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**Submarine Films as Narratives of Masculinity.**

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, October 2000.



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## **Abstract.**

The research for this thesis is on representations of masculinity in Anglo-American submarine films since 1943. The discussion will draw on relevant work on the representation of masculinity and popular cinema in film and cultural studies. In particular, the thesis will account for the notion of hegemony in relation to masculinity in the submarine film. Further, the notion of hegemonic masculinity will be addressed in terms of four key claims. These are as follows: that relations between groups are characterised solely by domination and subordination, that a singular hegemonic masculinity prevails at any one time, that this masculinity is coherent, and that hegemonic masculinity is consistently dominant in relations of power.

Through the reading of the films, this thesis will critique the notion of hegemonic masculinity in the following terms: a] the recurrent concern with the group emphasises teamwork and cooperation rather than domination and subordination. Even where these relations operate at the level of fantasy, they can suggest utopian possibilities of mutuality. b] This preoccupation with teamwork shows that the struggle between competing masculinities endorses difference in masculinity, not just a hegemonic masculinity. c] Rather than privileging hegemonic masculinity as coherent, this struggle leads to alliances between masculinities, in which hegemonic masculinity has to negotiate contradictions in masculinity. d] This account of submarine films therefore shows that masculinity involves the complex negotiation of differences and not solely the consistent privileging of hegemonic masculinity.



The analysis will be organised into chapters that derive specifically from the following thematic concerns within the case study: nature, the masculine body, men's friendships, rationality, vision and power, ideological processes, and the submarine as masculine space. Through the discussion of these themes and the developments in submarine films, the thesis will show the extent to which representations of masculinity in the case study conform to assumptions about hegemonic masculinity and popular film.

## 1] *Hot, Straight and Normal?*

### **An Introduction to Masculinity and the Submarine Film.**

The cry 'Hot Straight and Normal' is the confirmation that a torpedo is armed and successfully on its way to its intended target. This phrase recurs frequently in the submarine war films analysed in this thesis. For a number of reasons, this phrase is a useful way to interrogate submarine masculinity and also masculinity in film studies. The submarine film may be perceived as a masculine genre,<sup>1</sup> one that articulates a version of masculinity complicit with dominant ideology. As such, the characteristics of dominant masculinity are identified and contained within that phrase: hot as in active, straight as in heterosexual, normal as in rational. The course of this thesis will explore all of the above claims and assumptions in relation to masculinity in the submarine and undersea adventure film.<sup>2</sup> The significance of this phrase in theoretical terms should not be overlooked either. It at once signals that masculinity is seen as being defined through both its opposition to femininity (active vs. passive and rational vs. irrational), and its exclusion of homosexuality (straight not deviant). But, it also points to the way in which gender debates have addressed masculinity in terms of difference and inter-relation. Here, it has been emphasised that masculinity cannot be addressed in isolation, but as part of gender relations within wider social relations, crosscut by, at the very least, difference in terms of race, sexuality and class. As Connell puts it, there has been a 'growing recognition of the interplay between gender, race and class.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the notion and function of the war film as masculine genre see, T. Modleski, 'A Rose Is a Rose?: Real Women and a Lost War', in J. Lewis, (Ed), *The New American Cinema*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998, pp. 125-145.

<sup>2</sup> Most of these are US in origin, but the limited number of British and European productions will feature where relevant.

<sup>3</sup> R. Connell, *Masculinities*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995, p. 76. See also introduction to M. Berger, B. Wallis, S. Watson, (Eds) *Constructing Masculinity*, New York and London: Routledge, 1995.

This observation has been significant within the terms in which film studies has addressed masculinity. For example, this assumption critically informs Neale's argument that 'Heterosexual masculinity has been identified as a structuring norm in relation both to images of women and gay men.'<sup>4</sup> The consequence of this assumption is that straight white masculinity is addressed through relations of difference from its others, and most importantly, its position of power inscribed within differences of race, sexuality and gender. However, submarine films have largely omitted black figures, gay men have been seen as occluded by the clouds of testosterone and diesel, and the function of femininity has been confined to the submariner's shore obsession, comic disruption or source of conflict to be overcome.

Subsequent chapters will consider these omissions, occlusions and confinements in representations of masculinity. But the object of this study is, by and large, the straight white male. If these other arguments have insisted that masculinity must be addressed as difference *from* and relation *to*, this thesis will consider difference and relation *within*. It is this that establishes the trajectory of this thesis and sets it apart from the approaches to masculinity accounted for below. Clearly, then, the argument will be working within a hegemonic model of masculinities, and the introduction will introduce more fully the strategic use of hegemony<sup>5</sup>, the object of the study, how it will be addressed, and the relationship of the thesis to debates about masculinity.

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<sup>4</sup> S. Neale, 'Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema', in S. Cohan & I. R. Hark, (Eds), *Screening The Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 9. See also, for example, J. Davies & C. R. Smith, *Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality in Contemporary American Film*, Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997, or S. Willis, *High Contrast: Race and Gender in Contemporary Hollywood Film*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Hegemony is the process by which a dominant group maintains its position through the establishment of a consensus or common sense view of society by granting concessions in order to win consent for its position. The consensus relies above all else on establishing its position as both natural and legitimate.

### **Hegemony, Masculinity and Representation.**

The concept of hegemony will allow this thesis to see representations of masculinity in popular culture as an area up for contestation, resistance and negotiation. The argument will be that popular representations of masculinity do not necessarily conform to a notion of hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the argument will maintain that the masculinity said to be dominant is too fractured and changing to establish a position of hegemony. By retaining these important provisos in mind, the concept of hegemony will allow this thesis to discuss the representation of masculinity in the context of the themes and issues that the narratives within the submarine film frequently return to. The thesis is not one that sustains a critique of 'dominant masculinity' or one that attempts to prove the unvarying ideological complicity of popular film. Rather, the thesis will shed light on masculinity in popular film in respect of two significant areas. Firstly, the way in which representations of masculinity attempt to negotiate changes within specific periods covered in this thesis. In this way, hegemony enables the thesis to argue that masculinity should not be seen as something that has undergone a simple historical change from traditional to modern masculinity. Hegemonic processes should instead be seen as ongoing struggles within masculinity that are attempts to negotiate change. For example, the change from civilian to combat masculinity during The Second World War. Secondly, the concept permits an exploration of relations of power within masculinity. The thesis will therefore be able to show that these power relations are never simply ones of domination and subordination. The film narratives under discussion represent struggles between men as negotiations between different forms of

masculinity, For example, in the conflict between martial and civilian masculinity in *The Abyss* (J. Cameron, US, 1989).

Gramsci's application of Lenin's concept of hegemony continues to offer a valuable critical tool in cultural studies and sociology. The concept has been particularly useful in moving beyond simple models of domination and subordination in the study of different social groups and also in the ideological function of popular culture. Hall defines hegemony as 'a condition of social ascendancy, of cultural, moral and political leadership by a particular social bloc.'<sup>6</sup> Gramsci insisted that popular culture, or in his terms popular sentiment, (which could include, for example, Catholicism) was an essential part of the process of hegemony. Although the popular culture Gramsci would have perceived in 1920s Italy cannot be seen as equivalent to contemporary popular culture, the significance of popular culture in hegemonic processes has been established.<sup>7</sup> Bennett argues that 'Gramsci's work constitutes a critical point of engagement for anyone interested in popular culture.'<sup>8</sup> The concept has also been extensively used to explain the functions and meanings of cultural processes. *Resistance through Rituals*, for example, accounted for the symbolic and material significance of new social movements associated with youth in terms of hegemonic processes:

Negotiation, resistance, struggle: the relations between a subordinate and a dominant formation, wherever they fall in this spectrum, are always intensely active, always oppositional in a structural sense...<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> S. Hall, 'Popular Culture and the State,' in T. Bennett, C. Mercer, J. Woollacott, (Eds), *Popular Culture and Social Relations*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986, p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> T. Bennett, 'Introduction: Popular Culture and the 'turn to Gramsci', in Bennett, Mercer, & Woollacott, (Eds), 1986, pp. xi-xxiv.

<sup>8</sup> Bennett et al, (Eds), 1986, p. xxii.

<sup>9</sup> S. Hall and T. Jefferson, (Eds), *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, London: Hutchinson 1976, P. 44.

Furthermore, in Gramsci's concept of hegemony the distinction between the state and civil society is rarely hard and fast. Gramsci defines the state as 'the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules.'<sup>10</sup> Significantly, the process towards hegemony works through leadership rather than outright domination by the dominant group, and leadership is dependent on consent. Moreover, where the dominant group holds power 'even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to lead as well.'<sup>11</sup> Although specifically applying the concept to culture develops from within cultural studies, particularly in the work of CCCS in the 1970s, implicit in Gramsci is the significant inter-relation between popular culture and hegemonic processes. As Chambers sees it, hegemony allows for a more holistic understanding of relations of domination and subordination, relations in which culture plays a highly significant part:

the direct ideological domination and manipulation of subaltern social forces by a ruling class is replaced with the proposition that ideological domination - the everyday acceptance of the world and its existing relations of power and social relations - is not imposed from 'above', but established across the shifting fields that constitute a shared 'consensus.'<sup>12</sup>

Cinema can be seen at work in these 'shifting fields' that many critics have taken to include the way representations of those 'existing relations' (including gender) are worked on and come to have meaning for their audiences. This thesis will, then, work within and critique the application of hegemony to popular culture.

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<sup>10</sup> Gramsci, 1971, p. 244.

<sup>11</sup> Gramsci, 1971, p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> I. Chambers, 'Gramsci Goes to Hollywood', in J. Hollows, P. Hutchings and M. Jancovich, (Eds), *The Film Studies Reader*, London: Hodder, 2000, p. 273.

The understanding of the notion of hegemony by Gramsci and subsequent critics shows how cinema is central to hegemonic processes. In Gramsci's later writings hegemony becomes an expanded concept, one that includes not just the dominant group as a class alliance, but a strategy for the formation of all historic blocs. Furthermore, Hall argues that

Hegemony is not exercised in the economic and administrative fields alone, but encompasses the critical domains of cultural, moral, ethical and intellectual leadership.<sup>13</sup>

Donaldson argues that cinema is implicated in processes of hegemony by specifically including film makers and actors as most influential in constructing dominant models of masculinity:

They are the "weavers of the fabric of hegemony" as Gramsci put it, its "organising intellectuals". These people regulate and manage gender regimes; articulate experiences, fantasies, and perspectives; reflect on and interpret gender relations.<sup>14</sup>

It can be seen that the way Gramsci envisaged hegemony establishes its saliency in the analysis of cultural processes. Furthermore, specific examples of cultural production such as cinema have provided examples of the way culture is implicated in hegemonic processes. Harper argues that

Certain films also play a key role in the hegemonic process; that is to say, in the persuasive and imaginary means whereby dominant forces maintain power. To do this it is necessary to win over on behalf of the ruling class, those groups on its boundaries. In some films this is achieved by incorporating such marginal

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<sup>13</sup> S. Hall, 'Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity', in D. Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Routledge: London, 1996, p. 426.

groups into the narrative and according them a symbolic role; they are thus given a sense by the texts that they have a stake in society.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of hegemony has been used as a way of understanding concerns such as the representation of gender in the cinema. Harper also maintains that

Gainsborough films were a key example of the way in which popular texts can function hegemonically; they provided a temporary imaginary location where marginal groups could experience that pleasure and confidence which were normally the prerogative of those who made the rules.<sup>16</sup>

In the account of film studies and masculinity above, cinema is one of those forms through which dominant culture is reproduced. It should then follow that representations of masculinity maintain the dominant position of men through their validation of particular, dominant, versions of masculinity. The thesis will examine the extent to which the films emphasise, through narrative resolution, the particular form of masculinity that can be said to be hegemonic at any one time. The introduction will establish a criticism of the importance attributed to narrative resolution at the expense of dissonant possibilities opened up by the narrative process.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the thesis will argue that hegemonic masculinity cannot be seen as simply maintained through the narratives of dominant culture. At least as much attention has to be paid to those contradictions that the narrative negotiates. In this way, narrative process can be aligned with hegemonic process. In other words, concessions made in the struggle for consensus, which can be likened to the possibilities opened up by the narrative, are given their due weight in the hegemonic process.

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<sup>14</sup> M. Donaldson, 'What is Hegemonic Masculinity?', *Theory and Society*, 22, 1993, p. 646.

<sup>15</sup> S. Harper, *Picturing the Past: The Rise and Fall of the British Costume Film*, BFI: London, 1994, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Harper, 1994, pp. 185-186.



The argument will, then, use and interrogate the notion of a 'hegemonic masculinity'. Principally, there are two important reservations with this concept. To what extent can one type of masculinity be identified as hegemonic in a specified period, and to what extent are submarine films bound up in the hegemonic processes of masculinity? Popular film has been seen as one of the ways hegemonic masculinity is constructed and maintained. Connell claims that

Mass culture generally assumes that there is a fixed, true masculinity beneath the ebb and flow of daily life. We hear of 'real men', 'natural man', the 'deep masculine'.<sup>18</sup>

This statement tends to oversimplify popular cultural debates about masculinity. Tensions within masculinity cannot be read as a straightforward conflict between true and imposed masculinity. This may be one form that these tensions take, but their full complexity will only be revealed by attention to, for example, particular debates in specific narratives identified in this thesis.

Further reservations can be seen in the way that the concept of hegemonic masculinity proposes one type of masculinity as it is defined by Connell:

hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is rather, *the masculinity* that occupies the hegemonic position in a given set of gender relations, (emphasis added)<sup>19</sup>

Hegemonic masculinity opens up the possibility of addressing masculinities in terms of heterogeneity and difference, but the argument still maintains a hegemony of a singular masculinity. Connell's case studies of hegemonic masculinity are identified by

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<sup>17</sup> See page 53.

<sup>18</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 45.

occupation: accountant, architect, computer technician, journalist, librarian, pilot, psychologist, teacher and welfare administrator.<sup>20</sup> However, he goes on to stress that hegemonic masculinity is 'always contestable'<sup>21</sup> though it can be seen as working in terms of hegemonic process:

At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, within these occupations characteristic of hegemonic masculinity there may exist relations of power that are conditional on factors such as employment situation, need, age and position that have nothing to do with patriarchy or the subordination of women. Furthermore, relations between a teacher and a librarian for example, may not consistently maintain the same positions of power.

Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity arises out of the developments in sociological studies of masculinity within particular institutions that highlighted differences within masculinity and a resultant hierarchy of masculinities. Although the notion of hegemonic masculinities as suggested by Connell opens up interesting avenues in a discussion of the representation of masculinity, there are problems with its application. The most significant of these is that his description of non-hegemonic masculinities tends to assume an opposition with a monolithic coherent hegemonic

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<sup>19</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 76. See also Donaldson, 1993, pp. 643-657.

<sup>20</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 76.

<sup>22</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 77.

masculinity. Although his concept of a 'complicit masculinity' is an attempt to distinguish between 'patriarchy's shock troops' and those who merely enjoy the benefits of the 'patriarchal dividend', this model is insufficient for its explanation of differences within hegemonic masculinity.<sup>23</sup> Popular representations of masculinity depend on negotiations between differences within masculinities, negotiations that do not consistently privilege the shock troops of patriarchy. It is the differences within masculinities, and the relations between them that can be seen as validated in terms of contemporaneous debates about masculinity. This is not to go down the road that Connell warns against where

Recognising multiple masculinities, especially in an individualistic culture such as the United States, risks taking them for alternative lifestyles, a matter of consumer choice.<sup>24</sup>

The aim of this thesis is to make the multiple in multiple masculinities work harder, so that the sparse framework of hegemonic masculinities reveals contradictions, differences and relations within the so-called dominant masculinity. This will also enable the thesis to move beyond the proposition, critiqued below, that multiplicity in masculinity is a condition of modernity.

There are further issues pertinent to this thesis raised through the application of hegemony to masculinity in discrete historical periods. In relation to the 1950s, Cohan argues that 'there were major deviations from hegemonic masculinity in the movies and these are of considerable significance,'<sup>25</sup> Cohan identifies what he perceptively calls the 'paradox' of hegemonic masculinity and suggests that the paradox can be explained in

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<sup>23</sup> For an account of these terms see Connell, 1995, pp. 76-81.

<sup>24</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 76.

the following terms. The hegemonic masculinity was singular and plural, specific to some men and common to all, and imposed as the norm and resisted even as it was being taken up. None of this, of course, invalidates the concept or the claims of a hegemonic understanding of masculinity; indeed, plurality and resistance are functions of the hegemonic process. Cohan summarises this process thus

as it underwrites positions of power and wealth, a culture's hegemonic masculinity has to appear to accommodate competing masculinities, too, with the purpose of maintaining "a particular variety of masculinity to which others - among them young and effeminate as well as homosexual men - are subordinated" (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 174).<sup>26</sup>

The argument will show that contradiction and resistance are fundamental aspects of hegemony that cannot be ignored when discussing the representation of masculinity in popular film. The masculinities in submarine films do not exist solely in relations of competition and subordination, and it will be shown that the relations between masculinities are therefore not simply power relations.

On the other hand, other critics maintain that representations of hegemonic masculinity can only be seen through relations of domination and subordination:

while television may offer a range of images of men, such redemptive readings do not address the ideological work that exceptions to the hegemonic pattern do,

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<sup>25</sup> Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity in the Fifties*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 38.

<sup>26</sup> Cohan, 1997, p. 39. The quote is from 'Hard and Heavy: Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity,' in M. Kaufman, *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power and Change*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983, pp. 139-92.

within a relatively stable framework of patriarchal codings of gender roles and relations, marriage and the family.<sup>27</sup>

The problem with this argument is not that hegemonic processes only maintain the dominance of masculinity, but that one type of masculinity is seen to be consistently dominant over all others. A singular hegemonic masculinity allows Hanke to reduce change and difference in masculinity to an overarching power struggle

thereby recuperating patriarchal ideology by making it more adaptable to contemporary social conditions and more able to accommodate counter-hegemonic forces, such as liberal-feminist ideology and gay/lesbian politics.<sup>28</sup>

This is not to argue that power may be evacuated from gender relations, but that power is one amongst many forms that the relation between and within genders may take. In this way, the thesis will address masculinity within but not only in terms of relations of power.

### **Hegemony and History in this Thesis.**

This thesis will not argue that hegemonic masculinity can be seen as a historic bloc that has achieved its hegemonic moment. The period under consideration in this thesis, and the changes, contradictions and differences within masculinity make this proposition untenable. The notion of a hegemonic masculinity implies that masculinity undergoes an internal, self-contained process in which dominant masculinity retains its position through concessions to subordinate masculinity. This thesis is concerned with the extent to which those concessions in the process of hegemony maintain dominant masculinity's position as coherent and sustainable. Film narratives can be seen to be involved in hegemonic processes in the way they grant concessions, by constructing

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<sup>27</sup> R. Hanke, 'Redesigning Men: Hegemonic Masculinity in Transition', in S. Craig, (Ed), *Men, Masculinity and the Media*, London: Sage, 1992, p. 192.

negotiated or oppositional positions within the text. The tendency towards hegemonic masculinity has to assume then that these different positions within the text are then negated or undermined by the narrative processes that work towards the validation of the hegemonic position. This thesis will question the extent to which these positions are dealt with in this way by the validation of a particular masculinity or masculinities in the narrative drive towards closure.

There are a number of ways in which changes in masculinity within the historical period covered by this thesis can be understood. Rather than seek to encompass the processes of change over the last sixty years, the notion of hegemony shows how processes of change within masculinity can be linked to particular historic events and processes. This avoids the problem of linear development from traditional masculinity to modern masculinities, while at the same time eschewing the generalised statements about the history of masculinity based on large-scale epochs. It is worth reiterating here that peaks in submarine film production correspond to perceived periods of adjustment or crisis for masculinity.

There are a number of assumptions and implications in the application of a hegemonic model to changes in masculinity between World War II and the 1990s. Particular events or processes are not then periods characterised by one type of masculinity rather than any other, but rather these events and processes function as changes that masculinity has to negotiate. The implication of the hegemonic model is that masculinity successfully negotiates and accommodates any changes brought about by these events

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<sup>28</sup> Hanke, 1992, p. 197.

and processes, thereby remaining hegemonic. One issue for this thesis then, will be the extent to which this process of negotiation permits a 'hegemonic masculinity' to be seen as consistently coherent, stable and powerful.

Within this emphasis on historical change and hegemonic masculinity, a structure within which changes in masculinity can be identified needs to be established. This is not to erect a developmental model of linear change, but to suggest terms within which changes in masculinity have had to be negotiated. For example, can it be assumed that pre-war masculinity was a stable and coherent entity, based upon patriarchal authority over women and children and bolstered by the breadwinner ethic (which ignores the trauma posed to the masculine breadwinner by the depression)? The wartime films are though engaged in the transition from peacetime to combat masculinity, so that masculinity has to be redefined to encompass courage and sacrifice, notably through the subordination of the self to the team war effort. This is figured in the films through putting aside romance in order to carry out combat duties. The 1950s submarine films, the highpoint of submarine film production, can be seen as the transition from wartime to postwar masculinity. The difficulty with this transition is that it involves coming to terms with the past trauma of the Second World War at the same time as remaining prepared for the conflicts in South East Asia and the oppositions of the Cold War. This can be seen as figured through the conflicts between revenge for past injuries and the welfare of the current (young) crew. While WWII films emphasised teamwork, the 1950s films emphasised leadership. Submarine films from the 1960s and 1970s tend to be of the undersea fantasy adventure type, and these can be seen to negotiate oppositions between conflicting forms of masculinity in order to privilege new forms of masculinity.

The late 1980s and early 1990s sees the emergence of submarine films in the form of undersea science fiction and nuclear missile narrative. These can be seen as the attempts by masculinity to negotiate between outmoded cold war or hard-line capitalist masculinity, and masculinity influenced by contemporary discourses on racial and gender equality and environmentalism. This shows how the concept of hegemony allows masculinity to be seen not in terms of type determined by the characteristics of a historical epoch, but as negotiating change in relation to historical processes.

Periodic differences in the hegemonic processes of masculinity have been addressed elsewhere. Recent manifestations of the so-called new man in 1990s popular cinema have been dismissed in similar terms to those employed by Hanke:

While the production of such a feeling male subject may seem like a progressive step, all improper feeling (homophobia, racism, sexism etc.) is identified as an individual problem, as a lack of knowledge and experience.<sup>29</sup>

Van Fuqua does not claim that the emotional masculinity is new, as it was seen in post WWII 'trauma' films such as *Best years of Our Lives* (W. Wyler, US, 1946). But what is different is that now men undergo transformation through observing *other* people's suffering and/or by feeling and learning from their own pain. 1950s feeling men were though heroic failures; suffering from individual crisis rather than standing for the decay of whole social class

Where 1950s male melodramas held out little hope for the transformation of the individual without a simultaneous transformation of social relations, these more

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<sup>29</sup> J. Van Fuqua, ' "Can You feel It Joe?" Male Melodrama and the Feeling Man', *Velvet Light Trap*, 38, Fall 1996, p. 29.



recent male melodramas offer the possibilities of a version of masculinity which does not call for a redistribution of power and privilege.<sup>30</sup>

Van Fuqua also argues that

these feeling man films are part of the constantly shifting maneuvers of hegemony, which appropriate the counter discourse of anti feminism and other anti racist, anti homophobic projects to realign apparently threatened positions of power'.<sup>31</sup>

One consequence of addressing hegemonic changes in terms of power is that the focus tends to be on either the relations of domination and subordination, or the continued impact of that relation on the subordinated. This thesis will argue that in order to address masculinity and hegemonic processes, the consequences of those anxieties and transformation for masculinity need to be recognised. Cohan and Hark ask 'what are we to make of a masculinity that can preserve its hegemony only by confessing its anxiety at every turn.'<sup>32</sup> For Hanke and Van Fuqua, hegemony is about continued domination and power. For this thesis, it is about process and concessions. This is to question the coherence and condition of hegemonic masculinity, not whether men dominate women in society.

This thesis will also argue that the sheer number of differences cannot be reduced, as Willis does, to mere aesthetic difference within the postmodern proliferation of images that renders them all meaningless. Willis maintains that within this conceptualisation of

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<sup>30</sup> Van Fuqua, 1996, end note 6, p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> Van Fuqua, 1996, p. 29. See A. Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, page 64: 'Western cultural traditions ...try to neutralise and contain the threat of the unmasculine or feminine man by making him the butt of homophobic laughter.'; also footnote 41, p. 128.

<sup>32</sup> Cohan and Hark, (Eds), 1993, p. 2.

society's relation to popular culture, audiences attach no real meaning to representations of a transformed or progressive masculinity;

our culture's contemporary fetishisation of differences may operate to transform *only* the rhetoric of the dominant discourse without changing their structural effects.<sup>33</sup>

Willis maintains that popular forms are themselves divested of social meaning, and it appears that it is up to the critic to reinstate them. This position is rejected here because it is founded on the belief that only the critic can see the ideological work that representations of difference perform. While Willis acknowledges Mercer's claim that there are always contradictory identities and progressive political contests around polyvalent signs<sup>34</sup>, she goes on to locate progressive representations of race and gender only outside mainstream cinema. For example, this can be seen in the differences between *Falling Down* (J. Schumacher, US, 1992) and *The Crying Game* (N. Jordan, UK, 1992). Here the former, 'big' film, positions the white middle-class male at the centre of difference, and the 'independent' latter film agglomerates 'all the force of difference around the dazzling fetish that shimmers under the straight white male's fascinated gaze.'<sup>35</sup>

Use of the concept of hegemony will allow the thesis to question many of the above assumptions about representations of masculinity in popular film. This, coupled with the study of a neglected area of film, establishes the thesis as a distinct area of research.

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<sup>33</sup> Willis, 1997, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> K. Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle*, New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 202.

### Introduction to the Case Study.

The case study will include available submarine films released in Britain and the US since the start of World War II, and will focus on those titles where there is at least some agreement within critical and audience perceptions of their classification as submarine films. This is not to argue that submarine films constitute a genre, and the films in this case study have previously been addressed as war films, science fiction and fantasy-adventure films. In Altman's terms, 'submarine' is one of those adjectival terms that describe the characteristics of a genre, rather than a noun that names a genre, rather like 'musical western'. These terms are not fixed, though 'submarine' has never achieved the independent status that would allow it to stand alone in the way that, say musical has.<sup>36</sup> In this way, it is possible to address these films as a hybrid body comprising of submarine-war, submarine-science fiction and submarine-adventure films. The submarine and undersea adventure film represents a viable case study for the application and function of hegemonic processes within masculinity. However, the films have in common various recognisable factors, which identify the films under discussion. A fuller discussion of this approach to genre and its relation to other work on genre will take place in chapter two.

Submarine and submarine-related themes are recognisable to both producers and consumers. Basinger argues that 'Submarines had always been popular with filmmakers.'<sup>37</sup> and quotes the press release for *A Submarine Pirate* (C. Avery/S. Chaplin, US, 1955), which emphasised a submarine 'above water, submerged and firing

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<sup>35</sup> Willis, 1997, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> See R. Altman, *Film/Genre*, London: BFI, 1999, pp. 50-53.

<sup>37</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 105.

a torpedo ... and the use of the periscope is also illustrated.”<sup>38</sup> As the filmography shows, submarine or underwater films appear regularly in the 20th century. The 21st century has already seen the appearance of *U-571*, (Jonathan Mostow, US, 2000) a spectacular reworking of a World War II submarine action, with commando combat and espionage. The word ‘submarine’ in the title has long been a draw for filmmakers and audiences though titles can be misleading. *Submarine Alert* (F. MacDonald, US, 1943) is an espionage adventure on land that has no submarines in it at all. *Submarine Base* (A. H. Kelley, US, 1943) is likewise not a submarine film, though it does at least momentarily have a submarine in it. The presence of a submarine is no guarantee of a submarine film; *Assault on a Queen* (J. Donohue, US, 1966) is a US/European heist romantic-comedy, even though a sunken U-Boat is used to hold up the *Queen Mary*. *The Abyss* is a submarine film because the technology used by the Non-Terrestrial Intelligence to threaten the world is based on water; they exist in a symbiotic relationship with the undersea world.

### **Popular Culture and the Significance of the Submarine.**

The popular conceptions of submarines and their continued fascination<sup>39</sup> drive the cultural myths that surround the submarine and submariners. The U-Boat and its commander are particularly significant in this myth, for example “Among weapons, the U-Boat is closest to the mythical: a fish full of people, dangerously armed, and equipped with enormous firepower and a fine, wide reaching sensory system.”<sup>40</sup> Of

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<sup>38</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 106.

<sup>39</sup> Public libraries continue to lend novels and autobiographies about WWII submarine action and contemporary submarine stories. The most prolific US and British authors, some producing tens of books, include Michael DiMercurio, Alexander Fullerton, Alexander Kent, Douglas Reeman, Craig Thomas, and Charles Whiting/Leo Kessler.

<sup>40</sup> Herbert Kremp, ‘Das Boot’, *Die Welt* 2/3 March 1985, quoted in M. L. Hadley, *Count Not the Dead*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 1995, p. 159.

special significance is the part played by popular film in the formation of submarine mythology, as Hadley argues in relation to *Das Boot* (W. Petersen, W. Germany, 1981):

At the level of popular consciousness, the propaganda image of the German submariner as some kind of legendary hero - or villain - did not begin to change until the release of the film *Das Boot* in 1981. ...In the film they discovered for the first time a Nelsonian "band of brothers" who no longer fitted the stereotype of the iron-willed and amoral "Prussian" sailor.<sup>41</sup>

Popular conceptions are therefore open to change, and submarine films can play an important part in those processes. What also emerges from Hadley's account is that those conceptions hold submariners to be unique amongst members of the armed forces. He uses examples from contemporary German media to argue that

"there is such a thing as a U-Boat face: [it's that] steely, wistful expression" caused by "the tough, primitive living conditions aboard, the tension, [and] the skipper having to live by his instincts".<sup>42</sup>

This thesis will examine this notion of submariners as particular types of men to investigate whether a specifically submarine masculinity can be said to exist in the submarine film. Moreover, the investigation will examine the extent to which submarine masculinity can be seen to correspond with hegemonic masculinity. Hadley also suggests that popular culture has itself constructed this mythology of masculinity, citing the dust jacket of a popular historical work; "In the U-Boat two typically male inclinations find their expression: the romanticism of seafaring and the adventure of modern technology."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> M. L. Hadley, 1995, p.4.

<sup>42</sup> Hadley, 1995, p. 83. The quotation is from W. Knoth, 'Das U-Boat Gesicht', *Elegante Welt*, 1940, U-Boat archives, Cuxhaven.

<sup>43</sup> Hadley, 1995, p. 127.

The concept of a submarine masculinity in popular culture shares the concerns of critical debates about masculinity. The popular novels of Michael Di Mercurio represent masculinity in terms of a contradiction between the family and the submarine:

Each briefing sheet listed the pain these men had suffered on account of their commitment to the submarine force, leaving home for months at a time to take a steel pipe to the bottom of the ocean for reasons that often made no sense to their families. And many of those stories seemed familiar to Pacino, whose own personal life had suffered in his climb to command, at one point nearly forcing him to choose between his submarine and his family.<sup>44</sup>

This raises a number of issues in relation to masculinity, for example, the contradiction in the notion that the submariner is a special type of masculinity.<sup>45</sup> In *Submarine Seahawk* (S. G. Bennett, US, 1958) the submariners see non-submariners as 'surface pukes', but the submariners are likewise seen as crazy to go down in a 'pig-boat' or 'iron coffin'. In a similar contradiction, the family stands for that which the submariner fights for in the war film, but that same family is also threatened by service in the submarine.

### **Critical Work on the Submarine Film.**

There is very little critical work specifically on the submarine film, and only a very small part of that addresses masculinity. Instead, critical focus has centred on the submarine film as a type of combat film, on narrative and ideology in specific periods, or on the submarine film's relation to the science fiction genre.

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<sup>44</sup> M. Di Mercurio, *Attack of the Seawolf*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, p. 127.

<sup>45</sup> The notion of submariner's distinctiveness can be found in many novels, for example: 'The submarine was a weapon first and foremost, but from the cramped discomfort was born a strength, a reliance on your mates that was hard to match elsewhere. Dangerous, demanding, it nevertheless produced a special

Although Basinger accounts for a great number of submarine films, they are discussed in relation to her aim of establishing the conventions and evolutions in the combat genre since 1941. The submarine film becomes simply one interchangeable narrative device for stories of conflict between men, and also with nature. Thus despite the acknowledged differences in setting between infantry, submarine and air force films, Basinger argues that these elements function in the narrative as ‘The tank across the sand is the sub through the water is the plane through the sky.’<sup>46</sup> While this may be a useful form of narrative analysis in genre study, these structural similarities do not really further the understanding of individual submarine films. Even when Basinger does list the specific elements of individual the submarine film, her claim about their persistence is open to question, and ultimately they are the same basic units as in an infantry film such as *Bataan* (T. Garnett, US, 1943). *Destination Tokyo* is used to establish the basic units of the submarine film:

an unexploded bomb drops and becomes wedged on the aft deck, followed by a long slow intense sequence of defusing the bomb to save the sub; a burial at sea takes place; they go through nets into the Japanese harbour and sit on the bottom of the sea; they hear Tokyo Rose on the radio; a group must go ashore on a mission; they attack ships with torpedoes; they undergo a destroyer attack with depth charges; they have to sit on the bottom again for a long period of time.

*These units of story appear over and over again in later submarine films.*

(Emphasis added)<sup>47</sup>

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kind of man for this Navy within a Navy.’ D. Reeman, *A Dawn Like Thunder*, London: Heineman, 1997, p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 19.

<sup>47</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 68.

Many of these units do reappear in later submarine films, though even within the combat film the bomb defusion sequence does not and the mission to Tokyo Bay only occasionally. Basinger's approach informs us of generic variations within the combat film, but does little to refine an understanding of the meanings those variations may have.

Despite these reservations, Basinger at least maintains her argument based on knowledgeable and sympathetic readings of the films. For example, she argues, *Destination Tokyo* was a popular film because it was released during the war, and because of the genre conventions it established:

*Destination Tokyo* was the first big-budget submarine movie of World War II combat, and it became a famous and fondly remembered film. It lives in people's memories partly because it clearly establishes the dramatic world of the combat submarine.<sup>48</sup>

This dramatic world is presented through 'the family', which establishes the basis for many significant tensions between, and relations within, the heterogeneous masculinities of the mixed bunch crew and officers. It is this world that Spoto finds distasteful in his description of the film as 'offensively racist', 'hopelessly maudlin' and goes on to argue that

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<sup>48</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 63. *Destination Tokyo* appeared in the *Showmen's Trade Review* for 1944, which listed 'films that played in one theatre for many weeks and thus accrued more money to the exhibitor.' See T. Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II*, New York: Columbia UP, 1993, pp. 300-303.



The movie celebrates male camaraderie in time of stress, but it celebrates it so thickly that it's surprising these sailors didn't suffocate on the carbon dioxide of their own good will.<sup>49</sup>

Although the depiction of the Japanese is justifiably condemned, Spoto reveals his critical perspective and prejudices here, chiefly through his association of melodrama not only with debased culture but also with a failure of masculinity. He renders the audience and the narrative concerns of the film laughable:

There's nothing particularly manly or mature about the film, and it is interesting to remember that audiences adored it: apparently it told them what they most of all wanted to hear: that our boys were becoming our men over there, and that, golly, they were a nice bunch.<sup>50</sup>

This thesis will argue that, on the contrary, stories of male camaraderie and rites of passage are precisely where to look for the anxieties and concerns those representations of masculinity have to negotiate in terms of their historical conjuncture.

General books on the war film have very little to say about the submarine film, and most of that is disparaging where the films are of significance in terms of masculinity.

Manvell argues that

Too many of the British films lessened understanding of the worst features of war by intrusive, or virtually intrusive, love stories...or turned extremely hazardous exploits into occasions for melodrama.<sup>51</sup>

His overall tendency is to claim that the only good war film is an anti-war film. This leads him to gloss over significant contradictions within specific films. For example, *The*

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<sup>49</sup> D. Spoto, *Camerado: Hollywood & the American Man*, New York: Plume, 1978, p. 28.

<sup>50</sup> Spoto, 1978, p. 29

*Enemy Below* (D. Powell, US, 1957)<sup>52</sup> is dismissed as ‘The mutual dedication to their respective Services of a German U-boat commander and the American captain of a destroyer.’<sup>53</sup> It is, though, the contradictions in that mutual dedication and the recognition of higher ideals that drive much of this narrative.

Issues of authenticity and accuracy are of major concern in much of the early material on the war film. Butler’s tirade against the war film is driven by the critical validation of authenticity and accuracy, with propaganda being the greatest obstacle to the truth. The little film *Civilisation* is dismissed as

a competently made but nauseatingly dishonest film, [which] tells of a submarine engineer whose body is taken over by the spirit of Christ and used as a mouthpiece against “war”.<sup>54</sup>

So concerned is Butler with his diatribe against popular film that he overlooks the most prolific period of submarine films production, the late 1950s, in order to characterise this period as the age of the ‘War Epic’. This era, he argues, is dominated by ‘essentially anonymous commercial mass products, their primary purpose, one can only conclude, to make money, since facts were so often distorted to make fiction.’<sup>55</sup> Instead of this focus on authenticity, the argument here will maintain that narratives of submarine combat and adventure negotiate significant issues in relation to masculinity.

This thesis will make comparisons between submarine films in terms of type and era where this is pertinent to changes or differences in debates about masculinity. These

<sup>51</sup> R. Manvell, *Film and the Second World War*, London: Dent & Sons, 1974, p. 321.

<sup>52</sup> Based on the novel by Commander D. A. Rayner, *The Enemy Below*, London: White Lion, 1956.

<sup>53</sup> Manvell, 1974, p. 312.

<sup>54</sup> I Butler, *The War Film*, London: Tantivy Press, 1974, p. 18. This film is sadly unavailable!

comparisons will not be made to sustain evaluative judgments such as those addressed above. Likewise, the thesis will not attempt a quantitative analysis of the films in terms of content. Shain's statistical analysis of US war films establishes historical variations in terms of military branch, specialty, image of the military and the enemy, and the consequences of war. The survey does reveal, however, that only in 1946 submarine films numbered over 6.0% of total war films, though they were consistently near the top of all lists from 1939 to 1970, which were dominated without exception by infantry films.<sup>56</sup>

Submarine films have also been discussed in Neale and Polan's arguments, both of which maintain that the conventions of the war film uphold the correspondence between narrative structure and ideological function. Although both link narrative structure to an Oedipal Trajectory, they can be seen to differ in their assessment of the degree of ideological coherence necessarily produced by narrative structure.

Neale's reading of *A Walk in the Sun* (L. Milestone, US, 1945) and *Objective, Burma!* (R. Walsh, US, 1944) leads him to conclude that 'Oedipal fantasies and tensions are clearly involved in war films, but that there is no set pattern to the way they are stated and resolved.'<sup>57</sup> His account of narrative motivation and point of view in *Torpedo Run* (J. Pevney, US, 1958) maintains that these formal aspects are crucial determinants in the ideology of the war film, particularly as they relate to knowledge and power. Thus *Torpedo Run* constructs motivation in personal terms through the flashbacks to

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<sup>55</sup> Butler, 1974, p. 99.

<sup>56</sup> R. Shain, *An Analysis of Motion Pictures About War Released by the American Film Industry, 1939-1970*, New York: Arno Press, 1971, pp. 298, 318 & 340.

Commander Doyle's (Glenn Ford) daughter's birthday party. Neale argues the film functions ideologically to validate the war in terms of higher motivation (the family is what we are fighting for) and constructs a positive model of power relations through the benevolent command structure. Significantly, Neale drops *Torpedo Run* from his analysis when it does not fit his conclusions about 'Masculinity and Fantasy', though it is a variation on the Oedipal resolution. As will be shown in Chapter Five, male camaraderie and heterosexual romance are significant elements in this narrative, though Neale argues that the latter is 'actively repressed or displaced.'<sup>58</sup> Subsequent chapters will also show that the narrative resolution maintains the ambiguity of the relation between motivation and ideology through the conventions of melodrama.

Polan's discussion of *Destination Tokyo* supports his deconstruction of the notion that the war was a period in which cinema autonomously aligned itself with state policy. While Polan argues that it is necessary to reject the idea of the ideological coherence of films during the war period leading to contradiction in the post-war period (for example in *films noir*), he maintains that ideological contradiction can only exist *despite* the narrative. As Polan explains the power and paranoia of his title, the power lies in the narrative structure's drive towards coherence, and the paranoia is 'all that threatens the unity of its logical framework.'<sup>59</sup> In other words ideological coherence is achieved 'only at the cost of repressions and distortions that come bursting out under moments of narrative stress.'<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> S. Neale, 'Aspects of Ideology and Narrative Form in the American War Film', *Screen*, 32:1 Spring 1991, p. 56.

<sup>58</sup> Neale, 1991, n 2, p. 37.

<sup>59</sup> D. Polan, *Power & Paranoia: History, Narrative, & the American Cinema, 1940-1950*, New York: Columbia UP, 1986. p. 12.

<sup>60</sup> Polan, 1986, p. 18.

This thesis will argue that it is not at moments of stress in narrative structure, but at moments of tension in narrative process that contradictions appear. Contradictions do not burst out despite the narrative, they appear because of the narrative. Furthermore, this does not mean that they inevitably become subordinated to narrative process or resolution. For example, Polan's reading of *Destination Tokyo* sees the disavowal of atheism by the 'doctor' (actually a pharmacist's mate) and the reunion of the couple at the end as an affirmation of the dominant discourse of faith, family and women's subordinate position. The troubling aspect is not the affirmation of a dominant discourse, but that atheism is what the film is *really* about. Polan claims here that 'the real threat is not the Japanese but the internal dissonances that atheism poses.'<sup>61</sup> While atheism is one of the narrative preoccupations of *Destination Tokyo*, the tone of Polan's claim privileges his critical reading as the correct one, which implies that contemporary audience would have 'misread' this film. A related concern is that critical privileging of the discourse on atheism reveals a tendency to make the film fit the theoretical model, rather than to use the model to read the film. This tendency is the product of the urge to apply theory that leads to the 'interpret[ation of] films as instantiations of theoretical categories and propositions.'<sup>62</sup> This tendency is rejected within this thesis because it leads to theoretical elucidation rather than appreciation of film in their contexts.

The underwater science fiction films included in this case study have been also addressed in discussions of the science-fiction genre. These films share concerns with science fiction such as the existence of alien or alternative social systems, the relation

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<sup>61</sup> See Polan, 1986, p. 61.

<sup>62</sup> D. Bordwell, 'Contemporary Film Studies and the Vicissitudes of Grand Theory', in D. Bordwell & N. Carroll, (Eds), *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1996, p. 24.

between humanity, technology and nature, and encounters with the other as threat or benign.<sup>63</sup>

The differences and similarities in science-fiction and submarine narratives have been identified in submarine novels, for example in the comparison between space travel and deep sea diving: ‘the three hour descent, like space travel in reverse, killing pressure in place of killing vacuum, black darkness instead of starlight, moonlight, earthlight.’<sup>64</sup>

These differences can also be emphasised in order to stress the similar threats in space and submarine adventure. *Around the World Under the Sea*, (A. Marton, US, 1966) for example, begins with the following quotation; ‘“The sea is a tough adversary - much more hostile an environment than space.” Astronaut M. Scott Carpenter.’

On a general level, submarine films have been discussed in relation to ‘saucer’ movies. For example, Meehan describes films such as *The Abyss*, *Deepstar Six* (S. S. Cunningham, US, 1988) and *Leviathan* (G. P. Cosmatos, US/It, 1989) as ‘Unidentified Submerged Object’<sup>65</sup> films. As types of saucer movie, these films are about the ‘first contact between humankind and alien civilisations...usually set in the present, on earth.’<sup>66</sup> The genre fluidity can be seen in Meehan’s castigation of *The Abyss* for being confusingly ‘an undersea adventure, a war movie and a science fiction thriller.’<sup>67</sup> It is, though, in the fluidity between undersea adventure and the war film in the encounter

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<sup>63</sup> For an account of these preoccupations in science fiction see A. Kuhn, (Ed), *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, London & New York: Verso, 1990, pp. 5-8.

<sup>64</sup> A. Fullerton, *Final Dive*, London: Little, Brown & Co., 1998, p. 31.

<sup>65</sup> P. Meehan, *Saucer Movies: A UFOlogical History of the Cinema*, London: Scarecrow Press, 1994, p. 252.

<sup>66</sup> Meehan, 1994, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Meehan, 1994, p. 252.

with the science fiction thriller that *The Abyss* is most interesting in terms of masculine and feminine identity, and conceptions of gender relations.

Lyle also considers *The Abyss* for its combination of motifs from the war film with science fiction. Here though, Lyle argues that the combination foregrounds the notion of fluid gender boundaries. However, because this is a Hollywood film with a romantic happy ending, Lyle concludes that this conception can only take place at the level of fantasy:

Perhaps it is only an unreal space which accommodates female empowerment. Once the characters leave the water, the utopian possibilities vanish. Lindsay's connection to nature, Bud's feminisation, and Coffey's powerlessness all required water and submersion.<sup>68</sup>

It will be argued here that these utopian possibilities do not vanish once the submarine environment has been left behind, and possibilities opened up by the text are not necessarily subordinated to narrative resolution. The subsequent chapters will consider submarine and terrestrial notions of masculinity and gender relations, particularly where those notions function as negotiations with hegemonic masculinity.

The thesis will also make use of discussions of gender and the science-fiction genre. For example, the alien encounter convention of science fiction has significant implications for debates about masculinity. Hutchings argues that

the mere imagining of an alien culture always involves an acknowledgement of Otherness and this in turn unsettles a certain complacency and racial self-

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<sup>68</sup> J. Lyle, 'Like a Fish Out of Water', *Jump Cut*, 38, June 1993, p. 13.

centeredness. Humanity's imaginary dominion, its sense of itself being at the centre of things, is wounded...<sup>69</sup>

Hutchings rightly accounts for national specificity and historical variation in the British alien invasion films of the 1950s and 1960s. The thesis will also then consider the implications for hegemonic masculinity of this unsettling and complacency. For example, is masculinity's hegemonic position in relation to femininity also threatened by encounters with the other?

Within these terms, the argument will establish the extent to which encounters with the other simply shore up dominant masculinity. Therefore the thesis will critique Creed's argument that the other is consistently feminine. Creed suggests that the maternal figure is maintained 'as *outside* the patriarchal family constellation.'<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, Creed argues that *Alien* is

an attempt to shore up the symbolic order by constructing the feminine as an imaginary 'other' which must be repressed and controlled in order to secure and protect the social order. Thus, the horror film stages and re-stages a constant repudiation of the maternal figure.<sup>71</sup>

Here, the monstrous is defined as feminised because of its state of lack (it signifies the threat of castration, therefore it lacks the phallus and is consequently outside of patriarchy and is necessarily the feminine) even when it is clearly masculine.<sup>72</sup> Within the submarine film encounters with the monstrous other are not simply repudiations of the maternal. Rather, those encounters have significant implications in a number of

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<sup>69</sup> P. Hutchings, '“We're the Martians Now”: British Invasion Fantasies of the 1950s and 1960s', in I. Q. Hunter, (Ed), *British Science Fiction Cinema*, London & New York, 1999, p. 35.

<sup>70</sup> B. Creed, 'Alien and the Monstrous-Feminine', in Kuhn, (Ed), 1990, p. 133.

<sup>71</sup> Creed, in Kuhn, (Ed), 1990, p. 140



ways in both the encounter with, and the responses to, both the alien and monstrous other. For example, through the negotiations between conflicts within masculinity in *The Abyss* and *20 000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and in humanity's causal relation with the monstrous through mutations of nature in *Leviathan* and *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City*. Responses to the monstrous other can also figure as a form of critique of ideology: military-capitalism in *Leviathan*, fascism in *Warlords of Atlantis*, and forms of masculinity in *Deepstar Six*. The thesis will maintain that the relation with the other should be seen as taking on different forms, and that these differences have implications for debates about masculinity within the submarine film. Although writing on the horror film, Jancovich explores the way in which responses to the monstrous other in *It Came From Beneath the Sea* raise the issue of changes in femininity as a problem for masculinity because 'it is male authority and its assumptions about women on which this film concentrates and which it criticises.'<sup>73</sup> Therefore femininity is not consistently identified with the monstrous, and in this case is identified with the correct response to the other: the scientific expertise and dedication of Professor Lesley Joyce (Faith Domergue) are instrumental in defeating the giant squid.

### **Issues in the Definition of Masculinity.**

Many of the recent debates about masculinity maintain that it is not something that can be defined only in terms of what it is. Masculinity has though been described through reference to characteristics, traits and forms of behaviour associated with 'masculinity'. This approach to definitions of masculinity has been common in sex-role theory;

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<sup>72</sup> For a critique of this point see M. Jancovich, 'Screen theory', in Hollows & Jancovich, (Eds), 1995, p. 147.

<sup>73</sup> M Jancovich, *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s*, Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 62

Franklin includes a table of male and female valued traits in his account of the meanings of masculinity.<sup>74</sup> These attributes are though contradictory, contestable and subject to change. Moreover, references to characteristics of masculinity depend as much upon what it is not as upon what it is. This can then be established as the arena where contemporaneous debates about what masculinity is, can, and should be, take place within contradictory and dynamic notions of masculinity.

In the early 1970s, representations of masculinity are seen as straightforward reflections of social assumptions about masculinity. With more than a nod to mass-culture theory, these are taken up by men in order to maintain their dominant position in relation to women.<sup>75</sup> Subsequently, the concept of masculinity is based on processes of exclusion. Here, that which it actively excludes and denigrates through the association of the 'non-masculine' with weakness and subordination defines the masculine.<sup>76</sup> Further work on masculinity addresses the concept in terms of repression rather than exclusion, with those 'non-masculine' traits being seen as inherent but repressed in masculinity, making it unstable and therefore always having to work to maintain its position of power. Both of these latter approaches can be seen as tendencies in the application of psychoanalysis to gender in film studies. The concept of masculinity based on repression tends to be seen in psychoanalytic approaches to gender influenced by post-structuralism, which focus on notions of difference, particularly sexual, in the

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<sup>74</sup> C. W. Franklin, *The Changing Definition of Masculinity*, New York and London: Plenum Press, 1984, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> See, for example, D. Spoto, 1978, or, J. Mellen, *Big Bad Wolves: Masculinity in the American Film*, London: Elm Tree Books, 1977.

<sup>76</sup> For an account of these debates in psychoanalysis S. Frosh, *Sexual Difference: Masculinity and Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 1994, particularly Chapters 2 & 5.

formation of gender identity.<sup>77</sup> This thesis will not address masculinity within the limits of these theoretical approaches, but will undertake a cultural studies analysis of masculinity in the submarine film. Furthermore, the aforementioned rejection of a linear model of development will enable the thesis to avoid a 'post-modernist slide towards the plural and the provisional'<sup>78</sup> found in certain debates 'about the cultural construction of gender.'<sup>79</sup> The argument will maintain that the plural and provisional is a factor within historical debates about masculinity, and not just a condition of post modernity. The above theoretical frameworks will be used in order to investigate the extent to which power relations are maintained through particular versions of masculinity, and through the processes of exclusion and repression. Therefore, masculinity is not seen as consistently working to exclude or repress the 'non-masculine'. In addition, masculinity is not necessarily made unstable by the failure to maintain the exclusory or repressive mechanisms upon which it is founded.

### **Film Studies and the Representation of Masculinity.**

The application of hegemony outlined above establishes the position of this thesis in relation to debates about masculinity in film studies. The argument will maintain that representations of masculinity cannot be seen as monolithic, nor do they consistently function in the interests of dominant ideology. Popular representations of masculinity do not necessarily exclude or repress elements identified as non-masculine, such as femininity, homosexuality, or hysteria. Most significantly, it cannot be assumed that these representations are simply imposed on a passive audience who replicate in

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<sup>77</sup> For example, J. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge, 1990, and *Bodies That Matter*, London: Routledge, 1993; and, K. Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, London: Routledge, 1992.

everyday life the power relations implied in the notion of hegemonic masculinity. While many of the assumptions criticised above have already become unfashionable, the account below will address the extent of their influence on the study of masculinity in film. The limited work on masculinity in the cinema during the 1970s tends to be dominated by descriptions of a masculine character and works explicitly with a mass culture theory model of text spectator relations. These studies are saturated with assumptions and generalisations; for example, Mellen's 'ideal man of our films'<sup>80</sup> is dominated by the 'John Wayne mystique'. Significantly, 'The Big Bad Wolf' is a 'stereotype of the self-controlled, invulnerable, stoical hero who justifies the image of unfeeling masculinity as a means of winning in a world that pounces on any sign of weakness.'<sup>81</sup> In historical terms, Mellen argues that only silent films and the films of the 1920s had a 'richly varied male image [which] all but disappeared from American films with the Depression.'<sup>82</sup> This perceived decline in representations of masculinity is linked to social decay, particularly since the 1950s. Mellen also argues that violence in particular functions to engender competition between men and the domination of women. There is at the heart of Mellen's argument a distaste for popular films and a hostility towards their audiences, for example, Bond's sexual prowess is claimed to be admired by young men 'because his partners, unlike theirs, were always so grateful for his favours.'<sup>83</sup> The overarching assumption in Mellen's decade by decade attack on this 'degenerate' masculinity in popular film is that the 1970s now burdened men with

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<sup>78</sup> P. Kirkham & J. Thumin, (Eds), *You Tarzan: Movies, Masculinity and Men*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993, p. 26.

<sup>79</sup> P. Kirkham & J. Thumin, (Eds), 1993, p. 11.

<sup>80</sup> Mellen, 1977, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Mellen, 1977, p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Mellen, 1977, p. 70.

<sup>83</sup> Mellen, 1977, p. 20.

'the distorting and cruel masculine mystique in the name of which our movies, no less our culture, have been demeaned.'<sup>84</sup>

Far less hostile, but no less descriptive of masculine types, is Spoto's description of American film masculinity through 'certain recognisable types in representative kinds of films.'<sup>85</sup> The types are identified as ordinary, charming, funny, sad, lawless, and strong which are seen as reflections of ideal types in particular periods. This of course leads to particular problems of generalisation and simplification, for example with regard to the 1950s: 'The kind of emotional flatness and antisociability that Glenn Ford projected so well really typified a whole era in American life.'<sup>86</sup> Representations of masculinity are thus components of a collective psyche and their relation with the social is simply as reflections, ideals, and types. Spoto shares Mellen's despair about contemporaneous cinema, seen in his lament that 'Eastwood's peculiar brand of manhood typifies something cold, aloof, and uncongenial in the screen image of today.'<sup>87</sup> Spoto though tends to ignore rather than despise the audience. Both of these works are problematic for these reasons, though some of the points they make in relation to specific films and significant issues will be addressed below. The argument will avoid this tendency to see representations of masculinity as determined by a model of social decay. Further examples, such as Klapp, maintain that mass communication, the cult of the celebrity, and moral ambiguity have all contributed to the deterioration of the hero.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Mellen, 1977, p. 345.

<sup>85</sup> Spoto, 1978, p. x.

<sup>86</sup> Spoto, 1977, p. 174.

<sup>87</sup> Spoto, 1977, p. 189.

Much of the 1980s film studies work on masculinity works within the terms of Mulvey's influential article, 'Visual pleasure and Narrative Cinema'<sup>89</sup>. For example, the editors of *Screening the Male* adapt the premises of Mulvey's claims about the male gaze at the woman's body, wherein voyeuristic and fetishistic looking function in the interests of patriarchy, to speculate about the eroticised male body. Their aim is to explore masculinity through

the issues that film theory has repeatedly linked to the feminine and not the masculine: spectacle, masochism, passivity, masquerade, and, most of all, the body as it signifies gendered, racial, class and generational differences.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the accusations of the a-historical and universal nature of psychoanalytic approaches to film studies, the editors stress that 'masculinity is an effect of culture - a construction, a performance, a masquerade - rather than a universal and unchanging essence.'<sup>91</sup> While in broad agreement with the emphasis on context, arguments in specific essays in this anthology will be dealt with in terms of specific issues raised through the textual analysis.

There are a number of problems with the binary oppositions inhering in Mulvey's claims about mainstream cinema, subjectivity and identification. These include the fixed polarity of masculine and feminine positions, absence of spectatorial resistance, homogenisation of mainstream cinema, no recognition of multiple and fractured identifications that cut across gender, absence of a female position of spectatorship, and

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<sup>88</sup> O. Klapp, *Heroes, Villains, and Fools: Reflections of the American Character*, San Diego: Aegis, 1972, pp. 150. (1st published New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1962.)

<sup>89</sup> L. Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16: 3, 1981, pp. 6-18. Examples of approaches dominated by Mulvey's claims can be found in Cohan & I. R. Hark, (Eds), 1993. Further examples will be addressed in the thesis where relevant

<sup>90</sup> Cohan & Hark, (Eds), 1993, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> Cohan & Hark, (Eds), 1993, p. 7.

the need to acknowledge the possibility of voyeuristic and fetishistic looks between male characters.<sup>92</sup> These will be addressed in relation to specific problems in the course of the thesis.

This thesis will address the issue of power in gender relations, though not strictly within the framework offered by psychoanalysis which approaches power in two specific ways. Firstly in terms of the Oedipal Complex as a basis for men's dominant position in relation to women, and secondly through the subject's entry into the symbolic as a process whereby those subjects take up positions in patriarchy. Easthope for example uses the 'psychoanalytic definition of masculinity', though without saying what this is, equates it with 'the cultural object of the phallus'.<sup>93</sup> This limitation on how masculinity is addressed enables Easthope to argue that 'masculinity is defined mainly in the way an individual deals with his femininity and his desire for other men.'<sup>94</sup> The argument here will be that, on the contrary, gender in the submarine film suggests fluidity between the masculine and the feminine, and that homosocial desire is a significant factor in representations of individuals and groups of men. Furthermore, these are not the only ways in which masculinity is defined, and these definitions do not necessarily work towards closing off the feminine or denying homosocial desire. Krutnik similarly uses the Oedipal model in order to argue for the primacy of the phallus in social identity:

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<sup>92</sup> For a discussion of these objections see M. Merck, 'Difference and its Discontents', *Screen*, 28:1, Winter 1987, particularly pages 4-6.

<sup>93</sup> A. Easthope, *What A Man's Gotta Do: The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>94</sup> Easthope, 1990, p. 6.

Men and women are set in alignment with the regimen of cultural authority which is structured through the determinacy of the phallus (as the central term which authorises identity and delimits the possibilities of desire.)<sup>95</sup>

While such a model may prove the relative dominant position of men, it fails to take account of the following significant factors. Submarine films negotiate complex relations of power *between* men as well as *with* women, and power relations need to be seen as dynamic rather than as simple restatements of patriarchy.

This thesis will also reject claims that narrative structure itself maintains men's dominant position. Dyer goes so far as to claim that, for the male spectator, moments of female vulnerability actually cause rape:

In the way such sequences are put together, we are encouraged to take up a traditional male role in relation to the woman, one that asserts our superiority and at the same time encourages us to feel the desire to rape and conquer.<sup>96</sup>

The problem with this position is that it assumes only non-narrative film can be progressive and works with a model of the audience as passive spectator. The assumption that narrative drive is somehow inherently masculine has been related to the Oedipal process through psychoanalysis.<sup>97</sup> Problems remain, however, if narrative closure figured through the restoration of the heterosexual couple stands simply for the retelling of the Oedipal narrative. For example, narrative cinema has been identified with

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<sup>95</sup> F. Krutnik, *In A Lonely Street: film noir, genre, masculinity*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 76.

<sup>96</sup> R. Dyer, 'Male Sexuality in the Media', in A. Metcalf & M. Humphries, (Eds), *The Sexuality of Men*, London: Pluto Press, 1985, p. 38.

<sup>97</sup> A sustained critique of what he calls 'subject-position theory' can be found in D. Bordwell, in Bordwell & Carroll (Eds), 1996, pp. 3-36. For further discussion of the problems of the application of psychoanalysis to popular film, see M. Jancovich, 'Screen Theory', in Hollows and Jancovich, (Eds), 1995, especially pages 144-47.



the Oedipal process in a way that fails to discern differences in narrative processes.<sup>98</sup> The problem with this form of totalising claim is not just the refusal to acknowledge differences but that it also reduces other significant narrative elements to functions of the Oedipal model. For example, while *The Abyss* may restore Bud (Ed Harris) and Lyndsey Brigman's (Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio) relationship, it proposes a dynamic model of gender identity and relations.

This rejection of psychoanalytic models is particularly important in relation to gender, for it has been argued that the means of representation is itself masculine: 'Furthermore, if mainstream film is a powerful regime of 'maleness' then it is as both representation and *means* of representation.'<sup>99</sup> O'Pray cites the shower scene in *Psycho*, where the frenzied editing duplicates the knife attack, as an example of this masculine means. He then goes on to claim that only independent, non-narrative cinema may avoid these tendencies. It has also been claimed that women's films can offer an alternative to

the very apparatus of Hollywood narrative film form, the way it creates a sense of narcissistic continuity or unity between male spectator and film spectacle, actualised a misogynistic social structure, whereby passive women became the sites upon which male power is validated. Hollywood form is inherently patriarchal.<sup>100</sup>

This thesis will, rather, address masculinity as the subject's negotiation with heterogeneous and contradictory social and cultural discourses. This in itself puts the conception of gender at odds with psychoanalysis, particularly when psychoanalysis is

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<sup>98</sup> J. Bergstrom, 'Alienation, Segmentation, Hypnosis: Interview with Raymond Bellour', *Camera Obscura*, 3/4, p. 93, quoted in T. Modleski, 'Film Theory's Detour', *Screen*, 23:5, December 1982, p. 73.

<sup>99</sup> M O'Pray, 'Movies, Mania and Masculinity' *Screen*, 23:5, Nov/Dec 1982, p. 63.

aligned with post structuralist notions of discourse. It has been argued that 'Psychoanalysis offers a universal theory of the *psychic* construction of gender identity on the basis of repression.'<sup>101</sup> The problem with this approach is that the norms of gender themselves come to be seen as repressive. One consequence of this is that gender and sexual 'deviance' are posited in themselves as resistant or liberational, with the oppression of mainstream cinema only being opposed by avant-garde film and subcultural expression.

Butler's work on gender as performance attempts to reconcile a Lacanian notion of the subject born into lack and always separated from the 'I' of enunciation with the subject's place in Foucaultian notions of discourse and power. Gender identity is seen as the effect of institutions, practices and discourses and it is through their language that the foundations of gender construction are laid. Mainstream film features here as one of the 'regulatory norms' which 'consolidate the heterosexual imperative'<sup>102</sup>. For example

*Victor/Victoria*, *Tootsie* and *Some Like It Hot* are narratives of homosexual anxiety, ...not subversive, they function as a ritualistic rehearsal for a heterosexual economy that must constantly police its own boundaries against the invasion of queerness....<sup>103</sup>

Butler insists that any disturbance to compulsory heterosexuality is located in 'what is excluded from the regulatory norm.'<sup>104</sup> (i.e. avant-garde film and drag balls.) This thesis

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<sup>100</sup> M. Ryan & D. Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University press, 1988, p. 139.

<sup>101</sup> C. Weedon, *Feminist practice and Post-Structuralist Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987, p. 43.

<sup>102</sup> J. Butler, 1993, p. 2. See also 'obligatory sexuality' in G. Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: notes on the "political economy" of sex', in R. Reiter, (Ed), *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975, pp. 157-210, and 'compulsory heterosexuality' in A. Rich, 'Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence', *Signs*, 5, 1980, pp. 631-60.

<sup>103</sup> Butler, 1993, p. 126.

<sup>104</sup> Butler, 1993, p. 12.

will contend that terms such as 'heterosexual imperative', 'compulsory heterosexuality' and 'the heterosexual matrix' are too general to reveal the full complexity of relations and practices within representations of heterosexual relationships. In addition, although the exclusion of homosexuality is seen as an important characteristic of definitions of masculinity, Butler's work is significant for what it says about sexualities rather than gender. Likewise Silverman claims that the 'dominant fiction' (of which popular film is a part) continually emphasises an exemplary masculinity through solicitation of 'our faith above all else in the unity of the family, and the adequacy of the male subject.'<sup>105</sup> If Silverman's argument makes claims about 'exemplary masculinity' by looking at masculinity at the margins, this thesis will maintain that, within this framework, it is the centre that needs to be interrogated in order to understand the meanings of that 'exemplary masculinity'. Within Silverman's model, which holds phallic masculinity as the exemplary masculinity, only deviant masculinities can be non-phallic masculinities. Because the non-phallic masculinities are repressed through the individual's acquisition of normal gender roles, the only possibility of resistance to the dominant fiction is in feminised masculinity or gay sexuality. Not only does this opposition mean that the norms of gender identity are inherently oppressive, but also by definition homosexuality is in itself liberational: this denies the operation of other forms of power relation that may cross-cut homosexual desire, culture and identification.

Masculinity as performance can be seen as bringing about 'two possible dangers for the posing or performing male: functioning as an object of desire he can easily become the object of ridicule, and within a heterosexist culture, accusations of homosexuality can be

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<sup>105</sup> K. Silverman, 1992, p. 16.

launched against him.'<sup>106</sup> Although this account seems to rather conflate the social performance of masculinity with an actor's performance of a role in a film, the notion of there being 'dangers' to masculinity extends the debate about 'masculinity in crisis'. Masculinity has been seen as being in crisis in two specific ways.

Firstly, in the proposition that masculinity is 'caught between fear of women and fear of homosexuality.'<sup>107</sup> Penley and Willis, for example, argue for a move away from the 'narrow' psychoanalytic structuring of masculinity around voyeurism and fetishism, and instead propose to examine masculinity in terms of 'feminine' hysteria, masochism and narcissism. The argument is based on a return to Freud and Lacan in which 'these psychological positions or states are descriptive of subjectivity [rather than just femininity] itself.'<sup>108</sup>

Problems with arguments such as Penley and Willis' that combine psychoanalysis and poststructuralism have been summarised by Middleton, who suggests that

According to sexual difference theory, gender is constructed within discourses and their work of representation, on the basis of the sexual difference that is only achieved through the Oedipal process and entry into language.<sup>109</sup>

This thesis will argue that this model is limited in its application because of its inability to account for differences in gender identity and also for the over emphasis on the *failure* of the Oedipal process as a basis for addressing tensions and contradictions in masculinity.

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<sup>106</sup> Cook & Bernink, 1999, p. 361.

<sup>107</sup> C. Penley and S. Willis, (Eds), *Male Trouble*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. viii.

<sup>108</sup> Penley & Willis, (Eds), 1993, p. ix.

The notion of masculinity in crisis has also been addressed in historical terms. Masculinity is no longer seen as universal, it has become fragmented and denaturalised. Here, old forms of masculinity have become discredited or simply worn out, and men are searching for replacements amongst too many alternatives to be certain of their identity. This can be related to arguments about the breakdown in men's dominant position in society, assaulted on the one hand by a crisis in capitalism that has eroded their breadwinner status<sup>110</sup> and by the attacks from feminism, gay rights and anti-racism on the privileges dominance brings. Chapman and Rutherford summarise these changes and their consequences for masculinity, which should be seen as particularly significant for hegemonic masculinity:

...social and economic changes of the past two decades are beginning to call masculinity into question. ...For men who were promised recognition and a secure place in the world, there lies ahead a frightening prospect: that masculinity will be shorn of its hierarchical power and will become simply one identity among others.<sup>111</sup>

It is possible, though, to identify almost any two decades of social and economic change that have had effects on gender commensurate with the 1970s and 1980s.

The limited discussions of masculinity in the war film are particularly significant for this thesis, though problems with the assumption that war films are chiefly about

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<sup>109</sup> Middleton, 1992, p. 132.

<sup>110</sup> See for example B. Ehrenreich, 'The Decline of Patriarchy', in Berger, Wallis & Watson, (Eds), *Constructing Masculinity*, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 284-290, which is a distillation of the arguments in B. Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, London: Pluto, 1983.

<sup>111</sup> R. Chapman and J. Rutherford, 'The Forward March of Men Halted', in R. Chapman and J. Rutherford, (Eds), *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988, p. 11.

'remasculinisation' will be discussed below. Jeffords locates the films of the Vietnam War in the social context of the 1970s and 1980s in order to argue that these films are patriarchy's attempt to maintain its dominance within these changed circumstances, and that

The primary mechanism for this renegotiation of patriarchal relation is through "remasculinisation", a revival of the images, abilities, and evaluations of men and masculinity in dominant U.S. culture.<sup>112</sup>

This remasculinisation, for Jeffords, works through 'the exclusion of women and the feminine' and the proposal that 'men are not significantly different from each other...'<sup>113</sup>. Jeffords claims that *Full Metal Jacket* (S. Kubrick, US, 1987) 'reinstates a clarified rejection of the feminine and restitution of the masculine.'<sup>114</sup>, and that films about the Vietnam War are really about gender relations. Ultimately, Jeffords maintains that the film is 'a story of a gendered opposition between masculine and feminine, a battle that the masculine must win in order to survive the war.'<sup>115</sup> While gender may be a significant aspect in Vietnam War films, it is not sufficient to see the meaning of the film as only a restatement of oppositions between masculinity and femininity. The argument here will show that within the concept of hegemony, the submarine film can be read as negotiating the terms of any opposition and its instability, rather than as a reinforcement of those terms.

Tasker demonstrates that the study of masculinity in film studies has not been confined to textual analysis that serves to bolster theoretical claims influenced by

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<sup>112</sup> S. Jeffords, *The Remasculinisation of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, p. xii.

<sup>113</sup> Jeffords, 1989, p. 168.

<sup>114</sup> Jeffords, 1993, p. 173.

psychoanalysis. Her reading of *Die Hard* (J. McTiernan, US, 1988) shows how theoretical sophistication can be allied with a cultural studies approach that utilises genre awareness, audience empathy and intertextual understanding. Her sensitivity to the conventions of the genre allows for the recognition that 'the body of the hero is the sole space that is safe, and that even this space is constantly under attack'<sup>116</sup>. In this way, the body of the action hero can be read as a place where anxieties over masculinity in the 1980s are negotiated, rather than as simply the reassertion of a particular form of masculinity identified both with a backlash against feminism and political and social conservatism. Tasker concludes that

Action movies are not then, simply 'dumb movies for dumb people', but rich and ambiguous texts that 'though rarely address[ing] the specificity of particular struggles, ...nonetheless powerfully dramatise the fact of struggle.'<sup>117</sup>

The argument here is one that is more closely aligned with this thesis than those above.

The notion of crisis in studies of masculinity has also been seen as endemic to subjectivity itself, as intrinsically bound up with power relations in sexual difference, and as a product of historical changes brought about by modernity. Popular film is one of the arenas in which this crisis manifests itself, and in some ways is the cause of that crisis. Debates about masculinity in men's studies implicitly link 'crisis' with 'representations' of masculinity. Horrocks argues not only is masculinity *in* crisis but that *it is a crisis* for men today. In common with much work in the men's movement<sup>118</sup>,

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<sup>115</sup>Jeffords, 1993, p. 174.

<sup>116</sup> Tasker, 1993, p. 65.

<sup>117</sup> Tasker, 1993, p. 166.

<sup>118</sup> For an extensive bibliography see D. Ford & J. Hearn, *Studying Men and Masculinity: A Sourcebook of Literature and Materials*, Bradford: Working with Men/University of Bradford, 1988, pp.38-40.

it is the 'inherited forms of masculinity'<sup>119</sup> particularly the repression of emotion, that oppress men which is a cause of the crisis. Horrocks identifies popular film as playing a part in that crisis ('Superman is the fantasised compensatory image for the man who feels inadequate.'<sup>120</sup>) because 'men have overdeveloped the qualities of being assertive, tough, hardworking, self reliant and so on.'<sup>121</sup> This has resulted in repressed anxiety and emotion. Other tendencies in the men's movement maintain, on the other hand, that the crisis in masculinity is due to traditional, particularly mythic forms of masculinity becoming diluted by both popular cultural heroes and feminism.<sup>122</sup>

This emphasis on masculinity in crisis needs to be related to the linear historical model of masculinity critiqued above. As Grievson expresses his reservations concerning 'masculinity in crisis'

crisis exists wherever you want to look for it, stretching across (at least) the history of narrative cinema. When is masculinity not a question? How does one date the moment it enters the realm of the questionable? Where is the moment of stability from which variously related moment of crisis deviates?<sup>123</sup>

This discussion of masculinity as the articulation of cultural and social ideologies and anxieties about gender relations will also be conducted with *critical* reference to the postmodernist notion that masculinity is no longer a meaningful term for classification and identification. MacInnes claims that masculinity does not exist because, capitalism, which brought it in to being has itself made the category unstable. He therefore concludes that there is no natural relation between sex and gender, and that the social

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<sup>119</sup> V. Siedler, (Ed), *The Achilles Heel Reader*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. xi.

<sup>120</sup> R. Horrocks, *Masculinity in Crisis*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994, p. 145.

<sup>121</sup> Horrocks, 1994, p. 143.

<sup>122</sup> R. Bly, *Iron John*, Shaftsbury: Element, 1991.



conditions (patriarchal capitalism<sup>124</sup>) that constructed gender differently in order to establish men's dominance of the public domain have been replaced by the 'meretricious contract' lead market-logic of modernity. Being a biological male cannot necessarily confer masculinity, and masculinity is itself contradictory and available to the female sex. This is why concepts of masculinity, femininity and gender are confused and confusing: 'If we use them to describe properties of persons, masculinity, femininity, and gender relations describe something that cannot logically exist.'<sup>125</sup> Although MacInnes maintains that masculinity therefore does not exist, he also argues that 'masculinity exists only as various ideologies or fantasies, about what men *should* be like, which men and women develop to make sense of their lives.'<sup>126</sup> The argument here will maintain that, on the contrary, the concept of masculinity should not be dismissed precisely *because* it exists in significant ways in these ideologies and fantasies. MacInnes disregards these ideologies and fantasies because they are 'sufficiently contradictory to make living them out in any consistent way impossible.'<sup>127</sup>

### **Issues in Historicising Masculinity.**

Where histories of masculinity are insufficient is in the generality of their historical typologies: masculinity is assigned particular definitions and traits according to broad sweeps of economic and social change.<sup>128</sup> Pleck and Pleck argue that masculinity had different meanings determined by five historical epochs: the Agrarian Patriarchal Period,

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<sup>123</sup> L. Grievson, 'Review Article', *Screen*, 35:4, Winter 1994, p. 405.

<sup>124</sup> See J. MacInnes, *The End of Masculinity*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998, p. 11.

<sup>125</sup> MacInnes, 1998, p. 15.

<sup>126</sup> MacInnes, 1998, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> MacInnes, 1998, p. 15.

<sup>128</sup> E. Pleck & J. Pleck, *The American Man*, New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1980.

1630-1820; the Commercial Period, 1820-186, the Strenuous Life Period, 1861-1919; the Companionate providing Period, 1920-1965; and 'after 1965'. This approach addresses masculinity in terms of a linear developmental model from straightforward traditional to complex modern. Modern masculinity is more complex because it is seen in relation to, and frequently challenged by feminism, civil rights, gay activism, post industrialism, modernity and post modernity. However, although a list of tensions in agrarian masculinity may be speculative, masculinity could here be seen in similar relations with superstition, nature, seasons, wild animals, the church, violent attack, feudalism, and competing family and community structures. Connell argues that

The history of masculinity, it should be abundantly clear, is not linear. There is no master line of development to which all else is subordinate, no simple shift from 'traditional' to 'modern'.<sup>129</sup>

However, as certain studies show, problems with periodisation and generality need not forestall the consideration of underlying historical factors within changes and continuities in concepts of masculinity. As Stearns argues, industrialisation initiated the disintegration of patriarchal forms of masculinity and the advent of certain changes, and that '...it was the impact of this massive shift in economic structure that generated the principal watershed between traditional masculinity and contemporary forms.<sup>130</sup> Stearns' concept of modernity is unusually long in its time scale, starting as it does with industrialisation (1780s in Britain, 1820s in the US/Western Europe), and can hardly begin to address the range, or the degree of change in definitions of masculinity within this period. Brod, for example, characterises masculinity in industrial culture as the 'real man' version of masculinity, which is defined as a] wage earner/provider; b] power over

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<sup>129</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 198.

family; and c] heterosexual - which meant domination of women and the bullying of the homosexual. Post-industrial culture is seen as undercutting these terms in which masculinity is defined.<sup>131</sup> This schematic can neither account for contradiction or the ebb and flow in changes in masculinity, and renders masculinity in a deterministic relation with industrialisation.

Connell's summary history of masculinity identifies the long century of 1450 to 1650 as the period in which the North American/Western European concept of a gender order was formed.<sup>132</sup> From this period, the hegemony of gentry masculinity, defined through land ownership and integrated within state, judicial and military institutions along with domestic authority over women, was challenged by three further developments. These were challenges to gender order by suffragettes, decline in landowner's power under industrial capitalism, and the changing power relations of Empire resulting in wars against fascism and massive population shifts. In what Connell calls 'the present moment' of contemporary masculinity, further change has arisen due to challenges to men's privileges from feminism and the existence of an alternative to hegemonic heterosexuality in gay and lesbian practices.<sup>133</sup> While this sparse historical framework will serve to address the notion of change in definitions of masculinity, problems remain. For example, Connell claims that 'Masculinity, it would follow, is the social elaboration of the biological function of fatherhood.'<sup>134</sup> However, practices of fatherhood can include authoritarian and liberal versions under the single title father.

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<sup>130</sup> P. Stearns, *Be A Man! Male in Modern Society*, New York & London: Holmes & Meier, 1990, p. 49.

<sup>131</sup> See, H. Brod, (Ed), *The Making of Masculinities*, Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1987, p. xii.

<sup>132</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 186.

<sup>133</sup> See Connell, 1995, pp. 187-202.

<sup>134</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 52.

The most significant qualification is a historical one, for example in the very different concepts of fatherhood in the 1980s and the 1990s.<sup>135</sup>

### **The Strategy for Addressing Masculinity in Popular Film**

The terms within which masculinity has been addressed in the studies outlined above can be seen as indicative of tendencies in different approaches to popular film. As such, the critique of the arguments in those studies establishes a particular position within the study of popular film. The strategy of this section is to account for debates in cultural studies around audience and popular film, to relate those debates to gender, and then to propose ways in which particular, predominantly psychoanalytic, models of film, audience and gender relations need to be interrogated. This critique will then be related back to the issues raised by cultural studies in order to specify reading strategies for the analysis of popular film to be undertaken within this thesis.

However, the argument will also maintain the specificity of the film's narrative when its meaning is addressed. In other words, films

may be profitably understood in relation to their context of production and dissemination, it is also recognised that a film has its own specificity (and semiotic productivity) that cannot be reduced to context.<sup>136</sup>

This is not a return to semiotic production in terms of structuralist notions of texts producing meaning and positioning the reader, but is an argument for sensitivity to narrative tensions and genre conventions.

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<sup>135</sup> Implicit in the argument of Jeffords in 'Can Masculinity be Terminated', in Cohan & Hark, (Eds), 1993, pp. 245-262.

Following the forms of address evident in cultural studies the submarine film can be seen in terms of hegemony as one of those forms of popular culture which are 'a site of struggle between groups, rather than the property or expression of any specific group's interests.'<sup>137</sup> If there is to be an *a priori* assumption of this thesis it is in the way popular films should be addressed. Popular films cannot be lumped together as undifferentiated versions of dominant ideology.<sup>138</sup> Babington and Evans argue that

It will be clear also that our view of Hollywood is not one of a simply monolithic, oppressive and conservative force, but of a multi-levelled and contradictory phenomenon capable of producing from within its contradictions works of art that are worth our constructive as well as deconstructive meditation.<sup>139</sup>

The emphasis is then on the texts, with readings of the representations of masculinity being related to contemporary and contemporaneous debates about masculinity. The argument will therefore maintain that the films should be read as indicative of tensions within masculinity, rather than as reflections of masculinity in particular eras. It has been claimed that

academic film criticism has often placed an inordinate emphasis on the operations of narrative, hence the significance often given to the moment of narrative resolution as a way to decode the politics of a given text.<sup>140</sup>

In the light of the above critique the emphasis will be on narrative processes rather than on resolution. This will allow for contradiction and tensions in the texts to be addressed

<sup>136</sup> J. Hill, *British Cinema in the 1980s: Issues and Themes*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> A. Willis, 'Cultural Studies and Popular Film', in Hollows and Jancovich, (Eds), *Approaches to Popular Film*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 174.

<sup>138</sup> Found in for example the assumed unification of formal and thematic paradigms that worked towards the 'prevailing ideology' in R. Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930 - 1980*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985. The quote is from page 13.

<sup>139</sup> Babington & Evans, 1989, p. vi.

<sup>140</sup> Y. Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 6.

for their narrative significance, and not simply as oppositions foreclosed by the narrative resolution. In this way, the reading strategy itself complies with the central notion of the thesis, that hegemony is fundamental to our understanding of film and masculinity. In contrast to this emphasis on narrative resolution,<sup>141</sup> Hill has argued that:

In the processes, there is always the possibility that the problem, force or threat which has set the plot in motion may defy or outrun the movement towards a resolution.<sup>142</sup>

This defiance is part of the narrative process and should be seen in relation to potential audience readings characterised by heterogeneity and even contradiction. The notion that defiance of the movement towards the resolution is *despite* the narrative will be rejected. This thesis will argue that apparently dissonant meanings can remain salient. This position can be seen in models of text/audience relations derived from cultural studies<sup>143</sup>. Here, for example, Mayne<sup>144</sup> has suggested meanings are dependent on conflicting modes of gender and the spectator's position in relation to dominant ideology, while Mercer stresses that texts are multiaccental and polyvalent.<sup>145</sup> In this way hegemony can be related to narrative process: possibilities opened up but not necessarily closed off by narrative resolution correspond to concessions made to subordinate groups.

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<sup>141</sup> See above critique of Polan, 1986 and Neale, 1991.

<sup>142</sup> J. Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism*, London: BFI, 1986, p. 62.

<sup>143</sup> Influenced by S. Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding' in S. Hall et al (Eds), *Culture, Media Language*, London: Unwin Hyman, 1980, pp. 128-138; and D. Morley, *The Nationwide Audience*, London: BFI, 1980. For a discussion of trends and issues in audience ethnomethodologies see R. Brunt, 'Engaging with the Popular: Audiences for Mass Culture and What to Say about Them', in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson & P. Treichler, (Eds), *Cultural Studies*, London & New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 69-80.

<sup>144</sup> J. Mayne, *Cinema and Spectatorship*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 145.

<sup>145</sup> K. Mercer, 1994, p. 202.

This has implications for masculinity in the submarine film. For example, the war film and its representation of the military can be seen as one of those institutions instrumental in patriarchy. It may be inferred that men watching this masculine genre will therefore buy into a validation of the preferred masculinity of the military and patriarchy. However, given the arguments concerning gender, race and marginality above, male spectators must be seen in terms of similar intersections of conflicting modes. While power relations are significant terms within Mayne's argument concerning black and female audiences, power relations also obtain in men's lives, particularly in relation to the institutions represented within the war film. These points are central to the argument about masculinity pursued in this thesis.

Popular films are, then, one of those representational forms that are the 'articulation (often the fully available articulation) of structures of feeling which as living processes are much more widely experienced.'<sup>146</sup> This implication of films in the materiel culture of their time is dependent on recognising that film makers are engaged in the same cultural debates and anxieties that inform an audience's readings of the film. In other words

the makers of films are touched by the same tensions and fantasies as everyone else, and their profits are usually dependent on their ability to guess or divine popular feelings and trends.<sup>147</sup>

Readings of the films will then avoid the tendency identified in psychoanalysis which

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<sup>146</sup> R. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 133.

<sup>147</sup> L. Quart & A. Auster, *American Film and Society Since 1945*, London: Macmillan, 1984, p. 5.

leads to and requires esoteric readings of the texts it seeks to analyse, readings which definitionally could not be part of any audience's conscious interpretative apparatus.<sup>148</sup>

One tendency of this approach is to maintain a hierarchy of readings where the audience's possible responses to a film are regarded as both erroneous and inferior. The consequences of this are that the audience tends to be conceptualised as one of two mythic viewers of mass culture. Here, 'on the right, an unruly mob endangers the privileges and property of the power structure; on the left, a narcotised mass drugged into an unthinking embrace of inimical values that are solely in the interests of the power structure.'<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, as Hall has sharply observed in relation to certain ideological approaches to popular forms;

Yet it is a fact that, though there are people willing enough to deploy the false consciousness explanation to account for the illusory behaviour of others, there are very few who are ever willing to own up that *they* are themselves living in false consciousness.<sup>150</sup>

Another problem of this approach is that it tends, as Tudor goes on to elaborate, to 'homogenise' audiences into one undifferentiated mass, and fails to take account of difference and changes in readings. As Kramer has argued in relation to the potentially progressive forms of gender identification in *ET* (S. Spielberg, US, 1982) and *The Lion King* (R. Allers/R. Minkoff, US, 1994);

If screen representations can be seen in terms of emotional realism rather than fantasy, it is also possible to approach the social and psychological experiences of

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<sup>148</sup> Tudor, 1989, p. 3.

<sup>149</sup> W. Paul, *Laughing Screaming: Modern Hollywood Horror & Comedy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 14.



audiences through observation rather than psychoanalytic theoretization. This allows, among other things, for a far less deterministic view of the role of gender in the shaping of audience responses.<sup>151</sup>

The aim of this thesis will then be to address masculinity through the relevant issues in terms of their significance in the films. This discussion will then be related to masculinity debates in order to account for the relationship between the issues and the assumptions about masculinity. Therefore, issues in the films will determine the structure of the chapters, though it will be apparent that this structure relates to issues in masculinity debates. Chapter Two will therefore account for patterns, developments and changes within the submarine and underwater adventure film. Subsequent chapters will account for masculinity within those parameters in terms of: nature, the body, relationships, rationality, vision, ideological processes, and space. Conclusions will be drawn in the course of the argument and related to the notion of hegemonic masculinity. This will enable the thesis to account for masculinity in a neglected area of film studies.

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<sup>150</sup> S. Hall, 'The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism among the theorists', in C. Nelson, & L. Grossberg, (Eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, London: Macmillan, 1988, p. 44.

<sup>151</sup> P. Kramer, 'Would you take your child to see this film? The cultural and social work of the family-adventure movie'. in S. Neale & M. Smith, (Eds), *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 299.

## 2] Submarine fictions.

This chapter is concerned with navigating the contours of the submarine film in terms of changes and continuities. As suggested in chapter one, the contested collective idea of the submarine genre is a workable definition recognisable to producers and consumers alike. This chapter will use Altman's recent proposals concerning the understanding of genre in order to support an approach that works with the notions of genre hybridity, fluidity and usability. In other words, rather than worrying over exactly what it is that makes a film belong to one genre rather than another,<sup>1</sup> this chapter will set out the features and changes various sub genres have in common.

Everyone knows what a submarine film is, and most people can probably name one or two 'classics'. Audiences can recognise, or reject, a submarine film on the basis of what they expect it to look and sound like. Although not determined by iconography alone, the repertoire of the submarine film can be derived from visual and aural iconography, as well as setting and themes. Visual icons include the periscope in the water, the tell-tale tracks of a torpedo, falling depth charges, in rushing water, bulk-head doors, and various equipment indicating the operation of a submarine, including the depth gauge, diving planes and the periscope itself. Aural icons include the diving alarm, the ping of the sonar, escaping air pressure, depth charge explosions, the creaking and groaning of the hull, and various commands including; 'Dive! Dive!' 'All ahead full', 'Up Periscope', and 'Torpedo running hot, straight and normal.' These motifs occur most often in sub war films and some sub sci-fi films. They have also appeared though in the Bond and Indiana Jones series, and these are clearly not submarine films. The recognisable motifs

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<sup>1</sup> See S. Neale, *Genre*, London: BFI, 1980, pp. 5-6.

and iconography from the genre have to be seen in conjunction with narrative preoccupation, combined with a setting that has to be significant in terms of narrative. Again, problems may be encountered in this claim. *City Beneath the Sea* (I. Allen, US, 1970) takes place on the ocean floor but is really an action sci-fi film, which adds a bullion robbery and an attempt to hold the world to ransom to its narrative confusion. *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City* (J. Hill, UK, 1969) and *Warlords of Atlantis* (K. Connor, UK/US, 1978) both figure living underwater as a conflict between different social systems, though they emphasise notions of an undersea world as utopia in different ways. The themes of the submarine and undersea world film are organised around being underwater and the consequent threats and challenges that arise. Thus being underwater in itself provokes contradictory needs, desires and power structures, and can therefore function as both danger and sanctuary. The narrative is driven by this contradictory function of the submarine world, and by the conflicts arising out of antagonistic uses and perceptions of that world. Different types of submarine film emphasise those conflicts in varying ways. For example, in terms of combat between opposing terrestrial forces in the war film; through encounters with the other in the underwater science fiction film; and in contradictions between different social structures in lost civilisation narratives. Altman argues that genres are seen as being established through the use of semantic elements in combination with their syntactical arrangement. However, as is shown in the critical and audience disagreements over classification below, the way genres are used and understood by producers and consumers alike also needs to be seen, in Altman's terms, as a pragmatic process:

Instead of a word or category capable of clear and stable definition (the goal of previous genre theorists), genre has here been presented as a multivalent term multiply and variously valorised by diverse user groups.<sup>2</sup>

This suggestion allows the thesis to step aside from the neurosis of genre classification and instead work within the pragmatic understanding of genre held by consumers and producers, however contradictory that may. For example, in anecdotal discussions fans have suggested that *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (R. Fleischer, US, 1954) is not a submarine film. The film is rejected because submarine films are seen as American films from the 1940s and 1950s about WWII, for example *Destination Tokyo* (D. Daves, US, 1943) or *Run Silent Run Deep* (R. Wise, US, 1958). Critical definitions of submarine films turn out to be as imprecise when applied to different examples. If, as Basinger argues, 'Staying underwater is also a condition of the submarine film'<sup>3</sup> then this could include sunken treasure films such as *The Deep* (P. Yates, US/UK, 1977) or *Underwater!* (J. Sturges, US, 1955). However, staying underwater *can* be seen in some films as a preoccupation of the narrative, and for this reason, amongst others outlined below, the thesis will discuss the submarine and underwater adventure films identified in this case study.

This may be seen as not without difficulty, as consultations of any definitive list will show. In the *Time Out Film Guide*, for example, *The Abyss* features in both the list of submarine films and undersea world films.<sup>4</sup> *Video Hound* includes *The Inside Man* (T. Clegg, Sweden, 1984) as a submarine film, but no submarine activity takes place in this

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<sup>2</sup> Altman, 1999, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> J. Basinger, *The World War II Combat Film: Anatomy of a Genre*, New York: Columbia UP, 1986, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> J. Pym, (Ed), *Time Out Film Guide*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997, pp. 1080 & 1083.

thriller.<sup>5</sup> Within these disagreements this thesis will assume the submarine film to be one in which the condition of staying under water is of major significance in the narrative. This would allow for the inclusion of *Hell and High Water* (S. Fuller, US, 1954) but not *Ice Station Zebra* (J. Sturges, US, 1968), where submarine action quickly gives way to conflicts on the ice.

This approach is not based on the need to establish staying underwater as essence or central myth of all submarine film. In other words, *Ice Station Zebra* is better understood as a cold war conspiracy thriller rather than as a submarine film. This position is different to that of earlier approaches to genre, where the structuralist influence can be seen in the need to establish fixed notions of genre conventions.<sup>6</sup> Instead of working towards identifying generic structure<sup>7</sup> or mythic function<sup>8</sup>, this thesis will proceed from the collective idea to discuss individual films in relation to genre. This can be seen as working within the mode of address suggested by Hutchings' analysis of the position of women in horror, which he suggests 'can, however, only be determined through an analysis of specific films which does not presuppose the genre having fixed, immutable qualities.'<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Tasker has argued that to see popular

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<sup>5</sup> M. Connors and J. Craddock, (Eds), *Video Hound's Golden Movie Retriever*, Detroit: Visible Ink, 2000, p. 1165.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, J. Palmer, *Thrillers: Genesis and Structure of a Popular Genre*, London: Edward Arnold, 1978. Many of the problems in Palmer's approach have been accounted for in M. Rubin, *Thrillers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, particularly pages 11-13, and 259-268. See also: T. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking and the Studio System*, New York: Random House, 1981; S. Solomon, *Beyond Formula: American Film Genres*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976; B. Klinger, ' "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism" Revisited: The Progressive Genre', in B. K. Grant, (Ed), 1995, pp. 74-90, and R. Wood, 'Ideology, Genre, Auteur', in B. K. Grant, (Ed), 1995, pp. 59-73.

<sup>7</sup> See for example, W. Wright, *Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

<sup>8</sup> See for example, J. G. Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique*, Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970.

<sup>9</sup> P. Hutchings, *Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 18.

genres only in terms of their repetition of conventions is to look through an inappropriate framework:

The structural analysis of narrative reveals how the vast number of stories which are told in myth and popular culture can ultimately be reduced to a small number of narrative elements.<sup>10</sup>

This approach tells us little about those narratives other than that they can be reduced to a small number of common elements.

Gallagher provides a perceptive critique of the tendencies in these forms of genre study, and queries whether 'comparisons, classifications, contrasts may aid us, but is not their illumination ultimately peripheral to the work itself?'<sup>11</sup> Gallagher is particularly concerned with the subordination of the film experience to narrative structure in genre study. As the introduction has established, it is through narrative process rather than narrative structure that a film means for the spectator.<sup>12</sup> In Gallagher's terms, a film comes into being through the apprehension of character and the sensuousness of the visual medium. By working within these terms, this thesis will show how it is the experience of the films as stories of submarine conflict and adventure that is paramount.

The points that have proved useful for the understanding of submarine films in this thesis, with the exception of Altman, tend to be more common in the study of specific genres rather than in the study of the notion of genre itself. The limitation of studies that

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<sup>10</sup> Tasker, 1993, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> Gallagher, in B. K. Grant, (Ed), 1995, p. 257.

<sup>12</sup> Neale emphasises process in narrative, but in terms of overall similarities in narrative structure. See Neale, 1980, pp. 25-30.

address the notion of genre rather than specific genres has been observed by Grant, who identifies the differences in the following terms:

Genre criticism has concentrated primarily on the former aspect, enumerating the conventions, iconography, plots themes, and characters that distinguish the various genres and carry their various mythic meanings. However, it would seem impossible to appreciate in any meaningful way individual film genres without considering the special manner in which we experience them.<sup>13</sup>

This highlights the importance of how the audience experiences a genre in critical understandings of their meanings. Shorn of value judgments about realism, this notion relates to the submarine film in that for the vast majority of people, the submarine film will be their only experience of a submarine. Therefore, the meanings attached to the conventions of the submarine film derive from their deployment in the narrative process, though oppositional readings are always possible.

If genre criticism in terms of narrative structure is deemed too general, then what model for the identification of narrative types and patterns of change can be seen as useful for the argument? One possibility may be Tudor's model where he establishes a history of patterns in the horror film. Tudor aims to map the development of a genre, and this chapter will retain his emphasis on genre in terms of narrative in order to establish patterns and changes in the submarine sub-genres. Tudor argues that when people are asked about a film they have just seen, they mainly respond by recounting what happened, telling the story as a narrative of events. He makes the important observation that

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<sup>13</sup> B. K. Grant, 'Experience and Meaning in Genre Films', in B. K. Grant, (Ed), 1995, p. 115.

our routine concern with plot reflects the fact that, in most forms of popular cinema, narrative is the primary channel through which aesthetic experience is filtered.<sup>14</sup>

The importance of this claim is that the forms of narrative analysis discussed in the introduction disparage this 'primary' experience as one that fails to engage with the true meaning of the text. This is either because it is suggested that the true meaning lies only in the narrative gaps, or that we should be looking at the formal elements of the visual field. An audience's primary experience is also dismissed as it simply works to maintain dominant ideology through narrative closure and resolution. Significantly, Tudor argues that 'it is the taken-for-granted and non-esoteric features of the genre-language that are fundamental to that understanding.'<sup>15</sup> Mapping narrative patterns in the submarine film enables an understanding of the ways audiences can come to recognise, understand and give meaning to the submarine film.

Variations in submarine films can be seen in relation to the broad shifts in historical context, though these do not necessarily determine the type of submarine film produced in specific eras. Wartime films need to be related to the 'present emergency' established by Doherty<sup>16</sup>, though contradictions have here been identified.<sup>17</sup> The 1950s needs to be seen in terms of the trauma posed by World War II, fears of cold war escalation, and also tensions between individualism and conformity.<sup>18</sup> Problems with this

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<sup>14</sup> Tudor, 1989 p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> Tudor, 1989, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Doherty, 1993, pp. 36-59.

<sup>17</sup> Polan, 1986, pp. 9-18.

<sup>18</sup> N. Sayre, *Running Time: The Films of the Cold War*, New York: Dial Press, 1980. For a critique of Sayre's position see E. Sikov, *Laughing Hysterically*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 4. Further discussions of the 1950s in these terms can be found in a reappraisal of P. Biskind, *Seeing is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties*, London: Pluto, 1983, in M Jancovich, 1996, pp. 14-49.



characterisation of the 1950s have been suggested by Lears, who argues that fears over conformity were often expressed as a matter of taste, for example in the way that spiritual poverty was equated with mass consumption.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Lears argues that the notion of America as homogeneous and conformist needs to include contradiction within the dominant group and resistance and subversion by black and white working class. The 1960s have been seen as characterised by responses to the Vietnam War, the demands of feminism, youth culture and civil rights.<sup>20</sup> The 1970s have been described as beset by economic vulnerabilities and crises of hegemony:

In the wake of the 1973 oil embargo, for example, the cycles of disaster, horror and science fiction movies all appeared to reflect the American audience's sudden awareness of its vulnerability to 'the other'.<sup>21</sup>

Following this sense of crisis the 1980s have been seen as a backlash and the restoration of forms of authority undermined since the 1960s.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, accounts of cinema in the 1980s and 1990s have seen the subject as decentred within post-modernity, with consequent impacts on aesthetic style and social effect.<sup>23</sup> It is also worth bearing in mind a note of caution concerning establishing historical context in terms of decade long epochs: for example, Lears argues that the notion of conformity prevalent in the 1950s has its origins in the 1930s.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the youth and counter cultural rebellions associated with the 1960s can be confined to the end of that decade. However, a son rebelling against paternal authority has its precedents in 1950s culture, for example *East*

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<sup>19</sup> J. Lears, 'A Matter of Taste: Corporate Cultural Hegemony in a Mass-Consumption Society', in L. May, (Ed), *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, pp. 38-57, particularly page 44.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, L. Quart and A. Auster, *American Film and Society Since 1945*, Westport: Praeger, 1991 (2nd edition), pp. 71-77.

<sup>21</sup> Paul, 1994, p. 364.

<sup>22</sup> Ryan and Kellner, 1988, pp. 11-12.

<sup>23</sup> See A. Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 157-177.

of *Eden* (E. Kazan, US, 1955) and a considerable degree of overlap with the 1970s must be acknowledged.<sup>25</sup>

This account of submarine fictions in terms of evolution and consistencies will bear in mind recent critical reservations concerning permanence and coherence as objectives in genre criticism. As Altman argues

Traditionally, by stressing coincident structures and concerns, genre criticism has labored mightily to conceal or conquer difference and disagreement: the principle observed here instead foregrounds discrepancies in order to explain what makes difference possible.<sup>26</sup>

This does not continue debates about genre classification, but indicates that a working notion of the submarine genre needs to incorporate differences, differences that are readily contained within popular understandings of the genre. Submarine films fall readily into four distinct types (outlined below), which are characterised by their underwater setting and thematic emphasis, and are all hybrids of other popular genres.

While the first submarine films can be traced back to early cinema eg *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea*, (S. Paton, US, 1916), and *The Hero of Submarine D-2* (P. Scardon, US, 1916) the first clear narrative type is not really identifiable until World War II. This early version of *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea* is driven more by the concerns of a

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<sup>24</sup> Lears, in May, (Ed), 1989, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> See for example, N. Roch, 'The Neoconservative Backlash against Feminism in the 1970s and 1980s: The Case of *Commentary*', in D. Pye and C. Pedersen, (Eds), *Consumption and American Culture*, Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1991, pp. 83-98.

<sup>26</sup> R. Altman, 'Reusable Packaging: Generic Products and the Recycling Process', in Browne, (Ed), 1998, p. 2.

cinema of spectacle.<sup>27</sup> Loosely based on Verne's story of the same name, the 1916 version introduces a second Verne story about a balloon flight. This chapter will argue that submarine war films of two distinct types dominate the 1940s and 1950s: in wartime these films are Mission Narratives, postwar they evolve into Pursuit Narratives. There is some overlap between these two types, and this period also sees the partial introduction of the third narrative type, the Exploration Narrative. The introduction of the Exploration Narrative is only a glimpse though of what will become the dominant type from the 1960s to the 1980s. Within the Exploration Narrative there are the early Exploration Narratives that focus on the possibility of Mythical other civilisations based on the Atlantis legends. Later Exploration Narratives tend to inflect the narrative in terms of an encounter with deep-sea creatures or aliens. All of these hint at the emergence of the fourth narrative type, the Microcosm Narrative, which comes to the fore in the 1990s. Here other narrative types are combined, and the submarine as a microcosm of wider social structures is posited. *U-571* effectively combines elements of the Mission and Microcosm Narratives.

The pattern of Mission, Pursuit, Encounter and Microcosm is not an attempt to propose a developmental model that begins with a simple type that develops into the complex social critique of the contemporary Microcosm Narrative. The argument will also explore the hypothesis that the patterns that emerge from the narrative types correspond to particular versions of social structures salient within particular historical periods.

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<sup>27</sup> For the tension between the desire to tell a story and the desire to display in early cinema, see T. Gunning, "Now You See It, Now You Don't": The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions', *The*

### Mission Narratives.

During World War II there are a few films that initially appear to be submarine Mission Narratives, but they can be excluded on closer examination. Although released prior to hostilities<sup>28</sup>, *Submarine Patrol* (J. Ford, US, 1938) is actually concerned with the officers and crew of a submarine chaser. In *Action in the North Atlantic* (L. Bacon, US, 1943) the threat of attack by U-Boats is narratively significant. Overall though, the concern is with the Merchant Navy's vital supply missions to the allies. Both of these films highlight the need for civilian and joint military contributions to the war effort.

In the Mission Narrative there is a clearly defined mission(s) that the submarine crew work towards. It is distinguished from the *object* of Exploration and Pursuit Narratives by the emphasis on the affect of that mission on particular figures. In order for the mission to be successful, the figures have to undergo a process of change, and the mission itself causes that change in them through necessity. Change can also be signalled through a change in personal or non-combat life, usually in terms of romance.

Early World War II films combine combat with civilian romance or drama, and submarine films of the period are no exception. *Crash Dive* is the first war time submarine mission film.<sup>29</sup> The narrative tensions between Captain Dewey Connors (Dana Andrews) and his XO, Ward Stewart (Tyrone Power) figure both in terms of the mission and in the civilian romance rivalries they must learn to put aside. Stewart's experience of the war has been in motor patrol boats, ('PT boats'), and he consistently

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*Velvet Light Trap* 32, Fall 1993, pp. 3-12.

<sup>28</sup> Basinger, 1986, establishes *Submarine Patrol* as part of the prior history of the WWII combat film, that combines 1930s service comedy elements with the transition to war film. See pp. 105-7.

disparages submarines when first assigned to the *Corsair*. A switch to first names and their subsequent shore camaraderie signifies that the two men come to appreciate the specific virtues of patrol boats and submarines. However, it is at this point that the civilian romance intrudes between them, when Stewart realises that Connors is about to propose to his childhood sweetheart, Jean Hewlett (Anne Baxter). Back on the *Corsair*, the mission to locate the secret U-boat base commences with Connors declaring 'personal affairs and feelings have no place on the *Corsair* Mr. Stewart.' This submarine narrative, early in the war, emphasises the transition from civilian to combat life, and the success of the mission is in part dependent on the two men putting aside their rivalries. The mission itself, to attack the secret German base, depends on Stewart and Connors trusting each other not to let their rivalry influence their strategic military decisions. Although this Mission Narrative emphasises necessity for change in the men in order to achieve the mission this change is emphasised in civilian 'romantic' terms.

*We Dive at Dawn* (A. Asquith, UK, 1943) is also a Mission Narrative that emphasises the mission transformation in relation to civilian life. This is carried out through the reconciliation between Hobson and his estranged wife after the successful sinking of the *Brandenburg*. Although in this film the Mission has a clearly defined target as objective, which indicates a similarity with the later Pursuit Narrative, it is really the impact on the men that is significant. The taciturn and dispirited Hobson (Eric Portman) features as the central figure in the sinking of the *Brandenburg*, a role that restores relations with his wife and son. Mission Narratives such as *Crash Dive* and *We Dive at Dawn* stress how the mission depends on individuals putting aside their civilian disputes and

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<sup>29</sup> Reviewed in *The New York Times*, April 49 1943. *Destination Tokyo* review date is Jan 1, 1944. See Basinger, 1986, pp. 286 & 288.

personal rivalries. Both films emphasise the need not to let personal feelings prejudice military action; here they are seen as endangering the mission. The interdependence of the civilian and military narrative stresses how in certain cases sacrifices have to be made.

In *Destination Tokyo*, the *Copperfin* is assigned a secret mission into Tokyo Bay, which centres on the process through which the crew matures and bonds together. The crew is presented as an ethnically mixed bunch, but also as a family. Basinger argues the message that this family can survive would not have been lost on wartime viewers: 'As the sub moves towards Japan, the movie virtually turns into submerged soap opera.'<sup>30</sup> Significantly more of the narrative takes place on, and is directly concerned with, the submarine and its mission. This film places less emphasis on the transition from civilian life and more on the actual mission. The link between the two is through the 'initiation' of Tommy (Robert Hutton), Wolf's (John Garfield) 'reminiscences' of sexual conquest and Captain Cassidy's (Cary Grant) inability to communicate by phone with his family. Any shore activity is less significant than in *Crash Dive*. This absence of any actual civilian relationships, and the priority given to the *Copperfin's* immediate departure, serve to further centre the submarine and its mission.

The initiation of Tommy and the process of his transformation from 'The Kid' into a member of the submarine crew are central features of this film. Tommy volunteers to defuse a bomb lodged in the submarine's casing. Whereas for Polan it is the potential for lack of volunteers that is significant in *Crash Dive*, in *Destination Tokyo*, the only other

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<sup>30</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 67.

submarine film he discusses, Tommy's volunteering is regarded as insignificant.<sup>31</sup> In terms of the Mission Narrative, and particularly for the wartime audience, Tommy's actions are highly significant. This can be seen in his relationship with Mike (Tom Tully) a more experienced crewmember, who establishes a mentoring friendship with Tommy. When Mike is stabbed by a Japanese airman he tries to pull from the water, Tommy blames himself for not reacting quickly enough to help. It is this guilt that propels Tommy to defuse the bomb, and this furthers his process of initiation. The mission is then the process by which the men involved undergo change. For Tommy it is about gaining combat experience, echoed by the crew's attempts to teach him about women. Wolf, whose fantastic accounts of sexual conquest are eventually seen by the crew as fantasy, gets the opportunity to prove himself under real combat in the shore assignment.

There are other plots centred on transformation that unfold on the mission to Tokyo Bay, and one of the most significant is that of Pills' conversion from atheism to belief in God. While this is significant, it is stretching things too far to suggest, as Polan does

that the doctor's atheism *is the real foe*, and the major turning point of the film will be his turning point during dangerous surgery as the sub lies in wait. Not surprisingly, the script treatment for the film makes all the connections clear: "There are no atheists in submarines, at least not in this one."<sup>32</sup> (Emphasis added.)

Pills' conversion does come at an extremely tense moment in the film, as the shore patrol carry out their vital reconnaissance mission, but it is not identified as *the* turning

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<sup>31</sup> Polan, 1986, pp. 90-99.

<sup>32</sup> Polan, 1986, p 55.

point. The film has an episodic construction that tends to distribute the emphasis rather than focus on any one turning point. The transformations in masculinity brought about by the mission underline that experience is vital, and that the men must be willing to make sacrifices to gain that experience

If this is the preoccupation of wartime Mission Narrative, what differences begin to appear in those narratives in the immediate postwar period? Cultural concerns are seen as being closely tied in with the success of the Communist party in China, Russian acquisition of the A-bomb, and fears about spies in the US which were symbolised by the execution of the Rosenbergs for treason.<sup>33</sup> One of the most significant factors for the audience though may have been the reintroduction of the draft in February 1948. This is not to maintain that the films were part of the recruitment drive, but that war films of this period had to negotiate a complex set of issues regarding masculinity, World War II veterans and the possibility of a return to action.

The 1950s see a large number of films about World War II after they almost disappeared from the screens between 1945 and 1949.<sup>34</sup> Representations of war in the postwar period are therefore bound up with US involvement in Korea less than five years after the end of hostilities. Two postwar Mission Narratives, *Operation Pacific* and *Torpedo Alley* (L. Landers, US, 1953) combine stories of World War II submarine warfare with romantic dramas. This would be familiar from the World War II film, but needs to be

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<sup>33</sup> See P Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985, pp. 352-367.

<sup>34</sup> Combat war films are seen as absent during this period, Basinger, 1986, pp. 153 & 176. Shain's looser definition of the war film identifies at least a dozen war films released in each of the years in this period, except 1947 when only two, *The Beginning or the End* and *13 Rue Madeleine* are listed. See Shain, 1971, pp. 395-6.



seen for the differences in the ways they inflect the mission, the romance and the relationship between the two.

Basinger describes *Operation Pacific* as ‘a romantic entanglement involving a divorced couple ‘Duke’ Gifford (John Wayne) and Mary Stuart (Patricia Neal), primarily a story of submarine warfare in World War II.’<sup>35</sup> The two stories are interrelated through the reconciliation of the couple at the end of the mission, and Duke’s experiences on this mission are instrumental in this. The divorce is founded on two common assumptions about masculinity: Duke’s continued absence on patrol and his inability to show any emotion. This lack of expression is associated with Duke missing his own son’s birth and the baby’s premature death. The resolution allows Duke to change *and* to remain the same. Duke gets to nurture an orphan baby and thus learns to care but at the same time Mary realises that Duke cannot change that much and, in fact, is made aware that ‘If he did cry you wouldn’t like him.’ Duke’s transformation is more about having the experience he missed out on rather than self-realisation. *Operation Pacific* poses the tensions between combat and romance as reconcilable without significant changes in wartime combat masculinity. Later submarine films resolve this tension differently, as will be shown below.

*Torpedo Alley* is the type of submarine narrative that emphasises the need for change in masculinity. For example, past combat experience is shown to be inappropriate in the contemporary military. Through explicit reference to World War II and the Korean War, *Torpedo Alley* uses Bob Bingham (Mark Stevens) to oppose ‘airace’ individualism with

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<sup>35</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 171.

the responsibility required in a submarine crew. The initial action is set at the ending of World War II where Bingham is rescued by the *Devilfish*. In hospital he falls for a nurse, Susan Peabody (Dorothy Malone), but quickly learns she is engaged to the submarine's XO, Dore Gates (Douglas Kennedy). After the war, Bingham decides to train as a submariner, immediately looks up Susan and learns she is not yet married. Bingham's courtship of Susan and his retraining as a submariner are consistently emphasised in terms of putting aside past individualism and the need for present group responsibility. Both of these apparent problems are resolved through Bingham's retraining. Most importantly, Bingham's guilt over the death of his plane crew is resolved when he saves the lives of the submarine crew on a training exercise.

It is on an actual combat mission that the combat and romance narratives are resolved. On patrol in the Philippines, Bingham and Gates are sent on a sabotage mission during which Bingham has to provide covering fire while the rest of the team escape in the boat. He therefore not only learns about responsibility but also gets to practice it. Both are wounded on the sabotage mission, and Gates gracefully withdraws from the three-way wrestling match for Susan. He withdraws because he recognises the relationship had become stale; they had been together such a long time that they had become too familiar to each other.

*Operation Pacific* seems to be able to resolve both sets of narrative tensions without emphasising the need for change. *Torpedo Alley* on the other hand insists that World War II experience was all right then but that the Korean War requires changes in the self in relation to the team. This Mission Narrative emphasises the need for teamwork and

individualism rather than the fusing together of disparate members of a group through mission experience. This, and the three years between them, accounts for the differences between *Operation Pacific* and *Torpedo Alley*.

*Hell and High Water* articulates the mission in terms of anxieties over Cold War nuclear proliferation rather than World War II combat. Here, a group of concerned civilians, lead by Professor Montel (Victor Francen), recruit Adam Jones (Richard Widmark), a World War II submariner to skipper their submarine on a mission to investigate the build up of an atomic arsenal on a remote island. They discover that the Chinese military are planning to provoke a nuclear war by using a US Airforce plane to drop a nuclear bomb on their own people. After a disagreement between Montel and Jones over the legitimacy of destroying the plane themselves, the submarine surfaces and shoots down the plane. Montel had initially ordered Jones to take the submarine back home: 'We cannot take it upon ourselves to commit an act of war, no matter how we feel. We are civilians.' However, he later steals a dinghy and paddles to the island to give the signal to shoot down the approaching plane. The plane is damaged by the submarine's deck gun, it crashes back into the island, and Montel is killed when the A-bomb explodes. There is also a romance drama, which is played out between Jones and Denise Montel (Bella Darvi) but this takes place on board the submarine during the mission. The influence of the Cold War can be seen in the way *Hell and High Water* creates tensions between civilian and military responses to the plan. What is interesting is the way that it inflects elements of the *Mission* film in terms of contemporaneous narratives and events. These can be found in the emphasis on tensions between World War II combat experience and the present mission. In essence, previously it was clear what we were

fighting for, now motivation is harder to maintain and the overall objectives of the mission are far less concrete. The resolution of these tensions is though unequivocal: the civilians need the military. The mission succeeds because Jones takes over and Montel sacrifices himself.

*Above Us the Waves* (R. Thomas, UK, 1955) on the other hand, refers back to the Mission Narrative of World War II rather than to contemporary fears about nuclear proliferation and Communism. This film is about the use of midget 'X-craft' submarines by the British to sink the German battleship *Tirpitz* in a Norwegian fjord. The mission in this case is not only 'against all the odds', the difficulties to be overcome include training the crew and the experimental status of the midget subs. Furthermore, the training of the team to operate the midget submarines updates tensions to make them between the individual and the group. Firstly, Fraser (John Mills) encourages Smart (Michael Medwin) to overcome his fear of diving with the words 'There are two kinds of courage, aren't there. One fellow's brave 'cause he doesn't know what fear is, the other fellow's brave 'cause he's afraid and fights it and doesn't show it.' Later, Fraser has to admonish the training group for being too hasty and competitive: he tells them this is a team not a race. Although this is a Mission Narrative, the narrative is clearly reflecting on and reassessing World War II.

By the late 1950s it is possible to see the Mission Narrative introduce elements of the Pursuit Narrative. In the three films accounted for below, *Hellcats of the Navy* (N. Juran, US, 1957), *Submarine Seahawk*, and *Up Periscope* (G. Douglas, US, 1958), the tensions are still about the mission. Here they are emphasised more emphatically in terms of

individualism and leadership, for example, through the Captain's ability to lead the men on the mission, or in terms of the suitability of individuals to be on the mission. Obstacles that the men on the mission have to overcome are no longer within themselves but between themselves. In the earlier *Torpedo Alley*, individualism belonged to the past and responsibility to the present, but for these films the opposition is framed rather differently. For example, in *Hellcats of the Navy*, Captain Abbott (Ronald Reagan) struggles against his XO, Landon (Arthur Franz) on a mission to enter the heavily mined Tsushima Straits. Firstly, Landon considers Abbott reckless in not following procedure to get through the minefield. A further incident concerns Abbott's decision to dive to save the submarine rather than stay on the surface to rescue Barton (Harry Lauter), a diver popular with the crew. Abbott's decision is seen as questionable, not least because Barton is his rival for the affections of Helen Blair, (Nancy Davis). The stay on the surface or dive scenario is later repeated with Landon in charge and Abbott in the water: only this time Abbott is saved when Landon surfaces the submarine. The mission is successful, and Landon insists on telling Abbott that '...suddenly I saw things a whole lot differently when I had to take over.' Leadership is here best left to those individuals who have the experience to know how to lead most effectively.

Two 1958 Mission Narratives, *Submarine Seahawk* and *Up Periscope*, centre the mission conflicts around a particular individual's specialised skills or methods. While Naval Intelligence had figured in previous Mission Narratives, it is only in this period that intelligence becomes not only vital to the success of the mission, but also figures in the tensions concerning mission decisions. Both these films express conflicts between the captain and the officers and crew in terms of a 'by the book' mentality. In Captain

Turner's (John Bentley) case in *Submarine Seahawk*, it his academic background that is the cause. In *Up Periscope*, Captain Stevenson's (Edmund O'Brien) actions by the book cause tensions with the specialist Braden (James Garner). His vindication and acceptance by the crew at the end of the mission are also related to tensions between the expert and the crew.

*Submarine Seahawk* begins with Turner on patrol as XO under the command of Captain Stoker (Wayne Heffley), at the end of which Stoker puts in a report that says Turner is unsuitable for command because he lacks a rapport with the men. Turner though, gets given command of Stoker's submarine when the latter is ordered to a desk job. Turner's commission is based on his knowledge of Japan, and his assignment is to collect information on Japanese ship movements to help the planning of the vital Operation Forger. There is considerable resentment from the crew, and from the inexperienced officer, David Shore (Brett Halsey) in particular, over the number of targets they fail to attack. After many observations, and punishing attacks from enemy ships, Shore attempts a one-man mutiny that is quickly put down. At this point, the submarine has transmitted the location of the renegade Japanese Naval Task Force, but then has to wait on the bottom while it is attacked by US planes. Eventually the submarine is able to surface, and limping home, sinks a lone carrier missed in the attack. In this instance the opposition to the mission comes from those who do not know the full picture, and Stoker and Shore are only able to grasp the significance of the mission when it has been achieved.

*Up Periscope* bears certain similarities to *Submarine Seahawk*, but it also has more in common with the later Pursuit Narratives. Braden and Captain Stevenson come into conflict on the mission to photograph the codebook at a hidden Japanese transmitter. Debates about the mission are in this instance carried out in terms of doing things by the book over individual acts of bravery. These tensions between the individual and group figure in terms of an opposition between specialist knowledge and the crew's perception of their role in combat. This tension will be shown in chapter eight to have significant bearing in terms of conflicting forms of power relations.

A later mission narrative, and therefore an anomaly, is *Das Boot* (W. Peterson, Germany, 1981). This film frames the mission as one of survival, rather than a mission with any objectives or transformative properties. Adapted from the book published in 1973, the film participates in West Germany's concern to mark a generational shift from the Germany of World War II. With its theme of wasted youth and debates about the extent of culpability in the horrors of the Nazi regime, *Das Boot* is an examination of the past from a position of generational distance. That the novelist, Lothar-Gunther Buchheim, was a propagandist for the Nazis only served to inflame the debate even further.<sup>36</sup>

To summarise the Mission Narrative characteristics, the conflicts and tensions on the mission are external, whereas those in Pursuit Narrative will be shown to be internal. The tensions in *Up Periscope* point towards the characteristics of the Pursuit Narrative, in that they are due in part to internal factors. Stevenson's 'by the book' method is

related to his personal failures on the previous patrol, but this sense of personal loss does not drive the narrative in the way that it does in *Run Silent, Run Deep* or *Torpedo Run*.

It is necessary to make brief mention of particular type of Mission Narrative, the Rescue-Mission, where the narratives tend to hinge on variations of the question can the men get/be got out before the submarine disintegrates.

Released at a similar time as, but not based on, an actual submarine accident,<sup>37</sup> *Morning Departure* (R. W. Baker, UK, 1950) follows *HMS Trojan* on a routine patrol when it runs into a stray mine left over from the war. Most of the men are able to escape the stricken submarine, but the captain, Armstrong (John Mills), and two crew, Higgins (James Hayter) and Snipe (Richard Attenborough) have to wait until the submarine can be lifted off the sea bed. Unfortunately, a force 10 gale delays the rescue attempts, and the men are trapped as the film ends. The scenario described above allows the film to explore ideas of group spirit and individual indomitability. In this sense it bears close relation to the Mission Narratives of the immediate postwar period. This can be seen, for example, through the transformation in Snipe and his developing relationship with Higgins. The focus of the narrative is on the men trapped in the submarine, and comparatively little time is spent on the surface operations to rescue them. Therefore the drive of the narrative is the impact of the accident on the men and on how they respond to impending disaster.

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<sup>36</sup> See. Hadley, (1995), Chapter Five describes how Buchheim's association angered the left and the right in Germany: the left for his Nazi past and because the anti-war stance did not go far enough, the right for his betrayal of their comrades, and his lack of real U-Boat experience. (He was an observer on one patrol.)



In *Gray Lady Down* (D. Greene, US, 1978) equal narrative time and emphasis is given to the rescue operation and to the men trapped in the submarine. The different tensions on the surface and on the seabed structure the rescue. Captain Blanchard, (Charlton Heston) brings the *Neptune* to the surface for the entry into New London, but a Norwegian ship rams them in the fog, *Neptune* sinks, and becomes precariously stranded 1450 metres below the surface. Captain Bennett (Stacy Keach) leads the rescue operation from a nearby US navy ship, the *Nassau*. An experimental Navy DSRV, *The Snark*, and its crew are called in to clear a rock fall to enable the rescue sub to dock. Bennett clashes with Captain Gates (David Carradine) and Mickey (Ned Beatty) over how to carry out the rescue mission. Significantly, both men designed and run *The Snark* in a co-operative non-hierarchical way that Bennett cannot come to terms with. Though Naval officers, the two are identified as being unconventional and have little time for Navy protocol, which irritates Bennett. Gates is proved right in his methods, but in order to prevent the *Neptune* from sliding off the ledge and being crushed, he jams *The Snark* under the bow, killing himself in the process. Meanwhile, the men on board the *Neptune* have to cope with a number of crises. For example, the exhaustion of their air supplies, their dead mates in the flooded propulsion room, and the increasing strain on the watertight doors. Both these films place considerable emphasis on self-sacrifice as a form of courage that causes men to act beyond the call of duty; Snipe in *Morning Departure*, and Gates and Samuelson in *Gray Lady Down*.

In *Sub Down*, (G. Champion/A. Smithee, US, 1997) the USSN *Portland* becomes trapped on a 'cooperative cruise' under the Polar ice cap with a team of civilian

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<sup>37</sup> HMS *Truculent* sunk as filming was completed on *Morning Departure*. Program Notes, Private Collection.

scientists on board to carry out an under ice profile. This rescue mission contains the element of self-sacrifice, and transformation in the self through the ordeal. For example, civilian-military hostilities between the XO (Tony Plana) and the two scientists are resolved when he has to learn to trust them despite his antagonism towards them: he expresses his doubts by exclaiming 'Great, we're left with the hip and the ditz.'

Rescue-Mission Narratives are characterised by tension between getting to safety before time runs out, and the self-sacrifice of one individual (usually the least likely), in order that the survivors may be rescued. *Morning Departure* frames this in terms of the indomitable group spirit fostered through adversary, and through Snipe, a young man coming to understand his self worth. As chapter eight will show, this is also expressed in terms of class and gender relations during the period of postwar reorientation. For *Gray Lady Down*, the tensions of the surface rescue contain elements of friction between a by the book figure (Bennett) and the maverick individual figure (Gates/Mickey). This conflict is also nuanced in terms of the institutions of the state rubbing up against counter-cultural influences. Here, Gates is clearly identified with a bohemian individualism that has scant regard for official procedures. *Sub Down* recasts the tensions between the military officers and the civilian scientists in 1990s terms. Opposition to the military is only partially signalled by Rick's bohemian anti-military stance (In an education versus military spending debate); instead the emphasis is placed on Laura, who is ridiculed for being a feminine 'whale watcher'. Ultimately though, she has all the best ideas and drives the submarine off the seabed.

### **Pursuit Narratives.**

In the previous section the argument maintained that during the late 1950s the Mission Narrative took on particular characteristics that began to inflect it in particular ways. While the emphasis was still on the Mission and the impact of that experience on the group, that impact was often explored through the tensions between the individual and the group. In becoming pursuit Narratives they begin to be more about leadership than about the group as they had been during the war period and immediate aftermath. The significant element that differentiates the Pursuit from other narrative types is that the prosecution or evasion of the pursued/pursuer functions as cause and resolution in the narrative. Part of the narrative drive is the examination of the nature of the relation between the participants, in particular the effect of the quarry on the pursuer. Pursuit Narratives frame the pursuit in terms of the suitability of the men to carry out the pursuit. The relations between pursuer and pursued are expressed differently than the relations between the mission and the men.

Pursuit Narratives explore the impact of that pursuit on the men and through the opposition of duty and obsession. This obsession comes in many forms and can be driven either by emotional or familial motivation, or even impulses of paranoid fantasy. Pursuit Narratives tend to characterise the relations between the self and the object of the pursuit as causal in that change comes through obsession. In the Mission Narrative, men need to change in order to achieve the mission. In this way the move from one narrative type through to the other is a move from an emphasis on the external to an examination of the internal. In other words, this is a move from masculinity in groups to masculinity in the mind.

In *The Enemy Below*, the narrative immediately emphasises the personal loss that the two adversaries have experienced, and this is done before they have located each other. The crew of the *Haynes* is seen speculating about the new captain's state of mind before Murrell (Robert Mitchum) even makes an appearance. In the U-Boat, commander von Stolberg (Curt Jurgens) gives a long and weary monologue on his loss and disgust with the war to his friend Hiene Schwaffer (Theodore Bikel). Following this, the combat between the two vessels is carried out in a series of seven lengthy manoeuvres. In each of these the antagonists' attempts to think as the other meet with fluctuating degrees of success. Eventually von Stolberg is lured into attacking the *Haynes*. In the penultimate exchange Murrell tricks the U-Boat into surfacing to finish off the apparently crippled destroyer. Both vessels are sunk in the final exchange, then Murrell rescues von Stolberg and both men express recognition of each other's skill and bravery. The film emphasises the pursuit in terms of a duty that Captain Murrell and von Stolberg carry out despite their opposition to war. This opposition is identified as being due to personal circumstances: Murrell's new wife drowned when her ship was torpedoed, von Stolberg's sons have both been killed fighting for Germany. It is this personal loss that provides the foundation in the narrative for exploring the psychological relationship between the two adversaries. Murrell and von Stolberg try to out wit each other, and this contest is consistently framed through the two thinking as the other in order to predict the next move

This film shares elements with Mission Narratives in that the men are the way they are because of external factors, but it is the personal loss that is significant. It is not the obsession with catching the quarry that drives the two men here. It is a reluctant sense

of duty, and for von Stolberg at least, an overwhelming desire to get home. This reexamination of the war and the men involved may only be possible from a historical vantage point.

*Run Silent, Run Deep* and *Torpedo Run*, contemporaneous Pursuit Narratives, emphasise the pursuit as revenge through conflicts between the individual and the group, but nuance that revenge in quite different ways. The notion of obsession can be seen to have a significant bearing on tensions in the association of masculinity and rationality as will be shown in chapter six.

In *Run Silent, Run Deep* the outsider Richardson (Clark Gable) is unexpectedly given command of the *Nerka*, over the head of the XO Bledsoe (Burt Lancaster). The combat patrol the film follows turns into Richardson's personal quest for vengeance on the ships that sunk his previous submarine. Opposition to that pursuit is based on a perception of it as fulfilling the personal needs of an older man, rather than responsibility to the crew.

The film indicates how this will cause friction through the two opening scenes. The first is the sinking of Richard's submarine and the unexplained Morse signal heard at the time. In the second, Bledsoe is identified as the popular choice to take over command of the *Nerka*. The next sequence shows Richardson, at his desk, reenacting the sinking of the destroyer that sunk him. His assistant's comment that he has played this game hundreds of times establishes the extent of his obsession and his frustration at being behind a desk for a year. His appointment to the *Nerka*, over the younger and more

popular Bledsoe can only be seen as a source of conflict. The confrontation between Bledsoe and Richardson is over the desire for revenge and their orders, over Richardson's guilt for the dead crew versus his responsibility to the present one. His obsession for revenge is making him reckless with the lives of the present crew. Significantly though, Richardson's state of mind is instrumental in sinking the destroyer: only when delirious is he able to work out it was a hidden Japanese submarine that sank him.

*Torpedo Run* also focuses on revenge as a form of obsession, with obsession having productive and counter productive effects. Doyle's obsession in pursuing the *Shinaru* is based on revenge, but a revenge that is expressed in terms of his family rather than the crew as in *Run Silent, Run Deep*. Doyle has made an attempt to sink the Japanese carrier, which he knows to be using his wife and daughter as deterrence on board a screening transporter. Doyle believes them to be among the victims when the *Greyfish* sinks the transporter, and his pursuit of the *Shinaru* is framed as revenge for their deaths. Doyle's preoccupation with the whereabouts of his family pre-exists the pursuit of the carrier: the film begins with him taking no satisfaction from the sinking of a tanker, concerned as he is with his family's safety in Manila, which has fallen to the Japanese. Repeated flashbacks during the pursuit reinforce the torment that Doyle is going through. This torment leads to the obsessive hunt for the *Shinaru*, a hunt that is questioned in terms of his mental condition.

Once the *Greyfish* has located the carrier in freezing waters, Doyle's desire to attack begins to endanger the submarine and its crew. His XO and friend Archer Sloan (Ernest

Borgnine) warns him that attacking on the surface will cause the equipment to freeze and malfunction, but Doyle wants to press ahead despite the danger. They are forced to dive to avoid a log and chain boom, at which point they also come under attack from an enemy destroyer. In the dive the periscope is damaged and Doyle is injured. This serves to emphasise the opposition between individual desire and group responsibility. Doyle refuses morphine, as it will spoil his shooting arm, and is driven to attack without radar and periscope despite the odds against success. In addition, Doyle declines to evade the destroyer as every second in position improves the chances of a hit. The *Greyfish* torpedoes the carrier but is sunk in the process, though the majority of the men are rescued by *Bluefish*.

### **Exploration Narratives.**

Exploration Narratives, although often eschewing actual submarines in favour of fantastical cities under the sea, continue to pose the relations between men and the submarine environment in familiar terms. However, from the late 1960s, and through the 1970s, these narratives can also be seen as utilising conventions belonging to the fantasy adventure film (lost peoples, monsters, and natural disasters). Ideas of the Mythological City or Continent of Atlantis figure prominently in these narratives from this period. The analysis below will show the different ways in which this 'other' civilisation figures in narratives of exploration. All of the Atlantis Exploration Narratives figure the accidental or deliberate discovery of the other world and this meeting functions to emphasise the opposition of submarine and terrestrial worlds, in variously positive and negative terms.

The 1980s sees the rise to prominence of 'aliens under the sea' Exploration Narratives, which frame the exploration in terms of an encounter with alien creatures rather than other human civilisations. The impact of the science fiction genre can be seen on the Encounter Exploration Narrative in the creatures that are deep-sea monster, scientific experiment, or extra terrestrial life.

### **Atlantis Exploration Narratives.**

In this type of submarine film the opposition between the two worlds consistently revolves around a 'price to pay' element. In order for the ideal submarine society to work repressive methods are needed, either to keep monsters out, or to keep people in their places. It is, then, a system based on a contradiction: that which makes it possible also threatens it.

The 1965 version of *City under the Sea* (J. Tourneur, UK, 1965)<sup>38</sup> combines a lost city mythology with an Anglo-American heterosexual romance. Set in turn of the century Cornwall, the film begins with the voice of Vincent Price reciting mysterious lines of poetry as a body is discovered washed up on the beach. The superstitious locals go to the big house for an explanation, where Ben (Tab Hunter) a visiting American and Harold Tufnell-Jones (David Tomlinson) speculate on the myths surrounding disappearing locals in the past. Their host, Jill Tregellis (Susan Hart) joins with Harold in dismissing Ben's sea creature hypothesis, but he insists he is 'a trained observer, I see what the ordinary eye overlooks'. That night Ben wrestles with a strange Gill-man in the house, and then Jill is kidnapped. When Ben and Harold pursue her captors, they

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<sup>38</sup> Also known as *War Gods of the Deep*.



discover a secret underground passage down to the sea, where they are sucked through a whirlpool into a series of strange rooms. Believing themselves to be under the sea, the two men then witness a peculiar sacrificial ritual, before The Captain (Vincent Price) arrives to tell them they are his prisoners and have to help him. The Captain, King of the Gill-people whose land has been claimed by the sea, was originally Lord Tregethyn, chased into the sea by excise men. He has also fallen for Jill as the image of his long lost love. Ultimately, Ben, Harold and Jill escape to the surface, and The Captain and the undersea world are destroyed. What is of interest here is the opposition between the undersea world and the terrestrial world. This opposition, as in all the Atlantis Narratives, is best examined through the ways in which the civilisation is run, its foundation, and the contradictions of its continuation.

The Captain reveals that a nearby volcano is both the source of his power and the force that makes this civilisation possible. The volcano though is a double-edged sword: it provides life and power, but if it erupts it will destroy the city. The volcano allows the Gill-people to breathe under water, through a local phenomenon of an imbalance of oxygen. The power of this is drawn out through its links to dreams of immortality: The Captain has discovered the volcano makes them immortal, a fact that Ben encourages him to share with the world. Unfortunately, if The Captain and his people return to the surface the preservative powers will cease and they will die. The people of the city are thus caught in a double prison. The volcano makes them immortal, and it also provides the power to pump the water out of the city, but the city is decaying and the volcano could erupt at any moment

The Captain maintains his hold over the Gill-men by pacifying the volcano through the provision of victims for regular sacrifice. Although the people are kept in position by hope of resolution, this system is clearly identified with the past, with tyranny. For example, the system of justice is seen as particularly ancient and barbaric; executions ‘follow an established ritual’ in order to satisfy the Gill-people’s demands for a sacrifice to appease the volcano. The ideal or fantasy of an Atlantis is attainable only at a price. Later Exploration Narratives expand on and frame this contradiction in different ways, as will be shown below. *City under the Sea* tends to identify the underwater civilisation in terms of a mythical past, while the emphasis on the organisation of that place is undeveloped. Two further Exploration Narratives, *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City*, and *Warlords of Atlantis* foreground that civilisation in terms of its social structure.

*Captain Nemo and the Underwater City* develops the figure of Nemo as a flawed idealist, who, in rejecting the surface life, has founded a civilisation based on his own vision of a ‘paradise on earth’ under the water. A group of civilians are saved from drowning by the *Nautilus* when their ship founders in a storm. Captain Nemo (Robert Ryan) takes them to *Templemere*, the first city in his planned underwater civilisation. *Templemere* is identified as a utopian society where everyone lives contentedly. There is a two-fold cost in this paradise: deep-sea monsters constantly threaten the boundaries of the city, and this underwater paradise requires a centralised system of surveillance. The threat from the monsters clearly comes directly from the presence of the city: in building the city an inadvertent explosion caused the creatures to change. The intervention has caused the creatures to behave uncharacteristically, making them aggressive without provocation.

*Templemere* is based on Nemo's rejection of terrestrial war mongering. Nemo refuses to share his invention, reasoning that the world will only fight over it resulting in self-destruction. Nemo's invention combines two crucial elements that figure in the conflict between terrestrial and undersea figures. The first is the central system of surveillance, which is given considerable prominence. The second is the oxygen machine, of which gold is a by-product. Gold functions as an analogy for the opposition between the two social systems. This is realised through a comic sub plot that involves the attempts by two of the survivors, Barnaby (Bill Fraser) and Swallow, (Kenneth Connor) to get rich quick by escaping with as much gold as possible. This parallels the opposition between Nemo and Fraser, (Chuck Connors) one of the shipwrecked passengers, a heroic US statesman. Fraser refuses to remain in *Templemere*, despite its obvious attractions (he is in love with a native, Mala (Luciana Paluzzi) as his work is too important. He is working to try to persuade European arms manufactures to halt arms sales to both sides in the American Civil War. This is positioned directly against the means by which Nemo has achieved his aims: Nemo is given a letter from Fraser after he has escaped in which he argues that 'Your dream is to create a perfect society that will transform men. For you, this may well be the answer, but my ambition lies in a slower, more painful process.' In this instance the society of *Templemere*, though cast as undemocratic, is comparatively benign. Fraser is allowed to leave, and two of the passengers Helena (Nanette Newman) and her son Phillip (Christopher Hartstone) elect to stay behind when she and Nemo fall in love.

*Warlords of Atlantis*, on the other hand, maintains a far more fascistic version of Atlantis. Here, the opposition is staged as a struggle between the brutal master race of Atlantis and the explorers in alliance with the oppressed subordinated group in that system. In addition, fearsome monsters, mutations of evolution caused by the Atlanteans presence, attack the city walls. In this version of Atlantis, the civilisation is identified not with legends of the past but with the arrival of aliens whose planet has died. Released in 1978, this take on Atlantis shows the later influences of the science fiction rather than the fantasy adventure genre, which indicates the emergence of the Encounter Narrative.

An American inventor, Greg Collinson (Doug McClure), an English scientist, Charles Aitken (Peter Gilmore) and his father Professor Aitken (Donald Bisset) have chartered the *Texas Rose* for a vaguely defined scientific expedition. The crew is skeptical and nervous, as their voyage has taken them into the notorious Bermuda Triangle. The Aitkens' research has lead them to believe that the reason for the disasters in the area is that this is the location of the Lost City of Atlantis. They have kept this true objective of the expedition secret from Greg and the crew, whose attitude to their employers changes when Greg and Charles's first dive brings up a gold statue from Atlantis. This enrages a giant octopus, which attacks the boat and the two divers and three of the crew end up in Atlantis. A mysterious figure Atmir (Michael Gothard) appears who leads them to 'Troy', the third of the seven cities of Atlantis. This civilisation is a parallel world under the sea, bounded and threatened by the 'waters of the outer limits.' As Atmir explains, the Atlanteans are an alien species who left their dead planet and are building up the power and resources to return home. Charles is given insight into their

power and is seduced by their vision of the future, a future in which a military state will 'release the full creative energies of 20th century science.'

Here, the foundation for Atlantis is a particularly brutal system, organised along structured cities that house the workers and the 'intellectual' master race separately. Charles is invited to join this master race, while the others are sent to join the other victims of the Bermuda Triangle, (including Captain Briggs (Robert Brown) of the *Marie Celeste*). These survivors are the functionaries of the master race, existing to provide for them and to defend the city from attack by the monstrous mutations that lurk outside the defences. The narrative focuses on the attempts of the 'manual' classes to escape the brutal system of Atlantis, and the ease with which Greg is swayed by the frenzied visions of the future. (Its fascistic nature is signalled by footage of marching German soldiers and Nazi regalia.)

This opposition between two worlds consistently emphasises that there is the 'price to pay' element. In order for the idealised society to work repressive systems are needed either to keep monsters out, or to keep the people in their places. Here, this system is again identified with the past. Certain submarine films can be seen as combining the hubris of the desire for the city under the sea with the monster from science fiction. For example, in *The Neptune Factor* (D. Petrie Canada, 1973) 'an underwater lab and living experiment is threatened by giant fish and eels bred by under-sea volcanoes, so both monster and failed city forms converge.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> M. Yacowar, 'The Bug in the Rug: Notes on the Disaster Genre', in Grant, (Ed), 1995, p. 263.

## Encounter Narratives

The encounter always occurs when the subjects are on the seabed involved in unconnected activities, which, for varied reasons, develop quickly into causal factors in the encounter. Exploration Narratives with an emphasis on an Encounter cluster around the late 1980s. *Monthly Film Bulletin* described *The Abyss* as 'the most elaborate of the current slew of undersea adventure films.'<sup>40</sup> This cluster can be attributed to *Alien* (R. Scott, UK, 1979) *Aliens* (J. Cameron, US, 1986) and *The Abyss*.

Firstly, it is necessary to distinguish between these Encounter Narratives and *Atomic Submarine* (S. G. Bennett, US, 1959) and *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (R. Gordon, US, 1955) both of which initially appear to be forerunners of the Encounter Narrative. However, while the latter specifically links the submarine with the giant octopus through their shared dependency on atomic power, this is not really a submarine film. The submarine plays little narrative significance in the battle with the monster, until it makes a belated reappearance at the end. *Atomic Submarine* is really an invasion narrative and should be considered in those terms, despite the 'encounter' between Richard 'Reef' Holloway (Arthur Franz) and the alien. The emphasis is not on how the encounter affects the crew, but on the best way to defeat it. The tensions are over how to prepare to meet the other: as invaders or visitors, tensions which figure in the encounter with the underwater life form in *The Abyss*.

In *Deepstar Six* the disgruntled crew is being harassed by their impatient boss, Van Gelder (Marius Weyers), to get an underwater missile sled in place before the Navy

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<sup>40</sup> *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 56: 670, November 1989, p. 329.

cancels the project. Van Gelder cannot wait for proper sounding results and he also ignores Scarpelli's (Nia Peeples) historical evidence of sea monster attacks on shipping in the area. As a result an underwater cavern collapses and an aggressive monster is unleashed to attack the drilling station. After a series of battles with the creature, in which most of the crew are eaten or killed, two of the crew escape to the surface, Collins (Nancy Everhard) and McBride (Greg Evigan), where the latter finally kills the monster.

Here, the monster is primitive and animalistic, identified with legends. Its aggression is down to an invasion of its territory, an invasion which could have been avoided had proper precautions been taken. In this film then, the encounter produces conflicts between historical evidence and scientific research on the one hand, and the recklessness engendered by the gung-ho masculinity associated with the military. What differentiates the monster in *Deepstar Six* from the aggressive monsters in other Encounter Narratives is that it is a naturally occurring monster. Its origins and presence are entirely due to this location being the extreme depths of the ocean. Impatience and stupidity cause the encounter itself.

*Leviathan* is an attempt to take issues in genetic engineering below the surface of the water. Here, a deep-sea mining operation for silver/precious metals inadvertently unleashes a genetic mutation from the wreck of scuttled Soviet ship. Once it gets on board, Six Pack (Daniel Stern) and Bowman (Lisa Eilbacher) drink some banned vodka out of a hip flask stolen from the wreckage, and they rapidly mutate into a blood-drinking monster. The Doctor, (Richard Crenna) discovers that the creature is the result of genetic tampering by Soviets to produce 'Homoaquaticus' a man that can live

underwater and endlessly regenerate, at which point he announces; 'Don't fuck with mother nature!'

In *The Abyss* the military functions as the initial cause of the sea creature coming into contact with humans. A US nuclear missile submarine, the *Montana*, crashes with an unidentified submarine object. During the rescue/salvage attempt the opposition between the military response and other possible responses features as the source of narrative tension. For example in the way that Lyndsey Brigman (Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio) suggests that the creatures are merely displaying curiosity, rather than being a Soviet submersible, as Coffey (Michael Biehn) sees it. Once this is an apparent possibility, different ways of responding to the other becomes the narrative drive; it becomes a conflict between different ways of seeing/believing.

#### **Microcosm Narratives.**

This final section is concerned with those submarine narratives that are combinations of other narrative types already identified. Although there maybe some similarity and potential cross-over with the other types, in Microcosm Narratives tensions and conflicts are ultimately framed differently. The difference is in the way in which tensions in the former narratives are between or within individuals. In the Microcosm Narrative, they are between individuals as symptomatic of social tensions. In addition, unlike the Atlantis narratives, where 'down here' is opposed to 'up there', Microcosm Narratives structure the submarine environment as a model for 'up there'. These films are also interesting for the way they emphasise different elements of the other narrative types



Microcosm Narratives emphasise the existence of social differences, and also the ways in which the submarine can be seen as a microcosm of those differences. Emphasis can be on the need to put aside those differences in order for the submarine to function, or conversely, the necessity of those differences in order for the distinct parts to function effectively as a whole. Microcosm Narratives can also *appear* to be any of the other types of narrative, but the emphasis is on the functioning of the system rather than the mission, pursuit or exploration. Microcosm Narratives containing elements of the other types focus on the submarine-as-social-system, though they may contain and emphasise combinations of the other elements.

*20,000 Leagues under the Sea* combines all the other types and functions as a form of microcosm. The opposition between terrestrial social systems and Nemo's submarine 'utopia' has much in common with the oppositions in Atlantis narratives, but in *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* this opposition needs to be considered in terms of the broader connections to the Microcosm Narrative.

The film begins with official and popular concern over growing shipping losses, and the monstrous nature of the possible assailant. As a result, Professor Arronax (Paul Lukas), Conseil (Peter Lorre) and Ned Land (Kirk Douglas) join a naval frigate in pursuit of the beast, only to end up prisoners/guests on the *Nautilus*. Captain Nemo (James Mason) is on a mission to rid the world of armaments, but this is there to serve the idealist or tyrant debate. In these terms, this narrative shares much with the later Atlantis Narratives. For example, Captain Nemo's idealism can be seen as foundational in the later 'Captain Nemo' figures and the underwater world created in their vision.

Furthermore, Arronax, Land & Conseil encounter Nemo's other world, which is placed in opposition to the terrestrial system.

Nemo has rejected the surface social system for its colonialism and war mongering, though this is also framed in personal terms. His torturers murdered his wife and child when he refused to surrender the secret of his invention. His alternative to the surface ways functions as an other world that the guests interact with. It is the differences amongst them in this interaction that can be seen as similar to the Atlantis Narrative. In the Atlantis Narrative though, the figures that are most antagonistic to Nemo perish (Lomax (Allan Cuthbertson) in *Captain Nemo & the Underwater City*), while in this instance it is the antagonistic Land who enables the guests to escape. In *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea*, Land and Arronax as emblematic of social differences are seen as necessary differences.

In what ways do mission and pursuit elements figure? Nemo is driven by his mission to sink any warship, and the US Navy is pursuing the *Nautilus*. Both of these elements, while important are not central. The mission though does function in terms of tension between Nemo and Land: Land sees the warship the *Nautilus* sunk as murder, Nemo believes there are higher matters at hand. Overall, this conflict is concerned with the moral justification for Nemo's mission, and therefore can be seen as part of the idealist/tyrant debate.

This film also explores questions of moral responsibility for armaments and war in relation to nuclear power. Nemo's secret power for the *Nautilus* is emphatically

identified with nuclear power, and the destruction of his volcanic island base resembles a nuclear explosion. Proliferation of nuclear power and weapons was of major concern in the early 1950s when this film was made. The full implications of Arronax's voice over ending, which expresses the hope that one day the world will be ready for inventions such as Nemo's will be discussed in these terms in chapter eight.

*Voyage To The Bottom of the Sea* (I. Allen, US, 1961) encompasses different narrative types, coming as it does at the end of the period of Pursuit Narratives and acting as a precursor to the Exploration Narrative. It could be classed as a Pursuit, with the *Seaview* in a race against time to extinguish a fiery belt of radiation circling the earth, with Admiral Nelson (Walter Pidgeon) up against pursuers and opposition within the submarine. Furthermore, the film has many similarities with the Mission Narrative, in that the crew undergoes a process of transformation in order to achieve the mission. In addition, the viability of Nelson's mission has to be proved in the face of opposition from the scientists and the Navy. *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* also contains elements of an Encounter Narrative; in this case the Van-Allen belt is not another world, but the other that threatens to destroy the world. In this respect, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* is clearly a Microcosm Narrative.

The emphasis on different elements in these two films illustrates how the different combination of types can alter the model of the wider social structures. The emphasis on the Atlantis type in *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* means that the *Nautilus* functions as an alternative to that system. The Mission emphasis in *Voyage To The Bottom of the Sea* positions the *Seaview* as model through which the tensions in the social structure

can be expressed. The *Seaview*'s mission throws up tensions in terms of class, gender, leadership, nationalism and national sovereignty, the military, science and psychiatry, political institutions in the form of the Government and the UN, and of course the individual's relation with all of these.

Two further narratives which adhere to the Microcosm type, *The Hunt for Red October* (J. McTiernan, US, 1990) and *Crimson Tide* (T. Scott, US, 1995) appear in the 1990s. The declining saliency of the Cold War can be seen as bringing about a recognition of national difference within conceptions of the USSR as the other. These two films, in different ways, exploit this notion of difference, and in turn, the notion of difference in the self.

In *The Hunt for Red October*, the apparent defection of Ramius (Sean Connery) in the latest Soviet submarine becomes the object of pursuit for the Soviets and an object of interpretation for the US. The construction of apparent oppositions between the two social systems is figured through Ramius and Ryan (Alec Baldwin). As such, the film deals explicitly with problems of recognition and difference in the other.

In the first instance the film is a Mission Narrative. Ryan has to prove the viability of his mission in the face of institutional opposition from the US military that sees Ramius's actions as those of a madman. This skepticism continues, first from the officers on the *Enterprise* and also from Mancuso (Scott Glenn) on the US attack submarine, the *Dallas*. In addition to this, in order to carry out his mission, Ryan has to overcome his fear of flying after a serious helicopter accident during his marine training.

*The Hunt for Red October* is also a Pursuit Narrative. For example, Captain Tupolov (Stellan Skarsgard) of the *Konavalov*, a chasing Soviet submarine, is driven by overriding self interest and ambition to the extent that his fanatical desire to kill his friend leads to his own self-destruction. On the other hand, Seaman Jones (Courtney B. Vance) obsessive interest in music and his sonar equipment enables him to decipher the sonar trace of the *Red October's* silent propulsion system. This is an example of how obsessive behaviour can be seen positively rather than negatively.

*The Hunt for Red October* can also be seen as an Encounter Narrative. When the US boarding party first see Ramius and his fellow officers on the *Red October*, the standoff brings together a number of issues regarding perception of the other. The narrative explores the way perceptions of the other as difference are seen to be contradictory, not least in the way similarities between the self and other pose contradictions within the self. Ramius and Ryan are consistently figured as different from the systems of which they are a part, and are shown to have more in common with each other. Ryan's reluctant smile as a gesture of friendship, along with Ramius's fear of meeting a 'buckaroo' (apparently confirmed when he thinks Mancuso resembles a cowboy) frame this encounter with 'the other' in terms of perception of differences.

The later *Crimson Tide* also exploits the notion of differences in the other. The setting is in the post-Cold War period, indicated here through the break-up of the former Soviet Union and the threat posed by 'ultra-nationalist' Radchenko (Daniel von Bargen). Whereas *The Hunt for Red October* utilises the potential break-up as a premise for

difference in the other, *Crimson Tide* uses the actual break-up to prioritise differences in the self. It does this through the Microcosm Narrative.

For example, the conflict between Ramsey (Gene Hackman) and Hunter (Denzel Washington) can be seen as drawing extensively on both Mission and Pursuit narrative traditions. The conflict in *Crimson Tide* is over the correct procedure in the protocol for a nuclear missile launch. In the first case, Ramsey's hostility to Hunter's philosophy and procedural decisions is based on the latter's lack of combat experience. Hunter's baptism, literally by fire (in the galley), prefigures his actions in the combat situation. In the course of the mission, when Hunter sinks the Akula he gains the combat experience for which he is called into question. In the typical Mission Narrative of the 1940s and 1950s, this experience would have been vital for the completion of the mission. In this Microcosm Narrative, this experience is less explicitly identified as the change the figure has to go through in order to achieve the mission. Although Hunter may be seen as having to prove he was up to the job, the narrative emphasises this in terms of his conflict with Ramsey rather than the necessity for success of the mission. Wartime Mission Narratives needed to emphasise the ability of the men to perform their duty. *Crimson Tide* in the 1990s is more preoccupied with differences within masculinity.

If the Hunter/Ramsey conflict can be seen as taking on the form of the Mission narrative, it can also be seen in terms of the Pursuit Narrative. The Naval Board of Enquiry equivocates over who was right and who was wrong, but the conflict is played out at least in part in terms of that familiar obsessional behaviour. Hunter is positioned as the more pragmatic figure in the conflict over procedure. Ramsey is the regimented

Cold War Warrior, intent on getting off his missiles before the other side launches. He is unable to deviate from the 'orders in hand' and when he encounters resistance from Hunter, he loses self-control and ends up disregarding those very regulations he appears to be so regimented by.

This Microcosm Narrative and the way it emphasises the submarine as microcosm of wider social structures in terms of differences in the self is represented metaphorically in the debate about horses between the two men. At the height of the stand off in the con, Ramsey baits Hunter about the Spanish Lippezaner stallions, claiming they are all white. Hunter responds that they may be all white, but they are born black and are from Portugal. The implications of this metaphor must include the possibility that social structures based on racial difference are at least not fixed, and founded on erroneous distinctions. Ultimately though, the ending's equivocation may stand for the system's inability to simultaneously accommodate conflicting belief systems symbolised by Hunter and Ramsey, at least without under going change.

### **Conclusions**

To what extent then are the Mission, Pursuit and Encounter types ways in which the microcosm type has been historically determined? The different types would have to be historically distinct for this to work, and with some exceptions they follow the broad pattern established here. This is not to argue that Mission and Pursuit Narratives are historically determined while Rescue-Mission Microcosm Narratives are not. The narrative patterns in the submarine and underwater adventure film of different eras are articulated to different versions of social structures, and these versions are best

expressed through either Mission, Pursuit or Encounter Narratives. Microcosm Narratives containing elements of the other types can be distinguished as having the model of social structures as one of their most significant narrative drives, even though they may contain elements of the other narrative types. The chapters that follow will account for different issues seen as central to the construction and maintenance of masculinity. The changes within the submarine film, and the appearance of the different types, allow these hybrid sub genres to emphasise the different issues that are seen to confront masculinity.



### 3] Nature.

The relationship between masculinity and nature has frequently figured as one of the main ways in which masculine identity is defined. Nature functions in both cultural representations and social constructions of masculinity not only to establish particular concepts of masculinity but is also seen to figure in notions of gender difference and the subordination of femininity. This chapter will draw on these arguments in order to investigate the relation between masculinity and nature in the submarine film, and to propose that this relation is characterised by heterogeneity and contradiction. It will then be shown where these characteristics have implications for the concept of hegemonic masculinity. This chapter will argue, then, that nature cannot be seen as determining gender identity, neither can masculinity or femininity be seen as having a consistent relation with nature. Through this, the chapter will address the extent to which nature in gender and film studies is seen to maintain fixed notions of masculine identity and gender difference.

Myths of nature function in terms of an ideal, a romantic opposition to urban society found in the 'agrarian myth'<sup>1</sup> in popular representation and in wider culture and society. The way in which nature functions in opposition to urban development finds particular expression in a romantic notion of heroic masculinity as a reaction to modernity. Nature represents freedom from constraint and freedom to live out preferred forms of identity. In this way, both the sea and the desert in Dawson's account of popular representations of Lawrence of Arabia are spaces that

...offered its audiences a fantasy of liberation. Thomas cuts his hero free of the modern world itself, imagining him as able to do as he pleases and fashion the world according to his own desires, far away from the cramped, regimented and soulless hierarchies, out in the limitless deserts of Arabia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Schindler, *Hollywood in Crisis: Cinema and American Society, 1929-1939*, London & New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities*, London & New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 176. Dawson's discussion here is based on L. Thomas' articles on Lawrence that appeared in *The Strand Magazine* 59, January - June, 1920.

In many concepts, nature needs to be tamed but also preserved, both functions being part of the dynamic and changing attitude to nature as wilderness<sup>3</sup>. Leo Marx argues that Emerson came closest to 19th Century popular conceptions of man/nature relation in America. Through technology, man came to exploit nature: steam power allowed men to impose their will on the world, rather than be hostage to nature through wind.<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously, nature is bound up with a valorisation of technology as the triumph of reason, which is seen as leading to higher moral and political standards. However, Marx founds his discussion of concepts of nature on contradiction, for nature also functioned at this time (as it continues to) as locus of relief and restoration from the city. The historical dimension to the persistence of the myth and its contradictions has also been linked to changing notions of the frontier in American society during increasing urbanisation at the turn of the 20th Century.<sup>5</sup> The West has been seen as particularly significant in terms of the determination of difference in gender roles because

they [men and women] both faced new circumstances in which each sought to define gender rather vigorously...The image of the American frontier, spread so widely in popular literature, was an extreme but pervasive point in case, and we know, it because we celebrate it still.<sup>6</sup>

Humanity's relation with nature has increasingly been seen in terms of the growing pressure put on nature's finite resources through exploitation and development. These pressures have been accounted for in the following terms:

after the limits imposed by decolonisation, and the so-called oil shock (1973), culminating in the early 1970s, the contours of nature produced and conceived

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<sup>3</sup> See the third edition of R. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1982. (1967).

<sup>4</sup> See L. Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 229-242.

<sup>5</sup> For example, P. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America*, Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, 1990, especially pages 180-188. For the significance of nature/frontier in American thought and identity see D. Tallack, 'Transcendentalism and Pragmatism', in M. Gidley, (Ed), *Modern American Thought: An Introduction*, London & New York: Longman, 1993, pp. 68-93.

<sup>6</sup> Stearns, 1990, p. 68. Interestingly, Stearns cites biographical evidence (see page 69.) that these differences were not nearly so marked amongst pioneers as fiction maintained.

under capitalism were reworked in ways that are continuous and analogous with those of space in the early years of the century.<sup>7</sup>

Founded on a perceived incompatibility between economic activity and the environment, these issues can be seen as coming to the fore in the 1970s Atlantis myth underwater films, where utopian notions of the sea's bounty figure prominently.<sup>8</sup> Further, submarine films figure concepts of the sea in relation to notions of space as frontier. This may account for the existence of under water science fiction films and the use of science fiction conventions and iconography in those submarine narratives.

There remains one further point that should be emphasised concerning changes in conceptions of nature. These developments have been consistently underpinned by the continuity of the pastoral ideal of nature:

.. if nature at the dawn of the twenty-first century is resolutely social this does not mean that the modern dualism between "nature" and "society" no longer retains a hold on our imagination. Indeed, the opposite may be the case: today we hear regularly of the "death of nature" or the "end of nature", and now as often as before "nature" is seen as a refuge - a "pure" place which one travels in order to escape from society.<sup>9</sup>

Dualism and contradiction can then be seen as prominent in concepts of nature, and these notions will inform the structure of this chapter. Furthermore, the relation between masculinity and nature is likewise characterised by dualism and contradiction.

When nature is represented by water and the sea in particular, the contradictions within nature are emphasised through idyll, resource, and threat. Daniels has also shown how nature in this way contributes to formations of nation. In World War II, Britain drew on representations of landscape: 'the sturdy, vernacular culture, rooted in Tudor England,

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<sup>7</sup> C. Katz, 'Whose Nature, Whose Culture? Private productions of space and the "preservation" of nature', in B. Braun & N. Castree, (Eds), *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millenium*, London & New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 47.

<sup>8</sup> For developments in environmentalism since 1960s see K. Eder, *The Social Construction of Nature: A Sociology of Ecological Enlightenment*, London: Sage, 1996, particularly pp.163-166.

<sup>9</sup> N. Castree & B. Braun, 'The Construction of Nature and the Nature of Construction', in Braun & Castree, (Eds), 1998, p. 33.

... was seen to epitomise the nation.'<sup>10</sup> For example, both the sea and the land come to stand not only for what Britain was fighting for, and that which made Britain different from the enemy, but also as one of her allies:

Constable's skies were commandeered for the war effort. They feature prominently in the *British Weather* volume of the *Britain in Pictures* series, a volume which upholds the English sky, not just as a reflection of national character but, no less than the sea, a 'natural advantage' in times of war.<sup>11</sup>

However, nature later comes to function in opposition to the values found in the relation to the war effort, for example in the continuing anti-nuclear protests around the Faslane submarine base, and as Daniels shows, over Cruise Missiles at Greenham Common in the 1980s.<sup>12</sup> As will be shown in the analysis of specific films, nature has historically been defined in different ways. There, the argument will show that the relation between masculinity and nature is not always consistent with hegemonic masculinity.

The specific characteristics of nature in different types of submarine film have implications for masculinity because of the terms of the masculinity/nature relation. The characteristics of nature relate to those in other popular genres. For example, nature as wilderness in the western, as omnipotent in the disaster film, and as other in science fiction and horror. However, these characteristics should be seen as formed within the terms of the relation and not as determined solely by nature itself.

In film studies, masculinity has been defined through nature in various and contradictory ways, Popular representations of masculinity and nature contain oppositions between masculinity and femininity that correspond to culture and nature. Where masculinity is identified with nature, femininity is positioned as the restriction of civilisation or culture. Conversely where femininity is identified with nature, masculinity is identified

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<sup>10</sup> S. Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England & The United States*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993, p. 222.

<sup>11</sup> Daniels, 1993, p. 223. See S. Bone, *British Weather*, London: Collins, 1946.

<sup>12</sup> Daniels, 1993, pp. 227-229.

with culture, with the rational.<sup>13</sup> So, in order to fulfil these definitions, masculinity and femininity have to change places in these oppositions. Within these terms, nature can only be seen as functioning to maintain gender difference and the subordination of femininity. The argument in this chapter will show that identity and gender relations become more complex and dynamic processes if the relation between masculinity and nature is seen not only in terms of these oppositions.

There are a number of ways in which masculinity has been seen as identified with nature in popular culture. Easthope reads the 'Marlboro Man' advert as one which 'brings the image of the masculine ego in touch with nature.'<sup>14</sup> This notion of masculinity in touch with nature conforms to a romanticised ideal of a true masculinity, free from the trappings of culture and civilisation, from the 'ebb and flow of daily life' in Connell's phrase. In addition, this oneness with nature is seen as disguising the contradiction in masculinity's relation with nature: masculinity is seen as being at one with nature only when it can be brought under control, under the influence of culture. Nature is there to be cultivated; 'The world is presented as a natural dimension there only to be mastered. In the image, civilised man confronts untamed nature and takes up its challenge and invitation.'<sup>15</sup> The cultivation and taming of nature turns it into landscape, which maintains masculinity's dominant position. Untamed nature is brought under control and is therefore feminised through its subordination. Within these terms, every relation of power and domination has to figure as a relation of masculine and feminine. In many submarine films, particularly in the exploration and encounter narratives, a power relation is not the only relation with nature. Furthermore, masculinity and femininity do not consistently occupy the same positions in power relations that do occur.

Certain feminist arguments in film studies have addressed nature in terms of sexual difference, particularly in relation to the unequal social position men and women

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<sup>13</sup> See S. B. Ortner, 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?', in M. Zimbalist, and R. & L. Lamphere, (Eds), *Woman, Culture, and Society*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1974, pp. 67-87.

<sup>14</sup> Easthope, 1990, p. 47.

<sup>15</sup> Easthope, 1990, p. 47.

occupy. Here, nature can only function to maintain gender imbalance, a position that is not borne out in the textual analysis below. Mulvey, for example has seen this tendency as

drawing attention to the patterns of otherness that flesh out the raw nerve of sexual difference in popular culture and mythology (public vs. private space, nomadic vs. stable, sun vs. moon, mind vs. body, the law vs. the sexual, creator of culture vs. closeness to nature).<sup>16</sup>

For Creed, who works within the limits imposed by Kristeva 's notion of 'the abject' as anything outside of patriarchy, it is woman's reproductive capability (and the apparent threat this represents for men) which locates femininity as close to nature:

Her ability to give birth links her directly to the animal world and to the great cycle of birth, decay and death. Awareness of his links to nature reminds man of his immortality and of the fragility of the symbolic order.<sup>17</sup>

Stearns argues that the association of femininity with nature through reproduction, prevalent in the West since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, is 'rooted in women's multitude of natural functions - from menstruation to childbirth - and men's greater exposure to their fellows outside the home, a literally manmade world.'<sup>18</sup> The implications of the femininity/nature identification can be seen in other assumptions about gender, for example in the opposition of masculine/rational with feminine/irrational. Here, femininity is irrational through association with nature. However, it will be shown that in the submarine film femininity/masculinity is not positioned consistently in the opposition nature/culture.

The link between femininity and nature via women's reproductive capability also figures in accounts of masculinity in the war film. For Jeffords, Vietnam War films address birth/nature as a threat to masculinity and work towards masculine control of nature, thereby maintaining women's subordinate position.<sup>19</sup> This can have implications for masculinity and nature, particularly when it is water or the sea that stands for

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<sup>16</sup> L. Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989, pp. 161-2.

<sup>17</sup> B. Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, London & New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> Stearns, 1990, 73.

<sup>19</sup> Jeffords, 1989, p. 108.

nature/femininity. The ocean's similarity to the amniotic fluid of the womb represents for masculinity the plenitude of pre-Oedipal stage and therefore functions as a site of desire but also as a place where men should not be. Men must, within these terms, leave the water in order to take up their proper place in the symbolic order that is opposed to femininity/nature/the abject. For example, Robbins accounts for the link between the womb and the ocean in Freud, and its function in masculine identity through her discussion of womb envy in Cronenberg's films, where

the womb envy of Cronenberg's men is often indistinguishable from their masochistic, regressive desire to return to the pre-symbolic connection with the maternal real.<sup>20</sup>

The colonisation of submarine worlds can be seen as the imposition of 'masculine' traits of rationality, regulation and order on 'feminine' nature itself. The question this chapter will address, though, is whether this process necessarily privileges hegemonic masculinity.

There is a problem of generality in the way Creed addresses the monstrous in terms of femininity as the abject because 'every encounter with horror, in the cinema, is an encounter with the maternal body,'<sup>21</sup> Within these terms every encounter with nature as monstrous other is an encounter with femininity. The deep-sea giant squids, aliens, and mutations that figure as threats to masculinity are not simply coded as feminine. For Creed nature has to perform a contradictory function: untamed it is associated with 'the feminine' because it poses a threat to masculinity; brought under the yoke it is 'feminised' because it is placed in a subordinate position to masculinity. The terms in which this 'gendering of nature' operates are unsatisfactory. Analysis of the different types of submarine film will show that it is the processes of the relation that is significant rather than the positions that masculinity and nature occupy.

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<sup>20</sup> H. W. Rollins, 'More Human than I am Alone: Womb Envy in David Cronenberg's *The Fly* and *Dead Ringers*', in Cohan & Hark, (Eds), 1993, p. 140.

<sup>21</sup> Creed, 1993, p. 166.

In contrast to the overarching claims discussed above, Tudor accounts for the differences within nature-as-threat found in developments in the horror genre. For example, the threat posed by nature is central to the 1970s, but there are differences between earlier 'obsessed scientist' films and the industrial/scientific consequence films, with a modern anti-pollution dimension. The conventions of the genre emphasise the threat as external or internal to humanity, rather than to patriarchy and as Tudor argues

Our external/secular threats are no longer as external as they once were, for it is nature, the very essence of our own world, that is rising against us, and in these natural apocalypses human beings are routinely found guilty.<sup>22</sup>

Tudor shows that the function of nature has to be seen in terms of context, narrative significance and that to which nature is opposed. As Medhurst perceptively reads *The Spanish Gardener* (P. Leacock, UK, 1956), nature stands for the opposite of a restrictive, 1950s, English masculinity: in the figure of Jose the gardener, (Dirk Bogarde). Nature is freedom, exoticism, feeling and a potentially homosexual desire:

Harrington Brande stands for and is associated with England, coldness and the inside of buildings, Jose' is the personification of Spain, warmth and the great outdoors.<sup>23</sup>

Nature in the war film is also seen to represent an inferior, hostile and foreign other. For example, Kane argues that for the American soldier foreign lands are 'Barren, sterile, they are somehow an aberration of Nature. ...They would never attempt to turn this wilderness into a garden'<sup>24</sup>

Discussions of other popular genres such as the Western have associated particular forms of masculinity with nature. These too can depend on maintaining dichotomies of masculinity/femininity and culture/nature, which this chapter finds insufficient for the processes in hegemonic masculinity. The instability of these oppositions, the way in which culture and nature have a dual function in myths, including popular genres, has

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<sup>22</sup> Tudor, 1989, p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> A. Medhurst, 'It's as a Man That You've Failed': Masculinity and Forbidden Desire in *The Spanish Gardener*', in Kirkham & Thumin, 1993, p. 97.

<sup>24</sup> K. Kane, *Visions of War: Hollywood Combat Films of World War II*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1976, p. 46.



been identified with reference to the Western. Kitses' binary oppositions determining the thematic structure of the genre should be seen as; 'a philosophical dialectic, an ambiguous cluster of meanings...'<sup>25</sup> In this way, nature has a positive function when

The plains and mountains of western landscape can be an aspiring and civilising environment, a moral universe productive of the Western hero, a man with a code.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, nature can be 'barren and savage, surroundings so demanding that men are rendered morally ambiguous, or wholly brutalised.'<sup>27</sup> These oppositions and the significance of nature have been accounted for in the construction of authentic American Western narratives<sup>28</sup>, The dynamism of these oppositions, particularly in terms of masculinity and culture, can be seen in a film such as *Red River* (H. Hawks, US, 1948). Here Tom Dunson (John Wayne) moves from being identified with culture to being identified as outside culture when he cannot come to terms with change and progress.

As the above account shows, nature performs several contradictory roles in the definition and analysis of gender. If the strict oppositions are not maintained, then many of the claims appear wanting. Through the analysis of the different types of submarine film below, it can be seen that nature does not function consistently to maintain a coherent hegemonic masculinity.

The analysis below will establish the relation between men and nature, and the extent to which that relation privileges certain forms of masculinity and maintains hierarchical gender relations. The discussion of the films will therefore consider nature in the following terms: nature as threat, nature as benign, nature as bounty, and finally nature as wilderness. Again, there is a degree of overlap between these categories. This will

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<sup>25</sup> J. Kitses, *Horizons West*, London: Thames & Hudson/BFI, 1969, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Kitses, 1969, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Kitses, 1969, p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> See R. Abel, 'Our Country'/Whose Country? The Americanisation Project of Early Westerns', in E. Buscombe and R. Pearson, (Eds), *Back in the Saddle Again: New Essays on the Western*, London: BFI, 1998, pp. 77-95, particularly pp. 77-81, and D. Pye, 'The Western (Genre and Movies)', in B. K. Grant, (Ed), 1986, p. 148.

serve to demonstrate that the relation between masculinity and nature is not solely determined by nature, but that the relation is one of inter-dependence and inter-relation.

### **Nature as Threat.**

When the submarine dives to extreme depths nature becomes a threat. This threat works towards different meanings for masculinity in different types of submarine film. For the submarine, nature is its medium of transportation *and* its disguise. The submariner is always out of his natural environment, so in a very important sense their existence is a defiance of nature. Conversely, the submarine is designed to function under water; on the surface it becomes unstable and is at its most vulnerable.<sup>29</sup> In defying nature, the submarine exposes itself to all forms of threats from nature. Significantly, it is when things go wrong with the submarine that nature begins to endanger the lives of the crew. For example, nature becomes a threat when the submarine crew push the submarine beyond the limits of its technological endurance, or when it is damaged, when nature becomes too powerful for the submarine, or when the crew's foolishness brings them into conflict with the laws of nature.

It has been established that being trapped on the bottom of the ocean is a convention of the submarine film<sup>30</sup>. Although it does not occur with the regularity that Basinger claims, this condition is significant to a number of submarine narratives of different types. Trapped beneath the sea can be caused by a number of factors: hostile enemy action, technological breakdown under extreme pressure at depth, and imprisonment of intruders in a submarine world. The threat that nature poses is expressed through the need to escape to avert the exhaustion of air or the failure of the submersible's integrity due to pressure.

In *Das Boot* for example, the submariners are stranded on the bottom when the diving planes are damaged in a Spitfire attack. The propulsion system, steering and pumps are

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<sup>29</sup> See T. Clancy, *Submarine: A Guided Tour Inside a Nuclear Warship*, London: Harper Collins, 1993, p. 62.

<sup>30</sup> See Basinger, 1986, p. 68.

damaged and need to be repaired if the men are to escape before they suffocate. Within this scenario, it is the way in which the threat of nature is resolved that has implications for masculinity. The survivors have enough air for one attempt to escape, if they blow the ballast tanks the submarine may float to the surface, if not they suffocate. The remedial action to this threat is coded in terms of group cooperation and perseverance: here, heroism belongs to the crew not to the individual. As the captain (Jurgen Prochnow) puts when he wakes to find the engine, pumps and sonar repaired: 'All you need is good people.'

Within the rescue mission submarine film, nature as threat has a far more direct bearing on the narrative process. One of the consequences of being trapped under water is that the crew will eventually run out of air. Rescue missions are driven by the need to save the crew before the extreme pressure ruptures the submarine, and before the men suffocate or drown. These dangers function in relation to class and gender in postwar Britain in *Morning Departure*, and in relation to counter-cultural masculinity in *Gray Lady Down*.

In *Morning Departure* most of the officers and crew have escaped from the sunken HMS *Truculent*. The remaining men resort to cutting cards to determine who gets an escape hood. Stoker Snipe (Richard Attenborough) becomes hysterical and is knocked out when he loses, but then fakes an injured arm when he is given another's place in the escape party. The film ends bleakly, with Snipe, Higgins and Captain Armstrong stuck playing cards on the bottom, abandoned by the salvage team because of bad weather. Here, nature as threat enables Snipe to overcome his anxieties. These can be seen in terms of contemporary debates about masculinity around the return to civilian life, femininity and consumerism. Snipe is initially positioned as a loner, and reluctant service member. His marriage is also troubled by his wife's desire for consumer goods. This is emphasised as a threat through the present she has received from another man and her perceived waste of the housekeeping money. Snipe's hysteria that originally positioned him as a coward is replaced by selfless bravery that earns him camaraderie

and acceptance by the crew: 'Snipe turned out to be a real good man. If all this had not happened, we'd not have found out what he was really like.' In addition he overcomes his antagonism and decides to 'go for that promotion after all'; thus issues of class mobility are addressed in ways that promote the possibility of social advancement. The issues around femininity and consumerism can be seen as left unresolved by the death of the men at the end. However, it can also be argued that the threat posed by nature enables Snipe to overcome the anxieties evident in postwar British masculinity through a restoration of heroic masculinity. This is achieved not through heroic selflessness but in terms of group stoicism in the face of suffocation. Nature as threat brings the men together, not to deny difference, but to emphasise the significance of different masculinities within the officers and crew. Armstrong is the middle-class officer, Higgins is stoic and down to earth working class (all he longs for is 'a pint of wallop and some fresh air'!), and Snipe is a feminised, younger working class.

The threats that nature poses to the stricken *Neptune* in *Gray Lady Down* are derived from the submarine's position. The submarine comes to rest on the continental shelf, on the edge of the deep ocean. The threats to the submarine are: water pressure bursting the watertight doors, the hull being crushed by increased pressure at greater depth, exhaustion of the air supply, and rock slides down the canyon wall. The rescue mission has to race against all these eventualities if the men are to be saved. The tensions in the mission procedures are between maverick/experimental (Gates and Mickey) and obedient/trained (Bennett and Bloome (Lawrason Driscoll)). The maverick/experimental position is validated through individual heroism, though the latter is partially vindicated through its mutability. This can be seen in two decisions pivotal to the rescue mission. Firstly, it is Bennett who has the idea to use shaped charges to blow the rock obstructing the submarine's rotation to the horizontal (to enable the DSRV to dock on the escape hatch). However, he reaches this decision by going against his military training: as he puts it, 'I can hardly believe it myself.' Secondly, Gates rams his mini-sub the *Snark* under the *Neptune* as the rockslide eventually drags it over the edge of the canyon. This holds up the submarine long enough for the DSRV to get the last of the

men out, but Gates is crushed in his act of heroism. Here then, nature as threat functions to vindicate masculinity not in the interests of the individual over the community, but in terms of the maverick over the military. Therefore, even when nature figures as a threat to masculinity it cannot be said to simply reinforce institutions identified with *the* hegemonic masculinity, such as the military.

In *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* nature as threat takes the form of encounters with deep-sea monsters. In both cases, a giant octopus/squid attacks when the submarine reaches extreme depths. Here then, it is at the farthest remove from culture that nature becomes a threat. In *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, Nelson's plan to fire a Polaris missile at the Van Allen belt is resisted by the skeptics at the UN who condemn his plan. In addition, Nelson has to out run the US Navy to get the *Seaview* in position at the Marianas Trench so as to achieve the correct trajectory for the missile. Nature is positioned as violent and unexplained through the threat posed by the Van Allen belt of fiery radiation: a nearby meteor storm at the time of its appearance could be a link, though its origins are not explained. The fight with the giant octopus is significant in terms of masculinity in a number of ways. In his attempt to contact command, Nelson takes the *Seaview* to the ocean floor to connect with the Rio-London telephone cable. Although the connection is made, the octopus kills two men and communication is unsuccessful, because London has been destroyed. The function of this encounter is to emphasise the apparently reckless individualism of Nelson, which in turn can be seen as working towards vindicating the form of masculinity he stands for when his defiance proves to be worth while. Without leader figures such as Nelson, clearly positioned against the community of vacillating scientists, politicians and even military, the irrational force of nature cannot be dealt with.

The encounter with the giant octopus in *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* similarly works towards validating a particular form of masculinity, though in very different terms. The *Nautilus* has been damaged in an attack by a warship and sinks out of control until, as

Nemo informs Arronax, they have gone 'deeper than man has ever been before'. It is here that they encounter the giant squid that pursues them to the surface when power is restored. Nemo and his crew's efforts to fight off the monster are futile, and Nemo himself is dragged into the water by one of the squid's giant tentacles. Throughout this attack, Land has been imprisoned for trying to escape, but frees himself and uses his harpooners skills to kill the 'most tenacious of sea beasts' and then dives in to save Nemo. Land's heroics could be seen as validating masculinity in terms of individual strength and action. However, the film clearly signals his heroics in terms of his opposition to Nemo: he dismisses Land's 'brash heroics' as 'in the best traditions of cheap fiction'. In terms of the differences within masculinity, Land is positioned as the ordinary working man and Nemo as an outmoded tyrannical leader, who values life less than his ideals. For him, nature is simply a function of his vision; Land depends on the sea for his livelihood, so is therefore positioned as closer to nature.

*The Enemy Below* shows how nature can have contradictory meanings. While the explicit threat of nature is all too apparent in the examples discussed, there are also situations where the relation with nature foregrounds this contradiction. The U-boat captain is on a fixed course, to pick up a captured British codebook, and then sail for home. It is this fixed course that will prove to be his undoing, as it allows the destroyer to predict his positions. Eventually, the U-boat is forced to hide on the bottom of the ocean by the depth charge attacks of the destroyer. This section is a highly tense drawn out game of patience, bluff and double bluff, endurance and discipline for the captains and crew of both the submarine and the destroyer. The exposition below of the sequence shows how the stress is placed on an opposition between the conventional tactics associated with heroic masculinity, and the risks the U-Boat captain takes in order to get home.

von Stolberg has just received the congratulations of his officers and crew (Kuntz remarks 'The Fuhrer would be pleased with you.') for a series of brilliant manoeuvres that has enabled the submarine to survive, shaken but unscathed, the first pattern of American depth charges. Within minutes though the destroyer attacks again and Von

Stolberg has to decide on his course of evasive action. Grimly consulting his charts, he assesses their chances of evading detection on the ocean floor, 310 metres below the surface. His second in command and friend 'Hiene' Schwaffer (Theodore Bikel), argues that 'It's not possible, Herr Capitain, to go that deep. Pressure would crush the hull.' The Captain's makes his decision when the submarine is rocked by another pattern of depth charges: he decides to head for the bottom. As the gauge passes 250 metres, a water pipe bursts but is quickly sealed before the submarine creaks its way to the ocean floor. The captain's reassuring 'We build them good in Germany, eh, Hiene?' is met with a halfhearted 'Yeah' and a close up on Hiene's anxious face.

At this depth, beyond the expected capabilities of the submarine, the pressure is a threat to the survival of the crew. The longer they stay down, trapped in the silent routine which is their camouflage, the greater the risk. But this silent routine has to convince the destroyer that the submarine is gone rather than hiding on the bottom. For fifty minutes silent routine must be maintained. On the surface, the destroyer crew passes the time reading a *Little Orphan Annie* comic, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, sleeping, ambling about the deck and fishing over the side. Following one of the fishing lines down through the water, the camera tilts on its axis and zooms in on the submarine. Inside the crew sweat it out in their vests, play chess, read the paper and, to the disgust of the captain, *Mien Kampf!* This shot links the two crews together in their tasks, and emphasises their commonality across the military antagonism. This apparent normalcy stresses the threat that nature poses to both crews; any noise will reveal their presence, given the sound carrying qualities of the sea and the listening devices extended into the water.

For the submarine, nature plays a dual, contradictory role in its fate. The ocean floor provides the cover that masks its presence from the American sonar equipment. But it is only by pushing the limits of the submarine that advantage can be taken of this deception. The submarine can only withstand the pressure for so long, and it is this that forces the captain's decision to try to escape. This will reveal its presence to the

listening sonar crew, and nature also plays its part in this. One factor that reveals the presence of a submarine is the working of its propeller. It is not the noise of its engines, but 'cavitation', the bubbles produced by the turning of the screws in the water that carries to the sonar. That which hides the submarine also betrays its presence.

Since von Stolberg took the submarine to the ocean floor nature has played its part in the fate of the submarine and in the conflict between the two opposing captains. Nature is used as a decoy by the submarine, but to do so the submarine comes under threat from nature. Nature becomes the ally of the submarine, against which Captain Murrell has to use his intuition to out-wit von Stolberg. Finally, the pressure forces the submarine to start engines and reveal itself; nature is instrumental again in the course of action and in the outcome. Nature is a threat to the submarine, but the picture is more complex than this. It is also the relation between men and nature that is important. Using nature for secrecy exposes the submarine to the danger of destruction. The threat is determined by the perception of nature, and the opposing captains have to take calculated risks with nature as threat and as protection. It has been shown how this figures for the U-boat captain, nature functions as protection but ultimately it is his downfall. Nature also plays a crucial role in the actions of the destroyer, as it is Captain Murrell's intuition that enables him to penetrate the submarine's deception. Murrell decides 'He might like us to think he can't.' when confronted with the question of the submarine's ability to hide at 310 metres.

In this film, then, nature as threat to masculinity can be seen to function in different ways to that identified by Mulvey and Creed above, where femininity/nature is consigned to the outside of patriarchy. The significance of nature is that in the duel between the two captains it is one of the ways in which their mutuality is emphasised, over and above the political and military oppositions.

In the under water adventure submarine film, the contradictions within humanity's relation with nature are highly significant. This can be seen in a number of submarine



films of different types, which deal with the contradictions in contrasting ways. For example, in the ways *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City* and *Leviathan* address 'meddling with nature'. Furthermore the dangers in notions of utopia founded on nature's 'energy' are explored in *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City* and *City under the Sea*.

*Captain Nemo and the Underwater City* presents 'meddling with nature' through the threats to *Templemere* by 'Mobula', a giant 150 foot ray that periodically attacks its citizens. The boundaries of utopia are then threatened by nature, but this civilisation is also founded on nature. However, it turns out that the ray is actually a mutation, and as Nemo explains 'one of our own making. Building *Templemere* caused an explosion and the blast affected its brain - turned a harmless creature into a monster, marine inhabitants don't attack without reason.' Fraser remarks; 'Even utopia has its hazards', but significantly he is the one who manages to kill Mobula. Fraser's masculinity is clearly located in the real world politics of diplomacy and arms negotiations, which is opposed to the idealism of Nemo's utopia. This would suggest that the oppositions are based on the distinction between an idealistic approach to nature that ignores the consequences, associated with Nemo and the past, and Fraser's pragmatic approach to political and social problems.

By the late 1980s these oppositions are expressed in different terms in *Leviathan*, where monstrous nature is a genetic aberration. The crew of a deep-sea mining operation comes across the wreck of a Soviet ship, which is revealed to have been torpedoed because of genetic mutation produced in its attempts to create an underwater man. 'Homoaquaticus' becomes the monster through meddling with nature. This is expressed in terms of political and economic instrumentalism and contemporary anxieties over genetic engineering. While the Soviet's are indicted for experimenting on their own civilians, (the scientist put the 'genetic experiment' in the crew's vodka), the company is implicated because it knew of the accident and abandons the crew for dead. Here, the opposition between nature and culture do not work towards maintaining difference in

terms of masculinity and femininity, but in terms of privileging a consensual rather than hierarchical social model.

In *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City* the notion of utopia founded on nature's energy can be seen in Nemo's oxygen purification machine. This becomes a threat through the escape attempt by Lomax the neurotic Englishman who is clearly opposed to Fraser's controlled masculinity. Lomax tries get to the surface by blowing the roof off *Templemere* by shutting the safety valve on the mechanism. Nemo ruthlessly lets Lomax drown in order to save *Templemere*, a decision that is initially resisted by Fraser and Helena. Lomax's anxiety makes him aggressive; this suggests that the wrong approach to nature can lead to its misuse with disastrous consequences. In this way, representations of masculinity in the submarine film can be seen as working against rather than towards masculinity associated with aggression.

Overall then, it is an aggressive masculinity that is seen as irrational. Significantly, *Templemere* is not destroyed by its own power: in addition, Helena and Nemo have fallen in love so she opts to remain below with her son Philip. [Unlike Fraser, who leaves despite falling in love with a 'native' Mala] This can be read as associating femininity and youthful masculinity with idealism, but as has been shown, these are not the only terms of the opposition. Although the oppositions of culture and nature figure in this narrative, they work towards difference within masculinity rather than difference of femininity.

In *City under the Sea* nature as threat is associated with primitivism through the mythical coding of the undersea world. Here, life under the sea is dependent on the energy from a nearby volcano that powers the pumps and mysteriously prevents the inhabitants from aging. All this comes at a price though, for the volcano continually threatens to erupt and destroy the city. As The Captain puts it; 'We are prisoners of our own help.' When the explosion does come, it clearly resembles a mushroom cloud associated with a nuclear explosion and so can be seen as expressing anxieties about

nuclear technology. Immortality functions as a desire to defy death and thereby maintain a separation between masculinity and nature. The references to myth and ancient civilisations clearly link this desire with primitivism and the past, thereby emphasising the opposition in terms of past and present rather than masculinity and femininity.

### **Nature as Benign.**

Similar questions about the interdependence of masculinity and nature need to be posed in the consideration of nature as benign. Nature as benign takes different forms in the submarine film - as innocent, as non-malignant, as haven, or as aid. These in turn figure in the processes of hegemony and difference within masculinity.

Pressure, the cold, the inability to absorb oxygen and the topography of the seabed remain crucial factors in the representation of nature as benign. In addition, the interpretation of nature determines whether it is friendly or hostile. Within submarine films, the differences in perception of nature range across the ways in which individuals see the ocean itself, the seabed and the creatures encountered below the surface. While the submarine has to work against the natural environment, the submarine is designed to be underwater. The same hull design that provides the submarine with its stealth and speed underwater causes the submarine to wallow and pitch on the surface.

*The Abyss* articulates complex negotiations around issues of gender and nature, and these negotiations are significant in terms of the processes of hegemonic masculinity and a dynamic concept of gender relations. There is one sequence in which assumptions about gender and nature are particularly significant. This is where Bud and Lyndsey are trapped in the crippled DSRV, 70 yards from their base, Deepcore, with only one functioning breathing apparatus. Lyndsey, without a suit, is beginning to freeze in the rapidly rising water. She rejects Bud's suggestion that he swim back to the rig to fetch another supply of air. Subsequently, she exhorts him not to be emotional and to listen to her plan, though he retorts 'Fuck logic!' The dialogue emphasises the positions of masculinity and femininity in relation to nature:

- Lyndsey** Right, yes, so I've got a plan.
- Bud** What's the plan?
- L** I drown and you tow me back to the rig.
- B** No! No!
- L** Yes! This water's only a couple of degrees above freezing. I go into deep hypothermia. My blood'll go like ice water, right, my body systems'll slow down. They won't stop. You tow me back, I can be revived after maybe ten or fifteen minutes.

This scene relates to the assumptions about the relation between masculinity and nature. The orthodox perception of the very low temperature of the sea at extreme depths (1,700 feet from the surface) is that it is life threatening. But in this instance, it is the cold that saves Lyndsey. Nature here is benign, and this is determined through the individual's relation with nature. Of particular note is that in this case it is the woman who is able to come up with the life saving idea; it is because of Lyndsey's knowledge that she is able to think of nature in a different way. It is this different perspective that turns a life threatening factor, the cold, into a life preserving one. Here, the association of logic and reason with the masculine is overturned, as Bud is presented as having become over emotional and unable to think of a solution. It is through the feminine appropriation of this supposedly masculine behaviour that turns nature as threat into nature as saviour. Nature therefore has a benign function.

Another scenario where benign nature functions in the service of the submarine's mission can be found in *The Hunt for Red October*. Hunted by the navies of both the Soviet Union and the United States, Ramius has to out-run his own side and convince the Americans his intentions are not hostile. Powered by the revolutionary 'magneto hydrodynamic propulsion' system the *Red October* is capable of a higher level of stealth under the sea. The ultimate disguise for a mechanical construction such as a submarine is for it to sound like a creature of the ocean, a 'biologic' in sonar terminology. In this way the submarine becomes identified with nature through its revolutionary technology, rather than as an intruder in that environment. Unfortunately for Ramius, the *Red*

*October* is detected, and his course plotted. He is discovered because sabotage to the propulsion system forces him to use his conventional screws for power, and the Soviets pick him up on their sonar. In addition, Seaman Jones on the *USS Miami* discovers his position, by using his knowledge and equipment to interpret the 'biologic' blip on his sonar.

It is the route *Ramius* plans to take that is also interesting here. Jones' discovery of *Red October's* course prompts him to remind the Captain of the rumours about Russian sub captains running the Ricanus Ridge at high speed because they had hyper-accurate surveys of the underwater canyons. In this instance there are two ways in which nature functions as benign. It is specialist knowledge that makes the canyons available to *Ramius* as a source of cover for his course. The natural topography of the ocean floor provides extra cover for *Red October*, so to reduce his chances of detection *Ramius* takes what is known as 'Red Route One' southwest from Greenland. Successful navigation of the Ricanus Ridge depends on precise calculations of speed, direction and time. *Ramius* though induces panic in the navigator *Kamarov* when he increases speed to 26 knots. A close up of the sweating navigator as he whispers to *Borodin* (Sam Neill) 'Too fast, *Vasily*, too fast, those charts are laid down precisely. So many knots on such and such a course for so many seconds, ...and this thing handles like a pig.' emphasises the importance of those calculations in taking advantage of the topography. *Ramius'* apparent recklessness though is only a prelude to the next significant incident in which nature has a benign function in the mission of *Red October*.

*Ramius* successfully navigates the canyons at the new speed and immediately the crew has relaxed when something jolts the submarine. This turns out to be the failure of the caterpillar drive that forces them to run on normal propulsion. As a result, the submarine is detected and fired on by a Soviet Anti-Submarine Aircraft. *Red October* has to take evasive action to escape the armed and homing torpedo. The crew knows the torpedo can be diverted by the counter measures, but when these fail, *Ramius* has to use the canyons to escape being hit. With the time to impact only seconds longer than the

time to the next turn in the canyon, Ramius delays the turn until the last possible moment. The torpedo is unable to make the turn, and explodes on impact with the canyon wall. *Red October* escapes with only minor damage. It is Ramius' knowledgeable interpretation of the calculated route that enables him to use the natural topography of the ocean floor to his advantage. Nature has a benign function in this scenario, determined by the individual's perception of the topography.

### Nature as Bounty.

The sea is everything. Its breath is pure and healthy. It is an immense desert where man is never alone, for he feels life quivering around him on all sides.

(Captain Nemo)<sup>31</sup>

The previous section showed the ways in which nature as benign allowed the submariner to use it for specific purposes. These were notably stealth, torpedo evasion, life preservation and navigation. Specific use can be made of the bounty of nature, for example, power and nutrition, but the idea of nature as paradise is also significant. In this sense, nature offers the possibility of an alternate, even superior, way of life to that of human society on the surface.

Nature here is articulated around three specific ideas found in submarine films: nature as bounty, nature as superior to society, and as source of power for the submarine and underwater civilisation. In particular narratives, these can be related to contemporary anxieties about natural resources, and also to fears over nuclear power through the ways in which the latter hints at harnessing the 'power of the universe'.

Firstly, the focus will be on the sea's bounty in *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea* represented by the meal that Professor Arronax, Conseil and Land are invited to take with Captain Nemo. The survivors tuck into their meal as Nemo explains to them the subtle differences between being guests or prisoners on his submarine. Nemo closes the debate with the remark 'I tolerate no guests aboard the *Nautilus*, and you already know

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<sup>31</sup> J. Verne, *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea* London: Collins, 1954, (1870), p. 63.

the fate of prisoners.’ Conseil attempts to steer the conversation into safer waters and pipes up ‘The food is delicious, isn’t it professor?’ Nemo informs them that ‘These dishes come entirely from my ocean kitchen. There is nothing here of the earth.’ Asked if they are eating lamb, Nemo replies ‘That is brisket of blowfish, with sea squirt dressing, basted in barnacles.’

This scene is played with the comic touch brought about by the surreal oppositions between the survivor’s appetites and the dishes they are tucking into. These oppositions take a turn for the worst when Land learns that the cream for his pudding is ‘of course, milk from the giant sperm whale’, and his disgust is complete when Nemo reveals that the pudding itself is ‘my own recipe, sauté of unborn octopus.’ This ridiculous exchange underlines the plenitude of the natural world that Nemo has harvested for his alternative existence.

This notion of plenitude is further emphasised through the hunting expedition. Nemo informs Arronax ‘We do all our hunting and farming here’ and counters his disbelief by assuring him that ‘The sea supplies all my wants.’ The full extent of nature’s bounty in this section is brought about through the spectacular sequence of wildlife photography accompanied by Arronax’s voice over:

A strange twilight world opened up before me, and I felt as the first man to set foot on another planet, the first intruder in this mystic garden of the deep. ...Here in abundance were various substances necessary to sustain life. An underwater larder full to overflowing, and all Captain Nemo’s for the taking.

Alongside this voice over, the screen is filled with images of abundance: giant rays, colourful coral reefs, octopus, shoals of fish, and the crew scooping shellfish from traps, crabs and lobsters spilling from nets. This visual splendour as paradise is reinforced by the narrative voice; Arronax sees himself as the first man, and all these resources are under the control of Nemo. The ocean provides all of the submariner’s needs, as if the submarine world is paradise, an existence before the temptations of other desires. The exploitation of nature is justified by Nemo’s claims to superiority, but also by the sheer

abundance of the resource. The exploitation of nature's resources in this film can be seen as preceding environmental concerns over those resources originating in the 1960s.

The opposition between terrestrial greed and oceanic harvest is emphasised by the antics of Land and Conseil. After the visual feast of the harvest, they spot a wreck on the ocean floor. Their excitement at finding a treasure chest is short-lived though, as they come under attack from a shark and are only saved by Nemo's harpoon. The contrast between the two 'harvests' could not be greater. The harvest of nature is filled with wonder and the rewards for using nature in this way are life itself. For the more material desires of Land and Conseil, the reward is threat of death. If the underwater world is paradise, a Garden of Eden, then materialist values can only spoil that paradise.

This opposition of natural/materialist values also figures in the actions of the comedy brothers in *Captain Nemo and the Under Water City*. Swallow and Barnaby continually try to escape with as much of the 'by-product' gold as they can. It is the massive production of this gold as a waste product of Nemo's oxygen purifier that works towards the privileging of life/nature over gold/riches. This is underlined further when the survivors have escaped: Barnaby is drowned by the weight of gold in his pockets, Swallow survives and casually tosses his only remaining piece of treasure back into the ocean.

Although Nemo's invention is coded as mystical, there are more practical ways in which nature is coded as bounty in this film. The tour of *Templemere's* 'farms' includes an underwater safari spectacular such as those found in *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*. The emphasis in these sequences is on the spectacle of nature (vivid colours, strange shapes, and elaborate decoration) but also on the plenitude offered by the scale of resources. Nature provides food, air, and, in *City under the Sea*, immortality. Living beneath the sea in the underwater adventure film is positioned as utopian because nature provides for all needs, and there is no danger of these resources running out. As has been shown, there is a price to pay for this utopian idealism. The



way in which nature as infinite resource is questioned in the later films, such as *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City*, and *City under the Sea*, can then be related to environmental concerns originating in the 1960s. Environmentalism is constructed as unrealistic through the associations of utopia with idealism, the past and femininity. For example, Fraser in *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City* has to leave to carry on his real world politics rather than live in Nemo's 'perfect society'. Associations of masculinity in the 1990s with 'the environment' are part of dominant culture's hegemonic process. Ross, for example, sees *On Deadly Ground* (S. Seagal, US, 1994) as a reaction to 'corporate environmentalism' in the 1980s in that the heroic figure is aligned against the ruthless machine of capitalist exploitation.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, masculinity's relationship with nature as bounty needs to be considered within the emphasis on process central to both hegemony and utopia. Firstly, utopia necessarily contains an element of future promise, of something not necessarily immediately attainable, but worth striving towards. Secondly, hegemonic processes in which dominance is maintained through concessions cannot simply appropriate oppositional values without the dominant group undergoing some change. With this in mind, and the already extant differences within masculinity, it is possible to see the utopian notions in nature as bounty not as opposed to masculinity, but as part of ongoing negotiations between differences within masculinities.

### **Nature as Wilderness**

Nature as wilderness has a resonance within the submarine film. There are many ways in which the ocean figures as a form of wilderness for the submariner; the sheer expanse of the water, the unknown, possibly savage, depths of its farthest reaches, isolation and distance from society and the home, and the inhospitability of the submariners environment. Submarine narratives articulate ideas about masculinity in the ways that they deal with the notion of wilderness. The submariner's relationship with the wilderness is a process of negotiation, and this process emphasises changes in

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<sup>32</sup> A. Ross, 'The Great White Dude', in Berger et al, (Eds), 1995, pp. 167-175.

perceptions of that wilderness. These ideas will be discussed through analysis of two scenarios from *Leviathan* and *The Abyss*.

*Leviathan* opens with an emphatic visual and verbal indication of the inhospitability and isolation to come. Under the opening credits, the camera descends through increasingly dark and impenetrable water, emphasised through ominous music. As the screen blackens, a series of titles appear;

Atlantic Ocean 16 000 Feet Deep

Tri Oceanic Mining Corporation

Mission: Extraction of Silver and Other Precious Metals

Classification of Mission: Extremely Hazardous

Mining Shack \*7 Habitat and Operations

Day 87 of 90 Day Shift

Through this use of camera movement and titles the narrative has established the isolation and danger of the submariner's mission. The inclusion of the length of the shift adds to the overall feeling; the three months at 16, 000 feet below the surface emphasises the level of hardship endured on the mission: it indicates temporal and spatial aspects in the notion of wilderness.

On this shift, nature is a wilderness to be tamed and exploited for the benefit of society. Both 'The shack' in *Leviathan* and 'Deepcore' in *The Abyss* colonise that wilderness, making it hospitable. Any submersible is principally a steel bubble, designed to keep the water away from the inhabitants. The submarine can be read as a colonisation of that wilderness, an attempt to impose a different set of rules on at least part of that wilderness. Like all processes of colonisation though, the colonised offer some form of resistance. In terms of the gender of nature, the deep submersible can be seen as an imposition of masculine order on the feminine irrationality of nature. As the previous analysis of *The Abyss* shows, the terms of this identification in the submarine film do not conform to this set of oppositions. In the notion of nature as wilderness, nature brutalises rather than ennobles masculinity. The discussion below will address the extent

to which this brutalisation of masculinity works towards a hegemonic masculinity, and the ways in which differences within hegemonic masculinity are emphasised.

Barren as the ocean floor appears, it contains elements that are valuable on the surface. The reward for venturing into this wilderness is a system of bonuses calculated according to the hazards of the mission and the ability to meet the quota of silver extraction. This emphasises the need for a trade off between the hazards of the wilderness and the comforts of civilisation. The crew spends their leisure time fantasising about returning home and what they are going to do with the money. The crew's longing to be on the surface is countered by the cynicism of Mr. Cobb (Hector Elizondo):

I tell you what you'd be doing. You'd be watching news on TV that's so bad it makes you nauseous. So bad that you get in your car to get some fresh air, and after five miles you realise the air's so dirty you can't breathe. ... And that's just the good part, you people just don't appreciate how good you got it down here.

Here, the wilderness is positioned in opposition to the supposed advantages of civilisation, which are undermined by the apparent decay of modern society. Although nature is here emphasised as wilderness, its impact is not one of brutalisation. The rest of the crew rejects Cobb's cynicism, but this scenario destabilises the opposition between wilderness and society.

In *The Abyss* there are further examples of the way nature functions as a wilderness in submarine narratives. In this discussion the focus will be on the 1992 Special Edition version which includes the restored footage. The depth of the Cayman Trough 'two and a half miles straight down' brings the extent of the wilderness home. Bud, in volunteering to disarm the missile dispatched by Coffey to destroy the 'Russian' submarine, knows that his journey is one way. His descent into the wilderness of the deep is a mission of self-sacrifice for the greater good of civilisation. Disarming the warhead will not only prevent the nuclear explosion, but also save the 'aliens'. This is

important, for the 'alien' being stands for the possibility of a superior way of life, both in terms of morality and technology.

Bud leaps into the void, equipped with the revolutionary 'Oxygenated Fluorocarbon Emulsion' breathing system in order to follow the ROV to the warhead. His isolation is underlined by the faltering communication with Deepcore. He can hear them over the radio, but he can only respond by typing messages on a keypad. As he goes deeper, his ability to receive and respond to communication becomes impaired by the effects of the pressure on his nervous system. To keep his mind on the job, Lisa 'One Night' Standing (Kimberly Scott) implores Lyndsey to talk to him about something meaningful, rather than the bland reassurances she is offering. As his isolation increases, it is real contacts with 'home' that keep him going. By the time Bud approaches 16 000 feet he is only capable of typing nonsense on the keypad. Lyndsey reassures him 'Bud, it's the pressure, alright. You have to listen to my voice, you have to try. Concentrate, alright, just listen to my voice, *please!*' Halfway through these lines the point of perception for the audience switches from on Deepcore to Bud's position. With the switch, Lyndsey's voice becomes tinny and more remote, through which the spectator is linked with Bud's isolation. At this point 'Little Geek' implodes with the pressure and Bud is now completely alone, unable to navigate through the wilderness due to equipment failure. As Bud completes the descent he is isolated in the wilderness. By the time he has disarmed the warhead, the breathing apparatus cannot sustain him for the return journey, and he stops communication as he accepts his fate.

Bud's heroic masculinity arises out of encounter with nature as wilderness. Heroic masculinity is therefore ennobled through the encounter with the wilderness. In addition, it is also predicated on a dynamic rather than oppositional notion of gender difference. Bud's actions to save the NTIs come about in part because of his reconciliation with his estranged wife, but this reconciliation is not expressed in terms of the hero 'winning the girl', which is seen as reinforcing the active/masculine, passive/feminine dichotomy. Their reconciliation can be seen in terms of the mutability of gender difference; the

combination of masculinity and femininity is privileged over fixed differences of gender. Both Bud and Lyndsey learn from each other and this progressive notion of gender relations and difference arises out of their encounter with nature as wilderness. The notion of a hegemonic masculinity is dependent on femininity as difference; here it has been shown that the apparently 'exalted' hegemonic masculinity can be seen in terms of the mutability of masculinity and femininity.

Bud's encounter with the NTIs raises a further important issue in the relation between masculinity and nature as wilderness. This concerns the presence of creatures in that wilderness, and whether men interpret that presence as savage or as friendly. Bud's encounter is of course presaged by the continuing conflict between Lyndsey and Coffey. Her response to the unknown life form is filled with wonder and delight, while Coffey 'sees only Russians'. As Lyndsey pointedly remarks, 'You have to look with better eyes than that.' The crucial point about Bud's encounter is that in the Special Edition it becomes a lesson about the destructiveness of human folly and the superiority of the NTI life form. The NTIs' have created gigantic waves to destroy civilisation because, as their illustrated lecture shows, nuclear weapons and the history of wars make humans too dangerous. Asked by Bud why they change their minds, they reproduce his message to Lyndsey:

KNEW THIS WAS  
ONE WAY TICKET  
BUT YOU KNOW  
I HAD TO COME  
LOVE YOU WIFE

The unknown 'savage' is represented here as noble, but the lessons to be learnt from that nobility depend on human interpretation of that 'savagery'. Coffey occupies a position associated with hegemonic masculinity, from this position the alien can only appear savage and unfriendly.

### **Conclusions.**

Within this section it has been shown how the terms in which masculinity can be addressed in the submarine film can destabilise the oppositions between masculinity and nature. Nature has different functions in the submarine film, but those different functions do not necessarily work towards maintaining a hegemonic masculinity. Although both change and continuity have been accounted for in historical conceptions of nature, it can be seen that within those historical processes differences within masculinity are emphasised. Furthermore, those differences do not necessarily conform to the assumptions about hegemonic masculinity, nor the terms of the opposition whereby nature is said to function in the definition of that hegemonic masculinity.

#### **4] The Submarine Body.**

There are many ways in which the body has been seen as fundamental to definitions of masculinity. These range from psychoanalysis where gender is defined in relation to the phallus, to socio-biology where the characteristics of the male body determine definitions of masculinity through the types of work men do. Furthermore, typically masculine characteristics such as aggression are seen as derived from the presence of higher levels of testosterone in the male body. Even in arguments that stress the social rather than biological determination of gender, physical difference plays a significant role in maintaining unequal gender relations. In gender difference the feminine body attracts negative characteristics in relation to the masculine body. Here, masculinity may be defined as the active and physical body, and femininity as the passive and erotic body. All of these assumptions emphasise the priority of the male body in definitions, identifications and the domination of masculinity. These positions will be accounted for below, and the chapter will establish where they relate to the discussion of hegemonic masculinity in popular film. The argument will show that these oppositions, masculine/feminine, sociological/biological, can be seen as interdependent and as interrelated: subjectivity can be defined less anxiously when determination and socialisation are seen as a continuing process. Biology does not provide a framework to which processes of socialisation are then appended. The chapter will show the ways in which the body, and threats to it, can function as anxieties and traumas that masculinity has to negotiate. In this way, it will be seen that the body does not necessarily maintain hegemonic masculinity.

This emphasis on the body in definitions of masculinity brings with it a number of assumptions about masculinity. The physical is privileged over the emotional. Certain forms of expression are seen as masculine, for example anger. Others, such as hysteria, are seen as feminine. Further significant aspects include lack of physical intimacy, the preservation of the boundary of the body and the distinction between the body and the psychological and social. All of these assumptions are characteristic of hegemonic masculinity and therefore function to maintain the gender hierarchy. The male body is seen as fundamental, even in sociological accounts of masculinity. Connell devotes an entire chapter of *Masculinities* to 'Men's Bodies' and states that 'the first task of a social analysis (of masculinity) is to arrive at an understanding of men's bodies and their relation to masculinity.'<sup>1</sup> This chapter will therefore work with this assumption of the centrality of the male body, and assess the extent of its impact on notions of hegemonic masculinity.

The discussion will focus on the issues around pressure and the body, which are central in the submarine film. In the discussion of nature in the previous chapter, pressure figured in a number of ways: indeed, it has life and death consequences in the submarine film. Furthermore, masculinity is dependent on the ability to withstand pressure, not only the literal pressure below the surface of the ocean, but the metaphorical pressure to perform, or to conform, and to maintain those boundaries on which masculinity depends. Pressure can be seen in terms of its impact on the physical body, on psychological notions of the self, and on the social body. Furthermore, the extent to which masculinity in the submarine film maintains the boundaries between the physical,

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<sup>1</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 45.



the psychological and the social can be related to the processes of hegemonic masculinity.

The concept of the body itself is continually subject to processes of historical change. For example, through the industrialisation of labour in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the concept of the body changed from organic reality to organic machine. The consequences of industrialisation were the eradication of

a whole traditional culture based on the notion of balance between the body and the world, tasks and resources, pleasure and difficulties, health and sickness [which] was shattered by the battering ram of industrial capitalism.<sup>2</sup>

Berthelot goes on to argue that in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, (actually since the 1960s), the body is seen in terms of spontaneity, and as a multi-functional and integrated whole.

Historical processes also inform the principal assumptions determining how the body has been addressed. The mind body dualism has for example historically positioned the body as obstacle, but the nature of that obstacle has taken a number of forms. While the body figures as inferior to the mind, it has been seen 'as animal, as appetite, as deceiver, as prison of the soul and confounder of its projects: these are common images within Western philosophy.'<sup>3</sup> Certain approaches within Postmodernism have considered the ways in which the body no longer exists in postmodernity. For example, the argument has been put in the form of the question:

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<sup>2</sup> J. M Berthelot, 'Sociological Discourse and the Body', in M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth & B. S. Turner, (Eds), *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, London: Sage, 1991, p. 390. This chapter first appeared in *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 3, 1986, pp. 155-64.

<sup>3</sup> S. Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1993, p. 3.

Indeed, why the concern over the body today if not to emphasise the fact that the (natural) body in the post modern condition has *already* disappeared, and what we experience as the body is only a fantastic simulacra of body rhetorics?<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter the argument will show that, on the contrary, the body is still significant in gender identity, and that body is a material body in process. The terms in which the material body functions will be examined in detail below. The argument in this chapter will maintain that the body cannot be seen simply as the effect of representations whether they are seen as discourse, copies or images.

The role of the body in definitions of masculinity is dependent on a number of oppositions that are key to gender difference and identity. Masculinity is tough, aggressive, and physical, and these characteristics stem from the male body. Femininity on the other hand is nurturing, emotional and passive. Contradictions in these terms have to be explained in terms of threats to hegemonic masculinity. For example, where emotions are associated with both the body and loss of control, this can be seen as a feminisation of masculinity. These claims can be seen in the argument that

Where social systems come to be dominated by themes of rationality and where such themes become, covertly at least, to be identified with men, then issues of the body together with the associated ideas of the emotions come to be marginalised. In many cases and in a variety of ways this has entailed being identified with women.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A. & M. Kroker, 'These on the Disappearing Body in the Hyper-Modern Condition', in A. & M. Kroker, (Eds), *Body Invaders: Sexuality and the Postmodern Condition*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 21-22.

<sup>5</sup> D. Morgan, 'You Too Can Have a Body Like Mine: Reflections of the Male Body and Masculinities', in S. Scott & D. Morgan, (Eds), *Body Matters: Essays on the Sociology of the Body*, London & Washington, D. C.: The Falmer Press, 1993, p. 74.

Here loss of control of the body is associated with a loss of power and therefore of masculinity. This chapter will also argue that fears over loss of control are frequently expressed in terms of the failure of secure boundaries between the internal and the external. This figures in both psychological and physiological terms. The body and power are linked in that 'power as much resides in the control of bodily activities as it does in the overt deployment of the body.'<sup>6</sup> This relation of power and control over the body, particularly in the form of 'bodily' emotions such as aggression and hysteria, has significant implications for hegemonic masculinity as will be shown in the discussion of the films.

Where sociology turns its attention to masculinity and the body, it is at pains to point out that this is a relatively recent phenomena, as discussion of the body had previously been restricted to debates about femininity, child birth, and body 'image'.<sup>7</sup> The interrogation of the masculine body, as a male rather than as a human body, has become significant in different disciplines and been brought under various theoretical models. This introduction will account for the ways the body has been addressed in sociology, cultural theory and film studies where these arguments intersect with the representation of hegemonic masculinity in the different types of submarine film.

It should be clear from the account of the debates so far that men/women mind/body oppositions are insufficient. As Morgan argues not only are there situations where women not men are seen as embodied, rather than spiritual and refined, and vice versa, but also that 'degrees and kinds of embodiment signify differences between men as well

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<sup>6</sup> D. Morgan, in S. Scott & D. Morgan, (Eds), 1993, p. 76.

as differences between men and women.<sup>8</sup> In his discussion of types of men's bodies Morgan also maintains that 'While there is clearly value in arguing for a hierarchy, rather than a simple plurality, of masculinities, the relationships between hegemony, embodiment and gender are by no means straightforward.'<sup>9</sup> This can be seen in the way the grotesque rather than the classical body can become the hegemonic body in different contexts and uses.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the notion of a singular and consistent hegemonic masculinity cannot account for contradictory processes in masculinity:

The differences between men can be seen in terms of the variety and the hierarchies of masculinities within a particular society. Over-use of the term 'hegemonic masculinities' might suggest that these are relatively straightforward, even fixed hierarchies.<sup>11</sup>

In relation to psychoanalysis, addressing masculinity and the body in terms of the phallus actually rules out a discussion of masculinity and the body in terms of differences within masculinity. Furthermore, this excludes the possibility of process intrinsic to the concept of hegemonic masculinity. In the first instance, the equation between possession of the phallus and power is clearly disrupted by these notions of difference and process. Furthermore, problems in the status of the phallus as a literal or symbolic penis remain.<sup>12</sup> If it is literal then possession of a penis has to function as a guarantee of power, which it clearly does not. If it is metaphorical, then it is open to

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<sup>7</sup> See A. W. Frank, 'For a Sociology of the body: an analytical review,' in Featherstone, et al, 1991, pp. 36-102.

<sup>8</sup> Morgan, in Scott & Morgan, (Eds), 1993, p. 71.

<sup>9</sup> Morgan, in Scott & Morgan, 1993, (Eds), p. 81.

<sup>10</sup> For differences according to class and culture see Morgan, in Scott & Morgan, (Eds), 1993, p. 82-3. For further discussion of the grotesque body as challenge to class and gender order see L. Kipnis, '(Male) Desire and (Female) Disgust: Reading *Hustler*', in Grossberg et al, (Eds), 1992, pp. 373-391.

<sup>11</sup> Morgan, in Scott & Morgan, (Eds), 1993, p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> See for example S. Frosh, 'Masculine Mastery and Fantasy, or the Meaning of the Phallus', in A. Elliott and S. Frosh, (Eds), *Psychoanalysis in Contexts: Paths Between Theory and Modern Culture*, London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 166-187, particularly page 176.

possession by anyone, so can hardly account any relative subordination of those without a penis, women.

For psychoanalysis, the body can be seen as playing a significant role in masculine identity in two ways in addition to the phallus/masculinity equation. Firstly, in the distinction between reason and the body. For Easthope, this 'presupposes a deep split between the mind and the body, one the masculine idea of the body is particularly adapted to.'<sup>13</sup> Secondly, the concept of the masculine body as 'not just the self as it is but as he would like to be, not just the ego but the ego ideal.'<sup>14</sup> Thus, for the masculine sense of identity, the masculine body as unified, hard, and permanent provides a strong sense of identity.

One of the consequences of poststructuralist notions of discourse in the way body and gender has been addressed has been the recognition of subversion of gender and bodily norms through practices such as body adornment and 'pumping iron'. For example, Johnston argues that the

specific materiality [of female body builders] provides a challenge to Western dualistic thinking of body/mind, sex/gender, and nature/culture. If the sexed body is no longer fixed, what is left? I suggest spaces of resistance to the masculinist geographical imagination.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Easthope, 1990, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> Easthope, 1990, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> L. Johnston, 'Flexing Femininity: Female Body-Builders Refiguring the Body', *Gender, Place, Culture*, 3:3, 1996, p. 337. For further work on discourses of body building & gender subversion see, for example, A. Mansfield & B. McGinn, 'Pumping Irony: The Muscular and the Feminine', in Scott & Morgan, (Eds), 1993, pp. 49-68. For a discussion of body adornment and the destabilisation of gender see *Body and Society*, Special Issue on Body Modification, 5:2-3, 1999.

While these arguments raise some interesting issues in relation to the poles of absolutes they erect, debates about discursivity and subversion need to be made in the context of historical processes of gender identity. For example, where body piercing and tattooing were subversive only ten years ago, the widespread use and acceptance of such practices has emerged in Britain. Within a similar theoretical trajectory, the notion that the cyborg subverts all notions of the self is based on a breaching of the boundaries between human/animal, organic/machine and physical/non-physical in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Harraway argues that

Cyborgs might consider more seriously the partial, fluid, sometimes aspect of sex and sexual embodiment. Gender might not be a global identity after all, even if it has profound historical breadth and depth.<sup>16</sup>

Although usefully emphasising a progressive agenda for gender relations, this argument seems to assume that gender identity derived from a non-cyber body cannot participate in this progressive agenda. The argument in this chapter will propose that normal body gender identity need not be seen by definition as traditional and therefore as oppressive.

The ways, in which metaphorical and literal pressure articulates tensions in masculinity between the physical body, psychic processes and social practices, echoes tensions in debates about anatomy and social process in gender studies. It is in the notion of the self that ideas about the body have taken on the guise of a struggle between biology and sociology. But it is how the body is seen in relation to the gendered subject that is of significance here. The terms of that relation play an important part in the construction of gender categories. For example, what are the consequences of claiming that the body

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<sup>16</sup> D. Harraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, London: Free Association Books, 1991, p. 180.

is where true masculinity lies? On the other hand, can the body be seen as perceived entirely through cultural practices, and what part do social processes play in perceptions of the body. What are the consequences of seeing the body in negative terms, as something animalistic and always in danger of 'getting out of control'? To resurrect these debates here is not reprise these oppositions but to argue that the submarine films under discussion suggest ways in which contradictions in masculinity are negotiated. This contradiction is borne out in the identification of masculinity with *both* the body and the mind. This has particular significance when the body out of control is equated with emotion, irrationality and therefore femininity. The contradiction in masculinity can be expressed in the following terms; masculinity is equated with reason and the physical body, but the body is equated with the irrational/animal.

Before discussing the masculine body in the submarine film, this section will account for the body in debates about masculinity in film studies. A return to sociological perspectives provides a way around some of the problems encountered within these debates. Though the issue of the male body as object of the look has been of major concern in film studies debates about masculinity,<sup>17</sup> this will be discussed in chapter seven. Here, the focus is on the ways in which men's bodies come to function in the formation of different masculine identities. The role of the body here needs to be addressed in terms of process and interrelation.

The male body has figured in discussions of the horror film, where the male body as monstrous has been seen as feminised. This tends towards the assumption that any

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<sup>17</sup> See Kirkham & Thumin, (Eds), 1993, pp. 12-15, and Tasker, 1993, pp. 114-118.

form of transformation or rupture of the integrity of the male body is seen as a feminisation. For example, Creed argues that when men become transformed into the werewolf they become feminised 'When man gives birth to himself - and hence takes up a feminine position - he is represented as an integral part of the animal world.'<sup>18</sup> Leaving aside the problematic conflation of transformation with giving birth necessary to sustain this argument, this thesis will investigate the extent to which the ruptured male body is feminised or poses a threat to hegemonic masculinity.

Further discussions of the male body in film have argued that representations of the body have at particular times been used to restore the hegemony of a particular form of masculinity. For example, Jeffords identifies political strategies linked to notions of the body in 1980s America. Here, Reaganism engenders a particular concept of the body that is linked to Reagan's leadership and to national identity. Jeffords argues that this idea of the body was a reaction to the malaise of the 1970s in which the soft body stood for 'the errant body containing sexually transmitted disease, immorality, illegal chemicals, "laziness", and endangered fetuses.'<sup>19</sup> In opposition was the hard body as 'the normative body that enveloped strength, labor, determination, loyalty and courage...[which] was to come to stand as the emblem of the Reagan philosophies, politics and economics.'<sup>20</sup> Within these terms, Jeffords argues that the heroes of the 'hard body' films, which dominated 1980s popular film, were white males, whereas the soft body 'invariably belonged to a female and/or a person of colour'.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> B. Creed, 'Dark Desires: Male Masochism in the horror film', in Cohan & Hark, (Eds), 1993, p. 125.

<sup>19</sup> S. Jeffords, *Hard Bodies*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffords, 1994, p. 24-25,

<sup>21</sup> Jeffords, 1994, p. 25.



Rather than see the hard body as a 'simplistic embodiment of a reactionary masculine identity',<sup>22</sup> the hard body is, on the other hand, one of the ways masculinity negotiates both crises and triumphs. Tasker argues that

...there are no easy links to be made between the action hero, the muscleman and some unproblematic endorsements of a nationalistic macho. With critics caught between breasts and biceps, it is clear that both active and passive, both feminine and masculine terms, inform the imagery of the male body in the action cinema.<sup>23</sup>

In this way, is not sufficient to see ruptures of the physical body simply as failures of masculinity. Rather, this argument will show that these ruptures need to be seen in terms of the relation between masculinity and the body, and in the interrelation of the physical, psychological and social. It is not simply which body gets ruptured, but how men respond to the threat of rupture that is significant.

The soft body in a more literal sense is one of the ways notions of the body and forms of masculinity are subject to processes of historical change. In contrasting the bodies of a 1990s film such as *Copland* (J. Mangold, US, 1997.) with the hard bodies hero of the 1980s, Adams observes that

While it upholds a form of masculinity quite different from that of the hard-bodies action hero, *Copland* is nonetheless heavily invested in masculine heroics.<sup>24</sup>

This article takes account of the changing notions of the body and masculinity, which are perceptively linked to the so-called 'feminisation' of the male body through the growth of debates about weight issues and consumption in relation to masculinity rather

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<sup>22</sup> Tasker, 1993, p. 109.

<sup>23</sup> Tasker, 1993, p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> R. Adams, ' "Fat Man Walking": Masculinity and Racial Geographies in James Mangold's *Copland*', *Camera Obscura*, 42, September 1999, p. 21.

than just femininity<sup>25</sup>. What is of significance here is that heroic masculinity is not intrinsically linked to particular [i.e. hard-body] notions of masculinity. Moreover, the different heroic masculine bodies are articulations of existing differences within masculinities rather than just a development of 1990s cinema.

The body can be seen to stand for the fears and anxieties encountered by masculinity. Williams argues that in 'body genres' [horror, pornography and melodrama] 'the bodies of women figured on the screen have functioned traditionally as the primary *embodiment* of pleasure, fear and pain.'<sup>26</sup> Without wishing to claim that all submarine films emphasise excess in the same way as Williams' 'low' genres, excess is significant in relation to pressure and the masculine body.

The post-structuralist turn to discursive practice as foundational in gender identity has manifested itself in film studies. This tendency should be seen in relation to sex-role theory in the 1980s. Brod outlines this turn as the understanding of gender 'not as something we are, but as something we do.'<sup>27</sup> This type of approach characterised by the work of Butler<sup>28</sup> and Fausto-Sterling<sup>29</sup> assigns an over deterministic role to discourses of heterosexuality as proscriptive of gender norms. In this 'heterosexual hegemony' of gender norms there is little room for the body in on-going processes of negotiation, agency and change.

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<sup>25</sup> For an account of the associations between femininity, dieting and the body see for example, S. Bordo, 1993.

<sup>26</sup> L. Williams, 'Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess', *Film Quarterly*, 44:4, 1991, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> H. Brod, 'Masculinity as Masquerade', in A. Perchuk and H. Posner, (Eds), *The Masculine Masquerade*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> J. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, London: Routledge, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> A. Fausto-Sterling, 'How to Build a Man', in Berger, et al, (Eds), 1995, p. 133.

The outcome of heterosexual hegemony in discourses of the body and gender is that there will always be bodies that are outside of that hegemony. These are the bodies that do *not* matter to compulsory heterosexuality; they are outside the 'boundaries of bodily life where abjected or deligitimated bodies fail to count as "bodies".'<sup>30</sup> The abject here is then any kind of practice that destabilises the boundaries of heterosexual hegemony, for example in the way the drag ball plays around with normative links between the body and gender through the performance of cross dressing. The concern in this chapter though is with those bodies that are said to matter: are there differences in the ways that they matter?

For Butler, often accused of proposing that gender is a free-floating signifier,<sup>31</sup> the very idea of sex itself is already constructed as gender by a science with social and political interests. For both Silverman and Butler narrative film functions as a regulatory norm: called variously the heterosexual imperative, compulsory heterosexuality, and the dominant fiction of exemplary masculinity. Anxieties arise through the control the norm exercises over individuals and the structure of the gender order. This chapter will then examine submarine films as an example of that regulating norm for signs of anxiety in terms of gender and the body. The exact correlation between the spectator's experience of cinema as an institution and the subject's position in relation to the regulatory norm of Foucaultian institutions is also suspect. This problem can be seen in the way in which masculinity has been addressed as discourse, as Middleton observes:

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<sup>30</sup> Butler, 1993, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> For a critique of this claim see L. Nelson, 'Bodies (and Spaces) do Matter: the limits of performativity', *Gender, Place and Culture*, 6:4, 1999, pp. 331-351, and A. Hughes & A. Witz, 'Feminism and the matter of Bodies: From Beauvoir to Butler', *Body and Society*, 3:1, March 1997, pp. 47-60, and W. C. Harrison & J. Hood-Williams, 'Gender, Bodies and Discursivity', *Body and Society*, 3:4, December 1997, pp. 103-118.

The presentation of men in popular cultural forms or the recurrent use of specific languages to describe men are very significant but we cannot simply call them discourses and assume we have established a link with histories of power and knowledge.<sup>32</sup>

This concept of the relationship between gender and the body as a discursive one tends to over emphasise the role of discourse in gender identity. As has been argued above, this is problematic when the body as process is considered as central to gender identity and to processes of hegemonic masculinity. Connell for example argues that the pendulum has swung too far towards cultural determination in post structuralist approaches to gender similar to Butler's. For him, the body gets left out in the focus on 'performance' and he goes on to claim that 'The surface on which cultural meanings are inscribed is not featureless, and it does not stay still.'<sup>33</sup>

This formulation of the body in process allows a way out of the anxiety over nature/nurture components in subjectivity as it discounts the 'once and for all' determinism of biology, and the endless free play of gender discourse on the 'blank canvass' of the body.<sup>34</sup> Connell argues that gender is a 'body-reflexive practice' in which bodies are 'both agents and objects of practice, [with] the practice itself forming the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined.'<sup>35</sup> This shifts the emphasis in the role of the body from formation to process: the uses, meanings, and role of the body change within the social processes of lived experience. It has been argued in

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<sup>32</sup> Middleton, 1992, p. 142.

<sup>33</sup> Connell, 1995, p 51

<sup>34</sup> For account of these arguments see Connell, 1995, pp. 45-56.

<sup>35</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 61.

relation to the body and the problems of voluntarism and determinism that 'We can exercise agency, but we do so in the context of massive structural restraints.'<sup>36</sup>

The argument in this chapter has shown that the body cannot be seen as distinct from cultural and social factors that constitute gender. In his analysis of social practices, such as sport, and historical processes such as aging, Connell demonstrates the way in which the agency of the body functions in discourses of gender. The sociology of the body should therefore maintain an emphasis on the notion of a dialectical relationship between institutions, discourse and corporeality; in this way to theorise the body is not to theorise any element in that relationship before the other. The emphasis on process suggests that different notions of the body and gender can arise within different situations such as work, leisure, aging and reproduction.<sup>37</sup>

The terms within which these processes have an impact on representations of masculinity feature in the following account of Patrick Swayze and his character Bodhi in *Point Break* (K. Bigelow, US, 1991):

If this characterisation of Swayze is reminiscent of the distinction between the 'new man' and 'action man' discussed earlier, it is clear that, while both types are written through gender and defined by the body, they cannot be understood within a simple gendered *binary* that opposes female/feminine to male/masculine. *This serves to remind us that the meaning of the body on the screen is not secure, but*

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<sup>36</sup> B. S. Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*, London: Sage, 1996, p. 232.

<sup>37</sup> For example, M. Featherstone & M. Hepworth, 'The Mask of Aging and the Postmodern Life Condition', in Featherstone et al, (Eds), 1991, pp. 371-389.

*shifting, inscribed with meaning in different ways at different points.*<sup>38</sup> [Emphasis added.]

It is necessary then to sustain the combination of an emphasis on the on-going agency of the body with awareness that the meanings of the body are related to specific narrative concerns within individual films. Through the interaction of the body, the psyche and the social in gender identity, the body is not distinct from cultural definitions of gender and from social processes of gender formation.

Following on from the points raised through the discussion of nature in the previous chapter, the aim is to consider in more detail the issue of pressure in the submarine film. Here, pressure is significant particularly for the different ways men respond to that pressure. These differences have implications for hegemonic masculinity. The argument will retain this physical sense of pressure to consider how this acts on the body of the submarine itself, the hull. Then the argument will show how pressure acts on the bodies of the men inside the submarine. The focus will then be on how pressure can be related to the physical manifestations of the psychological and social pressures on board the submarine.

### **Submarine Pressure and Bodily Integrity.**

The integrity of the submarine body is vital in maintaining the boundary between that body and the body of water outside. Following the assumption that the ocean stands for nature, to what extent is that body the animalistic body, the abject body, the feminine body? This section is concerned with those incidents where pressure affects the actual

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<sup>38</sup> Tasker, 1993, p. 165.

structure and the function of the submarine itself. The hull has to withstand the force of the pressure in order to prevent the water rushing into the submarine, and is therefore the boundary between the two mutually exclusive bodies. The ability of the hull to withstand the pressure figures in different types of submarine narrative. The submarine may have to go to dangerous depths for investigative or rescue purposes, or it may be submerged to evade detection. Alternatively, pressure may bear upon the hull of a stricken submarine unable to return to the surface because of malfunction or threat of attack. Overall, the hull's ability to withstand pressure determines the survival of the men and the outcome of the mission. In addition, the effects of the pressure may compromise certain functions of the submarine; for example, equipment may cease to function.

An instance where the body of the submarine implodes due to pressure can be found in *The Abyss*. In the underwater DSRV chase sequence, Lyndsey and Bud pursue Coffey as he attempts to launch the missile attached to Big-Geek on its pre-programmed course to the NTIs. With both DSRVs entangled and immobile after the chase, Coffey in Cab-3 is suspended over the edge of the Cayman Trough. The close-up on Coffey's expression as he looks back up at Bud and Lyndsey reveals he knows the outcome if the submersible should fall. Slowly, Cab-3 disentangles from Cab-1, and spirals down the trough. Initially Coffey appears resigned to his fate before he frantically tries to restart the DSRV as it plunges deeper and deeper. The glass cracks first and in close-up Coffey lets out a despairing shout, then in a cut to a medium shot, we see the descending submersible implode under the increased pressure. This sequence shows how the physical effects of pressure impact on the body of the submarine. Going too deep will

literally implode that body. Here then, the implosion of the DSRV is linked through that pressure on the individual body to the failure of a martial, and therefore hegemonic, masculinity. The relation between the masculine body and pressure works towards differences within heroic masculinity, rather than the exultation of a singular hegemonic masculinity.

In *Gray Lady Down*, one of the threats to the stricken *Neptune* is hull failure due to excessive pressure. Part of the submarine has already been flooded in the collision, and only the bulkhead doors keep the ocean at bay. The growing threat to the submarine is emphasised through the increased rate at which the pressure forces the water through the bolts and round the edge of the door to the con. This is the front-line of the undamaged section; if this door gives way the men will have to retreat further into the rear of the submarine, causing them to lose communications with the surface. In this instance, the bulkhead door holds out long enough for the men to be rescued, though as has been shown in the previous chapter, pressure does have disastrous consequences for Don Gates in *The Snark*. What is of significance here though, is the ways in which threats to submarine integrity figure in the struggle to control masculine hysteria. This will be discussed below.

Pressure can be shown to have different implications for hegemonic masculinity, even when the consequences of that pressure lead not to the breach but the maintenance of the integrity of the submarine body. In *The Enemy Below* there is an incidence of pressure threatening, but not breaching, the integrity of the hull. von Stolberg has decided to risk the threat to his hull by hiding on the ocean floor. This dive is beyond



the known limits of what the submarine is expected to withstand. (*U-571* also features this tension between dive capability and the submarine's actual depth.) The sequence in *The Enemy Below* shows the strain of the hull as it descends to threatening depths through the groaning of the hull structure, instrument glass shattering and the rupture of seals in the pipes. The tension of this descent is emphasised through the music and through the faces of the crew as they eye the creaking hull. It has been von Stolberg's decision to take the submarine this deep, and as can be seen from 'Hiene' Schwaffer's lack of confidence, only the captain feels secure in this decision. This dive emphasises that the integrity of the body of the submarine is dependent on its ability to withstand the force of pressure. In this instance, the integrity of the submarine is maintained, despite the expected structural capabilities of the hull being exceeded. The U-boat's resistance to pressure, beyond its specifications and conventional military thinking, functions here to validate von Stolberg's masculinity. This masculinity is positioned outside the hegemonic masculinity identified with the military:<sup>39</sup> when the others fear the submarine's integrity will fail, von Stolberg's knowledge and experience enable him to use the exceptional integrity of the hull to temporarily evade the destroyer.

In *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* there is a sequence that features both the failure and the maintenance of the integrity of the body of the submarine. The *Seaview* has to reach the Marianas Trench so as to achieve the correct trajectory for the Polaris missile. The Marianas is a vitally significant location in the narrative because of its depth and hence the threat of excess pressure at extreme depths. Here, at this extreme of the ocean, the US navy submarine pursuing *Seaview* engages in combat. It is also significant that

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<sup>39</sup> Significantly, Murrell is also positioned outside the military through the doubts about him because of his merchant marine service.

*Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* emphasises the technological superiority of Nelson's experimental submarine; it is a nuclear powered submarine, capable of far greater endurance and speed than the other submarines. As the pursuing submarine fires its torpedoes at *Seaview*, Nelson dives at full speed for the deep of the Marianas. The officers watch through the glass viewing panels in the bow of *Seaview* as the submarine recklessly chases them to depths beyond its capabilities. (How they can see *behind* them through the bow is overlooked.) Once it reaches the point where its hull can no longer withstand the pressure, the officers can only look on helplessly as the structure gives way and the submarine implodes. At this pressure the crew is killed instantly once the body surrounding them gives way and the pressure crushes them.

Here, then, it is the capability of the submarine technology that maintains the body's integrity. The advanced design of *Seaview* allows it to withstand far greater pressure than the ordinary Navy submarine. It is these design limits of the submarine that figure as the crucial difference between success and failure of the mission and between the life and death of the crew. This film's advocacy of advanced nuclear technology, in combination with the heroic, strong leadership of Nelson, shows how pressure on the integrity of the hull can work towards forms of masculinity identified as hegemonic. The significance of this as pro-nuclear lies in the film's release during an easing of anxieties, between the nuclear proliferation fears of the early 1950s and the missile escalation anxieties sparked by the Cuban crisis in 1963.<sup>40</sup> The film can then be seen as functioning as a warning against complacency in the nuclear arms race.

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<sup>40</sup> Boyer, 1985, p. 352.

In *Crimson Tide* the hull integrity of the *Alabama* is threatened when it is damaged by the *Akula* and goes into an uncontrolled dive. As the submarine spirals deeper and deeper, COB<sup>41</sup> (George Dzundza) announces 'Passing 1500 feet, at 1850 it's all over.' It is clearly understood by the men that this depth is crush depth, and propulsion must be restored if they are to arrest the dive. In addition the bilge bay is leaking, and this must be controlled in order to prevent the weight of the water dragging the submarine down below crush depth. Throughout this attack Hunter is in command of the ship, and it is significant that his first command decision after his first combat experience involves the death of two men. In order to prevent the flooding, Hunter has to order the hatch closed which will drown the men struggling to stem the leak. Hunter deals with this threat to the hull's integrity, which shows him to be capable of making the tough decisions required under combat. The opposition of Ramsey's combat experience to Hunter's training and education expertise is crucial to the way in which this film negotiates hegemonic masculinity.

Inside the submarine, the effects of pressure on the bodies of the men can manifest itself in different ways. This chapter will also account for the failure of the body of the submarine and the consequences for the men. For example, partial violation of the hull can lead to water bursting through the watertight doors and drowning the crew. The excess of pressure at depth can crush the hull though, in most types of submarine film, the consequences for the body tend to be drowning rather than implosion. However, in the underwater science fiction film, disintegration of the body under pressure is figured, sometimes quite graphically. Also, the effects of pressure can feature in the return to the

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<sup>41</sup> Chief Of the Boat.

surface. Too rapid an ascent and the body will literally explode if decompression is not allowed to take place. In these two different scenarios, the effect of pressure on the body is the violation of the boundaries of the body itself. Pressure can cause the boundaries to fail, so that what should normally be kept outside the body rushes in, and what should be internal to the body is forced out.

For both the crew of the pursuing submarine in *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and for Coffey in *The Abyss*, the inevitable result of the failure of the integrity of the hull is also implosion as the human body is crushed by the pressure. In the sequence discussed in the previous chapter in *The Abyss*, Bud survives the affects pressure can have on the body through use of the Oxygenated Fluorocarbon Emulsion apparatus. Having liquid in his lungs allows him to withstand the pressure at 16 000 feet whereas Coffey in Cab-3 implodes soon after starting his fall.

In *Deepstar Six* the impact of pressure on the body is seen in the ascent to the surface rather than descent to the bottom. Snyder (Miguel Ferrer), the most recalcitrant crewmember finally cracks, under the strain of being trapped in the base vulnerable to attacks by the monster. He has inadvertently detonated the warheads while following the procedure to secure the missile site prior to the evacuation of Deep Star Six. The missile blast causes major structural and equipment damage, most significantly to the decompression chamber. Without the decompression chamber the crew cannot return to the surface to escape the impending nuclear reactor explosion. The last straw for Snyder comes when he accidentally jabs van Gebler with a CO<sub>2</sub> dart as the crew fends off the monster. Sedated by the Doctor, Diane Norris (Cindy Pickett), who he no longer trusts,

Snyder begins to hallucinate and this causes him to panic and run for the escape pod regardless of the need for decompression. In order to breathe at high pressures, divers use an air mixture with high oxygen content. If this oxygen is not allowed time to return to normal levels before reaching the reduced pressure levels at the surface, it expands in the blood and the body cannot withstand the increased pressure of this expansion. Snyder straps himself in then hesitates, before exclaiming 'Fuck it' and hitting the launch button. The watching McBride and Norris see their only means of escape being taken and blurt out 'I ought a kill that son-of-a-bitch Snyder.' 'He's already dead.' The close-up on Snyder shows the effects of not decompressing before ascending to the surface. As the escape-pod climbs to the surface, Snyder's body begins to explode under the decreasing pressure his body is under. First he bleeds slowly through the skin, then his blood vessels violently spurt blood all over the pod before he explodes in a mess of tissue and blood.

This shows how pressure figures as a double threat to the body. It is not only through going beyond the capabilities of the body or the technology to withstand increased pressure that the integrity of the body is violated. Increased pressure causes the body to collapse and the water rushes in to claim that space that the body has occupied. Conversely, once the body has adjusted to the increased pressure, it has to readjust if it is to return to the surface. To ignore those laws as Snyder does means the body explodes. The body breaks its boundaries outward rather than inward, but this incident shows how this is also a failure of the integrity of the body. This failure of integrity does not function to express fears over the feminisation of the masculine body, but can function in terms of differences within masculinity. Snyder's excessive individualism is

positioned against the heterogeneous community of the crew on board the submarine station. The regime for compression/decompression is of vital significance in submarine narratives, and in the next section the discussion will show how the psychological ramifications are linked to the physical effects of that regime.

Decompression is dealt with in different ways in other films in the underwater science fiction cycle. For example, in *Leviathan*, decompression is simply glossed over by an indication light coming on as the survivors rapidly ascend to the surface from 16, 000 feet. In *The Abyss* though, the survivors from Deepcore are brought to the surface by the NTIs who mysteriously obviate the need for them to observe the decompression regime. Hip (Todd Graff) exclaims 'They must have done something to us', and Lyndsey's 'Oh yeah, yeah, I think you could say that.' emphasises the symbolic function of this aversion of bodily implosion. Doing away with the normal regulations governing the integrity of the body at a fantastical level stands for the negation of martial masculinity. What the NTIs have 'done to us' is teach us a lesson.

### **Physical Pressure, Psychological Integrity and Social Cohesion.**

This section is concerned with the psychological effects on the crew and the ramifications within the 'social body'. Both can be related to the physical affects of pressure accounted for above. The effects in the physical body can destabilise the boundaries between the physical and the psychological, which emphasises their interdependency. In addition, the breaking down of the boundaries in physical terms is related to the need to maintain boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The physical affects of pressure can cause normally suppressed fears and

anxieties to break out and 'take over' members of the crew. This can appear as the traumatic psychological effects of high-pressure nervous syndrome.

The physical effects of literal pressure can be related to the pressures arising out of the crew's containment in the submarine itself. The physical space, shape and organisation of the submarine itself, and also the duration of the dive, directly impact on the crew's psychological and physical state. All of these provoke the trauma of claustrophobia, panic, and peaks tension as a result of the pressure of containment. The crew and the submarine depend on harmonious co-operation, and this depends on there being an outlet for the pressure of being on board.

A characteristic incidence of hysteria under pressure is the manifestation of High Pressure Nervous Syndrome (HPNS) in Coffey. The narrative develops the links between the affects of pressure and the psychological behaviour of the crew. In terms of hegemonic masculinity, this process can be seen as a critique of martial masculinity. Coffey's HPNS develops as Lyndsey brings the Navy Seals down from the surface into Deepcore. Part of the procedure for operating on the ocean floor, 2, 000 feet below the surface, requires the Seals to equalise pressure before they can enter Deepcore. The process of equalising takes eight hours, and as it begins a highly significant exchange between Lyndsey and Coffey takes place:

**Lyndsey:** Let's watch each other closely for signs of HPNS.

**Seal:** High Pressure Nervous Syndrome. Muscle tremor, usually in the hands first, nausea, increased excitability, disorientation...

**Coffey:** ...and a partridge in a pear tree.

**L:** How about one person in twenty can't handle it, they just go buggo?

**C:** Look, they've all made runs to this depth, they checked out.

The contrast between their attitudes to HPNS is significant. While Lyndsey is professional and experienced her approach is to take it seriously, the Seal is merely reciting lines from a training manual, and Coffey is flippant in his disparaging sing-song ending to the list of symptoms. In defending his team so vehemently, Coffey ('They checked out!') covers up the fact that he has HPNS. Once out of the equalising chamber and unloading the equipment, Coffey alone notices his hand tremor; he quickly clenches his fist and a close-up on his face shows his denial of the symptoms. The narrative establishes here that it is Coffey, the Seal team leader and the one who is most antagonistic towards the civilian crew, particularly Lyndsey, who is susceptible to the psychological effects of pressure.

The next time Coffey's symptoms become apparent is when he is operating Flatbed in order to remove the Merv warhead from the missile on the *Alabama*. This is highly significant, for it is Coffey's psychological condition that leads to the confrontation between the crew and Coffey. After the crew have confronted Coffey over bringing the warhead on board Deepcore, he mutters to himself 'We don't need them, we can't trust them. We may have to take steps. We gonna have to take steps.' Coffey's psychosis brings him to the point of breaking after the NTI has visited Deepcore by appearing through its molecular manipulation of water. Gathered all together to discuss whether the manifestation was an NTI or a 'Russian water tentacle' as Lyndsey sarcastically names it, the crew carry on the talk while the audience sees Coffey alternately in close-up, then in the foreground of the shot. His physical condition is extremely agitated,



sweating profusely and eyes rolling, he makes no verbal contribution. The discussion continues as the camera tilts from a close-up of Coffey's face to under the table where he is slicing deep cuts into his arm with a large hunting knife. Lyle argues that 'Quickly losing his reasoning capabilities, Coffey takes drastic action to remain conscious by slicing his arm with a knife.'<sup>42</sup> Lyle sees this as the point at which Coffey loses control in his gender battle with Lyndsey. While their confrontation does articulate conflicts in terms of masculine and feminine 'roles', his arm slicing can be seen in other terms. His decision to ignore the affects of HPNS have lead to him being 'out of control' in this situation. Coffey's symptoms are then pivotal in the narrative. He takes the decision to bring the missile in to Deepcore on his own when communications with Naval command on the surface have been cut-off. Although Hurricane Frederick is responsible for severing the umbilical between *Benthick Explorer* and Deepcore, it is because Coffey has taken the equipment needed to uncouple the umbilical safely which causes them to be cut off permanently. The arm slicing, an action which literally opens up the body as a form of coping with the situation, is a physical manifestation of HPNS. Here, the psychological manifestations of the physical effects of pressure are articulated through Coffey cutting through the boundaries of his body as his psychosis deepens.

A further manifestation of that pressure can be found in *The Enemy Below*, though in this incidence, the manifestation takes the form of hysteria. von Stolberg has failed to lose the American destroyer by hiding his U-boat on the ocean floor, and the attacks on the submarine continue as Murrell stages a delaying action until reinforcements arrive. He remarks to his officers 'Being inside a submarine under attack is the worst experience

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<sup>42</sup>J. Lyle, 1993, p. 10-11.

you could imagine.’ The submarine then undergoes a series of depth charge attacks that threaten the structure and damage the equipment. After the third such attack, shown through the imposition of close-ups of the tension filled face of the crew over depth charge explosions, one of the crew in the aft torpedo room rushes for the escape hatch. He is restrained by the crew, but escapes and runs amok with a wrench, trying to batter his way out of the watertight door. von Stolberg manages to calm him down, and he immediately breaks down, laughing at his actions and sobbing in despair.<sup>43</sup> The seaman’s panic is induced by the claustrophobia of being trapped inside the submarine. Eventually, he cannot contain his fears, fears that are founded on his containment inside the submarine under attack.

The implosion of the body in *Deepstar Six* provides an illustration of the relation between the body and psychological and social integrity. The narrative events leading up to Snyder’s implosion in the escape pod are significant in his hysteria and also for the social body of the crew.

The first sign of Snyder’s psychological trouble appears when he begins complaining about the length of their mission. Under pressure from van Gelder to complete construction of the missile site, the crew is being coerced into staying down longer. For Snyder, the desire to go topside is already making him agitated and non-co-operative. He complains that they have already been under for six months, even though their contracts were for a four-month dive. The duration of the dive is made irrelevant by van Gelder’s

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<sup>43</sup> In the novel: ‘It is young Edelmann, he has gone mad. It takes four men to hold him. ... There was a sudden small unmistakable explosion and the smell of burnt cordite joined the other smells in the boat. ... “Achtung.” von Stolberg’s voice cut the thick atmosphere. “That is the only medicine for those.”’ D. A. Rayner, *The Enemy Below*, London: White Lion, 1956, pp. 129-30.

decision to blow in the lava bubble cave, and Snyder's inadvertent detonation of the missile warheads. Snyder's psychosis now begins to threaten both himself and the crew.

His eagerness to surface comes out again when the crew is trying to repair the damage done by the shock waves from the missile detonation caused by Snyder. Asked by Norris if he can fix the radio so they can call for help, Snyder replies 'Sure I can fix it, if I had the right parts, a little bit of luck and two weeks to do it. Fuck it! Why don't we just get in the escape pod and go!' Two events follow that further isolate Snyder and increase his paranoia and panic: the consequent attempt to fix the decompression lines so they can surface, and the next engagement with the monster.

To restore the lines to the decompression chamber, Richardson (Matt McCoy) has volunteered to go outside to bypass the main line. The crew let him back in but the sensors detect a large presence in the airlock. As Richardson is winched inside, the monster leaps through the airlock and bites him in half. In the panic to escape, Snyder deserts his post and traps Scarpelli, McBride and Collins inside with the monster. This serves to further isolate Snyder, as it is his desertion that leads to Scarpelli's death. She has to stay behind to close the airlock and is killed by the monster. McBride beats up Snyder for his cowardice once Norris has released them. Isolated and terrified, Snyder then accidentally kills van Gelder. He is then sedated by Norris, but begins to hallucinate and becomes disorientated. It is at this point that Snyder makes his fatal, panic-stricken escape in the pod without decompressing. Although it is a series of accidents and cowardly actions that bring Snyder to a state of isolation and panic, it is his agitation and distrust that provide the foundation for his state of mind. That state of mind is

founded first on his inability to cope with the pressure of prolonged containment inside the submerged Deepstar Six.

The fear of failure of submarine hull integrity can be seen to function in two different ways in a film such as *Gray Lady Down*. In the first instance, Harris (Michael O'Keefe) voices his panic that 1,200-foot is crush depth as the *Neptune* careers out of control in 2,000 feet of water. He is curtly silenced by Captain Blanchard and relieved of his post. The reasons for this become clear later when Blanchard visits the sick and wounded men and he reassures Harris that he 'just did what they all felt like doing.' Harris' trauma stems from his inability to control his hysterical reaction to crush depth, and this is clearly positioned against the control that the rest of the men achieve. In order for the social body to maintain its integrity, the psychological trauma over the threat of pressure to the individual body must be regulated. Although control over hysteria can be seen as associated with masculinity, here it is not expressed as a validation of individual masculinity, but in terms of the processes of social cohesion.

In the second instance, the leaking bulkhead door figures prominently in the anxiety of Commander Samuelson (Ronny Cox). Rather than hysteria that causes an excess of physical action, Samuelson is immobilised. His whole attention becomes focused on the door, he cannot carry out any duties, and he can only sit and stare at the increasing flow of water. However, this individualistic inaction is resolved by a piece of heroic self-sacrificial action that saves the rest of the crew. In order to turn the submarine upright the starboard ballast tanks need to be blown. The levers to do this are in a rapidly flooding compartment, and, from inside, Samuelson shuts the hatch as Murphy

(Stephen McHattie) holds the levers open. The trauma can then be seen in terms of process: as a move from over-individualistic inaction, a paralysis of the body induced by hysteria to heroic selflessness in the interests of the social body. Significantly, there is a conflict between Samuelson and Blanchard over the latter's individualistic heroism. Samuelson blames Blanchard for the collision and accuses him of 'just want (ing) to ride into harbour up there, 'Captain friendly', one last time.' Here then, the failure of the boundaries between mind, body and the social arena is not expressed in terms of feminisation but in terms of differences in heroic masculinity.

In *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* the threat to the social body is derived from the psychological tension caused by the crew's containment within the submarine. Admiral Nelson insists on keeping the crew of *Seaview* ignorant about events on the surface. They also become angered over prolonging a dangerous assignment. In the face of the potential destruction of the earth, the men want to be with their families. In these circumstances, a fight breaks out between two of the crew over a game of draughts, one accusing the other of being 'a big man' only behind the Admiral's back. This fight on *Seaview* shows how the pressure of being contained within the body of the submarine can irrupt. This is a different psychological manifestation of the pressures of the material body of the submarine and the men's existence within it. Their existence depends on co-operation, and the fight disrupts that social cohesion.

### **Conclusions.**

In this chapter the argument has shown the significance of the different forms of pressure experienced and endured by the body of the submarine and the bodies of the

crew. This significance is articulated in terms of threats to the submarine and the crew. These threats manifest themselves in both physical and psychological terms that have a bearing on the assumptions about the relation between masculinity and the male body. The argument has shown how that relation does not work consistently towards hegemonic masculinity. In addition, anxieties over the male body do not revolve around the necessary feminisation of that body, but instead can be seen in terms of both differences within masculinity *and* tensions between the individual body and the social body.

### 5] Camaraderie, Emotion and Power in Men's Friendships.

This chapter will address the key issues in accounts of men's friendships and their significance for masculinity. Male relationships can be seen as important in critical approaches to masculinity in particular for the way these friendships function in the interests of hegemonic masculinity. Male friendships are characterised in a number of ways. For example, emotionally inexpressive, competitive, focused around activity, instrumentalist, reticent, and homogenous. These friendships also have specific functions, for example, to maintain male power and privilege, replicate institutions, exclude women, negate homosexuality, inculcate men into dominant masculinity, and to subordinate difference. This chapter will address the extent to which men's relationships in the submarine film conform to these characteristics. Through this analysis, the argument will show that those relationships impact on the notion of hegemonic masculinity in different ways.

There are significant ways in which men's friendships have varied according to their cultural and historical contexts, for example, the gradual disappearance of a romantic element in those friendships. Nineteenth century processes of industrialisation had contradictory impacts on men's friendships. Men became more competitive because of their position as wage earners, but at the same time these work practices established bonds based on a lower level of intimacy. In addition, industrialisation removed men from the home and therefore from childrearing. Friendships developed an 'interpersonal style characterised by separation and individuation, as opposed to the female's style of connection and social embeddedness.'<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, men later developed intimate

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<sup>1</sup> D. Sherrod, 'The Bonds of Men: Problems and Possibilities in Close Male Relationships', in H. Brod, (Ed), 1987, p. 234.

friendships with their spouses rather than other men, which has important implications for men's relationships. However, Sherrod argues that by the late twentieth century

The structure of the family has been so stretched and torn by dual careers, divorce and single life styles that the family may no longer be a reliable source of intimacy and emotional support for either men or women.<sup>2</sup>

This account of some of the historical factors pertaining to masculinity and relationships does not necessarily establish a decline in the quality of those relationships, or to argue that the changing structure of the family or work practices is causal in any perceived decline. It indicates the terms-within which men's friendships have been addressed, and also serves to introduce the questions raised below concerning the qualitative judgment of those relations.

The debates about the qualitative differences in relationships have tended to emphasise differences in the following terms: masculine relationships are based on commonality, activity and instrumentalism; feminine relationships are seen as intimate, reciprocal, and emotionally expressive. Franklin argues that 'male youth tend to form instrumental friendships, rather than ones based on emotional expressiveness.'<sup>3</sup> However, it is significant that there is more variation within masculinity than between masculinity and femininity. This important observation informs Nardi's argument in *Men's Friendships*, 'The premise here is that while variations may exist modally between men and women and how they structure their friendships, the variations within each group are greater.'<sup>4</sup>

A further important qualification regarding qualitative assessment relates to notions of

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<sup>2</sup> Sherrod, in Brod, (Ed), 1987, p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> Franklin, 1984, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> P. M. Nardi, (Ed), *Men's Friendships*, London: Sage, 1992, p. 5.



intimacy. Sherrod questions the description of male relationships as less intimate by asking

Should male intimacy be compared to female intimacy in its form, style, and goals? Or should the unspoken commitments of typical male friendships be evaluated by different standards than the easy verbal and physical intimacies of women's relationships?<sup>5</sup>

In addition, notions of friendship need to bear in mind the dual nature of those relations. Friendships are a personal relation over which individuals exercise considerable agency, but, as Allen argues, friendships are also 'socially patterned' and 'the forms which friendships take vary historically with changes in the dominant characteristics of the social and economic formations in which they occur.'<sup>6</sup>

Within men's studies, the perceived inability of men to form meaningful relationships functions to oppress them. The men's help books for those who reject 'outdated ideas of masculinity'<sup>7</sup> position traditional masculinity in a negative and oppressive relation to new masculinity. These outdated ideas have a specific function in the formation of masculine relationships as oppressive, and include traits such as the

tough, lonely man... violent... untrustworthy...a kind of zombie: uncommunicative, dead inside, apparently incapable of an inner life. He is friendless...He is almost completely out of touch with his feelings, unable to express any emotion except anger.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> D. Sherrod, in H. Brod, (Ed), 1987, p. 215. For further discussion of these questions see pp. 220-222.

<sup>6</sup> G. Allen, 'Friendship and the private Sphere', in R. G. Adams, and G. Allen, (Eds), *Placing Friendship in Context*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> P. Fanning and M. McKay, *Being a Man: A Guide to the New Masculinity*, Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 1993, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Fanning and McKay, 1993, p. 3.

Typically, the source of men's oppression is the masculine role fostered on men by social norms. For example, Fanning and McKay list a number of obstacles to male friendships under the heading 'How society discourages male friendship' which include: 'Fear of rejection', 'Homophobia', and 'Fear of reaction at home'.<sup>9</sup>

Men's emotional deprivation and inexpressivity are founded on processes of mother-son relations in feminist interpretations of object relations theory, for example the work of Nancy Chodorow<sup>10</sup>. In seeing masculinity as 'defined through its defensive relation to the feminine'<sup>11</sup> men's groups such as Men Against Sexism argued that masculinity was fragile, fearful and insecure, which 'conjured up an emotionally impoverished and psychologically unstable gender identity.'<sup>12</sup> One difficulty with this approach to masculinity as a problem that could be reformed is the assumption that men's repressed femininity is the cause of all masculine domination and oppression of the self and others. Rutherford goes on to argue that

The attempt to redefine masculinity and explore male heterosexuality is turned into an assumption that what is silent within male subjectivity is feminine and consequently what women have and want and therefore the basis for a new masculinity.<sup>13</sup>

The significance of men's lack of feeling is that it is directly linked to the domination of women and all the negative attributes of masculinity. As Baker argues in support of men's consciousness raising practices such as 'disclosure'

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<sup>9</sup> Fanning and McKay, 1993, p. 111-112.

<sup>10</sup> N. Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

<sup>11</sup> J. Rutherford, *Men's Silences: Predicaments In Masculinity*, London & New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Rutherford, 1992, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Rutherford, 1992, p. 70.

men just need to find trusted friends or partners who will listen while they talk openly and honestly...This is the key to men being more loving and intimate, more expressive about their feelings and consequently less domineering.'<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, men's lack of proper, feminine relationships is seen as being a causal factor in the domination of women.

The association of emotion with the subjective and the feminine determines men's failure in relationships while masculinity is objective and rational. Although focusing on men's relations with women, Seidler argues that

Dominant forms of masculinity can make it difficult for men to sustain relationships. It is as if we learn to break up experience into a series of discrete events or occasions. ...[which] seems to connect to the ways in which we often learn to *cut off* and *separate* from experiences that we find difficult.<sup>15</sup>

For Seidler, men cannot sustain relations because emotion and dependency are seen as weakness and therefore as unmasculine. Further, it is the conditions of modernity and separation from the mother that determine men's friendships: 'there are significant processes within modernity that have their source in the particular identification between masculinity and reason...It is harder for us to focus upon the emotional dimension of friendship.'<sup>16</sup>

Men's friendships also maintain dominance in terms of a homogeneity that reinforces men's concepts of masculinity:

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<sup>14</sup> P. Baker, 'Real Gentle Men', *Company*, December 1991, quoted in Rutherford, 1992, p. 71.

<sup>15</sup> V. J. Seidler, *Unreasonable Men: Masculinity and Social Theory*, London & New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 145.

<sup>16</sup> V. Seidler, 'Rejection, Vulnerability, and Friendship', in Nardi, (Ed), 1992, p. 17.

The stress on similarity in friendships thereby facilitates not only the strengthening of ties amongst those with power generally, but it also facilitates the strengthening of ties between men. They are thus a very important but insufficiently recognised element in maintaining the status quo in society.<sup>17</sup>

These power relations are sustained by the spatial exclusion of women from all-male institutions such as men's clubs. For example, Spain argues that

Spatial barriers thus help differentiate appropriate masculine and feminine characteristics, contributing to a gendered society in which men's power is greater than women's.<sup>18</sup>

The submarine as all male space will therefore be considered in these terms here and related to the discussion in chapter nine.

The terms within which masculinity is addressed frequently foreground the repression anxiety of male homosexuality. Nardi, for example, accounts for 'heterosexual masculinity' as an idea which

in today's culture requires a distancing from any behaviour that may indicate homosexuality, including emotionally close friendships with other men.<sup>19</sup>

The negative associations of homosexuality in men's friendships are in some accounts seen as a 20<sup>th</sup> Century development. Rotundo has accounted for romance in 19<sup>th</sup> Century same sex relations and argues that friendship could be 'based on intimacy, on a

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<sup>17</sup> P. O'Conner, 'Women's Friendships in a Postmodern World', in Adams and Allen, (Eds), 1998, p. 128.

<sup>18</sup> P. S. Spain, 'Spatial Foundations of Men's Friendships and Men's Power', in Nardi, (Ed), 1992, p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> Nardi, (Ed), 1992, p. 2. See also G. Gerek, 'On Heterosexual Masculinity: Some Psychological Consequences Social Construction of Gender and sexuality', in M Kimmel, (Ed), *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage, 1987, pp. 68-82.

sharing of innermost thoughts and secret emotions.<sup>20</sup> However, the absence of sexual anxiety could have been derived from the limited saliency of concepts and words to do with homosexuality in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Contemporary all-male relations and institutions work to deny, repress or expel any intrusion of sexuality in men's friendships. Within these terms, the representation of male friendship, camaraderie or bonding is inherently anxious if homosexuality is denied or displaced: its absence can be read as its troubling presence. Any male/male relation is therefore seen as excluding difference and as a function of sexual power relations. This argument has been employed with regard to the repression of the feminine in masculinity. For Modleski straight male relations in *Dead Poets Society* (P. Weir, US, 1989) and *Lethal Weapon* (R. Donner, US, 1987) can only

...indicate the range of response found in contemporary mass culture to male homoeroticism and homosexuality: the first seems to be one of sheer repression, the evocation of a desire to return to a supposedly pre sexual and pastoralised - yet really very disciplinary - past; while the second response takes male homoerotic impulses, embedded in homosexual panic, to their most murderous extreme.<sup>21</sup>

Modleski argues that expressions of male/male desire can only be homophobic, for example, *Lethal Weapon* is seen as part of a burgeoning 'intensely homoerotic' genre in which appears the 'astonishingly open *expression* of male/male desire that nevertheless is accompanied by phobic denial of homosexuality *per se*.'<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> A Rotundo, 'Romantic Friendships: Male Intimacy and Middle-Class Youth in the Northern United States, 1800-1900', *Journal of Social History*, 23:1, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> T. Modleski, *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist Age"*, New York and London: Routledge, 1991, p. 137.

This denial of homosexuality in the masculine also has a hegemonic function, where homosexual men are trivialised and therefore marginalised. The notion of gay men as subordinated masculinity is reinforced by the gay buffoons & villains in *Rob Roy* (M. Caton-Jones, US, 1995) and *Braveheart* (M. Gibson, US, 1995) which 'suggests that gay men are too frivolous, ineffectual, and vain to be trusted with the serious affairs of heterosexual men.'<sup>23</sup> Hegemonic processes are therefore played out in the coding of particular forms of masculinity as homosexual, forms which are positioned in opposition to the heterosexual protagonist. While this approach may work within the oppositions Keller adopts, differences within heterosexual masculinity may also come to form the basis of oppositions that have nothing to do with sexuality. This chapter will also question whether those oppositions can be sustained once differences within masculinity have been recognised.

Easthope's approach to masculinity is derived from the Freudian assumption that the infant is polymorphously perverse, and that therefore masculinity has to deal with this as an anxiety:

One way to cope with it is to try to throw it out. This is particularly a task for the masculine self. The masculine ego has to defend itself from 'the enemy within', and this mainly takes the form of its own femininity.'<sup>24</sup>

Based as it is on the spurious binary masculine/homosexual, Easthope's analysis of same sex relationships can only conceive of them in terms of sexuality: thus male relations are discussed in terms of a Freudian emphasis on projection, hysteria and

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<sup>22</sup> Modleski, 1991, p. 145.

<sup>23</sup> J. B. Keller, 'Masculinity in *Rob Roy* and *Braveheart*', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 24:4, Winter 1997, p. 151.

<sup>24</sup> Easthope, 1990, p. 104.

castration anxiety as mechanisms of homophobia. Where male relations are considered, it is in terms of 'banter', a form in which the masculine ideal asserts itself. Thus, the analysis of the banter between the two protagonists in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (G. R. Hill, US, 1969) claims that 'To the end they cannot admit their love for each other except through attack. In banter explicit antagonism between two masculine egos covers the implicit male bond.'<sup>25</sup>

Men's inability to express their true feelings for each other is linked to the domination of women, for the two men exclude Etta (Katherine Ross) from their relationship. Mellen sees in Etta's exclusion from this relationship a fear of women's predatory sexuality linked to contemporary advances made by feminism. For her, men's friendships are problematic because men

would rather live an asexual life than have anything to do with women, so great is the strain of confronting awakened women in society...<sup>26</sup>

There are two problems here. Firstly, Etta leaves because the men are unable to give up robbery in favour of legitimate occupations and she has earlier stated that the only thing she will not do is see them die. Secondly, the banter between Butch and Sundance is laced with sarcasm, self-deprecating irony, and a vulnerability that reveals rather than masks the male bonds. An analysis of male relations must proceed from an understanding of the processes within those relations, and not just look to what is apparently repressed, denied or excluded.

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<sup>25</sup> Easthope, 1990, p. 90. The screenwriter for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* has pointed out that the depth of the bond between the two men is highly significant. See W. Goldman, *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, London: Futura, 1983, pp. 191-215.

<sup>26</sup> Mellen, 1977, p. 16.

Men's relationships can be read in terms of 'damned if they do/damned if they don't'. Within the binary that opposes masculinity to homosexuality, men's friendships can therefore only exist in a relation of anxiety to homosexuality and femininity. Modleski claims that in *Top Gun* 'the presence of the love interest protects men from suspicions of homosexuality, while male homoeroticism protects him from too great an intimacy with women.'<sup>27</sup> It is insufficient to see the repression of homosexuality and the exclusion of femininity as inherent in all men's friendships. Furthermore, it is important to recognise the processes of men's friendships in terms of those anxieties, and it is of equal importance to address those relations in terms of their function for the men involved. Bukatman argues that the Jerry Lewis/Dean Martin partnership

produce[d] a dual version of masculinity...[which can be seen as] a privileged view of male interdependence that could be seen as an alternative to the traditional, and fully patriarchal, buddy-buddy structure founded upon an exclusion not only of women but the feminine by definition.<sup>28</sup>

Although the terms of the opposition between 'alternative' and 'patriarchal' can be questioned, Bukatman at least recognises existing differences within masculine relations in popular film.

Even within the opposition of homosexuality and masculinity, the terms in which homosexuality functions can have differing implications which destabilise its terms. For example, the function of sadomasochism in men's friendships has been seen as inherent in certain institutions not as 'shocking aberrations but ordinary and even necessary practice in the military, in prisons, in many corporate organisations, athletic teams, and

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<sup>27</sup> Modleski, 1991, p. 63.



schools of all levels.<sup>29</sup> Here, though, Moon retains an emphasis on the anxiety endemic in all-male relations through his argument that men kissing is 'a sign of the "scandal" of liminal gendering...the repression of which "scandal" so much energy and anxiety in straight-male relations are invested in concealing and revealing.'<sup>30</sup>

Bersani raises further contradictions that trouble the masculinity/homosexuality opposition, particularly with regard to assumptions concerning homosexuality being inherently progressive. He suggests that there can be 'a continuity between sexual preference for rough and uniformed trade, a sentimentalizing of the armed forces, and right-wing politics.'<sup>31</sup> Within these terms, it should be possible to allow that heterosexual masculinity cannot be simply opposed to homosexuality, with all the associations of inherent homophobia implied by such an opposition.

Furthermore, there is more than one way of reading the sexual economy of the all-male institution in film. Dyer argues that 'Sailors have especially figured in gay erotic tradition'.<sup>32</sup> Cornell's reading of the marketing of Douglas Fairbanks' body in *The Black Pirate* (A. Parker, US, 1926) shows how the 'double coding' of Fairbanks' body drew on this tradition despite its heterosexual romance.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> S. Bukatman, 'Paralysis in Motion: Jerry Lewis's Life as a Man', in A. S. Horton, (Ed), *Comedy, Cinema, Theory*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, footnote on p. 203.

<sup>29</sup> M. Moon, 'A Small Boy and Others: Sexual Disorientation in Henry James, Kenneth Anger, and David Lynch.' in H. J. Spillers, (Ed), *Comparative American Identities: Race Sex and Nationality in the Modern Text*, New York and London: Routledge, 1991, p. 142.

<sup>30</sup> Moon, in Spillers, (Ed) 1991, p. 147.

<sup>31</sup> L. Bersani, 'Loving Men', in Berger, et al, (Eds), 1995, p. 116.

<sup>32</sup> R. Dyer, *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 112.

<sup>33</sup> D. Cornell, 'Stealing the Spectacle: Gay Audiences and the Queering of Douglas Fairbanks's Body', *The Velvet Light Trap*, 42, Fall 1998, pp. 76-90.

LaValley argues that in certain queer readings a repressed bi/homosexuality is a natural state, fore-grounded in all male genres such as the war, gangster, schoolboy, prison cop, and cowboy film. Although such genres express desires for stronger male ties and friendship, LaValley stresses that only films that subvert their genre conventions have been favoured by queer readings:

When the movies are softer and celebrate camaraderie... they are definitely gay cult items. *Gallipoli* for instance undermines the war genre, and *Heaven's Gate* and *Days of Heaven* undermine the western.<sup>34</sup>

This chapter will consider where camaraderie is celebrated within genre norms without troubling the heterosexuality of masculine identity. In other words, camaraderie is an expression of masculinity that may be queer and straight read without one troubling the other.

There are a number of values in all-male relationships that have been identified in many representations of masculinity. Themes such as loyalty, trust, camaraderie, honour, defection or betrayal, cowardice and sabotage have historical precedents in narratives of men's friendships; 'The stories all have an agnostic setting. Confrontations with extreme danger heighten and prove the essential quality of friendship.'<sup>35</sup> War stories in particular provide the context for those men's friendships in which 'the friendships portrayed are so striking that the miseries of war are reduced to setting - the stark contrast to the heartwarming friendship.'<sup>36</sup> Rather than see war stories as either the validation of

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<sup>34</sup> A. LaValley, 'The Great Escape', in Creekmuir & Doty, *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian and Queer Essays on Popular Culture*, London: Cassell, 1995, p. 69.

<sup>35</sup> Hammond and Jablow, in Brod, (Ed), 1987, p. 248.

<sup>36</sup> Hammond and Jablow, in Brod, (Ed), 1987, p. 253.

masculinity, or as a backdrop to men's friendships, war and friendships should be seen in terms of their relation through which anxieties within masculinity are articulated.

Men's friendships in film have also been explored in relation to the notion of 'homosocial desire'. Derived from Sedgwick's analysis of male friendship in English Victorian Literature, the term seeks to define what are the limits of 'social bonds between persons of the same sex'<sup>37</sup> The limits are the ways in which homosocial bonds continually work to deny the continuum between homosociality and homosexuality. Masculine friendship rituals function to mark a break with homosexuality through homophobia, and Sedgwick places desire at the centre of her conception of homosociality because it is sexuality or the erotic that friendship between men works so hard to deny. A further significant aspect of Sedgwick's notion of homosocial relations is that, given the power relations of the gender order, these can never be the same for men as they are for women. Therefore, when men promote the interests of other men it does not have the same function or implications as when women promote each other's interests. This chapter will argue that, on the other hand, it is not only power relations in the gender order and the denial of the erotic that are at stake in men's friendships. These friendships, and the power relations they maintain, subvert or overthrow, all express anxieties about masculinity that need to be negotiated.

Sedgwick is concerned with the period 1750 to 1850 and the embodiment of changes in the gender order and sexuality in the novel. Moreover, her focus is on the 'rivalry between the two active members of an erotic triangle.'<sup>38</sup> The analysis is then of

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<sup>37</sup> E. K. Sedgwick, *Between Men*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Sedgwick, 1985, p. 21.

novelistic representations of a specific friendship in a particular historical contexts. Therefore, the application of Sedgwick's claims to cinematic representations of other forms of men's friendships needs to be carefully qualified. For example, Keller simply assumes that in *Rob Roy*, Archie Cunningham's (Tim Roth) rape of Rob Roy's (Liam Neeson) wife can be defined in terms of Sedgwick's theory of homosocial bonding 'in which the aggression and desire between men is mediated through a female.'<sup>39</sup> Although Cunningham may use Mary in his conflict with Rob Roy, in no sense is their relation an 'erotic love triangle' in which the men compete for the affection of the woman. This relation can more accurately be used to identify the rivalry in *Crash Dive* between Stewart and Connors for the affection of Jean Hewlett, or that between 'Duke' Gifford and Bob Perry (Ward Bond) over Mary Stuart in *Operation Pacific*.

Power is significant in Sedgwick's argument in that sexuality is always about power relations. Power relations are therefore part of gender inequality in the sense that sexuality is constituted differently for men and women because they have unequal access to power. What does this mean for masculinity and film? Within the circular terms of Sedgwick's argument, and examples of film studies that appropriate her argument,<sup>40</sup> male homosocial relations are seen as narratives of domination and exclusion. For Sedgwick, the different shapes of male and female homosociality 'will always be articulations and mechanisms of the enduring inequality of power between women and men.'<sup>41</sup> For Fuchs, the buddy-cop relationship is a 'masculine hegemony', functioning literally as 'an all-male unit transcending race and class distinctions to

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<sup>39</sup> Keller, 1997, p. 148.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, C. J. Fuchs, 'The Buddy Politic', in Cohan & Hark, (Eds), 1993, pp. 194-210.

<sup>41</sup> Sedgwick, 1985, p.5.

produce stable self-identity.<sup>42</sup> Guerrero, on the other hand, has argued that the bi-racial buddy film can be 'enjoyed from a number of spectating positions on the racial-cultural continuum, from dominant to resistant to minimal and so on.'<sup>43</sup> In addition, while specifying the bi-racial buddy film's 'strategies of containment', such as the isolation of black figures and the buddy as white ideological chaperone<sup>44</sup> Guerrero argues that *Lethal Weapon*

contrasts the wise restraint of an older Black cop, (Glover) with the risk taking, violent actions of his younger White partner (Gibson). Moreover, in exception to the buddy thematic, the Black cop has a family and a home, and his relationship to them is explored.<sup>45</sup>

Men's friendships of the buddy formula are then not only about the repression of homosexuality and the exclusion of racial difference. For other critics, racial difference between men can only be hierarchical. Modleski maintains that the black man 'in the racist tradition of American letters occupies a subordinate role to the white hero.'<sup>46</sup> In this way any contradiction within masculinity can be made to stand for the validation of that masculinity as coherent. White argues that in *Full Metal Jacket* 'the construction of a masculine identity - where anything infantile, female or homoerotic is expelled with horror'<sup>47</sup> cannot function as a critique of masculinity. Instead, any contradictions opened up by the interdependence of the oppositions can only work in the interest of homophobia and racism. This account has established two assumptions about men's

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<sup>42</sup> Fuchs, 1993 p. 194

<sup>43</sup> E. Guerrero, 'The Black Image in Protective Custody: Hollywood's Biracial Buddy Films of the Eighties', in M. Diawara, (Ed) *Black American Cinema*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 243.

<sup>44</sup> Guerrero, in Diawara, (Ed), 1993, pp. 237-239.

<sup>45</sup> Guerrero, in Diawara, (Ed), 1993, p. 244.

<sup>46</sup> T. Modleski, 'A Father Is Being Beaten: Male Feminism and the War Film', *Discourse*, Spring-Summer 1988, p. 72.

<sup>47</sup> S. White, 'Male Bonding, Hollywood Orientalism, and the Repression of the Feminine in Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*', *Arizona Quarterly*, 44:3, Autumn 1988, p. 122.

friendships that pervade both discussions of masculinity and analyses of masculinity in film. These are that those friendships are qualitatively impoverished and consistently function in the interests of hegemonic masculinity. This chapter will address the extent to which those assumptions can be maintained through the analysis of camaraderie, emotion and power in the submarine film.

The purpose of this chapter is then to examine male friendships in submarine films within the terms of the notion of 'homosocial desire'. This will allow the argument to consider the extent to which those relationships work towards the subordination of women, the phobic denial of homosexuality, and the establishment of a hegemonic, stable masculine identity. This is not to deny that male homosocial relationships can function in the interests of men, or that homophobia exists in masculine social relations. The argument will emphasise that male homosociality does not *only* serve to allow men to dominate women and to oppress homosexuality. Homosociality between men is also about loyalty, cowardice and betrayal, affection and emotion, tolerance and empathy, and mentoring through support and initiation. The concern here is with how and why these function *between* men, rather than how they act solely as processes of exclusion and repression of difference. The account will address friendships in three sections: processes of power and gender relations in group formations, conflicts between duty, romance and friendship, and the negotiation of emotional anxiety and repression.

### Power, The Group, and Relationships.

The first significant area is the way in which initiation into the submarine crew creates male friendships that work toward hegemonic masculinity in terms of power, same sex groups and institutions.

In *Destination Tokyo* the initiation of Tommy on his first patrol is one of the primary narrative elements. The *USS Copperfin* is on a secret mission into Tokyo Bay to gather information vital for an air raid on Tokyo. Although *Destination Tokyo* is a propaganda film, it still offers interesting material for a discussion of masculinity and male friendships. As the reviewer for *Monthly Film Bulletin* put it

The rest of the many players are good despite the handicap that they are frequently required to overplay their emotional moments and to indulge in homilies on religion, patriotism and love.<sup>48</sup>

It is in these 'emotional moments' that significant issues in masculinity and male friendships arise, so the argument will focus on the emotional investment in the initiation of Tommy. There are two significant incidents where those investments are brought to the fore: Tommy's sexuality and the loss of his mentor.

Tommy's initiation involves him being taught about sexuality, society and how to be a submariner. (He gets his promotion for an act of bravery.) What is most interesting about the initiation into heterosexual masculinity is how the discourse on sexual experience is really about failure rather than conquest. There are two key moments in this initiation, both of which revolve around 'Wolfie' (John Garfield) regaling the crew

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<sup>48</sup> *Monthly Film Bulletin*, April 1944, 11: 124, p. 41

about his on-shore liaisons with women. Wolf, the only single, sexually active member, explains how his chat up technique never fails since he started drinking in bars with a Liberty Doll at his table. When Tommy innocently asks 'What happens then?' Wolfie advises him to 'Come back next year' because he is only nineteen. While this incident clearly marks out some women as fair game, it also underlines Tommy's sexual innocence.

Wolfie's next tale of sexual exploits occurs when a song reminds him of 'a girl I knew in 'Frisco'. Told in partial flashback, with a string of submarine metaphors to describe his seduction, this anecdote is actually one of failure when the woman chooses to go off with another sailor. Apart from the fact that this anecdote ends in failure rather than success, the most significant aspect for the audience is the clear signal of the unreliability of Wolfie's narrative. He describes how 'she comes right up to about my chin, you know, fits just right.' but what the audience actually sees that the woman is a head taller than he is. This sequence is concerned with sending up the myth of predatory masculinity. The unreliability of the narration and the ambiguous conclusion emphasise this point.

Tommy's socialisation into a veteran is expressed in terms of acting to help Mike his mentor, of whom he has become very fond. Significantly, it is Tommy who shoots the airman after he has stabbed Mike, yet Tommy still chastises himself for not doing anything; 'Mike looked up like he wanted me to do something. I just stood there.'



This sequence illustrates how initiation into the crew and socialisation are intertwined through Tommy's experiences. It is at this point in the narrative, when he is grieving over Mike that Tommy volunteers to defuse the bomb lodged in the deck. He nervously defuses the bomb, guided by Captain Cassidy, who calls him 'son' throughout the sequence. When it is over, the Captain tells him 'You've earned yourself a higher rating.' but it is Cookie (Alan Hale) who makes the most significant remark when he says to Tommy 'You got a great pair of shoes to fill, Tommy.' Cookie's remark is made without rancour or any implication that Tommy is not capable of replacing Mike as a '1st Class Torpedo Man' (pun intended). What is most significant about Tommy's initiation is the lack of gung-ho attitude surrounding the discourse on war and on sexuality. It is the emotional investment the men make in their friends on board that figures most prominently, particularly in Tommy's heroic actions. Of no less significance is the importance of family to the crew. For example, after Mike's death some men listen to a record that he continually played in secret. Hoping it is 'one of those censored records', the crew instead retreat one by one, on the point of tears when they hear the recording of Mike's wife looking forward to his homecoming.

In *Submarine Seahawk* the initiation of Seaman Ellis Bellis (Henry McCann) is significant for the way in which it can be seen as a comic variation of the initiation convention established in the World War II submarine film. Here, Bellis is ridiculed by the rest of the crew for not being a 'proper Seahawk man' because he does not drink and is resolved to remain faithful to his fiancée, Nancy (uncredited). Bellis is represented as a Kansas country-boy through his determination to save his wages to buy Nancy a tractor for an engagement present. These factors position him as different from the

rowdy, streetwise and carefree crew. The comic attempts to get Bellis drunk enough to sleep with a 'hula girl' are interrupted by the call of duty, and in the end Bellis, though drunk, maintains his fidelity. Bellis is accepted as a *Seahawk* man when he declares under a depth charge attack; 'If we do this I'm gonna drink a quart of that Island Fever tonic'. However, his initiation is not at the cost of his relationship with his fiancée, who he is seen to greet ecstatically when the submarine returns safely to Pearl Harbour. The initiation is not accomplished through a specific act of heroic masculinity, and the retention of Bellis' integrity emphasises differences of masculinity within the group.

In the British film *We Dive at Dawn* the camaraderie on the submarine is structured along fairly strict class lines. The friendships remain within the distinct groups of Officers, Petty Officers and ordinary seamen. Taken at this level, the comparisons with the more homogeneous group camaraderie of *Destination Tokyo* are fairly ordinary and unsurprising. The friendships among the crew consist of betting and continuous ribbing about their wives or girlfriends back home. Considerable narrative time is devoted to the question of family and relationships; the success of the mission to sink the German warship *Brandenburg* is coupled with the satisfactory resolution of a number of troubled marital relationships. Therefore it can be seen that these marital relations form a significant backdrop to the relationships that develop between the men on board the *Sea Tiger*. Significantly, the relationships are interwoven with the mission.

The relationship between Captain Taylor (John Mills) and Leading Seaman Hobson (Eric Portman) is significant in a number of ways. In the case of Hobson, it is also the absence of camaraderie, and how and why this figures in the narrative that is significant.

There are two incidents in which tensions around Hobson's marriage surface. Just as the crew is about to depart for shore leave, Hobson passes the Petty Officer's wardroom and makes a crack about the impending marriage of Chief Petty Officer Mike Corrigan 'T.I.' (Niall MacGinnis). Rebuked, Hobson retorts, 'I like to look in on the Petty Officers now and again, it's good for discipline.' The antagonism between the crew and the Petty Officers is not just along class lines though; the Coxswain C/PO 'Dickie Dabbs (Reg Pundell) tells 'TI' to ignore Hobson's teasing, dismissing his cynicism 'because he's mucked up his own life.' Next, Hobson mishears the crew talking about someone else's wife, thinking the conversation is about his marriage; he angrily exclaims 'You mugs make me sick. Nothing else to think about on leave but females, smart dames, and homework.' This is a prelude to Hobson receiving an unofficial 'little talk' from the Captain; 'I've often wondered about you Hobson, why you haven't gone a little higher in the service. I mean you've knocked about the world a bit, you speak a couple of languages, well, I... it seems a pity really, that a man like you should mess up his whole life; just because... Look here Hobson: I've had a letter from your brother-in-law.'

What is significant is that the marital problems are talked about in relation to what kind of a man Hobson is. What counts, what constitutes his masculinity is the sum of his life experience, and that includes his family. His identity is not just established through his rank, but through a complex, and in this case conflicting, set of factors. Hobson's resentment comes from having an interfering 'hymn-singing fish and chip fryer' for a brother-in-law. The incident is notable for the unease which both men display. Taylor's advice is full of hesitation and his body posture and nervous movements reveal his

discomfort whenever he touches on Hobson's marriage. Both men are struck with reticence, and end the conversation on a formal note, as if it were a duty briefing.

Hobson remains the most isolated figure on the *Sea Tiger*. His truculence and constant cynicism towards any camaraderie are marks of his unhappiness. But in the end it is his knowledge of the Danish island where they are marooned and his ability to speak German that enables them to steal the fuel to return safely home. Hobson is then happily reunited with his wife and young son once they get back. It is possible to read this as a narrative of how differences between the men, and of how the conflicting elements within masculinity, play a significant part in the submarine narrative. It is less about constructing a hegemonic masculinity than about establishing viable differences within masculinity. This is emphasised through identification with Hobson; the reason his wife wants a separation is because of his drinking, yet he only got drunk when he found his wife and son had moved out of their home. His actions, coded in terms of a heroic masculinity, imbricate that masculinity within family relations thus emphasising the significance rather than absence of emotion.

In the 1980s underwater science fiction film, the notion of camaraderie within the civilian crew takes on a special significance in relation to the military hierarchy. This is most apparent in the different methods of work organisation and the levels of openness and secrecy. Through these differences the film can be read as privileging certain forms of masculinity and gender relations over others.

In terms of working methodology, the differences are immediately signalled through the Seal's antagonistic attitude to Lyndsey in the descent to Deepcore. This is contrasted with Bud's methodology. He asks rather than orders his co-workers to do something, to which One-Night replies 'You got it boss.' The crew works in a playful, co-operative manner, and the first of a series of conflicts between the Seals and the civilians is over how to go about getting things done. The next sequence underlines the familiar co-operative ethos of the crew. One Night turns on the music in Flatbed, and Bud and Hippy join her singing. This emphasises their commonality despite their differences in terms of professional hierarchy, race and gender.

These differences set the tone for the antagonistic relationship between the two groups, and this is established at the first rescue-mission briefing. Hip expresses concern over exposure to radiation when they are all issued with counters, but Coffey's response is 'What is your problem, huh? On this dive you'll do absolutely nothing without direct orders from me, and you'll follow those orders without discussion. Is that clear?' Bud speaks for the crew when he says to Coffey 'We got a certain way of doing things around here.' but Coffey's response is 'I'm not interested in your way of doing things.' The contrast between the two methods of operating is clearly spelled out. The crew work through co-operation, with every member of the team having a significant and different part to play. The crew discusses everything as they go along, while Coffey expects them to follow orders without question.

After Deepcore has been cut off from the surface these tensions arise again. Coffey attempts to get the crew to carry out repairs and to watch for the presence of the alien.

Prior to this the crew have been seen talking about their personal lives as they work, and also having a debate about the nature of the alien presence. In contrast, Coffey is again met with resistance when he orders the crew to carry out certain tasks. Bud gets them all to work by asking rather than ordering them. Coffey is here turned away in the foreground, clearly angry, while Bud in the background can be heard saying to One Night, 'Heh, do me a favour, see if you can get that transmitter fixed?' Bud's concern is for the safety of his crew, they all work together towards a shared goal. Coffey's form of leadership is antagonistic and leads to dissent and resistance.

The importance of each member of the team is emphasised through the change in the relationship between Lyndsey and the crew. At first her presence is greeted with hostility: she is known as 'Queen bitch of the universe'. After the damage to Deepcore, Bud says to Lyndsey 'I'm glad you're here' as she has the expertise to extend the air supply and so increase their chances of survival.

The different levels of openness play an important part in the narrative. For example, in the crew's willingness to discuss everything compared with Coffey's demands for unquestioning obedience, The contrast with the crew is epitomised by Coffey's remark to Lyndsey 'You don't need to know the details of our operation. It's better if you don't.' Coffey's attempts at secrecy are of course a failure; the crew learns what is going on from the television news before they are cut off from the surface. The narrative also makes it clear that openness is preferable to secrecy through the events leading up to a highly significant incident: Coffey's attempt to destroy the NTIs with the warhead attached to the pre-programmed ROV 'Big Geek.' Lyndsey has tried to make a secret

arrangement with Hip to programme the ROV to take pictures of the NTIs at the bottom of the trough. Hip wants to tell Bud, but she makes him keep it a secret. Unfortunately, Coffey has seen them on the monitor and so is able to use the ROV to send the missile on its way. This emphasises that secrecy can lead to potentially catastrophic results, as it is a result of Coffey's action that in part induces the NTIs to launch their tidal wave. Here relationships between men are coded positively when they engender inclusion, familiarity and therefore heterogeneity. The group is seen to function effectively because it includes differences of race and gender as well as differences within masculinity. By contrast, Coffey operates in terms of hierarchy and the suppression of difference.

It could be argued that this notion of relationships, with an emphasis on heterogeneity is strictly historically determined, a result of 1980s anxieties over masculinity. However, negotiations with notions of differences within masculinity can be seen as crucial to submarine narratives in the 1950s. For example, in *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*, the differences between Arronax, Conseil and Land are presented as vital to the successful escape from the *Nautilus*. The tensions between a scientific and heroic masculinity are not resolved in favour of one or the other but in terms of combination of the two. Furthermore, Conseil, though positioned as subordinate to Arronax and Land, is seen as indispensable to them both.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, Verne's novel also emphasises their differences in terms of compatibility and indispensability: 'And, in fact, the worthy fellow, though an enthusiastic classifier, was not a naturalist... The Canadian, on the contrary named them all without hesitation. ... Decidedly, between them, Ned

### Conflicts of Duty, Friendship and Romance.

In *Crimson Tide* trust and duty are fundamental to tensions in the friendship between Hunter and Lieutenant Peter Ince 'Weps' (Viggo Mortensen). In the conflict between Captain Ramsey and Hunter, one of the many swings of power between the two officers is dependent on the relationship between Weps and Hunter. For Weps the conflict is between his trust and loyalty to his friend Hunter, and his sense of duty with regard to navy regulations. Also of significance are Cob's relation with Hunter and his position in the conflict, and the differences between Hunter and Ramsey in their relations with the crew.

The second scene in the film establishes the nature of the friendship between Hunter and Weps. At the birthday party for Hunter's daughter, Weps is clearly identified as a family friend. Weps is paged by command as they watch the news of the escalating crisis in Chechnya. This scene is significant, in that it establishes a relationship based not only on professional association but also on close personal ties. When Hunter is posted to the *Alabama*, Weps tells the officers that 'We served together on the *Baton Rouge*; we're lucky to have him.' Their friendship is therefore both professional and personal, with established intimacy and respect.

Hunter is clearly identified as a family man with close personal friendships with other men. Other significant factors in his masculinity are established, both in terms of his self and his relationship with Weps. For example, after a stern lecture from Captain Ramsey on the need to maintain a 'unified chain of command' and his intriguing observation that

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Land and Conseil would have made a distinguished naturalist.' J. Verne, *20 000 Leagues Under the Sea*, 1860, p. 83.



'We're here to preserve democracy, not practice it.' Hunter is shown exercising vigorously and punching his aggression out in the gym. This sequence is lit from above and shot in close-up, which has the effect of glamorising Hunter's physical desirability in addition to his established emotional and professional capabilities. Directly after this sequence is the private conversation between the two friends over the ironing board, where Hunter expresses his doubts about Ramsey's decision to call a missile test drill while a fire was raging in the galley. In this domesticated setting, Hunter is able to confide his fears in his friend and to receive valued advice and reassurance in return. Here, male homosocial relations include domesticity and vulnerability, and are not necessarily concerned with oppression and exclusion.

The next crucial exchange between Hunter and Weps comes during the final confrontation with Captain Ramsey over missile launch protocol. Ramsey has locked Hunter in the officer's Ward room and is preparing to launch two missiles without the regulation concurrence from his XO. Unfortunately he needs Weps to unlock the tactical firing pin from the safe so he needs him on his side. Hunter manages to escape and speak directly to Weps over the voice-powered 'phone, where the following exchange takes place:

**Hunter:** Weps, Weps, listen don't do this, don't do this. Once you launch they cannot come back, they cannot come back. Weps, you know the repercussions if we're wrong. Goddamn it, Weps. If we fire now we'll be firing while we're blind and crippled, you understand me?

**Weps:** Where the fuck are you?

**H:** Do not remove that firing trigger. Do not open the safe, Weps, it's up to you, you're the only one that knows the combination, it's up to you Weps, it's up to you.

This exchange is interesting and significant not only for the conversation but also for the close-ups of the two men as they converse. The shots of Weps in missile launch show him trying to keep the conversation a secret, he clearly wants and needs to listen to Hunter, but does not want to be heard talking to an officer under arrest. Weps is clearly torn between orders and his loyalty and respect for Hunter. Even while he is maintaining his position in the procedure for missile launch (over the tannoy to Ramsey) he is desperate to hear what Hunter has to say. *Crimson Tide* is about mutiny and counter-mutiny, about the correct interpretation of regulations, which ends up with the Naval Enquiry Board announcing to Hunter and Ramsey 'In so far as the letter of the law is concerned, you were both right. And you were also both wrong.' The different interpretation of those regulations is down to differences between the two men, but Weps plays his own highly significant part in this narrative. His initial decision to disobey the Captain is down to his relationship with Hunter. Weps changes sides when he is surrounded by the other officers on the submarine. Furthermore, he only opens the safe when Ramsey threatens to shoot Petty Officer Hilaire (Scott Grimes). Weps is entirely instrumental in his relationships, changing sides according to whoever puts pressure on him.

The particular significance of this relationship is made clearer by contrast with the relations between Hunter and Cob. Cob stresses to Hunter, in return for his thanks for his support, that he does not necessarily think Hunter is right, it is that according to

navy regulations the Captain cannot just replace him at will. Cob's alliance and loyalty to Hunter is expressed in terms of naval regulations, but he stands by his principles even when Ramsey has been returned to command his relationship is one of principal rather than instrumentalism.

Differences in Ramsey and Hunter's relationships with the men are also significant in terms of masculinity and friendship. Ramsey expects loyalty from the men on the basis of his position as captain of the submarine, for him the men are dispensable positions within the naval hierarchy. Hunter on the other hand, wins the loyalty of certain members of the crew by recognising their differences. This can be seen in Ramsey's threat to shoot Hilaire, he does not even know his name, and simply sees him as a tool to manipulate Weps. Hunter learns the names of the crew he can count on, and significantly has a common understanding of the Silver Surfer (with Rivetti) and Star Trek (with Vossler) on which his relationship with them is founded. These two men play vitally significant parts in the counter mutiny and in the reception of the message calling off the missile strike.

The account of relationships shows how personal and family relations come into conflict with duty, but the resolution foregrounds those relationships as part of 1980s masculinity. Ramsey represents a masculinity in which those relations are absent or failed<sup>50</sup> and in this film that masculinity is clearly identified with the past. This masculinity is also identified with hierarchical notions of difference in relations.

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<sup>50</sup> His wife left him because of his continual service on submarines

Within the three way erotic love triangles played out in submarine films, the tensions between the men and with the women can be seen as significant in terms of men's friendships, femininity and hegemonic masculinity. These relations are therefore not just about the bonds between men that express a fear of femininity through the exclusion of women.

In *Operation Pacific*, the rivalry between Duke Gifford and Bob Perry over Mary Stewart also has a fourth term; the relationship of all three with Bob's elder brother 'Pop' Perry (Ward Bond). This is related to processes of hegemonic masculinity that is structured through the relation of Pop and Duke to 'The Chief' (Jack Pennick). Duke and Mary's marriage has failed because of his duty in the submarine service, and in his absence, Mary has begun dating Bob Perry, a flyer in the Fleet Air Arm. Here though, the conflict between duty and romance for Duke is successfully resolved. Although Mary is persuaded to accept him as he is, Duke has come to terms with his emotional inexpressivity, symbolised by his desire to see the rescued orphan at the end of the film. Therefore masculinity can accommodate emotional attachments while remaining unchanged in relation to femininity.

Bob resents Duke which extends back to the latter's days as football quarterback and all round high school hero. This resentment deepens when Pop is killed on a mission and Bob blames Duke for his death. Duke attracts Bob's further resentment when he rescues the downed flyer from the Pacific. These events can be seen as significant in terms of hegemonic masculinity in the following ways. The 1951 release of this film is crucial in this process, for in this way the elder Perry can be seen as associated with World War II, but his age is significant in his death. He is taken in by a fake surrender of a Japanese

freighter and killed by its hidden machine guns. Duke takes over command and successfully sinks the ship.

Duke's heroic masculinity can then be seen as part of the past but brought up to date by his recognition of the individual's place in the group rather than as the independence of that individualism. This is emphasised by Duke's eulogy for his dead friend The Chief, who is killed in the rescue of Bob; 'Chiefs have been taking care of this man's navy for a long time'. The Chief is the Chief Engineer and member of the crew, and therefore a working man rather than an officer. The real hero of the submarine service is therefore the ordinary man, standing for the crew as group, not the individual officers. This can be seen as providing continuity with the past in addition to the need to change. To further emphasise this point, Bob, who stands for individual heroism in terms of his position as lone flyer, is seen to misread the heroics of Duke; 'All I can think of is Pop out there helpless, while you went glory hunting.' The symbol of the quarterback illustrates this misrecognition of Duke's heroic masculinity. The quarterback may be the star individual on a football team, but that individualism depends on the rest of the team fulfilling their roles, and the quarterback needs to perform his role for the team to achieve success. Bob is put in his place with a literal pat on the head, and Duke is reconciled with Mary. Submarine masculinity is the combination and balance between individualism and the group, and the friendships between men are one of the ways this tension is worked through.

Historical differences impact on the way the conflict of duty and romance is dealt with. In *Crash Dive*, romance needs to be put aside in the move from civilian to combat life,

but the love triangle also articulates issues in feminine sexuality. Stewart's equivocation over submarines is dealt with humorously, quickly resolving the tension between the luxury of civilian choices and the necessity for the war effort. However, this tension also figures in Stewart's courtship of Connors' fiancée Jean Hewlett. As a result of this rivalry, Connors' earlier friendship with Stewart cools and he begins to question his friend's position on the submarine. His feelings are put aside, though, and they are reconciled through their joint heroic actions during a commando raid on a German base. As one contemporary review put it, 'This personal tension does not, however, affect the complete success of the raid, and after that the commander steps gracefully out of the picture.'<sup>51</sup> Although the two men are reconciled at the end, this rivalry does not function simply in terms of forging a stronger bond between the men than the lovers. For this rivalry also raises the issue of feminine desire. For Hewlett the two men represent an option between over-familiar non-sexual Connors, and passionate, exciting and sexual Stewart.

In *Torpedo Alley* there is a very similar rivalry between two men, and although this too expresses the issue of feminine sexuality, the tensions in terms of duty and romance figure differently. Here, Bingham and Gates are rivals for the affection of Susan Peabody, and the fourth corner of the relationship is an older man, Susan's father, Warrant Officer 'Pops' Oliver Peabody (Charles Winninger). Released in 1953, and with a narrative that spans the end of World War II and the Korean War, this film foregrounds hegemonic processes of masculinity explicitly in relation to men in combat.

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<sup>51</sup> *Monthly Film Bulletin*, 10:114, June 1943, p. 63.

Furthermore, the options for feminine sexuality are likewise structured around Susan Peabody's preference for the exciting sexuality represented by the unfamiliar Bingham.

Bingham's success is achieved through his negotiation from past to present masculinity. His move from flyer to submariner is a move from individualism to responsibility. He holds himself responsible for the death of two men, but his training for submarine duty is constantly expressed in terms of him being able to live up to the responsibility for the entire crew of the submarine. Bingham is in effect able to overcome his guilt when he saves the lives of his submarine crew on a training mission, but it takes the wisdom of 'Pops' Peabody to make him aware of this. The conflict between romance and duty comes to the fore in the final training mission. Here, Bingham needs to gain top marks in a torpedo exercise in order to come top of the submariners class. The exercise goes wrong when the torpedo doubles back and narrowly misses the submarine. The faulty steering is due to Bingham's failure to check the torpedo; his carelessness here is due to his preoccupation with romance. When he is castigated by command, and cautioned to check the torpedo properly, this means that in order to carry out his duties he cannot be distracted by women and romance. Once in actual combat, the rivalry between Gates and Stewart is put aside, and they work cooperatively together, providing cover for each other. They are wounded in the process and on the hospital ship, Susan chooses Stewart over Gates, who resignedly remarks that it does not hurt as much as he thought it would.

### Emotional Repression and Anxiety.

This section will account for the extent to which masculinity in the submarine film works towards the repression of emotion. First, male relations will be addressed in order to account for the function of exclusion and difference in relation to hierarchies of race and gender.

The friendship in *Crash Dive* between Chief 'Mac' McDonnell (James Gleason) and Oliver Cromwell Jones (Ben Carter) relates to the processes identified above. Doherty argues that 'Ben Carter plays a dignified and heroic...messman. *Variety* correctly noted that the responsibility for Carter's lowly status in the ranks was "the Navy's not Hollywood's".'<sup>52</sup> To dismiss Jones as a racist representation of black masculinity ignores the processes in which his heroism and dignity figure, particularly in his friendship with McDonnell.

The initial point in the relationship is when Jones becomes concerned for Chief after he sees him become ill and disoriented. Chief testily brushes off his concern and refuses Jones' offer of a drink. When he discovers that Chief is secretly taking tablets, Jones asks the pharmacist's mate what they are for, and discovers that they are Nitroglycerin tablets for a heart condition. Jones is with Chief on shore leave when the latter learns he has earned a promotion, but becomes angry and depressed when he has to pass a physical first. Chief is then seen lying on his bed when Jones asks after the physical, but the Chief again becomes angry. However, in this instance, Chief also breaks down and reveals to Jones why he will not take the physical. If he fails the test, he will be

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<sup>52</sup> Doherty, 1993, p. 212.



invalided out of the Navy and his determination to keep on active duty is based on an incident in the previous war. Chief tells Jones ('something I told nobody before') that he had faked illness and missed a patrol, and the submarine had been sunk with all crew lost.

It could be argued that Jones' nurturing role works to feminise, and therefore make safe, the representation of black masculinity. However, this nurturing aspect of his masculinity exists alongside, not in place of, a heroic masculinity: he participates in the commando raid. In addition, Jones' race is drawn attention to in this sequence when he jokes that he is the only one who does not have to wear night camouflage. McDonnell dies in the commando raid, sacrificing his own life to allow Stewart and Jones to escape. The implications for the position of a subordinated black masculinity in relation to hegemonic masculinity are significant. Jones not only establishes an emotionally meaningful relationship with another man, with his significance expressed through the impact on Chief's emotional state, but he also participates in the heroic masculinity of combat, and he survives. Furthermore, when the *Corsair* returns to base, Jones is the only one on the conning tower with Stewart and Connors, played by the two stars of the film. The relationship between Jones and McDonnell is one in which the expression of emotion, and the relation to difference, of femininity and race, is linked to a heroic masculinity. This emphasises the combination of aspects associated with dominant masculinity with those associated with difference; therefore, masculine relationships do not necessarily work towards hierarchy and the exclusion of difference.

The friendship between Barney Doyle and Archer Sloan in *Torpedo Run* is also a significant example of the way male friendships negotiate anxieties over emotional repression.

Doyle's revenge figures on a national and symbolic level, as the *Shinaru* is identified with the flagship in the attack on Pearl Harbour.<sup>53</sup> But the revenge also functions on a personal level, because the *Shinaru* had used a ship transporting Doyle's wife and daughter as an escort screen. Doyle's pursuit of the *Shinaru* is compounded by his attempts to control his grief, a struggle that brings him into conflict with his friend Sloan. The friendship is put under strain by conflicts between emotion and duty. Furthermore, the friendship and the conflict bear on notions of an active, heroic masculinity. The significance of this friendship has been noted by Neale, who points to the secondary status of the heterosexual romance in relation to a 'narrative thread centred on the friendship between Doyle and his second-in-command.'<sup>54</sup> The significant aspects of their relationship in relation to masculinity are: its coding in terms of domesticity, their feelings for each other, and their falling out and reconciliation.

In the first instance, the domesticity of the relationship can be seen in the way Archer constantly tends for Doyle, and also in the way that they two men consistently carry out their private conversations. The way they address each other with the familiar 'Arch' and 'Barney' is only replaced by the formal 'Sir' or 'Mr. Sloan' at the height of the conflict between them. At the end of the film, when the *Bluefin* has rescued the crew of the *Greyfish*, Archer tenderly places a blanket round Doyle's shoulders.

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<sup>53</sup> See J. F. Enright, *Shinano! The Sinking of Japan's Secret Supership*, London: Bodley Head, 1987.

<sup>54</sup> S. Neale, 1991, p 37.

Furthermore, when Doyle breaks down and sleeps for three days, the watching Archer has to be persuaded to take a break from his vigil in order to relieve his over-anxiety. In one of Doyle's flashbacks to the courtship of his wife Jane, (Diane Brewster), she expresses her frustration that Doyle is using Archer as a chaperone between them. In this sequence, Jane persuades Doyle to marry her, and Archer is seen toasting with them as they celebrate. The strength of their feelings for each can be seen in the sequence where Doyle learns that Archer turned down a chance of his own command to serve again as his XO:

**Archer:** Yes, I could have quit you.

**Doyle:** Well, why didn't you?

**Archer:** Don't you know that yet?

Clearly then, Archer loves Doyle, and an account of the events of the narrative will indicate that this love is reciprocated. It would be extremely difficult to claim that any figure played by Ernest Borgnine could be read as feminised, particularly so soon after his recent role as the brutal stockade sergeant in *From Here to Eternity* (F. Zinnemann, US, 1953). Nevertheless, these two men clearly have a loving relationship where masculine and feminine attributes are combined with no anxiety over their gender or sexuality. The meaning and function of these attributes should be seen within the processes of their relationship, in what the men represent to each other, and what they are prepared to do for each other and why.

These three processes can be seen at work in the dynamics of their relationship, as they move from a position of friendship, through acrimony, and back again. The submarine is back in Pearl Harbour for a refit after another unsuccessful attack on the *Shinaru*.

Doyle's three-day sleep becomes an issue between the two men, as he knows Archer could be responsible for invaliding him off active duty. Archer declares that if he were asked he would have to tell the truth. On the next mission, the *Greyfish* has been ordered to as Doyle puts it 'the deep freeze'. His suspicions are confirmed when he forces Archer to reveal that he was asked about Doyle's condition, and remains unconvinced by his protestations that he persuaded the Admiral to allow Doyle to continue in command. As far as Doyle is concerned, he is being kept away from the war by Archer's betrayal and collusion with the Admiral. For example, he steadfastly refuses to accept Archer claims that their mission is to intercept the *Shinaru*. Here he breaks down again, shouting at Archer, 'I, I am going to get the *Shinaru*, in spite of what you think, in spite of what the Admiral thinks, in spite of what any body thinks. You got that?'

In the next stage of the row, the positions of the two men in the relationship are made clearer. When the submarine receives information that the *Shinaru* has been sighted in their area, the looks and body language of the two men show that they both know Doyle has been wrong, and Doyle knows Archer knows! Significantly, Doyle's next words to Archer are terse; 'Mr. Sloan, come to the bridge.' Alone again, there occurs a telling revelation in their relationship when Archer says 'I wanted to follow in your footsteps, but one of us has changed.' From this point on, the two men hardly speak; for example, Archer responds to a question from Doyle in a hostile manner, practically spitting out the last two words of his reply; 'I just want to know your plans in case you *pass out*.' Their differences are only resolved when the *Shinaru* is in their sights and Archer says the ship is Doyle's; he responds that it is 'Ours' before allowing Archer to fire the torpedoes that sink his nemesis.

This relationship is significant because of the reciprocal emotional support and understanding between the two men. Although they come into conflict, that conflict and its resolution should be seen in the context of their friendship and not just as a validation of heroic masculinity. This is stressed through the Doyle's ambivalence at the end. Furthermore, the relationship typifies different notions of intimacy and emotional expression, notions that can be seen in relation to the argument that masculine relations are characterised and oppressed by an apparent 'failure' of intimacy.

### **Conclusions.**

This chapter has accounted for the different male friendships in submarine films and the points they raise in relation to claims about masculinity and men's friendships. With regard to fears and anxieties of feminisation and homosexuality, the discussion has deployed the framework of the notion of hegemonic masculinity to map out the form and function of those friendships in terms of processes in masculinity. This has shown that the representations of masculinity within the submarine film do not completely undermine the power relations emphasised in the debates accounted for. However, the analysis has shown how the friendships negotiate particular fears and anxieties for masculinity in particular periods, and, most significantly within the context of the meanings, values and functions of those friendships for masculinity. Seen within these terms, male friendships cannot be seen as consistently impoverished, exclusory or hierarchical.

## 6] Rationality

One of the foremost reasons for the repression of emotion in men's friendships, discussed in the previous chapter, is the association of masculinity with rationality, or reason<sup>1</sup>. This association is determined by developments in industrialisation, for example in work practices such as hierarchical skills organisation where rationality is equated with masculinity. Masculinity is therefore associated with rationality through the characteristics of work and through the significance of work in masculine identity. This chapter will account for the significant ways in which gender, rationality and work have been associated, and then discuss how these terms are negotiated within the submarine film. The discussion of masculinity in particular films will show how hegemonic processes are related to changes in the function of work and rationality in definitions of masculinity. Thus each section will explore different ways in which tensions within rationality and masculinity are negotiated within the narrative concerns of the films. The first section will consider the contradictions within associations between rationality and masculinity, for example, the extent to which rationality and irrationality are consistently opposed. The second section will draw on this opposition in order to consider how masculinity negotiates tensions between rationality and the imposition of regulations and duty. Finally, the third section will account for conflicts between individualism and responsibility as struggles between emotion and reason. The conflicts, contradictions and oppositions above have implications for the notion of hegemonic masculinity, particularly in the different ways rationality figures in concepts of masculinity.

As the account below suggests, the workplace is a significant area in which gender relations have undergone continual processes of struggle. The debates over gender roles as women entered the labour market articulate anxieties over masculinity that extend to struggles to identify different types of work as more or less masculine. The historical ties between masculinity and work have been identified as being formed within the developments of industrialisation:

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<sup>1</sup> The interchangeability of these terms can be seen in, for example, Seidler, 1994, p. 253.

The advent of capitalism saw the progressive separation of the worlds of men and women in respect of public and private domains. Men's sense of self and identity was largely secured through their ability to be able to perform paid employment outside of the home.<sup>2</sup>

In these terms, work is defined as masculine, and masculinity is similarly defined through work.

One of the fundamental points of this relationship is that institutions of work are seen as masculine in themselves, so that it is impossible to think of work and masculinity existing as separate spheres. The other major claim is that forms of masculine identification function through the work institution to the extent that how men see themselves in relation to other men, to women and the family, and in terms of their position in society are defined above all through work. For example, Tolson argues that 'definitions of masculinity are bound up with definitions of work. The qualities needed by the successful worker are closely related to those of a successful man.'<sup>3</sup>

Later studies have argued that professional/managerial practices in the workplace embody a masculine institution, which is reinforced in the wider social context. Cockburn argues in relation to a British retail firm that

Men socialize more with each other than they do with women colleagues. There is, for instance, an all-male golf society and many of the other sports and social activities are sites of male bonding.<sup>4</sup>

The significance of this process of identification for masculinity is that work privileges certain types of masculinity for men. There is a historical and social dimension to this, in that these types undergo historical change and can vary across different cultural and social class groups. This produces different ideas about aspects of work that are

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<sup>2</sup> N. Stevenson, 'The 'new' Men's Health Magazines: Masculinity, Work and the Body', in P. Jackson, N. Stevenson, and K. Brooks, *Making Sense of Men's Lifestyle Magazines*, Cambridge: Polity Press, forthcoming, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> A. Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity*, London: Routledge, 1977 p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> C. Cockburn, 'Men's Power in organisations: 'equal opportunities' intervenes', in J. Hearn and D. Morgan, (Eds), *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*, London: Unwin Hyman, 1990, p. 82.

associated with masculine identity; for example professionalism, management, skill, endurance, craft. This also defines what is seen as inappropriate work for men, as in 'women's work'. In addition, masculinity at work is one of the ways in which a hegemonic masculinity maintains its position in relation to women and other masculinities.

This relation between masculinity, work and power means that 'Males, if they are to be masculine in America, must internalise the work ethic and incorporate it in their work-role performance.'<sup>5</sup> The period of Fordist organisation in particular depends on rationality, which is aligned with masculinity, through its emphasis on specialism, time management, and hierarchical forms of control. Gender differentials in the work place include factors such as unequal participation, pay and status. However, it has also been observed that women's participation in the labour market alters not only the scope of those differentials but also the assumptions about gender and work:

...increased experience with women workers should reduce statistical discrimination and prejudice to the extent that these are based on stereotypical ideas of women as unsuited for nontraditional jobs.<sup>6</sup>

The relation between masculine identity and work is also threatened by the conditions of modernity in a postindustrial society, in which flexible work patterns and technological change constantly figure. The sense of belonging and identity can no longer be seen as guaranteed through the work place, with the result that

The fear of disposability, firms down sizing and the fear that our skills may well become redundant in the future means that the work place can only offer the most insecure of identities.<sup>7</sup>

Further work on the professions, in men's studies for example, has been conducted in the sex-role theory tradition, though sociological accounts of manual labour in Britain are prominent.<sup>8</sup> The account below will draw on the claims made in the various approaches

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<sup>5</sup> C. W. Franklin, 1984, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> F. D. Blau, M. A. Ferber, and A. E. Winkler, *The Economics of Men, Women and Work*, 3rd edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998, p. 377.

<sup>7</sup> Stevenson in Jackson, et al, forthcoming, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Tolson, 1977.



where they pertain to the debates on masculinity and rationality in relation to hegemonic processes.

The notion of the professional is particularly significant in the association of masculinity and rationality. Macdonald argues that 'Sociologists generally take a model of rational, formalised scientific knowledge as their starting point in study of the epistemological base of the professions.'<sup>9</sup> This is of significance in relation to hegemonic masculinity. For example, through professionalism as a validation of middle-class masculinity, and the association of the physical, particularly manual labour, with working class masculinity. However, this association and its implication for hegemonic masculinity has been qualified by the distinction between 'respectable' and 'rough' working class masculinity. Meyer argues that 'Clearly this rough masculine culture contrasted sharply with both respectable middle-class, and working-class virtues.'<sup>10</sup> Meyer labels a masculinity identified through skilled work, drinking and use of prostitutes as 'regressive'<sup>11</sup> though the ways any one or all of these may be seen as anything other than symptomatic of masculine domination is unexplored.

The issue within masculinity is the ways hegemonic masculinity can be privileged through non-manual or white-collar work. Development of professionalism along particular lines is one of the ways middle class masculinity differentiates itself from both working class masculinity and femininity. The importance of rationality and the need for a restricted body of knowledge is a way of both maintaining the dominance of middle class masculinity and excluding women and non-expert working class. However, the changes within informational capitalism undermine the status of the professional, so masculinity has to negotiate a new relation with rationality and knowledge. Furthermore, within business professionals, the distinction between reason and emotion can be blurred in terms of private and public by the strategies of work practices when men

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<sup>9</sup> K. M. Macdonald, *The Sociology of the Professions*, London: Sage, 1995, p. 157.

<sup>10</sup> S. Meyer, 'Work, Play, and Power: Masculine Culture on the Automotive Shop Floor, 1930-1960', *Men and Masculinities*, 2:2, October 1999, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> Meyer, 1999, p. 116.

recognise the need to 'reveal something of their personal lives, but only to the degree that the job requires. Their personalism is part of the professional act.'<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the professional, or more specifically that which constitutes professionalism, is particularly significant in the way tensions between masculinity and rationality are negotiated within the submarine film.

The first modern professions have been described as 'status professions' and derived the ethos of *noblesse oblige* from the aristocracy. This is attributed to the upper class dominance of education and pre-1860s professions such as the clergy. As a result, their role was validated by the notion of it being in the public good.<sup>13</sup> This was significant in distinguishing status professionals from the business profession of the mercantile class, whose ethos was the baser one of making money. Significantly, military officers were seen as status professionals since the military reforms at the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>14</sup> Mills includes military officers as professionals and members of the twentieth century American 'power elite' in that government is 'inextricably linked to the military which is frequently used to legitimate political decisions.'<sup>15</sup> This distinction between the military professionalism and political ideology is a significant tension in submarine masculinity.

The historical association of the professions with rational masculinity has been accounted for by Stearns, who claims that

Women were claimed to be irrational, and thus unqualified to receive the new professional knowledge. The male who had attained a professional profession was

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<sup>12</sup> R. L. Ochberg, 'The Male Career Code and the ideology of Role', in Brod, 1987, p. 174.

<sup>13</sup> Brint, 1994, pp. 8-10. Brint and Johnson both acknowledge the significance of public good in early sociologies of the professions. For example T. H. Marshall, 'The Recent History of Professionalism in Relation to Social Structure and Social Policy' *Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science*, August 1939; and T Parsons, 'Professions and the Social Structure', *Social Forces*, 17, 1939, pp. 457-67.

<sup>14</sup> Brint, 1994, p. 28-9.

<sup>15</sup> See C. W. Mills, *The Power Elite*, London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1956. p. 200.

therefore suitably manly. What was new about this old claim for male intellectual leadership was the importance of rational activity.<sup>16</sup>

In the medical profession, for example, doctors sought to privilege masculine rationality and authority over feminine nurturing. Stearns also asserts that these conditions were in place long before men needed to exclude women from professions, but they were deployed in response to women's increasing entry into the professions in the 1960s. In this way the logic of meritocracy can be seen to threaten the masculine dominance of professional institutions.

Notwithstanding the threats to male dominance of the professions from meritocratic or contract capitalism in the late twentieth century, this dominance has been seen as an inherent characteristic of both patriarchy and capitalism. For example, Witz argues that professional institutions, such as medicine, deployed strategies of exclusion of women as members and also demarcation of women into low pay/status jobs within their ranks.<sup>17</sup> Witz links the status of women under capitalism with the maternal role of women under patriarchy to argue that they support each other. The associations of women with nature, the body and emotions have their consequences in the male domination of the professions and the logic of professionalism within those institutions. The consequences of this are that professions are seen to maintain a gender order characterised by imbalance through 'the institutionalisation of gendered social practices, which are patriarchal in the sense of systematically maintaining male power and privilege.'<sup>18</sup>

Masculinity has, then, been associated with the rational through the processes of industrialisation, and changes in those processes have altered the terms within which that relationship has can be seen to function. However, Seidler argues that the association of masculinity with rationality or reason is a condition of post-Enlightenment modernity; 'As men, reason has been shaped in our own image within

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<sup>16</sup> Stearns, 1990, p. 136.

<sup>17</sup> A. Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 36-38.

<sup>18</sup> Witz, 1992, p. 209.

modernity, for it has been identified with the dominant forms of masculinity.<sup>19</sup> The most significant aspect of this identification for Seidler is its dependence on the distinction between the mind and body, reason and emotion and the internal and the external in modern subjectivity. The consequence of this dualism, and ways it may be challenged, are identified by Seidler:

So it is that reason is defined as autonomous and independent faculty that should not be tainted by emotions, feelings or desire. It is the source of knowledge alone.

It is this vision that feminist theory and practice help to question, as they suggest that reason *cannot* be categorically separated from feelings and emotions.<sup>20</sup>

Rationality and professionalism are significant terms within which definitions of hegemonic masculinity work. Notions of professionalism are significant for the way they produce tensions within masculinity. Therefore, it is important to relate professionalism to issues such as duty, emotion and regulations in order to address the extent to which notions of professionalism function in hegemonic processes of masculinity.

This is not intended as an account of the full range of definitional and functional questions relating to the professions. It is more pertinent to this chapter to adopt the premise of later sociologies of the professions in assuming that

The future of profession lies in embracing the concept as an intrinsically ambiguous, multifaceted folk concept, of which no single definition and no attempt at isolating its essence will ever be generally persuasive.<sup>21</sup>

Freidson is arguing here that theoretical approaches need to retain a sense of folk understandings of professionalism, and it is this understanding that produces tensions within masculinity. For example, professional regulations simultaneously serve to guarantee standards of professional service, maintain power relations via a discourse of

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<sup>19</sup> Seidler, 1994, p. ix.

<sup>20</sup> Seidler, 1994, p. 27.

<sup>21</sup> E. Freidson, 'The Theory of the professions: State of the Art' in Dingwall & Lewis, (Eds), 1983, p. 32.

professional authority, and function as an inflexible and insensitive set of rules. It is where masculinity positions itself in relation to these tensions that is most significant.

Particular works in film studies have seen the centrality of careers and work institutions as a significant component in definitions of masculinity. For example, institutions of work are implicit in 'The External World' as one of Kirkham and Thumin's structuring sites of masculinity which frames their approach in *You Tarzan*. Power is seen as central to any approach to masculinity, and it is in patriarchal institutions such as the workplace that power relations operate. Although there is little consideration of actual work practices or notions of professionalism, these are implicit in the claim that

in filmic representations of masculinity, associated issues such as status, hierarchy, knowledge skill, language and success inform our understanding of the operations of male empowerment and control, whether this be exercised over events, people or emotions.<sup>22</sup>

Here, then, the 'issues' are ones that obtain in discussions of masculinity and professionalism, though rationality is conspicuously absent. However, the implications of power and control that have arisen in relation to rationality above suggest that it should be included.

The discussion of masculinity and work in film studies has in places tended to foreground issues of aggressive competition, validation of the hero through success, and the restoration of threats to masculine domination which come from femininity and sexuality.<sup>23</sup> Cohan, on the other hand, relates the professional masculinity of Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) in *North by Northwest* (A. Hitchcock, US, 1959) to the emergence of the new historic hegemonic block of 'educated media and managerial professionals'<sup>24</sup> identified in the 1950s. Significantly, this masculinity is derived from the transformation of the American economy from being production to consumption driven. Whereas consumption is traditionally seen as feminine, Thornhill's suits and

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<sup>22</sup> Kirkham and Thumin, (Eds), 1993, p. 18-19.

<sup>23</sup> See Mellen, 1977, p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> Cohan, 1997, p. 20.

advertising background identify masculinity with consumption. At stake here is the extent to which oppositions of femininity and masculinity are maintained in issues of professionalism; here they clearly are not.

The impact of 'the organisation' on masculinity in 1950s films has also been considered in terms of the excesses of competitive hierarchies. Sayre, for example, argues that 'success in "the chromium jungle" is extremely dangerous to respiration or circulation, and very damaging to home life, [but] they hardly criticise the system.'<sup>25</sup> However, the presentation of competition as related to excessive, therefore irrational, greed and ambition indicates that these films negotiate anxieties about masculinity and professionalism. Representations of masculinity have also been related to cultural notions of the right type of job for a man. For example, Street, suggests *Sunset Boulevard* (B. Wilder, US, 1950) deals with

an overwhelming male anxiety about age, mortality and career. In post-war USA, lack of career success was taken as a sign of failure; not to have made one's way in a man's world was not to be fully a man: career and success were ways of affirming masculinity.<sup>26</sup>

Joe (William Holden) foregrounds this anxiety in a number of ways: feminised as a screenwriter, he fails in this career and ends up in the even 'more unsavoury role of being a gigolo'<sup>27</sup> which further identifies him with the feminine through prostitution.

Issues of masculinity and professionalism have also been addressed in relation to sexuality and femininity in a number of 1980s and 1990s films. These are notably, *Wall Street* (O. Stone, US, 1987), *Fatal Attraction* (A. Lyne, US, 1987), *Basic Instinct* (P. Verhoeven, US, 1992) and *Falling Down* (J. Schumacher, US, 1993). The interrogation of these films has assumed that they 'mediated the particular identities of white male Americans, while also focusing on other cultural and social issues of ostensibly universal

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<sup>25</sup> N. Sayre, 1982, p. 140.

<sup>26</sup> S. Street, 'Mad About the Boy: Masculinity and Career in *Sunset Boulevard*', in Kirkham and Thumin, (Eds) 1995, p. 224.

<sup>27</sup> Street, in Kirkham and Thumin, (Eds), 1995, p. 227.

or national scope.<sup>28</sup> In this respect, all notions of difference are seen as being subordinated to white patriarchy, with little regard for either transformations in the relations of power or for oppositional readings. This reading of the white male in relation to difference has meant that

In great part, this simultaneous rendering of the universalising and the specific has been predicated on (and has in turn reinforced) white patriarchal power, by constructing white masculinity as a kind of default position, ostensibly lacking specificity but defining the universal in the form of the white male.<sup>29</sup>

One consequence of this position is that in *Wall Street*, for example negotiations between forms of professional masculinity (irrational greed/responsible integrity) become elided under the repression of homoeroticism and the exclusion of femininity.<sup>30</sup> An analysis of masculinity should include the terms of the anxieties these men negotiate and the consequences for masculinity. This need not be at the expense of the impact 1980s masculinity had on subordinated groups.

For example, Willis argues that in *Fatal Attraction* and *Basic Instinct* masculinity undergoes a crisis and anxiety that is related to the social impact of feminism. Here, masculinity is powerless in relation to women, a situation that threatens masculinity in terms of the family and professional competence:

*Basic Instinct*... explores anxieties about dissolving borders in the context of women invading and manipulating, as if by remote control, the police detective's personal life, his personal and psychic history, and his professional performance.<sup>31</sup>

By pathologising feminine sexuality Willis argues these films offer reassurance to masculine anxieties. However, in terms of professionalism, it is Curran (Michael Douglas) who becomes irrational, driven by desire to the point where he cannot perform

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<sup>28</sup> Davies and Smith, 1997, pp. 16-17.

<sup>29</sup> Davies and Smith, 1997, p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> See Davies and Smith, 1997, pp. 27-31.

<sup>31</sup> Willis, 1997, p. 70.

his professional role. Deleyto argues 'he is letting his attraction for her spoil his professional attachment.'<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, where Willis discusses *Falling Down* as an anxiety of differences of femininity and ethnicity, the conclusions overlook the way the film negotiates anxieties for masculinity in relation to identity and professionalism. Willis argues Bill 'D-Fens' (Michael Douglas) and Prendergast (Robert Duvall) are paired by domesticity and femininity. However, this ignores the other terms of their relation: masculinity and work. The catalyst for D-Fens' anxiety is the loss of his job, while Prendergast has to come to terms with his redundancy through retirement. This observation brings to the fore the tensions in masculinity around identity through work or career that are centred on rationality. D-Fens loses his job and begins to act irrationally; Prendergast acts against the loss of his job through working out the clues that lead to the identification and location of D-Fens. Kennedy argues that this difference between the two white males works towards the hegemony of white masculinity in the 1990s:

*Falling Down* may parody the imperial individualism of white American manhood but it does not negate it, rather it retells the story of the (re)making of this manhood as a morality tale for multiracial, late imperial America.<sup>33</sup>

For Kennedy, the emphasis on home and the past in this film is evidence that crises in masculine hegemony are to be resolved only by a return to an America untroubled by feminism and ethnic diversity. However, given the processes both men go through and the complexity of the forms of identification available,<sup>34</sup> this resolution can be read in terms of gender equality rather than the domination of either masculinity or femininity.

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<sup>32</sup> C. Deleyto, 'The Margins of Pleasure: Female Monstrosity and Male Paranoia in *Basic Instinct*', *Film Criticism*, XXI: 3, Spring 1997, p. 29.

<sup>33</sup> L. Kennedy, 'Alien Nation: White Male Paranoia and Imperial Culture in the United States', *Journal of American Studies*, 30:1, 1996, p. 99. For recognition of difference within white masculinity, see C. Clover, 'White Noise', *Sight and Sound*, 3:5, May 1993, pp. 6-9.

<sup>34</sup> For an account of cross class/ethnicity audience identification, see J. Gabriel, 'What do you do when minority means you? *Falling Down* and the construction of 'whiteness'', *Screen*, 37:2, Summer 1996, pp. 129-151.



In his autobiographical account of British submarine service during World War II, Young's description of his new base commander identifies the contradictions within the notion of a rational masculinity.

He was a fire-eater in the best tradition, blustery, often rude almost to the point of insult, vibrantly alive, generous hearted and fanatically devoted to the support of his submarines at sea. We were certainly devoted to him.<sup>35</sup>

Connell identifies rationality as one of the markers of hegemonic masculinity and as one of the ways in which men exercise power through their masculinity:

Hegemonic masculinity establishes its hegemony partly by its claim to embody the power of rationality, and thus represent the interests of the whole society.<sup>36</sup>

In this way masculinity is identified with rationality, with being rational. Therefore, being unreasonable, irrational or even emotional can be seen as being unmasculine, or feminine. How does this opposition figure in submarine films? It will be shown that professionalism functions in opposition to insanity within submarine masculinity. In this way this chapter will discuss the extent to which the opposition of rational/irrational is maintained within masculinity. For example, is dominant masculinity consistently characterised as rational? Is it opposed to and dominant over irrational and emotional masculinity? This chapter will argue that submarine films provide interesting examples of the tension between emotion and rationality in masculine identity.

### **Contradictions within Masculinity and Rationality.**

In the previous chapter, assumptions about emotion figured in male relationships, and there are significant ways in which these can be related to rationality. In *Crimson Tide*, Hunter provides an interesting example of the tension between emotion and rationality in masculine identity. Significantly, in military submarine films it is officers who experience tensions in terms of rationality. These tensions among crew are identified with hysteria and the body discussed in chapter four, perhaps indicating an

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<sup>35</sup> E. Young, *One of Our Submarines*, Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1997, p.227.

<sup>36</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 164. Significantly, Connell's case study chapter on hegemonic masculinity is called 'Men of Reason'.

identification of working class masculinity with the body. These tensions are articulated differently in underwater science fiction films, as will be accounted for below.

The conflict between Hunter and Ramsey is over proper orders. The tensions over missile launch protocol are invested with many points of difference between the two officers, for example family, friendship and Hunter's background. This is signalled at his interview for the job of XO when Ramsey, reading his profile asks 'A year at, excuse me, Harvard?' This difference between veteran Navy professional and educated officer continues in the Ward Room 'philosophy of war' discussion sequence. This includes disagreements over dropping the bomb on Japan and over von Clausewitz's thesis on 'the art of war'. Ramsey calls Hunter 'complicated', but emphasises

That's the way the navy wants you. Me, they wanted simple. ...All I had to know was how to push it (the button); they'd tell me when. They seem to want you to know why.

This confrontation establishes the significance of the rational use of knowledge associated with professionalism. This is figured through Hunter rather than Ramsey, and is one of the ways hegemonic processes within masculinity can be established. But it is an intellect combined with professionalism. This is significant in terms of a hegemonic masculinity, as intellectuals are seen as being less powerful, less masculine, than business professionals. This point is also emphasised when the two officers share a cigar on the bridge when Ramsey says, 'You knew to shut up and enjoy the view. (Sir?) Most eggheads want to talk it away.' Masculine reticence is here privileged over intellectualising.

The significance of this component of Hunter's identity is emphasised by the part it plays in the most important narrative incident in the film. The mutiny and counter-mutiny hinge on the correct procedure when an Emergency Action Message (EAM) is cut off in mid transmission. For Ramsey it is a matter of part orders being no orders at all, and they should follow the orders in hand (to launch ten cruise missiles at the nationalist rebels). For Hunter, the correct procedure is to wait and find out if the part

EAM could be a countermand to those orders. Both men believe they are carrying out the correct protocol, are acting as professionals. The form of their differences are spelled out to Hunter by his Captain:

I don't have the luxury of your presumptions. Mr. Hunter, we have rules that are not open to interpretation, personal intuition, gut feeling, hairs on the back of the neck, little devils or angels sitting on your shoulders. Now shut the fuck up!

Hunter's masculine identity is clearly emphasised through his intellect, his relations and also his emotion. Gut feeling and intuition are not attributes normally identified as rational, but as the opposite of rationality. Intuition is opposed to rigid adherence to rules, and indicates a validation of independence, or even the maverick individual unconstrained by the institution. However, obeying orders blindly and the strict observation of rules are not seen as professional. Masculine identity is made up of contradictory elements that are not consistently associated with the institution of professionalism. Significantly, it is through Hunter that this complex masculinity is emphasised/positioned. The explanations of masculinity are channelled through identification with Hunter: in the narrative, Ramsey explains himself and Hunter to Hunter, 'Weps' explains Ramsey to Hunter, but Hunter never explains anyone to anyone.

Within the narrative of *Crimson Tide* it can therefore be concluded that a professional masculine identity does not consistently occupy the same position in relation to rationality. Hunter's masculine identity is not a privileging of rationality over emotion and intellect, it is a privileging of a combination of emotion, intellect and rationality. Or to put it another way, it is an excess of rationality, or blindly following rules without question that can be seen as unprofessional.

During the 1950s the tension between duty and emotion in masculinity is one of the ways submarine war films can be seen to be negotiating the trauma of the recent conflict. In *Torpedo Run* the conflict between rationality and emotion takes shape through the

tensions between Doyle's sense of duty, his friendship with Sloan, his desire for revenge and concern for his wife and daughter. One reviewer felt that

The personal story, composed of random flashbacks alternating with close-ups of Glenn Ford under strain, is much less convincing, and goes far towards dehumanising the production.<sup>37</sup>

However, it is through this combination of the personal story with the submarine 'revenge' narrative that the masculinity/rationality association needs to be addressed.

The most significant sequence in the conflict between rationality and emotion occurs when the *Greyfish* attempts to torpedo the *Shinaru*. Aware that his wife and daughter are on the transporter screen, Doyle has to decide whether to fire or not. In response to his XO's entreaties not to fire Doyle retorts 'We're trained to penetrate the enemy's protective screens and kill'. Under attack from depth charges, Doyle does not want to lose his 'firing position' so he presses the button despite the danger of sinking the screening ship. In this sequence, Doyle's emotional attachment to his family is subordinated to his training as a professional. This theme is continued when *Greyfish* spots some survivors in the water and Doyle refuses to pick them up, rationalising 'Those destroyers are waiting for us to pick them up, they're using them as bait. Well, let's get out of here'. If rationality is the exclusion of feeling, then his actions are the product of training: therefore this training functions to exclude emotion.

The consequent revenge pursuit of the *Shinaru*, where Doyle is 'under strain' is where the struggle between emotion and rationality comes to the fore. Revenge is not a professional rational motivation as it is more closely allied with emotion. Doyle's pursuit leads him to take the foolhardy decision to enter Tokyo Bay in an effort to gain his revenge. It is on this pursuit that the flashbacks occur as Doyle recalls his pre-war romance with his wife, Jane. He recalls their courtship, and that she had to talk him into marriage, arguing against his calculated resistance on the grounds that he is 'a bad risk'. It is because he loves her that he does not want to marry her, because of his desire to

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<sup>37</sup> *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Dec 1958, 25: 332, p. 159.

protect her from being widowed and hurt. In the end Jane convinces him to marry her, because, as she rightly points out, *she* is the one taking the risk. In this exchange masculinity and femininity do not occupy consistent positions in relation to rationality and emotion.

Back at Pearl Harbour, with no news of survivors or of the *Shinaru*, Doyle becomes increasingly agitated as he waits for a chance at revenge. This leads to an argument with Archer, who is covering for him so he can skipper the *Greyfish* rather than get posted to a desk job for the rest of the war. The naval command is reluctant to send Doyle out again despite passing him physically fit; as they acknowledge, 'The problem is not physical.' Doyle's strain and his desire for revenge are seen as a mental disturbance, and he is clearly shown to be acting irrationally in his declaration that he will sink the aircraft carrier 'in spite of what anybody thinks, you got that!'

For Doyle though, the narrative ends curiously unresolved. Although the *Greyfish* sinks the *Shinaru*, it is Archer who fires the torpedoes. And the audience never learns if his wife and daughter survive. At the confirmation of the sinking of the 'flat-top', the close-up on Doyle shows a face devoid of euphoria certainly, perhaps a feeling of grim satisfaction, or recognition of the hollowness of the revenge. It could be argued that revenge is a suitable emotion for masculinity, but this film questions the way in which emotion in masculinity is channelled into revenge. Doyle moves from a position of being unable to interpret emotion to being blinded by emotion. His relationships with Jane and Sloan had enabled him to negotiate a position between these extremes, but once these are unavailable or rejected he discovers to his cost that these extremes are untenable. The combination of conventions of the war film and 1950s melodrama questions the gendered assumptions about rationality and emotion accounted for above.

The ending of *Run Silent, Run Deep* is certainly more equivocal than that of *Torpedo Run*, in that Commander Richardson dies in the successful sinking of his nemesis, the Japanese destroyer held responsible for sinking his previous submarine. But this

narrative also contains complex tensions between rationality and emotion within masculine identity. To reiterate, command has preferred Richardson to Bledsoe as captain of the *USS Nerka*. The resentment of the crew grows when Richardson enforces tougher and tougher drills on them, while continually avoiding combat with enemy ships. The crew sees this as cowardice, as avoiding his naval duty, but Richardson is fixed on revenge for the previous sinking. The drills though are soon revealed to be part of Richardson's plan for revenge. He has had the crew dive and fire as quickly as possible so he can get in a risky 'bow shot' at the destroyer. Naval doctrine, logic, has dictated that the best chance of hitting a ship is from side on, but Richardson intends to surprise the enemy by attempting the risky head on attack.

Like revenge, cowardice is associated with feelings, or at least with an inability to rationally control those feelings. Richardson's revenge is based on repetitive training, but of a manoeuvre that is considered too risky. He gets his revenge but is killed in the process.

### **Tensions Between Ideology and Professionalism.**

In this section the textual analysis will focus on tensions between ideology and professionalism within masculine identity. Dominant ideology, hegemonic masculinity and professionalism are all associated with each other; this section will look at the terms of that association in order to assess its role in the representation of masculine identity.

In *Crimson Tide* the conflict between Hunter and Ramsey can be seen as being one of differences between the kinds of men they are, differences that include ideology and professionalism. Their different choices and actions in response to the missile launch drill are manifestations of those differences. This is summarised by 'Weps' in the ironing sequence alluded to in the previous chapter:

To him you're Annapolis, Harvard, expert on theory, well versed in world affairs. He's had his head up his ass driving ships for the last twenty-five years.

He's probably a little paranoid about that. I mean the navy's all he's got, the navy and that little rat dog of his. That's why his wife left him.

The differences between Ramsey and Hunter are continually emphasised in terms of theory and experience. For example, Ramsey remarks to Lt. Dougherty (James Gandolfini), 'I've just been looking at Hunter's file here. The closest to combat he's been is a policy seminar.' This comes at a crucial time in the narrative; Dougherty has gone to see his incarcerated captain, and this visit will determine which of the officers will stick with Hunter and who will follow the captain. Most of the officers go with Ramsey because they resent Hunter's attempt to gain authority over the captain. Hunter's decision not to launch immediately is also seen as cowardice. This opposition is one of simple, experienced 'cold war warrior', versus complicated, inexperienced, thinker.

The terms of this opposition between forms of masculinity need to be related to the processes of hegemonic masculinity identified above. The argument is not only that things are more complex than this, but that all the ingredients that construct this opposition make for a much more interesting and contradictory set of differences. Ramsey and Hunter lay claim to the authority of navy regulation, both believe they are carrying out those regulations and are acting professionally. But these beliefs bring them to a head-on, mutinous collision. Both sets of belief are aligned with professionalism, with a sense of duty.

Within the terms of this opposition, Ramsey should be seen as being irrational because of his inflexibility, which qualifies the relationship between rationality and masculinity. This relationship should be seen as a negotiation between reason and emotion, not as the repression of the latter. This relation can be seen in Middleton's claim that

A rational person is someone in whom reason can interpret emotion, not necessarily someone who has no feelings, suppresses them or dictates to them with logic.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Middleton, 1992, p. 156.

'Weps' observation that 'the navy's all he's got' reveals an obsessive devotion to duty, to his career. It is his one-dimensional identity that opposes him to Hunter; the former is divorced, the latter is clearly identified as a family man. This could also point to generational differences in notions of the professional 'performance' and masculine identity. Older forms of masculinity have been seen as being strictly breadwinner roles, while so-called modern masculinity has a more balanced view of family and work. This accords with changes in masculinity identified by Stevenson in late 1980s men's health magazines, which, he argues

encode new sets of social contradictions whereby men continue to seek their identity through work, but combine this with a more equal relationship with their partners, more affective relations with children and a more 'concerned' relationship with their health generally.<sup>39</sup>

In terms of the narrative, Ramsey is proved wrong in that the EAM was a communication to abandon the missile launch. He is wrong because of his obsessive professionalism, and this narrow professionalism is represented as dangerous through being allied with an outmoded ideology.

Marko Ramius in *The Hunt for Red October* also figures in terms of potential conflicts between ideology and professionalism. Again, this conflict can be seen as significant in the relationship between the self and institutions in masculine identity. Ramius is the leading nuclear submarine captain in the Soviet navy and he has taken the lead boat out in each new class. In this case, his command of the *Red October* is expected, but when he disappears and heads for the US coast, no one, except his allies among the officers, knows why. The question is whether he is trying to defect, or whether he is a madman determined to launch a preemptive strike against the US. What is interesting in terms of masculinity is not whether Jack Ryan as the CIA intelligence officer can convince the 'hawkish' US navy of Ramius's true, peaceful, intentions. It is rather the processes involved in the formation of Ramius's identity; these processes are expressed through his profession as captain and naval officer, his nationalism and his feelings for his wife.

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<sup>39</sup> N. Stevenson, in Jackson, et al, (Eds), forthcoming, p. 4.



For the pursuing Soviet navy, the only way to prevent *Ramius* from defecting is to convince the US that he is about to launch a preemptive strike. The narrative is therefore significantly concerned with debates over the real intentions of *Ramius*. The audience though is in a position to see *Ramius* carry out his plan to defect and to understand his motivation. This identification is solicited through a network of factors that constitute his masculinity, seen through his performance as a submarine captain. For example, in the high speed run down 'Red Route One', *Ramius* has the same knowledge of the terrain as his navigator, yet his expertise enables him to increase the speed of the *Red October*. The close up shots of *Ramius* in this sequence, calmly calculating the time for the manoeuvres are contrasted with the panic stricken faces of the other officers. It is this that enables the submarine to evade the torpedo from the hostile Soviet ASW aircraft.

A further sequence that emphasises *Ramius*'s skill as a submarine captain occurs when the *Konavalov* has attacked the *Red October*. The crew has been evacuated, and the *Red October* is being controlled by Soviet and US navy officers. As the torpedo approaches, *Ramius* turns the submarine into the path of the torpedo at high speed. Only he knows the arming distance of the Soviet torpedo, so he is able to get close enough to be hit by it before it has 'gone active'. His professionalism is again shown through the contrast with the other scared officers. As sonar man Jones announces 'twenty seconds to impact' *Ramius* calmly criticises the books Ryan has written on a German admiral, which is contrasted with his declaration that he evaded the torpedo through his knowledge of 'Combat tactics.' This professionalism is also contrasted with the fanaticism of Captain Tupolov (Stellan Skarsgard) of the *Konavalov*, a fanaticism signalled through a number of incidents. For example, *Ramius* says early on 'There's little room in Tupolov's heart for anyone but Tupolov' when told of the Captain's affection for him. Later, in pursuit of *Ramius*, Tupolov orders '105% on the reactor' against the advice of his engineer. The foolishness of this decision is signalled through the close up on Tupolov's face that emphasises his fanatical determination. Ultimately, this irrationality causes the

destruction of his own submarine. After the first failed torpedo attack, Tupolov orders the safety devices on his torpedoes to be set at zero so they are armed immediately. The next torpedo misses the *Red October* and turns back on the *Konavalov* in an attempt to find a new target.

The origin of his birth is also significant in Ramius' identity, in that he is identified as a Lithuanian, so his nationality is presented as being at odds with Soviet pan-nationalism. His relationship with his Grandfather is highly significant here, he has happy memories of being taught to fish by his Grandfather, a memory he has in common with Ryan and his Grandfather. The death of Ramius' wife is also a key element in the narrative. His plan to defect is put in to force on the anniversary of her death, and this indicates to Ryan that he could be defecting as Ramius blames the Soviet navy for her death.

It is significant that the combination of his professionalism, his nationality and his feelings are fundamental to Ramius's identity. This is emphasised and summarised in a particularly emotional sequence. Ramius and his friend Vasily Borodin (Sam Neill) are discussing what they will do when they get to the US. In contrast to Borodin's naive 'Do you think they will let me live in Montana... drive a recreational vehicle?' Ramius says

I have no such appetites. I miss the peace of fishing, like when I was a boy. Forty years I've been at sea, a war at sea, a war with no battles, no monuments, only casualties, I widowed her the day I married her. My wife died while I was at sea you know.

Ramius's professionalism is then to some extent at odds with rationality and militarism. He recognises the *Red October* as a first strike weapon, and his defection is designed to prevent it being used as such in the naval strategy of the cold war. But his national identity and his wife's death are also fundamental to his defection.

In the 1950s *The Enemy Below* presents tensions between ideology and professionalism in terms of conflicts with Nazism and military procedure rather than cold-war politics. Here, the tensions figure both within von Stolberg and in the relationship between him

and Murrell. In a long and extraordinary speech the captain expresses his doubts over the war. The most important thing for him is to get home, while the strategic significance of collecting the captured British codebook is secondary. von Stolberg's disillusionment springs from his advancing age, the death of his two sons in the war, and his perception of the Second World War as mechanised. He declares bitterly that

There's no honour in this war. The memories will be ugly, even if we win. And if we die, we die without God. ...Agh, it's a bad war. Its rationality is twisted, its purpose is dark. It's not for a simple man.

The similarity with Captain Ramsey is that both are men whose professionalism is out of step with the contemporary ideology. von Stolberg can even be seen as a man whose identity contradicts his professional position as U-Boat commander. His heroism is linked to the higher ideals of humanity, rather than the military ideals of the German navy. For example, he also says 'They've taken the human out of war.' This is not simply a case of US triumphalism in a period of post-war re-assessment, for Captain Murrell is also troubled by contradictions. As has been shown, the ending of the film avoids a triumphant resolution.

The conflict between ideology and professionalism takes on a similar significance in the later German re-appraisal of the war, *Das Boot*. Here though this takes the form of German attempts to reconcile contemporaneous new, Germany with the past. This is seen in the debate about the representation of youth and generational responsibility discussed in chapter two. Here then it is the Nazi ideologue 1st Lieutenant (Hubertus Bengsch) who is aligned with overzealous devotion to regulations. The other officers ridicule his prim table manners, observance of strict dress code and cleanliness. This is reinforced by the ironic combination of his dictation on appearance over shots of the unkempt officers. The 1st Lieutenant is heard declaring that 'Attention to personal hygiene and dress are not just appearances. It reflects an upright clean interior thus influencing the surroundings.' He then stresses the importance of strict discipline, but as his voice fades the Captain makes sarcastic comments on their fine 'wood panelling' and

'home cooking'. The futility of the 1st Lieutenant's regime is brought home when he becomes infested with venereal crabs along with the rest of the crew.

### **Self-control, Individualism and Responsibility.**

The previous two sections of this chapter have shown that masculine identity, rather than being simply in rational institutions of work, is more of a process involving tensions between emotion, rationality, ideology and professionalism. Ochberg argues that in the male career culture 'the balance between detached, self-interested calculation and disingenuous affection is one of the formative tensions built into the fabric of the business world.'<sup>40</sup> In this section, the argument will link these factors with the significance of male relationships and the incidents of pressure on the individual in the previous chapters to show how these tensions figure in issues of individualism and responsibility. For example, does putting yourself first endanger the rest of the crew, and does this represent a tension between the self and the institution that has consequences for masculine identity?

In *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* there are many points of tension around issues of individualism and responsibility. These are articulated through the conflicts Land has with Captain Nemo and Professor Arronax. These conflicts centre on Land's desire to steal the treasure on board the *Nautilus* and his plans to escape.

For example, where Land and Conseil attempt to retrieve the treasure, they are attacked by a shark and have to be rescued by Captain Nemo. Back on board the *Nautilus* Land is chastised by Nemo for putting so much value on 'the cheapest of human commodities', rather than on 'a sound mind and a full belly'. When the three prisoners are alone, the following exchange takes place:

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<sup>40</sup> Ochberg, in Brod, (Ed), 1987, p. 173.

**Arronax:** You're going to get us all killed if you keep on antagonising him. We mustn't quarrel among ourselves, we must stay together, it's our only chance.

**Land:** Chance? Chance for what? Oh, I know what you want, this crazy iron skillet's turned your head. You want to play a waiting game, hoping to learn old Nemo's secrets.

**A:** Well, I believe we owe the world that much. Have you a better plan?

**L:** Yeah, I want to get off. But I don't mind going with my pockets full...we'd be rich. I'd have a ship of my own, and you wouldn't have to be starving along on a professor's pay.

Although Land promises not to try a 'one man mutiny', he continues to plan his escape in secret, even to the extent of running the gauntlet of some hungry cannibals in New Guinea. For Arronax, stealing the treasure, like trying to escape, jeopardises the future of all of them. While Land is acting purely in his own interests, the interests of the group are under threat. At first Land is positioned as a threat to the group. He demands action (emphasised partly in class terms as discussed in chapter four) rather than Arronax's rational waiting game, but this gets them all confined to quarters. What is significant is the way the positions of individualism and responsibility are reversed. This begins when Conseil, sent to spy on Land by Arronax, changes sides. He has just called the Professor 'Captain' saying he can see little difference between the two, and goes to Land saying 'We need each other.'

It is the terms of this change of position that are interesting. In effect, that which Land and Conseil are allied against in the figure of their fellow prisoner, Professor Arronax. He is presented as a man of rationality, educated and possessed of supposedly higher ideals

than Land in particular. His call for unity is dressed in an appeal for the whole of humanity, 'we owe the world that much'. The point where Conseil turns against Arronax comes when the Professor announces 'the world has a use for him (Nemo) and I must make him see that.' Arronax's position is on the surface an appeal to rationality, in the interests of the world through Nemo's scientific advance (nuclear power). Furthermore, it is the subordination of self to the group. Opposed to him is the selfish greedy Land, who can think only of money, drink and 'native girls, hungry for affection.' But this opposition is reversed, and Arronax's higher ideal becomes that of the self-serving egotistical scientist, interested in the glory of being Nemo's emissary. Land's escape plan enables the prisoners to escape and brings about the destruction of the *Nautilus*. His message in a bottle finds its way to the US fleet, which ambushes the *Nautilus* on its return to *Vulcania*. The potential for tensions in this opposition are summed up by Conseil at the end of the exchange quoted above, Arronax returns to his desk muttering 'escape, trivialities, nonsense' so Conseil points out 'That depends on your point of view. ...I just think that Ned values his life above scientific achievement, that's all.'

Land's value for life becomes crucial in the narrative, it enables him to avoid execution for his escape attempt, and later it proves to be the point that distinguishes Nemo from Arronax and the others. Land has used his skill as a harpoonist to kill a giant squid attacking the *Nautilus*, and has then rescued the drowning Captain Nemo. Arronax and the captain discuss the feat of heroism in a debate about the nature of good:

**Nemo:** According to you, Mr. Land is a hero, in the best traditions of cheap fiction... Actually, he regrets saving my life as much as I would regret saving his. The only difference is that I wouldn't have tried.

**Arronax:** Then it is that difference that gives Ned Land the human dignity you no longer possess.

These tensions over individualism and responsibility have to be seen though as being played out against the debate over Nemo himself. One of the main narrative concerns is the representation of Nemo as mad tyrant or as idealistic visionary. For example Nemo justifies sinking a ship loaded with explosives as a blow against 'assassins, dealers in death'. Land rages at Arronax that 'They we're sailors like me, slaughtered by that monster you are trying to make friends with.' Nemo's tyranny is based on the opposition between unjust society and the purity of his own ideal:

Think of it. On the surface there is still hunger and fear. Men still exercise unjust laws, they fight, tear one another to pieces. A mere few feet below the waves their reign ceases, their evil grounds, here on the ocean floor is the only independence. Here I am free. Imagine what would happen if they controlled machines such as this submarine boat. Far better they think it's a monster and hunt it with harpoons.

*20, 000 Leagues under the Sea* is not then about privileging one form of masculinity over other, but about stressing the combination of differences within masculinity. These differences are not though organised in terms of hierarchical differences. A more productive way of seeing these differences is in terms of situational usefulness. In other words, within the process of different crises for masculinity, different responses are deemed appropriate. This can be seen to have parallels with Thumin's account of masculinity in relation to competence in *Unforgiven* (C. Eastwood, US, 1992.) which is 'a question not so much of knowing how to act, but of knowing when.'<sup>41</sup> Here, maturity is one of the forms of control over the self that can work within the process of hegemonic masculinity: subordinating younger masculinity in deference to the authority of mature masculinity. In *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea* this deference provides a source of tension that is not resolved in favour of either youth or maturity, but their combination.

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<sup>41</sup> J. Thumin, 'Maybe He's Tough But He Sure Ain't No Carpenter': Masculinity and In/competence in *Unforgiven*', in Kirkham and Thumin, (Eds), 1995, p. 238.

This submarine film raises the significant distinction between self-preservation and self-advancement. The former can be seen as putting self-interest to the common good; the latter only serves itself when naked ambition is not checked by social responsibility. This does not necessarily mean that in the case of *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* the film privileges active heroic masculinity over a rational educated masculinity. Without the restraining influence of Arronax, Land would have gone on kicking against Nemo. Without Land 'striking a blow for freedom', they would have not been rescued. Both individualism and responsibility constitute necessary elements within masculinity.

Other types of submarine film explore tensions between the individual and the group in a number of ways. In *Deepstar Six*, Snyder's desperate bid for freedom in the escape pod initially appears to be at the expense of the other members of the crew. He uses the pod on his own and as a consequence the others cannot return to the surface. In putting his own life before that of the group, he endangers them, but ultimately he kills himself; by failing to decompress, against the advice of Dr Norris, Snyder implodes on the way to the surface. Here then, the irrational self is opposed to both the regulations of decompression and the wider interests of the group.

Within the Atlantis narratives of underwater adventure, individualism is frequently coded in terms of greed. For example, in *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City*, the comedy duo Barnaby and Swallow have an obsessive desire to escape with the treasure in *Templemere*. However, Barnaby ends up dead and Swallow has to return his meagre spoils to the ocean. Significantly in this film, their greedy individualism is opposed to both masculinity and femininity. For example, in terms of Helena's romantic attachment to Nemo and through Fraser's sense of civic responsibility that drives him to return to the surface. Here then, irrational over-individualism is presented negatively, while selfless responsibility is validated through Fraser. In between is Helena's reasoned decision to interpret her emotions. It could be argued that this trivialises femininity through romance, though aligning femininity and youth with utopia serves to underline the possibility of change.



### Conclusions.

This chapter has shown how masculine identity is associated with the practice and the institutions of work. Hegemonic masculinity's power over women and other men is maintained through the alignment of certain codes of behaviour with the masculine - rationality, professionalism, performance, and ambition. The argument has then gone on to show that these elements are not consistently associated with hegemonic masculinity. For example, rationality is not consistently privileged over emotion. Rather, it has been argued that the submarine film is one of the ways masculinity negotiates the extremes and contradictions of rationality. The conflicts within Doyle and those between Hunter and Ramsey indicate that representations of masculinity do not necessarily privilege straightforward conceptions of hegemonic masculinity, even within discrete historical periods. Furthermore, in *Crimson Tide* the differences between Ramsey and Hunter are not just historical differences, in that Hunter replaces Ramsey. Although Ramsey is associated with the past, the other differences with Hunter, and the fact that Ramsey establishes alliances with the younger officers, ensure that contradictions within masculinity are not just down to historical development. The sense of masculine self is a process of often-contradictory elements, different elements that function in different ways depending on the context of the relations between the self, others and the institution.

## 7] Vision and Power.

This chapter will focus on the implications of image, gender and power in masculinity. Within film studies, many of these derive from the legacy of Mulvey's influential article, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'.<sup>1</sup> However, the terms in which vision and power figure in the submarine film have specific implications for hegemonic masculinity. Initially, then, the chapter will establish the significance of considering masculinity in submarine films within the terms of the visual pleasure legacy. This is not an attempt to continue what Bordwell describes as 'The Hermeneutic Impulse', in other words, the application of theory primarily to 'interpret films as instantiations of theoretical categories and propositions.'<sup>2</sup> This chapter will argue that there are a number of sound theoretical and textual reasons for considering submarine films within these terms.

In the first instance, the issue of vision is thematically significant in submarine films. In a literal sense most submarines are blind to their environment. With some exceptions, notably the technologically fantastic *Nautilus* of Captain Nemo in *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea*, or Admiral Nelson's *Seaview* in *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, the men on submarines cannot see beyond the limits of the submarine. Submarines involved in real and fictional exploration have viewing panels, but as has been shown in the discussion of Coffey's implosion in *The Abyss*, the glass is the first thing to crack under pressure. The ability to see out of a submarine therefore represents a weak point in its structure. Combat submarine do not, by and large, include 'portholes.' The discussion will therefore include the nature and significance of seeing as instances of vulnerability and power in submarine narratives. This visual impairment needs to be compensated for in order for the submarine to navigate underwater and to locate and identify other submarines. This is done through the technology available; listening equipment deciphers objects that reflect back sonar echoes. Technology can in some instances turn sounds into pictures, which software can manipulate and identify. This chapter will

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<sup>1</sup> Mulvey, 1975, pp. 6-18.

<sup>2</sup> D. Bordwell, in Bordwell and Carroll (Eds) 1996, p. 24.

analyse the forms that this compensation takes, and the relation of vision to other perceptual faculties.

The textual analysis that follows will establish the specific significance of vision and looking in the submarine films. The foundation for this claim rests on two thematic preoccupations specific to submarine and underwater adventure narratives. The first is simply that the nature of the environment and of the submarine makes vision virtually impossible. Noticeably, when vision of the underwater world is achieved it is clearly coded as part of the spectacle. For example, the visual splendour of marine wildlife (the hunting trip in *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*), or the spectacle of the underwater settlements (*Templemere* in *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City*). The instruments that transmit the perception of the outside world also feature as issues in looking. However, much of the submariner's sense of the external world comes about through listening. Secondly, and of more concern to this chapter is looking within the submarine. This is of interest because of the significance of visual contact and communication between the men in the confined space and restricted view of the submarine. What is the meaning attached to looking when there is nowhere to look beyond the immediate environment? In addition, the looks between men in the submarine challenge many assumptions about hegemonic masculinity.

In submarine war films the periscope is one of the most significant features of the submarine. This is for two reasons, both of which have narrative significance in submarine films and also relate to the theoretical concepts evident in the legacy of Mulvey's article. The periscope is the means by which submarines identify and target the enemy. The location and destruction of the enemy depends on seeing that enemy through the periscope. As technology developed, the submarine became less reliant on the periscope and more dependent on software that analysed target data. How the periscope features in later submarine films is significant in terms of communication and technology. But, in order to see the enemy, the submarine risks being seen. The moment the submarine sees its target is the moment it is most vulnerable; its potency, derived

from its invisibility, comes under threat when it can be discovered. One of the concerns of this chapter is to establish whether the thematic preoccupation with the submarine betraying its presence conforms to the power relations identified in voyeurism.

One of the first attempts to rework Mulvey's article was made by Neale in 1983.<sup>3</sup> Here, he poses questions about images of men and of the male spectator using Mulvey's article as 'a central, structuring reference point'.<sup>4</sup> Drawing on Willemen's 'Anthony Mann: Looking at the Male'<sup>5</sup> Neale considers the implications for the male spectator in relation to images of masculinity as erotic objects of contemplation. Although specifically about the troubled heroic figures in Anthony Mann's Westerns, Willemen's claims have been used freely to theorise the male look at masculine figures. Willemen maintains that there is on the one hand spectorial pleasure in seeing the male 'exist' and on the other in 'seeing the male mutilated'.<sup>6</sup> There is an anxiety involved in this look at the male, though Willemen does not insist, as others have done (For example, Neale and Hark), that this anxiety is necessarily or in part disavowed by that process of mutilation. Within the terms of Mulvey's concept of the spectating process, such images must work to deny or disavow their homoeroticism:

in a heterosexual and patriarchal society, the male body cannot be marked explicitly as the erotic object of another male look: that look must be motivated in some other way.<sup>7</sup>

In a further extension of this kind of inquiry, Hark examines *Spartacus* (S. Kubrick, US, 1960) for the particular ways in which the masculine body is coded in order for it to function as spectacle.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding the specific claims of these articles, which will be dealt with below, both Neale and Hark point to the importance of testing out Mulvey's concepts in relation to masculine genres. There are two claims that are particularly relevant here: that men are bearers of the look, and that the apparatus of

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<sup>3</sup> Neale, in Cohan and Hark, (Eds), 1993, pp. 9-20.

<sup>4</sup> Neale, in Cohan and Hark, (Eds), 1993, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> P. Willemen, 'Anthony Mann: Looking at the Male', *Framework*, Summer, 1981, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Willemen, 1981, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Neale, in Cohan and Hark, (Eds), 1993, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> I. R. Hark, 'Animals or Romans: Looking at masculinity in *Spartacus*', Cohan & Hark, (Eds), 1993, pp. 151-172.

cinema functions to reinforce sexual difference in the interests of patriarchy. How do these claims bear up when applied to male figures, in male genres, looked at by male spectators? Submarine films fall within the rubric of a masculine genre, they contain predominantly male figures and they are aimed at a putative male spectator.

Further examples of this kind of inquiry deal with the male figure in popular film both within the terms of Mulvey's argument and as a form of critique of the basic premise. For example, Lehman argues that while 'Mulvey oversimplified both the history of the sexual representation of the male body and the nature of male subjectivity'<sup>9</sup> he also remains 'deeply indebted to her.'<sup>10</sup> In contrast, Smith criticises Mulvey's foundational claims when Neale applies them to the male body in the action movie:

Taking his cue from Mulvey's analysis of the way women's bodies are objectified and made the object of the gaze, Neale also tends to take for granted the sadistic/masochistic doublet.<sup>11</sup>

None of these articles though begin to dissect the terms in Mulvey's argument that can arise from the analysis of masculinity in the submarine film. For example, while this chapter retains its focus on theoretical concepts of looking and the narrative theme of vision, it is the nature and existence of 'the look' that needs reconsideration. Both the subject and the object of the look are sexualised by that look within Mulvey's argument. But that does not mean all looks and bodies are so sexualised. If this is the case, is it possible to sustain the argument for the necessity for disavowal of homosexuality in all classical cinema? Where does this leave other bodies and other looks? For example, in what ways might the conditions of a particular male relationship not require repressed homoeroticism to be allayed by the necessary conditions for looking at the male? As Cohan argues concerning William Holden in *Picnic* (J. Logan, US, 1955.) it is important when making claims about masculinity and the look to maintain the possibility that the man in question could 'be looked at from *multiple* viewing positions.'<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> P. Lehman, *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993, p 6.

<sup>10</sup> Lehman, 1993, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> P. Smith, 'Eastwood Bound', in M. Berger et al, (Eds), 1995, p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> Cohan, 1997, p. 171.

There are though ways the concept of 'the look' has been challenged. Hunt, for example, questions Neale's assertion that, in relation to masculinity, 'the look' 'is heavily mediated by the looks of the characters involved. And those looks are marked not by desire, but rather by fear, by hatred or aggression.'<sup>13</sup> Hunt's reservations are with desire and hatred as necessarily mutually exclusive, and with the assumption that 'desire only appears by virtue of its unsuccessful repression.'<sup>14</sup> These reservations have particular relevance for masculinity in submarine war and encounter films, particularly in that they question the extent to which desire (or its repression) is a condition of 'the look.'

There are further significant ways in which arguments about looking as sadism and controlling can be questioned. For example, does the look necessarily maintain the power relations of active male passive female? For example, Sikov suggests that

cinematic pleasure returns the spectator regressively not to an Oedipal moment wherein sexual difference is defined but rather to a *pre*-Oedipal state in which the image of woman, a maternal imago, retains a primal dominating power. ...the spectator is held fast by this image, rapt in a pleasurable masochism. ...in this way visual pleasure is open to everyone, male and female, gay and heterosexual.<sup>15</sup>

When men become the object certain conditions have to be in place in order for the regime of looking to function in terms of power and homoerotic disavowal. Indeed, the codes and conventions of narrative cinema, and the ideology of patriarchal culture are said to make it inevitable. The concern of this chapter is whether representations of masculinity conform inevitably to those conditions.

It is far more productive to consider the ways in which individual narratives position different masculinities along this axis of subject/object, sadistic/masochistic. For example, what are the specific conditions under which the male becomes the object of

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<sup>13</sup> S. Neale, 'Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema', *Screen*, 24: 6, 1983, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> L. Hunt, 'What Are Big Boys Made Of? *Spartacus*, *El Cid* and the Male Epic', in Cohan & Hark, (Eds), 1993, p. 70.

<sup>15</sup> E. Sikov, 1994, pp. 70-71. See also G. Studlar, *In the Realm of Pleasure*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, and L. Arbutnot & G. Seneca, 'Pre-Text and Text in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*,' *Film Reader* 5, 1982, pp. 17-21.

'the look', or how might men control 'the look', and in what narrative and perceptual contexts can 'the look' be said to function. Prince argues that specific narratives are at least if not more important than narrative structure in how films mean. Using Messaris' research into visual literacy in film and television, Prince maintains that 'narrative context often overrules codes.'<sup>16</sup> Because of the abstract level at which 'the spectator' is conceived in these Mulveyesque concepts, the concern here is primarily with inter-diagetic looks, rather than the spectator's look. In other words, rather than claim that the spectator is obliged to identify with particular positions through the apparatus and codes of film, the account will ascertain the possible positions offered through narrative looks in relation to, for example, genre, star and narrative context.

It could be argued that the strategy of this chapter is disingenuous. To claim merely that there are other types of looking in the cinema, and then analyse instances of that type, to 'prove' that looking in the cinema is not only about disavowal of homoerotic anxiety seems straightforward. Rather than maintain this emphasis on homoerotic anxieties, the textual analysis will stress the significance of different masculinities in particular narratives, the looks within that narrative, and the significance of the visual field in submarine narratives.

There are a number of ways that the implications of Mulvey's concepts have been interrogated and applied in film studies. Some of these, discussed below, bear on the regime of looking within the different types of submarine film. Certain conditions have to apply for the subject/object relationship of looking to work: to be looked at is not necessarily to be made an object. Within the terms of 'the look', to be an object means to be female or to be feminised and to be looked at from a position of power. Tasker accounts for the limitations of feminist film criticism which 'map onto the cinema a peculiarly heightened sense of male power and female powerlessness.'<sup>17</sup> Through this

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<sup>16</sup> S. Prince, 'The Discourse of Pictures: Iconicity and Film Studies', *Film Quarterly*, 47, 1, Fall 1993, p. 21. Prince quotes Messaris' observation that 'Interpretation is driven by the narrative context, not the code.' P. Messaris, *Visual Literacy: How Images Make Sense*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Forthcoming.

<sup>17</sup> Tasker, 1993, p. 116.

binary, the body as object can only be feminised, an opposition that works towards gender imbalance through the restoration of power to the masculine. Tasker argues on the other hand that 'The action scenario is not simply a narrative of empowerment, in which we identify with an heroic figure who triumphs over all obstacles, but is also a dramatisation of the social limits of power.'<sup>18</sup> Although Tasker is concerned specifically with the action hero, her remarks on the shifting identifications with that hero relate to the approach in this chapter.

Cornell suggests ways in which queer readings of Douglas Fairbanks have made the spectator an active participant in cinema rather than the victim of cinema's spectatorial regime. Even within the terms of Mulvey's claim that cinema is a patriarchal institution, this shows that

all subjectivities are not collapsed under a unitary visual regime even within the objectifying organisations of knowledge and power supported by patriarchal assumptions.<sup>19</sup>

Significantly, Cornell's analysis of the marketing strategies around Fairbanks indicates that this reading can take place without 'distorting the film's structural meaning.'<sup>20</sup>

Steinman argues that male identification with attractive masculinity on television works within that spectorial regime which denies homosexuality. Here, although gendered identity in 1990s America is no longer seen as secure, there is no position for the heterosexual male from which images of masculinity can be read as threatening gender relations or heterosexual desire. In this way, the spectator is still assigned a position determined by the text regardless of differences in cultural modes and relation to dominant ideology addressed in previous chapters. Steinman constructs his assumptions on the premise that

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<sup>18</sup> Tasker, 1993, p. 117.

<sup>19</sup> Cornell, 1998, p. 76.

<sup>20</sup> Cornell, 1998, p. 77.



Recognising the continuum of sexual orientations through which men live, we might view the “male” gaze as an inconsistent regulator of gendered experience, as well as an apparatus for domination of women.<sup>21</sup>

There are other ways in which the position of the spectator and the representation of gender may be considered. Shaviro suggests that rather than see representation as the battlefield of gender relations, film needs to be considered in relation to the insistence that ‘social formations be defined not by their hegemonic institutions and ideologies but by their potentials for change, not by their norms but by their “lines of flight.”’<sup>22</sup> In this way, the look, masculinity and power need to be considered not just for what they seem to reinforce, but also in terms of the anxieties and contradictions they negotiate. The analysis will then consider precisely how masculinity in submarine films negotiates anxieties about power and masculinity in relation to the assumptions about the object and looking.

### **Masculine Subject as Feminine Object.**

Arguments about the eroticisation of the male figure in narrative film tend to focus on stars with an acknowledged erotic appeal, and to include only films where they remove at least some of their clothing. For example, Hark’s discussion of Kirk Douglas in *Spartacus*, or Cohan’s claim that ‘Lancaster’s “unmistakably male” chest can only carry those meanings, however, when it is stripped of its covering and turned into spectacle.’<sup>23</sup> Therefore, this section will discuss Kirk Douglas in *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*, and Burt Lancaster in *Run Silent, Run Deep*. At the time, both of these stars were at the height of their popularity. Lancaster and Douglas have a star image that is at least in part constructed through their physique.<sup>24</sup>

Douglas is the only one to take his shirt off in *20,000 Leagues*. His character Land is positioned as the man of physical action. Arronax is a scientist and Nemo’s cerebral

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<sup>21</sup> C. Steinman, ‘Gaze Out of Bounds: Men Watching Men on Television’, in S. Craig, (Ed), 1992, p. 202.

<sup>22</sup> S. Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> Cohan, 1997, p. 185.

<sup>24</sup> See chapter 5, ‘The Age of the Chest’ in Cohan, 1997, pp. 164-200.

authority is marked by the unquestioning loyalty of the crew. Land is a harpooner, recruited to the mission to destroy the 'monster' because of his skill and physical attributes. What is significant about the display of Douglas's torso is the narrative context in which it is revealed. On the first occasion Land appears to be at his most vulnerable and helpless, but he is also angry and determined to plan an escape. Land's anger stems from being powerless to help his fellow sailors on the ship *Nemo* has sunk. It is this, along with Arronax's complicity with *Nemo* that enrages him. Immediately after the sinking Land is seen without his shirt. He is confined to quarters, and immediately becomes violently angry when Conseil comes to see him. In his rage he accuses him of being Arronax's spy. In this way, with his shirt off, powerless and being spied on, Land would appear to fulfil the criteria for feminised object and for the masochistic/sadistic doublet. He is even initially seen clutching a string of pearls.

This anger enables the actor to rant and rave, flexing his muscles, punching the wall and straining the veins on his neck and chest. Land flings himself on his bed, dejected at the hopelessness of putting his escape plan into action, but it is at this point where Conseil tells him about *Nemo's* secret base, *Vulcania*. Conseil himself does not look at the exposed body, he prefers instead to meet his gaze. There is no diegetic motivation in this sequence for the spectator to look, and none is needed. Prior to this Land has been seen powerless and prone, but with the new information he is able to put his plan into action (a message in a bottle): it is at this point that Land leaps up in celebration, and then puts his shirt back on. So here the masculine torso figures as object: Land is powerless and angry, (emotional) therefore he is feminised. But within the conventions of the narrative that Neale proposes as coding the male as to-be-looked-at, Douglas puts his shirt *on* when he is restored to active masculinity. However, it is also highly significant that this active masculinity is achieved through cooperation and not individualism.

This sequence is the only sustained opportunity for Douglas to appear half-naked. Two further minor sequences occur in the film but overall the spectacle of Douglas's torso is under wraps for this production. However, what is most noticeable is the skin tight T-

shirt that is stretched over his chest and biceps for the rest of the film. While the other figures remain swathed in heavy, Victorian clothing, Douglas plays Land in a recognisably sailor-boy outfit. All of these factors have to be borne in mind when accounting for the apparent objectification of the male figure. Whatever kind of fantasy Douglas functions as, it has to be remembered the narrative itself is a boys adventure story.

Five years on from being the erotic object of contemplation with Deborah Kerr in *that* beach scene in *From Here To Eternity* (F. Zinnemann, US, 1953.) Lancaster resolutely kept his shirt on for *Run Silent, Run Deep*. This film, like *Sweet Smell of Success* (A. Mackendrick, US, 1957.) was a Hecht-Lancaster production. Lancaster's increased power within the production context allowed him to keep his shirt on and not be objectified. Indeed, in *Run Silent*, he is seen to knot his tie in defiance of any loosening of his clothing. Burt's chest, or for Swanson<sup>25</sup> Burt's neck, cannot avoid functioning as erotic object of the look. But what is it about Lancaster/Bledsoe within *Run Silent* that is significant in terms of masculinity and submarine films? This question should be dealt with not only in terms of the relationship between Lancaster and his audience, between Bledsoe and the narrative, but also in terms of the presence of Clark Gable as Commander Richardson.

Although this film is co-produced by Lancaster, Gable's name appears before Lancaster's above the titles. The pre-credit sequence takes place one year before the actual story, i.e. the sinking of Richardson's submarine in the notorious Bungo Straits. While Gable comes first before Lancaster in the billing order, his first action is to be sunk and the sequence ends with a shot of Richardson clinging desperately to a piece of wreckage. The next time the audience sees him he has been behind a desk for a year, repeatedly fantasising his revenge on the Akakasi that sunk him. Following on from these two sequences, the film introduces Burt Lancaster as Jim Bledsoe, Commander

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<sup>25</sup> G. Swanson, 'Burt's Neck: Masculine Corporeality and Estrangement', in Kirkham & Thumin, (Eds), 1995, pp. 203-222.

apparent of the *USS Nerka* and very popular with the crew. This film pursues a complex and fluctuating struggle for authority between these two men. A good deal of this struggle is played out through looking, and, significantly, through attempts to avoid that look. Cohan positions Gable against the 'new' masculinity of the 1950s, in that he is a 'rugged, physical masculinity still being personified on screen by those old working warhorses, Cooper, Gable, Stewart and Wayne.'<sup>26</sup> What is of equal importance is that Cohan does *not* include Lancaster in this chapter where he discusses 'Why Boys Are Not Men'. Spoto has argued that for depression audiences 'the sex appeal he (Gable) had for women and the envy he summoned from men were probably due to his complete satisfaction with being himself.'<sup>27</sup> Roughly twenty years later, Gable as the older man stands for past masculinity in relation to Lancaster. The latter's youth is further emphasised by his captain's retirement, complaining that 'submarines ruined my liver.' What is also important though is the assumption of a necessary relation between increased age and diminished sex appeal; for some stars, their sex appeal for some fans is actually increased with age. (For example, Sean Connery and Harrison Ford.) Any discussion of the object of the look has to bear this in mind.

The narrative though positions Lancaster/Bledsoe against Gable/Richardson. It continues the opposition established in the beginning through showing Bledsoe as a social figure, the shots of Bledsoe with the men after Richardson has left are frequently followed by shots of the latter alone in his quarters. It could be argued that there is ample opportunity for Lancaster to function as an 'erotic object of contemplation' despite the fact that he keeps his clothes on. In fact, the way the uniform is worn emphasises his physique: shirt button undone, hint of white T-shirt underneath and sleeves rolled up all play a part in suggesting a muscular chest and arms beneath the cloth. The tightly tucked-in shirt and the cut of it both draw attention to the slim waist, which make the dimensions of the upper torso even more pronounced.

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<sup>26</sup> Cohan, 1997, pp. 201-202.

<sup>27</sup> Spoto, 1978, p. 57.

While there is a quite clear distinction between the part played here and that of Milton Wardman in *From Here To Eternity*, there are still grounds for claiming that Lancaster/Bledsoe functions as erotic spectacle. But how does this work within the terms of the claims that anxiety over the look at the male needs to be allayed through the process of eroticisation, destruction and re-emergence? There is nothing either in the events or the formal properties of the narrative to suggest that this masochism/destruction takes place. It is clearly Gable who undergoes this process, as he is repeatedly wounded and made powerless.

Therefore, there is one male figure that is the object and another who goes through the process of allaying the anxiety of looking at that object. A further issue for this discussion is that the differences between the two men are resolved in a way that is pertinent to questions concerning both masculinity and the visual field in submarine narratives. In the final engagement with the enemy, Bledsoe has replaced Richardson, who lies delirious on his bunk. The key to Richardson's re-emergence and therefore the secret of the hidden submarine the enemy have used to sink so many US submarines is through what Richardson hears not through what he sees. It is when he at his weakest, relieved of command and delirious, that Richardson realises that the sound they heard on being sunk is another submarine. He has at this point lost control of his senses and is confusing the past with the present. This leads directly to his vital function in the narrative. If Lancaster and Gable function as the object and the disavowal, it is between them that the narrative can be resolved. Rather than see Richardson's death as the passing of an older masculinity, it is his vital contribution despite his impotence that remains important.

Before the next section though it is worth noting the use made of erotic elements of star image in *Crimson Tide*. Previous chapters have discussed the relationships between Hunter, Ramsey, Weps and the crew, and these relationships are significant in terms of the present discussion of masculinity as object. *Crimson Tide* continues and extends the scope of the points in this section around generational difference, professionalism, star

image and their narrative significance through the figure of Denzel Washington as Hunter. Washington's star image is in part based on his erotic appeal, for example *Ricochet* (R. Mulcahy, US, 1991). In *Crimson Tide* the conditions that are supposed to be in place for the display of the male body as erotic object are apparent. For example, the sequence of Washington skipping and boxing then towelling down after his exertions. Throughout this sequence, Washington's athletic body is visible in his vest, he is covered in sweat and the shots are glamorised by the use of bright white top lighting. There is no motivating diegetic look, so this can be seen as spectacle. It is clear from the narrative that in this sequence the look at the male body is motivated by other means. The exercise sequence takes place immediately after Hunter has received a dressing down from Captain Ramsey for publicly voicing objections to running a missile drill while the galley was on fire. Is the masculine figure here in a masochistic position? A superior officer, an older man who uses his combat experience to show Hunter the error of his thinking, has just put him in his place. These elements in the narrative have no consequence on the formal conditions with which Washington is looked at - there are no motivating looks. This sequence though does go towards positioning Hunter as modern, professional masculinity against Ramsey's militaristic masculinity. Interestingly, the sequence ends with Hunter quizzing Weps about Ramsey while he irons. This sequence and the exercising emphasise the fluidity of masculine and feminine positions within the narrative context. Hunter moves between positions where he is eroticised and domesticated without becoming feminised. By the same token, the ways in which masculinity and femininity function as subject and object are equally unstable, a claim expanded on in the next section.

### **Seeing and Being Seen in the Submarine Film.**

Through the analysis of submarine narratives, this section will pose questions concerning the ways in which masculine power is linked to vision. For example, what are the conditions that separate the male gaze from men just looking? Within the terms of Mulvey's concept of man as bearer-of-the-look, 'the look' establishes control of the female and this leads to a stable identity through fetishisation. Therefore, a stable

identity can be seen as being dependent on power. Does this mean that the converse holds true, so that a lack of seeing means lack of power, with a consequent loss of stable identity? This section will address these and other questions surrounding masculinity, visual impairment and submarine narratives.

Burt Lancaster and Clark Gable in *Run Silent, Run Deep* illustrate some of the issues in the matter of loss of vision, power and identity. The relationship between these two fluctuates continuously and this is clearly indicated through the way that they look, and do not look, at each other. For at least the first hour of the film, Bledsoe has the upper hand with Richardson. For much of the action when Richardson is ordering the drills and refusing to engage with the enemy, Bledsoe stares at him with a look of disbelief and puzzlement. When Bledsoe first challenges Richardson over procedure, they attempt to stare each other out, and it is the latter who first dips his head. What is most significant about Lancaster's stare is that it is unblinking and it is not met. Every encounter between the two men is noticeable for the downcast eyes of Gable and the steady gaze of Lancaster. In the most significant confrontation, over Richardson's unilateral decision to ignore naval command and take the submarine into the 'Bungo Straits', Bledsoe maintains this position. In fact body language and position reinforce this. Richardson remains seated, angry and blinking rapidly while Bledsoe calmly leans over him staring down at him. At no point in this exchange does the camera show Lancaster blink. It is only later when Bledsoe has relieved Richardson of his command that Lancaster is seen to blink. In this confrontation, Richardson accuses Bledsoe of using 'tall words' and ribs him for ordering a retreat as his first command as captain. Only then, well over an hour in to the film is Lancaster seen to blink, when he no longer holds the position of power. Looking is therefore highly significant within the relations between masculinities in these narratives. But it is also important to account for the different ways in which men look at men. What part might looking play in communication and relationships between men in submarines? This is important given the physical confinement, proximity of other men's bodies, and the role of technology in communication and looking.

For example, in an exchange between Bledsoe and Kohler (Joe Maross), looking plays an important part in the meaning of the words. Kohler reveals to Bledsoe that he thinks Richardson's repeated drills are for the bowshot that is only used 'in desperation, it's all like some experiment.' In response, Bledsoe suggests that the bow-shot may be a way to torpedo the Akakasi in the Bungo Straits. Kohler exclaims: 'But that's impossible, the orders say to avoid it.' Bledsoe replies 'I know' but only after a very deliberate, slow turn of the head, in which Bledsoe looks meaningfully at Kohler. The need for a private conversation in the confined space of the submarine, combined with the significance of the information makes this look a loaded one. The two officers share the understood significance of Bledsoe's answer; the look communicates the meaning and the nature of the relationship between them. This is not an attempt to refute the claim that men act as bearer of the look by suggesting examples where a non-voyeuristic gaze negates that look. When making claims about the look in cinema it is necessary to put the sexual look at the sexual body in relation to other looks at other bodies in film. Looks between men within the diagesis perform many different narrative functions, and these, as this argument shows, need not be motivated by hatred, fear or aggression.

Furthermore, the significance of male looks in *Torpedo Run* needs to be addressed. The relationship between Barney Doyle and Archer Sloan is interesting here. This has been noted by Steve Neale, who argues that the heterosexual romance plot is 'actively repressed or displaced' for a 'narrative thread centred on the friendship between Doyle and his second-in-command.'<sup>28</sup> In addition, the relationship has to be seen in terms of Glenn Ford's star image. Mulvey claims that

a male movie star's glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of the gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Neale, 1991, p. 37.

<sup>29</sup> Mulvey, 1975, p. 12.



Cohan has argued that Ford's star image in the late 1950s (*Torpedo Run* came out in 1958), was in part built on roles that undermined an early 1950s tough-guy masculinity that Ford himself had once exemplified:

By the end of the decade, when Ford had risen to the top of box-office polls as one of the industry's most popular male stars, he had further turned his tough screen image inside out through a comic style...<sup>30</sup>

It is hard to see how Glenn Ford in *Torpedo Run* fulfils any of the requirements of the 'ideal ego' as envisaged by Mulvey above. In addition to the anxieties surrounding emotion and rationality accounted for, this is not least because of the transformations evident in his screen image. With regard to Neale's claim that the friendship between Doyle and Sloan is at the expense of the heterosexual romance, a close look at the development of that friendship will in fact reveal the significance of this romance in that friendship and in the narrative. Much of this friendship is indicated through the exchange of looks between the two men. It is the looks between men that are significant here, rather than the male look at another male. As with the meaningful looks between Bledsoe and Kohler in *Run Silent Run Deep*, it is the relationship between these two men that the looks emphasise. Indeed, the friendship and the looks concern the heterosexual romance: Doyle's anguish and torment over sinking the transporter give rise to Sloan's deepening concern, communicated through his looks at his friend. The relations between these two men are not subject/object, or even sadistic/masochistic. This could be seen as an example of a male relationship that does not require the anxiety of repressed homoeroticism to be allayed by the necessary conditions for looking at the male, particularly in relation to Sloan's domesticated position in their friendship.

There are a number of issues concerning the periscope, vision and power that also need attention. It is of course significant that the periscope is one of the main tools in submarine war films that enable the destruction of the enemy. Sighting the enemy to get a bearing, fixing the enemy as a target and firing the torpedo all depend on the periscope. When a target is in a position to be fired on, it is called 'a set up.' It is also significant

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<sup>30</sup> Cohan, 1997, p. 109.

that it is the Captain, with occasional verification from the Firing Officer or the XO, who looks down the periscope and makes the decision to fire. The familiar camera shot that emphasises the close link between periscopic vision and destructive power occurs in *Run Silent, Run Deep*. After the extensive drills for the bowshot, the crew of the *Nerka* put this manoeuvre into practice. The final shot in this tense engagement is through the periscope, the target apparently helpless as two torpedoes can be seen streaking through the water towards it. This is a fairly frequent shot in submarine narratives and can also be found in, for example, *Operation Pacific*, *Crash Dive* and *We Dive at Dawn*. From this it would appear that the periscope functions as one of the symbols of the submarine's potency, a symbol that explicitly links vision with power. The sight of a periscope in the water figures as a powerful trigger of fear and dread of a stalking U-Boat in *Crash Dive* and *Action in the North Atlantic*. There are though important ways in which the periscope as symbol is tested and qualified in the submarine war film. This relates both to the importance of looking in films and to the theoretical concepts discussed in this chapter.

The most significant factor is that while the periscope functions as a powerful tool in its destructive capabilities, the periscope itself contributes to the submarine's vulnerability. Quite apart from the chance of being detected by sonar, the use of the periscope exposes the submarine to the danger of being spotted itself. How might this danger relate to the concept of voyeurism - power derived from seeing without being seen- and vision in the submarine narrative? In *Submarine Seahawk*, for example, the observations through the periscope have to be made every thirty minutes and then for only thirty seconds in order to avoid being spotted. The power comes from being able to see without being seen, a facility that is consistently shown as being jeopardised by the act of looking itself.

An interesting example of the symbolic and thematic importance of the periscope occurs in *Crash Dive*. In the escape from the raid on the German harbour Captain Connors and his XO Stewart are about to go below when the *Corsair* loses the use of its periscope.

The significance of this is not lost on the two men, as Stewart remarks 'The eyes are gone we'll have to stay on the surface', but Connors points out 'We'll be a dead fish if we do.' Connors decides to remain on deck as they dive so that he can act as the periscope. He clings to the damaged bridge and from this vantagepoint is able to guide the torpedo that sinks the submarine net-tender and then successfully navigate through the anti-submarine nets. Once through the nets though the *Corsair* surfaces and is promptly hit by enemy fire, which wounds Connors. While this indicates the importance of the periscope in the sequence, the significance of Connor's actions in the narrative is also emphasised. Following his courageous act of heroism, Connors is able to magnanimously give up his claim on Jean Hewlett, the woman both he and Stewart have been pursuing. Both the heterosexual romance and the mission to counter the threat to allied convoys from the secret base are resolved successfully through Connors' act of periscopic heroism.

This analysis shows how visual impairment needs to be compensated for within submarine narratives. This compensation can take different forms and have different consequences. The question is though how might this compensation relate to the issue of looking in terms of power and subjectivity as outlined at the start of this chapter. In addition, this needs to be related to the crucial question of what kind of masculine subjectivity is empowered through any compensation.

This question becomes particularly acute in the later submarine films where software plays a far more significant role in the perceptual capabilities of submarines. Consequently, the validation of the men who operate this equipment indicates the existence of differences within masculinity. Significantly, these men play a meaningful and significant role in the narratives. In the 1950s submarine war film the sonar operator is used to signify the vital part played by all members of the co-operative team. In *Torpedo Run*, for example, Lt. Redley (Robert Hardy) is English, which inflects the teamwork ideal in terms of the different but vital roles played by each of the Allies.

A contemporary example can be found in *The Hunt for Red October*. Seaman Jones has a specialised knowledge of his sonar software, which depends on his particular relationship with technology and this becomes a significant element in the narrative. Jones's persistence in running the software that recognises sounds in the water enables *Dallas* to identify and track the 'seismic anomaly' that is the virtually silent *Red October*. Two aspects emphasise the significance of sound and vision in the narratives. Jones is clearly seen as different, if not odd by the crew of *Dallas*. This is made clear in a sequence early on when he is ribbed for playing music over his equipment which alarms the listening navy defences at Pearl Harbour. What is important is that Jones understands, and cares about, the musical differences between Paganini and Pavarotti. Jones has knowledge of classical music and opera and a fondness for the equipment that he works on. This marks his masculinity out as different and emphasises that this difference gives rise to his special attributes; note that this difference is validated by his vital role in the narrative. In this example, the visual impairment inherent in submarines has been compensated for, if not superseded, by technology that listens rather than looks. Does this aural alternative to visual capability necessarily mean an alternative masculinity? Jones is played by a black actor, and his fondness for classical music hints at a disposition for high culture that is associated with the feminine. His technical wizardry is also related to difference, computer literacy stands for a cerebral and therefore weak, non-physical masculinity. Vance/Seaman Jones' difference and role in the narrative show that representations of masculinity do not simply function to further hegemonic masculinity. In this way, black and feminised masculinity can be heroic masculinity without being incorporated within hegemonic processes that maintain the dominant position of a singular masculinity.

### **Conclusions.**

The purpose of this chapter has not been to undermine the theoretical concepts that equate power with looking, by drawing attention to forms of looking other than those that gaze on the sexual body. The look should though be evaluated in relation to the other senses of which it is but one. Although vision remains the most significant sensory faculty both within the diagesis and in the spectator's experience of that diagesis (i.e. we

talk of going to see a film not to hear one), the full meaning of that visual experience is dependent on the additional aural elements. Further, while many relations between subjects involve a relation of power, looks between those subjects do not inevitably make one an object. If that exchange of looks is between two males, it does not necessarily have to carry a sadistic motivating cause in order to disavow homoerotic anxieties. In relation to masculinity, vision does not operate solely within strategies of domination and subordination. Furthermore, operations of the look do not function solely to exclude difference and maintain hierarchies in relation to hegemonic masculinity.

### 8] Ideology and Social Process.

In order to discuss masculinity in relation to notions of ideology, the emphasis in this chapter will be on the process of relations between individuals and institutions. Foremost in this strategy is an attempt to move beyond the assertion that, collectively, submarine films reflect dominant ideology. Through an emphasis on tension and process, the chapter will address how the individual and the institution are positioned in structures of social relations. A number of different and interesting scenarios arise when ideology is considered in this way, for example: individuals lead groups erroneously or satisfactorily, groups oppose and overturn certain individuals, hierarchical groups and institutions struggle with interactive groups, and top-down changes/ideas meet resistance from subordinate groups. Through these thematic concerns the chapter will address the extent to which individuals are mere functionaries or indispensable elements of the system. Furthermore, the discussion will address whether the relations between individuals and institutions propose static or dynamic models of social interaction.

Definitions of ideology exist in a contested domain. Eagleton, for example, lists seventeen current uses of the term.<sup>1</sup> He goes on to discuss six definitions of ideology in critical thought, but the point to stress from his account is that 'The term ideology, in other words, would seem to make reference not only to belief systems, but to questions of power.'<sup>2</sup> However, a discussion of submarine ideology should also account for how notions of ideology as social process have had a bearing within film studies and its significance in discussions of film as a form of cultural process, particularly in the formation of gender.

A sense of how different groups in society exist in relations of power is important here. Although films do not simply reflect the values of the dominant group, the ways in which audiences derive meaning takes place within unequal relations of power. As Hall argues

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<sup>1</sup> T. Eagleton, *Ideologies*, London & New York: Verso, 1991, pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Eagleton, 1991, p 5.

Ideologies may not be affixed, as organic entities, to their appropriate classes, but this does not mean that the transformation of ideology in society could proceed free of or outside the structuring lines of force of power and class.<sup>3</sup>

Hall includes the symbolic in the processes of transferring ideology within these relations, but the chapter will develop the argument that these relations of power and class need to be seen as more complex when discussing the ideology of film as an example of the symbolic.

Eagleton argues that the notion of a coherent dominant ideology does not take account of the different elements within the dominant group, nor does it recognise that

A dominant ideology has continually to negotiate with the ideologies of its subordinates, and this essential open-endedness will prevent it from achieving any kind of pure self-identity.<sup>4</sup>

This qualification regarding conceptions of ideology *pace* hegemony has a significant bearing on this chapter and the discussion of masculinity. Masculinity has been seen as operating within the strict limits of relations of domination and subordination. To reiterate, Connell suggests that hegemonic processes in gender ensure that 'At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted.'<sup>5</sup> The argument in this chapter will maintain that this exaltation is open to resistance, and that, furthermore, this one form of masculinity is in itself multiple and fractured in such a way as to qualify its potential for domination

In terms of cinema's ideological function, Hill argues that the relation between popular film and ideology is not straightforward, and that his analysis shows that films were

themselves active in the construction of ideological meanings and with results that were often less consistent and coherent than the 'dominant ideology thesis' may sometimes be taken to imply.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Hall, in Nelson & Grossberg, (Eds), 1988, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Eagleton, 1991, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Connell, 1995, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> Hill, 1986, p. 178.

Paul goes further to suggest that popular film has frequently been positioned in opposition to dominant ideology:

If, as I have been arguing here, there is a long and continuous tradition for popular culture, one that is often in opposition to official culture and ideology, then the disreputable art of movies has an honourable position within that tradition.<sup>7</sup>

The argument in this chapter will proceed from a position that acknowledges this opposition as a possibility for film, rather than assuming there is a consistent complicity between film and official culture and ideology. Therefore, any form of universal condemnation of popular film is rejected. An example, of this approach can be seen in Willis's argument that any form of opposition within popular film is inevitably contained within its narrative structure:

At one extreme, we find popular representations that strain to manage differences figured as pure threat in images and stories which mobilise social anxiety, only to reassure mainstream audiences by restoring the privilege of white heterosexuality, white masculinity, and the white middle-class family.<sup>8</sup>

A further point with regard to ideology and its relation to popular cinema needs to be addressed. This concerns the distinction between ideology and culture, while acknowledging that culture is embedded in ideologies and that it is part of the process whereby ideology is sustained.<sup>9</sup> Stevenson argues the terms culture and ideology are not interchangeable, and that 'The cultural retains a socially transcendental function and a connection to an aesthetic dimension.'<sup>10</sup>

Some accounts of ideology in film have attempted to provide overarching descriptions of the content, which reduce all films to one set of ideological values. Wood argues that the great majority of films can be dismissed because they reveal a 'submission to ideological norms.'<sup>11</sup> In some instances the ideology of film is seen as being dependent on formal

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<sup>7</sup> Paul, 1994, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Willis, 1997, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> See R. Williams, *Culture*, Glasgow: Fontana, 1981, pp. 26-30.

<sup>10</sup> N. Stevenson, *Culture, Ideology and Socialism*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1995, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> R. Wood, *Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 2. While Wood advocates a historical dimension to the ideology of Hollywood, it is one based on an



structures, examples of which Nicholls includes in his anthology.<sup>12</sup> Ray, for example goes as far as to suggest that this can be explicitly linked to the formal style of classical film, where incompatible values are resolved.<sup>13</sup> He goes on to claim that

An extraordinary amount of traditional American mythology adopted by Classic Hollywood derived from the variations worked by American ideology around this opposition of natural man versus civilised man.<sup>14</sup>

The problem with this emphasis on formal aspects is that although contradictions between popular film and dominant ideology are allowed, they are only produced through a breakdown in the form of popular film.<sup>15</sup> A fundamental belief that only the analysis of fissures in the narrative reveals the true meaning of a film text leads to a situation where all other readings amount to a 'misrecognition tucked into the fine print of our desire's investment negotiations.'<sup>16</sup>

The argument in this chapter has more in common with work that seeks to distance itself from totalising conceptions of film ideology. For example, Ryan and Kellner show how the structuralist notion of the subject prohibits the possibility of difference within the 'effects' of film. They go on to argue that

the pragmatic determination of a film's meaning or its ideology (rather than in terms of a preordained category of ideological closure that operates the same way everywhere without differentiation) also opens the analysis of film out onto a more plural political and social terrain.<sup>17</sup>

Babington and Evans also position themselves specifically against the tendency that Ray represents, in other words, those critics 'who ignore the specificity of film in their

epochal concept of historical development, allowing the construction of a 1970s/80s right wing 'backlash' against the progressive gains of the 1960s in for example, civil rights, feminism, and gay liberation.

<sup>12</sup> B. Nicholls, (Ed), *Movies and Methods*, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976.

<sup>13</sup> Ray, 1985, pp. 57-59.

<sup>14</sup> Ray, 1985, p. 59.

<sup>15</sup> See for example the 'extended body of criticism that has emerged around the classic John Ford film, *Young Mr. Lincoln*', B. Nicholls, *Ideology and the Image*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981, p. 84.

<sup>16</sup> Nicholls, 1981, p 87. Nicholls goes on to argue that a film's self-awareness is a marker of ideological difference, citing *The Birds* as evidence, see Nicholls, (Eds), 1981, especially pp. 134-169.

<sup>17</sup> Ryan & Kellner, 1988, p. 2.

haste to collapse works of art into the simplest negative ideological categories.'<sup>18</sup> This proposition is useful to the argument here in that it recognises ideological meanings as polysemic rather than coherent. Bordwell also critiques the type of approach where there was 'no room for agency in a framework in which ideological representations so thoroughly determined subjectivity.'<sup>19</sup> Marchetti suggests that the 'turn to Gramsci' in cultural studies enabled a move from texts as ideological to texts 'as contradictory entities, polysemic in nature, which themselves allow for a range of possible meanings.'<sup>20</sup>

An example of this kind of approach to film would be Worland's discussion of the combination of military and family discourses which can be seen to work in more than one way. He argues that whereas some studies suggest that the military/family combination works towards securing ideological unity behind the American family, it is possible to read this combination as evidence of ideological tension. He maintains that

'While *Toko-Ri* and other films of the Korean War suggest that combining traditionally bracing combat drama with family melodrama's emotional turmoil could diminish the preferred ideological effect, war and romance mixed frequently in fifties cinema.'<sup>21</sup>

This suggests it is possible to see that the ideological effect and the civilian/military 'family' metaphor are not necessarily held together within the text, and that there are no guarantees that the film will be read in this preferred way.

Here, popular film can be seen to negotiate different positions in relation to dominant ideology. Furthermore, those different positions open up as well as close off points of resistance in relations of power. This kind of study is well established, and is not

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<sup>18</sup> Babington & Evans, 1989, p. vi.

<sup>19</sup> Bordwell, in Bordwell & Carroll, (Eds), 1996, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> G. Marchetti, 'Action-Adventure as Ideology', in I. Angus & S. Jhally, (Eds), *Cultural Politics in Contemporary America*, London: Routledge, 1989, p. 185.

<sup>21</sup> R. Worland, 'The Korean War Film as Family Melodrama: 'The bridges at Toko-Ri' (1954)', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1999, p. 371.

specified here in attempt to claim new ground in theoretical approaches to film. For example, Gamman & Marshment argue that

It is not enough to dismiss popular culture as merely serving the complementary systems of capitalism and patriarchy, peddling 'false consciousness' to the duped masses. It can also be seen as a site where meanings are contested and where dominant ideologies can be disturbed.<sup>22</sup>

Ryan argues that ideology in film should not be seen as simply an exercise in domination and resistance. Dominant ideology is not the product solely of the dominant group with an *a priori* existence that determines all subordinate groups' responses. Indeed, 'it might be more accurate to describe ideology as being itself a response to resistance... Therefore, ideological films can serve as good barometers of the progressive or radical potentials in a society.'<sup>23</sup>

Although it is possible to query whether some films are ideological and others are un-ideological, this observation shows how ideology in film can be related to notions of utopia. Gramsci's notion of common sense philosophy and its relation to dominant ideology is instructive, particularly as it relates to the possibilities of gender relations opened up by the submarine film. Notions of utopia are significant here, and should not be dismissed in terms of magical resolution but retained for the progressive potential they are based on. As Gramsci argued, common sense philosophy contains

Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy....<sup>24</sup>

Cohan illustrates this in his discussion of the hegemony of the 1950s 'Man in the Grey Flannel Suit', and suggests that 'no film ever simply reproduces a single ideology in a pure form, since other ideologies invade, complicate, and often disturb its representational field.'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> L. Gamman & M. Marshment, (Eds), *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*, London: The Women's Press, 1988, p 1. See also, for example, T. Bennett & J. Woollacott, *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987.

<sup>23</sup> Ryan, 1988, p. 484.

<sup>24</sup> Gramsci, 1971, p. 324.

<sup>25</sup> Cohan, 1997, p. xviii.

The section below will consider the ways in which issues of power figure in film, for example in terms of communication, the individual and the group, and institutional hierarchies. The significant aspect in the relations of power addressed by the films is the associations and implications of loss or lack of power. In a discussion primarily of masculinity and the horror genre, though with explicit reference to cinema as a whole, Hutchings accounts for arguments where

male submission to disempowerment, that is a willing subjection made by someone who already has power, is merely a way of confirming possession of that power.<sup>26</sup>

Hutchings immediately goes on to take issue with this claim in two respects. Firstly, why should the male spectator feel a need for a reconfirmation of this power? Secondly, the male subject's relationship with power is far more tenuous than in this assumption, as power is not possessed but 'appertains to those institutional and ideological positions which the male individual occupies and through which he finds an identity.'<sup>27</sup> Hutchings also makes the point that loss of power is articulated to femininity, and therefore to 'feminising the male'. As with problems in feminising the male in terms of the look and masculinity discussed in the previous chapter, any form of powerlessness is thereby equated with femininity. The questions for this chapter include to what extent id feminisation associated with loss of power in the films, and can the powerless male consistently and clearly be seen as feminised masculinity?

In a study that attempts to link formal aspects of film to the local contingencies of genre, Neale argues that it is possible to see an explicit link between formal devices, such as point-of-view or motivation, and ideology. His argument suggests that formal and ideological issues are related because knowledge (range, depth, omniscience) is linked to power (loss of one leads to loss of other) and to masculine fantasy scenarios (sons take the place of fathers). This systematic link needs to be examined in terms of Hutchings' argument concerning identification with powerless, or feminised figures. For example,

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<sup>26</sup> P. Hutchings, 'Masculinity and the Horror Film', in Kirkham & Thumin, (Eds), 1993, pp. 84-93.

<sup>27</sup> Hutchings, 1993, p. 92.

when is the audience asked to identify with the feminised male? Bledsoe's replacement of Richardson in *Run Silent, Run Deep*, for example, is discussed in these terms below.

Bearing in mind the above theoretical context, in what ways is it possible to claim that 'the submarine film' proposes a single model of social process? If there is one single recurring theme it is one of tension between individuals and the crew. The mission priorities are the submarine, then the men, and the whole crew over individuals. Tensions of this kind are historically consistent, but it is the way these tensions arise, are worked through and then resolved that differs. In wartime films, the individual is positioned as having a specific function that is vital to the whole crew/submarine, but that function is never more vital than the whole. Postwar films tend to reorientate tensions in the individual/group as a different dynamic, as will be discussed below. Sobchack argues that films invariably subordinate the interests of the individual to those of the community. He bases his claims on the anxiety inevitable in the 'freeing of the self' which conflicts with the 'security of passive identification with the crowd'. This conflict can be found in all genre films, and, Sobchack goes on to argue, 'because of the classical nature of the genre film, the resolution of the tension between these two poles will always be in favour of the community.'<sup>28</sup> In the light of this claim and the strategies outlined above, this chapter will address ideological issues in the submarine film in the following ways: tensions between the self and institutions, threats to power, and competing or contradictory discourses. The discussion of these issues thematically illustrates the way different types of submarine films address issues of power. Organising the material this way should not be seen as an attempt to make historical comparisons without regard for the wider context.

### **Tensions between the Individual and Institutions.**

There are generic conventions of the war film that are important when considering power relations in the submarine film. For Neale, ideological issues are closely related to formal aspects of narrative, in particular motivation and point-of-view. There are a

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<sup>28</sup> T. Sobchack, 'Genre Film: A Classical Experience,' in Grant, (Ed), 1995, p. 109.

number of factors seen as significant in relations of power: the mission, the operational chain of command, officer men relations, and means of communication. Here, then, the discussion of ideology in submarine films will initially focus on the different elements structured in relations, how power functions in those relations, and what are the attitudes towards the other elements in that power structure.

Ideological issues in the mission can be understood through the relation between that mission and the overall war. As Neale argues, establishing a cause of the outbreak of hostilities is an important propagandist function of wartime film. When the mission is a response to enemy action it fixes the war as one caused by enemy aggression.<sup>29</sup> Issues of motivation then become paramount to the narrative, and the degree to which this motivation can be seen in personal or impersonal terms can have ideological implications. Justification of the mission in terms of the larger picture provides additional purpose and motivation to that mission. When the larger picture and the mission are in conflict, the mission can begin to be seen as futile, which can question the ideological justification for war. Neale specifies how this addresses issues of power if the mission becomes a matter of survival rather than one with a clearly defined military objective: 'The goal in these instances - and the index of any gain in autonomy, of any gain in power - becomes, simply, survival.'<sup>30</sup> In these terms, *Das Boot* would be seen as a critique of Nazi Germany. The achievement of these objectives, either with or despite the aid of command, points towards the second issue that is of significance in relations of power, the chain of command.

In submarine films released during World War II the connections between the specific mission and the overall war are made explicit. In films such as *Crash Dive* and *Destination Tokyo* the mission is vital to the combined service efforts. In the former, a secret U-boat base must be located and destroyed in order to put an end to massive shipping losses to vital supply convoys. In the latter, landing the 'aerologist' on the

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<sup>29</sup> Neale, 1991, pp. 35-56.

<sup>30</sup> Neale, 1991, p. 53.

mainland will provide vital information for the bombing raids on Tokyo Bay. Both films made during the war then emphasise the mission's importance to the overall war effort, an unsurprising propaganda function of films made during the 'present emergency'.<sup>31</sup>

In post-war submarine films, the stress on a mission's significance to the overall contribution to the war effort would no longer have immediate appeal. Basinger argues that genre characteristics 'must contain meanings that an audience needs further information on or involvement with in the postwar era'.<sup>32</sup> The personal motivation of the pursuit narrative comes to function as that additional element. Questions of futility no longer pertain simply to the necessity of war but to personal and emotional needs that will be discussed below.

In *Torpedo Run*, the relation between the pursuit of the *Shinaru* and the overall war are made explicit in the row between Doyle and Archer over their orders to go to Kiska. Archer's argument that Setton (Philip Ober) 'isn't running the war just for one boat' goes directly against Doyle's personal motivation to sink the carrier. In the row between the two men Doyle also learns that Setton has discovered from Archer his lapse of consciousness, at which point he begins to fear he will never satisfy his desire for revenge. The film presents Doyle's anxiety and motivation in an ambiguous way. In the opening sequence we see *Greyfish* sink a Japanese ship, but Doyle is overburdened by concern for his family. Having finally seen the *Shinaru* sinking, Doyle's face displays the hollowness of his 'revenge'. His motivation has not made the pain of losing his family go away; it has simply displaced it while he pursued his nemesis.

*Hellcats of the Navy* also utilises the relationship between the specific mission and the overall war, but it does this to raise questions concerning leadership and responsibility. The secret mission to take out a Japanese base is presented as part of the need to sever the enemy's supply lines from the mainland. But the friction between Landon and

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<sup>31</sup> See Doherty, 1993, pp. 11-15 for the saliency of 'this present emergency' in film production.

<sup>32</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 78.

Abbott that runs through the mission is over whether to dive to save the boat or stay on the surface to rescue a man in the water. In this film the crucial episode concerns Captain Abbott's decision to take his damaged submarine through the Japanese mine fields, using an enemy ship as a guide, against both the specific instructions of Command and the advice of his XO. This will allow them to make a chart of the minefield and so enable other ships to penetrate the defences. They get the chart, but the submarine is sunk as a result. At the Naval Board of Inquiry, the issue is whether Abbott acted negligently or recklessly. The grateful Navy exonerates Abbott, but the mission's importance to the overall war is pursued to develop the leadership issue. In the combined attack that is launched partly as a result of Abbott's chart, Abbott is trapped outside the submarine and Landon has to dive in order to avoid a destroyer. Once the positions of command are reversed, Landon confesses 'I saw things a whole lot differently when I had to take over'. In order to re-emphasise that leadership is the concern of the film, rather than the actual mission, the chart proves to be worthless as the mines have been moved!

Other postwar submarine films inflect the relationship of the specific mission to the overall war in other ways. Both *Submarine Seahawk* and *Up Periscope* present this relationship in terms of tension between officers and men. In *Submarine Seahawk* it is Lt. David Shore's inexperience that is given as the reason for his gung-ho desires. In *Up Periscope*, the crew is not party to the secret mission and therefore does not understand why they do not attack viable targets. In both cases, the impatience is borne out of ignorance of the 'bigger picture', which suggests that the officers should be trusted as they have this wider knowledge: the leaders know what they are doing so let them get on with it.

Late twentieth century *Encounter* and *Microcosm* narratives tend to present this relationship between the mission and the external world in terms of conflict between the different elements in the chain of command. Frequently, those at the top are represented negatively. For example, relations of power figure in an interesting and complex way in



*The Hunt for Red October*. In this instance there is an immediate conflict between the specific mission and the overall cold war picture, shown through the military's hawkish response to Ryan's accommodation of Ramius's attempted defection. National Security Advisor Jeffrey Pelt (Richard Jordan) gives Ryan a chance to prove the Generals wrong. In turn Ryan has to convince Mancuso on *USS Dallas* of Ramius's intentions, which he does by deception. Finally, Admiral Greer (James Earl Jones) of the CIA steps in at a crucial time to override the military action to sink the *Red October* in order to complete Ryan's plan to fake the sinking of the Soviet submarine. The three institutions, the military, the executive, and the security forces all function in a direct relation of power with Ryan and the mission, but as has been shown, they do so in different ways. What then, are the ideological implications of this? Ryan is 'cut a little slack' by the officers in the field because of his experience in the marines, whereas the Chiefs-of-Staff reject him as 'just an analyst'. It is the men involved in the action who treat the mission more sympathetically, those in Washington remain unsympathetic to Ryan. In ideological terms those at the very top of the power structure, without cognizance of the local picture, are represented negatively.

In those underwater science fiction narratives where the mission to survive is a direct result of the overall mission, conflicts arise in different ways. Both *Leviathan* and *Deepstar Six* feature the grumbling heterogeneous crew that is harassed by the organisation they work for. In the former, the company sees the crew as expendable. Once the mining operation has been jeopardised by the encounter with the mutant creatures, the company attempts to thwart the crew's escape attempt through the doctor when he releases the escape pods. In this film the audience sees the company acting unreasonably, against the interests of the crew; they know before the crew that they have been abandoned.

In *Deepstar Six* the tensions between the crew and the institution are played out through the actions of van Gelder. His impatience causes the accident to happen, but significantly, he overrides Scarpelli's argument that they should study the cavern before

collapsing it. The conflict between missions is resolved in terms of the opposition between autocraticism (van Gelder) and interaction: by ignoring the consensus of opinion, van Gelder's autocratic behaviour directly precipitates the disaster. These conflicts between different elements in the relations of power have ideological implications. The unreasonableness and autocraticism of the institution is seen negatively through the audience's identification with the crew and their struggle to escape. This needs to be seen as significant for hegemonic masculinity, as it is supposed to be individualistic rather than consensual.

Also of importance in this equation of motivation and the relation of the specific mission to the larger context are the chain of command and methods of communication. This chain involves relations between the individual and the institutions such as the military or the Corporation, but this relation also has to be seen in terms of *its* relation with other institutions such as the family, and with other forces such as romance. The chain of command represents the system of power that directly affects the lives of the men. Where that system is seen to be understanding, and where the audience is given access to command motivation, the different levels in the chain of command can be seen in sympathetic relationships. On the other hand where command decisions are seen as impersonal and without understanding of the men's situation, then that can be seen as critical of the power structure. Neale suggests that 'formal and ideological issues are interwoven.'<sup>33</sup> For example, narratives that present those impersonal orders only from the uncomprehending recipient's point of view have a different ideological meaning from those narratives that contain an omniscient point-of-view.

Means of communication are also important in relations of power. Communication by impersonal order, without discussion or feedback, or orders that give no leeway for individual action and therefore cause conflict or expose men to unnecessary risk, all portray that power structure negatively. The success or failure of communication can also be related to issues of power. This is particularly so when failure of communication

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<sup>33</sup> Neale, 1991, p. 57.

means that the men on the mission are put in a position of lack of knowledge. Where this is so, Neale argues, loss of communication or lack of knowledge can be seen as a loss or lack of power.<sup>34</sup> When this lack of power is linked to the aforementioned questions of motivation and to methods of communication, the ideological implications are made more explicit. While there is no submarine film that contains only the indifferent command of *Objective Burma*, or the circumscribed 'grunt's eye view' of *Platoon* (O. Stone, US, 1986) Neale's discussion of these two examples opens up questions in terms of these issues.

Even where the command process is seen to be operating justifiably and with understanding, other factors need to be taken into consideration. These concern specific conventions of the submarine war-film, firstly where the submarine has to operate as a lone wolf, (radio silence is frequently enforced) and the relationship between war and a romantic or family narrative. This can be seen not only in terms of relations between the self and institutions, but how the institution functions in its relation with the individual. For example, Doyle's 'revenge' pursuit of the *Shinaru* in *Torpedo Run* is founded on personal motivation *and* is condoned by command. All the intelligence gathered by command about Doyle's wife and daughter and about the location of the *Shinaru* is communicated directly to the *Greyfish*. Further, the audience sees the command system at work: Admiral Setton's desire to keep Doyle informed is emphasised, therefore showing the command system to be working with him.

Despite the apparent concord between command and Doyle, communication and the mission do come into conflict. After the first, unsuccessful, attack on the *Shinaru* Doyle's three-day sleep has to be kept secret from command. Sloan is pressurised into telling Setton, but Doyle is allowed 'one last shot at the *Shinaru*'. When Doyle finds out that Archer has betrayed his trust and told Setton of his breakdown, he interprets his orders as sending him to 'the deep freeze' for the rest of the war. Despite a sympathetic command and Archer's attempts to convince Doyle that the orders are based on 'the best

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<sup>34</sup> Neale, 1991, p. 45.

longshot hunch he's got', Doyle comes into conflict with command and with his friend. In *Torpedo Run*, the system of command is seen to break down when orders are misinterpreted by the recipient, not just when the command is callous in its dealings with those under its authority. Doyle misunderstands because he is overwhelmed by the fear that he will not get the *Shinaru* if his weakness is discovered.

Communications between the company and the crew in *Leviathan* have specific ideological implications. In order to prevent the crew from trying to escape, the company representative Martin (Meg Foster) keeps telling them, via video link, that a violent storm is raging on the surface. After the doctor has released the pods and they are trapped on the seabed, the survivors access TV weather reports and discover the storm does not exist. In addition, they learn the company has issued a statement that they have all been killed in an accident. Here, the false information that threatens the crew functions to represent the authority figures in the power relations negatively. This is emphasised by the close-up on Martin's face when she breaks the video link with Beck, which reveals her duplicity to the audience.

### Threats to Power

While relations of power are clearly significant in power structures, a threat to power such as mutiny is of particular ideological significance in those power structures. This section will consider the ways that changes in power and threats to the power structure are worked through by the narratives. The concern here is with instances of forced change as a direct result of an authority figure's actions. This focus allows consideration of changes in power in terms of the disparate communities and their resistance to dominant individuals.

In *Run Silent, Run Deep* the officers are dissuaded from their mutiny, albeit reluctantly, by the XO Bledsoe. This mutiny is founded on the initial appointment of Richardson to

the *Nerka*. The resented or inappropriate appointment<sup>35</sup> is key to understanding the formation and patterns of mutiny in the submarine film. Here, Commander Richardson gets command of the *Nerka* by pulling strings at Pearl Harbour. In direct opposition to this, the first sequence in which Bledsoe appears shows both his captain and the crew anticipating his expected promotion to Captain. Bledsoe is further positioned as the captain the crew would chose through his declaration that he never keeps anything from the crew, so they should treat him in the same way. This drive towards mutual communicativeness within the command structures of the navy is directly opposite to Richardson's secretive approach. He has built up resentment among the crew by enforcing more and more drills on them without explaining why. Furthermore, he keeps secret until the last possible moment his decision to ignore orders and enter the Bungo Straits where his previous submarine and three others have all been lost. He curtly informs the crew 'Due to conditions of special advantage I have decided to take the boat to the Bungo Straits only because Bledsoe confronts him over playing with the men's lives for the sake of his dead crew.

The potential mutiny hinges on this decision to go to the Bungo Straits. Richardson's refusal to engage enemy shipping exacerbates the resentment towards him. In addition, when he does engage the enemy, it is to try out his head on 'dive and fire' tactic. This is seen as needlessly endangering the submarine for his own purposes, which serves to further motivate the mutineers. Bledsoe spells this out to Richardson when he realises that the Bungo Straits is the intended destination all along:

Passing a Jap submarine to save your torpedoes, jeopardising a whole boat with a bow shot, ducking a convoy so they can't radio our position. You planned it all right; you knew it the day I came to your house.

Richardson retorts that he's known it since his own submarine was lost, but for Bledsoe his actions amount to disobeying the order to stay clear of the Bungo Straits. The tension between the two is then over the right of the captain to change the mission

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, the naval mutiny film *The Caine Mutiny*, where Captain Queeg is resented for his erratic punishments, and is seen to be inappropriate due to his incompetence.

according to the particular circumstances. Because of his 'special advantage', Richardson believes he can ignore command directives, Bledsoe feels this unjustifiably endangers the crew.

In the next sequence, the *Nerka* arrives at the Bungo Straits, and it is at this point that the issue of the potential mutiny arises, when the officer's try to persuade Bledsoe to take over. Cartwright (Brad Dexter) argues that according to navy regulations they are within their rights, but Bledsoe retorts that there is only one captain aboard and they will follow him to the bottom if necessary. If Bledsoe refuses to take over at this point, what changes have occurred when he does take over? The *Nerka* has been badly damaged in the attack on the destroyer, and Richardson is suffering from concussion after an accident. Bledsoe is motivated by the risks that Richardson is prepared to take with the damaged submarine in order to get his revenge. The confrontation between the two men involves them threatening each other with court martial. Richardson swears he will see Bledsoe hang for taking over, Bledsoe retorts 'then we'll hang together, orders have been disobeyed it's a proven fact, no more technicalities.' Bledsoe assumes command and almost immediately reverses his decision to head back to Pearl Harbour, deciding instead to carry out Richardson's plan to sink the destroyer. Richardson then says to him: 'I made the same speech. ...you're going back because you've been through it.'

Richardson is the older man and his identity is overshadowed by the loss of his crew in a previous patrol. Bledsoe is the popular choice for command, younger, and until he has 'been through it', unwilling to take risks. Richardson particularly played by Clarke Gable opposite Burt Lancaster carries associations of a particular masculinity.<sup>36</sup> This struggle for command has particular resonance in cultural terms. The meanings for the late 1950s audience resonate around the opposition of older masculinity identified with loss in the Second World War, and younger, less experienced masculinity. Sandwiched between the

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<sup>36</sup> Recognisable to fans in 1940s films as one of 'their male legends who where 'stubbornly all man" Jane Ellen Wayne, *Clark Gable: Portrait of a Misfit*, London: Robson Books, 1993, p. 292.

wars in Korea and Vietnam, this film validates the heroes of World War II, but acknowledges that their time is past. Richardson's death, off screen and due to exhaustion, is evidence of that. Bledsoe takes over when navy regulations have been ignored in the pursuit of the past, but his subsequent experience forces him to change his mind. Without experience then, the young pretenders cannot fully take up their father's positions.

The mutiny in *Submarine Seahawk* stands for tensions in the process of command within the overall power structure. Turner's reconnaissance mission into the base is vital to a planned combined forces operation, knowledge of which is retained by command. Shore's ignorance and lack of experience lead him to hysteria. Ultimately the *Seahawk* gets a chance to play its part in the shooting war, thus earning Turner the respect of the crew. But the significance of this has to be seen in terms of the narrative's validation of knowing when to shoot, knowledge that is retained by the command. To underline the significance of this validation there is further tension between combat and intelligence. This tension is related to the range of knowledge available to command and the audience compared to the rebellious and mutinous elements. This can be traced through the conversion of Dean Stoker (the previous skipper of the *Seahawk*) into what he disparagingly calls 'a desktop gladiator.' Stoker resists his promotion to the intelligence position within command for the same reason he is hostile to Turner's observations: he only understands war in terms of the little picture, of actual combat. In validating information gathering and intelligence, *Submarine Seahawk* validates white-collar masculinity through professionalisation of the fighting man, at a time when it was perceived to be undergoing a 'crisis'.<sup>37</sup> The privileging of intelligence also pertains to the need for surveillance in the era of the cold war.

Mutiny in *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* functions to validate authoritarian power relations through the figure of Admiral Nelson and his relationship with other officers, the crew and scientific forms of discourse. The mutiny springs from the resentment of

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<sup>37</sup> See Cohan 1997, p. xii.

the crew over Nelson's reckless pursuit of his mission when they want to be with their families, and is led by his second in command, Captain Crane (Robert Sterling). The family is repeatedly emphasised as the source of their resentment, and Crane's drive to replace Nelson is founded on the latter's disregard for their wellbeing. The crucial point comes when Crane witnesses Nelson slapping a lieutenant for 'faking' nervous exhaustion. He then determines that his Admiral is 'irresponsible' and under 'federal Regulation 249 governing conduct on the high seas' assumes command and places Nelson on the sick list. However, the US navy's attack on *Seaview* and the sabotage attempt on the submarine interrupt the mutiny. This propels Crane back on to Nelson's side and he is instrumental in firing the missile that successfully puts out the ring-of-fire. Nelson's position as authoritarian individual is then vindicated over the collective body of the crew and the committee of scientists. The film emphasises this individualism in terms of scientific genius at the start when news reports of the *Seaview* declare that if the sub works then Nelson will be seen as 'a great man' and the 'predominant scientific genius of our time'. This visionary individual is resisted because of his disregard for the consensus of the community, but this community is shown to be wrong by the success of the mission. His authoritarian command is encapsulated in his attitude to the attempted sabotage: 'Until proved otherwise, everyone is suspect.'

In *Crimson Tide* the collective identity of the submarine comes in to conflict with an unwelcome appointee. The process of mutiny contains three incidents that express this particular tension in the power structure. Firstly, the correct procedure under navy regulations; secondly, the authority of the Captain and XO accorded by their identity; and finally through the loyalty of the other officers to that identity legitimated by the power structure. These terms are of course over determined by the differences between Ramsey and Hunter previously accounted for.

In the first instance, Hunter rejects Ramsey's legitimacy to remove him of command when he argues 'I do not recognise your authority to relive me of command. Under navy regulations...' He is cut off by Ramsey's order to arrest him, but it is Ramsey himself



who is placed under arrest, when COB agrees that under navy regulations the XO has to concur with the captain's orders to launch. Hunter then states that he is 'assuming command', a statement that signals the struggle over identity. Ramsey's claim to legitimacy is based on his identity as the captain of the ship. In the conflict over launch protocol he asserts his claim to legitimacy through repeated use of his rank: eg 'as captain', 'I'm captain of this boat.' Hunter, in turn, can only *assume* command, authority is not his through his identity in the power structure. Ramsey's return to authority is based both on his identity and the identification of his officers with his position.

Interestingly, this identification turns not only on Ramsey's identity as captain but as *their* captain, thereby introducing the question of loyalty. This is personalised through the appeals by Dougherty, Westerguard (Rocky Carroll) and Zimmer (Matt Craven) to Weps, which makes the question of loyalty not just one of obedience to the position of captain in the power structure but of personal loyalty to the man. As Zimmer expresses it to Weps, 'There's only two sides to a mutiny, now *your* captain has asked for your help.'

Although ultimately the stand off is resolved when Ramsey grants Hunter time to repair the radio and receive the message to cancel the missile launch, the reversal of authority reveals much in the way of differences in the functioning of the power structure. In order to effect his counter mutiny, Ramsey advises the loyal Dougherty not to recruit the whole ship as he plans to 'lead from the top down.' Hunter by contrast is able to mount his counter mutiny through his appeal to the lower ranking Petty Officer Rivetti. Their relationship is based on a shared familiarity with the Silver Surfer comic. Ramsey by contrast, uses Petty Officer Hilaire's life as hostage to get the combination for the tactical firing pin. To re-emphasise, Ramsey does not even know his own officer's name when he puts a gun to Hilaire's head. What is significant in the mutiny is not the resolution in terms of one side or another, but the differences between the two sides in the process of that mutiny. The differences in attitudes to power and the command structure are also significant. Ramsey is identified with an outdated mode of command,

restricted by the reliance on his 'combat experience' for the legitimacy and acceptance of his authority (ideology has to be received as well as being transmitted). Hunter, positioned in terms of broader processes of identification, is validated by being right about the message but also by his more consensual claims to legitimation. This is expressed through the personal and family relationships he establishes, while Ramsey is unable to do either of these. In essence, Ramsey gets to know Hunter by reading his file and makes judgments about him on this basis. If this is the process by which hegemonic masculinity is said to maintain its position of dominance, then it cannot be ignored that the endorsement of so-called subordinated masculinities presents a serious degree of contradiction within any hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity contains too many contradictions for it to be a singular masculinity in a consistently dominant position.

### **Discursive Tensions**

Discursive tensions can take different forms. For example, whether forms of knowledge are incorporated or excluded, imposed from above, or arrived at from below or within. In addition, where knowledge appears as techno-rationalism that imposes a system on individuals, this can lead to incorporation, subordination or exclusion of difference. The account of these issues will determine the extent to which different types of submarine films establish consistent relationships between specialist discourses, individuals, and other institutional forces. Lapsley and Westlake warn that discussion of discourse within cinema must take account of the problematic relationship between film as text and the concept of discourse as envisaged by Foucault:

Because cinema is not a single discourse like those on sexuality or madness, but is rather, a site for discursive conflict, it is neither institutionalised as knowledge nor is its relation to other discourses easily specifiable.<sup>38</sup>

In this way the argument should not be read as advocating a precise equivalence between discourse and forms of knowledge or expertise.

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<sup>38</sup> Lapsley & Westlake, 1988, p. 22.

The genre conventions of the World War II submarine film tended to privilege the bonding of disparate individuals behind the war effort.<sup>39</sup> *Crash Dive*, for example, emphasises all sections playing a vital part in the war effort. Conflicts between specialist discourses becomes salient in 1950s submarine films, though this form of tension is not universal in all films, for example, *The Enemy Below* and *Torpedo Run* construct tensions in other ways previously discussed.

Writing about *The Thing from Another World*, Jancovich explores how anxieties over discourses of scientific rationalism are expressed in 1950s horror films. He goes on to argue that scientific-rationality in modes of production had considerable social implications:

In this process of production, and by extension, in a society ordered according to the principles of scientific-technical rationality, individuals must deny their individual qualities in order to become interchangeable components within a system which is ordered and controlled by experts.<sup>40</sup>

The tensions between experts and individuals can be seen to take particular expression in the submarine genre of the 1950s, where experts come into conflict with the institution of the military and with individuals. In terms of the 1950s anxieties over rationalism described by Jancovich above, submarine films negotiate these tensions via conflicts between the specialist and the military institution. This conflict is further inflected around tensions between individualism and the submarine crew as a team, and, most significantly, through tension over regulations imposed by the formal structures of rules and procedure. This conflict relates to the process of masculinisation of professional occupations, as in the 'desktop gladiator'. Here, the focus will be on *Up Periscope* and *Submarine Seahawk* in order to account for the tensions and resolutions engendered by this conflict of specialist discourses.

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<sup>39</sup> See Basinger, 1986, pp. 63-69.

<sup>40</sup> M. Jancovich, 1996, p. 36.

*Up Periscope* frames this conflict in terms of incorporation of Braden's expert mission. The narrative has emphasised the importance of intelligence at the beginning of the film by connecting the information to the overall war through the planned 'big invasion'. Braden is recruited for the mission not only because of his training in underwater demolition but because of his knowledge of Japanese ideograms and culture, knowledge he obtained at university. Braden's mission is therefore information gathering rather than soldiering; he neither engages in combat with nor kills any enemy, and his knowledge of explosives only provides a diversionary fire while he secretly photographs the codebook. This is the nature of Braden's particular specialism, but with what does it come into conflict? The tension between Braden and the submarine is expressed in terms of Commander Stevenson's 'by the book' approach to the overall mission. Their clash over how near the shore the submarine will go before Braden has to swim positions the interests of the individual against the safety of the whole crew of the submarine.

The narrative sets up two incidents that attempt to negotiate this conflict of interests. In the first case, Braden volunteers to dive beneath the boat to carry out repairs. This sequence is a variation of the man left on top convention, (The XO, Carney (Carleton Carpenter) has already made a self-sacrificial order to dive when he was left wounded on the bridge.) as the submarine is forced to dive to save the crew rather than rescue him. Fortunately, Braden is able to get back in the sub having completed the repairs. The film seems at first to suggest that this persuades Stevenson to relent over the distance Braden has to swim, but it turns out that this reversal has more to do with the presence of an enemy ship above. Ultimately, Stevenson waits for longer than he has given the mission, jeopardising his men's safety as the oxygen supply runs low. In this instance, individual interests are incorporated into the group, and this is done when the captain relaxes the rulebook. The opposition between doing things by-the-book and the individual specialist mission in this case pivots on a conflict between the figures being allowed to do their job. This compares with *Hellcats of the Navy* where this tension is over the value of experience in the individual's suitability for the job. Initial tensions over the specific requirements of the different missions are resolved by flexibility on

both sides. Stevenson reports himself for court martial because he 'knowingly and improperly hazarded a vessel'. The rigidity of the rulebook is buried at sea when the report goes missing, which the entire crew is shown to endorse.

Knowledge of Japanese also functions as the source of tension in *Submarine Seahawk*, where Turner's specialism runs up against the aggressive tendencies of Shore. This can be related to anxieties over the application of rationalism to management of people attributed to the 1950s. For example, Turner is seen as a cold academic type, with 'acid in his veins'. The crew initially rejects him because he is influenced by textbooks rather than human relations. Turner is vindicated when his observations provide vital information for the attack. The opposition between intelligence gathering and combat action, between individual skills and the group, is ultimately resolved in favour of the former because only the captain is aware of the overall picture. In both *Submarine Seahawk* and *Up Periscope* knowledge of the real mission is restricted to the commanding officers, and it is the ignorant crew that agitates against the apparent inaction. But in *Up Periscope* this inaction is resolved early on (they sink a destroyer) so the tension is instead between Braden and the by-the-book captain. Both films though tend not to communicate fully to the crew thus creating narrative tension. In *Up Periscope* the emphasis is on the crew having to accommodate the individual, in *Submarine Seahawk* the crew has the imperatives of the overall war imposed on them through the figure of the specialist individual.

In *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, it is the military individual who comes into conflict with forms of expert discourse and institutions. Admiral Nelson's plan is contested by the prevarication of the world committee of scientists, and threatened by the scientific figures on board the *Seaview* who attempt to sabotage the mission. It is no accident that these saboteurs, including Dr Susan Hillier (Joan Fontaine) are aligned with Alvarez (Michael Ansara), a religious fanatic and fatalist. Alvarez could be seen as embodying, in goatee beard spouting existentialism, contemporary anxieties about Beat influences in

America.<sup>41</sup> Nelson, as inventor of the *Seaview* and high-ranking member of the military command, indicates that this is not a negative representation of science itself, but a negative representation of science in thrall to the wrong interests. i.e. the scientific-military vision of this unique individual is challenged by the indecisive military, the collective voice of the world scientific community, femininised branches of science (Hillier is a psychiatrist as opposed to a hard scientist), and dissenting peaceniks. Here, the authoritarian individual is validated over the feminine, the dissident and the collective.

In *The Hunt for Red October* the role and position of the specialist figure functions differently, which points to a reformulation of the relationship between such figures and the institution and the individual. To begin with, Seaman Jones as the expert figure is presented as eccentric. He is excessively devoted to his job, he uses the sonar as his 'personal stereo', and, unlike the officer who is baiting him, knows (and cares) that Pavarotti is a tenor and Pagannini is a composer. It is this eccentricity that enables Jones to pin point *Red October*. Jones is repeatedly seen manipulating the sound trace and eventually presents the captain with his course for the submarine. Despite their initial hesitation, the officers accept Jones' findings and proceed to intercept the course. This is crucial to the narrative, for it allows Ryan to spot the *Dallas* on its lone pursuit, and therefore also enables the encounter between the opposing sides to take place.

In this film Jones the expert is no longer a figure who provokes anxiety, his difference is accommodated by the command structure and his eccentricity and role is fundamental to the narrative. Further, the expert is not part of the command structure as were Lt. Braden and Captain Turner in the 1950s: Jones is an ordinary member of the crew. This makes his position in the relationship of power and knowledge different, but the significant factor is not that he is unable to impose his knowledge on the group because of his lack of power, but that the expert is not necessarily identified as an authority figure. Jones, presented as a femininised figure through his fondness for opera and

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<sup>41</sup> See Ehrenreich, 1983, Chapter 3, for discussion of the anxieties over the (exaggerated) beat influence.

classical music, possesses a specialism that is eccentric. This specialism is accepted by the command structure and turns out to be vital to the narrative.

The role and position of Jones represents a consensual rather than top-down model of social relations. In addition, this model emphasises the accommodation of differences within masculinity, in the same way that the overall narrative stresses difference within the concept of the nation. This understanding is also related to different specialist discourses: Ryan has to overcome resistance from the field military personnel because he is 'just an analyst.' Ryan and Jones are therefore linked through their outsider position and by the insights provided by individuals who perform crucial functions in the narrative. Thus it could appear that *The Hunt for Red October* privileges a desk bound analytic masculinity. Or rather, because these forms rise to the occasion and perform vital functions, the film can be said to privilege difference within masculinity, difference that works within the resolution.

The tensions between the civilian workers and the institution of the military have been documented elsewhere in terms of difference in relationships to nature and professionalism. All of these tensions articulate differences in attitudes to power, communication, and oppositions between consensual and authoritarian approaches within groups.

In *The Abyss*, for example, not only does Coffey retain information from the civilian crew, but he is also shown to be wrong when operating secretly. *Deepcore* is dragged to the edge of the trough because he takes Flatbed without the consent of the group. Further, Coffey is not interested in the engineers' methodology, insisting that they obey his orders without question or debate. This contradicts directly the consensual way that the group functions, with the way Bud leads his team of workers. In a further opposition, Lindsey at first operates in much the same way as Coffey, though through the process of mutual interchange between Bud and Lindsey, (both learn from each other) she is aligned closer to the group. Coffey, for all his dogma, is unable to deal with

the presence of the aliens because his mode of operation does not permit him to function in response to the situation on the seabed. His procedure only allows him to interpret the presence of the alien other as hostile Soviet other. His system is inappropriate for the local situation and when he tries to impose this system on the group, this system is seen to fail.

There are implications for gender relations and processes of hegemony because the mutuality between Bud and Lindsey occurs in the 'unreal' world of the seabed. The return to the surface is an example of how hegemonic processes allow the continuation of masculine power through the appropriation of aspects of femininity that enable it to maintain a position of relative power. The emphasis on heterogeneity through the consensual group and the mutuality of the metamorphosis in gender roles does not allow the 'concessions' to equal gender relations to be dismissed in this way. This is not to ignore the essential condition of hegemony that concessions to subordinate groups are fundamental to the processes whereby the dominant group maintains power. The conjunction of mutuality and mutability within the framework of a consensual mode of power relations, coupled with Lyndsey's move from impositional to consensual figure of authority, suggests the possibility of a more egalitarian social structure.

### **Conclusions.**

This chapter has argued against the tendency to associate the content and form of popular film simply with a dominant ideology. This has allowed a discussion of different aspects of forces, relations and structures of power in the submarine film as an example of popular film. The specific significance of this claim about ideology in the films concerns the link between certain forms of masculinity with dominant ideology. The reflectionist model has been qualified by a critique of the terms with which a society attempts a hegemonic project around certain norms, say masculinity. Representation of those 'norms' does not simply fulfil the requirements of a hegemonic project, not least because of the different positions open to audiences, not least the post contemporaneous academic one:



film representations enlist audience identification or sympathy with different sides in social debates and social struggles. And the movement of those social struggles in part determines what sorts of representations will appear on screen. Changes in society affect both what sorts of representations will appear and how audiences will relate to them.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ryan, in Nelson, & Grossberg, (Eds), 1988, p. 481.

## 9] The Masculinity of Submarine Space.

This chapter will draw on the preceding analysis of masculinity and submarine films to address the complex variation of masculinities within the submarine narrative. Within the submarine film, tensions between masculinities are played out that may or may not be resolved in terms of specific dominant masculinity. Archetypal masculine characteristics can be seen in a complex relation to each other, and it is the tensions between these archetypes that express competing versions of masculinity that provide the narrative drive of the submarine film. Resolution of those tensions has been shown to emphasise the mutual dependency of masculinities, a dependency on which the survival or destruction of the crew and the submarine consistently hinge. This chapter will account for the ways in which that space is disrupted, and test the hypothesis that the disruption serves to validate particular forms of masculinity through the restoration of that space to the masculine. The chapter will also argue that the conventions of film comedy allow for disruption, parody and destabilisation of hegemonic masculinity. This, it will be shown, has implications for many of the notions, theories and claims accounted for in the course of this thesis. While the final chapter provides the formal conclusion of this thesis, the potential for disruption outlined in the submarine comedy can be seen as fundamental to the critique of hegemonic masculinity sustained throughout the different chapters in this research.

The argument will propose that comedy submarine films, such as *Operation Petticoat* (Blake Edwards, US: Universal, 1959) *Going Under* (Mark Travis, US: Warner, 1990.) and *Down Periscope* (David S. Ward, US: C20th Fox, 1996) deploy notions of femininity to disrupt the male space of the submarine. Other types of submarine film have been shown to deploy the literal presence of women for different and differing functions. For example, in the way *The Abyss*, and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* women challenge or validate certain forms or assumptions about gender and gender roles. In these other forms disruption is not consistently associated with the feminine, neither is the feminine consistently disruptive. Romance in war film disrupts and then

consolidates masculinity as seen, for example, in the restoration of Hobb's marriage in *We Dive at Dawn*.

Both comic and non-comic forms of submarine film work towards establishing the submarine space as a gendered space. This gendered space can be seen as threatened or progressively transformed by the intervention of the feminine. The discussion below will address the extent to which comic forms, through their conditional narrative resolution of that disruption, maintain boundaries of masculine identity. This gendering of particular kinds of space has a significant function in gender relations:

...spaces and places are gendered through and through. ... And this gendering of space and place both reflects *and has effects back on* the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live.<sup>1</sup>

For Massey the exclusion of women from certain spaces function as a means of subordination, and this is most apparent in the distinction between the spatial separation of the private (the home as 'feminine') and the public (workplace as 'masculine').<sup>2</sup> In what ways, then, does the submarine film code the submarine as masculine space, and what are the terms of that coding? It will be shown that submarine comedy disrupts that distinction between masculine/work and feminine/domestic in ways that has implications for the claims about gendered space.

The submarine film has been seen to produce an environment that is ambiguous in terms of gender through a blurring of the distinction between work and domestic spheres. For example, Basinger argues that the submarine and naval film 'transmit via coding of spaces contained within images...' a specific kind of space which she describes as 'domestic'. Furthermore, 'when not in combat, men occupy domestic spaces: bunks, bedrooms, galleys, as well as bridges which are porch like in their capacity to provide...places for conversation.'<sup>3</sup> The notion of submarine space as domestic space is

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<sup>1</sup> D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity, 1994, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> See also G. Pratt & S. Hanson, 'Geography and the Construction of Difference', *Gender, Place and Culture*, 1:1, 1994, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 22.

pertinent to this chapter. The submarine film has to find ways of reconciling this space as masculine *and* domestic, or of losing the stability of these categories all together. The crucial question is whether this reconciliation or loss of stability functions as a threat to hegemonic masculinity. The account of comedy and film below will address the way in which narrative, genre and character all function in the interests of that destabilising disruption.

Bakhtin's notion of the 'carnavalesque' is useful in terms of the disruption and possible restoration of gender relations. Stam argues that the notion of carnival in film has implications for a discussion of genre comedy, though he locates the carnival in an avant-garde aesthetic:

The confounding of generic conventions and the parodic approach to serious film genres offended critics, a reaction hardly surprising given the close link between generic and social conventions.<sup>4</sup>

The separation of genres is linked by Stam to class hierarchies, and he argues that any levelling produces fears of levelling in society itself. This may account for the low critical esteem in which comedy is held. Bakhtin's concept of 'carnavalesque' has particular significance for a discussion of the comic in relation to the disruption of masculine space and the implications for gender relations:

[Carnival festivities] offered a completely different, nonofficial, extra ecclesiastical and extra political aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations; they built a second world and life outside officialdom, a world in which all mediaeval people participated more or less, in which they lived during a given time of the year.<sup>5</sup>

Stam's summary of carnival's broad relevance for film can be related to comic submarine films. For example, the use of humour to 'anarchise institutional hierarchies', the comic privileging of 'lower bodily stratum', and the celebration of social inversions all feature in the comic form. The carnival is significant for the way in which 'Carnival is revealed

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<sup>4</sup> R. Stam, *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989, p. 109.

<sup>5</sup> M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 6.

then, as a transgressive space, more or less tolerated by the law, in which class resentments and utopian aspirations are acted out in ritual and symbolic form.<sup>6</sup>

This discussion will also briefly account for the comic in non-comic submarine narratives. This will allow for an understanding of disruption in the broader context of non-comic disruption, particularly when that disruption is coded as feminine. Palmer argues that comedy in non-comic narratives is 'responsible for the lighter emotional tone that the film has, lighter than if the same range of subject matter was treated in a non-comic mode.'<sup>7</sup> Rather than see the comic as purely a disruption of narrative, the comic can be seen in relation to narrative as 'a process in which various discourses are brought into contact with each other.'<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Palmer's work on the structure of the comic is useful where his claims regarding plausibility and implausibility relate to genre conventions and social norms. Palmer's emphasis on the 'peripetia' (shock or surprise) of the gag is related to cognizance of those norms and conventions, which produces the dynamic of plausibility and implausibility. Palmer states that 'the process nonetheless has a measure of plausibility, but that this is less than the implausibility.'<sup>9</sup> The disruption of space can be seen in terms of gags structured according to Palmer's formula, but they remain conditional on generic familiarity. Genre gags and comic situations arise out of exaggeration or genre hyperbole that depend on familiarity while simultaneously mocking those conventions.

A discussion of comedy should not take place without reference to Freud, not least because of the critical importance<sup>10</sup> imparted to the links he establishes between jokes and the unconscious.<sup>11</sup> However, Freud devotes considerable space to distinguishing between jokes, which are produced, and the comic, which can simply take place. Freud's discussion of genre and comedy is implicit. This chapter will approach masculinity and

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<sup>6</sup> Stam, 1989, p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> J. Palmer, *The Logic of the Absurd: On Film and Television Comedy*, London: BFI, 1987, p. 149.

<sup>8</sup> Palmer, 1987, p. 152.

<sup>9</sup> Palmer, 1987, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> See Babington & Evans, 1989, for example pp. vii, viii, & 3.

<sup>11</sup> S. Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, London: Routledge, 1960.

comedy in terms of femininity as the comic surfacing of the unconscious of masculinity: hysteria, delirium, and melodrama. Within these terms masculinity is seen as conscious & rational, that which disrupts it is the irrationality of the unconscious

Many of the arguments concerning comic disruption emphasise the temporary and conditional nature of that disruption, particularly when it comes to popular film and dominant ideology. Krutnik argues that 'comic pleasure is...inextricably linked to a replacement of transgression in relation to ideology, a resetting of the boundaries'<sup>12</sup> and that comedy is 'an *allowable* disruption of the fictional 'rules' because of audience expectations in comedy.'<sup>13</sup> Eaton qualifies comedy's disruptive potential further when he argues that the 'audience recognition of the play with generic conventions is often indispensable to the functioning of comedy narrative.'<sup>14</sup> In the light of such expectations, Eaton warns against seeing this disruption as transgressive as it can simply lead to the 'familiarisation of the transgression'.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, it has been argued that it is precisely those expectations that foster the potential for disruption or transgression:

Because comedy is a formal occasion to which audiences are invited with the hope that they will take belly laughing pleasure in seeing standards of normality inverted (often rather viciously) all comedy is political.<sup>16</sup>

This chapter will propose that the transgressive potential of comic disruption should be understood in the context of differing audience expectations and desires. Therefore, the notion of potential oppositional readings should be incorporated. The work of feminists on readings of the romance, and queer theory readings<sup>17</sup> show how potential readings of

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<sup>12</sup> F. Krutnik, 'The Clown Prints of Comedy', *Screen*, 25:4-5, July-October 1984, p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> F. Krutnik, 1984, p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> M. Eaton, 'Laughter in the Dark', *Screen*, 22: 2, 1981, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Eaton, 1981, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> E. Sikov, 1994, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> See for example: Bad Object-Choices, (Eds), *How Do I Look? Queer film and Video*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1991, C. Strayer, 'Redressing the "Natural": The Temporary Transvestite Film', in B. K. Grant, (Ed), 1995, pp. 402-427, A. Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, particularly pp. 8-11, and K. Burdette, 'Queer Readings/Queer Cinema: An Examination of the Early Work of Todd Haynes', *The Velvet Light Trap*, 41, Spring 1998, pp. 69-80.

the comic cannot be seen as limited by the structure of the narrative 'reordering' of disruption. All-male relationships have been accounted for in chapter five, but here, familiarity with the codings of homosexual culture allows for audience pleasure both within and against the ostensible heterosexual desires of the mainstream narrative. Queer readings of the all-male space of the submarine can then disrupt that space: although homosexuality is expelled from dominant masculinity, it is always there in readings that can go against or even work within the narratives of popular film. These readings can be made from any queer position with knowledge of gay culture and codes: therefore this chapter will indicate their disruptive possibilities and not practice those readings simply for analysis.

Further debates on oppositional reading have concerned women's reading of romance. It is claimed that 'romance reading is oppositional because it allows women to refuse momentarily their self-abnegating role.'<sup>18</sup> On the other hand the emphasis on narrative structure has led to the claim that:

the romance's narrative structure embodies a simple recapitulation and recommendation of patriarchy and its constituent social practices and ideologies.<sup>19</sup>

These points will be addressed in more detail in parts one and two of this chapter, particularly as they relate to romance as disruption or validation of both masculine space and hegemonic masculinity. It should be emphasised here though that the function of disruption and redemption has to be seen in relation to who is watching. In a discussion of race and spectatorship Mayne cautions that 'attention to race and spectatorship means not only questioning the difference being black makes, but also the difference being white makes.'<sup>20</sup> Mayne goes on to suggest that the danger of identifying a complicit white spectator and its 'opposite' critical black spectator lies in seeing *any* marginality as inherently oppositional.

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<sup>18</sup> J. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*, London: Verso, 1987, p. 210.

<sup>19</sup> Radway, 1987, p. 210.

<sup>20</sup> J. Mayne, 1993, p. 144.

Romance has different functions in different genres. In 'male oriented genres' for example the woman functions as love interest of protagonist, 'a term which implies that her narrative function is subsidiary to that of the hero.'<sup>21</sup> The feminine as love interest has figured as both object of romance and subject of disruption. Furthermore, this dual function has important implications in terms of narrative resolution and the restoration of the masculine space. In addition to generic variation, the function of romance in masculine genres needs to be considered in relation to genre evolution. War films were held to be a masculine genre in the perceptions of the audience but, Doherty argues, 'After 1943, war films modulated their violence and expanded introspective moments of melodramatic register.'<sup>22</sup>

1990s submarine comedies can be related to anxieties over increasing numbers of women in the armed forces, and particularly over combat roles since the Gulf War of 1990-91. Linville argues that *Courage under Fire* (E. Zwick, US, 1996) relates to 'the vicissitudes of gender integration in the armed forces.'<sup>23</sup> For the comic submarine film, to what extent does the integration of the feminine represent the disruption of submarine space and masculinity?

Overall, then, this chapter will investigate how submarine comedy films depend on and ridicule genre conventions, and consider whether this disruption of genre amounts to a disruption of gender. Comic forms of genres exist in a complex relation to those conventions. Neale and Krutnik argue

the local forms responsible for the deliberate generation of laughter can be inserted at some point into most other generic contexts without disturbing their conventions.<sup>24</sup>

The masculine space that is to be disrupted is characterised by certain aspects: work, regulation, rationality, order, seriousness, rigid power structures, authorial figures.

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<sup>21</sup> S. Neale and F. Krutnik, *Popular Film and Television Comedy*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 182.

<sup>22</sup> Doherty, 1993, p. 183.

<sup>23</sup> S. E. Linville, ' "The Mother of All Battles": *Courage Under Fire* and the Gender-Integrated Military', *Cinema Journal*, 39:2, Winter 2000, p. 101.

<sup>24</sup> Neale and Krutnik, 1990, p. 18.



Comedy, then, functions as disruption of order through characteristics associated with femininity; domesticity, chaos, irrationality, frivolity, overthrow of rigid hierarchies, undermining of authority figures.

Masculinity in the submarine comedy film should be addressed in terms of four forms of comic disruption, each of which can be related to genre conventions and social norms. Those forms will be considered in turn to establish their significance and meanings for masculinity; firstly, literal presence of women; secondly, phobia and unconventionality in the hero figure; thirdly, the institutions of masculinity; and finally, the representation of deviants and misfits.

### **Femininity and the Disruption of Masculine Space**

This section will focus on the literal presence of femininity and its function in the comic form. It should be noted here that the symbolic presence of femininity functions to emphasise absence: pictures of family and sweethearts, pinups, or women on the dock at the end in *Up Periscope*, and *Submarine Seahawk*. *Operation Pacific* deploys the presence of nuns and children in order to emphasise the loss that Gifford has to overcome. Gifford's nursing of the newborn baby, met with surprise by the crew, is a comic moment. The female specialist functions as a threat to certain forms of masculinity. In *The Abyss* Lyndsey Brigman is positioned in opposition to Coffey's martial masculinity, but her femininity complements the forms of masculinity represented by the civilian crew. In *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, the female scientist is one amongst many other potential disruptive elements - monsters, prisoners, terrorists, scientists, and specialists. All of these, bar Lyndsey Brigman, can be said to have a 'To-be-overcome-ness'; their presence functions as a threat to be dealt with and therefore can be said to assert masculine heterosexuality. The important point is the extent to which a feminine presence in either drama or comedy transforms masculinity in terms of contemporary debates. Furthermore, it is significant whether this transformation is progressive or simply restores masculine dominance through the processes of hegemony.

In the submarine comedy *Operation Petticoat*, the *Sea Tiger* is bombed, seemingly beyond repair, and Captain Sherman (Cary Grant) is forced to limp to Darwin for repairs. On the voyage, due mainly to the activities of Holden (Tony Curtis), the *Sea Tiger* takes on board five stranded American nurses, two pregnant local women, some children, a goat and a pig. In addition the submarine is painted pink and attacked by US forces before arriving safely in port. The feminisation of the masculine submarine space will be addressed through the impact on the submarine itself, and in the feminisation of that space in terms of romance and disruption. The differences between the romance involving Holden and Sherman and the nurses, and the relationship between Major Edna Howard (Virginia Gregg) and Chief Engineer Sam Tostin (Arthur O'Connell) are highly significant here.

In addition to being painted a feminine pink, there are many ways in which the *Sea Tiger* is coded as feminine in relation to genre, the war and naval tradition. For example in order to persuade the navy hierarchy to allow him to repair the sunken submarine, Captain Sherman argues that 'she deserves a better epitaph than "Commissioned 1940, sunk 1941". It's like a beautiful woman dying an old maid.' Further, given an opportunity to sink an enemy tanker one sailor argues that 'This boat wasn't meant to be a virgin, sir.' These incidents illustrate where the submarine itself is emasculated and rendered impotent by the enemy action, a condition that is seen as a threat to masculinity itself. Furthermore, the flashback frame of the narrative shows that the *Sea Tiger* may have been painted pink while emasculated in this way, but that she started out and ends up military grey. The response to one of the nurses' comment that it is a lovely colour is met with the retort 'Twenty five years I've been in the navy, and I aint seen nothing like this.' It is significant that the submarine is allowed to remain pink for the New Years Eve festivities, a moment of carnival excess that is interrupted by an enemy attack which prevents the colour being restored to military grey. The pink paint will be addressed with regard to the satire of institutions below.

Lieutenant Crandall (Joan O'Brien) functions as a feminine interference with submarine operations. The *Sea Tiger* is about to torpedo an enemy tanker when Crandall arrives on the bridge to give Sherman his vitamin pills. He shouts at her to get below and she accidentally hits the launch button. As a result the torpedo misses the tanker and destroys a truck parked on the beach; Sherman despairingly announces 'We sunk a truck.' Crandall's disruption here is part of the feminisation of Sherman, she tries to get him to take vitamins because he looks tired, he resists because he claims the pressures of being captain mean he is too busy to remember to take them. Crandall's clumsiness is disruptive in a number of other ways, for example, she gets a stiletto heel caught in the deck, sets off the collision alarm, leaves a cigarette in Sherman's coffee and knocks a crew member overboard.

The disruption through sexuality and the romance narrative are also significant. Crandall's sexuality is immediately brought to the forefront when the nurses are rescued through the positioning of the camera to emphasise her breasts. Indeed, how to pass her correctly in the submarine's narrow passageways causes excitement amongst the crew and specific instructions from Sherman. Her sexuality and her femininity function as moments of comic disruption of the masculine space:

To walk past a woman on a submarine, a man must rub against her. This puts him in her power, or at her mercy. A woman's bosom juts out into the passageway of the submarine and forever transposes it into a danger area. It takes possession of the space.<sup>25</sup>

Sherman warns the nurses that 'being confined like this could create situations not normally consistent with submarine operations.' Femininity, particularly feminine sexuality, has an explicitly disruptive function in the comedy. This disruption also affects submarine operations, operations that adhere to the conventions of the submarine genre.

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<sup>25</sup> Basinger, 1986, pp. 253-4.

But it is in terms of romance that the disruption is reconciled within the narrative of heterosexual love. For example in the way Sherman attempts to control the romance between Holden and Lieutenant Barbara Duran (Dina Merrill), but is brought to face his own romantic interest in Crandall through the intervention of the women.

Holden's attempts to seduce Duran, with champagne and silk pyjamas, are curtailed by Sherman, as it is a breach of regulations. Holden has been caught using a military helmet as an ice-bucket for their illicit champagne, but it is only when they are discovered kissing that Sherman confines him to his quarters with the rebuke 'Mr., you've used that uniform for every purpose except what the government intended it for.' Holden's attempts to seduce Duran are only brought to a halt, though, when she presses him about their future (children and work) and he reveals that he is engaged to a railroad heiress. Thus his predatory masculine sexuality is thwarted when she discovers he only wants one thing, but it is significant that his engagement is later revealed to have been a mistake.

Differences within masculinity are emphasised through the opposition of Sherman's reluctant sexuality and Holden's predatory sexuality. He only realises his feelings for Crandall by the actions of the women. Crandall is afraid to come on deck for the party because of his earlier reprimand, and Sherman is persuaded to make up with her by Major Howard. Both are unaware of their mutual attraction, it is only after this incident that their romance begins. Both of these romances are brought to a full and satisfactory resolution at the end of the narrative. Here, the flashback returns to the present of the narrative to reveal the full story; Sherman and Crandall are married with two children, and Holden is married to Duran. In addition Sherman is now Admiral in command of the pacific submarine force, and Holden is captain of the *Sea Tiger*. Although both have returned to the submarine in order to reminisce before she is scrapped, Holden's sadness is ameliorated by the command of a new, atomic *Sea Tiger*. In this way all of the disruption is contained through their successful navy careers and happy marriages.

Crandall though is shown to be still accident prone, when she shunts her husband's official car into the back of a military bus.

The most interesting comic disruption of gender and gender relations in *Operation Petticoat* concerns the relationship between Chief and Howard. The Chief appears hostile and superstitious about women on submarines. This hostility is exacerbated when he discovers Howard is using his engine room to dry her underwear. The opposition between femininity and masculinity is expressed through the conflict between her domestication (she sees dirt everywhere) and his resistance. It is an engine room so it is bound to get dirty. However, this rigid demarcation of roles and space is turned on its head through their continuing struggle and eventual reconciliation. The first incident occurs when Howard suggests that Chief could improvise for an unobtainable valve spring. She reveals that her father was Chief Engineer at a power plant and that she is 'a lady who knows machinery'. The Chief shows his hostility through his declaration that 'Maybe Congress made you an officer, but God made you a woman, and a...a woman just shouldn't mess around with a man's machinery.' He is forced to back down when he later returns to find she has used her girdle in place of the valve spring. Despite the Chief moaning that it is 'undecent', Sherman backs up the Major. By the end of the narrative the romance between the two emphasises how feminine disruption of masculine space can challenge proscribed gender roles and force masculinity to confront the boundaries upon which identity and difference are supposed to rest. Their final comic exchange illustrates the progressive impulse of the destabilisation of the masculine space:

**Chief:** You know, I spent a lot of years disliking women, but I don't dislike you.

**Howard:** Don't you?

**Chief:** You're different, you're not a woman, you're more than that, you're a mechanic!

**Howard:** Thank you!

Though this could be a negative masculinisation of femininity, in that Howard is positioned as desexualised in relation to the other, younger, nurses, (she is 38 while they are in their early 20s), the progressive potential of this destabilisation cannot be discounted.

### **Heroic Masculinity and Comic Disorder.**

The previous section has dealt in part with romance as way of validating heroic masculinity. Disruption is resolved with men demonstrating heroic masculinity through romantic competition and combat, a convention established in Stewart and Connors' competition for Hewlett in *Crash Dive*. The emphasis here will be on the processes and forms that disrupt this heroic masculine identity. Furthermore, these processes and forms will be discussed in relation to the claim that 'The idealised male screen heroes give back to the male spectator his more perfect mirror image, together with a sense of mastery and control.'<sup>26</sup> Basinger argues that the comic hero must be tempered and flawed so that he is at least 'temporarily emasculated.'<sup>27</sup> The analysis will address the extent to which that comic disruption is coded as feminine, and whether the narrative works towards the exclusion of elements coded as feminine. Focusing on phobia and unconventionality shows how heroic masculinity is positioned in relation to difference and femininity. That relation also includes tensions between rationality and the irrational identified in chapter six.

Comic moments or disruptions of the narrative figure as feminine disturbances of masculinity. In this way comedy destabilises masculine identity. Bukatman, for example, cites Freud's work on hysteria and elaborates on its function in structuring differences between masculinity and femininity:

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<sup>26</sup> E. A. Kaplan, *Women & Film: Both Sides of the Camera*, London and New York: Routledge, 1983, p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> Basinger, 1986, p. 251.

This resistance to the passivity of the feminine (passivity, of course in the face of the threat of castration) results in its massive suppression, and writes Freud, "often the only indications of its existence are exaggerated over-compensations"<sup>28</sup>

This section will address the forms of hysteria evident in the male protagonists and the extent to which these represent feminine disruptions to be overcome.

The figure of Nick Holden played by Tony Curtis is of particular significance because of his star image and his relationship with Captain Sherman played by Cary Grant:

Cary Grant as the seasoned submarine commander tells the newly arrived and pristinely (and fully masculinely) attired Curtis that he cannot become the supply officer because it 'would ruin your manicure'.<sup>29</sup>

The presentation of Holden as feminised is also relevant here. When he is first spotted through the *Sea Tiger's* periscope Holden's pristine white uniform produces giggling and disparaging remarks from the officers: 'What is it?' 'I don't know sir.' illustrate the indeterminacy of his gender. In addition, he is reputed to be 'the darling of the high-brass social set, he and the admiral's wife were winners of the rumba championship two years in a row.' When Sherman asks Holden about his experience, his answer provokes connections with the Madison Avenue masculinity of Roger Thornhill (played by Grant) in *North By Northwest*: 'I'm primarily an ideas man.' So far his duties have included coordinating parades and posters, Hollywood liaison officer, and entertainment officer. The only time he has been to sea was by mistake and he was quickly recalled! Holden relates then to anxieties over associations of masculinity with non-productive labour. Only an actor of Curtis's beauty could carry off this feminisation without detracting from his masculinity:

[as one among many male beauties] Curtis could move from male to female to male without any violence being done either to his own image or to the general image of masculinity he represented.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Bukatman, in Horton, (Ed), 1991, p. 196. The quote is from S. Freud, 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable', in P. Rieff, (Ed), *Therapy and Technique*, New York: Collier Books, 1963, pp. 233-271.

<sup>29</sup> E. Sikov, 1994, pp. 133-134.

<sup>30</sup> Sikov, 1994, pp. 134.

Holden's heterosexual masculinity remains uncompromised, shown by the course of his romance. Holden expresses this paradox precisely when he says to Sherman, 'Don't let my manicure fool you. I was born and raised in a neighbourhood called Noah's Ark, if you didn't travel in pairs, you just didn't travel.' Immediately after this Sherman leaves a dirty handprint on Holden's white uniform, which emphasises the tarnished and ambiguous surface of his appearance. Further, in the following scene, Holden is blacked up in fully masculine commando dress to rob the supply depot of much needed spares. It is through his organised thieving that Holden's standing among the crew changes from disparagement to admiration. Holden thrives because he believes that 'In confusion there is profit.' (After he has stolen the wall of the base commander's office during an air raid!)

In *Going Under*, Biff Banner (Bill Pullman) is given command of the latest navy stealth submarine. His appointment is seen as the best way of losing the submarine and thereby covering up the overspending and corruption of Admiral Malice (Ned Beatty) and Wedgewood (Robert Vaughn), a defence contractor. Malice sends the *Substandard* on the seemingly fatal mission to defuse a nuclear bomb on a US satellite that Wedgewood has deliberately crashed in Soviet waters. With a misfit incompetent crew, including Jan Michaels (Wendy Schaal) as Malice's special observation officer and The Mole (Ernie Sabella) as on board saboteur, Banner is given little chance of survival. Biff Banner is the male hysteric; a claustrophobic submarine commander traumatised by his past failure to live up to the demands of martial masculinity. Banner is ridiculed within the navy for having beached the USS *Bongo* and since then has been unable to enter a submarine. He is compelled to substitute 'camp' and 'ramped' for 'cramped', and 'otter' for 'water' in order to control his hysteria. He also continually takes refuge in the virtual reality environments created by the submarine's 'Imaging Room.' Banner's phobia and his hysterical reactions are repeatedly emphasised in relation to a proper, naval masculinity.

This can be seen initially in his therapy sessions with Navy Psychologist Drim Friendly (Rif Hutton), who conducts the sessions in the manner of the familiar screeching drill-



sergeant. Banner's failure lies in his indecision and hesitancy when giving commands under pressure. He beached the *Bongo* because he belatedly gave the incorrect order to blow the ballast when heading for the shore. Friendly's reaction to Banner unburdening his problems is to yell from off screen 'Hit the floor mamas boy, and give me 50, you poor excuse for a commander.' Friendly couches Banner's real problem as unsuitability for command,

...what kind of navy man are you? We know why you get all weak-kneed like some piss-soaked Chihuahua every time this man's navy gives you command of anything, don't we Banner?

On board the *Substandard*, Michaels continues this line in trying to persuade Banner out of the imaging room 'You have to calm down and act like a captain.' His response is comic overcompensation: he appears at the wheel (of a sailing ship) dressed as a pirate and armed with a cutlass declaring 'Is this captain enough for ya?' But, he is faced with the same problem as on the *Bongo*: they are being pursued by the *Pink November* and heading straight for an ice floe when he needs to make a quick decision. Michaels orders the sub to dive, but Banner retorts 'I give the big commands round here.' He is only able to repeat the 'blow all ballast' order, but this time they are saved as the *Substandard* surfaces and sledges over the ice to land right next to the satellite.

Ultimately though, Banner's phobias are not fully overcome. Although he is given what the officers perceive to be 'the perfect opportunity to confront all [his] phobias' his successful progression to hero is qualified in two significant ways. The first of these is the part played by others in diffusing the bomb and the second the football play in order to do so. Banner's plan, devised on the phone to Captain Joe Namath (Himself), is to run the Soviet fleet in order to drop the bomb in 'the abyss' where it can explode in isolation. Namath and Banner call a punt that is revealed to be a 'trick play' in order to fool the *Pink November* and dispose of the bomb. Unfortunately the anchor chain (!) holding the bomb gets caught, and it is only disposed of when The Mole, hanging on to the chain, severs it and releases the device safely. The crew accepts The Mole as one of the group despite his earlier allegiance to the evil Malice. The success of Banner's plan

is therefore qualified in terms of the solidarity of the crew. The use of sport to restore Banner's masculinity (He used to be captain of the football team before his accident.) may be perceived as a traditional mode of securing masculine identity. However, his play is actually a trick and only works because of the intervention of others. This qualification of Banner's masculinity through the metaphor of sport is significant in terms of the comic disruption of masculine identity:

In both British and American society, an interest in active muscular physical sporting activity has been an important component of the most dominant form of masculinity.<sup>31</sup>

In *Down Periscope* the figure of the heroic individual is not presented in terms of a phobic and therefore failed masculinity, but as the unconventional, renegade captain in opposition to martial masculinity. In this case Dodge (Kelsey Grammer) is seen as unsuitable for command because he has been held responsible for previously brushing against a Soviet submarine. In order to disqualify Dodge permanently from command, the despotic Rear Admiral Yancy Graham (Bruce Dern) orders him to lead a rusting 1940s diesel sub in a hopelessly one-sided war game against the US Navy's sophisticated nuclear attack submarines. To reduce Dodge's chances of success, Graham not only changes the rules during the war game, but also gives him a crew he describes as 'the most incompetent bunch of retards and ass-holes in naval history.' Dodge is clearly and consistently positioned as unconventional, an attribute that is opposed to the straight martial masculinity which Captain Knox (William Macy) and XO Pascal (Rob Schneider) both stand for. Both of these are by the book, over-ambitious officers who are ridiculed. The first scene with Dodge establishes his position in this conflict. A medium shot of Dodge on deck going through range finding procedures subsequently pans back to reveal he is attempting to land a golf ball on a nearby links course. An additional factor regarding Dodge's unconventionality and his unsuitability for command is the 'Welcome Aboard' he had tattooed on his penis. It is though, these very factors

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<sup>31</sup> G. Whannel, 'No Room For Uncertainty: Gridiron Masculinity in *North Dallas Forty*', in Kirkham and Thumin, (Eds), 1993, p. 200.

that enable him to succeed against navy command, although he is given encouragement by an officer superior to Graham, Admiral Winslow (Rip Torn): 'Don't go by the book, think like a pirate. I want a man with a tattoo on his dick. Have I got the right man?' Dodge employs double bluff against Captain Knox in the *Orlando*, opting for the 'bizarre and risky' tactics to win by reaching the game objectives between the twin screws of a tanker. Dodge's success though is emphasised as being achieved through the group efforts of the crew, a point to be discussed in more detail below in relation to deviants and misfits.

### **Institutions of Masculinity, Parody and Satire.**

This section will address the disruption of the institutions associated with masculinity, particularly in relation to the potential destabilisation of those institutions in terms of power and domination. Through a focus on parody of genre conventions and satire of social norms, the ways in which the films sustain and reset the boundaries within those power relations within the comic form will be considered. The argument will bear in mind the necessary caution that 'neither comedy nor the comic can be regarded as inherently subversive or progressive, or as inherently avant-garde.'<sup>32</sup> Though comedy as essentially subversive is problematic, the potential for subversive readings outlined above remains paramount in this discussion of parody and satire.

Distinctions between parody and satire are seen as important because 'Where parody...draws on - and highlights - aesthetic conventions, satire draws on - highlights - social ones.'<sup>33</sup> For example, *M\*A\*S\*H* (R. Altman, US, 1969.) is satire because it mocks the military, government and war itself. However, the parody of cultural or aesthetic conventions can lead to satire of social codes. Hutcheon argues parody has a satirical function in *Play It Again, Sam*, (H. Ross, US: APJAC Pictures/Paramount, 1972.): 'What is parodied is Hollywood's aesthetic tradition of allowing only a certain form of mythologising in film; what is satirised is our need for such heroisation.'<sup>34</sup> There is a

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<sup>32</sup> Neale and Krutnik, 1990, p. 93.

<sup>33</sup> Neale and Krutnik, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, London: Methuen, 1985, pp. 25-6.

need to retain this distinction, yet parody 'cannot be confined to the intramural, satire to the extramural.'<sup>35</sup> Genre comedy sends up all kinds of things that cannot be labelled as exclusively one or the other. For example, through the parody of genre conventions military institutions can be satirised in terms of discipline, technology, and the uniform.

There are additional ways in which the cultural and the social are linked in the comic. Palmer asserts that figures can link political message and comedy in certain films

in so far as they stand in metonymically for real world personae who have authority -or at any rate power- this lack of reverence for the actants of the story may translate into lack of reverence for their real-life counterparts and for the power they yield..<sup>36</sup>

Although Palmer makes this claim with respect to films he sees as having a political 'message', such as *Dr. Strangelove*, ridicule of powerful figures in the comic form may also institute a lack of reverence. At the very least, audiences will only identify with the comedy if there is some correspondence between their conceptions of the 'real-life counterparts' and the figures of authority mocked in the film. Figures of authority are identified with tyranny, corruption and incompetence, and genre conventions are deployed to satirise those institutions associated with forms of masculine domination. The submarine comedy has a satirical potential in significant areas. For example, service comedy moans about military life in general, ridicule of the by-the-book or martinet officer, de-throning of tyrannical or crooked officers, and the cynical mockery of the wider structures of power relations that link the military to political and economic forces. One of the most significant factors is that these figures and forces are positioned in opposition to the figures discussed above, figures with whom the audience is invited to identify.

Holden's thieving has been discussed above, but it is the inefficiency of the navy supply system that gives him the justification to carry out his 'Where there is chaos there is

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<sup>35</sup> Hutcheon, 1990, pp. 43-49.

<sup>36</sup> J. Palmer, 1987, p. 193.

opportunity' maxim. The *Sea Tiger* is continually held up by lack of spare parts, and only Holden can obtain what they need. The context for his intervention is the failure of Hunkle (Gavin Macleod) to requisition toilet paper for the submarine. Despite months of trying 'according to the book, through channels' Hunkle breaks down when his sample of toilet paper is returned stamped 'Cannot identify, requisition cancelled.' Holden offers to 'go up a few back alleys' to get everything they need. The extensive thieving is justified by the petty injustices of the bureaucratic nightmare of the military system, though Doherty argues that comedy functions as a permitted space because

true laughing matter demands the suspension of natural law and moral convention, comedy offers a safe haven to act out the impermissible and utter the unspeakable.<sup>37</sup>

Holden's criminal activity goes unpunished, and he successfully moves up the ranks to commander despite his unorthodox use of the uniform. Sherman expresses Holden's contradictory position in his Captain's log; 'Probably the only man I know who will be presented the Navy Cross at his court martial.' Holden defies military regulation and the system of justice, which allows the flouting of discipline to be celebrated. Furthermore, figures that enforce discipline are held up for ridicule.

For example, the encounters with the MPs in *Operation Petticoat* position them as gullible and stupid. On his first theft, Holden is discovered by a patrol as he leaves the supply depot. He escapes by convincing the MP he will have to report him for flouting a new order requiring all personnel to be blacked up at night. In the second incident, Holden and Hunkle have stolen a pig for the New Year's Eve party. In order to get it through a checkpoint they sit the pig in the cab of their truck dressed in uniform, a submariner's cap pulled over his eyes. Despite the pig's grunting, the MP is convinced by Holden's insistence that it is a drunken sailor, and waves them through declaring 'Now I know why they call them pig-boats, man he was the ugliest.' In this way, the forces of discipline within the system, and therefore the system associated with a hegemonic martial masculinity, are mocked and ridiculed.

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<sup>37</sup> Doherty, 1993, p. 184.

By-the-book officers and the martinet captain are familiar figures from naval dramas and comedies. Like bureaucracy, the jobs-worth is commonly encountered in every day life. When these forces are overcome or ridiculed, satisfaction can be derived from the comic inversion of social norms. As with the 'howl against military life', the unseating of the authority figure has a tradition in the service comedy. For example, *Ensign Pulver* (J. Logan, US, 1964) features the naval version of the screeching martinet who makes life hell for the officers and crew before being thrown off the ship. Doherty's service comedy formula [eg. *See Here, Private Hargrove*, (W. Ruggles, US: MGM, 1944)] can be summarised thus:

a martinet (screeching sergeant, by-the-book junior officer), nemesis of misfit inductee, chaos in military regulations, court martial looms, inductee rescued and martinet put in place by ranking officer, inductee becomes accidental hero.<sup>38</sup>

Submarine films deploy many of these conventions to emphasise differences within masculinity and to satirise figures of authority.

In *Down Periscope* Captain Knox, (who cannot abide swearing), stands in the way of Dodge's command, but it is Pascal who represents the by-the-book officer. When Dodge first meets the crew he observes that Pascal is very young to be an XO, to which Pascal replies 'Excellence knows no age, sir.' During the war game he bellows unheeded orders at the crew, quotes the rulebook at Dodge and panics whenever the submarine appears to be in danger. His persecution of the cook Seaman Buckman (Ken Hudson Campbell) illustrates the comic dethroning of authority figures associated with carnival. Pascal insists on screeching at Buckman about the regulation way to stack shelves in the galley, and continually berates him about the quality of the food. In the end, Buckman greases the galley floor so that Pascal slips and is humiliated when he repeatedly bangs his chin sliding down the rungs of a ladder. The officious and over-ambitious Pascal is ritually held up for ridicule and eventually ceremoniously 'uncrowned' when he is made to walk the plank. His humiliation is complete when he lands in a fishing boat hidden beneath the plank: he has become hysterical, fearing he is about to be dumped in the sea.

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<sup>38</sup> See Doherty, 1993, p. 184.

Hysteria here functions not as the disruption of dominant masculinity but in terms of the ridicule of the authority figure. Hysteria is not then simply aligned with femininity but with the tyranny of the martinet officer, in this way a particular form of masculinity is validated, but that form is positioned against authority.

The military tyrant figures as the hero's nemesis in the later submarine film comedy. Admiral Malice in *Going Under* and Admiral Graham in *Down Periscope* fulfil this role, particularly in the way they are humiliated and dethroned. Malice is arrested for using Banner to dispose of the *Substandard* and cover up his corruption. He is introduced in the middle of taking bribes from defence contractors in return for ordering useless and spurious technology. Admiral Graham's come-uppance on the other hand is based on his abuse of power in order to further his self-serving ambition. Graham resists Dodge's promotion to captain at the selection board because he takes a prudish stand against his tattoo. His subsequent desperation to see Dodge lose stems from the fact that he has never lost a war game, and as such is in line for promotion. Graham changes the rules of the war game to ensure Dodge cannot win, despite this Dodge succeeds and Admiral Winslow gives Graham his comeuppance. In this case the system can be seen as taking care of bad individual elements within it, thereby moving to retain some of its legitimacy. However, this has to be seen in the context of the satire of those systems in *Down Periscope*.

Despite the occasional success of maverick figures (Holden, Dodge, Banner) within the military hierarchy, the institution itself cannot avoid satire within the comic submarine film. The audience is invited to celebrate when bureaucracy, incompetence and tyranny are overturned. In *Going Under*, Banner's conflict with Malice and Wedgewood is resolved in terms that are more explicitly at the level of fantasy, outside the structure of the military. He and Michaels are making love on a 'desert island' in the imaging room of the *Substandard*. Despite the fantasy level of this resolution, indeed Wedgewood turns into a vampire and escapes the clutches of the MPs, explicit criticism of the institutions remain salient.

*Going Under* begins with a school tour of Congress where the guide is telling a party of school girls that this is where the politicians turn 'our tax dollars into machines of mass destruction.' The link between weapon manufacturers and government is explicitly satirised, though it is business that comes in for the most criticism. Malice is seen to be manipulated by Wedgewood, though it is his own greed that drives him to embezzle defence funds, and only Malice is brought to justice. The satire of this economic-political power relation is emphasised when Wedgewood is on the way to the White House and he instructs his driver to 'Tell the President not to be late.' In addition, his office door sign reads 'National Defence at Your Expense'. Furthermore, Wedgewood's plan to dispose of the *Substandard* is intended to start a war so he can make even more money. Between them, Wedgewood and Malice stand for greedy capitalism, and a corrupt and incompetent political system. The comic premise of this film would not work for audiences if these figures did not derive their saliency from the conceptions of their real-life counter parts. The comedy of the *Substandard* as symbol of defence budget misappropriation depends on a cynicism derived from the perception of defence spending as spiraling out of control. Where the film draws on this cynicism can be seen in the Soviet's reaction to the submarine as the latest US stealth technology. The Soviet intelligence personnel think that the *Substandard* rather than the actual stealth-bomber must be the real stealth-weapon, because, as they put it, no one 'would spend so much money on something so stupid.'

All of the above points can be drawn together in the submarine itself within this satire of institutions and parody of genre conventions. All of the central submarines are positioned outside the institutions, and this is achieved through the comic play with submarine films conventions. The *Substandard* is named to provide the foundation for this satire and parody. Furthermore, it is everything but the latest nuclear stealth technology: noisy, cumbersome, and unfinished. The internal space does not conform to the restrictions placed upon it by its actual structure; rooms spaces and corridors appear wherever they are need for the comic. For example, hydraulic doors and lighting from *The Abyss* are used for comic and dramatic effect when The Mole returns from disposing



the bomb. The *Stingray* is a rust bucket, held together with bird droppings. The age and condition of the submarine itself when surrounded by the navy's latest nuclear submarines draws attention to the over-dependency on expensive technology. The institutions define their justification for defence spending through demands to keep up with technological developments, but are outmanoeuvred by obsolete or caricatured technology. In *Operation Petticoat*, the US destroyer captain believes the pink *Sea Tiger* is an enemy decoy and surmises that 'Maybe they have a weapon we know nothing about.' The destroyer is unable to recognise the submarine as friendly so proceeds with depth charge attacks. These are only brought to a halt when the nurses' underwear is sent out through the torpedo tubes and the sailors on the surface hold up Crandall's brassiere and say 'The Japanese have nothing like this.' This incident draws on a familiar genre convention, whereby a submarine attempts to fool the enemy it has been destroyed by expelling debris. This narrative incident draws on the conventions of the masculine genre in order to mock the social norms of that masculinity.

The actual submarines in these films, through their emasculation and in their affects on the military, bring together the satire of the authority figure and the institutions associated with dominant masculinity. The submarine itself, in certain forms, can then function satirically.

### **Deviants, Misfits and Masculine Disruption.**

This section will address the ways in which the officers and the crew cause disruption and satirise social norms. *Going Under* can be seen in relation to the *Police Academy* tradition which 'founds its comedy on having characters, who between them incorporate all the traits that make them unsuited to police work, train precisely as policemen.'<sup>39</sup> The use of misfits or deviants depends on the ambiguity of the stereotype in comedy, in that comedy both deforms and draws on stereotypes. The resolution deploys this ambiguity in order to propose the deviants and misfits as a form of disruption that is made safe as order is restored. On the other hand, this section will show that the

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<sup>39</sup> Neale & Krutnik, 1990, p. 89.

representation of the crew draws on comic conventions, which undermines hierarchical power structures associated with martial masculinity. As will be shown in the analysis below, this favours more democratic norms and values and the celebration of difference. The crew is, then, made up of all those who do not 'fit' martial masculinity. In both *Going Under* and *Down Periscope* they are selected precisely because it is believed they will fail as a submarine crew in order to fulfil the antagonists evil plan. For example, Admiral Malice orders The Mole to 'assemble me the worst crew ever. I want the dregs, the loonies, the dropouts, the burnouts, the lowest of the low, the scum of the earth.' The crews in *Going Under* and *Down Periscope* consist of those least likely to succeed because they are positioned as everything dominant masculinity expels in order to maintain its dominance. But the narrative works towards a resolution in favour of the seemingly powerless within the institutions and against the norms of dominant masculinity precisely through that which is excluded. It is this that makes up the comic inversion of the social norms. In *Going Under* the officers are: Quizby (Tyrone Granderson Jones), a communications officer dumbstruck with nerves, Officer Sonar (Elmarie Wendel), a cardigan wearing elder woman, Turbo (Dennis Redfield), an engineer with no nuclear submarine experience, Apple (Chris Demetral), a teenage computer whiz-kid. The Navigation Officer is a New York cab driver who has, therefore, at least had 'combat experience.' This disparate group resists the regulations imposed on them by the institution. They continually show disinterest in pep talks, ignore orders and undermine the authority of both Banner and Michaels.

In *Down Periscope* the crew of the *Substandard* behaves in a similar fashion, for example when they ignore Banner's call to attention and continue their casual conversation. This film constructs its crew along similar lines to *Going Under*, for example, the failed Quarterback Jefferson "RJ" Jackson (Duane Martin) and Brad Stepanak (Bradford Tatum), a rebellious dropout who sees the assignment as a chance to sunbathe. (Stepanak describes himself to Dodge as a 'detriment to the entire operation, a total morale crusher.') All of these figures disrupt masculine identity in ways that pertain to both social norms and to genre conventions.

The disruption of norms that stems from these deviant crews and their (mis)use of uniform is also significant here. Clothing is a mark of gender identity, and this is particularly significant in terms of the power and control associated with masculine figures and institutions of authority; 'Clothing is associated with gender, serving as an outward mark of difference, of a fundamental attribute of the wearer's identity.'<sup>40</sup> These points are particularly salient in relation to the military uniform. Resistance to the oppression of uniform functions as comic disruption: 'Men's clothing, then, came to symbolise male devotion to the principles of duty, renunciation, and self-control.'<sup>41</sup> The examples discussed below show how resistance to uniform satirises patriarchal dress codes and the principles they stand for. Holden in *Operation Petticoat* is not only mocked for his pristine uniform, but also for his tailor-made versions of submariners clothing. His tailored clothing marks him out as not being the right type of masculinity to serve on the submarine. In *Down Periscope*, the officers of the *Stingray* variously wear sunglasses, a Hawaiian shirt, black vests and leather trousers

The *Substandard's* officers are also dressed unconventionally, and the only time they wear any type of uniform is during Banner's football play, when they all appear in gridiron shirts, shoulder-pads, helmets and anti-glare stripe. This uniform functions to emphasise the group as a team despite their difference, a team that succeeds against the corrupt figures of the powerful and hierarchical military institution. The resistance to and play with uniform is a resistance to forms of control that seek to exclude difference. Furthermore, those forms of control are utilised by the excluded in a mocking satire of sports fantasy associated with the masculinity that exercises both control and exclusion. The military uniform works to mask difference behind its uniformity, to maintain hierarchy and power within its ranks and to sustain power relations attached to particular forms of identity through exclusion of those who do not bear the mark of identity. In this way, masculine domination associated with the regulation of particular

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<sup>40</sup> A. Kuhn, *Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality*, London: Routledge, 1985, p. 53.

<sup>41</sup> Stam, 1989, p. 193.

forms of dress is overturned through the emphasis on resistance and comic disruption within these films.

A further way in which the comic form of submarine film can be seen to disrupt relations of power is in terms of language and behaviour:

as a genre, comedy is often concerned with the lives of 'ordinary' classes and people, and thus with what is, from a ruling-class point of view, the *indecorum* of the speech, behaviour, actions and manners of those of a lower social rank.<sup>42</sup>

This is particularly significant in terms of the military as an institution of masculine domination, since it is the language of the military that is disrupted by comedy. Both crews in the 1990s comedies laugh derisively, ignore orders, and consistently undermine figures of authority such as Michaels and Pascal. In addition, orders and communications are consistently misheard or used to provide innuendo that mock the regulation that those orders seek to impose. This does not happen only to authority figures identified as ridiculous. In *Going Under*, Banner's order 'Prepare to launch.' is taken by the crew as an opportunity to prepare to lunch.

Comic disruption of military order through sexual innuendo is also significant in *Going Under* and *Down Periscope*. In the former, submarine and military terminology become sexual terms in the initial standoff between Banner and Michaels: 'I'm gonna lick you.' 'You'll blow it.' '...hard to swallow...going down.' In the latter, Lake's presence on-board the *Stingray* causes much sniggering when Dodge intones about how this will 'make things hard' and how they will have to take care how they 'handle themselves'. These instances of innuendo can be seen as examples of comic disruption that take on the 'privileging of the lower bodily stratum' associated with carnival. A further example of this occurs when Buckman breaks wind and chokes everyone during 'silent running'. This particular form of disruption points to the final way in which comedy functions in relation to gender, and this is concerned with specific instances of genre parody.

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<sup>42</sup> Stam, 1989, pp. 85-6.

Genre comedy is dependent on and draws on audience familiarity with genre conventions. However, this is not simple a matter of straightforward genre parody. Blake Edwards' genre comedy tends to 'invoke other genres... but like *Help!* they are comedies that rely on other genres to provide a sense of form for very loose structures.'<sup>43</sup> The comic may in itself derive from the combination and reference of genres. *Operation Petticoat* combines war and romantic comedy for its laughs, and the inclusion of Michael Winslow as a reporter complete with his trademark sound effects in *Going Under* references the *Police Academy* series.

Genre parody specifically depends on laughter being 'consistently produced, ...by gags and funny lines which specifically use as their raw material the conventions of the genre involved.'<sup>44</sup> This in itself has implications for the representation of masculinity, particularly as it relates to gender relations in terms of power:

parody appropriates an existing discourse for its own ends, it is particularly well suited to the needs of the powerless precisely because it *assumes* the force of the dominant discourse only to deploy that force, through a kind of artistic jujitsu, *against* domination.<sup>45</sup>

Genre parody works through comic exaggeration of those norms on which genres depend. In the submarine film, the familiar conventions of silent running and sonar operation are the raw material for gags and one liners. In *Going Under*, Quizby removes his trainers in response to the order for silent running. *Down Periscope* takes the specific conventions of the sonar to the extreme through comic exaggeration; Seaman 'Sonar' Lovacelli (Harland Williams) has extraordinary hearing and is able to imitate the sound of whales. In the first instance, he is able to tell it is exactly '45 cents' that has been dropped on the opposing submarine. Secondly, his whale noises are dispersed through the water in order to fool the sonar operators on the *Orlando*, which allows them to evade detection.

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<sup>43</sup> Paul, 1994, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> Paul, 1994, pp.18-19.

<sup>45</sup> Stam, 1989, p. 227-8.

While the misfits described above may work against the norms used to define the crew of the submarine, a figure such as Howard (Harry Dean Stanton) works within those norms to parody them. Howard is the Chief whose dour disposition and preference for the engines over people references the 'Chief' familiar from submarine films, particularly Johann 'the ghost' (Erwin Leder) from *Das Boot*.

In *Going Under*, the capabilities and characteristics of the submarine itself parody those of submarines in the genre film. The stealth capabilities of the *Substandard* amount to a painted on eye and grinning mouth of a whale that appear every time the button for the 'Sonic Dispersion System' is pressed. The *Substandard* is fundamentally a mockery of everything a high tech vessel is supposed to be, right down to the '57 Chevy' welded in the hull in order to fill 'a hole the size of a '57 Chevy.'

### Conclusions.

Genre parody creates the arena in which the films operate their inversion of norms associated with particular genres. In particular, these last instances of genre parody illustrate where the powerless triumph over the powerful. They also emphasise that the resonance of that triumph cannot be over-looked in a drive to subordinate disruption under narrative resolution. This is because the comic disruption depends for its function on a degree of correspondence between the fictional institutions that are mocked and the audience conceptions of their real life counter parts.

The comic disruption of the masculine coded as feminine or as other subject excluded from hegemonic masculinity should therefore be seen not as

...the castration of the male... [but as] comic hyperboles which suggest that the adjustments demanded of the male are not traumatising, merely a passing phase on the way to some better, more liberating balance, and not the absolute overthrow of all gender specificity.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Babington & Evans, 1989, p. 15. See also T. O. Lent, 'Romantic Love and Friendship: The Redefinition of Gender Relations in Screwball Comedy', in K. B. Karnick & H. Jenkins, (Eds), 1995, pp. 314-331.

In what ways and to what extent is order restored through the restoration of masculinity? Where masculinity is transformed by that disruption, then the disruption does not simply vanish under the pressure of narrative resolution. *Down Periscope* particularly can be seen as refusing to give up the ground made in favour of the disparate group who challenge the status quo. Dodge declines his promotion and the offer of a 'proper crew' because, as he puts it, 'I would not be in line for such a promotion without the help of my present crew.'

This chapter has proposed an argument that goes against the tendency to dismiss comic disruptions as only comedy and therefore only temporary. The emphasis on specific reading strategies and the importance of genre recognition refutes the suggestion that comedy reaffirms dominant cultural/social values, particularly in terms of gender as argued by Purdie:

...[Comedy] is therefore very unlikely radically to challenge an Audience's perceptions, and we are all of us deeply saturated with a constructed 'knowledge' of masculine dominance which is thus deeply implicated in our performance of Symbolic competence.<sup>47</sup>

This chapter has shown that, on the contrary masculine space of the submarine, unstable to begin with, could be open to transformations that do not simply work towards expanding the hegemonic processes of masculine domination. To conclude here: 'Thus it is that within ideology, within the imaginary resolution of the fissures in old forms of thought and behaviour, the emergence of the new can be glimpsed.'<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> S. Purdie, *Comedy: The Mastery of Discourse*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, pp. 5 & 147.

<sup>48</sup> Ryan & Kellner, 1998, pp. 166-7.

### 10] Conclusions.

There are a number of conclusions about hegemonic masculinity and submarine films that can be drawn from this thesis. The process of research, including viewing the films, reading and discussing relevant material and the writing of the thesis have together thrown up many thoughts and conclusions, some unexpected, about myself, masculinity, gender studies and submarine films. The research commenced with an assumption that the re-reading of familiar and fondly remembered boyhood films would reveal them to be laden with sexual symbols and undercurrents that were vigorously repressed or denied by the narratives. While the theoretical issues raised in the argument suggest that this reading is always possible, the argument here has shown that this is not necessarily the most productive way to address submarine masculinity. Instead, the analysis of issues in the films and the discussion of relevant theoretical arguments have shown that submarine masculinity invariably revolves around ordinary men just getting on with it. The tag line for *U-571* is 'Heroes are ordinary men who do extraordinary things in extraordinary times.' This claim could be applied to the men and women of differing social status and background in all types of submarine film.

However, there are a number of specific points that need to be made concerning the themes and issues that have been discussed in the course of this thesis. Furthermore, these points form the basis for the conclusions about the processes of hegemonic masculinity. In the first case, there is a problem with the notion of hegemonic masculinity itself. While it is straightforward to argue that social relations and institutions reproduce masculine hegemony, it does not necessarily follow that there is a hegemonic masculinity. For Connell, hegemonic masculinity is a singular, coherent



masculinity, always in a position of power in relation to women and other masculinities. This thesis has shown that representations of masculinity do not necessarily consistently endorse those characteristics associated with the hegemonic masculinity at any one time. The different struggles around the issues that arise in the thematic concerns of the submarine narrative frequently sanction characteristics of subordinated masculinities or femininity.

Overall, the argument has shown where there are problems with the notion of hegemonic masculinity. There are too many differences and power shifts within hegemonic masculinity for it to be consistently hegemonic. In addition, that singular masculinity in fact consists of too many subordinated masculinities for it to be identified as coherent, unified and stable. Once this so-called singular, hegemonic masculinity has undergone the changes brought about by the concessions it has to make to subordinate masculinities, it becomes incoherent and contradictory. The discussion of films such as *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* has shown that popular film does not necessarily privilege one form of masculinity over other. Rather, the different types of submarine film are examples of the way film stresses the combination of differences within masculinity. These differences are not necessarily organised in terms of hierarchical differences. Moreover, the submarine and underwater adventure film emphasise difference articulated to the group rather than to the individual.

The thesis has also shown where transitions within masculinity can be seen through the historical processes that are intrinsic to hegemonic masculinity. In this way it is quite straightforward to show where these transitions have taken place. For example,

the 1940s transition from a civilian to combat masculinity, and the 1950s transition from individualism to team work. However, while these transitions may indicate preferred versions of masculinity, there is no guarantee that this preferred masculinity would become or remain hegemonic. In addition, the idea of a transition from civilian to combat masculinity in the 1940s also has further implications for hegemonic masculinity. It can be argued that this process of transition does not indicate the hegemony of combat masculinity but instead shows that masculinity is inherently contradictory. The process is therefore not one of transition but one of struggle between forces. These films are not about figures such as Connors and Stewart in *Crash Dive* putting aside family and romance in favour of combat. Rather, this process indicates the ways that forces such as the family, work, leisure, and friendships give rise to contradictions within masculinity. Moreover, these forces may have different levels of saliency in different situations, situations that involve continually shifting relations of power. These different situations mean that subordinated masculinities and hegemonic masculinity cannot be seen as always occupying the same positions in relations of power. It is insufficient to claim therefore that 'the crucial difference between hegemonic masculinity and other masculinities is not the control of women, but the control of other men.'<sup>1</sup> In other words, there are situations where hegemonic masculinity may become subordinate to other masculinities and femininity. This is not a denial of structural inequalities within specific social systems. It simply means that relations of power are not determined simply by gender difference or type of masculinity/femininity. Overall, the thesis has not set out to reject outright feminist readings of masculinity in film. Neither has it tried to argue that 'hegemonic

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<sup>1</sup> M. Donaldson, 1993, p. 655.

masculinity' is actually misunderstood, under attack, historically and theoretically, from progressive positions aligned with femininity, ethnicity, sexuality and class. The point has been that to understand the function of hegemony in masculinity it is necessary to look at the anxieties faced by 'hegemonic masculinity'. This means examining those anxieties for the impact they have on masculinity, not just the impact they have on groups subordinate to 'dominant masculinity'. There are instances and processes when even dominant masculinity is subordinate to dominant masculinity, and even situations when it is subordinate to subordinate groups. These instances, processes and situations cannot be ignored.

This leads on to a further problem with the notion of hegemonic masculinity. Connell argues that to say a particular form of masculinity is hegemonic means 'that its exaltation stabilises a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole.'<sup>2</sup> The conclusions from the discussion of the films indicate two ways in which hegemony needs to be qualified when it is applied to representations of masculinity in popular film. Firstly, popular film does not consistently exalt one particular form of masculinity, and there is no simple relation between representation and reception of any form of masculinity. Secondly, relations within masculinity do not consistently function in terms of dominance and oppression. Therefore, dominance and oppression cannot be seen as the only form of relations between so-called hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, neither is this the only form of relation between masculinity and femininity. For example, the discussion of romantic competition between men

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<sup>2</sup> R. Connell, 'An Iron man: The Body and Some Contradictions of hegemonic Masculinity', in M. Messner and D. Sabo, (Eds), *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*, Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1990, p. 94.

validates feminine sexuality through its recognition of female desire. The friendships between men, and the relationships with women are therefore one of the ways in which masculinity negotiates both continuity and change. Most significantly, these friendships and relationships are one of the ways women may desire rather than be oppressed by hegemonic masculinity.

The research into patterns and types of submarine film for this thesis does not show a developmental model of change in the submarine film from the 1950s to the 1990s. Neither is there any evidence of consistent or dramatic difference between types of submarine film. The submarine war film is not inherently conservative or reactionary in the ways that it negotiates dominant ideology, and submarine science fiction or adventure films are not consistently progressive. For example, submarine adventure films can include utopian notions of gender relations, while submarine war films can emphasise feminine sexual desire. In addition, it has been shown that there is not a necessary historical development from a top down to a consensual model of social interaction. Neither do later films necessarily privilege heterogeneity while earlier films exclude difference through the imposition of expert discourses.

This thesis has also indicated a number of areas that could be productive in terms of further research. For example, the number of submarine films released during the 1950s suggests that a historically discrete investigation into the context of the production process would be worthwhile. Further work in this specific period could initiate a more thorough investigation of the notion of hegemonic masculinity, particularly with regard to male trauma and adjustment to the post war society. This thesis has also shown that

further research into the underwater adventure film would be worthwhile. For example, the typical underwater adventure narrative could be related to work on the 1970s disaster film. In addition, as the bibliography indicates, there are a number of submarine films that are as yet unobtainable which in itself warrants further archival research.

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