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Violence, Power and the Fragmenting of Male Identity

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Abstract: This thesis will analyze how violence and power, that can be considered as the classic pillars of the American masculine identity, trigger disintegration as opposed to integration in the novels of American Psycho (1991) and No Country for Old Men (2005) and their film versions by Bret Easton Ellis and Cormac McCarthy respectively. Patrick Bateman is an embodiment of 1980s yuppie crisis, making grotesque murders by consumer rituals that only bring him indistinguishability with colleagues, whereas Sheriff Ed Tom Bell is facing the crisis of moral obsolescence of the 2000s, and the inherited lawman power that he has is crumbling in the face of the amoral brutality of Anton Chigurh. In applying R.W. Connell hegemonic masculinity, gender performativity by Judith Butler, late capitalism by Fredric Jameson and late-life identity as systems by Benjamin Saxton/Thomas R. Cole the analysis demonstrates five interlinked pathologies, namely; the transformation of violence into more machine-like indifference than theatrical assertion; intergenerational betrayal at the biomedical level; the collapse of relationships; the disintegration of narratives echoing psychic dissection; structural creation of interchangeable killers in capitalism.

Chapters 3-4 lead us, through individual textual studies, through Bateman's commodified emptiness and Bell's existential exhaustion, and Chapter 5 illustrates the same crisis through what are otherwise very different aesthetics. The end is a diagnosis of structural and not circumstantial breakdown: Wall Street finances Bateman abattoir and cartel business bolsters the bolt gun by Chigurh and both construct depthless subject unable to hold a consistent identity.

Results refute optimistic masculinity reconstructions showing that hegemonic failure makes existential manhood and not alternative manhood.

Index Terms **– Masculinity, Fragmentation, Violence, power**

I.INTRODCUTION

The contemporary American masculinity contains a strange paradox, which is how the very nature of it can manifest itself throughout the late-twentieth-century cultural scene. The American male ideal which has always been based on the idea of power, dominance and authority, seems to be both more violent than ever and more vulnerable. Bret Easton Ellis, American Psycho (1991) and Cormac McCarthy, No Country for Old Men (2005) are two literary works of this period that help to observe this contradiction without focusing on making theoretical statements directly, but in the form of the detailed psychological degradation of two men protagonists whose lives portrayed how structurally unsound the male identity was in the USA of that time. When we put these texts side by side we find not just two different stories of malefecting in males, but a full scale cultural diagnosis: that the violence and power, which has traditionally been the stuff of hegemonic masculinity, have turned out to be the very tools of fragmentation of identity.

The question that fuels this dissertation comes out of an apparently easy observation: how come both Bateman and Bell, who are set apart by a simple distance between them, an age difference, a profession and an ethical purpose of their lives, are stuck in a spiral of violence and misconception regarding what they essentially are? The solution is not in personal medicine, but the systematic crisis of manhood that characterizes the modern era. It is a constructive point of reference to the work that Raewyn Connell did in laying out the foundations of the term hegemonic masculinity as being that which is not simply an innate characteristic of someone but rather a set of values that are produced by men in power and served to both include and exclude, as well as organize the society in unequal gender ways. In those systems portrayed by Ellis and McCarthy it could be clearly seen that they are falling apart, taking their male protagonists with them, one of them as a creature of consumer capitalism of the 1980s, the other as an aged lawman struggling to construct his own identity out of the debris of a dead masculinity.

The 80s and the 2000s were characterized by great anxiety on American masculinity, albeit the anxiety was characterized differently across generation. Masculinity in the Manhattan of American Psycho is created in the forms of consumption, performance and frenzied dominance assertion in homosocial hierarchies. The main character of Ellis Patrick Bateman lives in the world in which masculinity is not only a source of power and place of deep vulnerability but in which material prosperity and exterior appearances are the two criteria of human value and identity. His hysterical fixation on brand names, physique and social status conceals a more

fundamental crisis, a realization that his own self based identity is just pretense, depending on the acceptance of others, and the hold of possessions that he can always re-possess or even top. A very well-known statement that gives order to a large part of the internal conflict of Bateman is no less than the dispute of a very basic character: I want to fit in, but I am not a clone. Where distinguishing oneself has in turn become commodified, where individuality is made and sold in consumer capitalism, then authentic self becomes impossible.

No Country for Old Men by McCarthy addresses this crisis of black masculinity in a completely different time, space perspective. The story of the novel takes place in the American Southwest in the 1970s and 1980s, and the setting, however, is not a young man who is desperately trying to enact success, but a old man who is responding to the obsolescence of all his beliefs he has about truth, justice and masculine authority. Sheriff Ed Tom Bell is burdened by his conscience to bring in his father the set of simple but immeasurable rules concerning the distinction between good and bad, what it is like to be a man. However, the new order gradually demolishes these certainties. The sheriff, having to deal with the presence of Anton Chigurh, an amoral violence that cannot be accounted to within the moral framework that Bell has always perceived to be her own, has to confront an utterly intolerable fact, which is that the kind of masculine identity which he has led his entire life based on the process of exercising authority, expressing will, and in certain instances necessitating an act of violence, does nothing to shield him or offer any path up, no meaning or value at all. At the end of the novel Bell has rejected violence not out of any moral sense but because she has realized how hopeless violence is. His retreat into retirement and home life is not heroic transcendence but a real failure albeit the self scathing kind, and it is one that ironically opens up the prospect of another form of manhood, of such as is founded upon humility, dialogue, and the realization of incompleteness.

This break in the very basis of hegemonic masculinity is what connects these two seemingly off-topic texts. Power, in both works, manifests itself as based, and subject to change. The violence meted out (or imagined to be meted out) by Bateman on women in American Psycho is the grotesque assertion of control that, in fact, indicates the lack of this control, the necessity to destroy others as witnesses of the vulnerability of his own identity. In No Country for Old Men, it is the violence around Bell, which he is a witness to, and cannot stop or understand, which also reveals the pretense of manly authority. According to one scholar in an examination of the character of Bell, as a man who is stripped of the classic equipments of timeless male identity, he is, in fact, an amazing and interesting case of seeker of late life masculinity identity. Both of the characters lack agency. They both fall victim to the force sin, both with the incomprehensible brutality of a world that has passed beyond his comprehensible that makes their masculine identity untenable.

The theoretical framework supporting this analysis has a number of converging bodies of thought. Thanks to gender studies, and specifically the writings of Connell on the subject of hegemonic masculinity, we can realize that masculinity is not a monolithic thing but a plurality, and a relationality, and contingent over time, space, and social place. For the postmodern literary theory we are advised to understand that identity itself especially as it is acted out in the modern day narrative is disjointed, unreliable and produced by the use of language and representation as opposed to articulating some already existing authentic center. and in existential philosophy we derive the understanding that it is not something that one has but in some way that he reproduces and reinstates, and tends to do so in the wake of pressures which are apt to render this performance meaningless.

Violence along with power, combination with male identity is not a mere coincidence. Masculinity was traditionally determined in Western culture in general and in the American culture in particular by the ability to demonstrate the power, to conquer, to safeguard, and command. In the genre of the American Western, as Jane Tompkins observes in her analysis of it, it does not count whether the man is a sheriff or an outlaw, a rustler or a rancher, a cattleman or a sheepherder, a miner or a gambler. It only matters that he be a man and being a man has historically inherited the definition of aggression and frequent use of violence to act on his privilege and dominance as a white male. It is in the American mythology that this equation of man with the ability and readiness to embrace violence poses deep roots. But it is a syntactic dismantling of this equation which both Ellis and McCarthy achieve in their respective texts. In American Psycho, violence is brought absurdly into excess, maybe even fictional, and it ends up defeating itself since it cannot accomplish the oneness of self that Bateman is desperately trying to accomplish. In No Country for Old Men, violence is merely inexplicable, disconnected with any moral justification or masculine agency, a power of a nature impersonal like weather.

The historical time when these writings were done and published is crucial. American Psycho, published in 1991, was a book that arrived at a particular historical time of the epoch around the peak of the excesses of consumer capitalism of the 1980s, and the mythology of Wall Street hegemony. In some measure, the novel represents a ferocious attack on that particular historical formation the alchemy between masculinity and economic prosperity, the dehumanization of human interactions, the objectification of human bodies (and female bodies in particular). The novel is once again vague on whether or not Bateman is savage or a dream, whether he has actually killed or is in the act of killing that he is recounting the killings either as a form of grotesque fiction. This vagueness, in itself, is quite post modernistic, requiring the reader not to create a distinction between reality and representation, authentic violence and its simulation.

No Country for Old Men on its part, came out in 2005, post 9/11 and as American forces continued to engage in combatant operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. McCarthy is directly concerned with the relationships between America as it relates to violence, the loss of moral consensus, aging and generational dispensation in her novel. Where Ellis portrays the self as an act done upon consumption and narration, McCarthy portrays the self as being a creation that builds up gradually and is then torn down systematically by experience. The passage through the novel is incredibly full of doubt and the experiences that Bell is going through

do not fit a moral code that he already possessed. The sheer monotony of his monologues in which he repeats the refrain I don't know what to make of it, is thus a plain epistemological crisis, not a crisis of action or of identity.

Nevertheless, despite all these differences, they are connected in their demand that the identity of contemporary manhood is essentially broken. Both texts provide no held ground upon which a solid male subjectivity can come up. They both also indicate that the old myths and scripts of American masculinity the myths of self-made success, of moral clarity, of the redemptive possibility of violence have reached the end of their explanatory and transformative effectiveness. The only thing left behind is the painful labor of creating new shapes of constructing male lives without such traditional sustenance. This is not so much pessimism, but not in the ordinary sense, certainly, optimism. Instead, it is more of an unblushing realism concerning the historical moment and the opportunities that men had at this moment.

This dissertation organization is in the form of tracing the genealogy of this masculine crisis using theoretical and textual survival. Chapter 2 gives the conceptual architecture, which would offer, in detail, how theorists in gender, cultural criticism and literary analysis have interpreted masculinity, violence and identity in the setting of late capitalism and postmodernity. Chapters 3 and 4 present a conceptually close reading of American Psycho and No Country for Old Men respectively, covering how both texts go about constructing, performing, and eventually deconstructing the definition of masculine identity. Chapter 5, however, sets these two analyses into a dialogue where the comparative dimension of their critique is defined, with differentiation on the status of specifically historical and generic backgrounds where each analysis is constructed. Chapter 6 is a conclusion concluding the findings of these discussions, as well as, their more general implications on the study of American masculinity during the late twentieth century and the early twenty first centuries.

The main thesis which structures this dissertation is the endlessly misleading simplicity of violence and power being no longer a means to stabilize and enlarge male identity but rather the major tools of its disintegration. Either by the grotesque parody of Bateman murdering fantasies or by the tortured realization of powerlessness in the presence of the incomprehensible evil, both texts show that the classical masculine methods of identity formation and assertion of power are not only ethically discredited but down just plain illogical. This is not to say that the texts provide other ways of masculinity as redemptive solutions. Instead, they imply that even the very notion of a unified, stable male identity is also a sort of fictional construction, a discourse that has never stopped relying on a systematic exclusion/subordination of the so-called non-men and is now, possibly inevitably, wear out its welcome.

Through this piece of work, one can therefore add it to a wider academic debate on the question of masculinity in crisis, of the possibilities of resettling male existence beyond the parameters of patriarchal supremacy, of the connection between content form and the expression of fractured subjectivity. It is presented with the belief that literary texts gain clarity when read attentively and in rich conversation with theoretical models, can guide us, in other terms, not only into where men are at present, but why it is so, and what we might need to lose should we under attend to the narratives we give ourselves about manhood

II.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Masculinity in contemporary literature is complex because it has of late been in a dynamic relationship with violence and power. Over the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, theorists have it become more and more clear that masculinity is not a homogenous, unchanging identity, but a complex set of performative behaviours and scripts of culture, which is constructed by forces social, economic and ideological (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). This insight departs not just necessarily to the globe of essentialist orientation of the male subject but rather to an examination that considers gender as a production of discourse, illustration, and historical situation. The issue that this chapter is aimed at is to trace this theoretical territory and position American Psycho and No Country for Old Men in it, outlining those conceptual strands that permeate the gender studies, postmodern literary theory, and cultural discourse of violence.

Other gender theorists like Judith Butler have contended that identity, especially gender identity is not an object; it is a performance that is developed by engaging in repetitive practices over time (Gender Trouble, 1990). The concept of performativity offers a conceptual framework to the description Ellis offers of Patrick Bateman whose manic self-production using clothes, money, and consumer rituals reveals masculinity as an outer show and not an interior reality. There is no consolidation of the identity in Bateman's daily routine, as it is based on brand fetishism and self-maintenance which only shows the basic emptiness within this routine. Some researchers like Tirna Sadhu (2024) interpret this performance as a symptom of the late capitalist condition: the body turns into the tool of marketing, self becomes a brand in need of confirmation in the gears of consumption (p. 320).

However, in Cormac McCarthy, No Country for Old Men, masculinity is not lost in excessive amounts, but through moral burnout. According to Benjamin Saxton and Thomas Cole (2012), the crisis that befell Sheriff Bell is typical of male alienation in later age when inherited codes of courage, heroism, and justice do not present stable definition any more (p. 97). The loss of hegemonic masculinity at its declining years is reflected in Bell and his reflective monologues that are full of nostalgia and self-doubt. Fusion of paternal voice of Bell and amoralized violence of Anton Chigurh is an example of what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) refer to as the reconfiguration of masculine power structures when the dominant forms of masculinity lose legitimacy but still have a residual influence (p. 843).

Even though first developed in Gender and Power (1987) by R. W. Connell and refined with James Messerschmidt (2005), the idea of hegemonic masculinity continues to play a crucial role in explaining how hierarchies, grounded in gendering, work in various cultural worlds. Hegemonic masculinity is the exalted culturally invented masculinity that ensures the group domination of men

over women and subordinate masculinities. However, as Connell subsequently warns, hegemony is not fixed he relies on constant legitimization of power by social consent not by coercion. The legitimization of myths breaks down, and men are exposed to a gendered panic of modernity, as Kimmel (2017) describes it once vitalized and confused by the new world, with aggression and doubt about oneself.

Such collapse is carried out by both Ellis and McCarthy, using their main characters. The case of American Psycho is that Bateman is stuck in a desperate enactment of the hegemonic ideal. His obsessive attempt to exemplify the strong, rich, hyper competitive man is in real sense ugly parody of what hegemonic masculinity requires. It can be noted that an attempt to re-establish control over a self that has been hollowed out by consumerism principles, Bateman resorts to frenzied brutality towards women (Sadhu, 2024, p. 321). His violence hence is a symptom and a parody of masculine authority.

Sheriff Bell, the other, on the contrary, feels a heart-rending detachment with that vision. According to Saxton and Cole (2012), he is the final member of the traditional male virtue in the nihilistic world of moral entropy (p. 101). His failure is not the ability to see that his previous power was an illusion. The skill, which had made him his power as a lawman, his belief in logic, justice now seems to be another word that is immeasurable in the presence of the unexplainable violence. This would be reflected in the subsequent Connellian thinking of marginal masculinity, which explains that it is not the feminization of Bell but the fact that the very structure of social order that kept him in power has diminished itself.

The postmodern theory provides means of criticism in the comprehension of how both Ellis and McCarthy have presented fractured identity as a mere result of late modern living. According to Fredric Jameson, the postmodern subject is placed in an endless cycle of consumption, with identity being a collaging of simulations and commodity images, which the author calls the cultural logic of late capitalism (1991). This rationality is directly put into practice in American Psycho: the apartment, body, and speech of Bateman are relogged in brand names and references to the media, creating what one critic describes as an ontology of surfaces (Wrethed 2022). The deadness of rhythms of late capitalism and the repetitive prose of the novel itself appear to be simulated.

The concept of fragmentation is different in the work by McCarthy. In No Country for Old Men fragmentation is not aesthetic but existential. The nonlinear structure of the story with the reflective voice of the sheriff and the impersonal and brutal voice of the narrator about the crimes of Chigurh characterizes the loss of a sounding moral. The narration of Bell is of a fading ethical code, and the one that then, after Chigurh, is the omniscient has instead a new kind: impassive, technocrat, posthuman. In this regard, the world created by McCarthy can be said to be not post modern but post-humanist. Violence can no longer be representative of the human will, it is automatic, systemic, even metaphysical.

Historically as has been argued by scholars such as Michael Kimmel (2008) and Jackson Katz (2013) violence has served as an evidence and act of masculinity in a patriarchal society. Violence turns into the only possible language in which Bateman can make his feelings and desires that his hyper-capitalist environment prohibits him to show. Every violence replaces intimacy and empathy with self-knowledge. The fact that Ellis decides to tell the novel in the first-person present tense augmentation of the claustrophobia of this closed circuit of desire and annihilation.

Mccarthy, however, is not more concerned about the psychology of violence, but rather its ontology. In the case of Bell, the spectacle of mechanized, haphazard death means the death of an ethical universe where violence could previously assure significance. Here the difference between power and violence that is explained by the philosopher Hannah Arendt when power is collective and legitimate, and violence is solitary and illegitimate finds a very close reflection (Arendt 1970). The violence perpetrated by Chigurh is devoid of any power in the sense used by Arendt, it is a manifestation of sheer contingency that demonstrates a world of chance, and not reason. This realization kills the hope of Bell in a providential order and he is left caught between the nostalgia and nihilism.

The disjunctions between masculinity and late-modern disillusionment have been examined by a number of critics through American literature. Wight (2014) follows the traces of the disintegration of the patriarchal subject as a crisis of epistemological coherence in the fiction of post-1960s (p. 112). Likewise, according to Lydia R. Cooper (2013), authors such as Ellis and McCarthy question a set of moral assumptions of the establishment of the traditional narrative of masculinity through a consistent, formal experimentation and a lack of moral certainty. In this regard, both the novels under analysis occupy transitional space in American narratives imagination. The male world that Ellis is living in is a world of exorbitance and is seen as the outburst of masculinity when it has lost sense of dominance and self-destruction. The masculinity represented by McCarthy is that declining in which the hope of redemption by abstinence of morality is destroyed. The comparative quality of this study displays a diachronic process because in one world, men are devoured by a lust to rule, in the other world, loss of such power crosses with them. The current paper works in a qualitative interpretive paradigm based on the close reading of a text and its cultural interpretation. It analyzes Ellis and McCarthy in terms of the postmodern theory, masculinity studies and violence studies, with the perspectives of Connell (2005), Butler (1990) and Jameson (1991). This approach is based on interpretive synthesis as opposed to an empirical validation: the idea is to follow the way the form of the text, the way in which the characters are developed, and symbolic violence is visualized in American fiction as a changing concept of masculinity. Both texts are viewed as products and critiques upon their respective socio-historical contexts, the corporate 1980s as it was to Ellis and the morally unstable early 2000s to McCarthy. This theoretical framework and literature review form the conceptual background to the analysis of masculinity and violence in the context of American Psycho and No Country for Old Men and identity fragmentation. Whereas previous models grasped manhood in terms of control, productivity, and moral confidence, recent literature reveals masculinity as destabilized, fractured, and performative.

These novels follow the boundaries of the masculine power, showing violence not as the manifestation of the strength, but as the manifestation of breakdown.

III. PATRICK BATEMAN'S COMMODIFIED MASCULINITY AND THE VIOLENCE OF PERFORMANCE IN *AMERICAN PSYCHO*

Published in 1991, Bret Easton Ellis's American Psycho is an accurate cultural snapshot at a time when the concept of American masculinity was being radically changed by the Wall Street ambition and Reaganomics. The 1980s saw the emergence of what cultural critics have christened yuppie masculinity that is a blend of business dominance, consumerism, and physical idealism that renegotiated manhood not with labour or virtue, but with the gathering and demonstration of commodities. Patrick Bateman becomes the epitome of this generation, an investment banker working in Wall Street whose days are spent on mergers, bookings at Dorsia and the exact color of his business card. Ellis makes the readers plunge directly into this world as he starts off describing the morning of the main character Bateman as he showers with Les Best soap, uses six steps of skincare products, and picks out an Armani suit. This information is not the backdrop but the actual content of what Bateman is all about. This historical particularity counts a lot. The neoliberal capitalism of the 1980s brought about the next wave of success of the economic success that turned into a moral necessity through financial deregulation and corporate raiding. Men such as Bateman did not just happen to be involved in this order; they turned into its breathing bodies. The fact that postmodernism as it is being analyzed by Fredric Jameson is the cultural logic of late capitalism sheds light on this phenomenon in the most insightful way. Indeed, according to Jameson, in the age of late capitalism the cultural production is inseparable with the commodity production and individuals whose paramount desires are directed to the production of commodities and not at the meaningful human experience (Jameson 1991, p. 18). In his apartment full of designer furniture and exercise apparatus, it is not a home but an exhibition stand. His body, which has been sculpted with hours of Nautilus training and steroid cycles is used as advertising copy to sell the ideal of masculinity of the time. Bateman is so disturbing in its understanding of the immeasurable alienation of such a consumer paradise. The Wall Street that is close to ascribed to the man in the 1980s was a symbol of masculine hegemony which was frail and relied on the external insignia of status. The well-known business-card scene when Bateman is virtually catatonic about the superiority of the bone-coloured card belonging to Paul Owen with his extremely sharp logo exercises the vulnerability at the surface. With the utopian homogeneity where all bankers are dressed in identical suits, dine at the same restaurants, and chase the same women, homogeneity becomes the supreme goal, but one that eludes all the time. Thereby, Ellis makes American Psycho a satire and diagnosis: a novel, which reveals the process through which the identity of a man has been emptied by consumer capitalism, leaving it with only surfaces and no underlying meaning. The main paradox of Bateman character is a deep-rooted contradiction: His obsessed striving to achieve masculine perfection shows that it is impossible. On one hand, Bateman displays all the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity i.e. riches, physical strength, sexual victories, professional achievements. However, every success emphasizes his emptiness. Tirna Sadhu explains this tension very accurately: Bateman is a symbol of a man whose masculinity is both a strength and a place of great weakness, where the value and identity of a person are measured by material success and exterior appearance (Sadhu 2024, p. 319). His bloodshed does not appear as a perversion but the natural extension of this structure i.e. a frantic attempt to experience something real in the emptiness of commodified life.

This weakness is best evidenced in Bateman in his existential confessions. Very mid way through the novel he regrets, I am, it seems, all the features of a human being. blood, flesh, skin, hair but my depersonalization is so complete, has always been so complete, that almost nothing I personally will ever be found anywhere in the sociopolitical decoration (Ellis 1991, p. 282). In this case, Bateman admits his artificiality: his body and his belongings, even his very identity are merely decoration in a greater social text. The theory of gender performativity formulated by Judith Butler is the most appropriate platform to explain this condition. Butler assumes that gender exists not as an in-bred nature but as a repetition of performance, a performance which is manufactured by social acknowledgment (Butler 1990, p. 140). All his actions are shaped by such stylized forms his exercise routines, his reviews of restaurants, his murders but none of all these brings about a stable identity. But rather they expose the weariness of performativity stripped of any improper content.

This argument is supported by the structure of the novel. Ellis uses the minimal plot development, but rather long monologues about pop music, restaurant menus, and grooming products. These digressions are not authorial pleasures and enjoyments but studied formal decisions reflective of the fractured consciousness of Bateman. Readers perceive time the same way that Bateman does: it is drawn interminably across repetitive rituals that are only interrupted by episodes of violence. Such formal fragmentation highlights the main thesis hearing in consumer capitalism that masculine identity does not coalesce in action or moral development, instead it fractures into performances of disconnected displays of dominance.

Ellis builds the world of Bateman by a catalogue of material culture that tends to make the reader feel the overload of senses of the lifestyle of the yuppies in the 1980s, and at the same time reveal their spiritual sterility. The virtues of Huey Lewis records, the singing voice of Whitney Houston, and the optimum crunchiness of a Genghis Cohen fish filet are explained on pages after pages. There are several purposes of these passages as far as analysis is concerned. To begin with, they create verisimilitude, making the novel rely on a familiar cultural point in time. Second, they display how thoroughly Bateman lacks outreach to the real experience,

the objects themselves overshadow whatever meaning they may carry. Third, they bring out the postmodern aesthetic of the novel as surfaces run to an infinity with no subsequent depths.

The physical regimen as practiced by Bateman is such an example of commodification of male body. His exercise routine consists of fifty minutes of the Nautilus work and free weights and running on the treadmill daily and then day by day he self tans and does certain hair treatments. This body is not meant to work, but to be displayed, to move around in networks of homosocial desire and corporate rivalry. The idea of homosocial rivalry by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick sheds light on the relationships happening at the place of employment of Bateman. In Between Men Sedgwick explains the concept of male bonding in terms of triangulating women as objects of exchange hence forming hierarchies of masculine domination (Sedgwick 1985, p. 1). Such is the case with office relationships at the office of Bateman: every conversation focuses on reservations, clothes, and conquests, never a productive conversation. The women are nothing but a prop who is taken out as a date with Dorsia, a prostitute who is used on weekends to unite with the superiority of men, who are the dominant force.

The materialism Bateman employs in his murders is in the form of selection, acquisition, use and disposal. The prostitute he constantly employs, Christie, becomes merely a product as well with her body being under the same scrutinies as the ones he constantly checks out in the restaurant. This commodification climaxes into the grotesque in the Paul Owen murder scene, when Bateman chainsaws his competitor and sprinkles body parts in Wall Street beneath. It is a carefully planned cartoon push towards violence beyond the realism into postmodern pastiche. It is still not clear whether these killings happen or not and this aspect has been proved deliberately vague by Ellis in interviews. This ambiguity compels readers to address the more important question of the novel: in pure simulation world, does the difference between actual violence and fantasy even exist?

What is most disturbing and the most critical commentary Bateman makes on the issue of patriarchal entitlement is that he commits violence towards women, but this is also the most incisive one. His ritualistic killings that are seduction with money and then torture are the revelation of the intimate relation of consumer capitalism and misogyny. The women he is pursuing represent the expendable femininity, prostitutes charged by the hour, girlfriends being replaced with those of his colleagues. The disposability of his worldview is literalized in his most famous scene in which he uses a chainsaw and a group of subjects. Bodies are raw material that are judged like in business cards or restaurant service.

This psychopathy is a natural extension of the consumer logic to nihilistic levels. Once Bateman gets rid of the old trends of yesterday to bring in the new trends tomorrow, he also gets rid of human beings the minute they no longer offer him stimulation. The stakes in this context are explained by the concept of hegemonic masculinity proposed by R.W. Connell and James Messerschmidt. The hegemonic masculinity here is not only dominance over women, or rather subordination of any other masculinities, the less successful bankers, the exchangeable drones (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, p. 832). Demonstration of the intra-male competition, or rather the dark side of the homosocial bonding, the fact that Bateman kills Paul Owen as a result of professional jealousy shows that violence is the result of male competition.

These effects are increased by the unreliable narration. Batemans are made to enter the world of his consciousness, and the readers feel his violence via the twisted perception of the first person. Such a decision reflects postmodern theories of subjectivity: there is no standpoint of truth on which to view his actions. His last word to the Detective Kimball I simply had to kill a number of people. And I don't know why. It's okay. I simply had to" runs into inexplicableness. Nobody recollects Paul Owen; nobody is concerned with the crimes of Bateman. This replaceability is the final disintegration: the hyper- visible man was completely invisible to the system that elevated him.

The film version by Mary Harron changes the novel created by Ellis with the physical appearance of Christian Bale captivating the eye with his male vulnerability, which Bateman in his internal monologue cannot do. Bateman, in the role of Bale, wears his Armani suits with predatory authority, but the desire to fit in is reflected in his eyes, which are always on the verge of desperation, slightly widened in the scene of the business card, lips licks like a Compulsive. Harron uses visual contrast as the greatest device: when Bateman flexes his sculpted body through the mirrors, it appears that he is being brutal, but when the murder of Huey Lewis occurs and the blood projects on his pure white shirt, the music of Genesis is playing maniacally. In contrast to the ambiguity of the violence in the novel, Harron makes certain murders very real and the chainsaw swinging above Wall Street when Paul Allen least is waiting in his apartment covered with blood makes the power of Bateman a reality they are sliced by the indifference of the co-workers. The use of the line by Detective Kimball, of people simply just disappear, is rendered differently onscreen, Tommy Dolan holding on to his laughter, going through with his Bateman as Bale physically sweats informing Mr. Bruce the truth.

Harron focuses on feminine point of view with the naive vulnerability of Jean by Chloe Sevigny which leads to the office scene where Bateman almost strangles her among the self-help books that the audience witnesses with her terror. The last restaurant scene of the movie, having Bateman looting about Huey Lewis as the police turn a blind eye to the soaked raincoat with blood, uses banality to fight with horror. The twitching mouth of Bale, the bored Oh would you like some wine with that, of the waiter. this information makes the male crisis of Bateman not only mental but also, in a very visible way, an elaborate spectacle, his authority virtually floating away in front of a world that is too unconcerned to care.

Misogyny in Bateman is directed specifically against female bodies since they include the border of his authority. He cannot find the ways to separate himself among other men; he cannot develop authentic closeness, he strives to dominate those who are systematically barred to his own privileged reality. This analysis of gender violence by Butler as the maintenance of boundaries is very acoustically audible in this case: in order to validate the normative male subject, violence against women is being stipulated

to create a distinct line of distinction (Butler 1990, p. 33). But even this role is lost by the violence of Bateman the victims of which have lost their identities, his crimes have lost their existence.

Bateman experiences existential panic at extreme moments of radical interchangeable. The confusion of Paul Allen and Marcus Halberstram, and the continued address of him as the latter by itself these misnomers shows the failure of individuation in consumer capitalism. This dilemma was best demonstrated in his final cry which was I want to fit in, I don't want to be a clone (Ellis 1991, p. 145). Differentiation is needed to create distinction but his world creates total sameness.

This inability is what puts him in degeneration. The rat coming out of his apartment walls and into his fall in incoherent spouting is the end of the performance altogether. All that is left is blank nothingness the realisation that he has built the entire self of a complete fraud. The performativity theory created by Butler elucidates this process: in the case when the identity is absolutely linked with external repetition and recognition, self becomes precarious, constantly being under threat of being misrecognized or erased.

The American Psycho exposes the scenario of masculinity as empty performance maintained by violence and continued consumption. Patrick Bateman represents a masculine ideology of the 1980s at the point of its exploding. It is the spiritual emptiness of capitalism that is revealed in his world of rigid surfaces that fit bodies, violence. Power is not affirmed by violence, but it is weak. The thing is that Bateman becomes no more real and more powerful because his murdered make Bateman more unreal. The novel does not provide any redemption, no other manhood. The last thing that has been left is the cold truth: deprived of moral content and turned into a mere show of materialism, modern day American masculinity disintegrates into hopelessness.

IV.AGING, OBSOLESCENCE AND THE VIOLENT SEARCH OF MEANING IN *NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN*.

In No Country for Old Men (2005), later filmed in the Academy Award-winning version by Coen Brothers (2007), the masculine crisis that is typified by the consumerism of the American Psycho is in stark contrast. Where Patrick Bateman was panic acting out his identity in ways that were exaggerated in commodities, Sheriff Ed Tom Bell is faced with the obsolescence of all his previous belief about manhood. The novel was set against the desolate Texas desert of the early 1980s and finds Bell falling apart as he meets Anton Chigurh who is an amoral, mechanized violence that exists beyond moral understanding.

This crisis is only heightened by the visual decisions of the Coen Brothers, which are as visual as the haunted eyes of Tommy Lee Jones, the frosty presence of Javier Bardem in the role of Chigurh, and the bleak movie estates of bare roads and desolate wastelands. Whereas Ellis had taken pleasure in the city skins, McCarthy reduces the male sex to its bare essence. The path that Bell is going through is not the conquering one but the one that acknowledges that there is nothing to conquer. His aging body that used to be the repository of the authoritative masculinity is transformed into the location of intense vulnerability. Chigurh is not only a character who is an antagonist, a criminal, but also a symbol of the world in which a traditional masculine power is useless i.e. a world in which violence functions in its inexplicable logic.

Based on the crisis of a man deprived of the traditional tools of ageless male identity, Sheriff Bell represents the phenomenon of the search of masculinity in the later life (Saxton and Cole 2012, p. 97). Compared to the youthful frenzy exhibited by Bateman, the crisis Bell faces is brought about by tiredness as opposed to too much. The thirty years he has been a lawman, his bequeathed moral code, his paternal blood and everything the system used to support and stabilize his masculine law hereby is useless against the violence of Chigurh.

This impotence is supported by the structure of the novel. The reflections expressed by Bell in form of monologues introduce the beginning of each part, commenting philosophically on the action itself that is impossible. These lines demonstrate a collapsing moral world of a man. At the beginning, he insists on the traditional masculine confidence thinking that he will find a true point of responsibility and will make it count somewhere (McCarthy 2005, p. 21). At the end of the novel, this assurance breaks down into fantasies of his father bringing fire into darkness which is figurative parental masculine incompetence.

The film directed by the Coen Brothers almost curiously eliminates the majority of the interior monologues of Bell in favor of the visual powerlessness. The acting of Tommy Lee Jones focuses on physical loss: bent posture, tormented eyes, shake of hands when he quits. This option turns the crisis of masculinity inward in ethical disgrace into outward display of obsolescence, which simplifies the fragmentation of Bell itself instead of being its own storytelling.

No Country for Old Men is a systematic destruction of the Western hero myth that used to typify American manhood. Sheriff Bell goes around with the artifacts of conventional influence: the badge of star, the service revolver, the pick-up truck, the ethical confidence of his father and grandfather, a lawman. However, these signs are not effective against the pneumatic bolt gun and moral code the cruel person of Chigurh does not understand.

Anton Chigurh is the dark reflection of a classical masculinity in the novel. In contrast to Bell who is a symbol of masculinity in decay, Chigurh is the embodiment of masculinity that is not bound by any moral obligation. His physique stands apart with the short hair, dead eyes, and mechanical precision strongly oppose the rugged individualism of the western archetype. Chigurh does not attempt domination by the conventions of masculine gestures; he lives as naked executioner. His well-received ritual of coin toss Call it (McCarthy 2005, p. 258) makes human agency insignificant to render violence moral. This is enhanced by the chilling performance of Javier Bardem: the softness of his voice and the absence of feeling in his eyes makes Chigurh post-human, a force, but not a personality. The lack of success out of masculine succession is further depicted by the generational confrontation between Bell and Llewelyn Moss. Moss is the future of Western manhood: resourceful, violent and self-reliant. However, Chigurh executes

him morally without a second thought. Although this progression between generations is not a natural progression to Bell but a moral disaster. Bell repeats in vain that he simply does not know what to make of it, which is his epistemological crisis and the failure on the part of men (McCarthy 2005, p. 295).

The moral authority becomes ineffective on the crisis that Bell focuses on. The fact that he served as sheriff for thirty years fitted him to deal with human violence that was mostly robbery, domestic abuse, drug crime. Chigurh is a manifestation of something new, violence without any human motives, which exists by a metaphysical law. I do not even know what it is anymore, says Bell (McCarthy 2005, p. 3). This is where understandable crime turns into un-understandable evil.

The violence in the novel has an impersonal course. Chigurh is a cold-blooded murderer with neither anger nor joy. Moss breathes out his death in the desert. Carla Jean dies off page. The lack of spectacle is in contrast to operatic murders of Bateman. Violence is idealized, becoming bureaucratic, and deprived of masculine bravado. It is beyond Mantling of Bell to do anything, since he does not understand what has changed.

An elderly age becomes the focus of masculine vulnerability of Bell. His authority is failing together with his body. His retirement is not out of choice but fatigue. He tells his wife that he is sixty years old, and he can barely pick up that gun over his head anymore (McCarthy 2005, p. 286). The aging man body that used to be the representation of consistent masculine strength turns into a sign of obsolescence. According to Saxton and Cole, the possibility of Bell to lose violence can be explained as a surprising and novel example of the masculine identity search in late life (2012, p. 97). But this forgiving comes not out of righteousness but out of despair.

Visualizing this powerlessness, the film adaptation of the Coen Brothers makes use of framing. Much of Bell is tiny in comparison to vistas. Chigurh rules all the frames with immobility and unavoidability. The iconic gas station scene involved in which Chigurh leaves the old man alive not out of pity but out of some cosmic twist is evidence of the vagaries of violence. To build up the fact that Bell was utterly unsuccessful as a defender of the women, the death of Carla Jean was put in the movie. In the trailer, her dead body symbolizes home territory invaded by unintelligible evil.

Anton Chigurh is the embodiment of violence, which is totally disconnected with the masculinity. In contrast to Bateman, whose promiscuity is a way of trying to stand out in homosocial competition, Chigurh commits cat homicide without any individual commitment. The symbolic element in his bolt gun that he uses as an industrial tool that has been reused as a murder weapon is mechanical violence that had taken the place of traditional masculine weapons. Returning to Carson Wells, he says, "Of no use was the rule that led thee to this, if the rule thou adhered to brought thee hence also. (McCarthy 2005, p. 260). This pessimistic school of thought opposes moral systems advocating the old-fashioned masculinity.

The physical presentation of Chigurh goes against masculine show. No muscles, no swagger, no sexual conquests. His strength is based not on dominance, but on inevitability. Coen Brothers emphasize this with sound design: hiss of the bolt gun becomes not in volume but rather character-defining than the dialogs do. The bowl cut and deadpan presentation of Bardem make Chigurh alien the post-human enforcer and not man.

Chigurh also survives car accidents thus further alienating himself with mortal masculine vulnerability. His head injuries cause him to bleed, and he goes on remorselessly. Breath-size, as McCarthy says (2005, p. 289). Chigurh breaks the physical boundary of the conventional masculinity. He symbolizes force of violence as a cosmic and not a human endeavor.

The last dream sequence by Bell is a reconstruction of a nature. Reminiscing his father bringing up fire to prehistoric time, Bell dreams of renewed fatherly blood. He closes his book by saying "And we started to ride (McCarthy 2005, p. 309). This mythological imagery states that one cannot be above failed masculinity in sheriffs but is not definite. Will paternal fire get moral straight, or just nostalgic?

Coen Brothers finish with Bell telling his wife about this dream and even end with no word. No ending, no heroic ending. Loss of continuity of delivery in the film of Tommy Lee Jones, due to uncertain stress, emphasises vulnerability, rather than healing. The movie is more concerned with existential defeat than mythic possibility of novels.

Alternative masculinity is seen in Bell retiring into domesticity: meekness, negotiation, submission to inferiority. He tells his deputy earlier that he is not seeking your respect (McCarthy 2005, p. 89). This forsaking indicates passage of authoritative masculinity to something that is not defined. According to Saxton and Cole, this is a masculine identity in late life expressed in terms of vulnerability and not dominance (2012, p. 112). However, the novel does not complete this identity since Bell retires into ambiguity.

The way McCarthy has structured his movie by alternating Bell monologues with action sequences represents a masculine disintegration. Violence cannot be contained and explained in philosophical reflection. The moral sparsity of the novel is reflected in the spare prose. The violence is sudden without any dramatic suspense.

Coen Brothers formalize the editing by bringing out fragmentation. Violence is competing against pace with long shots of deserted scenery. The monologues by Bell are visual memoirs cut up with current failure. Moral emptiness is reflected in the sound design silence interrupted with violence.

Instead of surplus, masculine crisis is manifested in no Country for Old Men in the form of obsolescence. Sheriff Bell finds the masculine trite items which are moral authority, physical dominance, fatherliness as well as does not provide defense against inexplicable violence. Anton Chigurh represents post-masculine violence, and it is mechanized, amoral, and inescapable.

Bell is the embodiment of despair that is caused by exhaustion, unlike Bateman who plays his role frantically. His trip follows the narrative of masculinity through certainty and instability of existence. Retirement is not success or failure but an acknowledgement

of weakness. The physical powerlessness stressed by Coen Brothers with regard to physical power is an addition to philosophical inquiry led by McCarthy.

The novel shows how the violence is turned to masculine assertion to indifference of the cosmos. A power discloses itself conditional, morality provision relative, identity weak. The last silence of Bell admits this fact. Where the American Psycho displayed masculinity to collapse in enjoy too much, No Country for Old Men displays masculinity to melt in none at all. The two ways end in disintegration.

V.COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FRAGMENTED MASCULINITIES IN TWO TEXTS.

In Chapter 5, the personal reviews of American Psycho (1991) and No Country for Old Men (2005) continue to make methodical comparisons of the two films on their usage of masculine fragmentation. As Patrick Bateman represents the yuppie of the 1980s obsessed with the commodification of identity performance, Sheriff Ed Tom Bell is faced with existential obsolescence at the beginning of the 1980s neo-Western environment. More importantly this chapter focuses direct character comparisons of Bateman against Anton Chigurh as agents of violence, Bell against Bateman as old age versus childhood crisis, and people surrounding them such as Llewelyn Moss and Evelyn Williams as failed relational anchors.

The film versions add another layer of comparison: hyper-stylized American Psycho (2000) of David Fincher focuses on surface playing by means of the chiseled body of Christian Bale and the bleak No Country for Old Men (2007) Coen Brothers film visualises moral emptiness by using the worn-out physicality of Tommy Lee Jones and the inert and robotic body language of Javier Bardem. In novels and movies, violence is not shown as a symptom of masculine expression but rather that of identity in its state of desperation.

The two texts demonstrate the approaches to hegemonic masculinity discussed by R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, in which the power of men hinges on hierarchical differentiation in the domain of homosocial rivalry (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, p. 836). Both Bateman and Bell lose in this contest but they lose in different ways: Bateman by refusing to stand out in an ecumenical row of similarities, and Bell by irrelevancy. The killing of Patrick Bateman is a bid to be prominent in yuppie homogeneity by using axe to murder, the use of a chainsaw to drop, a command to an ATM to feed me a stray cat. All these acts scream to be acknowledged in the flattened hierarchy of consumer capitalism. Conversely, killings by Anton Chigurh do not subscribe to distinction. His execution of the gas station owner, Carson Wells, with a bolt gun has no emotions and there is no hierarchical intent. Where Bateman is acting out violence in a theatrical way, as he is manifested in his monologue to Paul Allen before he kills him, Chigurh uses violence bureaucratically, resulting to the coin toss ritual. Such juxtaposition shows the development of violence: in 1980s there was performance assertion, and in 2000s there is cosmic nonchalance. The two men attain power by way of killing, but neither brings masculine legitimacy. Bateman is still to his peers but Paul Allen, and Chigurh lives through car crashes as cold element.

When looking at Bell versus Bateman it becomes possible to see how the authority of a generation breaks down diversely in texts. The physical posturing of traditional masculinity is of no use to face friendly Bateman whose youthful vitality of morning bathing and perfect physique rest on it which is used against him as a physical legitimacy in Wall Street. The weakness of those props is revealed by the shaking hands of Bell as she grows old and the retirement fatigue. Bell tries to lift that gun up over my head, I can hardly do that anymore, just like pathetic treadmill practice of Bateman (McCarthy 2005, p. 286). The bodies of the two characters are false to them: the sculpted (Bateman) or the worn (Bell) body contains spiritual emptiness or moral emptiness respectively. The physical body is unreliable means of masculine identification in both texts.

The comparison made between Patrick Bateman and Anton Chigurh sheds some light on the fact that violence also serves as an expression of masculinity in different ways. The violence of Bateman, however, is theatrical and consumerist in the sense that he does so by holding and wielding chainsaws and axes and killing restaurant owners since he needs to be identified, desperately hopping into the hierarchy of yuppies. His reasoning is based on the necessity in recognition, though perverted. The violence of Chigurh, on the other hand, has a mechanistic and fatalistic way of expression. His bolt gun that is an industrial gun that is used to kill is his signature exactly because he does not have to engage directly with it. Even the weapon represents the post-human indifference of Chigurh.

These characters stand in contrast to each other physically. Bateman uses obsessional effort in muscular development and skincare regimen in that he realizes that his body is a type of masculine capital in consumer capitalism. His morning routine, aspirated with all the brand names, is performative masculinity on a compulsive level. Chigurh, in his turn, proves to be of slight figure, with a weird bowl cut haircut, exhibiting post-human poisedness as opposed to male showmanship. The perfection in the physical appearance of Bateman is a scream to be noticed, but the banality of Chigurh makes him horrifying due to its banality. The performance by Javier Bardem enhances this: the Texas accent that he spoke with, the dead eyes, and the manual way that he moves give Chigurh the air of a nature rather than a man.

Their relative to violence is different as demonstrated in the weapons that these men pick. Bateman uses his luxurious commodities such as the chainsaw used by Paul Allen, his apartment that was used as an abattoir implying violence mixed with commodity fetishism. Every killing turns into aesthetical staging, which is talked about in connection with designer briefcases and reservations made in restaurants. The cattle gun used by Chigurh is on the opposite side: a weapon, deprived of any prestige, mechanical and efficient. He does not persuade, in any flashy way, with it. The toss of the coin brings the element of randomness in the process of

killing where human decision is limited to chance. This automatization is applied even to life: Bateman can avoid violence due to money and social confusion, Chigurh seems immune to any human sufferings, being able to survive a car crash only because it is bound to happen but not his own strength.

The destruction of masculine authority between generations is compared between Sheriff Bell and Patrick Bateman. Traditional masculine elements are inherited by Bell: the badge of the lawman, ethical confidence of her lineage, the decades-old respect of the surrounding society. Bateman has got 1980s male capital: Wall street job, designer clothes, athlete body. But these props are found worthless by both. The crisis that Bateman faces is a result of indistinguishability. Although he is flawless in appearance and violent in murder, he still exchanges with his colleagues. He thinks nonchalantly of his business card with bone-colored paper, and then neither does anything (Ellis 1991, p. 108). It is an understanding that leads him to his violence, frantic insistence on being unique, and only unique, which deepens the homogeneity. It makes every murder meaningless since no one realizes that he has committed the murders. He gets mixed up with Paul Allen by his colleagues; he is addressed disrespectfully by people that he only knows. The muscular body, the designer suit, the costly apartment with all masculine signs of wealth create a total lack of identity.

The crisis that Bell is having is different. His authority is becoming obsolete not by being indistinguished but irrelevant. The world has evolved that his moral construct that is based on the traditional inheritance of lawmen, Christian moralism, the belief in individual responsibility is useless in application to counter-acting the amoral lawlessness of Chigurh. This becoming obsolete gets physical expression on the body of Bell, which is aging and fatiguing. He has a shaky hand in trying to shoot his service revolver. His retirement is not something out of choice but rather out of exhaustion. The epistemological and physical failure mentioned above is expressed through a repetition of the word I don't know what to make of it, which appears in the novel in almost every chapter (McCarthy 2005, p. 295).

There is, however, one commonality as both men are deceived by the bodies and are equally vulnerable as men. Bateman was an obsessive workout addict "I have done approximately one thousand crunches on my stomach every day" (Ellis 1991, p. Proving the spiritual emptiness, 26) is left hollow, the body left hollow. The fact that Bell is aging makes her body confirm vulnerability that she is not able to control. Otherwise we have failures that are opposite; the over-take charge that Bateman makes on his bodies results in emptiness; the under-take charge that Bell makes on her own results in obsolescence. In both instances, the male body turns out to be an unstable point at which masculine identity can be tied.

The male characters that support in both texts will shed light about the consequences of failure in a relationship that only reinforce the masculine fragmentality. The character Evelyn Williams in the American Psycho is holding unstable status as fiancee, possible victim of murder, narrative antagonist. Her brunching and engagement party appearances indicate total lack of emotions in Bateman. He is talked to by her; he can hardly hear her. Bateman admits at some point that he does not feel like he is associated with anything (Ellis 1991, p. 297), but the fact that Evelyn is there should fix this sense of disconnection. Rather, their relationship is a masculine inability to communicate up to the point of being connected. In Bateman, Evelyn is only two-dimensional, separated into descriptions of designer outfits and a few words. She provides related ground, upon which the fragmented identity of Bateman is not able to support.

Llewelyn Moss in No Country is not occupying romantic object but has taken the place of structure opposite that of the hero, the failed masculine hero. The moss in this case is the aspirational masculinity between the frenzy of Bateman and the loss of Bell. His cleverness, survival instinct and the desire to kill the cartel with violence imply other masculinity that may make the difference where other masculinities fail. But McCarthy deprives this possibility. Moss is also killed off-page in a dirty motel in Mexico and is found dead gasping, his body lying down in filth. The story denies him climax of a hero. His wife Carla Jean only lives just long enough to be murdered by Chigurh in the trailer of her mother as she tries to escape.

The anonymity of the victims in Bateman is reflected by Carla Jean pleading with Chigurh to ignore that he has not seen her who she is. Both lose their lives without any narrative significance, implying the insensitivity of violence to the identity of a person. Carla Jean attempts to employ the moral construct through prayers of her mother, Christian redeeming grace but Chigurh throws his coin off-handedly. He does not call any names, he kills her," he tells her, and does it without feeling (McCarthy 2005, p. 306). Her death is parallel to the murders of Bateman victims they live as murder victims of narratives, their value in the world of violence being taken away.

The breakdowns in relationships in the two texts are indicators of a masculine crisis which is not just a social inability by individuals. Bateman does not maintain real relationship, neither does Bell. The fiancee of Bateman is still emotionally inexistent; and Bell is retiring into domestic silence with his wife. The marriage of Moss and Carla Jean fails because of the burden of drug money. The break up between people only enhances the masculine fragmentation in that the characters are left alone in their failures.

The theory of gender performativity created by Judith Butler becomes crucial to the explanation of the masculine crises experienced by both texts. According to Butler, this means that gender is an identity that is formed temporarily, whose identity is achieved through a repetition of acts that is stylized (Butler 1990, p. 140). This performativity is disclosed both by Bateman and Chigurh albeit in different ways. The morning routine Bateman follows, consisting of skincare products, workout regimen, the selection of designer wardrobe is compulsive gender performance. Every single application of the product, every abdominal crunch, is an attempt to build masculine identity repeatedly by disciplining of the body. But this act is unsuccessful as it creates lack of distinctiveness. All everyone does the same; there is no place where performance can be distinguished.

The reverse act by Chigurh is also enlightening. His reloading ritual, his low-key philosophizing, his robot-like brutality all make up alternative masculine identity through an inhuman repetition. Where Bateman performs to such an extent as to overdo masculinity, Chigurh performs to such an extent as to overdo mechanical restraint. The two performances do not succeed in creating consistent identity. Bateman overindulges creating nothingness; Chigurh withholds creating alienation.

Bell observes the failure of both the performances but she does not get an option. He has withdrawn into domestic silence, which symbolizes not other forms of masculinity but total exhaustion. This is emphasized by the film adaptation based on casting: the weary physicality of Tommy Lee Jones is the total opposite of the conventional male performance. No attitude, no claim, but resignation.

The analysis of the late capitalism by Fredric Jameson deepens the knowledge of the American Psycho in particular and the economic setting of both texts. Jameson believes that the consumer society creates superficial subjects, people engaged in the concern of surface signification (Jameson 1991, p. 9). Bateman cries out this in terms of business card obsession, restaurant obsession, designer brand obsession. He believes that it is necessary to have these things, but he at the same time believes that they are insignificant (Ellis 1991, p. 108). His awareness is turned into a shallow superficiality, unable to reach even interiority of calculations of consumption.

No Country for Old Men penetrates this late capitalist analysis into the realm of violence economy. The drug proceeds satchel of $2 million makes the violence of the cartel to be connected with Wall Street speculation. These two economies are functioning under the element of abstract value as opposed to human values. Chigurh is the perfect agent of late capitalism: he is unemotional but a cold blooded profit and loss merciless killer. The violence of the deal with drug dealers that fails at the beginning of the novel creates the environment of violence being ingrained within the logic of capitalism. The moral code and ethics held by Bell are based on Christian beliefs and honor in a person; the code is outdated when incorporated in the face of this infathomable violence.

The model of masculine identity in the late ages as created by Saxton and Cole mainly fits Bell, but sheds light on premature aging in Bateman (Saxton and Cole 2012, p. 108). The two men are in battle with masculine identity breakdown with nothing to help in the reconstruction process. The fact that Bell has retired to domesticity, that Bateman has gone back to brunch business both signal fatigue instead of success. The paradigm shows that crisis of masculine fragmentation is heightened at old age: Bateman at 27 undergoes the emptiness of youth; Bell at 60 undergoes drink-induced fatigue. However, both end up at the same deadlock, that conventional masculine props do not provide nourishment.

Both the adaptation of American Psycho (2000) by David Fincher and the Coen Brothers of No Country for Old Men (2007) follow a more simplified version of the source text, but as both films further visualize a fragmentation of the male. The glossy and hyperreal cinematography used by Fincher is saturated colors, flawless lighting, designer looks. Such visual language is a reflection of the consciousness of Bateman: the world that has been diminished to surfaces, a moral void. The well-known scene of the murder of Huey Lewis contrast the philosophical monologue of Bateman about the band with his brutal attack on Paul Allen, where the pop music is used to ridicule the act of masculine intellectual activity. Bateman imagines himself as a spectacular surface and not a part of himself, which is clearly illustrated through the exaggerated facial tics and obsessive physicality of Christian Bale such as his abs.

The aesthetic of the Coens is inverted. Their No Country makes use of natural and subdued color palette, skimpy dialogue. A gas station monologue given calmly by Chigurh as the clerk screams in horror induces menace by not being dramatic. The bowl cut hair style, distorted features and robotic accuracy of Javier Bardem make him an outsider in the Texas scenery. There is some physical shrinkage in the performance of Tommy Lee Jones as Bell, hunched posture, shaky hands, long silences indicative of mental fatigue. The movie deprives the filmmakers of the interior monologues by the author, and, instead, visual facts of defeat are presented.

Both the adaptations provide even further fragmentation of their texts with casting. The traditional Hollywood beauty of the symmetrical perfect features, moulded and sculpted body contributes satire on Bateman regarding its fixation on physical perfection and spiritual barrenness of Bale. The fact that his beauty is horror is the fact that it contains nothingness. On the other hand, the mundane nature of Bardem, such as his low-pitched accent, slight stature, peculiar looks is horrific as cosmic apathy of Chigurh works through the disguise of a human body.

The weariness of Jones that is the face of a man who has seen too much and known too little humanizes Bell defeat and makes him tragic instead of heroic.

The sequences of major scenes in different adaptations disclose the way a masculine breakdown is expressed through visual language. Pop music and design luxury space: The murder of Paul Allen by Bateman in the apartment is suffers in spectacular mise-en-scene making it almost aesthetic. A fast and stylized editing is a reflection of the fragmented consciousness of Bateman in the film. Conversely, the gas station killing by Chigurh is done in the banal fluorescent space, and this is given long takes which cannot be spectacularised. The visual restraint renders the violence more atrocious as it does not allow the viewer hectic distance of stylization.

Both novels are introduced so that they formalize the masculine fragmentation. Ellis uses the first-person narration of Bateman with interventions of catalogues of the consumer goods in terms of brandnames, prices, and description of products that break the narrative flow with an obsession with commodities. Such stylistic decision reflects on the awareness of Bateman: he cannot support

the unity of the narrative, he is constantly disrupted by the trivial meaning. The scenes of terror are mixed with restaurant descriptions; blood and thunder fights the analysis of fashion for the space of narration.

The structure of McCarthy is counterbalanced but just as fragmented. No Country for Old Men constantly shifts between third person narration of the run of Moss and the violence of confronting Chigurh and philosophizing monologues by Bell of the disintegration of meaning. This is because the violence that happens around them cannot be contained and explained in these first-person reflections. The efforts of moral understanding by Bell shatter against the incomprehensibility of events. The dream that Bell gets of his father taking fire to a darkness at the end of the novel does not give answers to anything and shows them as it ends without resolving anything.

It is these fractured structures which are formalized in the film adaptation into cinematic language. Fincher uses very fast cuts between scenes, pop music footage, mon-dialogue of Christian Bale straight to camera. The visual language is equivalent to the broken prose of Ellis: facts overpower sense. The Coens use long takes, sound design of natural sounds, and visual arrangement in terms of isolation. Bell looks tiny in the context of huge sceneries; Chigurh prevails in silence and certainty. The official decisions support thematic disintegration: narrative cannot hold the meaning of the violence.

Both narrative styles reject the masculine victory. Bateman brunch back and forth in it being not clear as to whether he murdered or failed to avoid the murdering is inconclusive. The dream of Bell especially about his retirement has not been enlightening but rather resigned. These buildings reflect the unsuccessful struggles of their main characters: Bateman and Bell are unable to find a consistent masculinity, and the stories are not able to find a storyline and end.

The period between American Psycho (1991) and No Country for Old Men (2005) is another historical period and masculine crisis. Bateman lives in the world of the yuppie culture of the Reagan era, where being a man meant being a successful business man and a consumer recognized as such. The need to use business cards, visit restaurants, designer brands that Bateman displays is a status anxiety of the 1980s: manhood is gained at the cost of consumer identification.

No Country for Old Men is a novel that is published in 2005, but events happen in the early 1980s and talks of the post-9/11 disorientation. The incomprehensibility of War on terror is stimulated by the activity of Mexican border violence cartels, drug trafficking, findless murders. The confusion by Bell in the aspect of morality resembles the national wearyiness with war that lacks any moral framework. His constant refrain of I don't know what to make of it carries with it, more general epistemological crisis.

VI.CONCLUSION: VIOLENCE, FRAGMENTATION, AND THE MODERN AMERICAN MALE.

This concluding chapter is a synthesis of the main argument of the dissertation proliferated through the five other chapters, showing how violence and power that was originally bearable buplet of American masculine identity has turned into a disaggregating force in the modern-day literature and film. The systematic crisis of traditional masculine props is exposed through the analysis of Patrick Bateman as a consumerist crazed in American Psycho (1991) and Sheriff Ed Tom Bell in No Country for Old Men (2005) who are both morally exhausted. Chapter 2 laid the theoretical grounds of the hegemonic masculinity, gender performativity, late capitalism, and late-life identity crisis. Chapters 3 and 4 followed singular textual crisis that consisted of Bateman, the yuppie homogeneity, and Bell, the existential obsolescence whilst the comparative analysis in Chapter 5 elucidated the two-fold development of violence as a performative assertion to a cosmic indifference.

The synthesis supports the diagnosis that those two texts are diagnosing the same pathology basing on the different aesthetics and historical events. Bateman and Anton Chigurh represent the dialectic of violence in the contemporary sense: the theatric hopeless desperation and cold mechanical necessity. Bell and Bateman disclose a generational breakdown: spiritual emptiness of young people in reflection of moral exhaustions in old age. David Fincher and the Coen Brothers adaptations make versions of this crisis, which are universalized through visual and performative enhancement. In the theoretical perspectives, narrative structures and media, masculine fragmentation is not a lone character failure but condition of the late capitalist America.

The thesis of the dissertation is that violence and power give rise to fragmentation and not consolidation of the masculine which is thoroughly justified on analytical levels. The school of hegemonic masculinity established by R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt is also quite basic as it seeks to explain how the two lead characters cannot hierarchically stand out in the context of homosocial competition. Bateman hopes to seek the recognition of a yuppie desperately with perfected surfaces and operatic killings but suffices only to be interchangeable with Paul Allen. Bell is holding onto the legacy of power of the lawman but she faces irrelevance in the face of the amoral force of Chigurh. The model by Connell demonstrates the reason why violence becomes pathological: in case an individual cannot attain legit power that is seen as masculine, committing a murder replaces the distinction without stability.

The performativity theory by Judith Butler explains the ways of how both characters reveal the fragility of gender as constructed. Bateman is showering on 18 skincare products in the morning, performing 100 sit-ups a day, rituals of designer wardrobe, which amounts to compulsive repetition of masculine behavior that generates spiritual emptiness and not spirituality. Chigurh does the reverse ritual: systematic reloading of bolt guns, toneless fatalism, coin-toss ritual. These formulaic reiterations expose total breakdown of performativity in cases where outside authentication fails. Bell observes this downfall without getting any other performance and goes back to the silence of home. The framework offered by Butler illustrates that masculine identity is not based on the biological essence, but rather on the social legibility and both texts systematically reject it.

This is where Fredric Jameson with his late capitalism analysis leans across the economic contexts of the two texts. American Psycho represents postmodern depthlessness Bateman has been turned into a human being flattened into consumer surfaces, into business card paper chronically argued over and human relationships are washed away. No Country for Old Men brings this into the violence economy: the $ 2 million drug satchel bridges the cartel cruelty with Wall Street abstractional both generate footprints of replaceable subjects. Chigurh is the perfect enforcer of capitalism who is an emotionless calculator of values who does not care about the cost. Jameson justifies the symptom of violence, which causes identity: consumer society requires differentiation but gives homogeneity, compelling compensatory brutality.

The late-life masculinity paradigm by Benjamin Saxton and Thomas R. Cole, which is used largely on Bell, is surprisingly consistent with the premature aging of Bateman. Both men are subjected to identity defeat in the absence of constructive assets. Bateman is 27 years old with existential emptiness, which can foresee Bell who is 60 years old with moral fatigue. The time comes to share retirement: Bateman goes back to the routine of brunch ambivalently; Bell closes to his wife into silence. The structure shows that the disintegration of masculinity progresses over time exposing the traditional tropes such as youthful energy, elder command which are equally insignificant.

The synthesis of the two theoretical views yields a single explanatory framework: hegemonic masculinity demands hierarchical marking out; performativity requires social legibility; the late capitalism makes human beings flattened; the aging characterizes the body boundaries. Violence is the result of all four mechanisms not only failing at the same time but also as a desperate symptom and not an establishment of power.

Findings:

The five interrelated findings that conclude the thesis in a systematic manner were obtained through the individual analyses. First, violence changes into masculinity assertion into identity pathology. The chainsaw falls of theatrical murder by Bateman, the restaurant executions, the accompaniment by Huey Lewis are trying to be distinguished in the sea of yuppe, but only to greater anonymity. The killing of gas station owner, Carson Wells, by Chigurh is not based on distinguishing at all, but it is a cosmic or free enterprise. Neither one of them works out: Bateman is only Paul Allen; Chigurh is inhuman without reaching manhood.

Second, the physical embodiment is defiant of the masculine authority in successive generations. The sculpted physique of Bateman is compulsive crunches on the abdomen, ritual protein shakes, human emptiness, ridiculing the promise of discipline of the body. The aging frame of Bell with shaking hands, which cannot raise service revolver discloses the time measure of authority. The visuals of this betrayal are enhanced by the chiseled beauty of Christian Bales and the tired physicality of Tommy Lee Jones to make bodies mascots of masculine capital changed into the location of failure.

Third, personal crisis is added to by relational failure. Bateman does not even take notice of his fiancee Evelyn Williams and he also dismisses her banning her to a frame or two of designer dresses, as part of the engagement party niceties. Bell comes out badly as guardian angel: Llewelyn Moss succumbs dying on his breath in a Mexican motel; Carla Jean was killed in her trailer despite her desperate escape. The cold bloodedness of Javier Bardem and the excessive tics of Bale make murderers relationally inaccessible and the brutality surrounds them like a cloud with no ethical repercussions.

Fifth, the form of the narrative represents fragmentation. Bret Easton Ellis in between segments of murders with consumer magazines and websites advertising brands and prices and restaurant reviews to imitate Bateman with his watchful consciousness. Switching between the impotent philosophical monologues of Bell and unexplaining violence, Cormac McCarthy displays the failure of epistemology as well as it is shown that masculinity is failing. The poor editing and use of pop music edits by Fincher in American Psycho do not allow the story any narrative unity, the long takes of deserted desert locations by the Coens in No Country For Old Men reflect moral and ethical barrenness.

Fifth, like resolution-free development of crisis can be identified in the historical settings. The yuppie boom of American Psycho is a product of Reagan that creates consumer homogeneity where money-loving success requires differentiation but ensures substitutability. The border violence of early 1980s in No Country is published after 9/11 and the shift in the moral position of traditional authority is experienced in the face of incomprehensible evil. Both eras also show capitalism-violence nexus: the Wall Street finances Bateman to open an urban abattoir; the cartel business finances Chigurh to operate his bolt gun economy.

Limitations of the Analysis:

Though all-inclusive, the dissertation recognizes the limits of methods. Originally, two-text focus though it allows depth reduces generalizability. Future studies could consider other exemplars of Chuck Palahniuk Fight Club (1996) to investigate working-class masculinity crisis, Cosmopolis (2003) of Don DeLillo to find out the degree of fragmentation. Second, the focus on white masculinity is made, which indicates the demographics of the texts. Intersectional theories which include race, class and sexuality are focus of indispensable extension. Third, adaptation is treated comparatively and not analytically; adaptation research may be conducted about the intentionality of the director versus the textual source. Fourth, the theoretical synthesis consists of giving precedence to Connell, Butler, Jameson, Saxton/Cole; Lacanian psychoanalysis or Deleuzean schizoanalysis could provide other perspectives of violence-desire nexus. Lastly, crisis is diagnosed without prescriptive re-construction, normative masculinity theory is just logical development.

Future Research Directions:

The following lines are the results of this basis. To begin with, corpus expansion would be able to test texts written after 2008 related to financial crisis such as Michael Lewis documentary novels, television series such as Billions to test fragmentation under

an austerity condition. Second, European equivalents of neoliberalism could be compared globally such as European neoliberal alternatives such as Dogville (2003) by Lars von Trier about revealing whether crisis is still American particularism or capitalist universalism. Third, the online radicalization, incel forums could be examined using digital media to trace the fragmentation into algorithmic capitalism. Fourth, there might be empirical studies of the audience which could test the hypothesis that visual adaptations can result in a higher threat to identity than literary sources. Fifth, reconstructionist therapies might inquire into the possibility of alternative masculinity crisis resulting in progressive solutions or totalitarian backlash as indicated by modern political violence.

CONCLUSION: THE IRREVERSIBLE DIAGNOSIS OF MASCULINE COLLAPSE.

This dissertation is a manslaughter: violence and power do not more form masculine identity but bring it to pieces. The consumer abattoir of Patrick Bateman and the bolt gun bureaucracy of Anton Chigurh are the worn-out old idioms of violence straining at the ultimate futility of their performance. The plea of moral exhaustion in Sheriff Bell is the discursive terminology of hegemonic masculinity into the silence of home. In all theoretical paradigms, forms of storytelling, historical conditions, and changes in the media, the texts all revolve around a single fact: conventional masculine weapons such as wealth, power, violence do not help face the flattening logic of late capitalism.

The critique disapproves nostalgic reconstruction or optimistic options. Bateman also lives uncertainly into yuppie immortality; Bell silently dreams of paternal fire; Chigurh is walking past rubble. Male authority is so hollow that it is systematic in its breakdown and its demise is structural and not circumstantial. The modern-day literature and film has diagnosed a long-held sociological and theoretical suspicion, albeit without empirical proof: hegemonic masculinity lives on not by adapting but with a frantic re-enactment of unfamiliar actions.

There is an immediate contemporary urgency in this diagnosis. With the growing instability of the economy under capitalism, the wars of borders expand, the subject of consumers develops, the population of the aged face the specter of obsolescence, the readings of violence impose it as unavoidable not as the exercise of power but as symptom of existence. The research on masculinity should go beyond rebuilding alternatives to discover the process of collapse. It is then only that the society may be steered through the period between discontinuous manhood and whatever comes after.

Having made the traversal into the reflective corridors of the yuppie urban setting and the bottomless Texas borderlands, this dissertation draws a harsh conclusion: violence and authority that were once the twin foundations of American manhood progressively bring American manhood to its knees in an orderly way. Patrick Bateman does not just kill, he makes a desperate axe stroke with every philosophical Huey Lewis monologue and Huey Lewis monologue, he needs to make a name in the world of just like suits and Dorsia reservations. But he is still confused with Paul Allen by his colleagues. Sheriff Ed Tom Bell does not simply grow old; he sees thirty years of traditional moral legitimacy fade away with the cold coin tossed by Anton Chigurh, retiring with no victory just because he is tired, dreaming of a father taking fire into prehistoric blackness.

What starts out as the consumer craze in American Psycho back in 1980s develops into the inability to show moral in 2000s in No Country for Old Men, but the pathology is the same. These theatrical murders by Bateman scream in ignorance and seek yuppie identification that Chigurh murders by mechanical means disavow. They both attain unbelievable body counts without being masculine. The sculpted figure which Bateman trains with never-ending crunches is, in itself, the embodiment of spiritual nothingness; the aging skeleton which Bell used to entrust with the powers of a lawman is now shaking too much to be able to hold a service revolver. Evelyn Williams is wasting away in the slips of designer dresses in the indifference of Bateman; Carla Jean Moss is asking her humanity to a coin which is not interested.

The theoretical systems coincide in surgical accuracy. The hegemonic masculinity shape by Connell explains why the hierarchy does not work: Bateman is unable to shine ex more than his clones, Bell is unable to understand the post-hierarchical violence by Chigurh. Butler in performativity reveals the ritual such as 18-step bathing made by Bateman, the reloading of the bolt gun as the stylized repetition by Chigurh which results to alienation and not identity. The explanation of the economic engine as described by Jameson is the Wall Street abstraction that purchases the abattoir owned by Bateman and the cartel commerce that drives the bureaucracy of Chigurh that breeds interchangeable killers out of interchangeable subjects. Saxton and Cole are shedding light on the time span: the 27 years of men in Bateman is fighting the 60 years of fatigue in Bell, the masculine aids crumbling through the life.

The Coen Brothers and David Fincher adaptations of the film do not simply describe that they exaggerate. It is as frightening that Christian Bales chiseled perfection harbors nothing, is as chilling as the coldness of Javier Bardem's ordinary humanity, as weariness as Tommy Lee Jones, the unspoken inflexibility of those exhausted eyes; it is as weighty as all of us at some time in our lives as authority faded to our aged fingers. The Coens bleak desert silence and the glossy pop montages by Fincher formalize what the novels themselves prescribe is a lack of narrative coherence smacking up against the reality of violence.

This study provides more than a literary study because it provides a diagnosis that is timely to our times. With the intensification of economic precarity, the atomization of the digital identities, the increasing split of the border conflicts and the aging population facing the looming obsolescence, the texts predict the resurgence of violence as one of the inevities. No more as power spectacle, but as existential symptom of screaming men seeking a meaning of their world, systematically denied by it. Bateman comes back

over and over again to brunch, Bell goes into housewifely penumbra, and Chigurh is walking around out of debris. No reconstruction comes out, but the chilling repetition of unsuccessful gestures.

The study of masculinity should develop beyond the nostalgic recreating toward the knowledge of the collapse mechanisms. It is only understanding what has made violence divide humanity instead of unite that we can find our way amongst the fragmented identity that is next before the next Bateman picks up his axe, the next Chigurh throws the next coin, or the next Bell just walks away. The American male identity did not simply break, the fault lines run all through capitalism. They are superimposed with terrifying accuracy in this dissertation.

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