

Introduction:

The New Men of 1998

Many of these guys have been in what would be called lesbian relationships for years.

— Gerald Hannon, “Dicking over Genitals”

I’m a lesbian man.

— Holly Devor, *FTM: Female-to Male Transsexuals in Society*

Field Hockey in No Man’s Land

The end of the twentieth century will be remembered as an interesting time for masculinity. Poet Robert Bly (1990) might concur with Michael S. Kimmel and Michael Kaufman (1995) when they argue that masculinity suffers from internal existential crises caused by all the wrong influences. Bly accuses women of feminizing America’s sons while Kimmel and Kaufman argue that those same sons are suffering under the influence of too much of the wrong kind of men. To the horror of Bly, Kimmel and Kaufman suggest that America needs “more Ironing Johns, not more Iron Johns” (27). Still reeling from its socialization failures, masculinity then faces its constitutive absences and ambivalences as articulated by psychoanalysts. Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan cite different crises as constitutive of male subjectivity. Freud suggests castration anxiety whereas Lacan argues that lack, acquisition of language, and entry into the symbolic order mark the subject’s coming of age. And just when masculinity’s internal crises and vacuity become ironically visible, Franz Fanon (1967), Cornel West (1993), Stuart Hall (1997), Kobena Mercer (1994), and Richard Dyer (1988) de-emphasize semblance (gender) and reiterate racial difference. Masculinity, it seems, is not what it used to be. Moreover, and most productive (or perhaps most disturbing, depending upon your point of view) are the assertions of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1995) and other contemporary gender scholars that, sometimes, masculinity has absolutely nothing to do with men whatsoever. My axiomatic starting point in this book borrows its argument from Judith Halberstam (1998a), who contends that the best place to find masculinity is actually the least obvious; that is, not with men at all. Masculinity, she argues, cannot and should not be reduced to the supposedly self-evident male body and its effects (1). Thus, when we want to theorize the constitutive features of masculinity, they are, as Halberstam suggests, best and most accurately discernible the further

they travel from what is read as *the* white male body. Hence, *Masculinities without Men?* positions itself as much in masculinity studies as it does in the study of sexual subjectivities.

For reasons that I elaborate below, my study of masculinities in the twentieth century marks its own discursive origins in the period just following the First World War. Canadian-Lebanese novelist Ann-Marie MacDonald (1996) thematizes the discursive changes initiated by both modernity and the First World War in her first novel, *Fall on Your Knees*. MacDonald uses the phrase “No Man’s Land” as a trope that is particularly productive for my purposes, suggesting that entry into No Man’s Land necessitates suspending one’s status as a human being. Once such suspensions have occurred, what steps into the lacunae is instead the rapid proliferation of subjects who seemingly look alike, dress alike, and equally face obliteration. Achieving a foothold on the other side, as it were, may restore humanity but like any journey, what’s significant is not the end point but the effects of the process. For the characters in her novel, and indeed, for the subjects under consideration in this book, the journey through a No Man’s Land of gender is key.

If gender is the process whereby individual subjects are constituted as subjects of a pre-existing social category, then, as Gayle Rubin (1984) suggests, the sex/gender system – or those sets of arrangements that perform this task – functions best by cloaking its operations and implying that its effects are those of nature. Recent scholarship in the field of gender studies exposes the technologies that construct gender as an unchanging biological essence with self-evident links to physicality, identity, and authority. Conservative ideas about gender dictate that people with male bodies naturally possess both a man’s identity and a man’s right to wield power. Thus, as Gail Bederman (1995, 7) argues, the ideological process of gender works through a complex political technology made up of institutions, ideas, and daily practices, which, when combined, produce a set of truths about who an individual is or can be based upon his or her body. I share with Rubin, Bederman, and other scholars a belief that this complex political technology was thrown into a crisis during the late twentieth century. In other words, it has now become a site where anatomy, identity, and authority no longer function as synonyms for each other. Thus, no man is automatically granted the status of manhood.

That ontological centre, where a man was considered a man based on the supposedly natural link between those three things, no longer holds. It has been replaced by No Man’s Land, where ontological status is suspended. No Man’s Land is a stretch of contestatory and discursively productive ground that no man can venture into and remain a coherently ontological subject, where a thousand versions of himself, both like and

unlike him, fight for the supposedly singularly “authentic” position on that field. I use the word “productive” to evoke not only a Marxist sense of industrial manufacturing but also the process of externalization by which something is made or allowed to appear. As Calvin Thomas (1996, 34) argues, “production thus discloses ... linguistic and representational processes ... the restricted economy of sexual, textual, and political representation that hails men as masculine subjects in history.”

One of the subjects of masculinity repeatedly misread but persistently entrenched within that field is female masculinity. Female masculinity references a range of subject positions – drag king, butch, female-to-male (FTM) transman (both operative and non-operative), trans-gendered man, stone butch – simultaneously constituted by irreducible contradictions between (de)constructions of “bodies” *misread in a certain way* as female and yet masculine. No one of these practices is reducible to the other as exemplary of female masculinity. While the histories of each of these practices are no more reducible to each other than are their constitutive or component parts, the “character” of female masculinity vis-à-vis its most common manifestation – stone butchness – began to undergo changes in and around 1989 with the publication of Joan Nestle’s (1987) *A Restricted Country*. Nestle’s work reassembled butch-femme sexual cultures of the 1950s and, despite opposition, shed light on these, at that time, long forgotten practices. Sally Munt (1998), Lynda Hart (1994), Judith Halberstam (1998a and 1998b), and others acknowledge that the phrase “butch-femme” references homosexual (differences in sexual orientation) but in terms that are hetero-gendered (differences in gender identifications) and that centre erotic practices that emerged in post-Second World War, urban working-class lesbian communities in the United States. These practices were driven underground after a harsh condemnation by lesbian-feminism in the 1970s but reappeared in the early 1980s after the acrimonious sex wars. In these skirmishes lesbian-feminism, challenging the homophobia of mainstream feminism and attempting to redress the structural inequities between women, argued that butch-femme reproduced dominant/submissive power imbalances thought inherent in heterosexuality. Lesbian-feminism sought to recentre lesbianism as quintessentially feminist by privileging a lesbian subject position – the woman-identified woman – that disavowed all manifestations of masculinity and femininity.

Cultural work in the mid-1980s began to reconceptualize butch-femme, arguing that what was being dismissed was an important erotic system as well as pre-Stonewall lesbian working-class erotic history. Nestle’s *A Restricted Country* restores butch-femme as embodied resistance to the sex/gender system by establishing butch-femme as lesbian gender identities that eroticize gender, not power, differences. If sex is biology and gender the culturally

constructed subjectivities of masculinity and femininity mapped onto biology, then, as Nestle (1987), Rubin (1984), Feinberg (1993, 1998), and Butler (1990) argue, boys could be girls, and girls could be boys, regardless of biology. Butch or masculine women challenge the “naturalness” and biological essentialism of the sex/gender system while lesbian and bisexual femmes trouble the necessary alignment of gender (femininity) with the overdetermined object choice (male-embodied masculinity). Butch-femme, then, is no longer an imitation of gender but a parody of heterosexuality that deconstructs the operations of the sex/gender system and, subsequently, all gender identities, as performative effects.

More recently, debates around butch-femme have widened to overlap with those of trans-gender, trans-sexuality, gender performativity, and drag “kinging,” thus necessitating a similar shift in language from “butch” (referencing particular forms of lesbian masculinity) to “female masculinity” (or particular types of gender expression that bring together both ends of that phrase) (Halberstam 1998a). At stake in many of these debates are the ways in which female masculinity has erroneously become coterminous with ontological “lesbianism” (not all female masculinities are lesbian; not all lesbians are masculine; not all lesbians are female). When pressure is placed on the fault line between masculinities, what is exposed in the fissure are the limitations of heteronormative (read: binaristic) configurations of gender, embodiment, and identities. All too frequently, lesbian configurations of identity that strive towards stability and certainty have assumed a kind of concordance between body shape and gender category – a concordance that, as I show in Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness*, Leslie Feinberg’s *Stone Butch Blues*, and Rose Tremain’s *Sacred Country*, have reproduced the limitations and, sometimes, the violence of a naturalized biological essentialism.

Thus, as part of a larger agenda that attempts to rethink the strategic use of gender essentialisms, *Masculinities without Men?* hypothesizes four axioms of “gender studies” (Sedgwick 1995). First, sometimes masculinity has nothing to do with men. Similarly, female masculinity and/or butch identity in women is largely, but not exclusively, lesbian. Second, masculinity and femininity are in many respects orthogonal to each other (i.e., they are not at opposite ends of the same axis but, rather, constitute different social and psychic axes). Gender-queering masculinity (drag kings, butch and stone butch masculinities, tomboys, girlfags, intersexed by design, he-she’s, boydykes, etc.) is a torsional queering, or performance, of heteronormative masculinity, while transitive identities (those such as FTM trans-sexuality that are not necessarily queer but that are marked by subjectivity/somatic incongruities) linger in and around the critical limitations of heteronormative masculinities. Third, because some people are more gendered than others, masculinity and femininity are “threshold

effects" where quantitative increments in somatic signifiers of gender along one axis can suddenly appear as qualitative differences on the other. For my purposes here, this penultimate axiom is crucial. Figuratively, this means that it is sometimes necessary to cross over the threshold of one thing (butchness and queerness), or to flip its switches from on to off, in order to register on an entirely different scale (FTM trans-sexual). In terms of race, however, the opposite is true. It is necessary to invert that which is normally hypervisible (people of colour) in order to see what white people are not supposed to see (whiteness). Finally, in masculinity/femininity, a dynamic of self-recognition mediates between bodies and gender performance. Influenced by the interrogation of gender on the part of second wave feminism, contemporary studies in masculinity have intensified masculinity as a heteronormative and anxious imperative, shifting the terms from straightforward descriptions of maleness to a critical exploration of "masculinity" as a complex set of meanings. This field of inquiry suggests that masculinity (and, by implication, female masculinity) is a category that alters across time, region, social class, and ethnicity.

Recalling the axioms that masculinity is not always about men, and that female masculinity is a torsional performance of masculinity, I argue that contemporary masculinity has shifted from the singular to the plural – a series of subjectivities inflected by and articulated through a variety of positions, discourses, institutions, and apparatuses. Similarly, female masculinity has proliferated and mutated from the indeterminate subject of Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (Chapter 2), who vacillates continuously between the axes of masculinity and femininity, to the complexly transgendered and partially trans-sexed subjects that I discuss in Chapter 3 (Jess in *Stone Butch Blues* and Martin in *Sacred Country*). In other words, I argue that contemporary fictions of female masculinity are ambivalently enabled by the historical but, more important, discursive "event" (both publication and banning) of Hall's novel, signalling its productive success but also its epistemological and discursive limitations. These contemporary gender-variant fictions are grafted from a representational history articulated by Radclyffe Hall through Stephen Gordon. Thus, they inadvertently repeat what Hall did when she created Stephen; that is, they graft discursive but also self-articulating practices from past knowledges and representational practices (including those already and equally bound by discourses of race and nation) in order to present what is imagined as new in a world of *borrowed and always already inhabited language*.

In *The Well of Loneliness* Stephen Gordon finds two texts with which to rewrite himself: sexology and the Bible. Each complements his father's legacy to him – British aristocratic masculinity. Armed with the alibis that each provides, Stephen is enabled into language and into subjectivity, with the alibis functioning as the condition of both possibility and limitation.

In other words, the “revolutionary” ardour for Stephen and for the late twentieth-century gender-variant subjects that follow in his footsteps is dressed in borrowed clothing. Stephen’s alibi of essence still flourishes in the discourses of female and trans-sexual masculinities at the close of the twentieth century, which suggests that each is bound by the very thing it cites. These “men” are making their own history; they are not making it under circumstances chosen by themselves but, rather, under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past (Marx 1977, 300). That past and those circuits of transmission are inevitably but irreducibly grafted from and bound with and by *The Well of Loneliness*.

The increasing visibility and politicization of gender-variant identities – intersexual individuals; non-operative, pre-operative, and post-operative FTM and MTF trans-sexuals; trans-gendered people – that exist outside of a supposedly referential epistemology and linguistic systems function as touchstones for what can be (somewhat reductively) identified as the condition of postmodernity. As Susan Stryker (1998, 147) notes in her introduction to “The Transgender Issue” of *GLQ*:

That a signifier does not point to its signified in any direct manner has been something of a first principle in linguistic theory for most of the twentieth century; only more recently, however, has it become socially significant that the signifier “gender” does not reference a signified “sex” in quite the direct way assumed by the idea of a “sex/gender system.” ... As such, these phenomena become sources of cultural anxiety and semi-otic elaboration ... [and] provide a site for grappling with the problematic relation between the principles of performativity and a materiality that, while inescapable, defies stable representation.

Nowhere is this poststructuralist crisis of language and representation more evident than in the smallest but most resonant discursive traces that mark identity: gendered pronouns. As Stryker notes above, when “gender” no longer references “sex,” then the pronouns “he” and “she” can no longer reference a discernibly gendered body. In *Masculinities without Men?* I use pronouns strategically to reference precise rearticulations of counter-discursive subjectivities and practices. If subjects are in dialogue with discourse and speak it as often as they are spoken by it, then the processes of “self-articulation,” which, as I have already noted, are also the object of this book, are themselves metadiscursive. For example, the verb “to articulate” can, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, mean one of two things simultaneously: (1) to divide into words, pronounce, distinctly utter and (2) (as a transitive verb) to connect or mark with or by joints, or with flexibly connected sections. In other words, to articulate means to be able to express oneself fluently and coherently *and* to be the site where component

parts join, as in a knee or hip joint that brings constitutive elements of the same entity together. To articulate that joint means to bring its segmented or constitutive components together to enable functionality or, conversely, to perform its dysfunctionality. When joints bend in ways they are not supposed to, they are often deemed "grotesque." As I argue in Chapter 3, the grotesque bodies of these subjects of masculinity profoundly disturb a phallic economy, the stock from which they are produced.

But the term "articulation" also references a set of theoretical problematics that emerged out of the work of Stuart Hall and his rereading of Ernesto Laclau. Laclau (1977) developed his notion of articulation in reference to Plato's allegory of the cave. Recall that, in Plato's allegory, since childhood men have had their backs to the entrance of a cave and cannot see the outside world. On the wall of the cave are projected shadows of other men, and, by linking the voices of these men to the shadows, the inhabitants conclude that the first derive from the second. One of the men leaves the cave, escapes, and perceives the true origin of the voices. As he leaves the cave the sun blinds him. As he becomes accustomed to it, the vision he gains helps him to understand and unthink the falsehood in which he has been living. Laclau argues that common sense discourse is presented as a system of misleading articulations in which concepts do not appear linked by inherent logical relations but are bound together simply by connotative or evocative links that "custom and opinion" have established between them (7). As a critique, a theory of articulation similarly seeks to break the links between concepts that are the residue of opinion and custom. Accordingly, then, knowledge presupposes a kind of rupture, a disarticulation of ideas that enables us subsequently to construct newly grafted articulations.

As a theory and a method, articulation can be understood as a way of understanding a social formation without falling into the traps of reductionism, where all formations are reduced to a mechanical relation between base and superstructure, and of biological essentialism (Slack 1996, 112). As Jennifer Slack writes, "articulation is a way of thinking the structures of what we know as a play of correspondences, non-correspondences and contradictions, as fragments in the constitution of what we take to be unities" (112). Stuart Hall uses the specific trope of the articulated lorry, or British truck, where the front cab and back trailer can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. The result is that the two parts are connected to each other but, because of that linkage, can also be broken apart (Hall 1996a). Thus, an articulation is the form of connection that can make a unity of two different or contradictory elements under certain conditions; but it also is a linkage that is not necessary, determined, absolute, or essential for all time (141). According to Hall, given that the unity of a discourse is really the articulation of different distinct elements

that do not have a necessary “belongingness” but that can be “languaged” together, the question to ask of an articulation is: Under what conditions can the connection be forged, made, or disarticulated (141)?

Hall draws on the example of the Rastafarians in Jamaica to show how distinct elements become languaged together. According to him, new cultural (trans-)formations are manifested when what he calls “lines of tendential force” articulate a political group (e.g., Rastafarians) to political, economic, and ideological structures (e.g., the Bible). Hall suggests that Rastafarians have had to transform biblical language, develop it, inflect it, clarify it, and engage it in order to transform it and themselves into a certain kind of consciousness because that consciousness is already bound with the community’s historical relation to biblical discourses (143). “In the case of the Rastafarians,” Hall argues, “[they] borrowed from a text – the Bible – that did not belong to them; they had to turn the text upside-down, to get a meaning which fit their experience. But in turning the text upside-down they remade themselves; they positioned themselves differently as new political subjects; they reconstructed themselves as blacks in the new world: they became what they are ... This is a cultural transformation” (143). In other words, this particular formation is the product not of an unbroken line of continuity from the past; rather, it is a transformation through a regrafting and a reorganization of the elements of a cultural practice – elements organized together in a new discursive formation.

To articulate the selves at the heart of the texts presented here is to read how they similarly join, attach, detach, dis(as)semble, or disjoin(t) discursive and epistemological elements not only to function within those economies but also to foreground and trouble their articular machineries. These subjects also reorganize elements of existing social formations to make them, and themselves, new. They cite authoritative sex/gender discourses, which, for Radclyffe Hall, include biblical and sexological texts, to enable resistant counter-citational articulations. In other words, to create “something new,” an identity or a gender supposedly not thinkable inside the sex/gender system, the authors under study often evoke an identity that is thinkable in order to resignify what that gender looks like and, indeed, how it dysfunctions outside the limitations of bodies as the current episteme “articulates” them. They performatively cite authorities at the same time as their self-articulation is enabled by them to effect dysfunctional counter-citational practices in, around, and through the category of female masculinity. This is a social category that, I argue, is inciting riotous destabilizations, performing as a category in/as crisis. That said, the particular formations of gender articulations manifest in *The Well of Loneliness* are also languaged by and with white supremacy. As Stuart Hall (1996a, 143) notes, these formations are made up of elements “which do not in themselves have any necessary political connotations.” In the

case of white supremacy, the imperative is that whiteness qua race does not have political connotations as it is hinged with discourses of gender to form a new discursive formation. Chapter 2 seeks to disarticulate that formation.

As I argue in detail in Chapter 1, by 1928 the sites of homosexuality and femininity became the objects of intensification via the supposedly neutral disciplinary powers of regulation, policing, and punishment when Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* was seized and banned. The effect was not the eradication or repression of a female homosexual subject but, rather, its epistemological realization. Many other early twentieth-century texts featured lesbian, gender-inverted, or otherwise sexually "deviant" subjects. Indeed, one of the important thematics to emerge out of the early twentieth-century modernist literary cultures of which Radclyffe Hall was a part was not only the interrogation of masculinity but, more precisely, the representations of both masculinity and femininity as modern(ist) subjects in crisis.

Regardless of whether or not one argues that a crisis in identity begins or follows modernism, there can be little argument that modernism, if not ambivalently, responds to, contests, or attempts to work through the crises of modernity. In other words, one of the irrefutable conditions of the modern world is its own paradoxically unimaginable and profound transition and destabilization due to industrialization, capitalist market relations, urbanization, sustained war, and so forth. A modernist aesthetic self-consciously (and perhaps paradoxically) experiences – indeed, hails – the end of time and history. Thematically, modernist texts began to re-imagine and reconfigure themselves in their own thematics, which were often preoccupied with identity, voice and silence, subjectivity, and (especially the fracturing of) consciousness vis-à-vis spatiality and the city. Stylistically, modernist writers often deployed a method that was anti-representational, anti-realist, obsessed with both the end of literary time and a formal poetics of the "New." In short, modernism is a wholly unresolved (and irresolvable) contradictory (anti-)tradition of rupture; it is a ruptured tradition turned against itself, aggressively rejecting the supposed authorities (moral, formal, social, literary) of its own literary and historical past. Finally, it is that which, by interrogating form over (sometimes as) content, paradoxically both affirms and denies art. In other words, that spasm of rebellion that is/was modernism compelled a contestatory imperative to break from the past in order to rupture tradition (clustered around the complexities of form, the representation of inward states of consciousness), foregrounding (rather than disavowing) the often nihilistic disorder behind the ordered surface of life and reality, consciousness itself freeing art from the burdens of the dull habit of formal and literary convention.

Male writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald, T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, and D.H. Lawrence, to mention only a few, stage this crisis in white masculinity in a variety of textually non-conventional ways. For instance, Hemingway's early novels, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), aggressively perform, to excess, masculinity as a profound woundedness. But femininity was similarly imploding in fictions of the early twentieth century, showing the productive impossible complexities of femininity, narrative, and voice (impossibilities with which Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein must also come to terms). Zora Neale Hurston's (1928) *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; Nella Larsen's (1928) *Passing*; Rosamond Lehmann's (1927) *Dusty Answer*; Clemence Dane's (1936) *Regiment of Women*; Compton Mackenzie's (1928) *Extraordinary Women*; Virginia Woolf's (1928) *Orlando*; Djuna Barnes's (1929, 1930) *Nightwood* and *Ladies Almanac* are examples. As are such dramas as Sholem Asch's (1922) *The God of Vengeance* and Edouard Bourdet's (1926) *The Captive*. All of these works interrogate the supposed self-evidence of femininity as well as the relationships between sex, gender, sexuality, desire, and representation.

In many ways, what seem now to be recognizable as "lesbian" texts of the early twentieth century were exploring the paradoxes at the heart of any imperative towards self-representation. Lillian Hellman's (1933) *The Children's Hour*, for example, metatextually performs this paradox by staging the dangers of even negative representations of female same-sex desire: even though its main characters, Martha and Karen, are accused, in the terms of the play, of something horrible, Martha comes to terms, as it were, with the "new meanings" that inevitably follow Mary's accusations: "Every word will have a new meaning" (66). Martha recognizes herself in those new meanings. In other words, the world of the play actually produces a negative representation into which Martha reads herself: "There's something in you and you don't know it ... and [then] there you are, seeing it for the first time" (71). While these "meanings" are not positive in the sense of challenging negative stereotypes, they are *productive*; that is, while there are no laws per se against female same-sex desire, there are interdictions that accord it the status of the "not permitted," the "unspeakable," and the "unintelligible." The irony, of course, is that to render it non-permitted, unspeakable, or unintelligible is to continually "speak," or, for my purposes here, "represent," it. "It" becomes the thing strictly forbidden but continuously produced in order for the interdiction(s) to function. Two other early non-canonical modernist plays – *The God of Vengeance* and *The Captive*, as well as Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* – all function in such paradoxical ways: all were subject to legal interdiction (the strictly forbidden or non-permitted) while creating or opening up subject positions that produce desire (the thing continuously demanded) as their

effect. Unlike novels that are usually read in private, *The God of Vengeance* and *The Captive* also contributed to the production of social space and the socio-political context of reception that, like *Salomé* in the Pemberton Billing trial (which I discuss in Chapter 1), always already taint their viewing audience.

Asch's *The God of Vengeance* was the first play with a lesbian theme produced on the American stage. While formally conservative, it challenges negative representations by presenting its themes in morally ambiguous ways. Yankel, patriarch and protagonist of the play, runs a brothel in the basement of his home. Upstairs, he purchases a Torah Scroll to help appease what he perceives to be the vengeful God of the Old Testament in order to keep his daughter, Rivkele, pure for marriage. Not only does the play actually stage physical intimacy between women – Act I ends with Rivkele and her lover, Manke (a young prostitute from her father's brothel), alone on stage passionately kissing and touching, a direct (and pleasurable) challenge to the “not permitted” interdiction; and later in Act II Manke and Rivkele “pretend” to be bride and groom on their wedding night – but it also stages a failure in “truth.” In the end Yankel's religious faith is permanently shattered by his own inconsistencies and contradictions. Thus, one of the play's thematics involves a tension between “Old” World moral authorities (religion) and “new” modern values, especially those of capitalist market relations – at one point, one of the prostitutes challenges the way sexuality is burdened with an excess of moral significance: “You think we are any different from the girls who go in[to] business?” (95). But, perhaps most important, when Yankel discovers that Rivkele spent the night with her lover (he does not know her lover is a woman), he demands to know whether or not she is still a virgin. At the emotional climax of the play, Rivkele answers him with a desperate “I don't know” (111). Here the play poses a direct challenge to the “unintelligible” interdiction. While lesbianism is indeed unintelligible within terms of the sex/gender system as the play defines it, it also sends that system into a conceptual crisis, revealing its limitations and demanding of the play's audience that it, too, question the categories of supposedly self-evident sexual “truth.” Even though, in the end, Rivkele's father banishes her to the brothel, the questions the play raises cannot be contained by the less-than-positive images, especially of Manke. Finally, the play itself was brought to the attention of the courts, and all the actors were arrested, charged, and convicted (by a jury) of producing a play deemed “obscene” and “immoral.” The arrest and conviction made front-page news in most of the important New York daily newspapers as it was the first time that an American jury had found performers guilty of presenting immoral public entertainment. The “event” of *The God of Vengeance* enabled the proliferation of the very identities that legal interdiction attempted to contain.

Bourdet's *The Captive* was the second play to put female same-sex desire on the American stage. Here, our main character is Irène, a young woman (apparently motherless) who refuses to travel with her family and is presumed to be preoccupied with a lover. In a desperate bid to remain in Paris she gives her father the name of a young man – Jacques – who was a suitor but is now pursuing an affair with Françoise. We subsequently discover that her lover is, in fact, a woman: Mme D'Aiguines. The fascinating thing about Bourdet's play is that our seductive "villainess," Mme D'Aiguines, never appears on stage. She is the wife of a friend of Jacques, M. D'Aiguines, and she is either discussed on stage by her husband and Jacques as a powerful seductress or is represented on stage by a bouquet of violets (curiously, this play was so popular that after its well-publicized encounter with the American courts the sale of violets dropped in New York City flower stores to a small but very telling amount). Moreover, heterosexuality comes under the microscope in this play and, like religious and sexual truth in Asch's play, is troubled as a source of moral authority. The attachments between these "kinds" of woman is likened to a secret alliance of two beings who understand each other because they are of the same ontological species. Even more interestingly, "these women" are likened to a kind of country where men become the stranger and enemy. After Jacques and Irène have lived together in an "empty" marriage, Jacques courts his previous mistress and tells her that, after living in a marriage with a woman who does not return his passion, he has learned something about himself. He tells Françoise that he longs to come home to the "people of his homeland," to the people who speak his language: "It's tiresome to talk when one isn't understood. One wearies of it ... I've come back to my own people" (237).

Thus, sexual difference is represented as a kind of ethnic, linguistic, or national difference, an "other," a crisis in representation that I return to more thoroughly in Chapters 2 and 3. Moreover, the fact that Mme D'Aiguines functions as an erotically powerful absent presence facilitates a kind of pleasurable erotic transference by women in the audience, enabling them to fill in their own details, as it were. In the end, not only does Irène leave Jacques to be with her lover, but Jacques leaves his marriage to be with Françoise. While *The Captive* does portray Mme D'Aiguines negatively and Irène as a "prisoner" of her unnatural desires, the gap left by failing-to-materialize Mme D'Aiguines manipulates the "not permitted" interdiction by refusing to embody her as an object of erotic contemplation. Once again, this play suffered under the gaze of the censors and the police who staged a rather sensational "night-stick" raid on the production. One historian unknowingly articulates the ironic effect of such actions: the play "revealed to thousands of innocents the fact that the world contained such a phenomenon as homosexuality" (Curtin 1987, 44).

While these and many other texts explored lesbian and gender-variant subjects, Hall's novel began to accrue currency as "the" lesbian novel of the period due, in part, to its construction of Stephen as the prototypical invert. *The Well of Loneliness*, vis-à-vis its symbiotic relationship with nineteenth-century sexology and its alibi of essence, provides a game of truth, or what Michel Foucault (1991, 16) calls "an ensemble of rules [or procedures] for the production of truth" about the sexual self. Its protagonist, Stephen Gordon, recognizes or constitutes himself as a cross-gendered or masculine subject. At the same time, though, I argue that both sexology and *The Well of Loneliness* produce a resistant subject, for the non-masculinized "feminine" and lesbian subject recognizes/constitutes herself as a discursive and epistemological impossibility. Both of these subjects emerge as strategies of resistance to the production/invention of rigidly gendered codifications of desire in nineteenth-century sexology. Thus, two paradoxically gendered subjects emerge: the first produced by realization (female masculinity) and the second by resistance (femme, refuted as an epistemological impossibility).

One final note: These debates in No Man's Land over butchness, drag kinking, intersexuality, and trans-sexual and trans-gender identities have profoundly important implications for a subject that haunts this work (and its subjects) but remains, perhaps dangerously so, bracketed. That subject is, of course, lesbian-identified, heterogendered, or bisexual femmes. In many ways female masculinity is as guilty as is heteronormative masculinity of constructing or producing itself in relation to the thing it is compelled not to be – that is, feminine. Thus, I assume the following premise: masculinity's disavowed Other (in this case, the lesbian femme subject) remains an epistemological impossibility in sexological discourse but emerges as a problematic yet productive subject in later twentieth-century lesbian and queer discourse. What continues to be bound in the sex/gender system where same-sex desire is represented as gender inversion is queer femininity. Given that queer, or ironically performed, femininity might be the thing that pushes the limits on binding and bound gender discourses, it also remains in a discursive bind. If Judith Butler (1993, 16) is correct in suggesting that it is "important to think about how and to what end bodies are constructed ... [and which] bodies are not constructed and, further, to ask after how bodies which fail to materialize provide the necessary outside, if not the necessary support, for the bodies which, in materializing the norm, qualify as bodies that matter," then queer femininity in a female body has emerged as resistant but contradictory in relation to queer and queering discourses that have orthogonally privileged cross-gendered bodies and subjects (essentialism, sexology, queer theory). Femme is at once the subject of "nature" (Biddy Martin [1996, 73] argues that she is all too often still (mis)read as a non-performative subject of

nature, as “a capitulation, a swamp, something maternal, ensnared and ensnaring”), the subject of an epistemological impossibility (neither feminism nor queer theory have adequately conceptualized her), and the subject of the technologies of white femininity in this moment of late capitalism.

While Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* can be seen as the most productive novel of lesbian identity in the early twentieth century, it, too, raises interesting questions about femme subjectivity that its noisy dialogism can neither contain nor account for. Although a realist text and not at all formally experimental, it, as I have suggested already, deploys an alibi of essence (*vis-à-vis* sexology) in order to open up new gendered and desiring subjectivities. While Hall writes the stereotypical butch, or invert, in Stephen Gordon, the most troubling and problematic image in the text is that of Mary, the supposedly “non-inverted” woman who becomes Stephen’s lover. Despite the negative representations of Mary/femme subjectivity in this novel, Mary persists. Joan Nestle (1987) has argued that, in order to read for femme, one must read between the (textual) lines; by reading between the at times limited portrayal of Mary in Hall’s text, one can find a resistant femme subject and a portrait of femme desire and agency. We encounter a femme gaze that pleasurably reads butch as the object of its desire: Mary and Stephen are standing in front of a mirror in their home and, while Stephen grooms herself, Mary watches her, desiring both the strong thin masculine lines as well as the curve of her breasts, “slight and compact, of a certain beauty” (Hall 1928, 321).

Moreover, in earlier scenes we see that, despite the myth in sexology of the invert as sexual aggressor, it is Mary who initiates the consummation of their relationship: Mary lays her hand upon Stephen’s knee, imprisons Stephen’s fingers in her own, asks Stephen to kiss her goodnight, then tells Stephen she wanted this kiss more than anything in the world (297). Subsequently, the transcripts of the judge’s decision to ban the text and the text itself reveal the pleasurable moments between Mary and Stephen: “and that night they were not divided” (313) and “[as] they look[ed] straight into the eyes of a love that was changed – a love made perfect, discarnate ... they drew together” (324). At another point in the novel, Stephen is called home by her mother but is told she cannot bring her lover with her. Mary writes to Stephen in a moment filled with longing and “only one ache”: “that letter was full of many things which a less privileged pen had best left unwritten – loyalty, faith, consolation, devotion; all this and much more she wrote to Stephen” (338). That letter, as a moment of enabling self-articulation, is a profound (and articulate) silence where femme desire is supposedly unimaginable but exists nonetheless.¹

All of these subjects – gender-queers, femme-butch, FTM, MTF, invert, nellie, queen, third sex, hermaphrodite, tomboy, sissy, drag king, female

impersonator, cross-dresser, and so on – represent a series of somatically signified yet productive contradictions. My questions are less “What do these contradictions really mean?” or “Who owns them and are they good or bad?” and more “What do they reveal?” “What do they allow (or, conversely, what do they not allow) discursive economies to do?” There are pivotal moments in the twentieth century in which gendered subject positions have been invested with, and articulated to, an important currency within economies of sexuality. *Masculinities without Men?* does not purport to be, as Foucault (1977b, 31) wrote, a history of those past investments in terms of the present; rather, it purports to be a history of present investments.

The Men of 1998

Four recent, albeit very different, community events demonstrate the degree to which the subject of female masculinity remains unstable and contingent regardless of how economies outside of No Man’s Land attempt to invest it. While all four of these events occur outside academic institutions and the narratives of theory told inside them, nevertheless they remain intelligible outside of those institutional practices. I include them here as examples of community and so-called “non-academic” events whose subjects rearticulate complex theoretical questions that seem to be the terrain of academic discourse alone. These events skirmish across the field of No Man’s Land to re-language and rearticulate elements of social formations in ever-increasing proliferations. I raise them here as examples of the dynamic and contingent nature of cultural and political articulations occurring outside of academe.

“Dicking over Genitals” is an article by Toronto academic and notorious sex-trade worker Gerald Hannon, and it is published in *NOW Magazine*, a free weekly arts magazine produced and distributed in Toronto. Hannon (1998, 18) reports on “Crossing Borders,” the twelfth annual convention organized by the US-based International Foundation for Gender Education and hosted in Toronto by Xpressions, the “fastest-growing transgender club in Canada.” The convention in downtown Toronto brought together several hundred transvestites, trans-sexuals,² cross-dressers (along with their friends, spouses, parents, and significant others) to share information, experience, and advice on living in and with differently embodied gender identities. Hannon describes the convention as a cacophonous mix of individuals. For example, in attendance was Virginia Prince, self-described as a “man for 50 years” but a “woman for 35,” someone who has done “everything except go to bed with a guy” and who runs a cross-dressing and transvestite organization called the “Society for the Second Self,” which serves primarily heterosexual men and which does not allow gays or trans-sexuals to join. The convention also welcomed Miqqi Alicia,

a.k.a. York University philosophy professor Dr. Michael Gilbert, who characterizes her-self and the convention attendees as “the walking deconstruction of the bi-polar gender dichotomy” (21). But the convention also attracted younger people, like two MTFs (male-to-female trans-sexuals) named Siobhan and Tina, “local girls who got engaged to each other the previous Saturday,” as well as, for the first time, a large FTM (female-to-male trans-sexual) contingent (21).

Black-and-white photographs of convention participants accompany Hannon’s musings about gender, nature, and “the meaning of sexual liberation”; a quick glance at these images by an unsuspecting reader would seemingly reveal next to nothing other than banal and unremarkable-looking white men and women (18). To quote Hannon: “These gals dress rather conservatively ... most of these guys are straight ... [but] it was still a bit like hanging out with a gaggle of kinky Kiwanis” (21). Two things betray this particular statement and, indeed, the article, as perversely ironic: *NOW Magazine’s* choice of Hannon as reporter, and Hannon’s choice of the adverb “still.” Anyone who has read a Toronto newspaper or watched local news coverage in the two years preceding this article might recognize Hannon’s name from the controversy surrounding his termination as professor of journalism at Toronto’s Ryerson University.

While Hannon was an employee of Ryerson, he continued to work as a gay sex-trade worker; when he outed himself (as a sex-trade worker) Ryerson fired him. Hannon himself notes the irony of his own reading position: “I’ve been a gay activist for some 25 years, live in the [gay] ghetto, have done party drag myself ... but what I was seeing was not drag as I had come to understand it ... I spent a lot of time rather dizzily discombobulated. I met a 19-year-old woman who had cut off her own balls. I kept reading for a vocabulary that isn’t there yet (though I did discover I was a ‘bio-boy’). I wanted the shock of the new. I got it” (18). Clearly, Hannon was commissioned by *NOW Magazine* because of his visibility as a gay activist and sex-trade worker; he was to write a story on what would inevitably be read as a queer event. However, the primary tension that runs throughout Hannon’s article and his construction of his own erotic responses to the trans-sexual men he meets at the convention is one of mildly annoying disappointment and disorientation. Sexuality, as Hannon discovers, was not at all the point. From Virginia Prince to the cute “guy,” “early 20s, lanky, crew cut, tight white T, jeans,” many of the subjects highlighted in Hannon’s piece perform post-heterosexual identities, motivating Hannon to conclude: “this past weekend left me wondering whether sexual liberation isn’t in fact a subset of a much more powerful phenomenon that’s getting called ‘gender agnosticism.’ This past weekend left me wondering whether the torch hasn’t been passed from our [i.e., gay activists’] hands” (21).

Hannon's choice of the term "agnosticism" shows both the parodic and epistemological aesthetics of a queer reading practice that does not quite fit coupled with the temporal anxiety signalled by his use of the term "still" in the simile I cited earlier ("it was still a bit like hanging out with a gaggle of kinky Kiwanis"). Despite the best efforts of feminist, gay, lesbian, and queer scholars to pry sexuality apart from gender, the two terms remain caught in an analytically illicit embrace, an ironic proximity overdetermined by crises in knowledge, constructions of time and space, and, indeed, the very language we used to talk about, well, "it" ("You begin to see the vocabulary problems" [Hannon, 18]). "It" is characterized in any number of ways, as this book suggests; how we even begin to articulate "it" overdetermines exactly how "it" might even be knowable at all.

One of the primary ways that "it" is described as thinkable is through historical and temporal relations of proximity. Hannon's own semantic choices foreground these discursive relations of time: phrases such as "it was still like," "what began as," "the torch hasn't passed from our hands," "the shock of the new" suggest that he is conceptualizing the "new" as emergent in the trans-gender movement rather than in a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or even queer movement that began in a supposedly knowable past and is now "mired in the gloomy swamp of spousal rights and pension plans" (21). At the same time, a gay and lesbian history continues to function as the frame of reference for Hannon and the conference attendees he interviewed. His interviewees would concur: "These," claims one transgender activist interviewed by Hannon, "are our Stonewall years ... This is our first generation of activists," at once evoking and deferring the epistemological, discursive, temporal, and conventionally "historical" frames of reference that make "it" intelligible. The recitation of a gay and lesbian frame of reference is fascinating, given that many of the biologically born men in the "Crossing Borders" convention dress in women's clothes but are accompanied by their female wives and spouses; it is also curious that many of the biologically born women at the convention are transitioning into male bodies through hormone treatment and surgical interventions, identifying throughout the process as heterosexual men; it is curious again that many biologically born men are similarly transitioning into female bodies to complete their sense of themselves as heterosexual women.

"Crossing Borders," the title of the convention, works against the most frequent misreading of the terms trans-sexual and trans-gender, which reads the suffix as suggesting "transcendence." Hannon's conceptualizations of the relationships between gay and lesbian discourse and trans-sexual discourse similarly work against reading the suffix as meaning "transcendence." Despite the at times acrimonious debates over how this term functions, I use the terms "trans-sexual" and "trans-gender" to suggest movement *across* gender difference, bodies, and discourses rather than

beyond them. Bodies may be reconstructed, but gender is neither transcended nor rendered insignificant. All of the characters in the novels that I discuss find a home in a gender; it just happens to be a gender that differs in meaning from how and what “gender” is conventionally authorized to mean in relation to “sex.” Such contingent precision similarly raises the question: what exactly is being crossed? A gay and lesbian liberationist politics, as Hannon suggests? A queer practice? Compulsory engendering and heterosexuality? “Crossing” suggests contrariness, a binary opposition, especially in its definitions of “passing from side to side,” “intersecting,” “placing crosswise.” To cross from one point in a binary opposition to another is not exactly the most productive trope for my purposes here.

This process of evoking a subject only to disavow it betrays an ontological anxiety that underwrites identity politics as they are performed in Hannon’s reading of this event and in the twentieth-century prose texts that are the objects of my study. To frame this point differently, the definitional crisis over the ontological discreteness of subjects produces a pattern where a fiction of origins is posited that centres a supposedly new subject in relation to an old one, hence continually (re)producing the new from within the old as if it were somehow always already outside of it. That new subject emerges in and through as well as against the old subject (the more conventionally defined gay and lesbian movements that contested essentialist alignments between bodies and genders and desires, or, conversely the “post-gay-and-lesbian” queer subject who celebrates those interventions). In many ways, the suffix “trans” suggests that somehow it is precisely this gay and lesbian past that is being trans-(c)ended.

Such a notion of transcendence or closure, however, suggests that moving beyond, past, or rising above such discursive histories is even possible. What might fit better is the trope of “grafting” that Laura Doan elucidates in her readings of the deconstructive strategies in Jeanette Winterson’s novels. Grafting is a replication process “whereby a plant, perhaps tender or uncertain, is fused into a hardier member of its strain, and so the two take advantage of each other and produce a third kind, without seed or parent” (Doan 1994, 152). The literal process of grafting is an organic reproductive process, where a new shoot might be inserted into a slit of stock from which it receives enough nourishment to generate a new entity, produced by but not reducible to either of the two constitutive elements. As a figurative trope, to graft means to insert something into, on, upon, or together; to insert or fix in or on so as to produce a vital or indissoluble union; to sew together; to attach on to make a “new” thing out of the two. As Doan suggests, this is a much more useful conceptual trope, one that allows us to acknowledge the dependence of the new thing on the other two as it is made out of them but is not reducible to either. As Doan puts it:

The transnatural practice of grafting does not circumvent, eliminate, or destroy the original ... biological matter that produces a hybrid, and as a result the process that makes an "other" ultimately registers the inceptive binarism as excess, as redundancy. The hybrid presupposes a biological precursor (as opposed to spontaneous regeneration), but cultural (in this case, scientific) intervention bears the responsibility for the act of creation. By becoming "something else" in a complex interplay of independence from and dependence on its biological precursors, the hybrid denatures dominant oppositional paradigms that set one against the other and subsequently accommodates more options. (152)

I use the trope of grafting to signify two processes: The first is that identified by Doan, although I use it as a way of thinking the relation between the manifestation of "trans-gendered" (read: "differently gendered") bodies as effects of the sex/gender system in crisis and transition. The process of grafting, not as an artificial, scientific reproductive mechanism but, rather, as a process of self-making and reproduction outside of (beyond) a heteronormative model, spawns a third hybrid sex. But this is not androgyny, a mix or blending of both (read: "natural") genders. As Doan puts it, "the notion of hybridity resonates with doing violence to nature, which results ... in the scientific equivalent of freaks, mongrels, half-breeds and cross-breeds" (153). This is a strategy of naturally denaturalizing biological essentialisms with a "sexual politics of heterogeneity and a vision of hybridized gender constructions outside an either/or proposition" in order to naturalize "cultural oddities, monstrosities, abnormalities, and [what appear to be] conformities" (154). The trope of grafting thus allows me to argue that gender differences and distinctions are still produced in these spaces but are deployed in trans-sexual and trans-gender discourses to entirely different ends.

The notion of grafting as opposed to crossing also allows me to think the imbrications and radical dependencies that these identities – gay, lesbian, bisexual as well as trans-sexual and trans-gender – have on/with each other both historically (the invert + the lesbian + the trans-sexual) and in the current moment when the differences between them often appear as the effect of productive and performative speech acts. "I am a boy" or "I am not a lesbian" have particular effects that may not be immediate but that emerge over time. One of these productive effects is the materialization or externalization of a body not visible; in the case of the subjects in the fictions I discuss, this is a boy's body. Because these speech-acts are particularly productive I refer to them as "onto-performative" speech acts. The differential process that produces the fantasy of positivity occurs through practices of self-articulation and oppositionality. Thus, my concern is not only the way in which the texts under discussion contest the

alignment of bodies, identities, and power but also (indeed, perhaps moreso) the ways they contest discursive practices and force a crisis by grafting articulations onto each other.

An article that appears in April 1998 in *Girlfriends Magazine* clearly depicts this process of grafting new articulations out of older ones through a relation of proximity and oppositionality. If Hannon's argument that resemblance marks the relations between the trans-gendered and ironically heterosexual performances of "Crossing Borders" participants and the mandatory heteronormativity of a Kiwanis convention, then Athena Douris's article, "The Well of Genderlessness: Who Decides If We're Lesbian or Transsexual?," suggests, rather, that dissemblance marks relations within two members of the first group. If Hannon compares two seemingly unlike things (heterosexual men of the Kiwanis and the many different kinds of heterosexual and heterogendered "men" at "Crossing Borders"), then Douris compares two seemingly like things (FTM trans-sexuals and butch lesbians) to complicate these relations even further. Douris reports on a talk given by a developmental child psychologist and a male-to-female trans-sexual, Shoshanna Gillick, to a group of lesbian and gay journalists and scholars on the topic of gender identity disorder (GID). Gender identity disorder is the label used in the American Psychiatric Association's fourth *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV)* to name and diagnose gender identity confusions. As it now stands, children or adults have GID if they exhibit both a strong and persistent cross-gender identification and discomfort with either their biological sex or the gender role deemed appropriate to their biological sex. Girls, for instance, are well on their way to a diagnosis of GID when they insist on "wearing only stereotypical masculine clothing," "exhibit a preference for cross-sex roles in make-believe play," demonstrate a "marked aversion toward normative feminine clothing," and/or assert that "she does not want to grow breasts or menstruate" (*DSM IV*, quoted in Douris 1998, 18).

Gillick's research tries to complicate such confusing and supposedly self-evident certainties in the *DSM IV* by arguing that none of the criteria for GID in girls seems indicative of a psychological disorder. For instance, she argues that between 50 percent and 75 percent of GID children are actually misdiagnosed. Gillick insists that long-term studies show that up to 75 percent of GID-diagnosed children never have sex changes and, instead, grow up to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual (18). In other words, what appears to be a clearly definable gender identity disorder (GID) according to the *DSM IV*, potentially "correctable" by sex-reassignment surgery, might, in fact, be the early signs of a masculine or butch sexual identification in girls otherwise not "uncomfortable" with their biological sex. Simply put, and despite the resemblances, one (trans-sexual) man's gender identification is

not necessarily another (lesbian) butch's sexual orientation. Again, in No Man's Land, sexuality is not necessarily the only stake.

What is at stake both in Douris's article and in the *DSM IV* diagnosis is, in fact, evoked in the article's title. "The Well of Genderlessness" cites Radclyffe Hall's 1928 novel *The Well of Loneliness*, a text that both camps that Douris discusses in her article have claimed almost exclusively as a narrative of origins. Stephen Gordon, the main character of Hall's novel, functions as a contestatory site similar to that described by Douris. As I discuss in Chapter 2, Stephen understands himself best as an "invert," the term used by late nineteenth-century sexology to describe/produce a phenomenon similar to that named by GID – that is, a discomfort, or lack of "fit," between gender identity and biological sex. Some definitions of lesbianism and, recently, FTM trans-sexuality trace discursive histories back to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century construction/invention of inversion and, curiously, back to *The Well of Loneliness*. What interests me here is not the truthfulness or accuracy of any of these terms but, rather, the different and numerous ways they function to legitimate different claims to power and truth. The repudiation of these identities flags the discursive limitations of each, suggesting that these subjects are thinkable through the contestation of limits, boundaries, and exclusions.

For instance, much of the lesbian criticism of Hall's novel has dismissed Stephen's masculinity in order to articulate a lesbian-feminist subject not (obviously) bound by gender difference but, rather, by object choice: girls instead of boys. Recent trans-sexual and queer theory has again contested early feminist readings of *The Well of Loneliness*, arguing, in turn, that the novel articulates a subject neither thinkable nor desirable. Two recent studies published within the same year, Judith Halberstam's (1998) *Female Masculinity* and Jay Prosser's (1998) *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*, claim that the modern origins of their respective subjects do not overlap and are to be found in Hall's banned novel. I argue that the genealogies of both subjects can indeed make a twentieth-century home in *The Well of Loneliness*, whose subject is neither exclusively but *both*.

The very acrimonious disputes between trans-sexual and queer theorists that have often exploded into full-fledged border wars erupted most profoundly over the ownership of Brandon Teena. In Toronto ownership battles flared in May 1998 following a showing of *The Brandon Teena Story* (Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir, USA, 1998) at Inside/Out, the Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival of Toronto, the third event I want to use to theorize the No Man's Land of masculinity. Brandon Teena was a white, working-class Nebraska youth who was murdered along with two friends (a white female friend named Lisa Lambert and a young black man, Phillip DeVine) in 1993.³ Audience members at the Inside/Out screening

continued to speak about Brandon as “female” and “lesbian” when asking questions of the filmmakers who were in attendance, even though Brandon identified as heterosexual and male and disidentified with lesbianism and femaleness. The murders of Teena, Lambert, and DeVine attracted enormous media attention. The gay press coverage of the event evolved into a discussion of violence against lesbians and women as well as a debate over lesbian and gay civil rights: it specifically omitted discussion of violence against trans-sexuals. Donna Minkowitz’s (1994) *Village Voice* narrative of Brandon’s death, for instance, acknowledges the fact that Brandon himself identified neither as lesbian nor female, yet she continues to use a female pronoun to fetishize Brandon’s masculinity as lesbian and to characterize him as a confused but sexy cross-dressing butch: “From photos of the wonder-boychic [sic] playing pool, kissing babes, and lifting a straight male neighbor high up in the air to impress party goers ... Brandon looks to be the handsomest butch item in history – not just good looking, but arrogant, audacious, cocky – everything they, and I, look for in lovers” (27). In subsequent interviews, those “babes,” the white working-class women who were Brandon’s lovers, make it very clear that they identify as heterosexual, that Brandon frequently talked with lovers and friends about being trans-sexual, and that he repeatedly talked about understanding himself as a man rather than as a butch lesbian. As I show in Chapter 5 – which considers these issues again as they are raised by Kimberly Peirce’s very successful 1999 film, *Boys Don’t Cry* – these quarrels continue.

What I find so profoundly disturbing about the border war that has erupted over Brandon Teena is its insistent and compulsory singularity, indeterminacy, and need for possession. Not only is Brandon misrepresented as something he seemed not to be, but his lovers – young, working-class white women who have clearly and articulately named themselves – are also misrepresented and characterized as self-hating closeted lesbians or “duped” heterosexual girls. By constructing the border war between two camps (butches and FTMs) as being solely over gender (specifically, masculinity in No Man’s Land), such arguments must either ignore or repudiate other sites of contest – in this case, contests of meaning between lesbian-identified femmes and the, for all intents and purposes, heterosexual, working-class women who were Brandon’s lovers and who have been delegated to the sidelines throughout the press coverage. One of the most frequent questions about Brandon concerns why he chose to stay in Nebraska instead of going west to the gay Mecca of San Francisco – a question that refuses to recognize that similarities in class might have been more important to Brandon than similarities in sexuality.⁴ Brandon seems to have found himself in a non-queer but working-class rural community where he could more readily pass as male because he did not identify either himself or his desires as “female” or “queer.” The border wars over

Brandon, by focusing on his supposedly self-evident queer orientation, completely disavow equally important facets of Brandon's identity, which remain contentious within gender and sexual debates.

Finally, the fourth skirmish that I want to discuss took place when the CBC aired the Bester Cramm documentary *You Don't Know Dick: Courageous Hearts of Transsexual Men* in late June 1998. On 2 July, *Xtra! Toronto's Gay and Lesbian Biweekly* featured a rather contentious review of the documentary by gay critic Brent Ledger (1998). It is entitled "Getting to Know Dick: Transsexuals as Guardian of Gender Status Quo," and it ups the ante on the stakes of the border wars in No Man's Land by shifting the focus of those wars from butch lesbians and FTM trans-sexual men to gay men and trans-sexual men over the right to define "maleness." "This wide-eyed doc," Ledger writes, "left me feeling as if I'd stumbled into a time warp. Maleness hasn't felt this claustrophobic since the fifties" (37). Ledger's primary quarrel with the documentary seems to rest with trans-sexual men seemingly conforming to heterosexual and, therefore, in Ledger's estimation, heteronormative notions of masculinity. "The real question," he writes, "is what are these guys chasing? For many gay men, maleness is a chimera, an illusion invented by a culture bent on endowing one segment of the population with a taste for aggression, control and dominance" (37). Ledger unproblematically equates gay masculinity with a critique of heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality when he simultaneously realigns all forms of heterosexual masculinity with aggression, control, and dominance, repudiating – indeed, disavowing – the ways in which gay men are often accorded forms of social power vis-à-vis class and race.

In his ironic accusation – "Instead of questioning standard gender roles and images these men embrace them – and the more conservative the better" – Ledger disavows Leo Bersani's (1995, 117) claim that, for white, gay, middle-class men, "there may have been no time at which the object of [their] desire did not include a socially determined and socially pervasive definition of what it means to be a man." Bersani makes it clear that, for many gay men, the struggle against those definitions, like the struggle against white supremacy for many white subjects, includes the ways that those struggles are ambivalently mapped onto their bodies: "An authentic, gay, male, political identity therefore implies a struggle not only against definitions of maleness and of homosexuality as they are reiterated and imposed in a heterosexist social discourse, but also against those very same definitions so seductively and so faithfully reflected by those male bodies that we carry within us as permanently renewable sources of excitement" (117).

Part of what Ledger misses in his reading of *You Don't Know Dick* are the ways the documentary and its subjects refuse to allow male bodies, authority, and power to stand as synonyms for each other. He notices yet

misreads the fragility and instability that is constitutive of masculinity: “All of the men in the documentary share this sense of fragility. They’re aware of the ways in which masculinity can be socially constructed. They talk about learning to be men, adopting a new personality. They’re aware that their sex practices are not quite those of genetic men. They know they don’t quite fit” (Ledger 1998, 37). What Ledger cannot know and, clearly, what he disavows is that all masculinities are fragile, markedly unstable, and continuously in process. In other words, if masculinity is no longer an essence that male bodies are naturally born with, then, as *Masculinities without Men?* suggests, becoming any gender is a process that is ongoing, contingent, non-foundational, and self-conscious: masculinity is the process by which men of any gender learn to identify and fit themselves into discourses of gender.⁵ As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1995, 12) argues, “sometimes, masculinity has nothing to do with men”; the transsexual men in *You Don’t Know Dick* drive a wedge between masculinity as a cultural identification and masculinity as the sole prerogative of male bodies. Ledger pathologizes trans-sexual masculinity as the pale imitation of the original heterosexual and heteronormative masculinity that he himself, as a gay man, refuses. He constructs the female lovers of trans-sexual men as homophobic women who pander to phallic penetration while remaining entirely passive sexually. According to Ledger, “Max [one FTM in the film] has a relationship with a woman who says: ‘Max is just absolutely the most male man I’ve ever been with. Max uses hands, dildos and strap-ons for penetration.’ Which makes you wonder what the lover would do with a butch dyke like Lea DeLaria.” Moreover, Ledger collapses all forms of heterosexual masculinity, including trans-sexual masculinity, with “aggression, control and dominance” – qualities that apparently all gay men essentially reject (37).

More important, Ledger also misses the very contingent and ironic status of the masculinity suggested by the film’s title, *You Don’t Know Dick*. The title, which resonates with “you cannot know” (the supposedly self-evident truth about bodies and subjects) as much as with “you do not know” (what you think you know about masculinity), foregrounds the crisis of knowledge and certainty that I argue is a constitutive feature of masculinity but that percolates most productively in, around, and through the bodies of trans-sexual men and butch women. As Holly Devor (1997) and others have noted, the transition from female to male is a process far more fraught with difficulties than is its male to female counterpart. Current medical technologies have not been as successful at constructing a full-functioning penis as they have been at constructing a vagina from a penis; the result for many FTM trans-sexuals is intersexed bodies – bodies that are marked as masculine through facial hair, primarily flat chests, dense muscle tone, masculine clothing, and so forth but that do not seem

to bear that supposedly ultimate signifier of maleness: a stereotypical, conventional-looking penis. As one self-fashioned transman writes, "I call myself 'Intersex by Design' in order to call attention to the fact that it is a choice I am proud to make ... I find it a far more effective strategy [though] to be accepted as a regular guy first and then to reveal myself as something a wee bit different" (Volcano n.d., n.p.).

Del LaGrace Volcano acknowledges that, for many intersexuals, self-determination and control over one's own body has been violently stripped away by surgeons and family members. Morgan Holmes (1995), Suzanne Kessler (1998), and others have documented and theorized the surgical and psychological violences done to intersexed babies by paediatric surgeons, endocrinologists, and parents who need to stabilize meanings between gender, genitals, and sexualities. The intersexed bodies that medical technologies forcibly produce are radically different from manufactured FTM bodies. Nevertheless, they remain intersexed. In Chapter 3 I pay particular attention to intersexed bodies created by removing the most obvious and immediate visual signifiers of femininity: breasts. Reading the breast-removal scenes in the two novels under consideration in that chapter, I argue that, within what I call a mamillian economy, the absence of breasts changes these subjects' experience of a lack. By removing the signifiers of objectification and without adding the requisite penis, the subjects of female masculinity resignify lack (the lack of breasts) as both a refusal of but also a disidentification with masculinity's objectifying gaze.

The questions raised by both Ledger and the transmen in *You Don't Know Dick* are the questions of contemporary scholarship in gender and sexuality studies: What is masculinity? What is gender? And how is gender related to bodies? Indeed, what is that "something a wee bit different" referenced by the transman above? And how is it possible to know or articulate that "something a wee bit different"? Answers to these questions are to be found in cultural artefacts: texts, performances, and/or images that explore gender-variant subjects. Those artefacts – drag king shows, butch theatrical roles, documentaries, newspaper articles, FTM autobiographies, and novels articulating female masculinity – set the stage for the narratives I query. In short, those answers are found in the "trenching" in *No Man's Land*, where "to trench upon" means "to encroach upon a person's rights, privacy, etc.; or to verge upon [the] borders" (*Oxford English Dictionary*) between queers and transfolks; between FTM but gay transsexual men and gay men; between heterosexual women and heterogendered women; between non-operative FTM transmen and butch/lesbians and the bisexual and (sometimes lesbian) femmes who seek out both.

But those answers can also be found in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. One of the central premises of Bakhtin's work is the parallel between the construction of texts and the construction of the self. Both centripetal and

centrifugal forces intersect in and as utterances that are not the product of a closed system but of social acts or “active participant[s]” that respond to and anticipate other utterances (Bakhtin 1981, 233). Because Bakhtin’s concern rests far more with language as living speech in its concrete totality (this is what Bakhtin means by “discourse”), he suggests that the meaning of any linguistic sign is diachronic and relational, involving different speakers and their use of words within sentences. He goes so far as to argue that language is inseparable from its specific socio-historical context: “Language acquires life and historically evolves ... in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms” (Bakhtin and Medvedev 1978, 129). The results of these context-determined utterances are meaning-making processes dependent upon contexts. Language as discourse is productive, and relations of language evoke present, past, and possible future contexts as well. Thus, it follows that the constitutive nature of a word itself embodies a multiplicity of meanings and traces of its past usages. “Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of communication ... Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on others ... and somehow takes them into account” (Bakhtin 1986, 91).

If language is the space of confrontation between differently oriented accents, then, by speaking and hence rearticulating and “linguaging,” subjects transform both the social context in which speech occurs and themselves. These transformations are what constitute language as dialogic. Stuart Hall rereads Bakhtin to posit that subjects are formed and, by implication, reformed “new” vis-à-vis discourses and utterances. Conversely, since subjects are “linguaged” by discourse, so they must use and reconfigure those same discourses to, as Hall (1996a, 143) puts it, “construct some narrative, however impoverished and impure, to connect the past and the present: where they came from with where they are” and, indeed, where they are bound. In turning these texts, discourses, and dialogic languaging processes upside-down, subjects remake themselves, becoming and exceeding what they are, finding a meaning that *fits*, however temporarily, and only, as Bakhtin reminds us, until its next moment of refraction. “When a member of a speaking collective comes upon a word his own thought finds the word already inhabited ... there is no access to one’s own personal ‘ultimate’ word ... every thought, feeling, experience must be refracted through the medium of someone else’s discourse, someone else’s style, someone else’s manner ... almost no word is without its intense sideward glance at someone else’s” (Bakhtin 1984, 202-3).

The larger question at stake in performances of female masculinity, especially when they emerge in lesbian contexts and then repudiate those

contexts, is similar to one asked by Stuart Hall. Hall rereads Stallybrass and White (1986), who draw on Bakhtin to theorize metaphors of transformation, including those of the self. Stallybrass and White ask a question that I cannot fully answer here, nevertheless, it is one that informs my own reading and writing practices: "Why is it that the thing we deem socially peripheral has be[come] symbolically central?" (Hall 1996a, 303) Anyone who has watched lesbian-feminist communities and subjects transform themselves over the last twenty years would recognize the ways that performances of gender (especially masculinity) once "Othered" and banished have now returned to become symbolically central. These failures trouble constructions of the subject and allow me to flesh out Bakhtin's assertion that the subject is constituted by the "impossibility of a direct relation with oneself" (quoted in Stam 1989, 4).

Like many of the poststructuralists who followed him, Bakhtin (1986, 7) argues that there will always be an element of "outsideness" to any self; that is, the consummation of the whole, either a self or a text (which, with the poststructuralists, Bakhtin understands as any coherent complex of signs), can never be complete. In other words, as I become and realize myself as a "self," I become aware of my relations with others in the very moment that I transform myself through the operations of language. Without those "others" the self could not exist. For Bakhtin, the self-other relation is also dialogic in that the self does not and cannot exist as a fixed, finished, or finalized entity but, rather, is in a state of constant activity. While the building of a self constitutes a process that is dialogic, the self nevertheless remains partly outside the self. Thus, dialogism is grounded in alterity, where subjectivity constantly seeks to evoke or engage the words of others that might "externalize" and "finalize" its sense of self. "The hero's attitude toward himself is inseparably bound up with his attitude toward another, and with the attitude of another toward him. His consciousness of self is constantly perceived against the background of the other's consciousness of him – 'I for myself' against the background of 'I for another.' Thus the hero's words about himself are structured under the continuous influence of someone else's words about him" (Bakhtin 1984, 207). This self, then, exists on the boundaries between its own and the other's consciousness, between its words and the words of others. It is this other that enables the self to reflect on its others and to respond, so that the other's words become part of oneself. As Bakhtin puts it, I need the other to "author" myself.

If the word, as Bakhtin suggests, is both already inhabited and a social event – the expression and product of listeners and speakers – then the resignification of words and the performances of those resignifying practices are precisely what is at stake in both the code-crossing and riots of meanings that are fought on and over the words "man," "woman,"

“lesbian,” “butch,” “female-to-male trans-sexual,” and so on. At its most conservative and violent, the sex/gender system cannot make provisions for the crises of meaning inherent in the nature of language, or what I name as a dialogic, or double-, indeed, multi-voiced collision of utterances and discourses articulating female masculinity in the twentieth century.

“Female Masculinity”

That collision of utterances and discourse is nowhere more evident than in the work of Judith Halberstam. There can be no denying the importance and significance of Halberstam’s (1998a) *Female Masculinity*. Besides being the source of my own book’s title, it is the first book-length study of subjects heretofore neglected in academic inquiry. Halberstam has, in essence, set the parameters of this field of inquiry. Until the publication of *Female Masculinity* there had been no comprehensive study of this subject, so one of its key goals is to theorize, document, and catalogue the diversity of masculine expression in primarily lesbian women. To this end, the book has been quite successful. While Halberstam nods towards transgendered and trans-sexual men, her theoretical project is most successful when she focuses on the range of expressions that encompass masculinity in women, each with its own history, characteristics, and representations.

Female Masculinity makes several important interventions in both the content and the methodologies of sexuality studies. First, after coining the phrase “female masculinity,” which works through juxtaposition and paradoxical relation (i.e., through categorical indeterminacy), Halberstam constructs and then deconstructs the subjects who are now visible by and through the contradiction it names. Halberstam herself notes the misrecognition that has overdetermined or collapsed the very significant differences between subjects hailed by the phrase “female masculinity” – butch masculinity, trans-sexual masculinity, trans-gendered subjects, drag kings, and so on. She argues, as remedy, that while these subjectivities might look similar, each has different representational and discursive histories. Where some of the work theorizing these subjects challenges a binary, or two-genders, system by positing a third gender, Halberstam’s work, like Anne Fausto-Sterling’s (1995) and my own, instead gives us multiple engenderings; that is, her work is most potent when she suggests that, instead of conceptualizing female masculinity and lesbianism as coterminous and, thus, as a singular figure between masculinity and femininity, critics benefit, as do gender and sexuality studies, when female masculinity itself is understood as multiple, contradictory, and inherently plural. That said, and despite its predictability vis-à-vis queer fem(me)ininitities – and Halberstam (1998a) has been taken to task by a number of queer femme scholars for her assertion that being tomboyish and/or butch is far more desirable than being feminine (“the excessive conventional femininity

often associated with female heterosexuality can be bad for your health" and "it seems to me that at least early on in life, girls should avoid femininity ... femininity and its accessories should be chosen later on, like a sex toy or a hairstyle" [268-9]) – *Female Masculinity* makes an important contribution to depathologizing and complicating subjects who, at best, have been relegated to political non-importance.

At the same time, Halberstam has been very much influenced by the work of Sedgwick (1990) and Butler (1993) and their reluctance to stabilize the relation between signifier, signified, and supposed referent. Both Sedgwick and Butler, whose work has been so important to establishing the field of queer theory, share a deep suspicion of stabilizing the contemporary and historical meanings behind signs such as "lesbian," "queer," "butch," "trans-sexual," and so on. Besides the fact that linguistic fixity is, by definition, impossible, both Sedgwick and Butler are critical of essentialist identity politics that attempt to secure political certainty by making foundational claims about what counts, or, more important, does not count, as an identity. Such refusals, informed by semiotics and deconstruction as much as by poststructuralist theory, suggest, as does Halberstam, that triangulations between politics, language, and the "real" can never be innocent. Hence the importance of what Halberstam calls a "perversely presentist" model of historical and theoretical argumentation. According to Halberstam, her method of perverse presentism is an attempt to correct oversights in previous methodologies, which look for contemporary configurations of desire, sexuality, and gender in past constructions of lesbianism and define them as being synonymous with masculinity. Her method, in other words, avoids the trap of simply projecting contemporary understandings back in time as a way of attempting to secure current knowledge regimes. The problem with these configurations, she writes, is that "what we do not know for sure today about the relationship between masculinity and lesbianism, we cannot know for sure about historical relations between same-sex desire and female masculinities" (Halberstam 1998a, 54). Perverse presentism allows for both a denaturalization of the present and a history of the present rather than, to quote Michel Foucault, "a history of the past in terms of the present" (quoted in Halberstam 1998a, 53).

Another important goal of Halberstam's work involves distinguishing female masculinity from male masculinity, or, as she says in an oft-quoted expression, "conceptualizing masculinity without men" (Halberstam 1998a, 2). In the end, she wants to make masculinity safe for women and girls, even heterosexual women, so that, with more gender freedom, perhaps even men will be able to recreate masculinity using her model of female masculinity. A number of critics have read the phrase "masculinities without men" to mean "without relation to men." For instance, in his review for the *Journal of Men's Studies*, Daryl B. Hill (2002, 237) comments that "the

assertion that [female] masculinity is ‘masculinity without men’ is problematic.” What Hill seems to be identifying here is how Halberstam’s work, like my own, is predicated upon a rupture, or distinction, between “masculinity” and “men.” If the term “men” is successful as both an ideology and a signifier, then the referent it imagines itself marking is the male body, complete with penis as supposedly self-evident referent. If, however, the term “masculinity” accomplishes its work, then “men” no longer references a self-evident penis. What it references instead is the sex/gender system. “Men” collapses the distinction between signifier and referent whereas “masculinity” not only reasserts it but also suggests that the possession of a conventionally defined penis has nothing to do with securing manhood. Masculinity is a free-floating signifier, detached from the referent, which, as Stuart Hall (1997), Jean Baudrillard (1995), Roland Barthes (1993), and others have suggested, is itself a prior set of signifiers naturalized, and thus passing, as referents. So when Halberstam or I argue, as does Sedgwick, that sometimes masculinity has nothing to do with men, we are not necessarily arguing, literally, “that female masculinity isn’t related to male masculinity”; rather, we are arguing that, since masculinity now has nothing to do with the male body, female masculinity is just another materialization, or form, of manhood – one among many, none of which is secured (or privileged) by a referent.

That said, the irony of Halberstam’s accomplishment is that it is achieved through a series of problematic disavowals that have yet to be deconstructed in the reviews of her book. The major difference between Halberstam’s work and mine is that *Masculinities without Men?* cannot and will not sustain the two disavowals at the heart of Halberstam’s argument. First, and perhaps less immediately significant (albeit still glaringly problematic), is the question of the taxonomizing impulse that organizes Halberstam’s inquiry. That this categorical imperative is confusing has already been noted in a number of reviews, including one by Rachel Adams (2000) for *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. Adams gives *Female Masculinity* a fair read, arguing that, while it suffers from certain shortcomings – the most important of which I discuss below – its accomplishments and contributions are both original and important. But those shortcomings, she suggests, actively conspire against the deconstructive claim implied by the contradiction in the title. Adams notes that *Female Masculinity* suffers from an “excessively schematic taxonomy ... characteristic of gay and lesbian identity politics” (473). She reiterates and celebrates Halberstam’s argument that the phrase “female masculinity” works because it calls into being a subject previously eclipsed by both heteronormative and lesbian categorical imperatives. But she also questions why “Halberstam’s solution to the problem of categorical thinking is to come up with still more categories.” This, she argues, is the book’s biggest limitation: “The tension

that troubles [Halberstam's] work, between a capaciously flexible model of sexuality and one that is fractured endlessly in an attempt to account for every possible variant of experience, is characteristic of gay and lesbian identity politics ... Halberstam wants to have it both ways, to criticize existent categories for not doing justice to the diversity of sexual experience and identification but then to produce ever more exacting taxonomies as a corrective" (473).

Adams does not fully answer her own question – that is, why does Halberstam choose this particular tactic? – but she does give the book a close and generous reading and reviews it well. My answer to Adams's question marks the fundamental difference between *Female Masculinity* and *Masculinities without Men?* – namely, that the former is primarily concerned with lesbian masculinity while the latter seeks a post-identity politic and, at times, post-queer, anti-heteronormative but trans-ed materialization of masculinity. Adams remarks that, despite Halberstam's categorical imperative, what remains most queer about female masculinity is that it produces an "odd alignment of sex and gender," which is most powerful when it refuses categorization altogether (473). What I argue is that the subjects under discussion not only refuse categorization as a teleology but that they also rearticulate, or reassemble, the intelligibility of categorization itself. Post-queer (i.e., trans-gendered and/or trans-sexual but not gay and/or lesbian) subjects like Martin from *Sacred Country* and Jess from *Stone Butch Blues* are, by definition, newly configured bodies that at once realign and dealign the terms of gendered embodiment – alignments to which *Female Masculinity* attributes definitional self-evidence.

Second, Halberstam's argument begins to betray its lesbian identity politics through its second major disavowal during the discussion of Terry Castle's (1996) *Noel Coward and Radclyffe Hall: Kindred Spirits*. In this curious but significant text, Castle posits and documents a kind of kindred spiritedness between John Radclyffe Hall and Noel Coward by reading their work, aesthetics, and personal styles dialogically. Castle suggests that Coward and Hall shared a masculine sensibility that demonstrates "vibrant cross-gender relationships" amongst differently gendered and queer artists, friends, and colleagues (12). Halberstam (1998a, 88-9) dismisses such dialogic conversations between men of different genders, suggesting that "this is an admirable project in some respects, with regard to the question of Hall's masculinity and indeed Coward's femininity, Castle links female masculinity to the imitation of queer maleness and male femininity to the imitation of queer femaleness and thereby renders cross-gender expressions as wholly derivative." Her thesis seems to be that female masculinity (why does she continue to use the singular form when her own articulation is plural?) is complex and, as such, is a "copy" neither of male homosexuality nor of male heterosexuality; instead, it "carves out its own

gender expression" (90). While this may be true, what is it carved out of? With what tools? By which (by Halberstam's account) pre-interpellated subjects? Why insist that only female masculinity is a unique articulation of masculinity?

This is an all too easy dismissal of an increasingly queer cross-pollination of subjectivities not just between butches, FTM trans-sexuals, trans-gendered men, and heterosexual men, but also between and amongst gay men and butches, tranny-fags and gay men, FTM trans-sexual men and heterosexual "bio" men, and many other possible arrangements of which we cannot yet conceive. Moreover, what seems to be at stake here for Halberstam is the pernicious belief, despite sentiment to the contrary, that male masculinity is the original and female masculinity the derivative. While Halberstam argues the opposite, as is indicated above, what she seems to disavow is precisely what masculinity studies has suggested all along – that male masculinity, for lack of a better term, is itself derivative. If there is no "original," as Butler has repeatedly reminded us, then why continue to claim that female masculinity is not derivative, there being no argument to the contrary? Female masculinity, I argue, does indeed carve out its own gender expressions, but so does male masculinity, gay masculinity, working-class masculinity, masculinities of many colours, and all combinations of the above. Each, to borrow the language of both Hall and Butler, is always already a rearticulation of engendering discourses. No one articulation is original: all are derivative. And, thus, each is capable of rearticulation and/or reconstruction.

Moreover, given the first premise of social construction theory – that each gender will be articulated through discourses of class, race, sexuality, and so on – each subject of female masculinity that I theorize is bound by the materialization of manhood as it appears in and is, as it were, spoken through different classes, races, sexualities, and bodies. These relationships amongst men of different genders within similar classes, races, sexual orientations, and so on are the stuff of female masculinity. Halberstam suggests and declares a performative indifference towards male masculinity, which she hopes will pass as an affirmation of female masculinity. "Such affirmations," Halberstam (1998a, 9) writes of female masculinity, "begin not by subverting masculine power or taking up a position against masculine power but by turning a blind eye to conventional masculinities and refusing to engage ... [P]ower may inhere within different forms of refusal: 'Well, I don't care.'" On the contrary, I make no such disavowals. In fact, I am interested in taking up power precisely in and as masculine power. Each of my subjects finds power not by feigning indifference but, rather, by cultivating proximity, identification, and similarity with other subjects of masculinity.

Can we really suggest that Stephen Gordon refuses kinship with his father

and with his childhood friend Martin Hallam? Does Jess Goldberg not look into the faces of fellow-labourer Ben and of union organizer Duffy and see him-self? *Sacred Country's* Mary Martin Ward refuses her father, yes, but her grandfather, Cord, gives him his name – a name that brings him into existence. The novel ends, in fact, with Martin finding ironic kinship, solace, self with Judge Riveaux, Jeremiah, and Walter. And isn't the horrific and painful irony of the film *Boys Don't Cry* the fact that it was the boys who mentored Brandon who were eventually responsible for killing him? Can we entertain the possibility that sometimes, as my opening epigraph suggests, some "lesbians" actually *do* want to become men? That each of the characters in these and the many texts I discuss all cultivate profound and important relationships with women cannot be disputed. But the argument that female masculinity does not notice, or is not influenced by, or does not reciprocate or return the gaze to male masculinity cannot be supported. Each is unquestioningly informed, influenced, mentored, and otherwise learns to become a man from other men in their class. Stephen, Jess, Martin, and Brandon, as trans-gendered and possibly trans-sexual men, not only have to directly "engage" the men around them but must also, to turn a clichéd phrase, embrace the boy within themselves in order to move closer to becoming that boy. Halberstam's "I don't care" might work as a rhetorical disavowal; but, like all disavowals – moments where subjects cannot know what it is they both already know and are always already constituted by – it certainly raises the question of psychic proximity to and identification with masculinity.

In *Masculinities without Men?* I do not just map these proximities; I advocate for the social, psychic, and political necessity of these relationships. Post-queer relationships amongst men are often at different angles to each other politically, but even though we are not likely to see the masculine version of the television show *Will and Grace* (could we even imagine, let's say, *Bubba and Butch* or *Spike and Mike*), each text I discuss cultivates the space between men and butches – male masculinity and female masculinity – as vitally important spaces. Halberstam is right to suggest that an examination of female masculinity has much to tell us about masculinity in general. But she is wrong to suggest that, somehow, masculinities can be reduced to the categorical imperatives of body types. As Sedgwick (1990) notes, each instance of a gender has to be understood through the specificities of other axes of identity (e.g., race, class, sexuality, etc.). As such, it is entirely conceivable that heterogendered working-class FTM trans-sexual men might have far more in common with heterosexual working-class "biological" men than with FTM trans-sexual men of a different class. And trans-sexual men of colour might have more in common with men of colour than with white trans-sexual men. To continue to privilege "female embodied" masculinity over other instances of masculinity is to

capitulate to essentialist constructions of gender as limited by bodies rather than as limited by discourse. Finally, *if* Butler (1997a) is correct in her assertion that gender performatives mark the space of un mournable loss rather than positivist identities, then female masculinity and Halberstam's "I don't care" disavowal mark far more complex relations than its subjects could ever know. Masculinity, regardless of what type of body it is articulated through, by definition marks a space of proximity with men; it is *this* space that I theorize in *Masculinities without Men?*