Starving sons and hungry daughters:

A Post-Jungian Analysis of Fatherhood in Contemporary Cinema

Toby Nicholas Reynolds

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Abstract

To date, the onscreen father is a relatively under-explored area of cinematic masculinities. Adding to the existing literature on this (e.g. Bruzzi 2005, Hamad 2014), the thesis seeks to explore and analyse the presence and importance of the filmic father. It approaches this by examining the concept of 'father hunger', a term popularised by the mytho-poetic men's movement from the early 1990s that posits that fathers are considered a vital link to the masculine continuum. By using a post-Jungian methodology in analysing how two auteur directors (Sam Mendes and Paul Thomas Anderson) symbolically mediate onscreen representations of father figures and 'father hunger' within their films, the thesis offers a new perspective on this area of cinematic masculinities.

Auteur film theory was chosen for the project as one of the functions of the auteur, as held by Staiger (2003), is to act as a conscious analyser of historical and cultural citations; in other words the auteur can present and analyse perspectives on gender, in this case, masculinities and fathers. The auteur also performs a stylistic and signatorial function which meshes with the symbolism analysed by the chosen methodology. By utilising a post-Jungian methodology as a different but equally fruitful psychological perspective, the concepts of archetypes and symbols, via close textual analysis of the films, are found to reveal the depths, complexities and nuances of Mendes and Anderson's depictions of fathers and of masculinities.

The thesis concludes that by virtue of Anderson and Mendes' depictions of multi-faceted and polysemous father figures throughout their oeuvres, the auteur is shown to act not only as a conscious analyser, but also as a symbolic mediator of historical and cultural gender citations, in this case of masculinities and masculine identities.

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Introduction

Fathers and the masculine continuum

Within Hollywood cinema, the visual, narrative and thematic articulation of fatherhood appears to have undergone a quiet revolution (Douglas and Michaels, 2004) with Bruzzi identifying that the cinematic father had been previously treated '"a bit like air" – omnipresent but rarely talked about' (2005, xi). It is now arguable that we are confronted at many turns with multiple images of the father and, concomitantly, of what has been termed 'father hunger'[1], contradicting the past perception of the father as a largely one-dimensional and under-analysed presence within films that involved masculinities. This development is arguably indicative of both cultural and artistic shifts that correspond to the perceived pluralisation of masculinities that is continuing within cinema. As Hamad states: 'Fatherhood has become the dominant paradigm of masculinity across the spectrum of mainstream U.S. cinema' (2014, p.1). The thesis will argue that this foregrounding of the father and father hunger demonstrates both the symbolic importance of this hitherto under-analysed polysemous masculine presence, and that it reflects how the figure of the auteur can be analysed in terms of the mediation of cinematic gender imagery. For example the figure of Jack Horner (Burt Reynolds) in (Fig 0.1) Paul Thomas Anderson's *Boogie Nights* (1997) highlights the complexity of these mediations of fatherhood and father hunger through an ambiguous representation of the father as acting as both a benevolent and caring surrogate paternal, whilst simultaneously sexually exploiting masculinities and femininities.

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[1] The term 'father hunger' was popularised by the mythopoetic men's movement writer and poet Robert Bly in his 1990 book *Iron John*. Before this wider use, the term, and variations of it, had been used in psychological circles for a number of years.

Figure. 0.1 - The seemingly benevolent patriarchal father figure of Jack Horner (Burt Reynolds) in Anderson's *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Film Company/Ghoulardi Film Company, 1997).

Before these arguments are engaged with more fully, however, we need to explore and outline the cinematic and cultural contexts and discourses in which the thesis is set, and the theoretical perspectives and methodologies that I will be employing. The thesis uses three main areas of theory, namely: gender theory (in particular theories of masculinity), post-Jungian theory, and auteur film theory, and a methodology of textual analysis informed by post-Jungian paradigms and sensibilities.

Gender, post-Jungian thought, and the auteur

From post-war depictions of father-troubled teens (e.g. *Rebel Without a Cause*, Ray, 1955), to the fraught relationships with the paternal in the self-consciously quirky and visually complex films of Wes Anderson (e.g. *The Royal Tenenbaums*, 2001), the presence of the father and examples of father hunger can be found throughout classical, post-classical, and contemporary Hollywood (both mainstream and 'Indiewood') cinema. The hitherto largely unremarked-upon ubiquity and accompanying polyvalent nature of the cinematic paternal is strongly indicative of the importance of this key masculine figure. When we consider what men's movement writers (Bly, 1990; Biddulph, 1995; et al) term, the 'masculine continuum', the father can be argued to represent the continuation of masculinity by virtue of his importance to both the son and daughter from a developmental perspective in terms of functioning both as a masculine progenitor and as an initiator of masculinity. Before we explore in more detail what this figure represents, we first need to contextualise any paternal analyses within the larger array of filmic gender discourses

In terms of cinematic gender discourses, academic understanding of masculinity within film has been steadily moving from a largely binary understanding from the 1970s and 1980s (Mulvey, 1975, 1981; Neale, 1983) to a generally agreed upon pluralisation of gender (Cohen and Hark, 1993) whereby, for the purposes of the thesis, masculinity as a term has been supplanted by the more accurate plural *masculinities*. This recognition of gender pluralism also coincided with broader

cultural shifts in gender relations, namely, a declared crisis in masculinity[2], held to be brought about by the triple impact of feminism, civil rights and gay liberation. Peberdy argues that 'it is impossible to deny the instability of the male image evident in the overwhelming permeation of a discourse of masculinity crisis during the 1990s and 2000s' (2011, p7). These shifts challenged notions of traditional societal gender norms with corresponding cultural imagery reflecting these undercurrents: 'The power of such images should not be underrated: the image of a 'true' gender is omnipotent…Images of masculinity that go against the norm thus become all the more intriguing' (ibid, p.28).

Reflecting the growing interest in this gender field, RW Connell (1995) formulated the key phrases 'hegemonic masculinities' and 'patriarchal dividends', explicit recognition of the pluralisation of male gender, and their concomitant rewards, with other theorists developing the idea to a point where there was a recognition that there were both supra-hegemonic and sub-hegemonic masculinities (Fouz-Hernandez, 2009, pp.59-62). Fatherhood can therefore be said to both function and be performed (Butler, 1990; Pomerance and Gateward, 2005) in both spheres of this gender hegemony, with cinematic imagery reflecting these performances. Linking this with the men's movement theories of the critical central role that the father performs within the masculine continuum, and cinema can be seen as accurately divining cultural perspectives in gender relationships. The mythopoetic men's movement also supported the idea of a crisis in masculinity, but held that father hunger was both a symptom and a cause of the crisis, with the perceived lack of father figures available to modern men causing masculinity itself to falter and fail. Consequently, the paternal has had attention focused upon it as both the cause of and solution to the crisis in masculinity, with both conservative (Blankenhorn, 1995) and progressive (Biddulph, 1995) elements identifying it as a key figure in the construction of masculinities. It would, therefore, be logical to focus upon and analyse the paternal as an originator of and contributor to masculinities. Having identified the importance of the father within cinema, it would now be prudent to explore why a particular psychological methodology and theoretical perspective was chosen with which to analyse representations of the father.

A post-Jungian methodology was selected primarily for an alternative psychological perspective on cinematic narratives, gender and on the role of the auteur. Whilst film theory has traditionally, and successfully, utilised both psychoanalysis and cognitive theory to map out the psychological landscape of film phenomenonology and provided valuable psychological insight into both film narratives and apparatus, there remains a danger in mistaking them for the only psychological approaches to cinema. A post-Jungian theoretical perspective (in the sense of theory

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[2] This was held to occur in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and was perceived as a reactionary phenomenon to a number of gender challenges (Faludi, 1991, 2000; amongst other writers).

developing after Jung's death in 1961, as well as classical Jungian concepts) includes both a revisionist slant on his main theories as well as outlining and exploring the central theoretical tenets of his work. Key to this set of what can more accurately described as sensitivities (Bassil-Morozow and Hockley, 2017) is the importance that Jung assigned to the power of the image in terms of it engaging with the psyche and with the wider culture. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley argue that: 'In Jungian theory the image exists somewhere in the space between the unconscious and consciousness' (ibid, p.124), effectively existing in a liminal and subliminal capacity. This emphasis on the prevalence, potency and importance of the image, and its consistent presence, both within (the spectator) and without (society), makes a post-Jungian methodology and theories highly attractive for analyses of visual cultural products such as cinema, as well as television and other digital media. However, this approach is not without its disadvantages:

> A Jungian-informed approach to cinema does not offer a prescription. Nor is it a set of tools for analysis. Rather, it is a set of sensitivities that offers a different framework within that which to go about the work of understanding how it is that meaning is made in, by and, crucially, with media artefacts (ibid, p.12).

Post-Jungian writers (Fredericksen, 1979; Izod, 2001, 2006) warn that in analysing cinematic symbols, a reductive approach (similar to psychoanalytical methodologies) can encourage ossification of meaning when analysing the text: 'Fredericksen also warns Jungian film studies against becoming a reductive approach only interested in decoding archetypal structures and individuation patterns instead of regarding moving images from a variety of perspectives.' (ibid, p.16). Or, to be more concise, 'Put simply, the meaning of an image is not fixed' (ibid, p.7). Jung himself described the symbol as a 'corpus et anima' or body with spirit, something that resists easy categorisation.

In addition to rethinking the symbolic and imagistic approach to cinema, there are also other advantages. In terms of post-modernist theory and the collapse of totalising theories, a post-Jungian approach has the advantage of reacquainting the reader with a more open-ended interpretation of the symbol, thereby potentially enhancing interpretations of art, cinematic or otherwise (Potash, 2015, p.145). This foregrounding and re-examination of the symbol and the archetype within visual cultural products is linked in with wider cultural and socio-political debates. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley identified Jung's claim that 'the psyche of the individual is inseparable from the psyche of his or her society, and that the process of individuation and spiritual progress are only as successful as society allows them to be' (2017, p.17). This awareness and identification of what has been termed by post-Jungians as the *cultural complex* (Singer and Keebles, 2004) also makes post-Jungian thinking attractive when it comes to analysis of cinema and its effects on society, as well as reflecting societal issues. The gender issues described previously can therefore be analysed from a different aspect and

potentially new interpretations considered, both at the individual level and the societal level. In addition to this, there is a need to distinguish between the universal father and the American father, given that metaphors of personal processes within individuation are inflected by specific cultural contexts, in this case, American cultural complexes such as the so-called 'American Dream' with its emphasis on material success and social mobility (Winn, 2007, p. 6-7).

Moving the focus to gender, we need to consider that Jung and post-Jungian theory also proposes that the psyche is archetypally bisexual (Izod, 2001; Singh 2009). If we accept this, then there is scope to generate polysemous gender perspectives and their subsequent filmic representations. Susan Rowland reminds us that:

> …Jung regarded psychic energy as essentially neutral and hence not privileging one gender. Where Freud (and Lacan after him) considers the Oedipus myth to possess an originating role in the structuring of the psyche, Jung makes room for many potential myths of being. Some of them can even emphasise the feminine! (Hauke and Hockley, 2011, pp.148-149).

This recognition of the fluid nature of gender representation also enables a new perspective and approach to the producers of images, namely authors of films, whoever or whomever they are held to be. Film auteurs can therefore be regarded in post-Jungian terms as being conscious (and unconscious) producers and mediators of archetypal semiotic and symbolic imagery. Jung himself said that: 'Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him its instrument. The artist is…one who allows art to realize its purposes through him (1966, CW15, para 157). Analysis of these producers of imagery, therefore, can be fruitful when considering gender issues and how they impact society and the individual.

In terms of more general post-Jungian gender theories, Tacey (1997) argues that both the political (pro-feminist) men's movement and the mythopoetic (spiritual) men's movement have positive aspects to their differing ideologies, but that conversely, there is also a shadow side to them. Identifying the tendency for reactive retrogression in much of the mythopoetic writings of Bly (*Iron John*, 1990), Tacey argues that mythopoetic writers are archetypally father-dominated. He conversely identifies the pro-feminist men's movement as archetypally mother-fixated, and advocates a more balanced approach to analyses of masculinities. Related to this, other post-Jungian writers (Izod, 2001; Singh, 2009) have argued for recognition of both the anima and animus in both male and female psyches which allows for greater flexibility when analysing gender dynamics. As Tacey puts it: 'If we take away the patriarchal encrustations from around Jung's ideas, the androgynous and compensatory model of the psyche is still useful' (1997, p.31). As ever with any theory, there are caveats to be aware of. When using post-Jungian theories, there also needs to be a recognition of what Charles identifies as the: '…conservatism inherent to the symbolism at the heart of Jung's psychological theory.' (2013, p.133). A man simultaneously both of his time, and ahead

of it, Jung and Jungian theory has also faced accusations of dogma, sexism and racism, much of which has to do with overly rigid interpretations of archetypal theory, both by him and others, (Noll, 1994, 1997; Samuels, 1993). Nevertheless, as a set of theories and as a methodology, a post-Jungian approach has much to recommend it and contains the potential for new perspectives, both on gender and on the role of the auteur, an area of theory that we now turn to.

One of the most vexatious, yet passionately argued aspects of film theory, auteur theory and the role of the author within film still manages to generate controversy. From its initial emergence in post-war France as a means for film to be accorded status as a recognised art-form, through to its contested theoretical presence in auteur-structuralism and historical materialism, the figure of the auteur, and particularly the figure of director-as-auteur has always excited debate. For a figure whose obituary Barthes famously pronounced in 1968, the author shows remarkable tenacity in remaining a key part of film theory. The theoretical history of the auteur will be explored in more depth in the next two chapters, but for the purposes of this introduction it can be assumed that we are currently functioning in a post-structuralist landscape that allows for a plurality of readings of both the author and authorship. Staiger has identified seven broad functions that the author performs, namely (2003): origin, personality, sociology of production, signature, reading strategy, site of discourses, and *technique of self*. It is this last function of the author that the thesis will be examining (ibid, p.49) as well as some discussion of the signatorial role. Staiger maintains that the director-as-auteur can exercise agency over articulating historical citations. This can lead to hitherto unheard voices within cultures and societies being heard. As Staiger reminds us: 'Authorship does matter. It matters especially to those in non-dominant positions…' (ibid, p.27). As men occupy, in a general sense, mainly hegemonic and dominant societal and cultural positions, it is therefore arguable that representations of these positions need to be analysed and studied in order to further understand non-dominant and subaltern positions. It is also arguable that masculine positions are largely hegemonic, but not necessarily monolithic. This recognition of a more nuanced and complex set of representations allows for greater clarity in analysing masculinities and masculine gender positions, particularly those of fathers and their often complex relationships with their children and society. When we consider the varied depictions of fathers that Paul Thomas Anderson and Sam Mendes present us with, this authorial function can reveal new perspectives. As Staiger says:

> …although authorship may be subject to the wiles of humanism and capitalism, it also has functions for social action. Contemporaneous post-structuralist theory may be working to articulate a dynamics of agency not yet fully realised (ibid, xi).

Representations of gender have within them capacity to contribute to questions of identity; mediators of gender imagery therefore, such as auteur directors, can influence gender debates, particularly when

the psychological impact of imagery is considered. Having outlined the reasons for choosing auteur theory, we will now explore why the work of these directors were selected.

Case studies, method and structure

Mendes and Anderson have been chosen as case studies of auteur directors for a number of reasons. Besides fulfilling the function of the auteur as practising a technique of self as highlighted above, they also demonstrate command and use of auteurial and thematic signatures. Anderson in particular (Sperb, 2013; Toles, 2016) has had critical attention focused on him for this reason. King places both directors in context of what he saw as a resurgence of self-consciously director-as-auteur films in the mid-to-late 1990s that appeared to focus on more adult-centred issues (2009, p.192). This resurgence was compared to the 1970s, and what Biskind (1998) and others (Waxman, 2005) dubbed the 'directors decade'. In addition to this industrial contextualisation, we can compare both directors in terms of Hollywood outsider and insider status. As both a theatre director and British, Mendes can be considered another non-American outsider[3] who, like his previous filmic antecedents, manages to make mainstream Hollywood products with arguably an outsider's eye for the varying contradictions and contestatory nature of American mainstream society with regard to masculinities and gender relations. This national and cultural outsider status affords Mendes a fresh and revealing perspective that simultaneously critiques but also seeks to understand American Hollywood cinema, culture, and society. By contrast, Anderson can be argued to be more a product of what has been termed 'Indiewood' (King, 2002) in that he trained in television and was immersed in popular screen culture and subcultures in Los Angeles by dint of his upbringing[4]. This insider status provides an interesting counterpoint to Mendes in that Anderson also provides critique of his native culture, but crucially from what can be termed, views it from a native cultural perspective. Between them, Mendes acting as an outside director working within the classical Hollywood system, and Anderson as an insider working on the fringes of the same system, both directors' canons of work provide a well-rounded set of perspectives on American society, culture, and the cultural complex around the American paternal. With few exceptions - Anderson's *Punch-Drunk Love* (2005) and *Inherent Vice* (2014), and Mendes' helming of the James Bond franchise *Skyfall* (2012) and *Spectre* (2015)[5] - virtually all of

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[3] Hollywood has traditionally long employed European and other non-American film professionals, particularly directors. Early Hollywood examples include Michael Curtiz, Fritz Lang and Frank Capra. This practice continues today with directors such as Wim Wenders and Timur Bekmambetov.

[4] Anderson's father was Ernie Anderson, a popular TV presenter and disc jockey who played 'Ghoulardi', an in-character horror-film show TV presenter in the mid-1960s. Anderson paid tribute to his father by naming his production company after him.

[5] Arguably, Mendes has also incorporated family issues in the narrative and plot of both films.

their respective outputs have focused upon representations of the father and father hunger, indicating a consistent interest and concern with this archetypal presence.

Their status as auteur directors is further bolstered by their approach to material. Mendes interprets others' screenplays (*American Beauty,* written by Alan Ball) and uses adaptations of existing texts (*Road to Perdition, Revolutionary Road, Jarhead*)[6] but still manages to establish and maintain his thematic and visual signature. Anderson, by direct contrast, writes his own screenplay from original ideas, with few exceptions (*There Will Be Blood* and *Inherent Vice* being two), allowing him to also establish a clear authorial voice and control over what imagery is produced. By selecting these differing auteurial voices, the thesis can examine more effectively how symbolic and masculine gender imagery is produced and mediated from both a mainstream Hollywood and an 'Indiewood' perspective, indicating awareness of a filmic paternal ubiquity. When contextualised with regard to contemporaneous films from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s, the chosen directors' output has a noticeable difference in terms of how other directors depicted the paternal. For example, Wes Anderson' films (*Rushmore*, 1999; *The Life Aquatic*, 2004; *The Darjeeling Limited*, 2007, etc.) also foregrounded the father (both surrogate and biological) to a high narrative and semiotic degree; yet the over-stylisation and visual complexity arguably masked a lack of psychological depth and nuance. Similarly, *Die Hard 4.0* (Wiseman, 2007, USA) uses the central protagonist's status as a father, but reverts to a deeply anachronistic version of a 1950s father protecting his daughter's sexual innocence, echoing Bruzzi's (2005) earlier points about Hollywood's seeming inability to deal with the father's sexuality, and that of his children. Compared to these examples, Mendes and Anderson's oeuvre provides a more realistic and mature psychological recognition of the paternal, and its archetypal presence.

With regard to the thesis methodology, textual analysis has been chosen as it allows for close readings of the various texts and is flexible enough to accommodate multiple interpretations, accommodating and informed by the methodological 'sensibilities and sensitivities' nature of post-Jungian theory. As Jung stated about the image: '[it] alone is the immediate object of knowledge'(1967, CW7, para 201), making textual analysis as a methodology an attractive choice with which to scrutinise a cultural product like film in which imagery plays such a central role. With regard to auteurial intent, many film scholars (Stam and Miller 2000; Lapsley & Westlake, 2006; Bassil-Morozow and Hockley, 2017) have pointed out the naivety of trying to assign single or fixed meanings to films or fixed authorial intent to auteur directors (Toles 2016)[7]; I can but concur whilst

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[6] These films were based on works by, respectively, Max Allan Collins, Richard Yates and Anthony Swofford.

[7] Toles reads Anderson's output as being more concerned with his alleged difficult relationship with his mother (p6-7), citing a number of paratextual sources (interviews, etc.) as evidence of this.

also highlighting that too broad or diverse a set of pluralistic readings can also conflict with the textual evidence on offer.

As an example of the auteur acting as a conscious analyser of gender imagery and symbolism, we can briefly analyse the figure of Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day Lewis) in Anderson's *There Will Be Blood* (2007). Within the text, here are a number of complex and conflicting images and themes at work here. Initially Plainview is an example of a solitary cipher of a man, with no past or family, who is consciously depicted by Anderson as being wholly venal and materially driven. His narrative and psychological journey starts to develop when he adopts HW (Fig 0.2), the orphaned son of an employee after a fatal accident early on in the film.

Figure 0.2   In Anderson's *There Will Be Blood*, despite being covered in oil (their livelihood), father (Daniel Day Lewis) and son (Dillon Freasier) share an intimate bond. (JoAnne Sellar Productions / Ghoulardi Film Company / Annapurna Pictures, 2007).

This conscious act of fathering (father hunger here being portrayed as the hunger *to be* a father), in effect, the masculine continuum being continued, is a potential source of redemption for Plainview. However, when HW is deafened after an oil-well blow out, Plainview sends him away, unable to deal with his son's disability, having admitted that he despises human weakness. This rejection of his son signals his descent into madness and soul-darkness, Anderson showing Plainview's dark patriarch becoming lost within his shadow, and specifically referenced (Fig 0.3) within the mise-en-scene and colour palette of the film.

Figure 0.3   Plainview's shadowy inner psyche is clearly symbolically referenced in *There Will Be Blood*. (JoAnne Sellar Productions / Ghoulardi Film Company / Annapurna Pictures, 2007).

Anderson portrays fatherhood here as a symbolically potentially redemptive act, an act that Plainview fails to perform, a failure which is shown to eventually damn him. This brief example leads to the heart of the thesis, namely the central fields of interest. In terms of over-arching questions, the project is primarily concerned with two main enquiries: firstly, to what extent does a post-Jungian methodology and set of theories allow us to analyse filmic gender and masculinities differently, and secondly: how does the figure of the auteur, represented here by Anderson and Mendes, act as a conscious analyser of historical gender citations and mediator of gender symbols? These two questions will allow me to evaluate the relationships between historically-contingent gender regimes (the cultural complex), and individual filmmakers' articulations and mediations of these regimes within their bodies of work (the personal complex). In order to answer these main questions the thesis has been structured into six chapters, detailed below.

The first chapter deals with reviewing the existing literature and overall academic context for the main subject areas under discussion. Firstly, societal and filmic gender discourses are analysed, with the paternal being placed within its various contexts and how it, and masculinities, have been previously discussed and theories mapped and developed. The chapter then justifies use of post-Jungian thinking and methodologies and locates them within existing contemporary psychoanalytical psychological approaches to film, including the American Dream and American cultural complexes. It also tracks how it has developed into its current form, as well as its application to film and gender studies. Lastly, the figure of the auteur is discussed from its early emergence within French film theory, its journey through mainstream academic discourses, and its current post-structuralist position within contemporaneous film theory. This journey is analysed and the current pluralistic positions and functions of the auteur are contextualised.

The second chapter establishes the methodological frameworks and examines the theoretical application and contextual value of the texts under analysis, in particular, the idea of father hunger

and how this is mediated in symbolic terms via the figure of the auteur. Men's movement concepts and theories are outlined, and the influence of Robert Bly discussed and critiqued in terms of his co-opting Jungian and post-Jungian theory to support his own ideas. The possibilities and limits of post-Jungian methodological theories (both general theory and screen theory) are analysed and applied to the thesis questions. Finally, auteur theory is discussed and critiqued, with the various functions of the author scrutinised and applied to the thesis. The position of the auteur as a conscious analyser of historical citations is explored in more detail and how Anderson and Mendes can be argued to fulfil this role. The methodological and theoretical landscape and context thus established, the thesis then moves on to the film analysis chapters where the evidence for the thesis' main arguments and debates are laid out.

Formal film analysis begins with the third chapter analysing the father and his relationship with the child son using Mendes' *Road to Perdition* (2002) and *American Beauty* (1999), and Anderson's *Magnolia* (1999) and *There Will Be Blood* (2007) as main texts. To aid analysis, the filmic symbol is analysed and used in terms of post-Jungian theory, the chapter using this as a fresh perspective on representations of the father by Mendes and Anderson as either redeemed by dint of paternal sacrifice (*Road to Perdition*), or damned because of paternal rejection (*There Will Be Blood*). The fourth chapter continues to analyse the father and son relationship, this time by focusing on the figure of the adult son, using Anderson's *Boogie Nights* (1997), *Magnolia* (1999) and *Hard Eight* (1996) as texts that continue to demonstrate auteurial symbolic depiction and mediation of the shadow archetype, and the phallus. The father is shown here (*Boogie Nights*) as acting as a key influence on the adult son, both as a potential exploiter of masculine sexuality and masculinity. If the father is not transcended (rather than overcome), the paternal eventually traps the son in what can be described as a perpetual adolescence. The paternal importance is therefore demonstrated in terms of acting as a key developmental barrier to adult masculinity that needs to be confronted and transcended (*Magnolia* and *Hard Eight*) leading to greater masculine maturity.

Moving on in the fifth chapter to depictions of the father and daughter, Mendes' *American Beauty* (1999) and Anderson's *Magnolia* are analysed and key gendered archetypes and post-Jungian concepts and symbols such the anima and animus are analysed in their relationship to contemporary paternal depictions. The daughter's relationship with the father, including the controversial and problematic aspect of sexuality is explored, with the sexual father figure being analysed both as sexual abuser (Jimmy Gator in *Magnolia*) and as sexually redeemed (Lester Burnham in *American Beauty*). Lastly in the sixth chapter, the father and his relationship and status within society is examined via Mendes' *Revolutionary Road* (2008), *American Beauty*, and *Jarhead* (2005), and Anderson's *The Master* (2012). Here, the father as a cultural complex in its post-Jungian sense is analysed, as well as its location within society and how father is still seen as an initiator and gatekeeper to masculinity. The conclusion reiterates and summarises the figure of the father within

film and what the future may hold for the paternal illustrated by an analysis of Mendes' *Away We Go* (2009). The potential advantages of post-Jungian methodologies are also discussed in terms of what future research could be mapped out around gender in cinema, as well as in a more general sense. The figure of the auteur is also re-visited with its role as mediator of archetypal symbolism and analyser of historical citations analysed and summarised.

With this structure and the two central questions in mind, we can now engage with the current literature and theoretical landscape in more detail, starting with gender, and specifically, masculinities within cinema along with the changes that are held to have occurred in wider Western society and culture.

ONE

The Realm of the Father: mapping the territory

This chapter, due to reasons of brevity, paints a broad picture in terms of reviewing the scholarship about filmic gender, post-Jungian film theory and the figure of the author within film studies. In particular, there is a vast, complex and ever-increasing body of work on film gender alone, with Kord and Krimmer accurately summarizing this situation: 'Reading the vast literature on the subject is like walking into a hall of funhouse mirrors' (2011, p.37). Accordingly, and for purposes of clarity, the gender section of this chapter has been divided up into two further main sub-sections: firstly, men and masculinities within film and cultural studies, and secondly, men and masculinities within related humanities and disciplines that inform, influence, and are influenced by the first two areas of scholarship. Attention is then turned to post-Jungian developments and contexts, examining the foundation of post-Jungian theoretical literature, including gender, and finishing with a focus on film literature. The chapter concludes with a historical analysis of auteur theory literature taking us up to contemporary post-structuralist discourses. We begin our survey of the literary landscape with an overview of gender within film and cultural studies.

Men, Film and Culture

In terms of both film and cultural studies, what started to emerge from gender discourses around masculinity and men in cinema in the early 1990s, was the key idea of pluralized masculinities that were to be located within cultural texts such as film. Since Mulvey's seminal work on gendering the male gaze and female subjectivity in her landmark 1975 essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', the assumptions around masculinity was that of a monolithic cultural construct that was premised on the goal of patriarchal dominance of woman. Employing Freudian and Lacanian theories

to support her critique of patriarchy within cinema, Mulvey sketched what Dix calls 'a pessimistic, even morbid account of the female spectator's place as it is constructed by mainstream narrative' (2008, p.234). Whilst invaluable in drawing critical attention to masculinity, and the undeniable power of the gaze, it was uncomfortably close to gender essentialism for many critics (Stacey, 1994; Peberdy, 2011), promoting, again in Dix's words 'a depressingly binary system' (ibid), with masculinity, and indeed femininity, still being identified as singular. Stacey echoes this, commenting how:

> Psychoanalytic theories of identification used within film criticism have led to very narrow conceptualisations of cinematic identification, which have ignored the broader meanings of spectator/star relations and indeed have led to some overly pessimistic conclusions about the pleasures of cinema (Singh, 2009, p.125).

Bruzzi concurs:

> For all its brilliance, *Visual Pleasure* has not only opened doors, but closed them, too….the overwhelming attraction of Mulvey's schema has, in turn, closed down alternative ways of interpreting gender operations in mainstream, principally Hollywood films… (2013, p.7).

Continuing in a similar vein in the early 1980s, Steve Neale's 1983 essay 'Masculinity as Spectacle*',* applied psychoanalytical theories and continued the work that Mulvey started, with specific reference to men, rather than just women, being cast as an onscreen spectacle. It differed, however, with the influence of Ellis's work in *Visible Fictions* (1982), around the plurality of representations of men and masculinities. Whilst a useful and timely contribution to the debate, the psychoanalytical model it used was still subject to the restrictions inherent in a reductionist psychological paradigm. The emerging debates around masculinity were increasingly predicated on the realisation that there were now a plurality of cinematic masculinities that were on offer. This recognition of diverse male and female spectators, along with their diverse perspectives, culminated in Cohen and Hark's seminal collection of critical writings: *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. Identifying the traditional view of onscreen manliness as a 'unperturbed monolithic masculinity produced by a de-contextualised psychoanalysis' (1993, p.3), they provided a persuasive deconstruction of masculinity as cultural performances, performances that were subject to a spectrum of influences and discourses. *Screening the Male* was followed by Kirkham and Thumim's complementary collections of essays on masculinities, *You Tarzan* and *Me Jane*, (1993) both of which also addressed masculinities from a number of viewpoints (including psychoanalytical), although mainly from a cultural studies perspective. These two early collections provided inspiration for a rapidly increasing number of perspectives on masculinity and film, and as such, provided the basis for theories around masculinity being a wholly plural construct, firmly foregrounding these theories within debates on cinematic masculinities.

In addition to, and supporting the overall sense of the debate widening, Kirkham and Thumim identified the following areas as being of primary concern with regard to depictions of masculinity, namely: the body, action, the external world and the internal world. These were, they argued, the main sites where male strengths, weaknesses, anxieties, pleasures, and pain reside:

> It is these sites that various traits of masculinity are signalled; these may be qualities either asserted or assumed in the construction and development of masculine characters, or they may be signifiers of themes quite consciously concerned with an interrogation of masculinity (ibid, p.11).

For example, Tasker's dissection of the *Die Hard* series of films (McTiernan and Harlin,1988-1995) in her in-depth study of male action films *Spectacular Bodies* (1993) makes a point around the transposition of male anxiety and the body:

> Anxieties to do with difference and sexuality increasingly seem to be worked out over the body of the hero. The male body (usually replete with muscles) is an arena where by contemporary anxieties are played out on screen (ibid, p.236).

This broad demarcation of where masculinities are enacted and played out within cultural products was a major step forward in establishing studies of masculinities and gender within film studies. Another noteworthy development within the literature was the emergence and adoption of the performative theories of gender theorists, such as Judith Butler (1990, 2004), RW Connell (1987, 1995, 2005) and within film studies, Pomerance (2001, 2005) amongst many others. Many these essays and works argued persuasively that masculinity (also gender as a whole) is a performance, a masquerade, 'dramaturgical' in that it is, in effect, an exhibition for audiences and spectators that both reinforces and subverts cultural norms and discourses. Butler, quoted in Peberdy stated that gender performances are '…ideological, created and fuelled by public and social discourse in order to normalise what is conceived to be 'masculine' and 'feminine''(2011, p.27). As such, filmic performances and onscreen representations therefore echo cultural and gender performances. This theory will be discussed further and in greater detail in the next chapter.

So far in this section, plurality still remains the over-arching concept when considering a cultural studies approach to masculinity and gender; the past idea of an essentialist single masculinity is expressly exposed as simplistic and restrictive when considering the polysemous cinematic depictions of masculinity. Simultaneously, there were a number of other aspects of filmic masculinities that were being explored. Masculine aspects of national cinema were starting to be analysed with French males and Gallic masculinity under scrutiny (Powrie, 1993), alongside later examples such as Russia (Goscilo and Yashmova, 2010) and Italy (Rigoletto, 2014; O'Rawe, 2014; Bini, 2015. Inspired by the development of the four main areas defined by Kirkham and Thumim**,**

writers such as Holmlund (2001), Lehman (2001, 2007) and Fouz-Hernandez (2013) focussed attention upon cinematic representations of the male body. There were also in-depth dissections and analyses of masculine representations within cultural, historical and social discourses (Cohan, 1997; Davies and Smith, 1998; Yates, 2007; Combe and Boyle, 2013) alongside overviews and analyses of males and masculinity within film and actorly performance (Bingham, 1994; Peberdy, 2011) and more generalised summaries and explorations of men and film (Baker 2006, 2016; Benshoff and Griffin, 2003; Chopra-Gant, 2005; Gronstad, 2008; Burrill, 2014). Discussions of men within genre films (Grant, 2010) were joined by more specific inquiries, with horror (Greven, 2013, 2017) and war (Morag, 2009) being some of the genres under scrutiny. In terms of families and anxieties around the masculine, Harwood (1997) and Tincknell (1997) identifying changing and responsive cinematic representations of the family under pressure; fathers being seen as still playing a key role within this social structure, albeit as figures also under pressure. Filmic representations of the crisis in masculinity also came under questioning with Walsh (2010) and Fradley (2013) providing dissenting perspectives and trenchant critiques of this phenomenon. This recognition of the crisis that masculinity was facing in the late 1980s and early 1990s is echoed and explored further by, amongst others, Kord and Krimmer. They state that:

> Upon entering the realm of cultural representation, a social diagnosis-the crisis in masculinity-metamorphoses into a crisis of *fatherhood*. In this new guise, it is propelled to prominence by a plethora of scholarly works, social movements, and cultural narratives, Hollywood cinema being amongst the most conspicuous among them (2011, p.37).

With these metamorphoses of crises in masculinity transforming into crises of fatherhood in mind, we are able to now turn to the main focus of this section of the chapter that is to say, the mapping of the cultural discourses that deal directly with representations of fathers and fatherhood within film.

Fathers, film, and culture

Film studies had a noticeable lack of emphasis on representations of the paternal figure until after the millennium. Stella Bruzzi's earlier point (paraphrasing Richard Dyer) about the filmic father being akin to oxygen; largely invisible but always present, being rather apt. This absence of discussion was reflected in the literature around the father and film. Susan Jeffords cogently analysed the depictions of father figures within *Terminator 2* (Cameron, 1991) in *Screening the Male* (1993) arguing that fatherhood within the 'new masculinity' is depicted as being a construct that 'transcends racial and class difference, but that the vehicle for that transformation is fathering, the link for men to 'discover' their new 'internalized' selves'' (p.254). This argument strongly echoes Robert Bly in that the paternal is the location of masculine self-discovery. Andy Medhurst provided a provocative

analysis of the melodrama, *The Spanish Gardener* (Leacock, 1956) within *You Tarzan* (Kirkham and Thumim 1993), hinting strongly at a transgressive sexual aspect to the paternal relationships portrayed within, a point echoed by Bruzzi later. Fathers and fatherhood are either discussed in passing in (mainly) Freudian terms or present largely by their absence. It is not until Peter Lehman's *Masculinity: Bodies, Movies, Culture* (2001) that fathers and fatherhood receive more substantial attention in writings on men in cinema, although this is also treated as supplemental, rather than as a subject worthy of study in its own right. Beynon (*Masculinities and Culture*) also addresses the subject of fathers when he analyses them in his sub-chapter entitled 'Men Running Wild' (2002, p.128). He quotes from Susan Faludi's seminal study of American men *Stiffed* (2000) when he outlines what Bly (1990) terms 'father hunger', around the situation 'having a father was supposed to mean 'having an older man show you how the world worked and how to find your place in it'.' (p.130). This position of defining masculinity as a gender continuum will be analysed and argued for, albeit one that is inflected and shaped by both internal and external forces.

Bly and fatherhood are also mentioned in depth by Trice and Holland in 2001's *Heroes, Anti-heroes and Dolts*, an incisive analysis of portrayals of masculinity that manages to both celebrate and critique representations of the wide range of masculinities on offer in the twentieth century. 2004 saw the release of the collection *The Trouble with Men*, edited by Powrie, Davies and Babington that devoted a section purely to representation of fathers. The academic interest in fatherhood and film continued to gather pace, culminating in 2005 with Stella Bruzzi's *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood*. This key text provided a trenchant and wide-ranging analysis and critique of the father figure in film as portrayed by Hollywood from World War II to the 1990s. Utilising a range of theoretical bases including psychoanalysis, gender studies and sociology, Bruzzi highlighted the range of onscreen fathers on offer within each decade and how they contextually related to the cultural battles being fought off-screen. While Bruzzi's work is invaluable in analysing the father figure and fatherhood, there is still heavy emphasis on the psychoanalytical psychological perspective, although there is occasionally use of Jungian terms and concepts, albeit still in the minority, along with a brief mention of Robert Bly. Gerstner (2006) discusses at length early examples of cinematic masculinity in *Manly Arts* and in 2008, Reiter in *Fathers and Sons in Cinema* analysed father-son relationships using a Jungian framework, focusing upon what he terms 'filmmyths', and used Bly as a reference around the danger to men of experiencing father-hunger.

At the same time Nicola Rehling's *Extra-Ordinary Men* (2009), manages to both use Bly when referencing the masculine wound, a key men's movement and Jungian concept, and critique his more controversial ideas, particularly around the role of male victimhood. Likewise, Peberdy analysed depictions and performances of males and masculine angst in *Masculinity and Film Performance* (2011). She also provides a critical discussion of Bly and *Iron John* that touches upon

both fathers and the Wild Man, another key concept within men's movement gender theory. In 2011, Kord and Krimmer's *Contemporary Hollywood Masculinities* brought a focus on a number of filmic representations of men and masculinities. Similar to Bruzzi, Hamad delineates fatherhood as being a means to resolve masculine anxieties in her 2014 *Postfeminism and Paternity in Contemporary U.S. Film: Framing Fatherhood*. Also recently, *Millennial Masculinity* edited by Timothy Shary in 2013, gathered together a collection of writings on a number of key areas of interest to the filmic masculine, namely representations of gay men, fathers, the 'man-child', and racial questions around men within film. Shary also summarises the ongoing attraction and academic necessity of analysing cinematic masculinities:

> Given the escalating developments within the gendered milieu of men in U.S culture as well as the ongoing evolution of male roles (domestic, professional, performative) and the concerns that these vicissitudes presented to the patriarchal norm, a logical opportunity to re-examine masculinity at the turn of the millennium arises, especially since the positive advances in women's authority and men's humility over the past few decades have not created true gender equality. The comprehensive themes of cinema and its dependence on audience appeal to achieve success make movies the ideal medium through which we can better understand how men in contemporary culture have been changing and how our perceptions of men continue to change as well (p.4).

Bruzzi also returned to masculinity and cinema in 2013 with *Men's Cinema,* a study and exploration of masculine tropes and use of mise-en-scene within men's cinema (including mentions of fathers), along with a timely exploration of how men's cinema can be an *affective* experience as well as a cerebral or intellectual one. This question of affectivity, is a potentially interesting area for further research; however, it will not, due to issues of space, feature within this thesis.

To summarise this section of the chapter, if we are to theorise about cinematic representations of masculinities, and the father specifically in the case of this thesis, then it can be argued that the paternal is generally viewed as a product of cultural forces and social discourses, as well as psychological drives. The increasing amount of academic attention, as charted above, afforded to the father is indicative of the previous under-representation and under-analysis of this key figure. This paucity of attention is one of the primary reasons why critical attention is focused on the father figure, and the subsequent hunger for it, for the thesis. Attention is now turned to analysis of the father figure within other humanities, which broadens the contextual landscape of the thesis.

Men, society, politics, and gender studies

Before we begin this section, a reminder is needed of Kord and Krimmer's earlier 'hall of funhouse mirrors' (2011, p37) warning cited earlier in the chapter around comparing the vast literature on masculinities. Accordingly, and for the sake of brevity and thesis space, attention will be given to the most relevant texts, with other secondary sources being necessarily mentioned in passing only. Following on from the film and cultural studies field is the arena of gender studies; it is here where the mythopoetic (or 'spiritual') men's movement (part of the contextual aspect of the thesis) is discussed. By necessity, the overall context has to be broad in range when being discussed due to the previously mentioned vast literature on the subject. What can be affirmed is that initially the men's movement first became visible with early writers such as Herb Goldberg (1977, 1991, and 2007) being inspired by the rapidly burgeoning women's movement into re-thinking traditional gender roles for men. This included the role (or lack) of fathers, with Gloria Steinem quoted in 1970 in the *Washington Post*: 'The truth is that most American children seem to be suffering from too much mother and too little father' (Hamad, 2014, p.8). This perceived lack of father presence gathered pace throughout the 1970s and involved other writers such as Warren Farrell (1974, 1986, 1993, 2001) who attempted to highlight the negative gender roles and performances that men were also often held to be socially conditioned into enacting. As the 1980s progressed, various differentiated strains of the men's movement began to emerge, eventually coalescing into two main strands[8]. These were the pro-feminist, academic and socio-political men's movement, and the mytho-poetic, or 'spiritual' men's movement, the most famous exponent being the poet and cultural commentator, Robert Bly.

Bly and the mytho-poetic movement

Based on a decade of seminars that he led involving story-telling sessions using myths and fairy tales[9], Bly published his seminal text *Iron John* (1990) and popularised the term 'father hunger' although this phrase had been used previously to his work by Herzog (1980) in a clinical journal, and later was the title of a collection of clinical cases (1983). Variants of this term were commonly in use (the post-Jungian writer Anthony Stevens uses the term 'parent hunger' in print in 1994) in other settings, both clinically and culturally, and in all likelihood the term was not particularly new. The publication of *Iron John* also coincided with (indeed, was inspired by) the widening and gradual perception that there was, within the Western world, a burgeoning social, cultural, sociological, and political crisis within masculinity in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Numerous writers and

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[8] Samuels (1993, p181) claims that there were four main groups – experiential, socio-political, mythopoetic and gay men's movement. Tacey (1997, p x) puts the figure as high a dozen differentiated male movements.

[9] The cultural, political and sociological context of fairy tales is comprehensively critiqued by Zipes (1979).

commentators, both academic and non-academic (Modleski, 1991; Horrocks, 1994; Connell, 1995; Fauldi, 1991, 2000; Robinson, 2000 to name but a very few) broadly agreed that there was, at the very least, a *perceived* crisis within masculinity[10] itself (although there was passionate debate as to how real this crisis was), brought about largely by the triple impact upon masculinities of civil rights, feminism and gay liberation. These three social and cultural movements were held to put normative notions of masculinity and masculine gender performance under pressure in terms of how men and their behaviour were perceived and, perhaps more importantly, how men perceived themselves and their behaviour.

Bly's answer to this crisis in masculinity (of which he held that father hunger in both men and women was the strongest symptom) was, unsurprisingly, more father. However, he held that father hunger in both men and women was for the missing (and idealised) *caring* masculine; a masculine energy that was (like idealised notions of feminine energy) also nurturing, protective, initiating and safe. By utilising Jungian, Freudian and mythic theories, Bly succeeded in challenging and provoking the debate around gender and masculinity, an approach that is not unproblematic, to put it mildly, given the subsequent critiques and rejections of his work as cloaked essentialism that sought a return to patriarchal dominance (Bruzzi, 2005; Rehling, 2009; Peberdy, 2011, amongst others). Picking up on this criticism, Bly cannot be construed or treated as a separate theorist in his own right partly due to his over-reliance and arguably mis-interpretation of existing and past theories. The post-Jungian writers Andrew Samuels (1993, p.184) and David Tacey (1997) both recognise that Bly, in Tacey's incisive quote:

> …has a habit of being half right and three quarters wrong. He correctly identifies a real and pressing problem of the time, and then puts forward a 'solution' that is wildly reactionary and not of the time (p.92).

Both writers subject Bly[11] and the mytho-poetic men's movement to sustained criticism of their positions, more detailed analysis of which will be in the next chapter. In academic film circles Bruzzi, in particular, analyses Bly incisively (2005, pp.139-141) arguing both the strengths and weaknesses of his perspective and over-emphasis on the father. Conversely, many readings of Bly often manage to ignore much of his work when using mythopoetic theories in critical dissections (Hall, 2005, pp.

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[10] There is a tendency by some writers to put the phrase 'crisis in masculinity' in quote marks. It is my assertion that this subtle grammar action can have the effect of reducing the importance of this phenomenon. The thesis will therefore not be using quote marks for this phrase, any more than it would use the same grammar action for the word 'backlash'.

[11] Bly produced other work, such as *The Sibling Society* (1996) and, *The Maiden King: The Reunion of Masculine and Feminine* (1998). The former text was a polemic about the immaturity of society, and the latter was an attempt to reconcile and transcend the traditional binary view of gender by using another Grimms fairy tale, this time analysed with the help of Marion Woodman, a Jungian analyst. Both works were nowhere near as impactful as *Iron John*, reflected in diminished sales and subsequent cultural ignorance of their ideas.

43-52). As mentioned previously, both Peberdy (2011) and Rehling (2009) have critiqued Bly's writing, although their examples of his supposed misogyny leave out large parts of his work that contradict many of their arguments, particularly around discussion of the Fifties Man, and the concept of the Wild Man (2011, p.98) [12]. Bly's work, and the phrase 'father hunger', is a large part of the contextual analysis for the thesis, mainly for the alternative nature of the text; with its questioning regarding existing masculinities, both 'soft' and 'hard', and its strong emphasis on the importance of the father, both as a real and symbolic figure to the construction of masculine gender performance.

Turning attention to wider effects of *Iron John*, one of the main effects was the placing of the father at the centre of debates around masculinities. Post-*Iron John*, as it were, a huge number of Bly and Jung-influenced texts, both academic and non-academic, were released throughout the decade (publishers quickly realising the potential profits to be made out of gender studies[13]) that focussed attention on father hunger and healing the 'father wound' amongst men and women. Amongst these writers were: Lee, 1991; Corneau, 1991; Moore and Gillette, 1991, 1992; Keen, 1992; Pittman, 1994; Schwalbe, 1996; Van Leeuwen, McCloughry & Storkey, 2003, etc. Many of these writers (although not all) produced work that was, in effect, male pain confessionals. This tendency towards masochistic male soul-baring was critiqued by Tacey:

> …these authors have decided that they will write from the gut and their emotions, and will not bother about 'head stuff' concerning feminism, rupture, history, alienation. In writing from the gut, we get blasted with an emotional longing that is alarmingly primal, fierce and unschooled (1997, p.54).

Whilst these confessionals highlight long repressed and unexpressed masculine emotional longing and pain, they are, as Tacey accurately points out, often unbalanced in their focus on the subjective and the personal, effectively deliberately ignoring historical gender contexts. However, not all writing on masculinities at the time indulged in this. Biddulph (1995, 1997, 2013), Clare (2000), Shwalb, Shwalb and Lamb, 2012, and Seidler (1989, 1997, 2005) - amongst others - sought to maintain a more balanced view of where masculinity was located in various cultural, psychological and sociological contexts. Jungian and post-Jungian inspired writings will be analysed further on in

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[12] These critiques are understandable, but, when compared to Bly's actual work, appear to be contrary to what is actually written, given what he states in the preface of *Iron John*: '…this book does not seek to turn men against women, nor to return men to the domineering mode that has led to repression of women and their values for centuries' (1990, viii-ix). He goes on further:

> The dark side of men is clear. Their mad exploitation of earth resources, devaluation and humiliation of women, and obsession with tribal warfare are undeniable. Genetic inheritance contributes to their obsessions, but also culture and environment (ibid).

[13] *Iron John* had sold over half a million copies by the early part of the 1990s (Samuels, 1993 p.184).

this chapter, but suffice to say, many established Jungians and post-Jungians scholars (Samuels 1993, Tacey 1997, et al) were correctly suspicious of this sudden archetypally informed output. Another, more problematic from some perspectives, aspect of the literature was the emergence of a quasi-regressive style of cultural commentary (e.g. Thomas, 1993; Moir and Moir, 1998) where men were increasingly viewing themselves as victims, paradoxically both of patriarchy, and of feminism in the broader sense. Counter to these perspectives, and holding largely oppositional views, were the socio-political men's movement, the aims and origins of which will now be explored.

Socio-political men's studies

Beginning initially as a companion movement to second wave feminism (Goldberg, 1977; Farrell, 1974) in the 1970s, the socio-political men's movement was inspired by feminist thought and sought to apply similar theories to society in order to effect change in attitudes towards gender biases within culture and society, this time with men changing men. Based in academia, and generally left-wing in its sociological approach, by the time of *Iron John*'s publication, the socio-political men's movement had developed into a wide-ranging set of beliefs, ranging from more moderate voices (Seidler, 1989, 1997, 2005; Chapman and Rutherford, 1987) through to more uncompromising perspectives (Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Pfeil, 1997; Kimmel, 1995, 2000, 2009, 2015). Arguing in the main that patriarchy and patriarchal social structures needed to be destroyed, they tended to dominate academic discourses and attacked writers such as Bly (Samuels, 1993, p.184) whom they viewed (not without good reason) as essentialist, retrogressive and neo-patriarchal. Connell (2005), for example, correctly identifies the mytho-poetic men's movement as a form of protest masculinity, and also, more importantly, identified the concepts of 'hegemonic masculinity' and the 'patriarchal dividend', concepts that were, perhaps, conveniently overlooked by mythopoetic men's movement writers. However, there were also problems inherent in their own positions that were either overlooked or ignored. In *Remaking Men* (1997) David Tacey warned against the dangers of solely adopting a socio-political men's movement perspective towards questions of masculinity:

> Progressive discourses must oppose the father but not kill him, and they must 'shrink the phallus' but not mutilate it. If our radical activity gets caught in the killing and mutilating mode, society will not move forward at all, because we become paralysed by negative archetypal forces (p.51).

He went on: 'Despite the idealism of political rebels, the dissolution of patriarchy will not bring on a new golden age, but will necessarily leave many men in an emotional and psychological quandary'

(ibid, p.52). In case Tacey is perceived as being biased towards the 'spiritual' / mytho-poetic men's movement, he poses these questions around their beliefs:

> What about the deathly and demonic face of the patriarchy? What about the feminine zeitgeist? What about the urgent need for a new, post-patriarchal consciousness? All too often the spiritual movement ends up in conservative politics, a more reactionary set of attitudes, and a restoration of 1950s values (ibid, p.54).

This explicit recognition by both Tacey and Samuels (1993, pp.182-4) of both the shortcomings and strengths of both strands of men's movement is indicative of an attempt to strike a more balanced approach to perspectives around masculinity, something that this thesis will attempt to emulate. Writing about the future of masculine gender discourses, Tacey states that: 'We have still to discover a public men's movement that honours both styles at once, that has the guts to oppose and the courage to embrace' (ibid, p.47). To complete outlining the context of masculinity studies, other humanities will now be examined.

Social sciences and masculinity

Turning attention firstly to the anthropological view of fathers and fatherhood, there are (like gender studies) a large number of other voices on this subject. For the purposes of the thesis, the work of anthropologist and theorist David Gilmore (1991) around masculinity and fathers is a useful entry point. He proposed that there are two major areas that need to be explored. Firstly, the role that men, and especially fathers were expected to perform. He summarised three areas where men were expected to perform adequately, namely as an impregnator of women, as a provider, and finally as a protector. He goes on to advocate that men are nurturers, but in a different way to women:

> Men nurture their society by shedding their blood, their sweat, and themselves, by bringing home food for both child and mother, by producing children and by dying if necessary in faraway places to provide a safe haven for their people. This, too, is nurturing (Beynon, 2002, p.63).

Fathers, at least competent and successful ones (if permitted to use the normative definition of competency and success), are therefore primarily nurturers, protectors and progenitors of life, themes that are also reflected within Bly and post-Bly writers. Gilmore goes on 'the manhood ideal…is not simply a reflection of individual psychology, but part of public culture, a collective representation' (ibid, p.64). This is an important point to consider, namely that while the psychological approach to analysing masculinities is a useful tool, the wider contextual situation cannot be ignored, indeed, is a vital component, when considering any debate. Beynon (ibid, p.62) also sounds a note of caution into the debate on fathers and fatherhood around unconsciously adopting an ethnocentrist viewpoint,

namely viewing western (British and American) masculinity and masculine discourses from a western (British and American) perspective. Beynon highlights the restrictions that we can unwittingly place on analysing masculinities, with a tendency to regard our own culture as normative: 'It is all too easily assumed that contemporary western masculinity is the universal norm' (ibid). For the purposes of the thesis, the texts under analysis are (mainly) located in contemporary American social and cultural settings, and so it assumed that contemporary western masculinity *is* the normative context in this case, especially when considering the films under analysis.

The second major anthropological aspect that is of interest here is the question and depiction of the recognised rite of passage of *initiation*, both personal and social, that is addressed within anthropological and post-Jungian perspectives. Due to (again) the vastness and complexity of this area of scholarship, the thesis will be mainly focussed on the Jungian and post-Jungian perspectives on initiation. Jung wrote widely on the archetypal initiatory drive, but post-Jungian discussions of this area (certainly as it relates to film) are conspicuous by their absence. Discussion as this initiatory drive relates to film (both as a practice and as a depiction), therefore, is limited and a potentially exciting new area of debate albeit due to reasons of brevity, the thesis will only be dealing with this area briefly. The argument, linked in to the earlier position of masculinity as a mediated continuum, is that just as there is successful initiation into childhood to adulthood, there is also both misinitiation (a failure for whatever reason to complete the journey into the adult world) and disinitiation (a deliberate abuse of initiation for other purposes). Furthermore, within the films that the thesis will be discussing, *Jarhead* (Mendes, 2005) is a text that has both misinitiation and disinitiation as a key symbolic ritual at its heart. This culturally and societally endorsed passage into adulthood, whether negative or positive, is a reminder of the power of culture in that anthropologically, culture also has a key role in reinforcing social norms and mores; any images that are presented by an auteur, are also mediated by the culture.

Society and politics

Linked in with anthropology are the sociological and political perspectives on masculinity, an area that has drawn an increasingly large amount of attention through the 1990s and 2000s. Connell (1995), introduced the influential term 'hegemonic masculinity' that was picked up and developed further by, amongst others, Kimmel (2000, 2009). Beynon's *Masculinities and Culture* (2002) nuanced by what Dix calls 'a politically more alert vocabulary' (p.241) explored the debate further. Beynon reminds us that:

> Masculinity is always interpolated by cultural, historical and geographical location and in
> our time the combined influence of feminism and the gay movement has exploded the

concept of a uniform masculinity and even sexuality is no longer held to be fixed or innate (p.1).

He goes on to argue for an awareness of how hegemonic masculinity develops and which is itself defined by various 'subordinate variants'. As Dix puts it: 'Various screen masculinities may themselves contribute either to the reinforcement of culturally dominant models of how to be and look a man, or to their critique and subversion' (2008, p.241). Beynon also sounds a note of caution when discussing men and masculinities, using the work of Kenneth Clatterbaugh and his term 'adjectival masculinities' (2002, p.23) to describe specific masculine communities based around race, class, sexuality. Arguing that 'there are no ready criteria that allow me to identify masculinities…it may be the best kept secret of the literature on masculinity that we have an extremely ill-defined idea of what we are talking about' (1998, p.27). Clatterbaugh rightly warns of tendencies of viewing masculinities as self-contained and autonomous, prompting Beynon to ask the interesting question: are masculinities the same as varieties of masculinity? He takes this argument further when he draws a distinction between discussing males and male behaviour, and male images and masculine discourses. Whilst in some ways intellectually exciting, the debates around masculinity were in danger of perhaps becoming too dense and convoluted, leading to at times an overwhelming sense of complexity.

Elsewhere in the theoretical landscape, Lupton & Barclay (1997), Burgess (1997) Hobson (2002), Gavanas (2004), Dermott (2008) and Featherstone (2009) all contributed critical perspectives around the figure and social position of the father, both symbolic and actual. What emerged was the theme of masculinities and fathering as being a gendered political discourse that is essentially shaped by society, unsurprisingly given that sociology is, by its nature as an academic discipline focussed on the external social forces that influence individuals. Hobson in particular argues, not without some veracity, that fatherhood is a familial discourse that is virtually wholly shaped by external pressures. Whilst it would be disingenuous to deny the existence and power of external social factors upon individuals and the roles that they are expected to play within society, it would be equally disingenuous to deny that internal psychological drives also play a key role within the construction of fathering discourses and families, hence the focus of the thesis on the psychological approach. Society, after all, is made up of individuals, who often have diverse and contestatory agendas within the realms of family, and so would resist or even subvert hegemonic models (Connell, 1995) of fatherhood imposed from society. Individuals also are either consciously or unconsciously resisting or embracing their own experiences of fathering, whether positive or negative, or more realistically a mixture of both kinds of experience. What was agreed upon from the plurality of sociological perspectives is that fatherhood has undergone a fundamental shift from a broadly agreed upon post-war model to a pluralist model, prompted in part, at least, by the forces of feminism, civil rights and gay liberation (as outlined in the earlier section), a move reflected in the perception of masculinity

itself and outlined by Chapman and Rutherford (1987). What is also evident is that fatherhood has been 'rediscovered' as a source of masculine power, or at the very least, presented as such, mediated by the changes wrought by feminism in terms of division of labour, both inside and outside the home. What else is worthy of attention is that the increasing involvement of fathers within the family is reported as being demonstrably beneficial, both on a familial and societal level (Blankenhorn, 1995; Burgess, 1997).

Coupled with this resurgence of interest around the figure of the father, however, is also what Jungians would term the Shadow side of this social and political discourse. Gavanas (Hobson 2002) has identified masculinities as becoming, in effect, domesticated to other forces. At the same time that paternal discourses are moving into a plural set of models, fatherhood and the father figure have been increasingly appropriated by right-wing and reactionary political ideologies, arguably leading to a resurgence of patriarchal power and social hegemony, or so many feminist theorists believe. Bly's work has also been appropriated by right-wing discourses to provide psychological and mythic 'proof' of the essentialist nature of masculinity being naturally dominant, a position that is at odds with many of his arguments, and all the more ironic, given Bly's steadfast opposition to right-wing policies, particularly around economics and aggressive foreign policies[14]. One example of the appropriation of masculinity–as-neopatriarchy is the phenomenon of the Promise Keepers, a right-wing Christian social movement whose tenets are in line with born-again evangelical views on gender relations, namely the male is the leader and head of the house in all matters. On the surface, this movement appears to be a prime example of Faludi's (1991) backlash, with men seeking to reinstate patriarchal dominance over social territory contested by feminism. Yet when Faludi interviewed a number of Promise Keepers in her later work *Stiffed* (2000), she found a wide range of views about their role as men, and, somewhat surprisingly, an overwhelming and deep confusion around what promises they were supposed to keep. Many saw their role as protectors, providers and what was termed *servant-leaders* to their families. It appeared that patriarchal dominance was not necessarily on the agenda for some of these men. Conversely, there were many Promise Keepers that welcomed the confirmation of their place as a dominating patriarch, most notably the founder of the movement, Bill McCartney. Hobson (2002) also found this divergence of views within the ranks, leading to the conclusion that as with any large social movement, pluralities within its ranks were almost inevitably guaranteed.

Relating this back to masculinities and film, the sociological and political impacts of masculinity and fatherhood are resonant within the texts studied, containing as they do, many examples of sociological discourses around fatherhood. It appears that the psychic resonance of the

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[14] Bly first came to public attention in the 1960s as a vocal and outspoken critic of the Vietnam War and later denounced the first Gulf War in similar terms (Smith, 1992).

father archetype is being felt at a wider societal level, not surprising when we consider that this particular archetype is one of the most fundamental within the individual psyche. The father existing as what has been termed by post-Jungians as a cultural complex will be explored in the last film analysis chapter; the paternal social discourse can be argued to be felt at all levels of society and can be analysed accordingly.

Contemporising the debate, there has been a visible return and re-focus on the father, and on men and masculinity within the mainstream media in recent years. For example, the *Observer* newspaper publishing a Father special edition of its *Woman* magazine on 25 October 2009 covering, amongst other topics, how fatherhood supposedly came of age, gay dads and an alternative fertility guru. The *Independent on Sunday* newspaper ran a double page spread entitled 'The Changing Face of Fatherhood on 17 June 2012, the *Guardian Weekend* ran an article on single fathers by choice on 2 November 2013, with *The Times* dedicating its magazine as 'The Men's Issue' on 30 November 2013. More recent still was the *Observer Magazine* on 1st March 2015 entitled 'How to be a man in 2015'. On 8th May 2016, the *Sunday Times* carried an article entitled how to be a modern caveman, which echoed a number of masculine anxieties and concerns in terms of practical competencies and other gender performance issues. In recent popular culture, the artist Grayson Perry published *The Descent of Man* in 2016 that dealt with his own masculine journey and by proxy, modern masculinity. In 2017, the actor and comedian Robert Webb published a childhood memoir *How Not to be a Boy* that dealt with contemporary childhood and fatherhood issues. In the same year, comedian Chris Hemmings, published *Be A Man* which questioned contemporary 'macho' cultures and discourses, and Jack Urwin wrote *Man Up* which discussed the same discourses echoed by previous authors. It appears, judging by media, political and sociological discourses, that fatherhood and fathers are here to stay, men and masculinities being of seemingly perennial cultural concern.

To conclude this section, the sheer number of voices around the debate on masculinity and male gender performance can be overwhelming. Such deafening volumes of discourse inevitably generates paradoxical positions, contradictions and confusion. However, what can be stated is that the crisis in masculinity is largely held to be still continuing, but, paradoxically, it can also be viewed as an opportunity in that patriarchy and patriarchal institutions have been and continue to be, under pressure to change. Accordingly, the thesis will be arguing that patriarchy and its products are inimical to men as well as women (albeit for different reasons) a view that Bly and many other men's movement writers (Goldberg, 1974: Keen, 1992; Biddulph, 1995, 1997; Magnuson, 2007) concur with. It will also be posited that patriarchy is one aspect of masculinity, albeit an aspect that has dominated both masculine discourses and culture to detrimental effects for both women and men. Having established the gender context of the thesis, we now explore post-Jungian methodologies and the analytical psychological landscape.

Jungian and Post-Jungian Textual Landscapes

'The Jung no longer believe in the Freud!' – attributed to Sandor Ferenczi

When psychological approaches to film are examined more closely, we discover that a recurrent theme within studies on masculinity and cinema has been the two-pronged nature of psychological debates within film studies. If we are to judge by the psychologically inflected readings encountered within the broad general scope of film studies, it would fair to assume that psychological interpretations and theoretical discourses either fall under the auspices of cognitive theory, championed and developed by, amongst others, Bordwell (1989), Currie (1995) and Buckland (2000), or are psychoanalytical (Freudian or Lacanian). Essentially, for the majority of the time that film studies has been considered a serious academic discipline we are somewhat restricted to two models of psychological interpretation[15], the first of which, cognitivism, we shall turn to.

With cognitive film theory, theorists such as Currie and Bordwell, sought to bypass both psychoanalysis and filmolinguistic theory (e.g. Metz), rejecting such approaches as essentially untestable and unverifiable, therefore unscientific. As Stam puts it: 'Cognitivism looks for more precise alternative answers to questions raised differently about film reception by semiotics and psychoanalytic theory' (2000, p.235). This theoretical approach dealt with film features such as narrative (Bordwell, 1985, 1989) and affect (Grodal 1999, 2009), arguing for a: '…stance which "seeks to understand human thought, emotion and action by appeal to processes of mental representation, naturalistic processes, and (some sense of) rational agency (Bordwell and Carroll, 1996, p.xvi)' (ibid, p.236). Cognitivism favoured an emphasis on what Bordwell termed 'contingent universals' (ibid, 236) that were to be found in all humans (hard-wired cognitive and physiological systems). Compared to psychoanalytical approaches, cognitivism had an appeal in terms of a concrete, 'provable' theoretical basis, but, as Stam summarises it, a less appealing aspect in that:

> Cognitive theory allows little room for the politics of location or for the socially shaped investments, ideologies, narcissisms, and desires of the spectator, all of which seem too irrational and messy for the theory to deal with (ibid, 241).

Compared to psychoanalysis and *analytical psychology* (Jungian and post-Jungian approaches), with their foregrounding of theories concerned with the messily irrational and unconscious psyche, cognitivist approaches treated aspects of film theory as pragmatic problem solving, leaving out important questions around the personal, the contradictory, the subjective, and the emotional. For insights into these areas of film theory the psychoanalysis approach was utilised, starting in the 1970s with Mulvey's classic essay 'Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema' (1975). As the decade

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[15] Bassil-Morozow– 'In a way, using Jung to analyse film narratives is an equivalent to thinking outside the box – to challenge the established norm' (2015, p.132).

progressed, a large and complex body of theory emerged, using both Freudian and Lacanian concepts (Lacan's concept of the psyche operating as a language neatly complementing semiotics). However, psychoanalytical discourses threatened to dominate psychological approaches to film, with little room for competing or dissenting theoretical frameworks. Criticisms of the psychoanalytical approach to gender include the not unreasonable accusation that it is essentially a patriarchal and phallocentric approach that seeks to pathologise the psyche, focussing as it does on issues such as sadism, masochism, castration, fetishes and voyeurism. While it is undeniable that cinema does contain these themes, it would be a mistake to view this as all encompassing. The dogmatic insistence around the supposed universality of the Oedipus complex (itself based on a male child's supposed development, biased against by its nature, female child development) is one example of psychoanalytical reductionism, and pushes any debates around gender towards more rigidly essentialist thinking, something that is inappropriate when the performative and fluid nature of gender is considered.

Whilst unarguably of enormous value, psychoanalytical and cognitive film theories have often been perceived as the only psychological approaches to film, an emphasis that has often marginalised analytical psychological approaches. This is an approach, that, until relatively recently, has not been considered as an appropriate psychological lens with which to analyse film. As Bassil-Morozow states: 'Jung had been an unwelcome name at film and media conferences, short of unmentionable. Seen as conservative, apolitical, antiscientific, bizarre and obscure, Jungian theory has been ignored by cultural studies for decades' (2015, p.132). It must be noted at this point that post-Jungian tools are similar to psychoanalytical tools, in that they cannot be taken as absolutes. Similar to biology, psychological methodologies work best when interpreted as *tendencies*, rather than prescriptive diktats. Hockley quotes Terrie Waddell to this effect:

> The body of work left to us by Jung…might be better understood as a 'tool' that we can use to help us with meaning. In the academic world, the ideas of theorists are rarely taken to be absolutes (2007, p.7).

Setting aside, then, the regrettably often hostile differences between Jungian and Freudian adherents (dogma not being restricted to only Freudians), Jungian and post-Jungian film theory has been chosen for this thesis as it posits a number of new concepts and tools with which to interpret cinema, both as a cultural text and a cultural process and practice. With analytical psychology, there is a marked difference in approach to the structure of the psyche from a psychoanalytical perspective. Jung was primarily concerned with the individual's psychic[16] approach to, and interaction with,

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[16] It needs to be stated that 'psychic' here is used in a very specific way in analytical psychology in that it relates primarily to matters both of the psyche and anything arising from it. It does not relate to any supernatural or occult phenomena.

his/her environment and culture, and how this impacted on the teleological[17] psychic journey towards what Jung termed 'individuation', or, to put it more simplistically, a state of self-conscious, aware wholeness[18]. Compared to the broadly reductionist psychoanalytical model of a psyche consistently seeking to reconcile and/or repress conflicting tensions and drives based wholly around sex and death (materialistic and mechanistic forces), there is an immediate and fundamental shift in emphasis on how psychic forces operate within both the individual and in the wider society. This is not to deny that Jungian and post-Jungian theory is unproblematic. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley highlight the potential problems around using an analytical psychological approach to screen studies:

> …Jungian film theory seems diffuse and unfocused – a miasma that floats alongside the more concrete and structural presence of psychoanalysis. It is enormously difficult to get any purchase on the subject and the answer to the dreadfully penetrating and simple question: 'what *is* Jungian screen theory?' (2017, p.2).

They posit that Jungian screen studies should be viewed as 'a school of thought rather than a diffused set of ideas' (ibid). Whilst some Jungian (and indeed post-Jungians) have also exhibited tendencies towards dogmatic insistence upon their particular creed, they may well have missed a crucial point of Jung's philosophy which is to be the individual that you are born to be (Waddell, 2006), namely a conscious and fully balanced whole, which may well run counter to following any dogma or belief system too rigidly. This insistence upon individuality, individuation[19] and the uniqueness of the individual psyche runs counter to many of Freud's assumptions about the mind. Consequently, this individualistic approach is attractive in film analysis terms in that it begins to explain the widely differing impact that cinema can, for example, have on individual spectators viewing the same film, directed by the same auteur, rather than forcing the contents of texts and the auteur that produces them into potentially restrictive theoretical frameworks. Another example is the role that symbolism plays within Jungian and post-Jungian writings, with the symbol being a signpost, rather than a symptom, of the state of the psyche. This issue will be explored in more depth in the next chapter, challenging the Freudian view of symbols as essentially reductive phenomena that seek to obscure, rather than clarify.

Similarly, a post-Jungian methodology and perspective is valuable when we consider the role of the auteur in the formation of the moving images that make up a film and the questions around agency that the auteur is deemed to possess by critical discourse. By employing Jungian and post-Jungian film theories, new gender perspectives on masculinities and fatherhood in cinema begin to

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[17] Teleological explanations are concerned more with an understanding in terms of purpose and the end result, rather than the more reductionist view that involves known and identifiable prior causes.
[18] This journey of the Self includes compensating for imbalances in the self-regulating psyche which can manifest as complexes, neuroses and psychoses.
[19] Individuation is the name Jung gave to the process of the human psyche becoming a fully realised, self-sustaining and self-reliant whole.

emerge. Linked in with this, is Jung's treatment of the arts as a general area of psychological interest. Jung utilised many aspects of the arts when describing and illustrating his theories, although this was limited in the main to classical forms of art (painting, poetry, music), and, indeed, often citing classical motifs myths and legends (Greek and Roman mythologies being especially favoured). In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung also divided art and artistic creations into what he termed *psychological* art and *visionary* art. He gives vivid descriptions of both:

> Whatever its particular form may be, the psychological work of art always takes its materials from the vast realm of conscious human experience-from the vivid foreground of life we might say. I have called this mode of artistic creation psychological because in its activity it nowhere transcends the bounds of psychological intelligibility (1933, p.159).

Similarly, he then goes onto define visionary art:

> It is a strange something that derives its existence from the hinterland of man's mind-that suggests the abyss of time separating us from pre-human ages, or evokes a super-human world of contrasting light and darkness. It is a primordial experience which surpasses man's understanding, and to which he is therefore in danger of succumbing (ibid, p.160).

These two distinct terms can be used when analysing the various chosen films; indeed, in a general sense, a number of films can be accurately described as being both visionary and psychological. A note of caution needs to be sounded, however, due to any misapprehensions that films are in any way binary in terms of this dichotomy[20]. Realistically, most films will be comprised of psychological elements, but this does not preclude them from having some visionary elements; similarly, many visionary films have a strong psychological component to them. In a more generalised context, there have been a number of critical evaluations around Jungian and post-Jungian perspectives on art and culture from, amongst others, Charles (2013), Colman (2017), Gardner (2013), Hauke (2000, 2005, 2014), Homans (1979), Potash (2015) and Rowland (2008, 2013). Charles, for example, identifies Jung and his psychology, particularly around symbolism, as being innately conservative:

> Whilst some post-Jungians have associated Jung's concept of the symbol with a post-modern critique of modernity, such a move risks deflating the historical, material and metaphysical dimensions necessary to engage critically with the conservatism inherent to Jung's account of symbolic 'conjuration' (2013, p.120).

Gardner agrees, and adds that:

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[20] Don Fredericksen in his classic 1979 essay *Jung/sign/symbol/film* falls into this trap when discussing signs and symbols in relation to films.

Art that seemed fragmented or overly sophisticated or modernist, which demands intellectual combined with aesthetic appreciation, was not compatible to Jung's theories, and so he did not find them appealing (2013, p.256).

This said, Jungian and post-Jungian critical theories have at their heart capacity to accommodate contradiction, ambiguity and ambivalence within art forms and artistic phenomena; a valuable feature when analysing cinema. As Bassil-Morozow and Hockley state:

The Jungian approach to images and films in particular, seeks to preserve such unstable and shifting qualities – it is polysemic in orientation and regards meaning as a process in which the film itself, its viewers and film theorists are together engaged in a hermeneutic activity through which meaning is constellated and brought into being (2017, p.7).

Taking these perspectives into account, we can now pay closer attention to exploring the literature and theoretical landscape of post-Jungian film studies in greater depth.

Jungian and post-Jungian approaches to cinema

As a growing and promising theoretical discourse that offers alternative and useful interpretations of film apparatus and the film image, post-Jungian film theory is noteworthy in that Jung himself had very little to say directly about film (mainly focussing on the more classic forms of art such as painting, literature and music as detailed above), other than one or two brief mentions that are found in interviews or notes of group seminars (Hockley, 2007, p.21). However, when he did turn his attention to film, an appreciation of its potential to allow the psyche expression is present:

The movies are far more efficient than the theatre; they are less restricted, they are able to produce amazing symbols to show the collective unconscious, since their methods of presentation are so unlimited (ibid).

Later on he writes enthusiastically upon seeing *The Student of Prague* (1926):

The great asset of the movies is the amazing effects they can produce. One sees the man and his reflection in the mirror, and the devil stands behind and beckons to the reflection of the student in the glass, and the reflection comes out in quite an extraordinary way and follows the devil. The student stares into the mirror and can no longer see himself, he is a man without a shadow. And the devil walks away (ibid, p.22).

Jung was quick to see the potential of the symbolic in film (a point that will be discussed later when discussing post-Jungian takes on symbolism and semiotics) but did not accord it much attention compared to his interest in other art forms, although he did recognise the effects on film audiences

within a culture: 'The cinema, like the detective story, enables us to experience without danger to ourselves all the excitements, passions and fantasies which have to be repressed in a humanistic age' (1931, CW 10: para 195). Post-Jungian film theory is dealt with in greater depth in the next chapter, suffice to say, the brief introduction above outlines the differences between the classic psychoanalytical approach, and the analytical psychological approach. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley remind us that:

> It is important not to oversimplify Jung's ideas, and not to use them as tools for the reductive analysis of film texts which could otherwise be amplified – i.e. examined in a respectful manner taking into consideration the complexity and independence of unconscious processes behind both filmmaking and film viewing (2017, p.7).

This difference between psychoanalytical and post-Jungian theoretical fields, in a way, is a bonus for academics in that it leaves film to be interpreted by Jungians and post-Jungians largely on their own terms, an opportunity that was taken up surprisingly slowly as we shall now see.

In terms of academic film studies, a Jungian approach does not begin to attract very much attention, largely being side-lined in favour of psychoanalytical psychological perspectives as stated above[21] , until the 1980s when, apart from the occasional article in specialist analytical psychological publications, one-off studies of auteurs such as Howard Hawks (Branson, 1987), started to make their appearance. Sustained Jungian and post-Jungian analyses of cinema (both textual and apparatus) did not, however, appear until the early to mid-1990s with Iaccino examining the genres of horror, sci-fi and fantasy (1994, 1998) from a specifically Jungian perspective, applying early versions of archetypal film theory and how it corresponded to the chosen genres. This attracted some criticism both inside and outside post-Jungian circles for a shallow and largely unimaginative approach, or 'archetypal literalism' as Fredericksen memorably puts it in *Jung and Film II: The Return* (2011, p.102), but Iaccino's work was at least indicative of a slowly burgeoning interest in how Jungian and post-Jungian ideas could be applied to film and its theories.

The first major collection of specifically post-Jungian writings on film*, Jung and Film: Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image,* was published in 2001 and contained a number of articles from 1979 onwards as well as original pieces commissioned from scholars and therapists in the field. It explores in some detail the theories around film from a post-Jungian perspective, namely; archetypal imagery, the differences between Freudian and Jungian signs and symbols, genre from a post-Jungian perspective, and gender within film as viewed through a post-Jungian lens. Detailed analyses of film

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[21] – One of the most famous example of psychoanalytically influenced writing on gender is, of course Mulvey's acclaimed work on the male gaze, mentioned earlier.

texts revealed post-Jungian takes on individuation, alchemy and the role of gender within film, a pertinent concern for this thesis. As Hauke puts it in the introduction:

> From a Jungian perspective, gender identities are not only regarded as part of a range of human psychological expression which is less prescribed by anatomy than by culture, but the imagery and representation of masculine and feminine are taken more flexibly for the symbolic content they convey rather than the literal man or woman we see represented (p.9).

It is this flexibility around theorising gender that is attractive for the thesis, taking into account as it does cultural factors and what has been identified as the *cultural unconscious* (Henderson, 1984; Singer and Kimbles, 2004; and Izod, 2006).

Inspired by Fredericksen's deft delineation around signs and symbolism (1979), post-Jungian film theory began to produce the tools with which to analyse and discuss film texts in a markedly different way from psychoanalytical theories in order to both liberate meaning, and to deal with the role of both affect and emotion in the cinema. This also marked a branching of two main strands of theoretical discourses: narrative analysis and phenomenological criticism, with Bassil-Morozow and Hockley (2017) linking Jungian theory with apparatus theory. Soon after this initial anthology was published, both Hockley and Izod produced works dealing with, respectively, a greater outlining of a specific post-Jungian film theory (2001), and with the role of myths and how they related to film and filmic heroes (2001). Individual Jungian analyses and critiques of specific films kept being published, such as *American Beauty*, by Chachere in 2003 for example, and *Post-Jungian Criticism: Theory and Practice* was published in 2004 which included a chapter by Hockley on the detective film, as well as subjecting Jungian ideas to thorough critique, exposing, for example, elements of anti-Semitism, racism and misogyny that were present in Jung's writings, mainly before the Second World War. Other works soon emerged, Waddell's *Mis/takes: Archetype, Myth and Identity in Screen Fiction* in 2006 explored in some depth the intricacies around archetypes and their on-screen depiction in, for example, *Mulholland Drive* (Lynch, 2001), *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007) and *Absolutely Fabulous* (BBC, 1992-2012). Apperson and Beebe analysed in depth the female gender in film in *The Presence of the Feminine in Film* (2008). Singh's valuable *Film after Jung* (2009) emerged which gave a succinct summary of main film theory to Jungian and post-Jungian readers, and Jungian and post-Jungian theories to film theorists. This work in particular managed to provide a bridge between post-Jungians and other academic disciplines. Within the 2000s, Bassil-Morozow (2010, 2011, 2014), Hauke (2000, 2005, 2014), Hockley (2007, 2013), Izod (2006, 2012, 2015), Nagari (2015), Reiter (2008), Rowland (2008), Spinelli-Coleman (2010), Stubbs (2006), and Waddell (2010) also produced other works dealing with a large and varied range of filmic subjects including national cinema, the auteur, the figure of the Trickster, myths, liminality, and film music.

Entering the 2010s, Hauke and Hockley edited a second collection of cinematic Jungian and post-Jungian articles and chapters in 2011, *Jung and Film II: Further Post-Jungian Takes on the Moving Image.* This contained an increased number of diverse analyses of post-Jungian theory, notably Fredericksen who subjected post-Jungian film theory itself to substantial self-reflective analysis. He stated that:

> Those of us who engage with this work are at that point where we need to know better the nature and function of our criticism: we need a theory of Jungian film criticism, nested within a theory of film, its creation and its exhibition (ibid, p.99).

He went on to identify two fundamental functions of Jungian film criticism firstly, to work against what was termed by the philosopher R.G Collingwood 'the corruption of consciousness' (ibid, p.102), and secondly, to enable psychological life to mature, presumably the psychological life of the spectator. He ended the chapter with a plea that echoes of the origin of the theoretical discourse, that of therapy to encourage development of the Self, 'let us nonetheless remember that we are at the service of something deeper than the popular, something deeper than the semiotic register of living, something beyond the literal' (ibid, p.107). This hinting at spiritual and metaphysical considerations, an area that Freud and psychoanalysis either ignored or subsumed into the libido is characteristic of an analytical psychological approach. Freud famously confessed in the 1920s to never having experienced an 'oceanic feeling' when challenged over his 1927 work *The Future of an Illusion* which held that all religions were false belief systems. Conversely, he also is supposed to have had hysterical fainting fits on several occasions when discussing or mentioning death or mortality, with, amongst others, Jung, although this is contrasted with accounts of his equanimity as he approached his death from long-term mouth cancer. This consideration of the non-corporeal and meta-materialist touches on both the individual and the cultural in Jungian and post-Jungian theories[22] and considers that the individual and their culture or society are both reflective of and influenced by each other. Any spiritual or religious phenomena are found both in the individual and in their environment. At present time of writing, the emergence of post-Jungian titles show no sign of slowing down (e.g. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley, 2017) with debates continuing and expanding.

In terms of articles, like the monographs published above, they too have also followed suit in reflecting a wide theoretical discourse and a healthy populating of the theoretical and critical landscape. The main Jungian and post-Jungian journals (*Jungian Society for Scholarly Studies, Journal of Analytical Psychology, Journal of Jungian Theory and Practice, Jung Journal: Culture and Psyche, JUNG: the e-journal*, *Spring Journal Books* and *Quadrant*) have carried numerous

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[22] One of Freud's last works was *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930), in which he asserts that civilisation exacts conformity from the individual and therefore represses the individual, acknowledging, like Jung, that culture and environment exacts a price upon its inhabitants.

articles either discussing film in relation to cases or culture, or related directly to film studies - Rountree's discussion of auteur directors as contemporary shamans (2008) for example. The IAJS (International Association of Jungian Scholars) also maintain a series of lively web-discussions around Jungian and post-Jungian topics and areas of interest. This wider critical discourse, to summarise then, can be taken to be indicative of post-Jungian discussions on film having flourished and matured to a point where it is no longer having to justify its place within academic discussions. Rather, it has established itself as a credible and alternate psychological perspective on film and one that has valuable insights into film as an art form, as apparatus, and as cultural discourse. With the overall critical landscape established, attention can now be turned to post-Jungian discussions of gender, specifically men, masculinity and fathers.

Jung, post-Jungians, the masculine, and fathers

The archetype[23] of the father (a figure that is both universal and personal) and more generally the masculine, has been the subject of a considerable amount of attention from both Jungian and post-Jungian writers. Jung himself in *Aspects of the Masculine* (1989) discussed at length the gender archetypes (specifically the anima and animus) and fathers, linking his thinking with analyses of various myths and mythic journeys. As above with gender studies, space forces a certain degree of brevity when discussing Jungian and post-Jungian perspectives on the masculine with, for example, the definition of the *animus* varying somewhat from source to source. Jung held that the *animus* was the male contrasexual archetype, brother to the *anima* as it were, existed in all women, but not in men. He also confessed in a lecture that the animus intimidated him: 'But we had better not talk of the animus now. It just scares me, it is much more difficult to deal with. The anima is definite and the animus is indefinite' (1989, p.151). Consequently, much more has been written on the anima by Jung than the animus, an interesting psychological asymmetry that in a way, betrays his own gender bias as a man. He did define both archetypes' function, 'the animus and the anima should function as a bridge, or a door, leading to the images of the collective unconscious, as the persona should be a sort of a bridge into the world' (Storr, 1983, p.415). *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis* defined it 'as the figure of man at work in a woman's psyche…a configuration arising from a basic archetypal structure...the 'masculine' aspects of a woman' (1986, p.23). Hauke and Alister concur 'the corresponding masculine principle at work in a woman's psyche' (2001, p.244). For Hockley it is the archetype of 'traditional masculine behaviours and attitudes [that] represent themselves in the image of the *animus*' (2007, p.130). Samuels echoes these definitions, but also reminds us that anima and animus are not necessarily male and female, 'animus and anima images are not of men and

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[23] The theory of the archetypes are explored in greater depth in the next chapter.

women because animus and anima qualities are 'masculine' and 'feminine'' (1989, p.103). This point around flexibility of definition needs to be borne in mind when analysing this key archetype.

Recently, post-Jungian writers such as Izod (2001, 2006), Samuels (1989) and Singh (2009) have contradicted this position, arguing that both *animus* and *anima* exist within a person's psyche. Singh, in particular, attempts to establish the concept of the psyche possessing both contrasexual archetypes. He sounds a note of caution around the concept of contrasexuality itself with 'the common mistake in dealing with contrasexuality is that it sometimes suggests polarization of gender, as well as a naturalized notion of equivalence between gender, sex and sexuality' (2009, p.126). It needs to be stated that any polarisation needs to be avoided, lest there occurs a slippage from archetypes into stereotypes. What can be termed a gender syzygy (dynamic union of opposites) was what Bly was attempting to highlight and popularise with *The Maiden King* (1998), albeit with little success. In terms of his earlier work, as mentioned previously, after the publication of *Iron John*, there was a literary glut of Jungian-influenced texts that sought to emulate the success of Bly's work. As mentioned previously, both Samuels and Tacey sounded a strong note of caution. In *The Political Psyche* Samuels argued that: 'The way in which Jungian psychology has been hijacked by the mythopoetic movement is a disaster that stifles its progressive potentials' (1993, p.188). He recognised the same danger that Tacey warned against four years later, namely that the conflation of the father figure runs the risk of warping the view of this archetype. As Tacey points out: 'Jung spent much of his intellectual energy warning against an unconscious or infantile return to an identification with the archetypal figures' (1997, p.19). He went further, warning specifically against mixing the energies of an archetype with the individuative and archetypal energies of the self/Self:

> …the popular fusion of archetype and gender is, at bottom, a symptom of the nervousness of our time, an attempt to create a fixed world order amid the chaos of contemporary experience. It is also a fundamental and determined resistance to the bisexuality or androgyneity of the soul (ibid, p.23).

He goes on to issue another warning, one which is perhaps more relevant than ever in contemporary times: 'Moreover, a real danger inherent in the mythologisation of one's own gender is that there is a natural tendency to demonise the opposite gender' (ibid, p.24). This mythologisation of the father can lead to the shadow; a dark aspect to the men's movement that Bly unwittingly denies by his idealisation of the Father archetype and the attractive simplicity of prescribing it as a panacea to current gender issues. Not surprisingly in terms of gender debates, Jungian ideas and theories have also attracted feminist attention (e.g. Wehr, 1988; Irigaray, 1993) which have highlighted his ideas as being conflictingly both attractive and problematic in terms of his concepts of psychic androgyny, but at the same time contextually verging on sexist and essentialist. More recently, the publication of Jung's *The Red Book* (2009) reveals more of his thoughts on gender 'humankind is masculine and

feminine, not just man and woman. You can hardly say of your soul what sex it is' (p.263). He goes on: 'This is the most difficult thing – to be beyond the gendered and yet remain within the human' (ibid, p.264). Moving on from the Jungian perspective on gender, we can now analyse and illustrate what has been termed the *cultural complex* (Singer and Keebles, 2004), and how this applies to our chosen case studies.

<u>American Fathers and the cultural complex</u>

When we consider the paternal cultural complex, there is an obligation, imposed by the recognition of cultural differences, to be culturally specific. Considering that all of the case study films pertain to American society and culture, it is contingent that our analysis addresses the specificities of American culture and how they are specifically depicted within the said films. What can be termed the universal father is not necessarily the American father; the American archetypal father has distinct features that are discussed in more detail below. Before we begin a deeper critical analysis of the films, it is necessary to explore the myths and cultural narratives that are present within American society that impact on the father archetype, and, in particular, the so-called American Dream. It is this cultural construct that provides contextualisation of the American paternal.

<u>Dreams, fantasies and film</u>

The American Dream is a near-constant presence within both mainstream and fringe American culture and originated within the American Constitution, specifically in the famous statement '…that among these [rights] are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.' This founding statement of egalitarianism, individualism, and with strong hints for both social and financial improvement, developed into what has been termed the American Dream, a cultural myth that promoted the illusion of meritocratic fairness and equality of opportunity within American society. This myth was further promulgated by, amongst others, the nineteenth century works of Horatio Alger, in whose stories the main protagonists were able to socially and fiscally advance by hard work, thrift and honesty. By the twentieth century, the American Dream was arguably well established as a national narrative that echoed the material and social benefits of the puritan work ethic, but simultaneously contained a deep denial of other factors (social class, race and economic inequality) that contradicted the idea that happiness and freedom were available to all.

When applied to film and cinematic portrayals, there have been a large number of analyses of the American Dream. Writers such as Arnold (2013), Duncan (2015), Narloch (2008), Ortner (2013), Osteen (2012), Rosen (1973), Sands (2017) and Winn (2007) have all argued that the American Dream (refracted via different genres and narratives) has proved to be a largely illusionary affair. This is in spite of Hollywood producing numerous films that doggedly depict that the

American Dream is both alive and achievable (e.g. *The Pursuit of Happyness*, Muccino, 2006, USA). Winn argues that 'The American Dream assures that no class system hampers an individual's advancement, even though many Americans experience structural class limitations daily' (2007, 6). He quotes Fisher (1973) to reiterate that the American Dream consists of two myths, 'the materialistic success myth and the moralistic myth of brotherhood' (ibid). Financial, career and social improvements are held to be achievable to anyone who, crucially, is prepared to work hard, and there exists a supposedly supportive egalitarian society in which this advancement takes place. These myths extend throughout American society but are, at their heart, a contradictory discourse in that they simultaneously celebrate, reinforce, challenge, subvert, and openly disbelieve the American Dream, if we are to judge by recent cultural products such as film. It is these contrasting symptoms that indicate that the American Dream is not only a national narrative, but also operates as a cultural complex with the American father at its heart.

The Filmic American Father

The previous example of *The Pursuit of Happyness* demonstrates the filmic American father as a key player within the American Dream. In the film, Chris Gardner (Will Smith) is beset by setback after setback in his quest to advance his career and provide for his son (Jaden Smith). In this film, it is crucially the father who assumes both paternal and maternal roles, the mother (Thandie Newton) is seen to give up on improving her situation and abandons her family. After a stereotypical Hollywood uplifting narrative journey, Gardner is successful at gaining well-paid employment with a stockbroking firm (both material success and social mobility), ensuring a twenty-first century version of the American Dream is achieved.

Figure 1.1 Upwardly mobile father (Will Smith) shares a tender moment with his son (Jaden Smith) in *The Pursuit of Happyness* (Relativity Media / Overbrook Entertainment / Escape Artists).

Whilst based real events, the social and cultural context of the characters' are largely marginalised. The overall focus of the film is concerned with a virtually Darwinian version of subjective self-help and asserts that the American Dream is still shown to be achievable and has the

father at its core. The film depicts the paternal as the source and producer of familial and financial power, and simultaneously implies that poverty is more often than not a matter of laziness and poor choices, rather than socially endemic, or economically engendered. When compared to films that sharply critique the American Dream, e.g. *Wall Street* (Stone, 1987, USA) or *Happiness* (Solondz, 1998, USA) contemporary mainstream Hollywood is arguably still generating celebratory myths of the American Dream.

Focusing on the films and fathers within the case study films, both Mendes and Anderson refract the American Dream and its effect on the American father in complex and interesting ways. The elements of success and failure with regard to the American Dream are acutely observed, for example, in both *American Beauty* and *Revolutionary Road.* Lester Burnham is aware that he is supposed to be chasing the American Dream and be successful, but he somehow fell asleep along the way. This is to the chagrin of his wife, Caroline (Annette Bening) who is still very much in thrall to this aspect of the American cultural complex. She is landed with carrying this energy but at the cost of their marriage. Frank Wheeler (Leonardo di Caprio) is portrayed as a victim of the American Dream, sacrificing his wife and soul in the name of suburban security and success. By sharp contrast in *There Will Be Blood* Daniel Plainview is driven to slow madness and murder by being consumed by the idea of success, the American Dream effectively becomes an American nightmare for him. With the film showing how America's cultural complex developed and eventually became located in the collective Shadow, his role as father holds out the hope of redemption, but this chance is rejected. Elsewhere in the directors' corpus of work, the route to success is depicted as being transformed from its puritan work ethic roots. In Anderson's *Hard Eight* and *Magnolia*, the American Dream can still be achieved, not by hard work, but by short cuts. Sydney (Philip Baker Hall) mentors his surrogate son through the shadowy world of professional gambling and low-level crime, a big win or a big score being the easy route to material success. In *Magnolia*, TV quiz shows promise instant success and riches to ordinary people, most significantly children, who seek to minimise or circumvent the hard work ordinarily required to succeed. These faster routes to success and material wealth are, in effect, short-circuiting the American Dream, with the Puritan work ethic being subsumed into other, shadowy areas. The fathers in these films are still mediating the American Dream but from within the Shadow, confounding normative expectations of American society. Both directors explicitly portray the failing and challenged fathers within the case study films as either subverting the American Dream (Sydney in *Magnolia* and Jack Horner (Burt Reynolds) in *Boogie Nights*), or failing to engage or fulfil it (Lester Burnham and Frank Wheeler). In addition to these symbolic journeys, the symbol of the gun also emerges as being a key part of the American father's symbolic portfolio, with, for example, *Road to Perdition* explicitly showing that the father is an armed presence, a throwback in some ways to early frontier fathers. Guns are also the necessary tools of the trade for the criminal gangs in the film, crime essentially being one of the main shadow sides

of capitalism, and another shadow response to the American Dream. In *American Beauty*, the enlightened father (Lester) is killed by the Shadow father, Colonel Fitts (Chris Cooper) by gun, and in *Jarhead*, guns are explicitly signalled both as masculine symbols, and, more significantly, as paternal symbols, Staff Sergeant Sykes (Jamie Foxx) firing a noticeably bigger machine gun than his men at the end of the conflict. As discussed in more detail in later chapters, guns are an integral tool of both the father and part of the wider American cultural complex.

In summary, the American father is a key part of the American Dream and of American culture. The personal processes and masculine individuative journeys depicted by Mendes and Anderson are strongly coloured by their cultural context. When the American Dream becomes part of the American shadow cultural complex, then the father falls within this complex and shadow as well. When the American Dream becomes a cultural complex and an obstacle to masculine individuation, the father archetype can also become an obstacle to American men seeking to transcend the American cultural complex. In these cases, the father carries the cultural shadow, which in American society can also represent competitive capitalism. With the child archetype (both sexes) also arguably suffering the effects of shadow capitalism and the American cultural complex, father hunger takes on a transcendent function in that the child archetype points the way towards a more balanced American culture, transcending the American cultural complex and its preoccupations with material success, power and social mobility.

To conclude this section of the chapter on Jung and post-Jungian ideas and concepts, and bring attention back to analysis of archetypal images of the Father, Tacey provides a qualified endorsement of Jungian methodologies, 'if we take away the patriarchal encrustations from around Jung's ideas, the androgynous and compensatory model of the psyche is still useful and can serve our new needs and guide our post-modern development' (1997, p.31). With these thoughts borne in mind, we now turn to the film theory areas of auteurs, authors and authorship.

Auteurs and authorship

Out of all the theories to be found within the discipline of film studies, why choose authorship, or indeed, the auteur? As a method of explaining and analysing film via a creator figure or figures (whoever, or whatever, that is held to be), auteur theory is one of the most contested and controversial areas of film theory, echoing parallel critical theory. Auteur theory, however, remains a valid part of film studies, despite the existence of fundamentally challenging questions regarding the pluralistic nature and collaborative method of cinema production. Auteur studies can also pose critical questions for film studies with regard to questions of identity and power, such as Lapsley and Westlake's summary of the fundamental psychoanalytical enquiry: 'Who is speaking, and to whom?'

(2006, p.128). This question will be explored further along with *what* is being said when this original question is asked, as this *what* is fundamental to answering questions of identity and power. It is perhaps not immediately obvious how auteur theory can address these questions; I will be arguing that auteurs communicate with spectators through film, specifically filmic symbols, images and imagery, and that this communication is where various gender discourses can be located. How authors and auteurs communicate, and what they communicate, will be analysed via close textual analysis of films within the individual directors' corpus; with questions of gender identity and behaviour being foregrounded via the auteur. Choosing to focus on authorship and auteur theory and related issues also allows the thesis to examine how the figure of the auteur has emerged and evolved to its current pluralistic form or representation, encompassing as it does a wide spectrum of guises, among them: artist, economic unit, cultural figure, textual presence and institutional entity.

This plurality of auteurist identities points at the tenaciousness of the auteur as both a presence within art and within film studies. As Wexman states in her introduction to her reader in auteurism, even after post-structuralist concepts around a fragmented subjectivity and the omnipresence of textuality 'we are still left with the presumption of some form of agency which is implicitly understood as having brought a work into existence. Such an agency, however defined, is worthy of examination' (2003, p.2). Dix identifies the concept of the director-as-author as '…a persistent figure, surviving in mutated forms and multiple contexts' (2008, p.147). The famous 'death of the author', proposed by Roland Barthes in 1968, despite being deservedly influential in terms of rethinking the role of the reader as opposed to the supposed authority of the author, is thus rendered, perhaps, both premature at best and possibly mistaken. As Caughie states about film criticism and the author in the preface of his seminal reader *Theories of Authorship*:

> The function of such a criticism is, then, not to discover, or construct the author, but to discover the history and discursive organization which is foundational for the text, and which negotiates its relationship with its historical audience (1981, p.1).

The study of authorship then, allows different approaches to questions of gender. Before we arrive at the chosen area of study within auteur theory, namely examination of the auteur as a psychological mediator of masculinities, and within my choice of post-Jungian methodology, as a mediator of male and paternal archetypes, it would be necessary, bearing in mind Caughie's reminder above, to examine and analyse the emergence of the auteur, and plot the subsequent journey and evolution of this persistent and often problematic aspect of film theory.

The emergence of the *auteur*

The first use of the word *auteur,* as being linked with film, emerged in 1921 from Jean Epstein, and was seized upon by the writers for the specialist film magazine *Cahiers du Cinema*

(edited by critics Lo Duca, André Bazin and Jacques Doniol-Valcroze) in post-war France. These writers, many of whom would go on to become noted filmmakers in their own right such as Chabrol, Godard and Truffaut, were inspired to declare that the presence of artists (always the director, always white, and always male) operating within the industry not only proved film as an art form worthy of genuine critical attention, but that these directors could be distinguished from *metteurs-du-scene* (journeyman directors) by their artistic use of what Alexandre Astruc dubbed in a 1948 essay 'le camera-stylo', or 'camera-pen' (Caughie 1981, p.9). This phrase neatly allowed critics to identify distinctive aesthetic filmic flourishes, usually centred around the mise-en-scene, and link it to a specific director, thus allowing identification of a distinct authorial voice. This passionately argued debate quickly developed the idea of the auteur as being a key figure within film and one that by virtue of having a distinct artist in charge of producing the text, promoted film to become an art form by virtue of the director of a film having sole authorship. In other words, the figure of the auteur within film was elevated (more often than not to dizzying and unsustainable heights) by a perceived notion of the auteur's vision and worldview being found to solely organise the text. When Andrew Sarris, an American critic, mistranslated a phrase by Truffaut in his 1954 article, '*A Certain Tendency of French Cinema*' to read 'the auteur theory', rather than 'the auteur policy', auteur theory, or rather, the theory of the Romantic auteur was born (in the sense of the classic author as defined by Enlightenment philosophy).

Promoted by Sarris in America (Grant, 2008, p.35), auteur theory soon became quickly entrenched as a strictly hierarchical system of evaluating directors (again, virtually all Hollywood, all white, and all male; art cinema and female directors not being seriously considered) emerged. Entry to the esteemed 'Pantheon' level echoed of an Olympian doorkeeping method, overseen by Sarris and the *Cahiers* critics (in England by the writers for *Movie*) and it was soon critiqued by, amongst others, Andres Bazin, consulting editor of *Cahiers Du Cinema,* and the American critic Pauline Kael[24] who forcefully argued for an abandonment of romantic auteur theory as it was both inaccurate and limited in assessing film, its unsustainable position holding that the worst efforts of an *auteur* were better that the best efforts of a *metteur-en-scene*, according to Sarris, et al. Whilst romantic auteur theory had many drawbacks in terms of academic rigour - Caughie identifying *Cahiers du Cinema* as essentially maintaining 'a teenage romance' (1981, p.2), with auteur theory, and Schatz more pithily blaming the writers as 'at least partly responsible for having kept film studies in "a prolonged stage of romantic adolescence."' (Dix, 2008, p.133) - film studies as a discipline had an emerging system of distinguishing both authorship and critical analysis that faced unique challenges due to the collaborative nature and highly industrialised realities of film production and

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[24] – In her article 'Circles and Squares', published in 1963 in *Film Quarterly*, Kael takes issue with Sarris's championing of the *politiques des auteurs* by sharply critiquing his skating over the obvious flaws in the theory with regard to simplistic notions of auteurs consistently producing works of genius.

authorship. Classic auteur theory soon faced charges, however, that it was a retreat from the previous socially and politically engaged film criticism, preferring, as Lapsley and Westlake put it, to back off from 'social reality in favour of arcane and indulgent bickerings among cognoscenti about who was or was not to be admitted to the Pantheon (Sarris) or the Great (*Movie*)' (2006, p.108).

Auteur-structuralism and historical materialism

Auteur theory was not immune to the social and political forces at play during the 1960s. The situation soon prompted a critical *volte-face* in that the figure of the auteur was subjected to structuralist and Levi-Straussian semiotic analysis by, writers such as Peter Wollen. Writing in the late 1960s and early 1970s (his seminal work being *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, published in 1969) Wollen argued for what Geoffrey Nowell-Smith termed 'a more scientific form of criticism' (Lapsley and Westlake, 2006, p.109), one that cast the work of the auteur as containing the binarism of Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology in what Wollen termed 'master antinomies' that contained within even more pairings which added layers of sophistication to any analyses. In the case of Ford and Hawks, who Wollen analysed to illustrate his argument, they became 'Ford' and 'Hawks'[25], structures that are located within the texts, and that can be identified as implied authors. Criticisms of auteur-structuralism soon came about when its reliance on myths being comparable to films (with echoes of Jungian work on myths, albeit with fundamental differences) came under pressure from, amongst others Brian Henderson, who contended that:

> …a body of myths and a film director's oeuvre are so different as to render the method utterly inapplicable. The fact that myths have no authorial centre, do not originate in a subject, indeed, rely on interchangeability of subjects for their perpetuation through constant retelling, makes them strictly non-comparable with a corpus of films whose distinctive signature is that of the author (Lapsley and Westlake, 2006, p.110).

Not only did auteur structuralism come under attack for this oversight, but Levi-Strauss's central idea of a scientifically constructed, but stagnant and unchanging, collective unconscious came under pressure as his work was held up as being, at best, methodologically weak. Also, it was considered both idealistic and ahistorical, implying that "there could be no human history, only 'the same song on different keys, plus occasional improvisations, over and over again'" (ibid, p.112). This said, the influence of anthropology (specifically Levi-Strauss) was also in some ways an indicator of the influence and cultural significance of the author and authorship. When the cultural

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[25] - Wollens' differentiation of Hawks and Ford as both individuals and constructs by putting their names in quote marks to distinguish them as auteurs, rather than the individual, is highly reminiscent of Richard Dyer's delineation of star actors' star personas (1979) in that the notion of the director as being identified as an auteur is the equivalent of an actor becoming a star.

unconsciousness is discussed later on in the thesis, the idea of the auteur as cultural commentator and barometer will be explored, particularly around depictions of gender and its images. However, at this time, and given the swing towards the historical materialism that was happening at the time, (especially considering both European and American political and social events of 1968), auteur-structuralism and Levi-Strauss were soon abandoned with the idea and figure of the author undergoing yet another transformation.

Reconfiguring the author as only one aspect of film production, historical materialism sought to divide film into two aspects: firstly, as a commodity plus the attendant technical, political, ideological and economic determinants; and secondly as a producer of ideological and political effectivity. Attempting to strike a mortal blow at the heart of classic auteur theory, historical materialists sought to portray films not as 'creations of directors of genius, standing above or outside history; rather they were the effect of a whole array of determinations making up any particular conjuncture.' (Lapsley and Westlake, 2006, p.110). Using this theoretical basis, authors cannot be accorded any special attention as a source of meaning within a film or its construct as he or she is already working within institutional frameworks. Any claims that they were in some way special or unique, and moreover able to somehow distinguish their work to the point where it was heard or perceived as a distinct authorial voice, was seen as untrue. This emphasis on the environment and context of production being dominant over individual voices was at the expense of any notion of individual agency.

For their part, Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson argued that 'individuals are not simply bearers of positions, but function in terms of belief, desire and intention' (ibid, p.115). To back this point up, Buscombe analysed Raoul Walsh's body of Warner Brothers gangster films (1974), and Ellis attempted to deconstruct the Ealing comedies in 1975 by reducing them down to three determinants (cinema technology, production organisation and, in a nod to artistic sensibilities, aesthetic beliefs of the production controller). Added to this, the *Cahiers* group, by now wholly abandoning their classic auteur theoretical position (with Godard in particular taking a far-left position, both in his theoretical approach and filmic output), carried out a detailed Marxist analysis of the Ford film, *Young Mr Lincoln* (1939) and attempted to link it to Daryl F. Zanuck, head of Twentieth Century Fox, trying to influence the 1940 US election campaign against Roosevelt. Their attempt, however, was widely seen as mechanistic and largely unsuccessful, being arguably too reductionist and an example of content being forced into a theoretical framework. Historical materialism also failed to reduce the author as much as it wanted to since, in Lapsley and Westlake's words 'it was to prove impossible to provide a satisfactory account of the relationship without recourse to a notion of the subject as agent, as constituting, as well as constituted' (2006, p.114).

This tacit recognition of the undeniable presence of individual agency implied that there was already the seed of later post-structuralist takes on the author. Saddled with what appeared to be a profoundly anti-humanist slant on spectatorship and its position, historical materialism, and Althusserian theory, also attracted criticism for the reduction of the spectator to what was tellingly termed 'subject-effects'. As Hayward surmises, this effectively means that 'cinema, in terms of meaning production, positions the spectator as a subject-effect who takes as real the images emanating from the screen. Thus meaning is received, but not constructed, by the subject' (2006, p.37). This position then, accorded agency only to the producers of texts, not to the recipients. At the very least with historical materialism the spectator was at last accorded some attention, attention that had, up until now, been noticeable by its absence from the auteur debate.

Post-structuralism: the functions of the auteur

After auteur-structuralism and historical materialism theories had risen to prominence, and subsequently retreated in academic popularity, post-structuralism emerged, a term that is, in effect, both a recognition of the limitations and distrust of the totalistic theory systems that had gone before. Drawing on a renewed interest in psychoanalysis, feminism and deconstruction, post-structuralism sought to neutralise single-theory ideas and recognised that theoretical discourse, in this case auteur theory, was pluralistic, multifaceted and that there were polysemous aspects to it that contradicted any attempt to place it in any totalistic theoretical pigeonholes. Whilst post-structuralism recognised the theoretical situation, it also had an interesting effect in that the pluralistic discourse allowed room for a spectrum of theories around the auteur that, in Caughie's words shattered 'the unity of the auteur' (1981, p.200). Authors now were also fragmented constructions as well as multifaceted. As Hayward puts it: 'Because post-structuralism looks at all relevant discourses (said or unsaid) revolving around and within the text, many more areas of meaning-production can be identified' (2006, p.37). With post-structuralism, Roland Barthes' prophetic, 'death of the author' (originally published in 1968, but not being given much attention until later) emerged where he proposed that the death of the author generated the birth of the reader. Stephen Heath's application of this to film theory was that the author was not 'a subject of expression' but 'an effect of the text' (Lapsley and Westlake, 2006, p.124), and reflecting another anti-humanist stance, this time against the author, with the reader being accorded virtually all the agency. Barthes and Heath's thinking attracted attention when the theory moved onto enunciation with Barthes declaring that 'every text is eternally written here and now' (ibid). Developing this line of thinking, it could also be proposed that the author, far from being dead, is, in fact, resurrected repeatedly alongside the reader in the act of textual consumption by the reader/viewer, an interesting contradiction of Barthes and Heath's position, given that *something* or *someone* has to produce a text in order for the reader/viewer to consume it. At the same time, Barthes' critique of the inflated status of the author is an important idea to consider,

given the hallowed status previously awarded to the author by Godard and others in the earlier days of film criticism.

Moving on to subsequent developments, Michel Foucault's theory of author-function, outlined originally in a 1969 essay and revised in 1975 and 1977 as *What is an Author?* expanded the debate by re-envisaging the author as having four functions, namely: the creation of a designation by the naming of a person as author; the permitting of categorisation of this designation, the categorising producing status within a culture and final, the categorising inferring meaning on the texts. As Staiger puts it 'rather than accept the death of the author, the response needs to be a reconceptualization of authoring from the vantage of poststructuralist theories of the subject and agency' (2003, p.29). In addition to this revision of the author's role, analysis of the role of institutions and capitalism in defining the author has made a robust return with Schatz and Corrigan (collected in Wexman's anthology in 2003, but published in 1988 and 1991 respectively) both highlighting the role of the auteur in the economic capital of film and the role of the studio in providing an authorial function of a film. This continuing post-structuralist pluralistic reconceptualization of the author is where the debate is now located, with Staiger identifying seven broad categories where many of the theories outlined previously appear to fit in. In brief, they consist of the author and authorship as being discussed in terms of: origin, personality, sociology of production, signature, reading strategy, site of discourses and finally, authorship as *a technique of self*. With authorship studies in recent times, such as Wexman (2003) and Gerstner and Staiger (2003), comprising mainly of readers and collections of essays, all outlining a dizzying variety of what theoretical ground authors cover, the author is far from buried. Indeed, authorship appears to be undergoing a renewal of interest, with analyses of this figure appearing within critical discourses with regularity, for example, C. Paul Sellors' 2010 *Film Authorship: Auteurs and other Myths* subjecting the auteur to renewed in-depth analysis and critique, and the *Devils Advocates* series of single film studies of horror auteurs[26]. Alongside monographs are a number of recent articles focussing on the auteur and its impact, either directly discussed (Galiero, 2013; Andrews, 2013) or alluded to when discussing other cinematic theories (Roggen, 2013), enriching debate around this figure and indicating that the author has a large degree of robustness within film debate.

Similarly, within post-Jungian film theory, auteur theory has been increasingly debated and commented on. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley argue that 'films [are] not as just the creation of an auteur, but as social and psychological sites of meaning that exist in relationship with one another'

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[26] – The BFI and other publishers such as Phaidon in its 'Masters of Cinema' series also issue series of single director monographs, all indicating that the auteur is recognised by readers as a single point of understanding of film.

(2017, p.113). They go on to comment that 'films have as much to say about our cultural condition as they do about the psychological state of their directors' (ibid). In a more general sense:

> Izod suggests that the lifting of the authorial mask comes with the interpretative impulse and that it complements the drive to understand a film in all its theoretical, aesthetic and psychological complexity (ibid, p.115).

This urge to identify the figure of the auteur is resonant with contemporaneous film studies auteur debates and indicates that post-Jungian auteur film theory has a similar 'interpretative impulse'. The thesis will add and expand to these debates, identifying how an auteur director functions as a conscious analyser of historical citations through textual analysis. To prepare for this analysis, we can now turn to the theoretical basis of the thesis.

TWO

The Rule of the Father: Ideas and methodology

Having identified the main academic contexts and literary landscapes of the project, we can now engage in a similar vein with the accompanying theories, starting with gender theory and filmic masculinities, post-Jungian theories and concepts, and auteur theory. At the heart of this chapter is the main thread that runs throughout the thesis: the concept of father hunger and how we can analyse how it is mediated by the chosen auteur directors using a post-Jungian methodology. Before this key term is defined, the thesis needs to be located within current theoretical debates around masculinities in cinema.

Gender theory

As outlined in the earlier literature review, it will be argued that cinematic treatments of masculinity have evolved from Cohen and Hark's concept of an 'unperturbed monolithic masculinity produced by a de-contextualised psychoanalysis' (1993, p.3) to a wide-ranging set of pluralistic cultural performances that encompass a spectrum of different gender positions. Echoed by Kirkham and Thumim's arguments around masculinity being a plural construct (1993), the argument is that masculinity is a performance, a masquerade, 'dramaturgical' in that it is, in effect, an exhibition for audiences and spectators that can both reinforce and subvert cultural norms and discourses. Writing in *Gender Trouble* Butler argues: 'There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender...identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (1990, p .25). She goes on to state that gender is also 'ideological, created and fuelled by public and social discourse in order to normalise what is conceived to be 'masculine' and 'feminine''' (ibid, p.27). For the purposes of the thesis, the question of gender, and more specifically, masculinity, is

also a question of performance. Whilst there is much to be gained around Butlerian ideas of masquerade and dramaturgical performance, they can run the risk of becoming problematic when dismissing any identity or agency behind expressions of gender, very much like auteur theories that dismiss the idea of agency. Therefore, if Butler's metaphor of gender as a performance, is to be continued, it can be posited that performances are invariably based on *something*, which runs counter to Butler's assertion, quoted in Peberdy, 'the notion of a true or original gender is a myth or "imitation without an origin" (2011, p.32). When it is considered that any dramaturgical performance, such as film or theatre for example, is invariably based on some memory or imaginative construct, (an actor's performance will be informed by internal and external factors) this assertion becomes effectively untenable, especially when applied to gender, given its personal, biological, social and cultural factors. Advancing this argument further, and assuming gender *is* a performance, it is a performance that is nuanced, influenced and shaped by a large number of factors including, but not restricted to, biology (Segal 1990, p.67), psychology, family dynamics, social forces, cultural pressures and political power structures.

Furthermore, from a post-Jungian perspective, it can be argued that gender can be both an *unconscious* and *conscious* performance (using these terms within a post-Jungian context) in regards to the individual psyche. An unconscious gender performance, for example, would be replaying or performing a gender role according to societal and personal factors, regardless of the consequences. A conscious gender performance, by contrast, would be a performance that is informed by, but not dominated or dictated by the performer's cultural and personal factors, and one that is conscious of the consequences of the performances. In addition to this, it is arguable that archetypes and archetypal images can and do inform gender performances both in unconscious and conscious ways. When the collective and cultural unconscious is also factored in, gender performance in effect transforms into a complex and rewarding phenomenon for analysis. This multiplicity of influences would go some way to explain why there is such a pluralistic, diverse and complex range of masculinities that are reflected within cinema, and why there is such a correspondingly diverse range of spectator and audience reactions to individual filmic texts.

Moving this argument to specifically cinematic depictions of masculinities, we can return to Kirkham and Thumim and their identification of the following arenas as being of primary concern with regard to depictions of cinematic masculinity, namely: the body, action, the external world and the internal world. *American Beauty* is a prime example of this, with Lester Burnham (Figure 2.1) seeking to prove his masculinity by the transformation of his body from flabby office drone to toned and muscled (Fig 2.1). As he plaintively says, when asked by his muscled gay male neighbours what he wants: 'I wanna look good naked!'

Figure 2.1   The father's body (Kevin Spacey) becoming both masculinised and sexualised in Mendes'
American Beauty (Jinks/Cohen Company, 1999).

The male body (usually, but not always, replete with muscles) is a site where by contemporary anxieties are played out on screen. This is certainly found within the masculine performances mediated and inflected by Anderson and Mendes. In another example, when Anderson's *Boogie Nights* (1997) is analysed, the male body is skilfully depicted as the site where male sexuality (Fig. 2.2) in particular has anxieties and instability played out within it, the masculine performances here subverting the normalistic view of the world of pornography.

Figure. 2.2   The surrogate son's (Mark Wahlberg) soon-to-be commodified flesh in Anderson's *Boogie Nights*. (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film Company, 1997).

Having established masculine performances as a fundamental part of cinematic masculinities, we can now focus on what has been said about the specific cinematic masculine performance that is of interest to the thesis: the father.

Notable largely by its absence until comparatively recently, the figure of the father has been noticeably under-analysed within film studies (Bruzzi, 2005). Linked in with this, the definition of the father as an essential link within the masculine continuum, albeit a continuum that is inflected and shaped by both internal and external forces, is a persuasive one, and one that has strong echoes

of Bly and other men's movement writers, both mytho-poetic and pro-feminist, with Chopra-Gant identifying 'the intergenerational reproduction of patriarchy' (2005, p.144) via the father. It can therefore be posited that fatherhood is a site that constellates many differing discourses, both masculine and feminine, and as such needs to be considered in light of these. Hamad's definition of fatherhood is a salient one:

> …a universalizing discourse of masculinity (notwithstanding the variety of modes through which it is articulated), with a high degree of cultural purchase that enables hegemonic commonality across a plurality of postfeminist masculinities (2014, p.1).

Yet fatherhood is, at the same time, often far from a means to resolve masculine anxieties; rather it is depicted by Mendes and Anderson as an often unstable construct and one that is under pressure from a variety of different fronts. In other words, it can be part of the problem (or at least depicted as one) within the construction of masculinities, as well as being depicted as a solution. Leading on from this identification of fatherhood as multifaceted and problematic, is the desire for fatherhood, both to *be a* father and *for a* father: father hunger.

Father hunger and the child

The term 'father hunger' itself implies some kind of masculine parental need that a child (adult or otherwise) needs and seeks out, successfully or unsuccessfully. This need manifests itself in different ways and on different levels and in different arenas, psychologically, politically, socially, and culturally. Broadly speaking, the term can be defined in two ways: firstly, on an individual level by examining the psychological aspect and origin of the term, and secondly on a wider collective level by examining the cinematic, cultural and political impact of father hunger as a cultural presence. Both these definitions feed into cinematic analysis and the overall impact of father hunger on contemporary film. When considering these definitions, the impact and influence of the external must be taken into account in terms of defining the role of the father and consequently, of father hunger. Archetypal images of the father, as presented to us by film, are of equal importance as internal (introverted) drives when considering how father hunger arises. Jungian psychology has previously been viewed as essentialist and introverted, as it appears to focus on the individual and side-line the external. Hockley disagrees, pointing out that:

> Jungian psychology has at its very centre the importance of social and cultural factors in shaping our sense of self. In part this is implicit in Jung's constant use of literature, philosophy, science, and mythology as sources from which to shed light on contemporary psychological situations, both culturally and personally. More dramatically, Jung remarks:

'Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself (2007, p.9).

The external psychic environment (as previously mentioned, psychic being concerned with matters of the psyche, rather than occult phenomena), is therefore of fundamental importance in consideration of gender based issues, particularly when analysing specific cultural complexes. The universal father needs to be differentiated from the American father, as discussed in more detail in the previous chapter. American fathers are also products of their culture, with the father occupying a crucial position within American cultural complexes such as the American Dream. When the cultural complex falls into shadow, the father falls into shadow as well. Consequently, contextual factors, in this case received mediated images, both reflect and inform definitions of father hunger. As outlined in the previous section, the term 'father hunger' was first clinically identified and defined in a paper in 1980 by Herzog. His definition of father hunger is complex and rooted in Freudian psychoanalytical terminology but has similarities with the Jungian interpretation (see below) of a father-figure's role:

> The recognition of sameness with the father, the need to manage a mutual concern, and the need to be shown how is common. I have come to consider this need to be "shown how" a hallmark of the pre-oedipal boy's relationship with his father. Of course, girls need their fathers too. It may be, however, that either they need them more when they reach oedipal age or they can make out better without them before that time (p.34).

Herzog's area of interest is chiefly paediatric psychological health, but his work carries into adult areas of mental health as well. Another aspect of his investigations included studying men who have a compulsive need to *be* a father-figure to other men. In most cases this was linked in with their relationship with their own fathers (most often absent, either physically or emotionally). In both child and adult arenas, father hunger emerges as a psychological response to inadequate or incomplete male parental input during a child's developmental stage. This carries over into adult life with potentially profound consequences for the future psychological health of a person, both male and female. The psychoanalytical explanation, however, assumes that the son will, in effect, transform into his father, the masculine continuum continuing largely unchanged, the best outcome being an acceptance of an instinctive psychological pattern. Having found a brief psychoanalytical definition of the term, attention can now be turned to the Jungian explanation of this phenomenon.

From a Jungian (analytical psychological) perspective, the father is a fundamental archetype within the human psyche and Self. Jung proposed that the human psyche and Self was, in essence, a self-balancing, psychically homoeostatic structure that strived to adapt to its environment and maintain a sense of itself, gradually developing to the point of what Jung termed individuation or complete wholeness: 'The Self, therefore, possesses a teleological function, in that it has the innate

characteristic of seeking its own fulfilment in life' (Stevens, 1990, p.41). Psychic Self-actualisation is the goal of the Self; an attainment of fully conscious awareness. This quest for wholeness utilises the rest of the psychic structure (ego, persona, shadow, animus/anima); all these parts develop from this matrix and are under the guidance of the Self. Archetypes (in a clinical sense), therefore, are also part of this structure and can take many forms, such as mother, father, son, daughter, child, hero, villain, initiate, trickster, etc. Archetypes, however, also fulfil what Hockley describes as 'a mediating role between the collective unconscious and the conscious' (2007, p.11), a bridge between our inner psychic life and the wider environment around us. This assertion echoes with Jung's conviction that 'through psychological images…it is possible to come to an understanding of ourselves and of our relationship to the world…the individual and his or her cultural location are inseparable' (ibid, p.7). The archetypal image, therefore, of the parent or father that is received, and the archetype that is animated and activated by the biological father or surrogate father, is held as one of the most important and fundamental parts of the Self and psyche. Without the activation and bringing to life of this parental archetype by actual biological parents, the developing child or teenager, will tend to unconsciously seek out phantasy, substitute or surrogate father figures within the family or without, in the wider world, with greater or lesser degrees of success. This seeking out of substitution is closely linked with the previously mentioned teleological function of the psyche; where there is a gap, it will seek to close or fill it. How these gaps occur is what will be dealt with next.

Developmentally speaking, a male child's identification with a father-figure (not necessarily the biological father) is held to be crucial to his sense of himself as a male and as a man, experiencing as he grows and develops, a fundamental identity difference between himself and his mother. Stevens 'At this point, the presence of a father-figure can prove crucial, enabling the boy to move from a self-concept based on mother identity to one based on identification-with-the-father' (1994, p.69). The male child then begins to identify himself as profoundly different to his mother, not least because of his sexual organs. At some point he realises that he has to know, learn and absorb from his father, not necessarily as an enemy and rival as Freud proposed, but as a bridge into the world of men and masculinity that his own, slowly activated father archetype is directing him towards. The teleological journey of the son towards manhood is to ultimately transcend the father (both the father archetype and the biological father), a major difference from a psychoanalytical perspective. This is a somewhat more optimistic outlook with both the father's individuation and the child's development psychologically potentialised. As a bridge/evolution of the male child's increasing sense of himself, the presence of the father, or father figure, is perceived and viewed as a crucial one. If, for whatever reason (absence, weakness, deficiency, or even over-involvement), the father is not available for the male child to learn from, then Stevens holds that the archetype of the father within a child's emerging

Self and ego will not be fully activated, leading to psychic distortion and subsequent neuroses which will affect the future health of the child:

> Thus the boy whose father was inadequate or absent may fail to actualize his masculine potential sufficiently to establish the social or vocational his talents equip him for, or he may be unable to sustain a relationship with a member of the opposite sex long enough for him to become an adequate husband or father himself (1994, p.75).

Or, to put it another way: 'The less adequate the parents, the greater the unfulfilled potential, the more ravenous the parent hunger and the more obsessive the Flying Dutchman quest' (Stevens, 1990, p.122). Stevens goes on to describe what he envisages the likely fate of such children to be:

> …they are more likely to embark on an unconsciously motivated quest, like Flying Dutchmen seeking to redeem themselves from a bitter fate: they pass from one dependent relationship to another – employers, teachers, older companions and lovers – people perceived as being able to make good the deficiencies of the parents. The pangs of such *parent hunger* can be powerful indeed and may gnaw away in the unconscious for the rest of life (ibid, p.121, italics in the original).

This colourful description of parental hunger, and by extension, father hunger is problematic for a number of reasons. There are urgent questions about what constitutes adequacy within a parent here that Stevens does not directly address within the passage, implying earlier on that a degree of responsibility, maturity, and ability in the giving of care is what makes an adequate parent, quoting D.W Winnicott's pithy phrase 'good enough', 'that is to say, whether they are capable of discharging the basic obligations of parenthood'(ibid, p.119). There is also a strong assumption around heterosocial and heterosexual familial discourses that has a notably biological[27] bias to it, assumptions that come with all the attendant baggage that this view brings. Part of the problem is that Stevens views the archetype as being as solid as the composition of a biological entity, 'archetypes are as fixed as the genetic structure of our species' (ibid, p.120). This is a rigid definition of an archetype, and one that is disagreed with by several post-Jungians, Hockley among them:

> Jung also refers to the presence of the structures, which he names 'archetypes' and the role they play, as a hypothesis…there is a tendency in some branches of Jungian theory to over-literalize the archetypes. This results in treating them as either actual biological structures or as concrete psychological forms (2007, p.10).

This over-simplification of the archetype of the parent can also lead to over-simplified and fixed notions of what the lack of 'adequate' parenting will result in. What must also be borne in mind

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[27] The role that the father in the formation of the daughter's psyche is covered later within the fathers and daughter, and has distinctly different developmental features compared to that of the father-son relationship.

is that a classical Jungian position is generally from a therapeutic perspective. Subsequently, any approach to cinema studies from a pathological perspective needs to be treated with appropriate caution. Samuels strongly hints that a father need not be a masculine figure: 'Whatever the salient features of fatherhood may be, and whether or not a male figure has to be their executor, those features are not the result of accident or coincidence' (1985, p.23). This is echoed by his statement later 'the fluidity of the psyche means that anyone can stand in for a symbol for anyone else' (ibid, p.37), including, for example, a woman standing in for a father figure within lesbian couples. These assertions run counter to many of the men's movement's more rigid ideas around gender roles and will be examined in later chapters when we examine specific depictions of the father. Anderson in particular subjects the family unit to close analysis and often finds it wanting (*Boogie Nights* and *Magnolia* in particular) with the nuclear family being deconstructed and new families being substituted, Eddie Adams / Dirk Diggler (Mark Wahlberg) going from a dysfunctional natural biological family unit to a (slightly) less dysfunctional family unit that still oppresses him but in a different way. *Magnolia* is littered with the remnants of families that simply do not work, either being the source of abuse (sexual and financial) or engendering issues of familial abandonment (father and son Partridge) usually centred around the father leaving children. As so much of the family disruption is concerned with the father, it behoves us now to examine this figure through the contextual basis of the men's movement.

Continuing the masculine

According to the men's movement, the father figure has been afforded an increasingly important role since the early 1990s. This importance attached to the figure of the father is also largely reflective of the crisis in masculinity that was identified as occurring in various guises in the late 1980s and early 1990. As outlined earlier, the crisis in masculinity was held as coming about due to the triple impact of civil rights, feminism and gay liberation, the crisis focusing attention on the construction of masculinities, with the father being thrust into the spotlight as both a problem and a solution to this crisis, certainly by the mytho-poetic men's movement. Since the early 1990s, the men's movement has been largely perceived as a 'reactive masculinity' (Connell 1995). Bruzzi (2005), Rehling (2009), Peberdy (2010) and Kord & Krimmer (2011) all make the point that masculine crises have been occurring in various guises since post-war times, with the 1980/1990s crisis being one in a long string of crises. For Biddulph, a popular psychologist and cultural commentator on men and masculinities, the crisis is mainly due to father-hunger, manifesting as a 'hidden grief' (1995, p.31) within men. He went on to provide a fuller description: 'Father hunger is the deep biological need for strong, humorous, hairy, wild, tender, sweaty, caring, intelligent masculine input'(ibid). From this description, father hunger appears to also be an experiential and

affective phenomenon, rather than just a psychological one. From a mythopoetic men's movement perspective, both the main cause and effect of father hunger is the discontinuation, or the interruption, of masculinity which itself is the failure of a father figure to fully initiate and guide his son into adulthood. This viewing of masculinity as a continuum (as detailed above), is a fundamental part of men's movement ideology and was first proposed by Bly in *Iron John* (1990) and consequently developed by Biddulph and other writers (Lee, 1991, Moore & Gillette, 1992, etc.). Detractors of this approach, including Bruzzi (2005) Samuels (1993) and Tacey (2007), argue that the obsession with the father as the *sole* source of masculinity both effectively ignores the role of the mother and the role that social forces and institutions play in shaping ideas around masculinities, points that need to be considered. Samuels also argues, for example, that Bly's use of Jung for men's movement ideological purposes is deeply problematic due to his sharp delineation of gender roles masquerading as 'archetypally drawn' (1993, p.186). Tacey (1997) also argues that Bly mistakenly conflates the father archetype with the idea of the self/Self, and does not recognize the shadow that is archetypally omnipresent.

The thesis takes the position that filmic depictions of father hunger does indicate an innate, rather than essential, archetypal need in men for a father figure, as well as the need to act as a father figure to younger men. Going further, this perceived and depicted initiatory need is not, however, the end of the masculine journey. Rather that, whilst the cinematic portrayal of the father figure as an initiator into and mediator of masculinity has veracity, the journey of gender construction continues past this stage, with the adult male interacting with both feminine and masculine social constructs and institutions as part of a dynamic masculine continuum. This is where the thesis examines how the films, *Jarhead* and *The Road to Perdition* in particular, portray patriarchy and patriarchal institutions as mostly inimical to men, and to fathers and fatherhood. The thesis is intended to complement and add to these positions, reiterating the implied importance of the father and paternal. There is also the question, touched upon by Bruzzi, around the position of the father within the psyche. She uses *American Beauty* alongside *Happiness* (Solondz, 1998) and *Affliction* (Schrader, 1997) to illustrate that the father in 1990s films is more often than not portrayed as being, to use the appropriate Jungian term, a Shadow father in that the paternal is used to display and channel the darker side of masculinity. Peberdy goes on to analyse, albeit somewhat selectively, Bly's position on the Wild Man, which she links to Tom Cruise's performance in *Magnolia*. This will be analysed further in later chapters, and is (as highlighted in the literature review) arguably an example of Bly being selectively quoted and consequently mis-read, a not uncommon occurrence. This position of the shadow father is also of interest to the thesis and one that will be analysed throughout the thesis, father hunger arguably having its roots within the shadow. This shadow is where the father is potentially sexually dangerous (*American Beauty* and *Boogie Nights*), physically dangerous, (*There Will be Blood*) and spiritually dangerous (*Magnolia, The Master*). Where there is

disagreement with Bruzzi and her analysis of the dark father is that fathers are also shown by Anderson and Mendes to have redemptive qualities (*Road to Perdition*) and are also shown to be redeemed (*American Beauty* again), a position that Bruzzi barely acknowledges. The seeds of what can be termed masculine numinosity lie with the dark father and effectively co-exist with the shadow, the films showing the masculine journey that is made within them, both successful (*Road to Perdition* and *Jarhead*) and unsuccessful (*There Will be Blood*). It is the journey made by the father, either driven by a psychic hunger for the paternal or to be a parent, which ultimately constructs the masculinities within these films. With this outline of the main gender theories in place, attention can now be turned to more detailed exploration of post-Jungian theory and how it relates to cinema.

Post-Jungian theory and cinema

As outlined earlier, it has to be acknowledged that post-Jungian theories and methodologies are not unproblematic. Post-Jungian theory has its problematic areas, both resulting from its author and his ever-changing revisions to his theories (similar to Freud) as well as the theories themselves. Contextually, Jung was both a man of, and outside, his time, with ground-breaking theories on the psyche, juxtaposed with conservative and arrogant pronouncements, particularly around gender. These contradictions are very much prevalent within his writings[28], and add a layer of complexity to any analyses.. This re-examination of textual meaning and apparatus is, via post-Jungian methods, not offered here as better than a psychoanalytical approach (as mentioned previously), rather as a different and potentially equally as valid a take on the perennial meanings that cinema presents the spectator with, Waddell's earlier reminder (2006) about theories not being diktats being timely. This said, post-Jungian theories have much to offer the film scholar seeking to examine cinematic images and the impact they have on spectators, although we would do well to heed Hockley's warning 'there is no such thing as Jungian screen studies; but there is a way of approaching films that is rooted in Jungian sensitivities, ideas and insights' (2014, p.58). Chief amongst these ideas and insights that will be examined and employed, are the concepts of the *archetype* (naturally, given the subject matter being examined here, the archetype of the father), the *archetypal image,* and, treated as one theory for the purposes here, the *symbol* and *sign*. These three main theories will in turn touch upon the *collective unconscious* (post-Jungians have renamed this the *objective psyche,* or *transpersonal unconscious*), the *cultural unconscious*, and, leading on from this, the *cultural complex*. As the main

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[28] Jung's personal life was colourful and contradictory to say the least, with a (mostly) happy marriage to Emma Rauschenbach co-existing alongside a number of mistresses, many of whom he trained as analysts (McLynn, 1996). His conservatism is also highlighted when we consider his writings on the anima and animus, the contrasexual archetypes, that he asserted strongly lived in everyone without exception. Freud also called Jung 'brutal and sanctimonious!' in 1909 during their famous schism (Hyde and Guinness, 1992, p.33)

subject of the thesis is the father, it would be appropriate to start with this primal archetype and definitions thereof.

<u>Archetypes and other ideas</u>

Amongst many of the ideas that Jung developed within his analytical psychological theoretical discourse, the concept of archetype quickly began to gain currency and usage, both within psychoanalytical circles and, later on, within the humanities as Jung's ideas began to make their presence felt. Before my own definition of this key term is offered, it is worth examining other attempts by both Jungians and post-Jungians to define what this concept is, and isn't. Firstly, we can examine Jung's own definition of the archetype, albeit a definition that avoids precise parameters to say the least:

> The concept of the archetype…is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, everywhere…these typical images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas…They have the myths and fairy tales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up their origin in the archetype, which itself is an irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time (1967, CW7, para 847).

This lengthy opening description of what an archetype is sets out some of the ideas, and problems, with this concept. Firstly, an archetype is, by its nature, largely undefinable in and of itself; it is the archetype that gives shape to an archetypal idea and image. Secondly, archetypes are also present in the collective, cultural and personal unconscious, and therefore cannot be conscious. Rather, that the corresponding archetypal images and ideas can be made conscious and visible, the phenomenon that gives rise to them cannot. Thus the archetype is not known directly, rather it is known by the *images* it is held as producing. Thirdly, they appear to be evolutionary and universal, in that archetypal images reflect the culture that produces them. Jung also warns of the danger of attempting too rigid a definition of this term: 'It is necessary to point out once more that archetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form and then only to a very limited degree' (ibid, para 155). The concept of the archetype, therefore, is itself seemingly undermined by the nature of the archetype, being widely perceived as a vague and largely undefinable concept. The popular, but often mistaken, usage of the term is of something that is more concrete, a pre-cursor or cousin to a stereotype, in effect a clearly defined, differentiated example of the psychological landscape, such as the parent, mentor, sibling, child, enemy, friend etc. This mis-use of the term archetype is something that both Jungians and post-Jungians have attempted to combat, albeit with differing degrees of success. Part of the problem is that there is considerable debate within

analytical psychological circles about how an archetype is defined, and whether or not an agreed upon definition is even worth attempting. If we are to proceed with a Jungian analysis of film, then it would seem both timely and circumspect to at least attempt one as discussion of the father archetype in the thesis would demand this. Before this can be attempted, however, it would be circumspect to review the definitions of archetypes offered by both Jungians and post-Jungians.

Samuels (1985) has streamed post-Jungians into three broad schools as summarised by Waddell from Samuels' work: 'The *Classical* School, largely uncritical of Jung's theories; the *Developmental* School, privileging personal development and links with psychoanalysis; and the *Archetypal* School, interested in the primary nature of the archetypal image' (2006, p12). Starting with Jung's successors from the classical Jungian school, we can examine the different definitions of archetypes. Stevens, a practising Jungian analyst, scientist, and writer, describes and defines the archetype as: 'Innate neuropsychic centres possessing the capacity to initiate, control, and mediate the common behavioural characteristics and typical experiences of all human beings' (1994, p.48). As mentioned previously, Stevens goes on further to propose that archetypes have a virtually biological basis in the psychological life of an individual by cross referencing ethology with psychology. For Stevens, the archetype is a definite concrete psychological structure that not only produces archetypal images, but that controls and influences psychic behaviour. Waddell also highlights this point in her discussions around the philosophical background to Jung's development of the psyche 'he [Jung] saw the mind as matter; a biological structure like the body, genetically determined and programmed, yet open to variation through cultural and environmental factors'(2006, p.13). This definition is at odds with later post-Jungians, particularly in the field of film. Samuels et al, define, or rather summarise, what an archetype could be, and what it contains, as follows:

> a)Archetypal structures and patterns are the crystallisation of experiences over time (b)They constellate experience in accordance with innate schemata and act as imprimatur of subsequent experience (c) Images deriving from archetypal structures involve us in a search for correspondence in the environment (1986, p.27).

This collection of points around what an archetype's features are, and more importantly what its function is, is a step further towards a deeper understanding of the archetype, a point perhaps missed by some Jungians. For their part, post-Jungians' definitions also differ widely. Izod offers this definition, echoing Jung's own writings:

> The contents of the collective unconscious. They are not inherited ideas, but inherited modes of psychic functioning. Until activated, they are forms without content; when activated they control patterns of behaviour. The centres of energy around which ideas, images, affects and myths cohere (2001, p.215).

It is, perhaps, this last sentence that is of particular interest to film and cultural scholars, drawing, as it does, attention to the cultural and filmic impact archetypes can have. Izod offers a further commentary around classical Jungian theories on archetypes 'an archetype is a theoretical concept that not capable of proof precisely because it is a component of the unconscious' (2006, p.25), a view that is reflected above in my earlier introduction to the term. What needs to be borne in mind is that Jung's ideas progressed over a considerable length of time, with some of his theories contradicting others and varying greatly in their definitions, hence the clear divergence in interpreters and students of Jung's work. Returning to post-Jungian film theory, Hockley defines the archetype as:

> The deep structure(s) of the unconscious…These are the patterns which influence our psychological development and growth. They are also the patterns that interact with our culture, our personal experiences and family lives to bring shape and form to an individual psyche. The archetypes are the mechanism through which the psyche maintains its sense of balance and health (2007, p.25).

Hauke, another leading post-Jungian writer on film, defines the archetype as 'the unconscious structuring principles of the psyche which make our experience, perception and behaviour distinctly human' (2001, p.244). Singh's discussion and definition of the archetype is directly quoted from Roger Brooke:

> A hypothetical construct, used to account for the similarity in the images that cluster around typically human themes and situations… anything said about the meaning of an archetypal image, or *symbol*, is only ever an approximation to this core (2009, p.121).

This definition is clearly at odds with the more classical view of Stevens, refusing, as it does, to propose the archetype as a solid feature, more a theoretical reaction to existing human behaviour. This divergence of opinion is one of the problems facing anyone attempting to define the archetype as it excites and inspires so many differing views. For my own part, I disagree with Singh and Brooke's cautious labelling of the archetype as theoretical in that whilst it is an unconscious phenomenon, it can be known, at the very least, by the archetypal images that it produces and the behaviours it generates. Clearly *something* is present, the fact that it is essentially unknowable apart from the images it creates, does not necessarily make it a hypothetical construct. Similar to the Freudian unconscious, it is discernible via the traces it leaves within culture and language. For the purposes of the thesis, therefore, the archetype can be defined as an unconscious but distinct nexus of dynamically essential psychic energy that is located within the collective unconscious. This energy both influences and is influenced by the individual's exterior and interior environment and generates archetypal images and behaviour, depending on the particularities of an individual's culture and surroundings.

To bring this back to the main subject under discussion studied, we can return to the archetypal figure of the father as defined by Samuels:

> This (archetypal) structure functions as a blueprint or expectation of certain features in the environment; it is a predisposition which leads us to experience life in a patterned way, the psychological equivalent of an instinct. Whatever the salient features of fatherhood may be, and whether or not a male figure has to be their executor, those features are not the result of accident or coincidence. The perception of our personal father is an end product resting on an archetypal substructure (1985, p.23).

This definition is useful because it hints strongly at the possibility that fatherhood does not always need to be carried out by a male figure, an interesting proposition, running, as it does, contrary to many of the views held by the men's movement. Barbara Greenfield provides another useful definition of the archetypal masculine:

> …we may characterise the archetypal masculine as an *intrusive, active* principle that pushes the development of consciousness out of primal undifferentiation and unity with the mother. Unlike the anima, this male principle is *mental* rather than material, pertaining to activated spirit, intellect and will. In short, those aspects of the psyche that we characterise as ego are traditionally identified with the masculine (ibid, p.189 - italics in the original).

This definition is useful in that it echoes the developmental progression that the mythopoetic men's movement also focuses on with regard to the idea of masculinity as a continuum. The summary so far of the archetype as it relates to film then, is that it is largely known and is a presence within film and culture by virtue of its ability to generate *archetypal images* which is what we will turn to next.

The importance of the image

Jung's foregrounding within his psychology of the importance of the *image* has to be of interest to any student of cinema, one of the most powerful generators of communicative symbols, with Jung emphasising on how important this was and still is 'image alone is the immediate object of knowledge'(1967, CW7, para 201). Bassil-Morozow and Hockley outline two fundamental questions in the Jungian approach to films: where is the image, and where is the meaning? They state: 'Ostensibly both (image and meaning) reside on the screen, yet the interplay of the unconscious with a film results in the creation of a new image' (2017, p.75). This said, however: 'The film's imagery belongs to its internal world, while the reception of the film gives the film a life off screen created by the life of the viewer' (ibid). Where Jung differs from Freud is his emphasis on the image as a vital clue as to the psyche's attempts at psychic rebalancing via structural mechanisms (persona, personal unconscious, etc.) rather than Freud's insistence of images and symbols as being essentially

deceptive phenomena whose purpose it is to mask the repressed desires that live in the unconscious. Analysing the matter of *archetypal images*, we can immediately see the appeal of post-Jungian theories to cinema theorists, dealing as they do, with an art form that consists of a constant stream of signs, symbols and (potentially) archetypal images. With the Jungian model of the unconscious consisting largely of archetypes, the potential application of this theory to the generation of art is described well by Davis:

> Whereas the Lacanian unconscious is composed of potentially word-forming linguistic structures, the Jungian (collective) unconscious is made up of structures with a potential for image formation. According to Jung, it is the presence of images formed by these archetypes", or "archetypal patterns" that characterizes the true work of art (Baumlin, et al 2004, pp.66-67).

These are reductive words, assuming that 'true' works of art by this measure must contain archetypes. If we are to follow this argument through, there is an implication that works of art that do not contain archetypal images are somehow 'false'. Perhaps a better term to use here is to *succeed*, (a definition of successful art being its ability to engage with the viewer, reader, or in these post-modern times, consumer). By this measure, art that does succeed must contain archetypal images. Assuming this to be true, what are archetypal images, and how do they relate to cinema, the most visual of artistic mediums? Moreover, what is their purpose in being placed in art? A shallow reading of Jung in relation to cinema seems to be content to identify characters as being archetypal and largely content to leave it there (Iaccino, 1994, 1998). Which begs the question: so what? What value is there knowing that, using *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977) as an example, Obi Wan Kenobi is the archetypal image of a Wise Old Man? Or that Luke Skywalker is the archetypal image of a callow Youthful Hero? Whilst we can congratulate ourselves for having applied and identified Jungian archetypes within a filmic text, the role and purpose that archetypal images play is not explored nor explained using this reading. As mentioned previously, Fredericksen identifies this archetype-spotting as 'archetypal literalism' (Hauke and Hockley, 2011, p.102). Whilst it functions as a diverting parlour game of sorts, this kind of reading does not advance post-Jungian film theory. Samuels goes on to explain further the role and function of archetypal images within art:

> In post-Jungian analytical psychology, the view is gaining ground that what is archetypal is not to be found in any particular image or list of images that can be tagged as anima, trickster, hero, shadow, and so on. Rather, it is in the *intensity of affective response* to any given image or situation that what we find is archetypal (Baumlin et al, 2004, xiv).

A post-Jungian view of successful art, then, can be measured by the audience's archetypal *affective* response, both individually and collectively to a film. This emotional response is triggered, or catalysed, within the psyche of the viewer or audience by the archetypal images contained within

the film and how they are articulated, Samuels reminding us that 'The archetypal can therefore be *relative, contextual and personal'* (ibid). To this, we can also add cultural, echoing the post-Jungian idea of the cultural unconscious. Taking this idea further, we can introduce the theory of psychic resonance; archetypal images contained within art resonating to the same psychic frequency within the psyche of the viewer or consumer. This resonance, or identification, is what triggers the affective/emotional response, or charge, within the psyche, and therefore affects (and in some cases) changes and develops the psyche (Izod, 2006; Hauke, 2014; Singh, 2014; Bassil-Morozow and Hockley, 2017). Singh expands upon this debate

> The act of viewing film engages our subjectivity (and sense of subjectivity) in much less discreet ways. It is a sensuous and affective act, connecting as it does the intimacy of perception-expression and our experience of it. In other words, what we see and hear *out there* is very difficult to separate from what we feel *in here* in any meaningful sense (2009, p177- italics in the original).

As mentioned in the literature review, this question of affect and resonance is a key one for a wider post-Jungian discussion of cinema, but as my arguments are more to do with semiotics and the symbolic rather than the experiential, the thesis will, by necessary reasons of space and focus, concentrate on analysing the images present within the films rather than their effects, or affective power. Having begun to establish the role of archetypal images within film, we can now explore their definitions in more detail.

If the archetypes are largely unconscious, then we know them through the images that are generated by them. These psychic features are also encountered within dreams (Fig. 2.3), which are similar, although not the same, as films.

Figure 2.3   A number of archetypal themes (roses, nudity, water) collide to produce this dreamlike archetypal image from *American Beauty* involving Lester and Angela (Mena Suvari) (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

It is the archetypal image (Figure 2.3) that alerts us to the presence of an archetype within a film, the archetypal image that engages with the audience's collective and individual psyche to generate an affective response, if we are to accept Samuels' explanation of affect above. Hockley puts it thus 'the archetype is better conceived as a way of understanding, in the form of an image, how an individual is engaging with both inner and outer worlds' (2007, p.10). The image is, therefore, the key to understanding an archetype and the role in which it plays in engaging with the psyche. Hockley continues 'Jung suggests that the images associated with a given archetypal pattern may be broadly similar even though they will vary over time and will respond to the influences of different cultures and different family experiences' (ibid). Jung himself has defined the archetypal image as 'essentially an unconscious that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear' (Hauke and Hockley, 2011, p.187). Izod provides more detail in that 'these are not ordinary images in terms of their impact. Jung referred to figures that have this kind of power as being pitched from 'the treasure-house of primordial images; into the arena of consciousness' (2001, p.35). Going back to the theory of psychic resonance, archetypal images that are identified with by the audience or viewer can only resonate if they have power to so. Archetypal images are also mutable and evolutionary, reflecting changing eras, cultures and environments. Izod again: 'Archetypal or primordial images, however, are more exposed to the erosions of time and culture than the forms that they can only fill out provisionally' (ibid). He quotes Jung at length in a classic explanation of the archetypal image:

> The primordial images undergo ceaseless transformation and yet remain ever the same, but only in a new form can they be understood anew. Always they require a new interpretation if, as each formulation becomes obsolete, they are not to lose their spellbinding power (ibid).

Archetypal images are not restricted to religious (or filmic) imagery; rather they are activated and generated by the unconscious power of the archetype that lies behind them and that seeks expression within the culture of the individual and the individual themselves. Relating this to cinema, Beebe makes a crucial and similar point when he differentiates between stage acting and screen acting: 'The actors are not up on screen, their images are; and this translation of person into image is crucially important psychologically, because it moves film past the personal and into the archetypal realm of psychological experience' (Hauke and Alister, 2001, p.216). It is this power of the archetypal image that is explored further in the thesis in the shape of the archetypal image of the father and how it interacts and changes in the different films it is contained within. The use and manipulation of these images is how Anderson and Mendes construct masculinities within their films and is how we can identify them as auteurs in that they are controllers and mediators of the archetypal masculine image. To help explain further how the archetypal image works, and what it contains, we need to examine the post-Jungian concepts of the sign and the symbol.

<u>Signs and symbols</u>

With regards to signs and symbols, post-Jungian film theory differs sharply from Freudian, Lacanian and Marxist film semiotics. Perhaps the biggest difference is that Jung's psychology is one of amplification and expansion, rather than reduction, an approach that holds both the (archetypal) symbol and the sign as equally important, although with arguably a greater value and emphasis placed on the symbolic. In essence, post-Jungian theory values the symbol (by its nature, an unknown), rather than reduce it to a sign, a known, as the semiotic approach would have us do. Fredericksen's seminal 1979 essay *Jung/sign/symbol/film*, revised and updated for *Jung and Film* outlines why:

> Semiotic approaches are limited to psychic expressions that are in fact signs, and to that subset of symbolic expressions for which one can attempt semiotic interpretations …the semiotic attitude is ultimately limiting because it either denies the existence of the symbolic realm by definition, or denies its existence in practice by attempting to explain symbolic expressions semiotically (2001, p.27).

He goes on to identify the weaknesses of the semiotic approach towards symbols as resulting from what Edward Edinger calls the 'reductive fallacy':

> The reductive fallacy is based on the rationalistic attitude which assumes that it can see behind symbols to their "real" meaning. This approach reduces all symbolic imagery to elementary known factors. It operates on the assumption that no true mystery, no essential unknown transcending the ego's capacity for comprehension exists…This attitude does violence to the autonomous reality of the psyche (ibid, p.28).

Fredericksen goes on to warn of the dangers of such an approach, echoing Jung's own warning of rationalistic hubris towards the unknowable:

> The limiting character of the semiotic attitude involves a clear hubris of – and often a fear of – the rational and the conscious toward the irrational and the unconscious mind. Throughout his life, Jung warned against this hubris, without ever denying the absolute necessity of reason and consciousness in one's striving for self-realisation. For Jung, *the point is not to identify with either the conscious or the unconscious mind, but to forge and keep a living tie between them*. (ibid - italics in the original).

This approach is pertinent to film studies, if only to explain the affective nature of film that semiotics does not always engage with successfully. Where Fredericksen goes awry somewhat is the arbitrary way in which films he identifies as being symbolic, value judgments creeping in as to what films are judged as being symbolic and which are 'merely' semiotic. There is a clear implication in

his writing that popular cinema is largely semiotic and therefore 'known' and easily analysed, and art cinema that is somehow more symbolic, 'unknown' and therefore of greater value. Singh takes issue with this reasoning:

> It is apparent that Fredericksen is employing a hierarchical structure that presupposes a poverty of meaning in semiotic films, and a pregnancy or richness in symbolic ones…troublesome in the assumption that the majority of films are 'predominantly semiotic in character', an assumption that tars mainstream and popular cinema with symbolic poverty. It risks placing many films *en masse* in this bracket before analysis has even begun (2009, p.92).

Singh also identifies that Fredericksen does not keep in mind Jung's exhortation to forge a 'living tie' between the conscious and unconscious when choosing a film to analyse in order to flesh out his theory, focussing as he does on the symbols within Wright's *Song of Ceylon* (1935), an example of his own post-Jungian film analysis.

Taking Fredericksen and Singh's positions further, it can be proposed that films are potentially both semiotic *and* symbolic, the (unknowable) symbols birthing the (known) signs that are shown as images. Successful films, that is to say films that possess psychic resonance, would consequently have a strong tie, less successful films a weaker tie. It is also worth noting that successful films (in post-Jungian terms) can also be popular in an industrial and commercial sense, just as unsuccessful films can be seen as art or 'worthy'. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley agree:

> Further, the psychological worth of an image does not necessarily stem from its aesthetic and intellectual qualities – it is quite possible, even normal, to find something of psychological worth in images that lack cultural sophistication (2017, p.8).

Tying this back to the definitions earlier of archetypes and archetypal images, it is also proposed that symbols and signs are, in effect, differing and co-existing forms of archetypal images, active and activating within the psyche of the spectator, forging, as Jung and Fredericksen would have it, a living tie between the conscious and unconscious. This said, Bassil-Morozow and Hockley issue a caveat around the analysis of symbols and signs:

> While the Jungian view of images appears to be flexible, intuitive and non-rational, in fact it is highly codified, constrained and structured…in this respect, Freudian and Jungian views of the image and the symbol are actually much closer than they first appear, and much closer than Jung himself allows for (ibid, p.65).

This recognition of post-Jungian film analysis being in danger of becoming symbolically reductive is both useful and challenging, given that the thesis will be engaging with close textual analysis. That said, filmic symbols and signs can and should be identified and their meanings interpreted, albeit

with an awareness and appreciation of their innate polysemous nature and polyvalence (ibid p.63). It is arguable that the filmic context of any symbol or sign can change the meaning significantly, reflecting its plurality of meaning.

Auteur Theory

In terms of auteur theory it is now largely accepted that debates have moved away from the totalistic theory systems outlined in the last chapter, and is at a post-structuralist crossroads where a choice must be made regarding which auteurist approach to use when analysing the chosen directors. The situation, however, becomes problematic when we consider the many varying aspects of the director-as-auteur. Virginia Wexman articulates this potential confusion in her introduction to *Film and Authorship*:

> Are directors to be thought of as social agents, psychic scribes or spectator-induced fictions? Are they conscious craftspeople, bundles of libidinous energies, or cultural conduits? Do they express their preoccupations through stylistic motifs, narrational strategies, idiosyncratic character types, self-reflexive cameos, or structuring opposites? How do they function in relation to the industrial, socio-political, and legal contexts? (2003, p.7).

The tempting (and glib) answer to these questions is: yes, they are everything stated here. This answer, however, does not help a more nuanced examination of the auteur and authorship, given the limited space available. More important, at least for the purposes of this thesis, is the acceptance and recognition that the auteur, and authorship, is still a viable figure, and approach, with which to analyse film and to analyse particular directors, in this case, Sam Mendes and Paul Thomas Anderson. Before, however, we go on to examine formal authorship theory, there are a number of reasons why the above mentioned directors and their individual collective outputs arguably identify them as auteurs, both in terms of thematic concerns and in their distinctive aesthetic and mise-en-scene choices.

Firstly, from a thematic perspective[29], both directors consistently and self-consciously foreground and focus upon the father and father figure, as a constant presence which is depicted within their corpus as being critically important to the construction of cinematic masculinities and subsequent filmic masculine discourses. As authors-as-analysers (discussed later), Mendes and Anderson are pertinent examples to examine for the purposes of the thesis. Furthermore, there are a

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[29] 'Two main dimensions are usually considered. Distinctive thematic concerns have to be identified across a director's body of work. Particular issues or attitudes are detected….The recurrence of similar themes is the first requirement if a director is to be considered more than just a hired hand working on material that has its essence elsewhere…A distinctive style is also required. A true auteur uses the medium in a manner that is identifiable from one work to another as his or her personal style…Ideally, the style should reflect the thematic concerns' (King, 2002 p.87).

number of distinct differences between them which adds value in terms of covering the different facets of the cinematic paternal. As a British-born outsider to the American filmmaking community, Mendes' thematic concerns within his films are mainly concerned with the notion of the father as a figure that is subjected to external pressures of the kind that are highlighted by versions of post-Jungian theory that can be found in the men's movement. Contrastingly, Anderson tends to locate his paternal thematic concerns internally, resonating with post-Jungian theory's emphasis on looking inward for explanations of the Self. Moreover, there also exists a difference in the source material which they draw upon which emphasizes the differences highlighted above. Through his choice of texts, Mendes can be seen as an outsider, who is essentially an interpreter, with his films being either adapted from original standalone texts (*The Road To Perdition* is a series of graphic novels and both *Revolutionary Road* and *Jarhead* are a novel and biography respectively), or adapted from screenplays by other people (*American Beauty* was written by Alan Ball). Compared to Anderson, who wrote and directed virtually all of his films as original pieces of work (*There Will Be Blood* was loosely adapted from the book *Oil!* by Upton Sinclair, and *Inherent Vice* was adapted from a Thomas Pynchon novel), a distinct difference in authorial approaches emerges. Going further, and from an aesthetic perspective, Mendes is from a theatrical background and stages his films with a distinctive theatrical flavour (*American Beauty* in particular). Anderson, as an American-born director steeped in film school techniques, theories, and popular culture (as mentioned in the introduction, his production company is named Ghoulardi after his father's professional name as a TV presenter on horror films), takes a markedly different approach with a self-consciously filmic approach to the mise-en-scene and other creative imagistic choices.

Whilst this difference in auteurial approach can be differentiated for the most part, there are moments when each director's approach, in effect, is under pressure (e.g. Anderson in *There Will Be Blood*, and Mendes with *American Beauty*) in terms of genre classification. Despite their work covering a number of historical scenarios, (and the variety of genres as a constant presence in their work) both recent (*American Beauty*) and past (*There Will be Blood*), all the films under analysis were produced in the mid-1990s to late 2000s, making the thesis more of a historical study rather an ahistorical one. The directors' consistencies are also reflected in the many different kinds of genres (gangster, war, drama, historical/period) found within their work, the dominant commonality being the director rather than a specific genre. Again, with modes of production, both mainstream Hollywood and arthouse modes of production are represented here, but that definitions of arthouse and mainstream are unstable when consistently applied to each auteur, Mendes's later work arguably moving away from mainstream towards arthouse (*Revolutionary Road,* and *Away We Go* [2009]), and Anderson's work straddling a blurred line between the two. As King reminds us:

> Here, as in other respects, the concept of the director-as-auteur is sustainable only if it is understood in a qualified manner. Particular social or industrial circumstances can allow

individual filmmakers to ring the changes *within* the classical style…A director who consistently makes certain sets of choices might thus establish something that could be termed an individual style. This is a significant measure of freedom, but within limitations. Exactly what can be contained within a broadly classical or mainstream stylistic approach is subject to historical change (2002, p.109-110).

Out of all the authorship theories from which to choose to analyse the texts, Staiger's idea of the author as practising a *technique of self* is an attractive option as it addresses the themes around masculinity and fathers that each director engages with. Picking up on Wexman's memorable phrase: 'psychic scribe' from the beginning of this section, total theory systems and the Romantic/early *Cahiers du cinema* notion of the auteur/author/artist as *sole* generator of textual meaning will be left behind, and instead the auteur will be examined as a construct as defined and outlined by Staiger when she discusses agency in relation to auteur theory in what she terms a *technique of self*:

> …but the point is to rescue the expression of the self as a viable, if contingent act – a potent one with real effects. Thus, the author is reconceptualised as a subject having an ability to act as a conscious analyser of the functionality of citations in historical moments (2003, p.49).

This quote needs some unpacking before we can discuss in-depth the role that the auteur plays within film, and more specifically, the films studied here. Firstly, Staiger highlights the importance (certainly from a non-dominant situation) of expression of self (and as a post-Jungian would say, the Self)[30] as an act of power. This has definite resonance with post-Jungian theory around the journey of the Self where recognition and expression of all parts of the psyche can lead towards conscious wholeness. As gender and identity are closely entwined, Anderson and Mendes are interesting case studies when it comes to looking at how male and masculine gender identities are constructed within film. The act of expression then, of allowing inner drives, complexes, feelings and emotions to become conscious, is a crucial and vital process towards becoming fully conscious or to individuate. It is the over-arching goal of the psyche to become conscious; consciousness, and the expression of consciousness, is power, both individually and collectively.

Taking the debate further with this line of argument, the author then becomes a subject that can *act as a conscious analyser* of how citations work within any given moment or context. In other words, the author is consciously looking at and employing citations in regard to his or her own position and the positions of others within culture and society in a given historicity. Staiger has highlighted how potentially important this expression is for groups in non-dominant positions:

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[30] The term Self as used by post-Jungians refers to the greater Self, the higher conscious state of humanity to which we all belong and (arguably!) aspire to. Conversely, the term self refers to the whole personality which includes the ego (Hauke and Alister, 2001, p.245)

…authoring as an "art of existence" becomes a repetitive assertion of "self-as-expresser" through culturally and socially laden discourses of authoring…Authorship is a technique of the self, creating and recreating the individual as an acting subject within history (ibid, p.50).

This argument is counter to the arguments of Foucault and Barthes quoted in Wexman who asserted that the author was essentially a site of discourses:

What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where did it come from? How does it circulate? Who can appropriate it? What sites are prepared for possible future subjects? Who can take over the diverse functions of agency? And behind all these questions one would hardly notice the stirring of an indifference: "What difference does it make who is speaking?" (Foucault, 1975, p.614).

As Staiger has indicated above, it can matter a great deal *who* is speaking if there is a previously non-conscious voice expressing. Indifference to their position is not often an option for non-dominant groups within cultures. From this perspective, Barthes' suspicion of the author is questionable when we consider his seminal tract *The Death of the Author*

The writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any of them. Does he wish to *express himself*, he ought to at least know that the inner "thing" he thinks to "translate" is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words and so on indefinitely (Waugh and Rice, 2001, p188 - italics in the original).

Whilst his deconstruction of the author as supposed textual authority was intriguing (and arguably overdue when the excesses of the *Cahiers du Cinema* theorists were in full flood), this denial of the expression of self is potentially disturbing when we consider the investment that dominant groups (hegemonic masculinities for example) in culture can have in suppression of non-dominant groups, or, to put it in a post-Jungian way, making them *non-conscious*. For Barthes, it appears that the individual self is merely a 'ready-formed dictionary' that is only informed and explained by language alone, rather than by any pre- or meta-linguistic energies or emotions. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley comment that 'Barthes proclaimed the 'death of the author' but this does not necessitate the death of the director' (2017, p.118). Returning from this negation of the individual and the self/Self to the idea of conscious analysis of citations within a given moment by an author, we can expand this argument to include the author as acting as a *conscious* analyser of gender, and in the case of the films studied, of masculinities. This is where the auteur can be located in terms of a pivotal position to mediate gender positions and identities within culture through film. The

conscious expression of self, therefore, is also the conscious expression of identity, and consequently, as it is such a fundamental part of identity, the conscious expression of gender. As Rountree argues:

> Auteur directors are interested in transforming, enlightening and often healing to empower their audiences through the channel of an "alert consciousness", a "condition in which people are fully aware of their surroundings and are able to react with those surroundings" (2008, p.127).

At this point it needs to be acknowledged that what has been argued so far, and will continue to be argued for, may appear to revert back to the Romantic notion of the auteur as being the *sole* generator of textual meaning. This is not the intention of the thesis, willingly recognising that cinematic authorship is, in virtually all cases, a shared affair that also has a strong commercial, industrial and production presence, Schatz and Corrigan being particularly strong on these aspects of auteur theory (Wexman, 2003). Bassil-Morozow and Hockley support this, reminding us that the notion of the author fulfils a psychological need for 'the individual creative genius' (2017, p.108). They go on:

> From early on in the history of cinema the director of a film has held a special place in the imagination of the public. Filmmaking is of course a collective enterprise as the lengthy credits at the end of any film bear testament...Yet somehow the idea that the director is the equivalent of the author of a novel is a proposition of such immediate simplicity and appeal that it is hard to shake off (ibid).

Authorship is also dependant on the spectator, a film arguably not even existing until actually seen or consumed. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley again:

> As mediated through the lens of Jungian psychology, authorship is not just about production, it is also concerned with reception as shown through the psychological relationships viewers have with films in which they are re-authored repeatedly, as each viewer constructs afresh the notion of authorship on each viewing of a film…From this vantage point it becomes clear that every film has numerous authors, only one of whom is the director of the film (ibid, p.118).

This said, however, the generally accepted position is that a film director is in charge of creative decisions (Wexman's phrase, 'conscious craftspeople' (2003, p.7) being particularly appropriate here) that have a profound effect on the themes, direction and aesthetics of a film. This decision-making ability and position can therefore be perceived as, at the very least, having a legitimate claim to a large part of the authorship of the film, the remainder of authorship being located elsewhere (screenwriter, producer, studio, etc.). Staiger also uses Butler to argue this very point when it comes to highlighting the role of director as enforcer of citations:

> …a directorial (or other) choice is a performative choice only as it is given that directors may make choices. A performative statement works because it is a citation of authoring by an individual having the authority to make an authoring statement (2003, p51).

She goes on to expand this argument, 'citations work only if they fit within boundaries of the norms they cite, although norms do not exist prior to and separate from the citation. The citation affirms and produces the norm' (ibid). Using this Butlerian argument, Staiger concludes that:

> ...a *repetitive* citation of a performative statement of "authoring choice" produces the "author" (who is different from the subject making the statements) ...all authoring statements by a subject are part of the subject's authorship and constitute the technique of that self. What an author *is*, is the repetition of statements. (Ibid - Italics in the original)

This argument is open to question; not least of which the assertion that it is the repetition of performative statements that produce an author. Authors can be produced by one statement, not necessarily repeated statements. Also, whilst an author may make repetitive statements in one text, they can also contradict those statements in the same text. Staiger's point around norms being exclusively produced by citations is misleading as it is arguable that norms do, in fact, pre-exist within the text and it is proposed that these norms have evolved in part, at least, from the collective unconscious. They then are reinforced and affirmed, as Staiger correctly points out, by repeated citational statements within individual cultures and contexts. Regarding citations that can only work by staying within the norm, it is argued that a citation can change, or even destroy the norm, rather than always reinforce or affirm it. She summarises how oppositional authorship can work: '…rebellious or resistant authorship would be understood as a particular kind of citation with the performative outcome of asserting agency against the normative' (ibid). We will be examining how Mendes and Anderson perform this very function when they subvert normative codes and symbols of masculinity (based around the figure of the father) in later chapters. For example, Mendes has Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey), the main hero/protagonist of *American Beauty*, not only *not* consummate his desire to have sex with Angela Hayes (Mena Suvari), but is also killed by Colonel Fitts (Chris Cooper) for turning down his attempt at a sexual encounter (Fig. 2.4). This is not a normative Hollywood resolution to a dramatic film, the usual happy ending being consciously avoided.

Figure. 2.4   Not your average happy ending – *American Beauty's* Lester Burnham and the end of his 'stupid little life' (Jinks / Cohen Company, 1999).

This subversion is then compounded by Lester's afterlife narration directly to the audience at the very end, effectively breaking the 'fourth wall', stating that the afterlife not only exists, but is nothing to be afraid of. This is both counter to a 'typical' Hollywood happy ending, but effectively another kind of happy ending, the conventions simultaneously avoided, accepted and yet profoundly subverted. Anderson also, for example, both self-consciously subverts and uses the melodramatic situation of a son reconciling with his estranged father on his deathbed cliché in *Magnolia* (Fig. 2.5) to re-examine the relationships between fathers and sons to penetrating effect, analysed in more depth later.

Figure. 2.5 – The dying patriarch (Jason Robards) and the subverted deathbed scene in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Continuing this argument, citations around gender are arguably evolutionary (if permitted to use this word in its general sense) in that they change, adapt, develop and are inflected over time and in different cultures, a type of cultural Darwinism in that aspects of gender that resonate with the present culture survive as part of cultural discourses. Viewing the author/auteur as a mediator of masculinities, in the case of Mendes and Anderson, allows the thesis to examine how they mediate images in order to construct cinematic masculinities. This helps to expand the debate around the key psychological question outlined by Lacanian-inflected Lapsley and Westlake in their analysis of the author: 'Who is speaking, and to whom?'(2006, p.127). They identify why there is still an ongoing search for the author as follows:

At the centre of authorial discourse there is equally a search for an identity, one that is to be achieved through the establishing of the identity of the author, which, as Michel Foucault has pointed out, has been a principle of unity since the Middle Ages…the establishment of an author's identity is in itself not enough, since the subject no more wants to be just anyone than he or she wants to have just anyone. For the subject to be taken by an author, *there must be a consonance with the subject's psychic economy* (ibid - italics added).

This concept of a consonance, or perhaps more accurately, a resonance between an author and the subject is crucial to establishing the link between the two. In addition, the psychic economy, a phrase that is quintessentially and deeply post-Jungian, that an auteur can provide to a spectator, also provides a crucial point around questions of identity, in this case, gender and masculinity. This resonance and identification also expands the psychological question posed above, to: 'Who is speaking, and to whom, *and what is being said*?' As mentioned previously in the chapter, this examination and questioning of *what* is being said about gender, and masculinity in particular, is unwise to ignore, especially when we consider questions of gender identity that are often dictated by dominant societal groups. Does it matter *who* is speaking to *whom*, if *what* is being said does not have any resonance between the two? It will be argued that both the author and what they are stating, plays a key role in helping to construct identities by virtue of the imagery they present to the spectator for reception and consumption.

In summary so far then, authorship as a technique and expression of self has much to recommend it when it comes to analysing how genders are constructed within cinema. Where it will be taken further is to apply this theory of authorship to masculinities and masculine performances by arguing that auteurs act as mediators and producers of psychological and gender images, an argument that will centrally involve post-Jungian ideas around the power of the image. Before we go any further, we can examine Jung's opinion on how important he considered the image to be within the psyche:

We would expect that all psychic [psyche-related, rather than occult] activities would produce images of themselves and that this would be their essential nature…It is difficult to see why unconscious psychic activities should not have the same faculty of producing images as those that are represented by consciousness (Hockley, 2007, p.8).

Given this strong emphasis on images and how they are produced by both the conscious and unconscious (as in dreams, for example), it is a logical step to cast the auteur (whether a director or not) as, in essence, a producer, generator and mediator of images that have a psychological and affective impact. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley again:

For present purposes it is enough to register that one of the psychological functions that 'myth' of the auteur performs culturally is to preserve the idea of individual identity and to foster a belief in personal creativity (2017, p.109).

They go on to make the point that, regarding auteurs: 'In place of our psychological fathers we have reinstated our cinematic fathers – the directors who, like us, have undergone a crisis of identity' (ibid, p.116). Hockley also identifies the auteur as being part of a creative and receptive interpretative process

The centrifugal movement here is from the individual concerns of the director to the collective reception of the film back to the personal….Father – of whatever sex, as Andrew Samuels might put it (creation); society (reception); individual (interpretation) (2015, p.58).

As stated previously, for reasons of brevity, the thesis will concern itself with the first and third stages of this process, leaving the affective (societal reception) stage for future research. The images are usually consciously, or unconsciously, created by the auteur to achieve their desired effect, which in most narrative cinema, is to take the spectator on an individuative journey. This journey is similar to mythic journeys, but it is important, at this stage, to distinguish films from myths[31]. The films studied here are primarily concerned with the masculine journey of the father, intertwined with the journeys of the children and other characters around the father. How these journeys are archetypally signalled by the director-as-auteur is what is of interest to the thesis and will be discussed at greater length in the following chapters. The auteur, in post-Jungian terms, can be viewed as a potential facilitator of individuation, a view echoed by Rountree:

Both filmmakers and shamans need a heightened accessibility and responsiveness to the inner landscape of the self as well as to the physical and emotional cartography that surrounds them…When using the medium of film to shift attention from a consensus reality, directors as shamans expand their consciousness and the consciousness of their community by offering blueprints for spiritual development (2008, p.1).

Lofty words perhaps, yet the idea of the auteur as a generator of archetypal images that depict self-actualisation is one with credence when we consider the widely differing films that Mendes and Anderson have created. There is a wide variety of father figures who are shown as achieving an individuative journey within their films, such as Lester Burnham and Michael Sullivan (Tom Hanks) from Mendes, and Earl Partridge (Jason Robards) and Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day Lewis) from Anderson. These points considered, the blending together of Staiger's ideas of authorship as a

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[31] Joseph Henderson's (1984) critiques around comparing myths with films is appropriate here, but Reiter also makes the valid point that: …'myths are still part of our lives because they are first and foremost stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves…myths are metaphoric stories that reflect who we are and what we could be' (2008, p6).

technique of self with a post-Jungian re-framing of the auteur as a producer of psychologically influential images is potentially a fruitful one, and one that will now be explored in more depth, beginning with the relationship and imagery around fathers and children.

THREE

Fathers and child sons: Beginning the Masculine Journey

We begin filmic analysis of the father by examining the primal relationship between fathers and child sons. Through close analysis of the varied symbology of *Road to Perdition* (Mendes, 2002), *Magnolia* (Anderson, 1999), *American Beauty* (Mendes, 1999), and *There Will be Blood* (Anderson, 2007), the centrality of the father to the building of masculinities is revealed by the conscious use of filmic symbols. Before we formally engage with using post-Jungian methodology, the film studies context and previous treatment of the filmic father-child son relationship needs to be explored in more depth to contextualise the subject better.

In her analysis of the traditional Hollywood view of father-son films, Bruzzi summarises it thus 'Over the decades, recurrent motifs and tendencies have emerged. Father-son movies vastly outnumber father-daughter movies and it is usually through a turbulent relationship with his son that a father's role is scrutinised' (2005, xv). In other words, it is the initial conflict between a father and his son that provides the narrative drive and sets up the subsequent portrayal and exploration of masculinity. Whilst dramas are routinely narratively driven by conflict of some kind, the assumption of the inevitability of paternal conflict is an interesting supposition (and one of the key theoretical ideas underpinning Freudian thought). It is, however, an assumption that leads to an important question regarding gender construction, namely: why does masculinity have to be born out of difficulty and in particular, be born out of *conflict* with the father? An answer that appears to be

favoured by classical Jungians such as Stevens (1994)[32] and the majority of mytho-poetic men's movement writers (Biddulph, 1995, 1997; Lee, 1991; Bly, 1990; et al), is that a male (due to profound biological differences) has to make the journey to separate initially from his mother, and bond with the father. Whilst the father bonding is held to be of crucial importance (the lack of which being identified by the aforementioned men's movement writers as the source of 'father hunger'), the son also has to make the final journey to mature masculinity and, in effect, outgrow and transcend his father (whether surrogate or biological). This effort for the son to, using the Jungian term individuate, seems to always involve an archetypal conflict with the father; by fighting the father (physically, emotionally or mentally), the son separates and moves away from both the paternal protection and the paternal shadow. The son becomes a mature man, effectively, by dint of a conflicted separation. Peberdy comments on this at some length in relation to Bly's interpretation:

> For Bly, fatherhood is a central masculine signifier that has been usurped by the mother figure in the contemporary period. Bly repeatedly returns to this idea of father lack or loss as a significant explanation for the softening of men. The father or father figure, as Bly's pseudo-Freudian reading suggests is central to the process of initiating boys into manhood thus the rejection of the mother is a necessary step in reclaiming masculinity (2011, 100).

This assertion of the usurpation of contemporary fatherhood by the mother within the male psyche is understandable, but at the same time questionable when we consider the supposed masculine journey that males take, according to the previous argument above. Rather than the mother usurping the father, males are seemingly stuck under the mother's influence to a degree past a normative developmental stage, in part due to the absence of the paternal. Rejecting the mother is not the same as transcending the mother, just as the father is also transcended, rather than destroyed, as argued further in this chapter if we accept the assumed post-Jungian teleological psychic journey. This is fundamentally different to the Freudian infantile Oedipal dynamic where the father is to be overcome in a struggle to possess the mother. The paternal is viewed by classic psychoanalysis as largely hostile and inimical to the child, rather than part of the child's individuative journey that is to be joined with, transcended and absorbed into the psyche. This alternative to psychoanalytical theory is attractive in that it allows for much greater flexibility when examining cultural products from a psychological perspective.

Related to this is the foregrounding of the father at the expense of the feminine presence. As Hamad points out, the marginalization (or removal) of motherhood allows the father to be foregrounded (2014, pp.18-19). In particular she highlights the role of the widowed father as a figure

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[32] Andrew Samuels is a notable exception to more classical Jungian thinkers in terms of his pioneering work on fathers and the archetype of the father (1985, 1989 and 1993). As referred to earlier, his definition of the paternal is a markedly more flexible definition than some other Jungian writers, including Stevens.

of 'an entrenched, culturally apposite and affectively charged paradigm of masculinity, whose appeals to empathy and victim status negotiate the attendant marginalization of mothers germane to his narratives and to postfeminist culture' (ibid, p.21). This father-widower status also has an added melancholic narrative effect, making the narrative conflict potentially all the more poignant, due to the missing feminine. She goes on to link this to the location of the paternal within historical settings 'Fatherhood is dualistically configured to signify ideals of both the past and present' (ibid, p.28). Kord and Krimmer largely agree:

> As the last of the he-men around, the father is an ideal vehicle for national myths. Hollywood films strictly distinguish between "actual" fathers, who are often diminished or inept, and symbolic fathers, who start out that way but in the end represent the unassailable ideal. As a national symbol, only the awesome primal father will do (2011, p.52).

Road to Perdition is a prime example of this foregrounded melancholic father. With regards to the masculine psychological journey, both Hollywood and Freud (for the most part) recognise the first stage that is outlined above, but perhaps only partially recognise the need for the son to separate from the father and, in effect, outgrow or transcend his father. Freud's pioneering psychoanalytical work partially recognised this journey in his writings on the primal father and the Oedipus complex, but, as hinted at earlier, arguably became overly mired in the struggle with infantile sexuality and possessing the mother. For its part, Hollywood follows the Freudian arc but often leaves the story only partially complete with the son reconciled with the father, but not always transcending him. As Bruzzi argues at length, this is more often than not indicative of a basic confusion about the father's role in film:

> …there remains a fundamental ambivalence towards what to do with the authoritarian, traditional father. Much of 1990s' Hollywood dispenses with him, but ultimately it seems to protest that the traditional father is what we want. Contemporary American cinema acknowledges the validity of alternative parental models, nevertheless it still feels – often quite urgently – the lack of a strong, conventional father. This conservatism continues to manifest itself in films as diverse as *Far From Heaven, Catch Me If you Can* and *Road To Perdition* (all 2002), all of which bind the father's failure to their unconventionality (2005, p.191).

Contextually, Peberdy expands this argument further and outlines the need to provide a wider arena for the paternal to be performed:

> 1990s fatherhood is arguable even more of a performance; without breadwinning to define his masculinity and identity as a father, he must confirm his fatherhood and masculinity in other ways. The implication is that with contemporary changes to the family structure, it has

become increasingly necessary to devise new cultural scripts for fatherhood and to redefine the parameters of masculinity (2011, p128).

This perceived and portrayed need for a conventional / unconventional father, and the corresponding new cultural scripts, and how he is both the cause and source of father hunger can now be analysed in greater depth by examining the symbols used by Mendes and Anderson in *Road to Perdition* and *Magnolia* when portraying both conventional and unconventional paternal masculinities.

Road to Perdition: the criminal father's journey into light

Mendes's second film in 2002, was, on the surface, a conventional gangster film, located in a specific time period and geography (the American Mid-West/Chicago area in the winter of 1931) and was based on a graphic novel by Max Allan Collins. Ostensibly the story of how an Irish mob hitman and enforcer, (who was conveniently a First World War hero), Michael Sullivan (Tom Hanks), takes his revenge on his employers after they murder his wife and youngest son after the elder son witnesses a mob hit, the film[33] both cemented Mendes' reputation as a director and also marked the beginning of him being considered an auteur, albeit with reservations: 'It's not the John Woo film envisioned by Collins; it is instead and unquestionably a Sam Mendes film. It is nonetheless a success' (Oxoby, 2002, p.111). Whilst the film is comfortably located within the gangster genre (signalled by the use of signature motifs and tropes such as Thompson machine guns, black getaway cars and stereotypical gangster clothing such as long dark trench coats and wide-brimmed hats), the main difference to other films in its genre is that it approaches the subject matter from a markedly different angle, namely examining the henchman and his family through the perspective of a twelve year boy, Michael junior (Tyler Hoechlin), and the violence that they suffer when the familial and societal power structures that surround the family, and they are an integral part of, turn against them. This has echoes of an older, almost mythic like tale, a point picked up by Beck:

> *Road to Perdition* is such a tale, honoured for the strength of and depth of all its elements, especially the performances…Here is a straightforward version of the old story of an honourable, loyal, and violent man whose family is destroyed and whose own life is threatened by the self-centred cruelty of those he served and who owed him good treatment (2003, p.25).

Oxoby concurs with this view when he points out the similarity to other, more classical narratives 'more than one film critic has compared *Road to Perdition* to Greek tragedy, in which, regardless of the choices the characters make, their fates are sealed' (2002, p.111). This observation

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[33] From a commercial aspect, the film was greeted with both popular acclaim, albeit occasionally hysterical ('The greatest gangster film since *The Godfather*' – *News of the World*) and corresponding box office take ($80 million budget against a $181 million gross, ref: www.boxofficemojo.com).

around the mythic quality of the film also is reminiscent of Joseph Campbell's arguments: 'Freud, Jung and their followers have demonstrated irrefutably that the logic, and the deeds of myth survive into modern times' (1949, p.4). Added to the classic archetypal narrative foundations of the film is the emphasis on the father-son relationships that permeate the film, from Rooney's sharply differentiated natural and surrogate sons, Connor Rooney (Daniel Craig) and Michael Sullivan respectively, and Michael Snr's relationship with Michael Jr. Mendes demonstrates keen awareness of the mythical narrative logic within his film by virtue of his mediation of the imagery and awareness of masculine development and paternal relationships, with the story involving classical themes and motifs of violence, appeasement, and sacrifice, themes that are dealt with from different aspects by Freud and Jung. Alongside the mythic elements, the genre and historical setting echoes Hamad's earlier point about historical locations being deliberately used to locate paternal postfeminist representations:

> '…in films like these the past is configured as a safe space in which to locate and idealize archaic formations of masculinity, a scenario typically negotiated through a mediating discourse of post-feminist fatherhood. These masculinities thus appear divested of political charge as their cultural recidivism is naturalized by their displacement to historical settings (2014, p.28).

The fathers and sons depicted here are engaged in complex and tension-ridden patterns of relating, echoing the masculine journey outlined at the beginning of the chapter, but fleshed out with telling details and skilled use of cinematic features, techniques, and most important of all for the purposes of the thesis, symbols. The reductive psychoanalytical theories of Freud and Lacan are useful in reducing complexity to a singular theory (Oedipus complex), but a post-Jungian interpretation affords a greater range of interpretation, around symbols, for example. We will analyse three overarching symbolic features and motifs that Mendes uses consistently within the film, namely spaces, water and guns[34]. Before the symbolic aspects are tackled, awareness of the potential limits of Jungian symbolism, outlined in the previous chapter, need to be made explicit. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley argue that:

> While the Jungian view of images appears to be flexible, intuitive and non-rational, in fact it is highly codified, constrained and structured…in this respect, Freudian and Jungian views of the image and the symbol are actually much closer than they first appear, and much closer than Jung himself allows for (2017, p.65).

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[34] Mendes dedicated *Road to Perdition* to his cinematographer Conrad L. Hall, who received a posthumous Oscar for his work on the film.

Consequently, whilst Jungian symbol interpretation will be followed, paradoxically there needs to be maintained a healthy scepticism of the meanings assigned to the symbols, in effect building on the work carried out by previous scholars, but being mindful of differing interpretations. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley comment further:

> Looking for a definitive meaning in a film is not a mature attitude because it gives an illusion of safety and control. True meaning is unpredictable, exciting or even dangerous, and is linked to that moment in space and time when the film is being watched by this particular audience (ibid, p.20-21).

The danger is that by over-literalising the symbols, analysis can lead to what is termed by Bassil-Morozow and Hockley 'reverse alchemy' which can 'transmute[s] the affect-laden symbolic quality of the image into a leaden literal description' (ibid, p.74). Clearly, this is inimical to deeper understanding of the symbolic power of film, and is similar to the caution urged by Fredericksen when regarding semiotic interpretation; we need to bear in mind that the classical semiotic approach is intent on eliminating mystery from a cultural product; to make the unknown known. This can also lead to 'reverse alchemy'. Whereas a psychoanalytical approach thrives on making the unknown, known, in effect decoding symbols (the image and symbol functioning as an obstacle), a post-Jungian approach is to restore the unknown as a method or gateway to experiencing other aspects of the psyche. As Fredericksen puts it:

> The semiotic attitude is ultimately limiting because it either denies the existence of the symbolic realm by definition, or denies its existence in practice by attempting to explain symbolic expressions semiotically. Frequently it does both simultaneously since the two denials implicate one another. The limiting character of the semiotic attitude involves a clear hubris of – and often a fear by – the rational and the conscious mind toward the irrational and unconscious mind (2001, pp.27-28).

With these caveats borne in mind, attention can now be turned to a closer engagement with the symbology and semiotics of the film.

Dangerous spaces, dark journeys

The masculine and paternal journeys in *Road to Perdition* are indicated and delineated sharply by Mendes's deliberate and symbolic use of space. When Michael Sullivan junior is first shown (just after the credits) he is narrating the beginning voice-over overlooking Lake Michigan in the town of Perdition (Fig 3.1), although we do not know that yet. We are overlooking the lake with him, deliberately placed behind him so we do not see his face, only hear his solemn voice-over, in effect, an almost otherworldly narrator and presence. This ethereal scene is almost spiritual in nature,

in that it invokes a dream-like state emphasized with an accompanying palette of off-whites and light greys.

Figure 3.1   Michael Junior (Tyler Hoechlin) contemplating his life in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Figure 3.2   Michael Jnr returning to a safe domestic space in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Dissolving to the younger Michael coming home from school with his bicycle in the winter snow (Fig 3.2), Michael Jnr enters the home that he inhabits with his family, namely his father, Michael Snr, his mother (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and younger brother Peter (Liam Aiken). Whilst the mother's space (Fig 3.3) is the kitchen (she dominates and controls this area throughout the film) Michael Jnr is sent up to his parents' bedroom to fetch his father down for dinner.

Figure 3.3   The Sullivans at dinner, with the mother (Jennifer Jason Leigh) rather than the father (Tom Hanks) controlling this domestic space in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Figure. 3.4   *Road to Perdition'*s Michael Jnr approaching his parents' bedroom, an explicitly adult space (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

This area is clearly marked out of bounds for Michael Jnr, with Mendes framing Michael tightly (Fig 3.4) as he progresses down the corridor, increasing the sense that he is nearing an area he should not be trespassing on. Michael pauses half way along the corridor when he senses his father being there. Switching to his POV and getting closer, and at this point he becomes a voyeur, like the audience, he watches with growing interest and awe through a middle framed half-open door as his father first takes off his jacket and begins to unload his paternal paraphernalia onto the marital bed (another parental and sexual space which Michael Jr is not allowed near). Firstly, car and house keys (symbolic of domestic power and security) are fished out and deposited. Next comes the father's wallet (symbolically redolent of money and its attendant material power) and finally, (and most jarringly for both the audience and for the son), a large Colt.45 automatic pistol (Fig 3.5), signifying the power of life and death. As discussed in Chapter One, Michael Sullivan Sr is symbolically delineated as an American father in that he possesses security, money and also the power of violence, and more significantly from an individuative perspective, his son is witness to the father's power.

Figure 3.5   The first glimpse of the father's symbolic power, via a gun, that catalyses Michael Jnr's own masculine journey *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Symbolically speaking, and individually, money, a gun and keys can possess any number of meanings; referencing the symbolic context from previously, these symbols *together* portray the father's role as a symbolically and semiotically explicit figure of power at this juncture. The paternal is thus established under what Jung described as *logos*, or the rule of the father[35]; and is signed as both provider and protector for the family in the material world. The son, for his part, can only watch from afar into this explicitly adult and masculine space that he is not yet ready or old enough to inhabit, and, still acting on his mother's instructions, call his father down for dinner. Mendes, however, takes this further. This tantalising glimpse into a man's world and viewing masculine symbols, sets rise in Michael Jnr heroic illusions about his father due to this space being filled by a psychological vacuum. There are consequent dangers within this space that are filled with illusions as Bly reminds us when referencing Alexander Mitscherlich's *Society Without the Father* (1974) and what can happen when the truth of a situation is not made explicit:

> ...a hole appears in the son's psyche. When the son does not see his father's workplace or what he produces, does he imagine his father to be a hero, a fighter for good, a saint, or a white knight? Mitscherlich's answer is sad: demons move into that empty place – demons of suspicion (1990, p.95).

Mendes portrays Michael Jnr as initially largely avoiding these demons of suspicion; in a cleverly-shot exchange between the brothers in a darkened bedroom, Michael Jnr persuades his brother Peter that their father works for Mr Rooney carrying out secret heroic missions, a son idolising what his father does, despite having no real knowledge of what he does. During this exchange, Michael is reading cheap hero comics under his bedclothes involving agents fighting shadowy criminals, a deliberate irony when set against the reality of what his father really does for a living.

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[35] The rule of the father (*logos*) is discussed at length by Jung, and is compared and contrasted to *eros*, the rule of the mother. In a sense, it is the delineation of a binary set of worlds, the interior and the exterior.

It is not until later that he partially learns the truth from his mother about what his father does for a living in order 'to put food on the table for us!' as his mother sharply reminds him, that he starts to face the truth of his father's occupation. This maturation process begins with the family visiting Mr Rooney's house for the wake of Finn McGovern's (Ciaran Hinds) brother who has died a violent death during the course of working for Mr Rooney, later revealed to be the fault of Connor Rooney (Daniel Craig), Mr Rooney's treacherous and wayward adult son. In this space, dominated by John Rooney, lies the seed of Michael's coming of age; he overhears his father and Connor Rooney talking about a meeting with Finn, and he decides to smuggle himself along. Hiding in the backseat of the family car (the garage being another overtly masculine space where Michael Snr keeps his deadly tools of the trade safely locked away), Michael Jnr spies on the warehouse where Finn, Michael Snr, and Connor have a meeting ending in the death of Finn and one of his henchman (Figs 3.7 and 3.8). Mendes deliberately shoots the scene low from Michael Jnr's perspective, once again the framing tight and claustrophobic, the child (and the audience) again playing the voyeur and looking in on where men conduct deadly business (Fig 3.6).

Figure 3.6   Tensions begin to build in *Road to Perdition*…(The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Figure 3.7   …until guns are drawn… (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Figure 3.8 – …and Michael Jnr sees Connor (Daniel Craig) cold-bloodedly execute McGovern (Ciaran Hinds) (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

The shock and disillusionment of Michael Jnr with witnessing his father killing in cold blood, directly leads to the main narrative arc of the story, with Connor killing Michael Snr's family and attempting to have Michael Snr killed by another lackey in order to stop any potential witnesses to his own betrayal of his father's business interests. After the mother and Peter are killed by Connor Rooney in their own home, the domestic and family space is now tainted and invaded, a supposedly safe space no more. Michael Snr forcefully reiterates this point to Michael Jnr as they flee the danger: 'This is not our home anymore!' The last shot of their home deliberately frames Michael Jnr's bicycle as black and stranded, lying somehow bereft on the lawn. This is a clear symbolic and semiotic break with childhood and a powerful signal that he is now in a dangerous transition phase of his life. Symbolically, there are now no safe spaces for a child; Michael must learn to grow up and inhabit the dangerous and violent masculine space and world of men and wider American society.

Their new home, and masculine space, is now the family car, affording a degree of mobility, but it is also rootless and insecure. It also acts as the site of masculine bonding. When Michael Jr tearfully and angrily blames himself for the family deaths, his father stops driving and they get out, arguing furiously. In an affecting scene in a ploughed earthen field (possibly deliberately chosen to reflect the unconscious truth), his father, by dint of forceful paternal energy, helps him to understand that he was not to blame for the deaths. As Hamad puts it:

> Mike [Sr} enacts protective paternalism in extremis when his wife and younger son are murdered…The paternal melancholia of the widowed single father thus frames Mike's characterization, although the immediate need to mobilize his protectorate fatherhood and secure Michael's safety prevents the film from dwelling on his affective state for long; as he curtly informs Michael, "I have to protect you now" (2014, p.35).

In a deliberately awkward scene, Michael Snr makes an attempt to reach out to Michael Jr and gruffly asks what it is that his son learns at school as they are driving (Fig 3.9). The car, symbol and sign of power in that it directly represents mobility and agency, and can only be (officially) driven by adults

can also be viewed as the space for a masculine mini-initiation of sorts in that father and son begin to emotionally connect and bond over Michael Jr learning to drive, the car being a key part of American life.

Figure. 3.9 – In *Road to Perdition*, father and son begin to tentatively establish a bond in a safe space (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

This adult skill, coming to Michael Jr courtesy of his father (and indicative of paternal power and knowledge being passed down via the masculine continuum), is shown to be useful later in the narrative when Michael Snr is wounded by the hired assassin Harlan Maguire (Jude Law). It is Michael Jr who assumes the responsibility and drives them both to a safe retreat, a farmhouse owned by an elderly couple who look after the wounded father and nurse him back to health. The relatively safe space of the car is compromised, and Michael Sr realises that their situation has to be brought to a final resolution.

Mendes displays a symbolic awareness again when composing Michael Snr's penultimate meeting with his surrogate father, John Rooney. Taking place in the basement of a church (Figs 3.10 and 3.11), this site resonates with a number of symbolic meanings. As mentioned above, traditionally in Jungian psychology, any underground spaces signify the unconscious, and the descent into the unconscious, very often meeting some archetypal aspect of the Shadow whilst located there. In this scene, the space is not only dark, cold, dank and uninhabited, but filled with broken and disused religious icons and statues (presumably Catholic, given the Irish ancestry of the gang), hinting strongly at the spiritual state of both men.

Figure. 3.10   Surrogate father (Paul Newman) and son in church, about to confront unconscious and shadow aspects of their psyches within *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Figure 3.11   In *Road to Perdition* both men are located beneath a symbolic space of redemption, replete with abandoned religious icons (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

This deliberate use of redundant religious imagery and the location, is a potent reminder to the audience of the spiritual state of both men and reflected by the following angry exchange between surrogate father and surrogate son:

ROONEY: There are *only* murderers in this room. Michael, open your eyes! This is the life we chose. The life we lead. And there is only one guarantee – none of us will see heaven.

SULLIVAN: Michael could.

ROONEY: Then do everything that you can to see that that happens.

Mendes's use of this symbolism is obvious and overt, arguably even heavy-handed; both men are on their way to hell (beneath a church, place of redemption, and consequently unlikely to find any). As the crypt can be viewed as representing the unconscious, we can posit that Michael Snr is now confronted by Shadow aspects of his psyche, and also by his own chosen surrogate paternal telling him a hard truth. This confrontation illuminates the chance of redemption that Michael Snr

has before him. Despite being a murderer, he can still prevent his son from following him down a violent path. This redemption, however, comes at a heavy price; in order to get to Connor Rooney and complete his vengeance, Michael Snr must violently supplant his surrogate father, John Rooney. After Michael Snr's execution of Rooney and most of his gang (analysed in the next section), and his subsequent execution of Connor, the masculine spaces *appear* again to be safe for father and son. Father and son decide to go to their relative's house on the lake in the town Perdition, a seemingly safe space to recuperate and begin the next phase of their lives. However, the now deformed assassin Maguire, who has been lying in wait for them, manages to mortally wound Michael Snr by shooting him in the back (Fig 3.12) in a wordlessly composed, almost ghostly, scene, highly reminiscent of the opening sequence that introduces to the story.

Figure 3.12   The bloodied and dying father at the end of *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

In turn, as he gloats over Michael Snr dying in front of him, Maguire is challenged by Michael Jnr (Fig 3.13) threatening him with his own pistol.

Figure 3.13 – The son stands at a crossroads in *Road to Perdition,* about to become a killer himself (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

As this tense standoff proceeds to a potential dangerous climax, his father shoots Maguire from behind, thereby saving Michael from going down a road to violence, and redeeming himself from his previous parricidal actions when he killed his own surrogate father. This act of sacrifice and redemption can be seen as highly symbolic in terms of Michael Jr's spiritual development (in the graphic novel, he is narrating the story from his calling as priest).

Figure 3.14 – The father in *Road to Perdition* ensures that his son does not become like him (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

The mythic qualities of violence and blood being shed, are mediated here symbolically, with violence paying back violence to achieve narrative resolution (Fig 3.14). The space that Michael now inhabits is a liminal one with his spiritual safety ensured, from a post-Jungian perspective, the father has made a profound psychic transformation with his sacrifice for his son. The film ends as it begins at the lakeside, a masculine initiatory journey and cycle successfully embarked on and completed with Michael Jnr completing his original voiceover from the beginning describing his father in front of the lake, water being a constant motif that Mendes uses throughout the film. It is this symbol that we now turn to, providing as it does, an archetypal sign for death, and, by extension, dark or shadow masculinity.

Water, death, spirit and the unconscious

As both an archetypal symbol and sign (both an unknown and known according to Fredericksen) water is traditionally to be held as being of primal importance within mythology and culture. Nothing can live without it and it is referred to more than once as a substance that is key to existence. As Mircea Eliade expresses it in Stevens' study of symbology *Ariadne's Clue*: 'Water symbolizes the whole of the potentiality: it is the *fons et origo,* the source of all possible existence…Water symbolizes the primal substance from which all forms come and to which they will return' (1998, p.130). Water, therefore, has undeniably strong archetypal overtones and it is these that Mendes invokes when he mediates his images that run throughout the film. This exploration of water as both a sign and a symbol appeals to the conscious and unconscious parts of

the psyche, and is a key motif in the construction of masculinities within the film. Water is the first symbol that is directly encountered (the lake), the camera closing slowly in on the back of Michael Jnr as his voiceover begins the film. Dissolving to the snowy weather and landscapes of the Sullivan home town, Mendes uses a deliberately chilly and stark palette of monochrome colours. The next time water features prominently is at the wake for Finn McGovern's brother. This scene is key for a number of reasons, not least of which it not only introduces the major characters of the film, but also the thematic concerns. As the Sullivan family approach the body to pay their respects, both Peter and the mother refuse to come close, Peter being (naturally for a child) scared of death. The mother hushes him away, and Michael Snr and Michael Jnr are left to confront the corpse which has been put on ice that is slowly melting and running into pots (Figs 3.15a and b). Michael questions his father about this practice, to be told gruffly that the cold preserves the body better.

Figures. 3.15a and 3.15b   The coffin and ice – water standing in as symbols for spirit and mortality in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Michael then raises his eyes over the edge of the coffin (framed as a split screen) to look at the body; this is his first sighting of death (the sign), and of the world of spirit (the symbol). It is symbolically significant that in the film it is the men, or rather, the man and his son who is to become a man, that are closest to death here. Death is both the concern of, and in the realm of, men and the shadow masculine within the film, and this theme saturates the film, reflected and invoked by Mendes' use of a ghostly palette of colours and costumes, the father and the men almost always wearing heavy protective coats and shadow-casting hats.

The next time water is encountered as a symbol, it is in the form of the heavy rainstorm that is the background to the fatal meeting between Connor, Michael Snr and Finn McGovern referred to earlier, Mendes by this point cementing the symbolism (again arguably heavy-handedly). The theme is more subtly handled when the mother and Peter are murdered by Connor in the bathroom, (Fig 3.16), the image of innocent souls being cleansed, before being dispatched to the afterlife, a striking one.

Figure. 3.16 – Innocent lives about to be taken – water again signifying death and spirit in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Stevens comments about the use of this motif

> As an agent of purification before entering a sacred temenos, to worship or make sacrifice, the universal symbolism of ablution is readily understandable. Dirt dissolves in water and is washed away. Immersion in water, therefore, removes contamination; it cleanses and renders pure (1998, p.130).

Perhaps the most overt display of this symbol and signifier comes with the climactic shootout between Michael Snr and Rooney's gang (Fig 3.17) which takes place in the pouring rain on the home town main street. This scene is carefully orchestrated, the violence being balletic but deadly, blood (more fluid) mingling with the rain as Michael Snr carries out his deadly task. When John Rooney, the dark patriarch, is finally confronted by his surrogate son (Figs 3.18 and 3.19) one last time at the end of this scene and utters the line: 'I'm glad it's you Michael', water is drenching both of them, hiding Michael Snr's tears (more water) as he reluctantly guns down his surrogate father in what appears to be a classically Oedipal conflict. However, if we examine this scene more carefully, this particular encounter demonstrates that there is no mother to possess. Rather, this is an example of an older, more primal act of retribution and a removal of a dangerous and betraying father, a father who favours his own son (Connor) over Michael, despite the obvious differences in their temperaments, and the fact that Connor betrayed his own father's business interests.

Figure 3.17   Towards the end of *Road to Perdition,* death is approaching for the dark patriarch after his gang is massacred (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Figure 3.18   Michael Sullivan Snr prepares to commit what appears to be an Oedipal act in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Figure 3.19   'I'm glad it's you Michael.' The surrogate patriarch accepts his fate in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

In killing his beloved surrogate paternal, Michael Snr redeems himself and John Rooney, the violence and rain arguably being depicted as a cleansing spiritual action. Ronnberg and Martin's description

of some of the qualities and symbolism of rain echo the above: 'Yet rain can also come as the language of divine retribution, in the destructive waters of the deluge. As symbol and metaphor, the details of nature's rains reflect inner psychic dispositions' (2010, p.62). In what can be argued to be a deliberate circular ending to another narrative arc, Michael Snr is shadowed by a tracking shot as he stalks through Connor's hotel suite only stopping when he calmly executes Connor in his bath (Fig 3.20), resonating strongly and deliberately echoing Connor's earlier crime against the younger son and the mother.

Figure 3.20   Water again signalling death and retribution in *Road to Perdition*, with Connor dead in his bathtub (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

By the end of the film, it comes as no surprise that violence is likely to be present when water is again a major presence at the house at Perdition by the lakeside. The ostensible peace and calm that is present is shattered bloodily and shockingly by Michael Snr's mortal wound from Maguire, this particular camera angle conveyed via reflections and windows. That he manages to kill his killer and save his son from going down the same road is conveyed symbolically as he achieves a redemption before he dies. Water then not only is a sign for death, but a symbol for spirit. Ronnberg and Martin highlight how lakes have carried an archetypal symbolic resonance:

> The lake, for many peoples, has been a symbol of the land of the dead, of life gone missing into the fluid substance and darkness of another world…Standing at water's edge and gazing out over the surface, we pause and give way to dream, reflection, imagination and illusion: to other worlds below and beyond in ourselves, making lake symbolically the entry, for good or ill, into psyche's unconscious dimensions (ibid, p.44).

This act of reflection by Michael Jnr is referenced directly in the final shot, a circularity achieved as Michael Jr narrates the end of his story, looking out over the lake (Fig 3.21) and gazing into his past as he remembers his violent, but redeeming father who saved both himself and his son by his sacrificial death. It is strongly implied that the son has transcended the father here, rather than become like him, a key difference between psychological approaches.

Figure 3.21   The story ends as it begun, with Michael Jnr by the lake, symbol of death, and of unconscious psychic dimensions in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company).

On a similar theme, we can now analyse the final listed symbol that is used in the film, the tool(s) of Michael Snr and Maguire's trade as killers, the classic masculine phallic symbol: the gun.

<u>Gunned down: the dangerous phallus</u>

The gun as phallic symbol has long been recognised within cinema almost as long as cinema has been in existence[36] and its interpretation as such is accepted to the point of cliché. Whether it's Tarantino, Hitchcock, Ford, Bigelow, Coppola or any other major director within crime or thriller genres, the gun is most often than not used and employed as the archetypal masculine sign and symbol, resembling as it does on a visual and mechanical level, the phallus itself. Where we can differentiate between the two (psychoanalytical and post-Jungian) semiotic interpretations is what the gun represents. Whereas a classic Freudian semiotic take on the gun within *Road to Perdition* could involve an explicit and reductive sexual explanation around the father's phallus, the son, sexual competition between the different men within the film, and the eroticisation of violence (most likely homoerotic) culminating with the rain-soaked shootout and Oedipal death of John Rooney by his surrogate son Michael Snr, a post-Jungian explanation would be different. Whilst the masculine sign of the gun as phallus is undeniable, the simplistic sexual interpretation of the gun as phallus is a potentially problematic one. Firstly, the phallus is, above all, a sign and symbol of life, key within the masculine sexual act, both heteronormative and homonormative, and referenced throughout cultures as such. Conversely, by its nature, the gun is a device to kill, to take away life and consciousness, or at the very least, to threaten to; a tool of violence and pain, not of pleasure, unless it is sadistic pleasure as in Maguire's hands. With a post-Jungian interpretation, the gun then can be read, in effect, more as an oppositional symbol to the phallus, in effect the *shadow* phallus. To treat

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[36] A number of writers (Kelley 1995: McCaughey and King 2001; Clover 2015 to name but a few) have analysed the gun as fetishistic phallic symbol from a wide range of perspectives, notably Freudian and Lacanian. The gun is seen as a substitute penis with accompanying masculine power, although this power can also be harnessed by femininities (*Blue Steel*, Bigelow, 1989, USA).

the gun as a knowable phallic sign and to interpret it on a purely sexual and fetishistic level without recourse to the deeper significance of its power around life *and* death is to miss exploring this key symbol in more depth. There is also a masculine aspect to this symbol that warrants consideration. As Ronnberg and Martin state:

> Like other weapons, the gun packs its own eros, embodied by the legendary gunslingers that stalk their victims across the old American West. Its automatic conferral of phallus one-upmanship in standoffs and its seemingly sure-fire self-protection makes a gun's brass cartridges and intricate firing mechanisms especially seductive to men. Even a small boy understands what a gun does to its target long before he understands what death is. The pistol's fundamental maleness seems tacitly understood despite our campaign to shatter cultural constructs of gender, perhaps due to the widespread tradition of assigning hunting and fighting roles to males (2010, p.498).

To illustrate further, we can examine this sign and symbol by analysing Mendes' use and portrayal of the various guns within the film which effectively mark out the masculine journey, and, indeed shadows the emotional journey of Michael Jnr.

Our first sighting of a gun within the film is, as referred to earlier, when Michael Jnr is on the edge of the masculine/adult space of his father's bedroom and is effectively looking into the world of adults and men, a space that he cannot enter yet. The automatic pistol is taken out of his father's pocket last, which is significant in itself as it is the gun underpins the other two symbols of the wallet and the keys as being foundational to providing the other two signs. When Michael stows away in the masculine space of his father's car, his father places a case on top of the backseat where Michael is hiding. The audience, being aware of gangster films, can guess as to what's inside the case, a suspicion that is confirmed when Michael hear ominous metallic clicking sounds as something is assembled by Michael Snr. When Michael Jnr is spying on his father and Connor in the warehouse, just prior to the killings, we still do not see anything. When the killings take place, it is to the accompaniment of a deafening roar of the machine gun and the pings of the spent cartridge cases falling to the floor. The father is now revealed and portrayed as a bringer of death as well as a progenitor of life, the gun being a masculine sign of death and by extension, a masculine symbol of dark spiritual power and redemptive violence.

After the remaining Sullivans are forced to escape, Michael Snr forces his son to take a small revolver for protective purposes, despite Michael Jnr's strong initial misgivings. This is a classic example of an initiatory stage of the masculine continuative journey, symbolised by the small gun (reflecting Michael Jnr's smaller phallus), where the son is forced to grow up by the father and embrace the dark side of his masculine power, arguably symbolically demonstrating that to protect

ourselves from darkness, darkness sometimes has to be embraced. This theme is continued throughout the film as gradually guns begin to become more visible, both around the Sullivans and against them, as they fight to survive against their former protectors-turned-enemies. After Michael Snr is wounded (Fig 3.22) in the shoulder by Maguire's bullet, another stage of Michael Jnr's masculine journey is forced upon him when he is charged to take care of him, recognising that his father is mortal, can bleed, can be hurt, and can die.

Figure 3.22   The father's mortality is exposed in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

This realisation is also a reminder to Michael Jr that he is also mortal, and therefore vulnerable. Later, and prior to when Michael Snr slaughters Rooney's gang in the climactic rainstorm, we see him assembling from the beginning his classic gangster's weapon, the Thompson submachine gun, the symbol of the shadow phallus (Fig 3.23). From a cultural complex perspective, it is also symbolic of a classic American father's power, in effect, explicitly revealed in full. It is also significant in that it is this act that avenges his family's deaths with his phallic power.

Figure 3.23   The father's symbolic phallic power on display in a classic generic trope in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

Mendes shows us that the gun, therefore, is not merely a sexual phallic symbol, but a symbol of a darker spiritual power, the power to kill; in effect the shadow phallus. The film's narrative climax occurs at the lake house when Michael Snr, (for the first time in the film shown without his normal protective traditional gangster's uniform of dark hat and trench-coat) is gunned down by Maguire. At this point, Mendes portrays Michael Jnr's masculine journey as being nearly diverted down a dark road as he unhesitatingly points Maguire's own gun at its owner as Maguire prepares to take a picture of Michael Snr as he lays dying (the camera acting as another surrogate, but voyeuristic phallus) and nearly shoots him with it, but is saved at the last minute by Michael Snr's bullet (from a hidden gun) killing Maguire and thereby saving his son from his own fate. The gun is therefore also portrayed by Mendes as an ambivalent instrument of redemption, its power both deadly and life-saving; a warrior's tool that can save people as well as kill them. This polysemous post-Jungian perspective in regard to multiple aspects of a symbol allows for multiple interpretations when performing textual analysis.

In summary so far, what the previous symbols and signs have in common is their deep connection to the masculine journey that both Michael Snr and Jnr are shown to take in the film. Indeed, it is through the symbols and signs that Mendes mediates the gender journeys that are portrayed here. Mendes depicts the American family here as a social construct that is located within the American cultural complex and dominated by the patriarch. The Sullivans and Rooneys are subscribers to a shadowy version of the American Dream and who are shown to ruthlessly turn upon their own members when threatened. What else is noticeable is the near total lack of the feminine; this is a film shot through with masculine presences, whether paternal or filial, in effect edging out the feminine, echoing Hamad and Kord and Krimmer's points from earlier. Once the mother dies, she is barely mentioned again. The only other feminine presences in the film are her sister, a waitress and a prostitute, all of whom play short-lived supporting roles, and in all cases with very little to say or do. As Kord and Krimmer point out 'it is little wonder that Father stands absolute and absolutely alone in these films. The pairing of names in both films already indicates that father and son form a symbiotic unit' (2011, p.46). It is arguably also a symbolic unit considering that male symbols are apparently the only ones that count within *Road to Perdition,* a film overwhelmingly concerned with the American masculine and the American paternal.

What kids *do* know – the exploitative father in *Magnolia*

With Paul Thomas Anderson and his third film, *Magnolia* (1999), we can now examine a different auteurist and symbolic approach to the father–child son relationship. Whereas Mendes approaches the subject as a Hollywood player (albeit a non-American one) and deals in seemingly straight-forward masculine narratives and obvious use of symbols and signs, always adapted from

other existing sources, Anderson is, in some ways, more an obvious auteur who operates in that blurred realm where the American indie fringe blends with mainstream Hollywood (the so-called 'Indiewood' [King, 2009]) and is deliberately self-reflexive and self-referential in his filmmaking approach.

Figure 3.24   Jimmy Gator (Philip Baker Hall) and his gameshow in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

King also outlines another reason why these films are different from mainstream Hollywood fare: 'The thematic resonances of these films also have more in common with their literary/novelistic equivalents than with the stuff of dominant Hollywood narrative' (2005, p.90). In other words, there is a deliberately more nuanced and novelistic quality to this kind of cinema. Linked in with this assertion, and having learned his craft via work experience in television and popular music videos, Anderson brings a different sensibility to his depiction of masculinities, particularly the complexities of the many father-son relationships that abound in the film, all eventually to be revealed to be connected with the symbolic process of a dying elderly father, namely, TV patriarchs Earl Partridge (Jason Robards) and (Fig 3.24) Jimmy Gator (Philip Baker Hall). To examine in closer detail the masculine journey between the father and his child son, as with *Road to Perdition*, we can analyse the depiction of the quiz show (deliberately entitled: 'What Do Kids Know?') boy genius Stanley Spector's (Jeremy Blackman) relationship (Fig 3.25) with his father Rick Spector (Michael Bowen).

Figure 3.25   The paternal as intellectual and media pimp within *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Echoing our earlier points in Chapter One about short cuts to achieving the American Dream of material success, Spector Snr is portrayed as a venal and pushy man who reveals his greed about what his son can do for him. In an uncomfortable scene as he watches his son effectively perform as a cash cow for him he exclaims: 'My little fucker! I have no idea where he gets this stuff!'

Figure 3.26   The angry paternal, Rick Spector (Michael Bowen) furious at his son in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Anderson's portrayal of Rick calls to mind one of the four broad types of negative father that John Lee outlines in his book *At My Father's Wedding* (1992) and that Biddulph summarises thusly:

> The Critical Father – Full of put-downs and nit-picking, driven by his own frustrations and anger. This father was certainly active in the family, but in totally negative, frightening ways. 'Is that the best you can do?' 'Can't you get anything right?' 'You stupid idiot, look what you've done!' Whatever was frustrating him – his job, his own father, his lack of success in life, even just his hopes for his children – even the sweet wine of his love was turned into an acid which ate away at his family's well-being (1995, p.108).

Anderson depicts Rick as fitting this description; he is first shown in a hurry for an audition (perhaps he's an actor; it is not made clear), he then berates his son as they travel to the TV studio where Stanley will perform for money that Rick will take. Ostensibly Rick is acting as a parent, and fulfilling a paternal role, but in actuality Anderson symbolically portrays him as a kind of paternal pimp who uses and intellectually prostitutes his own son for material gain. Rick is driven by the rewards of the American Dream, but his paternal love has fallen into the American shadow and its love of material success. Anderson depicts a deeply troubled father-son relationship here; arguably drawing inspiration from his time working on a very similar children's TV quiz show in the 1980s (Sperb, 2013). The father's boasting to other parents in the studio viewing gallery displays not only his misplaced pride, but also his arrogance and ultimately his impotence, with his income being earned by his son, rather than by him. This parental insecurity grows the more when the film starts

to build to the multiple narrative denouements and Stanley's climactic on-air rebellion articulated by him when he is denied a much-needed toilet break:

> STANLEY: I AM NOT A DOLL...I' M NOT SILLY AND CUTE. I'M SMART SO THAT SHOULDN'T MAKE ME SOMETHING, SOMETHING SO PEOPLE CAN WATCH HOW SILLY IT IS THAT HE'S SMART? I KNOW. I KNOW THINGS. I KNOW I HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHROOM I HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHROOM AND I HAVE TO GO!

Anderson uses the symbology of the boy's body and its physical frailty and basic needs as an effective brake and reality check to his father (Fig 3.26). In particular, the use of urine has several symbolic and semiotic aspects. Stanley's outburst is him finally breaking through his emotional barriers and expressing his anger; he is literally 'pissed off'. Ronnberg and Martin also note that urine can:

> …denote(s) the urgency of emotional and creative self-expression, the feeling-toned "yielding or allowing the flow of what needs to come through one"…we find urine also representing affect that is hot, intense, personal and sometimes not ideally contained (2010, p.426).

After this outburst, Stanley gets into trouble with both his father (who displays a sudden and shocking violent streak when he throws a chair at the viewing window after watching his son's pleas) and the floor manager of the TV studio (Fig 3.27).
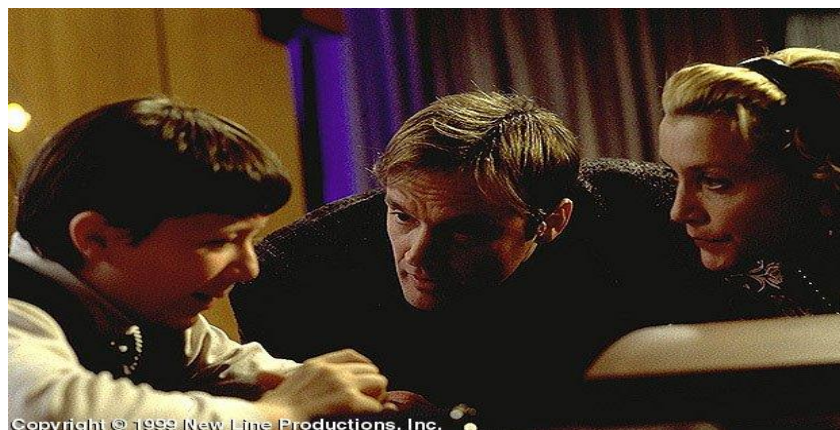
Figure 3.27   Stanley (Jeremy Blackman) under parental and studio pressure in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

He also arouses the ire of the other two child contestants who are depicted as spoilt and venal as most of the adults around them, the greed and dysfunction of the entertainment industry being effectively generationally passed down. In effect, the sacred space of the studio (signed as sacrosanct within the

film for diegetic performative and commercial reasons) is symbolically defiled by the physical realities of the child's body. The voyeuristic nature of television is reinforced here as all gazes are on Stanley and, symbolically, the vulnerable aspect of the Child archetype. Later, after the climactic rain of frogs has brought the film to a conclusion; Stanley displays almost preternatural levels of maturity in a short but intense scene with just him and his father, shot by Anderson with the father lying on a bed in the foreground, his anger largely spent, contemplating his life after Stanley's meltdown has cost him any future appearances on the show, and therefore an income.

> STANLEY: Dad...Dad.

> Rick opens his eyes, but doesn't move.

> STANLEY: You have to be nicer to me, Dad.

> RICK: Go to bed.

> STANLEY: I think that you have to be nicer to me.

As Carmago summarises:

> The focus on the present means that, although the characters in *Magnolia* clearly have pasts, they do not have histories. We do not know…what has happened to Stanley's mother, or whether his father is successful in his career (2002, p.1).

All that Anderson shows in the film is that there is just Stanley and Rick, a masculine unit of two, with no mother present or referred to anywhere in the film. Their history is a blank one; the feminine not being present, with a dysfunctional masculinity centred around Stanley's now unstable TV career as a quiz kid on display. Symbolically speaking, and similar to *Road to Perdition*, there is no feminine energy here; and the future trajectory of the child son is in doubt without this (presumably) more caring presence to negate the darker aspects of the father. Stanley's possible future fate is symbolically indicated by Anderson by the presence of former quiz kid Donnie Smith (William H Macey). He is a now washed up salesman (Fig 3.28), his past glories of TV celebrity a long time behind him. Stanley's final request to his father, delivered with an unsettling urgency, hints at a possible different future than Donnie, who the audience learns had parents who also exploited him and cast him adrift after spending all the money he earned for them.

Figure 3.28   Washed up former quiz kid Donnie Smith (William H. Macy); what Stanley may grow up to become in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Anderson depicts the relationship between Stanley and Rick with a high degree of ambiguity; this vaguely hopeful scene shows that Stanley is maturing, like Michael Jnr in *Road to Perdition*, in knowing what he needs from his father, and asking for it. Rather than a fixed symbol and dynamic that a psychoanalytical approach would apply, we can analyse this particular relationship as containing the capacity for the previously mis-used Child to transcend the American father and the focus on material gain. Stanley is starting to outgrow the paternal and move towards transcendence of his father, and his father's materialistic American Dream values. Like the Colonel and Ricky Fitts in *American Beauty*, the presence of both Donnie and Stanley in the film (although they never meet) strongly hint at an eternal present when it comes to the son – both are portrayed here as vulnerable, exploited and in a space of potential change, a position that has a strong symbolic and archetypal echo about it, again a post-Jungian perspective containing polysemous symbolic aspects. Anderson invests *Magnolia* with this potential for change and for healing; the American fathers in the film may be dark and dysfunctional, but the damage that they have wreaked on their children may just yet be healed in time.

American Beauty: Hidden desires of the dark father

Continuing with the theme of sons healing from psychic damage inflicted by damaged fathers, *American Beauty's* Colonel Fitts (Chris Cooper), Ricky Fitts' father, is also depicted as undergoing his own fatherly journey, albeit with much darker consequences for himself and for Lester, as he is forced, unsuccessfully, to confront repressed areas of his psyche that relate to his role as a dad and as a man. Like Lester, he has problems with his sexuality, unlike Lester, they relate to same-sex attraction that he has, until now, managed to repress. And, like Lester, the very portrayal of him as being sexual in any way plugs into American culture and American cinema's deep unease of recognising the father as a sexual being, especially a homosexual being. In *Bringing Up Daddy*

(2005), Bruzzi identifies representations within American cinema of the father figure as deeply problematic for a number of reasons, one of which is the de-eroticisation of the paternal; in terms of sexuality, 'the father is a figure of renunciation' (xvii). She goes on further:

> It is not only in the 1950s that the father is de-sexualised, compelled to renounce or repress his desirability if he is to become a good father. This abdication comes out in a number of ways: the father's body is very rarely on display, and when it is it commonly becomes a mark of his and his family's dysfunctionality. He is very rarely the object of sexual desire although, as in the comedies of the 1990s, he is frequently the chaste romantic hero. The sexual father is commonly bad or a pervert (most extremely in *Happiness*, [1998]) and for the majority of Hollywood fathers being a moral, symbolic guide is of greater importance than sex (ibid).

American Beauty not only overturns this trend, but symbolically uses American paternal sexuality, in this case homosexuality, as a way of both constructing and deconstructing masculinities. Bruzzi labels Colonel Fitts as 'a ludicrous caricature of a neighbour...a repressed homosexual; ex-US Marine who collects Nazi memorabilia' (ibid, p.184). Whilst this is largely true, as well as being overbearing, disciplinarian, militaristic and homophobic, Mendes depicts him as also being in profound mental pain (Fig 3.29).

Figure 3.29   The fearful and closeted gay American father (Chris Cooper) in *American Beauty* (Jinks/Cohen Company, 1999).

Beating his son over perceived infractions of the strict household code of conduct, Fitts is viewed by Hausmann as carrying out a 'sexualised disciplining of Ricky' (2004, p.125), a strong hint at the incestuous desire that Fitts *appears* to carry for his offspring, although, similar to Lester rejecting Angela's sexual offer, he chooses to approach an adult for sexual release. Through his accidentally viewing of Ricky's video tapes of a naked Lester working out in his garage, and the mistaken viewing of what appears to be (Fig 3.30) Ricky fellating Lester in the garage (he was

actually rolling a joint), the Colonel is forced to confront both his repressed homosexual desires, and his attraction to Lester.

Figure 3.30 – Acting as a voyeur, the Colonel's POV shows him a scene that forces him to acknowledge his sexual desires in *American Beauty* (Jinks/Cohen Productions, 1999).

Hausmann describes it thus: 'The scene registers *American Beauty's* insistence not only that vision and desire remain inextricably bound but that what we see barely conceals our own identifications and repressions, as well as our aggressions' (ibid, p.122). What Mendes allows us to see in this key scene, short though it is, is a psychic and symbolic throwback for the Colonel in that he may well be identifying with Ricky, remembering what it was like for himself at Ricky's age to be in a sexual situation with another man. The Colonel is suffering from the heteronormative American mores of suburbia and its denizens; his repression of his true sexual nature a high price to pay for conformity.

Whilst the Colonel's history is closed to us, Alan Ball has said in interviews[37] that he originally had the Colonel name his son after a male lover that he lost in the Vietnam war, but that this backstory was lost in the final draft of the screenplay. The Colonel's inner world soon comes to crisis point during the final scenes of the film, (together with a rainstorm, water again seeming to signify death, as in *Road To Perdition*) which has a zombie-like Fitts (under the influence of his long-repressed desires) staggering into Lester's garage (Figs 3.31, 3.32 and 3.33), a masculine space where Caroline Burnham only ever ventures once, his long repressed and buried desires finally breaking free from his Shadow.

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[37] Interview in the *American Beauty* published screenplay (1999).

Figure 3.31   In *American Beauty*, the Colonel slowly approaches the object of his desire… (Jinks/Cohen Company, 1999).

Figure 3.32   …repressed paternal sexuality finally breaking free (Jinks/Cohen Company, 1999).

Figure 3.33   The Colonel's desires are nearly consummated, only to be rebuffed by Lester, leading to fatal consequences later in *American Beauty* (Jinks/Cohen Company, 1999).

His attempts to kiss Lester are tactfully rebuffed, only to lead to Lester's death an hour or so later, Mendes effectively showing the repressed American paternal both physically and symbolically destroying the liberated American paternal. Symbolically, Fitts' hunger to be a father is depicted as being located firmly within his Shadow; his physical (bordering on sexual) abuse of Ricky coupled with his obsession with testing his son's urine, again picking up on the previous point in *Magnolia* about urine being a substance that is 'hot, intense, personal and sometimes not ideally contained' (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, p.426) and strict rules of behaviour, all site his paternal love within the darker side of his psyche, which Mendes depicts as leading to profoundly negative consequences.

For his own part, Ricky displays preternatural compassion and understanding of his father and his situation. During a scene where Ricky is again physically attacked by his father after Colonel

Fitts has seen his son and Lester in Lester's garage, he realises that by playing up to his father's self-loathing homophobia, he has a way out of his untenable situation and calmly states the truth about his father to his face: 'What a sad old man you are', effectively destroying his father's authority, a situation emphasised by Chris Cooper's performance (Fig 3.34) as he collapses and visibly shrinks before his son.

Figure 3.34   Colonel Fitts at breaking point in *American Beauty*, having beaten his son badly (Jinks/Cohen Company, 1999).

Mendes portrays Ricky as being in the last stage of the paternal journey and has effectively transcended his father at this point, and leaving behind his family with a final compassionate and sensitive request to his zombie-like mother (Alison Janney) to 'look after Dad'. Mendes shows him as having largely individuated as a male and he is pictured by the end of the film as a young adult, rather than a boy, his father hunger satiated, or even transcended. Ricky's chosen career as a highly successful marijuana dealer is arguably a symbolic satire on the American Dream and success story; the difference is that Ricky does his dealing as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. Ricky and the Colonel's father-son relationship, it is, on the surface, dysfunctional in the extreme, but Mendes shows that it is still possible for the son to survive this dysfunction and to complete the masculine journey, unlike the father, in effect an alternative take on the classic Freudian father-son struggle. As an auteur, Mendes articulates a very different father-son relationship and journey here, approaching and adapting seemingly straightforward narratives with an eye for numinous[38] archetypal images and symbols, analysed in more depth later on.

There Will Be Blood - Black oil and a dark soul

With the last film under analysis in this chapter, *There Will Be Blood,* Anderson depicts and mediates a much less hopeful picture of masculinities and the paternal than the gritty but ultimately

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[38] Numinous and numinosity can be defined as (Hauke and Alister, 2001, p.245): '…powerful emotional or spiritual experiences encountered either in dreams or waking consciousness. Although the power of the experience is archetypal, mysterious and enigmatic, an individual message is conveyed which remains deeply impressive.'

uplifting *Magnolia*. The story of Daniel Plainview (Day-Lewis) and his descent into greed-fuelled paranoia and madness is set in the early days of the Californian oilfields, an apt metaphor for patriarchal American capitalistic urges, successes and excesses. Here, Anderson depicts a determined and unflinching portrait of what can be termed shadow American patriarchy with a much darker view of fatherhood and the consequences of father hunger than in previous texts, refracted primarily through the character of Plainview. With the change in focus shifting from a complex and interwoven narrative played by an ensemble cast in *Magnolia* to a single character who dominates both the screen and the narrative discourses, the masculine journey is effectively depicted as a symbolic journey into a psychic void where the father and his *Logos* law may eventually rule supreme but in doing so, costs the male protagonist his soul.

Figure 3.35   Daniel Plainview taunting his old enemy Eli Sunday (Paul Dano) in *There Will Be Blood*, before killing him (Ghoulardi Film Company, 2007).

This is essentially the journey of a dark father, a violent and rapacious patriarch (Fig 3.35), described by Heyraud as 'a demonic force of nature, the incarnation of evil. His character embodies the underside of the American success story, stunningly illustrating how greed so tragically ignites violence' (2008, p.180). In terms of the filmic techniques that Anderson uses, there is a marked difference between the two films. Compared to *Magnolia* with its telling and intimate close-ups of the main characters and hyperkinetic camerawork and editing to reflect the inner turmoil of the relationships on show, *There Will be Blood* is a more sombre affair in terms of mise-en-scene with Anderson directing the camera in a series of tableaus and slow pans, enabled by supportive editing. This is also a film without much dialogue, what there is, is often biblical in flavour and starkly spoken, reflecting both the historical milieu and the discourses under examination. In a similar vein (no pun intended) there are a number of symbolic images within the film, including memorably epic scenes of oil as a metaphor for the earth's blood (a direct reference to the film's title), gushing out of the ground similar to the bleeding from a huge wound. As Bassil-Morozow and Hockley remind us 'Importantly, symbols should be respected and not over-interpreted; they are not signs with a fixed meaning but have multiple meanings' (2017, 52).   Accordingly, Anderson also signals oil as functioning within the film as power and money, but it also carries a dark spiritual charge. Early in

the film, and in a deliberately ritualistic manner (Figs 3.36 to 3.39), reminiscent of the Christian baptism ceremony, H.W.'s biological father symbolically anoints him on the forehead with a smudge of oil taken from a jet-black pond, looking like a huge and crude baptismal font.

Figure 3.36   In *There Will Be Blood*, the oil pond acts as a baptismal font (Ghoulardi Film Company, 2007).

Figure 3.37   HW and his biological father, later killed in an accident, in *There Will Be Blood* (Ghoulardi Film Company, 2007).

Figure 3.38   HW, about to enter into a darker world in *There Will Be Blood* (Ghoulardi Film Company, 2007).

This short scene is arguably deeply symbolic and numinous in that in consciously substituting holy water for oil, Anderson both uses and subverts this powerful initiation rite. Fontana states that: 'Baptism is a symbolic cleansing of sin – rebirth in the life-sustaining fluid of the earth-mother's womb' (1993, p.70). Stevens agrees: 'Baptismal initiation, for example, proceeds through the stages of baptism, chrism and communion; and these correspond to the three degrees of mystic life: purification, illumination, and union' (1998, p.216). Ronnberg and Martin also echo this potentially numinous act of rebirth:

> …Christian baptism, with its commitment to the life of the spirit over that of the flesh, was in itself a bathlike immersion, originally meant to symbolize drowning and representing death to the old life and one's rebirth as a new being (2010, p.604).

Anderson, however, symbolically subverts this ritualistic rebirth by depicting H.W. as being baptised into a much harsher realm as well as into the care of a dark father figure. Anderson's depiction of what is worshipped in this film, namely power, greed and money, are all represented here by oil, the economic and material lifeblood of the twentieth century, and a quintessentially American industry in that it contains all the ingredients of the American Dream.

Plainview's subsequent adoption of H.W. (Fig 3.39) briefly offers the chance of humanising him, as he cares for what Heyraud calls 'a son-partner who carries the thread of conscience and reflection, symbolizing the "divine child" that Daniel cannot integrate' (2008,p.179).

Figure 3.39   HW and his new father after being 'baptised' in *There Will Be Blood* (Ghoulardi Film Company, 2007).

This act of fathering affords Plainview a brief hope of redemption until the child suffers deafness due to an accidental well blow-out. Now crippled and consequently useless in his adoptive father's eyes, he is promptly packed off to school and away from Plainview's sight, another sly pun on his name, thereby causing Plainview to 'lose the only link to his already shattered sanity' (ibid). This slim chance at redemption for Plainview, in spite of his avowed dislike of humanity, is wasted

by him as he continues to carve out his own empire in the style of his contemporary American robber-barons. To emphasize his character's outlook on life Anderson has the usually taciturn Plainview outline his philosophy in an exchange with his possible half-brother (Fig 3.40) as a simple hatred of humanity and an ability only to see the failings in others.

Figure 3.40   *There Will Be Blood'*s Daniel and possible half-brother Henry (Kevin J. O'Connor), his confessor for his misanthropy (Ghoulardi Film Company, 2007).

McQuillan and McQuillan link this deep-seated misanthropy to the prevailing social and cultural ideas that were circulating in American society at the time: 'Plainview's ideology is reminiscent of the social Darwinistic theories prominent at the time that purported the benefits of the culling of the weak from society' (2008, p.273). As Karlyn comments on the film in Hamad 'the epic [film] celebrates nationhood, war, racial purity, and the "law of the father", offering spectacles of national violence and mythmaking in worlds peopled primarily by men' (2014, p.29). This assertion is questionable in that *There Will be Blood* has epic qualities (cinematography, etc.) but in effect shows Plainview and his philosophical outlook as deeply flawed and destructive, the worst kind of chauvinistic American masculinity. The dark father in this film is depicted as both beyond redemption, and more importantly, not interested in its possibility. The hunger to be a father, had he allowed it (and explicitly exposed by his enemy, Eli Sunday (Paul Dano) in a deeply telling confessional scene), may have redeemed Plainview, but Anderson steers the narrative towards dysfunctional patriarchalism, madness and violence.

Many years later, when Plainview is semi-retired, but still in control of his businesses, H.W. returns to him asking him to dissolve their business partnership so he can start out for himself. As H.W. has had the temerity to marry the sister of Plainview's arch enemy Eli Sunday, Plainview refuses and deliberately and cruelly taunts him about his ancestry and character. This is archetypal dark father behaviour, mocking and destroying any masculinity other than his own, including his own family, and his own masculine line, ultimately proving to be self-destructive and self-devouring. Heyraud describes this encounter in more detail:

His barbaric behaviour is alienating. A shred of redemptive possibility is expressed through the separation of H.W. from Daniel. If this were a dream or fairy tale, H.W.'s deafness could suggest a quiet inner connection that enables him to finally leave Daniel's house – a separation from the archetype of the "old King" presenting the possibility of new life. This is quite a heroic and hopeful stance – a very small spark of light in the midst of an atmosphere of darkness (2008, p.180).

Again, like Mendes before him, Anderson shows the son (Child archetype) making the first steps in transcending the American capitalist father, in this example, an enforced separation and determination to be never like him, expressed by H.W. with heartfelt feeling. When Plainview clubs to death Eli Sunday (the man who earlier forced him to admit that he had treated his son badly) in his bowling alley (Fig 3.41), and utters the final lines of the film: 'I'm finished' it can be read as both an explicit recognition that he is finished as a man and a damned soul. All his efforts and material riches essentially count for nothing: he is alone in the world and will end his life as a murderer.

Figure 3.41   *There Will Be Blood* ends with the father as murderer: 'I'm finished.' (Ghoulardi Film Company, 2007).

To conclude this chapter, both directors portray the masculine journey of the father-son relationships within the films as taking place within psychic darkness. Whilst both Anderson and Mendes demonstrate that the father can (potentially) achieve redemption in terms of the father and son relationship in *Magnolia* and *Road to Perdition* respectively, in both *American Beauty* and *There Will be Blood*, both father figures violently end their journeys in a psychic void, bereft of support, isolated and out of touch with their families, the masculine continuum being portrayed as largely broken. The American Dream is shown here to be a dangerous illusion that entrances and traps the father in restrictive models of relating, as well as damaging the child, in this case the son. Jung's definition of psychological and visionary art applies here in that the visionary is strongly hinted at with *Road to Perdition* in terms of Michaels Snr and Jnr having to make spiritual choices, referenced by Mendes in the deliberately ghostly and otherworldly shades of grey, white and black used throughout the film. *There Will be Blood* also references spirituality, but it is in terms of false

prophets and psychic and spiritual darkness. Linked in with these visions, the Child archetype, in this case the child son, is also developmentally symbolic. Bassil-Morozow notes that: 'Jung theorised that the child motif corresponded to a specific psychological process: the birth of the personality and its development and survival in the world' (2014, p.145). The presence of the male child in these films can be seen as allowing the directors to mediate father hunger as a process of masculine development (both psychological and spiritual); the hunger to be a father in both these cases turns in on itself and is destructive in the extreme, eventually leading to murder in both films. As Izod reminds us, 'films are vehicles for symbolic energy' (Hauke and Alister, 2001, p.16). Bruzzi has this to say about the desire and hunger for reconciliation in the masculine continuum:

> Reconciliation with the father remains the ultimate goal of the children within these films… reconciliation is by no means the same as closure; the former is a state of individual understanding, the latter is a definite narrative end (2005, p.180).

It is significant that there is no closure in any of the films, only a partial reconciliation (if any at all). Bruzzi again:

> This need to apportion blame and importance to the father and the concomitant desire to reach a rapprochement are all features found in these millennial films, although in none of these films is there a happy/child/father reunion. The fathers in these films hurt and hold back their children because their offspring cannot work out how to disentangle themselves from the oppressive patriarchal relationship (ibid).

It is this struggle to both connect and to separate, to transcend the American paternal and the patriarch, that mark the masculine journeys within the films discussed. Yet it is also this masculine struggle that is held to mark the son as becoming a man, a subject that is discussed in more depth and with more films, as well as the feminine presence making an appearance, in the next chapter around American fathers and adult sons.

FOUR

__Maturation of the masculine: Fathers and the adult son__

This chapter analyses the continuing journey of the father and son in terms of the adult son and the ongoing relationship with father figures, both natural and surrogate. Continuing the symbolic analysis in the previous chapter, it is worth further evaluating and exploring post-Jungian perspectives concerning symbols and archetypes as they relate to gender, as there is the danger (previously highlighted) of dogmatic interpretations of this theory narrowing, rather than amplifying, any arguments and discussions. Samuels has this to say on imagery and the post-Jungian perspective:

> …the archetypal images no longer need to conform to pre-existing criteria. …what is archetypal is to be found in the *eye of the beholder and not in a particular image itself*. With this assumption it is possible to set aside preconceived schemes or hierarchies of archetypes. The archetypal experience is more a state of mind (1985, pp.261-262 - italics added).

In other words, there is a symbolic context (explored briefly in the previous chapter) around the archetypal image, but this does not have to conform to 'preconceived schemes or hierarchies' for the image to impact. A more classical Jungian approach would hold that an experience or reaction to an archetype would logically follow one another; an assumed cause and effect taking place within the psyche. Samuels' above point does appear to contradict the supposed contextual commonality of particular symbols that appear within differing cultures and times, a fundamental theoretical plank on which much classical Jungian and post-Jungian thought rests, and one that does indicate certain symbolic commonalities. However, if the symbolic commonality is taken too far, as with Freudian and Lacanian symbols where every image is held to conform to either phallic or vaginal symbology, then the symbol stops functioning effectively, and loses potential psychological depth. Following on from this, it is, perhaps, more arguable that *both* symbol and beholder/spectator are needed, if a

synergistic experience that can be defined as archetypal is to be achieved. However, as Singh warns: 'The activation of the archetype as a structure is a very different phenomenon: It is a non-conscious or partly conscious mode of engaging audiences that is affective in character and therefore very difficult to discern' (2008, p.126). That is to say, not all archetypal symbols and images lead to archetypal experiences; archetypal experiences and understandings cannot be assumed to be a guaranteed phenomenon or result merely because of the presence of a symbol or archetypal image. This is reminiscent of Hall's work around coding and encoding (1976) regarding dominant understandings within prevailing discourses, and again is reminiscent of psychoanalytical textual readings where the text is read for the dualistic symbolism outlined above. It is likely, although not guaranteed, that a spectator will interpret archetypes in a particular way; dominant discourses within cultures could indicate a spectator experiencing archetypal imagery within given historical and cultural contextual moments and locations. They are more likely to favour a reading shaped by and within that context. This argument is reinforced when we consider auteurs such as Anderson and Mendes who consciously use archetypal imagery and symbols within a specifically American set of cultural contexts around the American Dream to engage audiences and generate visual meaning and understanding. With these arguments in mind, we can now begin with the analysis of the surrogate father and family.

Surrogate fathers and families

In the corpus of both directors, the surrogate father tends to be foregrounded over the biological father (particularly with Anderson), with the majority of the films featuring imagery of a surrogate paternal as opposed to the biological antecedent. This later developmental stage of masculinity (certainly as understood by mythopoetic men's movement writers) relies upon the presence and input of a community of (ideally) supportive males to complete the initiation of the young man into the wider community of men and women as the son begins to outgrow the familial father. Amongst others, Keen, (1991); Biddulph, (1995), and to a lesser extent Bly (1990), argue that a male still needs a wider community of older men to support their masculine journey into (ideally) healthy and maturing manhood; in other words older men play a key role in shaping younger men through their function as masculine mentor and the passing on of external, *Logos* / 'Rule of the Father' worldly knowledge that is useful, in some cases held to be essential, for survival. The masculine continuum is therefore held as continuing via the father and paternal surrogates; father hunger can still occur here if there is no strong father figure for the adult son, or if there is not a community of older men to help this supposed societal initiation and masculine constellation.

Whilst the father is still seen as being crucial to this process, the adult son is now regarded as needing the input of older men, in other words the adult son is transcending the father, or at least,

held to be carrying out this maturing process. This mythopoetic men's movement view has strong echoes of Jungian and Classical post-Jungian writers such as Anthony Stevens (1994), but this view is questioned by other post-Jungians such as Samuels (1985, 1989, 1993) and Tacey (1997). Samuels, for example, reminds us that Logos and Eros energies can be understood as:

> …symbolic terms of psychological factors that are independent of anatomical sex. Logos and Eros exist within a person of either sex. The balance and relation between the two separate principles regulates the individual's sense of himself [herself] as a sexed *and* as a gendered being (1985, p.210).

Jung himself, at different times, appeared to argue for a much more binary position on this issue, echoing Freud and Lacan, consequently inviting more concrete and commensurately less flexible interpretations of gender, whilst at the same time proposing a vision of both qualities being available to both sexes. If this more flexible post-Jungian approach is applied to the figure of the surrogate father, then a number of challenges emerge against this view of a wider community of father surrogates that the mythopoetic men's movement hold as being necessary for maturation of manhood:

> …but every archetypal figure brings with it its own set of dangers and difficulties. There is no simple 'integration' of the father, but an ongoing struggle to maintain one's own individual identity in the face of this potentially overwhelming archetypal figure (Tacey, 1997, p.149).

A surrogate father (or fathers) is not without its dangers, it seems. Fathers, including surrogate fathers, can overwhelm the adult son, leading to potentially limited psychological growth and to burden the son with personal complexes. There are also questions around what the mytho-poetic men's movement constitute as a socio-normative 'healthy' attitude towards masculinity that are more often than not, not always engaged with. Are they promoting a 'reactive' masculinity (Connell, 1995) that seeks a reactionary, conservative return to 'traditional' masculine values as a number of political men's movement writers have proposed (Kimmel 2000, 2009, 2015; Pfeil 1995)? Or is it more a case of them attempting to co-opt the archetypal father energy to effect change in masculinities, but falling prey to the Shadow energies that are present within the archetype of the American father, and ignoring any specific cultural discourses and contexts that surround this archetype? As mentioned previously, ideal notions of the mature masculine include actions carried out in a healthy, supportive, life-loving manner towards both men and women. At the same time, there are the Shadow aspects to consider when we examine the role of the surrogate father, for example, and what kind of male mentoring they may (or may not) provide. Tacey again:

The negative senex [older man] actually fuses with our male ego and our power drive, and men tragically fail to realise that the very thing that presents us with the illusion of power is the source of our crippling pathology (1997, p.166).

Assuming Tacey is correct, there appears to be a clear danger that Shadow surrogate fathers may cause the adult son to enter their own Shadow, a psychological dynamic that arguably both directors show strong awareness of, judging by the commensurate themes and narratives within their output. The role and issue of the surrogate father is also picked up by Goss: 'In Anderson's films, the necessity of surrogate family is demanded by the failure of families of the biological variety and is due largely to patriarchal desertion' (2002, p.180). Similarly, Konow reports Anderson as saying that 'I was not really able to notice a pattern in my work until I made three movies. Now I'm starting to decipher that they all have something to do with surrogate families and family connection' (2000, p.3). Whilst this is certainly true of *Magnolia* and *Hard Eight* (although here the desertion is more due to the violent death of the biological father committed by the surrogate father), in *Boogie Nights* the son deserts the family, partially due to the weak paternal, and is taken under the wing of the strong senex, albeit a negative senex. Anderson effectively transposes nuclear familial conflicts onto surrogate families, familial conflicts being depicted here as just as common as in normative families. This more nuanced portrayal echoes Halberstam's (2005) work on subcultures - Jack Horner's surrogate family effectively acting within a porn subculture, similar to the gambling subculture in *Hard Eight*: 'subcultures provide a vital critique of the seemingly organic nature of "community" […through] transient, extrafamilial and oppositional modes of affiliation' (p. 14). Sarah Thornton further defines this point:

Kinship would seem to be one of the main building blocks of community. By contrast, those groups identified as "subcultures" have tended to be studied apart from their families and in states of relative transience. It is also often assumed that there is something innately oppositional in the word "subculture" (1997, p2).

This assumption of familial oppositional status of a subculture is subverted by Anderson, particularly where he explores this concept of critical subcultural kinship further in relation to the question of surrogate familial incest discourses, discussed at length later in the chapter. This subversion resonates with the point made earlier about archetypal imagery and symbols not necessarily being psychically logical in terms of the experiences generated.

Similarly, and rather than being in opposition to the nuclear family, in effect, Anderson portrays the surrogate father and family as functioning as a substitute family structure within an American porn subculture. In both *Magnolia* and *Boogie Nights*, there are nuclear families, but (and especially in *Magnolia*) they are depicted as being under pressure and fracturing as the film progresses, familial discord, disintegration and reconciliation being a large part of the narrative drive.

In *Boogie Nights*, Anderson depicts the surrogate family and parental figures (Jack Horner and Amber Waves) as oppositional figures in that they appear to be welcoming to Eddie Adams/Dirk Diggler, a depiction which is in deliberate, stark contrast with his shrewish, nagging and abusive biological mother, and a weak, silent biological father. Archetypally, the surrogate or substitute family can be said to embody the familial energy here and acts accordingly in terms of performing as aiding the individuative journey of Eddie/Dirk. This substitute family also performs a similar archetypal initiatory function for the adult son in that the son's entry into adult masculinity is facilitated by the surrogate family or a surrogate father figure, discussed and analysed in more detail later. In terms of filmic depictions of this relationship, Bruzzi again picks up the thread:

> The sons, in turn, manifest extreme responses toward these [absent] fathers, wanting to destroy them, become them (sometimes both at once) or wanting to effect a final reconciliation with an alienated father, often as lies in bed ill or dying (2005, xv).

As analysed in detail later, the symbolic deathbed scene, a staple motif of reconciliation in many melodramas, is recast as something more nuanced by Anderson, reminding us of the dangers of reverse alchemy as highlighted by Bassil-Morozow and Hockley (2017). *Magnolia* uses this ubiquitous trope of the dying father and returning prodigal son at his bedside, although it is a trope that Anderson manages the difficult task of both celebrating and, at the same time, subverting.

Mendes also portrays the surrogate family in *Road to Perdition* in that John Rooney (Paul Newman) is both biological father (Fig 4.1) to Connor, and surrogate father to Mike (Tom Hanks).

Figure 4.1   John Rooney and both of his sons, surrogate and biological in *Road to Perdition* (The Zanuck Company, 2002).

As referenced in the previous chapter, this shadow surrogate family turns deadly when threatened and has to be destroyed by Mike, despite his suppressed love for his (in turn) loving surrogate father figure, John Rooney. Similarly, and as outlined above, Anderson's surrogate families are dark constructs, seemingly benign, but often with negative cores and features. *Boogie Nights* also exemplifies this surrogate familial darkness with Eddie Adams / Dirk Diggler (and particularly his phallus) being exploited under the seemingly friendly paternalism of adult film maker Jack Horner, and his shadow version of the American Dream, here once again being subverted by Anderson.. The

film is explicit in showing how the son can have his masculine journey stunted and stymied by a dark father figure, despite being drawn to the surrogate paternal in the first place to satisfy any feelings of father hunger. This stunting function of the paternal reflects another dark aspect of the father, and one that is made clear within the text. Tacey accurately describes this situation: 'The negative senex rules best when our psychic energy is not available to challenge him' (1997, 163). Eddie is portrayed as simply not psychically strong enough to resist the dark paternal energy embodied by Jack Horner. The adult son is shown as being unable or unwilling to transcend the father; the paternal shadow that they are under is essentially ending up acting as their prison. Similarly with Anderson's third film *Magnolia,* Frank T.J. Mackey's (Tom Cruise) breakdown at the deathbed of his estranged father, Earl Partridge (Jason Robards) is a depiction of the son's vulnerability when faced with paternal mortality. Within normative and subcultural American society, the fatherly shadow and fatherly absence that the son has been both under and subject to until now exacts a heavy price on the son and can lead to masculinity developing in a gender vacuum, Anderson showing how hyper-masculine facades are constructed to hide behind in face of paternal absence. This and other key symbols (the phallus and the shadow) are now analysed in more detail below, beginning with *Boogie Nights.*

Boogie Nights: The father as pimp

With his second film *Boogie Nights* (1997) Anderson continues to depict both the adult son and surrogate father in dark thematic tones, layering both masculine performances here with sexual complexities and comments on exploitative masculine power relationships within American society. Whereas *Hard Eight* (1996) is more concerned with the guilt of the surrogate father and his redemptive attempts to make amends to the surrogate son that he robbed by patricide (analysed later), *Boogie Nights* is more concerned with the depiction of the surrogate father as an exploiter of young and undeveloped masculinity, effectively a paternal pimp. Anderson portrays the American father in the film as both recognising and capitalising the masculine power of the phallus; in effect an exploiter of masculinities as well as femininities (Di Lauro and Rabkin 1976, Williams 1990, O'Toole 1998; and Kryzwinska 2006). In a deliberate piece of retrospective casting by Anderson, Burt Reynolds as Jack Horner (Fig 4.2) directly references Reynolds' star power in the Seventies when he was a consistent presence in a number of high-grossing films[39] as well as being a sex symbol for both women and gay men, thanks to a Cosmopolitan centrefold in 1972. Horner is one of the central figures within the film and one of its central constellation points and source of masculine performance.

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[39] Reynolds starred in a number of popular films in the 1970s, including: *Deliverance* (Boorman, 1972), *The Mean Machine* (Aldrich, 1974), and *Smokey and the Bandit* (Needham, 1977). *Smokey and the Bandit* alone made $126 million in the US and $300 million worldwide, making it the second highest grossing film in 1977, the same year that *Star Wars* (Lucas) was also released. (ref. www.boxofficemojo.com).

Figure 4.2   The avuncular and seemingly benevolent patriarch Jack Horner in *Boogie Nights* (Burt Reynolds) (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

It is this surrogate father figure that Anderson uses to portray the father hunger of Eddie Adams (Mark Wahlberg), soon to become Dirk Diggler, and the consequent effects it has on both the adult son and the father within the film. In pursuit of portraying these dysfunctional relationships, Anderson mediates a number of symbols, most notably: the phallus, the family and its shadow (both literal and metaphorical), and also uses time in a symbolic manner, the film neatly dividing into two halves, both of which have clearly demarcated imagery and themes. The film's depictions of exploitative surrogate fatherhood reflect and resonate with wider debates and discourses over the development of the son into an adult as outlined above, as well as feeding in to ideological debates about the family and patriarchy (Tincknell, 2005).

The story of Eddie Adams (later self-christened as Dirk Diggler) an adult film star, and set in the late seventies and early eighties, the film was in part inspired by and loosely based on the real life of adult film star John Holmes[40]. The film's poster tagline: 'The life of a dreamer. The days of a business and the nights in between' is deeply ambiguous with the film showing both the attractions and destructive side of the pornography business and how these affect its participants, both male and female. This is the American Dream of (supposedly) guilt-free pleasures of the flesh (sex and drugs), set to a disco soundtrack. Located mainly in the San Fernando valley, a consistent setting for Anderson's films (*Magnolia* also being located here), the film can be viewed as both a coming-of-age morality tale and a sly critique of the American family structure and shadow capitalistic mores that prevailed at the time, particularly around the porn industry and the so-called 'Golden Age of Porn'[41]. The film depicts, a complete surrogate family structure that contains within it a rendition of

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[40] John Holmes starred in approximately 2,250 adult films including the *Johnny Wadd* series of films which is specifically referenced with *Boogie Nights*. Like Eddie Adams / Dirk Diggler, he was (in)famous for the large size of his penis, his star power within his chosen profession being entirely dependent on it. The attempted heist and theft scene towards the end of the film is loosely based on the Wonderland murders which took place in 1981 in Los Angeles in which he was directly involved.

[41] The so-called 'Golden Age of Porn' is widely held to have started with the 1972 theatrical release of *Deep Throat* (Damiano) and continued into the early 1980s. It was characterised by relatively high production values, use of professional equipment by professional operators, starred performers who (in the main) consented to be constructed as adult film stars, and scripts that constructed (or at least made a pretence of) a

the masculine journey as experienced by Eddie / Dirk as he matures from callow restaurant bus-boy through to adult film star with all the attendant temptations and dangers that this role entails. Symbolically, Eddie/Dirk's star power within the film is generated by his famously large phallus, with this most masculine of symbols depicted throughout the film by Anderson by others' reactions to it. Anderson, in effect, teases us with the unseen power of Eddie/Dirk's penis, only revealing it in the very end scene in a self-consciously humorous and yet poignant moment. Before we commence with analysis of the film and its mediation of symbols, an exploration of the symbolic power of the phallus would be circumspect.

<u>The phallus on film</u>

An ancient symbol, found in various visual forms in all human cultures from the earliest days to the present, the phallus is most often associated with masculine virility and potency. Ronnberg and Martin describe the power of this archetypal masculine symbol in some depth:

> …it takes on the ithyphallic form that is worshipped as a numinosum. Seed-bearer, penetrator, begetter, the phallus was also wonderful for its association with not one, but two sacred fluids – golden urine and the semen of life….we have venerated the phallus as emblem of rapturous pleasure, inseminating heat and spiritual transcendence (2010, p.406).

It is this aspect of the phallus that Anderson is mainly concerned with in the first half of the film, an approach that resonates with Freudian interpretations. Stevens reports that '…Jung himself quipped that the penis was a phallic symbol' (1998, p.313). Monick, also quoted by Stevens, declares that:

> Phallos…has a mind of its own; it will not be dictated to by the ego. It behaves in a way that tangibly manifests the autonomy of unconscious forces. An erection cannot be manufactured by a conscious act of will: either it happens or it doesn't, as the circumstances dictate. As a consequence, an erection can be experienced as an epiphany (ibid).

This is demonstrated by Anderson in one scene in the second half of the film by Dirk experiencing difficulty in getting an erection (due to cocaine abuse) in order to perform in another one of Jack's films. The phallus, it seems, is an organ that will not be dictated to. Chevalier and Gheerbrant remind us that the phallus also 'conveys the sense of the powers of procreation which are worshipped in that particular shape by many religions' (1994, p.751). In other words, the phallus is not always a literal penis. Cooper agrees and emphasises its polysemous symbolic nature (largely contradicting a

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viable narrative structure. Anderson's film purports to show the end of this phase of porn production being a direct result of the advent of home video and a lowering of production values, budgets and narratives with the express aim to maximising the enormous profits that were to be made.

psychoanalytical interpretation), as discussed previously: 'It can be merely physical in is symbolism, as in the worship of Priapus, or be spiritual in significance, as in Hinduism' (1978, p.129). With this in mind, where Anderson mediates this symbology in more complex ways is by linking the phallus with the nature of the filmic gaze and the shadow. The film is, in effect both a dramatic and occasionally humorous exploration of both the American personal shadow, the surrogate familial shadow and the American porn industry's shadow; in essence an exploration of the American phallic shadow and its relationship with the father.

The phallus is first encountered via Eddie Adams (Mark Wahlberg) as he works at Maurice Rodriguez's (Luis Guzman) club Hot Traxx in the San Fernando Valley. Both the location and time are specifically referenced in a subtitle, locating the film and subsequent action in a deliberate context, a point that Anderson returns to later on in the film when he signals a change in attitudes towards his main subject matter. The swooping tracking shot (echoing the beginning of *Hard Eight* and also used half-way through *Magnolia*) that opens the film is reminiscent of Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990) and provides the immersion to Eddie/Dirk's world, effectively suturing us into this milieu. As King summarises:

> This is a breathtakingly fast and fluid example of initial multi-strand-narrative exposition, the effect increased through the use of highly mobile camerawork and emphasis-creating zooms, introducing all the major characters in a sustained sequence of about six minutes (2005, p.89).

Jack Horner, Amber Waves (Julianne Moore) and Rollergirl (Heather Graham) and other members (John C Reilly, Don Cheadle, Melora Walters and William H Macy) of Eddie / Dirk's soon-to-be surrogate family are rapidly and efficiently introduced to us (Fig 4.3) with the mise-en-scene accurately capturing the music, clothes and atmosphere of the time.

Figure 4.3   Jack and his entourage in the nightclub Hot Traxx in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Jack is portrayed as an ostensibly benevolent and authoritative paternal figure, greeting people, giving friendly orders and looking after his colleagues and cast, but his main interest soon

becomes clear when he spies Eddie performing his busboy duties (Fig 4.4) and goes to talk to him alone. The camera gradually pulls in closer to Jack and switches between him and Eddie as Jack senses something different and special about the young man.

Figure 4.4   *Boogie Nights'* Jack Horner in charming mode (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Eddie suspects Jack of being interested in being a voyeur because of his outsized phallus (Fig 4.5), and is already amateurishly capitalising on it: ('If you wanna watch me jack off it's ten bucks. If you just wanna look at it then it's five.').

Figure 4.5   Eddie Adams (Mark Wahlberg), before he becomes Dirk Diggler, already capitalising on his outsized phallus in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

The chance for Jack to be a voyeur that Eddie is offering is arguably self-reflexive and deliberate of Anderson, an intertextual awareness being present, given his main subject matter and themes about pornography and the spectator. This nascent self-exploitation of his penis is also indicative of Eddie's growing awareness of his potential phallic power; it is Jack, however, that holds the key to the commercial exploitation, commodification and capitalised gains around Eddie's phallus, in that he can provide access to voyeurism on a mass scale by virtue of his role as producer and director of pornography. Eddie is, in effect, being offered the chance of fulfilling the American Dream in terms of material success and the attendant fame by being a porn star: the ultimate

capitalised American phallus. This scene is key in terms of casting Jack as a surrogate parental figure, reinforced as he questions Eddie's ambitions and what he wants to do with his life, typical parental and paternal concerns. From Jack's perspective, Eddie's (as yet unseen) phallus is wonderful (reflected in the dialogue), but mainly only in terms of exploitation and the potential monetary rewards that await him and his backers. From Eddie's naïve perspective, he remarks to his casual lover Sheryl Lynn (Fig 4.6) in bed together (no full nudity is involved yet): 'Everyone is blessed with one special thing…I plan on being a star. A big, bright shining star…'.

Figure. 4.6   Sheryl-Lynn's (Laurel Holloman) reaction to Eddie's hidden phallus in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

The phallus is again indirectly referenced when Jack uses Rollergirl (Fig 4.7) to confirm the size of Eddie's phallus. Her reaction shot when she first sees it (a visual motif that occurs throughout the film) as she prepares to perform fellatio on him at his workplace, reinforces the growing off-screen phallic presence.
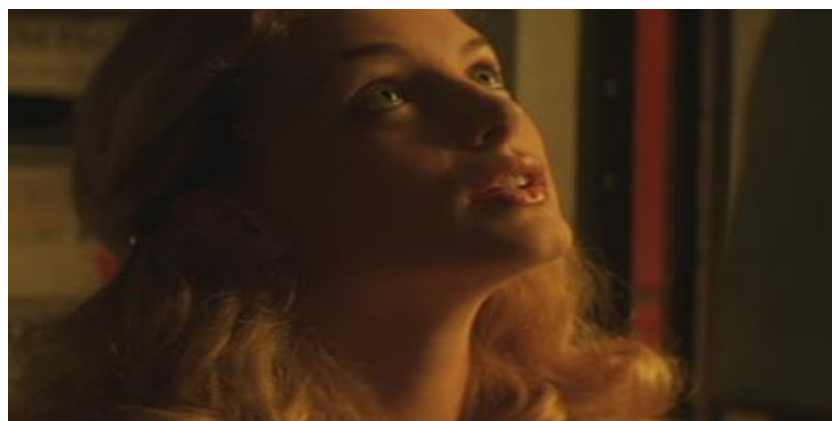
Figure 4.7   Similarly, Rollergirl (Heather Graham) again confirming the phallic mystique in *Boogie Nights*. The shot is very similar to Fig. 4.6 in terms of angle of the female gaze (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

This presence is strongly hinted at again when Rollergirl has intercourse with Eddie at Jack's house, watched by Jack, his head tilting to the side as he sees Eddie's phallus in action for the first time. Before, however, Eddie and his phallus can star in adult films, he has to become an adult; in

other words, undergo a rite of passage into the adult world. This initiatory journey is explicitly referenced after a party that Jack holds and where Eddie is introduced to the porn financier (Fig 4.8) Colonel James (Robert Ridgley) who calmly asks to see Eddie' penis.

Figure 4.8   The Colonel (Robert Ridgley) checking on his investment in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Satisfied with his future investment, and closing the deal with a manly handshake (effectively the cash owning the cock in an informal capitalistic exchange), the Colonel asks Eddie if he has thought of a new name. The archetypal significance of this re-naming is profound when we consider that in primitive cultures, the passage to adulthood for both genders was marked by a ceremonial re-naming[42]. During this sequence, the symbolic nature of water, like *Road to Perdition*, discussed in the previous chapter, is foremost, with the parallels of the Christian christening ceremony strikingly similar to Eddie's initiation into his new surrogate family. He is depicted as diving into Jack's swimming pool and emerging anew and accepted by his adult co-stars into a new world. Water is depicted here as having spiritual and initiatory symbolic qualities that mark a significant change in Eddie's life. This quasi-initiation (not formalised, but nonetheless archetypally powerful) is completed when (Fig 4.9) Eddie is in Jack's hot tub (more water) and chooses a new name for himself.

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[42] Naming ceremonies that are a part of formal rites of passage ceremonies are a consistent feature within pre-industrial and primitive societies and have been documented, by, amongst others, Charles (1951) and D'Alisera (1998). Jung discussed these as part of initiation and posited that they were evidence of processes contained within the collective unconscious.

Figure 4.9   Reed (John C. Reilly), Jack and Eddie (soon to be re-christened) discussing a new name… (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Figure 4.10   …with Eddie now re-christened Dirk Diggler, his adult name in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

This particular scene is played for comic effect, with Eddie describing what his new name would look like in blue neon and that his name would be so sharp and conjure up so much (presumably masculine) power that the sign would explode. The film then cuts to the said sign (Fig 4.10) that boldly reads 'Dirk Diggler' in blue neon which promptly bursts into flame and explodes. Cutting back to the hot tub, both Jack and Eddie's future friend and co-star Reed Rothchild (John C Reilly) give their wholehearted masculine support. From now on Eddie has transmogrified into an adult, who can now star in adult films, as well as engaging with a subcultural version of the American Dream.

Where the phallus's symbolic presence is made explicit and set at the heart of the text, is Dirk's first day on set. The roving camera, used at the start of the film when introducing the main characters, is employed again against carefully constructed mise-en-scene. Beginning with Jack, who has now assumed the role of the director-father giving orders and choosing angles and running order for the shoot, the camera swoops and focuses on different film crew members in turn. In response to cameraman Kurt Longjohn's (Ricky Jay) complaints about stubborn shadows on set, Jack insouciantly responds: 'There are shadows in real life, baby', prophetic words in light of what happens to himself and his surrogate family later on in the film. The scene then cuts to a nervous Dirk alone in his dressing room, dressed in a dark red velvet suit (red being a strongly sexual colour), and preparing for his debut by psyching himself up via a mirror, deliberately echoing the very final shot of the film. The camera is still this time, providing a contrast to the more kinetic previous shots, and cuts to a close up of Dirk, nervous as he prepares to enter his new adult world. As Dirk walks down to the set with an admiring Scotty (Philip Seymour Hoffman), the roving camera is ahead and confers an urgency, the re-christening being approved and reinforced by his peers.

Figure 4.11   Little Bill (William H. Macy), Jack and Kurt Longjohn (Ricky Jay) on set and ready to shoot Dirk's first adult film in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Upon his entrance, Jack takes immediate charge (Fig 4.11) and guides Dirk (as he is now known) as to the task ahead, backed up by the assistant director Little Bill (William H Macy) ('Do not stop. DO not STOP!') Anderson then starts a subtle series of switches in perspective by deliberate use of different film stocks and formats, starting with authentic looking 35 mm grainy 1970s film stock to simulate the spectator looking at the actual scene as it is being filmed complete with suitably wooden acting, typical of the genre.

This then cuts to a sequential series of shots in normative film stock indicating we are in the original diegesis, all closing up into their subject, of the different members of cast and crew on set. Each shot registers a different version of the same reaction, namely a side tilt of the head (Fig 4.12) or a second look, when Dirk's phallus is revealed, although crucially, to preserve what could be described as the phallic mystique, this is never revealed due to deliberately chosen camera angles.

Figure 4.12   A common response in *Boogie Nights*: Dirk's co-stars react to his phallus (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Dirk's penile size is confirmed by Amber Waves' (Julianne Moore) flatly delivered line: 'This is a giant cock', together with a close up of the two actors starting to have sex (Fig 4.13), although again, this act is deliberately avoided with the camera deliberately framing out any nudity by a close-up on the faces of Dirk and Amber, switching back to the grainy footage to reveal some nudity, both male and female, along with passionate kissing, but avoiding any sight of sexual organs, male or female.

Anderson then takes the spectator on yet another journey, when the roving camera through which the action is being viewed, then focuses in on the camera lens that is filming the scene on set. The spectator is, in effect, being deliberately sutured into the voyeurism that is being constructed on set, an ironic device used by Anderson to remind us, perhaps, that all spectators are voyeurs to some degree or other (Mulvey 1975).

Figure 4.13   Amber (Julianne Moore) and Dirk performing on 35mm film for the first time in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

The image of Dirk and Amber having sex is seen upside down, just as a camera would process the image (and the same as our brains would). It then cuts to the film spool running through the camera, the sound of the camera whirring gradually mixing in with the orgasmic grunts and sighs of the performers, until the film reel itself runs out. We then cut to Jack being told that the film needs to be changed over, Dirk's performance so far already having lasted a reel. During the break of changing the film, Amber tells Dirk (always framed in close-up) that she wants him to climax inside her. This is a deliberate breaking of the informal rules of heterosexual pornography that the male performer always climaxes (the so-called 'money shot', itself an interesting allusion to the capitalised and commodified nature of pornography) on the female performers breasts (this is directly alluded to earlier when Amber tells Dirk to 'come on my tits or on my stomach, honey'). This breaking of the rules is indicative of the growing ambivalent feelings that Amber is starting to experience around Dirk, developed later on in the film, for example, when she references him as 'my baby boy!' at the Adult Film Award ceremony. Dirk duly does so and is congratulated by his performance by all around him. Amber is promptly covered up by other cast members, leaving Dirk and his body, the embodiment of young virile masculinity on show and on display. His virility is further reinforced when Little Bill informs Jack (the overseeing director-father figure) that they don't have a cum shot, Dirk innocently and happily offers to do a repeat performance so Jack can get his required footage (Fig 4.14).

Figure 4.14   Dirk happy to do another take for Jack as they haven't the crucial 'money shot' in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

With this sequence, Anderson places the phallus as the central unseen focus of the film; a symbolic presence that dominates the narrative and journey of Eddie/Dirk[43]. As Singh also notes with pornography:

> It is also evident that there is a curious contradiction in terms of gender representation here: The men are often reduced to objects in that emphasis lies on their sexual performance and size of genitalia: the women are often reduced to fragmented body parts through generic framing and camera set-ups (2009, p.138).

Dirk's phallus and performance are both objectified and symbolized by Anderson. Once the phallus is established as one of the key symbols within the text, Anderson starts to depict the shadow side of it, intertwined with depictions of the family, both natural and surrogate. Ronnberg and Martin also describe this dark aspect of the phallus in detail:

> The brutal, violating aspect of the phallus is manifest in the rape of the individual, in the rape of the earth. Phallic power can shatter, uproot and lay waste. There are interior forms of coercive penetration, like self-destructive compulsions and invasive thoughts; or intellectual or religious transfixion, where the phallic presence overwhelms its vessel (2010, p.406).

This shadow side is explicitly referenced with the move to video coinciding with the advent of a more brutal and explicitly misogynist pornography, and Horner's surrogate family's consequent involvement in this new world. Before the key New Year's Eve party scene, Dirk makes a heartfelt plea to Jack Horner, complaining about Johnny Wadd (see previous footnote 42) and his violence towards women: 'That's not sexy, that's not cool!' Dirk does not want any part of violence towards women in the films he stars in, yet Anderson shows the new decade that Dirk and his surrogate family

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[43] Dyer, similar to Jung, in his work *The Matter of Images,* is careful to distinguish between the penis and the phallus (1993, p.89).

are about to enter as being much less about pleasure, and much more about power, violence and money.

The father, sex and the shadow

With Dirk's first adult film under his belt, masculine sexuality in the shape of Dirk and his phallus is signalled by Anderson to be ready to be both exploited and celebrated. Yet Anderson has not only shown Eddie's initiation into his new adult world, but has also (specifically within the first party sequence) set up strong hints of the shadow aspects of both Dirk and Jack, aspects that grow throughout the film, and eventually culminate in violence and near death experiences before they are resolved. Jung defined the shadow in 1945 as 'The thing a person does not want to be' (Samuels et al, 1986, p.138). Samuels, et al, defined it as 'the negative side of the personality, the sum of all the unpleasant qualities one wants to hide, the inferior, worthless and primitive side of man's nature, the 'other person' in one, one's own dark side' (ibid). Hauke and Alister define it as:

> The part of the personality that one does not identify with or wishes to disown; it usually refers to negative aspects, but may also include positive aspects that – due to family or social beliefs – have remained rejected and unavailable to the individual (2001, p.246).

Bassil-Morozow and Hockley define it as:

> … the shadow is the 'dark brother' in whom all the negative aspects of human nature are stored. It is home to greed, aggression, envy, jealousy, fear and hatred. Humans' relationship with the shadow has always been a key *leitmotif* of art and literature (2017, p.39).

These darker qualities, present in the background earlier in the film, begin to overwhelm the characters as the film progresses, lending a darkening tone to the second half of the film. The shadow aspects of the American porn industry are mediated mainly around the sinisterly avuncular figures (Fig 4.15) of Colonel James, Jack's financial backer (and later on revealed to be a paedophile), and Floyd Gondolli (Philip Baker Hall), another producer who has adopted a more realistic attitude to the new video technology and how it will benefit the pornography business.

Figure 4.15   The more sinister side of the pornography business; a young actress overdoses and is viewed with disdain by the Colonel and Jack in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

For these men, surrogate father figures after a fashion, sexuality (both male and female) is itself to be exploited for monetary gain. Jack Horner's delusions of being thought of and feted as a 'proper' filmmaker are depicted to be just that: delusions. The shadow side of the industry, its exploitation and commodification of both male and female sexuality, is a constant presence within the film and provides a counterpoint to the initial depiction of clichéd 1970s free love and relaxed attitudes to drugs and pleasure. Anderson develops Dirk's initiatory journey into adult manhood into a parallel exploration of American attitudes towards sex, pornography and drugs, an exploration, in effect, of an aspect of the American shadow and cultural complex. This is articulated by Peter Lehman in a lengthy quote from an article in *Jump Cut*:

> …the first part of Boogie Nights characterises the adventures of its hero, Dirk Diggler (Mark Wahlberg), as part of the carefree, anything-goes era of 70s sexuality. Porn chic, casual sex, and nudity a la hot-tubs and drugs are the norm, and everyone seems happy and content. There is no price to pay. The 80s, on the other hand, contain nothing but paying the price. In the 80s those associated with the world of 70s porn commit suicide, lose custody battles for their children, can't get loans to start their legitimate businesses, or get killed in drug shoot-outs. Even porn itself seems degraded from the narrative forms of 35mm theatrical features with stories, production values, and stars to the 80s cheap amateur videos. During the 80s, it seems, we pay the piper for the 70s, and little else (1998, p.37).

Whilst Lehman correctly identifies the film's plot and narrative in this demarcation between the 1970s and 1980s, there is an implied criticism of Anderson's supposed naïve approach to his contextual eras. It is arguable that Anderson is too subtle a filmmaker and auteur to allow the film to be clumsily divided up like this. In the film's first half, (the 70s half, as it were), there are a large number of telling scenes (Amber Waves' phone call to her ex-husband and attempted contact with her young son, Little Bill's wife [real life ex-porn star Nina Hartley] cheating on him, and the constant presence of hard drugs in the background [young girl ODing at the party] that eventually, but inevitably, come into the foreground) that do much more than hint at the tensions and dark side of the 70s porn industry.

Figure 4.16   Dirk strung out on cocaine and freebase later on in *Boogie Nights* as his lifestyle and unresolved father complexes begin to take their toll (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Whilst Lehman is correct in pointing out that, on the whole, the price of pleasure is shown to be mainly paid in the second section of the film (Fig 4.16), sharply delineated by the new year's party scene for 1980, the problems are already apparent and implicit within the first half of the film. They become explicit in the second half of the film and are linked in with the shadow aspects of American culture and society during the Reaganite 'greed is good' 1980s.

The shadow journey of Dirk Diggler

Dirk's journey into adulthood, overseen by Jack Horner and played by Reynolds as a saturnine, largely unflappable, benevolent and indulgent patriarch, mirrors this transition from pleasurable irresponsibility to drug-addled paranoia and desperation. After his initial film performance is a success, and his surrogate father's instincts are proved right, a crisply edited montage sequence shows Dirk's rapid rise to the top of his chosen career. Dirk now has it all: the money, the house, clothes, women, and most important of all, his dream car, a bright orange Corvette Stingray (referenced earlier in a poster on his bedroom wall at home, and torn down by his mother during their final fight). From here on in the only way forward for Dirk is down. This is emphasized by the previously mentioned New Year's party scene, where Dirk is initiated into cocaine use for the first time by Amber Waves, who also tells him that she really loves him, not just for their performances on screen. The use of hard drugs, (previously portrayed, but until now never used by Dirk) marks the beginning of the end of the carefree period that has been shown so far, with Todd Ingram (Thomas Jane) making his first appearance, acting as a shadow catalyst for Dirk. Anderson shows in *Boogie Nights* that whilst Eddie/Dirk is partially initiated into adulthood via Jack in the first half, he has to deal with both his shadow, and with Jack's shadow in the second half of the film. Dirk's Shadow emerges as the 1980s get into full swing, with his drug use, specifically cocaine and later freebase cocaine, escalating out of control. The cinematic power of drugs to indicate emotional repression and damaged personalities in film characters has a long and well researched history (e.g. Shapiro, 2003) and *Boogie Nights* is no exception. Eddie as surrogate son is skilfully depicted by Anderson as initially innocent and willing to please both his surrogate director-father and his surrogate mother and sister actresses (Amber and Rollergirl) to descending, via his cocaine abuse, to an abrasive, troubled and impotent young man. It is Dirk's impotence (indicative of non-functioning and shadow masculinity) that threatens both his deluded self-image and earning power, and is the catalyst for a symbolic break with his surrogate father figure, depicted in a scene at Jack's house and garden (Figs 4.17 and 4.18). Dirk is not only threatened by his self-inflicted impotence due to cocaine use, but also by Johnny Doe (Jonathan Quint), a young actor, very much like himself when he was first recruited by Jack. His explosion of anger at his director-father is encapsulated in the following exchange:

DIRK   YOU DON'T TELL ME ANYTHING!

JACK   Get the fuck outta here.

DIRK   YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME!

JACK   Yes I am.

Figure 4.17 Jack and his creation clash…(Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Figure 4.18 …resulting in Dirk being thrown off set and catalysing his shadow-driven journey downwards into his unconscious in *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

Jack's own shadow emerges from this encounter as he is faced with a son that needs disciplining but that won't stand to be disciplined. His Frankenstein's Monster-like penile creation, has in effect, run amok. In Jungian terms, this is the start of a descent into the underworld for Dirk as he has to face up to his shadow and shadow induced emotional and mental trials. His putative music attempts with co-star Reed (John C Reilly) end in failure due to the pair of them squandering money on drugs that could have rescued their tapes from the recording studio, he gets badly beaten by homophobic thugs in a parking lot when he tries to raise money by gay hustling, and finally he is nearly killed in a drug deal initiated by Todd that goes terribly wrong. This particular sequence ends with him having to push his prized but shot up Corvette (Fig 4.19) home as he has run out of fuel, a close-up shot on the flashing red low fuel light an apt, but a somewhat heavy-handed symbol from Anderson about Dirk's internal state of mind and soul.

Figure 4.19   Dirk runs out fuel in all senses of the word at the end of *Boogie Nights* (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

His homecoming to Jack as the prodigal son returning is captured in a short but pivotal scene where he appears in a doorway (Fig 4.20), Jack in extreme foreground which effectively frames Dirk as he stammers out his apology to his surrogate father, ending in a desperate plea for help and a corresponding embrace from Jack. Tacey's earlier point about (1997, 158) the senex taking over the puer being proved correct here.

Figure 4.20   The prodigal son returns in *Boogie Nights*: Jack and Dirk reconcile, Dirk not having the psychic strength to transcend his shadow father (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

The final sequence of the film is dominated by a long tracking shot (reminiscent of the opening tracking shot) with all of the surrogate family (including the presence of the late Little Bill contained in an oil painting) coming together at Jack's house, ready to shoot another picture, this time on the once-despised video tape format. A form of balance has been restored, with porno-normative family life reigning once more. The very last scene has Dirk, dressed in a *Miami Vice*–like ensemble of pastel T-shirt and white linen jacket with rolled-up sleeves, firmly established the mid-1980s context, rehearsing his lines, clearly having learned some acting skills by this point. He then undoes his fly and finally shows the spectator his overlarge penis (Fig 4.21), which has been the hitherto unseen presence throughout the whole film, ending with his words from the beginning: 'I'm a star, I'm a star, I'm a star, I'm a star. I'm a star. I'm a star, I'm a big bright shining star.'

Figure 4.21   The phallus is finally revealed in *Boogie Nights*, and we get our very own money shot (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

The 'melodramatic phallus', (Lehman, 1998, p.36), finally makes its appearance after teasing us for most of the film, and we can finish watching the film satisfied, having finally seen our own symbolic phallic money shot.

<u>Keeping symbolic incest in the family</u>

Following on from above familial reconciliation, the surrogate familial dynamics contained within the film are mediated as being symbolic, albeit in an arguably deliberately subverted form. As mentioned by Goss at the beginning of the section, Anderson portrays surrogate families taking over when biological families breakdown or are shown to be too restrictive. In *Boogie Nights*, Eddie's natural family consists of him, his mother and his father (no siblings are present). The mother is portrayed as a nag who, in our first encounter with them, rejects her mild-mannered husband's affections and instead verbally attacks her son for not having a job closer to home and for not finishing school. Later on, once Eddie returns from his job late one night, crucially having been introduced to the rest of Jack's 'family', his mother first verbally attacks him over his life choices and his choice of girlfriend, attacking the reputation of his lover Sheryl Lynn, calling her a 'little slut' and 'whore' several times (Fig 4.22). This is a significant choice that Anderson makes in psychological terms, casting the American mother here as essentially a shadow mother, in essence a maternal catalyst for Eddie to leave home and begin the process of adult maturation. Her shrill denunciation of her son as stupid and useless, and her verbal attack on his lover point towards a fundamental inability to deal with her son's burgeoning sexuality, reminiscent in a maternal sense of Bruzzi's earlier point (2005, p.191) around the problems Hollywood and American culture has of portraying the father as being sexual or sexualised.

Figure 4.22   Eddie's mother (Joanne Gleason) verbally and physically attacks him at the beginning of *Boogie Nights*, unable to deal with his burgeoning sexuality (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

In a telling cutaway edit, Eddie's father is sitting on the edge of his marital bed, listening to the fight unfold, but unwilling or afraid to intervene or interject. In short, he fails to stand up for his son and to stand up to his wife. As Tacey reminds us: 'The son may be required to reject the style and consciousness of the father, but the psychic life or 'spirit' of the father must be continued. This is a deeply paradoxical realisation' (1997, p.45). There is no masculine support for Eddie within his biological family (Gross's earlier quote being proved here); Anderson depicts the natural/biological nuclear family as unhappy and stressed, with masculine sexuality problematized for mothers. Eddie, at this point, is still materially owned by his mother, a situation that he deals with by violently rejecting her and her maternal rule, and leaving home to take up Jack Horner's offer. Masculinity, and in particular male sexuality, is initially problematized, deliberately ironic, given that Eddie's talents and the narrative impetus relies on male sexuality[44].

Masculinity and male sexuality ceases to be problematized and starts to be celebrated, indulged and ultimately commodified (hinted at earlier in the film) when Eddie turns up at a party at Jack's house and in effect begins his masculine transition into adulthood via his sexual prowess and physical attributes, taking place within his rapidly adopted surrogate family. This focus on male sexuality within the film is labelled by Guttman as 'a desperate assertion of masculinity in its most fundamental terms. All of this stems from a sense of maleness under pressure, under hostile review' (1997, p.72). Whilst it is arguable that the portrayal of maleness and male sexuality within *Boogie Nights* contains an element of masculinity under pressure, it is contestable that it is a *desperate* assertion of maleness, the film acting as a far more nuanced depiction of male sexuality that Guttman's statement allows for. This said, Eddie/Dirk faces many challenges around his phallic status, not least of which is the exploitation by his surrogate father and by extension, his surrogate family.

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[44] *In Iron John* Bly makes the generalised (and therefore contestable) point that whilst fathers prefer to wound sons physically, mothers wound sons with words and shame.

Subjecting the surrogate family to refraction through both psychoanalytical and post-Jungian frameworks, Anderson posits an interesting symbolic revisionism (another advantage of a post-Jungian approach) with the traditional Freudian theoretical interpretation of the child-parent developmental dynamic, namely the Oedipal and Electra complexes[45], being slyly and deliberately subverted. Eddie Adams' masculine journey to becoming Dirk Diggler is portrayed as being centred on his relationship with Jack Horner, a clear substitute, and eventual surrogate, father figure, prompted by his unconscious father hunger due to the depicted inadequacies of his timid biological father, first seen early on and never referred to again. The family structure (Fig 4.23) that Eddie, now Dirk, is subsumed into is depicted as consisting of Jack as the father, Amber Waves as the mother (they are a couple away from the film sets), Dirk as the son, Rollergirl as daughter, and the other cast and crew as extended family.

Figure 4.23   Dirk's surrogate family in *Boogie Nights*, just as dysfunctional as his biological family (Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film company, 1997).

This familial dynamic is explicitly reinforced at several points during the film, Jack himself, stating to Eddie at the beginning that Amber 'is a wonderful mother to all those round her', Amber's cry of 'Yes, my baby boy!' referred to earlier, her explicit positioning of herself as Dirk's older combined mother/lover when she introduces him to cocaine during the pivotal 1980 New Year's Eve party scene, and Amber and Rollergirl's cocaine-fuelled conversation where Rollergirl asks Amber 'Will you be my Mommy?' and Amber acquiescing, albeit with both women crying as they do so. The obvious symbolism around the Oedipus complex and its dynamic make for an interesting deconstruction. Far from repressing the wish to sexually possess the mother and kill the father as is normatively held in classic psychoanalytical theory, Dirk is shown to be not only encouraged to sexually join with his substitute mother and sister time and again, but at the behest of his father figure, rather than against his wishes. The family that Anderson portrays here is a fundamentally permissive

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[45] Freud developed the theory of the Oedipus complex early on his work on psychoanalysis (1897-1909), and it remains a cornerstone of his theories ever since. The female version of this, the Electra complex was proposed by Jung later in 1913.

sexually incestuous one, and one that does not repress these urges, but instead revels in them to the point where they are commodified and capitalised by Jack the patriarch. The Oedipus complex is, in effect, being depicted here by Anderson as being overturned and subverted in a case of deliberate symbolic and semiotic revisionism. The demarcation between the sign and the symbol, explored by Fredericksen (2001, p.27-29) is effectively blurred here with both signs (sophisticated images of the production of pornography) mixed in with the symbols (images of existential despair, masked by drugs) mediated by Anderson.

Exploring this further, if we examine this family dynamic through a post-Jungian lens, other dynamics and complexes emerge. Ronnberg and Martin describe incest as 'the muddying of emotional waters, the defiling or dishonouring of another, the closing off of naïve spontaneity and trust through the breaching of sacrosanct psychological or physical boundaries' (2010, p.416). This breaking of boundaries points towards other issues and complexes. The image of and the action of joining with the mother on a sexual level could be interpreted as pointing towards a desire to be reborn on a mental and spiritual level for Dirk. He has already taken a step towards adult maturity with his symbolic renaming, overseen by his father figure in the hot-tub scene, a universal rite of passage that is held to be contained in the collective unconscious or objective psyche. Where his individuative progress is halted is by his continuing exploitation by his paternal and, to a lesser degree maternal, figures of Jack and Amber. By effectively owning and commodifying Dirk's phallus, Jack is delaying his surrogate son's maturation, resulting in psychic pain that is shown as being numbed by increasingly heavy drug use. This in turn leads on to Dirk's reluctant experience of the shadow journey detailed earlier. By the end of the film, Dirk has returned to the family fold as the prodigal son, but he has still not matured fully and has not been able to satiate his father hunger, and break free from the paternal influence and control. Anderson shows us the cost and price of Dirk not engaging fully with his complexes as he prepares at the very end of the film to go out and shoot yet another exploitative film for his exploitative director-father who arguably represents the shadow American Dream. As Tacey identifies by quoting Neumann, the father can engage with the 'patriarchal castration' (1997, p.157) of the son, either deliberately or unconsciously. Dirk is portrayed as not consciously recognising nor engaging with his father-hunger complex, and he is effectively trapped under Jack's influence until he does so. His partial break away from Jack and Amber earlier in the film, which marks his downward psychic trajectory, where he undergoes a semi-conscious awakening of sorts resulting in a statement of fact about his familial situation; ('You're not my father! You're not my mother!') [46] is doomed to fail as he is portrayed as not having the inner

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[46] In an earlier version of the script of *Boogie Nights,* Eddie/Dirk visits his former family home to attempt a reconciliation with his mother and father, only to be told by Cheryl Lynn, (who has since moved into his old residence) that both his parents are dead, the result of a car accident that also involved Johnny Doe, his replacement after he stormed off set following his argument with Jack.

psychic resources or emotional strength to fully separate. Eddie/Dirk's father hunger is too strong for him to fully let go of his paternal exploiter. Tacey comments again:

> As Robert Bly has said, the father is a kind of doorway through which the son must pass, and if the doorway cannot be found, or is closed for some historical and/or personal reason, then the son suffers the condition of ongoing and chronic immaturity, living life as an Oedipal man, effeminate, incapacitated by guilt, and alienated from his own spirituality (ibid, p.52).

For his part, Jack Horner is also not up to the task to fully play the surrogate father role that he has (unconsciously) chosen. His persona and role of seemingly benevolent chronicler of the contextual pleasures of the time (consequence-free sex and the associated pornographic voyeuristic pleasures that accompany it) is partially a false one. The polyvalent and polysemous nature of this symbolism is contradictory in that he acts in a paternal way, but this paternalism is predicated on capitalistic exploitation of his surrogate family. Anderson shows him as exploiting the substitute family that has gathered round him mostly without consequence; he is largely untouched by the pain that the other characters undergo. When his financier, Colonel James, is arrested for drug possession and child pornography, Jack is quick to abandon him to a brutalising legal system. The only difficulties that Jack faces is his reluctance and slowness in embracing the change in technology and the fact that he will never be taken seriously as a storyteller. By the end of the film, everything is back to normal for Jack, the only difference being that they are preparing to shoot on video [47] instead of 35mm film. *Boogie Nights* displays the consequences of not recognising father hunger by charting both Eddie/Dirk's dark journey into his Shadow, alongside Jack playing the dark Father, a controlling exploiter of his surrogate son and his surrogate family. Dirk is shown at the end still not being able to break away from his exploitative adopted family; he has not grown out of his shadow and individuated past his father. Anderson has demonstrated that his surrogate father has blocked Dirk's growth into mature masculinity, issues that resonate with Anderson's next film, which we will now analyse.

<u>*Magnolia* – The power and presence of the dying father</u>

Moving on from the porn industry, Anderson's next film *Magnolia* (1999) presents us with, amongst other masculine performances, his depiction of an adult son reconciliation with an absent father in the form of Frank 'TJ' Mackey (Tom Cruise). With this highly self-conscious rendition of

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[47] In another script revision, a scene involving Jack and cameraman Kurt Longjohn discussing how to use a new video camera, was dropped from the final edit. This scene contained the immortal lines from Kurt: 'We can still tell good stories, Jack.' Jack responds: 'No. It's about jacking off now Kurt. No more stories…that's over.'

a classic filmic narrative, namely that of the dying father attempting a reconciliation with an adult son, Anderson depicts archetypal masculine pain as father hunger in the American adult son symbolically resulting from the masculine continuum being fractured, and by the end of the film only partially redeemed. Early on in the film, Earl Partridge's nurse Phil (Phillip Seymour Hoffman) has a conversation with one of Frank's assistants (instigated by Earl), outlining the situation and how similar it is to previous melodramatic film scenarios:

> PHIL: I know this all seems silly. I know that maybe I sound ridiculous, like maybe this is the scene of the movie where the guy is trying to get a hold of the long-lost son, but this is that scene. Y'know? I think they have those scenes in movies because they're true, because they really happen. And you gotta believe me: This is really happening, you can check this with, but don't leave me hanging on this -- please -- please. See; see; see this is the scene of the movie where you help me out….

This deliberate self-awareness is indicative of Anderson's conscious subversion of the dying father narrative trope, and at the same time, he also employs it to generate affective and emotional impact when Frank Mackey does finally visit his father.

Figure 4.24   Frank 'TJ' Mackey (Tom Cruise) peddling his 'seduce and destroy' masculine self-help seminars in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Up to this point Anderson has depicted Mackey as an example of toxic hypermasculinity, to the point where, after his male 'self-help' seminar[48] entitled 'Seduce and Destroy' (Fig 4.24), has finished and he is being interviewed (Fig 4.25) by the female journalist, Gwenovier (April Grace) he is shown to be revelling in and sporting a very obvious erection.

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[48] The seminar depicted appears to be based on contemporary 'seduction community' seminars that are promoted and led by a number of self-appointed seduction experts, including Ross Jeffries whom Anderson is said to have credited with inspiring the character of Frank Mackey. A popular account of life within the seduction community is *The Game* (2005) by Neil Strauss.

Figure 4.25   Erect hyper-masculinity strutting and showing off before the feminine in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

However, as the interview progresses and her subtle and gradually relentless questioning begin to unravel the holes in his purported history, Anderson allows us to see his hypermasculinity as being exposed as an act. Carmago comments about this history and how unique it is to this particular character within the film:

> This lack of history makes it difficult to make moral judgements about them [the other characters]. The single character in *Magnolia* who explicitly attempts to create a history for himself is Frank Mackey, the male empowerment guru played by Tom Cruise. Mackey says that a focus on the past is an excuse for not progressing in the present, further thematising the importance of the present (2002, p.1).

Mackey's deceit, and avoidance about his past, and his exposure by Gwenovier, causes him to explode in anger at her when she calmly states that his mother is not alive but died when he was a teenager.

Figure 4.26   Frank's narcissistic and hyper-masculine mask begins to slip in *Magnolia*. (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

This is a pivotal moment within Anderson's depiction of one of the main masculinities within the film as Mackey's hyper-masculinised persona slips, emphasized by an unflinching and unforgiving close-up shot on Cruise's face (Fig 4.26) as he retreats into a blank mask, only to erupt in self-righteous ire (Fig 4.27) at his questioner, accompanied by the line: 'I'm quietly judging you!' with an accompanying violent snap of the fingers very close to Gwenovier's face.

Figure 4.27   The feminine in the form of the journalist Gwenovier (April Grace), successfully exposing the false and narcissistic hyper-masculine in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

It is this moment that marks a turning point for the character, and another part of his masculine journey begins (initiated by feminine intervention) he finally visits his estranged father, Earl Partridge (Jason Robards), on his deathbed. Peberdy identifies Mackey's performance up until this point as being reminiscent of Bly's Wild Man (1990), although this is arguably more of a Savage masculine performance, with Bly clearly differentiating the Wild Man and the Savage[49] in *Iron John*. Tacey argues that Bly's idealisation of the Wild Man can lead to potentially reactionary thinking, a consistent critique of Bly's position, and a position that is more than hinted at in this scene. This next stage of Mackey's masculine journey is the unexpected descent into what Bly and Biddulph describe as the time of Ashes. Before this particular scene is analysed in depth, it is worth defining what the time of Ashes actually is and its symbolic value and resonance. Biddulph describes this period:

> Eventually though, all men learn that not everything works out in this life. The mid-thirties seem to be the time that this often happens. The trigger can be anything. Perhaps a baby is stillborn. Or your wife stops loving you. A once-sturdy father shrivels and dies before your eyes. A lump becomes cancerous. A car accident smashes up your body. Or your carefully built career tumbles like a pack of cards. Suddenly there is shame, error and grief all around you. Welcome to the Ashes (1995, p.222).

Symbolically, the time of Ashes is when the masculine is humbled by greater forces than it, including direct knowledge of mortality, either through personal or indirect experience. Chevalier and Gheerbrant have a stark definition of what ashes may represent: 'In spiritual terms what remains is valueless, thus from the eschatological point of view, ashes symbolize the nullity of human life, deriving from its transience' (1994, p.49). Ronnberg and Martin broadly agree, and call attention to the initial qualities ashes are associated with: 'On ash we project finality, irrevocability, what has

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[49] Bly attempts to locate the Wild Man within and connected to the natural world; the Savage Man, can, in effect, be read as the Wild Man's Shadow, leading to, as Tacey points out, darker psychic territory.

gone cold after the heat and light of desire, hope, creativity or generation has been extinguished' (2010, p.728). Later they also highlight the more ritualistic and positive qualities:

> Yet ash is also associated with the sacred and the essential. Ash is the extract from a completed life or an achieved process, the substance that can go no further decomposition…Alchemy perceived ash, like salt, as an emblem of the albedo, the "white foliated earth", resulting from the burning off of impurities – desire freed from compulsion, bitterness become wisdom (ibid).

Echoing the definitions above, Cooper also highlights their explicit signing of humiliation and penitence (1978, p.16). Symbolically, ashes can be found throughout the film, as the emotional energies and narratives are eventually resolved after crises have burned themselves out, with the processes and griefs experienced by the characters resulting (in some, but not all, cases) in healing and wisdom.

These statements notwithstanding, a significant proportion of what the time of Ashes is defined as, is grief. Anderson portrays this hitherto unexpressed masculine grief within Mackey as a counterpoint to the hypermasculinity and narcissism that has so far been expressed by the character. As Izod notes 'narcissism shows itself in a psychological predisposition to gather the outer world to the self in order to sustain a pretentious persona that cover up feelings of emptiness' (2000, p.271). Anderson uses a number of cinematic techniques within the consequent deathbed scene between Mackey and his father, Earl Partridge to mediate the mood and symbolism of a dying patriarch, and his son's reaction to it. The scene (cutting to and from the other scenes that track the other characters and story arcs) is filmed fixed and in medium shot, encouraging deep focus editing on behalf of the spectator. Phil and the dogs are initially all we see, only hearing Mackey off camera as he converses with Phil, establishing who he is before he deigns to enter his father's house (Fig 4.28).
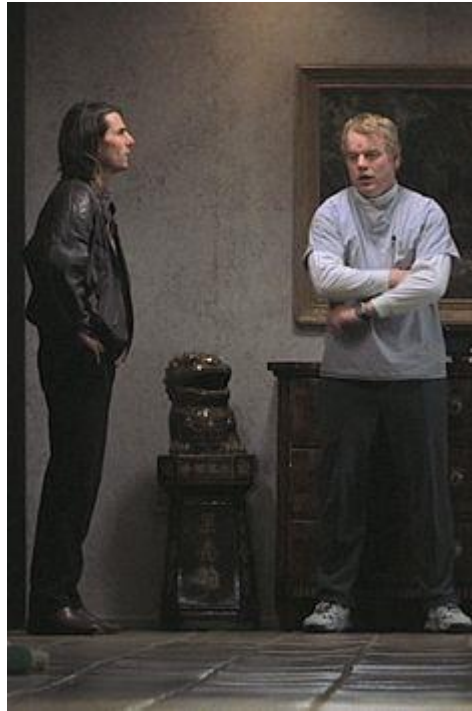
Figure 4.28   The estranged son entering the house of the rejected patriarch in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

The mise-en-scene here is dark and the lighting harsh, and mainly lit from above, a visual motif that is consistent throughout the scene and in all the rooms, emphasizing the starkness and mood. Cutting in to a closer angle on Mackey's entrance, his body language is defensive and aggressive, consistent with his previous portrayal, as is his language to Phil when he sets out his expectations around the meeting: 'I need you to be around, because I'm not gonna help him. And I will drop-kick those fucking dogs if they get in the way'. These ground rules established, he goes forward to meet his father. At this point, Mackey is still overly-identified with his overwhelmingly macho, narcissistic, and hypersexual persona, a psychic construct that is slowly revealing to have been built to protect him from the pain of his history. Stevens defines the persona as a construct that has a social element to it and therefore: 'There is always some element of pretence about the persona, for it is a kind of shop window in which we like to display our best wares' (1994, p.63).

The meeting of father and son is shot from underneath, close-up and from Earl's side of the encounter (Figs 4.29 - 4.32), with the camera focussed, again static and still, on Mackey, Phil quietly standing in the background.

Figure 4.29   In *Magnolia*, Mackey confronts the reality of his father's mortality (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Anderson's depiction of the encounter between father and son is deliberately and palpably awkward with Mackey firstly denying his father's illness ('you don't look that bad') to specifically masculine and phallic terms of verbal abuse ('You prick. You cocksucker.') as he castigates his father for not responding when his mother, Earl's former wife, lay dying, waiting for a visit that never happened. The focus of the camera, however, starts to prove relentless as his hyper masculine persona at this point starts to break down as his hitherto suppressed grief and pain gradually erupts from within his shadow, repository of all suppressed feelings and complexes, as stated earlier in the chapter. He starts to cry, even whilst denying that he is going to, as his feelings begin to overwhelm him and exposes his vulnerability, the emotion of the situation affecting both himself and Phil.

Figure 4.30   The mask begins to slip… (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Figure 4.31   …real emotion begins to emerge… (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).
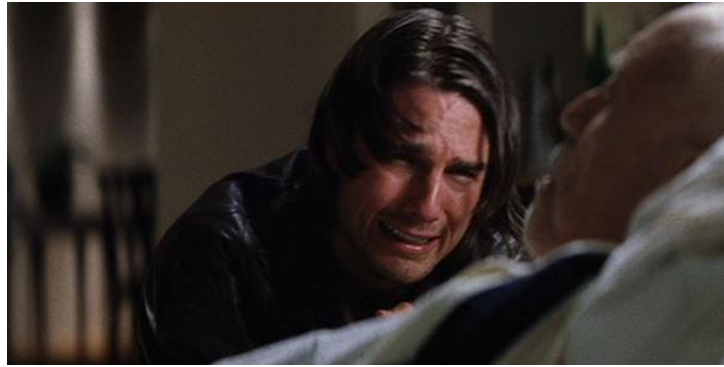
Figure 4.32 …and a son begins to plead with the father not to leave him a second time in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Mackey's childish rage is on now fully on show ('I hate you, you fucking asshole'), but this is shown as being born out of fear, grief and abandonment, an assertion that is borne out by his next utterance ('don't go away, you fucking asshole!') as Mackey regresses to a frightened child again (Fig 4.32) that we (presumably) suppose he must have been when his father abandoned him and his mother the first time around. As Fredericksen notes: 'We could say that a false self has no resonance with a nascent true self, and therefore does not activate the true self's manifestation' (2014, p.135). Peberdy also picks up on this point: 'Hard and soft masculinity should instead be seen as a sliding scale; a hierarchy of masculine tropes demonstrated both across roles and within them.' (2011, p.103). Mackey is forced into soft and vulnerable masculinity by realisation of his father's mortality at this point in the film.

This scene breaks down Mackey's false-self masculine façade, his specifically masculine and narcissistic arrogance, to reveal his latent father hunger, psychological hunger that he can only painfully admit at the end of his father's life. Subverting the dying father trope to the end by refusing to use speech or sentimental clichés such as 'I forgive you' or 'I love you Dad; I love you son' as analysed by Bruzzi (2005) in other films such as *The Great Santini* (Carlino, 1979), Anderson shows Earl Partridge regaining consciousness one last time and gazing at his son (Fig 4.33), but unable to speak, has him gasping out unintelligible sounds. Mackey's face, symbolically framed by this point by Anderson in extreme unforgiving close-up and half lit so there is both light and dark on it, struggles to understand, but the scene eventually ends with the paternal and the filial energies on display here connecting via the gaze, a continuation of the fragile masculine continuum being conveyed by visual means.

Figure 4.33   The paternal's (Jason Robards) final moments in *Magnolia*, but with no clichéd deathbed resolutions (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

As the drawn out montage of scenes at the end of the film show us Earl's body being taken away, the narrator reminds us that: 'We may be through with the past, but the past ain't through with us', a direct contradiction of Mackey's earlier confident dismissal of the power of the past, a past that he is forced to confront due to his forced engagement with the symbolic power of ashes. Anderson demonstrating here the power the senex (Earl Partridge) still has over the puer (son), as Tacey correctly identified.

With this key scene, Anderson simultaneously and symbolically subverts and re-invents the masculine trope of the father on his deathbed reconciling with a son. The performance of masculinity depicted here by Anderson of the damaged adult son being forced to deal with his father hunger is deeply revealing. Mackey's almost comically hyper-masculine behaviour from earlier in the film during the self-help seminar scenes ('Worship the cock! Tame the cunt!') are exposed by this scene to be a sham, a hollow pretence of male dominative power that lacks any credibility, by Mackey's regression to frightened, insecure boy when he has to deal with his own father's mortality. Anderson portrays his unacknowledged masculine wound due to paternal abandonment as having left him in a dark masculine space where masculine domination is a substitute for masculine depth of feeling. Echoing Carmago above, the film focuses on the present; what happens to him afterwards is not made clear, although in the closing scenes of the film, Anderson shows Mackey as beginning to connect with his late father's widow (Julianne Moore) at the hospital after her unsuccessful suicide attempt. It is arguable that in *Magnolia* Anderson mediates the father's death as perhaps the ultimate catalyst for the adult son to deal with any father hunger; the reality of a dead or dying father is a numinous symbol for the son to engage with in confronting his own father issues. Conversely, we now look at Anderson's portrayal of a surrogate father dealing with his own father hunger towards a surrogate son, a situation that was created by the surrogate's own masculine violence.

<u>*Hard Eight*</u>: Taking a gamble on the replacement father

Anderson's first film*, Hard Eight* (1996) has emphasis on father hunger from the point of view of the father himself, Sydney Brown (Philip Baker Hall). Sydney is the main focus of the film, his presence both reassuring and at the same time, ambivalent, another thematic consistency of Anderson's that can be found across his output. King notes that the film:

> …opens with a strong narrative enigma, setting up firm expectations…Central narrative enigma remains important, and is subject to strategies of retardation and partial answer that might be found in Hollywood, but there is also a degree of sustained delay and displacement that would not usually be expected in the mainstream (2005, pp.77-78).

Here, Anderson shows the father as driven by a number of internal issues in seeking out a surrogate son (Fig 4.34), in this case a failed amateur gambler, John Finnegan (John C Reilly). Here, the context is the shades-of-grey world of American gambling capitals Las Vegas and Reno and their inhabitants, another fringe social group that have their own rules and culture, very similar to the porn industry explored within *Boogie Nights*, and indicative of Anderson's fascination with marginalised outsiders and subcultures within American society.

Figure 4.34   Surrogate father (Philip Baker Hall) meets surrogate son (John C. Reilly) for the first time in *Hard Eight* (Rysher Entertainment, 1996).

The film is less satirical than *Boogie Nights*, being more of a psychological crime drama as Anderson carefully constructs a moody and atmospheric mystery narrative around the motivations of Sydney in choosing to look after and mentor John and his girlfriend, later wife, Clementine (Gwyneth Paltrow). Similar to *American Beauty*, the film nails its thematic colours to the mast within the first few scenes as Sydney and John Finnegan meet, seemingly by accident, and Sydney quietly and efficiently teaching John how to survive in the Nevadan gambling subculture. This teaching is deliberately reminiscent of paternal instruction, and is arguably indicative of the masculine transfer

of worldly knowledge as referenced previously (a grey-area *logos* energy, as it were). Anderson mediates this archetypal masculine transfer of knowledge amidst the shadowy atmosphere of the American gambling sub-culture and associated dangers and traps, a world which it is presumed that the spectator is unfamiliar with. Here, the American Dream has transmogrified into how to win at gambling, an inversion of the puritan work ethic, and a short cut to material success. The father figure here is, in effect, indirectly teaching the audience (Fig 4.35) tips on how to survive and thrive in this world; a form of subtle paternalistic mentoring.

Figure 4.35   In *Hard Eight* we are confronted with the penetrating gaze of the father as he teaches us about the world of gambling. (Rysher Entertainment, 1996).

This assumption of surrogate father to John by Sydney is also consistent (as mentioned previously in the chapter) with the major theme of what Goss observes being within 'the Andersonian world: the implosion of family life and the longing to restore it' (2002, p.180). This implosion and subsequent need for restoration is a dominant theme within the film; Sydney's surrogate parental role is notable as it establishes him as John's protector and father to the point where he manipulates Clementine and John into becoming a couple. John is portrayed as being under Sydney's influence to such a degree that he has to establish permission to sleep with her by confirming that Sydney has *not* slept with her. As Goss comments: 'She functions within the film as a "gift" bequeathed by the guilt-laden father figure to the surrogate son' (ibid).

Figure 4.36   *Hard Eight'*s Sydney and Clementine (Gwyneth Paltrow) negotiating their relationship (Rysher Entertainment, 1996).

Sydney's surrogate relationship with John is both noticed and commented on first by Clementine (Fig 4.36). His self-appointed role as surrogate father to John is obliquely critiqued by her when she asks Sydney in a scene in a diner whether or not he has any 'real kids?' His affirmative answer, after a defensive pause, is both surprising and illuminating; he has not seen them in many years and does not know where they are. Anderson presents us, with this scene, a partial explanation for Sydney's now acknowledged fatherly presence; he is missing his own biological children and seeks to replicate his missing relationship with them with his new relationship with John. It is not until later, when Jimmy (Samuel L Jackson), John's sinister new friend, who has prior knowledge of Sydney and his past, does the truth emerge. Jimmy acts a shadow truth-teller / Trickster[50] figure around the depth and veracity of Sydney and John's surrogate relationship when he points out to Sydney in a confrontation near the end of the film: 'No matter how hard you try, you will never be John's father'.

Figure 4.37   The surrogate father about to kill to protect his secret and his son in *Hard Eight* (Rysher Entertainment, 1996).

This explicit refutation of Sydney's new parental role is devastating for Sydney, and coupled with Jimmy's attempted blackmail over the fact that Sydney himself shot dead John's biological father years before, results in Sydney shooting Jimmy dead (Fig 4.37) to preserve his guilty secret. The symbolic family unit that Sydney has carefully and painstakingly built is protected by him by deadly means, such is the depth of his hunger to be a father, driven by guilt at his previous transgressions.

This key reveal for the audience of Sydney's guilty motivation for taking on the parental role to John solves the initial mystery set up at the beginning. By depriving him of a father, Sydney feels obliged to fulfil the role himself. The father hunger examined in *Hard Eight* is depicted as being generated by violence and guilt, but is also motivated by the need for masculine redemption, echoed

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[50] The Trickster is an archetype that Jung wrote extensively on throughout his work and is often cast as a truth-teller, a disruptor of the norm and a user of humour and satire to upset the status quo. The Trickster lives within the Shadow and is often encountered as a shapeshifter (Bassil-Morozow 2010, 2011, 2014).

in *Magnolia* in particular. Father hunger is depicted here as a mutual, co-dependent emotion, with both John and Sydney being caught up in its affective grasp.

Figure. 4.38   Towards the end of *Hard Eight*, the surrogate father recognises his surrogacy (Rysher Entertainment, 1996).

The recognition of the truth by Sydney is reflected by his final phone call (Fig 4.38) to John in one of the last scenes of the film: 'There's something I want you to know. This is very important. I want you to know that I love you. (Pause). *Like* a father loves his son' (my italics). Sydney has now faced up to the knowledge that he can never truly be John's father, and acknowledges that to John, all the while hiding past truths. Sydney is portrayed by Anderson as a complex and ambivalent figure, his motivations initially unknown and murky, not surprisingly, considering the sub-culture he has chosen to make his career in. His chance at a symbolic form of masculine redemption via surrogacy is what gives the film its narrative drive and thematic impact, and constructs the masculinities performed here as essentially hopeful in terms of guilt lifted and redemption partially achieved.

In summary, the portrayal of the adult son by Anderson and Mendes, and the various ways he relates to his adult father, surrogate or otherwise, is indicative of a deeper shift, both in the American cultural complex and, arguably in the American collective unconscious. Bruzzi (2005) charts this change in the cinematic treatment of the father to the point in the 1990s where the father is represented by a multiplicity of differing images, most of them negative and indicative of the Shadow aspects of the paternal. It is arguable that both Anderson and Mendes concur with this trend of depicting the American father as less than perfect: both flawed as a locus for masculinity, and floored as in they are shown as being at the mercy of the cultural shifts and changes around them. The American fathers in a majority of these films (particularly in Anderson's oeuvre) are depicted as being struggling from a position of weakness; occasionally achieving redemption, but more often than not remaining in the shadow American cultural complex. Spiritual issues are hinted at with both *Magnolia* and *Hard Eight,* and are deeply reminiscent of biblical themes of violence, redemption, and the return of the prodigal but for the main, the films studied here fulfil Jung's definition of

psychological art. The American adult son's depicted continuing need for a father figure is significant as it appears to give lie to any beliefs that adult males no longer need a father figure once they are 'grown up', instead it arguably emphasizes the archetypal need for ongoing masculine contact and to be part of the masculine continuum. This emphasis on the father as still being an essential part of the masculine experience resonates with cultural and analytical commentary on the father and the paternal by Andrew Samuels whom is quoted at length on this issue:

> A wheel has turned full circle, for the father was the key parent in the early days of psychoanalysis – the tyrannical, castrating, oedipal father. Then we got hooked – validly and necessarily – on the mother; now we're coming back to the father. He is still often the prohibitive father but also, increasingly, the positive father; the facilitating, empathic, mirroring father who aids imagination, creativity, and psychic health generally…In a way this is puzzling because, just as psychological thinking touches the image of the positive father, so a great deal of cultural and social criticism has at last caught up with the image of the negative father: patriarchy, a phallocentric culture, male violence, male sexual abuse of children, male chauvinism. Perhaps depth psychologists, not for the first time, are engaged in something subversive. At the moment when the image of the father in the social world and his authority therein are under as exclusively negative, we, in our limited ways as analysts, are struggling to preserve a balance (1989, p.67).

In other words, we are confronted in cinema with mediated images of the American father in both positive and negative lights, albeit within Anderson and Mendes' output in the 1990s and the 2000s, the image of the father is still mediated largely as a negative one. Paternal redemption is present within these films (most obviously *Hard Eight,* and to a lesser degree *Magnolia, Road to Perdition,* and *American Beauty*) but it is a largely partial, or incomplete redemption, with redemption often being achieved through violence. The problematized relationship with the adult son, contained within the films analysed above, is a reminder that the masculinities and the masculine continuum being presented to us is a dynamic and polysemous construct. As Tacey states, the individuative journey of the adult son is essentially unchanged in that it needs:

> …to transcend the alienation from the personal father, either directly conservative or through surrogate fathering and mentoring; to recover respect and trust in men and masculinity; and to seek initiation into a post-Oedipal state of maturity (1997, p.53).

With these points borne in mind, we can now move away from the masculine by examining the filmic relationship between the father and the daughter.

FIVE

Father hunger and the daughter: Daddy's Girl(s)

Having explored analysed the relationships between American fathers and sons in the previous chapters, we now turn to how the filmic symbolic images and imagery of the American father relating to daughters, namely the child, adolescent and adult female, are mediated. Given the nature of the father-daughter relationship and the female gender journey (described in more detail below), there are a number of reasons why father hunger may have arisen. When we consider post-Jungian theory and its flexibility around interpretation of gender imagery (similar to symbolic imagery) and the corresponding archetypes (anima, puella, etc.), a number of perspectives and insights into this perceived parental need emerge. However, before we can discuss this figure any further, the developmental relationship between the father and daughter needs to be examined in a more general sense, and differentiated from the relationship between the father and son, as there are markedly different features that are unique to this dynamic. Linked with this is analysis and discussion of the anima and the animus, two of the best known Jungian terms, and how the American anima in particular is symbolically mediated and depicted within the father's psyche by Mendes in *American Beauty*. Portrayal of the damaged adult daughter's relationship is then analysed in Anderson's *Magnolia*, with the American paternal shadow once more being seen to affect the child in a detrimental way, albeit with the tentative hope of healing also being shown.

Daughters and Paternal 'Otherness'

According to Jungian and post-Jungian perspectives, as well as psychoanalytical perspectives (Herzog, 1983; Williamson, 2004), the father and daughter relationship is fundamentally different to that of the son for a number of social, psychological and cultural reasons (Herzog, 1980; Samuels, 1985, 1993; Stevens, 1994). Whereas the last chapters dealt with the

relationships of fathers and sons being constructed as indicative of a masculine continuum, the imagery that depicts fathers and daughters are different in that they show the cinematic paternal depicted as an opposite to femininity, represented in this case by the daughter. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley make the point that: 'Judging by myths and fairy tales in which the protagonist is a woman, female individuation is structurally different from the traditional hero myth' (2017, p.136). The father, therefore, exists for the daughter as a primally important representation of masculinity, both in real life and within the psyche since he is the very first man in her life (both in terms of him playing a fundamental role in her creation, as well as, in most cases, being the first man she is aware of being present on a daily basis). Even if he is not present, his absence (Herzog, 1983, p.2), or, perhaps more accurately, his lack of *presence*, is held to have far-reaching consequences for the psyche of his daughter. The classical influenced post-Jungian writer Anthony Stevens makes this point in his analysis of parental hunger when he highlights the importance of the father-figure to a female child:

> For the girl, the father's presence is no less important [than the boy], for it heightens her sense of being female in contrast to the essential 'otherness' of the male, and so profoundly influences how she experiences her femininity in relation to men (1994, p.69).

This 'otherness' of the father to the daughter (rather than the psychoanalytical *lack*) is a crucial difference when we consider the question of father hunger. Whereas the son feels this hunger due to a gap, or hole, within the psyche that he has to fill or bridge (essentially *re-join*) in order to be part of the masculine continuum alongside his father, and perhaps one day his own son, the daughter feels father hunger as partly a need to know herself in an *oppositional* sense; in other words, an experience of the masculine as a (ideally) well balanced 'Otherness' in complement to her femininity, feminine energy, feminine presence, and feminine power. Rather than a part of the masculine continuum, her relationship with her male parent is defined by both its opposition and complementarity. Similar to the son, there is a gender journey to be made here, but it is a profoundly different one, compared to the masculine journey. Whereas the son's gender journey is held to separate from the mother and join the father to complete his experience of his own gender and accompanying sense of self-identity (certainly in terms of gender), the daughter's gender journey is to travel from the mother[51] to the father, *already* knowing her own gender, and to experience and understand the masculine, initially as an Other (Singh, 2009; Izod, 2001, pp.71-74). This Otherness can be located partially by virtue of the fact that the daughter is fundamentally dissimilar biologically to the father; a profound difference that also throws the similarity of the daughter to the mother into sharp relief. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley identify the goal of the father-daughter relationship

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[51] Samuels 'a girl does not have to surmount her relationship to her mother in the same way [as a boy does] to achieve femininity' (1985, 209).

thusly: 'The meaning of the female journey is 'relating' (as opposed to 'discovering', which is the focus of the male journey)' (2017, p.137). Whilst the daughter's relationship with the mother is also of primary importance, particularly the mother's relationship with the father, the daughter finds herself having to relate, negotiate and accept this masculine figure, and its presence, and absorb it into her psyche and personal consciousness.

There is, of course, a challenge with this gender journey. If this complementary aspect of the masculine is not present in the shape of the paternal presence through absence, unavailability, or worse, inflected or shaded by abuse, then the 'Otherness' of the male and by larger implication, masculinity as a whole will be perceived as missing, unreliable, abusive, violent, dangerous and by implication, the daughter will feel unloved and unprotected. The 'Otherness' of the father (and by extension other men or masculine presences) can become a fundamental source of guilt, anger, frustration and fear, powerful enough to colour her experiences of the masculine throughout her life. Mitscherlich's conclusions around this supposed parental 'hole' in the psyche[52], highlighted by Bly (1990); Reiter, (2008); and Biddulph, (2013), and referred to before when discussing the son, could be argued to apply equally as strongly here. To summarise, if the daughter does not have a clear idea of who her father is, what he is like, and what he does, then a space can open up by virtue of his absence which can be filled by negative feelings. Bly states that these feelings for the son are in the main feelings of suspicion; for the daughter they can be feelings of anger, longing, guilt and fear (Fig 5.1) that can grow to fill this psychic space. Anger, because of her not feeling her father is there for her in terms of protection and love; longing for a safe and life-giving masculine presence; guilt because of feelings that she may not be good enough for him as a daughter and therefore be undeserving of his presence as Maine puts it: 'Guilt pervades the female psyche, the way that isolation haunts the male psyche' (2004, p.101); and fear for the potential or actual danger that he may represent.

Figure 5.1 – Jane Burnham (Thora Birch) needing a strong father in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

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[52] Reiter in his book *Fathers and Sons in Cinema* (2008), describes this father as 'a dragon-obstructor, the same archetypal ogre found in many myths and fairy tales' (p. 14).

The Otherness of the father, therefore, can become a threat or, in some cases, a source of contempt and anger towards the masculine, with a weak or absent father also generating the hunger for a stronger masculine presence who will perform the role of a safe/strong father figure for the female psyche. Just as the emerging male psyche has to negotiate the mother and all of the powerful feminine energies that she represents in its journey towards individuation, so too does the female psyche have to deal with this often problematic father-energy. A psychoanalytical perspective corresponds closely with the post-Jungian view; as Herzog reminds us with reference to both sons and daughters:

> The father is the organizer and modulator of intense affect paradigms. He beckons to the child like a knight in shining armour, not only pulling him or her out of, or assisting in the dissolution of the intense mother-child relationship…but actively intruding upon it (1983, p.51).

This perceived need for a robust paternal presence which helps to enforce both psychic and physical boundaries for the female psyche, echoes powerfully with Jung's concept of the father being a representative of, or indicative of, *Logos*, or the organising force in the world, the erstwhile rule of the father being a consistent presence within the outside environment, the world outside of the domestic sphere where *Eros*, the force held as being mostly associated with the mother energy is to be found. Jung referred to these broadly male and female energies with characteristic vagueness: 'The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos just as the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros. But I do not wish or intend to give these two intuitive concepts too specific a definition' (Storr, 1983, p.111).

As the female psyche develops, the encounters with the father and his archetypal *Logos* energy, (whether or not it is the woman's biological father, as Samuels judiciously reminds us[53]) becomes increasingly important. This purported psychic need for a safe man who is there for her as support, as a role model and as a powerful presence with which to activate and nourish her psyche is arguably the essence of father hunger for the feminine. In addition to the father functioning as an oppositional figure, as stated at the beginning of the section, the father also fulfils an apposite role to the daughter in that he is often presented, or depicted, within film as complementary to the mother, and by extension to the daughter, when normative depictions of the standard Hollywood American nuclear family are considered. (Bruzzi, 2005; Hamad, 2014). One of the features of both Mendes and Anderson's output is the subversion of this construction of the American father as complementary, which will be explored in more detail later on in the chapter. To explore this relationship further,

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[53] Samuels makes a powerful argument that the biological father does not have sole rights to being the father figure within the psyche or indeed within the nuclear family, this role often falling to another male figure or in some cases, a female figure as in gay female couples (1985, p.23).

and later on with particular regards to the auteurs under analysis that display this concern with fathers within films, the problematic area of the American father and his sexuality is now examined and how he and it relate to the daughter.

Daughters and the father's body

In his book *The Political Psyche*, which deals in some depth with cultural perceptions of the image and positions of the UK father at a particular juncture in the early 1990s, the post-Jungian author Andrew Samuels makes the uncomfortable observation that whenever fathers and daughters are mentioned within a number of cultural discourses, there is an assumption made, bordering on a cultural complex, that this relationship is very likely not always a healthy one 'it has become very hard to write about the positive, loving flexible father and his political impact as well as about the sexually abusing, violent, abandoning or absent, authoritarian father and his political impact' (1993, p.126). Later on, he expands his theme:

> It is difficult to stay close to positive images of the father without tipping over into denial and idealization. There is very little description of the ordinary, devoted, good-enough fathering; our preoccupation is with the sexually abusing or violent father (ibid, p.135).

This realization was prompted by a related request for a newspaper illustration to show the positive aspects of the physical relationship between a father and daughter in an article that he had written. Subsequently, the picture provided was an overwhelmingly negative one, despite the original brief. Samuels later came to an interesting conclusion:

> It follows that, in order to stay with positive images of the father, one has to stay with the negative images as well…*sex and aggression constitute the good father as well as the bad father*. The central implication of this is that we are now required to pay maximum attention to the *father's body*. When the media concentrate on incest, they are expressing a fascination with the father's body. In its positive form, frolicking in the swimming pool; in its negative form, touching the child in an abusive way in the pool (ibid, p.136; italics in the original).

This point is mentioned in depth as an example of how deep the associations of the father being a danger to the daughter can run. Putting aside the often idealised, but at the same time conflicted, notions of American fatherhood that are contained with much mainstream Hollywood fare (Bruzzi, 2005; Hamad, 2014), the father, and particularly the father's physical presence in the imagery surrounding his body and his physical and symbolic relationship with his daughter are often negative.

Figure 5.2 The father's sexual body in *American Beauty* is still half-hidden; Lester Burnham masturbating in shower (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Bruzzi highlights this point when discussing the father's body (Fig 5.2) and the father's desires in *American Beauty*:

> Although Lester harbours illegal desires (Angela is still under-age) *American Beauty* is not 'about' them, for these sexual longings are merely symptoms of – and in some ways a metaphor for – his middle aged malaise. It is symptomatic of this distancing of Lester's perversity that his sexual fantasies are visually stylised and [deliberately] non-naturalistic (2005, p.185).

This assertion by Bruzzi around Lester's desires is not necessarily true (and subsequently undermines her argument somewhat) as neither Jane Burnham nor Angela Hayes's ages are made explicitly clear in the film. However, Ball's script does mention that Jane is sixteen, both of them are shown as attending senior high school (normal ages between fifteen and eighteen), and Jane embarks on a sexual relationship with Ricky Fitts who is mentioned as being eighteen within the script. They are depicted as being both sexually maturing and sexually aware, and most likely above the age of consent. This point is made to highlight that Lester's desires (whether or not they are legal or illegal) are still depicted to be perceived as, at best, deeply inappropriate, given the age difference (he tells us he is forty two), and his daughter's best friend is at most sixteen or seventeen. In a sense, illegality does not factor as much as Bruzzi would assert, rather the fact that he is (to echo a cliché) old enough to be her father, inviting questions of problematic incestuous desire. Bruzzi's point above around Lester's fantasies being a symptom of his mid-life crisis is well made and certainly resonate with the post-Jungian position highlighted by Chachere (2003); this is explored later in the chapter, along with the concomitant film imagery. Suffice to say that in the 1990s the father-daughter relationship (both in the US and UK) was culturally widely perceived to be vulnerable, fragile and threatened by potential paternal incestuous desires.

Where does this fear and fascination with the father's body come from, particularly in relation to his daughter? The answer, at least partially, appears when the daughter begins puberty and the growing realisation her sexual potential and power in relation to the males around her, including her father. Margo Maine in *Father Hunger*, makes a telling point that a male mid-life crisis (that may

or may not be catalysed by sexual self-doubt and age-related anxiety) can often coincide with his adolescent daughter's puberty:

> When a man is experiencing such conflicts, which often arise just as his daughter is going through puberty, the relationship between father and daughter may suffer. His discomfort with himself and insecurity or impulsivity regarding sexuality may frighten her. If he seems preoccupied by sex or becomes more overt in his own sexual behaviors, she becomes confused, not knowing how to react because her needs for parental support and stability during her adolescence are strong. In addition, a father's tendency toward separation and denial may make him oblivious to his daughter's needs and reactions. The widening chasm in their relationship results in the deepening sense of father hunger (2004, pp.92-93).

Maine maintains that the dangers of a father's timidity in facing up to his daughter's burgeoning sexuality as a maturing young woman can be considerable:

> So as the typical father watches his global girl mature and become increasingly sexual, he may be worried about [physical] boundaries and withdraw from her even more. Dad's anxiety compounds the daughter's own fear of her body's changes and becomes a powerful deterrent to a close supportive relationship and to her sense of herself as a young budding woman (ibid, p.131).

When it comes to the daughter's father hunger experienced as an adolescent/pubescent, Maine warns that the dangers are serious:

> Father hunger becomes increasingly detrimental when girls enter puberty, because this is the developmental phase during which their curiosity about men and the male perspective, their interest in hetero-sexual relationships [if so inclined] and their physical attractiveness emerge and intensify. When a father responds by withdrawing and being aloof, his daughter suffers from low self-esteem, and her confidence in her sexuality is undermined. She is denied valuable opportunities to gain experience and practical knowledge about how to act around men and how to talk to them (ibid, pp.131-132).

This purported fragility of an adolescent daughter's understanding of the masculine that Maine proposes appears to resonate when the depiction of this relationship by both directors is considered. Another aspect of father hunger is the hunger for the man to be a father to a daughter. If this desire to parent his daughter is frustrated due to internal and external challenges, then the father's paternal potentiality is frustrated and his love and nurturing will be stymied. *American Beauty* depicts this fatherly frustration via the figure of Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey), and goes further in explicitly linking this paternal frustration as a fundamental masculine spiritual challenge which Lester is depicted as nearly meeting. Mendes and the screenwriter Alan Ball articulate this situation

with arguably a large degree of accuracy, with Lester Burnham's mid-life crisis [54] coinciding with Jane Burnham's adolescence and individual journey of sexual and spiritual discovery in conjunction with Ricky Fitts (Wes Bentley). Post-Jungian writer Tacey articulates this soul search:

> In much cinema and popular culture, the pursuit of the soul turns a man away from his wife, toward either another woman or to an emotional or spiritual undertaking that for the time being appears to be a working vessel for soul-making (1997, p.182).

American Beauty accurately portrays this definition of a search, but with a crucial difference in that Lester still tries to connect emotionally and sexually with his wife, Carolyn (Annette Bening) and is finally 'woken up' to the benefits of his family by his rejection of Angela (Mena Suvari), before he is killed. Before we engage with further textual analysis, the sexual presence of the father, as theorised by Samuels (1993) and Bruzzi (2005), needs to be examined in more depth if the imagery and narrative drive of the film is to be understood on a deeper level.

The Erotic Paternal

Samuels proposes in *The Political Psyche* (1993) that the father plays a number of roles to his daughter in that he enables (along with the mother) the daughter to become psychologically pluralistic:

> My view is that the father's affirming physical response to his daughter at all stages of her life helps her to achieve a kind of psychological pluralism (to be one person and many persons). It is the father who communicates this to his daughter that 'You can be this…and this…and this…and still be your (female) self' (p.152).

One feature of this pluralistic theory is that the father provides erotic communication of a sort to the daughter that affirms that she is not just a maternal, or potentially maternal creature. Echoing the above statement, Samuels posits that:

> The daughter is *not* liberated by the father in the sense of being led into pastures new. Rather, his positive physical and erotic communication fosters and brings out potentials in her which are already there. 'You are this…and this…and this…and you're still you' (ibid, p.153).

This erotic playback between father and daughter is a delicate matter and Samuels recognises the dangers inherent at this stage of a developing relationship in a section that is quoted at length:

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[54] Maine makes an interesting argument when analysing the definition of crisis. In *Father Hunger* (2004), she points out that the word 'crisis' in Mandarin Chinese is represented by the two ideograms for 'trouble' and 'opportunity', seemingly antagonistic and contradictory elements that can, on reflection, perfectly define what a crisis can be.

A father whose own sexual development has been damaged may not be able to keep the physical element within bounds. But there's a paradox here: the father-daughter relationship has to be physical enough to allow for the experiential – and political – outcome I have been depicting…the good-enough father plays a full part in providing it…Quite understandable concentration on erotic excess, for example, child sexual abuse, has made it very hard to stay with erotic deficit….there is the risk of being misunderstood as advocating incest. ..we begin to think of *an optimal erotic relation between father and daughter and, hence, of the pathology of a failure to achieve that*. (ibid p.154; italics in the original).

Assuming they have veracity, these arguments are challenging in terms of the father-daughter relationship. According to this view, the paternal figure needs to provide enough physical, sensual, and erotic presence for the daughter to feel that she can be whatever she wants to be, and also feel that she has erotic viability as her own woman to be in the psychologically strong position of being able to sexually renounce the father, which, paradoxically, allows her to be able to be close to him. In terms of her developing awareness of eroticism (both her own erotic potential and the erotic masculine, assuming heterosexuality), the father (as the primary man in her life) needs to have a safe sexual presence around the daughter so that her erotic boundaries develop in a healthy way, and that she gains an understanding of the erotic potential of the masculine (the so-called erotic playback), constellating and assimilating this aspect of life within her psyche. When we consider, as we did at the beginning of this chapter, the oppositional and appositional aspects of the father, erotic playback can be viewed as a vital part of the father-daughter relationship in the sense of the daughter establishing a clearer idea of herself due to the various *presences* of the father. Father hunger can arise when this erotic playback is either not provided, as in the fathers described by Maine who shy away from the reality of the evidence of their daughters maturation, or when damaged fathers fall into their shadow and take the erotic playback too literally, such as in *Magnolia* (discussed later) and sexually abuse their daughters. Samuels' point appears to be backed up by Herzog's case studies 'All the fathers of girls in my study roundly insisted that they favoured total freedom of choice for their daughters professionally, but they tended to interact with them predominantly in the model I would call *protoerotic endorsement*'(1983, p.52; italics added). *American Beauty* also shows Lester Burnham as an American father who is in danger of remaining in his Shadow, but who (with the help of his anima) manages to contain his erotic playback and mature as a man as a result, achieving redemption by the end.

Archetypes and the daughter

When discussing the female-male dyad, particularly from a Jungian or post-Jungian viewpoint, the terms animus and anima need to be defined. For the purposes of this project, it can be

held that the term *Animus* is for the male contrasexual archetype that Jung held to be present in all women. Correspondingly, the term *Anima* is the contrasexual female archetype that Jung held to be within all men. Jungian scholar Anthony Storr describes these archetypes as follows

> This psychological bisexuality is a reflection of the biological fact that is the larger number of male (or female) genes which is the decisive factor in the determination of sex…anima and animus manifest themselves most typically in personified form as figures in dreams and fantasies ("dream-girl", "dream-lover"), or in the irrationalities of a man's *feeling* and a woman's *thinking*. ((1983, p.414); italics in the original).

Jung himself is initially quite specific about these primally important archetypes and where they belong, hence the need to quote him at length:

> Every man carries with the eternal image of woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definitive feminine image. This image is fundamentally unconscious, an heredity factor of primordial origin engraved in the living organic system of the man, an imprint or 'archetype' (*q.v.*) of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit, as it were, of all the impressions ever made by woman…In it's primary 'unconscious' form the animus is a compound of spontaneous, unpremeditated opinions which exercise a powerful influence on the woman's emotional life…Consequently, the animus likes to project itself on 'intellectuals' and all kinds of 'heroes', including tenors, artists, sporting celebrities etc. (ibid).

The exact purpose and reason why these two archetypes exist is then discussed in more detail:

> The natural function of the animus (as well as of the anima) is to remain in (their) place between individual consciousness and the collective unconscious (q.v); exactly as the persona (q.v.) as a sort of stratum between the ego-consciousness and the objects of the external world. The anima and the animus should function as a bridge, or as a door, leading to the images of the collective unconscious, as the persona should be a sort of bridge into the world (ibid, p.415).

As a mediating psychic structure between the collective unconscious and the material world, the animus for a female certainly makes sense when we consider that this particular archetype is influenced greatly by the individual's experience of the father. Whilst we have to ensure that we do not confuse the two (the animus for a woman also includes the collected and constellated experiences of other encounters with males and the masculine such as brothers, sons, other family members as well as non-familial male figures) it is the father most of all that influences the development of the animus the most. In addition (and as mentioned previously), the rule of the father, the *Logos* energy,

is hinted at when we consider the purported organising nature of the animus, a resonance that carries into the material realm and its perceived structures, whether this is actually the case or not.

When discussing the animus, we must also be mindful of the nature of archetypes in that that are essentially unknowable in and of themselves, but are held as only really being known through the archetypal images that are produced by them. Post-Jungians, among them Singh, urge caution in that Jung's writings on the animus in particular betray his own personal foibles and 'rather blasé perspective on sexual difference' (2009, p.131). It seems to be a feature of writing on Jungian theories that archetypes can quickly become stereotypes, not least by Jung himself when we consider his, at times, essentialist language on the sexes. Indeed, it can be argued that Jung edges closely towards essentialist thinking around the animus and anima when we consider his assertion about the complementarity nature of the anima in men, an assertion that could be argued to be a personal projection:

> …[the anima] contains all those fallible human qualities his persona lacks. If the persona is intellectual, the anima will quite certainly be sentimental. The complementary character of the anima also affects the sexual character as I have proved to myself beyond a shadow of a doubt (ibid).

Whilst the latter assertion from Jung in the quote above borders on arrogance, the central theory of a contrasexual complementary archetype of the psyche that is held to help maintain balance within the individual is an attractive one in that it explains the individual's approach to the opposite sex and gender, as well the individual's attitude to its own sex and gender. It is also in sharp contrast to psychoanalytical gender biases which have arguably disadvantaged Freudian psychological perspectives. Bassil-Morozow and Hockley also highlight a number of (qualified) advantages to the post-Jungian approaches to psychologically analyse the feminine and its presence:

> The good thing about Jungian psychology, however, is that it accounts for the active, aggressive and masculinised forms of female behaviour when it discusses the 'whore' aspect of the anima. Although it still objectifies the feminine and brands it 'mysterious' or 'dangerous', it nevertheless does not try to diminish its importance or restructure it to suit the patriarchal order…Jung's approach to the feminine, although largely tainted by the general patriarchal attitude to women prevalent at the time, nevertheless accounted for its power – not passive power, but the active and unpredictable type of power (2017, p.152).

Bearing these points in mind, we can identify where dangers lies within this theory. When discussing symbols and archetypes, there is a danger of falling into stereotypes when discussing the male-female dyad. This point is picked up by a number of post-Jungians, among them Izod and Singh. They hold that it is more than likely that *both* contrasexual archetypes are present within the

individual psyche, a more flexible proposition than the somewhat restrictive binary position that Jung originally proposed, and which has led, perhaps understandably, to charges laid against Jungian theory as essentialism. This proposed archetypal duality is termed syzygy, similar to the montage definition in that it is a structure that allows for oppositional forces to be held together. Singh quotes Izod when he describes it in more post-Jungian terms:

> …'the conjunction in opposition of the sexes', characterising ', many images of the unified self'. (2001: p.142). Although Izod acknowledges that syzygy is only one image of this kind of deep unification, there is a case to be made for the power of this specific conjunction that is both overwhelmingly other and yet utterly reasonable. As many commentators have noted, post-Jung, there is a general consensus that both men and women should be considered to have both anima and animus *aspects* (my emphasis) of the psyche present. This makes sense in terms of the overall consensus in cultural theory that gender is performative, is not static within identificatory practices, and is a social construction. However this conjunction flies in the face of normative assumptions, surrounding the sex/gender alignment that have changed little since Jung, in popular representation (ibid, p.147).

Bassil-Morozow and Hockley add to this definition: 'Psychological wholeness is a matter of equality and enlightenment, not a retrospective exercise in eliminating difference or an immature search for similarity and perfect mirroring' (2017, p.146). Post-Jungian writer Susan Rowland identifies another advantage that post-Jungian theory has when it comes to assigning gender meanings and culture:

> …Jung's originating principle is that the unconscious is independently creative of the ego and in part unknowable. Such a belief means that the human body cannot fix meaning. Gender becomes a dialogical process between the creative unconscious…and the cultural meanings bestowed upon the sexed body (Hauke and Hockley, 2011, p.149).

I would support these positions with regard to this theory of syzygy and its dynamic interplay of the anima and animus, particularly in representations within cinema. Whilst it would be reasonable to assume that in women the animus would hold more sway that the anima when dealing with any Shadow energies and when dealing with the opposite sex, the anima would no doubt also be presented when questions or complexes regarding the individual's own gender surfaced. When we factor in cultural and societal reinforcement of gender roles, there are clear reasons why imagery of feminine gender roles are so prevalent. In particular, and with specific reference to daughters, we can see this syzygy at work within both director's outputs, for example, Jane Burnham's troubled relationship with her mother in *American Beauty*, and with Claudia Gator with her outwardly normal parents in *Magnolia*, particularly Jimmy Gator (Phillip Baker Hall), the erstwhile respectable host of the ambiguously titled gameshow *What Do Children Know?* Having outlined the main points and

features of the father-daughter relationship, and the potential for father hunger therein, we can now engage with more detailed analysis of the symbols and themes used in Mendes' *American Beauty*, a text that is explicitly about father hunger, its source and the consequences of it, and *Magnolia*, Anderson's film showing the American daughter and American father's relationship as an example of a darker gender dance, inflected by sexual abuse, but hinting at redemption and healing.

American Beauty: the Anima and the inadequate paternal

Mendes' first feature film[55] (1999) specifically references father hunger at the very beginning of the film, and from the perspective of a teenaged American girl at the turn of the twenty-first century. The film opens with grainy home-video footage of Jane Burnham (Fig 5.3) who is lounging sulkily on her bed with her lover Ricky Fitts an initially unseen presence whom we hear talking to Jane as he films her.

Figure 5.3 - 'What a lame-o'. Jane Burnham's explicit contempt for her father in the opening scene of *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

In this opening scene, we have Jane's current situation and relationship with her father Lester Burnham summarised pithily as only a teenaged daughter can:

> JANE: I need a father who's a role model, not some horny geek-boy who's gonna spray his shorts whenever I bring a girlfriend home from school. (Snorts). What a lame-o. Somebody really should put him out of his misery.
>
> RICKY (off-screen): Want me to kill him for you.
>
> JANE: Yeah. Would you?

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[55] Both King (2002, 2009) and Waxman (2005) note how critically and commercially successful the film was (£15 million budget against a £130 million gross) and attribute this to what they term as conspicuous 'quality' directing and casting.

This bitter and seemingly world-weary exchange echoes Maine's points made at the beginning of the chapter regarding the emergence of the daughter's sexuality clashing with the American father's uncertainty and sexual self-doubt, brought on by age-related anxiety. Lester Burnham's journey of self-discovery, both spiritual and sexual, coincides with his daughter's own similar journey, with Jane's anger at her father for not being an adequate, or even as D.W Winnicott has termed it a 'good enough parent' (1973, p.10) or, in this case, a male adult. In both an oppositional and appositional sense, Lester is explicitly depicted by Mendes as not up to fulfilling his role as father to his daughter which is portrayed as having detrimental effects on Jane (her respect for the masculine and her animus is lacking), and subsequently provides much of the dramatic and narrative drive of the film as Mendes shows his journey towards a state of self-conscious awareness. The film depicts the American cultural complex and its negative effects on the daughter, via the figure of the father's individuative journey.

Echoing the point made by Samuels about the role of the father in providing erotic playback, Lester is depicted as failing to provide sufficient presence to Jane (erotic or physical) which consequently contributes to Jane's feelings of father hunger. Symbolically in both films, the daughter's body also acts as one of the main sites where father hunger is mediated; in *American Beauty*, the daughter is sexualised by her maturing relationship to both her body and to her first lover, Ricky, who calmly informs her that she is beautiful. In *Magnolia*, the daughter, Claudia (Melora Walters), is sexualised against her will by her father, Jimmy Gator (Philip Baker Hall), a subtle and delicately drawn depiction that is an integral part of the narrative, discussed later. Mendes symbolically depicts the daughter's body image, and more specifically Jane's body image, as fluid and fragile, to be changed, altered and shaped in accordance with a faceless and unaccountable set of influencers that are located online in cyberspace (Fig 5.4) as well as in the schoolyard of her high school, as strongly hinted at in a scene where her friend Angela Hayes (Mena Suvari) is boasting about allowing herself to be seduced by a fashion photographer.

Figure 5.4 Jane as Maine's 'Global Girl' – her self-image being mediated by faceless others at the beginning of *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

When we encounter Jane for a second time in the film's opening scenes, she is intently researching breast augmentation and plastic surgery options on the internet, (as well as checking her savings account) despite being sixteen or seventeen (the film does not specify her age, as stated earlier, although the script does). For Hockley, the Internet can also be viewed from a psychological perspective:

> On one hand, the Web provides new sources of information and unparalleled opportunities for communication yet, at the same time, some are afraid of its dark corners and of its power to corrupt through the easy access it provides to pornography, for example (2007, p.123).

These 'dark corners' also include the definition and influencing of female body image, usually for commercial and/or gratuitive purposes. Jane's desperate search for supposed bodily perfection is a symptom of dissatisfied female teenage self-image, which in the film, and perceived by Maine and Samuels, is held to be a source of father hunger, in this case caused by the father withdrawing his body from the father-daughter relationship.

The depiction of Jane's body insecurities as being partially fuelled by the emerging internet is uncannily prescient when it is considered that the film was made in 1999, sometime before negative effects of the Internet and other digital factors upon the emerging self-image of girls and young women became a widespread cause for concern (Maine, 2004; Biddulph, 2013; OECD, 2017, among many others). Maine's term 'global girl' fits the comparatively recent phenomenon of the contemporary teenage girl as both being and having a global digital presence via the internet and social media, albeit a presence that is at the mercy of an increasingly globalised economy that views her as a consumer first and foremost:

> Social pressure and experts are more abundant than ever, advising girls covertly or overtly about how to act and what to be. But few [if any] of these faceless messengers are people who actually know them, let alone care about them. Global communications and global markets have made girls and young women global targets…Global girls' lives have become less intimate but more intricate. The increased mobility of modern life means more external opportunities, while less emphasis is placed on developing an internal sense of one's true self (2004, p.31).

Mendes depicts Jane (and to a less detailed extent, Angela) as a typical global girl, insecure in her adolescent uncertainty about her developing body, and vulnerable to visions of what she should become. It takes the intervention of Ricky Fitts, from a post-Jungian perspective a wounded Trickster-type character who is virtually alone in the film in knowing who he is in terms of soul identity, and is portrayed as being well on the way to individuation (despite self-medicating with marijuana), to alert her and to wake her to the possibility that she could be loved, valued and

appreciated for who she is, not what she looks like. This is deeply (and most likely deliberately) ironic, given Ricky's penchant for filming everything (Fig 5.5) he sees, including her.

Figure 5.5   Ricky Fitts (Wes Bentley) filming – the voyeur as truth teller and seer in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Figure 5.6 Ricky and Jane walking together and getting to know each other in *American Beauty*'s anonymous suburban setting (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Ricky repeatedly calmly states in their early encounters that she is both interesting and beautiful (Fig 5.6), an assertion that she is shown to not believe in at first, until she eventually does.

Returning to the main relationship between father and daughter, Lester (through his voice-over at the beginning) is surprisingly aware of his daughter's troubles: 'Janie's a pretty typical teenager. Angry, insecure, confused. I wish I could tell her that's all going to pass…But I don't want to lie to her.' This awareness of his daughter's needs and his own inability to connect with her is portrayed by Mendes throughout the film, especially at the dinner table. This domestic space is transformed by Mendes as a key location for family conflict in two scenes, the first of which Lester announces that his job is under threat, an announcement that does not have the impact on his family that he'd hoped for. He is sarcastic: 'You couldn't possibly care any less, could you?' Jane bites back: 'Well, what do you expect? You can't all of a sudden be my best friend, just because you had a bad day. I mean, hello. You've barely even talked to me for months.' It is this hinted-at back story

detail that builds a bigger picture of their strained situation; they had a better relationship, but for some reason it has changed, and not for the better. It is not made clear who is responsible for this decline, but given the timing of the daughter's adolescence and Lester's slowly growing mid-life crisis, Maine's theory of the daughter's developing sexuality and adulthood clashing with the father's re-assessment of his life is particularly pertinent and resonant at this juncture. Richard Chachere reiterates that:

> *American Beauty* is a very American film and it is very American about the disaster of married life. It is also the all-American Jungian mid-life crisis film. In the story, Lester is having his mid-life crisis, and sure enough, the *anima* comes and pops him on the head. He looks stupid. He looks especially stupid to his daughter, Jane (2003, p.5).

It can also be posited that Jane's anger towards her father is shown to be born out of frustration that her emotional needs as a developing young woman are not being met by her father who is shown as being unconscious on a number of levels. Lester's self-described emotional and mental somnambulant state therefore is depicted as being damaging to both his marriage and to his daughter. He is shown as unavailable to the people that need him to be available; his depicted journey to a state of awakened awareness is all the more poignant when we are confronted with his death at the end of the film. Analysing the symbolic imagery that Mendes chooses to use in this particular scene is revealing. The mise-en-scene is carefully composed on a number of levels beginning with the deliberate seating of Caroline Burnham (Annette Bening) and Lester opposite one another, with Jane being placed forlornly in the middle (Fig 5.7).

Figure 5.7 Lester and family at dinner, the Burnhams' *temenos* in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Given what we have already experienced of the Burnham's familial unhappiness, the chances of a parental confrontation are high, and Jane is likely to be caught in the verbal and emotional crossfire. The scene also contains a number of photos of the family in (presumably) happier times to give contrast and heft to the drama that is being played out. These pictures are also directly referenced at the end of his film when Lester's end-of-life coda is being played as a montage and he experiences powerful archetypal images and imagery of happier moments (his wife laughing and joyous, his daughter excited at her birthday party) from his family's life played out as he dies.

The dining room is cast by Mendes and the film's cinematography (tightly framed composition of the Burnhams to enhance the sense of pressure, with red flowers present, a constant palette choice and significantly symbolic motif, discussed in more detail later) as the space and emotional cauldron, the temenos[56] as it were, where the family dynamics of the Burnhams are played out. This scene is tragi-comic and revealing in that it shows the state of the father's status as fallen. To paraphrase Bly (1990) and Moore and Gillett (1992), at this point early in the film, Mendes is at pains to depict Lester's King archetype as weak and lacking purpose. He is shown to have abrogated his responsibilities, and it is this weaker energy and the resulting lack of conscious presence within his family that his daughter identifies and complains about. Lester is shown to be dimly aware of the situation, but instead of recognising it, lashes out at his wife instead: 'You treat her like an employee!' When challenged by Caroline Burnham, he backs away from what could be a useful confrontation in terms of seeking conscious emotional truth with his wife, instead seeking solace in a bowl of ice cream. The scene ends with the Burnhams still unhappy, despite Lester's belatedly feeble attempts to connect with his daughter, and the attention cleverly shifting to Ricky Fitts' perspective as he films them from his bedroom window (Fig 5.8).

Figure 5.8 Ricky filming the Burnhams struggling to communicate in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

The next time, however, we encounter the Burnhams again in the family space of the dining room, a major shift has occurred in consciousness on the part of Lester as he begins to wake up from his spiritual and emotional torpor and starts to challenge the status quo of his family life.

What awakes Lester from his emotional coma presented to us at the beginning of the film? Mendes and Ball consciously locate the catalyst for Lester's awakening in his initial encounter with his *anima* via the figure of Angela, Jane's friend and fellow high-school cheerleader at a high school basketball game. As Chachere above correctly identifies, Lester's *anima* is shown as striking him awake, both locating itself both within Angela, or to be more accurate, simultaneously projected *onto* her by Lester. This is a pivotal moment in the film on a number of levels, and raises a number of

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[56] *Temenos* in a Jungian sense can be defined as a sacred or emotional space where unconscious issues, pain and energy are brought into consciousness.

serious questions to consider, not least of which that issues of incestuous desire are raised when we consider that the object of Lester's desire is his daughter's friend. The context of the scene is a revealing one in that it is preceded by Lester and Carolyn talking in the car on the way (Fig 5.9) to the basketball game where Jane Burnham is due to perform as a cheerleader. This is a short scene but a telling one, if we are to judge by the dialogue:

LESTER	What makes you so sure she wants us to be there? Did she ask us to come?
CAROLYN	Of course not. She doesn't want us to know how important this is to her. But she's been practicing her steps for weeks.
LESTER	Well, I bet money she's going to resent it. And I'm missing the James Bond marathon on TNT.
CAROLYN	Lester, this is important. I'm sensing a real distance growing between you and Jane.
LESTER	Growing? She hates me.
CAROLYN	She's just wilful.
LESTER	She hates you too.

Carolyn is depicted as being surprised by this revelation from Lester. She is correct in that there is a real distance between Jane and her father; what's more shocking from her point of view is that a similar unknown (or unacknowledged) distance is emerging between Jane and herself, a point picked up later and highlighted in the film when Jane and her mother argue, and her mother slaps her. Lester's existing state of emotional somnambulance is hinted at with his liking for the fantasy macho figure of James Bond, a safe phantasy figure to project his longings onto, whose adventures he is missing out on to attend this event. Lester, in Heyraud's words 'fumbles around the fringes of life, morbidly bound by his death-like depression' (2000, p.144).

Figure 5.9 Carolyn (Annette Bening) and Lester on their way to being woken up in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

In terms of the mise-en-scene used, this car scene is dimly lit and in stark contrast, with both parents on different sides of the screen, similar to the dining room scene, strongly hinting at their own growing distance. Carolyn is in the driving seat, rather than Lester, again subtly reminding the audience who has had to take control within their marriage. The palette of colours are limited to greys, dark hues and the like, reflected in Lester's clothes which are a dull grey jacket, and similar trousers, the stereotypical American suburban dad (Fig 5.10). The audience is being subtly prepared for a future explosion of colour which Mendes springs upon them in the next scene.

With the next scene, Mendes cuts to the darkened interior of the basketball court, the camera focusses on Carolyn and Lester as they (in Lester's case, clumsily) take their place on the bleachers with Lester plaintively asking if they can leave after Jane's cheerleader performance, another culturally specific moment.

Figure 5.10 Lester as bland suburban American dad…(Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Figure 5.11 …who is finally awoken from his suburban torpor…(Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Figure. 5.12 …by his anima in a key scene in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

We then switch to Lester's POV as the cheerleaders, Jane and Angela included, begin their cheerleading dance to staccato music that mimics the ticking of a clock, reflected in their automaton-like dance moves and lit up to emphasise them and them alone. We then switch back to Lester's POV as the deliberately dream-like image of Angela Hayes (Figs 5.11 and 5.12) is revealed, prompting an accompanying deliberate and distinct change in tempo of music, colour, sound and camera angle as the mise-en-scene changes dramatically and explosively. This theatre stage-like change (a throwback to Mendes' previous role as a theatre director)[57] employing harsh lighting on both Lester and Angela to reinforce the psychic connection between the two, is deeply symbolic as Mendes mediates the initial archetypal image of Lester's *anima* in all its power. This is Lester's first encounter with the sexually powerful aspect of his *anima*, and it is this power that manages to finally grab his attention and begin the process of his psychic awakening, or individuation. As Chachere has already succinctly pointed out, 'it pops him the head' in order to wake him up. Adding to the definitions discussed earlier, Jung defined it:

> Every man carries with him the eternal image of woman, not the image of this or that woman, but a definitive feminine image. This image is fundamentally unconscious, an hereditary factor of primordial origin engraved in the living organic system of man (1954, CW 17, par 338).

As Tacey describes it: 'A flight that does not soar upwards, but hovers near the things of the earth, is not governed by puer, Zeus, or Icarus, but by anima' (1997, p.179). There is also another side to the emergence of the *anima*. Tacey manages to provide a summary of the film in one sentence:

> Notoriously, the arrival of the anima in a man's life is associated with the mysterious or desirable 'Unknown Woman' who breaks up marriages, disrupts conventions, and throws a man's life into a mixture of erotic excitement and moral and personal chaos (ibid, p.180).

He expands more, less it be misunderstood that it is somehow the fault of the woman who has anima projected onto them that causes the disruption:

> …women act as the convenient carriers for the emotions, passions, energies and feelings that are part of the psychic reality of the anima-complex. If this complex is carried by others, then one is relatively free from the challenges that anima poses to male consciousness (ibid, p.181).

Bassil-Morozow and Hockley expand these points:

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[57] King (2009) argues that part of the raison d'etre in hiring award-winning theatre director Mendes was make the film a self-consciously prestige project: 'From its inception as a project, then, *American Beauty* was treated and positioned as something special, as an individual creative work that needed to be handled as such rather than as just another commercial/industrial 'product'' (p.197).

The woman is thus both the anima and the container of the animus. Either way, she is the victim: patriarchal culture sees her animus as 'the loud evil thing', and, as the anima she is not even a real woman – she is a cluster of someone else's fantasies. The anima needs to be restrained lest its uncritical opinions destroy the aura of mystery surrounding the feminine; and the anima needs to be maintained in order to keep the woman a suitable vessel for projection (2017, p.154).

Tacey's definition of the psychic space that the anima provides is what is initially valuable for Lester's spiritual and psychic journey. Mendes depicts Angela as acting as carrier of the anima-complex, allowing Lester to 'wake up' and rebel, abrogating his adult responsibilities, which in turn catalyses the narrative drive of the film.

Returning to the scene, and after an increasing series of camera close-ups on Lester's comically astonished face, the sequence progresses with the main motif and image being depicted.

Figure 5.13 Angela (Mena Suvari) channelling her full anima power in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Angela is shown as both objectified as Lester's focus of desire, her unambiguously sexual look towards him culminating in her opening her jacket to reveal not her body and breasts as an audience might think, but instead a shower of red rose petals (Fig 5.13) which fly out at a shocked Lester, at which point his dream/revelation ends abruptly and he (and the audience) is shown as returning to the reality of the basketball court. Bruzzi claims that the petals are 'vehicles of disavowal. That they both stand for Lester's lust and deny access to Angela's pubescent body means that the audience never has to confront the raw obscenity of the sexual situation' (2005, p.185). Perhaps, but from another perspective the scene and aesthetics also function symbolically as a way marker of Lester's imminent psychic journey.

Why is the red rose used as the symbol of transformation in particular? Aside from the obvious and well-known popular romantic connotations that are near universal, the rose can be symbolically analysed on a number of levels. With the petals not only resembling female sexual organs, the flower also carries a pleasing scent or perfume, both physical attributes that resonates strongly with desire, sexuality and life; on a visual level, the rose is generally held to be a deeply

libidinous blossom. Cooper defines the rose as standing for 'perfection; the pleroma; completion; the mystery of life; the heart centre of life; the unknown; beauty; grace; happiness, but also voluptuousness; the passions and associated with wine, sensuality and seduction' (2016, p.141). Exploring further on an archetypal and symbolic level, the rose has been reported as being found (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, pp.162-163) in a large number of cultures and mainly linked with goddess worship, particularly goddesses of love and fertility, reflecting the earlier assertion about its culturally recognised symbolism. The rose is also held to allude strongly to more than just feelings of romance:

> For alchemists, the entire process of psychic transformation takes place sub rosa (under the rose)…In alchemy the crossed branches of the white and red rose not only allude to the "love affair" of opposite natures, and to the albedo and rubedo as understanding and realisation pf psychic processes, but also to the silence necessary to the interior nature of the work and the womb or "rose" within whose petalled folds the Self is secretly conceived (ibid).

In other words, the rose is a strongly symbolic signifier of psychic transformation, in this case Lester's symbolic psychic re-birth and partial awakening from immature and asleep father and husband to a more self-aware and mature man and parent. Mendes develops this array of flower themes in a number of ways, from our first glimpse of Carolyn Burnham (Fig 5.14) tending to her ruthlessly controlled and pruned 'American Beauty' rose bushes, (her handling with gloves of her flowers can be read as indicative of both a distrust of the symbolic power of the rose, as well as an appreciation of their thorny nature) to the continuation of Lester's individuative journey.

Figure 5.14 Carolyn Burnham keeping her roses, and nature, under control in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

The rose, then, is both a symbol of both beauty (referenced throughout the film and on the film's paratextual publicity materials - adverts, posters etc. - upon its release) and, as Stevens has noted it is also:

> The Western equivalent of the lotus (allegorical symbol of creation and individuation), its mandala form representing the wholeness of creation, the perfection of the deity, and the

individuation of the Self. For the Christians, it refers to the chalice, the blood of Christ, the promise of redemption and resurrection, and the certainty of divine love...Aphrodite caused the red rose to grow from the blood of her slain lover, Adonis (1998, p.389).

This Shadow side of the rose (that it sprang from spilled blood, and that its thorns can draw blood as in various fairy tales) and its accompanying psychic power is also explored by Mendes in the final scenes of the film in which the dramatic narrative come to a climax.

Returning to the follow-up scene to what can be described as the anima scene, we are then shown (for Jane) an excruciatingly embarrassing first encounter with Angela where Lester stutters and inadvertently humiliates himself (Fig 5.15). For her own part, Angela displays preternatural awareness of the true state of the Burnham's marriage. Jane is humiliated: 'Could he be any more pathetic?' Angela smiles. 'I think it's sweet. And I think he and your mother have not had sex in a long time.'

Figure 5.15   Angela meets all of the Burnhams in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

At this point, Mendes and Ball deliberately depict Angela as fulfilling, at first glance, Lester's sexual anima fantasies about her. She is initially depicted as sexually experienced, worldly, aware of her sexual capital and power over men via the agency of her looks and her body, referenced particularly in a previous scene with Jane where she recounts confidently her growing awareness of her sexuality and beauty and the effect it has on men. This depiction of Angela as a Lolita-esque figure continues throughout the film, with her true state of virginity and sexual inexperience only revealed at the end of the film in another pivotal scene with Lester. To emphasize the journey that Lester is embarking upon, the scene after the encounter above, we are then shown Lester in bed in a highly stylized dream sequence, grinning in amazement and wonder (Fig 5.16) as red rose petals (presumably of the American Beauty variety) fall gently all around him from above.

Figure 5.16   Lester finds himself quite literally, under the rose, beginning his transformation in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

His POV then shows a magical version of Angela floating above him (Figure 5.17) on an inverted and literal bed of roses, her body coyly covered up by strategic petals, Mendes deliberately stylising Lester's fantasies in all of the dream sequences within the film.

Figure 5.17   Angela on the ceiling, as anima, she is dominating Lester's psyche in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

With this particular sequence Mendes references directly (and literally) the phrase 'sub rosa' as quoted above as they show Lester starting the process of awakening due to his anima resorting to desperate measures to awaken him. Lester has found himself under the power of the rose, under the power of his anima, and it is working its psychic magic upon, bringing him out of his mental and emotional torpor. With this imagery, Mendes is consciously mediating the symbolic flower power to indicate Lester's state of mental and spiritual awareness.

Alongside the obvious symbol of the rose, there are a number of other symbols within the film that Mendes deliberately uses here to generate affective power, namely rain (water), blood, and doorways. The background to significant scenes is dominated by water in the form of rain, with darkness falling in the evening to add to the imagery. As discussed previously in the chapter around fathers and child sons using *The Road to Perdition* as an example, rain is a primal indicator of spiritual cleansing and soul revitalisation:

Rain is a miraculous visitation of heavenly power, natural and immense, necessary and feared, cleansing, releasing, dissolving, flooding, relieving and sweet….Beneficial healing by the celestial influence of such "rain" cleanses that which is dark and trapped in emotional blindness, or in the parched earth within, inert, barren of life, stuck in unconsciousness or in uncertainty, and in need of the dissolving and propagating rains. The alchemists saw the falling rain as the "washing" of the *nigredo* state, illuminating and reanimating what felt dead and dark. This divine intervention of grace occurring at the darkest point preceded a new *coniunctio*, a psychic union of emotion, body, imagination and mind in a new level of consciousness (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, p.62).

This lengthy quote reinforces the importance of water as a transforming symbolic force within the film. Up to this point, the narrative has been built around Lester's awakening, and the effects of his awakening upon those around him, both constructive and destructive. Rain symbolises a coming renewal of Lester's psyche and his maturation towards individuation. Interestingly enough, the imagery Mendes uses is highly reminiscent of horror films when analysed, his encounter with Angela (after her fight with Jane and Ricky in which her repressed ordinariness is revealed to her by Ricky) is lit by light with rain clearly visible on window glass and stark shadows with occasional rumblings of thunder being heard as well. This direct hint at shadow aspects (the *nigredo* state) are indicative of and evinced by the mise-en-scene which references claustrophobic framing, close-ups, a darker palette of colours and harsher expressions of shadow from the actors; forces, both repressive and expressive, are on the march here.

Figure 5.18   Lester is about to have his fantasies fulfilled… (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Within the house, Lester is in the position of having his sexual fantasies fulfilled with Angela (Fig 5.18) as she needs reassurance from someone that she is not ordinary after her fight with Jane and Ricky:

Lester starts unbuttoning Angela's blouse. She seems disconnected from what's happening. Lester pulls her blouse open, exposing her breasts. Lester looks down at her, grinning, unable to believe he's actually about to do what he's dreamed of so many times, and then...

<pre>
ANGELA   This is my first time.

LESTER (laughs)   You're kidding.

ANGELA   (a whisper) I'm sorry.
</pre>

Lester looks down at her, his grin fading. Angela lies beneath him, embarrassed and vulnerable. This is not the mythically carnal creature of Lester's fantasies; this is a nervous child.

Confronted with the raw and uncomfortable reality of the situation, Lester subsequently does not follow through with his desires. This is a key moment within the film and for Lester's development as a man and, more importantly, as a father (Fig 5.19). His fantasies about Angela (which are all they have been up to this point) have collided with the reality of his position that he finds himself in that he realises that his desires have led him not to pleasure but to a truth about himself. The erotic playback – as defined by Samuels earlier - with a girl his daughter's age that he nearly gets so wrong fulfils its role in jolting him awake to become a mature man.

Figure 5.19   … but then realises his huge potential mistake, and makes a paternal decision in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

The implications of this are played out later, but before we can turn to more in-depth analysis, we need to focus on the linking scene. This next scene focusses on a different, but no less important symbol: the doorway, or portal. Ronnberg and Martin have this to say about the symbolism of this feature:

Gates {and doors] stand between here and there, between the known and the unknown. At a psychological level, gates are found between the inner and the outer world, between waking and sleeping…the gate-doorway is a dangerous and numinous place, rich in protective rituals and superstitions (2010, p.558).

Stevens largely concurs: 'They are both a barrier and an invitation to proceed. When open, they lead to the centre… They are thus linked to the symbolism of initiation (entrance) and transition from one state to another' (1998, p.244). Mendes uses this feature symbolically in a brief scene but it is a

telling one. When Caroline returns home from her stint on the firing range (another specifically American cultural reference), she has been motivating herself with affirmations about not being a victim. As she pulls up outside the house (Fig 5.20), the camera centrally frames the bright red doorway set against stark white, lit harshly.

Figure 5.20   The red door – potential portal to another state of consciousness in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

The palette choices here are interesting and deliberate; the door can be read as both a vaginal symbol, particularly due to its red colour and connotations of desire, sex and life, as well as a metaphor for spiritual awakening, of another psychic state to be entered into, a threshold to be crossed over (as described above). This is particularly relevant as within the house, Lester is about to experience a brief moment of spiritual enlightenment, albeit abruptly terminated. It occurs after he is in the role of caring parent towards Angela after their earlier encounter:

> Lester crosses to the kitchen table, where he sits and studies the photo. He suddenly seems older, more mature... and then he smiles: the deep, satisfied smile of a man who just now understands the punch line of a joke he heard long ago...
>
> LESTER   Man oh man...(softly) Man oh man oh man...
>
> After a beat, the barrel of a GUN rises up behind his head, aimed at the base of his skull. There is an arrangement of fresh-cut ROSES in a vase on the opposite counter, deep crimson against the WHITE TILE WALL. Then a GUNSHOT suddenly rings out, ECHOING unnaturally. Instantly, the tile is sprayed with BLOOD, the same deep crimson as the roses.

This mature realisation and the deep joy it is hinted at bringing, is both underscored and catalysed by Lester's last action, that of picking up a photo of his family and studying it (despite the chaos his hitherto largely anima-inspired selfish actions have wrought within his family up until now). It seems that, despite his wife and daughter on the verge of abandoning him, he perceives that there may be a way out of the situation that he has helped to create. Mendes and Ball, however, cut this wondering short with his violent death, the red and white colour scheme that has been used consistently throughout the film echoed in his last moments as his brains are spread across the wall by Colonel Fitts's bullet, accompanied, naturally by the ubiquitous roses in an arrangement by the white wall.

As detailed earlier, one of the Shadow aspects of the symbolic Rose is that it was held as springing up from the blood of a slain lover; both petals and thorns are therefore present, a reminder of the dangerous aspects of desire and of Eros energy. Blood, the symbol for both death and life, of sex, desire, etc., is used here by Mendes in conscious conjunction with the rose; as Ronnberg and Martin express it: 'Blood symbolises our feeling for the sacredness of life before we distance ourselves in bloodless, abstract thought – it is the soul of embodied life, forming our essential character' (2010, p.396). Alerted by the gunshot, Ricky and Jane discover Lester's body in a pool of dark red blood, with Ricky, far from being repelled, bending down to try and see what Lester is smiling at (Fig 5.21).

Figure 5.21 Lester finally gets the joke, but pays the price, as Ricky looks on in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

The conjunction of matter and spirit is invoked in this image, with Lester's red blood acting as the connecting factor, the coniunctio as it were, invoked not only by the rain outside as quoted above, but the mortal fluid that Lester is losing. This 'psychic union of emotion, body, imagination and mind in a new level of consciousness' (ibid, p.62) is expressed as the film concludes with Lester's voiceover reassuring us of the benevolent spiritual force behind everyday life (similar to Ricky Fitts's earlier realisation) we are led through a poignant montage of images, deliberately invoking the hackneyed phrase, 'life flashing before your eyes'. As an example of the mature paternal, Lester is a brief, but interesting example as he finally realises that his role as husband and father is in itself a sacralised and spiritual role that he is now fully ready to embrace and inhabit. The film, and the spiritual themes within, are the closest to Jung's definition of a visionary piece of art from all the films analysed so far, containing, as it does explicitly spiritual and numinous references and sequences.

This redemption has been critiqued by, amongst others Arthur (2004), Karlyn (2004) and King (2009) who argue persuasively that Lester's death is a dodge when it comes to his, at best, deeply inappropriate desires towards a girl his daughter's own age. King has this to say:

> If *American Beauty* was seeking to create genuine discomfort in its viewers, this might be considered a cop-out. It lets the viewer off the hook, which seems retrospectively to license the earlier indulgence in the sexual fantasy, safely removed from any eventual consummation (2009, p.214).

This issue, perhaps, is best addressed in terms of the depiction of Lester's anima fantasies. The first point to make is that they are clearly deliberately depicted *as* fantasies; and therefore unequivocally indicated as not real. No actual physical or sexual harm is shown to have been perpetrated by Lester; although the film deliberately flirts with incestuous themes throughout. Indeed when he gets the chance to have his fantasies fulfilled (as described above), he is shown to refuse, fantasy and reality colliding, but with fantasy explicitly depicted as coming off worst. It is telling that Lester is also shown as *not* getting to have any sex in the film[58], unlike both his daughter and wife, who enthusiastically commits adultery, although there is enough ambiguity in the narrative and script for the responsibility for this marital unhappiness to be at the door of both husband and wife. The second point to highlight, to paraphrase Juliet Mitchell's argument (1974), and echoed by Tacey (1997), is that the psyche is not politically correct:

> Masculine and feminine are not only a cause for intellectual confusion and embarrassment, but also, strangely, a source of spiritual power. The psyche continues to use male and female, man and woman, as symbols of the polar opposites that move through the personality. We continue to dream in the archaic and concrete language of ancient symbols, and we cannot rail against the psyche for using sexist or stereotypical language (p.35).

Unconscious forces within the psyche operate simultaneously both on a deeper and more transcendent level than culturally and contextually approved notions of gender imagery. Whilst the chosen imagery is deliberately provocative, the psychic processes that it hints at resonate at more profound levels. Karlyn, Arthur and King's points, whilst wholly valid in their contextual setting, also miss the point in that Lester does *not* take advantage of Angela, and it is this depicted conscious choice that pulls him back from the brink of falling into an anima-inspired trap which would send him back into his paternal shadow. This non-action is depicted as indicating that Lester, as a father, finally manages to achieve a form of redemption.

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[58] An earlier version of the script had Lester consummate his desire with Angela, a far more transgressive proposal, and one which may have negatively impacted the commercial chances of the film (King, 2009, p.215).

Whilst Mendes, more often than not, demonstrates the American paternal being redeemed within his films (*Revolutionary Road* being an exception), Anderson tends to depict fathers who are shown to be unredeemable (Daniel Plainview) or just unredeemed. Unlike Sydney in *Hard Eight* who achieves a partial redemption of sorts by the end of the film, Jimmy Gator (also played by Anderson regular Philip Baker Hall) *Magnolia* does not. One of a number of complex dysfunctional familial relationships that the film uses to weave its narrative, Jimmy and Claudia Gator (Melora Walters)'s relationship is presented as a troubled one from the start. Our first encounter with them takes place in Claudia's apartment where the seemingly kindly and concerned Jimmy enters Claudia's domestic space to discover her casual lover from the previous night. Her violent language when he gently challenges her about her promiscuous behaviour is all the more shocking when contrasted to his own puzzled and ostensibly caring demeanour. Anderson uses the tight space in more subtle ways, the camera unflinching as it focuses on Claudia as she slumps to the ground, defeated by the visit of her father, and the implied shame that he brings to her.
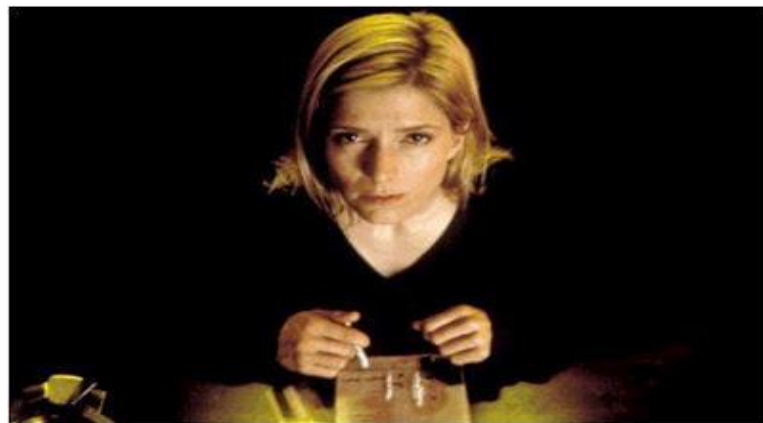
Figure 5.22 - Claudia Gator (Melora Walters), the troubled daughter and tragic *puella* figure in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

His seemingly genuine concern for her contrasts sharply with her swearing, and we are left with the impression that she is emotionally unstable (she is also shown snorting cocaine) and selfish (Fig 5.22). Anderson, however, paints a more subtle picture than at first appears. Writing about the puella aeternas (sister to the puer aeternas[59]), Schwartz describes Claudia's internal world accurately:

> …the emotional distress of the Puella, which remains hidden behind a persona that disguises the psychological tensions experienced by a woman in the Western world…She feels essentially unlovable and experiences shame, vulnerability and fear, all based on a

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[59] The puer aeternas, or flying boy/eternal youth, is an archetype that epitomizes arrested masculine development. Peter Pan is a prime example of this figure, someone who cannot deal with the adult world and who significantly has no shadow and subsequently does not recognise (or ignores) unconscious and earthy drives. Jungian writer and analyst Marie Louise Von Franz (2000) wrote extensively about the puer.

conviction of not being enough. When these feelings descend into the shadow, they become internal persecutory figures that feel overwhelming (2009, p.112).

Through her tentative relationship with sensitive police officer Jim Kurring (John C. Reilly) it is gradually revealed that Claudia *is* damaged, but damaged by her relationship with her father who, it is strongly implied, sexually abused her. Schwartz identifies the critical role that the father plays with the puella in a daughter's psyche:

> Fathers provide a doorway to the world and his interaction with her forms part of the foundation upon which a daughter builds her sense of self. He is integral to her identity formation as a woman and the unencumbered expression of her truth. The father complex is healthy or ill depending on how its energy has been internalized. A negative father complex adversely affects a daughter's intellectual confidence; promotes idealization of others, especially males; and destroys initiative. It feeds an internalized cycle of self-hatred, oppression and revenge (2009, p.115).

Claudia's troubled relationship with her ostensibly normal father is a classic case of this negative father complex, feeding her self-loathing (Anderson symbolically marking this with her drug abuse and strong language) and hesitant and fumbled emotional encounters with Kurring (Fig 5.23).

Figure 5.23   Tentative steps for Claudia Gator and Jim Kurring (John C. Reilly) as they negotiate their relationship in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

The sexual abuse revelations come after a verbal and emotional showdown with Jimmy's wife, Rose Gator (Melinda Dillon) in a tightly framed and claustrophobically filmed scene, powered by hesitant, but compelling dialogue:

ROSE   ...say it, Jimmy...

JIMMY   Do you know the answer to this?

ROSE   I'm asking you. I'm asking you if you know why Claudia will not
                speak to you....please, Jimmy....tell me.

JIMMY   I think that she thinks I may have molested her.

Rose doesn't flinch.

JIMMY   She thinks terrible things that somehow got in her head...that I might have done something. She said that to me last time...when it was...ten years ago she walked out the door, "You touched me wrong...I know that." Some crazy thought in her, in her head...

ROSE   Did you ever touch her?

JIMMY   No.

ROSE   Jimmy, did you touch her?

JIMMY   I don't know.

His transgressive secret uncovered, Rose declares flatly: 'You deserve to die alone for what you've done' and leaves him to be with her daughter. After this exchange, all hope extinguished by his abandonment by his family, and also suffering from terminal cancer, Jimmy attempts suicide on his own using a revolver (Fig 5.24).

Figure 5.24   Jimmy Gator, the unredeemed father, about to take his life in *Magnolia*; fate, however, has other plans for him (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

Unbeknown to him, fate appears to have another plan with the *deus ex machina* narrative device of a rain of frogs spoiling his plans for suicide and instead condemn him to the grisly fate of burning to death via electrical fire. This scene is an uneasy mix of pathos and laughter with the plague of frogs acting as catalysing the climax to the multiplicity of narratives. Anderson's use of the frog is not only deliberate (referencing the Old Testament plague, hinted at by the relevant Bible reference in a blink-and-you miss it piece of graffiti on a wall) but on a symbolic level, more than a little significant. In *Ariadne's Clue*, Stevens reminds us that the frog represents:

…an obvious symbol of transformation for not only does it change from tadpole to frog but it is a much at home in the water as it is on the land. It is a borderline or liminal case, hopping about on the threshold between consciousness and unconsciousness (1998, p.338).

Ronnberg and Martin also highlight its symbolic power of transformation:

> In dreams and fairy tales the frog arrives quite suddenly, out of water somewhere, just as an aspect (often princely) of self-substance emerges from the waters of the unconscious, but is not yet in fully conscious, recognizable form (2010, p.190).

Cooper states that the frog also represents:

> As arising from the waters it is renewal of life and resurrection, likewise as possessing the moist skin of life, as opposed the dryness of death…represents the dark and undifferentiated prima materia, the watery element and the primordial slime, the basis of created matter (2016, p.72).

In the film, Anderson mediates the frog symbolism (Fig 5.25) as a highly effective pointer to the various psychic transformations that are taking place within the multiple narratives.

Figure 5.25 – Stanley watching the rain of frogs outside in *Magnolia*, signalling a change in consciousness for the characters (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

In this particular case, the transformation is that of the dark American father in the form of Jimmy who cannot face his past actions towards his daughter, actions that are indicative of the erotic playback function in its negative form. The first scenes showing his initial bemusement about Claudia's reaction are all the more telling, and retroactively speaking, disturbing, when we consider his secret. The psychic transformation, hinted at by the rain of frogs, condemn him to a more painful and slower death than from his bullet, as is strongly hinted at by the fire that is inadvertently started. It appears that fate will punish Jimmy, and that he will be transformed, if only to ashes, by the fire. Claudia and her mother are also shown as having re-connected, both of them tightly embracing each other as the frogs continue to fall, the maternal and daughter being joined as one feminine presence. Claudia's initial and obvious pain and father hunger displayed to us in her opening scenes is explained in these tragicomic final scenes, and adds to the complex tableau of father-and-children relationships that Anderson depicts throughout the film. Similar to Stanley the quiz kid, however, Anderson depicts the situation as far from hopeless.

Figure 5.26   The very last frame of the film: Claudia finally seeing some light at the end of the tunnel in *Magnolia* (Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellars Productions, 1999).

In a final coda, reminiscent of *American Beauty*, we see Claudia framed in close-up (Fig 5.26) as Kurring stating positively that she can heal and that he will always be there for her. In a sense, the daughter's potential to transcend her father and the father-effect that he has had on her is very similar to the son's potential transcendence, discussed earlier. Claudia's tentative half-smile is a deliberately encouraging sign that daughters can yet survive both father hunger and the damage that dark American fathers inflict.

To conclude this chapter, the American father-daughter relationship and the accompanying father hunger, is consciously depicted as both substantially and subtly different from the father's relationship with the son. As the daughter has to go on her own gender journey from the mother towards the father knowing the masculine as an opposite, his absence, or, as mentioned earlier, his lack of *presence (American Beauty)* can damage the daughter and her perception of the masculine just as much as too much presence in a daughter's life can also cause damage (*Magnolia*). The American father has to do more than just provide material comforts and success; he has to provide psychological support and presence to a daughter. As *American Beauty* explicitly shows in its opening scene, Jane's crisply expressed longing for a role model father is what Lester finally becomes in his last moments, although, tragically, his daughter doesn't get to experience this more balanced mature father energy, robbed of her paternal by the other, more damaged and repressed father in the film, Colonel Fitts. Her father hunger is paralleled by Lester's own innate individuative journey as he confronts and learns from his anima via the symbolism of the rose. The erotic playback function that the father performs, as Samuels has theorized, has become deeply confused for Lester as he unconsciously projects his anima onto his daughter's best friend and results as a chaotic dance with his shadow, only redeeming himself at the end of the film. As an example of the redeemed dark father, Lester Burnham is a prime example. By sharp contrast, Jimmy Gator is a deliberate example of the unredeemed shadow paternal. The depicted results of him breaking one of the most primal human taboos is sobering. His refusal to face up to his actions and the truth about his own inner darkness damns him; the psychic forces that Anderson shows at work do not brook denials. Jimmy is punished here by what could be described as a classical Greek tragic device, the rain of falling

frogs, sent by the gods. Unconscious forces are depicted here by Anderson as being directly visible; they will act against transgressors and bring punishment, Jimmy's presumed final fate being a salutary lesson.

In a wider context, both Lester and Jimmy are examples of the sexualised father, as mentioned by Bruzzi (2005), and this depiction resonates and reflects with the other dark fathers that were present in contemporary cinema at the time (e.g. *Happiness,* Solondz, 1999). Bruzzi has this to say:

> Although Hollywood's disillusionment with the father is painfully widespread, within these scenarios of loss lie its ultimate masculine melodrama: just out of reach for these flawed fathers lies the perfected image they aspire to but know they cannot match. It is this disparity between the real and the symbolic father that Hollywood finds impossible to resolve, perpetually hoping to instead to effect their coalescence (p.191).

Picking up on this point about the perfected image of the father, as a symbolic relationship, the father-daughter dyad is revealing in that it helps to show the sexual father, sex being a function and feature of the American paternal that both Mendes and Anderson mediate symbolically in differing ways. These darker, more shadow qualities of the father, are shown to be contradictory; with Mendes, symptoms of psychic individuative progression, with Anderson, a psychic individuative journey that potentially leads to damnation. Both these aspects tie in to the American cultural complex and the presence of the American father within wider society, a subject that we will now analyse in more depth in the next chapter.

SIX

The Father and Society: The Paternal Cultural Complex

We now focus attention on the presence of fathers in American society and their cinematic depiction. Societally speaking, and in a very broad sense, the figure of the American father is in the conflicted position of being perceived as being both a key factor of, and blamed for, the problems surrounding masculinities, as well as functioning as the solution. This ambivalent gender position is reflected in the foregrounded social role afforded to the father; on the one hand the more liberal wing of the men's movement (Bly, 1990; Biddulph, 1995) maintain that paternal absence causes fundamental problems with the masculine continuum, their solution being to have a more present, supportive and nurturing father figure present. More conservative and reactionary neo-masculinists (Blankenhorn, 1995) would agree that society, and American society in particular, needs more paternal presence, but that this should signal a return to so-called 'old-fashioned' family values with the patriarchal paternal in charge once again, just in time, it would seem, to undo the social progression that feminism and other social movements have made over the past few decades (Faludi 2000). Added to this febrile mix, the political men's movement appears to regard the father ambiguously as more often than not problematic, and consequently his presence is often perceived as contributing to social problems as well as being part of any perceived solution (Kimmel, 2000, 2009, 2015).

With the above points borne in mind, we can analyse the cinematic presence of the father and his depicted role and place within American society[60] with the post-Jungian approach providing a fresh perspective. With the two directors' historical focus in question, the father appears in a number of historically specific time frames and eras, adding a certain diversity of depiction, although it would be misleading to assume that this was in any way particularly representative. The portrayed fathers and surrogate fathers portrayed within the films being (mainly) middle-class, mainly all white[61], and, with one exception, heterosexual. Hamad (2014, p.27, pp.113-134) and Peberdy (2011) both make the point that the figure of the American father is often 'de-racinated', enabling it to function across social barriers as a socially cohesive masculinising presence. Accordingly, this chapter will examine the father as portrayed in normative American society in *American Beauty* (1999) and *Revolutionary Road* (2008) as well as surrogate father figures that are found in American societal subcultures, both state-sanctioned subcultures - the US Marine Corps in *Jarhead* (2005) - and fringe subcultures – the quasi-religious cult in *The Master* (2012). Reflecting the common narrative structure of these texts, Bassil-Morozow and Hockley comment on the suitability of individuative narratives to mesh with mainstream Hollywood cinema 'individuation suits the type of narrative adopted by mainstream cinema: linear, realistic, plausible, with a clear personal history and a traceable psychological development of the protagonist' (2017, p.18). The chapter will be arguing that, despite the varying differences and societal positions, both directors depict American fathers within these narratives as often coming under pressure from other men in patriarchal social spaces, this pressure coming from a variety of sources, including the surrogate sons that the surrogate fathers have taken under their (masculine) wings. To facilitate the subsequent analyses of the depiction of these widely varying fathers and father figures, the thesis will explore the post-Jungian concepts of the cultural unconscious, the cultural complex, and the role of initiation in both an archetypal sense and as a societal function. These ideas are a concomitant accompaniment to the symbols and symbolic imagery that the directors use, and provide a valuable social context to the films under analysis, as well as bridging the gap between the personal and the social impacts of archetypal imagery and energies.

The cultural unconscious and the cultural complex

Examining first the cultural unconscious, it would, perhaps, be wise to give a Jungian and post-Jungian definition of culture in the first instance. Samuels et al: 'From a psychological point of view, he [Jung] suggests that culture carries the connotation of a group which has developed its own identity and consciousness, together with a sense of continuity and purpose or meaning' (1986, p.38).

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[60] I will be discussing patriarchal social structures, rather than an all-encompassing patriarchy, as I hold that the former term is more accurate and less problematic than the latter when applied to complex social organisations.

[61] Staff Sergeant Sykes (Jamie Foxx) is the exception in *Jarhead*, Colonel Frank Fitts (Chris Cooper) in *American Beauty* respectively.

This reference to a *group* consciousness that is indicative of a separate entity from an individual's (or personal) consciousness is fundamental to a deeper understanding of the cultural unconscious. Izod expands this further when he references it:

> A term first used by Joseph Henderson (1984) is helpful because it points to an intermediate zone from which unconscious or semi-conscious arousals disturb and sway consciousness but without the potentially cataclysmic consequences which can occur when contents irrupt from the collective unconscious (2006, p.18).

This intermediate psychic zone is a useful development in post-Jungian thought in that it provides a much needed link between the personal unconscious of the individual, and the deeper collective unconscious, or, to use a more recent phrase, the objective psyche. It also allows for the effect and influence of cultural symbols and energies upon the individual psyche, something that Jung managed to avoid fully engaging with (despite his emphasis on locating the individual within their particular culture), mainly preferring to posit that archetypal symbolic energy came directly from the objective psyche/collective unconscious. Izod again:

> …symbols found in screen texts (like other cultural forms) must indeed, to conform to Jung's meaning of the word, have a dimension that receives energy from the unconscious. However, those energies appear to lie nearer to the surface than the deep, collective unconscious from which are sourced the major archetypes of all human experience (ibid).

And also:

> The concept of the cultural unconscious…extends post-Jungian theories of the psyche, positing a less deeply buried level of unconsciousness based on the recognition that social and cultural pressures conjoin their considerable influence with many other factors in forming all but those images generated by the most profoundly hermetic psychological forces (ibid, p.146).

This concept of a cultural psychic buffer zone is crucial when we also consider the different effects generated by cultural or onscreen symbols within a cultural product, the meaning and message varying enormously to different audiences within different cultures. When the concept of the cultural unconscious is coupled with symbols and symbolic energies, differences emerge between cultural symbols and natural symbols:

> Jung's notion of natural and cultural symbolism denotes a crucial differentiation between the realm of the natural, which should be regarded as an eternally evolving source of images wholly deriving from embedded forms of the collective unconscious, and that of culture (Singh, 2009, p.55).

Singh, more problematically, claims that when discussing global shifts in late-capital culture:

> These cultural shifts, in the most general sense, therefore tend to be naturalized and internalized through very similar hegemonic processes of consensus and consent…and tend to (if not negate, then) render symbolic signifying systems redundant in the everyday sense (ibid).

This point of view is interesting, but arguably goes too far in dismissing symbolic signifier systems as redundant. Whilst it would be folly to claim that deeper symbolic signifiers consistently trump cultural pressures and movements, in this case within American culture, symbols are still socially and culturally potent phenomenon and can still be analysed as such, especially in cultural products, film being a prime example. Related to Singh's arguments, Hockley reminds us that:

> The notion of a cultural unconscious is indeed a controversial one. It seems to perpetuate some of the problems that come from use of the term 'collective unconscious' rather than the seemingly more neutral 'objective psyche. This is not to suggest that the problem is only one of terminology. The very notion of some sort of unconscious psychological agency is something to which there appears to be an almost instinctive resistance (2007, p.16).

This resistance is understandable when the individual, or personal, unconscious is threatened by the idea of their environment exerting a stronger influence over them than is comfortable to admit. In addition to this resistance, Samuels also reminds us that:

> …the cultural unconscious as an idea, needs further thought. For example, is the cultural unconscious a kind of repository of cultural experience – a storehouse of difference? Or is it the means, already existing as a potential, by which the human psyche gives birth to cultural difference? Or both? (1993, p.328).

More recently, Bassil-Morozow and Hockley offer this insight into the collective unconscious, part - progenitor of the cultural unconscious:

> By itself, the collective unconscious is speechless. It is dark, passionate and confused, and needs a language to make itself clear and understood. Its free-floating impulses can be turned into narratives with the help of symbols…The personal layer of the unconscious is structured by culture and by language. The amorphous contents of the collective unconscious transform into 'words' and 'phrases' of particular cultural constructs (2017, p.54).

With so many questions around the nature of the structure and function of the cultural unconscious yet to be answered, it would be unwise to make too many claims for it. However, there are strong arguments that individuals are also products of their social and cultural surroundings as well as individual families and genetics. Therefore, it is my view that the cultural unconscious (which

arguably also contains what could be described as a *social* unconscious) both exists, and exerts a powerful influence on both individuals and society. Consequently, for the purposes of the chapter and thesis, the presence of the American symbolic father within the cultural unconscious will be analysed in further detail.

Following on from these definitions and considerations of the cultural unconscious, is the concept of the *cultural complex*. At this juncture it would be judicious to revisit the definitions of what a complex is. Samuels et al, state that:

> Jung asserted that 'complexes behave like independent beings' (CW 8 para.253). He also argued that 'there is no difference in principle between a fragmentary personality and a complex…complexes are splinter psyches'. (CW 8, para. 202) (1986, p.34).

They define a complex as 'a collection of images and ideas, clustered around a core derived from one or more archetypes and characterised by a common emotional tone'. Hauke and Alister state that:

> A complex is a collection of images, ideas and behaviours which have a common emotional tone; it derives its force ultimately from a corresponding archetype. Complexes contribute to behavioural patterns and are marked by their powerful emotional tone (2001, p.244).

If we extrapolate these definitions to the American cultural unconscious, where we can presume American cultural complexes to reside, then potentially useful insights can be generated. As a culture also includes numerous subcultures, then cultural complexes can also be refracted through different cultural lenses, so to speak. For example, any cultural complexes concerned with social organs of the state (such as local government, police, etc.) and how they function across a society is almost certainly refracted by individual societal, racial, cultural, economic and gender positions. For more than fifty years, cultural and subcultural studies scholars have asserted that structural relations to power influence groups and individual's experience of the state and its various organs (Hoggart 1957; Williams 1961; Cohen 1972, Hall and Jefferson 1975; etc.). Based on these theoretical principles it could be argued that an American white, middle-class suburban nuclear family, for example, is more likely to have a trusting and less conflicted perspective and experience of the state and its various organs, than, perhaps, an economically deprived, ethnic minority one parent family, who have had previously negative or socially disadvantaged encounters. This situation is further refracted when we consider the *individual* positions of each member of the family, or social unit, and what other social or gender groups they belong to.

Developing this definition when it comes to the consideration of questions of national and cultural identities, Singer and Kimbles remind us that: 'Cultural complexes are not the same as cultural identity or what has sometimes been called "national character", although there are times

when cultural complexes, cultural identity and national character can seem impossibly entwined' (2004, p.5). This entwining can complicate analysis of cultural movements and features; yet there can be detected certain commonalities to a cultural complex that also impact and constellate cultural and national identities. This chapter will be analysing these commonalities that cluster around the figure of the American father; in effect, cinematically speaking, a societal archetypal presence can be analysed and examined. When an archetype such as the father, can, in effect, be argued to catalyse cultural complexes within the cultural unconscious, new cultural forms and identities can emerge. Singer and Kimbles provide an interesting post-Jungian analysis of oppressed cultural identities:

> …those groups emerging out of long periods of oppression through political and economic struggle must define new identities for themselves which are often based on long submerged traditions. This struggle for a new group, identity can get mixed up with underlying potent cultural complexes which have accrued historical experience and memory over centuries and trauma and lie slumbering in the cultural unconscious, waiting to be awakened by the trigger of new trauma (ibid).

When we consider the prevailing cultural and social energies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries within American society regarding the positions of gender, race and sexuality, the above quote clarifies and partially explains the pluralistic social and cultural positions that we are currently engaged with. American fathers are arguably asked to carry the shadow aspects of American society and the American Dream with its emphasis on material success and social mobility. This success 'by any means necessary' exacts a price. As mentioned previously, the American father is tasked with the role of provider; often at the expense of other, equally important, roles. With regard to the social and cultural position of the masculine, as theorised earlier in the thesis, the triple challenge of feminism, gay rights and civil rights has prompted, in effect, the eruption of a masculine cultural complex. Added to these economic challenges, and echoing Connell's (1995) work on hegemonic and subaltern masculinities, the masculine has arguably pluralised, and reacted to these challenges in various ways.

What this chapter, and to an extent, the conclusion, will attempt to show is how this American cultural complex around the American Dream, and its emphasis on material success and social mobility, has been refracted in the archetypal shape of the cinematic father via the agency of the chosen auteur directors. As highlighted at the beginning, the auteur can be considered, in Staiger's phrase 'a conscious analyser of the functionality of citations in historical moments' (2003, p.49), in other words, a distinctive commentatory voice on cultural and social energies and movements, in this particular instance, of masculinities and fatherhood. As Singer and Kimbles identify:

> Intense collective emotion is the hallmark of an activated cultural complex at the core of which is an archetypal pattern. Cultural complexes structure emotional experience and

operate in the personal and collective psyche in much the same way as individual complexes, although their content might be quite different (2004, p.6).

The father as a cultural and cinematic presence in American society can therefore be arguably located in the cultural shadow as Bruzzi (2005) correctly identifies, and if we are to judge by the filmic representations and depictions in the films so far encountered. Going further, it is also arguable that the films produced by Anderson and Mendes also depict the father as a highly nuanced and complex cultural symbol of American masculinity, as well as functioning as a cultural complex in itself, with a degree of capacity for redemptive behaviour which is sometimes (*American Beauty, Hard Eight, Road to Perdition*) but not always (*Boogie Nights, There Will be Blood, Revolutionary Road*) depicted as embracing. Before the chapter goes into more detailed textual analysis, the post-Jungian view of the role and archetypal presence and function of initiation needs to be examined in greater depth

Initiation and the archetypes

Examining the subject of initiation through a post-Jungian perspective, we can analyse this rite of passage in both its archetypal and social functions. Jung himself posited that the desire for initiation was a symptom of an 'instinctive stirring' (1969, CW 8, para. 712), effectively extending the idea of initiation beyond the anthropological and sociological to the psychological. A key part of initiation is also focussed on embracing aspects of the overall cultural Shadow that have been hitherto ignored or denied; the main purpose of initiation from a psychic viewpoint is to effect an entrance into adult society, and to be aware of the wider world and its collective opposing light and dark forces and energies. This post-Jungian recognition of the containment of opposites is highlighted by Hockley:

> The focus here, as in much post-Jungian psychology, is on difference. The acceptance and, indeed, containment of difference is at the heart of much of Jung's writing. Much critical psychological writing regards the human condition as essentially structured through a series of 'lacks', of lacunae and of discourses which attempt to paper over such voids. By contrast, the Jungian model of the psyche sees the challenge of making meaning of life as one of holding together differences, of containing the opposites and in doing so acknowledging that this cannot be achieved solely through a one-sidedly rational engagement with the world (2007, p.17).

As well as a psychological feature, initiation is also a key rite of passage that mark a human life span. Usually perceived and conceived as a way of marking the passage of adolescents (both male and female) to becoming adult members of wider society, Sullivan, summarising Jung's ideas, identifies

that 'initiation rituals can constellate a symbolic process that loosens the individual's ties…in the service of development' (1996, p.510). He goes on to define initiation as:

> …an inborn, identity-forming, psychological 'striving' that manifests culturally in rites of initiation. This striving manifests intrapsychically in a symbolic process that counteracts an unconscious identification with parental objects, an identification that slows growth and development (ibid).

Initiation can also be examined as an archetypal drive that is linked with spiritual growth, maturation and a desire for individuation, as described by Henderson:

> …an initiation of the kind I have mentioned as the experience of late adolescence when either by chance or design, a young person is educated and encouraged to experience the god by himself alone as different from his larger feeling for spirit of his peer group. The rite of separation is a kind of purification which gets rid of old attitudes and is followed by an initiatory ordeal of submission to whatever change is destined to occur through evocation of the god-image in any one of its many forms (1984, p.28).

> Henderson also highlights that during the process, the initiate often has experience of a 'guardian spirit' which seems to 'create individual identity <u>outside</u> parental influence or group solidarity' (ibid, p.84). Initiation is a process that appears vital both to the health of the individual and to the health of the accompanying society. Jung also describes the reward that initiation brings, if successfully undertaken:

> The [initiatory] descent into the depths will bring healing. It is the way to the total being, to the treasure which suffering mankind is forever seeking, which is hidden in the place guarded by terrible danger. This is the place of primordial unconsciousness and at the same time the place of healing and redemption, because it contains the jewel of wholeness (2014, para 270).

This 'jewel of wholeness' is how Jung refers to adulthood in terms of mature, socially aware, social sustainability, as well as being linked to Selfhood, or personal individuation. Sullivan also picks up on this point, reminding us that initiation also has a cultural impact in that the individual is made aware of his or her adult responsibilities and their place within wider social groupings and overall society:

> In cultural initiation rituals, the initiate begins to change a sense of identity from one based upon being son or daughter to the biological parents into an adult identity that is culture specific, centred on the needs of the larger group as they interact with his/her own emerging psyche (1996, p.510).

This identity of a shift away from parental control and influence is also noted by the mytho-poetic men's movement. They identity initiation as a crucial step in the adolescent masculine journey, a time when, in response to increasing signs from the young men of tribal societies, the tribal elders would, in Michael Ventura's words:

> …assault their adolescents, with, quite literally, holy terror; rituals that had been kept secret from the young until that moment…rituals that focussed upon the young all the light and darkness of the tribe's collective psyche, all its sense of mystery, all its questions and all the stories told to both harbour and answer those questions…if these things were not learned well and completely, the tribe could not survive (Biddulph, 1995, p.201).

Failure, then, to engage with initiation or to initiate has consequences:

> Stevens rightly points out that the failure to or absence of initiation experiences in our society is due to educational shortcomings. This means that many young boys and girls are unable to find the behaviour pattern that would connect them meaningfully with their peers and are left instead with an '"unsatisfied initiation" hunger (Henderson, 1984, p.102).

This 'initiation hunger' is similar to father hunger (or parent hunger) and appears indicative of an innate archetypal psychic need to progress onto adult maturity. Societal inadequacy or failure to respond to this perceived archetypal need is held to leave an unresolved hunger which will seek expression in other social spaces. It can also be posited that if initiation is not carried out in a societally and individually healthy way, then what is termed 'mis-initiation' or 'dis-initiation' can occur. Mis-initiation is when initiation is carried out either incompetently or partially; the psychic or cultural processes involved are either incomplete or unfinished, with the result that the initiate is left damaged or missing Jung's 'jewel of wholeness'. Dis-initiation is potentially far more problematic for masculinities, with the initiation process being either subverted or perverted to serve potentially personally or socially negative ends, with the psychic processes and ritualistic components involved being drawn into the collective or group shadow. This can be the case within subcultures which will be examined in greater depth later in the chapter.

Having outlined the main post-Jungian theories that are to be used, we can now examine the father and his symbolic presence within symbolic spaces, and the cultural complexes in heteronormative American society. Normative society can be argued to extract a price from the father in return for assumed male privileges and patriarchal dividends. These masculine privileges are symbolically depicted within Mendes' *Revolutionary Road* (2008) and *American Beauty* (1999) as simultaneously inimical to the paternal as well providing rewards. The figure of the American father within social subcultures *Jarhead* (2005) and *The Master* (2012) is shown largely both as an initiator

and controller of masculinities, the paternal function acting as protector of the subcultures' rules and mores.

Revolutionary Road: The trapped father

With *Revolutionary Road* Mendes depicts the figure of the American father as being trapped by two obstacles. The first is by another father (in this case a surrogate father), to the detriment of the younger man's psyche and maturation. Secondly, the American father's environment and social space also trap him, both in the domestic space and the work space. This state of what is essentially arrested masculinity is the journey of Frank Wheeler (Leonardo di Caprio) and is portrayed as a largely negative, tragic passage. Similar to *American Beauty* (analysed in more depth below), the film also share the same locale of suburbia as the principal setting for the narrative. By representing suburbia as a symbolically stifling and choking space for both the American masculine and the American feminine, it is argued that Mendes shows fatherhood and masculinity as being negatively affected by white, American middle-class, heterosocial society (suburbia being portrayed as its natural home), with assumed male economic and social privileges accorded to the main protagonists either being scant consolation or largely absent. Bruzzi identifies this situation:

> The strains, the repressive instincts, the disavowals and all the other attendant strategies deployed to hold up the 'normality' and hegemony of white, middle-class, heterosexual masculinity emerge furtively but frequently within classical Hollywood cinema, at a time when the explicit questioning of masculinity's status would have been more problematic (2013, p.38).

Heyraud also describes this situation: '*American Beauty* dramatically depicts how the psyche is lulled into a stupor by an illusional but seductive image of the "American dream" in which real human connection is gravely sacrificed' (2000, p.147). This assertion is equally applicable to *Revolutionary Road* with its shared emphasis on keeping up clichéd white picket fence and barred windows (Fig 6.1) appearances that are specifically referenced within the mise-en-scene of both films.

Figure 6.1   Frank Wheeler (Leonardo Di Caprio) sees the white picket fence outside his barred windows in *Revolutionary Road* (BBC Films / Neal Street Productions, 2008).

Investigating this further, Richardson argues that the setting of the suburbs is more symptomatic of the deeper themes explored within *Revolutionary Road*: 'DiCaprio seems to highlight that the suburbs, gender divisions, medications and alcoholism were not at the heart of either the novel or the film.' (2010, p.10). He goes on: 'the deeper-lying problem...is the exposure of an empty self' (ibid). He then quotes Cushman for a more detailed summary of the landscape that has led to this situation:

> ..this terrain has shaped 'a self that experiences these social absences and their consequences "interiorly" as a lack of personal conviction and worth, and it embodies the absences as a chronic, undifferentiated emotional hunger (ibid).

Mendes depicts the symbolic space of the American suburbs as masking this 'emotional hunger' that is expressed as father hunger by Frank within the film, an increasingly dark drive that ultimately leads to tragedy. Before the intervention of the false surrogate father figure of Bart Pollack is analysed, it is fruitful to analyse the figure of the suburban father further, particularly within the 1950s historical context of the film.

In many ways, Frank Wheeler embodies the ambivalent nature of the 1950s father as described by Bruzzi:

> A yearning for the strong authoritarian patriarch synchronous with the Freudian model was manifested in the films of the 1950s as a fascination with the domineering father who is frequently out of control. Alongside this father resided the paternal image most readily associated with the 1950s – the nine-to-five 'man in the grey flannel suit' (2005, p.38).

Mendes depicts Frank as attempting to perform *both* these paternal roles; his attempts at performing the role of patriarchal American father-and-husband within his family, combined with his role as faceless, anonymous office drone within Knox Business Machines, is something that Mendes portrays as an impossible task that he cannot hope to fulfil. The narrative bears this out as his frustrations at being unequal to the task eventually destroy his family, and by proxy, himself. This is both similar to, and dissimilar from actual 1950s films (Biskind, 1983) that dealt with the same subject matter, such as *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (Johnson, 1956) and *Executive Suite* (Wise, 1954), where the fathers in the films (Gregory Peck and William Holden) both managed to have their binary-role masculine privileges, balancing both corporate and family lives, and achieving some kind of domestic and familial harmony. Mendes shows that this does not happen to Frank Wheeler. What Frank, and Lester Burnham, discover to their cost, is that the world of white-collar work, especially corporate work, exacts an unbargained for price on the worker, as described by Biddulph:

> Many men have long discovered too late that rising in the class hierarchy does not make you freer – in fact the reverse. If you are a blue-collar worker, the company wants your body but

your soul is your own. A white-collar worker is supposed to hand over his spirit as well (1995, p.154).

This symbolic possession of both Frank Wheeler's body and soul by Knox, and by implication the wider American society that Frank is part of, is a large part of what Frank chafes against; he is depicted as being anonymised by his work to the point where he is virtually indistinguishable from all the other commuters. Richardson also identifies a key anxiety of Frank around his vaguely defined position at Knox: 'Instead of producing anything tangible, Frank's job is to perform – his product *is* his performance' (2010, p.11). As the father in the film, Frank is depicted as a largely conflicted and disempowered figure, unsure of himself, where he is going in life, and what he is supposed to do. Compared to Lester Burnham (Kevin Spacey) in *American Beauty*, it is Frank's failure to successfully rebel and move to Paris that ultimately damns him and eventually leads to the destruction of his marriage and family. Conversely, *American Beauty* shows the father's journey as becoming conscious from a state of unconsciousness (despite opposition from his family and society); *Revolutionary Road* is a depiction of a father who effectively performs the opposite of this awakening by running away from the chance of self-knowledge to pursue an illusionary ideal of fatherhood that is societally approved of, yet is shown to destroy the family.

Revolutionary Road's subtext of the father's masculinity being under threat from the perceived restrictions and emptiness of mainstream heterosocial American society, is signalled by Mendes' deliberate use of the colour grey. There is a danger, similar to the 'reverse alchemy' concept outlined by Hockley and Bassil-Morozow earlier in the thesis, of over-reliance on interpretations of symbolic palettes and colour choices. Stevens reminds us that: 'Artists develop their own vocabulary of colour, as do dreamers, and it would be fallacious to attribute fixed meanings to different hues' (1998, p.147). Whilst this is arguable, there is also, arguably, a visible and deliberate use of grey within the film to convey symbolic meaning. Ronnberg and Martin assert that: 'Gray evokes saturnine "lead" and the moods that leadenness conveys: sadness, inertia, melancholy, indifference or boredom' (2010, p.662). This is certainly echoed in Frank's job of an anonymous functionary in the catalogue/advertising department at Knox Business Machines, a middle class, white collar position. The symbolic societal work space that Frank occupies at Knox and travels from home to get to, reflects this colourless landscape. Mendes portrays this anonymity of the father-worker through an extended and largely wordless sequence (Fig 6.2) early in the film where Frank goes through his morning routine of catching the commuter train to the city, where he is blended in the grey-clad crowd of other workers through a subtle mix of cinematography, costume and mise-en-scene. The only way of identifying him by virtue that he is centred within the framing:

Figure 6.2   Frank Wheeler and his grey fellow commuters in *Revolutionary Road*'s invisible prison (BBC Films / Neal Street Productions, 2008).

As Ronnberg and Martin describe it:

> Gray is neutral, an in-between place. Opposites balance there are or yet undifferentiated. Mythically, dead persons and spirits moving between the realms are gray. A "gray area" is not certain one way or the other. There is indefiniteness about gray, embodied especially in gray clouds and fog, which add to its ambiguity (2010, p.662).

This implied symbolic ambiguity perfectly describes Frank's position both in his internal psyche and his societal role. The external suburban world that the Wheelers live in is also specifically referenced and depicted as a trap for both Frank and April, both at home and work with the mise-en-scene, cinematography and colours all working towards highlighting suburbia as symbolically restrictive and suppressive. Whilst Frank's invisible prison is his workplace cubicle and job, April's prison is her home, the domesticated space that suburban American women occupied, with April clearly depicted as being symbolically trapped behind bar like windows (Fig 6.3) in their (naturally) white clapboard house.

Figure 6.3   April Wheeler behind her own prison bars in *Revolutionary Road* (BBC Films / Neal Street Productions, 2008).

As Frank gets deeper into his paternal and personal crisis, he starts to challenge his routine actions (commuting to work, going through the motions within his marriage) and embarks on a brief affair

with a new co-worker, Maureen (Zoe Kazan), as a 30th birthday gift to himself, despite his family providing a surprise party directly afterwards. What is instructive about the scene involving Maureen, and gives a strong clue as to his inner life, is, in effect, a confession when he describes the father-son talks he used to have with his father, Earl Wheeler, another Knox man who was employed for twenty years, now dead. He confesses that he never wanted to be like his father, 'yet here I am at thirty. A Knox man'. He has unconsciously repeated his father's career and life decisions, despite consciously not wishing to, in effect, repeating a negative masculine loop, rather than a developing along a masculine continuum.

When April suggests that they move to Paris to give him the opportunity to find out what he wants to do with his life, Frank is shown as caught up in the excitement and agrees, after some persuading. She articulates his own thoughts for him: 'It's unrealistic for a man with a fine mind to go on working at a job he can't stand. Coming home to a place he can't stand. To a wife who's equally unable to stand the same things.' The Wheelers are portrayed as being subject to what some aspects of the American cultural unconscious has decided is a successful life; April and their neighbours' mentally troubled son John Givings Jr (Michael Shannon) are shown to offer up a resistance or alternative to societal expectations. April's speech acts as a catalyst for a be-numbed Frank and prompts the beginnings of a change within him.

Figure 6.4   Frank begins to distinguish himself and perhaps even starts to individuate in *Revolutionary Road* (BBC Films / Neal Street Productions, 2008).

Compared to his initial commuter journey, the above film stills reveal Frank as starting to stand out, the framing and colour scheme echoing Mendes' earlier shots, but carefully constructed to delineate Frank's emerging difference to his fellow commuters (Fig 6.4). He is still wearing grey, but is starting to consciously stand out, to differentiate himself, reflected by his framing within the shot. The ambiguity of the symbolic colour scheme is now starting to tilt towards more individuative actions. His archetypal journey as an emerging newly-conscious father and man has begun; unfortunately his subsequent actions and the forces within his external world (the American cultural unconscious and cultural complexes around the American workplace) conspire against him to stymie this journey.

Ironically, it is what appears to be a piece of good fortune that derails Frank's individuative journey. When a casually composed piece of work unexpectedly gets him the chance of promotion, Frank is faced with a dilemma: to take the new job and enjoy the security and extra money that it will bring, or to carry on with the Paris move, and an unknown future that may or may not involve personal self-discovery. He decides to stay; persuaded in large part by the wiliness of his boss, Bart Pollack (Jay O. Saunders) who, in a deliberately casual lunchtime meeting (Figs 6.5 and 6.6), cleverly uses Frank's dead father to convince him that Wheeler senior would be proud of him if he took the job. Mendes shows a treacherous surrogate father figure, using the dead Earl Wheeler as a tool to persuade Frank to take the new job with the seemingly innocent and well-meaning line: 'it would be a fine memorial to your dad.' By making a seemingly benign request and offering encouragement, Pollack is consciously manipulating Frank using both by his dead father's memory and via Frank's hunger for a father to tell him what the right thing to do is for the benefit of Knox, not Frank. Pollack is a Knox man who loyalty is to the company, not his employees. His words run directly counter to those of April: 'It takes backbone to lead the life you want.' Ultimately Frank is shown as being spineless in the face of Bart's manipulations and he submits to normative patriarchal masculine expectations, simultaneously destroying an opportunity for self-realisation. Similar to Dirk Diggler in *Boogie Nights*, he is not yet strong enough to transcend his father, whether dead or a surrogate. His depicted role as a father, and as a man, suffers accordingly. Tacey concurs with this:

> …work becomes the site of self-validation itself…instead of acting as 'elders' who put men at peace and provide a sense of affirmation, managers and supervisors will sometimes whip men into a frenzy of over-achievement…bosses and employers assume the role of the negative senex or devouring father, leading men into a spiralic condition of performance anxiety, where the emotional rewards are very few (1997, p.124).

Frank's decision to stay at Knox has profoundly negative narrative consequences; April is furious at being betrayed by Frank's timidity at facing up to the truth and willing to be comfortably miserable: 'You know what's so good about the truth is that everyone knows what it is, no matter how long they lived without it. No-one forgets the truth Frank; they just get better at lying!' Again, April is cast as the truth teller within their relationship; despite his name, Frank is depicted as not being able to face up to his situation.

Figure 6.5 – Bart Pollack (Jay O. Saunders) and a dangerous meeting for Frank… (BBC Films / Neal Street Productions, 2008).

Figure 6.6   …as he is about to have his dead father used against him in *Revolutionary Road* (BBC Films / Neal Street Productions, 2008).

Mendes now begins to depict Frank's father hunger as starting to invert, eventually resulting in tragic consequences. Similarly to Lester Burnham, Mendes shows that it's what Frank Wheeler *doesn't* do that decides his fate within the film; his refusal to go to Paris but stay at Knox (justified by the pay rise and potential for advancement) means that his journey into fatherhood stagnates and eventually crushes his soul. Frank's lack of paternal backbone and action damns him and his family, despite the urging of his wife, and the repeated warnings from their neighbour's son John when discussing the hidden dangers of living a bland, conventional, suburban life: 'It takes real guts to see the hopelessness.'

When the third act of the film plays out, with April determined to go through with an abortion, and Frank determined to stay in his job and make April have their third child, Frank has regressed into acting as what he believes the societally approved role and image of a contemporaneous father should be like: responsible, unemotional, rational, authoritarian, patriarchal even. Or, as Biddulph and Bly would have it 'man as block of wood!' (1995, p.27). It is the conflict between the heterosocial role that Frank has found himself forced to play, against his confused inner longings that provides the pain which is depicted as forcing Frank to act the way he does. Alongside

his deceivingly avuncular boss and cynical co-workers, the Wheelers' neighbours, Shep (David Harbour) and Milly (Kathryn Hahn) also play their part in ensuring that Frank is encouraged to stay, their private reaction (crucially seen by the audience, but not the Wheelers) to the news that a move to Paris is imminent, one of horror and disgust: 'A man sits around all day picking his nose in his bathrobe while his wife goes out to work!' Here Mendes depicts the conservative and reactionary heterosocial American society at its restrictive worst, stifling the freedoms and desires of both the father and the mother. Forces from the American cultural unconscious rear up: this is effectively the American cultural shadow, aspects of which are shown as dictatorial and restrictive. If the chance of career and material success is offered, American society seems to dictate that the father should accept unquestioningly. Conversely, April Wheeler articulates it thusly: 'We're just like everybody else. We bought into the same ridiculous delusion that you have to resign from life and settle down the moment you have children'. Their attempt at transcending the comfortable prison in which they find themselves in is doomed to fail, however, due to Frank's failure to break free. This is due to his increasingly dogged insistence on the illusionary American suburban ideal of marriage and children, an image generated by the cultural unconscious. Herb Goldberg, quoted in *Manhood*, also identifies other reasons why Frank is struggling:

> The traditional male harness has meant the early and often premature establishment of career, marriage and family, which gave the man the appearance of maturity but actually made genuine self-development very difficult, because he was constantly struggling to deal with external pressures (1995, p.137).

Frank is depicted as being increasingly lost within the appearance of masculine maturity for the reasons above: he is simply not ready for the responsibilities that he has taken on. Another reason can be identified for Frank's refusal. In an analysis of both the book and the film, Richardson claims that the main reason Frank doesn't go to Paris is because there wouldn't be any inner Frank to find:

> If Frank were to leave his job, his friends and all of the mundane acts through which he has constituted his 'self' over the last three decades, he would not find his essence. He would discover nothing. Searching for his core, he would literally arrive at a giant, gaping void… His search in Paris would be futile (2010, p.13).

Whilst this Butlerian argument is an intellectually interesting one, Richardson overlooks that Frank has already confessed to April earlier in the film that Paris was the city that felt most alive in. Clearly, Frank is aware there is *something* within him (his soul, perhaps) that feels alive and that there may exist the chance for him to feel this again. By suggesting they relocate to Paris, April tries to convince Frank that he can come alive again, echoing Lester Burnham's sense wanting to stop feeling so sedated. His refusal to commit to the Paris move (and potential individuation) shows that Frank is ultimately afraid of feeling alive, a tragedy that ends up blighting his life and destroying his

wife and family. By the end of the film, after the tragedy of April's death due to her home abortion, that has overcome him, Frank is still depicted in his work clothes (tie now askew and his clothes shabbier) his body hidden away by his stifling uniform of a grey and anonymous suit as he watches his children at play, with a hopeless sense of fatherly devotion. Mendes still uses colour to indicate the paternal mood: 'Gray is (also) associated with the sackcloth and ashes of penitence and with the symbolism of ashes in general' (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, p.662). As Ryan Gilbey observes of DiCaprio's performance in his *New Statesman* review: 'He wears defeat well' (2009, p.47), Mendes emphasizing his end position, a trap that he fell into, courtesy of a dark surrogate father figure and a powerfully restrictive father-hostile American cultural unconscious.

The Rebellious Father: *American Beauty*

Similar to *Revolutionary Road*, *American Beauty* is also located in suburbia, this time contemporary America rather than the 1950s, but non-specifically, rather than suburban Connecticut as with the previous film. Little has changed, however, in terms of the American cultural unconscious and its various cultural complexes lurking within its cultural shadow. In *American Beauty*, Mendes depicts the wider American society and environment, including the modern workplace, as just as damaging to the figure of the father as portrayed in *Revolutionary Road*, but with the focus on an older father who slowly realises the danger he is in, and rebels accordingly. Alongside this emphasis on the dangers of symbolic urban space for masculinities and for fathers, Mendes also highlights the father as symbolically rebelling in reclaiming a sexual presence. Before the chapter analyses this further, examination of the American father's space in terms of home and workplace reveals key symbolic details for consideration.

Lester is portrayed in the early scenes as symbolically, socially and economically castrated, with his dull, life–sapping job that threatens to redeploy him, and his false, image-of-success position within the Burnham's social circle, a view that his wife wholeheartedly subscribes to, much to Lester's distaste, but one that he reluctantly goes along with, not having the courage to say no. As with *Revolutionary Road*, the clichéd view of the American Dream and the idealised American home with a white picket fence is specifically referenced within the opening sequence of the film. When Lester is making his family late for work (Fig 6.7), the camera places Lester directly at the centre of the shot, balanced by the carefully controlled and clipped garden (naturally adorned with American Beauty roses):

Figure 6.7   Dangerous white picket fences in suburbia for Lester in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Mendes has also chosen his palette to reflect his thematic concerns, with the red, white and blue of this particular scene specifically symbolically referencing the American flag's colours, leaving the spectator in no doubt as to where we are, both geographically and, more importantly, societally. Lester's neighbourhood is, like Frank and April Wheeler's, white, middle-class and defiantly aspirational; all the more jarring when we consider Lester's voiceover: 'My family think I'm this giant loser. And, in a way, they're right. I have lost something….but it's never too late to get it back.'

Figure 6.8   Trapped and somnambulant – Lester as stereotypical suburban dad and father at the beginning of *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Echoing *Revolutionary Road*, the shot above of a grey-clad Lester (Fig 6.8), dozing in the back of his wife's SUV on the commute to work, is also carefully symptomatic of Mendes' exploration of another one of the film's main themes: that of unconsciousness. By deliberately choosing a grey palette and placing Lester in the back of the car, while his wife is driving, Lester's apathy and timidity about his role as a husband and father is subtly emphasized. Frank and Lester are kindred spirits in that they have allowed their individual identity to be subsumed; greyness is depicted as the symbolic uniform of the working American male. Similar to Frank, he is positioned in an anonymous cubicle within a much larger (and grey) office, his worker-drone status (or as Leonard puts it, a 'semi-conscious cubicle worker' [2010, p.828]) reinforced by a striking image in the

opening scene at his work of his reflection on his computer screen, held captive behind meaningless columns of numbers reminiscent of prison bars, as he deals with a fruitless phone call (Fig 6.10). The scene with his efficiency expert boss Brad, is shot deliberately (Fig 6.9) to emphasise Lester's lack of power within his working realm, traditionally viewed as a source of male power and privilege:

Figure 6.9   Brad, Lester's boss: 'Hey Lester, have you got a minute?.... (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Figure 6.10   …'For you Brad, I've got five!' Lester faking interest in his work in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

It is clear from the camera angles on Brad (shot from below eye line, and composed so that Brad fills the screen) contrasted with the camera line on Lester (shot from above and composed so that Lester only fills half the screen) that Lester is not a male with any real power or agency (Fig 6.11) within his workplace, a common complaint with contemporary capitalist corporations (Faludi, 2000):

Figure 6.11   Lester, unhappy and powerless corporate office drone, in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Within the workplace depicted here, as with Knox, there is the illusion of being part of a team working towards a goal, but workers within this type of structure are under no illusions that they are expendable, redundant and ultimately powerless. Farrell identifies this as part of the greater attitude to males that they are often perceived as both 'success objects', and disposable if they do not achieve enough success (1988, p.134). As Lester puts it in the second meeting with his boss, after he has begun his rebellion: 'I've been a whore for the advertising industry for fourteen years…'. He views his job as little more than economic prostitution for a corporate paymaster; an explicit critique of the American Dream. This scene of successful rebellion is almost the reverse of the first in terms of mise-en-scene, with Lester framed by the camera (Fig 6.12) in much more equal terms to Brad.

Figure 6.12   The tables have turned, due to blackmail… (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Lester's triumphant march out of his corporate prison is composed of a long tracking shot with partially opaque glass partitions between us and Lester until he emerges, openly celebrating his victory over his corporate oppressors (Fig 6.13), a victory that came about through threatened financial and sexual workplace blackmail.

Figure 6.13   …and Lester savours a rare victory in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Lester's largely unconsciously handover of his power to his corporate employer is left deliberately ambiguous and vague; we are not informed within the film itself whether he embraced the corporate role or reluctantly took the job. The net result, fourteen years later, is the same, Lester is depicted as essentially powerless. His supposed source of economic power, his job (and the

privileges that are assumed to accompany it) is depicted as a male privilege that exacts a high price, similar to *Revolutionary Road*. Lester's growing recognition of the symbolic and actual restrictions that the American cultural unconscious and American society, with its overt emphasis on material success (usually at the expense of, or substitute for, inner psychic development) impose on both masculinities and femininities, is what gives the film a large part of its narrative drive and power. What catalyses his awakening, as discussed in the previous chapter, is his animus that uses Angela as a fantasy figure to prompt a psychic awakening. The main site where this awakening is experienced is, naturally, the father's body.

The mediation of the father's body by Mendes shows a symbolic subversion and re-imaging of the paternal physical presence. Bruzzi identifies the de-eroticisation of the paternal as a feature of Hollywood cinema; in terms of sexuality, 'the father is a figure of renunciation' (xvii). In *American Beauty*, this normative Hollywood view of the father is deliberately turned on its head when we consider the portrayal of Lester's body in a sexual sense. The first time we see his body, he is masturbating and obscured by a shower screen, presumably to save our sensibilities from the sight of the erect paternal penis. This isolated sexual release echoes Bruzzi's comment above around the body of the father being a mark of dysfunctionality, especially when we consider Mendes' later depiction of the Burnham's dysfunctional marriage. Dysfunctionality is also signalled when his body becomes the object of repressed homosexual desire by Colonel Frank Fitts (Fig 6.14) due to an intricately filmed case of mistaken identity involving Ricky Fitts, Lester, some strong marijuana, and the Burnham's garage windows.

Figure 6.14   The homoerotic view of the father in *American Beauty* (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

Angela's later casual comments to Jane about how she 'would totally fuck him if he worked out', accidentally overheard by Lester, is the final galvanising he needs. He races off to his garage, a previously unused, unseen and traditionally masculine location, and, after finding his abandoned free weights, begins immediately to start his bodily change. This act of paternal self-transformation into object of (hopefully) female desire, is subsequently filmed by Ricky Fitts from his bedroom window, the footage playing a crucial role in arousing Ricky's father's desire towards Lester, which has such

serious narrative consequences later on. This desire for bodily transformation is also wittily skewered in a scene when Lester approaches his gay neighbours for fitness advice, stating sincerely that he 'just want to look good naked'. Heyraud critically analyses this focus on his body:

> He jogs, drowns himself in power drinks and pumps iron... In this desperate state of aerobic perspiration, Lester neglects his connection to Eros, the deeper aspect of the masculine, and injures his capacity to connect with inner and outer life forces. There is the building up of the body (ego), concurrent with the breaking apart, below (unconscious) (2000, p.146).

By recasting the American father's body as a re-sexualised presence (Fig 6.15) in the film, and in Lester's wider society, Mendes has effectively broken the Hollywood taboos around the father as outlined by Bruzzi. Her point around the sexualised American father being either a pervert or 'commonly bad' has particular resonance within the film when considering the incest taboo, discussed in more depth in the previous chapter. It is arguable that the father, despite his obvious sexual role in qualifying as a parent, is subject to de-sexualising forces within the American cultural unconscious and wider society. The sexual father is part of the cultural complex which *American Beauty* exposes, Mendes choosing to locate the sexual father within the American cultural shadow, a move that allows for partial redemption.

Figure 6.15   The sexual father in *American Beauty*; confident and sure of himself and his presence (Jinks / Cohen Pictures, 1999).

So far, in terms of analysis of the American cultural unconscious, cultural complexes and society as it relates to the father, Mendes' symbolic depiction of the paternal in these films shows the father as trapped by normative American societal expectations. The figure of the suburban father is shorthand for a strain of conformist subaltern masculinity. The paternal is not free (in a Jungian sense) to pursue individuative desires of self-fulfilment or personal psychic growth. Heteronormative American society is therefore arguably portrayed as actively repressing the numinous; both Lester and Frank have numinous encounters (Frank's Paris experience is referenced rather than shown) that are counter to what their society is shown to demand from them (conformity and obedience to

normative mores). When we further consider the depicted repressed sexual desires and drives of both Lester Burnham and Colonel Frank Fitts, the figure of the father within wider American society can also be viewed as a site of repressed emotions, both personally and culturally, despite the fundamental act of fathering being a sexual act. The American societal paternal is portrayed here as being located, in effect, within the shadow of America society. In both films, there is an open questioning of normative, conformist, heterosexual and heterosocial familial masculinity, Mendes setting up both Lester Burnham and Frank Wheeler as father figures who are undergoing similar crises of masculine identity. Yet with both texts, there is a sense that each of the films is in love with the very thing it is criticising; *American Beauty* with the incest motif, and *Revolutionary Road* with the conformity it purports to despise, despite there being only white, middle class pain on offer to melodramatically denounce. There is, consequently, an ambivalent attitude depicted towards fathers and men within American society, and strong hints at how patriarchal social structures are depicted as being damaging to fathers, sons and men, a theme that is explored further in the next section.

Jarhead and *The Master*: Sub-cultures and the Father

Moving away from normative mainstream culture and society, we can focus upon how father figures are represented in American societal subcultures, both a state-sanctioned (the United States Marine Corps) subculture in Mendes' *Jarhead* (2005) and the quasi-spiritual cult subculture found in Anderson's *The Master* (2012). Echoing Hall and Jefferson (1976), Gelder and Thornton (2005) and Jenks (2005) work found in sociology and cultural studies, the filmic subculture is often represented as carrying out a number of familial social and personal functions (socialization, social bonding, protection and to provide a sense of belonging for its members) and in many cases is portrayed as a family substitute that a film's protagonist is part of (e.g. *This Is England*, Meadows, 2006). These arguments have been recently challenged by Halberstam (2005), instead positing that subcultures act in oppositional support, rather than familial support. This familial structure also contains surrogate father figures, in *Jarhead*, Staff Sergeant Sykes (Jamie Foxx), Lt Colonel Kasinski (Chris Cooper) and Major Lincoln (Denis Haysbert) perform familial paternal functions and act as father figures in that Sykes, in particular, cares for his men, as well as acting as a punitive father, or even a 'male mother', setting punishments for various infractions. In *The Master*, the cult leader Lancaster Dodd (Anderson regular Philip Seymour Hoffman) decides to act as an authoritarian surrogate paternal substitute to Freddie Quell (Joaquin Phoenix), a troubled, violent drifter and surrogate son, in the hope that he can prove to himself that his pseudo-scientific psychological theories will work in healing people. In both films, and in keeping with the first section of the chapter, the idea of the father as a cultural complex existing in societal subcultures will be explored, beginning with the army and *Jarhead*.

Despite *Jarhead* being an atypical war film in that it is a war film without much of a war (Cromb, 2007), or for that matter, very little combat action, it is still concerned with soldiers and the effects of war on men and masculinities. Based on the eponymous bestselling memoir of Anthony Swofford, a United States Marine Corps scout sniper during the first Gulf War[62], it is ostensibly a war film about a war that, according to Jean Baudrillard's infamous assertion[63], did not happen. Contextualising Swofford's experiences via a constant voiceover, the film takes as its focus an ordinary Marine's perspective on the direct experience of war as essentially tedium, rather than action and heroism. Indeed the failure to engage in combat is a major thematic issue within the film and one that is analysed in more detail later. What in main distinguishes the film from similar offerings such as *Three Kings* (Russell, 1999), *Courage Under Fire* (Zwick, 1996), and *Live from Baghdad* (Jackson, 2002) is the deliberate direction of attention away from actual combat and towards the more mundane and everyday details of a soldiers life. Rather than employing a conventional narrative and plot, it is the inner psychological journey of a soldier that is under scrutiny here. It is this focus on the psychological and the study of unformed masculinity under pressure within patriarchal American social subcultural spaces that marks this film of interest and that carries on Mendes' thematic concerns with cinematic masculinities.

The film also references a strong sense of self-reflexivity in terms of both war films that are consciously used within the film's narrative, and accompanying music (Fig 6.16) from the same era.

Figure 6.16   Ghosts of Vietnam – the Marines viewing past conflicts via film in *Jarhead* (Red Wagon Entertainment / Neal Street Productions, 2005).

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[62] Also known as Operation Desert Shield, which then segued into Operation Desert Storm when the coalition forces under a UN mandate invaded Iraq in January 1991, following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

[63] Baudrillard's pronouncements not surprisingly caused controversy at the time. Whilst provocatively interesting to a point regarding issues over the emergence of digital and hyperreal warfare, it can be argued that his argument is merely another reinforcement of Westerncentric perspectives about warfare when we consider the amount of Iraqi dead (hundreds of thousands) compared to US and Coalition soldiers (dozens). In other words, despite the war being absurdly one-sided in terms of casualties, it can still be classed as a war.

The film treats the Vietnam War as deeply symbolic (both deliberately referenced directly and indirectly by cultural products (Fig 6.17) such as films like *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979) and *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick, 1987) in particular).

Figure 6.17   The Marines singing along to Wagner in *Apocalypse Now* in *Jarhead* (Red Wagon Entertainment / Neal Street Productions, 2005).

This conflict hangs over the film like a combative ghost, giving the film a sense of never quite managing to escape America's past military trauma and shame. As Joosten notes 'the haunting presence of Vietnam lingers in these modern works in the confusing nature of nature of the conflicts depicted, in both direct and indirect references, and in the ambiguity concerning enemy identity' (2011, p.1).   Indeed, *Jarhead* can be viewed as casting a subtly critical eye over the attempts by films from the 1980s (Reaganite or otherwise) such as *First Blood* (Kotcheff, 1982), *Missing in Action* (Zito, 1984), *Platoon* (Stone, 1986), etc. to reclaim the Vietnam War as a victory in the sense of individual heroism and so regain some sense of collective honour for America. The major difference between the previous war films and *Jarhead* is that Mendes' effort is devoid of any actual combat action, symbolically recasting this crucial aspect of a war film in new light, combat being present by its absence, so to speak. This re-casting of the Persian Gulf War by Mendes and screenwriter William Broyles Jr as not so much as a chance for heroism but as a missed chance to fulfil an ostensibly patriarchal masculine agenda was, not unsurprisingly, unpopular with audiences[64]. As a psychological perspective in terms of its treatment of masculinities within a subculture, however, it is concomitant with Mendes' existing auteurial themes, particularly when we consider the treatment of the archetypal process of initiation.

Initiation occurs in the opening moments of the film in a crisply edited rush of imagery and sound as we are introduced the hyper-aggressive masculine social space that Swofford will inhabit for the duration of the film: the United States Marine Corps. Almost immediately, Swofford is being insulted, challenged and bellowed at by a verbally dextrous and abusive drill instructor (Fig 6.18), highly reminiscent of the performance from Drill Instructor Hartman (R Lee Ermey) from *Full Metal Jacket*, a film that *Jarhead* is inevitably compared to in that it contains similar depictions of boot

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[64] The film grossed £96.9 million against a £72 million dollar budget. (Ref. www.boxoficemojo.com).

camp, an officially endorsed and led version of the initiation process, but from a psychological perspective, a mis-initiation and arguably a dis-initiation ceremony.

Figure 6.18   *Jarhead*'s Anthony Swofford (Jake Gyllenhaal) being inducted into the USMC via official initiation (Red Wagon Entertainment / Neal Street Productions, 2005).

In both films, the Marine has his individuality broken down (he is no colour except either light green or dark green; the colour of a Marine), his head is shaved so that he is de-individualised, and he is put through a physically demanding and painful process of training so that he is integrated into his new sub-culture. As the army as a subculture deals in state sanctioned killing and wounding; it follows that pain and wounding is a feature of its initiation process. This wound also has a psychological purpose and function to perform in that the wound marks a break with youthful notions of invulnerability, notions that need to be outgrown if one is to become a mature adult, and a successful soldier. Bly quotes the anthropologist Mircea Eliade when summarising the characteristics of initiation and how a wound is given during initiation:

> The second [feature] is a wound that the older men give to the younger boy, which could be a scarring of the skin, a cut with a knife, a brushing with nettles, a tooth knocked out. But we mustn't leap to the assumption that the injuries are given sadistically. Initiators in most cultures make sure that the injuries they do give do not lead to meaningless pain, but reverberate out of a rich centre of meaning. Where a man's wound is, that is where his genius will be (Biddulph, 1995, p.200).

In other words a wound can be seen as an entry point to the soul, although this has to be contextualised in terms of the subculture or tribe in which the initiate is socialised into. Swofford's soul and vulnerabilities are what the USMC are after, although they are seeking them so that they can toughen him up and get him to discard them. Wounds can also be psychic as well as physical; Bly differentiates the various wounds that mothers and fathers can give out to children during the course of an upbringing:

> The father gives a son a vivid and unforgettable blow with an axe, which has a hint of murder in it; many a mother makes sure the son receives a baptism of shame. She keeps pouring the water of shame over his head to make sure (1990, p.32).

These psychic wounds can add up to many small and not so small hurts within the psyches of men and women. Where the mythopoetic men's movement has a different perspective on initiation is that the wound is contextualised. The untreated or ignored wound runs the risk of turning the recipient (to paraphrase Bly) into a 'grandiose over-achiever' or a paralysed and depressed victim (ibid, p.33). As Bly points out 'initiation prevents such a fate, by reframing the wounding into a bigger picture – giving it meaning and channelling its intensity into a positive force' (Biddulph, 1995, p.209). Once initiated, an adult can give his or her wounds meaning and place them in a psychic context in terms of wholeness. Bly again:

> The ancient practice of initiation then – still very much alive in our genetic structure – offers a third way through, between the "natural" roads of manic excitement and victim excitement. A mentor or "male mother" enters the landscape (1990, p.36).

Swofford's various wounds and pain, is received via training at the same time as his fellow boot camp inhabitees; Mendes show these wounds as a collective pain, received and officially endorsed by that most patriarchal of structures, the army. Lehman identifies the USMC as a one of a number of American 'formidable national fathers' (2001, p.264) that carry out this wounding. It is this collective wounding that provides a focal point for their individual masculinities to coalesce around; each of them knows first-hand what the other has gone through. It is, in effect, a brotherhood based upon and mired in pain. There are also psychic wounds being inflicted here; in effect, to join the USMC, each Marine must submit their individual nature to the group consciousness. If they don't, there is a price to pay, namely some kind of punishment that is decided by their surrogate father figures (the NCOs performing the role of 'male mother') ranging from physical training exercises (twenty press-ups) to degrading tasks (cleaning out latrines). This deliberate sacrifice of individuality is a necessary price that the army must extract from its soldiers in order to efficiently carry out its main function; that of executing war upon perceived enemies. Individual consciousness is neither desirable nor useful in a soldier. Mendes shows Swofford quietly resisting this de-individualisation process; in a semi-comic scene, we witness him in the latrines reading Camus' *L'Etranger*. The main male mother figure in the film, Staff Sergeant Sykes (Jamie Foxx) then enters, solemnly notes (with half-hidden approval) Swofford's choice of reading material: 'That there's some heavy duty shit Marine!' and informs him that his shooting scores have qualified him to attempt to pass the Scout Sniper training program. This sequence marks the beginning of Swofford's further initiation into his new world in that he is specialising in a weapon (sniper rifle) that can bring death to enemies without them being aware of his presence. This paternal presence is a constant one throughout the film, and a presence that arguably shows the shadow side of patriarchal social structures in that developing masculinities of the young soldiers are being moulded for aggression and potential bodily sacrifice for patriarchal purposes.

So far the chapter has analysed the official initiatory process that Swofford goes through, but there is another, *unofficial*, initiatory process at work within the film and it is arguably equally as strong in terms of the initiatory drive. Early on in the film, Swofford turns up in his new bunkhouse where a group of Marines (his new companions) are wrestling an unwilling new recruit to the ground for the purposes of branding him with a hot iron to mark his entry and membership of their world. Swofford looks on from a distance, his trepidation masked as best as he can, as they appear to brand the new Marine. They then turn on him as another new member and wrestle him to the ground (not without fierce resistance from Swofford), heat up the iron and go to brand him, at which point he faints. When he comes round (alone apart from one Marine), he remains unbranded. The situation becomes clear when the remaining Marine, Troy (Peter Sarsgaard) informs Swofford that a Marine has to *earn* a branding by his fellow Marines and that what Swofford initially witnessed was staged for the purposes of scaring him; a hazing ritual that is dished out to all new recruits. Troy then laconically delivers the line 'welcome to the suck' to Swofford, meaning that Swofford's new home, his new male space has its dangers (it sucks in the sense of it being disagreeable as well as homoerotic), but it also has its true price of entry, namely fellow Marines have to accept you. In other words, the unofficial fake initiation, or more accurately dis-initiation, is deliberately acted out as a tool of fear, as well as a reminder that a 'true' Marine is not made on the parade ground or even in the boot camp process, but in combat when they kill. With death, indeed with any soldier's first credited 'kill', their initiation into the masculine social space of the army is completed. As Tacey reminds us, 'it is beyond doubt that war has long acted as cultural site for the making of men' (1997, p.121).

Crucially, the film shows the frustrations experienced by the soldiers when they are denied to perform their primary function as soldiers, that of killing the enemy in combat. When Swofford and Troy are assigned a sniping mission they are ecstatic to be able to perform as soldiers and fulfil their full initiation into the USMC. When they are ordered by another surrogate father figure, Major Lincoln (Denis Haysbert), to step down in favour of an air strike, despite having Iraqi Republican Guard officers in the scope of the sniper rifle, Troy loses control and pleads with his superior officer the chance to perform as a soldier, all to no avail. When they return to their platoon camp, the war is already over, but Sergeant Sykes recognises the pent-up frustration of his men, and allows them to discharge their weapons (Fig 6.19) in a deeply symbolic and ritualistic phallic manner.

Figure 6.19 – Swofford expressing his warrior's frustrations in a contextually appropriate manner in *Jarhead* (Red Wagon Entertainment / Neal Street Productions, 2005).

The primary colours that Mendes uses for this scene (night black with yellow gun flashes) combine with the soldiers in a near naked state of dress (Fig 6.20) to create a disturbing effect, but are also deliberately ceremonial and ritualised.

Figure 6.20   Staff Sgt Sykes (Jamie Foxx), the Marines' 'male mother' also letting out his frustrations out as a soldier, with a noticeably bigger substitute phallus, at the end of *Jarhead* (Red Wagon Entertainment / Neal Street Productions, 2005).

This recognition of the need to finish his men's initiation into the USMC demonstrates Sykes as the 'male mother' performing his initiatory duties. In addition, Mendes depicts the dubious honour of the unofficial initiation being extended to Troy when (due to him not reporting that he had committed a crime prior to joining the Marines and so cannot continue to be one) about to leave his new brotherhood, he is held down and branded by his fellow Marines. This accords him their (unofficial) signal honour and inflicting a deeply symbolic wound upon him to remind him that he once belonged to them. For them, it does not matter that he is no longer officially qualified to remain a Marine; it is more that he did once belong and was recognised by them as belonging. As Janssen reminds us:

> Ritual here is seen as a dramatized part of generally dramatic constructions of gender that implicate a double necessity: that of staging of the cultural plot, and that of resolving the psychostructural problem of early life feminization. Necessary action is essential (ontologically critical) reaction (2007, p.216).

This unofficial ritual (along with the official initiation dispensed by the army) is therefore another indicator of the initiatory drive and its push towards a form of adult masculinity. The pain received by the initiate is a strong sign and symbol of his removal, or exit from the civilian world (we can read this as a feminised or feminine world) and his consequent entry into a recognised masculine space, or at least a masculine space recognised by his fellow men. This initiation is carried out in lieu of Troy getting a credited kill, a clear case of a substitute ceremony. More tragically, Troy is denied a continuing role in the army, despite being an exemplary soldier, his pain at this official and patriarchal denial of purpose leading to his eventual suicide at the end of the film. The patriarchal structure of the US army therefore exacts a heavy price from its members; Troy is, in essence, is depicted as a victim of other men and a masculine structure that has used him, but ultimately rejected him. He is effectively betrayed by his surrogate family and the surrogate father figures therein.

The Master: false fathers and rogue sons

Paternal betrayal also plays a key role in Anderson's *The Master* (2012), with Freddie Quell's (Joaquin Phoenix) troubled and violent drifter an effective metaphor for post-war marginalised American masculinity. Freddie is depicted by Anderson as being betrayed twice by American patriarchal masculinity: once by the US army who, having failed with half-hearted attempts at re-socialization and rehabilitation, cast him aside, and again by the surrogate father figure of Lancaster Dodd (Philip Seymour Hoffman) who tries to help him by initiating him into his quasi-spiritual cult (The Cause)[65] to try and prove that man is not an animal. When Freddie proves both resistant to Dodd's brainwashing methods and challenges the cult's theories, he is also cast aside as being beyond help and unworthy of Dodd's attention. Initiation plays an integral role in the film, with Anderson depicting Quell as being subject first to a face-to-face initiation process (named Processing by Anderson in a possibly satirical nod to Scientology's 'Auditing'), akin to a formal interview. This is deliberately starkly lit to emphasise the symbolic movement of Freddie (Fig 6.21) from the darkness of his animal instincts to the light of 'reason' represented by Dodd and his acolytes.

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[65] There was a widely held rumour, denied by Anderson, that his film was based on the early days of Scientology with Dodd standing in for Scientology's founder, L Ron Hubbard.

Figure 6.21   Freddie Quell (Joaquin Phoenix) undergoing his first 'Processing' session with Dodd in *The Master* (JoAnne Sellars Productions / Ghoulardi Film Company / Annapurna Pictures, 2012).

Here, Freddie symbolically represents the Freudian Id or Jungian physical shadow in terms of animal instincts and drives; his alcoholism masking a compulsive, primitive and almost barely controlled libido, expressed both in comic scenes (mock-copulating with a giant female sand statue at the beginning and end of the film) and more dramatic moments (Dodd's daughter groping him surreptitiously during one of her father's speeches). Later in the film, Quell undergoes a more lengthy initiation process in front of the whole group which succeeds in allowing him full entry into The Cause. As such, he represents both a direct threat and opportunity to Dodd. Cavalli makes the point that Quell also symbolically represents: 'Dodd's false self, and at the same time, he represents the outer reflection of Dodd's shadow, all that he must keep under wraps in order to maintain his role as leader of his cult' (2013, p.57). As a surrogate father who Anderson depicts as exerting patriarchal control over his disciples, Dodd views Freddie firstly as a project to work on as proof of his ideas around Man not succumbing to animalistic urges, a clear case of a subcultural version of *Logos* energy establishing 'the Rule of the Father'. Before long, however, their relationship develops into a shadow father-and-son relationship that begin to challenge Dodd's own psychic malaise, and provokes his wife Peggy into urging him to drop Freddie due to suspicions that he is either an agent or a danger to The Cause. In a brief but revealing scene (Fig 6.22), Peggy asserts her control over her husband by masturbating Dodd in front of their bathroom mirror, and orders him to, firstly stop flirting with other women, secondly, stop drinking with Freddie and lastly, get him to join their group or quit.

Figure 6.22   Peggy Dodd (Amy Adams) demonstrating to her husband (Philip Seymour Hoffman) who is in charge of The Cause in *The Master* (JoAnne Sellars Productions / Ghoulardi Film Company / Annapurna Pictures, 2012).

Anderson uses this scene to depict Peggy as an increasingly powerful matriarchal figure who is revealed here to control Dodd, and therefore the group. The paternal phallus is symbolically used here as a tool by the matriarch of the group to manipulate the patriarch; Dodd's own physical and sexual vulnerabilities being exploited and utilised by Peggy to protect their subculture from perceived threats. As with the USMC in *Jarhead*, The Cause is portrayed as a substitute American familial social structure that exacts a price upon its members; any questioning of the patriarch Dodd earns the questioner potential humiliation and exile. In the end, Freddie is temperamentally unsuited to his surrogate father and mother figures (Fig 6.23); he is given the choice of one last chance of joining The Cause, or permanent exile.

Figure 6.23   Lancaster Dodd gives Freddie one last chance, the patriarch trying to exert control in *The Master* (JoAnne Sellars Productions / Ghoulardi Film Company / Annapurna Pictures, 2012).

He chooses exile, having been betrayed by both patriarchal subcultures and surrogate father figures. Echoing Connell (1995), Freddie's encounters with alternative subaltern masculinities have not resulted in any masculine dividends for him; The Cause's familial support was conditional on unquestioning loyalty and belief in its theories, similar to the army and its reliance on its members unconditionally following orders. The American fathers in filmic subcultures, it seems, are strangely similar to fathers in depicted mainstream American society, both Mendes and Anderson reiterating the controlling and damaging effect patriarchal social groups can have upon masculinities via mis-initiation and dis-initiation archetypal processes.

To conclude this chapter, and when we consider how these archetypal social paternal images are inflected, a timely reminder about the dangers of confusing images with reality comes from Burgess:

> It must be remembered, however, that paternal imagery and paternal behaviour are not the same thing. Our culture's saturation with patriarchal imagery has tricked us into thinking that this has accurately reflected fathers' daily conduct…Paternal imagery, however, has been selective and limited (1996, p.2).

The archetypal images of the paternal within *American Beauty* and *Revolutionary Road* are challenging and problematic to established American heterosociality and patriarchy in that both films expose the father as flawed, the images on display a far cry from normative cinematic images of the suburban, aspirational father. In a sense, Mendes represents the paternal in a more honest way with the father's flaws resulting from a mixture of his suburban and heterosocial environment, and from within the father himself. The depicted masculine journeys of the various fathers (biological and surrogate) in the analysed films in their search to be a father, are ambiguous in that they have much in common, but also have much to differentiate them, with death affecting Lester and Frank in markedly different ways respectively. Death is presented as the punishment for the father in both films; *American Beauty* has Lester redeemed by his death at the hands of a repressed father, Colonel Fitts, in effect, punishing Lester for transgression of the conformist American suburban mores, effectively summed up by Ricky: 'never underestimate the power of denial'. In *Revolutionary Road*, death comes to Frank Wheeler indirectly with the loss of April, her fatal home abortion largely a result of Frank's oppressive conformity to their restrictive social milieu, which ironically destroys his illusionary dream of domestic bliss.

In essence, both heterosocial normative suburban American society and subcultures are clearly depicted within both films as being largely inimical to the father; the world of work and to a lesser extent, family, containing potent threats to both the father's consciousness and masculinity. The cultural and subcultural unconscious both contain and mediate the American father as a cultural complex; his presence is shown to be a complex mix of shadow masculinity and potential numinosity. Lester's gradual awakening, propelled by his yet-undeveloped hunger to be a father, itself located in the numinosity of Angela acting as the 'knock on the door' (despite the incestuous overtones), is a move from unconsciousness to consciousness. His redeeming decision not to sleep with her marks a change of direction that conveniently, as Karlyn (2004); Arthur (2004); and King (2009) point out, saves him from charges of being a perverse father. Frank Wheeler, as mentioned in the introduction of the chapter, performs the reverse of this dynamic, with his unresolved, dimly-felt longings to escape and rebel against his society and its expectations, not being given credence or voice, due to his timidity and lack of self-trust. He does the wrong thing for the right reasons, his father hunger being an excuse to play safe, rather than to take positive individuative action. His move into a deeper state of denial and illusion is also propelled by the patriarchal figure of Bart Pollack, his cunning manipulation of Frank through the metaphorical corpse of Frank's father, an example of the masculine continuum being perverted to serve other interests, despite the negative effects it has on the younger man. Elsewhere, the fathers depicted in other social groups and subcultures (Sgt Sykes and Lancaster Dodd) are portrayed as equally as damaged and damaging; patriarchal masculinity, it appears, is not necessarily interested in the health of men but more interested in the manipulation of men. Mathews identifies this in a more general sense: 'Jung argued that just as a person may become

neurotically one-sided, so can a culture's valued forms' (2015, p.125). The American father as cultural complex that was discussed earlier is arguably evidential of American societal unbalance in terms of gender performances and power. Mendes and Anderson show that the figure of the father and paternal in society, is central to a patriarchal drive to control masculinities.

SEVEN

Conclusion – The future of the father

The previous chapters have demonstrated how widespread and pervasive the father is as a presence in the films of Anderson and Mendes; Bruzzi's original point about his filmic ubiquity being comprehensively proved here. What is, perhaps, more noteworthy is how pluralistic and multi-faceted the American paternal has proven to be. We have variously analysed him as castrated suburbanite (Frank Wheeler), re-potentialised suburbanite (Lester Burnham), tyrannical and murderous dictator (Daniel Plainview), and redeemed assassin (Michael Sullivan Sr). He is a dying abandoner (Earl Partridge), a sexual exploiter of masculinity and femininity (Jack Horner), a would-be sexual transgressor (Lester Burnham again), and an actual sexual transgressor (Jimmy Gator). He plays the role of guilt-ridden patricide (Sydney Brown), a harsh nurturer (Staff Sergeant Sykes), repressed and repressing homosexual, (Colonel Frank Fitts) and nervous father-to-be (*Away We Go's* Burt Farlander, analysed later in this chapter). This plurality of American paternal performative gender roles prove that there are multiple masculinities within the corpus of Anderson and Mendes; each auteur demonstrating that they are able to mediate masculine symbols and performances within American culture in conscious and unconscious ways. Returning to the two main enquiries outlined at the beginning of the project, namely: how does a post-Jungian approach allow us to analyse filmic masculinity differently, and how the auteur acts as a conscious analyser and mediator of gender symbols, we can attempt to answer them by summarising what has been discussed in previous chapters.

Post-Jungian sensitivities

In terms of the advantages in using a post-Jungian methodology and sensibility, we are now less restricted (compared to more reductive semiotic approaches) to interpret and analyse how

paternal performances are actually portrayed, rather than shaping texts to fit in with theory. One advantage of thinking about the American father in terms of archetypal symbolism, is the flexibility it affords us when analysing it within both cinematic and American cultural contexts. As Bassil-Morozow and Hockley state:

> …the psychological meaning of the symbol can never be fully understood…we are moving along the scale of the fixed-ness of meaning here and its degree is always socially and culturally determined. The less fixed the meaning, the less indexical the sign/symbol is as indexicality is lost in proportion to the loss of the link between the signifier and the signified (2017, p.69).

This explicit recognition of the symbol's inherent unknowability highlights that within the symbol, there will be what can be termed *meaning-space* that allows for fresh interpretation. This meaning-space allows future signs to be produced from the symbol within future cultural and social contexts and analysis, and resonates with what Fredericksen (1979) and other post-Jungian writers, Izod (2001, 2006) et al, have discussed. For example, the sequence in *Road to Perdition* where key paternal symbols (wallet, keys and gun) are viewed by the son can be pluralistically interpreted as symbols of archetypal masculine security, or symbols of insecurity. Is the masculine here safe or under threat? Why the need for the gun, if not under threat? The father's pistol here is not necessarily a sexual phallic symbol, but also a dark spiritual symbol in terms of death. Another view is that it is an archetypal economic symbol in that it could be seen to represent a ruthless version of gangster-capitalism, enforced by potential violence, and so on. This inherent symbolic flexibility calls attention to the parallels between pluralistic post-Jungian symbolic approaches to the pluralisation of masculinity, effectively one mirroring the other in that we have a flexible method of analysing multiple portrayals of gender. What the semiotic and symbolic imagery around the American father appears to tell us is that there appears to be an ongoing struggle with negative masculinities taking place within American culture from the mid-1990s onwards, a result of the crisis in masculinity leading to fundamental questioning of masculine roles. We can conclude that in many of the films, the American father is shown as located within the cultural shadow, both personal and societal, but also engaging with transcending it, a clear sign of cultural individuation. In broader symbolic terms then, the father can be said to occupy a number of dark spaces both within the personal psyche, and as a cultural complex within American society. Being such as fundamental part of the American Dream in terms of being a main source of familial and economic power within the American family, the American father is logically a key site of signalling a change within the American cultural complex. This understanding of the American father enables us to start to position the paternal as both a polysemous sign and symbol of masculinity itself, a key link in the chain of masculine continuum, and a gender figure that has been portrayed by both directors as being in need of redemption, a clear case of individuative and teleological psychic and cultural motion.

The two directors show us, via depictions of father hunger, that the father himself is simultaneously portrayed as being within a masculine crisis, and also shown as contributing to it by not challenging culturally and socially damaging patriarchal expectations. For their part, we have shown that Mendes and Anderson depict the father as struggling with negative masculine performances, reflecting deeper patriarchally inflected American cultural attitudes. When a major archetype such as the father is put under such pressures to change, the process does not happen immediately; more, it is a masculine work in progress, and part of the masculine continuum. Tacey argues that this work is fraught with dangers, Bly having fallen victim to some of them:

> …there is a real tendency to equate the senex or father with the archetype of the Self (Bly's mistake). The prevailing view is that the inner father will heal psychological pain and create wisdom and wholeness. The inner father is a God-father, an old, smiling, bearded presence who works ceaselessly for the health and development of his fragile, battered, alienated sons (1997, p.59).

Father hunger then manages to be both a symptom of this over-identification with the figure of the father (American cultural complex), and an unfulfilled psychological need (personal complex), both directors successfully portraying this dualistic phenomenon. Tacey continues to warn of potential consequences of not seeing past conflated notion of masculine and feminine archetypes: 'Acknowledging the power and might of these figures, without falling victim to them in unconscious domination, is the real challenge facing men today (ibid, p.189). Expanding on these points, and also addressing questions around mother hunger and the maternal (which would, no doubt, be another suitable topic for research), the post-Jungian approach to the analysis of gender symbols (viewing them as archetypal) has much to recommend it. Going further, the post-Jungian emphasis on how critical and central the image is to the psyche, also makes sense when we consider how images can trigger an affective response[66] within audiences, an area of study that is has already been analysed by post-Jungian theorists and writers (Singh, 2009, 2013; Izod 2001; Bassil-Morozow and Hockley 2017) to add to the existing discourses on the subject (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 1964; Sobchack, 2004; Grodal 1999, 2009; Shaviro, 1993, 2010, etc.). With Jung's definitions of psychological and visionary art inviting discussions around symbols and alchemy, and analytical psychological approaches even arguably being applicable to commercial and industrial cinematic discourses and

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[66] 'This is why we are able to have unconscious affective relationships with images – they mean something to us and can move us in ways that the rational and conscious part of our minds is unable to comprehend'. (Bassil-Morozow and Hockley, 2017, p.72).

reception studies[67], a post-Jungian approach is potentially able to reveal new and vibrant perspectives on existing debates within film studies.

<u>The Auteur</u>

Moving onto the second central question, we can re-examine and summarise the arguments around viewing auteurs as acting as conscious agents practising a *technique of self* (2003, Staiger). By depicting masculinities, specifically the paternal and its varying relationships, as pluralistic, Anderson and Mendes can be said to both inflect and reflect cultural consciousness of the figure of the father and father hunger. Echoing the similar point above, the pluralistic nature of post-Jungian perspectives and sensibilities when applied to film studies also has a resonance with the post-structuralist pluralistic nature of the auteur with post-Jungian methodology enabling multiple perspectives on auteurial functions, not just the auteur acting as a conscious analyser of historical citations.

The analysis of historical, in this case gender, citations is also linked in with the psychoanalytical auteurial question posed by Lapsley and Westlake (2006): 'Who is speaking and to whom, *and what is being said*? (my italics)'. Staiger reminds us that for some film theorists 'the author no longer seems to matter. Such a position dodges the material reality of human actions. Agency needs to be reconceived' (2003, p.49). As I have argued, one way to reconceive this question of auteurial subject matter and agency is, in this case, concerned with gender identity, and how it is depicted as performing. To paraphrase the previous argument, (Lapsley & Westlake, 2006, p.127), the search for the author <u>is</u> the search for identity – one that is to be achieved through establishing of the author. An author must have coherence 'they have found their voice' (ibid). In other words, the auteur must have a 'psychic economy' (ibid). Staiger states that authoring can be seen as an 'art of existence' (2003, p.50), and that: 'A performative statement works because it is a citation' (ibid, p.51). In their respective oeuvres, Anderson and Mendes provide several voices to, and citations of, the figure of the father, and of sons and daughters. As Lapsley and Westlake also point out:

> At its simplest what is at issue in a reader's concern with an author is the identification of the author as the same as or different from him or herself: there is either an alignment with a positively defined author (I, like Bresson, am a saint) or an oppositional identification against one negatively defined (I, unlike Hitchcock, am not a sadist) (2006, 127-128).

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[67] 'It is this common archetypal base that that allows us to empathise with each other. It is also this base that ensures a film's popularity and commercial success, for it makes a narrative understandable to a wide range of people all around the world. (Bassil-Morozow and Hockley, 2017, p.22).

Continuing their point, there is a complication in that audiences and spectators can build up an internal picture of what an auteur is, without recourse to empirical evidence, more (ibid): 'an idealised image of the author constructed from a reading of the work, with the figure whose unity is attested by the unity of his or her vision.' As mentioned previously, there is a tendency to speak of auteur directors in much the same way as film stars, 'Spielberg' as opposed to Spielberg. In addition to this main author-function as analysed here, both directors also perform other auteurial functions in terms of auteurial signature and in terms of industrial and commercial impact and identification. As proved by the *Cahiers du Cinema* authors when analysing and identifying Ford and Hawks' auteurial voice whilst working within the inherent restrictions of the classical Hollywood studio system despite genre restrictions, an auteur can still articulate their voice and chosen citations. One way of achieving this is by what can be termed a *symbolic signature*; this conscious use of symbolism inflects both auteurial signature and the analysis of citations. To give a brief example, Mendes has still managed to work within a mainstream Hollywood genre (two additions to the James Bond franchise) and still included distinct thematic concerns within his output (parental issues in *Skyfall*, familial issues in *Spectre)*, along with the symbolic signatorial use of water depicted as both a spiritual cleansing agent, and as a metaphor for a descent into the unconscious, particularly in *Skyfall*. (Fig 7.1).

Figure 7.1   James Bond (Daniel Craig) falling into deep water and his unconscious in *Skyfall*. (EON Productions, 2012).

This symbolic signature is another indicator of the presence of the auteur, and is also, arguably, another function of the auteur in terms of mediator and generator of cinematic psychological symbols.

Away We Go: the balanced father?

When we consider future representations of the American filmic paternal, we can link in cultural changes to changes in representation. From the mid-to-late 1990s, when Anderson and Mendes began their film careers, their representations of the father were located mainly in the shadow aspect of the American cultural, social and personal unconscious. As their work progressed and

developed, there was a gradual transition in terms of paternal portrayals in that the American father moved out of psychic darkness and struggle and began to be located in more light-hearted and comedic positions. This culminated in Mendes' *Away We Go* (2009), his last film before he signed on to direct the James Bond franchise. A drama-comedy that took the form of a road trip for two prospective parents, it followed the then current trend of what has been termed 'mumblecore' films[68], with Mendes attempting to depict contemporaneous parenthood via the figure of a thirty-something father-to-be, Burt Farlander (John Krasinski) and his heavily pregnant partner, Verona De Tessant (Maya Rudolph). Travelling the country to visit friends and family to try and decide where to raise their soon to be born daughter, the film depicted both fatherhood and motherhood as a maturation process (the couple constantly ask themselves the pithily posed question: 'Are we fuck-ups?'). Encountering a number of other parents, including his own (hers are both dead), they are in turn amused, mildly horrified, confused, and saddened by the differing models of American parenthood on offer. Finally choosing Verona's parents' house as a final place to settle down, the couple commit to raise their daughter as best they can, demonstrating themselves as, paraphrasing D.W. Winnicott's earlier term: 'good enough parents'(1973, p.10). Here, Mendes shows fatherhood as a performance that is inflected by an active rejection of both the selfishness of his parents baby-boomer generation, and an equal determination to avoid the more extreme modes of modern 'continuum' parenting (Fig 7.2) as evidenced by his adopted cousin, LN (Maggie Gyllenhaal), who angrily (and hilariously) rejects their gift of a pushchair as developmentally damaging.

Figure 7.2   The horror, the horror: continuum parents Roderick (Josh Hamilton) and LN (Maggie Gyllenhaal) are outraged by the gift of a stroller from Burt and Verona in *Away We Go* (Big Beach / Neal Street Productions, 2009).

In attempting to steer a middle course between the older generational parenting mode and the overly involved mode of LN, Mendes paints his version of modern American fatherhood as a balancing act between external (work and social) demands, and internal (familial and domestic)

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[68] These are usually independent, low-budget drama or comedy productions with little action, self-consciously naturalistic performances and lengthy, emotionally inflected dialogic exchanges. Directors include: Lynn Shelton, Mark Duplass, Joe Swanberg and Andrew Bujalski.

demands, and between the excesses of previous and contemporary parenting models that represent generational perspectives. The American Dream (and American cultural complex) is depicted within the film to have transformed to more modest parental ambitions, and a desire to raise their daughter with a more balanced approach. Material success, and competitive parenting as evidenced by Roderick and LN, are depicted as being rejected, indicating a potential change in cultural attitudes. Echoing Modleski's point about modern masculinities borrowing, or even appropriating, feminine qualities (1991), Burt is depicted by Mendes as a caring and sensitive father who eschews traditional and outdated modes of masculinities, and, in a telling pre-credit sequence (Fig 7.3), divines that Verona is pregnant due to her tasting different whilst performing cunnilingus.
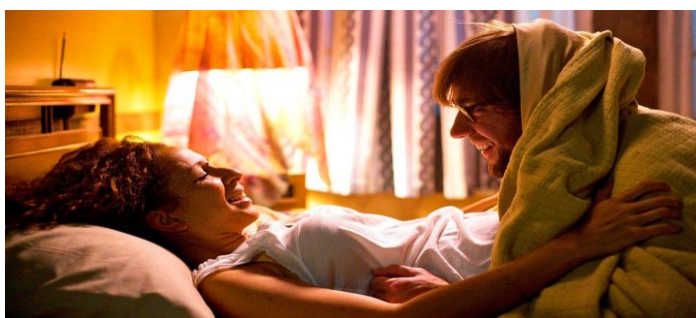

Figure 7.3   In *Away We Go* Burt (John Krasinski) correctly divines, via an unconventional method, that his partner Verona (Maya Rudolph) is pregnant (Big Beach / Neal Street Productions, 2009).

This is a clearly signified shift in terms of the American father performing as a sensitive and considerate lover, a far cry from the abusive (Jimmy Gator) or frustrated (Lester Burnham) sexual fathers that have been portrayed previously. This depiction also runs counter to Bruzzi's point about the action film essentially displacing masculine sexual frustration: 'That masculinity in cinema is so often predicated upon sexual frustration is one notable paradox of men's cinema' (2013, p.119). Symbolically, Mendes depicts the American father in *Away We Go* as embarking upon an individuative masculine quest for responsible fatherhood, but it is a quest that is intimately involved with his partner, not a lonely or difficult masculine journey through his shadow as portrayed in other examples, analysed earlier. The feminine has a strong and visible presence within the film, indeed, the film centralises the pregnancy as a key narrative driver and agent of the maturation process for both the feminine and masculine within the film, a gender syzygy that is portrayed as ultimately resulting in a satisfied, balanced and idealised state by the end of the film. Whilst this signifies a distinct shift in representation, there is an unwillingness, or at the very least a reluctance, to engage with the shadow that Jung held to be within every psyche. How far this depiction of the new paternal accurately reflects current American cultural and societal discourses around fatherhood is highly debatable, but given the increasing and sustained attention that the 'new' fatherhood attracts (referred to in the literature review) in the media and in recently in print (Perry, 2016; Hemmings, 2017; Urwin, 2017; Webb, 2017), it can be argued that just as there are multiple masculinities being performed, so

there are multiple paternal performances also on offer for adoption. With *Away We Go*, Mendes would have us believe that, in response to the calls of father hunger, the performance of a more balanced American fatherhood by modern men shows that they have duly responded.

To finally conclude, we can return to Jung and post-Jungian methodology for a fresh perspective on current discourses. Quoted in *The Frankenstein Myth*, Rushing and Frentz state that: 'Every period has its bias, its particular prejudice, and its psychic malaise. An epoch is like an individual; it has its own limitations of conscious outlook, and therefore requires a compensatory adjustment' (1966, p.98). The inadequacies of the American post-war fathering models depicted in film as outlined by Bruzzi and others (Chopra-Gant, 2005; Kord and Krimmer, 2011; Hamad, 2014, etc.) led to compensatory expressions of father hunger, highlighting the symbolic and psychic importance of this archetype. However, as Mendes shows with *Away We Go*, Tacey argues 'archetypes are always in danger of being deprived of their shadow' (1997, p.60). Conventional and mainstream Hollywood cinema either denied the patriarchal power that the American father represented, or over-stated this agency, effectively shutting out the power of the feminine. The father archetype was also either effectively deprived of its shadow, or worse, was all shadow. Adding to this recognition of the dangers of unbalanced depictions of archetypes often leading to stereotypes, Tacey further states that 'social stereotypes do not emerge out of thin air; they represent an amalgam of nurture and nature, culture and psyche, time and eternity…ideology has archetypal foundations that are ignored at our peril' (ibid, p.194). Mendes and Anderson's recognition of the American paternal shadow and cultural complex, and the resulting redemptive journey of the American father, is one indicator that culturally speaking, we are beginning to accept and recognise the American father as a pluralistic, and consequently more balanced, masculine presence. Father hunger effectively is indicative of a motion towards cultural individuation. As Tacey muses about the ongoing gender and cultural debates:

> …how to liberate without also destroying, how to make free without also creating horror and devastation? This is the big internal and external problem of our culture, and until we have come up with answers we cannot claim to be a post-patriarchal world (ibid, p.71-72).

This resonates in accord with Monick's point that 'unless masculinity is differentiated from patriarchy, both will go down the drain together' (1987, p.9). Culturally, it is crucial that the paternal needs to be differentiated from the patriarchal; a caring masculinity should not be the same as a controlling masculinity. As a conscious cultural mediator of archetypal gender symbols, the auteur is a valid and potentially valuable voice within this discourse.

Filmography

Primary titles

American Beauty (1999) [Film] Directed by SAM MENDES. USA: Jinks/Cohen Company.

Away We Go (2009) [Film] Directed by SAM MENDES. USA: Big Beach / Neal Street Productions.

Boogie Nights (1997) [Film] Directed by PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON. USA: Lawrence Gordon Productions / Ghoulardi Film Company.

Hard Eight (1996) [Film] Directed by PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON. USA: Rysher Entertainment.

Jarhead (2005) [Film] Directed by SAM MENDES. USA: Red Wagon Entertainment / Neal Street Productions.

Magnolia (1999) [Film] Directed by PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON. USA: Ghoulardi Film Company / JoAnne Sellar Productions.

Revolutionary Road (2008) [Film] Directed by SAM MENDES. USA/UK: BBC Films / Neal Street Productions.

Road to Perdition (2002) [Film] Directed by SAM MENDES. USA: The Zanuck Company.

There Will Be Blood (2007) [Film] Directed by PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON. USA: Ghoulardi Film Company.

The Master (2012) [Film] Directed by PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON. USA: JoAnne Sellar Productions / Ghoulardi Film Company / Annapurna Pictures.

Secondary titles

Absolutely Fabulous (1992 – 2012) [TV] Created by JENNIFER SAUNDERS. UK: BBC.

Affliction (1997) [Film] Directed by PAUL SCHRADER. USA: Kingsgate Films / Largo Entertainment.

Courage Under Fire (1996) [Film] Directed by EDWARD ZWICK. USA: Davis Entertainment.

Die Hard 4.0 (2007) [Film] Directed by LEN WISEMAN. USA: Cheyenne Enterprises, Dune Entertainment and Ingenious Film Partners.

First Blood (1982) [Film] Directed by TED KOTCHEFF. USA: Anabasis N.V / Elcajo Productions.

Happiness (1998) [Film] Directed by TODD SOLONDZ. USA: Killer Films.

Inherent Vice (2014) [Film] Directed by PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON. USA: IAC Films / Ghoulardi Film Company.

Live From Baghdad (2002) [Film] Directed by MICK JACKSON. USA: HBO.

Missing In Action (1984) [Film] Directed by JOSEPH ZITO. USA: The Cannon Group Inc.

Mulholland Drive (2001) [Film] Directed by DAVID LYNCH. USA: Les Films Alain Sarde / Asymmetrical Productions / Baboo Inc. / Canal + / The Picture Factory.

Platoon (1986) [Film] Directed by OLIVER STONE. USA: Hemdale Film Corporation.

Punch-Drunk Love (2002) [Film] Directed by PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON. USA: Revolution Studios / New Line Cinema.

Rebel without a cause (1953) [Film] Directed by NICHOLAS RAY. USA: Warner Bros.

Rushmore (1999) [Film] Directed by WES ANDERSON. USA: Touchstone Pictures

Skyfall (2012) [Film] Directed by SAM MENDES. USA: EON Productions.

Song of Ceylon (1934) [Film] Directed by BASIL WRIGHT. London: GPO.

Spectre (2015) [Film] Directed by SAM MENDES. USA: EON Productions.

Star Wars (1977) [Film] Directed by GEORGE LUCAS. USA: Lucasfilm Ltd.

Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991) [Film] Directed by JAMES CAMERON. USA: Columbia Pictures.

The Darjeeling Limited (2007) [Film] Directed by WES ANDERSON. USA: Fox Searchlight Pictures.

The Great Santini (1979) [Film] Directed by LEWIS JOHN CARLINO. USA: Bing Crosby Productions.

The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou (2004) [Film] Directed by Wes Anderson. USA: Touchstone Pictures.

The Pursuit of Happyness (2006) [Film] Directed by GABRIELE MUCCINO. USA: Relativity Media / Overbrook Entertainment / Escape Artists.

The Royal Tenenbaums (2001) [Film] Directed by WES ANDERSON. USA: Touchstone Pictures.

The Sopranos (1999 – 2007) [TV] Showrunner: DAVID CHASE. USA: HBO.

Three Kings (1999) [Film] Directed by DAVID O. RUSSELL. USA: Village Roadshow Pictures / Atlas Entertainment.

Wall Street (1987) [Film] Directed by OLIVER STONE. USA: American Entertainment Partners / Amercent Films.

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