Ronald Reagan's rise in 1980 as the new leader epitomizes the reassertion and recuperation of America as a traditionally masculine power as Reagan proclaimed after the invasion of Grenada: "Americans are now standing tall and firm" (qtd. in Michael Kimmel 211). Metaphorically Reagan's presidency seems to usher in an era marked by a new and ambitious recharged manhood. Such performance of assertive and powerful masculinity finds its articulation in the 1980s jingoistic action films which glorify the invincible male power as exuded by the character Rambo. By masculine power I mainly refer to the external force of aggression and muscular display of power long associated with traditional virility. Brenton J. Malin also notices the difference between male image in the 1980s and that of 1990s. He notes that "while the '80s was prolific with big muscled killers like Arnold Schwarzenegger, who fired their guns indiscriminately to prove their own and America's massive strength, the typical '90s hero seemed to be more sensitive and more politically correct" (8). Michael Kimmel further interprets such military intervention as a gesture of regained manhood which symbolizes "the compulsive masculinity of the schoolyard bully, defeating weaker foes such as Grenada and Panama" (211). It seems that by the 1980s American men feel disoriented in their search for the masculine role model. The image of Western frontier cowboy of conquest and subjugation like John Wayne has become antiquated. Traditionally the western as the major genre of Hollywood film always highlights the white protagonist's journey of conquest and exploitation of the American Indians. But as the American society experiences tremendous social upheaval such as Civil Rights Movement and Women's Liberation Movement, more and more attention is paid to the oppressed Other like the Indians and women. Therefore the stereotypical narrative of white supremacy of the cowboy is dismantled, just like what the American people experienced during the frustrating hostage crisis in Iran in 1979, shattering their confidence in the idea of America as an omnipotent power. Hollywood films always tap into the pulse of contemporary culture, with the genre of western undergoing a perpetual revision where the once arrogant white cowboy is constantly in the grip of self-interrogation and critique while learning to appreciate the beauty of other culture and gender as explored in films like *Dances with Wolves*. The western in the 1960s and 1970s such as *Unforgiven* and *Little Big Man* always ends with the illumination and transformation of the unbending and remorseless tough guy to become a sympathetic man fully aware of his flaw and fragility. Such image of the new man in the western resonates with the 1990s new men in the films focusing on the internalized drama of their self-reflection and self-questioning caused by the breaking down of the false image of the perfect family and estrangement of relationships. Gradually a sense of crisis is engendered from the male psyche as the idea of heterosexism, classism, racism and sexism that once forms the basis of American manhood meets great challenge, forcing society to reconsider a less traditional masculinity. John Lennon's comment in an interview suggests the drive

to forge a new relationship with the opposite sex, thus giving birth to a new formation of manhood. He argues: "where has it gotten us all these thousands of years? Are we still going to have to be clubbing each other to death" (qtd. in Michael Kimmel 212)?

The 1990s witnessed large amounts of Hollywood films depicting male protagonists struggling in the quagmire of masculine identity crisis. In her book *Stiffed: The Betrayal of Modern Man* Susan Faludi suggests that the degradation of masculinity is caused by corporate capitalism and consumerism and such idea might resonate with the cinematic representation of the beleaguered and frustrated male characters who feel bereft of a sense of masculine privilege and legitimacy. The long-held idea of traditional masculinity as the benchmark of breadwinner in total control of the environment, therefore, is being questioned, as articulated through male disorientation and anger in face of the rise of female power. Films like *Falling Down*, *American Beauty*, *Fight Club* are held together by a male paranoia desperate to shore up a patriarchal normative masculinity. Yet all the male characters' performances of virility as a desperate attempt to reclaim their privileged terrain eventually prove to be tenuous. These disenfranchised men are experiencing "massive restructuring of public and private space wherein conventional gendered and racial encodings no longer apply" (Nicola Rehling 28). Such sense of confusion experienced by men is also echoed by Michael Kimmel's argument that:

> our lives have changed dramatically, but the notions we have about what it means to be a man remain locked in a pattern set decades ago....The 1990s found men constantly bumping up against the limitations of that traditional definition but without much of a sense of direction about where they might go to look for alternatives (Kimmel, Ch. 2, ¶ 17).

The traditional manhood of macho and machismo as represented by the values disseminated during the reign of Reagan and Bush is disintegrated into a new shape of conflicted and mixed masculinity symbolized by Bill Clinton in the 1990s. He once remarks at a prayer breakfast that "it is important to me that everybody who has been hurt knows that the sorrow I feel is genuine." Scandalized by his affair with Monica Lewinsky, he tries to win back public support by offering his "hope that with a broken spirit and a still strong heart, I can be used for greater good for we have many blessings and many challenges and so much work to do" (qtd. in Breton J. Malin 7). Clinton himself becomes the incarnation of the mixture of the new masculinity in the 1990s. As Brenton J. Malin discerns, Clinton possesses certain qualities that challenge the imagery of the Reagan/Bush presidency and attempts to adopt a new image of male president which stresses sensitivity and empathy, rather than toughness or strength, subverting the long established notions of presidential masculinity. "By offering America a newly sensitive, empathetic presidency, the Clinton campaign promised an administration distanced from the oppressive masculinity associated with the '80s" (Breton J.

Malin 57-58). The new concept of masculinity can no longer be an essential, unmarked and invisible identity. Many gender scholars began to embark on the exploration of traditional masculinity facing crisis and sense of deprivation, leading them to question the traditional masculine values and open up discussions of alternative views of masculinity. Such idea is confirmed by Brenton J. Malin, who argues that a discourse of a less traditional masculinity begins to challenge masculinity's invisibility when the idea of heterosexism, racism and sexism underpinning American manhood is severely challenged in the drama of the crisis of masculinity (10). Moving out of fantasy and action adventure films of 1980s, male performance in films of 1990s is predominantly exemplified in the scenarios of gender politics. The depiction of masculinity is no longer confined to the external display of muscular violence but gives way to a "presumably more internalized masculine dimension. More film time is devoted to explorations of their ethical dilemmas, emotional traumas" (Susan Jeffords 245). Often the stage of drama shifts to the corporate office where the suppressed and claustrophobic atmosphere enrages the male protagonists to twist their vain machismo to an extreme in defense against their sense of emasculation. These films highlight male protagonists' sense of deprivation and frustration either in family or in workplace, exposing the instabilities of white heterosexual masculinity, alerting the audience to the falsity of Manichean and binaristic view of gender. Through the exploration of these films centering around masculinity crisis, more and more attention is paid to the performance of gender, as it can be worn so it can also be stripped away, revealing the tenuousness of masculinity.

After the release of *Thelma & Louise* tinged with radical feminist sentiment in 1991, an ongoing controversial debate concerning gender is fiercely raised in contemporary American culture. Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* chronicles 1980s conservative diatribe against the rise of feminism and the female intrusion into the male terrain. Eight years later in her sequel *Stiffed: The Betrayal of Modern Man* she switches the focus to target on the predicament and degradation of privileged white masculinity. The-taken-for-granted trophy and legacy won by the older generation seems to become a burden for the younger generation, as uttered by Faludi:

> Never , or so their sons were told, did fathers have so much to pass on as at the peak of the American Century. And conversely, never was there such a burden on the sons to learn how to run a world they would inherit. Yet the fathers, with all the force of fresh victory and moral virtue behind them, seemingly unfettered in their paternal power and authority, failed to pass the mantle, the knowledge, all that power and authority, on to their sons. (qtd. in *Boys in Trouble?* 114)

The disorientation and disempowerment of masculinity caused by historical change gives birth to crisis of masculinity in the 1990s. As Susanne Kord and Elizabeth Krimmer has observed, it has become a common phenomenon that crisis

befalls upon masculinity since the 1980s, that "socially this crisis manifests itself as a challenge to men's absolute dominance of the workplace; culturally, it is often played out in the domestic realm" (37). Donna Peberdy also discerns the malaise plaguing American masculinity by arguing that masculinity crisis has become a recurrent term in media and critical discourse to designate "any moment where definitions of maleness were severely debated, contested and renegotiated" (5). Behind these arguments of masculinity crisis lies a strong sense of deprivation and victimization felt by the male characters.

Erving Goffman in his 1963 *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* delineates a stereotypical construction of traditional masculinity:

> In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual Protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports….Any male who fails to qualify in any of these ways is likely to view himself--during moments at least—as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior; at times he is likely to pass and at times he is likely to find himself being apologetic or aggressive concerning known-about aspects of himself he sees as undesirable. (128)

From the above definition of traditional manhood we can discern the gendered expectation and barrier set by society's bias. However as America moves further into the turbulent 1960s, many presumptions dictated by the traditional concept of masculinity begin to fall apart. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* not only offers a new awareness of femininity but also challenges the long-held view of prejudiced masculinity. Myron Breton in *The American Male* points out the inadequacy of patriarchy by arguing that:

> This book is about the plight of the contemporary American male. It's about the increasingly difficult choices he is having to make, and most of all, about the invisible straightjacket that still keeps him bound to antiquated patriarchal notions of what he must do or be in order to prove himself a man. (15)

Thus the contemporary masculinity in crisis can be attributed to her idea of men bound by an invisible and rigid patriarchal thinking. Ian Miles goes further to accentuate the blindness and restriction imposed by the traditional ideology of masculinity:

> Sexuality is an important issue in several of these movements, especially in those championing gay liberation and homosexual rights—which are clearly difficult to accord with traditional masculinity—as well as in women's movements. But many other movements also begin to call some established masculine practices into question, by proposing, for example, new relations between economic activities and natural environments, new divisions between paid and unpaid work, new ways of resolving conflicts in the nuclear age. (52)

Facing the challenges posed by the rise of feminism and gay liberation movement,

Americans need to reexamine their history of masculinity and adopt a more flexible mindset in viewing the issues of gender and maleness. Yet American males tend to form bipolar camps with one represented by the popularity of Robert Bly's *Iron John* in the 1990s. *Iron John*'s enormous power of influence can be gauged by its spending 62 weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Robert Bly accuses women of replacing traditional fathers' roles. Michael Kimmel points out that according to Bly the decline of traditional masculinity stems from its dependence on the mother and its separation from the father. By urging American men to retreat into the woods, Bly is orchestrating a mythopoetic movement driving away the deep-seated fear of feminization (Michael Kimmel 229). He believes that through these primitive and ancient ritual these men perform, they can reclaim their long lost essential masculinity, which is gradually eroded by the feminizing worlds of work and home. Bly's thinking is still subservient to the traditional gender binary, as he illustrates:

> As men began to examine women's history and women's sensibility, some men began to notice what was called their feminine side and pay attention to it. This process continues to this day, and I would say that most contemporary men are involved in it in some way. There's something wonderful about this development—I mean the practice of men welcoming their own "feminine" consciousness and nurturing it—and yet I have the sense that there is something wrong. The male in the past twenty years has become more thoughtful, more gentle. But by this process he has not become more free. He's nice boy who pleases not only his mother but also the young woman he is living with. (qtd. in Brenton Malin 45)

It seems that the feminine sensibility is depicted as detrimental to male psychic formation and the clear-cut dissection of masculinity and femininity again strengthens the ideological construction of gender binary which is punctured by Judith Butler's idea of gender as an act of performativity: "The ideological aim of gender norms is to maintain the physical and emotional binary oppositions that set masculinity and femininity apart, for example: strong/weak, rational/irrational, macho/gentle, active/passive, and hard/soft" (qtd. in Donna Peberdy 27).

Instead of propagating such split categories she puts forward the theory of performativity which asserts that gender is fluid and subject to change, Judith Butler postulates that gender is a social construct, a performance women assume to undermine the long-held conventional view that gender is biologically determined and thus help women release the shackle of the binaristic gender framework. Judith butler in her groundbreaking work, *Gender Trouble* delineates the connection between gender and performance, arguing that "gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of a substance, of a natural sort of being" (33). What she implies is that there is no such thing as a natural gender identity, that is, a person is not born as a man or as a woman. Her purpose is to demolish the

impregnable wall formed by stereotypical notion of gender to denaturalize traditional gender categories based on biological determinism. Jeffrey Brown further confirms that "for Butler, gendered identities are not a reflection of one's authentic core self, but are a culturally coded effect of performance" (22). In other words, it is cultural and social expectation that shapes one's identity. Tania Modleski also posits that the idea of gender and masculinity is constantly deconstructed and constructed, suggesting "the boundaries of masculinity are repeatedly tested and challenged" (qtd. in Peberdy 28). Viewed from such perspective, it can be confirmed that masculinity as a normative gender performance is merely a cultural code dictated by the mainstream society to regulate the proper behavior expressed by men.

But Robert Bly's idea is so deeply entrenched that it triggers a series of cinematic representation of femininity being destroyed. *Fatal Attraction* is concerned with how the peaceful life of the male protagonist Dan Gallagher is ruined by his casual fling with a woman named Alex Forrest. The majority of the film is focused on Alex's abnormal behavior and strong urge to revenge on Dan when she wants to perpetuate the extramarital affair but is rejected by Dan. The portrayal of Alex as an obsessive and impulsive woman who seems to wreck endless destruction on Dan's lives corresponds to Susan Faludi's book *Backlash: the Undeclared War against American Women*, which mainly highlights the counterstrike of conservatism in suppressing the emerging feminist thought of liberation when women are beginning to make gigantic stride in pursuing independence and autonomy. Robin Wood observes that "restoration of the Father, the father understood in all senses, symbolic, literal, potential is the dominant project, ad infinitum and post nauseam of the contemporary Hollywood cinema" (172). The final scene enacts a rivalry between Alex and Dan, who eventually kills her, thus symbolically exorcising and expelling her from the cinematic narrative. In *Wall Street* Michael Douglas also plays Gordon Gekko, who is a merciless Wall Street financier building his empire of greed upon the exploitation of other people's lives. His exhibition of moral bankruptcy and lack of remorse fully encapsulates the reactionary portrayal of 1980s masculinity. The traditional ideology of masculinity exercises its power of manipulation in its suppression of female characters and develops into a cinematic tradition in the 1980s, which is characterized by the exaggeration of stereotypical masculinity and virility. Actors such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis all indulge themselves in a frenzy of obsessive weapon-wielding and muscular display of sheer physical prowess, as witnessed by Susan Jeffords: "Through a variety of these 1980s films, hypermasculine characters such as John Rambo, hard-bodied hero of *First Blood, Rambo: First Blood Part II* and *Rambo III*, repeatedly strut their well-developed, hardened machismo, flexing their ever larger muscles and touting an ideal of masculine virility " (qtd. in Brenton J. Malin 29).

Such one-sided and monolithic portrayal of contemporary Hollywood

masculinity is soon superseded by a new breed of cinematic representations of masculinity in the 1990s. Behind these films focusing on the more diverse characteristics of masculinity is the concept of masculinity shaped by culture, which should go beyond the rigid boundary set by traditional society which posits that sexual difference is pre-ordained. Therefore Philippa Gates accentuates: "masculinity is not a collection of attributes possessed by a male subject from birth but a set of expectations that society deems appropriate for a male subject to exhibit" (28). Out of the simplified version of contemporary masculinity comes the 1990s portrayal of masculinity which is fully in tuned with Nicola Rahling's argument that masculinity should not be viewed as a monolithic or static category, but instead should be in constant flux, "subject to historically contingent, cultural, social, economic, political and psychic forces" (4). The new formation of masculinity emerged from a spate of films in the 1990s exemplifies a new idea of man who is able to "transform himself from the hardened, muscle-bound, domineering man of the eighties into the considerate, loving and self-sacrificing man of the nineties" (David Greven 14).

Such paradigm shift in the cinematic representation of contemporary masculinity as observed by Susan Jeffords has also been found by Stefan Brandt, who suggests that there appears a "new breed of deviant masculinities, with the superheroes of the eighties stepped back to make room for a more sensitive, realistic and vulnerable figure in the nineties" (77). Many critics such as Susannne Kord (37), Elizabeth Krimmer, Caroline Bainbridge and Candida Yates (305) all agree that contemporary masculinity is really plagued by an array of tribulation and crisis. And it is exactly through such moments of crisis and quandary that Hollywood film makers find the opportunities to probe deep into and reexamine the configuration and formation of masculine identity. But the drama for the performance of masculinity is no longer the outward exaggeration of the extravagant spectacles of violence and power but seeps deep into the psyche of the protagonist whose moral dilemma and struggle registers "the emotional display of masculine sensitivities, traumas and burdens" (qtd. in David Greven 15). Nothing could be further from the true picture of contemporary masculinity than Robert Bly's exclusion of softness and sensitivity from the definition of masculinity. For him the only way to achieve genuine masculinity is to lay bare the wild side of the male psyche, which again is trapped in the vicious circle of binaristic concept of masculinity. However Donna Peberdy insists that instead of shifting from hard to soft, what contemporary masculinity implies is a simultaneous presence of hard and soft modes, which forms a constant dialogue with each other (102). David Fincher's *Fight Club* vividly captures the mercurial quality of the contemporary masculinity. The audience is introduced to Jack who is obsessive with consumer culture and suffers insomnia. He later makes friends with Tyler to start an underground boxing club to let people release their pent-up emotions while reclaiming their sense of masculinity. Throughout the film we witness how the

"soft" Jack is pitted against the excessive, hypermasculine Tyler. Yet the end of the film alerts the audience to the fact that Tyler is just Jack's alter ego. The film depicts how the act of violence is used to shore up the boundary of white heterosexual masculinity, which turns out to be unstable and tenuous. Another film that resonates with the theme of male alienation and victimization is *He Was a Quiet Man*, where the protagonist Bob played by Christian Slater is trapped in his own hallucination and fantasy, reminiscent of James Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." Bob is an insignificant worker plagued by repetitive and humdrum work. In the beginning the audience is witnessing a close-up of a black hole which turns out to be Bob's ear hole, symbolizing the inner darkness of the male psyche haunted by angst. Bob reminds us of the protagonist Travis Bickle in Martin Scorsese's 1976 *Taxi Driver*, who suffers delusion and commits rampant acts of violence, intimating the trauma of the male psyche triggered by the phantom of the Vietnam War. Bob resembles Travis in his obsession with fabricating his own imaginary scenario and Nicola Rehling argues that *He Was a Quiet Man* "exemplifies the depiction of white heterosexual masculinity being represented as a sterile, depleted, vacuous identity" (250). In *Magnolia*, Tom Cruise plays Frank T. J. Mackey, who takes Robert Bly's image of the Wild Man to the extreme. He runs a workshop called "Seduce and Destroy" to vent his misogynistic rage against women. In a scene characterized by exaggerated arrogant body language, he seems to establish a typical example set by Robert Bly, a masculinity totally rejecting softer, more feminine side to embrace a male identity punctuated by virility, potency, heterosexuality, power and subjugation of women.

Yet it quickly reveals how tenuous such a masculinity is when he is interviewed by a TV host Gwenorier. During the interview he strikes extreme pose of male aggression including puffing out his naked chest and performing handstands and somersaults across the room. In the meantime he utters "I am batman, superman," icons of traditional American masculinity. Despite his act of male aggression, his vulnerability becomes all the more exposed when the host furthers her investigation. He keeps lying about how his mother is alive but his father is dead. The truth is that he is abandoned by his father in his early childhood which casts a shadow in his psyche. And this shadow can never be dispelled until Frank is finally reconciled with his dying father on his deathbed, proclaiming "don't go away." Deep inside Frank's recesses lies a softer, gentle identity. As Donna Peberdy argues, beneath his mask of hypermasculinity lies a softer sensitive character who can cry and make peace with his estranged father. Many roles Tom Cruise plays witness such transformation from macho masculinity into "authentic" manliness; before he can reject the destructive nature of the Wild Man, Frank must embrace his softness (112). *Jerry Maguire* is another film enacting the drama of masculinity in crisis. Jerry played by Tom Cruise is a high-flying sports agent, but gradually he becomes resentful of the "chronic insincerity and greed of his business," troubled by the mounting pressure generated by the profit-hungry

corporation. The last straw that breaks him comes from the painful face of a football player's son, whose innocent eyes seem to beg Jerry for lifting his father out of the bloody and cruel jungle of professional sport.

Another recurrent image of contemporary masculinity is fatherhood. Donna Peberdy suggests that in a speech delivered by Clinton in 1995 he identifies fatherhood as a crucial area of responsibility for American society. But here the idea of fatherhood is different from that of traditional fatherhood. She further argues that "with contemporary changes to the family structure, it has become increasingly necessary to devise new cultural scripts for fatherhood and to redefine the parameters of masculinity"(128). *Far from Heaven* and *Pleasantville* are two films dealing with nostalgia for the 1950s but viewed from a deeper perspective; they are concerned with the family and role of the father in the 1990s. In *Pleasantville* the protagonist David is fascinated by the television show in which George and Betty's family forms a sharp contrast to David's broken family. Yet behind such placid surface of perfect life of nuclear family lies the artificiality and constructed image of normative family life. As Donna Peberdy illustrates: "In *Pleasantville* the husband is so reliant on the role of woman as homemaker and housewife that he is unable to carry out his patriarchal function in the absence of his wife" (134). While the father image in *Far from Heaven* turns the traditional breadwinning patriarchal as normative masculinity on its head. Dennis Quaid plays FrankWhittaker, who masquerades himself as a normal heterosexual father but suffers alienation in his interaction with his wife. His performance as a father toward his child is diametrically opposed to that of another black character Raymond, who is so devoted to his daughter with great care and love, just as Donna Peberdy observes that whiteness does not equate with good parenting, that an alternative image of fatherhood is presented to signify that the traditional father exists only as an outmoded image (139). *The Pursuit of Happyness* and *John Q* tell a similar story of how the devoted father goes against extreme odds to save their child from misery. It is noteworthy that both protagonists in these films are strong black men who achieve eventual success in defiance of adversity and perform the function of role models for their sons, while the mother figures are relegated to marginalized roles. A message is conveyed throughout these films that fatherhood is considered less as an essential male right than something to be proved, reinforced and maintained (Donna Peberdy 141).

The new space cultivated by images of masculinity is often built at the cost of representations of women but it represents a significant hegemonic shift of traditional masculinity because "it implies a capacity to live with difference without resorting to the old defensive subject positions that deny the complexity of the other" (Caroline Bainbridge and Candida Yates 303). Therefore, they go on to suggest that over the past decade, "more diverse examples of emotional masculinities can be found in Hollywood cinema, where the interior lives of the characters are more fully explored. They include diverse images of fatherhood,

men suffering mid-life crises, issues of retirement and problems of aging" (305). The 1991 film *Regarding Henry* similarly portrays an aggressive and ruthless lawyer whose past consists only of winning the case without paying attention to justice and victim's pain and suffering. But an accidental brain damage radically transforms the protagonist. It is only after his miraculous awakening from the coma that he begins to reexamine his inner emotion and regain a childlike innocence and reactivate his loving care for his daughter. As Nicola Rehling reiterates: "the film delineates an image of a sterile, materialist, morally bankrupt but ultimately redeemable middle-class white heterosexual male in order to critique the evils of capitalism" (58). In the very beginning of *Kindergarten Cop* detective John Kimble played by Arnold Schwarzenegger cares only about chasing the evil criminals but throughout the film it is gradually revealed that he suffers alienation and rejection caused by his separation from his wife. It is in the moment when he faces the children of the kindergarten that he realizes how alienated and isolated he becomes and he ends up teaching these children as his redemption. The inner depletion and impoverishment can only be removed when the male hero is willing to open up his hidden emotional self. All the characters explored throughout the essay adhere to the "deviant masculinities," yet it is exactly their vulnerability and instability and departure from traditional masculinity that attests to the necessity of an ongoing renegotiation and dialogue with the contemporary masculinity when it is deprived of the hitherto privilege and universality bequeathed to it. As a result Sally Robinson suggests:

> On the one hand, the substitution of an individually suffering white male body for a social class or gender and racial identity under attack betrays a desire to materialize, literalize the wounds to white male privilege that come from puncturing the aura of universality and unmarkedness historically claimed by whiteness and masculinity. (qtd. in Nicola Rehling 58)

With the white normative heterosexual masculinity no longer a given, the depiction of contemporary masculinity in Hollywood cinema will be subject to an ongoing process of self-scrutiny. The one-dimensional portrayal of dominant masculinity is only a superficial myth, thus opening up new possibilities for thinking about manhood. Brenton J. Malin therefore argues that the new image of conflicted masculinity "disrupts the reproductive power of traditional masculinity, continuously working to reframe the new possibilities of masculinity in ways antithetical to these conventionalized histories" (194), that only by honestly examining the inner deficiency of traditional and entitled masculinity can a authentic picture of masculinity be revealed, which is capable of facing its emotional vulnerability and fragility and dispelling the recalcitrant male pride, virility and valiancy. And through the cinematic exploration and dissection of beleaguered male protagonists' tormented journey of self-discovery, it is anticipated that the rigidity and obstinacy of masculine ego will thaw, thus restoring more

freedoms and emotional health and honesty to the male psyche.

Works Cited

Bainbridge, Caroline and Candida Yates. "Cinematic Symptoms of Masculinity in Transition: Memory, History and Mythology in Contemporary Film." *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 2005, 10, 299-318.

Bly, Robert. *Iron John: A Book about Men*. Shaftsbury: Element, 1990.

Brandt, Stefan. "Identity, Homosexuality, and the Search for a New American Hero." *Subverting Masculinity: Hegemonic and Alternative Versions of Masculinity in Contemporary Culture*. Ed. Russell Brian West, Russell West Frank Lay. Atlanta: Editions Rodopi B. V. 2000. 67-93.

Breton, Myron. *The American Male*. New York: Coward-McCann. 1966.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*. New York: Doubleday, 1991.

---. *Stiffed: The Betrayal of Modern Man*. London: Vintage, 2000.

Fradley, Martin. *Boys in Trouble? White Masculinity and Paranoia in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*. Saarbrucken: Scholar's Press, 2013.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1963.

Gates, Philippa. *Detecting Men: Masculinity and the Hollywood Detective Film*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006.

Goffman, Erving. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Greven, David. *Manhood in Hollywood from Bush to Bush*. Austin, TX: University of Texas press, 2009.

Jeffords, Susan. *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

Kimmel, Michael. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Kord, Susanne and Elizabeth Krimmer. *Contemporary Hollywood Masculinity: Gender, Genre, and Politics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Malin, Breton J. *American Masculinity under Clinton: Popular Media and the Nineties "Crisis of Masculinity."* New York: Peter Lang, 2005.

Miles, Ian. "Masculinity and Its Discontent." *Futures* 1989, 21(1), 47-59.

Peberdy, Donna. *Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Rehling, Nicola. *Extra-Ordinary Men: White Heterosexual Masculinity in Contemporary Popular Cinema*. Rowman & Littlefield. Kindle Edition. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009.

Robinson, Sally. *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis*. New York: Columbia

University Press, 2000.

Wood, Robin. *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan and Beyond.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.