

The Entwinement of Macroscale Welfare Politics and Microscale Masculine Performance

An exploration of patriarchy through personal performances of masculinity in Denmark and Australia

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ABSTRACT: This paper draws a correlation between the adverse welfare systems of Denmark and Australia and their varying displays of masculinity in the form of personal gender performance. It utilises *Puberty Blues* and *Twist and Shout*, similar films regarding their genres, contexts and target audiences to exemplify the latter. It employs Judith Butler's methodology, that gender expressions echo the social mores of the society in which they are conducted, to illuminate the inextricable link between macroscale constructions of masculinity, in the form of patriarchy and therein the differing economic-political systems of Denmark and Australia, and microscale performances. In doing this, it highlights how contingent upon sexuality gender expression was in the 1980's, whilst also depicting the entwinement of the welfare states and their concomitant masculinities. It therefore argues that while the production of masculinity through individual and collective performance was simultaneously sustaining in the 1980's in both nations, varying initial conceptions of masculinity influenced how they were solidified by superstructures and subsequently carried out.

KEY WORDS: Gender performance, Masculinity, Patriarchy, Sexuality, Welfare States.



Introduction:

The study of masculinity is an increasingly interesting component within the sphere of gender theory. The study of gender originally focused on women's plight within a patriarchal framework, with contemporary feminism being a driving force in its development. The dissection of gender dynamics which resulted from the evolution of gender studies consequentially made 'masculinity visible and problematized the position of men' (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 1). This facilitated the evolution of masculinity studies which requires masculinity to be understood as 'not...the normative referent against which standards are assessed but as a problematic gender construct' (Kimmel 1987: 10). Whiteness is a bedrock of the construction of normative masculinity as Ward contends that it exists in conjunction with masculinity as a 'particular nexus of power' (Ward 2015: 6) which allows those who conform with both to engage in certain sexual practices which others cannot. While this paper will not delve into Ward's argument, it elucidates the pivotal importance of ethnicity and sexuality to constructions of masculinity. Furthermore, it sheds light on how the construction of masculinity is more complex than initially thought and calls for a more nuanced unpacking.

Attempting to understand the construction of masculinity is paramount when dissecting structures within a society. As articulated by Judith Butler, 'it becomes impossible to separate "out" gender from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained' (Butler 2011: 42-43), illuminating the inextricable link between gender performativity and the culture in which it is conducted. The construction of normative masculinity on a personal scale in any society therefore is telling of ubiquitous social understandings and constructions of masculinity. Gender research has evolved to explicate indirect forms of structural inequality (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 16). This is significant when attempting to connect the individual with society as modern welfare states are structurally patriarchal with the dichotomy of men as active participants and women as passive subjects entrenched within them (Pateman 2000: 136). This paper seeks to investigate the mutually enforcing link between the microcosmic construction of masculinity, in the form of personal reproduction of masculine performance, and the macrocosmic expression of masculinity, in the form of patriarchy, in Denmark and Australia. After establishing this relationship, it will test the hypothesis that different constructions of masculinity enable different governance by exploring the differences in the country's welfare systems.

Butler's gender performativity theory will be utilised to analyse whether the differing welfare states, with Denmark propagating a social democratic welfare state and Australia a liberal welfare model, had bearing on how people performed masculinity in the 1980's, or whether it was personal construction of masculinity which arose a social consciousness which propagated state institutions. The films which will be analysed to answer this are the Danish 1984 film *Twist and Shout* (August 1984) directed by Bille August, and the 1981 Australian classic directed by Bruce Beresford, *Puberty Blues* (Beresford 1981). This paper will argue that the production of masculinity through individual performance and its collective performance by society was simultaneously sustaining. It will contend however that while at the conception of state superstructures¹ individual conceptions of masculinity influenced how they were to be run, regarding the different welfare states of

¹The use of the term superstructures in this paper refers to the Marxist sense.

Denmark and Australia, this was solidified early on and influenced the performance of masculinity on a microcosmic level in the 1980's.

The following sections of this paper are: The Methodical and Theoretical Reflection, The Analysis and Discussion, The Conclusion and The Bibliography. While the latter section will contain references to the works cited within this paper, the others will argue that personal expressions of masculinity have been influenced by collective understandings in Denmark and Australia, evidenced by their alternate welfare states and masculinity norms in the 1980's. The methodical and theoretical reflection will analyse the source material being used to exemplify personal masculine performance in 1980's Denmark and Australia. It will also introduce Judith Butler's gender theory as the theoretical angle which will be employed to analyse the material. The analysis and discussion will compare the films as representations of personal performance of masculinity in both countries utilising Butler's theory. It will analyse the correlation between individual masculinity and the patriarchies of each country, weighing up their concurrent influence on the development of one another. Using two countries as case studies will strengthen the assertion that patriarchies can be linked to private masculine performance and will provide insight into how differences in perceptions of masculinity within Australia and Denmark facilitated the development of contrasting welfare models. This section will simultaneously explore the countries variant evolution of their constructions of masculinity and their differing political systems. The conclusion of this paper will reiterate the central arguments made and will acknowledge the helpfulness of Butler's theory in illuminating the relationship between personal and political masculine performance.

Methodological and Theoretical Reflection:

The source material which will be utilised to accelerate this argument are films. They are both 1980's coming-of-age films which have been adapted from novels, one Danish and one Australian, which will allow for attitudes of masculinity to be contrasted. The popularity of the films correlated to how well they mirrored intrinsic attitudes about masculinity of their audience, as audiences 'tend to reject those films which contradict their basic attitudes' (Hughes 1976: 71). The popularity of both films is evidenced by *Twist and Shout's* immense reach in the Danish box office, selling 503, 000 tickets in the same season in which accredited director Lars von Trier's *The Element of Crime* sold only 37, 000 (Lumholdt and von Trier 2003: 12) and by *Puberty Blues* 'being designated a classic in the fields of both Australian literature and film' (McMahon 2005: 281). The normalisation of elements of toxic masculinity in *Puberty Blues* for example demonstrates the uncontested power of young boys in 1980's Australia. When analysing these films, it is essential that they are never misunderstood as objective depictions of reality and are explored as manufactured representations with the primary goal of being entertaining (Jerslev 2002: 30). In light of this, they hold value regarding the attitudes which they propagate which audiences resonated with. As *Twist and Shout* is temporally set in 1963, expressions of masculinity within the film may intentionally be attempting to mimic that of the 1960's, despite being directed in 1984, something which must be accounted for upon its analysis.

Butler's social constructivist theory of gender provides a framework through which the construction of masculinity in *Twist and Shout* and *Puberty Blues* can be understood as metonymic for the patriarchies in which they were produced. Butler's work in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* contends that gender is performative, as it is constructed through the repetition of cultural rituals. Acknowledgement that gender norms personify 'cultural fictions alternately embodied and deflected under duress' (Butler 2011: 228), allows for the implicit significance of heterosexuality to normative constructions of masculinity to also be challenged (Ward 2015: 5). R. W. Connell's study of hegemonic masculinity in 1980's Australia as the 'pattern of practice... that allowed men's dominance over women to continue' (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832), conveyed that heterosexuality was mythologised in collective and individual masculine ethos' despite the distinctiveness of gender and sexuality. A decade later, Butler proposed that the ability of gender to charade as essentialist is due to this, its unquestioned repetition on both the collective and individual level. Interrogation of normative masculine performances in 1980's Denmark and Australia, through the characterisation of Bjorn and Erik in *Twist and Shout* and Gary and Danny in *Puberty Blues*, enables their reprisal in their respective patriarchies to be apparent. A social constructivist view of gender thus invites analysis of the characters in both films as emblems of the welfare states in which they came to fruition, as in society 'the two genders are "scripts" for two main types of activity' (Holter 1997: 220).

Analysis and Discussion:

This section will analyse *Twist and Shout* and *Puberty Blues* as representations of Danish and Australian constructions of masculinity in the 1980's, respectively. It will do this by unpacking the characterisation of the central men in both films, their romantic relationships and therein their projection of sexuality, and their heteronormative friendships. Simultaneously, this section will explore masculinity as it existed in the 1980's and how it developed in Denmark and Australia. It will connect its variant evolutions to the country's differing political philosophies, regarding the construction of their welfare states. In doing this, the emblematic role of the characters in each country will be elucidated, and thus the relationship between microscale and macroscale gender performance will be apparent. Through integrating the history of heteronormative masculinity, which explores the interpersonal sexism implicit in both countries, this section will explore the nuanced relationship between the performance of masculinity and the tangibility of patriarchy. As while personal masculine expressions in both films are shaped by characters' external environments, their ancestors' recurrent gender performativity is what created the very patriarchal spheres in which they exist. This disconnect illustrates the malignant cycle which sustains and perpetuates patriarchy.

Twist and Shout is a coming-of-age film which follows best friends Bjorn and Erik traversing their adolescence and the hurdles which it entails. While Bjorn, an avid Beatles fan, is popular with the girls his age, Erik's love for his peer Kirsten is unrequited, as she is infatuated with Bjorn. Erik also is faced with a tumultuous home life, as his mother suffers with a debilitating mental illness, which has led his father to completely diminish her agency and constrict her to the house, as he is concerned about how their family will be perceived. Ironically, he is the one having an affair and creating a hostile environment for his son. Bjorn and Erik, despite fighting, provide great support for one another in their most trailing times which is what makes this film a beautiful expression of

male friendship. *Puberty Blues*, on the other hand, explores the bonds of female friendship through the eyes of best friends Debbie and Sue, as they attempt to advance their social status by becoming friends with the popular surfers in Sydney during their summer holiday. The film follows the naïve teenagers as they are exposed to the misogynistic surfing culture which was cultivated in 1970's Australia, partaking in sex and drugs. Despite this, Debbie, the narrator of the film, falls in love with popular surfer Gary, which eventually turns to heartbreak as he overdoses on heroin. In the wake of this tragedy Debbie and Sue turn to each other, disillusioned by their chauvinist friendship group, and exert agency by becoming surfers themselves, as opposed to mere groupies for the boys, which emphasises the importance of female friendship for breaking down patriarchal norms. Exploring 'the binary relationship between nature and culture' (Butler 2011: 87) constructed in these films, and their variations from this normative dichotomy, depicts how understandings of sex and gender were co-opted in both cultural contexts, through imposing fabricated accounts of naturalness, to sustain hegemonic powers which were invariably misogynistic. The performances of masculinity in both films therefore can be interpreted as reflecting the welfare structures of Denmark and Australia.

The character constructions of Gary and Danny are emblematic Australian gender attitudes in the 1980's, with the same being evident regarding Bjorn and Erik concerning Denmark. In both films the boys are becoming men, being shaped by the values surrounding them, which leads to their variances in characterisation, as masculinity is performed in a way that is 're-constituted through gender relations under changing conditions' (Wedgewood 2009: 332). The distinct development of masculinity in both contexts is hard to pinpoint as gender 'limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse ... that appear as the language of universal rationality' (Butler 2011: 50). This means that the overt evolution of masculine gender performance in both Denmark and Australia have not been recorded, as masculinity has been so ubiquitous in Western culture that historians have taken it for granted. By critically analysing how masculinity has been problematized in country's histories, this evolution can be elucidated (Bacchi 2015: 131). The gender hierarchy which is inherent to universal social structures has roots in ancient philosophical thinking. This is evidenced by the work of Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who explicitly denoted the inferiority of women regarding their ability to reason (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 36). This contributed to the normalisation of gender inequality, which was further entrenched by Judeo-Christian sentiments which characterised Eve as committing the original sin and thus reinforcing the acquiescence of women to secondary roles. While both Denmark and Australia have secularised in current history, religious sentiments were paramount in the modern formation of both, and thus a distinct gender hierarchy was once unquestioned in both.

The names of the boys are also emblematic of their culture in both films, illuminating the correlation between the characters and the societies where they were produced. The first view of Danny in *Puberty Blues* by the audience sees him surfing, with Sue exclaiming to the protagonist Debbie, 'look at Danny, isn't he great, far out!' The hyper-sexualisation of the masculine body in the exposition foreshadows the unchallenged heteronormativity of the film (Wolfe 2017: 491). Butler's gender theory contends that desire is unattached from categories of sex and gender, but within the heterosexual matrix it is seen as developed from such (Butler 2011: 173). This illuminates the ubiquitous heteronormative structures of 1980's Australia. Danny's character develops insofar as he pursues a relationship with Sue, however within this he fails to exude any individual agency, performing tasks which are conventionally masculine; drinking, surfing and

having sex with girls. Sue's enduring relationship with Danny fosters acceptance and normalisation of these actions. Connell's study of hegemonic masculinity highlighted the importance of the active body in constructions of masculinities, as bodies 'participate in social action by delineating courses of social conduct' (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 851). Danny's activeness contributes to an idealised Australian masculinity, illuminated in this proto-feminist text by Sue and Debbie's challenge to the passivity of being an Australian woman in the resolution of the film through surfing despite the fact that 'girls don't surf' (Beresford 1981). In the film, the girls' peers look on in disbelief at their rebellion of gender norms with other girls jeering at them, portraying the pervasiveness of Australian misogyny, seeping into what it meant to be a woman in 1980's Australia. This depicts how female characters harnessing activities traditionally only partaken by the masculine body, as ascribed by society, could challenge overt patriarchy. This parallels with the proliferation of feminism in 1970's Australia which, through criticism of the dominating force of masculinity, highlighted it as a mode of exclusionary social privilege and brought the artificial dichotomising of femininity and masculinity into public consciousness (Beasley 2013: 108). Danny's cheer 'good one' to Debbie following her successfully catching a wave, in conjunction with *Puberty Blues*' success in the box office, garnering \$2.6 million in 1981 (McMahon 2005: 284), illuminates how this push against misogyny resonated with Australians. Despite Australian superstructures in the 1980's being inherently patriarchal, evidenced by the welfare system which privileged men over women (Pateman 2000: 137), personal gender performance was evidently becoming more subversive in an attempt to influence structural gender inequality. The ineffectiveness of personal performance in influencing patriarchy is highlighted by the film's naturalisation of other elements of misogynistic performance, contributing to it being 'partially complicit with those operations of misogyny...that it simultaneously claims to critique' (Wolfe 2017: 500).

Bjorn in the opening scene of *Twist and Shout* is presented actively dancing with Kirsten, while conversely Erik is passively looking on by the door. Bjorn is characterised as more desirable throughout the film through Kirsten's incessant pursual of him and his love story with Anna, in comparison with Erik's unrequited infatuation of Kirsten. Bjorn's attraction to Anna, which comes from her assertiveness, leaning in for their first kiss and introducing him to new things like Bach, subverts the heterosexual matrix's construction of sexuality as something inherently driven by men (Butler 2011: 96). The nonconforming characterisation of both protagonists to archetypal masculinity illuminates the more nuanced gender hierarchy which existed in Denmark in the 1980's, whilst concurrently communicating the changing narrative of what it meant to be a man in 1960's Denmark as it had evolved into something quite different by the 1980's. This is reflected by how male dominance in the 1980's was not overtly pervasive in Nordic countries due to the early importance placed on gender equality within the region's politics (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 18). Erik's compassionate construction is enabled by his role as primary caregiver to his mother. As this film is temporally set in the 1960's the abnormality of this is emphasized by his father's shame surrounding his mother's condition, and the reaction of Kirsten when she visits his house. Despite this, by standing up to his father in the climax of the film to get his mother the help she needs, Erik assumes the role of the man of the house. Denmark's flexible gender norms are reflected in Erik's character progression, as to become a man Erik needed to showcase skills which invert the traditional mother-son dichotomy. The normalisation of men as caregivers, which bifurcates from constructions of men as workers in liberal welfare states like Australia, is the product of Danish social democratic welfarism, apparent by Denmark's normalisation of childcare outside of the

home (Pateman 2000: 140). Like Bjorn and Erik, Debbie's boyfriend Gary is characterised as caring, unlike the other boys in *Puberty Blues*. His subversive performance however is not rewarded like is done for Erik, as his sensitivity, evidenced by his respect for sex between him and Debbie, leads to a heroin addiction which eventuates in an overdose (Wolfe 2017: 499). The death of Gary enshrined the naturalisation of traditional performances of masculinity, serving the propagation of a welfare state built on misogyny. While being a feminist text and articulating that in the 1980's women could defy gender limitations, the film fails to provide that ability for men. The construction of young men in both films therefore illuminates how alternative reproductions of masculinity resulted from different patriarchal values propagated by the superstructures of Denmark and Australia.

The variances between 1980's Denmark and Australia are evidenced by the romantic relationships demonstrated in each film. Heterosexuality was a central tenet of masculinity in both contexts, reinforced by Butler's claim that male identification relies upon 'a prior formation of sexual orientation and, in particular, a rejection of homosexuality' (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 62). As elucidated by Katz, only when heterosexuality was conceptualised, and defined as a category itself, was it able to be interrogated (Katz 2007: 9). It's construction as the normative sexuality was only possible in contrast to the idea of the homosexual as a type of person which 'is only a century or so old,' (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 52) depicting that modern-day masculinity is a recent phenomenon and not an innate quality which men possess. It must be taken into account that the boys from *Puberty Blues*, unlike Bjorn and Erik were not protagonists. Their romantic expressions within the film thus were less complex, contributing to the construction of Australian masculinity as frank and unromantic. In *Twist and Shout* Bjorn is infatuated with Anna which is made apparent when she goes to Svendborg for three days and he finds it unbearable. Despite advocacy for the Danish concept of *frisind*, which is liberal-mindedness (Edelberg 2014: 57), heterosexuality is enshrined into what it means to be a man in Denmark. This was true in 20th century Australia too, as being colonised by England, Australian values of sexuality mirrored those from its motherland, evidenced by *The Sydney Morning Herald* refusal to acknowledge homosexual politics until the 1970's (Willett 1997: 123). Like in Denmark 1950's Australia problematized homosexuality, however, as argued by Willett, this actually allowed visibility for a homosexual subculture early on in the history of modern-day Australia (Willett 1997: 121). The centrality of heterosexuality to masculinity in Denmark is evidenced in the writings of Danish Police Inspector Jens Jersild, who criticized boy prostitution because it left young men 'susceptible to homosexuality' (Jersild 1956: 66). By personifying homosexuality as catching unsuspecting young boys in its tentacles, Jersild covertly constructs heterosexuality as natural and compatible with 20th century Danish society (Jersild 1956: 76).

In *Twist and Shout*, Bjorn's lovestruck construction was evident when he brought Anna to Kirsten's party which Erik got angry at him for doing. His prioritising of being with Anna above his best friend's desire for him to let Anna go, considering the importance of the theme of friendship throughout this film showcased his love for her whilst simultaneously naturalising heterosexuality. This differs from *Puberty Blues* in which the male characters sought women primarily for sex, naturalising the crucialness of heterosexuality for the reproduction of masculinity, and constructing desire as inherently masculine. Alternatively, in *Twist and Shout* it is Anna who guides Bjorn's sexual awakening, undressing herself and him. This theme of female sexual assertiveness continues throughout the film, with Kirsten also asking Bjorn to lie on her on a camping trip. The

normalisation of heterosexualism in both films illuminates the pervasiveness of patriarchy, but the extension of accessibility of desire to women in *Twist and Shout* evidences the greater gender equitable mindset of Denmark, which from the 1960's had begun questioning the gendered nature of normalised practices like rationality (von der Fehr, Jonasdottir and Rosenbeck 2005: 16). Bjorn's love for Anna reflects the changing sentiments regarding gender equality which were commonplace in 1980's Denmark, where 90% of men and women were in paid work, with women overtaking men in university attendance (von der Fehr, Jonasdottir and Rosenbeck 2005: 11). The 1960's temporal setting of the film allows the importance of gender equality as a 1980's issue to be evidenced, showcased in the explicit scene of Anna's abortion, which her mother provides financial but not emotional support for, as by the 1980's the Nordic region promoted a 'women friendly welfare state' (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 16). The openness about reproductive rights in *Twist and Shout* is remarkable, especially when contrasted with how the same issue is dealt with in *Puberty Blues*. In the 1981 film Debbie believes she is pregnant, and, unlike Bjorn, Gary is unsupportive. The film bifurcates from the original account in the novel in which she experiences a confronting miscarriage, as she gets her period. The film omits numerous references to abortion and miscarriage which are detailed in the novel, illuminating its controversial presence in Australian society at the time, with 1979 being a peak year for the struggle of abortion rights, with healthcare support being threatened (Gleeson 2012). This highlights how social issues within the Australian welfare state influenced individual expressions of sexual and reproductive agency, even in film reproductions.

The mistreatment and expected subservience of women by the male characters in *Puberty Blues* echoes the pervasive patriarchy propagated by the liberal welfarism of the 1980's. The Australian welfare state was responsible for the reproduction of traditional gender roles, with welfare provisions being dichotomised between the active working man and the passive housewife (Pateman 2000: 136-137). The Australian welfare state follows a liberal welfare model, having 'marginal commitment to public welfare and strong reliance on means testing' (Arts and Gelissen 2000: 183). Denmark, on the other hand, has a social democratic welfare system which entails promoting the highest standard of equality for all, endorsing principles of universalism and social de-commodification (Esping-Anderson 1990: 80). While both welfare states, these systems are markedly different, which can be attributed to the correlation between the formation of state models and prescribed gender roles. In Denmark during the Viking age power structures were set up to imitate the familial structure, constructing the king as an extension of the father (DuBois 1999: 29). This illuminates how despite propagating a more inclusive welfare model than Australia, gender hierarchy was instilled early in Denmark, and thus patriarchal thinking still prevails. The Australian welfare model alternatively was constructed to echo Britain, which espoused a gender-hierarchical system based upon patriarchal ideas of monarchy that metastasised during the European colonisation of Australia (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 213). This was evident in the Australian 1891 Census, which fractured the populace into breadwinners and dependents, with men exclusively comprising the former category (Pateman 2000: 136). The implication of the mindset that only men could be breadwinners was seen well into the 20th century in Australia, demonstrated by how in 1980-1981 women constituted 73.3% of claimants on welfare who were dependant on a man who failed to provide for them and only 31.3% of claimants from the economic market (Pateman 2000: 137). This illuminates the relationship between microcosmic and macrocosmic gender performance, with the welfare system being the driving force in sustaining gender performance which disadvantaged women in the 1980's. It also depicts that both welfare systems developed

from individual gender performances which cast men as the family “provider,” and thus elucidates the self-sustaining ubiquitousness of patriarchy in Denmark and Australia. Debbie and Sue’s rejection of their prescribed gender roles, as passive sexual objects, through their surfing at the end of *Puberty Blues*, depicts the ability of individual displays of subversive gender performance to challenge attitudes of these structures. *Puberty Blues*’ popularity further showcased support for this challenge (McMahon 2005: 281).

Erik’s father’s relationships with women elucidates the treatment of women in Denmark’s past, specifically in the 1960’s. His spiteful caring for his wife entrenches his role as the man of the house, depicting the simultaneous existence of social democratic welfarism and misogynistic values in 1980’s Denmark. Erik’s more compassionate approach to his mother’s care, in conjunction with his usurping of his father’s role as the patriarch of the house when he discovers his adultery, illuminates the evolution of social democratic welfarism, promoting the improvement of overall living conditions (Esping-Anderson 1990: 99). Erik’s reinvention of masculinity in contrast to his father highlights how individual displays of masculinity in Denmark have supported the evolution of gendered norms espoused by superstructures, influencing the performance of masculinity on a social scale. This depicts that while collective masculine reproductions had greater sway on individual reproductions, reproductions of masculinity were mutually enforcing, and thus personal performances of masculinity which subverted antiquated chauvinistic expressions in the 20th century, still carried weight in shifting attitudes. The performance of Australian masculinity in the 1980’s, as fabricated in *Puberty Blues*, was influenced by patriarchal social structures, and the normative ideals of sex and gender which they perpetuated. The unequitable gender norms which still prevailed in the 1980’s can be attributed to entrenched democracy upon the country’s conception which slowed the growth of liberal welfarism and instilled an individualistic as opposed to collective good mindset (Esping-Anderson 1990: 31).

While *Puberty Blues* focuses primarily on Debbie and Sue’s relationship, the male friendships are still pivotal to the character’s social lives. In *Twist and Shout* the friendship between Bjorn and Erik is quintessential to the film and is maintained through their journey from boys to men. This is evidenced by the opening scene of the film, which is also the last, in which the boys are in the back of a truck driving through the countryside, with Erik’s head rested upon Bjorn’s shoulder. The boys individually evolved throughout the film, but despite their differences they were both unquestioningly there for one another. This is evidenced when Erik gifts Bjorn money without need for explanation, and when Bjorn skips out on his marriage to Kirsten to accompany Erik in confronting his father. This enduring friendship is reproduced, and Australianised, in Beresford’s film with the mateship between Gary and Danny whose similar interests in physical pursuits such as surfing, partying and sleeping with girls, ties them together. Heteronormativity’s significance to Australian masculine performance was fortified by the idea of mateship, borne out of the ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corp) legend, which romanticised Australian soldiers fighting in Gallipoli during World War One. The theme of mateship, which arose from this brutal time in Australian history, has ‘iconic status as a cultural status of Australian identity...used to evoke a sense of...hegemonic identity’ (Butera 2008: 265). The respect for mateship in Australia is entrenched not just within the identity of Australian men, but Australian national identity. Australian women acknowledge this despite continually existing ‘as outside observers only,’ (Butera 2008: 266) illuminating the pervasive gender divisions in 20th century Australia. The bonds of this friendship are evidenced following Gary’s death in the scene where the group, headed by Danny,

lights a bonfire to commemorate him and floats his surfboard off to sea, declaring 'the beach is closed for three days.' The closing of the beach by Danny, which as a place permitting physical activity is enshrined in his characterisation, illuminates the severity of Gary's death to his own identity. Developing from war, mateship is interwoven with death, and has been built into what it means to be a man in Australia. Danny's performance of farewelling Gary thus facilitates his own personal transition into manhood, while symbolising the paradox of what it meant to live as a man in 20th century Australia, as it encompassed facing death. The presence of war in the essence of what it means to be a man in Australia also sustains the patriarchal welfare state, as the exclusion of women from the warfare state has aided men by ensuring welfare veteran provisions only apply to them (Pateman 2000: 135). The performance of the male characters in *Twist and Shout* reflects social democratic welfarism, as 'acts...produce the effect of an internal core or substance,' (Butler 2011: 222) and thus by caring for each other they symbolise a more compassionate system of care. While the constructions of men in both films are very different, they both depict an interconnectedness between individual performances of masculinity and the contexts in which they were sustained. Despite personal masculine expressions contributing to slowly dismantling the patriarchies in which they existed, in the films and the countries where they were based, social structures and the values they perpetuated had greater bearing on individuals' performativity in Denmark and Australia in the 1980's (Kimmel and Hearn 2000: 18).

Conclusion:

This paper utilised Butler's notion of gender performativity, to dissect individual expressions of masculinity as reflective of the contexts in which they were fabricated. It claimed that while collective and individual expressions of masculinity were reinforcing in both contexts, constructions of masculinity espoused by superstructures had a greater influence on individual performance of masculinity in the 1980's. This was done through contrasting how coming-of-age films from Denmark and Australia presented masculinity. The methodical reflection introduced *Twist and Shout* and *Puberty Blues* as historical artefacts of the 1980's. The theoretical reflection was the bedrock of this paper, introducing Butler's gender theory and how it was transferable for the analysis of gender constructions in films as representations of masculinity in both societies. The analysis examined the films through the male character's constructions, their romantic relationships, and their friendships, to explore what constituted normative microscale masculine performance in the two countries. Concurrently this section provided historical insight into the construction of the category of masculinity within gender theory, shedding light on its development in Denmark in Australia. The character constructions in both films were linked with the gendered social structures in each country. Evaluation of the romantic relationships of the characters in both films allowed for comparison between normative sexuality in the two contexts, as well as illuminating the influence state superstructures held over personal expressions. The friendships between the boys were enlightening as they depicted the universalism of heteronormative masculine friendship, being a prominent theme in both films. Overall Butler's framework was incredibly helpful in evidencing the effect of the values of social institutions on individual expressions of masculinity. This paper illuminated, through utilising 1980's Denmark and Australia as case studies, that patriarchy is ubiquitous, and leaves one with the question of whether we can ever truly escape misogyny when it is so heavily engrained in our state structures and our own gender expression? While it is impossible to contend that two films are all-encompassing historical

artefacts that such assertions can be made from, hopefully this can prompt further research and incite action to deconstruct and recreate superstructures. Whether this can ever be done in a gender-neutral way however, considering the entrenched nature of normative gender expressions in personal performance, is unknown.

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