

2011

That's My Dad in Action! Fatherhood and Masculinity in the Action Adventure Genre 1980-2000: Schwarzenegger and Stallone

Ryan Glyn Dench

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses>

Recommended Citation

Dench, Ryan Glyn, "That's My Dad in Action! Fatherhood and Masculinity in the Action Adventure Genre 1980-2000: Schwarzenegger and Stallone" (2011). *Digitized Theses*. 3650.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses/3650>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Special Collections at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digitized Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

That's My Dad in Action!

Fatherhood and Masculinity in the Action Adventure Genre 1980-2000:

Schwarzenegger and Stallone

(Spine Title: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Action Adventure)

(Thesis Format: Monograph)

by

Ryan Glyn Dench

Critical Studies in Global Film Cultures

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

The University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada

© Ryan Glyn Dench, 2011

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION

Supervisor

Dr. Christine Holmlund

Examiners

Dr. Joe Wlodarz

Dr. Constanza Burucua

Dr. Steven Bruhn

The thesis by

Ryan Glyn Dench

entitled:

That's My Dad in Action!

Fatherhood and Masculinity in the Action Adventure Genre 1980 – 2000:

Schwarzenegger and Stallone

is accepted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Date: _____

Chair of the Thesis Examination Board

Abstract

An analysis of recent Hollywood action adventure films starring Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger reveals that the presence or absence of fatherhood serves as a trope for representing the traditional and changing patriarchal ideology in the cultural, political, and economic uncertainty that has come to characterize life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By contextualizing my work through current gender and genre theory, in and considering shifts in contemporary domestic policies, socio-cultural tensions and anxieties surrounding masculinity and femininity, fatherhood and motherhood, I chart developments in the hard body action adventure genre. A close analysis of Stallone's and Schwarzenegger's performances as fathers from the 1980s through the 2000s reveal that fatherhood is hidden in the 1980s, flaunted and softened in the 1990s, and reconfigured in the 2000s along more traditional patriarchal lines. Of interest is the impact of melodrama on the hard bodied action film.

1980s, 1990s, 2000s, action adventure film, action hero, Arnold Schwarzenegger, domestic policies, fatherhood, hard-bodies, hegemonic masculinity, Hollywood, masculinity, melodrama, Sylvester Stallone, social change.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible had it not been for the guidance and help of several individuals:

First and foremost I would like to thank my thesis adviser, Dr. Christine Holmlund, whose insight, advice, and guidance from the preliminary stages to completion have been vital. I extend my deepest gratitude for her support and encouragement throughout the entire process of writing this dissertation.

Dr. Constanza Burucua, for her generous feedback during the writing stages and insightful suggestions for further research.

My thesis examination board, Dr. Joe Wlodarz, Dr. Constanza Burucua and Dr. Steven Bruhn, for their critical feedback and productive suggestions for revisions.

The faculty and staff of the Film Department of the University of Western Ontario, in particular Jennifer Tramble and Christopher Gittings, for their helpful and enthusiastic responses to my many queries.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother Carol Dench and father Phil Dench for their support, guidance, and help getting me to this stage of my life. Also thanks to Joanne and Steve Kimber for their kind words of wisdom and for their time and dedication to reading and re-reading this work.

Table of Contents

Certificate of Examination	ii
Abstract (and keywords)	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
Introduction	1
Chapter One:	18
<i>The (Hidden) Fathers of Action:</i>	
Stallone and Schwarzenegger as Fathers in 1980s Hollywood Cinema	
Chapter Two:	54
<i>Invasion of the Hard-Body Snatchers:</i>	
A Focus on Soft Fathers in 1990s Action	
Chapter Three:	88
<i>Passing the Torch of Patriarchy:</i>	
Tough Fathers in 2000s Action	
Conclusion:	107
<i>I'll Be Back? The Future of Fatherhood</i>	
Works Cited	114
Filmography	128
Curriculum Vitae	135

Introduction

There is an unconscious aspect in politics, where we are looking for a hero who will turn out to be a father figure for the country.

- Preface to *Hard Bodies* (Jeffords 1993: 5-6)

In June 2006 *Best Life Magazine* printed its special issue on how to “Be a (Much) Better Father”. On the front cover James Marsden, star of the *X-Men* franchise (dir. Bryan Singer, 2000; dir. Bryan Singer, 2003; dir. Brett Ratner, 2006), stands with his hand on his young son’s shoulder stating: “before parenthood I was just going through the motions” surrounded by the titles, “build wealth for your family”, “create a legacy of fitness”, “raise them tough, smart and savvy”, and “19 essential skills every man must teach his son”. In the spirit of the American pioneers, a group of brave and strong individuals who carved out homes and settlements in the western frontier of the U.S. in the late 1700s-1800s, the role of father here, similarly, relates to teaching, protecting, and providing for a family whilst being physically, mentally, and spiritually strong. This magazine demonstrates how America still wants to believe in the perfect father model through the traditional model of fatherhood.

Thinking back to my childhood, as I sat upon my father’s shoulders, I recall looking down upon the world from his height (he is over 6 feet tall), and feeling an overwhelming sensation of security, strength, and control. I also recall school yard banter on who had the tallest or most muscular dad, whose dad was tougher, or whose dad had the better job, now knowingly reflecting the same ideals as *Best Life*. The idea of a father is complex; he can also be inept, he can neglect, and yet, from the readings of *Best Life* and noting my childhood memories, one seems to continually fall back on positive nostalgic notions of toughness, power, individualism, and leadership.

Fatherhood is one of the most basic masculine roles, often relating to primitive desires and biological capacity. It is the one key element potential that men share. Within Western

culture, the father figure is associated with visions of authority (Chapman and Rutherford 1988: 272). As others do, Thomas Lacquer connects authority to patriarchy: “man-as-father has been subsumed under the history of a pervasive patriarchy – the history of inheritance and legitimate descent, the history of public authority, and its transmission over generations” (1982: 155). He continues: “we lack a history of fatherhood, a silence which I regard as a sign of a more systematic pathology in our understanding of what being a man and being a father entail” (Ibid.), suggesting that predetermined notions about the role of fatherhood in society have blinkered our vision of the male and narrowed our understanding of what being a father entails. We need to reconfigure our view of fatherhood to accommodate current social and political contexts.

Although a dated view, fatherhood is also traditionally seen as complementary to motherhood, thus setting in place gendered roles. For example, a father is generally expected to work outside the home and provide for the family, while the mother is often seen as the main caregiver within the home. “Soft feelings like empathy, nurturing, and gentleness are coded as feminine” (Rutherford 1992: 70) while, masculinity is associated with “strength, heroism, virility, and violence” (Gates 2006: 29). However, the roles of mother and father are no longer so basic, as Philippa Gates notes emotional vulnerability, parental affection, and romantic tendencies (usually associated with femininity) are now attached to the modern man. For males to be accepted as fathers within modern contemporary society, men must adopt softer attributes. Anthony Clare concurs: “there is a role for men as fathers ... they can, through the process of becoming fathers, develop empathy, altruism, sensitivity, and emotional expressiveness” (2000: 191). Mark Gallagher further comments: “Monolithic prescriptions for ideal masculinity no longer exist, having been replaced by a range of templates through which men define themselves apart from and in relation to women and the social world: romantic partner, husband, father, care-giver, warrior, patriot, crusader,

hardbody, stud, playboy, artist, businessman, and so forth, to name only a few of the preferred adult male roles” (2006: 4). Fathers and men no longer need simply to have the biggest muscles, be the tallest, or have the best job to be real men. Rather today more men adopt the role of primary caregiver while many women have become breadwinners.

The increase in women's independence and employment altered familial demographics and thus acted as a “catalyst for the increased interest, through the 1990s, in understanding men and fatherhood” (Bruzzi 2005: 154). In response to changing definitions of what it is to be a man, and what it means to be a father, Hollywood has produced a multitude of films that feature important father figures. However, this is an issue rarely discussed by critics. In 2005, Stella Bruzzi's book *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Postwar Hollywood* pointed out that the father is one of the central figures of Hollywood narrative, yet she claims to have written the first book to examine cinematic representations of the father. That social structures have newly shifted, accounts at least in part for the earlier lack of such studies.

In using studies on masculinity and studies on cinematic fatherhood, I aim to expand further the study of fatherhood in contemporary American cinema. In particular, I look towards a typically masculine field: the action adventure genre and two hypermasculine actors typically associated with that genre: Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone. Both actors have been examined in great detail within the media and have occasionally been looked upon as inspiring father figures¹. For example *People Magazine* in 1982 depicted Stallone, donning his Rocky attire, holding a child. Again in 1985 *People Magazine* placed Stallone on the front cover under the title “Sly's Silent Son”, which followed with an article

¹ Although this is not a star study, it is important to point out Schwarzenegger's 2011 ‘Love Child’ scandal where he is reported to have fathered a child to his housekeeper. This negative coverage in the media could affect his success in a future career as an aspiring on-screen father.

discussing him dealing with the stresses of his son having autism. In 1990 *GQ Magazine* also pasted Schwarzenegger on the front cover under the title “Arnold Fit for Fatherhood”. However, even with this focus on fatherhood within the media, their film’s narratives which deal with fatherhood are scarcely discussed.²

Addressing a relatively new dimension to the action adventure genre, the role of fatherhood, I undertake a journey through challenging water. In order to contextualize Hollywood’s portrayal of the father within a broader framework, I approached the father theoretically through masculinity. However, the father has been marginalized by discussions of masculinity in film because of his symbolic significance to masculinity as the de-eroticized ideal. This stands in direct opposition to the dominant body-centered work undertaken in film’s eroticization of the male form. Steve Neale’s essay, “Masculinity as Spectacle”, was successful in examining masculinity in cinema, but due to his focus on the body, grounding his work on eroticism and display, he muted the role of fathers (in Cohan and Hawk 1993: 9-21). Mulvey’s influential work “Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema” led critics like Neale to focus on the gender dynamics in cinema through concepts of vulnerability, image, and the deflection of the erotic gaze (See Mulvey 2004). Likewise, Yvonne Tasker and Susan Jeffords’ contribution to the action genre in terms of masculinity, particularly in terms of how Stallone and Schwarzenegger have been centered on the body, muscle, and ‘hardness’ (Tasker 1993b, Jeffords 1993b). Tasker also comments that the homoeroticism in the genre leads to “a refusal, or a failure, of the role of the father” (1993b: 127). Therefore, by not being an eroticized role, and therefore not being defined through his body, Bruzzi argues this develops a problematic situation, thus leading the father to be absent in cinema (2005: viii).

² Critics well known for their discussion of Stallone and Schwarzenegger as action stars, and their role of fatherhood in the 1990s but not the 1980s or 2000s include Tasker (1993b, 2004), Jeffords (1993b), Gallagher (2006), Gates (2006), and Lichtenfeld (2004), to name only a few.

Scholars have assessed the action adventure genre in terms of gender, in particular, masculinity, and the associated visual and homosexual connotations. They have also contextualized the genre within a historical framework, especially with regard to the US foreign policy (See Holmlund 1990: online). In order to approach this topic from a different angle I will be focusing on questions of U.S. domestic policies and social change, in particular social development, behaviors, and relations. I will focus more on how representations of fatherhood are re-workings in terms of what was going on domestically and in terms of social changes.

Why Study Schwarzenegger and Stallone

Hollywood has frequently flaunted muscular men on the big screen but, as Richard Dyer points out: “until the 1980s, it was rare to see a white man semi-naked in popular fictions” (1997: 145). This focus on the hard body, in regard to the action film, partly stemmed from the potent and dramatic effect of the Vietnam War on masculinity in society. Unlike World War I, which “offered a resolution of the turn of the century crisis of masculinity as men had an occasion to prove their manliness through wartime fighting and patriotism” (Gates 2006: 129), and World War II which once again, following the Depression years, offered an opportunity for men to prove their masculinity through battle, the Vietnam War led society to question its men. This was due to the U.S. not being victorious. The 1980s action film offered a hero who symbolically refought – and won.

By fighting on-screen, and winning, many 1980s action films “offered a remasculinization of America”³ (Jeffords 1989: 168)⁴. Furthermore, the impact of second-

³ This will be further explored in Chapter One. It is placed here for historical context.

⁴ Films often discussed in this context are Stallone's *Rambo First Blood Part II* (dir. George P. Cosmatos, 1985). For more information see Jeffords 1989 and Gates 2006: 125-145.

wave feminism⁵ had “thrown social conceptions of masculinity into flux by the 1980s and this led to conflicting conceptions of positive masculinity in the media” (Kimmel and Aronson 2004: 217). Television shows such as *Magnum P.I.* (1980-1988) gained popularity and embodied a man who was “a somewhat feminized type of masculinity: He was sensitive, romantic, and fashion conscious” (Ibid.). Denying the failure of the Vietnam War, and representing a backlash against the feminization of society, scantily clad action men showed that “whites – and men – are where they are socially by virtue of biological, that is, bodily superiority. The sight of the body can be a kind of proof” (Dyer 1997: 147). Through the hard body and their heroic actions the action star masked society’s struggle to reassert a traditional masculinity through his excessive representation of individualism, strength, sheer determination, and toughness.

A range of stars cropped up in the 1980s including Jean Claude Van Damme (*Bloodsport* [dir. Newt Arnold, 1988], *Cyborg* [dir. Albert Pyun, 1989], *Kickboxer* [dir. Mark DiSalle and David Worth, 1989]), Dolph Lundgren (*Rocky IV* [dir. Sylvester Stallone, 1985], *Masters of the Universe* [dir. Gary Goddard, 1987], *The Punisher* [dir. Mark Goldblatt, 1989]), Bruce Willis (*Die Hard* [dir. John McTiernan, 1988]), and Hulk Hogan (*Rocky III* [dir. Sylvester Stallone, 1982]). In the 1990s many of these stars made films where they would adopt the role of a protective (and patriarchal) hypermasculine father figure such as Van Damme’s *Nowhere to Run* (dir. Robert Harmon, 1993) and *Sudden Death* (dir. Peter Hyams, 1995), Hogan’s *Suburban Commando* (dir. Burt Kennedy, 1991) and *Mr. Nanny* (dir. Michael Gottlieb, 1993), and Willis’s *Die Hard 2* (dir. Renny Harlin, 1990) and *Die Hard: With a Vengeance* (dir. John McTiernan, 1995). However, Tasker maintains that Stallone and Schwarzenegger “provided the most publicised, most visible image of the figure of the

⁵ The Watergate scandal, the civil rights movement, social unrest and other political scandals undermined traditional images of masculinity too.

muscular male hero who had come to dominate the American action cinema of the 1980s” (1993b: 1). Whilst remaining loyal to Stallone and Schwarzenegger throughout their careers in the 1990s and 2000s, a charted analysis of the action adventure genre is achieved, tracking influences to the genre from domestic U.S. policies and social change, as the stars attempt to uphold the status they attained in the 1980s.

Movie and television stars have always been reference points for society: “it is important to talk about stars not as an abstract category but as a real-world phenomenon that has consequences for everyday thoughts and decisions and actions” (Ndalianis and Henry 2002: 23). Stallone and Schwarzenegger display “fitness, power, strength, excellence, uniqueness, success, influence” and so instill these qualities as desirable amongst the common folk of America (Ibid.: 30). Both forged careers with drive and determination – Stallone had a lower class upbringing, Schwarzenegger was an immigrant – and so both also embody the American dream. Stallone became one of the highest paid actors of the 1980s while Schwarzenegger began commanding up to \$25 million per film in the 1980s and 1990s. The two have also been explored extensively in public and private realms and their stardom, more so than Van Damme’s, Willis’s or Lundgren’s, is still of interest within Hollywood today. Their on-screen characters are iconic, having seen numerous returns, witness *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (dir. Jonathan Mostow, 2003), *Rocky Balboa* (dir. Sylvester Stallone, 2006), and *Rambo* (dir. Sylvester Stallone, 2008). The Terminator, Rocky, and Rambo have all made their way into the hearts and minds of Americans. Ronald Reagan famously mentioned Rambo in one of his presidential speeches while Schwarzenegger makes motivational speeches of his own to American society. While still acting, both remain in the news, often mentioned in print and are also seen in other media outlets.

Action Adventure Genre

Genre plays an important role in Stallone and Schwarzenegger's characterization. The term comes from the French word "genre" and means type or kind. It is, as a result, difficult to say clearly what genre is or is not as the term is subjective. Genre underpins many fields of cultural endeavor – literature, film, painting, dance, music, and so on. Christine Gledhill comments: "genre is first and foremost a boundary phenomenon" (2000: 221), suggesting the term's relation to definition, labeling, and naming of films at the outset. Definitions and discussion of genre in the cinema have tended to focus on mainstream, commercial films in general, and Hollywood films in particular. Genres can be seen as providing a disciplined framework for directors to work within whilst still "ensuring curbs on creative indulgence and guaranteeing that the cinema kept in touch with its mass public" (Ryall 1998: 327). Thus, a popular view is that "a genre approach provides the most effective means for understanding, analyzing, and appreciating the Hollywood cinema" (Schatz 1981: vii). Thomas Schatz claims that essentially all movies are "generated by a collective production system which honors certain narrative traditions in designing for a mass market" (Ibid.). This generic framework, he argues, provides a proven formula for each specific genre which allows producers to "economize and systemize production" (Ibid.: viii). Genre labeling recognizes the relationships of audiences with films, relationships which have affected the narratives and production practices of each individual film genre.

Nonetheless – and importantly – "many Hollywood films – and many Hollywood genres – are hybrid and multi-generic" (Neale 2000: 51). The action adventure genre is typically associated with Schwarzenegger and Stallone. Yet, as I will show, other genres also shape their films: they are often, as Neale maintains is true of Hollywood genres, multi-generic, hybrid. Barna William Donovan concurs with reading the action film as multi-generic and hybrid: "the genre itself is so chameleon-like. The action film colonizes several

genres, incorporating archetypes and iconography from films ranging the spectrum from science fiction to horror to comedy” (2010: xvii). In Stallone’s case, in particular, though in some ways in Schwarzenegger’s films as well, melodrama is key. In what follows therefore I will first describe the core characteristics of the action adventure genre or as Jose Arroyo would say, *mode*⁶, and then gloss the chief components of melodrama. The purpose of the study of genre is to highlight how the spectacle of the action adventure genre, presented through excessiveness in melodrama, has a thematic significance of fatherhood that, in the 1980s especially, was overlooked and hidden.

Arroyo defines the action/spectacle film as “one not easily contained within strictly defined categories of genre” (2000: 1). The problems of applying traditional concepts of genre to contemporary action/spectacle become evident when we question how the very existence of such cinema might require a rethinking of what film art is and can be. The problem with using the generic formula to categorize films was that, as Neale concurs, many Hollywood films are hybrid and multi-generic. I will question, rather than assume, what cinema is and consciously examine the appropriate modes to discover their intention of understanding. Melodrama is characterized by a lack of clarifying boundaries, but this works in my favor as I apply it to the action adventure film, a genre not typically associated with melodramatic techniques due to its portrayal of hypermasculine male characters. Rick Altman comments that “[g]enre mixing is first a discursive problem” and that “our notion that genres are more or less mixed in the films of any given period or director derives heavily from the way in which those films have been described, categorized, and labeled” (2003: 123). Boundaries are an issue in any discussion of genre and Schatz’ idea of a formula to compare and contrast films within the same category works in a positive way when analyzing cinema.

⁶ Jose Arroyo argues that the aesthetics of action/spectacle is “the dominant mode of contemporary Hollywood film-making” (2000: 1).

The problem with defining the action movie as a genre lies in current definitions. As Neale defines the genre today with reference to contemporary film series:

The term “action adventure” is nowadays mainly used to describe what was perceived in the 1980s and 1990s to be a new and dominant trend in Hollywood’s output, a trend exemplified by the *Alien* films (1979, 1986, 1993), the *Indiana Jones* films (1981, 1990, 1993) the *Rambo* films (1982, 1985, 1988), the *Die Hard* films (1988, 1990, 1995) and the *Terminator* films (1984, 1991). (2000: 52)

The dominant trend Neale refers to includes a series of obvious characteristics: “a propensity for spectacular physical action, a narrative structure involving fights, chaos and explosions, and in addition to the deployment of the state-of-the-art special effects, an emphasis in performance on athletic feats and stunts” (Ibid.). By defining the action adventure genre through particular films and particular characteristics, Neale is adhering to the proven formula Schatz identifies. However, according to this logic, any aspect of an individual film which lies beyond the boundary of this formula ironically creates a questioning of the concept of genre itself. If, by including characteristics which are not included in his list, what does the action film become subjectified to? Hence why Arroyo’s understanding of the action as a mode will be a significant catalyst throughout my work.

Dyer concentrates instead on the racial and gender dynamics of action adventure, claiming the action movie is aligned with “straight white men” (2000: 18). This is a comment many critics have made. Tasker frames action cinema in terms of spectacular bodies that are primarily white and male, while Jeffords studies Hollywood white hard bodies in the Reagan Era. Thus by focusing primarily on the visual in order to define the action adventure genre, these critics are making the spectacle the reason to watch, whilst the action becomes the mode in which they perform. Nevertheless, the physical impact the films have on spectators is, perhaps, key to understanding this genre. Dyer notes: “Extreme sensation is represented as experienced, not within the body, but in the body’s contact with the world, its rush, its

expansiveness, its physical stress, and challenge” (2000: 18). For him this sensational connection to the world represents the sensational melodramatic side of action. The entertainment edge to the action movie, where “we abandon ourselves to the illusion” (Ibid.: 20), demonstrates the significance of the audience in predetermining how an action movie meets expectation. He claims that: “to go to an action movie is to sink back in the seat and say ‘show me a good time’” (Ibid.). Tasker similarly approaches the genre of action adventure from the reaction of the audience, arguing that the contemporary action audience expects to experience the exhilaration of cinema within a narrative context of a fictional world. For her there is more to the action adventure genre than it just being a “rollercoaster: all action and next to no plot” (Dyer 2000: 21). The spectacle of the genre - i.e. “the violence of the combat, the thrill of the chase, spectacular landscapes, or simply the pace of editing – has, if not a narrative, then a thematic significance that is too often overlooked” (Tasker 2004: 3). This method of communicating significance is similar to what happens in melodrama. By concentrating on the world of the movie - the fictional sphere in which the action hero flaunts his hard body and displays his fights - we can see that: “like action, melodrama is characterized by the displacement of meaning onto *mise-en-scène*. And to the extent that action is a mode, it is clearly a melodramatic one” (Tasker 2004: 4).

Aligning to Arroyo’s definition, the action adventure is a genre whose mode of action is spectacle: its only purpose is entertainment. Therefore an action movie with only spectacle would be hollow: a hail of bullets and blood exploding in to the arena for everyone to see but no-one to feel. Engaging with melodrama, a mode characterized by sensational situations creates unity, coherence, and logic. Melodrama drives the narrative forward, giving the audience a sense of temporal and spatial awareness. With the marriage of melodrama to the spectacle of action, the action movie now becomes valued, it becomes worth something to the

characters and thus to the audience. It allows a field for fatherhood to be explored within and appreciated.

Melodrama

Melodrama too has been variously defined over the years. Gates maintains that melodrama is most often associated with “films of pathos and heightened emotionality including the woman’s film and family melodramas” (2001: 60). However, as Ben Singer states in his discussion of the serial queen melodrama⁷ of the 1920s starring female heroes, melodrama was initially a term used by the industry to describe films with “action, thrilling sensationalism, and physical violence” (1990: 95). Neale also argues that during the Classical Hollywood period, specifically between 1938 and 1960, the film industry originally used the term “melodrama” not for describing the films as directed at female audiences, but for “war films, adventure films, horror films, and thrillers, genres traditionally thought of as, if anything, ‘male’” (1993: 69). Although the term does have a pre-cinematic referent in Victorian theatre, the redefinition of the term “melodrama” to refer to films as female occurred when critics revisited films from the 1940s and 1950s: hence the current feminist definition of the term is a “misnomer” (Jacobs 1993: 122).

Crucially, melodrama is less frequently viewed as a singular genre than action adventure is. Gledhill stresses that:

Crucial to the development of the modern genre system and to understanding the shifting borders between high and mass culture is the rise in the nineteenth century of melodrama. Most contemporary accounts of melodrama begin with its “notoriously” amorphous lack of distinctive boundaries. (2000: 222)

⁷ Usually involving a damsel in distress, or persecuted maiden, the narrative develops as a hero dashes to her rescue. In film Singer has contested the idea that “serial-queen melodramas” were male fantasies and has observed that they were marketed heavily at women. For more information see Singer 2001: 223-261.

Often, in fact, melodrama is considered as a style or a mode. Altman's observations support Gledhill's comments. The Genres List that he signals is a "restrictive menu of only 14 "main" genres" (Altman 2003: 125). The list includes action adventure but "neither melodrama, romance nor the gangster film" (Ibid.), confirming that melodrama is not a genre in itself but constitutes the action genre when fused with action.

Thomas Elsaesser similarly concludes that melodrama first and foremost serves as a mode of experience by having a "truth and life of its own" (1987: 49). He claims that producers who adopted melodramatic techniques, "could put the finger on the texture of their social and human material while still being free to shape this material" (Ibid.). He thus argues that melodrama allows a freedom only contained within the realm of what is accepted as truth and/or reality. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith similarly maintains that "the basic conventions of the melodrama are those of realism" (1987: 74), balancing the superfluous nature of action. Although melodrama is marked by a highly expressive *mise-en-scène* in which "color, gesture, costume, music, lighting, and camera-work all conspired to produce cinematic texts rich with suppressed meaning and significance" (Mercer and Shingler 2004: 2), it is not incompatible in several ways with action, but rather underpins and complements action. For Linda Williams, melodrama is the fundamental mode of popular cinema, centering as it does on action and pathos, lashing "narrativity and visual spectacle ... together to produce affective response" (2007: 56). Incorporating spectacular action with unity, coherence and logic, the action adventure genre creates an emotive field for the audience to engage in and respond to, ultimately acting as an effective means in which to depict representations of fatherhood.

In the action adventure genre melodrama is presented through the emotional and physical suffering the action hero undergoes in training, fighting, and relationships. Paul

Ramaeker comments: “[i]f in the family melodrama emotional suffering performs this ideological and dramatic function, in the action film it is physical suffering” (2011: Forthcoming). For Williams, the feeling of righteousness achieved through the sufferings of the innocent is what counts in melodrama (1998: 62). Stallone and Schwarzenegger’s films are primarily male melodramas revolving around the protagonists’ personal emotional struggles, to resist the expectations of spectacular action by incorporating their fathering roles and thus maintaining their identity. Ramaeker comments: “[d]iscussions of melodrama as a narrative mode in Hollywood cinema further highlight Stallone’s characteristic formal and stylistic features because melodrama is for him a generic touchstone” (2011: Forthcoming). In his review of *Cobra* (dir. George P. Cosmatos, 1986), Scott Higgins argues that the contemporary action film draws on all five elements which Singer defines as melodrama: “pathos, emotional intensification, moral polarization, sensationalism and what he calls “nonclassical narrative structure”” (2011: Forthcoming). Placing Higgins’ argument in relation to Stallone and Schwarzenegger’s action films, I agree that these films do contain these melodramatic elements. By “thriving on juxtaposing thrilling situations, emotional reversals, and dramatic happenstance” (Higgins 2011: Forthcoming), melodrama contrasts classical structure to create a coincidental, rather than plausible, plot. Incorporating the spectacular mode of action, with melodrama, serves to unify the film through Manichaeism,⁸ moral polarities, and visual spectacle.

Stallone and Schwarzenegger’s action films are cases in point. Men no longer felt their roles in society were secured; they were disoriented. Venting this disorientation by showcasing hypermasculine action films cum melodramas, Stallone’s and Schwarzenegger’s films ground their action heroes’ superior strength and buffed muscles in a representation of reality based on fatherhood and family life. Stallone’s and Schwarzenegger’s films, I will

⁸ A dualistic philosophy dividing the world between good and evil principles or regarding matter as intrinsically evil and mind as intrinsically good.

suggest, are melodramatic either thanks to the violent action set pieces they include and/or because they are saturated by pathos and emotionality. The visual excesses of the action and melodramatic modes through the *mise-en-scène* and music rupture the realism of the film. By accessing the melodramatic elements within the spectacular action mode, these films expose the relationship between society and the masculinity of the hero. I question why, in the 1980s, the role of fatherhood by the action hero was denied, masked, and rarely visited by critics. In each film I argue there is a juxtaposition of hyper-masculinity and emasculation, emotionality, and vulnerability.

Chapter Contents: 1980s - 1990s - 2000s

In Chapter 1 *The (Hidden) Fathers of Action*, I explore 1980s action cinema and how “macho fathers or fathers preoccupied with their bodies have, within Hollywood’s parameters, tended to be deficient paternal role models” (Bruzzi 2005: 132). Such estimations are due to body-building relating to individualism, toughness, and narcissism. Barbara Creed argues that due to excessive masculinity the paternal signifier is lost (qtd. in Cohan and Hark 1993: 232). The hero becomes a “simulacra of an exaggerated masculinity, the original completely lost to sight” (qtd. in Tasker 1993b: 128). I maintain that even with their depictions of excessive individualized masculinity however - in films like *Rocky III*, *Rocky IV*, *Over the Top* (dir. Menahem Golem, 1987), and *Commando* (dir. Mark L. Lester, 1985) - the caring, loving, and protecting of a child allows audiences to see further than Stallone and Schwarzenegger’s characters’ tough outer shell. The traditional view of these muscular men as hypermasculine is challenged by seeing them switching to an emotional and caring father.

In Chapter 2 *Invasion of the Hard Body Snatchers*, I discuss how the role of fatherhood results in the hypermasculine action hero becoming “gentler and kinder” in 1990s Hollywood (Jeffords 1993b: 173). I note social changes such as divorce rates increasing,

resulting in more single-parent families (headed by females). To note Bruzzi, and others, I argue this subsequently forced men to feel inadequate within the nuclear family, requiring Hollywood to project fathers as important, dignified, caring, and protective. This meant the individualized, unemotional 1980s action hero had to develop into a new style action hero. At the forefront of the narrative, as opposed to behind the fighting, this 1990s action hero would glorify patriarchy through spending time within the domestic space and in becoming a nurturing father. I examine Stallone's and Schwarzenegger's caring and emotional roles in *Rocky V* (dir. John G. Avildsen, 1990), *Kindergarten Cop* (dir. Ivan Reitman, 1990), *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (dir. James Cameron, 1991), *Last Action Hero* (dir. John McTiernan, 1993), *True Lies* (dir. James Cameron, 1994), and *Jingle All the Way* (dir. Brian Levant, 1996). Embodying contemporary social and political pressures, with reflection on the 1980s action adventure genre's integration of melodrama and spectacle, I address how both actors developed their characters to adhere to the 1990s where "the action-thriller of the late 1990s has in the main become obsessed with, not to say hysterical about, families" (Schneider 1999: 4).

In Chapter 3 *Passing the Torch of Patriarchy*, the 2000s Stallone and Schwarzenegger's films still showed fathering themes. The chapter supplies a close textual analysis on the return of the iconic action protagonists dominating *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* and *Rocky Balboa*. I firstly discuss, however, *The 6th Day* (dir. Roger Spottiswoode, 2000) and *Get Carter* (dir. Stephen Kay, 2000), owing to their sub-plots which demonstrate surrogate father-and-child relationships. These earlier 2000s films display the action hero returning to the conventions witnessed in Chapter 1, i.e. the films foreground the protagonist's fighter side rather than their father side. In these films, in contrast to the 1990s, the protagonist adopts the role as protector/mentor not nurturer/provider, resulting in a return to their individualized action heroics. This glorifies, as in the 1980s, the individualized male.

In continuing through the 2000s, I discuss the impact of 9/11 on the action film and Stephen Holden's idea that: "the events brought back a real belief in heroes because we've seen real heroes. And that's going to impact a lot of mainstream films" (qtd. in MacNeil 2002: online). In accordance with this I note Stallone and Schwarzenegger bringing back heroes of the past generation, Rocky Balboa first seen in 1976 returned in 2006, while the Terminator saw a return after twelve years off screen. These iconic protagonists now instil strength in their adolescent sons, Robert Balboa (Milo Ventimiglia), and John Connor (Nick Stahl). I note how their role as father is not so much about nurturing as it was in the 1990s, or 1980s. I argue the type of fathering is much like the leadership of the U.S. at the time, a leadership in what Michael A. Messner argues as stemming from: "the culture of fear [which] brought about a revived daddy state ... Only the [man] who really cares about us, and [is] also tough enough to stand up to evil, can be fully trusted to lead us in these dangerous times" (2007: 468). Instead, the fathers in these films become mentors, men who teach young men to be tough, brave, and strong like they are.

Chapter 1: The (Hidden) Fathers of Action:

Stallone and Schwarzenegger as Fathers in 1980s Hollywood Cinema

A man who doesn't spend time with his family can never be a real man...

- Don Corleone, *The Godfather* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1972)

As one can see from Don Corleone's statement, only a man who is integrated within a family sphere can be a real man. What then would he think of the individualized action men of the 1980s – in particular the characters played by Stallone and Schwarzenegger? Traditional understandings of the pair are set up by critics such as Tasker who maintain that, in the 1980s, Stallone and Schwarzenegger's on-screen characters "lack a place within the community for which they fight" (1993b: 77), whilst Gates concurs:

While these men may fight for the preservation of American society, they are not invited to be one of its normal members and, more often than not, the hero finds himself alone and/or living at the margins of society at the end of the narrative. Personal relationships – romantic, platonic, and familial – are potential points of vulnerability for the hero (2006: 34).

Not only are these characters *not* integrated into the communal or domestic sphere, they are set aside in an individualist cocoon. What Stallone and Schwarzenegger represent is a white, powerful, hegemonic masculinity. In gender studies, and those in particular of masculinity, many critics (Michael S. Kimmel, Amy Aronson, Susan Ehrlich Martin, Nancy C. Jurik, and more) align hegemonic masculinity with James Messerschmidt's definition: "hegemonic masculinity... emphasizes practices towards authority, control, independence, competitive individualism, aggressiveness, and capacity for violence" (1993: 82). The heightened significance on their physical muscular bodies associated with erotized ideology of the male form (Bruzzi 2005: xviii) means that their 1980s fathering roles are rarely discussed. By viewing the 1980s action hero as a father in *Rocky III*, *Rocky IV*, *Over the Top*, and *Commando*, I comprehend a fusion between the independent masculine hero and the sensitive loving father to create, perhaps, in the eyes of The Don, a real man.

The 1980s is a decade full of individualized “hard-bodied”⁹ action heroes. However, the 1980s saw great political changes determined by the new President (Ronald Reagan) who signaled a new focus on the family. Although divorced himself, and still the only divorced U.S. president, he supported family values even when elected to the governorship of California (1967-1975). The interest in family values in the 1980s stemmed from social changes such as divorce rates more than doubling between the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰ Now with more single parent households in the U.S., and with more women becoming breadwinners,¹¹ researchers identified a growing interest in the role of fathers: “tracking the father’s type of nurturing – caretaking behaviors and the scope of intensity of attitudes towards his children” (Mackey 1996: 137). Such studies were prominent because the nuclear family no longer served exclusively as the model for normalcy. As Wade C. Mackey notes: “even though quite capable of exhibiting an egalitarian parenting quotient parallel to mothers, [fathers] had nurturing quotients that were lower than mothers” (1996: 138). This shows that the father as nurturer is not held in high-regard.

Even so, as women’s employment rates still continued to rise, more fathers became stay-at-home dads. The liberal revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, where women demanded that men undertook more of the childcare/more around the home, were factors that allowed 1980s cinema to focus on fatherhood (Bruzzi 2005: 115). This change in the traditional family structure, away from the father as provider and the mother as nurturer, prompted media makers to incorporate characters who reflected contemporary trends: “In terms of representations of fathers, the 1980s opened with a series of films that mimicked the success

⁹ “Hard-bodied” is a term defined by Jeffords. The hard body, she writes, was Reagan’s answer to a masculine post War dilemma and “came to stand not only for a type of national character – heroic, aggressive, and determined – but for the nation itself” (1993b: 25).

¹⁰ Critics record U.S. statistics: “Divorce rates in absolute and percentage terms stayed low through the 1950s, but rose steadily after the 1960s as the baby boom generation ... By the 1980s the divorce rate was almost half the marriage rate” (Adams 1987: 69), “Between 1970 and 1980, the number of divorce increased almost 70 percent” (Turner 2002: 94).

¹¹ “While men’s employment in the 1980s increased by 20 percent, women’s employment grew by 33 percent; women were integrated ever more fully into the national workforce” (Busch 2001: 32)

of *Kramer vs. Kramer* by championing the liberal, caring father” (Ibid: 117)¹². *Kramer vs. Kramer* (dir. Robert Benton 1979), a drama, won five Oscars. The plot follows a divorced man, Ted Kramer (Dustin Hoffman) as he learns to care for his son, Billy (Justin Henry) on his own. He then has to fight in court against Joanna Kramer (Meryl Streep) to keep custody of him. The film was seen as an aspiring story of single parent child rearing and loved by critics and audiences.

The championing of caring liberal fathers simultaneously meant that mothers could be more accepted as breadwinners - enabling them to reject the role of main-caregiver. Independent women displeased traditionalists who viewed an ideal family as ruled and financially supported by men. This concept of a male-headed nuclear family saw the male as breadwinner, provider, and protector of the family unit.

Part of the ideological project of the right in the eighties ... is the restoration of the family to its former status as a strong Ideological State Apparatus and the reinstatement of the father within this patriarchal stronghold. Hence, the focus on fathers and sons and the further marginalization of the female (Kinder 1989: 4).

I do not suggest Hollywood is wholly affected by political and social trends but, like Kinder, I agree many films during the 1980s agitated against breadwinner moms¹³, weak, stay-at-home fathers, and for the importance of the father to the nuclear family itself. Hollywood was thus, in some ways, moving along with the New Right¹⁴, towards the belief that society needed to see the re-emergence of traditional patriarchal authority. This led to an increase in films – in many genres – that depicted traditional nuclear families - families with men who were independent, strong, and unfeminine at their helm. Nancy Dowd points out: “[t]raditionalists would argue that traditional fatherhood, with its focus on the breadwinner

¹² Bruzzi also refers to: *Ordinary People* (dir. Robert Redford, 1980), *Author! Author!* (dir. Arthur Hiller, 1982), and *Table for Five* (dir. Robert Lieberman, 1983) (2005: 117).

¹³ See Jeffords (1994) and Harwood (1997).

¹⁴ Reagan is often described as: “associating patriotism, military strength, capitalism and moral righteousness with masculinity” (Carroll 2003: 386). Michael Paul Rogin also points out that “By making the independent women a central demonological symbol, neoconservatives and the New Right call attention to the source of counter subversion in patriarchal politics” (1988: 290).

role, is a nurturing role, and that the economic fatherhood is at the core of nurturing" (2000: 172). For example, in science fiction films such as *Back to the Future* (dir. Robert Zemeckis, 1985), the traditional father figure is shown¹⁵. In this film the son, Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox), actually goes back in time to teach his wimpy father, George McFly (Crispin Glover), to be tough (in a physical and mental capacity) and restores the traditional nuclear structure family in the present. The success of this film depends on society embracing the re-emergence of traditional paternal authority and the longing for the father as a traditional patriarchal figure.

However, with this view of the male figure in society changing, an opposing view of this successful type of fathering as the provider was the radical stay-at-home father whose task it was to nurture. In the latter half of the 1980s *3 Men and a Baby* (dir. Leonard Nimoy, 1987) pandered to society's interests in fatherhood and broke box-office records by placing the fatherhood figure within the comedy genre. Grossing \$167 million domestically from a budget of \$15 million *3 Men and a Baby*, unlike *Kramer vs. Kramer*, utilizes the typical patriarchal male figure¹⁶ (even though there are three of them), who knows little of how to nurture, for satiric effect. The feminized father is thus viewed as an unnatural, unmanly, and comical role.¹⁷

The film follows three bachelors as they care for the child of a woman who, instead of embracing motherhood, follows her career ambitions. On the surface, the narrative (like *Kramer vs. Kramer*) is progressive in terms of understanding contemporary gender roles - i.e. the mother is no longer confined to the household and the father to the workplace. Furthermore, that the men find their inner nurturing abilities is a triumph for single father's

¹⁵ *Ordinary People*, *Author! Author!*, *Table for Five*, *Mr. Mom* (dir. Stan Dragoti, 1983), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1984), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1989), and *Parenthood* (dir. Ron Howard, 1989), all similarly glorify traditional patriarchal figures.

¹⁶ See <www.the-numbers.com>.

¹⁷ *Paternity* (dir. David Steinberg, 1981), *Nothing in Common* (dir. Garry Marshall 1986), and *Parenthood*. are other examples of comic fathers in 1980s American cinema.

nurturing quotients, as critics note: “The movie never steps wrong as long as it focuses on the developing love between the three big men and the tiny baby” (Ebert 1987: online).

Yet, Susan Faludi argues that “*3 Men and a Baby* may seem like a film with feminist tendencies [with] men taking care of the baby... but does not propose that men take real responsibility for raising children. It derives its humor from the reversal of what it deems the natural order: mom in charge of the baby” (1991: 134). She views the film as conforming to a backlash against women’s independence that occurred in the U.S. during the 1980s by arguing that moviemakers were relying on an environment where portrayals of strong or complex women that went against the media-trend were few and far between (Faludi 1991: 126). This reaction impacted on Hollywood to the extent that when Hollywood cinema did depict strong and complex women or absent mothers, male characters had to step up to the plate and take on the role of child rearing themselves, often alone. This allowed the man to re-align himself from breadwinner to caregiver, ultimately making the father work as a savior to younger generations. Films like *3 Men and a Baby* therefore, whilst portraying men lacking nurturing quotients in a comedic fashion, show that men need to learn to care for children because breadwinning moms¹⁸ are changing traditional gender dynamics.

From the glorified father in *Kramer vs. Kramer*, to traditional paternal authority in *Back to the Future*, and finally to the comical feminized father in *3 Men and a Baby*, a feminist-inspired model of fatherhood that emerged in the 1980s “precipitated men into crisis, threatening their whole perception of themselves as adults”, argues Bruzzi (2005: 115). According to Bruzzi, femininity thus threatened masculinity, leaving men feeling disorientated and lost. Several 1980s action films, in contrast, joined fatherhood and hard-bodied masculinity, at least in passing. A key example is John McClane (Bruce Willis) in *Die Hard*. Harrison Ford was also an action dad. In the film *Indiana Jones and the Temple of*

¹⁸ Additional information in regard to contemporary parental roles can be found in Jeremy Adam Smith, 2009.

Doom (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1983) he gains a surrogate son Wan Short Round Li (Jonathan Ke Quan). Other notable action dads include Sergeant Roger Murtaugh (Danny Glover) in *Lethal Weapon* (dir. Richard Donner, 1987).

McClane, however, in many ways embodies the archetypal individualized action hero as he fights alone, survives alone, and saves the day alone. In the film he is even nicknamed Mr. Cowboy which connects him to no-name loner protagonists of the Western genre. However, in the film he is also a father. His familial relationships are glimpsed when we see him carry an oversized teddy bear (presumably for his child) from the airport in the film's opening sequences. In a later point-of-view shot (during an action sequence) he emotionally gazes upon a picture of his family, which he keeps safe in his wallet. Showing signs of emotional vulnerability the protagonist displays that, with fatherhood comes weakness. Bruzzi concurs noting: "fatherhood [is] oppositional to being 'a man' ... McClane's status as father means that his status as action hero is circumscribed" (2005: 138). Thus, unlike Stallone and Schwarzenegger's individualized action heroes, Willis' McClane is weakened due to fatherhood. As a weaker or more realistic action hero he feels pain, does not constantly display his hard body (at times it is hidden by a vest) and so is accepted as an every-man.

Die Hard's McClane is perhaps accepted as a family man because of his ability to be the average guy¹⁹. Other 1980s action films instead include "hidden father/son relationships", for example, *Platoon* (dir. Oliver Stone, 1986) and *First Blood* (Dir. Ted Kotcheff, 1982) (Jeffords 1993b: 63). In the case of *First Blood*, Jeffords links fathering to American politics, discussing John Rambo's (Sylvester Stallone) on-screen relationship with Colonel Trautman (Richard Crenna) as being similar to that of Ronald Reagan with his "right hand men". Jeffords describes Reagan as wanting his "philosophies and political changes – military

¹⁹ The opening scenes depict McClane gripping a chair arm aboard an airplane. The camera pans up to his face. He looks terrified. Another passenger exclaims: "You don't like flying do you". Initially depicted as vulnerable and emotional confirms his everyman persona.

build-up, moral conservatism, patriotism, a tough anticommunism, and economic deregulation – to continue past his own tenure as president” (1993b: 93). Reagan wanted to pass on his ethics to younger yet similar politicians, much like Trautman wanted to pass on his ethics to Rambo: “These narratives of father/son relationships help both to make change possible (the son replaces the father) and to prevent change from taking too radical a form (the son models himself after the father)” (Ibid.). Yet, as Neale argues: “Jeffords is forced to rely on analogy. This is a procedure - and a problem – common to numerous ideological analyses of genres and cycles... it should be said that in this case Jeffords analysis dovetails with arguments made about 1980s action film” (2004: 72). I agree. Jeffords deliberately avoids certain key 1980s films, among them Stallone’s Rocky franchise. Her focus also means she is not in the position to reflect on the positive or ambivalent takes on fatherhood, in particular, on actual rather than hidden or surrogate fatherhood.

True, many understand the typical action hero (Cobra, Conan, Rambo, Dutch) as a loner who, in the words of Rambo, is expendable. This is why the action hero is picked to fight as, with no family to rely on him, it does not matter if he lives or dies. Thus, set free from the fears of leaving behind a wife or a child he can act as martyr and die for the moral good (i.e. for his nation or to simply save someone who is not expendable). The 1980s action heroes are therefore “outcasts unsullied by attachments” (Lichtenfeld 2004: 82) and the avoidance of familial relations is similar to his avoidance of emotion.

In many films, Stallone and Schwarzenegger are similar to fictional superheroes with unattainable superhuman strength and power. As supermen they are not permitted to show any form of weakness - including emotions. By extension they are also often not depicting fatherhood by not being fathers. Jeffords defines both additionally as having a body that “would become so hardened as to forget that it was human, or ‘natural’, at all. In this sense ... the hard body revived strength and individualism” (1993b: 105). Nonetheless, in some

films Stallone and Schwarzenegger portray individualized action heroes but simultaneously remain mindful of the importance of fatherhood and the family. In the films *Rocky III*, *Rocky IV*, *Over the Top*, and *Commando*, the protagonists are an example of the retributive man when they are in the public sphere, whether on the battlefield (Schwarzenegger) or in the boxing ring (Stallone), though they appear as fathers in domestic spaces. Their characters even display forms of weakness and emotionality when they are with their children. Being fathers tempers our vision of their independent tough guise.²⁰

In each of the films we see scenes of the protagonists being emotional (loving, caring, nurturing) with his child. These scenes often use orchestral and/or classical mood music that clearly differs from the fast-paced rhythmic action music used. Close-ups, slow pans, and long takes are also predominant, prompting audiences to identify with the character's emotion. High key lighting is used and there are tranquil shots of wildlife and landscapes. Overall, the scenes, which will be examined in closer detail in what follows here, allow the action hero to adopt characteristics beyond those typical of the action genre and hegemonic 1980s masculinity.

Yet, for the most part, 1980s and 1990s critics argued that Stallone and Schwarzenegger's films were "self-referential forms of entertainment...ultimately in the service of a right-wing ideological project of hegemonic self-effacement" (Tasker 1993b: 58-59). In order for the action hero to embody authority, independence, and aggressiveness, situations occur (e.g. a family member is kidnapped, the nation is threatened) which allows him to switch²¹ from his fathering role and utilize his hard body in the service of action genre conventions before, in conclusion, returning to make peace with his child and venture back into family life.

²⁰ See Katz and Earp's 1999 documentary, *Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity*.

²¹ I refer to this idea of a switch during the close analyses that follow. I gained the idea of the switch from watching *Over the Top* where Lincoln Hawk states "When I turn my hat around - I feel a switch. It's like I become another person... I feel like my truck - a machine".

Throughout my analysis I will make references to melodrama to demonstrate the aspects of melodrama as pathos and heightened emotionality, as defined by the contemporary standard account. I look in particular at scenes between father and child. The father in these films, I claim, is ultimately a leader, a leader that can teach and pass on his ideals whilst asserting an image of the patriarchal family. The hypermasculine father can even demonstrate that males are where they are socially by virtue of bodily superiority – women and children would be unable to challenge his towering authority. These 1980s films thus preach a return to traditionalism, with men no longer losing their position on top. But this traditionalism was in part tempered by men's greater sensitivity and involvement in childcare. The heroes of these films follow suit.

Rocky III

Whatever happened to them quiet, tender moments?

- Michael "Mickey" Goldmill (Burgess Meredith) in *Rocky III*

Several of Stallone's early films paved the way for the *Rocky* franchise, mixing action, drama, and melodrama. His first career-defining role came in *The Lords of Flatbush* (dir. Martin Davidson and Stephen Verona, 1974), a film that touches on fatherhood. Within the film he plays Stanley Rosiello, one of a group of self-styled gang members. Stanley steals cars, behaves recklessly, and acts disrespectfully but gets a wake-up call when his girlfriend gets pregnant. The film follows him as he changes, and accepts what he sees as his responsibilities. Although his character does not actually become a father (he finds out this girl is not pregnant) the film shows Stallone portraying a character who must adjust from adolescence to adulthood.

Subsequently, in *Rocky* (dir. John G. Avildsen, 1976) and *Rocky II* (dir. Sylvester Stallone, 1979), Stallone's character confronts real-life situations. Both films proved

successful not because of his physical appearance²², but, as Roger Ebert mentions, his emotional performance: “it makes us commit ourselves: We find, maybe to our surprise after remaining detached during so many movies, that this time we care” (1976: online). The original poster art for *Rocky* shows him holding Adrian’s (Talia Shire) hand – an image that does not coincide with action or an individualized emotionless action hero. Tag lines for *Rocky II* also play on themes of romance and drama with the likes of: “He was one punch away from the heavyweight championship of the world. Now he’s one heartbeat away from losing the woman he loves”, and “There is one fight left. He must win it with his hands ... She must win it with her heart”.

By the 1980s, however, the emotions and drama associated with his films seemed to be lost, at least by critics. James Neibaur maintains:

Sylvester Stallone is perhaps lacking in original ideas, his tough guys being no more than incarnates of previous styles. His shrewd marketing sensibilities, however gives us the most stated example of what had happened to the presentation of toughness and masculinity in the American cinema by the eighties. To be tough, we must believe it is un-masculine to display emotion (1989: 213).

Yet, particularly in *Rocky III*, *Rocky IV*, and *Over the Top* Stallone’s characters do display emotions. *Rocky III* was successful at the box-office, grossing more than its predecessor *Rocky II*²³. True, as the series progressed, the 1980s films capitalized on the increasing popularity of the action genre, muscular bodies, and bodybuilding²⁴. However, these spectacular fight sequences and heightened displays of the hard body resulted in critics snubbing *Rocky III*. David Denby, for example, wrote: “The soundtrack is deafening - blows thud into bodies like artillery shells landing amidships. And visually the movie is all

²² The final fight sequence in *Rocky* takes up around 10 minutes of screen time. The other *Rocky* films (not including *Rocky V*) have more extended fight sequences.

²³ *Rocky III* grossed \$125,049,125 in the U.S. while *Rocky IV* (the highest earner in the franchise) grossed \$127,873,716 domestically. *Rocky* grossed \$117,235,147 while *Rocky II* was the second least successful (behind *Rocky V*) with \$85,182,160. The franchises total gross by 2011 is \$566,556,405.

²⁴ In the 1970s the art of bodybuilding gained publicity. Towards the end of the 1970s films such as *Pumping Iron* (dir. George Butler and Robert Fiore, 1977) further made the art popular. The National Physique Committee (NPC) was formed in 1981 – an organization that has gone on to become the most successful bodybuilding organization in the U.S..

hyperbole – either violent montages, with bodies falling in agony and crowds boiling over with excitement, or super tight close-ups of the actors sweating, cursing, imploring” (1982: 80). *Rocky III*'s action narrative, style, and iconography would now present what Neale defines as: “a propensity for spectacular action, a narrative structure involving fights ... emphasis on performance” and “hyperbolic bodies” (2000: 46). The film's advertisements also brushed away elements of drama or romance as the poster art confirmed. Stallone stands topless, holding his championship belt above his head. His posture conforms to the standard posing vocabulary Dyer describes as being a “conscious emanation of the classic statuary... so prized in the visual culture” (1997: 148). Tag lines also signal action as the film's primary generic affiliation: “The Excitement... The Power... The Man...” (*Rocky III*). As Eric Lichtenfeld argues, advertising films in such a way meant “that extra film material – trailers, posters, news features generated by the film industry publicists, and the like – determines ... expectations as much as anything on screen does” (2004: 7). Audiences began to appreciate Stallone's films through a body of rules and expectations. Stallone was now expected to portray a strong independent image of masculinity and to mask the fact that Rocky is a nurturing, compassionate father.

In the opening of *Rocky III*, we are reminded that Rocky is a fighter and action hero when a close-up covers the screen with his face. He is battered and bruised, yet basks in the glory of becoming the Heavyweight Champion. A heavy guitar riff from Survivor's “Eye of the Tiger” is heard as fireworks blast onto the screen. The music builds and the fireworks screech and squeal like missiles in a battlefield, then “Rocky Heavyweight Champion of the World” is pasted onto the screen in glittering lights. Spectacle is key here and, more than in the previous films we are drawn into the violent sport of boxing. For four minutes fifteen seconds the audience is left to witness Rocky battering his foes and defending his championship title ten times in a heroic montage. We next see antagonist Clubber Lang (Mr.

T) covered in oil and blood, similarly dismantling his foes. Close-ups, frequently in slow-motion, focus on the pair's magnificent pectorals, biceps, and triceps. In the first full fight scene of *Rocky III* we see Rocky fight Thunderlips (Hulk Hogan) in a charity match for a youth foundation. Thunderlips turns on Rocky aggressively throwing Rocky into the crowd, performing wrestling rather than boxing moves and ignoring the referee's commands. In these moments of excess in mise-en-scène, emotion, music, and gesture "disrupt the realism of the text and, thus, subvert the surface meaning or ideology" (Gates 2004: 63). Thus the display of muscle, violence and materialistic spectacle participates in melodrama conventions.

In the immediate preceding scene, Rocky is outside his lavish home in a golf cart with his son, Rocky Jr. (Ian Fried). The melodrama here depicts the hidden father and son relationship as masked by the spectacle of action in the previous fight scene. The scene begins in a long shot framing the father and son sitting in the golf cart encompassing the set with white pillars draped in green vines. Birds tweet. Naturalistic lighting suggests tranquility and authenticity as opposed to the glittering high-key lights of the boxing ring. As the scene progresses, the camera zooms in to a medium two shot and Rocky drives the golf cart towards the camera. With both Rocky driving toward the camera and the camera zooming to focus on the father and son bond, displays a progressive movement in directing attention on fatherhood for the action film. Head and shoulders now framed, we see Rocky clothed in a knitted jumper and dark trousers, with his hair neatly styled, his eyes fixed on his son. At home Rocky is anything but a fighter. His hard body is hidden. Cuddling up to Rocky Jr., wearing such bourgeois clothing, he has seemingly repressed his hard body to become a middle-class family man, a man of emotion, and a man who can nurture.

Rocky tells Rocky Jr. a story: "and this Pinocchio he told a lie and his nose started growing real big". Rocky Jr. asks, "Are you fighting again?" Rocky replies, "Today? Oh no, I

don't plan on fighting today". By the end of the scene the son asks his father to promise that he will not fight, and Rocky makes the promise. They embrace. As Rocky kisses his son, Rocky Jr. proclaims, "Good, because I like you being here" as Rocky responds, "Good because I like bein' here". But when Clubber Lang accuses Rocky of intentionally accepting challenges from lesser opponents, and makes a sexually suggestive remark about Adrian, Rocky agrees to fight him and breaks his promise to his son. Much as Pinocchio had done, Rocky has told a lie. In Rocky's case, however, he retracts his promise because his masculinity is threatened and he feels he needs to reassert his authority and dominance. Gallagher, in his discussion of action films, comments: "At the level of plot, the vast majority of actions of the 1980s and early 1990s support conservative formations of militant, heterosexual, white masculinity" (2006: 46). We can see this ideology at play in *Rocky III*. Rocky does not consciously wish to undermine his role as father, instead his macho formation prompts him to feel he should fight and abandon his role as father.

Rocky's acknowledgement of his role as father is revealed when he mentions his son in a standard formulaic narrative *Rocky* moment he discusses his fighting career with Adrian. The sequence begins with Rocky standing on a beach in long shot, head down as a sea breeze blows. Adrian enters the frame, there is a cut, and the pair are framed together in medium-close-up. As the sun shines on their faces, Rocky appears in close-up. Tanned and beautified, he opens up emotionally: "I don't wanna lose what I've got! In the beginning I didn't care what happened to me, I'd go into the ring and get busted up – but now there's you and the kid I'm afraid for the first time in my life!" A lingering close-up shows him become teary-eyed and, as he looks towards the sea, it seems that all he wants to do is return home and be a family man. The comment, "now there's you and the kid" represents the impact Rocky Jr. has on Rocky's life. He is suffering. Adrian attempts once again to reassure Rocky: "What do we have that can't be replaced? What? A house. We got cars, money!" at the same time as she

encourages him to be who he is: a fighter. Apollo Creed, Rocky's best friend, also informs Rocky that he must re-gain the "eye of the tiger" in order to win. Apollo and Adrian share the common denial of Rocky's emotions. Both regard his role as a fighter, not a father. In addition to Adrian and Apollo, Rocky's fans also expect him to be a hard-bodied action hero, i.e. to fight. He is awarded a statue for his "indomitable spirit as a man". This moment should be a joyous one for Rocky yet in close-up he seems dejected even though his fans enthusiastically shout, "Rocky! Rocky!" Rocky knows that the statue symbolizes what the fans want from him: they want him to be emotionless, indestructible. But Rocky informs his fans he is planning to stop fighting. He wants to be with Adrian and his son.

Adrian and Apollo want Rocky to conform as a fighter. They deny his emotions. In order for Rocky to express his emotions to someone who will understand, he turns to his son, strengthening the father and son bond. When he leaves to train for the fight against Clubber Lang, for example, the camera follows him through his home. His family, Adrian, Paulie (Burt Young) and Rocky Jr. wait outside. A long shot is used and the camera is fixed within the home. The conversation Rocky, Paulie and Adrian have is brief and trivial, discussing weather, and a single piano score overpowers it, therefore making it almost inaudible. In contrast to this, when Rocky turns to talk to his son the conversation is clear as a close-up is used to frame them together. Rocky kneels down on one knee and looks up at his son. The camera is positioned at a low angle behind Rocky's shoulder, looking up. As the scene continues, shot/reverse shots alternate between close-ups on each other's face, signaling their emotional bond. Eventually, as the music builds, the two are framed together in close-up and Rocky Jr. kisses his father. "I'll bring you back a gift", Rocky says. Perhaps this gift will be retirement? Adrian stands in the background, slightly out of focus, a witness. Emphasis is on the father and his son. As he leaves, Rocky strokes his son's face gently.

Rocky has at least two sides to his personality: he is both a hard-bodied boxer and a caring father. *Rocky III* is careful to separate these two sides through cinematography and mise-en-scène. The fight sequences are spectacular, with hyperbolic editing, high-tempo music, and violence. The fathering scenes are tranquil, with slow tracking shots, natural lighting, and soft piano accompaniment. Ian Huffer notes: “In *Rocky III* we can see how costume, cinematography, and editing are used to hide Stallone’s physique when Rocky is expressing weakness, and emphasize it when the character is displaying strength” (2011: Forthcoming). He argues that Rocky’s most vulnerable scene is when he rides his motorbike dressed in black leather clothing, and suggests that when Rocky is training, the more clothes he wears the weaker he is. Yet what Huffer does not mention is the father/son scenes where Rocky is fully attired and instead of being “lethargic” and “lacking co-ordination”, he is focused on his son, thriving in a familial environment (2011: Forthcoming). In depicting weakness in opposition to strength, Huffer is suggesting that when Rocky is not fighting, he is feeble and vulnerable. In the scenes where Rocky is with his son, he is always fully attired, and expresses his emotional vulnerability – but this is not a weakness. It is a glorification of the new nurturing masculinity that men can achieve through fatherhood. Outside of the ring his role as father and husband temper his macho antics, making him human. Nevertheless adhering to 1980s action film expectations, for the most part, *Rocky III* insists that Rocky must downplay his role as father in favor of being a successful fighter. This attitude masks the father and son scenes within the narrative, creating the assumption the 1980s action hero is a man who is all about muscles.

Rocky IV

Merry Christmas, kid! I love you!

- Rocky Balboa, *Rocky IV*

Rocky IV was released in 1985, at the height of the New Cold War²⁵, and includes an “Us vs. Them” (U.S vs. the U.S.S.R) theme in the plot. In the opening scene this is confirmed when two boxing gloves, one painted with the stars and stripes, the other with the hammer and sickle, crash into one another like guided missiles. Rocky’s enemy is now Captain Ivan Drago (Dolph Lundgren), a gigantic Soviet boxer who, defined as the epitome of evil, first appears backlit wearing military uniform. The new enemy speaks with an automated computerized voice: “you will lose” – “I must break you”. This ultimatum declaration is endorsed politically²⁶, showing how the cultural and political differences are emphasized and exaggerated. Essays point to anti-Communist themes²⁷. Donning the American flag on his shorts, Rocky now fights for more than his working-class pride or his family. Holmlund argues that *Rocky IV* combines Rocky's traditionally-based persona with that of the New Cold War hero, Rambo (1990: online). Thus, by Rocky using hard work, courage, and faith, to train and defeat the Soviet, he embodies the New Cold War concerns and becomes the savior of the U.S.. The original poster art, with the tag line “When East Meets West, the champion remains standing” depicts Rocky draped in the American flag, and similarly indicates the patriotic New Right/Reaganite themes this film aims to project.

²⁵ In context to *Rocky IV*, Chris Holmlund argues: “The films' success does not simply result from [its] enthusiastically presenting a New Cold War. [Its] strongest appeal often comes from the way [it] revert[s] to earlier U.S. value systems ... Cultural diversity and division are not just ignored, they are integrated into the film fictions. As a result, th[is] movi[e] [is] not simply [an] expressio[n] of New Cold War ideology, [it] also constitute[s] it and undercut[s] it in the process of incorporating a variety of personal and social anxieties and desires into a representational mode” (1990: online).

²⁶ Quoting Reagan during an interview, Allen reports: “My idea of American policy toward the Soviet Union is simple, and some would say simplistic,” he said. “It is this: We win and they lose. What do you think of that?” (Allen 2000: online).

²⁷ Alongside *Red Dawn* (dir. John Milius, 1984) and *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, *Rocky IV* was reportedly banned in places like Zimbabwe. This was due to complaints from the Russian and Cuban embassies. They declared the film as anti-Soviet propaganda. On the movie’s iconographic representation of the man vs. machine cliché of American-Soviet relations see (Palmer 1995: 218-22).

This film is readily identifiable as an action adventure. Rocky has definitely become “so hardened as to forget he is human” (Jeffords 1993b: 105) and he is truly indestructible during the final fight sequence. Pummeled by the right hooks of a man pumped up with steroids, he is referred to as “a piece of iron” and “not human”, he is, in fact, like Stallone’s Vietnam War hero John Rambo. The bodies in this film are also bigger (Drago especially, but, Rocky is also more ripped), conforming to the characteristics of the hard-bodied action films. Ebert argued that the film “drained all of the human emotions out of the series” (1987: online) and Janet Maslin asserted: “When [*Rocky IV*] flashes back to its antecedents, particularly to the original *Rocky* with its bashful heroine and self-effacing star, it becomes clear how bloated and hollow the story has become” (1985: online). Yet the character Rocky Balboa is not as hollow as one would first assume even here. Again melodrama gives the film a second “truth and life” (Elsaesser 1987: 49) beyond the excess of the action spectacle due to the scenes of fatherhood. The initial scenes show Rocky enjoying himself as a stay-at-home father. In his expensive home, replete with fancy cars and fine furniture, we witness him celebrating Paulie’s birthday with Rocky Jr. (Rocky Krakoff). Close-ups depict Rocky smiling, laughing, and enjoying his bourgeois carefree lifestyle. Parallel editing places father and son together and showcases their mirrored body language: one washes his car, the other polishes Paulie’s robot. Rocky has turned his back on fighting. “We’re changing. We’re turning into regular people”, he tells Apollo. However, signaling what is to come, Apollo responds, “We’re born with a killer instinct you can’t turn off and on like a radio. We have to be in the middle of the action because we’re warriors”.

When Apollo dies (by the hands of Drago), Rocky feels compelled to switch back into Apollo’s attitude of a warrior for vengeance. His emotions are invisible during Apollo’s funeral behind the tinted-aviator sunglasses he wears. He says little, only, “There’s a lot I could say about this man. I don’t know if it matters now. I guess what matters is what he

stood for ... what he lived for and what he died for. You always did everything ... the way you wanted it. I didn't understand that, but ... now I understand". Considering the conversation the pair had previously about change, Rocky accepts the facts that he, too, is expected to be a warrior with a killer instinct that can't be turned off and on like a radio. He uses Apollo's death to realign himself with heroic action masculinity and to detach himself from fatherhood.

However, what makes Rocky different from Apollo in agreeing to fight once more is that Rocky does not want simply to re-claim his inner warrior for fame, as Apollo had done. Apollo wanted to be remembered: "It's crazy how people care about you when you're in that ring bleeding ... but once you step out of that ring, you're ancient history". As opposed to demonstrating a capitalist accumulation which Apollo does because he is egotistical, Rocky instead wants to fight to protect and provide for his nation. Holmlund argues that this capitalism is presented in the film "by proposing yuppies as a kind of effete, emasculated, pseudo-class, unworthy of organized opposition" (1990: 90). By representing the U.S. society in this way, weak and elusive, suggests Rocky must return back to dominant patriarchal roots in order to succeed. Thus, returning to warrior status, Rocky surrenders all his material wealth by going to the Russian mountains to train. As he represents the U.S., Rocky fights for his nation. As Holmlund confirms: "Rocky's body and the body politic become presented as identical, while Rocky's more important fight is internal, not external" (Ibid.). Rocky primarily fights for moral reasons: in respect of Apollo, and to be a role model to his family. However, due to his reinstatement of bravery, dedication, and belief, Rocky's internal motivations propel into a national inspiration during the New Cold War, showing the Soviets that their aspiration for control over an effete America is over.

Whilst training in Russia, Rocky places a picture of his motivation on his bedroom mirror: his son. This scene is reminiscent of *Rocky*, where a picture of himself as a young

child appears on his bedroom mirror. The shot is included in a montage sequence²⁸. Just as the young Rocky of the first film represents America of the 1950s, so too does Rocky now represent America of the 1980s. The lost trust, paranoia, fear, and disorientation that accompanied the New Cold War are compensated for by Rocky's raw drive and dedication. That he looks intensely here at a photograph of his son instead of himself signals that he is fighting for a better future for his son. The scene now illustrates that "success, potential, and optimism" (Motley 2005: 64) may be something his son can experience in future, because his father accepts a challenge he says he is afraid of.

Creating himself as a father his son can be proud of, Rocky is fighting for his son. Rocky believes his son will aspire to be a businessman, a lawyer, a doctor, and not a fighter. "I fight so you don't have to", he states. At home he tells Rocky Jr., "I want you to use your head for something other than a punching bag". That his son conforms to middle-class dress codes is clear. He wears smart, knitted woolen jumpers and beige, roll-leg chinos. Rocky himself wears nice clothes, just as he had done in *Rocky III*. The money he earns from fighting even allows Rocky Jr. to participate in extracurricular intellectual activities. He is seen, for example, with a video camera, talking about focuses and zooms. Rocky Jr. has a choice, something Rocky never had. Rocky is even told in *Rocky IV* by Duke (Tony Burton): "Use all your strength! All your power! All your love!" His emotional devotion and commitment separate him from his foe.

Rocky confides in his son that he knows he often neglects him. Indeed, he leaves for the Soviet Union on the most important day of a child's year: Christmas. As he had done with Adrian in *Rocky III*, now Rocky tells his son he does not particularly want to fight: "I do get a

²⁸ Clay Motley comments with respect to *Rocky*: "Each of Rocky's failings, professionally and personally emphasizes his failed manhood in America's cultural malaise. The flat-topped, smiling youth in the picture represents America of the 1950s, a place of success, potential, and optimism. The modern, wounded fighter, declared past his prime, symbolizes the loss of potential by the 1970s, the failing of America to live up the promise of the past" (2005: 64).

little scared". While he speaks the camera fixes on his face and an emotive piano ballad begins. Through shot/reverse shots the film draws audiences into the character's emotions.

My arms hurt so much I can't even lift them. I'm thinking, God, I wish this guy would just hit me on the chin so I don't feel nothin' no more. But then there's the other side that isn't so scared. It's another side that wants to take more and wants to go one more round, because by going one more round when you don't think you can, that makes all the difference in your life.

This speech tells us that Rocky is not indestructible, emotionless, or brutal even in the boxing ring – he suffers like anyone else. The background music becomes louder as Rocky embraces Rocky Jr. stating, "I love you son." Sunlight shines through the blinds of the bedroom window, beautifying their relationship. The image is then reminiscent of Madonna and Child images as Rocky Jr. looks up at Rocky; while Rocky looks down on his son. Close-ups and slow camera movements additionally indicate the love the pair feel. His son is his motivation to fight.

The final fight sequence uses cross-cutting including Rocky Jr. watching on television at home with his friends. Critics view this fight as more important as an image of the U.S. than what it means to his family: "domestic affairs play second fiddle to foreign policy" (Holmlund 1990: 91). However, although presented through the spectacle of fighting, Rocky is ultimately protecting Rocky Jr.'s environment. He has not forgotten his home, his family, or his son. Rocky Jr.'s Christmas present is to view his dad fighting, something he does not do in the previous films. He sees his father as a celebrity, a superhero, and a role model. The first interaction in the film between Rocky and Rocky Jr. occurred where Rocky Jr. filmed his father on a video-recorder, like a star hungry paparazzi photographer, now he watches him on television. Television presents him, and us, with a mediated fantasy of hyper-masculinity. Rocky Jr. basks in the glory of viewing his father from this perspective. Rocky has become a symbol who is looked up to and respected by children, but he represents a form of masculinity that is fictional and unattainable because the fight is presented through the

medium of television. However, the fight sequence ends with Rocky stating, “Merry Christmas, kid! I love you!”, bringing the fighter back to his real man status. Slowly the camera zooms in on the face of Rocky Jr.. No longer does he scream “hit him, hit him” or “that’s my dad”. Now, he is speechless, emotional, reminded of the real father he has. He starts to cry and whispers, “I love you too, dad”. Using the peaceful and family-orientated mask of Christmas, the violence, history, and reality of the New Cold War is displaced to rhetoric. The battle of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. becomes less significant than the father and son bond. The film therefore re-enforces Rocky’s patriarchal power and role as father. The family unit can now be rebuilt around the strong and caring father, one who fights for the moral good, defends his nation with honor and has “the eye of the tiger”.

To end, Rocky indicates that he aims to return to his role as father: “My kid... he should be at home sleeping”. Ruth Ginsburg argues that: “an anxiety of fatherhood, inherent in the physiology of paternity and displaced onto an obsession with continuity, has always been at the core of patriarchy” (1991: 358). This concept is reflected in *Rocky IV*. Rocky says that he is changing into a “regular person”, a stay-at-home father. However, when Apollo dies Rocky returns to being a fighter, responding to Adrian’s request that he change his thinking “Everybody else does!”, that he cannot do so “Because I’m a fighter. That’s the way I’m made. That’s what you married - We can’t change what we are”. But after the final fight sequence, his final speech emphasizes the importance of change:

I seen a lot of changing: the way you felt about me ... and the way I felt about you. In here ... there were two guys ... killing each other. But I guess that’s better than a million. What I’m trying to say is ... if I can change ... and you can change ... everybody can change!

Now he is about to change again, to turn off his warrior mentality, and return home as a caring, nurturing father. Ultimately, his heroic achievement has enabled America to not look pitiful and weak against its Soviet foe, and the Soviets themselves to change: the Politburo and the Moscow crowd all rise to applaud Rocky’s triumph. At the same time, Rocky kisses

Adrian and hugs Paulie while an edit shows Rocky Jr. watching. Now, he wants to be seen as a family man, a caring man. To add to this John Caffert's song, "Heart's on Fire", kicks in. To turn to his family he chooses his heart (father) over his muscles (fighter). His individualized warrior mentality has been usurped by his nurturing side, proving that to be a muscular, aggressive hero should only be adopted in times of need. His fighter side therefore is not essentially a positive form of masculinity – it is his nurturing side that reigns through.

What is most significant about *Rocky IV* is how it informs audiences of Rocky's two sides. On the one hand, in the words of the commentator, Rocky is "the iron horse from America". On the other hand, he cares for his family and displays fear. Tension builds. Rocky is now fighting for his son. He is fighting the "most perfectly trained athlete ever" who is, moreover, a Soviet, so by extension he is fighting for the United States. On top of all this, he is scared. The family melodrama complicates and puts pressure on the dominant action genre. Altman argues that melodrama works within the dominant system of a genre to communicate comprehension because "of its refusal to adhere to a system" (1992: 34-35). As melodrama, this film attempts to put pressure on the representation of the real father as to heighten its meaning and give the unrepresented and repressed role of fatherhood in action adventure cinema a material presence.

Over The Top

How about Hawk and Son?

- Lincoln Hawk (Sylvester Stallone)

Released in 1987, after the less successful *Cobra*²⁹, *Over the Top* showcases Stallone as a muscular hero who spends most of the film dealing with being a father. However, this film, too, was unsuccessful at the box-office³⁰. Unlike *Cobra* (and his Rambo franchise) the emphasis on fathering meant the film toned down elements of spectacular/action and

²⁹ *Cobra* also frames Stallone as an individualized "hard-bodied" action hero. The film grossed \$49,042,224 domestically.

³⁰ With a budget of \$25,000,000 *Over the Top* grossed \$16,057,580 domestically.

therefore Stallone's core audience: "There's an audience that will show up to see *Rocky IV* ... on the other hand, *Over the Top* is a picture that's in terrible trouble: There Stallone is stepping out of his genre" (Wyatt 1994: 163). After Rocky became superhuman in his *Rambo* franchise and *Cobra*, audiences expected to see Stallone as a warrior, drenched in sweat and blood, strutting America's toughness on the big screen. His character here is instead a laid-back truck driver, with a fancy for country song whilst enjoying views of rural America.

The film follows Lincoln Hawk, a working-class truck driver and his son Michael Cutler (David Mendenhall), a military school graduate who is being raised by his wealthy grandfather, Jason Cutler (Robert Loggia), due to his mother's (Susan Blakely) terminal illness. Although Lincoln is separated from his wife (for reasons not explained) he fights for the custody of his child and the pair grow to love each other by the end of the film. The fight sequences and action stem from the introduction of arm-wrestling, as Lincoln enters the World Arm Wrestling Championship. Through these sequences, Lincoln is able to transform himself into a hard-bodied action hero, which is confirmed through close-ups of his bulging biceps. Due to emphasis on bodies and sweat, rendered through spectacular, hyperbolic editing (the film is literally a battle over who has the biggest muscles) critics saw the film primarily as action adventure: "Menahem Golan (the studio head of Cannon Pictures) has turned the film into an overblown cartoon complete with prolonged action sequences, special effects, and larger than life characters (i.e. caricatures). It's not supposed to be a good movie; it's just supposed to make money" (Weinburg 1987: 160). Such an understanding draws on the typical conventions of the action adventure: special effects, prolonged action, larger than life characters, and so forth. Yet here, too, Stallone mixed genres, at times moving away from action individualism and turning instead towards melodrama and community.

In the final arm wrestling championships, in medium close-up, Lincoln is interviewed and asked how he gains the strength to win. "When I turn my hat around - I feel a switch. It's

like I become another person ... I feel like my truck – a machine”, he says. When the switch occurs, Lincoln, like Rocky, “forget[s] he is human” (Jeffords 1993b: 105). But, Lincoln proves he is able to turn off and on his killer instinct like in *Rocky IV*. With him switching also proves he has other characteristics to his persona as shown through him being a caring nurturing father. Stallone’s hero is more than a male rampage hero – he is a fighter and father with heart and emotion. His opponents however, – Smasher (Magic Schwarz), Grizzly (Bruce Way), Big Boy (Randy Raney) - all grunt and groan and resemble primal beasts. This primal violent form of rampaging masculinity is not only shown through their names; they rip open their vests, scream into the camera during close-ups, tower over Lincoln with oversized muscular frames, and all have facial hair. They are primitive, uncivilized, and unemotional, much like beasts or men of the wild. When his opponents fight they are individualized as point-of-view shots only show them focused on their opponents. “Grizzly” and “Smasher” are names that also mark them as far less noble than the protagonist’s surname “Hawk”. In addition, hawks are extremely protective of their young³¹ - just as Lincoln is of Michael. Hawks are also like eagles, a symbol of America, which added to the name Lincoln, another name connected to American nationalism, displays he is a true American, with passion, determination and drive. Like Rocky therefore, Lincoln has an edge over his opponents; he is fighting with his heart; he needs to protect his young. His role as a nurturing father and protector define him as much as his ability to use his muscles to their full potential.

However, for the first sections of the film Lincoln is displayed as an individualized hard body, therefore not a father. Close-ups display his hulking body as he washes his truck topless. Wide-shots depict him driving through vast landscapes. He wears sunglasses to hide his emotions, and a stern aggressive looking demeanor, like Cobra. These opening images conform to the traditional individualized action protagonist. Due to this image Lincoln is

³¹ See Ted Andrews, who observes that a hawk is “the most intriguing and mystical birds of prey” (1993: 150).

unable, at first, to gain access to his son's emotions and Michael simply believes his father is incapable of emotion. Standing apart from his father, stood in the corner of the room, he seemingly cowers from the massive man. When Lincoln and Michael begin to talk, in their first encounter, blocking separates them. Michael declares: "I don't have a father" and requests proof from Lincoln that he is, indeed, his father. Lincoln steps forward and replies, "I'm ready". A close-up displays Lincoln looking anxious and vulnerable. He has made a switch. By letting go of his individualized, tough guise of masculinity Michael is able to access his father's nurturing and caring persona.

Letting go of his individualized hard-bodied self, Lincoln shows Michael his wedding photograph. Michael carefully examines the photo in an over-the-shoulder shot that places him, his father, and his mother together in the same frame. A clarinet group cuts in as backing music here. The melodramatic music is jocular and wholesome demonstrating that Michael is taking pleasure in being part of a nuclear family for the first time. That Lincoln keeps the photograph close also informs us how much he cares for his family, even though he left his wife, ill in hospital, many years before, for no reason other than it was a "big mistake". Making sure he will not make the same mistake again his wife asks him not to forget his son, "You must try and get to know him ... there is so much more to life than you know". The journey of action man turned father has begun.

The film constantly illustrates the action man as father as opposed to fighter. More so than *Rocky III* and *Rocky IV*, the emotional scenes of father and son are granted more screen time than fighting, action, and spectacle. These scenes change the traditional perceptions that the 1980s action hero is "a brutal, violent, and unfeeling man" (Jeffords 1993b: 142). However, Michael at times harbors the traditional perception of the 1980s action hero. Michael interrogates Lincoln on his intellectual ability, claiming that because he is a trucker he must be in the "11 to 13 year old" category for intelligence, Lincoln pulls over the truck.

Looking menacing and frustrated Michael then declares “Why are you stopping? You’re aggravated aren’t you? Are you going to get violent?” A low angle shot displays Michael as weak and his eyes glaze over with fear. Michael, like Jeffords’ understandings, simply assumes this hero is a violent unfeeling man. However, an edit is made to Lincoln. In a close-up Lincoln, through high-key lighting, displays his tanned, beautified face. He lets out a carefree laugh then looks towards his son: “Give me a break will you” he declares. Just as Rocky wants a break from the pressure Adrian and Apollo put on him to fight in *Rocky IV*, Lincoln’s attitude for change to the stereotyped action hero is clarified when he embraces his son. To acknowledge the softer side of Lincoln, Michael asks him to start reading, not just working out: “Don’t you ever read? There are no books around here! Don’t you know there’s more to life than muscles?” The action hero is seen to use his body over his brains – like his muscle over his heart - and so the addition of Michael changes this.

Over the Top further aims to supply the action hero with fathering characteristics and have him acknowledge that family bond brings happiness, as 1980s rock lyrics like Big Trouble’s “All I Need Is You” reinforce: “All I need is you. To always live forever. All I need is you”³². However when Lincoln’s violent, action persona is released due to him trying to rescue Michael from Michael’s Grandfather, this separates father and son. In prison, Michael visits Lincoln. Divided by bars, shot reverse shot technique forces the pair to no longer be framed together. Lincoln then states:

I wanna give you what’s inside of me. I don’t have much, and I may never have a lot, but I’ve got something inside that I wanna give to you. You’re the only person that means something to me. You. You.

Returning to the sensitive father hero, Lincoln’s speech reflects the familiar formula from the *Rocky* series when Rocky declares his love for Rocky Jr. These emotionally pathos moments

³² Other songs such as Robin Zander’s “In This Country” and Sammy Hagar’s “Winner Takes it All” are used during the father and son moments. Most talk about love, relationships and second chances.

are a precursor to Lincoln's big come back. However, Michael tells his father he feels "at home" with his Grandfather, and so leaves Lincoln behind. As he leaves prison, Lincoln is alone, again he is individualized. He therefore falls back on what he knows best: arm-wrestling and muscles. He sells his truck for the competition entry fee and sets off to win. Thus by sacrificing everything he owns shows Lincoln is going to the championship with an all-or-nothing melodramatic attitude. Although he will go onto fight, we know he is a man of feeling, a man in emotional pain in losing the "best thing in his life".

In order to reinstate the father and son bond, Michael has to realize his father is not just a violent action man but a caring and nurturing father. Michael finds letters (from Lincoln) in his mother's bedroom that were hidden from him his entire life. A single piano score is used here and cross-cutting between a close-up of his face to his father's driving on the highway again draw the pair together. Now understanding his father is indeed emotional, caring, nurturing it is Michael's mission to save the father and son bond. Michael steals one of his grandfather's jeeps (an iconic U.S. car usually associated with machoness) and, using the driving skills Lincoln taught him, drives the jeep to meet his father, who is heading to the arm-wrestling competition. Chased by his grandfather's henchmen, Michael has become a mini-action hero. In this regard, it takes the mode of action to draw the pair together. Of course, Michael *does* make it and bursting through a crowd of bustling people, he sees his father. Diegetic sounds fade and a soft piano score draws on their emotion. Through close-ups the two exchange hugs and Lincoln then enters the semi-finals.

The final arm-wrestling match pits Lincoln against Bob "Bull" Hurley (Rick Zumwalt). "It's David verses Goliath" says a commentator, rehearsing *Rocky IV*'s dialogue. Extreme close-ups chronicle the battle. As in *Rocky IV*, the film also cross-cuts between the father and son. After four minutes and twelve seconds of rapid cuts between bulging biceps and labored faces, accompanied by grunts of pain and Michael's cheers, Lincoln wins. He

holds his son above his head like a trophy. Stallone's character morphs from a loner/warrior into a caring, nurturing father. Michael even tells Lincoln they should start a business, "Son and Hawk". Lincoln disagrees: "How about Hawk and Son?" He has taught – and learned from – his son that being a working class action hero means knowing how to switch back to being a normal, caring, nurturing father. As the action hero finds his inner nurturing abilities this champions the caring liberal father. Yet, by him driving away with his son with the last words "Hawk and Son" (without the mother – who seemingly died) demonstrates a reinstatement of traditional patriarchal authority. This reinstatement of traditional patriarchy came with a price, however; as the film demonstrates, men can no longer simply provide and protect to be held as heads of the family unit, they also need to care. As a strong arm wrestling champion and a caring father, Lincoln proves the switch between fighter and father is the recipe for a successful action father.

Arnold Schwarzenegger: The Matrix Family: Commando

All that matters now is Jenny

- John Matrix (Arnold Schwarzenegger)

In Schwarzenegger's earliest films his characters do not manifest the caring or emotional sides that Rocky and Lincoln Hawk do. In *Stay Hungry* (dir. Bob Rafelson, 1976), the first movie in which he has a significant role, he is even asked whether his character is gay, though he is clearly heterosexual and one of the more sympathetic, if oddball, characters around. In *Pumping Iron* (dir. George Butler and Robert Fiore, 1977), he is portrayed as an individual and a loner: "I can hide my feelings under my muscles", he proclaims. In real life, his individualistic drive gave him the ability to win Mr. Universe. Eventually starring in films such as *Conan the Barbarian* (dir. John Milius, 1982) and *The Terminator* (dir. James Cameron, 1984), Schwarzenegger's association with strength, power, and individuality made him one of the foremost 1980s action heroes.

Commando exploded onto the cinema screens after Schwarzenegger's triple header of heroic fantasy – *Conan the Barbarian*, *Conan the Destroyer* (dir. Richard Fleischer, 1984), and *Red Sonja* (dir. Richard Fleischer, 1985). These three films type-cast Schwarzenegger as a mighty warlord who slays the bad guys in scantily clad clothing. In *The Terminator*, Schwarzenegger played a villain who is a mechanical killing machine. But Schwarzenegger's on-screen image began to change with *Commando*. In the film Schwarzenegger plays more of a regular guy, i.e. he shows more emotion than Conan or the Terminator do. Whereas Conan and the T-800 are simply retributive men, Matrix is not. Tasker comments: "*Commando* goes to great lengths to present Schwarzenegger/Matrix as 'well adjusted'. Matrix is, in the credit sequence which pictures him with his daughter, seen to be a good father" (1993b: 84). This is as far as Tasker takes her analysis of *Commando* however; instead she focuses on Schwarzenegger's 1990s fathering roles in films such as *Kindergarten Cop* and *Terminator 2*. I aim to expand on this idea of being a well-adjusted father as although the fathering themes in *Commando* are minimal, perhaps merely echoing the successful *Rocky* films or, other fatherhood films of the 1980s, it still offers evidence that Schwarzenegger's hulking bodybuilder frame could be a more compassionate and emotional figure in the 1980s than one would expect.

In *Commando*, Matrix has one mission – to save his child, Jenny (Alyssa Milano). The capture/rescue narrative binds the plot more closely to an action adventure tradition than the *Rocky* franchise films do, but it simultaneously foregrounds family, emotion, and sentimentality. Again, however, critics largely focused on the film's action, overlooking family and fatherhood. The poster art confirms the film's action predilections: Matrix/Schwarzenegger stands, muscles tensed, strapped with grenades and covered in war

paint. The tag-line - "Somewhere, somehow, someone's going to pay"³³ - rests above his head.

Those critics who mentioned, even in passing, Matrix's fatherhood, acknowledged "the existence of another language, another logic" (Altman 1992: 34). *Entertainment Weekly's* Ty Burr is one such critic. He recognizes the father and daughter themes but, as others do, argues it goes against the film's charm: "Worse, *Commando* attempts to make Arnold over into a loving father figure: It gives him a young daughter ... and lets the two frolic with laughably dewy innocence under the opening credits" (1996: online). This review indicates that, as was the case with Stallone's *Over the Top*, critics expect to see an action hero conform to genre expectations i.e. killing, fighting, bleeding and not nurturing, caring and loving. Still, for Burr to point out that *Commando's* attempted to make Schwarzenegger into a loving father proves that he was at least taking note that the film differs from Schwarzenegger's earlier efforts.

Matrix is introduced in a low angle shot as energetic electronic music plays. He carries a tree on his shoulder and a gigantic chainsaw in his hand. He stands perched, biceps bulging as sunlight plays over his muscles. A point-of-view shows him looking towards his home nestled within a mountain range, far from civilization. The shot is at a similar position (angle, distance) to the shot of the white picket house we have seen previously when its owner, Matrix's old partner, was killed with his family. Is he a loner or does he, too, have a family?

The next point-of-view shot shows Matrix looking towards animals (a deer and a rabbit) running through the woodlands. As the camera cuts back to his face he does not smile or flinch. Instead he looks angered by the animals; he may even kill them. Suddenly, the camera switches to another point-of-view shot as an unknown entity lurks behind Matrix. He

³³ Original poster art can be found at <<http://www.impawards.com/1985/commando.html>>.

has, like the deer, become the hunted. An expressive use of non-diegetic music relays suspense as does the use of a stalker cam³⁴. As the stalker gets to within arm's length of Matrix the big man holds up a silver axe, checking the reflection to see what is behind him. The background music builds to a crescendo with steel drums crashing, suggesting there will be bloodshed. However, Matrix pivots, drops his axe and embraces his child. The background music switches to an elating orchestral score.

As he hugs and kisses his daughter exclaiming, "I love you", a montage sequence begins with the two fishing and eating ice cream. Matrix feeds food to a deer, demonstrating that he does not kill innocent animals but instead nurtures them – as he does Jenny. Like Rocky in his scenes of fathering, Matrix wears clothes that allow him to become more than a muscle-man. His polo shirt is even pink, a color associated with femininity, love, beauty and cuteness (Prinz 2004: 132), (Frueh 2008: 320). He is not a spectacle to be looked at or a fighter. In discussing this scene Lichtenfeld notes:

The father and daughter relationship ... will drive the films captivity-rescue scenario, but also make room for masculinity to be reinvigorated later – specifically, through other montages that link Schwarzenegger's physique with weapons and the preparations he makes for his private war (2004: 82).

A switch is coming. Jenny makes a comment about Boy George, and Matrix replies: "Why don't they just call him girl George? ... It would cut all the confusion". Clearly this 1980s action hero is at odds with effeminization: macho is the only form of masculinity that he can understand. Tasker notes that: "the muscular action hero was, for some, a figure who represented the antithesis of the "new man", himself a creation of advertising in the early 1980s, and the feminist gains he supposedly represented" (1993b: 1). Jenny counters his homophobic comment with: "Oh Dad, that's so old". She is more advanced than he is when it

³⁴ Films such as *Halloween* (dir. John Carpenter, 1978) and *Friday the 13th* (dir. Sean S. Cunningham, 1980) popularized the use of a steady-cam to capture the killer's point of view. Audiences familiar with such films would easily see the similarities.

comes to accepting gender and sexual diversity and tries to cure her father of his old-fashioned ways.

The furnishings of Matrix's home further cast doubt on how macho he really is. Even with no wife (who died years previous) there are still vases filled with flowers. Perhaps Matrix is more in touch with his feminine side than he would like to admit, as "flowers in general, symbolize femininity, innocence, manifestation, love and the soul" (Webster 2008: 37). He gazes affectionately at an "I love you, Dad" message attached to the refrigerator. His guns, knives, and other destructive objects are locked away in an outside shed. Like Rocky or Lincoln Hawk, Matrix has two sides, as the film will show. Although apparently contradictory roles, fighting and fatherhood are both important to his character. Written by Steven E. de Souza, the writer of *Die Hard*³⁵, this film also has the protagonist examining a photograph of his daughter in his wallet. Keeping the wallet with him at all times proves Matrix wants to be recognized as a father, it is a role he keeps close to his heart, not one he throws away when he picks up a gun, grenade or bazooka. As with McClane, close-ups draw on Matrix's emotional turmoil when he looks at the image of his child. He clearly loves, cares, and finds solace in his role as father. During an emotional moment of looking at the photograph he is with Cindy (Rae Dawn Chong), an off-duty flight attendant whom he initially "kidnaps" to be his chauffeur. Handing the photograph to Cindy he proves he is a father, not simply a massive killing machine. After this exchange Cindy no longer fears the big man - the role of father has seemingly normalized his persona. He then introduces himself to her as "John", an everyman's name if there ever was one. His enemies, in contrast, address him only by his surname: Matrix. It evokes something mathematical, inhuman, whether a metal matrix compound or a data matrix associated with technology, computing, and algebra.

³⁵ John McTiernan was originally going to make *Commando 2*, but Arnold Schwarzenegger turned the role offer down. *Commando 2* was transformed into *Die Hard*; Schwarzenegger was the first actor offered the title role, but he again declined. Eventually Bruce Willis would get the part after it had been offered to Sylvester Stallone, Burt Reynolds, Harrison Ford, Mel Gibson and Richard Gere.

In many scenes, moreover, Matrix is in emotional turmoil. When he first sees Jenny tied up and gagged by the villains, he spasms violently, a Frankenstein's monster shocked by a bolt of electricity. Once he sees her squirm in pain and is told that she will be harmed if he does not "calm down", a close-up emphasizes his dejection, fear, and vulnerability. His whole life has been spent protecting, guarding, and sacrificing himself for others. Now that he has a daughter, he chooses a rural lifestyle that he thinks will be better for his daughter because it is away from danger. When the villains attack, he returns to his destructive ways to protect her. The Manichean opposition of traits and options is typical of melodrama.

Melodrama is indeed, typically, not only a moralistic drama but the drama of morality: it strives to find, to articulate, to demonstrate, to "prove" the existence of a moral universe which, though put into question, masked by villainy and perversions of judgment, does exist and can be made to assert its presence and its categorical force among men (Brooks 1976: 20).

One of the final scenes even presents Matrix as emotionally vulnerable because of his paternal instincts. First we see numerous close-ups of his body as he fires off rounds, smashes windows, breaks plants, and generally destroys everything and anything in his path. He kills Arius the Dictator (Dan Hedaya) by hurling him through a glass window. Soon after, Jenny's voice is heard off-screen, shouting, "Daddy! Daddy!" A reaction shot suddenly shows Matrix looking worried, scared, and thus vulnerable. Distracted, he tries to embrace his child, only to be shot in the arm by Bennett. This is one of the only scenes where Matrix is actually hurt by his foes but adds to the image of his vulnerability.

Like *Rocky IV* and *Over the Top*, in the final sequences of *Commando* our hero chooses the role of father over that of a hard-bodied fighter. The ending unites him with Cindy and Jenny in the equivalent of a nuclear family. The final shot frames Matrix and Jenny together in a medium two shot. In the background in deep focus the destruction Matrix has left behind him is visible. "Leave anything for us?" asks Major General Franklin Kirby (James Olson). Matrix replies, "Just bodies". The comment resembles the one-liners

Schwarzenegger delivers in monotone in other films, and perhaps shows that he will be ready for action again soon. For now, he walks away from the battlefield carrying his child, only to be told by his Commander, "I'd like you to start up your unit again, John. All it would take is your coming back". But after looking at his child, Matrix replies, "This was the last time".

As Matrix and Jenny walk away from the camera, again in medium two shot, deep focus again reveals the vast landscape. However, instead of destroyed buildings on fire, burnt bodies, and an array of guns scattered around, this shot shows a calm sea. Power Station's "We Fight For Love" ballad kicks in, with lyrics such as: "I will protect you. Nothing can hurt you. No storm clouds gathering terrify". Matrix has found meaning and solace in being a protective father. The music continues. Matrix boards a white seaplane with Jenny and Cindy. He has fulfilled his role as father, found a mother for his daughter and re-created a traditional nuclear family. Much like Rocky, Matrix has become the protectors of women and children. The character softens Schwarzenegger's star image. In effect *Commando* is the first action film where Schwarzenegger plays a more family-friendly character.

Conclusion:

Stallone and Schwarzenegger as Fathers in 1980s Hollywood Cinema

In this chapter I have established that the 1980s action hero, and in particular some of the action heroes played by Stallone and Schwarzenegger, can be defined as both fathers and fighters. As shown Stallone adopted the role of father and fighter more frequently, reasons for this include his ability his earlier 1970s Rocky films. These films, with their footings in melodrama, allowed Stallone to display a range of emotions and, because of his Oscar nomination and BAFTA award, saw him gain respect as a credible diverse actor. In contrast Schwarzenegger became known through his muscles in the 1970s. His films *Stay Hungry* and *Pumping Iron* display a man focused on physical perfection. He is anything but emotional

and caring. This made him the perfect specimen to perform as Conan and the T-800. As shown however, the mid 1980s did see him soften his on-screen image in *Commando*. This film demonstrates that even before the 1990s, a shift occurred from the representation of a muscular masculinity to a more internalized one, with more emphasis on the “ethical dilemmas, emotional traumas, and psychological goals of the heroes rather than on their skill with weapons and their ability to defeat villains” (Gates 2006: 145). As I have shown Stallone and Schwarzenegger sometimes express emotions; they do not merely show off their muscles.

In Stallone and Schwarzenegger’s films melodramatic excess surfaces in both moments of violence and moments of emotion. Most important to my analysis is these films’ insistence on melodramatic plotting involving fathers and children. It is not necessary to choose between the two applications of melodrama – the first describing stylistic excess through spectacularly violent effects³⁶, the second applied to heightened emotionality (as in the case of 1940s and 1950s women’s films)³⁷ – in order to discuss certain of Stallone and Schwarzenegger’s films. Here the action hero has emotional sides.

Many critics, however, have overlooked the softer sides of the 1980s action hero. Lawrence L. Habermehl, for example, postulates that with *Rocky III* and *Rocky IV*: “The violence is the glue that holds everything else together, and without it there would be very little to sustain audience interest” (1995: 120). More recently, however, Huffer has demonstrated that women respond to Stallone as star thanks to “Stallone’s portrayal of characters who use their strength to protect those that they care for” (2007: online). Other women indicate that they enjoy his “strong yet sensitive roles” and state that they like the fact that he plays a “good father and husband” (Ibid.). Perhaps it is because he was appreciated as

³⁶ See for example Neale 1993: 69.

³⁷ See for example Gates 2001: 60.

action star *and* a family man – or as an action star who was also a family man, that led to Stallone's success. Since he was ranked as the 13th highest paid actor in the 1980s, Schwarzenegger also wanted a piece of the fatherly action³⁸.

Utilizing fathering themes in *Commando*, Schwarzenegger became more of a regular guy than he had been in his previous roles. *Twins* (dir. Ivan Reitman, 1988) and *Junior* (dir. Ivan Reitman, 1994) would showcase further his skills as a father. Whether or not Stallone and Schwarzenegger's audiences would consider these films as melodramas is difficult to determine. Their combination of hyperbolic violence and father-child bonding sets them apart from their other 1980s action films. Here the hero switches back and forth between fighter and father, but, the protagonist is always mindful that the ideal nuclear family is a male-headed one. The father must prove himself worthy of being the family patriarch, moreover, in each film, by being tortured in the gym or on the battlefield. By never giving up and never backing down he eventually comes out "on top". His family look at him with awe perhaps because Rocky Balboa, Lincoln Hawk, and John Matrix choose being in a family over being an individualized action hero, in the eyes of Don Corleone, they do become real men.

³⁸With 13 films grossing a total of \$765,187,296 and an average of \$58,860,561 per film, Stallone was one of the most successful action heroes in the 1980s. Schwarzenegger, in contrast, was placed as 97th in 1980s Top 100 Stars at the Box Office. See <www.the-numbers.com>.

*Chapter Two: Invasion of the Hard Body Snatchers:**A Focus on Soft Fathers in 1990s Action*

All that I have learned, everything I feel, all of this and more I have bequeathed to you my son.

- Jor-El, *Superman* (dir. Richard Donner, 1978)

Chapter one addressed the 1980s action hero rarely being discussed as a father or family man. This was due, among other things, to critics understanding the action hero as representing a tough, individualized, powerful, white, hegemonic masculinity in an era when masculinity was in crisis. At the dawn of the 1990s and the so-called “Information Age”³⁹ the traditional 1980s hypermasculine action hero began to fade, as the early 1990s *Simpsons* episode, “Last Exit to Springfield”⁴⁰ illustrates. In its opening, McBain (a comic parody of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Willis’ John McClain) breaks out of an ice sculpture to kill a gang boss at a dinner party. Wielding an Uzi, he racks up a *Commando* style kill count. Our hero has thrown out a cheesy one-liner, “Ice to see you”, flexed his muscles, killed the bad guys, and saved the day. However, parodying the expiry of the 1980s muscle man, the gang boss hands McBain a poisoned salmon puff, which he eats. McBain squirms in pain, the villain laughs, and McBain dies.

Jeffords in particular maintains the action hero changed because of political, social and economic factors: “the social order that had seemed to be so smoothly instituted under Ronald Reagan had begun to deteriorate” (1993a: 140). With a new Republican President (Bush, Sr.) in power, a new decade looming, and no threat from the now disbanded Soviet Union, the U.S. concentrated more on domestic issues including family structures. American domestic statistics prove the dissolution of the traditional nuclear family: “from 1970 to 1990, while marriage rates declined 30 percent, divorce rates surged ahead 40 percent” (Jeynes 2002: 9). The result of these

³⁹ The 1990s is often referred to as “The Information Age” due to the rise of technologies such as the Internet.

⁴⁰ *The Simpsons* also parodies the decline of the muscular action hero in the 1994 episode “The Boy Who Knew Too Much”.

trends is that there has been a significant demographic change in the percentage of American children living with both natural parents. This social change showed that fathers lost significance to the nuclear family: “the number of female-headed families with children increased, first as a result of marital dissolution, and subsequently a result of out-of-wedlock childbearing” (Bachrach and Sonenstein 1998: online). In addition, Bruzzi points out that fathers were no longer sole or primary breadwinners, concluding: “[t]his shift in familial demographics is what some experts have argued was the catalyst for the increased interest, through the 1990s, in understanding men and fatherhood” (2005: 154).

Family and fatherhood thus became integral to the action film's narrative. The foregrounding of familial themes entailed a corresponding foregrounding of melodrama, as Gallagher comments: “The genre's most intriguing development in the 1990s was the incorporation of formal elements associated with the “female” genre of melodrama” (2006: 45). Being within the domestic space, many action heroes of the 1990s began showing signs of vulnerability and weakness. Even the most tough and individualized revealed sentimental sides. The familial disorder allowed 1990s action films to show the glories of patriarchy in a period when, because of job-losses, more female independence, and fewer father-headed households, masculinity was again in crisis⁴¹:

[W]hereas the Reagan years offered the image of a “hard body” to contrast directly to the “soft body” of the Carter years, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw a rearticulation of that hard body, not for a return to the soft body but for a rearticulation of masculine strength and power through internal, personal, and family-orientated values (Jeffords 1994: 13).⁴²

⁴¹ For further comments on the men's movement of the 1990s which saw organizations like the National Fatherhood Initiative and the National Practitioners Network putting fatherhood responsibility at the centre of the national agenda, see Gavanas 2002: 213 – 244.

⁴² Both the hard body and the soft body “are overlapping components of the Reagan Revolution, compromising on the one hand a strong militaristic foreign-policy position and on the other hand a domestic regime of an economy

Critics finally took notice, recognizing that Sylvester Stallone's and Arnold Schwarzenegger's on-screen personas were more like human beings than superheroes. In many films of the 1990s they even played family men and fathers⁴³. As Jeffords notes: "In 1991 the hard bodies of the 1980s seemed to have been successfully rejected in mainstream Hollywood films.... [F]athering was a key characterization and narrative device for displaying the "new" Hollywood masculinities" (1993a: 254)⁴⁴. This is a reading further supported by Tasker, who claims: "The 1990s feature men who learn to be good fathers and in the process save themselves" (2004: 258). As we have seen, both played fathers in the 1980s as well.

The concept of rearticulation will be a key theme in this chapter. It will be addressed in the next section firstly through a discussion of the background socio-political crisis affecting masculinity, and secondly through an overview of changes in the action genre. Subsequent sections will look at how these reformations impacted Schwarzenegger and Stallone, first examining the five 1990s films that cast Schwarzenegger's characters as surrogate or actual fathers, then studying the sole 1990s film, *Rocky V*, where Stallone again engages with his son, and with a surrogate son, too.

and a set of values dependant on the centrality of fatherhood" (Jeffords 1994: 13). Jeffords argues, further, that Regan could balance "hard-bodied" militarism and warm-hearted familiarism but that Bush could not. Yet Bush put family values at the cornerstone of his campaign in a speech at the National Religious Broadcasters' convention in Washington: "We are going to keep on trying to strengthen the American families a lot more than the Waltons and a lot less like the Simpsons" (*New Yorker* Dec 7, 1992: 74).

⁴³ The 1990s was obsessed with action dads. Van Damme opened the decade with *Lionheart* (dir. Sheldon Lettich, 1990). He continued playing fathers in *Nowhere to Run* (dir. Robert Harmon, 1993) and has a family of his own to protect in *Time Cop* (dir. Peter Hyams, 1994) and *Sudden Death* (dir. Peter Hyams, 1995). Bruce Willis continued his role as John McClain in two *Die Hard* sequels (dir. Renny Harlin, 1990; dir. John McTierman, 1995). He is also an action dad in *Last Man Standing* (dir. Walter Hill, 1995) and *Armageddon* (dir. Michael Bay, 1998).

⁴⁴ See for example Matthews 2000.

Iron Johns, New Men, Macho Movies

Fathering was defined as the essence of masculinity in the 1990s. It was viewed as an arena where men could assert themselves in a post-feminist era. Yet, argues Christopher Strain, sons saw their fathers as heroes in the 1980s, winning wars, defeating enemies, and looking fearless and muscular. By the 1990s this sense of awe and admiration began to slip. As fathering instead became equated with aspects traditionally associated primarily to motherhood, like the self-sacrificing desire to care for, provide for, and protect children, fathers and sons lost their sense of certainty and purpose (Strain 2010: 30). Such changing definitions of masculinity saw an increase in books such as Robert Bly's *Iron John*, a book about male maturation and fatherhood. In his comparison between *Iron John* and *Fight Club* (dir. David Fincher, 1999), David Greven comments that both share "an earnest attack on, or counterattack against, what our culture ... has done to us: made men soft, vulnerable, weak, soulless" (2009: 163). Often bestsellers, traditional masculinist books⁴⁵ argued that the women's liberation movement "was to blame for the disintegration of masculinity and family values" (Bruzzi 2005: 155)⁴⁶. In response to marketing shifts, a "New Man" emerged.

Gates maintains in consequence that images of the 1980s "retributive man" became viewed as negative representations of masculinity. Tasker's definition of the 1980s hero as "a hysterical and unstable image of manhood" (1993b: 80) similarly sees the spectacular figure of the bodybuilder as artificial and excessive. In contrast, the "New Man" was a consumer of fashion, was emotional, sensitive, and romantic, and above all showed that "narcissistic and nurturing tendencies came to be considered positive" (Gates 2006: 130-131). Importantly, however,

⁴⁵ Bruzzi cites David Thomas' *Not Guilty: In Defence of the Modern Man* (1993), Geoff Dench's *The Frog Prince and the Problem of Men* (1994), and Neil Lyndon's *No More Sex War: The Failure of Feminism* (1992) (2005: 71).

⁴⁶ See Jeffords 1993b, Modleski 1991, Gallagher 2006, and Pfeil 1995, who all concur with this view.

Michael A. Messner notes, rather than becoming too feminine, professional white men crafted a “hybrid” masculinity that made “toughness, decisiveness, and hardness ... still central to hegemonic masculinity, but ... now normally linked with situationally appropriate moments of compassion and, sometimes, vulnerability” (2007: 466). Developing “New Man” personas⁴⁷, whilst still maintaining their hard-bodied traits, Stallone and Schwarzenegger, in their character’s roles of 1990s action adventure, portrayed this hybrid Messner denotes.

In film, traits of the 1980s action hero were also retained yet rearticulated. Fred Pfeil defines 1991 as the “The Year of Living Sensitivity”⁴⁸ because films that year featured sensitive and emotional protagonists who did “not fight back” (1995: 38) unlike the heroes of the previous decade in, for example, *Die Hard* and *Lethal Weapon*. Jeffords similarly calls 1991 the year of the “transformed U.S. man”, referring to *Beauty and the Beast* (dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, 1991) and *Boyz n the Hood* (dir. John Singleton, 1991) (1993a: 245). This shift in emphasis to fatherhood and family anchors 1990s action films. Where the 1980s action film was seen as centering on the “extreme physicality and firepower of the 1980s hero” (Lichtenfeld 2004: 164), now the hero’s feats sometimes became “over the top”, making him a parody of himself⁴⁹.

To appeal to a wider audience, 1990s action films presented violent sequences as “exaggerated simulations of real violence”, rendering it cartoon-like so that “viewers – especially young viewers – would not find that violence objectionable” (Gallagher 2006: 47). By incorporating a distance between cinematic representation and its social referent, one that a child

⁴⁷ Stallone and Schwarzenegger could be deemed professional white men as they became recognized for their chain of Planet Hollywood restaurants, with Bruce Willis. They also appeared in magazines, discussing their charity work, fashion, literature, and art.

⁴⁸ Pfeil points out that 1991 gave audiences *City Slickers* (dir. Ron Underwood, 1991), *Regarding Henry* (dir. Mike Nichols, 1991), *The Doctor* (dir. Randa Haines, 1991), and *The Fisher King* (dir. Terry Gilliam, 1991) (2005: 37).

⁴⁹ See for example Jeffords 1993b: 176.

could recognize, the action film now becomes a source of family entertainment⁵⁰. Gallagher continues, noting that in the 1990s: "R-rated action films are increasingly a rare commodity in U.S. multiplexes.... [R]eplacing [them] are action blockbusters promoted to viewers across age ranges, not just traditionally 18-34 age demographics but also preteens, parents, and avid film goers entering middle age" (2006: 45). The action film also toned down violence because of the growing societal debate over the effects of movie and television violence. Christopher Ames argues that Michael Medved's bestseller, *Hollywood vs. America*⁵¹, "provided the most publicized attack on violent entertainment and the industry that sponsored it" (1997: 264). The book concludes that violence in the cinema has a negative impact on American culture⁵². 1980s spectacular violence would have to be replaced by other things, such as character development, to fuel interest.

The 1980s action hero could adopt the role of husband, and, more importantly for this project, the role of father. Where 1980s hard body action films masked fatherhood by presenting spectacle, thrills, and sensationalism, a significant set of 1990s action films put families at risk only to have the father save them. With the family now central to the narrative, as opposed to 1980s films which often focused on isolated, individual heroes, these films admittedly often feature traditional families (Schneider 1999: 4). At other times, however, these family structures are enacted by surrogate parents and children: a sign of the changing times. And this set of films

⁵⁰ Towards the end of the 1980s action films were designed with children in mind, as the toys that accompany them demonstrate. Lichtenfeld states that: "John Matrix action figures were... aimed at an even younger market" and "*Rambo: First Blood Part II*, spawned a tremendous number of similar products including toy weapons and walkie-talkies, sandals for both boys and girls, candy, a Saturday morning cartoon, and a Carolco toy line branded as "The Force of Freedom"" (2004: 85).

⁵¹ Medved's book was an international bestseller. It formulates an argument about "film violence" by using public opinion polls from 1989 to 1991. The book refers to studies such as *Watching America: What Television Tells Us about Our Lives* and a 1990s conference on "The Impact of the Media on Children and the Family" (Medved 1992).

⁵² Joe Mathews points out that in 1988 *The National Coalition on Television Violence* picked out Schwarzenegger as a main perpetrator of excessive violence because he "averaged a staggering 109 violent acts per screen hour" (2006: 50).

can be also understood as eradicating a traditional division of gender roles according to which the emotional support of children was supposed to be a female task.

As key participants in this kind of action, Schwarzenegger principally, but Stallone also if only in *Rocky V*, played sensitive father heroes in the 1990s. Each modified his previous image, sometimes playing in comedies, sometimes in straight-up action films. Often their characters talked more; frequently they dressed better. Off screen publicity complemented their filmic make-overs. Schwarzenegger found himself on the front cover of *GQ Magazine* in 1990 but, unlike previous front page spreads in *Muscle and Fitness* (August 1984), he now wore a stylish blue and white polo shirt and cream trousers. The article title read: “Arnold Fit for Fatherhood”⁵³. *Esquire* (1989) ran a similar cover story about Stallone with the title: “Stallone without Fists, Tanks, Bows, Arrow, Cudgels, Sabres, Flags, or Commies” while *Vogue* (1991) promoted pictures of Stallone and his art collection noting: “Stallone is smarter, taller, and funnier than most people give him credit”⁵⁴. But their films provide the best illustrations of the kinds of changes to 1990s action masculinity. Both play characters who engage in greater self-reflexivity. Both play characters who are tough, but caring. That Schwarzenegger stars in so many such films explains why during the 1990s he eclipsed Stallone at the box office⁵⁵.

The films discussed throughout this chapter concentrate more on Schwarzenegger’s content of films in the 1990s. This is due to his dedication and consistency performing as an on-screen father. Schwarzenegger in the 1990s would seem like a cultural chameleon, and because of his

⁵³ Again in 1993 Arnold was seen on the front cover of *GQ Magazine*. This time he is seen wearing a white tuxedo, black bow-tie under the title “Imperial Arnold”. *GQ* is of course a magazine aimed at style for men – hair, clothing, after shave, beauty products. Clearly a magazine to attract the “New Man” audience.

⁵⁴ See also Tasker 1993b: 234.

⁵⁵ With 11 movies grossing a total of \$1,048,147,082, Arnold Schwarzenegger was 24th in the 1990 “Top 100 Stars at the Box Office”. Stallone dropped from his 13th spot in the 1980s and found himself off the top 100 list.

ascension into American politics would seemingly adopt softer, gentler roles⁵⁶. Stallone on the other hand avoided fathering roles and instead opted, with the addition of a female companion, to become more of an individualized action hero. While Stallone would try to adapt similar softer roles in the early 1990s with *Oscar* (dir. John Landis and, 1991), *Stop or my Mom will Shoot!* (dir. Roger Spottiswoode, 1992) and *Rocky V*, all these films were flops at the box office. The failure to entertain as a softer, caring male forced him back into traditional action roles, witnessed in *Cliffhanger* (dir. Renny Harlin, 1993) and *Judge Dredd* (dir. Danny Cannon, 1995). *Rocky V* is significant to this chapter, however, as the film develops fathering themes discussed from *Rocky III* and *Rocky IV*.

While Schwarzenegger's roles as fathers were not all successful at the box office, they still demonstrate his willingness to adapt to societal and domestic changes in America, especially in regard to male parenting. My focus on Schwarzenegger's films will also go beyond *Kindergarten Cop* and *Terminator 2* to focus on his output of father themes in the mid-1990s⁵⁷. Although *Kindergarten Cop* and *Terminator 2* are iconic examples of his changing on-screen image, they are excessively discussed by the likes of Jeffords (1993a), Tasker (1993b), and Gates (2006) and more. In studying *Last Action Hero*, *True Lies*, and *Jingle all the Way*, this work is motivated with originality. Through the latter two films even, he adopts not surrogate but *real* fatherhood, as he does in *Commando*. The films here will be studied in chronological order, firstly beginning with the Schwarzenegger films and then moving onto Stallone's *Rocky V*.

⁵⁶ For more information regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger's change on screen as a tool to burrow his way into U.S. politics see Messner (2007).

⁵⁷ In *End of Days* (dir. Peter Hyams, 1999) Schwarzenegger's character (Jericho Cane) has a wife and daughter. However, they are killed, which is witnessed through flashback. This forces the film's narrative to focus on Jericho's psychological struggles as a widower. His 1994 comedy film *Junior*, although mentioned in passing, will also not be discussed. This is due to my study being grounded in the action-adventure genre.

*The Last Action Hero?**Arnold Schwarzenegger as Fit Father Hero in 1990s Action Cinema*

Your dad is not mad at you. He loves you more than anything in the whole, wide world. You're his all-time favorite person.

- Howard Langston, *Jingle All the Way*

Schwarzenegger's image "has almost exclusively been defined through the body" (Tasker 1993b: 82), not only as the site of aggression and suffering, but also as the ultimate icon of masculinity. But he began to change his image already at the end of the 1980s. He believed that other hypermasculine males of 1990s "took themselves far too seriously" (Blitz and Kraniewicz 2004: xii). The highly successful comedy *Twins* (dir. Ivan Reitman, 1988) was the first reformulation of his on-screen image from body to voice. Here Schwarzenegger plays the role of Julius Benedict, a character who is rarely seen shirtless, who reads poetry, and who is sensitive and emotional. Though a flop, the 1994 comedy *Junior* (dir. Ivan Reitman) went further still. Here Schwarzenegger is pregnant. He cries, becomes worried about his weight, and at one point even declares: "I'm all woman". Commenting on late 1980s, such as *3 Men and a Baby* and 1990s "kinder, gentler" films in general, Tania Modleski points out: "male power is actually consolidated through cycles of crisis and resolution, whereby men ultimately deal with the threat of female power by incorporating it" (1991: 7)⁵⁸. As fatherhood is often presented in the 1990s with a distant mother figure, relying on the individuality of the father to prove his heroism, the father-hero characters must exhibit stereotypical qualities of both parents to succeed.

In the 1980s, as we have seen, Schwarzenegger played a father only in *Commando*. In the 1990s, however, he moved into parenting with a (gentler) vengeance, playing real or surrogate fathers in *Kindergarten Cop*, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, *True Lies*, *Last Action Hero*, and

⁵⁸ For further comments see Modleski's analysis of *Three Men and a Baby* where she discusses topics of "womb envy", "male hysteria", and "castration anxiety", 1991: 76 – 89.

Jingle all the Way. The list encompasses both comedies and science fiction films. Action is the common generic denominator. That Schwarzenegger plays surrogate fathers in the three first films (*Kindergarten Cop*, *Terminator 2*, and *Last Action Hero*) and a biological father in the last two (*True Lies* and *Jingle all the Way*) puts surrogate families on a par with traditional, two-parent households. What Nicole Matthews points out about family comedies holds for these actions films as well. "The family implies less and less the presence of a biological father of children" (2000: 104), she writes. Crucially, moreover, "the fact that so many of these filmic fathers are not biological parents gives them an air of contemporaneity, recalling the trend to sole parent families and the spread of reproductive technologies" (2000: 107), making both kinds of fathers equally important. Whether real or surrogate, the parental bond allows Schwarzenegger's characters to show their capacity to protect and care for others and, often, to acknowledge their own need for care and protection. At the same time, all these fatherly characters are heroes.

Schwarzenegger's first surrogate father hero role is in the action comedy, *Kindergarten Cop* as Detective John Kimball. As an individualized, brutal, officer of the law, the character initially represents, in Jeffords' words, "the typical eighties action hero": "he is a loner who writes the rules as he goes along, a tough guy who needs no family or partners, a brutal violent, and unfeeling man" (1993b: 142). As a divorced cop Kimball is engulfed by dark and dingy settings of drug dens, and run-down office blocks. Classic noir tropes of low key lighting, white fog, and shadows symbolize his life of loneliness. His arch villain Cullen Crisp (Richard Tyson) even declares: "Without me, you wouldn't even have a life" and states, about him being divorced, "My old lady left because of money. Yours left because she just couldn't stand the sight of you". Clearly Kimball's lifestyle as a lone action hero is self-destructive. But once Kimball goes undercover as a kindergarten teacher, again to catch Cullen, he experiences what in

Chapter One I termed a “switch”, proclaiming: “I wish I was a kindergarten teacher... but I’m not. I’m a cop”. Once opting to become a fully fledged kindergarten teacher the film comes to life, as vibrant colors are injected onto the screen. No longer within a dark world of drugs, gangs and criminals, the film displays Kimball surrounded by trees, children and sunshine. He is also no longer alone and gains a female side kick, Detective Phoebe O’Hara (Pamela Reed). With the film seemingly coming to life through vibrant mise-en-scène and elevating music, Kimball is granted a softer persona. We find out he has a pet ferret (Larry), and he nurtures Phoebe back to health when she gets food poisoning.

Constantly smiling, laughing and enjoying his new life, Kimball learns to leave his “bad cop” behind and the children he teaches begin to adore him. Moreover, he “switches” when falling head over heels for another teacher Rachel Crisp (Penelope Ann Miller), whose son he teaches, Dominic Crisp (Joseph Cousins). Eventually he creates a nuclear family, becoming Dominic’s surrogate father and Rachel’s boyfriend. However, a twist occurs when Kimball finds out Rachel’s ex-husband is the villain he is hunting, Cullen. As the plot further unfolds Cullen breaks into the kindergarten, kidnaps Dominic and sets the school ablaze. Kimball’s new life is now under attack. Kimball readily evacuates all the children, but Dominic is left inside. He then adopts the role of protector of the nuclear family telling Rachel: “I lost my family. I should never have let it happen.... I don’t want to lose you. I don’t want to lose Dominic”. In moments of intense action Cullen holds a gun to Dominic’s head stating to Kimball “He’s my boy! You get your own family!” Kimball drops his gun, a close up displays his vulnerable and fearful face, he is no longer expendable, as in the film’s opening, he now has something to lose – his nuclear family. However, when his ferret jumps out of Dominic’s jumper and bites Cullen’s hand Kimball reaches for his gun. The ferret, which is constantly with Kimball throughout, symbolizes

his nurturing side, and for the ferret to protect him signifies that his nurturing tendencies need to continue. Picking up his side arm, Kimball takes a bullet to the leg, yet continues shooting away at Cullen, eventually winning the standoff. Kimball now adopts Cullen's family, making it his own. Saving the nuclear family grants Kimball the key to fatherhood. He is now a father hero as opposed to an individualized loner action hero.

The film is untimely about Kimball rejecting his fighter side for his father side and this transformation is displayed when comparing the film's opening with its closing. In the opening Reitman utilizes an ominous electronic score, and introduces Kimball through a low angle crane shot, which slowly pans up his hulking frame. The low angle shot displays Kimball as a man to be feared. His trench coat is also similar to that of the T-800's in *The Terminator* (dir. James Cameron, 1984) and he even wears sunglasses so his emotions are hidden. Opposing this, the end displays Kimball hobbling into the kindergarten on crutches. No longer wearing sunglasses or a trench coat, his vibrant shirt, cream trousers and damaged leg display him as an every-man. He is readily capable of feeling pain, as much as he is emotions. Surrounded by children who scream and cheer on his arrival, Rachel Crisp then greets Kimball. He picks her up, spins her around and kisses her gently in close up. An elating orchestral score then fades in and the scene edits to a medium shot. The camera pans backwards to a high angle shot and Kimball is swallowed up by the school setting and the children surrounding him. Kimball kisses Rachel again, the children cheer and a freeze frame captures this moment. Fading to black after the freeze frame signifies that Schwarzenegger, as an actor, is now locked within the role of father, protector and nurturer. This is the kinder, gentler 1990s Arnold.

Schwarzenegger's next film, *Terminator 2* shows his return to science fiction action. Schwarzenegger's Terminator character (T-800/T-101) transforms from the ultimate villain and

killing machine of the first film into John Connor's (Edward Furlong) concerned surrogate father⁵⁹. The T-800 is, in fact, even more caring and emotional than John Connor's mother, Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton). Sharon Willis comments on the change in traditional gender dynamics:

As she [Sarah] hardens, her surfaced closed like a shell, her eyes concealed by aviator sunglasses, her body draped with weapons, he softens, becoming increasingly obsessed with human emotions that he lacks. We might almost say that – to take an extreme angle on this odd couple – as she becomes increasingly “butch” the Terminator is “femme-inized” (2008: 63).

With the Terminator now “femme-inized”, Sarah recognizes that “The Terminator would never stop, it would never leave him... it would always be there. And it would never hurt him... it would die to protect him. Of all the would-be fathers who came and went over the years, this thing, this machine, was the only one who measured up”. Arguably, the T-800 is now a perfect father: he cares, nurtures, provides and protects. He/it is fierce, but also loving. This is displayed when the T-800 first meets John. Walking in slow motion John presumes this big machine is out to kill him, like he tried to with his mother in the previous film. However, shouting “Get down!” he/it embraces John and takes a magazine of bullets from the film's villain, the T-1000 (Robert Patrick). Emptying a case of roses, a symbol of love and beauty, the T-800 reveals a Winchester shotgun and blasts away at the T-1000. Encasing his/its weapon in these flowers symbolizes his/its love for John; he/it will protect him, but will also nurture and love him. By being a loving surrogate father and hard-bodied protector the T-800 displays that men should, and can, be strong figures within the family unit, even when, as in this case, it is a non-traditional one.

⁵⁹ On the (1997) Extended Special Edition DVD version of *Terminator 2*, an extra scene indicates that a literal, mechanical switch helps the T-800 to learn from its surroundings. John asks if the T-800 can “learn”. The T-800 replies: “My CPU is a neural-net processor ... a learning computer. But skynet presets the switch to “read-only” when we are sent out alone”. Sarah comments, “Doesn't want you thinking too much, huh?” John and Sarah reset the switch, allowing the T-800 to learn things like human emotions.

The T-800's surrogate son, John Connor, requests that he/it stops killing people, he/it maims them instead, showing his/its commitment to the child – as his/its primary objective as a Terminator is to destroy. Stuart Klawans suggests that Cameron thereby “offers an education of the emotions,” first by cranking up “the audience’s desire for bloodshed”, then by attempting to purge the audience of that desire “in the act of satisfying it” (qtd. in Welsh 2000: 278). Melodrama comes to the fore, but action abides. T-1000 hunts down “the family”, but the father figure, the T-800, brings about its salvation and thereby becomes the father hero, killing the T-1000. But instead of carrying on its role as protective father, it also terminates itself. The final sequence is full of pathos as slow-motion, a slow emotive electronic score and close ups are used. John begins crying, and through a low angle shot he looks up at his would-be father. The T-800 then looks down upon John insisting that he/it must “Go now”. The T-800 strokes away John’s tears as to show he/it values human life and emotion. Then, standing on a crane he/it requests that Sarah lower him into a vat of molten steel. His/its death, he/it states, is so humans cannot use the technology within him/it to create Skynet (a supercomputer from the future that’s aim is to wipe out humanity). Upon entering the vat the T-800 closes his/its fist and extends his/its thumb upwards. The signal of approval illustrates mission complete. He/it has re-claimed the glories of masculinity though being a strong, protective (and sometimes sensitive) father figure.

The new style action hero has made the ultimate sacrifice to save the nuclear family: “The inhuman Terminator must perish in order to save the human race; he must die because he is not truly alive; he must be put out of the misery that he is not quite capable of having” (Liu 1996: 60). The T-800 sacrifices himself because he cannot fully uphold the role of a father as a cyborg. He/it knows it can protect John and the family, but can never actually feel, cry, or care, which is

proven by his/its final comment: "I now know why you cry. But it is something I can never do". Emotions are essential. Hard – even cyborg – bodies have changed.

While *Kindergarten Cop* and *Terminator 2* changed Schwarzenegger's on screen image from an individualized hard body to a caring, nurturing protector early on in the 1990s, his next three films (*Last Action Hero*, *True Lies*, *Jingle All the Way*) continue his father hero role. These films (although not all successful at the box-office) are significant to this analysis, primarily because the father and child bond demonstrate Schwarzenegger's wider range of emotions. Whilst making familial themes central, as in *Kindergarten Cop* and *Terminator 2*, his next film (*Last Action Hero*) takes a more comical approach to conventional movie heroism than *Terminator 2* does and also reflects on the developing Schwarzenegger persona. By so doing, it goes further than *Kindergarten Cop*. The 1993 film is both post-modernist and post-structuralist. Breaking the fourth wall, using inter-textuality and a multitude of hybrid genre techniques, it pushes the 1990s action genre to the limit. It was, however, less successful at the box office. Centered on an enthusiastic brat, Danny Madigan (Austin O'Brien), the narrative begins in the "real" world of New York. Danny acquires a golden ticket from an aging projectionist, Frank (Art Carney) that allows him to travel into the movies and simultaneously allows film characters to travel back to the real world. As a movie hero named Jack Slater (Arnold Schwarzenegger) who moves in and out of the film and real worlds, Schwarzenegger plays a combination of action hero and surrogate father hero. Tasker comments: "if there are contradictions between the strength and violence that is associated with heroic masculinity in the cinema, and the very different nurturing qualities needed to manage family life, these are not apparent" (2004: 255) suggesting there is no distinction between "reality" and the movies.

In the film's opening Danny sits in a movie theatre (alone) watching the fictional movie *Jack Slater IV*. Eating popcorn he declares his fascination with indestructible, individualized action heroes: "Jack Slater cannot lose" he shouts. Watching an adrenalin pumping car chase scene from the film, Danny is on the edge of his seat. However, a stick of dynamite is thrown from *Jack Slater IV*, and passes through the cinema screen, rolling towards Danny in the "real" world. Running away from the explosive, Danny runs into the cinema screen – a bolt of lightning flashes, and he finds himself in the backseat of Jack Slater's car. Danny is in the movie-within-a-movie. Slater turns to Danny exclaiming "Who the hell are you?" to which Danny states "Don't shoot, I'm a kid". A close up shows Slater bemused, as he places his side-arm away from Danny's head. This exchange confirms that Slater has a soft spot for children as he will seemingly stop his aimless killing when a child is involved in the action. As they become partners fighting crime Slater is mindful that he cannot get too close to Danny. He states he prefers to "work alone" conforming to 1980s action hero traditions. Yet, like Dominic in *Kindergarten Cop* and John Connor in *Terminator 2*, the more Danny is around Slater the more this action hero changes. Danny even states "I teach you how to be vulnerable, you teach me how to be brave".

The plot unfolds when Slater's nemesis, Benedict (Charles Dance), acquires the golden ticket from Danny. Benedict discovers he can travel into the "real" world stating: "In this world the bad guys can win!" To stop Benedict's evil plot, Slater and Danny also travel into the "real" world. Danny alerts him: "Look! Things work differently here, please be careful", rendering the action hero vulnerable. Slater ignores the warning. Egotistically, he still wants to prove that he enjoys spectacular, heroic powers. First he shoots a car. It does not explode. Then he punches a

car window only to scream “Ow! That hurt”. Close ups reveal Slater in pain, scared, and emotional: he now has to abide by the laws of “real” world normality.

When Slater is introduced to Danny’s mother, Irene (Mercedes Ruehl) he hides behind a wall. After a pause, he enters the frame like a nervous boy by poking his head around their front door. He is emotionally vulnerable. Shaking Irene’s hand, politely stating “Hello, Miss Madigan”, he does not seem like the man who in preceding scenes was flirting with attractive women in a video-rental store. As the scene continues Slater takes his place at the head of the dining room table establishing himself as a pseudo father figure. He even talks with Irene about classical music. She tells him that he looks uncannily like movie star Jack Slater, “only you are much more intelligent”. Clearly, Irene has accepted him as a man of the house. As Danny tries to engage in their conversation the camera places itself outside of the kitchen door framing all three are together. This creates an image of the ideal nuclear family at breakfast. Slater then adopts the role of authoritative disciplinarian by reprimanding Danny, “Why did you go to the movies at night? You will make your mother worried”. Now he is siding with Irene as an erstwhile parent might. Irene begins cooking, asking what kind of eggs “the boys” would like for breakfast. A widow, she is once again a domesticated and traditional mother. Slater meanwhile has become humanized; he is no longer connected to the spectacular environment of the movies, he is a family friendly man. Danny snaps angrily at his mother, “You turned him into a wimp!” Although he secretly wants a father, his wants his action hero to remain a tough guy and a loner.

The image of Slater in the kitchen is very different to the depiction of Slater in the opening of *Last Action Hero*. The film’s opening presents Slater in *Jack Slater III*, as Danny is watching it before the new release of *Jack Slater IV*. In this movie-within-a-movie, Schwarzenegger plays the protagonist: a bad ass cop. Slater walks over the roofs of police cars

smoking a cigar. He enters a hostage situation in a school. Watching the film, again alone in the movie theater, Danny gazes in fascination at his idol who, wearing snakeskin cowboy boots, walks to a heavy guitar riff. The hostage situation in the movie-within-a-movie has been set up by Ripper (Tom Noonan) because he knows that action hero Slater will risk his life to rescue his son, Andrew Slater (Ryan Todd). But Andrew dies, and the film reel goes out of focus. In the theater, Danny shouts “focus” and runs: he wants Slater to focus on him, to believe that he will replace Slater’s dead, onscreen son.

When Danny goes into the movies to be with Slater, the father son connection is established. We learn little however of Slater’s deceased son in his filmic world *Jack Slater IV*. A brief scene of a photograph in his cupboard is the only sign that Slater is in emotional turmoil over the death. Yet, once in the “real” world Slater shows his vulnerability and emotions, particularly in losing his son. As Slater sits with Danny and Frank, the projectionist, he becomes bewildered by the truth of dual, “real”, and fictional existence, he confesses:

How would you like to have been made up? Your job, your marriage, your kids? Let us push his son off the building. You will have eternal nightmares, but you are fictional, so who cares? I do not find it new and exciting that my whole life is a damn movie.

Switching between the first and third person, talking about himself self-consciously, Slater is confused by his identity. In the movie world he represents the archetypal 1980s action hero: he is hard-bodied, individualized, and void of emotion. However, he has been unsuccessful in rescuing his own child. He has flaws. Beneath his heroics, he is unhappy and lonely. A climatic scene occurs when, brought back to the “real” world, Slater meets Arnold Schwarzenegger, who plays the role of Jack Slater in the movies. This self-reflexive moment occurs at the premiere of *Jack Slater IV*. As himself, Schwarzenegger declares: “You are the best look-alike I have seen. If you

get to L.A., call my office. We can get you jobs...” However, Slater recalls aggressively: “I really do not like you. You have brought me nothing but pain”. Aside from the obvious physical pain the 1980s action hero endured, Slater also describes the deeper, more meaningful pain which type casting has created for the action hero. He feels a “converse sense of limitation and being trapped expressed by the characters” (Ames 1997: 130). As a father hero figure who finds happiness in his surrogate son, Danny, Slater acknowledges his cinematic self is limited, individualistic, violent, and emotionless.

As in *Terminator 2*, but less in *Kindergarten Cop*, Danny teaches Slater by giving him emotions: “I teach you to be vulnerable, you teach me to be brave” again rings true. Each character begins to acknowledge the other’s significance. But Danny knows he cannot live in the filmic world because he needs to look after his mother, and Slater knows he can never live in the “real” world as he now has a purpose – to change the role of the action hero. Slater’s final words to Danny are: “Take care of your mother. I would love to...” He returns to the fictional world and begins dictating the characteristics he wants to embody in action film. He shouts at his commanding officer, Lieutenant Dekker (Frank McRae): “I do not want to shoot people and blow up buildings anymore”. He would never have been a father figure in the real world. He is an imaginary hero, not a “real” person. However, the role would make way for Schwarzenegger to further fall into family life, even gaining a family of his own in his next film *True Lies*.

In *True Lies* Schwarzenegger is back as a real father. Now, however, the nuclear family is featured. As Jose Arroyo notes, moreover, this film represents “another step in the carefully constructed career project of humanizing Arnie, it presents him as emotionally and physically vulnerable (through only his wife) as never before” (2000: 43). Here, for Arroyo, Schwarzenegger’s character is “insecure, vulnerable and jealous” (Ibid.: 44). Yet, Arroyo

dismisses the inclusion of Harry's daughter, Dana (Eliza Dushku), who, as will be shown, also allows Schwarzenegger to display emotions.

Harry Tasker is a man who balances his life as a spy/secret agent with being a normal family man – all behind his family's back. With this Schwarzenegger's character is not only "humanized" but humbled: his wife Helen (Jamie Lee Curtis) cheats on him; his daughter Dana disrespects him; he is the joke of the family. But in *True Lies* Harry learns to become a nurturing sensitive father figure, even though at the start of the film, he is more devoted to his work than to his wife or daughter. How out of touch he is can be seen when he gives Dana a gift unsuited to her age: a snow globe bought by his colleague, Albert (Tom Arnold). The scene begins with a close up of the snow globe being inverted, sending snowflakes into turmoil. As the camera zooms out, it becomes a point-of-view shot from Harry's perspective, looking at a distorted view of Dana's face through the glass. That he does not understand her is his own fault: he lies to her, pretending to be a salesman. Significantly, Dana is deceitful, too: she steals money from Albert's pocket. That they share the same traits, however, will be advantageous later on.

Throughout the film, Harry is seen as intelligent, charming, and intuitive. He is multilingual, persuasive, and an expert fighter. He is decidedly not a 1980s muscle-bound hero. In fact, a used car salesman named Simon (Bill Paxton), who is having an affair with Helen, ridicules this depiction of the action hero by pretending to be what Harry actually is – a spy. Claiming to give women "the promise of adventure, a hint of danger", Simon is revealed as nothing more than a coward. Once Harry finds out his wife is cheating he interrogates her. Sitting behind a blackened window and using a voice changer to deepen his voice, Helen is at the mercy of this "unknown man". Arroyo comments that the deception "perpetuates astonishing emotional violence in the name of the traditional nuclear family" (1994: 27). Shortly after this

scene, however, Harry redeems himself by swinging upside down on a helicopter to lift Helen from the sunroof of a burning limo heading for a blown up bridge. In order to save his marriage, Harry and Helen both have to suffer emotionally.

The hero and his wife have to learn to understand, and interact with, each other in a new way so as to revive their marriage, and once this is achieved the action hero has to go through the motions all over again to overcome the alienation of his daughter. (Kramer in Tasker 2004: 260)

Similarly, to gain an emotional connection with his daughter, they too have to suffer. Without a strong father figure in her life Dana has transformed into a rebel. Albert suggests that Dana is “probably stealing money to pay for an abortion... or drugs” and that her parents are “Axel Rose and Madonna”. Harry is set up as a father who neglects his child who, as a result, has become self-destructive. But when Dana is held hostage by Faisal (Grant Heslov), the leader of an Islamic terrorist organization, the key to a bomb around her neck, Harry races to the rescue. Flying a jet plane while being shot at, he becomes both father and hero; saving Dana and, of course, innocent lives. As they reunite the camera frames the pair together and, like in *Kindergarten Cop*, orchestral music cuts in as background music. As sunlight drapes across their faces Dana looks up at her father. Harry lifts her head up and gently whispers, “Hello Pumpkin”.

Being a father hero allows Harry to prove his toughness and allows Dana to leave behind her previously destructive lifestyle – all she needed was honesty from her father. With Harry’s transformation into a caring, reliable family man and Dana’s new respect for him, the nuclear family is able to thrive. This is illustrated in the final scenes when the whole family plays games together at their dining table. Where Dana previously was dressed in boyish clothing, here she looks beautiful and feminine. Her hair is neatly combed, and she wears makeup and a white

dress. Harry sits at the head of the dining table, head of the household once more. He has effectively restored the traditional nuclear family through his heroic feats.

Another action comedy, with Schwarzenegger again playing a biological father, *Jingle All the Way*, is both sillier and less successful than *True Lies*. Arroyo calls *Jingle All the Way* a “high concept facile action-comedy” (2000: 54). Because of the amount of slapstick comedy, and with director Brian Levant - *Problem Child 2* (1991), *Beethoven* (1992), and *The Flintstones* (1994) - the film could be seen as rejecting generic action conventions. Indeed, some critics refer to the film simply as a “family-comedy”¹. There are, however, chase scenes, terrorist attacks, hyperbolic editing techniques, fight sequences, explosions, and special-effects. The film does tone down on action however, with Schwarzenegger never picking up a gun, brandishing a knife or killing any bad guys. This is because the film’s aim is to further “humanize Arnie” (Arroyo 200: 43). Unlike *Kindergarten Cop* and *True Lies* even, Schwarzenegger’s character (Howard Langston) does not have two sides to his persona as the film opens depicting him as an every-man selling furniture and bedding to his “Number one customers”. This man is not an action hero, and he declares that perhaps Schwarzenegger may have lost his action persona, yet these scenes are precursors for the action hero to be reborn. To be a father hero he must find it within himself to become a hero in the first place. Therefore the film adds another dimension to Schwarzenegger’s on-screen persona as he only has to be a better father, he needs to learn how to be a fighter. To be a father hero one must acquire both traits. Howard does become a hero eventually when, at the end of the film, he transforms into his sons, Jamie’s (Jake Lloyd), favorite superhero (Turbo Man). Before this though, the family needs to be under threat for it to be saved.

Howard is initially seen as an inept father who, in Jamie's words "misses everything". Howard is supposed to attend his son's karate class at the start of the film, but due to focusing more on work, is late. The next door neighbor Ted Maltin (Phil Hartman), a middle-aged divorcee watches Jamie with Howard's wife, Liz (Rita Wilson), hoping to become part of their nuclear family. As a sexually promiscuous singleton Ted allows one to presume, like the introduction of Simon in *True Lies*, that Howard is in danger of losing his family to another man. As Liz stands with Ted she then promises to Jamie that Howard will make it on time. A cut to Howard then displays him speeding to the karate class. Just as we think he might make it by speeding, inevitably he gets a ticket. He misses the karate class. Arriving at the empty karate school Howard places his head in his hands. A slow emotive single piano score plays on his emotions, he knows himself that he neglects his son.

Arriving at home, Howard is greeted by Ted, who is putting up his family's Christmas lights. This deflates Howard's masculinity and proves another man is homing in on his family. Looking dejected he enters his home, Howard enters the frame as Jamie is watching television. Howard calls his son's name. Jamie turns around towards Howard and scowls, before turning his back and continuing to watch television. Now placed at a point-of-view shot from Jamie's perspective, we watch his favorite action TV show "Turbo Man". As Howard continues to apologize for missing the karate class, Jamie continues watching the show. Then: "Now it's your chance to save the universe with Turbo Man!" blasts onto the screen. As Howard's voice is heard over the voice of Turbo Man talking on the T.V. screen, the superhero and father are drawn together as one. Yet, here Jamie seemingly shows more respect for his beloved action hero Turbo Man than his real father. Like Danny from *Last Action Hero* before him, Jamie seemingly wants a father who can protect, be strong, and above all have a heroic sensibility. Jamie or Howard for

that matter, do not yet know that this father will become Turbo Man later on. As Turbo Man, Howard will not "Save the universe" but, as in *Kindergarten Cop*, *Terminator 2*, *Last Action Hero* and *True Lies*, save the nuclear family from dissolution.

However, at first Howard is anything but a superhero. This is shown when he attempts to make his son laugh. Following Jamie into his bedroom, which is surrounded by Marvel superhero memorabilia, Howard ties Jamie's karate belt around his head as if he were an action hero like Rambo. By ridiculing another 1980s action hero, Schwarzenegger is - as he did in *Last Action Hero* - laughing at himself and poking fun at his rival, Stallone, too. This comic view of fatherhood continues when Liz asks Howard if he purchased Jamie the Turbo Man doll for Christmas, a request she asked weeks before. Forgetting to buy the doll, presumably because of his duties at work, he lies to Liz informing her that he has already purchased it. Yet, with the intention of buying the doll the next day, Liz informs "at this point, they'd be impossible to find". Howard, not wanting to let Jamie down a second time, braves bustling Christmas-eve crowds and slippery ice. The pressure is on Howard to get the *right* Christmas present for Jamie. After all, Christmas is "the time, symbolically, mythologically, of maximally happy domesticity" (Pfeil 1995: 16). Once again, Howard fails to get the toy Jamie wants, and he even tries to steal it from Ted's house. Being caught red handed by Ted and Liz however, Howard holds onto the gift. Howard then cowers and states: "Let me tell you the truth". Liz cuts him short: "I've listened to you for far too long now, and honestly, I don't want to anymore. I want to salvage what's left of Christmas Eve... and go to the parade with my son". With statements such as "my son" forces Howard out of the family sphere, he has shamed her. Furthermore, words such as "salvage" and not wanting to listen to him anymore signify that a divorce may be looming. To further confirm this Liz turns to Ted and states "Ted. Will you drive us?"

As Ted, Liz, and Jamie head to the Christmas parade Howard is left alone with Ted's pet reindeer, whom he adopted for the Christmas holidays. A single piano score accompanied through close ups draw on Howard's emotions. Drinking a bottle of beer he sits, head down, in the outside shed. After he gulps down a beer he stands up to open another. However, once standing up, he looks into his shed and spots a drawing his son made of him, Liz, and Jamie. All smiling, the picture displays Howard in the centre of the family towering over the two. The music switches to an elating string quartet and the camera zooms in towards the photograph. Howard must get closer to his family if he is to keep them. The camera zooms into the face of Howard and he states "It's time I start keeping my promises". Howard has finally understood his duty as a father.

Arriving at the carnival, children chant and scream for the arrival of Turbo Man. Yet we hear from the announcers that the real Turbo Man has not yet arrived. Parking his car and running to meet his family, Howard finds himself lost. Mistaken for the actor who plays Turbo Man, presumably due to his size, Howard is dragged into a dressing room. The scene that follows employs Schwarzenegger's past as a hard-bodied action hero to comic effect. As Howard is dragged into a dressing room, a group of make-up artists begin to undress him and strap on Turbo Man armor pieces. Through a succession of close ups (there are 27) the make-up artists zip-up his armor, attach weaponry, and buckle his belt, while Howard grunts and groans. When placed into the Turbo Man costume, Howard's familial problems disappear. Suited and booted, Howard greets the crowd. As the commentator asks the audience to "All cheer for Turbo Man", crowds of children scream with joy, fireworks explode, and confetti falls from the sky. A single guitar riff accompanies a brass band in a rock score: Turbo Man's appearance is the high point of the carnival. Yet, real danger occurs when Jamie is kidnapped and held hostage at the top of a

building. As Jamie escapes from the villain Myron Larabee (Sinbad) he slips and finds himself hanging from the edge of the building. Watching the drama unfold Howard, as Turbo Man, uses the jet pack attached to his suit. Howard as Turbo Man is able to extricate his family from this violent and dangerous situation because Howard, the man beneath the suit, is smart, loving, and dedicated. He is now a father hero. As the film concludes the nuclear family is firmly re-established. The son is more than satisfied with his Christmas present, his father, a “real” Turbo man, and Howard’s wife has fallen in love with her husband anew. Like in *Terminator 2*, Schwarzenegger’s character ends clenching his fist to give his son a “thumbs up”. Once again the glories of masculinity are displayed through a protagonist being a strong, protective and sensitive father figure.

Schneider comments that 1990s action-thrillers “reveal a desperate attempt to rescue and reassert the hegemonic family, widely perceived as under siege” (1999: 4) but the invocation of the family does more. 1990s action masculinity marks not only a return to the family as a patriarchal source of masculine authority and power but also significantly aligns spectacular achievement with domestic triumph, making heroism seem both desirable and attainable. In the 1990s films analyzed here, Schwarzenegger’s fatherhood is no longer confined to isolated scenes or an occasional montage, as was the case with *Commando*. Now fatherhood, whether surrogate or actual, is central to the plot – if also often funny.

“Go For It!” Fighter Turned Father: *Rocky V*

If there’s something you wanna pass on, pass it on to your son, for God’s sake!

- Adrianna “Adrian” Pennino Balboa, *Rocky V*

In the 1990s Sylvester Stallone re-directed his on-screen image, portraying pensive, intelligent, emotional, romantic leads, in *Cliffhanger* (dir. Renny Harlin, 1993), *Demolition Man* (dir. Merco Brambilla, 1993) *The Specialist* (dir. Luis Llosa, 1994), *Assassins* (dir. Richard Donner, 1995), and *Cop Land* (dir. James Mangold, 1997). He is still an action hero in these films but his characters are more emotionally developed, and more in line with earlier *Rocky* films than with the 1980s tough guys like Cobretti or John Rambo. For where Schwarzenegger’s successful ability to be a father in the 1990s relied on his ability to be comical, Stallone was not well received as a jokester. Of *Oscar* (dir. John Landis, 1991), for example, Jonathon Rosenbaum wrote: “Whether Stallone is actually sedated or merely distracted from his surroundings by his own bulk, his lethargic and fumbling comic timing invariably throws off the rest of the cast” (1991: online).

Stallone’s fans wanted to see him in action, maybe also offering a hint of romance⁶⁰. His main success in the 1990s was with *Cliffhanger*⁶¹, where he plays a heroic rock climber Gabe Walker. Although his emotions are (rather discretely) on display, his body, for many, was the reason to watch. *Judge Dredd* (dir. Danny Cannon, 1995) was a cult favorite. Here again Stallone’s body was the reason to watch, though it was now encased in leather. Suzanne Hatty’s critical commentary is revealing. She charged that the film was “an attempt to reassert dominant masculine values and to locate these in an aesthetic of hard, impenetrable (male) bodies” (2000: 183). After *Judge Dredd*, however, he tried his hand as an intelligent hit man, in *Assassins*,

⁶⁰ For further information on fan’s wanting an “action” Stallone see Huffer in Austin and Barker 2003: 155-167.

⁶¹ *Cliffhanger* grossed \$255 million worldwide. *The Specialist* (\$170 million), *Demolition Man* (\$159 million), and *Daylight* (\$158 million) did not come close to this margin.

which was soon followed up by the mid-1990s disaster movie *Daylight* (dir. Rob Cohen, 1996). After *Daylight* he put on fat, not muscle, for his role in *Cop Land*. Because of his drastic bodily change the film was noted to “represent the logical culmination of the star’s move toward a less spectacular masculinity, disengaged from the display of a muscled body” (Lahti 2003: 159). Stallone was “de-Ramboed” (Ibid.) and although it was not a huge success at the box-office, it gained immense critical success. *Rolling Stone* noted: “Nearly down for the count in the movie ring, Stallone isn’t just back in the fight. He’s a winner” and *Time* magazine wrote “Rocky, Rambo, Rhinestone, - Sly Stallone did all that; now, at last, he gets to be an actor” (qtd. in Lahati 2003: 159). Similarly, however, his early 1990s production, *Rocky V*, aimed to make Stallone more of a respected actor. The film too was an early example of the star’s move towards a less spectacular masculinity, as he became more of a lovable father than a muscle-bound fighter.

Unlike the 1980s films, the fifth film makes fatherhood central. Now, Rocky Balboa can no longer fight and he and his family are no longer middle-class. Rocky feels emasculated. He can no longer provide for his family (boxing was their income), so he must find another way to be a good parent. *Rocky V* opens using the same formula as the previous sequels do: there is a montage sequence. This one concentrates on Rocky’s defeat of Ivan Drago in *Rocky IV*, now frequently shown in slow-motion and black-and-white. It ends as Rocky holds an American flag. The use of black-and-white signifies that we are watching his prior self, a self that no longer exists. The spectacular feats that he accomplished in *Rocky IV* are now a thing of the past. He has changed. The audience is set up to experience a less spectacular Rocky Balboa, someone who expresses more emotion and uses less muscle.

Rocky V then shows what happened after this climatic fight in *Rocky IV*. Rocky shivers. In pain, and as Adrian holds his hands, he states, “I can’t stop my hands from shaking.... I never

felt this thing. I just wanna go home". He wants to change, to nurture and be nurtured. *Rocky V* shows that he returns not only to the U.S., but, due to bankruptcy, also to his working-class roots. Most importantly, he returns home to his son, as a full-time father. An early, post recovery sequence chronicles Rocky's change from fighter to father as he returns home from the U.S.S.R.. Stepping off the plane he is greeted by a marching brass band, hundreds of American flags, and screaming fans. A close up shows that Rocky is confused. He shouts frantically: "I don't see the kid. Where's the kid? Ain't he here?" When Rocky Jr. runs towards him, Rocky shouts, "There he is!" He beams; the two embrace and the father and son narrative is set-up. But Rocky struggles to adapt to this exclusively family-orientated role. In the film, doctors confirm he is brain-damaged from fighting, recommending he retires. This was a risk in *Rocky III* but the final fight in *Rocky IV*, this film tells us, made that damage a reality. To help himself adapt to a life without professional boxing bouts, he adopts Mickey's gym as a refuge, finding happiness in training amateur boxers. He meets a younger "Stallone-Clone"¹, Tommy Gunn (Tommy Morrison), a fighter who has nothing to offer but time, dedication, and muscles. Sharing the same name as a gangster machine gun, Tommy asserts macho symbolism and reconfirms violent masculinity. However, Tommy captures Rocky's heart and wins him as a training mentor. Meanwhile Rocky is having problems with his real son, Rocky Jr. Rocky Jr. is bullied at school, and finds it difficult to adapt to a working-class lifestyle. Constantly asking his father for help, Rocky brushes him aside to focus on Tommy's fighting career. As Tommy and Rocky become "tight", Rocky Jr. finally explodes into a jealous rage. Pulling the switch to the only light in the basement, he demands to know what Rocky and Tommy's relationship is. Surprised, Rocky replies: "What are you saying to me kid? You're like another person". Rocky Jr. yells: "You're the other person! You said I would be number one to you! You said that and you lied!"

But as dollar signs appear in Tommy's eyes, he becomes greedy, and ditches Rocky to try his shot at the title under different management, a shady boxing promoter named Duke (Richard Gant): "It's my way or the highway", he tells Rocky disrespectfully when Rocky attempts to keep him away from "the dirty side of business", then speeds away in his sports car with his gold digger girlfriend, Rocky Jr. also leaves with his friends, after yet another argument. Adrian and Rocky find themselves alone, deserted on their street. Rocky declares his rage at still being a "bum": "I didn't want this!" In a reprise of Mickey's speech to him in *Rocky III* he explains to Adrian that watching Tommy fight makes him feel alive. Tommy signifies that Rocky wants to hold onto his fighter side. Instead of showing his real son love through nurturing, he shows Tommy how to be violent through coaching. But Adrian sets him straight about Tommy:

He's not you! He doesn't have your heart! All those fighters you beat, you beat 'em with heart, not muscle ... if there's something you wanna pass on, pass it on to your son for God's sake he's lost! He needs you! I know Tommy makes you feel great, he makes you feel like you're winning again, but you're losing us! Rocky, you're losing you family!

With Avildsen again directing and Stallone again scripting the film, with Adrian again working in the pet store in the same old run-down neighborhood, *Rocky V* arcs back to the series' beginning. The tag line here might have been the same: "Never give up. And never stop believing". When they first return to the old neighborhood, Rocky tried to teach his son how to survive. He warns about scams: "A scam is like a hussle, eh? Like a con." To which Rocky Jr. replies, "A deception? You're saying to be aware of deceptions?" The distinction in vocabulary is telling: the two are different. Rocky becomes closer to Tommy.

But after Tommy's rejection of him, and Adrian's speech about "passing things on to his son" Rocky runs through to streets of Philadelphia to find Rocky Jr. Finding Rocky Jr. he admits his mistakes:

You know I was tellin' you about deceptions 'n' scams? I shoulda listened to you. I was tryin' to teach you alright? But you, you were teachin' me 'n' I didn't wise up, I didn't know 'n' I made a mistake 'n' I do things you know? I ... it bothers me you know? I forget a lotta things 'n' I ... you know? I ...

Rocky Jr. notices that his father seems like a different person. Ashamed, Rocky stands speechless. A single piano plays, just as it did in the melodramatic father/son scenes in *Rocky III* and *Rocky IV*. Rocky finally realizes that his real wealth lies in his family and his son, whom he has alienated by paying too much attention to his violent protégé, Tommy Gunn. Moreover, by Rocky being taught by Rocky Jr. indicates how the 1980s action hero is being, like the T-800, reprogrammed by children in the 1990s.

The final fight pits Rocky against Tommy. Rocky defeats his protégé in a street fight and then punches out his manager as well. The film's conclusion exemplifies Jeffords' argument that "the emotionally whole and physically healed man of the 1980s wants nothing more than to be a father" (1995: 163). Ultimately, Rocky does not want to be "The Italian Stallion" or the "Iron Horse" after all, he is now "Daddy Balboa". His heart matters more than his fist. By giving Rocky Jr. Marciano's cufflink, the one thing Mickey gave Rocky signifying his love for him, Rocky gives his heart to his son. After nurturing for his turtles, Cuff and Link, in previous Rocky films, Rocky is now passing on Mickey's nurturing qualities to his son.

Rocky V breathes new life into the action narrative by returning Rocky to his roots and core values. Rocky the father "goes for it": "Mick used to say the only difference between a hero and a coward is the hero's willing to go for it. Take the shot", he tells Tommy. It is his real son, however, who learns the lesson, repeating "go for it" when he finally squares up to the school bully, in the final scene encouraging his dad to beat Tommy with the same mantra. And ultimately Rocky and Rocky Jr.'s father-son bond matters more than the outcomes of their fights.

As Gallagher argues, melodrama's impact on the 1990s action genre creates "accessible, viewer-friendly entertainment" (2006: 44). Wearing his heart on his sleeve, Rocky becomes the ideal dad.

Conclusion:

Stallone and Schwarzenegger as Fathers in 1990s Hollywood Cinema

This chapter has argued that the role of action changed from the 1980s where it was focused on the individual body, to the 1990s where action puts families at risk only to bring about their salvation thanks to the intervention of the hero/father. "Although the lone hero has not altogether disappeared, the action-thriller of the late 1990s has in the main become obsessed with, not to say hysterical about, families" (Schneider 1999: 4). As opposed to the "switch" explored in Chapter One, in the films discussed here the father/child relationship is front and center. Melodramatic situations abound, and the inclusion of other generic discourses such as comedy also seeks to broaden these films' appeal. A degree of self-reflexivity emerges in the third decade of both Schwarzenegger's and Stallone's careers, with comedy underpinning *Kindergarten Cop*, *Last Action Hero*, *True Lies*, and *Jingle All the Way*, and Cameron and Avildsen/Stallone melodramatically reworking of the more action-orientated plots of *The Terminator* and the earlier *Rocky* films.

Nonetheless, many critics, among them Gallagher, argued that developing the typical 1990s action hero as a father-savior reinforced prevailing notions of patriarchy. By integrating more everyday scenes alongside action set-pieces, he maintains, these action films narratives "tacitly assure viewers that "real" immutable masculinity exists somewhere beneath the gunplay and pyrotechnics" (Gallagher 2006: 80). In the 1990s, "Arnold Schwarzenegger shone biggest,

brightest and bulkiest” (Holmlund 2008: 18): he was more successful than Stallone. No one laughed at Arnold Schwarzenegger harder than Arnold Schwarzenegger himself (see James 1990: online). Whether as surrogate or real father, he successfully re-molds himself from the muscle machine of the 1980s into the softer, family guy of the 1990s in several highly successful films. Stallone’s popularity, however, remained tied to his Rocky and Rambo personas. He made no Rambo films in the 1990s. Heartfelt but lacking a comic touch, *Rocky V* did not match the earlier Rocky films at the box office, though it draws from and builds on 1980s formulas, and ups the melodramatic ante. Earnestly representing national self-respect, Rocky is known for his ability to absorb physical punishment, his moral views, his tireless dedication and, his spirit: “Rocky has neither brains nor wits, but he has a heart” (Schubart 2002: 155).

Schwarzenegger, in the 1990s, was more successful in a surrogate father role than when he plays a biological father⁶². While *True Lies* gained some success with Schwarzenegger playing a biological parent, *Jingle all the Way* and *Junior*, again with biological fathers, flopped. Surrogacy is a substitute, therefore to be a surrogate father is more of a feigned, non-biological type of fathering. Schwarzenegger is more believable as a surrogate because of his connection to rugged individualism, gained from his bodybuilding years. This, among other factors, could be why his biological parent roles are less successful than his surrogate roles. Critics concur, noting he is an “overly mechanical enactment of the formula for success” (Tasker 1993b: 81). As a cultural chameleon Schwarzenegger, more than Stallone, has the successful ability to mold himself within characters. Stallone, on the other hand, could not break away from his iconic protagonists from the 1980s (Rocky, Rambo). Though he does play a biological father in *Rocky V*, the film’s lack of Rocky as a fighter (and the film’s lack of action and spectacle) forced a

⁶² *Kindergarten Cop*, *Terminator 2* and *Last Action Hero* collectively grossed \$856 million worldwide. *True Lies*, *Junior* and *Jingle All the Way* collectively grossed \$603 million.

downturn in box-office takings from the previous, highly spectacular, *Rocky IV*. In referencing Chapter One it seems Stallone is granted success only when masking his role as father behind that of his role as fighter. Like *Over the Top*, *Rocky V* addresses a biological father and son bond over the protagonist's heroic fighting achievements. These films flopped. His 2000s films, *Rocky Balboa*, more so addresses Rocky's fighter side than his father side, and subsequently the film was a success.

As the decade came to a close the action film began to arch back to hard-bodied individuals. Gone were the soft men who tenderly stroked away their children's tears. The 2000s would again see both actors – now in their 50s and 60s – put themselves forward as fathers. All in all, however, Stallone would achieve greater critical acclaim and box office success than Schwarzenegger. In the 2000s, not only the Terminator, but also Rocky *and* Rambo were back.

Chapter Three: Tough Dads and Warrior Fathers

Fathering in 2000s Action

Milk is for babies. When you grow up you have to drink beer.

- Arnold Schwarzenegger, *Pumping Iron*

The 2000s is a decade dominated by sequels and hybrid action. With evolving technology, the genre's settings are more spectacular and fantastical. *The Lord of the Rings* (dir. Peter Jackson, 2001; 2002; 2003), *Pirates of the Caribbean* (dir. Gore Verbinski, 2003; 2006; 2007), and *Avatar* (dir. James Cameron, 2009) found success whilst flaunting hyperbolic editing, excessive explosions, and advanced CGI. However, a sub-genre of the action film, the comic-book movie, takes precedence. Drew Ayers argues that the *X-Men* series and the *Spider Man* series (dir. Sam Raimi, 2002; 2004; 2007), are direct descendants of the hard body film of the 1980s as “both the hard body film and the superhero film feature a protagonist with special powers whose duty it is to save the world” (2008: 57). More recent (and financially successful) superhero films (*Batman Begins* [dir. Christopher Nolan, 2005], *The Dark Knight* [dir. Christopher Nolan, 2008], *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* [dir. Gavin Hood, 2009], *Thor* [dir. Kenneth Branagh, 2011], and *Captain America: The First Avenger* [dir. Joe Johnston, 2011]), display protagonists with gigantic muscles, reflecting a return in cinema to the hard body.

Other muscle men have also become increasingly popular in the 2000s, and not just in superhero form⁶³. Actors Dwayne Johnson (*The Scorpion King* [dir. Chuck Russell, 2002], *The Rundown* [dir. Peter Berg, 2003], *Walking Tall* [dir. Kevin Bray, 2004]), Vin Diesel (*Pitch Black* [dir. David Twohy, 2000], *The Fast and the Furious* [dir. Rob Cohen, 2001],

⁶³ To further demonstrate the growing popularity of muscle men compare the slender Pierce Brosnan (*GoldenEye* [dir. Martin Campbell, 1995], *Tomorrow Never Dies* [dir. Roger Spottiswoode, 1997], *The World is Not Enough* [dir. Michael Apted, 1999], and *Die Another Day* [dir. Lee Tamahori, 2002]) to the bulky Daniel Craig (*Casino Royal* [dir. Martin Campbell, 2006], *Quantum of Solace* [dir. Marc Forster, 2008]) from the James Bond franchise. Also compare the bulk of Christian Bale in *Batman Begins* to the earlier Batmans: Michael Keaton (*Batman* [dir. Tim Burton, 1989], *Batman Returns* [dir. Tim Burton, 1992]), Val Kilmer (*Batman Forever* [dir. Joel Schumacher, 1995]), and George Clooney (*Batman and Robin* [dir. Joel Schumacher, 1997]).

xXx [dir. Rob Cohen, 2002], *A Man Apart* [dir. F. Gary Gray, 2003]), and Jason Statham⁶⁴, (*The Transporter* [dir. Louis Leterrier and Cory Yuen, 2002]) are examples. David Greven argues: “Diesel’s masculinity corresponds to long-standing themes in the construction of American manhood. His stardom connotes the important nineteenth-century figure of the self-made man” (2009: 178). The same could be said for Johnson and Statham. Each actor, in his own way, plays a hero who is overtly muscular and resolutely individual.

A recent article confirms the interest in hard-bodied superheroes in 2011. Speaking of actors who play Captain America (Chris Evans), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), and Conan (Jason Momoa), author Rebecca Keegan suggests: “these massive men are a shift from seasons past, when slight actors such as Toby Maguire and Orlando Bloom populated the franchise movies.... [I]n times when men are losing financial or societal power, biceps the circumference of tree trunks are proof of virility” (2011: online). Keegan’s analysis sounds surprisingly like earlier critical accounts of the 1980s hard-bodied hero. That hero similarly was seen to embody a reaction to the loss of male economic and social power, in part provoked by the success of the women’s movement⁶⁵.

Today, a portion of hard body heroes display massive pectorals, biceps, and triceps thanks to digital special effects and the use of prosthetics, as can be seen in *300* (dir. Zach Snyder, 2006). Whether natural or digital, however, we are now witnessing the reinstatement of strong, tough, and individualized hegemonic masculinity in action films. In the 2000s aged 53 and 64 yet still very fit, their hard bodies enhanced by drugs but not special effects, Schwarzenegger and Stallone have insisted once more that the fathers they play be tough, full

⁶⁴ Nurturing hard bodied comical fathers (like that of Schwarzenegger’s 1990s roles) live on through Vin Diesel and Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson. Their collective films, *The Pacifier* (dir. Adam Shankman, 2005), *The Game Plan* (dir. Andy Fickman, 2007), *Race to Witch Mountain* (dir. Andy Fickman, 2009), and *The Tooth Fairy* (dir. Michael Lembeck, 2010) did well at the box-office. However, to date, *Fast Five* (dir. Justin Lin, 2011), demonstrates both actors successfully returning to traditional individualized hard bodied roles. Still, these younger action heroes raise issues for further research.

⁶⁵ See also Faludi 2007.

of spirit and passion. They are less frequently domesticated or less friendly than they were in the 1990s. Melodramatic themes receive less screen time in consequence. Focusing more on boxing and gun toting scenes, several of Stallone and Schwarzenegger's 2000s films swiftly move focus away from the domestic and family space. *Rocky Balboa* is the exception. Nonetheless, even in these films melodrama remains present in moments of excess. In *Rocky Balboa* especially, but also in *The 6th Day*, *Get Carter*, and *Terminator 3* fatherhood is depicted as something to be proud of, to work for, and to take risks for. As Altman contends, melodrama works to expose us to alternatives through "moments of excess, [which], from the point of view of one logic, systematically serve as the shifter that permits us to recognize the concurrent operation of another logic" (1992: 34). These films put surrogate families on par with biological ones, all the while insisting on what fathers bring to the family.

The films discussed in this chapter are studied in two groups. Firstly Stallone and Schwarzenegger's early, pre-9/11 films (*The 6th Day* and *Get Carter*) are examined⁶⁶. Here the percentage of screen time devoted to father/child relationships and the protagonist's emotional struggles is far less than in the two stars' 1990s productions. With the growing popularity of individualized hard bodies, these films aim to "cash in" on the revival of a long standing tradition in U.S. manhood by featuring self-made men. The protagonists thus embody toughness, strength, and assertiveness. In these early 2000s productions they protect the nuclear family yet, as the 1980s action hero often did, they walk into the sunset alone at the end of the film.

A second section provides an overview of how and why, post 9/11, action films reinforced the idea of a heroic father figure, preferring him to a sensitive domesticated father

⁶⁶ Stallone's sports-action film *Driven* (dir. Renny Harlin, 2001) could be studied in relation to Stallone's character, Joe Tanto, being a surrogate father to Jimmy Bly (Kip Pardue). Teaching him bravery, courage, and how to be a better Formula One driver, Tanto guides Bly into manhood. However, their professional relationship far outweighs their emotional relationship. For this, the film will not be included in my analysis.

because the events of 9/11 altered the public's conception of what a hero was. A third section concentrates on the ways that *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* and *Rocky Balboa* call for men to stand up as protectors, teachers, and mentors. While *Terminator 3* features surrogate fatherhood, *Rocky Balboa* gives screen time to a biological bond between real father and son. *Terminator 3* was less successful than Schwarzenegger's earlier Terminator films. But the other films where he plays a real father (*The 6th Day*, *Collateral Damage*) during this decade were flops. This again links back to my discussion of real and surrogate fathers at the end of Chapter Two.

Notable, both *Terminator 3* and *Rocky Balboa* marginalize mothers: Sarah Connor and Adrian Balboa are both deceased. Marginalizing the mother obviously allows these films to focus on the father/child bond. Now, however, emotions and/or nurturing are not primary concerns: the "children", both boys, are actually adults. The father's task is to pass on his wisdom of strength, virility, and heroism. Patriarchal traditions thus continue. Thanks to their fathers' courageous acts, both sons aspire to be like them by the end of the film.

Clones, Gangsters, and Father Heroes: The 6th Day and Get Carter

Schwarzenegger and Stallone's earliest 2000s action films: *The 6th Day* and *Get Carter*, specifically separate fathers and fighters, showcasing protagonists whose main task it is to stand up to evil. The role of fatherhood nonetheless remains important, but once order is reinstated and the family is safe, the protagonist moves on rather than, as they did in the 1990s, remaining with the family. In both films the children they protect are innocent young girls. Both surrogate fathers are more like security guards than actual, hands-on fathers.

Schwarzenegger's *The 6th Day* is an action science fiction film which deals with cloning. The idea is not new to the genre, but having Schwarzenegger play two roles is reminiscent of his casting in *Last Action Hero* and his characters, both called Adam Gibson,

draw out the two sides of his on-screen persona. One is a dedicated, caring, loving, and compassionate father figure; the other a tough, individualized, action hero. These two sides are briefly acknowledged by Ebert: "Schwarzenegger once again gets mileage out of the contrast between his muscular presence and his everyman persona" (2000: online). Yet while the film presents these two sides, the film's main protagonist is the tough clone who, like the traditional 1980s action hero, slays his enemies with guns, grenades, and anything else he can get his hands on.

The plot begins as the cloned Gibson is chased by Replacement Technologies security agents. These agents aim to destroy him in order to cover up that human cloning is taking place. The cloned Gibson initially does not realize that he is a clone and only finds out when he sees his doppelgänger (the real Gibson) living with his wife, Natalie (Wendy Crewson) and daughter, Clara (Taylor Anne Reid). The agents force the cloned Gibson to leave his family, telling him that if his wife, child, or even his real self see him, they too will be destroyed.

Seen cuddling and kissing his daughter, the real Gibson denotes the 1990s sensitive father hero. He is also framed as a component of the perfect nuclear family; he dresses smartly in trousers and a shirt, and smiles constantly surrounded by his loving family. His clone dons black attire complete with a black aviator leather jacket – he is a mirror of the Terminator, without the cool shades. As he has been temporarily renounced as a real father, forbidden to be around Clara for her own safety, the clone adopts the role as a surrogate father to a doll he has bought for his daughter's birthday. However, rather than show affection and nurturing tendencies, the clone is annoyed and impatient with this doll, asking the taxi driver how to "turn this thing off".

Toward the end of the film the real and clone Gibson work together to secure not only the Gibson family's safety, but the termination of clones in the future. The real Gibson says:

“This is your family, too – you were willing to die to save them”. The 1990s hero welcomes the 1980s hero. In the closing scenes, the clone sets sail for South America – a setting featured in Schwarzenegger’s action movies of the 1980s, among them *Commando* and *Predator* (dir. John McTiernan, 1987). The real Gibson flies his family home to safety in a helicopter. By literally separating the two sides of the action hero (father and fighter) this 2000s action film displays the significance of both sides – without each other the family would not have survived.

Get Carter also allows Stallone to adopt two personas; one an action man, one a caring surrogate father. A re-make of the classic 1971 film, *Get Carter* (dir. Mike Hodges), here Stallone plays Jack Carter, a man who sets out to avenge the death of his brother, Richard (Michel Cook). Initially Carter parades around void of emotion. He beats people up claiming, “Shit, it’s good to be home”, wearing black shades and a gun. However Steve Chibnall argues Carter is on a “spiritual redemption, remorseful about his shirking of family duties, polite, capable of mercy” (2003: 109). In his role as a surrogate father to his niece, Dorian (Rachael Leigh Cook), Carter switches between being a heartless warrior and a compassionate uncle.

During moments with his niece, close ups are used as Carter fights back tears. Providing a minimalistic musical backdrop, a single piano and violin signal his new found emotions and sensitivity. In contrast, Carter’s action scenes use rock music, hyperbolic editing, and stylish mise-en-scène. Carter initially aims to “go straight”, telling his brother’s wife Gloria (Miranda Richardson): “Everything changes us. So why not me? I’m just trying to do something right”. Like *The 6th Day*, however, *Get Carter* re-inscribes individualized action heroics when Gloria tells him “You’re too late to be Richie’s brother. You can’t be Dorian’s father and you can’t be my man. I don’t know where you fit”. Since Carter cannot join the family he must, like Schwarzenegger’s clone Gibson, protect it. Towards the end of

the film he stands looking at his brother's grave with Dorian. Close ups are again used with an emotive single violin score. He tells her "Remember you are special", and embraces her. Dorian begins to cry: "I guess you gotta go, huh?" Her question is an attempt to entice Carter to stay with the family, but it does not work – he is a 2000s action hero and must return to his tough, action-packed life. As he walks back to his car, slow motion is used for dramatic effect. Perhaps he has changed and is thinking about turning around to become a father figure? Yet, as soon as he gets in his car, techno music blasts out and rapid shots show him opening his glove compartment, flicking open a map and pinpointing Las Vegas, then throttling his engine and speeding away. The individualized tough guy hero has returned.

Carter has shown his worth to the family and, like the cloned Gibson in *The 6th Day*, he is willing to die to save them. His character is allowed a glimpse at family life and temporarily conforms to the 1990s sensitive form of masculinity. He teaches Dorian that she is special and that she does not have to dwell on the past, that life goes on. As surrogate father he helps his niece but, mission complete, he goes back to his old ways. Unlike the 1990s films, then, where surrogate fathers are on equal footing with biological ones and both are relatively permanent, in these two films the surrogate fathers see their roles as temporary.

Nostalgia on Steroids: Father Heroes in the Post-9/11 Years

Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines and Rocky Balboa

The 9/11 disaster had a huge impact on both the U.S. psyche and the action genre. Some critics argue that the U.S. reverted to a "daddy state" where men again would serve as protectors. Messner maintains: "only the man who really cares about us, and is also tough enough to stand up to evil, can be fully trusted to lead us in these dangerous times" (2007: 468). Iris Marion Young argues the emergent U.S. security state is founded on a renewed "logic of masculine protection" (2003: 2), while Richard Lancaster comments "protection is

the big, overarching theme of the Daddy State that protects America from terrorists” (qtd. in Griffith 2005: 64).

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, media commentators anticipated a return to earnest dramatic fair within action cinema. Reflecting on the impact of 9/11, *New York Times* movie critic Stephen Holden commented: “I think that what this whole series of events has done is bring back a real belief in heroes, because we’ve seen real heroes. And that’s going to impact a lot of mainstream films” (qtd. in MacNeil 2002: online). Yet, realistic military heroes were not welcomed in film⁶⁷. As Gallagher argues: “audiences have not responded strongly to serious films foregrounding military figures” (2006: 198). Instead, he argues, “cartoonish action narratives” including *The Scorpion King*, *xXx*, and *Spider-Man* were more popular, they “showcase physically powerful male heroes, renegotiating but continuing patriarchal tradition” (Ibid.: 195). Other comic book movies include *Hulk* (dir. Ang Lee, 2003) and the *X-Men* films. The overall comedic tone of these films creates a space for dramatic moments, making them emotionally resonant but not so heavy-handed as to disrupt viewers’ immersion in the fiction. Reality is masked but a message of U.S. pride is simultaneously communicated.

The action hero found a new purpose. Schwarzenegger and Stallone’s characters (the T-800 and Rocky) would still move towards the 1980s action hero mentality, being more tough than kind and nurturing, and they would still save the nuclear family, as they did in the 1990s. But now they do not just fight evil or protect the family. They have another aim - to instil confidence in their young. With this they re-inscribe patriarchal masculinity by showing their surrogate and biological sons, respectively, to believe in themselves. Now not just fighting to protect the family, the T-800 and Rocky demonstrate that any man can reclaim a

⁶⁷ This is shown through the failure of *Collateral Damage* (dir. Andrew Davis, 2002), *Tears of the Sun* (dir. Antonie Fuqua, 2003), and *Ladder 49* (dir. Jay Russell, 2004). All these films flaunt 9/11 themes and all performed poorly in the U.S..

sense of pride. These heroes, too, fill a hole which the 9/11 crisis had created – the cinematic role of icon, mentor, and teacher. By returning to characters made famous in the 1980s and 1990s, moreover, these two starts tapped into nostalgia, affording viewers an escape from contemporary events and fears. Familiar characteristics such as courage, heroism, and virility reappear, sugar-coating the message that patriarchal values are needed post 9/11.

In his definition of the action adventure genre, Neale notes that “there is nothing inherent in the structure and the stereotypes of the adventure film to specify its central protagonists as either male or female” yet the word “adventure” has “links with ... traditional ideals of masculinity [which] run very deep”⁶⁸ (2004: 76). Schwarzenegger and Stallone’s post 9/11 films focus on sons, not daughters, chronicling how fathers prepare new, male action heroes. The switch from caring for a child to caring for a young adult is also significant: these fathers transform from being nurturing protectors to being authoritative mentors. Significantly, they are no longer self-promoting either. They do not perform good deeds to gain respect for their brave and noble actions. They are more selfless, teaching others about bravery and courage by example, as fathers. Crucially as well their sons, Robert Balboa and John Connor, are not simply supporting characters designed to show the action hero can be emotional. At times both sons argue with their fathers.

Terminator 3: Tough Love

All I know is what the Terminator taught me: Never stop fighting.

- John Connor, *Terminator 3*

Terminator 3 opens with Connor (through voice-over narration) recalling the events of the previous film. Riding his motorcycle through the darkened streets of present day, he begins discussing the future. As he talks of becoming the world’s future leader, the shot fades

⁶⁸ This is due to the action adventure genre being developed “in conjunction first with the medieval cult of the courtly knight, second with merchant adventuring in the early modern period, and third with the spread of the empire during the course of the nineteenth century” (Neale 2004: 76).

to white. Now in the future, a close up of the future Connor shows him as haggard and war-weary. He screams aggressively and resistance troopers copy his battle cry. The camera pans back and positions itself at a high-angle. From this angle Connor commands respect – he is a hero. He stands with a worn American flag blowing behind his back whilst holding a machine gun above his head. Voice-off narration, again from the present day Connor, states: “I would lead what was left of the human race to ultimate victory”. Everything has, and will go, according to plan: the future is led by a dominant, patriotic hero.

Cutting back to the present day displays Connor working as a laborer. One image stands out that is extremely redolent of Ground Zero. Introduced by a close up of a sledgehammer blow, Connor is shown working with a team of hard hats to clear a demolition site of rubble. Situated amongst tall skyscrapers, it would be hard for a U.S. audience not to make a link between this image and that of Ground Zero. Filming began in April 2002, just seven months after 9/11. Being released so close to the happenings of 9/11, and with weapons of mass destruction (the world is literally destroyed by missiles) it is easy to see connections to U.S. domestic policy during this period⁶⁹. In *Terminator 2* the end of the Cold War ensured that the apocalypse was no longer imminent. In *Terminator 3*, by contrast, Cold War nightmares are evoked in order to address 9/11 (Martin-Jones 2006: 158).

In the present, however, Connor then says: “But Judgment Day never happened”. With this the scene fades to black. Connor is now pictured head bowed, sitting on a bridge. The camera focuses on a bottle of beer in his hand. In ragged clothes, seemingly wallowing in drunken self-pity, he looks like a vagrant. “I feel the weight of the future bearing down on me. A future I don’t want. So I keep running ... as fast as I can. Anywhere. Nowhere”, he says. Close up show him as a broken man, weak, self-pitying, and emotional. The future

⁶⁹ Martin-Jones says that what is apparent in the film is “*Terminator 3*’s use of Schwarzenegger to construct a recollection-image that matched the new Cold War politics of the Reagan years with the post-9/11 world” (2006: 166).

Connor is a man out to protect U.S. values in a time of need; the present day Connor is filled with sadness.

Later scenes further illustrate the present day Connor's vulnerability. Startled by a deer whilst riding his bike, he crashes and squirms in pain on the ground. He looks up at the deer. He, too, will soon be hunted. A female Terminator, the T-X (Kristanna Loken), begins to stalk him. Like iconic action heroines the Alien franchise's Lieutenant Ellen L. Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) (*Alien*, [dir. Ridley Scott, 1979], *Aliens* [dir. James Cameron, 1986], *Alien 3* [dir. David Fincher, 1992], *Alien: Resurrection* [dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 1997]), Sarah Connor (*Terminator 2: Judgment Day*), and Jordan O'Neill (Demi Moore) (*G.I. Jane* [dir. Ridley Scott, 1997]), the T-X is strong, independent, and in some ways masculinized. Gates notes: "whether the action woman defies gender role stereotyping or is simply another version of it, like the *femme fatale*, she offers an image of empowered and independent women" (2006: 231). David Martin-Jones argues "the film portrays Loken's naked form in exactly the same way as it does Schwarzenegger's" (2006: 164). Portrayed initially naked, then in tight-fitting leather attire whilst distracting a policeman by enlarging her breasts in reaction to a "What is Sexy?" billboard in order to steal his gun, the T-X is celebrated in her "labyrinthine performance" (Ibid.: 165). In order to reinstate masculine authority and to stabilize post-Fordist values the T-X threatens⁷⁰, the T-800 appears.

His/its role is to guide Connor and show him how to pull himself together. The film thereby allows Schwarzenegger to stand for strong, authoritative patriarchy, as Messner (2007: 468) and Lancaster confirm (qtd. in Griffith 2005: 64). To help Connor attain this tough masculinity the T-800 is reprogrammed. Director Jonathan Mostow states in his DVD commentary:

⁷⁰ For further comments see Martin-Jones 2006: 156-188.

The writers and I made a conscious decision in developing the screenplay to avoid the sentimentality that was in *Terminator 2*. It was great for *Terminator 2* but we thought for *Terminator 3* that it was not appropriate. Instead there is a much more of a drill sergeant relationship between Arnold and John Connor. Arnold is his protector but there is a tough love relationship (2003).

The T-800 and Connor are rarely framed together. During their first conversations the T-800 sits in the front seat of a van, talking to Connor through a small caged window. Illustrating his/its lack of interest in being nurturing, the T-800 opens the window's hatch to talk only when he/it needs information, and closes it when he/it has finished talking. Expressions of emotion do not entice him/it to become emotional in response either. When Connor states, "You know you were about the closest thing to a father I ever had?" the T-800 mechanically replies, "I am a different T". Moreover, when Connor continues, "I'll have to teach you everything all over again", the T-800 informs him, "I am not programmed to follow your orders". By not having to take orders from Connor, and by not having to share emotions with him, the T-800 is able to be tough all the time. He/it has no ambition to understand "why humans cry" - crying is for the weak and pitiful. Post 9/11 men must learn to fight.

This means that Connor must learn different lessons from this surrogate father. The first scene where he experiences a new kind of fathering comes when the T-800 grabs him by the throat. Compare their first meeting in *Terminator 2*, when the T-800 tells the young Connor to "Get down", embracing him and laying his/its arms around him like a bear caring for its cub. As Connor shows despair, stating "I'm no leader, I never was!", the T-800 uses the "basic psychology" among his "subroutines" to enrage Connor, provoking anger by pushing him forcefully against a wall and raising him by his throat. Becoming enraged like his real father Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) before him, Connor yells "Fuck you, you fucking machine!" The T-800 approves: "Better.... Anger is more useful than despair", ultimately preparing Connor to believe that he will lead the Resistance to victory.

In later scenes Connor wields a machine gun and blasts away at the T-X. After fighting her/it, Connor runs to an underground bunker with his future wife, Kate Brewster (Claire Danes). Hiding there, he becomes the leader of the resistance, informing others that he is "John Connor of Eden Lake". When he is asked, again via radio, "Who is in charge there?" he replies firmly, "I am". The camera focuses on him as he holds Kate's hand, suggesting that he may become not only a leader but a tough father himself.

Because the T-800 is a tough father, as opposed to the kind and gentle protector witnessed in *Terminator 2*, he/it has enabled Connor to accept the burden of his quest. Moreover, under his/its tutelage Connor, like his mother and real father before him, is able to fight. Ultimately, Connor has been forced to identify with the T-800's fighter side rather than with the former T-800's nurturing fathering side. The T-800's work as a surrogate father is over, his/its mission complete. He/it is now expendable. By the end of the film the T-800 kills itself in order to kill the T-X. However, unlike in *Terminator 2* when Connor witnesses the death of his would-be father, Connor is not there to witness the death. There is now no need for tears. Connor has rejected his past self, the self seen crying, weak, and in pain at the end of *Terminator 2* and near the beginning of the film as well. All Connor will remember is the warrior spirit of the T-800, a machine that fought to the death, as Connor himself will now be able to do, if needed. Unlike *Terminator 2*, the future of masculinity has been determined; the world will be led by individualized warriors.

Rocky Balboa: Fighters Fight.

An' the time come for you to be ya own man an' take on the world. *Your world*, an' you did, but somewhere along the line ya changed. Ya stop bein' you, ya quit fightin'

- Rocky Balboa to his son, Robert Balboa, *Rocky Balboa*

Rocky Balboa also re-inscribes society's belief in heroes. Unlike the previous Rocky films, *Rocky Balboa* opens without a montage of Rocky defeating his foes. His fighter side may have disappeared. Instead, we see the current Heavyweight Boxing Champion Mason "The Line" Dixon (Antonio Tarver) defeating his foes in slow-motion, with a blue filter that drowns out natural colors. This illustrates that the space of the boxing ring is dreamlike, a world that Rocky may no longer be part of. As Dixon finishes the fight, the fans boo him, and throw bottles of water. He does not instill fighting pride in the public or affirm the nation's greatness, as Rocky did in *Rocky IV* especially. Dixon is a reincarnation of Apollo Creed in the first films: wealthy, flamboyant, and slick. He fights for money.

In this sixth film, Rocky returns to his underdog status when granted a fight against Dixon. In the boxing world, Dixon reigns undefeated, but he is ridiculed for never having gone up against a real contender. A computer simulation of a fight between Rocky and Dixon is broadcast on ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network) with Rocky winning by knock out. Dixon's reaction is frustration, whilst Rocky is inspired by the simulation to fight again. As he did in the original film, in the fight against Apollo, Rocky goes "toe-to-toe" against his opponent for a full twelve rounds, only to lose by a split decision. Again spectators chant his name in honor.

Rocky Balboa can be seen as an arching back to the 1970s *Rocky* in that it reinvigorates a masculinity humbled by domestic policies and social change. In the 1970s a host of social, economic, and political problems undermined American men's sense of

identity⁷¹. The emerging women's liberation and gay liberation movements directly attacked prevalent definitions of "manhood" and sought to reconstruct "American institutions along nonpatriarchal lines" (Schulman 2002: 11). Differently in the 2000s, an economic downturn, increasing national debt, and terrorism threatened men's sense of identity⁷². For Clay Motley the 1970s *Rocky* was "an example of Americans seeking what was 'genuine,' 'manly' and 'true' in a society perceiving itself as losing its original purpose, toughness, and authenticity" (2005: 60). In the 2000s, as Motley maintains about *Rocky*, *Rocky Balboa* revives this experience, "providing its audience with the confidence that, like Rocky, American men can fight back and succeed too, both personally and nationally" (Ibid.: 63).

The opening montage of the film closes with the commentator stating: "All of boxing was hoping for a warrior who thrills us with his passion" as Frank Stallone's song from the first film, "Take Me Back", kicks in, only to be replaced by the diegetic sound of a train. The setting literally takes us back to the streets of Philadelphia, with its sirens, traffic, and then the sound of Rocky's alarm clock. Rocky rises laboriously out of bed at 5 a.m., grunting and groaning. Rocky goes outside and does pull ups in his garden, conforming that he is still fit. He is lonely. He lives for his routines and moves more slowly. He needs to find his inner warrior again.

Adrian is dead, a victim of "woman cancer". Rocky's son is now calling himself Robert, not Rocky Jr., and he is at odds with his father. He is grown up, has left home, and begun work in an office. Their emotional distance is illustrated when Rocky visits Robert at work. Seen within a high rise glass office-building, Robert clearly aspires to be part of the affluent corporate world. Rocky stands in a revolving glass door looking at his son through its

⁷¹ See Richards 2009: 115-132

⁷² The recession affected the United States mainly in 2002 and 2003. See Henderson 2004: online. According to the United States Department of the Treasury, the administration of President George W. Bush, the gross public debt increased from \$5.7 trillion to \$10.7 trillion. See <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/BPDLogin?application=np>

glass. Throughout the sequence, the cinematography rarely frames them together. Instead shot-reverse-shots are used when they talk. Moreover, there is no background music. Robert lacks respect for his father, and informs him that “you throw a big shadow”. Some critics have noted the insignificance of Robert as a character. “The screenplay never knows exactly what to do with Robert Jr., a young man in the corporate world whose repeated complaints that he’s living in Rocky’s shadow come off as whiny and shallow” is an example (Koehler 2006: online). However, Robert *is* significant as he allows Rocky to become a mentor, a teacher. Through his teaching, and fighting, Rocky is able to instill pride and spirit into the next generation.

Rocky is also a surrogate father to Steps (James Francis Kelly III), the son of his female companion Marie (Geraldine Hughes). Marie in the first *Rocky* film was a street kid who smoked, drank, and acted disrespectfully. She was the first child Rocky met in the franchise who brought out his caring nurturing side. In *Rocky*, when seeing Marie (Jodi Letizia) with a gang of youths, he asks her: “How come ya wanna hang out with those guys? They teach ya bad things.” When she attempts to light a cigarette he nonchalantly tosses it to the ground. He then walks her home, advising her not to get a “bad reputation”. Yet, he is met with the words “Fuck you, Creepo!” *Rocky Balboa* acknowledges this previous exchange when he meets the adult Marie working at a local bar. Marie is now respectful, however, and seemingly enjoys the company of Rocky. Similar to when she was young, her son Steps hangs around on street corners. Rocky has a second chance to teach a child. Speaking in street slang and wearing overly baggy clothing, Steps represents an angry newer generation. Teaching the boy to respect his elders, Rocky offers him a job at his restaurant. Once off the streets Steps learns to be respectful of Rocky; he helps choose and name his new dog, Punchy, and looks in awe at his array of heavyweight championship belts. Rocky cares and nurtures for Steps, rather than fight. Like Tommy Gunn in *Rocky V*, Steps therefore distracts

Rocky from teaching his real son the lessons of life. Because of this Steps is seemingly left behind mid-film and, although he does witness Rocky's final fight, the focus within the film remains on Robert.

When Rocky informs Robert that he wants to fight again, his son remonstrates: "It's over, Pop". Like his mother in *Rocky IV*, he does not want Rocky to take more blows to the head. His friends recognize that Robert is not the man his father is: they call him "Baby Balboa" and ask, as they all watch Rocky fight Dixon in a computerized re-enactment: "What happened to you?" A climatic, melodramatic scene has Rocky tell his son:

The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place. And I don't care how tough you are it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me, or nobody ain't gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit, it's about how hard you can get hit and keep movin' forward. That's how winnin' is done!

Stallone as director here again separates father and son using shot-reverse-shots until, finally, he offers a side profile of the pair standing facing each other in deep focus. They seem engulfed by the barren streets of working-class Philadelphia. After the speech Rocky walks past Robert. He does not embrace him. He simply walks off screen. The camera switches to an over-the-shoulder shot behind Robert as he watches his father. Robert's face is out of focus: the focus is on Rocky. Once Rocky leaves the frame, Robert's face slowly comes into focus. A close up shows he is smiling. He walks away, head down, in slow motion, pondering Rocky's words.

Father and son are next reunited at Adrian's grave: the nuclear family is together again. Robert says encouragingly: "It's been a long time since I've seen you fight". And when Rocky does finally fight, for the first time Robert watches him from ring-side. The final exhibition fight sequences imitate HBO (Home Box Office) fights, using high definition cameras and soft cuts when transitioning between the fighters and fans. There are real HBO

commentators and the ring announcer is the famous Michael Buffer. The film thereby intentionally blurs the lines between reality and fiction. As Robert watches his father fight he sees up close what it means to get hit. He shouts, "You can do it, Pop! Come on! ... Chop him down!" Finally he again believes in his father. The blue filter which framed the opening boxing scenes of the film depicting a dream-like world has been replaced by vibrant, radiant colors. Despite literally losing the fight, Rocky is the popular winner: the crowd again chants his name. Robert punches his father's arm into the air, mimicking the stance of the Rocky statue. And this iconic posture represents the father and son as they were both winners together. In a time when the U.S. needs to declare its toughness, power, and pride, the old fighter, Rocky Balboa, shows others how to do it, on film.

Rocky's strength comes from his love for his family. Without them he would not have the power and determination to fight. And, as mentioned previously, the future of both the surrogate T-800 and Rocky Balboa is not what matters by the end of either film. What matters is what they have left behind, what they have instilled in others. Nonetheless, where the T-800 is focused on Connor, Rocky seems to have broader ambitions. His son is important, but so too are all children, and fans. As Rocky leaves the stadium, the last image of this scene is a still of Rocky's hand leaving the arena whilst clutching the anonymous hand of an audience member. Then, as the credits role, images of people (mainly children) are shown mimicking Stallone's character by running up the 72 steps in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art waving their fists in the air, just like Rocky. Unlike the T-800, who indisputably dies, the closing scene in *Rocky Balboa* witnesses Rocky at Adrian's grave concluding, "we did it". As he walks away, the camera stays at Adrian's grave, focused on the red roses Rocky brought. On his departure, the figure of Rocky becomes less and less focused until the outline of his body fades, leaving just the background of gravestones where

his body was. Suggesting the future of Rocky's death, the film lingers on his loving words to his son: "I'm always gonna love you no matter what happens".

Conclusion:

Stallone and Schwarzenegger as Fathers in 2000s Hollywood Cinema

Stallone (especially as Rocky Balboa) attempts to define "true" manhood through an anti-modernist attitude, providing his audience with the confidence that American men can fight back and succeed too, just like Rocky⁷³. Schwarzenegger in *Terminator 3* is similar. Post 9/11, both teach sons, not daughters. Both play characters who are surrogate fathers, though Rocky is also a real dad. Due to Schwarzenegger's characters encompassing a dual persona, often literally split to see the fighter and father sides as in *The 6th Day*, this fractured, incohesive image of fatherhood deems him only suitable to surrogate roles. Stallone, however, integrates both father and fighter within his characters, although when he is a surrogate, as in *Get Carter* and *Rocky Balboa*, he abandons his surrogate child.

The action adventure genre encompasses an array of genres and sub-genres, with patterns of action and character relationships linking them variously together. The hard body action film is one such genre. Its patterns are not found in every action adventure film. Nonetheless as hard-bodied action heroes, Jack Carter, Adam Gibson, the Terminator, and Rocky Balboa, do serve as models for many action heroes today. Combining heroism with fatherhood, these heroes teach their biological and surrogate children how to fend for themselves. Ultimately, they are teaching their children to believe in themselves, and in particular for the sons, but also for the daughters, to prepare for a future upheld with patriarchal notions. All are prepared to sacrifice themselves to reconstitute order, and to save their younger or older offspring from danger or from themselves.

⁷³ See Motley 2005:63.

*Conclusion: I'll Be Back?**The Future of Action and Fatherhood*

My father he's ... My old man, he was never too smart. He says to me, 'You weren't born much of a brain, so start usin' your body'.

- Rocky Balboa, *Rocky*

In his 2006 essay “Images of Victory. Images of Masculinity?”, Berit von der Lippe analyzes President George W. Bush’s announcement of victory in Iraq on May 1, 2003, revealing how a concept of hegemonic masculinity is embedded within the message in such a way as to make it appear universal. Von der Lippe calls on Roland Barthes’ understanding of “myth” to illuminate why certain iconic images, which are in themselves highly contingent and ideological, may seem natural and problem-free (2006: 68). The hard body action adventure film presents masculinity similarly: as if it were unavoidably and always white, heterosexual, physically fit, and tough. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone serve as iconic emblems. Their muscular figures stand for the ultimate that men want to be and women want to be rescued by and “have”.

Following Sigmund Freud’s concept of *Wunsch*, Jacques Lacan’s essay “The Signification of the Phallus”⁷⁴ distinguishes desire from need and demand⁷⁵. T-800’s departing words, “Desire is irrelevant. I am a machine”, rings true as, according to Lacan, desire can never truly be satisfied. Working on a paradoxical level of “to be” and “to have”, which is replaced by “to seem”, the phallus as a signifier protects itself on one side and masks itself on the other (Lacan 2001: 221). Unlike the T-800’s claim, for the action adventure genre desire *is* relevant. For Dyer, “the ‘naturalness’ of muscles legitimizes male power and domination” but that this becomes an “achievement” once muscles are developed and thus exaggerated (1982: 71). By

⁷⁴ See Lacan 2001: 211 – 361.

⁷⁵ “...desire is neither the appetite for satisfaction nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second, the phenomenon of their splitting” (Lacan 2001: 318).

being achieved, the muscles can now be desired. In claiming that Stallone and Schwarzenegger speak to men globally, as does the theory of Lacan and Freud, I am making rather a large claim. However, they are iconic, they are known for their muscular physique, and more so, they are men.

Yet, Bruzzi concludes, “there remains a fundamental ambivalence towards what to do with the authoritarian traditional father” (2005: 191). In a genre based on hegemonic masculinity, 1980s productions nevertheless downplayed fatherhood. Although recognizing that masculinity was in crisis in the 1980s, critics failed to comment on those films which did approach masculinity, albeit somewhat tangentially, in terms of fatherhood. In an attempt to understand why such a significant relationship would be overlooked, I began this project. As it expanded across three decades, looking at studies of masculinity advanced by sociologists, film, and other cultural critics and journalists, I began to see that fathers were marginalized within discussions of 1980s films because then society endorsed a physically buff, sexually dominant, independent masculinity.

In the 1990s, however, surrogate and biological action film fathers came to the fore. Critics took notice of the ways that Schwarzenegger and Stallone (and other action heroes as well) became kinder and gentler – and sometimes even funny. At the time, re-ordering of gender roles in the workplace, shifting marriage and divorce patterns, growth of the women's movement and development of the men's movement, brought about new concerns with respect to fatherhood. Critics questioned how these societal changes affected fathers and re-examined interactions between fathers and children (see Marsiglio 1995). They asked how much influence a father has over his children's development (see Peters and Day 2000). Some recently have

written, more negatively, about “father absence”, looking at children who grow up without fathers (Boothroyd: online).

Interest in action fathers is increasingly evident today, logically enough in children's entertainment. Since its debut in 1989, *The Simpsons* is a satirical parody of a working class American lifestyle, culture, and society, epitomized by its family. Homer Simpson is the father and family provider, working haphazardly as a nuclear plant safety inspector. Embodying several American working class stereotypes highlights “Homer's capacity both for catastrophic stupidity and actual heroism” (Greydanus 2010: online). Homer is presented as a costumed super-hero as Pie Man⁷⁶, Mr Plow⁷⁷, and many more personas. As Homer attempts to prepare his son, Bart, a twelve year old trouble-maker, for adulthood⁷⁸, Homer states: “The rules that teach a boy to be a man. Let's see. Don't tattle. Always make fun of those different from you. Never say anything, unless you're sure everyone feels exactly the same way you do. What else ...?” (qtd. in Richmond and Coffman 1997: 21). Showing Bart how to “fight dirty”, by hitting the bully “in the family jewels”, Homer is instilling his (lack of) fighting knowledge onto his son, with painful consequences for Bart. However, Homer's poor fathering advice for Bart is far outweighed by his utter love and dedication for his family.

In addition to the success of *The Simpsons*, 2000s films such as the *Spy Kids* series (dir. Robert Rodriguez, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2011), *Race to Witch Mountain* (dir. Andy Flickman, 2009), *The Incredibles* (dir. Brad Bird, 2010), *The Spy Next Door* (dir. Brian Levant, 2010), and others, have paved the way for television's *Action Dad*, a cartoon launching worldwide in 2011

⁷⁶ “Simple Simpson” The concept is mainly inspired by (and parodies) the 2002 *Spider-Man* movie, though it contains elements of other superheroes as well. “Simple Simon, your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man” pies the bad guys.

⁷⁷ “Mr. Plow” helps those suffering from the heavy snow.

⁷⁸ “Bart the General”

where the protagonist action father Chuck Ramsey (voiced by Michael Donovan)⁷⁹ is a “super-secret action hero”⁸⁰. Drawn as a muscular cartoon, Chuck is presented in a preview clip kissing his biceps as he invites the audience, with a smile, to “the gun show” and declares “parachutes are for girls”⁸¹. In a different preview clip, Chuck asks his son Mick how to diffuse a bomb, whilst his mum Angela (voiced by Sarah Johns), a “super-secret villain”⁸², asks him how to stop a death ray laser⁸³. Realizing “they couldn’t have done it without him [Mick]”, both parents ask him to work for them, and the story is set. Their reliance upon Mick and his quick access to technology (he seemingly solves their cases via the internet), instate Mick as the *real* hero, despite his parents carrying the stardom.

In celebrity culture, the importance of fatherhood is also again acknowledged. Brad Pitt, for example, has recently confessed that fatherhood has changed his career and his life: “[B]eing a dad changes everything.... I'm aware of the impermanence, now that I've got a few [movies] left - and I want to do stories where I can make a difference. I want them to be proud of their dad in the end” (qtd. in Bunbury 2011: online). A recent CNN documentary, *From Fatherlessness to Fatherhood*, also explores the causes and effects of absentee fathers. Through interviews, the documentary explores the impact of fathers with a view towards ending absenteeism⁸⁴. Launched in 2003, the interdisciplinary men’s studies journal *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers* publishes papers, articles, and literature reviews devoted to the promotion of knowledge about fathers and families as well as to

⁷⁹ http://www.bcdb.com/cartoon_characters/130552-Action_Dad.html

⁸⁰ <http://www.toonzonestudios.com/projects/actiondad.aspx>

⁸¹ Action Dad teaser for MIPJunior 2010 Screening Room, ToonZoneStudios, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9IJvZLkde0>.

⁸² <http://www.toonzonestudios.com/projects/actiondad.aspx>

⁸³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tb87aY6lXt8&feature=related>

⁸⁴ <http://www.fromfatherlesstofatherhood.com/>

practice and outreach with fathers. Web pages such as DIYFather.com offer fathers practical information about parenting from a male perspective too.

In films the concept of fatherhood has been newly approached in terms of what Brett and Kate McKay call “father flicks” (2011: online)⁸⁵. Steven D. Greydanus also looks at film fathers, terming *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s (dir. Robert Mulligan, 1962) Atticus Finch (Gregory Peck) and *The Sound of Music*'s (dir. Robert Wise, 1965) Captain von Trapp (Christopher Plummer) ideal father figures. He notes that both discipline their children and protect the family. They are also both, at times, nurturing and emotional. And the strong but gentle, self-sacrificing but undemonstrative father who is adored by his children but somewhat distant, is exemplified today anew by Schwarzenegger's T-800 and Stallone's Rocky Balboa. Yet, in their films, as was the case with single fathers Finch and Von Trapp, “fathers appear at their best only where there are no mothers” (Greydanus 2010: online)⁸⁶. This concurs with Tasker's understanding that: “mothers [are] marginalized or even absent from various father centered films” (2008: 176). By incorporating a maternal, female role - nurturing, protecting, and caring - these fathers automatically become, in some ways, feminized. However, because these film fathers place distance between themselves and their children, they may still be strong and gentle, at the same time as they secure traditional formulations of gender. Perhaps this is why as Tasker maintains: “male parenting is rarely conceived in terms associated with maternal nurturing” (2008: 176). At the center of Bruzzi's analysis as well is an “interrogation of the fantasy that structures so much

⁸⁵ According to the McKays films such as: *Father of the Bride* (dir. Vincente Minnelli, 1950), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (dir. Robert Mulligan, 1962), *The Godfather* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1972), *Paper Moon* (dir. Peter Bogdanovich, 1973), *Field of Dreams* (dir. Phil Alden Robinson, 1989), *Parenthood* (dir. Ron Howard, 1989), *My Life* (dir. Bruce Joel Rubin, 1993), *Road to Perdition* (dir. Sam Mendes, 2002), *Big Fish* (dir. Tim Burton, 2003), *Finding Nemo* (dir. Andrew Stanton and Lee Unkrich, 2003) and *The Pursuit of Happiness* (dir. Gabriele Muccino, 2006) all glorify fatherhood. All the protagonists are strong, protective, brave, courageous, and willing to care and teach their young (2011: online).

⁸⁶ Although I do agree with Greydanus, his understanding of Von Trapp is not wholly correct. Von Trapp is a better father when Maria (Julie Andrews) humanizes him.

of Hollywood's output – the phallogocentric myth of the perfect father” (Fradley 2006: 383). Hence my references to her work throughout this thesis⁸⁷.

Moving from the hard-bodied, individualized male of the 1980s, to the sensitive nurturing father of the 1990s, and finally to the hyper masculine tough dad of the 2000s, the action adventure genre has always engaged with changing notions of what it means to be a good father. Stallone and Schwarzenegger have been prime players in this respect. The number of daughters in their films has increased slightly: in the 1980s there was one (*Commando*); in the 1990s, again one (*True Lies*); in the 2000s, two (*The 6th Day* and *Get Carter*). Nonetheless, the amount of screen time allocated to sons has, for the most part, been greater across all three decades. Although there has been some change, therefore, the films that star Stallone and Schwarzenegger as fathers on the whole continue to advance a notion of patriarchy that understands the concept as the passing of power between fathers and sons, at the expense of mothers and daughters. Today their films thus communicate a fresh idea that you can be a modern dad and still uphold traditional masculinity, if either as a surrogate or as a biological father.

Stallone and Schwarzenegger have recently starred together, for the first time, in the *The Expendables*. Here, both characters, Barney Ross (Sylvester Stallone) and Trench (Arnold Schwarzenegger), are recognized as individualized mercenaries. The *Expendables 2* (dir. Simon West) is set to be released in 2012, again starring both actors. Other up and coming projects include Stallone's *Bullet to the Head* (dir. Walter Hill, 2012), a film in which he plays a hitman, and Schwarzenegger's western *Last Stand* (dir. Jee-woon Kim, 2013), a film where he plays an ageing sheriff tracking down a Mexican drug cartel. These films display a return to the lone,

⁸⁷ Bruzzi omits bad fathers, failing for example to discuss *Forrest Gump* (dir. Robert Zemeckis, 1994). She also ignores the importance of Black Nationalism to black fathering, for example in *Boyz n the Hood* (dir. John Singleton, 1991).

expendable, action hero. With little known of their careers beyond this point it is hard to determine whether either actor will ever again adopt the role of a father. Stallone in particular has only found success as a father/fighter in the *Rocky* franchise, and with *Rocky Balboa* marking an end to the franchise suggests he may never again step into the shoes of a father. Since *Terminator 3* also marked an end to Schwarzenegger's most famous father/fighter figure, the T-800, suggests his fathering days may too be behind him. To end their acting careers as individualized action heroes may be fitting to their most beloved action protagonists and to how audiences and critics perceive them on-screen. However, viewing them only as individualized tough guys will cease to further mask their roles as father figures. Subsequently this project will breathe new life into the action hero and perhaps make audiences, critics and fans alike, think beyond the blood, guns and loneliness that he constantly endures.

Works Cited

- Abbott, Pamela, Claire Wallace, and Melissa Tyler. *An Introduction to Sociology: Feminist Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2005. Print.
- Adams, John S. *Housing America in the 1980s*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation: 1987. Print.
- Allen, Richard V. "The Man Who Won the Cold War." *Hoover Digest* 30 Jan. 2000. *Hoover Institution Stanford University*. Web. 13 July 2011.
- Altman, Rick. "Dickens, Griffith, and Film Theory Today." *Classical Hollywood Narrative: the Paradigm Wars*. Ed. Jane Gaines. Durham: Duke UP, 1992. 9-49. Print.
- . *Film/Genre*. London: British Film Inst., 2003. Print.
- Ames, Christopher. *Movies about the Movies: Hollywood Reflected*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, 1997. Print.
- Andrews, Ted. *Animal-speak: the Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great & Small*. St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.: Llewellyn Publications, 1993. Print.
- "Arnold Fit for Fatherhood." *GQ Magazine US* May 1990. Web. 31 May 2011.
- Arrington, Carl. "Sly's Silent Son - Divorced, Kids & Family Life, Personal Tragedy, Autism, Medical Conditions, Coping and Overcoming Illness, Sylvester Stallone: People.com." *People.com*. 03 June 1985. Web. 25 Feb. 2011.
- Arroyo, Jose. *Action/Spectacle Cinema: a Sight and Sound Reader*. London: British Film Inst., 2000. Print.
- . "Cameron and the Comic." *Sight and Sound* Sept (1994): 26-28. *Periodicals Archive Online*. Web. 2 July 2011.
- Austin, Thomas, and Martin Barker. *Contemporary Hollywood Stardom*. London: Arnold, 2003. Print.

- Ayers, Drew. "Bodies, Bullets, and Bad Guys: Elements of the Hardbody Film" *Film Criticism* Mar 01, 2008; Vol. 32, No. 3, p. 41-67.
- Bachrach, Christine, and Freya Sonenstein. "NURTURING FATHERHOOD. Chapter 3: Report of the Working Group on Male Fertility and Family Formation." *United States Department of Health & Human Services*. June 1998. Web. 5 July 2011. <<http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/>>.
- "Be a (Much) Better Father." *Best Life Magazine* June 2006. *Googlebooks*. Web. 31 May 2011.
- Bellamy, Elizabeth J. *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992. Print.
- Berardinelli, James. "Jingle All the Way" Rev. of *Movie*. *Jingle All the Way*. *Reelviews.net*, 2010. Web. 5 June 2011.
- Blitz, Michael, and Louise Krasniewicz. *Why Arnold Matters: the Rise of a Cultural Icon*. New York: Basic, 2004. Print.
- Bly, Robert. *Iron John: a Book about Men*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1990. Print.
- Boothroyd, Lynda. "An Introduction to Father Absence Theory" <http://www.boothlab.org/fat.html> Web, 11 July 2011.
- Brooks, Peter. *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976. Print.
- Bruzzi, Stella. *Bringing up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-war Hollywood*. London: BFI, 2005. Print.
- Bunbury, Stephanie. "Brad Pitt interview for The Tree of Life" *The Telegraph* 28 June 2011. www.telegraph.co.uk. Web 1 July 2011.
- Burr, Ty. "Steamed Muscles." *Entertainment Weekly* 25 Oct. 1996. *Www.ew.com*. Web. 1 June 2011.

- Busch, Andrew. *Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Freedom* N.p: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.
- Bush, George W. "Text of Bush's Address" *CNN U.S.* September 11, 2001. Web. 1 June 2011.
- Carroll, Bret E. *American Masculinities a Historical Encyclopedia*. Thousand Oaks, CA [etc.: Sage, 2003. Print.
- Chapman, Rowena, and Jonathan Rutherford, eds. *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988. Print.
- Chibnall, Steve. *Get Carter*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2003. Print.
- Clare, Anthony. *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2000. Print.
- Clark, Brian C. "Iron John: A Book About Men." Rev. of *Book*. *Www.curledup.com*. 2005. Web. 5 July 2011.
- Cohan, Steven, and Ina Rae. Hark. *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Cook, Pam. *Screening the past Memory and Nostalgia in Cinema*. London: Routledge, 2005. Print.
- Denby, David. "Rocky III Is the Most Crudely Demagogic of All the Rocky Movies..." *The New York Magazine* 31 May 1982: 78-82. *Google Books*. Web. 6 June 2011.
- Donovan, Barna William. *Blood, Guns, and Testosterone: Action Films, Audiences, and a Thirst for Violence*. Lanham: Scarecrow, 2010. Print.
- . *The Asian Influence on Hollywood Action Films*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland &, 2008. Print.
- Dowd, Nancy E. *Redefining Fatherhood*. New York: New York UP, 2000. Print.
- Dyer, Richard. "Don't Look Now: The Male Pin-Up", *Screen*, 32: 3-4, 1982, p. 61-73. Print.
- . "'Action!'" *Action Spectacle Cinema a Sight and Sound Reader*. Ed. Jose Arroyo. London: British Film Inst., 2000. 17-21. Print.
- . *White*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Ebert, Roger. "The 6th Day." Rev. of *Movie*. *Chicago Sun Times* 17 Nov. 2000. Print.

---. "Three Men and a Baby :: Rogerebert.com :: Reviews." *Rogerebert.com*. 25 Nov. 1987. Web. 25 Feb. 2011. <<http://rogerebert.suntimes.com>>

Eggebeen, David J., and Chris Knoester. "Does Fatherhood Matter for Men?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63.2 (2001): 381-93. Print.

Elsaesser, Thomas. "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama." *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*. London: BFI Pub., 1987. 43-70. Print.

Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: the Undeclared War against American Women*. New York: Crown, 1991. Print.

---. *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post 9/11 America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007. Print.

Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy Ed. Marsiglio, William CA: Sage, 1995. Print.

Featherstone, Brid. *Contemporary Fathering: Theory, Policy and Practice*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2009. Print.

Fradley, Martin. "Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood Hollywood Genres and Postwar America: Masculinity, Family and Nation in Popular Movies and Film Noir" *Oxford Journals Humanities*; *Screen* 47; 3, 2006. p379-385. Web, 15 July 2011.

Frueh, Joanna. *Clairvoyance (for Those in the Desert): Performance Pieces, 1979-2004*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2008. Print.

- Gabbard, Krin, and William Luhr, eds. *Screening Genders*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2008. Print.
- Gallagher, Mark. *Action Figures: Men, Action Films, and Contemporary Adventure Narratives*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Print.
- Gates, Philippa. *Detecting Men: Masculinity and the Hollywood Detective Film*. Albany: State University of New York, 2006. Print.
- . "The Man's Film: Woo and the Pleasures of Male Melodrama." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 35.1 (2001): 59-79. *Wiley-Blackwell Library*. 05 Mar. 2004. Web. 31 May 2011.
- Gavanas, Anna. "The Fatherhood Responsibility Movement: the centrality of marriage, work, and male sexuality in reconstructions of masculinity and fatherhood." in *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood*. Ed. Barbara Hobson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print. 213-244.
- Ginsburg, R. "The Anxiety of Fatherhood." *Modern Language Quarterly* 52.4 (1991): 357-75. Print.
- Gledhill, Christine. "Rethinking Genre." *Reinventing Film Studies*. Ed. Linda Williams and Christine Gledhill. London: Arnold, 2000. 221-44. Print.
- . "The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation." *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*. London: BFI Pub., 1987. 1-5. Print.
- Gorn, Elliot. *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting In America*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994. Print.
- Greven, David. *Manhood in Hollywood from Bush to Bush*. Austin: Texas Press, 2009.
- Greydanus, Steven D. "Fatherhood and Hollywood: Dads in the Movies" *Decent Films Guide* <http://www.decentfilms.com/articles/fatherhood>. 2010. Web, 5 July 2011.

Griffith, Kelly. "They Can't Tear Their Eyes Away." *The Advocate* 16 Aug. 2005: 64-66. Google Books. Web. 7 July 2011.

Habermehl, Lawrence L. *The Counterfeit Wisdom of Shallow Minds: a Critique of Some Leading Offenders of the 1980s*. New York: P. Lang, 1995. Print.

Harwood, Sarah. *Family Fictions: Representations of the Family in 1980s Hollywood Cinema*. New York: St. Martin's, 1997. Print.

Hatty, Suzanne. *Masculinities, Violence and Culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000. Print.

Hayward, Susan. *Cinematic Studies: The Key Concepts*. Third ed. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006. Print.

Heller, Dana, ed. *The Selling of 9/11: How a National Tragedy Became a Commodity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Higgins, Scott. *Logic Is the Cure, Meet the Disease: The Melos of Cobra -- Forthcoming*. Web. 13 July 2011.

Holmlund, Chris. *American Cinema of the 1990s: Themes and Variations*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, London: Rutgers University Press, 2008. Print.

---. "Contemporary Stardom: Arnold Schwarzenegger." *The Cinema Book*. Ed. Pam Cook. London: BFI, British Film Institute, 2007. 131-33. Print.

---. "Masculinity as Multiple Masquerade." *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. Ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae. Hark. London: Routledge, 1993. 213-30. Print.

---. "New Cold War Sequels and Remakes." *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* No. 35. April (1990): 85-96. *Www.ejumpcut.org*. 2006. Web. 1 June 2011.

- Huffer, Ian. "Particip@tions Vol 4(2): Article - Ian Huffer." *Participations: International Journal of Audience Research*. Nov. 2007. Web. 25 Feb. 2011.
<[http://www.participations.org/Volume 4/Issue 2/4_02_huffer.htm](http://www.participations.org/Volume%204/Issue%202/4_02_huffer.htm)>.
- . "What Interest Does a Fat Stallone Have for an Action Fan?" *Contemporary Hollywood Stardom*. Ed. Thomas Austin and Martin Barker. London: Arnold, 2003. 155-66. Print.
- . N.d. "'Who Wouldn't Want a Body like That?'" *Masculinity, Muscularity and Male Audiences for the Films of Sylvester Stallone*. Forthcoming. Web. 13 July 2011.
- Jacobs, Lea. "'The Woman's Picture and the Poetics of Melodrama'" *Camera Obscura* 31 (1993): 121-47. *Camera Obscura*. Jan. 1993. Web. 31 May 2011.
- James, Caryn. "A School for Scandal, but a Scandal of a Different Sort." Rev. of *Movie Kindergarten Cop (1990)*. *New York Times* 21 Dec. 1990. *The New York Times*. Web. 5 July 2011.
- Jeffords, Susan. "Can Masculinity Be Terminated?" *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. Ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae. Hark. London: Routledge, 1993. 245-63. Print. a.
- . "The Curse of Masculinity: Disney's Beauty and the Beast" in Bell, Elizabeth, Lynda Haas. *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture* Indiana University Press: 1995. 161-175.
- . *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1993. Print. b.
- . *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1989. Print.

- Jeynes, William. *Divorce, Family Structure, and the Academic Success of Children* New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Kaplan, E. Ann. "Classical Hollywood Film and Melodrama." *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Ed. John Hill and Pamela Church. Gibson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 272-89. Print.
- Keegan, Rebecca. "Muscle Summer the Men of Captain America, Thor and Conan." Editorial. *Hero Complex Movies, Comics, Fanboy Fare*. *Latimes.com*. 28 May 2011. Web. 13 July 2011.
- Kimmel, Michael S., and Amy Aronson. *Men and Masculinities: a Social, Cultural, and Historical Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004. Print.
- Kimmel, Michael S. *Misframing Men: the Politics of Contemporary Masculinities*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2010. Print.
- Kinder, Marsha. "Back to the Future in the 80s with Fathers & Sons, Supermen & PeeWees, Gorillas & Toons." *Film Quarterly* 42.4 (1989): 2-11. Print.
- Koehler, Robert. "Rocky Balboa" *Variety Magazine* December 15, 2006. Web. 16 June 2011.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection* (translated by Bruce Fink). New York: Norton, 2001.
- Lacquer, Thomas. "The Facts of Fatherhood." *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*. Ed. Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom. New York: Longman, 1982. 152-58. Print.
- Lahati, Maratti. "Sylvester Stallone's Body: A Peculiar, Not To Say Pathological, Interest" By Ervø, Søren, and Thomas Johansson. *Moulding Masculinities*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003. 140-170 Print.
- Lears, Jackson. *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago P, 1994. Print.

- Lichtenfeld, Eric. *Action Speaks Louder: Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004. Print.
- Liu, Albert. "True Lies: Arnold Schwarzenegger's Life and Times." *Violence and Mediation in Contemporary Culture*. Ed. Ronald Bogue and Marcel Cornis-Pope. Albany: State University of New York, 1996. 57-71. Print.
- Mackey, Wade C. *The American Father: Biocultural and Developmental Aspects*. New York: Plenum, 1996. Print.
- MacNeil, Robin. "Culture After September 11" *PBS Online NewsHour* January 1, 2002. Web. 7 July 2011.
- Martin-Jones, David. *Deluze, Cinema and National Identity: Narrative Time in National Contexts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.
- Maslin, Janet. "'Rocky IV (1985) Screen: 'Rocky IV,' Vs The U.S.S.R'" Rev. of *Rocky IV*. *New York Times* 27 Nov. 1985. [Http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review](http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review). Web. 1 June 2011.
- Mathews, Joe. *The People's Machine: Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Rise of Blockbuster Democracy*. New York: Public Affairs, 2006. Print.
- Matthews, Nicole. *Comic Politics: Gender in Hollywood Comedy after the New Right* Manchester University Press, 2000.
- McKay, Brett and McKay, Kate. "12 Best Movies About Fatherhood" *Art of Manliness Blog* <http://artofmanliness.com/2011/06/17/12-best-movies-about-fatherhood>. 17 June, 2011. Web 11 July 2011.
- Medved, Michael. *Hollywood vs. America: Popular Culture and the War on Traditional Values*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1992. Print.

Men and Masculinities: a Social, Cultural, and Historical Encyclopedia. Ed. Michael S. Kimmel and Amy Aronson. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004. Print.

Mercer, John, and Martin Shingler. *Melodrama: Genre, Style, Sensibility*. London: Wallflower, 2004. Print.

Messerschmidt, James W. *Masculinities and Crime: Critique and Reconceptualization of Theory*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993. Print.

Messner, Michael A. "The Masculinity of the Govenator: Muscle and Compassion in American Politics." *Gender & Society* 21.4 (2007): 461-80. Sage Publications. Aug. 2007. Web. 5 July 2011.

Modleski, Tania. *Feminism without Women: Culture and Criticism in a Postfeminist Age*. New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Motley, Clay. "Fighting for Manhood: Rocky and Turn-of-the-Century Antimodernism." *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 35.2 (2005): 60-66. Print.

Mulvey, Laura. "The Melodrama's Role in the Development of Contemporary Film Theory." *Melodrama: Stage Picture Screen*. Ed. Jacky Bratton, Jim Cook, and Christine Gledhill. London: BFI, 1994. 121-34. Print.

---. "Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema" in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Ed. Leo Braudy, Marshall Cohen. 6th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 837-849.

Ndalianis, Angela, and Charlotte Henry, Eds. *Stars in Our Eyes: the Star Phenomenon in the Contemporary Era*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002. Print.

Neale, Steve. *Genre and Hollywood*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

- . "Action Adventure as Hollywood Genre." *Action and Adventure Cinema*. Ed. Yvonne Tasker. London: Routledge, 2004. 71-84. Print.
- . "Action-Adventure." *The Cinema Book*. Ed. Pam Cook. London: BFI, British Film Institute, 2007. 265-70. Print.
- . "History of Genre Criticism: Genre Theory since the 1980s." *The Cinema Book*. Ed. Pam Cook. London: BFI, British Film Institute, 2007. 252-65. Print.
- . "'Melo Talk: On the Meaning and Use of the Term "Melodrama" in the American Trade Press'" *Velvet Light Trap* Fall.32 (1993): 66-89. *FIAF Internation Index to Film Periodicals*. Web. 31 May 2011.
- Neibaur, James L. *Tough Guy: the American Movie Macho*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1989. Print.
- Nowell - Smith, Geoffrey. "Minnelli and Melodrama." *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*. London: BFI Pub., 1987. 70-75. Print.
- Palmer, William J. *The Films of the Eighties: a Social History*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1995. Print.
- Pellegrini, Ann. *Performance Anxieties: Staging Psychoanalysis, Staging Race*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Peters, Elizabeth and Day, Randal D. *Fatherhood: Research, Interventions, and Policies: Volume 1*. New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- Pfeil, Fred. *White Guys: Studies in Postmodern Domination and Difference*. London: Verso, 1995. Print.
- Pomerance, Murray, ed. *A Family Affair: Cinema Calls Home*. London: Wallflower P., 2008. Print.

- Prinz, Jesse J. *Gut Reactions a Perceptual Theory of Emotion*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Print.
- Ramaeker, Paul. N.d. "Staying Alive: Stallone, Authorship and Contemporary Hollywood Aesthetics" – Forthcoming, 2011.
- Richmond, Ray and Coffman, Antonia. *The Simpsons: A Complete Guide to Our Favorite Family*. N.p.: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.
- Rogin, Michael Paul. *Ronald Reagan, the Movie and Other Episodes in Political Demonology*. Berkeley: University of California, 1988. Print.
- Rosenbaum, Jonathan. "Oscar." Rev. of *Movie*. *The Chicago Reader* 26 Oct. 1991. *Chicago Reader*. Web. 5 July 2011.
- Rutherford, Jonathan. *Men's Silences: Predicaments in Masculinity*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Ryall, Tom. "Genre and Hollywood." *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Ed. John Hill and Pamela Church. Gibson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 327-42. Print.
- Schatz, Thomas. *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1981. Print.
- Schneider, Karen. "With Violence if Necessary: Rearticulating the Family in the Contemporary Action-Thriller", *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 27: 1, 1999.
- Schubart, Rikke. "Birth of a Hero: Rocky, Stallone, And Mythical Creation" By Ndalianis, Angela, and Charlotte Henry, Eds. *Stars in Our Eyes: the Star Phenomenon in the Contemporary Era*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002. Print.
- Schulman, Bruce J. *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*. New York: Da Capo, 2002. Print.
- Schwartz, Missy. "'Rocky' Road" *Entertainment Weekly*. January 08, 2007. Web. 31 May 2011.

- Scott, Ian. *American Politics in Hollywood Film*. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000. Print.
- Singer, Ben. "Female Power in the Serial-Queen Melodrama: The Etiology of an Anomaly." *Camera Obscura* 22 (1990): 91-120. *Camera Obscura*. 1990. Web. 31 May 2011.
- . *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and its Contexts*. Columbia: Columbia University Press: 2001.
- Smith, Jeremy Adam. *The Daddy Shift: How Stay-at-home Dads, Breadwinning Moms, and Shared Parenting Are Transforming the American Family*. Boston: Beacon, 2009. Print.
- Strain, Christopher B. *Reload: Rethinking Violence in American Life*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2010. Print.
- Stratton, Jon. *The Desirable Body: Cultural Fetishism and the Erotics of Consumption*. Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 1996. Print.
- Tasker, Yvonne. *Action and Adventure Cinema*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- . "Dumb Movies for Dumb People." *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. Ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae. Hark. London: Routledge, 1993. 230-45. Print. a.
- . *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre, and the Action Cinema*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print. b.
- . "Practically perfect people: postfeminism, masculinity and male parenting in contemporary cinema" in Pomerance, Murray, ed. *A Family Affair: Cinema Calls Home*. London: Wallflower P., 2008, 175-189. Print.
- Turner, Jeffrey S. *Families in America: A Reference Handbook* N.p.: ABC-CLIO, 2002.
- Von Der Lippe, Berit. "Images of Victory Images of Masculinity?" *Nordicom Magazine Review* 27; 1, 2006 63-79. Web, 1 July 2011.

- Webster, Richard. *Flower and Tree Magic: Discover the Natural Enchantment around You*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2008. Print.
- Weinburg, Marc. "Film Flip Flops." *Orange Coast Magazine* Mar. 1987: 157-62. *Google Books*. Web. 6 June 2011.
- Welsh, James M. "Action Films." *Film Genre 2000: New Critical Essays*. By Wheeler W. Dixon. Albany: State University of New York, 2000. 161-77. Print.
- Williams, Linda. "Melodrama Revised" *Refiguring American Film Genres: History and Theory* ed. Nick Browne. California: UCP. 1998. 41-71.
- Willis, Sharon. "Movies and Wayward Images." *American Cinema of the 1990s: Themes and Variations*. By Chris Holmlund. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2008. 45-70. Print.
- Willistein, Paul. "Commando': A Bloody Mess. Movie Reviews." Rev. of *Commando*. *The Morning Call* 5 Oct. 1985. [Http://articles.mcall.com](http://articles.mcall.com). Web. 1 June 2011.
- Wood, Robin. *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan*. New York: Columbia UP, 1986. Print.
- Wyatt, Justin. *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*. Austin: University of Texas, 1994. Print.
- Yoram, Allon., Del Cullen, and Hannah Patterson. *Contemporary North American Film Directors: a Wallflower critical guide* New York: Wallflower, 2002. Print.
- Young, Iris M. "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State." *Women in Culture and Society* 29.1 (2003): 1-26. [Http://www.signs.rutgers.edu/](http://www.signs.rutgers.edu/). Web. 7 July 2011.

Filmography

300. Dir. Zack Snyder. Perf. Gerard Butler and Lena Headey. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2007. DVD.
- 3 Men and a Baby*. Dir. Leonard Nimoy. Perf. Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, Ted Danson. Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, 1987. DVD.
- Alien*. Dir. Ridley Scott. Perf. Sigourney Weaver. Brandywine Productions, 1979. DVD.
- Author! Author!* Dir. Arthur Hiller. By. Israel Horovitz. Perf. Al Pacino. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1982. Video.
- Avatar*. Dir. James Cameron. Perf. Sam Worthington. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2009. DVD.
- Back to the Future*. Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Perf. Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd. Universal Pictures, 1985. DVD.
- "Bart the General" *The Simpsons*. FOX. KTTV FOX, Los Angeles. 4 February 1990.
- Batman Begins*. Dir. Christopher Nolan. By Christopher Nolan and David S. Goyer. Perf. Christian Bale, Michael Caine, Liam Neeson, and Katie Holmes. Warner Bros., 2005.
- Bloodsport*. Dir. Newt Arnold. Perf. Jean Claude Van Damme. Cannon International, 1988. DVD.
- Bullet to the Head*. Dir. Walter Hill. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Christian Slater. Dark Castle Entertainment, 2012.
- Captain America: The First Avenger*. Dir. Joe Johnson. Perf. Chris Evans, Tommy Lee Jones. Marvel Enterprises, 2011. Film.
- Cobra*. Dir. George P. Cosmatos. By. Paula Gosling, Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Brigitte Nielsen. Cannon Group, 1986. DVD.
- Cliffhanger*. Dir. Renny Harlin. By John Long. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. Tristar, 1993. DVD.

Commando. Dir. Mark L. Leiber. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Twentieth Century Fox, 1985. DVD.

Cop Land. Dir. James Mangold. By James Mangold. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. Miramax Entertainment, 1997. DVD.

Conan the Barbarian. Dir. John Milius. By Robert E. Howard and John Milius. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger, James Earl Jones and Max von Sydow. Dino De Laurentiis Company, 1982. DVD.

Conan the Destroyer. Dir. Richard Fleischer. By Robert E. Howard, Roy Thomas. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Grace Jones. Dino De Laurentiis Company, 1985. DVD.

Cyborg. Dir. Albert Pyun. By Kitty Chalmers. Perf. Jean-Claude Van Damme. Cannon Films, 1989. DVD.

The Dark Knight. By Christopher Nolan. Perf. Michael Caine, Aaron Eckhart, and Christian Bale. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2008.

Die Hard 2. Dir. Renny Harlin. Perf. Bruce Willis. Gordan Company, 1990. DVD.

Die Hard. Dir. John McTiernan. Perf. Bruce Willis. Twentieth Century Fox, 1988. DVD.

Die Hard with a Vengeance. Dir. John McTiernan. By Jonathan Hensleigh. Perf. Bruce Willis, Jeremy Irons, and Samuel L. Jackson. Twentieth Century Fox, 1995. DVD.

The Expendables. Dir. Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Jason Statham, Jet Li. Millennium Films, 2010. DVD.

First Blood. Dir. Ted Kotcheff. By David Morrell and Michael Kozoll. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna. Anabasis N.V, 1982. DVD.

Get Carter. Dir. Stephen Kay. By Ted Lewis and David McKenna. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. Morgan Creek Productions, 2000. DVD.

- Jingle all the Way*. Dir. Brian Levant. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Twentieth Century Fox, 1996. DVD.
- Junior*. Dir. Ivan Reitman. By Kevin Wade and Chris Conrad. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Danny DeVito. Universal Pictures, 1994. DVD.
- Judge Dredd*. Dir. Danny Cannon. By John Wagner. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. Hollywood Pictures, 1995. DVD.
- KickBoxer*. Dir. Mark DiSalle and David Worth. By Mark DiSalle. Perf. Jean-Claude Van Damme. Kings Road Entertainment, 1989. DVD.
- Kramer vs. Kramer*. Dir. Robert Benton. By Avery Corman and Robert Benton. Perf. Dustin Hoffman, Meryl Streep. Columbia Pictures, 1979. Video.
- Last Action Hero*. Dir. John McTiernan. By Zak Penn, Adam Leff. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Columbia Pictures Corporation, 1993. DVD.
- "Last Exit to Springfield." *The Simpsons*. FOX. KTTV FOX, Los Angeles. 11 March 1993.
- Last Stand*. Dir. Jee-woon Kim. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger. 2013.
- The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*. Dir. Peter Jackson. Perf. Sean Austin, Sean Bean. Warner Bros, 2001. DVD.
- Masters of The Universe*. Dir. Gary Goddard. By David Odell. Perf. Dolph Lundgren. Golan-Globus Productions, 1987. Video.
- Mostow, Jonathon. "Director's Commentary" *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*. Dir. Jonathon Mostow. By. James Cameron. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Tristar Pictures, 2003. DVD.
- Mr. Nanny*. Dir. Michael Gottlieb. By Edward Rugoff and Michael Gottlieb. Perf. Hulk Hogan. New Line Cinema, 1993. DVD.
- "Mr. Plow." *The Simpsons*. FOX. KTTV FOX, Los Angeles. 19 November 1992.

- Nowhere to Run*. Dir. Robert Harmon. By Joe Eszterhas and Richard Marquand. Perf. Jean-Claude Van Damme. Columbia Pictures Corporation, 1993. DVD.
- Oscar*. Dir. John Landis. By Claude Magnier. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. Touchstone Pictures, 1991. DVD.
- Over The Top*. Dir. Menahem Golan. By Gary Conway. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1987. Video.
- Platoon*. Dir. Oliver Stone. By Oliver Stone. Perf. Charlie Sheen, Tom Berenger and Willem Dafoe. Hemdale Film, 1986. Video.
- Pumping Iron*. Dir. George Butler and Robert Fiore. By Charles Gaines, George Butler. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Lou Ferrigno. Rollie Robinson, 1977. Video.
- Rambo*. Dir. Sylvester Stallone. By Art Monterastelli, Sylvester Stallone and David Morrell. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Julie Benz, Matthew Marsden. Lionsgate, 2008. DVD.
- Rambo: First Blood Part II*. Dir. George P. Cosmatos. By David Morrell, Kevin Jarre, Sylvester Stallone and James Cameron. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna. Anabasis N.V., 1985. DVD.
- Rambo III*. Dir. Peter MacDonald. By David Morrell and Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna. Carolco Pictures, 1988. DVD.
- Red Sonja*. Dir. Richard Fleischer. By Robert E. Howard, Clive Exton. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Brigitte Nielsen and Sandahl Bergman. Dino De Laurentiis Company, 1985. DVD.
- Rocky*. Dir. John G. Avildsen. By Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Talia Shire and Burt Young. Chartoff-Winkler Productions, 1976. DVD.

Rocky II. Dir. Sylvester Stallone. By Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. Chartoff-Winkler Productions, 1979. DVD.

Rocky III. Dir. Sylvester Stallone. By Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. MGM, 1982. DVD.

Rocky IV. Dir. Sylvester Stallone. By Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. MGM, 1985. DVD.

Rocky V. Dir. John G. Avildsen. By Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. MGM, 1990. DVD.

Rocky Balboa. Dir. Sylvester Stallone. By Sylvester Stallone. Perf. Sylvester Stallone. MGM, 2006. DVD.

"Simple Simpson." *The Simpsons*. FOX. KTTV FOX, Los Angeles. 2 May 2004.

Stay Hungry. Dir. Bob Rafelson. By Charles Gaines and Bob Rafelson. Perf. Jeff Bridges, Sally Field and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Outov Productions, 1976. DVD.

Suburban Commando. Dir. Burt Kennedy. By Frank A. Cappello. Perf. Hulk Hogan, Christopher Lloyd. New Line Cinema, 1991. DVD.

Sudden Death. Dir. Peter Hyams. By Karen Elise Baldwin. Perf. Jean-Claude Van Damme. Universal Pictures, 1995. DVD.

Superman. Dir. Richard Donner. By Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster. Perf. Christopher Reeve. Warner Bros. Pictures, 1978. DVD.

Terminator 2: Judgment Day. Dir. James Cameron. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Tristar Pictures, 1991. DVD.

Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines. Dir. Jonathon Mostow. By James Cameron. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Tristar Pictures, 2003. DVD.

The 6th Day. Dir. Roger Spottiswoode. By. Cormac Wibberley and Marianne Wibberley. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Phoenix Pictures, 2000. DVD.

"The Boy Who Knew Too Much." *The Simpsons*. FOX. KTTV FOX, Los Angeles. 5 May 1994.

The Godfather. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. Perf. Marlon Brando, Al Pacino. Paramount Pictures, 1972. DVD.

The Lords of Flatbush. Dir. Martin Davidson, Stephen Verona. By Stephen Verona, Gayle Gleckler. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Henry Winkler. Columbia Pictures Corporation, 1974. Video.

The Punisher. Dir. Mark Goldblatt. By. Boaz Yakin. Perf. Dolph Lundgren. New World Pictures, 1989. DVD.

The Terminator. Dir. James Cameron. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Twentieth Century Fox, 1984. DVD.

Thor. Dir. Kenneth Branagh. Perf. Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman. Paramount Pictures, 2011. Film.

Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity Dir. Sut Jhally. By Jackson Katz and Jeremy Earp. Perf, Steve Austin, Marlon Brando, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger. Media Education Foundation, 1999. Video.

True Lies. Dir. James Cameron. By Claude Zidi. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jamie Lee Curtis. Twentieth Century Fox, 1994. DVD.

Twins. Dir. Ivan Reitman. By William Davies and William Osbourne. Perf. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito. Universal Pictures, 1988. DVD.

X2. Dir Bryan Singer. By Zack Penn, David Hayter and Bryan Singer. Perf. Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2002. DVD.

X-Men. Dir. Bryan Singer. By Tom DeSanto and Bryan Singer. Perf. Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2000. DVD.

X-Men: The Last Stand. Dir. Brett Ratner. By Simon Kinberg, Zak Penn. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 2006. DVD.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine. Dir. Gavin Hood. Perf. Hugh Jackman. 20th Century Fox, 2009. DVD.