

REAL MEN ARE HAIRY BUFFOONS:
Fratire's Parody of Hegemonic Masculinity
And Its Implications for Both Genders

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Abstract

In a time when gender roles have shifted, especially after the rise of the feminist and metrosexual movements, the definition of masculinity has become unstable. This has led to what some have called a “crisis” of masculinity. It is important to examine the rhetorical implications of this search for masculine identity, especially how it affects both men and women. The media influences how men see themselves, and how they see themselves in relation to women. When men are told that masculinity is narrowly defined, it can also narrow their views of women.

Fratire is a recent literary genre that combines satire with masculinity. As fratire and responses to this “crisis” of masculinity gain fame, it becomes critical to assess the effect on consumers of that message. This paper will study two works of fratire:

Maddox’s *Alphabet of Manliness* and Tucker Max’s *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell*.

This study will apply the parody and metaphor perspectives to reveal the reinforcement of traditional hegemonic ideals of masculinity and how they affect men’s perceptions of women. It is imperative to consider the implications of fratire, especially for what it says about both men and women. Both works depict men as little more than savages, using violence and sexual appetite to determine how they treat others. Instead of presenting a new alternative to preconceived notions or prescriptions for masculinity, fratire reverts to the old hegemonic masculinity ideals.

Furthermore, fratire affects how women are viewed. Although each author may protest that women make up a significant part of their fan base, it is important to consider how the portrayal of women as less than men in fratire affects the treatment of women by both men and other women.

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Chapter I

Introduction

“The clothes make the man”. “That’ll put hair on your chest”. “Boys don’t cry”. These and many other sayings illustrate the mixed messages society gives males every day. Whether it’s to stifle their emotions or get in touch with their feminine side, men are often left questioning what it exactly means to be masculine. There are depictions in the media of all types of males: caring fathers, idiotic husbands, wifebeaters, cheating boyfriends, well-dressed metrosexuals, nerdy intellectuals, gay best friends, and white knights. While there are a variety of media portrayals, not all are depicted as truly masculine.

Throughout the years, hegemonic masculinity has created what society deems to be masculine and manly. While masculinity may have once been the opposite of femininity, that is no longer the case. After the feminist and metrosexual movements, many males have found masculinity to be in “crisis”. The conflicting ideals of masculinity today have left many men wondering what masculinity is and who is the ideal man.

It is important to examine the rhetorical implications of this search for masculine identity, especially how it affects both men and women. The media influences how men see themselves and how they see themselves in relation to women. When men are told that masculinity is narrowly defined, it can also narrow their views of women. In the wake of the search for masculine identity, a new literary genre, fratire, has emerged which combines masculinity and satire. As fratire and other responses to this “crisis” of masculinity gain fame, it becomes critical to assess the effect on consumers of that

message. This paper will study two works of fratire: Maddox's *Alphabet of Manliness* and Tucker Max's *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell*. This study will apply the parody and metaphor perspectives to reveal the reinforcement of traditional hegemonic ideals of masculinity and how they affect men's perceptions of women.

This thesis argues that fratire's depictions leave men with a narrow definition of masculinity. This thesis examines previous studies of masculinity and the state of masculinity today. By analyzing the two works of fratire as parodies of hegemonic masculinity and metaphors for beliefs about women, this thesis concludes that fratire degrades women while also limiting the possibilities for what can be defined as masculine. Finally, this thesis concludes by examining the effects of this limited view of gender, and how it can create gender role stress.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

In the past, scholars have completed numerous studies related to the depiction of masculinity in the media, especially as those depictions have evolved over time. These studies have generally included the examination of masculinity in crisis, and how that crisis and the resulting new masculinity construct have been influenced by changing gender identities. The following is a brief synopsis of published research and analysis in those three areas.

In “Hegemonic Masculinity on the Mound: Media Representations of Nolan Ryan and American Sports Culture”, Nick Trujillo examines how Nolan Ryan, one of the most famous baseball pitchers of all time, has come to serve as “the archetypal male athletic hero”. The 1991 essay describes the five features of hegemonic masculinity, as distinguished by R.W. Connell’s work, to be “physical force and control, occupational achievement, familial patriarchy, frontiersmanship, and heterosexuality” (182).

Another article by Peter F. Murphy looks at the literary character that is a challenge to current definitions of hegemonic masculinity- the buffoon. In “The Buffoon and Male Survival”, Murphy describes the buffoon as someone who is represented as “witty, intelligent, and funny” while at the same time having “eaten and drunk too much, chased women in keeping with their misogyny, made fools of themselves, and, ultimately, lived pathetic, even tragic lives of humiliation and self-parody” (2006). Murphy discusses that women are usually stereotyped by the buffoon and viewed as sexual objects but are “never to be trusted or taken seriously” (2006). The buffoon is described as a “transhistorical” character that can be traced as far back as Silenus, a

Greek demigod. Rather than relying on his physical abilities the buffoon uses his wit to defend himself, and he is usually found in an all-male environment. The buffoon also relies on drinking too much and sleeping with many women in order to assert his masculinity (2006).

In a 2000 study entitled “ ‘Slaves with white collars’: persistent performances of masculinity in crisis”, the recent popular culture trend of depicting professional masculinity in crisis is examined, including the two films *Fight Club* and *In the Company of Men*. The authors, Karen Ashcraft and Lisa Flores, define this as part of the crisis narrative of masculinity, which has led to the creation of entertainment such as “The Man Show” as a form of manliness. They define masculinity as a socially constructed, shifting identity. The authors examine historical texts from the late 19th century, a time when masculinity was also perceived to be in crisis. At this time, the authors find that white men drew from the idea of an “unspoiled, primitive masculinity” from which they constructed a “passionate manhood” (7). Furthermore, the authors look at the two films, how they stage the crisis of masculinity, and what resolution and comfort the performances bring about to the audience. *In the Company of Men* blames women and work for the crisis, while *Fight Club* brings up the issue of a lack of a father-figure. Both are about manhood and masculinity being threatened by women. In order to revive the concept of the masculine businessman, the characters turn to a “civilized/primitive” masculinity. The authors state that this hides the race and class hierarchy and instead appeals overtly to gender division, and the films are found to create an opportunity to re-envision dominant masculinity (23).

Brent Malin has also examined the portrayal of masculinity in crisis and the traditional depictions of white masculine identity. In the 2003 article “Memorializing white masculinity: the late 1990s ‘crisis of masculinity’ and the ‘subversive performance’ of *Man on the Moon*”, the author looks at the 1990’s film *Man on the Moon* and how many writers of that time related to the crisis of masculinity. The author explores how the film portrays Andy Kaufman as multiple selves that reflect the chaotic identity of masculinity at the time. The author describes “subversive performances” where conventional views are upset by more problematic notions of identity. In this particular film, the author believes that Andy Kaufman is made heroic because of his unstable identity; rather than being remembered as a Jew, Kaufman is depicted as a more traditional, white man. Instead of loosening gender norms, the author suggests that the film reestablishes the traditional white masculinity.

Furthermore, the “crisis of masculinity” has led to studies such as Katherine Sender’s 2006 journal article “Queens for a day: *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and the neoliberal project” which considers how the popular show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* works to reform heterosexual masculinity so that it becomes compatible with the neoliberal movement. The author describes the crisis of masculinity that requires heterosexual men to attend to their relationships, image, and domestic status. “... He is encouraged to adopt gay male consumption habits in order to become a better heterosexual” (132). The author finds that the show uses homosexual men “in a renewed attempt to solve the ‘problem’ of the male consumer, a problem that has plagued advertisers and media producers... white, heterosexual men have proven hard to train as consumers” (133). The author analyzes 40 episodes of the show, in addition to parodies

of the show, articles that discuss it, and other popular makeover shows from the same period. The author describes neoliberalism as a shift from authoritarian government to individual responsibility, with an emphasis on the idea that choice, especially consumer choice, can lead to fulfillment (135). The show turns the set of expectations normally placed on women onto men, and feminism and the new power of the female gaze is often targeted as the reason for this shift (141). The author finds that the crisis of masculinity depicted in the show is the “failure to grow up, to see the self as others do, and to have positive self-regard” (144). The author also relates the birth of the concept of metrosexuality with the uncertainty men now face in relation to women, but also in relation to the work world (145).

This uncertainty has led to a changing masculinity discourse, which has often been examined through the study of men’s lifestyle magazines. In a 2002 study, Federico Boni tries to understand why men’s lifestyle magazines have become so popular, and looks specifically at *Italian Men’s Health*. His hypothesis is that the magazine reflects the changing gender relations and identities of men, and that by offering men advice, the magazine helps to create a “male bodily order”. The author states that masculinity and the male body are social constructs, and refers to Bob Connell’s concept of “multiple masculinities” that are created by different societies in different eras. The author uses media frame analysis of the magazine; he also employs discourse analysis to identify the many textual frames that produce discourse on the lives and bodies of men and focus groups to identify the different ways that readers make sense of the magazine through audience frames. The author finds that magazines imagine a male community that both includes and excludes, creating a “copycat masculinity” (476).

Masculinity as a social construct has frequently been studied, especially in relation to magazines geared specifically towards males. In 2000, Nicholas Stevenson, Peter Jackson, and Kate Brooks look at the implications of the rising popularity of men's lifestyle magazines, why they are popular, and what that means for the social construction of masculinity. Their article, "The Politics of 'New' Men's Lifestyle Magazines", mainly focuses on the construction of masculinity in the context of sexual and personal relations. Through a narrative analysis, the authors try to determine political conclusions about these magazines. The authors used many methods, such as interviews with magazine editors, reader and non-reader focus groups, and content analysis. The authors determine that the magazine addresses the reader as a friend, and also uses language to warn the reader against taking any advice too seriously. The authors study the visual nature of the magazines, especially in regard to heterosexual relationships, and the use of irony and cynicism. The authors look at how magazines for men construct relationships between men and women while negotiating traditional masculinity with changing gender roles. The finding is that the magazines are not harmless fun or a backlash to feminism, but rather a cultural response to social change.

With social change comes the depiction of men through the female gaze. This appropriation of the male gaze is studied by Brenda Cooper in "Chick Flicks' as Feminist Texts: The Appropriation of the Male Gaze in *Thelma & Louise*". Cooper examines the popularity of the 1991 film *Thelma & Louise* as the female response to the use of the dominant male gaze. The film's mockery of male gaze gave female viewers pleasure through stereotypes of men, men as spectacles for the attention of women, and the celebration of female friendship. The author looks at the history of the dominant

male gaze in Hollywood films as a way to “reflect and satisfy the male unconscious” (289). Female gaze is a mockery of this, and it serves to disrupt male dominance. The author also finds that female gaze is not just apparent in recent films, but can also be present in the context of mainstream cinemas masculinist ideologies, such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (302).

As gender roles shift, so do the portrayals of masculinity in the media. Fabienne Darling-Wolf’s 2004 study “Women and the new men: Negotiating masculinity in the Japanese media” looks at Japanese women’s constructions of masculinity, and how it is affected by mediated pop culture representations. The author chooses Japan because it has such a complex culture so that there would likely be many different representations and interpretations of masculinity, especially in relation to Western culture. The author talks to a small group of rural women about their opinions of male pop culture figures. The women interviewed agree that there has been a shift in the representation of masculinity in the media. They attribute the relaxing of gender roles as the reason for the shift from manly idols to less masculine and even androgynous celebrities. The study suggests that one of the most important issues in equality among the genders is whether men can and will change, and also that the way women interpret masculinity is omnipresent in the media world.

While some media portrayals of masculinity have shifted, others continue the dominant masculine ideals of the past. In 2000, Lisa Holderman studied how men are portrayed on a television network geared towards women. In “Constructing men on “television for women”: a content analysis of male characters on the Lifetime network”, the author uses content analysis to look at the types of males shown on the Lifetime

channel. The purpose of the study is to look at the kinds of men that the media tells American women are appropriate, and the author finds that the portrayals on Lifetime are similar to those in the mainstream media. The primary male construct found is heterosexual, Caucasian, valued for his job and financial stability, and is not defined by his domestic roles. Using cultivation theory the author finds that Lifetime maintains social order by creating female viewers' expectations about men.

In response to feminism and new expectations of men and masculinity, came the rise of such shocking masculine figures like Howard Stern and Beavis and Butthead. In a 2002 article, Susan Douglas looks at the portrayal of gender as a response to feminism in "Letting boys be boys: talk radio, male hysteria, and political discourse in the 1980s". The author looks at the rise of talk radio and the central role of certain types of masculinities. The author discusses the new gender hybrid "the male hysteric" which emerged on talk radio as a way to work against feminism while also facing the reality of accommodating it. One "shock jock" studied is Howard Stern, who gained notoriety in the mid 80's. The author describes that the number of radio stations with at least some talk format rose from about 200 in the early 1980's to more than 850 in 1994.

While Douglas examined the hybrid "male hysteric", Melanie Nash looked at how white males are targeted and represented by these representations of masculinity. In the 1999 article " 'Beavis is just confused': ideologies, intertexts, audiences" the author looks at the concept of youth as portrayed on the MTV show *Beavis and Butthead*, and how the show portrays groups such as women and minorities. The show targets white male youth, and uses a masculinist and homophobic determinacy in relation to other discourses. The author states that MTV defines a generation of youth, and it presents the white male

experience of adolescence as representative for all. The author finds that there is a need to relate to the characters while also maintaining some distance from them. The author concludes with the notion that texts such as the show should be criticized not only for how they could or should be used but for how they are used in social relations.

These changes in gender roles have led to studies such as Willem Arrindell's "Masculine Gender Role Stress" (2005) which looks at how different situations can seem stressful depending on a person's gender. The author describes how society rewards some male behaviors as masculine, while others are nonmasculine and therefore punished. When these "schemata" are reinforced, they cause men to evaluate themselves and limit their responses to stress. Masculine gender role stress can occur when males feel they are not as masculine as their culture believes they should be.

This stress caused by gender roles can lead to anxiety. In a 2006 study entitled "Western Heterosexual Masculinity, Anxiety, and Web Porn", Ian Cook looks at the current crisis of masculinity and the anxiety it causes men. The author states that anxiety is caused by the failure of men to repress their femininity. Internet porn sites can cause further anxiety in males because it is even more difficult to measure up to the masculinity that web porn depicts. The author also describes how there is a need to "degrade and denigrate" women because of this anxiety (53). Web porn is found not to ease male anxiety, but to intensify it because there is a need for men to "prove themselves" as masculine (57).

Furthermore, metaphor has been studied by scholars to see how it can affect social relations. In his article "Rhetorical Functions of the Infestation Metaphor in Hitler's Rhetoric", Steven Perry describes metaphor as more than a stylistic choice. The author

studies Hitler's critique of the Jews and says that there is much more meaning to metaphor than many scholars once believed. The author states that Hitler's argument is "constituted" by metaphor and that many values and attitudes can be inferred from the metaphors a speaker uses.

These studies have all contributed to the study of hegemonic masculinity, especially the communication of the responses to this "crisis" of masculinity. This paper will analyze two books within the context of critical theories of hegemonic masculinity, parody, and metaphor. The analysis will begin with the history of feminism and a description of the two authors and their works of fratire.

Chapter III

Metrosexuals in the Media Today- The Backlash to the Back Wax

In a time where the genders are supposed to be closer to equality, there has been more confusion created than ever. Some people want to split the check, others still want the man to get it, and there are some who would rather not date at all.

Recently, there has been a backlash to the idea that men should be more like women. While some have heralded this change, others have questioned where it came from and how it has affected the male identity. In a 2002 article on Salon.com, Mark Simpson writes that:

For some time now, old-fashioned (re)productive, repressed, unmoisturized heterosexuality has been given the pink slip by consumer capitalism. The stoic, self-denying, modest straight male didn't shop enough (his role was to earn money for his wife to spend), and so he had to be replaced by a new kind of man, one less certain of his identity and much more interested in his image – that's to say, one who was much more interested in being looked at (because that's the only way you can be certain you actually exist). A man, in other words, who is an advertiser's walking wet dream.

Men have historically not been the ideal consumers. Advertisers geared their campaigns toward the female consumer, but when the opportunity came to exploit not only the insecurities of women but also men, advertisers seized upon it. Men heard the message that they, too, needed improvements, and that certain products could help them.

In a 2004 article in *USA Today*, writer Olivia Barker described the emerging backlash to the metrosexual trend. Barker wrote that although the term "metrosexual" was created in the 90's by a British journalist, the trend truly emerged from the hit show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, a television program where a group of five homosexual men help makeover a seemingly clueless straight man. The show was used by marketers as a way to increase profits by targeting grooming and fashion products towards men.

Fratire, a literary genre composed of satirical depictions of masculinity, is basically the embodiment of that backlash today. As more men looked for an alternative to the mainstream media message of metrosexuality, blogs such as Maddox's and Max's grew in popularity to the point where they were able to sign book deals and reach *The New York Times' Bestseller List* simply by word of mouth. At a time when the sexes are supposed to be more equal than ever, the idea of masculinity and what it means has come into question, and fratire seeks to define what it means to be a man.

Creating “Fratire”: From Blog to Book Deal

Views of femininity and masculinity have changed throughout the ages. As feminism developed in the early 1800's, the social creation of gender began to have different meanings. In *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, Rachel Adams and David Savran write that with the rise of feminism, came the study of gender; rather than simply studying women and men, the social roles of masculinity and femininity were studied (4). While academics have long studied movements like feminism which worked for equality for those who were oppressed, the study of masculinity is different in that it looks at a group that has dominated throughout history (7).

According to Gisela Block, author of “Women's History and Gender History”, the study of history is gender conscious, and there is women's history and men's history. Through women's and more recently men's studies, there is an examination of how gender and identity have been shaped throughout time (111-2).

The first wave of the women's movement in the United States started in 1840, as a way to gain the right to vote. The focus was not on women's quality of life as a whole, but on their political rights specifically. The second wave of the women's movement

began in the 1960's, as women sought more than just the right to vote. In *Gendered Lives*, Julia Wood writes that radical feminism emerged as women grew disillusioned by their lack of power in New Left political groups. Although radical feminists were unable to effectively organize, they were able to identify the structural basis of gender differences and opportunities. Liberal feminism also emerged, especially with the popularity of Betty Friedan's 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan's central point was that American institutions limited women to domestic roles. Her book propelled the creation of NOW, the National Organization for Women, which achieved many successes, such as including sex in the Civil Rights Act as an unfair basis for discrimination, supporting Title IX to make sports more equal and working with other groups in order to achieve federally financed child care centers (Wood, 71-74).

Other forms of feminism began to emerge in the second wave. Wood writes that these alternatives included separatists, who chose to remove themselves from the mainstream culture, structural feminists, who see a woman's place in the traditional domestic role, lesbian feminists, revalorists, who want to revalue women and their contributions, and womanists, who believed that women of color had been left out of feminism. Power feminism began in the 1990's, with the idea that women should have personal responsibility for what happens to them, rather than feeling victimized (Wood, 75-83).

Many today believe that the third wave of the women's movement is just beginning. This third wave celebrates the differences between women, and some critics say that it sacrifices the second wave's ideals for the lesser goal of individual advancement. Another feature of the third wave is that feminists are interested in

improving the connection between men and women, and many insist that men work to create more equitable gender arrangements. The confusion over how to define this third wave has led to articles such as *Time* magazine's 1998 cover story that read, "Is Feminism Dead?" Author Ginia Bellafante wrote that while many believe that feminism has achieved enough goals, there are still gaps in pay, the number of female CEO's, and a lack of day care for the children of female employees. Archetypes of single women like Bridget Jones or Ally McBeal cause critics to question exactly what feminism is today. Women's studies departments in universities have been renamed "Gender Studies", and the theoretical basis of gender identities has become a larger issue (Bellafante, 1-8).

The history of feminism is not just a discourse on what it means to be female, but also what it means to be male. Wood describes that it is only in the past twenty years that a men's movement has evolved. This movement is also a collection of different groups, each questioning the social view of masculinity. Profeminist men support the ideals of liberal feminism, and they even seek to develop emotionally in ways that society has generally restricted from men, such as expressing their emotions and having closer relationships. These male feminists encourage other men to understand and experience their feelings; the first Men and Masculinity Conference was held in Tennessee in 1975, in order to discuss the meaning of masculinity (Wood, 87-91).

These different meanings have resulted in conflicting groups. In "Just Who is This Guy, Anyway? Stereotypes of the Men's Movement", Cheryl Rickabaugh describes different groups, such as the promasculinists, who view feminism to be in conflict with men's interests. One of the promasculinists' key rhetorical strategies is to attack profeminist men. The issue of gay rights is also not one of the promasculinists' main

concerns, and many ignore or denigrate homosexual males (Rickabaugh, 459-470).

Wood also describes another group called free men, who seek to restore male pride in the traditional macho image. This group sees men as having more burdens than women, especially through the role of provider. Another group that blends some of the aspects from other masculine movements is the mythpoetic men. Their goal is to rediscover the origins of masculine thought and feelings in order to restore men to wholeness. They believe that men need to find a distinctly male way of feeling, and central to this is the idea of father hunger, the yearning to be close to another man (Wood, 93-96).

Masculinity, as defined by Joan Wallach Scott in her article “A Useful Category of Historical Analysis”, requires the repression of feminine traits, therefore creating conflict between masculinity and femininity. This conflict helps assure a common understanding of masculinity, despite the fact that its definition is constructed and unstable (139).

It is this ongoing and growing discussion of gender that has led to different rhetorical responses through literature. In the 1990’s that response was embodied by the bestsellers *Iron John*, authored by Robert Bly, the same man who created the mythpoetic men’s movement, and *Fire in the Belly*, by Sam Keen. *Iron John* spent 62 weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller list, while *Fire in the Belly* spent 29. These books reminisced about the “golden age” of masculinity (Kakutani,1). While these books and their depictions of masculinity were quite serious, more recent responses have taken on the satirical form dubbed “fratire”.

On April 16, 2006, the term “fratire” was created by *New York Times* reporter Warren St. John in a profile of writers entitled “Dude, Where’s my Book?”

(nytimes.com). It is a genre that “combine(s) a fraternity house-style celebration of masculinity with a mocking attitude toward social convention, traditional male roles and aspirations of power and authority.” In his article, St. John refers to the two most popular authors of fratire, Tucker Max and Maddox. Max is the author of *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell* [Fig. 1: Max’s Cover], and Maddox wrote *The Alphabet of Manliness* [Fig. 2: Maddox’s Cover]. Both began by writing in their blogs, until they became so popular with readers that they were able to get their books published (by the same publishing house- Citadel Press). St. John refers to the popularity of Max in particular, who for his loyal website followers has become an icon of masculinity.

Maddox, whose real name is George Ozounian, began his site to complain about his family and friends, but then it grew in popularity through word of mouth into the “Best Page in the Universe” (<http://maddox.xmission.com>). The book took six months to write, and the end result is a 204 page book complete with 145 illustrations. The illustrations were done by eight different artists, each a fan of the Maddox site (Kogan). The book debuted at #4 on *The New York Times* Bestseller List Advice/Other Hardcover, and eventually made it to #2, remaining on the list for ten weeks (Bestsellers).

The Alphabet of Manliness

Maddox’s book is written in the format of chapters for each letter of the alphabet, from A for Ass-Kicking to Z for Zombies. Maddox begins the book by dedicating it “To the love of my life, my soul mate, and the greatest person in the world: Me”.

The book is meant to describe what men like and what manliness means. One of the chapters is “Norris, Chuck” [Figure 3: Norris], and it describes the television action star as “the greatest American to ever live” (118). Chuck Norris is described as

Figure 1: Max's Cover

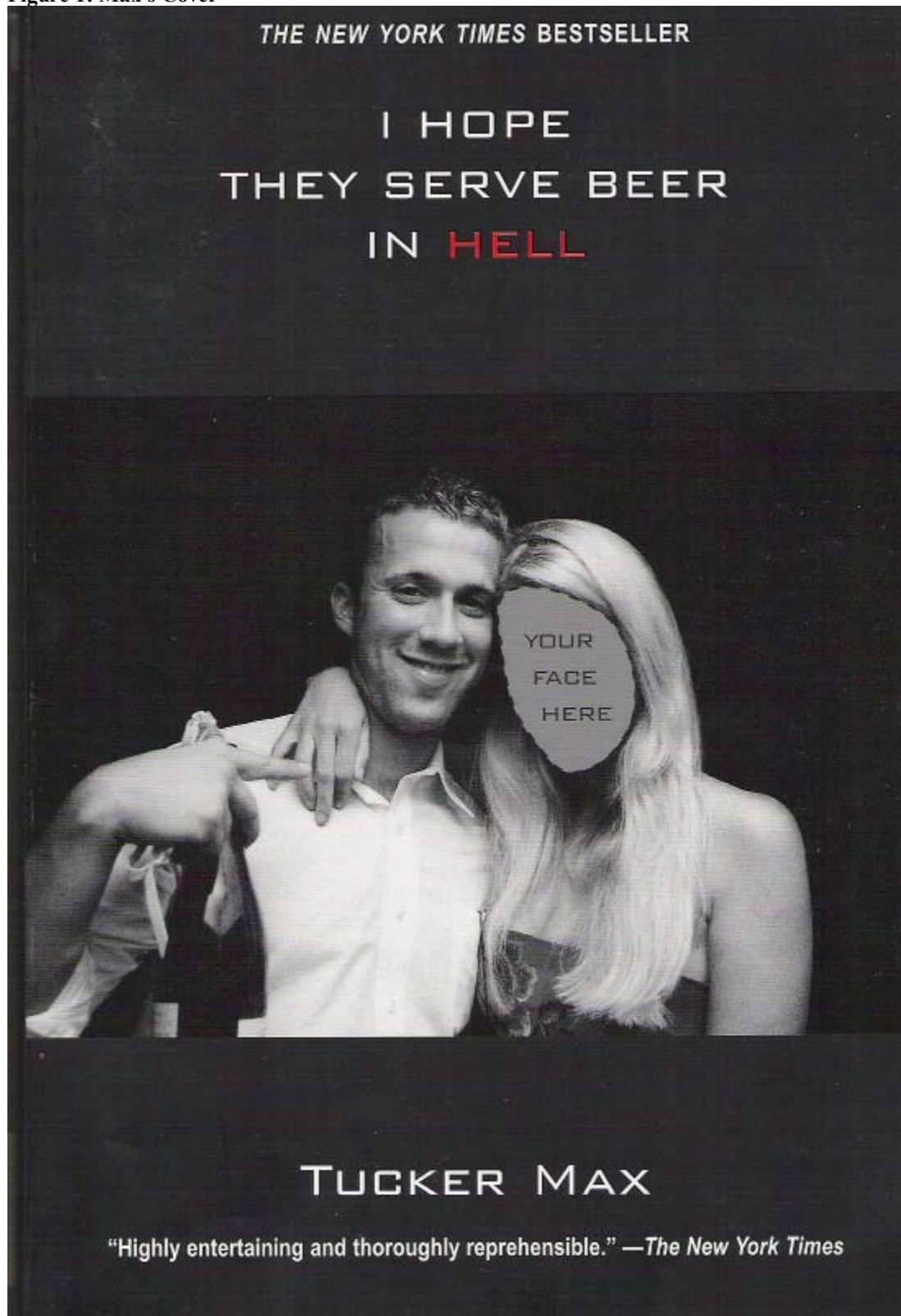


Figure 2: Maddox's Cover

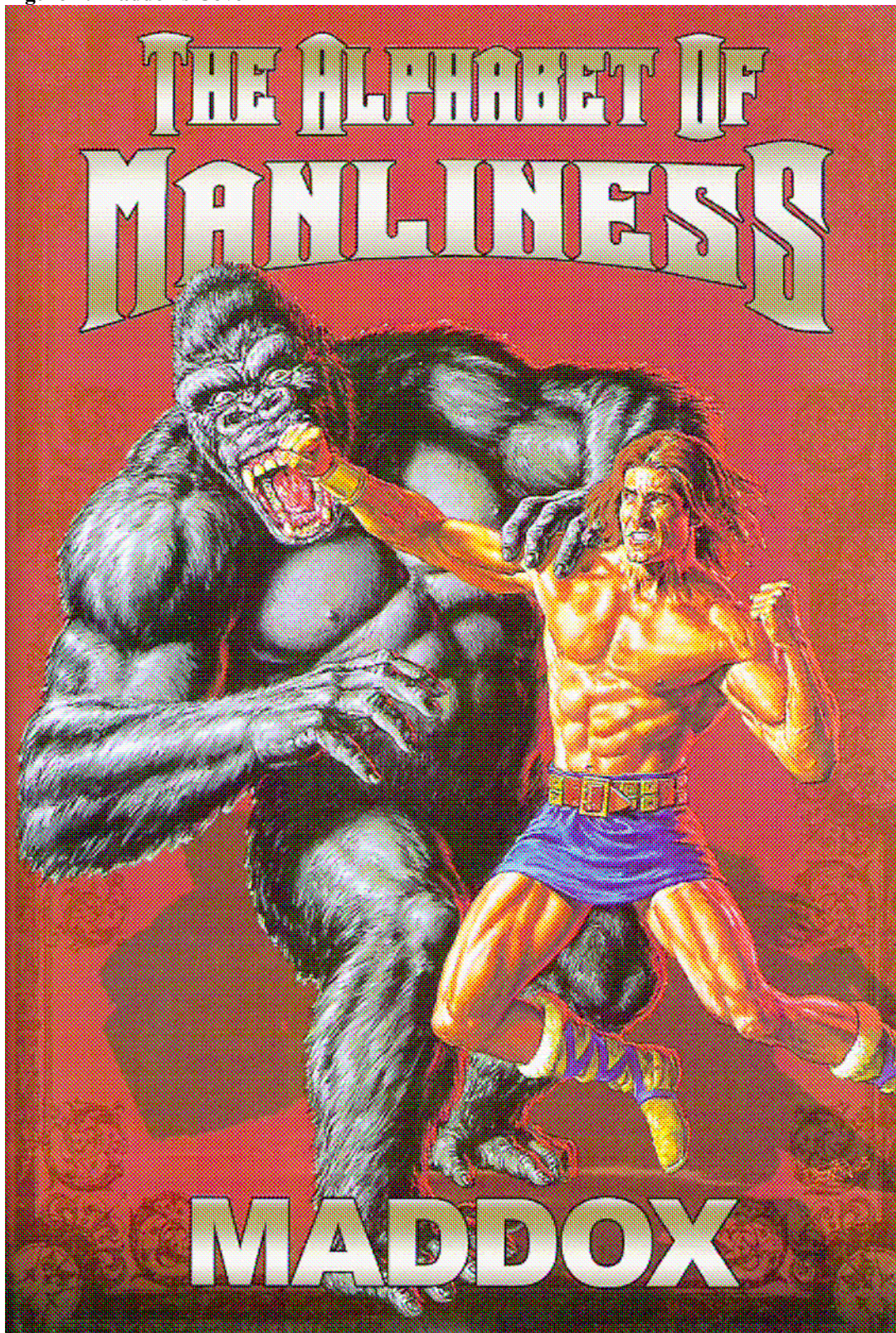
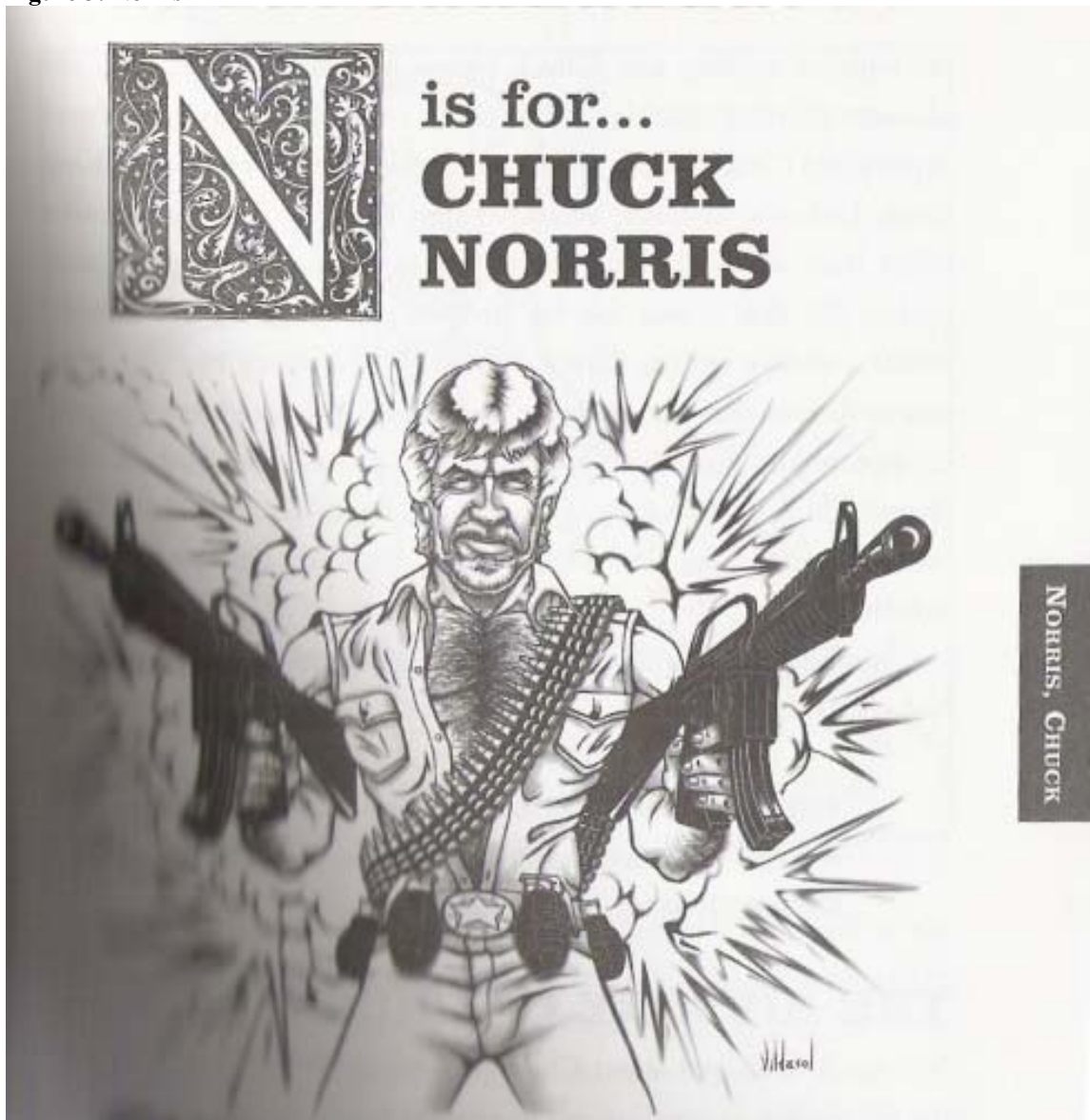


Figure 3: Norris



spontaneously coming to existence rather than being born from a woman. He fought in every major war, including the American Civil War and the War on Drugs, and sometimes he fought on both sides. Some of his favorite foods are whiskey, and then occasionally he eats sausage and onions. Maddox describes an encounter with Chuck where he went to his house, which is illustrated as a giant floating volcano, and meets Chuck who is sitting on a throne. He kisses his ring, but cannot look him in the eye, or Chuck might cause him to spontaneously combust. Then Maddox describes a day in the life of Chuck Norris to be more like when God created the universe. Chuck flosses with steel wool, eats dynamite, and opens his mail with the Spear of Destiny; he even knows the ending to a new Harry Potter book before it's written.

Another chapter, relating to the book's depiction of women, is called "O is for Obedience". It begins with an illustration of a woman leaping in the air to catch a Frisbee in her mouth as if she were a man's pet dog. Maddox starts the chapter by writing that an obedient wife is essential to manliness. He lists three types of places to meet women: malls, schools, and bars/clubs. He warns that it is more difficult to find high quality women at bars/clubs and that men should stand next to them and wait to see if they hear a "faint whistling noise coming from the cavern between her legs, as if wind were passing through a large, hollow cavern" (121). He says that if you hear this sound then that woman might be a whore. Maddox also writes that not all women are the same, and he classifies them by their hair color: blondes, brunettes, redheads. He also includes a "New Owner Checklist" to see whether her shots and vaccinations are up-to-date, if she has an unusual smell, and if she is relatively hair free. Maddox says that when you bring your woman home, you need to prepare the kitchen and the bathroom. Leave a candy dish of

Midol out once a month. Do not leave the woman alone in the bathtub or she could slip and drown. Exercise and diet are also a concern, and one workout plan suggested for women with large breasts is to jump up and down on a trampoline. To keep a woman's weight down, either feed her less food, make unflattering comments, or bring in another woman to make her jealous. Maddox ends the chapter by including tips on house training your woman so that the "ownership experience" can be a positive one.

I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell

Like Maddox, Tucker Max's book evolved from a website, but his was originally an application to date him. In 2002 he turned the website into a forum of stories about himself. Max's 278 page book was also published by Citadel, and spent two weeks on *The New York Times Bestseller List*. Max's book has sold more than 70,000 copies, a large achievement for an author without any publicity (*Publisher's Weekly*). He has already received an advance for his next book, *A**holes Finish First*.

Tucker Max's book is comprised of 27 stories generally involving drinking and sex. Although some may question whether these tales are true, in his Author's Note, Max claims that they did actually happen to him, and he only changed a few details so that he wouldn't be liable (ix). For each story, Max includes the approximate date that it occurred and the date that he actually wrote it down. Many of the stories are also available to read on his website, but the book includes new tales as well.

One of the stories is "The Famous Sushi Pants Story", which describes the night that Max brought a portable breathalyzer with him to a restaurant. Throughout the night he drinks and then checks his BAC (blood alcohol content). He decides that his goal is to get a BAC of .2 (.08 is the limit to be able to drive in many states, including Florida, the

state in which this story takes place). He eventually gets bored at the first restaurant and goes to a sushi restaurant across the street. There is a lingerie party occurring at the restaurant, so Max takes off his pants so that he can eat sushi. He reaches his goal of a .2 BAC, but then another man blows a .22 into the breathalyzer. They proceed to challenge one another to see who can have the highest BAC. Max loses, and runs out of the restaurant to vomit in the bushes. A cop finds him there, and Max goes back inside the restaurant but cannot find his pants. He eventually wakes up in his car without his pants, cell phone or wallet, but still has his breathalyzer. Even at this point he still has a BAC of .09, but he drives home anyway.

Another story, which exemplifies the portrayal of women in the book, is “Tucker Fucks a Fat Girl; Hilarity Ensues”. In this chapter, Max describes how he originally set up his site as a Date Application Page. A girl finally emails him, and when she sends a picture he describes her as “a fatty”. He waits for another girl to email him, but no one does, so he agrees to meet the fat girl (During the chapter he refers to her as FatGirl). He chooses a bar for the date that none of his friends go to so that they won’t see him and make fun of his date. Later in the date, Max has an inner dialogue between Good Tucker and Bad Tucker, as he debates whether to sleep with her; he ends the debate by ordering a shot of tequila because to him the loophole out of his rule against having sex with overweight girls is alcohol. Max and the girl have sex at his apartment, but when his roommates come home he does not want her to meet them. When she tries to, he throws her clothes out the window. Max tells her that she can either meet his roommates naked or go outside and get her clothes. When she leaves, he locks the door behind her.

The other stories in the book are basically variations on the same theme. Either Max gets extremely intoxicated and does stupid things, or he encounters women and makes fun of them to their faces or uses them for sex.

Potential Audiences: On the Search for a Real Man

The main audience of fratire is men, ages 18 to 35, who are looking for a new definition of masculinity. They do not want to be metrosexuals, men who are interested in grooming and fashion, or profeminists, and fratire offers them an escape from political correctness. It is a chance to be self-centered, like the authors portray themselves to be, rather than focusing on what women and society expect of them.

In his response to other articles written on Huffingtonpost.com, Max writes that many of the men who read his and Maddox's books would not normally buy books, but they feel that they have been left out by the media. While many may think the opposite, Max believes that the media is controlled by women, and men who feel left out by the image of masculinity that the media creates are more likely to seek an outlet for their frustrations through fratire.

Fratire serves as a form of escape. It's not politically correct and it refuses to apologize for that. Each author creates a safe haven for men to be rude, immature, and "masculine" simply by reading their books. The men may not actually commit similar acts or hold the same opinions as the authors, but through the books they can experience the same freedom.

Furthermore, women are also a potential audience. The November 2006 issue of *Cosmopolitan* features an article written by Maddox entitled "Things Guys Just Don't Want to Know About You". *Cosmopolitan* magazine targets young, single women, who

are looking to attract and understand men. The magazine often features pieces written by male authors, such as a writer from *Maxim* magazine, in order to give its female readers an inside look into how men really think. If women consider the advice of Maddox to be how men really feel, then they might be more inclined to read his or Max's books.

Even the authors of each book acknowledge their female fans. Max writes in detail of the women readers and fans of his site that email him on a daily basis offering to sleep with him, and Maddox writes in his Foreword: "...Maybe you're a woman and you're reading this wondering 'Is this book just for men?' I would say that it is only for men in the same way that lesbian porn sites on the Internet are only for women". Neither author considers their books to be only for male readers.

Also, women may read the books as an escape from political correctness, in the way that a copy of *The Rules: Time Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right* is reissued every few years. It can be a way for women to distance themselves from the idea of feminism, and the notion of "man-hating".

Because fratire has now reached such a widespread audience, it is important to examine it critically. By examining fratire as a parody of hegemonic masculinity, this analysis will examine the messages and metaphors of fratire and conclude with the possible effects they may have.

Chapter IV **Applying the Methodology- Parodying Hegemonic Masculinity**

Looking at Hegemonic Masculinity through the Buffoon's Parody

In order to look at the artifact, this analysis will use the critical perspectives of hegemonic masculinity and parody to examine how the ideal man is portrayed in the two fratire novels. Previous examinations of masculinity, such as R.W. Connell's "An Iron Man: The Body and Some Contradictions of Hegemonic Masculinity", have examined the depiction of the ideal man. Connell described that American culture has five features of hegemonic masculinity: "physical force and control" which define masculine power and social relations, "occupational achievement" is related to the division of labor and working in a capitalist society, "familial patriarchy" is the traditional depiction of men as breadwinners and family protectors, "frontiersmanship" recalls the masculine ideal of the cowboy, and, the final feature, "heterosexuality" relates the hierarchy of gender and what sexual and social relations are deemed masculine (Connell qtd. in Trujillo, 181-2). This analysis however will not examine how these elements are traditionally used to portray the ideal man, but rather how fratire parodies them. First, this paper will examine how both authors embody the literary character of the buffoon, and then it will study how the buffoon parodies the hegemonic masculinity ideals.

Throughout the history of literature the buffoon has: "[represented] a marginal masculinity, one that challenges the seemingly hegemonic definition of manhood during any given historical period" (Murphy, 6). Fratire reincarnates the buffoon through the works of Maddox and Tucker Max, creating their response to the increase in gender equality and the rise of the metrosexual. But while fratire may challenge some of the current definitions of masculinity, such as the metrosexual or the ideal man as perceived

by women, it is not a true break from the hegemonic masculinity that Trujillo described. The buffoon is a “parody of the dominant construction of masculinity, not a radical break with the prevailing sense of manhood” (Murphy, 5). Both Maddox and Tucker Max are white, upper-class, and heterosexual, and their parodies serve to reinforce the image of what they feel masculinity is and should be. Maddox’s prescriptions for masculinity include hairiness, spicy food, and violence. Tucker Max also portrays traditional masculinity as he and his white, upper-class friends venture out to bars and end up in drunken brawls.

Buffoons are “literary characters or self-created types [who] have been represented as witty, intelligent, and funny men” (Murphy, 1). Both Maddox and Max fit this description well. Each has created themselves as a character for others through their books, and they take pride in their ability to shock and entertain through their wit. Their buffoons do not hide their behaviors or thoughts behind political correctness, but instead “flaunt [their] crimes, seeing them as a badge of honor, not a disreputable quality for which he should apologize or feel guilty” (Murphy, 35). Max is a perfect example of this buffoon behavior as his entire book is a gathering of his many escapades, including mistreatment of women, drunkenness, and violence. While he uses pseudonyms for all other characters in his book, Max leaves his identity prominently displayed, even including his own picture on the cover of the book. Maddox also sees his work of fratire as a badge, even going so far as to dedicate his book to himself. Rather than feeling shame, Maddox exalts in his work of fratire. This attitude enables the authors of fratire to exalt their masculine ideals while depicting women as one-dimensional objects. While the buffoon might use his wit to challenge the traditional masculinity, his work also helps

to reinforce those ideals (Murphy, 6). Through their use of the buffoon, both Maddox and Max parody the main principles of hegemonic masculinity that Connell set forth while also furthering the traditional ideals of masculinity.

In his quest to entertain, the buffoon often engages in alcoholic and criminal activities. The ultimate example of this aspect of the buffoon is Max. In his “Absinthe Donuts” story, Max writes, “Absinthe is the fucking shit. I am on my second glass, and I’m Fucked-in-Half drunk. Rich and Eddie want to see full-on Drunk Insult Tucker. Loaded up with hallucinogenic alcohol, Tucker is happy to oblige” (187). Ever the buffoon, Max uses alcohol to turn himself into an entertainer. For the buffoon, alcohol serves as a means to gain acceptance from other males and becomes a source of power (Murphy, 24). As for the criminal behavior of the buffoon, by the end of the same story, Max has driven a car through a donut shop window. He describes the situation: “The letters ‘DUI’ leap to mind. The phrase, ‘destruction of property’ also appears. I decide that felony hit and run is not funny anymore. I pull the car out of the donut shop, park it in a tow zone, wipe all my fingerprints from the entire car, throw the keys into some bushes, and take off running” (195). Max’s entire book is a collection of the buffoon’s stories, in an attempt to entertain through his antics. In his Author’s Note, Max even writes: “I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed living it” (ix).

Drinking can be a way of “masculine resistance to feminization” which “gives men a source of power that they frequently direct against women” (Murphy, 24). Almost every chapter in Max’s book includes him and his friends getting drunk. Alcohol serves as the catalyst for most of the adventures that *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell* records. In the first chapter, “The Famous Sushi Pants Story”, Tucker describes the infamous night

that he brought a breathalyzer with him out to a bar. As he drinks more in order to test the effects on his BAC, he gains the attention that he craves: “Four people at the bar have tried my breathalyzer, both of the fake-breasted women included. Everyone wants to know their BAC. I am the center of attention. I am happy” (Max, 2). Alcohol is a source of power in fratire because it gains the attention of others, whether it is through bad behavior at a bar or simply recounting these stories later in the book, Max seems to define a lot of his masculinity through his drunken escapades.

While Maddox does not specifically describe himself in his book, his tales of the drunk and violent actions of men like Chuck Norris also illustrate the buffoon’s desire to provide entertainment for others. Chuck’s favorite food list includes only one item: whiskey, and he is described as “the ultimate fighting machine” (114). Rather than tell his own stories, Maddox puts characters such as Norris on a pedestal. Through his love of drinking and his violent tendencies, Norris becomes a folk hero for masculinity.

Ultimately the buffoon wants to be both a storyteller and a folk hero. His “achievements” of masculinity are that of legend. In one chapter, Max begins by writing that “Everything I am about to tell you is true. This is the complete and unadulterated story, as I can best remember it, behind my infamous summer with Fenwick and the very famous ‘Tucker Max Charity Auction Debacle’ email” (54). The buffoon’s tales are meant to shock and entertain to such an extent that they inspire disbelief. Throughout his book, Max refers to how he is infamous for his drunken insults and his ability to bed women, to the point that many are not even sure if they can believe the stories he tells.

In addition, a key aspect of the buffoon is his relationship with women. While the buffoon sees himself as irresistible to women, his identity exists primarily in relation to

other men. Most of Max's stories involve him going out with his group of male friends from law school and their misadventures, such as in the chapter entitled "The Night We Almost Died". Another example of the buffoon's identity in relation to men is when Maddox met his masculinity idol, Chuck Norris: "I kissed his ring, and then I wanted to thank him, so I said, 'Sir, permission to thank you for the privilege of allowing me to kiss your ring.' If Chuck Norris doesn't immediately kill you, that means he has granted you permission. I thanked him, bowed, and left. It was the happiest day of my life" (Maddox, 117). By describing this meeting as the "happiest day" of his life, Maddox emphasizes the significance that relationships with other males have to the buffoon.

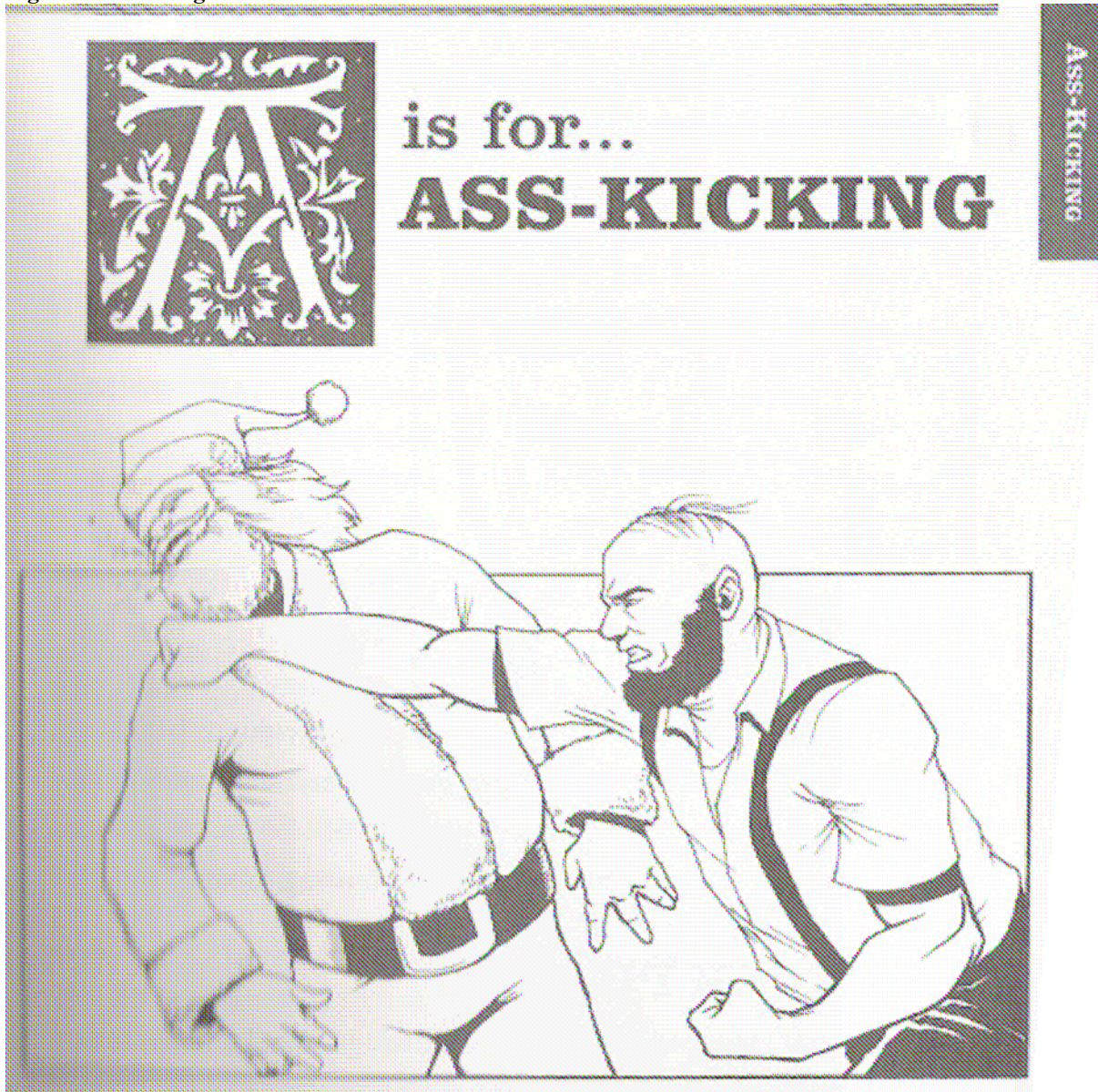
Yet relationships with women do not hold the same importance. The buffoon is ambivalent to women, and while he sees himself as sexually irresistible, he does not hesitate to act out his sexual urges publicly (Murphy, 31-32). Max describes his typical interaction pattern with women as the following: "She told me she loved me, and I probably told her the same thing... but then I got bored, stopped calling, and left it at that. Another day, another hit, right?" (158). For Max, many women are interchangeable, and his interactions with them are not of enough importance to even remember. Max writes: "I don't know how many girls I've slept with, but it's well into the triple digits. You start to forget a few last names somewhere in the 30s, some first names around the 60s, and entire girls altogether somewhere around the 90s" (68). While he may remember certain girls, the rest are just numbers, not people. Furthermore, the number of sexual partners a man has can help him to reassure himself of his masculinity (Cook, 58). To the buffoon, women are sexual objects. "By reducing women to misogynistic stereotypes, the buffoon acts out a contempt for women grounded in the traditional belief that they are available

for sexual pleasure but never to be taken seriously” (Murphy, 1). Furthermore, the buffoon is characterized as a man who has the “ability to sleep with more women than the other guy in order to confirm his always shaky masculinity” (Murphy, 6).

While Trujillo reverently described the masculinity of Nolan Ryan, fratire instead parodies hegemonic masculinity. Their ideal man is not a caring father and husband or a beloved athlete. He is a violent lumberjack or a drunken fool at the bar commanding attention. It is the parody of the buffoon that allows fratire to reimagine the aspects of hegemonic masculinity that R.W. Connell described. This parody is also extended to fratire’s view of women, extending the buffoon’s relationship with women into a metaphor for how fratire views them.

Although Connell’s masculinity includes physical force, fratire parodies this by admiring violence, not talent or prowess. Looking at *The Alphabet of Manliness*, it is easy to see the many parodies of physical force and control that are used to portray the ideal man. In the opening chapter of the book, entitled “A is for Ass-Kicking”, Maddox describes how awesome it is that he has an illustration of a lumberjack punching Santa in the face (1) [Figure 4: Punching]. He further states that someone who is “extremely manly” could “punch someone’s dick off” (4), and that a move he calls “the back breaker... will assert your manliness like few other ass kicking methods will” (10). While Trujillo described that the male body could represent power, fratire depicts power through the male body’s capability to cause violence and harm. In his article “Hegemonic Masculinity on the Mound: Media Representations of Nolan Ryan and

Figure 4: Punching



American Sports Culture”, Nick Trujillo describes how Nolan Ryan came to embody masculinity through the media’s depictions of his strength. As his fame increased, Ryan was described in the media as almost mythological (Trujillo, 186). While Ryan was made a masculinity legend in the media for his athleticism, in fratire men become legendary simply for being violent and strong. For Maddox, men such as Chuck Norris are legends because of the connection between their physical strength and their perceived masculinity. Trujillo writes that in his heyday sports reporters wrote about Ryan as if he were a legend come to life, proclaiming his strength by describing the times when he accidentally hurt other players through his athletic prowess. He was also described by one journalist as “faster than a speeding bullet and more powerful than a locomotive” (Trujillo, 186). Similarly, Maddox describes Norris as a man who “eats rocks and shits lightning bolts” (Maddox, 113). This extreme description makes Norris the Nolan Ryan of fratire; because of his physical strength, he is the ultimate man. While it parodies the value of strength, it also reinforces that to be strong is to be masculine.

While physical strength continues to be a primary aspect in the depiction of masculinity, it is interesting to look at the portrayal of occupational achievement in fratire and how it has been redefined. Instead of the traditional capitalist workforce that Trujillo described, fratire views the physical man as having higher occupational achievement. During this “crisis” of masculinity, white-collar jobs are feminized while blue-collar jobs are masculine, and often these workers are even described as primal and uncivilized (Ashcraft & Flores, 5). Maddox even compares white-collar executives to pirates: “Sadly, the only form of theft that’s tolerated in society is white-collar theft that executives commit every day by robbing shareholders blind of their fortunes” (131). Maddox even

refers to a “corporate façade”, and it is clear that fratire does not hold the achievements of the white-collar worker in high regard. The white collar man is derided, and instead, figures such as a lumberjack and Chuck Norris, men who use their bodies for a living, are heralded. Maddox writes that “There is no nobler calling than that of a lumberjack. Deep down inside every guy, no matter how much of a pasty-thighed, white-collared desk slave he is, there’s a lumberjack waiting to bust out” (95). Since the division of labor is socially defined, some jobs are more “masculine” than others (Trujillo, 182). Rather than defining a truly masculine job by how much money is made, fratire extends praise to those jobs that require physical, not mental, prowess. While it parodies traditional occupations, fratire still reinforces the idea of some jobs as more masculine than others.

Furthermore, fratire parodies the traditional view of family patriarchy. While Trujillo may have described Ryan as a “protecting husband” (190) and a good father, fratire avoids the depiction of the typical patriarch. For many men that are Max and Maddox’s age, fathers were absent throughout their childhood, and they were raised by women. So instead of looking up to their fathers, many simply reject women in order to become masculine (Ashcraft & Flores, 9). Chuck Norris is even described as having “no mother, as crawling out of a vagina is unbecoming of a man of his stature” (Maddox, 114). Since Norris is one of fratire’s masculine idols, it is interesting to look at how women play no role in his life, to the point where he does not even have a mother. In addition to this comment about having a mother, fratire also parodies the traditional role of a father. Maddox proclaims that “If I ever made the mistake of having a child, I’d make sure my woman would eat extra spicy food. Any child who can’t handle the heat is no child of mine. It’s a great way to weed out the pussies before they have a chance to

grow up and disappoint us by becoming nine-to-five paper-pushing, ass-kissing, yes-men” (69). Traditionally, family patriarchy depicted the male dominance of the family; men were portrayed as breadwinners and protectors while women were housewives and sexual objects (Trujillo, 182). Fratire ignores much of the traditional depiction of men and focuses on the male dominance of the family. Maddox describes family as a “mistake” and removes himself from any sensitive portrayals of fatherhood. He describes his wife as “my woman”, removing her humanity and making her an object that belongs to him and remains under his control. This depiction of a woman who belongs to a man is hardly different from the traditional patriarchal view. Mrs. Nolan Ryan was often described as “the attractive woman behind her man” (Trujillo, 190). While Max avoids the topic of raising a family, his depiction of women parodies the traditional patriarchal view. In one chapter, he describes dating Vicki, “a total blonde southern girl; really hot, really sweet, and really stupid. When we’d hang out with my law school friends she’d be very quiet, and whisper things to me like, ‘I am afraid to talk to GoldenBoy. He uses such big words’” (Max, 225). Max admires his date’s physical and maternal qualities, such as beauty and sweetness, rather than her personality or intellect. Just as Ryan’s wife stood behind him, so does Vicki, who does not even attempt to speak up for herself or step into the intellectual arena of men.

In rejecting the white-collar world, fratire conjures up the “frontiersmanship” that Trujillo describes as “symbolized by the daring frontiersman of yesteryear and of the present-day outdoorsman” (183). The ideal man as depicted by Maddox is someone who uses his strength to dominate and provide, therefore avoiding the white-collar world that women have invaded (Ashcraft & Flores, 6). Fratire parodies this ideal by taking it to the

extreme, glorifying lumberjacks and describing Chuck Norris as having “no weakness; he is the ultimate fighting machine” (114). He even compares Norris to God and says: “A Day in the Life of Chuck Norris: The word ‘day’ is a bit misleading when talking about Chuck Norris because a day in his life is less like the twenty-four hour day most people associate with the word, and more like an eon God describes as a day during the creation of the universe” (117). Masculinity in fratire is strongly tied to the physical characteristics of masculinity, and much like idealizing a cowboy or a lumberjack, the ideal man is someone who rejects the white-collar world and is defined by his physical prowess. The romanticism of the frontiersman ideal is also parodied when Maddox describes pirates, saying: “A long time ago, back when men were men and having a hairy back was a sign of virility, there was a breed of man that was saltier, meaner, and more spiteful than all the rest... Today, pirates stand as a monument of anger and ill temperament triumphing over cool-headedness and positive emotions” (126). Pirates are even more extreme than the masculine ideal of the cowboy. They are more than outdoorsman, they are thieves and warriors who represent a stark change from the metrosexuals and politically correct men of today. While fratire may take the element of frontiersmanship to the extreme, the point still remains that it is important to look to the frontiersman as a masculine idol.

The final distinguishing feature of hegemonic masculinity as described by Trujillo is heterosexuality, which “requires not being effeminate in physical appearance or mannerisms; not having relationships with men that are sexual or overly intimate; and not failing in sexual relationships with women” (183). Fratire parodies this feature by utilizing hyperboles of manliness and masculinity. In *The Alphabet of Manliness*,

Maddox describes a “cocksure” god named Odin: “Although poetry is pretty much the unmanliest form of writing, Odin was man enough to make even this most effeminate of written forms rock tits. Here’s a haiku written by Odin: I murdered a man. He had a wife and two kids. I slept peacefully” (46). Fratire ascribes manliness to more than just being a man. Throughout fratire, certain traits are associated with manliness more than others—in particular violence, hairiness, and a penchant for hot sauce. Maddox glorifies Odin as a man who is so masculine he can kill another man without a thought. Furthermore, Maddox’s take on sexual relationships with women depicts the heterosexual man as someone who associates women only as sex objects. Maddox states: “In the course of manhood, every teenager will at some point be confronted with an unexpected opportunity to grope a woman... You don’t want to seem too eager to touch a woman; don’t just rush in and start grabbing like some rapist. That shit is annoying and looked down on by other men. Women also don’t like it” (21-22). By initially describing inappropriate sexual behavior as something other men “look down on”, Maddox emphasizes the buffoon value of giving more importance to other men’s opinions over the treatment of women as equals. By stating that groping a woman is part of the “course of manhood”, Maddox implies that this kind of sexual behavior is synonymous with masculinity.

Although fratire is a parody of hegemonic masculinity, it also reinforces each of the masculine ideals Connell described: physical force and control, occupational achievement, familial patriarchy, frontiersmanship, and heterosexuality. While this parody affects how masculinity is viewed, fratire also shapes the depiction and perception of women through the use of metaphor.

Chapter V

Metaphor: How to Discipline Your Woman

While many works of literature use metaphor to compare an object to a person, fratire uses metaphor to compare women to objects. Fratire uses metaphor to dehumanize women as sexual objects rather than fellow human beings. In response to the anxiety caused by the current “crisis” of masculinity, Ian Cook, author of “Western Heterosexual Masculinity, Anxiety, and Web Porn” writes that there is a desire to degrade women and often it is by objectifying women that this goal is achieved. Women are often used and treated as “object-commodities” (52-53). In “Rhetorical Functions of the Infestation Metaphor in Hitler’s Rhetoric”, Steven Perry describes that it is important to study these metaphors for women because “metaphor can convey a whole body of incipient but shared attitudes and values” (219).

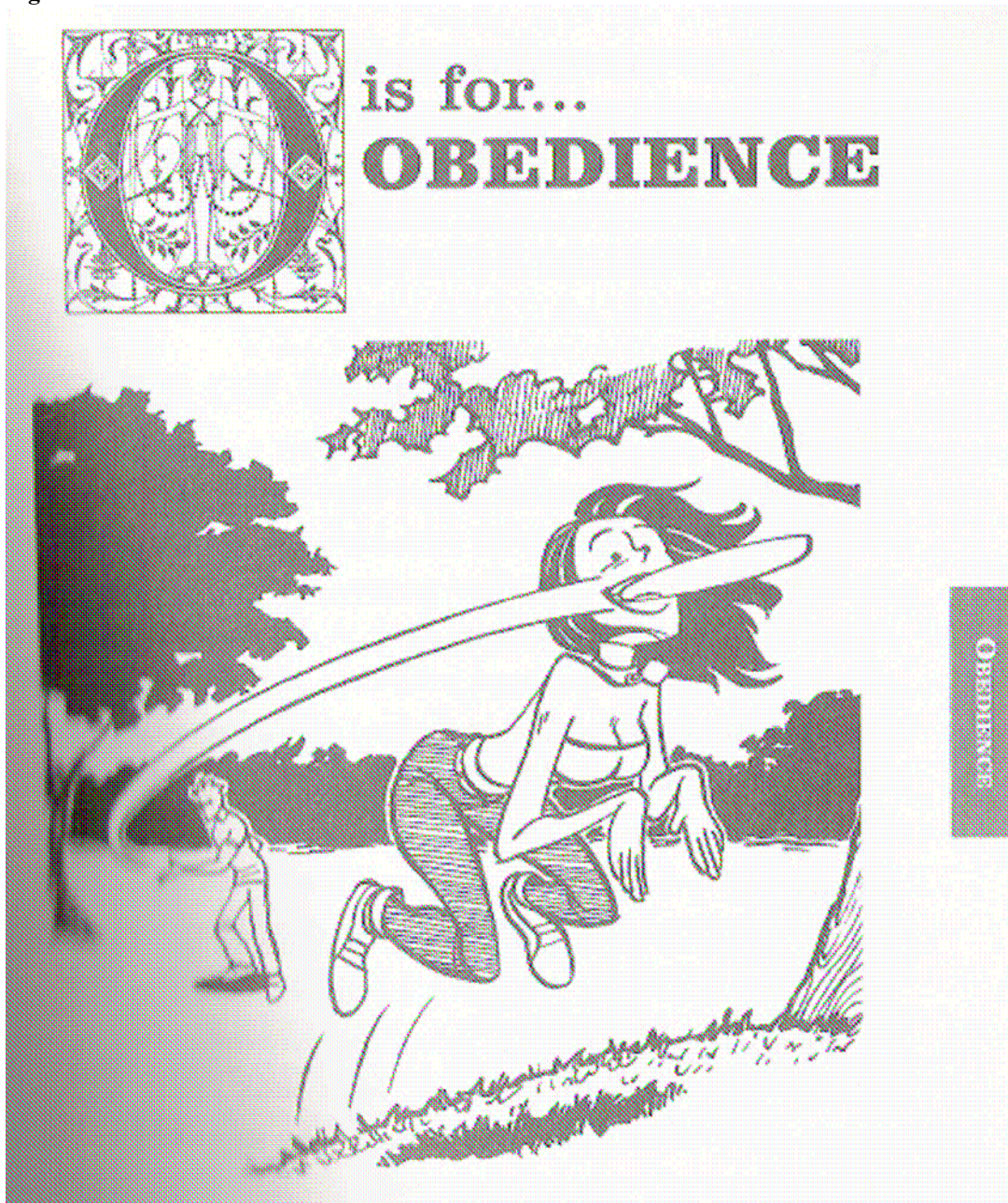
By viewing reality in a different way, metaphor uses language to describe how an author sees the world. Metaphors allow readers to “generate the discovery of ideas” (Foss, 359), and using metaphors can change their outlook. By associating two things with each other, an author can link their qualities, highlighting some characteristics while choosing to overlook others. Metaphor can serve as an argument because it often illustrates the author’s worldview, and if the audience finds the metaphor acceptable then the author has essentially won his argument. In order to analyze fratire, we must look at each work as a whole, isolate the metaphors, look for patterns in the use of metaphors, and finally analyze their effect (Foss, 362-363). The analysis of metaphor will look at how at how fratire creates a metaphor for the ideal woman as a sexual object. It will also examine the illustrations of women used in *The Alphabet of Manliness* and the

descriptions of women Tucker Max's narration offers readers as a metaphor for women as being less than men.

One metaphor used by Maddox is that women are like dogs. Although he does not explicitly state this, it is suggested in his chapter "O is for Obedience", which opens with an illustration of a woman catching a Frisbee in the air, with her arms poised as paws [Figure 5: Female Obedience]. The Frisbee is thrown by a man, presumably her "owner" and she is wearing a small and revealing tube top (Maddox, 119). He continues by describing places to find a woman and says that "adopt[ing]" a woman is a "time commitment" and an "ongoing responsibility" (120). Maddox also includes a "new owner checklist" and advice for "house training your woman". He says that, "A great deal of supervision and patience is required while training your woman to relieve herself properly... You should reward her good behavior with treats" (125). By comparing a woman to a dog, Maddox reasserts the gender hierarchy. The metaphor that women are like dogs and that they can be trained and owned removes their humanity. While Maddox may not intend for his metaphor to be taken seriously, it serves to degrade women through humor. Furthermore, Maddox compares women's need for attention to the cries of a monkey: "These women are starved for attention, and part of the reason they laugh so loud is to get a glance from men around them. The only problem with their method is that the attention they get from men is like the attention monkeys get at zoos" (77). By comparing women to dogs and monkeys, Maddox creates a metaphor for women who are less than men, to the point that they are not even human.

Women are even described with only their body parts, further dehumanizing them. Max refers to some of his female characters simply by their bodies, such as FatGirl

Figure 5: Female Obedience



and ElephantLegs: “Her hot face and great tits are paired with ghetto booty and elephant legs” he writes, and then continues his story referring to the woman only as “ElephantLegs” (33). Maddox also refers to women as body parts: “So you’re in the education department surrounded by hot chicks standing around twirling their hair, you’ve found a tight ass, now what?” (24). Rather than saying “you found a woman”, Maddox simply refers to her as her butt. Not only does Maddox dehumanize women through this metaphor of women as body parts, he also uses their body parts to define their personalities. Women are defined by their bodies: “A telltale sign of a stuck-up bitch is the slightly upturned orientation of her chest” (90). A woman’s body defines her, and this metaphor can be used to rationalize the buffoon’s use of women for sex.

In fratire, women are often seen as sexual toys. They are not only available for sex, but they are delighted to be used like playthings. Maddox writes that when a woman is crying: “Whip out your penis in front of her; all women are delighted to see a man’s genitals” (Maddox, 78). What this metaphor is saying is to ignore how women are feeling because they are willing to let men use them for sex and being used is pleasurable. Max even describes a woman he dated who let him go to the bathroom while she pleased him orally just to prove she was “up for anything”. Max describes his experiences with her by saying: “At first, I kinda liked it. I got to beat her up during sex, call her whatever names I wanted, pull her hair, throw her around, fuck any hole I could get my dick in as hard as I wanted, and basically do anything I could think of whenever I felt like it; nothing was out of bounds. She was like my own personal sexual canvas to experiment on” (146). Not only is this woman a sexual toy, she is a “blank canvas”. She is inhuman to Max, without a real personality, and by letting him use her, Max is eventually

disgusted by his sex toy: "... how the fuck am I supposed to have any respect for a girl who would do the things she did?" (149). So not only is Max's lover a sex toy for him, he does not think she deserves any respect either. He detaches himself and thinks of her as a sexual object deserving the treatment she is getting (Cook, 7).

In fratire, when women are described as humans it is through the metaphor that they are children and ought to be treated in such a manner. Maddox writes: "The reason men don't know what to do when women start to cry is because our natural response is to treat the woman like a child; does she want milk? Does she need to be burped?" (79). Not only is the woman no longer an adult in this metaphor, but she also needs to be cared for by a man, a nod to the patriarchy that is one of hegemonic masculinity's ideals. Max refers to a woman he dates as "Daddy's Girl" (141), and when she attempts to order champagne, he says: "Let's leave the ordering to me" (142). By patronizing his date in such a way, Max insinuates that she is unable to make her own decisions, and needs a man in her life; this point is further made by referring to her only as another man's daughter, defining her only in relation to men.

This idea of women as less than men is echoed in another fratire metaphor: women as servants. Not only are women treated as less than men, but fratire uses metaphor to show that they enjoy being treated as subservient. Maddox writes, "Women love the quickie because it makes them feel useful. The thing to keep in mind is that the quickie is all about you, and most women are content with being a perfunctory part of your experience" (Maddox, 132). By declaring the focus of quick sex to be only on men, women are shown to want to please them, like a servant. In their drive to be "useful", fratire's metaphor for women here is that they are around to serve men, specifically

sexually. Maddox continues with a description of what to do after you've had sex with a woman: "For example, if you want to show a woman how much you appreciate her, try writing her a check. When she wakes up alone, she'll see that you value her" (Maddox, 133). Just like a servant, in *fratire* a woman is paid for her services. In addition, Max uses metaphor to depict women as reverent to men, like worshipers are to God. He describes oral sex with one woman by saying: "After that, she swallowed every bit of my seed like a nun taking communion" (Max, 24). By using the metaphor of communion, Max depicts women as the servants of men. Men like Max are God-like, and therefore women are less than them. This idea of women as less than men is at the core of each of the metaphors used in *fratire*. While the buffoon is used to reaffirm traditional hegemonic masculinity, metaphor is employed to return women to the patriarchal view of that tradition. The advances of feminism are ignored, and *fratire*'s solution to the crisis of masculinity is not only returning to the hegemonic view of masculinity but also that of femininity. In their response to the "crisis" of masculinity, both authors affirm their identity as men by mistreating, dehumanizing, and patronizing women.

Metaphor is not just a stylistic device in Maddox's and Max's books, it is part of their argument (Perry, 219). Their metaphors should not be viewed simply as a way to supplement the author's parody of hegemonic masculinity; instead the metaphors for women in *fratire* are part of the argument for a return to the gender roles of the past. These metaphors ignore the progress of feminism and create an argument that women are less than men and should be treated as such.

Chapter VI

Assessing the Effects: Are You Man Enough?

The short term effect of fratire is that it entertains its readers. These books combine many different elements that appeal to the intended audience. They amuse through the antics of the authors, whether it's a discussion of farting or a story about the time Max drank Absinthe. Much like the pro-masculine movement before it, fratire aims to combat the political correctness of feminism through humor. Readers can feel as though they are escaping societal expectations while they temporarily experience the world through the eyes of buffoons.

The long term effects of fratire are much more significant than just selling more books. Through the use of parody and metaphor, the traditional ideals of hegemonic masculinity are reinforced. By experiencing the world through fratire, readers' views of both men and women are influenced.

In response to their ire at the feminist and metrosexual movements, the authors of fratire create a return to the previous ideals of hegemonic masculinity. Fratire parodies the expectations society has of men while also reinforcing them; the hegemonic ideals that Connell laid out are not removed, but instead translated into a humorous context. Fratire is not an alternative to the past tradition of society-defined masculinity. There is only one depiction portrayed, and even though it employs humor and wit, fratire does little more than reinforce how men ought to be. While it might seem to be a relief after the uncertainty that both the feminist and metrosexual movements caused men to feel, it is a return to a one-dimensional view of masculinity. This view of masculinity can cause behavior patterns that are "unhealthy or dysfunctional" because they limit men's

situational responses to a “limited range of gender-linked approved coping strategies” (Arrindell, 33). Fratire defines what being a real man is, whereas other movements have created more options for men than being strong, angry, and dominant.

These limitations can also affect men’s self esteem, because it may lead them to believe that if they are not as strong or have fewer sexual partners then they are less masculine (Arrindell). Fratire, especially Maddox’s work, limits the appearance of masculinity to looking strong, which may create body issues for men. If being manly is equated with having muscles like Chuck Norris, many men may not consider themselves to be as masculine. Also, the depiction of binge drinking as a masculine pastime could negatively affect men’s health. If men think that one of their only options to bond with other men is to drink, they may sacrifice their health. In fratire drinking too much is proof of masculine achievement, and that may result in increased alcohol abuse in men.

Furthermore, when men are made to feel insecure about their masculinity, it can result in an increased adoption of “macho” attitudes, such as homophobia and hostility, as a way to overcompensate (*Journal of Men’s Health & Gender*, 95-96). When Chuck Norris and Tucker Max become the ideals of masculinity, it is difficult not to question why masculinity is embodied by violent, womanizing, white males.

Fratire also affects the male-female relationship. Instead of emphasizing a healthy relationship with women, fratire depicts men using women for sex. This creates an image that real men do not need to care how women feel because they do not want a real relationship. Just as the buffoon only saw women as useful for sex, the message in fratire is that women are not friends or equals; they are around for sexual pleasure. This can

create unhealthy sexual practices and lead to a belief that real men do not need a relationship or an emotional connection, they just need sex.

By entertaining the reader explicitly, fratire also implicitly provides a view of women as less than equal. Fratire uses metaphors for women that dehumanize them and influences how its readers view women. The argument put forth through fratire's metaphors is that women are less than men.

For male readers, fratire can affect their treatment of women, even subconsciously. The images repeated throughout fratire reverse some of the progress made by feminism, leaving women as animals, servants, and ultimately whores. By embodying the buffoon, both Maddox and Max adopt his attitude of indifference toward women. Other than sex, women are of little use. Instead of welcoming gender equality, fratire makes women and feminism the enemy. This may cause males to believe that if women are treated as equals then men will be treated with less respect. Gender relations should not be categorized as an "us versus them" mentality because it leads to an unhealthy relationship between men and women.

While this may seem to be an extreme viewpoint, the metaphors used in fratire can easily affect how readers treat women. Even female readers who may initially feel outraged or degraded may feel compelled to laugh at the women in the books or think less of other women. Female readers may perceive that their only value to men is as a sexual object, defined only by their bodies, not their intelligence or personality. It may also cause female readers to feel disgusted by men in general as a result of the antics of Maddox and Max because they may associate the attitudes of fratire with how all men feel.

Finally, fratire has a limiting effect on both genders. While women are confined to being depicted as sex objects, masculine roles are narrowed, too. At least with the metrosexual movement there seemed to be more options for what masculinity meant. But with the rise of fratire comes the return to the old hegemonic ideals. Masculinity is narrowly defined, and if a man does not fit into the masculinity described, then he is not man enough.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

It is important to consider the implications of *fratire*, especially for what it says about both men and women. Both works depict men as little more than savages, using violence and sexual appetite to determine how they treat others. Instead of presenting a new alternative to preconceived notions or prescriptions for masculinity, *fratire* reverts to the old hegemonic masculinity ideals. By parodying hegemonic masculinity, *fratire* emphasizes that masculinity can be defined, and men who do not fit that definition are not truly men.

Men are supposed to be strong and powerful both in the workplace and at home; there are no varying depictions of what masculinity is, but rather, *fratire* further imposes restrictions on male behavior and expectations of what men can be. By portraying men as savage and immature, *fratire* pigeonholes masculinity, leaving men with few options. In *fratire*, there is no gray area, you are either a real man or you are not. While some men may have disliked the metrosexual movement and believed it placed more pressure on men, at least there were options for what could be defined as masculine. By returning to the previous hegemonic ideals, *fratire* furthers the notion that there is a singular definition for masculinity. This ideal man of *fratire* describes not only his outward appearance- hairy and muscular- but also his emotional capacity and attitude towards women.

Furthermore, *fratire* affects how women are viewed. In their quest to avoid political correctness, both Maddox and Max create depictions of women that are degrading; women are not equals, but instead are portrayed as sex objects. By creating metaphors for women as animals, children and servants, *fratire* makes a case that

feminism was a mistake because women are not equal to men. Although each author may protest that women make up a significant part of their fan base, it is important to consider how the degrading portrayal of women in fratire affects the treatment of women by both men *and* other women. Gender role stress for both men and women can create conflict between the two, and the way in which men and women are depicted in fratire makes a case that neither gender deserves much respect. Men are hairy savages while women are brainless whores; it is easy to see why gender equality may look less appealing after reading fratire books.

While fratire may just seem like an entertaining escape from a world full of politically correct rules and limitations on male behavior, it is important to realize that this portrayal of masculinity might be even more limiting. While some may argue that the feminist and metrosexual movements benefited women and gave them more power, it also gave men more options. Gender is more fluid than the black and white depictions of masculinity in fratire. Not all men have to be buffoons.

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