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Introduction

Giuseppe Balirano and Paul Baker

1 Queer masculinities: By Way of Introduction

This collection brings together diverse experiences, views, and studies stemming from original interdisciplinary research on different linguistic and cultural representations of queer masculinities in new and old media. It is a timely contribution towards ongoing research on changing representations of men and masculinities in contemporary academic studies. Each of the self-contained chapters in the volume is bound into a specific frame of reference enhancing a series of examinations on the ways that

G. Balirano (✉)
Literary, Linguistic and Comparative Studies,
University of Naples "L'Orientale", Naples, Italy

P. Baker
Linguistics and English Language,
Lancaster University, Lancashire, UK

P. Baker, G. Balirano (eds.), *Queering Masculinities in Language and Culture*,
Palgrave Studies in Language, Gender and Sexuality,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95327-1_1

masculinities intersect with queer identities and practices. The diverse authors who contributed to the book have analysed the representation of "queer" social actors from the perspective of gender studies, with the benefit of approaches and insights from masculinity and queer studies, linguistics, anthropology, and semiotics. Queering masculinities aims to promote a range of integrated approaches, particularly those relating to emerging ways of signifying contemporary masculinities and relating constraints, stereotypes, and prejudices within English-speaking contexts by addressing issues concerning gender in linguistic, literary, social, and cultural contexts. Hence, the book entails several analytical approaches spanning from critical discourse analysis and multimodal analysis to literary criticism and anthropological and social research.

The editors' original idea was to spark academic discourse relating to the existence of and/or resistance to non-hegemonic masculinities in order to acknowledge and foster further analyses of diverse, complementary, and/or contrasted gender identities (Connell 1995). Since masculinity is traditionally seen as one half of a mutual and binary identity construal (along with femininity), it is only through its relationship with other linguistically, semiotically, and socially construed instances of identity that contemporary dominant tropes on masculinity can be produced. The representation of hegemonic masculinity as a form of power by consent and/or power through dominance can, indeed, only gain real authority via its dichotomous interaction with the very concept of femininity, mainly in the ways that femininity serves to outline what masculinity is not (Balirano 2014). Therefore, when "kindliness", "mildness", and "passivity" are stereotypically labelled as feminine attributes, the typical masculine traits will necessarily be marked by corresponding antonyms such as "harshness", "aggressiveness", and "domination". Those forms of gender stereotypes and roles are damaging to men as maintained by one of the earliest studies dealing with the negative consequences of gender stereotypes and roles:

> The male machine is a special kind of being, different from women, children, and men who don't measure up. He is functional, designed mainly for work. He is programmed to tackle jobs, override obstacles, attack

> problems, overcome difficulties, and always seize the offensive. He will take on any task that can be presented to him in a competitive framework. His most positive reinforcement is victory.
>
> He has armor plating that is virtually impregnable. His circuits are never scrambled or overrun by irrelevant personal signals. He dominates and outperforms his fellows, although without excessive flashing of lights or clashing of gears. His relationship with other male machines is one of respect but not intimacy; it is difficult for him to connect his internal circuits to those of others. In fact, his internal circuitry is something of a mystery to him and is maintained primarily by humans of the opposite sex. (Fasteau 1975: 2)

According to Fasteau, men are socially expected to be strong, aggressive, confident, and in control of all situations at all times. Since many men find it difficult to live up to this masculine ideal, they may feel a loss of self-esteem, overcompensate with "machismo" or super-masculinity, or constantly pretend to be something they are not. Men are allowed less flexibility in gender role modelling than women: pre-pubescent females can be "tomboys", but it is still not acceptable for males of the same age range to act like "sissies". Consequently, boys must learn not to cry when they are hurt and are often pushed into "male" activities regardless of their talents or preferences. Men are forced to prove—to themselves and to others—over and again—that they are masculine.

According to Messerschmidt (2012), masculinity is not always the consequence of physical power or male brutality; it can also be seen as a discursive form of persuasion, a status each man should try and adopt in order to be empowered with those typical male features. Yet, this theorisation does not necessarily apply to those men who do not wish to align themselves with such a restrictive definition. Consequently, non-aligned forms of masculinity result in a constant re-interpretation of models at odds with prearranged schemes. Such dissident voices contribute to the construction of different stances which tend to undermine the very concept of masculinity. Novel and divergent processes of representation and re-configuration of the *nature* of manliness, seen as a social semiotic and widely shared construct, predictably mark a crisis point for hegemonic men.

When analysing masculinity as a relational construct, the hierarchies of power encompassing the different types of relationships among men must also be clearly identified. Kaufman (1994: 145) maintains that,

> [p]atriarchy exists as a system not simply of men's power over women but also of hierarchies of power among different groups of men and between different masculinities.

Conceptually, in any given society, men maintain hierarchical social roles over other men, as well as over other gender identities. Therefore, an investigation of masculinity cannot hinge on the study of a unique or homogeneous male identity unless we wish to incur the same charges made against some strands of feminist research. As Butler (1990: 3) has observed,

> there is a political problem that feminism encounters in the assumption that the term *woman* denotes a common identity. Rather than a stable signifier that commands the assent of those whom it purports to describe and represent, *women*, even in the plural, has become a troublesome term, a site of contest, a cause for anxiety.

Early masculinity theory has been frequently accused of essentialism since only the "essential" qualities of men were studied as those unique properties that make a man what he is. By privileging the concerns of white heterosexual middle-class men, terms like "men's experience" and "masculinity" reify an over-generalised, homogeneous male population.

Hegemony, then, concerns all possible kinds of masculinity, both those who make up its constituent members and those who either support or challenge it from the flanks. For that reason, Mort (1988: 195) aptly observed that "we are not dealing with masculinity, but with a series of *masculinities*" (*his emphasis*), since important factors such as class, race, sexual orientation, and many others are all *essential* in the construction of a man's identity. Consequently, the very term "masculinities" must contemplate the fact that any two performances of so-called masculine traits will never perfectly overlap. As the sociologist Connell (2005: 37–38) asserts:

> [t]o recognize diversity in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognize the relations between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance, and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on. There is a gender politics within masculinity.

Perceiving diverse forms of masculinity is only a first step towards the recognition of manifold male representations. It is also necessary to observe the relations occurring among men. Men, and their diverse forms of masculinities, cannot only be defined in relation to other men and other masculinities, but also through the study of women or femininities. Consequently, masculinities are perhaps more accurately understood in terms of complex associations of traits belonging to multiple social actors.

The acknowledgement that there are several forms of masculinities must be combined with the recognition that, as, in his seminal study on masculinities, *The Men and the Boys*, Connell (2000: 10) puts it,

> different masculinities do not sit side-by-side like dishes on a smorgasbord. There are definite social relations between them. Especially there are relations of hierarchy, for some masculinities are dominant, while others are subordinated, marginalized.

In much the same way as the identities, experiences, and practices of different groups of men and boys may vary widely, depending on factors such as age, race, culture, class, and sexual orientation, so too will their interests and forms of representation.

Male power and dominance is not typically attained by means of brute force or by issuing threats, it is *embedded*, to use Connell's expression, in society and its apparatuses and institutions such as the mass media, church, and school. Any form of dominance entails persuasion—and here the media plays a significant role—the bulk of the population that certain social institutions are acceptable because they are seen as "normal" or even natural. Connell (2005: 77) argues that, at any particular point in time, "one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted", consequently the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" to refer to a particular variety of masculinity to which all others are subordinated.

Studies of hegemonic masculinity normally set out to identify a specific typology of men who thrive on power and wealth. Such research also attempts to explicate how the legitimacy of social relationships based on dominance often goes unquestioned. Culturally idealised forms of masculinity may not align with more standard forms generally practiced within a given society's history, at a particular time. Furthermore, the actual personalities of the majority of men may have little in common with the cultural ideals of masculinity. Hegemony may, in fact, resort to fantasy characters to embody its particular variety of masculinity. In later works, Connell retains the use of the concept of hegemonic masculinity as essential, since it provides "a way of theorizing gendered power relations among men, and understanding the effectiveness of masculinities in the legitimation of the gender order" (2005: xviii).

Some critics have argued that hegemonic masculinity is too stable a concept in that it suggests a static, fixed masculine identity. Caution is required, however, when claiming that "hegemonic masculinity" is always contestable and susceptible to variations in time and place. In this regard, hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily the most common pattern of masculinity, as other forms may emerge concurrently. Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity does, after all, emphasise power relations among diverse forms of masculinities: some are dominant and others are complicit, subordinate, or marginalised.

It is essential, at this point, to specify the way in which the multifarious and diachronically baffling meaning of the word "queering" is adopted throughout this volume as a premodifier of the term *masculinities*. It is only by retrieving its original semantic value, devoid of any potentially threatening implication, that we can grant the term a new denotative and connotative value. According to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, (Harper, D.), the term, most probably, derives from Scottish (c.1500) and originally meant "strange", "peculiar", "eccentric", a derivation from Low German (Brunswick dialect) "queer" ("oblique", "off-centre") and related to German "quer" ("oblique", "perverse", "odd"); from Old High German "twerh" ("oblique"), from PIE root *terkw- ("to turn", "twist", "wind"). Since the early twentieth century, "queer" has mainly had the meaning of "gay" or "lesbian" and for much of the time has been used with disparaging intent and perceived as insulting. Since the 1980s, the term *queer*

has increasingly been adopted as a linguistic act of re-appropriation and re-signification among younger members of the gay and lesbian community as a positive term of self-reference. *Queer* has more recently come to include any person whose sexuality or gender identity falls outside the heterosexual mainstream or the gender binary: the use of *queer* avoids any specific label. For several scholars, the term *queer* does not apply to any categorical identity since it is customarily employed to refer to a wide range of social or personal events and phenomena (Halperin 1995: 61–62). Queer theory, in particular, developed alongside and out of post-structuralism, and has been extensively informed and re-contextualised by Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity (1990), whose central concept considers gender as a construction of the subject's personal repetitive performance of gender. Predictably, queer theory has stemmed out of a constellation of diverse positions since its beginning; Milani (2014) clearly summarises this critical position, putting the term *queer* in relation to several institutions and discourses, including laws, social pressure, violence, ceremonies, religious decree, and medicine.

Throughout this volume, "queer" is not employed with the primary purpose of seeking and establishing acceptance, freedom, or any sort of recognition for somewhat questionable and questioning categories of men. All of the authors in the collection, in fact, have tried to demonstrate how the common social practice of placing people and their relationships into pre-established groups or categories based on typical binary sexual/gender divide is impracticable since identities are always multiple, fluid, and thus positively *odd*. Hence, since identities necessarily tend to advance and adjust to society's continuous changes, the different studies within the collection have adopted Kulick's suggestion to push queer linguistics "beyond the study of the linguistic behavior of people we know to be, or suspect might be, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered" (2002: 68).

Some people find the refusal of queer to name what it is to be confusing and difficult to understand. Others refuse to use "queer" because the word is still associated with an insult and they cannot get behind the reclaimed and politically disruptive use of the term. Some people disagree on what queer actually means, and it has been argued that, for some scholars, it is just a fashionable word to refer to gay or lesbian, while some

other people, who employ (or even abuse) the term, do not necessarily engage in the theory behind it. In addition, queer theory does not involve a specific moral, humanistic view of sexuality—Is it acceptable to say that someone who desires children or wants to rape people is "queer"? What about men who buy sex? All could be seen as "against the normal". As Baker (2008: 220–221) asks, do we draw lines based on our own values? As an off-shoot of post-structuralism, queer could even lead to nihilism.

Against this backdrop, the editors' choice of premodifying the term *masculinities* with the several meanings of "queering" arose almost naturally from the fact that many of the chapters deal with men who perform their gender identity in a way which goes against what was seen as "normal" or socially acceptable for the time period and society that they were in. All of the chapters, in fact, question mainstream society's idea of what it means to be a man. Additionally, queer voices are often marginalised, ignored, laughed at, or not given priority in society, so drawing attention to these types of men is an act of queering in itself. Some questions the authors in the collection were asked to consider were:

How could their analyses disrupt, question, or complicate traditional notions of what it means to be a man?

How could their analyses "queer" the idea of people possessing single, fixed, or stable identities or desires?

How could their analyses give a voice to an identity that is normally ignored or invisible, or how does it give a different perspective on an identity that is normally viewed as problematic?

While questioning the political implications of these claims, we posit that it is crucial to recognise the social contexts within which these questions are usually raised. Therefore, although this study is not driven by a sociological framework, it is unquestionably socio-linguistically concerned with how social context informs the claims to queer that have pervaded contemporary media representations of men over the last decades. The central purpose of this collection of chapters is not so much to question whether the process of queering masculinity is indeed taking place, but rather to inspect how the notion of queer is being articulated and mediated in portrayals of social actors. The aim, therefore, is to examine the political and social stances of these "queering" discourses when applied to male representation as a relational construct.

Queering masculinity means, above all, engaging with different points of view and with the various gazes of different men, that is, with the way men, and of course women, look out upon the world, a process notably studied by multimodal discourse analysts and found in the discourses of mainstream mass media. Representations change over time, and forms endorsed by previous generations are today threatened, under considerable pressure since contemporary social structures increasingly privilege new processes, such as consumption over production.

Queering masculinity draws on various implications and men can adopt one of its forms on the basis of their interactional needs. Those same men can, however, opt out when they feel that it does not suit their purposes. Consequently, "masculinity" is not applicable to a specific, clearly delineated, type of man but, rather, it refers to the way that men position themselves through discursive practices. It becomes evident that when such a blurred concept of masculinity intersects with other social groups, the critical ways in which discursive constructions of masculinity resonate with the reproduction of power discrimination merely serve to generate an even more complex representation (Milani 2011). As a result, it becomes impossible to detach masculinity from the overlapping cultural and political contexts in which it is regularly produced and maintained.

2 Overview of the Collection

The chapters in the book do not fall neatly into discrete "topics" which naturally suggest sections, but instead each chapter references multiple themes: neo-liberalism, normativity, intersectionality, hegemonic masculinity, marginalisation, complicity, trans identity, homophobia, stereotyping, and subordination. Additionally, the authors draw on examples from newspapers, adverts, novels, film, television episodes, and online discourse, making this a book which broadly covers a range of different types of old and newer media. It should also be noted that the majority of our contributors are from Italy, with almost all of the chapters coming from a conference which took place in Naples in 2015. While two of the chapters deal specifically with the Italian context (the pasta advert in

Chap. 3 and the discussion of Valentina OK in Chap. 9), other chapters examine data from the UK (Chap. 5's analysis of the sitcom *Vicious*, and Chap. 11's consideration of newspaper articles), or the USA (the advert for engagement rings discussed in Chap. 3, the police drama *Starsky & Hutch* in Chap. 4, and the women's prison series *Orange is the New Black* in Chap. 8). Other chapters, particularly those which deal with online data, cannot so readily be assigned to a single nationality. Our ordering of the chapters thus reflects a progressive narrative, with each chapter acting as links in chain, rather than being assigned into specific categories.

Chapters 2 and 3 in this collection relate to the relationship between queer masculinity and neo-liberal culture as articulated through advertising. Tommaso Milani, in Chap. 2, begins with a critique of the current state of queer as a theoretical concept, in light of what resistance to the normal looks like in the context of queer institutionalisation. He then moves on to provide an analysis of websites which either sell or advocate the use of prostrate massagers, ostensibly marketed towards heterosexual men. In order to carry out what is a consumerist exploitation of the rectum for the purposes of male pleasure, and bearing in mind taboos around male penetration with its associations with a homosexual or female sexual identity, to say that the advertisers have a discursive uphill struggle is something of an understatement. Following from studies which have examined how products which challenge traditional notions of masculinity (e.g. make up or plastic surgery for men) have been marketed, Milani takes a critical discourse analysis approach to consider the way that language is used to strategically legitimate the use of anal massagers by straight men while enabling them to retain heterosexual masculinity, yet also sustaining the capitalist imperative for goods and money to exchange hands.

Chapter 3 (Eleonora Federici and Andrea Bernardelli) also considers advertising that could be seen as "strategically" queer, this time relating to two mainstream television adverts (aired in Italy and America) aiming to sell pasta and engagement rings respectively. While Milani's chapter looked at how to sell a queer sexual practice to heterosexual men, this chapter focuses on the normalisation (and commodification) of same-sex relationships in a context of increasing liberalisation. The authors note some cross-cultural differences in terms of the way that such relationships

are discursively constructed, although argue that despite the messages of acceptance and equality which the adverts advocate, they can also be read as fundamentally homonormative—featuring handsome, similar-looking, domesticated, masculine white men who can afford the comfortable lifestyles on display. The adverts are both inclusive and exclusionary then, inviting a subset of gay men some relief from the subordination afforded to them by hegemonic masculinity, although assuming they are willing to "buy in", not just to the product on offer, but a committed domestic partnership.

We move on to two chapters which examine queered representations of masculinity in television programmes, with both chapters focusing on a central intimate relationship between two men, although in some ways each chapter acts as an inverse image of the other. First we have Vincenzo Bavaro's chapter (Chap. 4) on the "bro-mance" relationship between two American detectives Dave Starsky and Kenneth "Hutch" Hutchinson. Both men are exemplars of hegemonic masculinity, tempered somewhat through a 1970s cultural context which was beginning to make space for more ambiguous, nuanced, and subversive types of masculinity to emerge. Indeed, Starsky and Hutch are early examples of mainstream television deflecting the male gaze to instead have the male body be the one which is looked at. While the heterosexuality of both men is firmly reiterated, it is also backgrounded, with the connection between the two men being the most explored and developed relationship in the series. Bavaro's analysis keenly shows how other forms of masculinity are also given airtime in the programme, in the unremarkable ways that a butch woman and a black man are represented and denoted as "the good guys". Perhaps ironically, Starsky and Hutch can be read as a more successful queering of masculinity than the more self-consciously "queer" texts examined in the earlier chapters.

The counterpoint to Starsky and Hutch are the two bickering camp queens in the British sitcom *Vicious*, discussed by Laura Tommaso in Chap. 5. While Starsky and Hutch are young, virile, heterosexual men, Freddie and Stuart are an elderly gay couple who spend a lot of screen time commenting in detail on how unattractive they find each other. Both couples consist of two men in strongly committed relationships, intimate rather than overtly sexual. One reading of *Vicious* is that it is

complicit in the subordination of gay identities, particularly in terms of what it has to say about gay relationships, ageing, and masculinity, indulging in old stereotypes of the older gay man as effeminate and bitchy. The sitcom, in terms of the way it is filmed and its static indoor sets, brings to mind earlier British comedies from the 1970s and 1980s like *Mind Your Language*, *Are You Being Served*, and *George and Mildred*. On the other hand, Tommaso's analysis of the scripts indicates that Freddie and Stuart's relationship has stood the test of time, locating moments of genuine affection which cut deeper than the humorous barbs. It should also be borne in mind that almost all British situation comedy is concerned with unlikeable failures who never learn and grow. Additionally, the fact that two older and less than physically perfect gay men have a place on mainstream British television indicates a move away from the more sanitised and safe advertising depictions discussed earlier. Freddie and Stuart offer no apologies for who they are, and they are more than capable of responding viciously with a well-stocked arsenal of put-downs for anyone who does not like them.

A third pair of men are the subject of Chap. 6, which considers the fraternal relationship between what are traditionally seen as the original brothers—Cain and Abel. Paola Di Gennaro explores several iterations of this literary archetype, linking its development across time and over different cultures in order to chart changing understandings of masculinity. Di Gennaro argues that in certain contexts both brothers can be read as queer—Cain typically is the villainous monster, the marginalised one who is cast out, although at times Abel is represented as the more feminine of the pair, the passive victim whose voice and identity are erased. Using examples from the original Biblical text as well as medieval Christian art, Shakespearian plays, through to modern day literature, comics, and films we see how the representations of the two brothers reveal something about the ways that different cultures and time periods have conceptualised the line between normal and not normal, and how the distinction is more complex than Cain, Evil, and Abel, Good.

Chapter 7 continues the theme of examining fictional texts, but this time moves to consider representations of masculinity from the perspective of trans identities, the first of three consecutive chapters to do so. Serena Guarracino takes the 2014 novel by Kim Fu, *For Today I Am a Boy*,

examining how the central character transforms from Peter to Audrey. The analysis unpicks a web of intertextual references within the novel, encompassing song, theatre, and film, with a particular focus on the way that male high voices have been historically signified as indexing a queer form of masculinity. Additionally, Guarracino considers queer masculinity from an intersectional perspective, taking into account the context of Chinese immigration to North America, and the feminisation of Asian American men through the trope of the "transvestite Oriental". Guarracino shows how the narration style of the book is deftly used to distinguish between the different identities which the main character takes on, and how this is both hampered and realised through relationships with other characters who embody more traditionally gendered characteristics—Chef and Margie, or who could be identified as queer themselves—Peter and Claire. The analysis ends with a consideration of what constitutes an authentic voice, arguing that the novel's multiple voices—a musical embodied voice and one which is literary and disincarnated reflect multiple gendered and racialised discourses, ultimately advancing a progressive message which boils down to the importance of being heard, no matter what you sound like.

In Chap. 8, Emilia Di Martino considers the African-American trans actress Laverne Cox, best known for her portrayal as a trans inmate in the critically acclaimed women's prison television series *Orange is the New Black*. Di Martino looks at the ways that Cox's identity as a black trans woman is represented in a number of different public texts—magazine covers, interviews, and dialogue from the television series. Using visual analysis, she examines how Cox's stance, her physical features, facial expression, and gaze are used to index a combination of masculine and feminine traits which subvert assumptions about gender. Di Martino focuses on the attention paid to Cox both in real life and through the way that her character Sophia interacts with others in *Orange is the New Black*, showing how Cox combines a strong "masculine" stance with a message of universal love to reverse the othering practices that are the province of dominant gendered discourses. Cox accepts her loss of privilege which is compounded through the intersections between her stigmatised and marginalised identities—she experiences a unique form of hostility which also gives her insight. Di Martino argues that in both explicit and implicit

ways Cox is a queer diplomat, her personal achievements afforded a distinctly political dimension.

The third trans person in this collection is the intriguingly named Valentina OK (Chap. 9). Annalisa Di Nuzzo situates this chapter within the context of the unique city of Naples and its adoration of a local daytime television celebrity in the 1990s. Valentina OK was a trans woman who took live phone call requests and dedications from members of the public. She used the programme's simplistic format as a way of connecting with her community, through a form of interaction which could be superficially interpreted as phatic, banal, or repetitive, but also projected a reassuring sense of propriety and affection which resulted in a wide fan base, including mothers, young men, and children. By analysing screenshots and dialogue from her phone-in programme, along with interview transcripts, Di Nuzzo explains Valentina's success, but crucially links her popularity to the social conditions within Naples—its status as a liminal space which absorbs rather than rejects diversity, integrating racial, class, and gender distinctions in a way which marks the city itself as queer. As with Cox, Valentina aimed for universal love, while rejecting mainstream society's stereotyping of trans identity as sexualised or hyper-feminine. Linking Valentina's identity to the traditional *femminiello*, Di Nuzzo notes how aspects of masculinity and femininity combine in different ways—with Valentina projecting a masculine role as a social guide and community leader with one which appeared maternal and caring, and how her physical appearance incorporated elements of male and female. While Valentina was unlikely to have been aware of queer theory, Di Nuzzo shows how in her final interview statement, she was remarkably prescient and self-aware, embodying a completely queer perspective on her own identity.

In Chap. 10, Emilio Amideo focuses on the 1989 film *Looking for Langston*, directed by Isaac Julien. This chapter echoes Chaps. 8 and 9 in that it takes an intersectional perspective on queer masculinity, with its focus on an interracial love affair between two men which is set in 1920s America. Amideo's chapter proposes a new reading of the film, based on a semiotic approach, drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal analysis and the tradition of the Caribbean diaspora. By positioning the film within the historical context of representations of black masculinity

in cinema and art, Amideo argues that Julien's choice to show beautiful black male bodies is a way of countering stereotypes, aiming for the audience to experience visual pleasure rather than feeling threatened or menaced. The analysis focuses on the director's use of close-up, light and shadow, sound, gaze, body pose, and camera movement in order to create aestheticised black male bodies which challenge the idea of objective reality. Amideo also emphasises the role of water in the film, from the sound track featuring sea waves to the use of a conch shell, as a way of symbolising black queer desire, signifying the crossing of the Atlantic, from Africa to America, and creating an overlap between past and present. The conclusion focuses on the fluidity of interpretation within the film, which rejects monolithic and reductionist homophobic conceptions of black masculinity, instead enabling the possibility of sexual healing.

The final two chapters in the collection also focus on homophobic discourses as they relate to masculinity. They are both based on news stories, but in two very different contexts. In Chap. 11, Maria Cristina Nisco considers the ways that the British press reported on asylum seekers who claimed to be gay. Nisco shows how initially, the asylum-seeking process was based on a model of homosexuality which assumed all gay people (no matter where they were from) would be familiar with aspects of stereotyped western "gay culture" like knowing the playwright Oscar Wilde or liking the music of Kylie Minogue. This occurred alongside questions which focused on penetrative anal sex. It is against this backdrop that the analysis then moves to consider a set of newspaper articles about gay asylum seekers, published in July 2010, which report on a ruling which was seen as a key point in asylum policy, when a decision to deny two gay men asylum was overturned. Nisco shows how British newspapers were critical of the decision, but that the negative reporting was compounded by a focus on stereotyping remarks made by the judge, who described gay men as drinking multi-coloured cocktails and going to Kylie concerts—a linking of effeminacy with homosexuality which echoed the earlier asylum tests. Rather than taking a critical view of the judge's comments, most of the newspapers instead reified this stereotyping, complaining that the decision would "open the floodgates" to any asylum seeker who wanted to "cry gay". Nisco argues that the reporting represented a lost opportunity for a more complex discussion around

stereotyping, and that future asylum testing could do more to focus on abuse rather than attempting to associate homosexuality with a handful of clumsy cultural tropes.

Finally, in Chap. 12, Andrew Brindle considers homophobic discourse articulated in the online far-right "white supremacist" internet forum Stormfront. He analyses responses to a news story about an attack by a Muslim man in a gay nightclub in 2016 which resulted in the deaths of 49 innocent people. Considering that Stormfront is heavily invested in maintaining hegemonic masculinity, Brindle examines how its members construct and orient towards different types of masculinities, focusing particularly on the contestations and ambiguities that members raised. He finds that gay men were subordinated and associated with sexual deviancy, spreading disease and paedophilia, while Muslims were labelled as a violent, savage out-group. However, some posters were supportive of the attack, viewing the attacker as having the "strength of his convictions", while others argued that the gay men in the club were human beings with families and did not deserve to be killed. On the other hand, white men were alternatively viewed as victims, repressed by a Jewish-controlled government, and preyed on by gay men, but paradoxically represented by others as powerful and at the pinnacle of civilisation. Brindle argues that hegemonic masculinity only gains meaning in relation to what it is not, and that such distinctions must be constantly reaffirmed. The differing of opinions and contestation found in the forum is likely to be attributed to multiple localised hegemonic masculinities colliding in an online environment, but also demonstrates fluidity and ambiguity in terms of how these men understand masculinity. Brindle concludes by pointing out that hegemonic masculinity sustains itself through subordination, but that it is the act of subordination rather than who is subordinated, which is key—and engaging in debate about who to subordinate constitutes a performance of hegemonic masculinity in itself. Ultimately then, Brindle notes that queer theory, in refusing to name the object and allowing for any identity to be against the normal, mirrors the tendency of hegemonic masculinity to be equally versatile in terms of loosely defining its subordinated groups.

We hope that the chapters in this collection will provoke debate, inspire further study, and raise awareness about the diverse and ever-changing ways of being a man.

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