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A New Masculinity for a New Millennium: Gender and Technology in David Fincher's *The Social Network*

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Though critics' praise for David Fincher's film, *The Social Network,* thundered across the media, ironically, it still could not drown out the informal feminist outcry taking place on social media platforms. Blogs sprang up across cyberspace as women virulently objected to the misogyny of the film supposedly capturing "the character of a generation." Articles and reviews titled, "Is the Facebook Movie Sexist?", "The Social Network: Where Women Never Have Ideas," "The Homosocial Network," and "The Social Network's 'Angry Nerd Misogyny,'" proliferated from popular social commentary sites such as Slate.com, Jezebel.com, Salon.com, and IFC.com. However, in lieu of formal criticism, faculty at elite institutions availed themselves of these virtual venues as well. In her blog, Jill Dolan, head of Princeton's Gender and Sexuality Studies, declares the film's "male worldview" to be "miserable to women," depicting them as "insane, fear-inspiring shrews or vacuous, sexualized objects" ("The Feminist Spectator").

Eventually, these cries of protest reached critical mass, eliciting an online apology and defense from the screenwriter himself, Aaron Sorkin. After conceding that, "It's not hard to understand how bright women could be appalled by what they saw in the movie," he adds, "but you have to understand that that was the very specific world I was writing about . . . I was writing about a very angry and deeply misogynistic group of people" (Barr). Thus, Sorkin redirects feminist criticism, steering it away from his authorial agenda and toward the subculture explored by the film, even providing empirical evidence for the accuracy of his depiction of these Harvard men. He argues, "Mark's blogging that we hear in voiceover as he drinks, hacks, creates Facemash and dreams of the kind of party he's sure he's missing, came directly from Mark's blog … Facebook was born during a night of incredible misogyny." Thus, Sorkin admits to the "male worldview," but reinforces its intentional construction as the lens of film, capturing

not the attitudes of the producers, but the patriarchal perspective of this particular community of men.

Though Sorkin identifies this group as "very angry and deeply misogynistic," David Fincher, reveals their patriarchy to be anchored in and uniquely textured by the technological world. Illustrating how the film is shot through the lens of these men, Fincher claims it even "extends to the casting of Justin Timberlake." When critics argued, "That's not who [Napster co-founder] Sean Parker is," Fincher responded, "It doesn't matter who Sean Parker is; this character of Zuckerberg has to see him as this. He's got to see him as the guy who's got it wired." The term "wired" speaks to Parker's technological success—he is virtually and socially connected, the embodiment of the small wave of technological entrepreneurs rising and ruling millennial society. As Mark represents those longing to fill this powerful position, the film's reality becomes the hacker figure's projection of reality, and even Parker's character is fashioned to replicate Mark's mental image.

Accompanying Sorkin's script and Fincher's directing and cinematography, the composer Trent Reznor contributes another crucial element to the film's lens. Carrying the narrative along on its ominous electronica wavelengths, the score further solidifies the film's technological vantage. Each scene is filtered through Reznor's pulsing bass line, arpeggiated techno flourishes and haunting, industrially-distorted electric guitar. Through the combined efforts of Sorkin, Fincher, and Reznor, the script, directing, and music all function to fashion the hacker's misogynistic worldview.

However, by arguing that "Facebook was born during a night of incredible misogyny," and refocusing feminist criticism on this community of technological men, Sorkin anchors the misogyny of Facebook's conception in this particular masculine worldview. In doing so,

however, Sorkin unintentionally echoes the "sociotechnical" doctrine of Feminist Technology Studies—that designing technology is a social process with social consequences. In fact, these scholars claim, "those who design new technologies are, by the same stroke, designing society." Thus they claim that technology and gender are "coproduced," and cannot be separated. By declaring the misogynistic context of Facebook's birth, Sorkin implies an ominous coproduction of gender along with Facebook's technology. Considering the feminist outrage over this patriarchal perspective, and especially as it "shapes" the hacker's technology, the gendered context and story of Facebook's construction "warrants a sociological gaze" (Lohan and Faulkner 322). Therefore, though the Social Network is a film about the rise of Facebook, it simultaneously functions as a narrative about the rise of new notions of gender—specifically masculinity—in millennial society.

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Digital Entrepreneurial Masculinity: An Origin Story

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This "sociological gaze," however, must first focus on the origins of computer culture's misogynistic tendencies. Sorkin hints at its causation when he claims that Facemash was a "revenge stunt, aimed first at the woman who'd most recently broken [Mark's] heart . . . and then at the entire female population of Harvard" (qtd. in Barr). Thus, Sorkin establishes the immediate, personal context for Mark's anger, but then extends it to the larger female community—suggesting a macrocosmic narrative of male revenge against women.

Susan Faludi terms this phenomenon "backlash," and claims, "The truth is that the last decade has seen a powerful counterassault on women's rights, an attempt to retract the handful of small and hard-won victories that the feminist movement did manage to win for women" (9-10). However, just as Sorkin defines the misogyny of the Harvard men as exceeding typical patriarchy, Faludi claims "backlash" is "caused not simply by a bedrock of misogyny," but arises

specifically "in reaction to women's 'progress'" (10-11). Thus, in her book, *Backlash: the Undeclared War on American Women,* she thoroughly chronicles the cultural retaliation to second wave feminism, proving historically how the progress of women has prompted surges of male resistance.

If one had to locate female success geographically, one might easily point to New England—as Ivy League institutions house some of America's brightest young women and form a dense nucleus of feminine intellect and potential. The setting of *The Social Network*, Harvard University, maintains one these pools of impressive young women, and—simultaneously—an impressive legacy of patriarchy, only allowing residential female students in the early 1970's (Ulrich). Such a victory of feminism—female presence in an elite, all-male institution—would naturally elicit some "backlash." Thus, according to Faludi, as female aspirations have historically bred male contempt, Harvard Yard becomes the quintessential setting for "a deeply misogynistic group of people" to reclaim lost male superiority (Sorkin).

Furthermore, though successful and seemingly secure in their future prospects, many male Harvard students fit the profile of those most susceptible to the backlash mentality. Though Faludi describes "Backlash" as a widespread cultural phenomenon, she notes that some men, "especially men grappling with real threats to their economic and social well-being on other fronts," see female progress as "spelling their own masculine doom" (10-11). Thus, within the patriarchal, modernist paradigm, even these marginalized men's male status provided their predominance over women. As women's rights began gaining momentum, these men became increasingly vulnerable, desperate to reclaim a threatened sense of superiority, and therefore prone to antagonistic backlash.

Prominent gender studies scholar, R.W. Connell, further defines this vulnerable

community of men and reveals that "threats to their . . . social well-being" often stem from the

complex politics of masculinity. Reappropriating Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony to

gender relations, Connell coins "hegemonic masculinity," or "the configuration of gender

practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the legitimacy of patriarchy, which

guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination

women" (77). However, Connell notes that within the framework of hegemony, "there are

specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men" (78), and

hegemonic masculinity establishes the top rung of a patriarchal society that subordinates women

and those masculinities that fail to fit the hegemonic male norm. Thus, as the "computer nerd"

stereotype proves a quintessential "subordinated masculinity," men especially vulnerable to

antagonistic backlash abound within the Ivy League.

To illustrate this cultural narrative on a microcosmic level, the first scene of *The Social*

Network represents this phenomenon through the subordinated masculinity—Mark Zuckerberg—

and his propensity to lash back at successful women who threaten his fragile sense of self. First,

through his clear identification as the stereotypical, SAT-acing "computer nerd," Mark

establishes himself as a subordinated masculinity. Second, his obsessive preoccupation with

joining the ranks of the "final club" hegemonic male elite illustrates his unfortunate social

distance from these popular, powerful men. According to Erica, Mark is "obsessed with finals

clubs" and even has "finals clubs OCD." Serving a "traditionalist agenda," the elite, all-male

societies house the modernist codes of "bourgeois" masculinity, and therefore symbolize the

modernist hegemonic norm (315). As the Winklevoss twins prove the film's representation of the

members, "their "particular version of manhood" reflects this bourgeois template of "social

authority," wealth, "snobbery," "domestic patriarchy," and traditionalism (Faulkner 91; Connell 315). And though these are "the men who are in power," within the smaller sphere of Harvard, one can extend their portrait of "hegemonic masculinity" outward to general American males— especially since these men are the prime demographic for America's future leaders (Faulkner 91). Erica attempts to disprove this final club myth, saying, "Teddy Roosevelt didn't get elected president because he was a member of the Phoenix Club," but Mark corrects her, replying, "He was a member of the Porcellian and yes he did."

Thus, Mark's preoccupation with gaining entrance into this elite society illustrates his desires to slough off his subordinated state and aspire to a form of hegemonic masculinity. However, his awareness of his social inadequacy results in his insecure attempts to assert masculine superiority. Erica, a successful Boston University student, attempts to indulge Mark's "obsession" and discuss how to enter one of the clubs. She asks which of the clubs "is the easiest to get into." Mark, however, immediately takes offense, and pointedly states, "I think you asked me that because you think the final club that's easiest to get into is the one where I'll have the best chance." Even though Erica innocently responds with, "The one that's the easiest to get into would be the one where anybody has the best chance," Mark interprets her comment as questioning his capability to rise to the level of hegemonic masculinity—or, in other words, emphasizes his hopelessly subordinated status, Mark's greatest source of insecurity.

As Erica's comments call attention to his subordination, and metaphorically elevate Erica through her acknowledging of his masculine inferiority, this threatening "female victory" is not tolerated by Mark. He replies, "I want to try to be straight forward with you and tell you that I think you might want to be a little more supportive. If I get in I'll be taking you to the events, and the gatherings, and you'll be meeting a lot of people you wouldn't normally get to meet."

Clearly, Mark attempts to reclaim lost vestiges of male superiority through authoritatively stating her dependence upon him for social recognition. Thus, in order to assuage his insecurity about his own subordination, Mark attempts to subordinate Erica and reestablish a patriarchal gender hierarchy.

This interchange, however, operates as a microcosm for the larger narrative of gender relations in early postmodernity. Just as feminism threatened to topple the supremacy of the subordinated masculinities, Erica's "upper hand" in the conversation leads to Mark's threatened sense of masculine superiority. From this vulnerable position, Mark attempts to relegate her to a place of female inferiority as a form of "backlash." However, such attempts ultimately prove futile as Erica dramatically dumps Mark—dealing the ultimate blow to his ego and rendering him impotent. Therefore, her female victory catalyzes Mark's dormant desires to reconfigure masculine hegemony—a social position impervious to the social assaults of others, especially women. Thus, Erica's victory proves the symbol for feminism functioning as a catalyst, causing subordinated nerds to seize the opportunity to redefine hegemony.

Furthermore, along with the motivating threat of emasculation, feminism also provided the perfect cultural context for subordinated nerds to assert long-denied masculine supremacy. By attempting to deconstruct oppressive, modernist notions of gender, feminism caused "the solidity of sex" to "[melt] into the air" and effected a general reconceptualization of gender (MacInnes 351). Thus, as feminism destabilized the ironclad gender identities of modernity – or the "currently accepted" configuration of patriarchy, a vacuum of authority on normative "masculinity" opened up; therefore, within the ensuing "crisis" of masculinity (Kimmel 291), an opportunity for "New groups [to] challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony" appeared (Connell 77).

However, in order to seize this uniquely opportune moment to stake their new "successful claim to authority" (Connell 77), nerds needed a tool—an incontestable source of power capable of toppling the alpha men of yesteryear and retool past masculinity templates. However, after Erica dumps Mark in a symbolic demonstration of female power, the film reveals the ultimate vehicle and platform of power for Mark to rewrite hegemonic masculinity—technology.

Hacker Masculinity: Its Attributes and Ascent

First Characteristic: A Preoccupation with Power

Though the hyper-powerful world of modern technology proves capable of recoding the traditional script for masculinity, ironically, due to its origin story, it is rooted deeply in a fragile masculinity. As the pillars of patriarchal modernity came crumbling down, emasculated and subordinated men found refuge in that which provided a means of power—the cult of technology. According to the historian David Noble, this Enlightenment-driven enterprise is at its philosophical core, a "celebration of disembodied intelligence" that is an "incorrigibly escapist . . . fantasy of total control, absolute transcendence of the limits imposed on mankind" (qtd. in Noble 128). Thus, subordinated men strove to abandon "the complexities of a diverse and unpredictable world" and create a new "Eden," a virtual world where the power of technology rectifies their woeful earthly condition and leads to the "salvation and restoration of fallen man" (Millar 51; Noble 19). Melanie Stewart Millar in her book, *Cracking the Gender Code: Who Rules the Wired World?,* mentions this myth of an otherworldly, technological paradise, claiming the "cyberfrontier . . . appeals to long enduring myths of masculine power and imperialistic control" (51-52). Thus, the hope of such transcendent power, promising cyberfrontier, and subsequent reinvigorated masculinity especially appealed to those long suffering under the impotence of subordination.

Therefore, emasculated men could buy back a sense of masculine power by developing technological skills. Sociological studies on tech-savvy men prove this to be a common "compensatory strategy"—to coopt the empowerment of technology to fill the void of social prominence (Turkle 231). In her article, "The Power and the Pleasure? A Research Agenda for 'Making Gender Stick' to Engineers," Wendy Faulkner claims, "Often the men who appear to take the most pleasure in technology are relatively un-powerful. Hackers and other technical hobbyists are obvious examples," but the "power of the technology symbolically extends engineers' limited sense of strength or potency" (106). Millar describes how the technology magazine *Wired* promises masculine reinvigoration by using "complementary images of masculine power and technological supremacy." Furthermore, by doing so, "it transforms images of men formerly associated with computer geeks and uptight 'suits' into ideals of hypermachismo" (78). Clearly, the cult of technology caters to this petrifying fear of emasculation and promises male privilege through the means of technology.

Thus, by borrowing the empowerment of this realm to reclaim a lost masculinity, these men construe technological power as the cornerstone of their own hegemonic masculine community (Faulkner 91). Therefore, within the "masculine cult of technology" (Wacjman 138), the "standard against which other men are measured" is technical prowess (Faulkner 91). Thus, Douglas Thomas, author of *Hacker Culture,* explains how the "notion of mastery" may be "the most important element of hacker culture" (xvi). Sherry Turkle elaborates how "mastery" is a fundamental component in an individual's "development" as it gives birth to autonomy, and autonomy allows one to "move beyond the world of parents to the world of peers" (647). The personal computer proved the ideal vehicle to assert a sense of autonomy since it was "divorced from parental or institutional authority" (Thomas xiv). Therefore, it "enabled the single most

important aspect of formative masculinity to emerge, independent learning" (xiv). Thus, within this "cult of prowess" (Turkle 652), technological mastery became defined in "hegemonically masculine terms," and, consequently, developing one's technological skills became synonymous with formulating a hegemonic masculine identity (qtd. in Kendall).

Proving the importance of technological prowess, the homosocial enactment of such a masculinity required "aggressive displays of technical self-confidence and hands-on ability for success" (qtd. in Kendall). Faulkner reiterates this finding, claiming groups of engineers regularly "engage in ritualistic displays of hands-on technical competence," and therefore construct a social hierarchy based off of one's technical skills (Faulkner 106). Thus, incentive sprouted up to improve one's coding skills, as they translated directly to an increase in social status. Those aspiring to the superior slots in hacker hegemony learned to code the most skillfully and win the contests. Therefore, Mark, who lands acceptance at Harvard, engineers an app coveted by Microsoft, drunkenly codes an entire website in four hours, single-handedly designs the original Facebook, and holds "coding contests" for the new interns, maintains an indisputable status as "alpha male" of hacker society. However, due to the hierarchical structure of this community, Mark's hacking virtuosity is derivative of his drive to gain a hegemonic masculinity.

First, as technological prowess is the primary component to hacker masculinity, so it is the evidence of Mark's hegemonic status—his superior coding skills that enable him to construct the new social "cyberfrontier" on which he can superimpose his masculine hegemony. Thus, Mark pitches this virtual society to Eduardo, saying "I'm talking about taking the entire social experience of college and putting it online." Yet he compares this exclusive online community to a final club, except he and Eduardo would be the "presidents" this time. As the online

community of Facebook is a powerful symbol of the social structure of the information age, by replacing the antiquated, hegemonic final clubs of Harvard with a simulated, cyber version, Mark illustrates the supplanting of the traditional social structure with those of the millennial era. And, by being the author of such a society, Mark can replace the traditional social codes with the hacker hegemony, essentially coding his way into the "alpha male" position in the new digital world order.

Thus, Mark's technological skills allow him to construct a new virtual society, but his derivative, masculine sense of power pushes this cyber "social network" to replace the old and establishes him as hegemonic head. Due to Mark's dominant position within the hacker subculture, he evidences a corresponding attitude of confidence and superiority. Jose Antonio Vargas, when writing a profile of Zuckerberg in the New Yorker, claims one of Mark's "closest friends" mentioned, "Ultimately, it's 'the Mark show,'" and another noted Mark's "imperial tendency" ("The Face of Facebook"). The film successfully captures this quality of the original Zuckerberg, even in the beginning of the movie as Mark begins building Facebook. He "asks" Eduardo for more capital, but when Eduardo tells him to "do it," Mark snappishly responds, "I already did." Thus, even in the early stages, one witnesses Mark's sense of power that demands others' submission. However, Mark's authoritative dictation ensures the future growth of the company. Facebook's masthead neatly sums up Mark's sense of superiority as it boldly declares: "A Mark Zuckerberg production." However, Mark's unashamed self-crediting actually proves a catalytic point for the future of Facebook. It is this name that captures the attention of Sean Parker—Mark's business mentor whose advice and networking attaches Facebook to the lucrative corporate world and spins it into a viral commercial success.

Second Characteristic of Hacker Masculinity: An Antiauthoritarian Agenda

Thus, by wielding the weapon of technological prowess and its corresponding sense of empowerment, Mark's performance of hegemonic, hacker masculinity establishes the society in which he occupies the alpha male position. However, this is not enough. Technological power and egocentrism cannot singlehandedly replace the ironclad constructs of modernity. Cocky engineers code and remain perfectly placed within the existing modernist framework—merely manufacturing the mechanisms that keep it running. *Hacking,* however, is an "exercise of power" that interrupts the fabric of this world and dramatically destabilizes its structures (Douglas xiv). Thus, hacking is a "form of *rebellion*"—the second fundamental component to hacker masculinity that ensures its ascension (xiv).

The emphasis on rebellion within computer culture is another component that can be traced back to its subordinated roots. Though the computer nerd maintained an "ambivalent relationship with power" due to his mastery of coveted technological skills yet awareness of social marginalization (Faulkner 91), the hacker demands recognition for its technological prowess—as his skills directly interrupt the world of those in power. Hegemonic power and its corresponding masculinity are housed in institutions and symbolized by these cultural constructs, thus representing the subordinating force for the computer nerd. Therefore, the hacker idealizes himself as the "rebel enemy of establishment and conformity" (Turkle 664). Naturally, this "struggle between authority and autonomy" between the subordinated hacker and the symbolic hegemonic power "constitutes a significant portion of formative masculinity" (Thomas xvi). And, if a hacker can "resist and overcome" these "boundaries and authority," he can "claim his independence" and forge a hegemonic masculinity (Thomas 75). Furthermore, given the unique nature of their technological prowess, "unlike the usual rebellious expressions youth culture, it was something that had a profound impact on the adult world." (xiv).

Eventually, the hacker begins to see authoritative rules and structure as existing to be broken; "A closed system is a challenge. A safe is there to be cracked" (Turkle 667). Thus, the hacker brain became hardwired to resist authority, and a subculture was born that was "dedicated to resisting and interrupting 'the system'" (Thomas xii). The more one moved toward "the center of hacker culture," the more one resisted "academic values," or "the acceptance of hierarchy"— all things that represented the institutional structure (Turkle 645). Hackers, as they became more insular, became more engrossed in their own countercultural ethos, lifestyle, and community. Thus, they nursed a growing bitterness for the "hegemonic" codes of institutional society, and their own independent social structure chafed against this unfortunate reality (Thomas 75).

However, the combination of simmering resentment for traditional hegemony and well-honed skills of anti-institutional disruption clearly equipped hackers to recode the current hegemonic masculinity. And though Mark's technological prowess provides the rudimentary skills to ascend, his belligerent anti-authoritarianism bushwhacks his path to supremacy. First, his construction of "Facemash" illustrates his first flagrant attempt to defy authority, as he hacked into the Harvard computers illegally to retrieve the images necessary. In the deposition scene, after the administration reads Mark a laundry list of his offenses, Mark responds, "As for any charges stemming from the breach of security, I believe I deserve some recognition from this Board." The administrative board remains in shock, though Mark merely repeats his statement. Eduardo decodes Mark's defiance later in the film. He states Mark had "thumbed his nose at the Ad Board, he'd gotten a lot of notoriety," and therefore, "Facemash did exactly what he wanted it to do." Thus, Eduardo reveals that Mark successfully leveraged "Facemash" to gain power and to spurn the authority of the hegemonic institution. More importantly, "Facemash" afforded him

the platform and the academic probation needed to eventually construct Facebook—his virtual "final club" where he could occupy the alpha role.

Supplanting Bourgeois Masculinity: The Deposition Scenes

The lawsuits leveled against Mark perfectly prove his rebellious bent on power, as Mark deliberately defies institutional guidelines and the Winklevoss' rights to Harvard Connection in order to grow Facebook. Furthermore, these legal scenes also illustrate how Mark's tech-savvy, anti-authoritarian masculinity outstrips the law-abiding, bourgeois masculinity of modernity, providing his platform for the new society, and replacing these traditional gender templates with the new millennial hegemony. The first deposition scene takes place after the invention of Facemash, as Mark is called in front of Harvard's Administrative Board. In this scene, Mark claims he deserves some "recognition" for "pointing out some gaping holes in your system." As Harvard University represents the traditional social codes in American society, by identifying the "holes" in the system, Mark identifies the insecurity and instability of that hegemonic society. Then, by hacking into and eventually crashing the Harvard server, he symbolically deconstructs this traditional structure, mowing it down to make way for his new online society in which his masculinity will be the hegemonic norm.

As Harvard administrators represent the modernist hegemonic structure symbolically subordinating Mark and other hackers, their pathetic, traditional attempts to assert their authority over Mark in this scene further illustrate their growing impotence during the rise of the information age. As Harvard's head of securities boasts about the "sophistication" of the Harvard system and it's its leading them "to [Mark] in under four hours," Mark scoffs, replying, "That would be impressive except if you'd known what you were looking for you would have seen it written on my dorm room window." Thus, Mark proves his technological superiority and reveals

the insufficient attempts of traditional hegemonic structures to keep pace with those designing the new information age. By punishing Mark with six months academic probation, even the attempts of the former structure to restrict this rising masculinity prove futile; in fact, due to the new masculinity's preoccupation with anti-institutional power, releasing him from the restrictive institution frees him to pursue his ambitions more successfully. Therefore, the deposition scene illustrates that the hegemonic structure retains some power and therefore win the battle, but ultimately, Mark's superior source of technological power and rebellion allows him to eventually win the war.

Thus, the first legal scene illustrates Mark's paving the way for a new, virtual social network, and the second lawsuit against the Winklevoss twins illustrates its construction and subsequent supplanting of bourgeois masculinity. First, proving Mark's hacker bent on rebellion, Mark "steals" the idea of the Winklevoss twins, taking advantage of their technological incompetence, and eventually developing an online "Final Club" that far out-powers the Porcellian. Thus, Mark "sticks it" to the hegemonic man—outstripping the Winklevii socially, financially, and culturally as he pioneers the digital age.

However, just as the Ad Board took traditional routes for Mark's discipline that ironically advanced his ambitions, so the Winklevoss twins' futile attempts to forestall Mark's success actually furthered his megalomaniac plans. After discovering that "Zuckerberg stole [their] website," the twins respond first with inaction, claiming to be "gentlemen of Harvard" who will not lower themselves to seek revenge. Second, they take several traditional steps; they "tried talking to him, [they] tried writing a letter, [they] tried the Ad Board, and [they] tried the president of the University." After all of these conventional plans fail, they summon the strength of the most powerful hegemonic system they know and "sue [Mark] in federal court." Though

they win, and Divya gloats, "I can't wait to stand over your shoulder and watch you write us a check," Mark remains unconcerned, responding, "no shit." Thus, his hacker masculinity provided him the technical tools to code the website they could not build themselves, and the attitudes toward power and rebellion that ensured its success; while the Winklevii's traditional sense of masculine propriety kept them from pursuing serious action against Mark, Mark's rebellious, power-hungry masculinity sought anti-institutional, cultural avenues, racing past the twins toward ultimate power and dominance. Ultimately, he constructs the virtual online society in which he can impose his own hegemony, becoming the alpha male and therefore supplanting the Winklevii.

Hacker Masculinity Meets the Business World: The Rise of Digital Entrepreneurial Masculinity

However, in order to write a settlement check to the Winklevoss twins, and to ensure Mark's uncontested predominance in the digital age, Mark needs to transform the brilliant idea of Facebook into a billion-dollar corporation. Thus, Mark's move to Silicon Valley marks a distinct turning point in the film. His bent toward power and rebellion have led him to dropping out of school and moving to California, but that is as far as his hacker masculinity can take him. Thus, though at first Mark approaches Eduardo because he needed "a little start-up cash to rent the servers and get it online," the site soon outstrips its start up capital. For the Facebook to continue to grow and keep up with demand, Mark says, "We need more servers than I ever imagined we'd need. We need more programmers. And we need more money." Otherwise, "the site cannot function," and Mark's aspirations die.

However, though technology "is supported by the needs of capital," in the information age, the technology industry became so lucrative that these companies received an

unprecedented return on their investment (Millar 36). As demand for the latest technologies

increased, a "corporate feeding frenzy over control over the information highway" ensued

(Millar 36). This "digital gold rush" only proves how, in a postmodern culture where the "grand

narrative is not religion but consumerism," bringing technology into the corporate world became

its ticket to totalitarian power (Kenway 219; Kirby 157).

Thus, historically, technology and capitalism have been inextricably linked; however,

authors note how they are joined ideologically as well. Millar argues that technology cannot be

"separated from the logic of the mode of production that has facilitated their design, production

and proliferation" (37). Faulkner identifies this "logic," noting the "themes of domination and

control" link the two together (322). Thus, just as hacker hegemonic masculinity operates

according to technical power, entrepreneurial masculinity is based on the power of the business

world. Given the monolithic position of capitalistic consumerism in American society, Kimmel

claims that the cultural emblems of hegemonic masculinity are those "white, heterosexual men

who are successful in terms of the capitalist marketplace" (qtd. in Faulkner 91). Connell

elaborates, describing how the "flexible, calculative, egocentric masculinity of the new capitalist

entrepreneur holds the world stage," replacing "older local models of bourgeois masculinity"

(263).

In the film, Sean Parker proves the quintessential example of this mix of masculinities.

First, just like Mark, Sean was the king of the hackers in his youth, and thus the fundamental

components of hacker masculinity manifest in Sean as well. As a teenager he won a state

competition for developing a web browser, and was recruited by the CIA before turning down

the offer and starting Napster. Thus, due to his virtuosity, the hegemonic hacker subculture

nurtured his sense of imperial power. However, Sean clearly boasts an anti-authoritarian bent as

well—catching the eye of the FBI as an adolescent and singlehandedly leveling the record industry with Napster. And even though he faced extensive legal action, he tells Mark, "Napster wasn't a failure. I changed the music industry for better and for always. It may not have been good business but it pissed a lot of people off."

However, Sean's sense of rebellion only intensified when the corporate giants of Silicon Valley crushed him, a naïve twenty-something. Thus, Sean's angst has its own origin story; whereas Mark was subordinated by the hegemonic men of Harvard—the final clubs, the Ad board—Sean was screwed by the corporate world in California. He tells Mark and Eduardo, "And I wanted to do it nice this time. I put on a tie and I shined my shoes but nobody wants to take orders from a kid, so let me tell you what happens to a 20 year old at the top of a hot dot com." Sean Parker, the inspiration for Justin Timberlake's character, explains his naiveté in an interview with Forbes: "I didn't understand at the time that when someone asks you to take an extended vacation that's basically a prelude to firing you" (Bertoni). Thus, just like Mark, Sean carries an anti-establishment agenda, but it's directed toward the hegemonic institution of traditional corporate business. When he meets Mark, however, he is determined that there will be "payback."

Thus, Sean boasts the characteristic obsession with "power" and "rebellion" of hacker masculinity, but after being beaten down by Silicon society, Sean started developing the entrepreneurial masculinity that took his skills and his persona past that of the hacker. In the Forbes interview, Sean claims he studied at "Napster University" and took a "crash course in intellectual property law, corporate finance, entrepreneurship and law school" (Bertoni). He learned the hard way the kind of hegemonic behavior necessary for survival in the ruthless corporate world, and thus, Sean stands as an emblem for entrepreneurial masculinity as well as

hacker masculinity. In describing entrepreneurial manhood, however, Connell explains how a "cultural hollowing-out seems to have occurred" to this template that "holds the world stage," (263). According to Connell, "It has no deeper rationale than the 'bottom line'—in fact, no rationale at all except profit making," making this version of manhood far more Machiavellian than the previous "conservative" bourgeois business masculinity (263). Thus, as Sean begins to advise Mark, one observes how the "flexible, calculative, and egocentric" characteristics of entrepreneurial masculinity manifest and function to the further the "individualistic," self-interested goals of the businessman (Connell 263).

Since Mark is not equipped to enter this corporate world alone, the messianic Sean Parker arrives to mentor Mark in the ways of the business world and introduce the hegemonic "entrepreneurial" masculinity to Mark's hacker masculinity. First, though Mark maintains an anti-establishment bent, Sean redirects his rebellious angst toward the corporate hegemony, skillfully protecting Mark's lucrative project from the greedy hands of corporate giants. He tells Mark, "They're scared of me, pal, and they're gonna be scared of you. What the VC's want is to say, "Good idea, kid. The grown-ups will take it from here." But not this time. This is our time. This time you're gonna hand 'em a business card that says 'I'm CEO...bitch.' That's what I want for you." Thus, as Facebook grows into a behemoth "dot com," Sean's angst protects Mark from letting the "3000 pound marlin" slip away. Additionally, Sean's vendetta against Case Equity actually leads to their impressive investment offer. Initially, Sean devises a "revenge stunt" against Case, coaching Mark about the interview, telling him to say, "Sean Parker says 'Fuck you' and walk on out." Ironically, however, "Manningham was so impressed that he [made] an investment offer that was hard to turn down."

Furthermore, Sean's coaches Mark into entrepreneurial "individualism" and "egocentrism." For the sake of Facebook's success, Sean sweeps away the "chaff" in the company, clearing away any impediments—even people—on Facebook's path to power. Unfortunately, in order to ensure future shareholders and appease angel investors of Facebook, Sean convinces Mark to force Eduardo Saverin, Mark's best friend and CFO of Facebook, out of ownership of the company. Initially, Mark remains loyal to Eduardo and fears Sean's Machiavellian trailblazing. He confesses to Eduardo, "I'm afraid if you don't come out here you're going to get left behind. I want…I want…I need you out here, please don't tell [Sean] I said that. It's moving faster than any of us ever even imagined and . . ." But eventually, after Sean's coercion, Mark sanctions Eduardo's elimination in efforts to grow the company. He succumbs to the "rationale" of "the bottom line" and even intentionally deceives Eduardo, luring him out to Palo Alto to sign his "death certificate," saying, "They want to meet you. They need your signature on some documents so get your ass on the next flight back to San Francisco. I need my CFO." Thus, Mark's self-interested and "calculating" manner in which he orchestrates Eduardo's stock dilution illustrates his absorbing of entrepreneurial masculinity. When Eduardo discovers that his stock had been diluted down to .03%, he confronts Mark who merely replies, "You signed the papers." Furthermore, as Eduardo exclaims, "And I'll bet what you hated the most is that they identified me as a co-founder of Facebook—which I am!" one observes how Mark's obsession with power has turned "egocentric" and individualistic—he cannot share it with Eduardo any longer.

Digital Entrepreneurial Masculinity

Unfortunately, the corporate environment provides a new context well suited to Mark's hacker inclinations toward power and rebellion. Sean's anti-establishment agenda influences

Mark's, redirecting his rebellion toward the corporate elite, ironically adding to Mark's success

and therefore, pursuit of power. The form of hegemonic manhood in this sphere, however,

slightly textures Mark's traits. To Mark's preoccupation with power, entrepreneurial masculinity

adds "egocentrism" and a proclivity for "calculated" schemes of self-interest. Thus, the

masculinity of business intensifies and dramatizes Mark's penchant for power, leading to a

masculine template associated with what Ziauddin Sardar terms "virtual capitalism," which "is

not just about profitability, it's about cynical power" (33). John Bellamy Foster and Robert

McChesney confirm this megalomaniac nature of virtual capitalism in their study, "The

Internet's Unholy Marriage to Capitalism." Their research illustrates how "digital capitalism, it

turns out, is more vicious than other forms of capitalism" because of its "organized monopolistic

power" (Kumar 39). Thus, hacker masculinity's preoccupation with power is intensified and

nearly unstoppable once wedded to capitalistic enterprise. Facebook's global, corporate success

makes the Winklevoss' settlement check a "parking ticket" to Mark, the Ad Board's punishment

laughable, and illustrates that, though bourgeois masculinity won the institutional battle, Mark is

leading the troops in the "new digital world order" and ultimately winning the cultural war

(Kenway 230).

Finally, while depicting how Mark's digital entrepreneurial masculinity stamps out his

closest friend, the film dramatically recalls the roots of this power-hungry hegemonic manhood:

Mark's initial sense of subordination. When Eduardo discovers Mark's betrayal, he says, "Tell

me this isn't about me getting into the Phoenix." Mark's incriminating silence exposes this latent

motive, hearkening back to Eduardo's initiation into hegemonic society and Mark's exacerbated

insecurity about his own subordination. Thus, as Mark seeks to rectify his humiliating

subordinated status by building a new final club on the cyberfrontier, he willfully elbows out

another embodiment of bourgeois masculinity—Eduardo. Though the first two depositions portray the replacement of traditional bourgeois masculinity with Mark's new template, Mark's opponents are merely impersonal, symbolic representations of hegemonic masculinity. However, the lawsuit between two best friends, Eduardo Saverin vs. Mark Zuckerberg, tragically reveals how Mark's original subordination leads to his obsessive overthrow of the former hegemonic manhood and the development of his megalomaniacal, Machiavellian digital entrepreneurial masculinity that crushes his closest friend.

Backlash Revisited: Female Subjugation as The Final Component of Digital Entrepreneurial Masculinity

Despite the computer nerd's uncomfortable subordination by modernist, hegemonic masculinity, the emasculating threat of feminism ultimately catalyzed his quest for power; thus, these originally vulnerable men turned to technology to develop a hegemonic masculinity invincible to social assault by men or women. However, from this position of power, these men not only sheltered themselves from the emasculating threat of feminism, but their technological prowess proved the perfect tool for retaliation, for *successful* backlash. Therefore, backlash bookends this narrative of digital entrepreneurial masculinity—beginning with ineffective attempts by angst-ridden subordinated men before the rise of modern technology, and concluding with the widespread, patriarchal "colonization" of gender identity in the information age.

As digital entrepreneurial masculinity colonizes "everything by virtual capitalism" (Sardar 33), the colonization of the female "Other" is a necessary component for such a hegemonic masculinity "counterpoised to subjugated femininity" by definition (Faulkner 91). Just as every other aspect of digital entrepreneurial masculinity, its domination over women stems from its origins of subordination. Men fearing feminist emasculation retreated to the cult

of technology not only because it provided power, but because such power justified male privilege. Therefore, "to reassert masculine white privilege in an era of declining personal control over a rapidly changing world," subordinated men relied upon the dualistic, Cartesian thinking entrenched in the technological world (Millar 51). This Cartesian thought, a fundamental reason/nature binary, provides a stable, hegemonic masculinity—justifying male supremacy through "rationality" and validating female inferiority and domination. Furthermore, through the transcendent power of technology, these men could "rebuild reality" in which they could impose this gender hierarchy, ensure male power, and mobilize widespread male backlash (Millar 51).

Achieving Male Supremacy Through a Reason/Nature Dualism

Thus, Sardar claims, "The binary coding of cyberspace carries with it another type of encoding: that of gender relations" (24). As the Cartesian dualism, a philosophical foundation for the cult of technology, advocates the transcendence of mind over body, the sphere of "reason" rises above the inferior sphere of "nature." Furthermore, according to ecofeminist Val Plumwood, as men have maintained a "claim on rationality" historically(Lohan 903), women have been excluded from this "superior" sphere and relegated to the realm of "nature," which is associated with the "body" and its "lower passions," the "physical or material," the animal or primitive, or the emotional and irrational (Plumwood 48). Thus, the reason/nature dualism of Cartesian thought translates to a gender hierarchy. Faith in the "transcendent" realm of reason results in "inferiorising the sphere of nature and those human-beings who may be counted as part of nature, providing a powerful and all-pervasive model of rational meritocracy" (Plumwood 53).

Such dualistic thinking still pervades the modern technological realm as computer engineers inhabit a cerebral world coded by literal binary. Sherry Turkle recounts Hacker's

psychological study on engineers: "Hacker found that as a group they shared a starkly stratified Cartesian outlook, devaluing the body and the earth in favor of the mind, the abstract, the mathematical" (223). Faulkner discusses how it is especially prevalent with those academic elite—the most successful hackers and programmers being an "extreme case in terms of the mind-body split" (97). Furthermore, "the powerful and all-pervasive model of rational meritocracy" is synonymic with computer culture's "cult of prowess" that awards masculine worth according to technological skill and associates lack of technical proficiency with femininity. According to hackers in an online forum, "femininity is incompatible with technological competence; to feel technically competent is to feel manly" (qtd. in Kendall 261). However, Plumwood emphasizes how defining masculinity by these means—through a hierarchy of "reason" and in opposition to femininity—results in an insecure, desperate "need to maintain hierarchies to define identity" (53).

Thus, according to Plumwood, the more "doubtful and insecure" the sense of masculinity, the heavier it leans upon hierarchy for definition (53). As the "religion of technology" demands ardent faith in "the triumph of rationality" (cite), this "constant reassurance of superiority" actually betrays its roots of subordination and insecurity (Plumwood 53). Furthermore, since maintaining this hegemonic masculinity necessitates a violent reinforcing of female inferiority, it proves to be a subordinated masculinity most prone to antagonistic "backlash." Millar states, "attempts to achieve a technologically mediated mind/circuit transcendence harmonize perfectly with a hegemonic culture of backlash that seeks to discipline feminine independence" (52). Therefore, defining hegemonic masculinity through a reason/nature dualism—as it rationalizes male privilege and vociferously reinforces female inferiority—is, itself, a form of backlash.

Furthermore, not only does this hierarchal perspective inherently inferiorize women, it translates to their subjugation. According to Plumwood, such dualistic thinking "naturalizes domination, making it appear to be a part of the nature of each and in the nature of things" (53) However, Plumwood merely echoes Descartes, who centuries earlier argued, "the rational sphere controls and regulates the lower order of nature represented as material necessity, producing arrangements which are for the best" (Noble 84). Therefore, since "the relation between the orders of reason and nature is constantly depicted as one of control and mastery" (Plumwood 84), the "cult of prowess" clearly operates according to such logic, as one's masculinity is directly tied to his "domination and control over the natural sphere" (Faulkner 105). Sherry Turkle, in sociological studies of computer engineers, proves how such domination of the "sphere of nature" transcends merely the machine and extends to women as well. She discusses an engineer, Anthony, and his attempts to find a relationship: "Anthony is keeping in mind that his quest is for what can be controlled and mastered. He judges everything he meets according to this standard." Though Anthony admittedly knows "he is not getting a 'substitute'" for a machine, he applies the same logic to another element associated with the sphere of nature—females (655).

According to the research of Turkle and Hacker, due to the engineer's submersion in technology, he is hardwired to seek "control and mastery" over the sphere of nature. However, especially since other social avenues of power are often inaccessible to subordinated men, technology becomes his primary means of exerting such control—and therefore, achieving successful backlash. Thus, in the opening pub scene, Mark's attempts at backlash were futile. Raised in the cult of technology, Mark maintains an inclination for mastery and control but remains incapable of asserting it without his vehicle of power, technology. Though Erica's

"female power" exacerbates Mark's sense of subordination, one understands how Mark attempts to "lash back" at Erica by specifically relegating her to the sphere of nature and seeking "control and mastery" over her to assert his superiority. After she tells Mark that they're no longer dating, he responds in disbelief, and tells her to "settle down." Then, he says, "Erica, the reason we're able to sit here and drink right now is cause you used to sleep with the door guy." Furthermore, as she repeatedly attempts to leave to study, he repeats, "You don't have to go study . . . Because you go to B.U." Thus, Mark first identifies her "with the sphere of physicality and nature," by suggesting her one night stand with the bouncer (Plumwood 33). Then, he insults her education, again, restricting her from the higher realm of "reason" that he occupies by going to Harvard. However, after his extensive attempts to control the situation and give orders to Erica, she dumps him—proving his attempts at backlash unsuccessful and rendering him impotent.

However, upon booting up his computer in the dorm room, Mark accesses a platform of power that allows him to reassert control over women and achieve an effective form of backlash. Once Mark signs onto Livejournal, he slips into a virtual space where he can "rebuild reality"— establish a patriarchal reason/nature hierarchy, subjugate the realm of "nature," and reconstruct his shattered sense of masculinity. After signing on to "Zuckonit.com," he writes, "Erica Albright's a bitch." Then, he angrily types, "For the record, she may look like a 34C but she's getting all kinds of help from our friends at Victoria's Secret. She's a 34B, as in barely anything there. False advertising." Mark, after linking to her to "animality" by calling her a "bitch" (Plumwood 33), reduces her to her body—but, the body as an object "advertising" for male sexual desire and domination. Unlike Mark's futile attempts at the pub to associate her with the sphere of nature, these online attempts prove highly successful. After Mark's blog entry, the film cuts to Erica's dorm room, where a male university student appears in the doorway, holding a

bra. He taunts Erica, saying, "Is this yours? I stole it from a tranny," and the camera pans and

freezes on Erica's horrified expression. Later, Erica tells Mark, "The internet's not written in

pencil, Mark, it's written in ink, and you published that Erica Albright was a bitch right before

you made some ignorant crack about . . . my bra size." Thus, Erica's comment emphasizes the

permanency of the Internet and her punishment reveals how Mark's weblog provides a powerful

platform to disseminate insults across cyberspace to other men, allowing the male collective to

join together and prove their superiority over the sphere of nature.

Therefore, as Mark uses the power of technology to recode masculine hegemony,

technological prowess—the ticket to hegemonic power among men—also serves as a weapon of

power to subjugate women. Thus, technology becomes the effective weapon of backlash—

relegating Erica to the natural sphere and asserting mastery over her. Furthermore, Mark

immediately begins constructing Facemash after the break up, therefore proving Sorkin's

assessment of the website as a "revenge stunt, aimed first at the woman who'd most recently

broken [Mark's] heart . . . and then at the entire female population of Harvard." However, by

extending the "revenge stunt" to the rest of the Harvard women, Mark's personal form of

backlash becomes a larger, cultural metaphor—illustrating the post-feminist successful

technological retaliation of digital entrepreneurial masculinity.

Facemash and Facebook: A Narrative of Successful Backlash Achieved Through Technology

As Erica's symbolic act of "female power" at the beginning of the film forces Mark to

retreat to technology to build a new hegemony, the viewer witnesses Mark's intoxicated plunge

into cyberspace after the breakup. Thus, Mark attempts to "take his mind off" of Erica and his

humiliation, by "rebuilding reality," or constructing a website. While looking at images of

Harvard women, he blogs, "Billy Olson's sitting here and had the idea of putting some of these

next to pictures of farm animals and have people vote on who's hotter." Immediately after

accessing technology, Mark "jokingly" associates women with animals, illustrating his attempts

to "entrench . . . hierarchies" about women through his technological prowess (Millar 51).

Furthermore, after identifying women with "animality," Mark reduces women to their

corporeality by building Facemash with headshots from Harvard's online directory. Then, after

associating women with the natural realm, Mark literally engineers male domination over the

"sphere of nature" through an algorithm that allows men to "rate women based on their

'hotness.'" As the site gets 22,000 hits in less than four hours, the male community joins Mark in

exercising mastery over nature and waging a counterassault on feminism.

Clearly, Mark's development of a new website illustrates how male interests—

particularly the angst-ridden ambitions of subordinated men—permeate the creation of new

technological artifacts. The retaliatory nature of Facemash.com proves that "specific

technological artifacts may be gender shaped and may have gender consequences and that this

process can be charted in the design and use of technologies" (Lohan and Faulkner 322).

Therefore, considering Mark's origins of antagonistic subordination, the patriarchal interests and

consequences of Facemash, and its predicating the design of Facebook, the construction of

Facebook proves gendered as well (Lohan and Faulkner 322). Though the film does not

specifically depict Facebook in "use," it does feature its "design" extensively—as Mark codes it

to create a virtual "Final Club" where he occupies a hegemonic masculinity. As hegemonic

masculinity is defined by female subjugation, misogyny can clearly be "charted in the design" of

Facebook. Though Mark initially begins coding Facebook to become "president" of a virtual

social club, he does not launch the site until Dustin approaches him asking about whether or not

a girl in Mark's art history class is single. This interaction proves an epiphany for Mark, and he

creates the "Relationship Status" function of Facebook. He tells Eduardo, "This is what drives life at college. Are you having sex or aren't you. It's why people take certain classes, and sit where they sit, and do what they do, and at its, um, center, you know, that's what theFacebook is gonna be about. People are gonna log on because after all the cake and watermelon there's a chance they're actually gonna," and Eduardo finishes his thought, "get laid." Thus, Mark admits that specifically gendered "center" of his technology. Though he discusses "people," his logic behind Facebook is to reassert a hegemonic masculinity that exerts mastery over nature, and such a "relationship status" would further these masculine pursuits.

Further proving the gendered intent of Facebook, as Mark begins to develop the website, he attempts to "rebuild reality" and create a cyberfrontier that "appeals to long enduring myths of masculine power and imperialistic control" (Millar). To illustrate Mark's fantasy, Fincher, Sorkin, and Reznor attempt to replicate the "reality" of the digital entrepreneur; therefore, after the launching of Facebook, the film's reality becomes this "cyberfrontier" invested with the reason/nature dualism that degrades women and establishes male supremacy. As the producers filter the narrative through the lens of these hegemonic men, all the women in the film become the projections of their dualistic, patriarchal psyche.

Thus, after Facebook goes live, the women in the film start to resemble the female stereotypes that populate cyberspace—the traditional cyberfrontier of the computer geek. Hyperbolically associated with the natural sphere, these "cyberbimbos" and "electronic renderings of Barbie dolls" are ignorant, incapable of "rationality" and reduced to their appearance, the realm of the "body" (Sardar 33). Furthermore, according to Millar, they are "highly sexualized objects, who forcefully seek male attention and crave sexual domination" (105-106). Thus, as these caricatures of "nature" desire "domination" by the rational sphere, such

a portrayal normalizes male mastery over women—the fantasy of the dualistic, technological male mind.

The first two women that Mark meets after launching Facebook, Christy and Alice, appear just as stereotyped as these exaggerated cyber-renderings of femininity. At a lecture on campus, Christy and Alice sit dressed as if about to go clubbing rather than listen to Bill Gates discuss an "8080 microprocessor." In a miniskirt and white blouse unbuttoned to reveal cleavage and a red lace bra, Christy is a beacon of sex appeal in the midst of the "rational" technical environment. After discovering that Mark Zuckerberg is sitting nearby, Christy leans over and whispers to Eduardo, "Facebook me when you get home. Maybe we can all go out and grab a drink later." Thus, Christy, calling attention to her body in her provocative outfit, and hinting at a hedonistic evening, identifies herself with the sphere of nature and "the body" and "lower passions" associated with it (Plumwood). Furthermore, the next scene in which Christy and Alice appear is a dirty, dimly lit nightclub bathroom, where they each aggressively drag Eduardo and Mark into separate stalls to give them oral sex. Thus, after aligning themselves with the sphere of nature, just like the women of cyberspace, they "seek male attention" at the lecture, and then "crave sexual domination" later that evening.

Furthermore, the peripheral women throughout the rest of the film continue to fit the digital entrepreneur's projection of the cyberfrontier. The pretty young girls at the house in Palo Alto distance themselves from the rational sphere through their overstated ignorance of technology and emphasize their association with the realm of the body. Sean asks them, "Are you guys using spikes or ghost missiles?" and they respond, "We don't know we're just shooting at each other." When Sean advises, "Use sweet kamakazis," they reply, "Like we know what that is." Thus, they confess ignorance of the technology they're using and continue to smoke

marijuana until they slur their speech. The women at the nightclub in California follow the same template for femininity. First, as they are Victoria's Secret models, the viewer immediately associates them with the body and sexuality. Furthermore, when Mark and Sean discuss Facebook, Brianna says, "If you guys are gonna talk about bandwidth we need shots." Thus, when the topic of technology arises, these women detach and insist on indulging the flesh— thoroughly identifying themselves as "natural," "bodily" creatures, incapable of comprehending the "rational" realm of technology. Therefore, the landscape of the cyberfrontier is populated by women so helplessly part of "nature" that their mastery by "rational" men appears normal.

However, while these women constitute the cyberfrontier "fantasy" of the digital entrepreneur, a cyber nightmare in the film further illustrates the importance of acquiring digital entrepreneurial masculinity and exerting mastery over the sphere of nature. As Eduardo does not have technological skills, he is restricted from fully entering the realm of rationality. Thus, he cannot properly exert control over the realm of nature—Christy. When Eduardo returns from Palo Alto, Christy arrives at his room, furious that his Facebook status says "single." However, Eduardo admits that he doesn't know how to change the status, confessing his lack of technical knowledge. Immediately, as Eduardo distances himself from rational sphere, he forfeits his masculine power, and thus, Christy becomes a horrific image of unregulated nature—a psychotic, pyromaniacal, emasculating nightmare. Thus, by means of contrast, the film proves the importance of developing digital entrepreneurial masculinity—to fail to stay "wired" means to give up one's manhood and allow the emasculating tyranny of irrational, unruly women.

Thus, in frighteningly stark contrast to the failed backlash at the start of the film, such complete "virtual colonization" of femininity by digital entrepreneurial masculinity proves a wildly successful form of cultural retaliation. Therefore, as the film depicts the rise of digital

entrepreneurial masculinity, defined by a megalomaniac, Machiavellian preoccupation with masculine power and a misogynistic vendetta against women, the social implications for the "new digital world order" are foreboding (Kenway 23).

What Does the Future Hold?

As those who design "new technologies are, by the same stroke, designing society," and the American landscape becomes exponentially more digitized, these powerful men can continue to shape it into the imagined "cyberfrontier." Even if Facebook's original patriarchal purposes are only partially realized through the furthering of a hegemonic masculinity, as these men continue to develop new technologies, and their gender ideologies trickle through them and into the cultural consciousness, the precise ramifications of Facebook's "gender shaping"—and certainly that of other technologies—will manifest over time. As David Noble says about technology, "our ignorance of its consequences completely swamps our knowledge" (22).

However, unfortunately, our society remains content with the utopian whim that all technological advancement translates to beneficial social progress. Necessary evaluation of technology is truncated as culture continues to indulge this Enlightenment fancy of "technological determinism,"—or the optimistic conviction that the autonomous, asocial force of technology will usher in a "technical breakthrough which, when launched, will impact upon and change our society" for the better (Lohan 322). However, David Noble predicts little change, as "the expectation of ultimate salvation through technology, whatever the immediate human and social costs, has become the unspoken orthodoxy, reinforced by a market-induced enthusiasm for novelty and sanctioned by a millenarian yearning for new beginnings" (24). However, Millar claims that the language of technological progress, or "digital discourse," forbids contestation as it is designed to keep the digital entrepreneurs in power, the hierarchies entrenched, and the

increasing colonization of the American social landscape into the imagined, misogynistic cyberfrontier. Thus, as the misogyny of *The Social Network* was met with relative silence from the male population and was heralded as "capturing the zeitgeist of 2010," perhaps this is the most compelling evidence for the osmotic absorption of gender norms through new technology, the transformation of America into the cyberfrontier, and the most convincing case for the digital entrepreneur's supremacy and successful backlash.

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