“Pin the Macho on the Man”: Mediations of Gay Male Masculinity in *The Body Politic*,
1971-1987

by

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Abstract

As the largest Canadian gay and lesbian newspaper from 1971 to 1987, *The Body Politic* not only shaped the political landscape of gay liberation but also mediated understandings and assumptions around gay male masculinity. The editorial collective behind *The Body Politic* addressed masculinity in myriad ways, sometimes directly in editorials on gender and sexuality, but more often indirectly as part of discussions around race, desire, the body, space, and HIV/AIDS. In doing so, *The Body Politic* served an important role in mediating the gendered, racial, sexual, and spatial politics of desire and identity in Toronto's gay male community. The newspaper was an important interactive platform for collective members and readers alike to explore and express apprehensions around heteronormative, ableist, and racial influences on gay male masculinity as a performative style.

This dissertation thematically examines masculinity in *The Body Politic*. Each chapter focuses on a different topic: pornography and visual culture, the hypersexualized white able-bodied "macho clone," the navigation of space and place, the inscription of colonial values of effeminacy or hypermasculinity on racialized bodies, and the marginalization of disabled bodies and bodies debilitated by HIV/AIDS that did not "perform" a sexualized idea of masculinity. By visualizing gay masculinity in particular and often contradictory ways, *The Body Politic* reinforced and challenged the self-regulation of hegemonic masculinity in gay male culture. My analysis of *The Body Politic* reveals that not only were the aesthetics of gay male masculinity fundamental to the politics of desire and liberation within the gay male community, but that the newspaper played an important part in legitimizing and destabilizing these desires.

This dissertation is dedicated to my late grandfather, William Donald Tape. He was—and remains—an inspiring figure in my life. He taught me a great deal about the importance of hard work, honesty, compassion, and perseverance. His pride in my education and his belief in the value of my work as a scholar remain a source of motivation in my life. I will forever be a better person because of him.

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INTRODUCTION

The early 1970s were the formative years of the Gay Liberation Movement that brought with it a rise in the visibility of a lesbian and gay sexual culture. Print media served as a significant catalyst in shaping this burgeoning culture. While lesbian and gay periodicals have been included in histories of gay liberation, there has been little consideration of their role as cultural texts, particularly in mediating understandings of gender and sexuality in gay and lesbian communities. Toronto's *The Body Politic*, referred to hereafter as *TBP*, was particularly influential in the development, permeation, and mediation of how sexuality, gender and more specifically, masculinity, were stylized on gay male bodies in Toronto's gay male community during its publication. As Canada's foremost lesbian and gay monthly newspaper from 1971 until 1987, *TBP* was more than a lesbian and gay political newspaper. It was home to discussions, debates, and deeper questions about gender, sexuality, race, the body, disability, and HIV/AIDS in Toronto's gay community, particularly amongst its middle-class intellectual readership.

In the words of historian David Churchill, *TBP* was one of North America's most "politically engaged and intellectually sophisticated lesbian and gay periodicals."¹ Indeed, the lack of a consensual stance among the editorial collective of *TBP* on what it meant to be masculine stemmed from a deep academic and political engagement with gender binaries that illuminated the artificiality of masculinity as a performed style. *TBP* oscillated between engaging in intellectual discussions on perceptions of gay male masculinity while simultaneously reaffirming a white, muscular, able-bodied aesthetic of

¹ David Churchill, "Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at *The Body Politic*," *Left History* 8, no. 2 (2003): 115.

gay masculinity in its many editorials and sexualized visual content.² In doing so, the newspaper's content demonstrates how integral conceptions of gender were to the sexual and identity politics of gay culture and activism.

This dissertation explores the role of *TBP* in mediating articulations of gay male masculinity as a "style" in Toronto's gay male community from 1971 to 1987. Through an examination of the refraction and reflection of hegemonic heteronormative conceptions of masculinity in *TBP*, I argue that *TBP* served an important role in mediating the racial, sexual, and spatial politics of desire and identity in Toronto's gay male community. Discourses of masculinity in *TBP* simultaneously fueled and challenged the creation of a hypersexualized "macho clone," the inscription of colonial values of effeminacy or hypermasculinity on racialized bodies, and the marginalization of disabled bodies and bodies debilitated by AIDS that did not "perform" a sexualized idea of masculinity. As such, *TBP* was a prominent actor in reinforcing and destabilizing the social construction of masculinity. These contradictions demonstrate that the gay community never contained a unilateral voice, but rather wrestled with their own politics around sexuality, gender, and desirability.

From the newspaper's inception, editors of *TBP* consciously wove political messages into their discussions of the sexual, social, and cultural milieu of Toronto. This was especially evident from 1974 onward when the format of the newspaper was broadened to include such subjects as, the happenings of Toronto city life, guides to healthy sexual lifestyles, and photographic exposés on the male body. The early popularity of *TBP* was marked by its wide availability at numerous locations across

² Jonathan Ned Katz, Gary Kinsman, Marianna Valverde, and John D'Emilio are just a few of the academic voices present in *TBP*.

Toronto, such as the University of Toronto Bookroom, the York University Bookstore, Times Square Books, Olympia Books, the CHAT Centre, Glad Day books, and Roman Sauna Baths.³ By the late 1970s, the newspaper was publishing forty- to fifty-page issues each month. As a result, the newspaper became more characteristic of a special interest magazine. The consequence of this expansion in volume was an ever-greater exploration of gay (primarily male) culture across Canada, albeit with a continued emphasis on Toronto's burgeoning gay village.

TBP's exploration of gay and lesbian culture was especially important in the context of Cold War paranoia that saw homosexuality equated with communism and an affront to the heterosexual nuclear family. Historian Mary Louise Adams argues that it was in the postwar period that heterosexuality became foundational for national and social security, resulting in the ostracism of those defined as sexually "abnormal" or "deviant." In her words, heterosexuality is best understood as "a discursively constituted social category that organizes relations not only between men and women, but also between those who fit definitions of heterosexuality and those who do not, and between adults and youth."⁴ In the Cold War period, heterosexuality was also construed as the backbone of social stability by the Canadian federal government relying on medical models of sexuality. Considering postwar medical and psychotherapeutic discourses, Elise Chenier argues that in addition to homosexuals, other sexual 'outsiders' such as transvestites, transsexuals, and bisexuals, were culturally defined as mentally ill and

³ "Where to buy the body politic" *The Body Politic* 4, May-June 1972, 15.

⁴ Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 167.

pathologized to be a serious threat to the safety of others, including children.⁵ The power of discourse not only speaks to Michel Foucault's theories of knowledge (particularly medical) and power, but also how behaviours and aesthetics attributed to masculinity, more narrowly, are shaped and defined.⁶

The obsession with being considered "normal" persisted throughout the twentieth century, particularly as homosexuality was pathologized as a medical condition in the early twentieth century. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there existed a cognitive dissonance between performing one's gender, performing a sexual act, and one's identity. As George Chauncey demonstrates in his oft-cited work, *Gay New York*, men who engaged in sexual acts deemed "homosexual" did not necessarily identify as such, especially if they performed a "normal" expression of masculinity. For example, the term *trade* was a word used to describe "straight-identified men who worked as prostitutes serving gay-identified men," but who nonetheless identified as masculine and heterosexual. In Chauncey's words, "So long as the men abided by the conventions of masculinity, they ran little risk of undermining their status as 'normal' men."⁷ This changed, however, as sexology and psychology became fields of inquiry into sexuality and identity, linking sexual behaviours and gender performance with individual identity.

⁵ See Elise Chenier, *Strangers in Our Midst: Sexual Deviancy in Postwar Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

⁶ Foucault argues that power is pervasive and dispersed rather than hierarchical, structural, or episodic. He refers to this power as power/knowledge to convey how power operates through knowledge, ideas, and the concept of "truth." Power is, in Foucault's words, a "regime of truth" which is unstable and in constant negotiation. He particularly notes that scientific observation or the medical gaze, along with the "truth of language" which has allowed for power to be exerted through specialized knowledge. Foucault described this "regime of truth" in the interview "Truth and Power." See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interview and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 109-33. His reference to medicalized knowledge is in Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963; repr., New York: Routledge Press, 2012), 72.

⁷ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 70.

TBP challenged the rich historical narrative on the medicalization of homosexuality and sexual deviance by shifting discussions of sexuality away from medicine and towards politics and culture. Medical discourse has long shaped understandings of sexuality, and thus, has been the focus of Foucault's concept of power/knowledge whereby he suggests that structures of power (in this case heteronormative gender and medical psychiatry) marginalize subjugated knowledges (queer sexuality and desire). The fine line that demarcated heterosexual development from homosexual deviation was reinforced by the clinical separation and categorization of sexual desire.⁸ However, by the early twentieth century, figures such as Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfeld, Sigmund Freud and Alfred Kinsey explored the realm of heterosexuality and same-sex desire and the relationship between gender and individuals' sense of "self" using psychiatry, sex psychology and later sexology.⁹ Labeling homosexuality as a psycho-symptomatic disorder molded the cultural imagination of homosexuality as a deviation from sexual norms due to emotional underdevelopment.¹⁰

⁸ This was a transformative shift from the hypothesis put forth by Marc-André Rafflovich, a homosexual Russian-Jewish writer in the late nineteenth century, whereby he argued that environmental stimuli played an important role in the development of homosexuality. He contended in 1895 that "[c]ircumstances, isolation and its concomitants, bad examples and bad advice, reading and conversation, a young and passionate seducer or a prudent, adroit, and experienced one, disgust with heterosexual sexuality, disease, transitory or permanent psychoses, vanity, cupidity, or even necessity may transform a heterosexual into a homosexual." Marc-André Rafflovich, "Uranism, Congenital Sexual Inversion: Observations and Recommendations," *Journal of Comparative Neurology* 5, no. 1 (March 1895): 39.

⁹ Freud contributed one of the most important hypotheses that brought homosexuality into the realm of psycho-medical discourse. Between publishing *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in 1905 and "Certain Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia, and Homosexuality" in 1922, Freud understood male homosexuality "as arising from an aberrant childhood experience, poor resolution of sexual conflict, and the relentless playing out of this conflict in adulthood." Francis Mark Mondimore, *A Natural History of Homosexuality* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

¹⁰ Jonathan Ned Katz maintains that Freud's concept of heterosexuality "is the standard against which the homosexual is always judged and found fixated." Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (New York: Dutton Press, 1995), 74.

Heteronormative understandings of masculinity in North American gay community life emerged in part from child-rearing practices in heterosexual nuclear families in the postwar era. John D’Emilio contends in *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* that the familial environments played a significant role in how homosexuals performed and understood gender. In his words, “[r]aised in families as virtually all Americans were, men and women unquestionably accepted as ‘natural’ a system of social roles ‘which equates male, masculine, man ONLY with husband and Father...and which equates female, feminine, woman ONLY with wife and Mother [emphasis added].’” Therefore, he continues, “homosexuals mechanically superimposed the heterosexual ethic on their own situation...”¹¹ The repercussions of a heteronormative matrix informing gay culture were reductive understandings of gender and sexuality despite early feminist influences in the formative years of gay liberation in the 1970s.

TBP reflected the ways in which heteronormative understandings of masculinity, such as passing, and conventional understandings of masculine attributes such as musculature, were inscribed onto gay male bodies. In its exposés, articles, and various other texts, however, *TBP* played an active role in complicating or challenging such constructions. The debates, concerns, and discussions around gay male masculinity in the 1970s and 1980s demonstrate that definitions of gender in the gay community were never static but continually negotiated along a spectrum of gender with heterosexual masculinity on one end and the effeminate queer on the other end. The flourishing of text-based commentary and visual culture within *TBP* reveals the ways in which patriarchal values of gender were subsumed into heteronormative performances of

¹¹ John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 2nd ed. (Reprint 2012. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 65.

masculinity in the gay male community and how those values were transmitted through the newspaper. Visual and textual evidence in *TBP* reveal the ways in which subversive homophobic and heterosexist beliefs surrounding the “failed” homosexual—one who is effeminate or fails their gender—continually found a place in the newspaper.¹²

My analysis complicates the process of “othering” bodies that did not conform to a white, muscular macho aesthetic within *TBP*. Macho style was the manifestation of white privilege in Toronto’s gay male community.¹³ The institutionalization of white muscular able bodies as the benchmark of desire on a spectrum of masculinities culminated in what is termed “macho culture.” Macho culture was based on macho style, an aesthetic set as the ideal to which all other performances of masculinity were compared. It became an almost-exclusively white subculture that remains enshrined within the contemporary gay male community. As the largest voice of gay and lesbian communities across Canada, *TBP* espoused many ideas and ideologies that highlighted the centrality of whiteness in gay cultural life. Representations of macho style in *TBP* symbolize the critical relationship between heteronormative “straight” conceptions of masculinity in Toronto’s gay male community and the masculinities intimately tied to gender, race, sexuality, and class in the 1970s and 1980s.

My reading of *TBP* as an actor in reinforcing and combatting the self-regulation of gay male masculinity is an important shift away from previous scholarship that has

¹² Judith Butler reinforces this point when she argues that “homophobia often operates through the attribution of a damaged, failed, or otherwise abject gender to homosexuals, that is, calling gay men ‘feminine’ or calling lesbians ‘masculine...’” Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 238.

¹³ The notion of “othering” originates from post-colonialist Edward Said and his concept of the “other.” Said describes Western Europeans study of the Orient as the “other” to better define Europe and its place in the world. In his words, the “Orient or Oriental or ‘subject’ which could be admitted, at the extreme limit, is the alienated being, philosophically, that is, other than itself in relationship to itself, posed, understood, defined—and acted—by others.” Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2014), 97.

focused on the publication as an engine for political activism and knowledge. Patrizia Gentile and Gary Kinsman's *The Canadian War on Queers*, Ann Silversides's *AIDS Activist*, and Thomas Waugh's *Romance of Transgression in Canada* have recognized *TBP* for its role in subverting the policing of gays by the state and as a forum for discussions on AIDS and the fragmentation of gay activism.¹⁴ My analysis pushes *TBP* beyond this traditional political arena and demonstrates that *TBP* played an important broader cultural role in shaping and problematizing understandings of masculinity, race, gender and sexuality. My research expands on the early work of David Churchill who has troubled notions of race in *TBP* in his 2003 article, "Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at *The Body Politic*."¹⁵ In Chapter 4, I take up the implications of discussions of race in the newspaper on styles of gay male masculinity. However, there were many other instances in which styles of masculinity were addressed in *TBP*, raising questions about the role of activist periodicals in the construction of masculinity and desire within marginalized subcultures and the unexplored repercussions of this media in Canadian queer history.

This dissertation does not explore the relationship *TBP* had with questions of lesbianism, the female body, and, to a large extent, femininity. Each chapter touches on the unique challenges faced by women in Toronto's gay and lesbian community and *TBP*'s handling of these issues. However, the central focus on masculinity is a reflective analysis of the editorial collective's own male-dominated voice. This dissertation instead

¹⁴ In these cases *TBP* is considered an important medium for communicating political ideologies, but not gendered or sexual beliefs. See Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Ann Silversides, *AIDS Activist: Michael Lynch and the Politics of Community* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003); and, Thomas Waugh, *Romance of Transgression in Canada: Queer Sexualities, Nations, Cinemas* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).

¹⁵ See Churchill, "Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at *The Body Politic*," 114-134.

considers how issues around gay male masculinity and queer style subsequently fostered secondary discussions in *TBP* around femininity, the exclusion of women, drag queens, and trans people from some realms of the gay and lesbian community. Discussions of misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia in *TBP* emerged almost entirely within the context of gay masculinity and how it pertained to the gay male experience.

Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas's concept of "queer style" is an important analytical tool to approach the numerous advertisements, articles, and images in *TBP* that seemingly championed white heteronormative performances of masculinity in the gay male community. Queer style is fundamental to describing gender performance, clothing style, and the manufacturing of fit bodies as both components and linkages of a multifaceted correlation between individual identity or "self" and sexuality in Toronto's gay male community. It is both an aesthetic adoption and rejection of the sexual status quo or, using Adrienne Rich's term, "compulsory heterosexuality," in order to reproduce alternative sexual ways of being.¹⁶ In addition to being the "deportment, the dress and accoutrements" that are related to the word "queer," queer style is "the unstable, bizarre other to heterosexual normativity."¹⁷ Geczy and Karaminas argue that whereas heterosexuality "is aligned to legible codes such as the suit for the male and the dress for the female, queer style is resistant to them. It does, however have a set of consistent attributes such as non functionality and exaggeration."¹⁸ Queer style can thus be used as a

¹⁶ Adrienne Rich describes compulsory heterosexuality as "a manmade institution...as if, despite profound emotional impulses and complementarities drawing women toward women, there is a mystical/biological heterosexual inclination, a 'preference' or 'choice' that draws women toward men. Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience," *Signs* 5, no. 4 (Summer, 1980): 637.

¹⁷ Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas, *Queer Style* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 4.

¹⁸ Geczy and Karaminas, *Queer Style*, 4.

lens in which to deconstruct the latent cultural values of gender that are inscribed onto the gay male body in *TBP*—a process that is not always explicit or straightforward.

Visualizing the male body and dressing the body (up or down) to perform expected masculine mannerisms and roles is a fundamental component in the socialization and normalization of gay masculinity as a style. “Style,” in the words of Susan Sontag, is a “notion that applies to any experience (whenever we talk about its form or qualities).” While visual art, fashion, and music have style in the conventional sense, Sontag argues that “Whenever speech or movement or behaviour or objects exhibit a certain deviation from the most direct, useful, insensible mode of expression or being in the world, we may look at them as having a style, and being both autonomous and exemplary.”¹⁹ Kelby Harrison compares Sontag’s definition of style with philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of style as a lived phenomenon or “expressive gesture” to articulate style as a manifestation that is “not a mask, but instead an actual form of existence.”²⁰ This postmodern approach to style builds upon late modernist Erving Goffman’s argument that individuals hide their real “self” with masks that are both material and performed.²¹ Rather than pursue style as an expression of the inner self, style is rather an integral linkage between an individual’s purposeful identity and their engagement with the world.

The relationship between style and gender resonates with Judith Butler’s theory of performativity and the body. Butler argues that gender, assumed to be a natural internal

¹⁹ Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation: And Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), 36.

²⁰ Kelby Harrison, *Sexual Deceit: The Ethics of Passing* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013), 115.

²¹ See Erving Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. (1965; revised ed., New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959).

essence, “is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body.”²² As a result, movements, gestures and acts of the body “constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.”²³ Approaching queer style as a performance opens up possibilities to interpret variations of gay male masculinity as both transgressing sexual norms while simultaneously endorsing masculine performances that imitate the heteronormative ideal. This was especially the case for macho masculinity, which negotiated boundaries between passing and camp in the gay community.

The term “passing” has had significant weighting in the history of sexuality for scholars interested in understanding how “the closet” became a metaphor for passing as “straight” or conforming to heteronormative gender roles and behaviours.²⁴ Preferring the term “closetedness,” Eve Sedgwick defines the process of covering up one’s sexual identity as “a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence—not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularity by fits in starts, in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it.”²⁵ Passing not only masked gay men’s homosexuality for protection from violence and discrimination, but in doing so, articulated safety as desirable. The consequence, however, was that the stylistic performance of passing simultaneously fuelled a dichotomy within gay male culture of those who *could* pass and those who *could not*.

²² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge Press, 1999 [1990]), xv.

²³ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 140.

²⁴ The term “passing” is imbedded in sociology and was prominently used by historians studying race and how racialized subjects subverted hegemonic categories of “other” by concealing their racial identity to be perceived as a member of a social group other than their own.

²⁵ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet: Updated with New Preface* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 3.

In comparison to passing, camp is considered a safe eroticism of the body and gender based on images of desire that are endorsed by society in general with heterosexual underpinnings.²⁶ For Sontag, camp is not a natural sensibility, but a “love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration.”²⁷ Macho style, for example, involved clothing that conformed to a straight ideal of masculinity while simultaneously making that same ideal homoerotic by turning the male body into the object of another male’s gaze. To be macho thus meant dressing and displaying one’s body in highly masculine ways that were ostentatious and somewhat theatrical to the point of exaggeration. Richard Dyer, contributor to *TBP*, viewed camp as a vital way of being human without conforming to the “drabness and rigidity of the het male role.”²⁸ Joseph Bristow argues that men who conformed to the macho clone aesthetic could “adopt and subvert their given identities, appearing like ‘real men’ and yet being the last thing a ‘real man’ would want to be mistaken for: gay.”²⁹ The duality between camp and passing was, and continue to be, reflected in images of posed models, artistic renderings, or discussions on proper and improper displays of masculinity. The campy elements of masculinity presented in *TBP* were fashioned along heteronormative lines that presented passing aesthetically—wearing working-class men’s clothes and donning musculature—as desirable, thus making passing a desirable performance of queer style.

²⁶ Shaun Cole, *Don We Now Our Gay Apparel: Gay Men’s Dress in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg Press, 2000), 95.

²⁷ Susan Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp,’” in *Camp: Queer Aesthetic and the Performing Subject*, ed. by Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 53. First published in: Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation: And Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966).

²⁸ Richard Dyer, “It’s being so camp as keeps us going,” *The Body Politic* 36, September 1977, 13.

²⁹ Joseph Bristow’s article considers how sexual identities are a play of constraint and opportunity, necessity and freedom, and power and pleasure. See: Joseph Bristow, “Being Gay: Politics, Identity, Pleasure,” *New Formations* 9 (Winter 1989): 70.

Performances of masculinities were contingent on the geographic and sexual landscape of Toronto. The importance placed on knowing one's space when cruising and what spaces were conducive for cruising by *TBP*'s editorial collective helped constitute particular spaces (clubs, bars, bathhouses, health clubs and gyms) as sexualized or de-sexualized venues that promoted queer masculine aesthetics. Matt Houlbrook and Steven Maynard have written on gay men's resistance to state policing and the regulation of sexuality by using a system of verbal and written codes in early twentieth-century London and Toronto.³⁰ Within a Canadian context, Maynard described the ways in which men circumvented the policing of homosexuality in Toronto between 1890 and 1930 in order to illuminate "what has been described as the most 'ubiquitous form' of the homosexual subculture, one revolving around 'public' sex in parks, laneways, and lavatories."³¹ Houlbrook also suggests in his book, *Queer London*, that men seeking sex with other men "were brought together through similar desires for sex, erotic pleasure, sociability, or intimacy. But the meanings they invested in those desires, the ways in which they understood their practices, and the urban lives they forged differed sharply. Different modes of queerness—different ways of understanding sexual difference—converged at the same sites."³² In the 1970s, cruising created an opportunity for police to insert themselves by appropriating queer style to entrap gay men. This early queer sexual

³⁰ The hidden system of verbal and written codes resonates with James C. Scott's concept of the "hidden transcript." A hidden transcript represents the relationships between discourse and power. Utilized by both elite and marginalized, hidden transcripts are "typically expressed openly—albeit in disguised form." James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990 [2008]), xiii. See Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and, Steven Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890-1930." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (October 1994): 207-242.

³¹ Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall," 209.

³² Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 266.

culture offers a historical backdrop in Canadian lesbian and gay history that resonates with Foucault's argument that "where there is power, there is resistance."³³

TBP demonstrates, however, that there was a tension between resisting mainstream heteronormative roles and notions of sexual propriety and conforming to a gay culture built around promiscuity and the white muscular able body. Indeed, desire for the white macho male body reveals a deeper politics around sameness prevalent in Toronto's gay male community.³⁴ Classifieds ads in *TBP* are particularly telling of the desires of gay men at this time since many described themselves as "discreet," "masculine," and often in search of muscular, "athletic," white gay men. The explicit desire for white muscular bodies simultaneously marginalized gay men of colour. Furthermore, those who did not conform to rigid ideals of masculinity in the gay community were, and continue to remain, frequently excluded from village life. Apart from circumventing binaries of normalcy and deviancy, queer style was a part of a broader homonormative aesthetic culture that contributed to the socialization, normalization, and regulation of gender and sexuality along white able-bodied gay men.

Drawing on representations of masculinity in *TBP* as sites, or as Ruth Frankenberg puts it, "locations," of power destabilizes racialized constructions of gay male bodies that have become tremendous undercurrents in the construction and categorization of effeminate, masculine, virile, able-bodied, desirable and white and non-white

³³ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Random House, 2012), 95.

³⁴ More recently, work has been done on the correlation between masculinity and whiteness. Michael Kimmel, a prominent sociologist on masculinity, has recently begun writing on the intersections of masculinity and whiteness. Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene Nexica, and Matt Wray also contend that racism only affects people of "color," thus, conveying the need to problematize whiteness and calculate its wages. See: Michael Kimmel, *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era* (New York: Nation Books, 2013); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and, Birgit Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene Nexica, and Matt Wrat, *The Making and the Unmaking of Whiteness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

performances of queer style.³⁵ Judith Butler argues, “It seems crucial to resist the model of power that would set up racism and homophobia and misogyny as parallel or analogical relations. The assertion of their abstract or structural equivalence not only misses the specific histories of their construction and elaboration, but also delays the important work of thinking through the ways in which these vectors of power require and deploy each other for the purpose of their own articulation.”³⁶ In *Gay Macho*, Martin Levine argues that, “black men had some visibility and currency in clone [ubiquitous macho bodies and attitudes] circles, but it was often because of the association with danger, and a rougher masculinity.”³⁷ Furthermore, Gordon Pon draws from Asian queer theorist David Eng to contend that, “Asian North American men are both materially and psychically emasculated by discourse such as orientalism.”³⁸

Interviews with former members of *TBP* collective, Tim McCaskell, David Rayside, Ken Popert, and Gerald Hannon, provide first-hand accounts of how political and divisive discussions of masculinity, race, the body, and HIV/AIDS in *TBP* were. What began as a small collective of approximately fifteen individuals eventually grew to span approximately dozens of contributors, editors, and volunteers by the mid 1970s. Those interviewed for this dissertation all held extensive roles at *TBP* and played important parts in its daily operation. Some of them joined the collective relatively early, such as Gerald Hannon, while other such as Tim McCaskell started after the newspaper

³⁵ Frankenberg contends that “whiteness” refers to, “a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination.” Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. 7th ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 6.

³⁶ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, xxvi.

³⁷ Levine, *Gay Macho*, 10-11.

³⁸ Gordon Pon, “Queering Asian Masculinities and Transnationalism: Implications for Anti-Oppression and Consciousness-Raising,” in *Troubled Masculinities: Reimagining Urban Men*, ed. Ken Moffatt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 97.

had established a strong readership in Toronto. I interviewed these members over the course of 2015 for their first-hand recollections of the editorial collective's approach to mediations of masculinity. The four interviewees were asked questions ranging from their role at *TBP* to the collective's role in engaging with notions of masculinity, race, sexuality, disability, and HIV/AIDS. Their oral histories provide a deeper insight into the collective's decision-making process around editorial content and commercial and classified advertisements.

These interviews also reveal that *TBP*'s engagement with cultural constructions of gender in the gay community lay dormant under an overarching political narrative. I do not suggest that *TBP* was not first and foremost a political newspaper; but rather that it was one that adopted the second-wave feminist mantra that the personal is political. Rather, I position the lack of any real recollection around major discussions of masculinity as exemplary of how the history of *TBP* is shaped by a particular white narrative that stresses the newspaper's political content rather than its broader cultural commentary. With this in mind, I return to these interviews in the Conclusion and reflect on how contemporary politics shape memory-making and the history of *TBP*. Indeed, a deeply entrenched understanding of queer activism continues to disconnect histories of *TBP* from the countervailing examples I present in this dissertation. These interviews are used with the intention of challenging older, more official narratives of *TBP*—a process that engages with narrative theory which, in Donald Ritchie's words, "has challenged the notion of objective history, seeing the past as recalled and recounted as simply a construction, shaped by the way it is told."³⁹ Additionally, I approach these interviews as

³⁹ Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (2002; reissued., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 124.

an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of reading *TBP* as an archive unto itself, illuminating the tensions between oral histories of masculinity and activism with the content on its pages.

The white makeup of *TBP* is an example of the white privilege in gay liberationist circles at the time, and the consequences this had on discussions of racism occurring in the gay community. White gay men primarily held the governance structure of *TBP* over the course of its lifetime. Decisions were made collectively and numerous internal debates around editorial content or advertisements that were subsequently published in the paper illustrate the divergence of opinions on gender, race, the body, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS within the collective. While the individuals that made up the collective changed over the years, either taking hiatuses from *TBP* or leaving altogether, there remained a consistent circle of collective members who shaped the tone of the newspaper, some of whom are interviewed in this dissertation. However, there were contributions from white women and racialized people. These contributions were usually found in women's issues columns, readers' letters to the collective, and editorial articles by non-collective members. These viewpoints were a critical counterbalance to the editorial collective's prominent voice, and they reinforced the argument that the newspaper reflected and refracted understandings of masculinity in the gay community.

By emphasizing the pervasive white privilege within gay activism, I challenge the progressive narrative around Canadian LGBT activist periodicals. When gay activist narratives are centred on whiteness, it suggests social activism is a white activity and demarcates social and public spaces as inherently white spaces. This relegates racialized gay men and women to a "ghetto" within a ghetto and perpetuates contemporary

practices of exclusion and sexualized stereotypes of non-white gay men and women.⁴⁰

Recent scholarship on sexuality and masculinity have problematized the assumed cohesiveness of lesbian and gay communities over the course of the twentieth century, a narrative found in progressive LGBT histories of the 1970s and 1980s.⁴¹ These studies challenge the understanding that the gay and lesbian political and social culture was one of inclusion, when in fact it was often fragmented and divided along lines of class, race, gender performance, and sexual proclivity.⁴² This has been accomplished by positioning masculinity within frameworks that consider race, gender, sexuality, and the body using

⁴⁰ In my engagement with race, I consider the ways in which specific bodies are racialized in the context of *TBP*, as well as how racial categories were, in many respects, slippery and applied unevenly, particularly in the case of Latin American and Indigenous men. It should be noted that race and whiteness have been constructed in very different ways throughout space and time. See David Goldberg ed. *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Sexual Politics and the Making of Modern Science* (Hammersmith, London: Pandora, 1993); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth-Century Colonial Cultures," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, eds. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997): 344-373.

⁴¹ For example, John D'Emilio has written extensively on the history of the LGBT community in the United States and LGBT politics. While his early works present a more unified approach to lesbian and gay history as a reflection of the need for scholarship, his more recent works address the cis-gender and white politics of the early lesbian and gay movement. See: John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988); and, John D'Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁴² These histories have emerged from the effort on the part of scholars such as James T. Sears who have deconstructed sexuality and race as part of an intersectional analysis. See James T. Sears's work, *Growing up Gay in the South: Race, Gender, and Journeys of the Spirit* (New York: Routledge Press, 1991). Discussions of class divisions within the gay and lesbian community are most pronounced in Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis's *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and, Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (October 1994). With regard to race, Nan Alamilla Boyd and Elizabeth Armstrong argue that the gay community's white foundation also made racism all the more prolific and subversive. See Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A History of San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003); and, Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Also see Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992); and, Jeffrey Escoffier, *American Homo: Community and Perversity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

intersectional analysis.⁴³ Indeed, many critics, such as Elizabeth Jane Ward and E. Patrick Johnson, argue that these other registers (class, race, disability, and gender) do not complement an essential or definitive sexual identity, but rather constitute unique identities.⁴⁴ In a similar manner, *TBP* reflected the slow unravelling of a unified image of gay liberation over the course of the 1970s and 1980s. Discussions around race and racism, HIV/AIDS, white macho masculinity, and the exclusionary practices of bars conveyed the disjointed experiences among gay men in Toronto's gay community.

Representations of queer style in *TBP* articulate a queer version of “updated patriarchy”—a system of values that weighed masculine performances and dress over those considered effeminate in order to counter the notion that gay men are devoid of masculinity. This is similar to what Chris Dummitt describes as the “manly modern,” which “linked ideal masculinity with the benefits of modern technology and progress [to provide] contemporary justifications for gender hierarchies that were under threat.”⁴⁵ In the gay male community, the desire for particular bodies, both dressed and undressed, originated from these patriarchal elements in mainstream heteronormative society. The cultural expectations of bodies were then reflected in presentations of masculinity appearing in commercial advertisements in *TBP*. These ads simultaneously promoted conformity to a masculine ideal while rejecting gay men as effeminate.

⁴³ Also see Bryant Keith Alexander, *Performing Black Masculinity: Race, Culture, and Queer Identity* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006); and, E. Patrick Johnson, *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁴⁴ Both scholars approach contemporary and historical gay and queer identities from an intersectional standpoint. In doing so, they challenge any sense of shared experience by gay men of different classes, racial backgrounds, and even gender expressions or identities as they grapple with multiple competing identities. See: Elizabeth Jane Ward, *Respectably Queer: Diversity Culture in LGBT Activist Organizations* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008).

⁴⁵ Chris Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2007), 2.

I have carefully chosen to include advertisements, photographs, and other illustrations found in *TBP* that demonstrate the evolving tensions and anxieties around masculinity as a style. These images are not simply representations of cultural ideals or stereotypes around sexuality, the body, gender, and race, but politicized statements that either challenged or upheld stylistic understandings of masculinity in Toronto's gay community. These images exemplify the wide range of material appearing in *TBP*, but also illustrate the ways in which visual culture reflected, challenged, and perpetuated the idolization of macho style, anxieties around race, performances of masculinity in different spaces, and the cultural repercussions of HIV/AIDS. French literary theorist Roland Barthes argues that visual imagery communicates symbols and signs that represent linguistic codified meaning.⁴⁶ In doing so, visual culture is a powerful medium in shaping gender and sexual "regimes of truth," as Foucault would contend.⁴⁷ Not only do visual representations mirror patriarchal society but they are composed of struggles over social power.⁴⁸

Histories of visual culture, advertising, and photography have traditionally focused on the role of the gaze in constructing and shaping visual images and the values they project. In their analyses, historians have emphasized the power that images have in representing and reinforcing expected gender performances. For instance, historian David Johnston looks at physique magazines in the 1950s as evidence of a burgeoning

⁴⁶ Roland Barthes argues that images provide a linguistic message, which is any written meaning associated with an image; the coded iconic message, which is the informational matter given by an image if all language and signs were removed; and finally, the non-coded iconic message, whereby the meaning an image conveys is shaped by individual perception. Roland Barthes, *Image—Music—Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 153-154.

⁴⁷ Colin Gordon, afterword to Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, Joh Mephram, and Kate Soper; ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 242.

⁴⁸ Dummitt, *The Manly Modern*, 11.

underground gay subculture that centred on admiration of the male body.⁴⁹ The muscular models of these physique magazines became enshrined in a more visible gay culture following the gay liberation movement of the early 1970s. Indeed, *TBP* oscillated between publishing sexually appealing images and consciousness-raising content.

In his examination of advertising in early twentieth-century United States, historian Roland Marchand notes that the frequency by which cliché images appeared in advertising formed a visual vocabulary of the nation as well as, using Clifford Geertz's term, "the social history of the imagination."⁵⁰ Kathy Peiss builds on Marchand's analysis when addressing beauty culture and gender as they relate to the creation of the self. For Peiss, visual culture is especially useful in understanding historical values around gender and sexuality because it is produced for a market that has been socialized to consume a specific idea of gender normality which shapes the social image of one's self.⁵¹ This means that images of American beauty culture and "making faces," a term Peiss uses to describe the performance of wearing makeup and posing with the ideal body, are visual indicators of gendered performances which are then put on display solely for the public gaze.⁵² Sharon Cook furthers this line of argument by contending that the observer "operates within a prescribed set of conventions and possibilities."⁵³ Thus, photographs

⁴⁹ See David Johnson, "Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture." *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 4 (2010): 867-892.

⁵⁰ Since Marchand's pioneering study, histories of beauty culture, gender, and race as seen through the lens of visual culture have proliferated. Roland Marchand examines race, gender, class, and nationalism as registers that have become inextricably linked with modernity through the process of advertising in interwar America in his 1985 book, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 238.

⁵¹ Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 46.

⁵² Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, 48.

⁵³ Sharon Cook, *Sex, Lies, and Cigarettes: Canadian Women, Smoking, and Visual Culture, 1880-2000* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 11.

and visual advertisements are not only features of “the modern intellectual and emotional landscape,” but captivate the gaze of young people and teach them to construct a visual identity through popular culture.⁵⁴

In the context of *TBP*, heteronormative and patriarchal values laden in visual culture, such as female submissiveness and male sexual virility, are evident in advertisements and visual illustrations around gay male masculinity. David Ciarlo, however, raises the question, “Is advertising a cultural mirror, or were advertisers the puppet masters of the popular mind?” He argues that this question is “irresolvable” and “remains a thorny crux of contemporary studies of visual culture.” He does concede, however, that “[v]iewing imagery collectively and coherently, as a corpus over time, allows us to see the existence of patterns—of ways of crafting *and* of seeing imagery—that are mutually reinforcing.”⁵⁵ Once decoded, advertisements, illustrations, and photographs of masculinity in *TBP* speak to broader visual patterns in conceptualizations of masculinity as a highly visual currency with which one acquired sex, anonymity, and security.

Queering the visual to search for queer sexual aesthetics has traditionally been the work of film theorists, particularly those writing for a U.S. audience. The limited work that has linked sexuality and the visual as a performance in Canada has focused on heterosexual paradigms.⁵⁶ Historian Jennifer Evans considers queer visual aesthetics in her article, “Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire,” whereby

⁵⁴ Cook, *Sex, Lies, and Cigarettes*, 5.

⁵⁵ David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 15-16.

⁵⁶ Becki Ross considers the visual element of staged performances in her book, *Burlesque West*, but it is within a heterosexual framework, discussing only the lives of heterosexual show girls in Vancouver and leaving no room for queer sexuality or queer performances. See: Becki Ross, *Burlesque West: Showgirls, Sex, and Sin in Postwar Vancouver* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

she queers the work of German photographer, Herbert Tobias, and the medium of photography to critically think about photographs as documents that are a part of an ongoing conversation about intimacy, pleasure, and desire.⁵⁷ Evans's work is important because she "queers" both the relationship between the photographer and the subject, as well as the meaning-making that photographs have in our own interpretation of the "social lives of objects."⁵⁸ Reflecting on this relationship between observer, subject, and medium, further echoes Peter Geller's argument that visual images reveal the "power relationship inherent in the photographic encounter and to the struggle over representation lying beneath the surface."⁵⁹ Drawing on J. Robert Davison, among others, Geller deconstructs the multiple meanings or "truths" photographs produce through the processes of production, circulation, and reception.⁶⁰ Put in the context of *TBP*, the relationship between photographer and subject is critical when approaching images that presented historicized values of sexuality, the body, gender, able-bodieness and race. The images in *TBP* were captured by contributors and carefully curated by the collective to present readers with specific interpretations of queer style and masculinity.

TBP played a vital role in constructing and shaping understandings of gay male masculinity in Toronto over the course of its publication. The editorial collective, while seemingly focused on the political gains of gay activism, also discussed developments

⁵⁷ Jennifer V. Evans, "Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire," *American Historical Review* 118, no. 2 (April, 2013): 432.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 433.

⁵⁹ Peter Geller, *Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920-1945* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2004), 35.

⁶⁰ J. Robert Davison argues that, "photographs...are lies insofar as they do not document reality but romanticize a past that had its seamier, unphotographed side." J. Robert Davison, "Turning a Blind Eye: The Historian's Use of Photographs," *BC Studies* 52 (Winter 1981-82): 20. See also Geller, *Northern Exposures*, 8.

around gender, sexuality, race, and the body as they pertained to sexual desirability. To be desirable, to have a desirable body, and to want to be desired, stemmed from heteronormative constructions around the stylization of the body. As *TBP* demonstrates, masculinity was described and understood as something that could be “fashioned” onto the body. Whether it be musculature acquired from bodybuilding, donning working-class clothing such as denims and tank tops, or even maintaining a well-groomed moustache, gay male masculinity was presented in various stylistic ways. *TBP*’s coverage of stylistic expressions of masculinity demonstrates the perceived importance of how gay men presented themselves in society. Not simply queer appropriations of mainstream conceptions of gender; gay men were embodying politicized statements around race, sexuality, gender, and health in the gay liberation movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

This dissertation is structured along chronological and thematic lines. My first chapter, “Destabilizing Heterosexual Masculinities in Gay Visual Culture” charts the development of gay male erotica in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and its subsequent appearance in *TBP*. The international scope of gay male masculinity as a style becomes increasingly evident when magazines such as *After Dark*, *Queen’s Quarterly*, *Christopher Street*, and *Lambda* presented images of muscular white men as the ideal for gay men. The cosmopolitan masculinity presented in these magazines re-gendered consumption and sexualized visual culture in the postwar era, laying the foundation for the presentation and style of gay male masculinity in the 1970s. Fashion magazines such as *Gentlemen’s Quarterly* and *Esquire*, along with gentleman’s magazine *Playboy*, were, and continue to be, a prominent source for connecting masculinity with a particular aesthetic. However, gay male masculinity evolves over the course of the 1970s from the

flamboyant and ostentatious clothing of disco and the peacock revolution to the more butch “clone” look—the focus of Chapter Two. In addition, Chapter One explores the legacy of bodybuilding magazines in visualizing masculinity and sexuality and their role in establishing an image of macho style that became subject of analysis in *TBP*.

The second chapter, ““Pin the Macho on the Man,”” is an examination of how the hegemonic aesthetic of the macho clone was constructed in Toronto’s gay male community. A style that initially consisted of tight jeans, white shirts, moustaches, and a macho demeanor, the clone became increasingly visualized in leather, and associated with bondage and sadomasochism (BDSM) as the 1980s approached. The clone was a performance of queer style that played on themes of whiteness, able-bodiedness, Roman-Greco physiques, and clothing often associated with a hypermasculine working-class identity. The macho clone, whose body represented a more traditional notion of masculinity, provided a hidden transcript for gay men to identify one another while being “discreet,” fueling anxieties outside the gay community on how to identify homosexual men from their heterosexual counterparts. This is particularly evident in the late 1970s when macho culture became synonymous with the gay community and some gay men were seen as “insidiously” hiding themselves in society. This chapter therefore serves as the foundation for the subsequent chapters that examine the consequences of macho style and the physical and social boundaries that appeared to be established within Toronto’s gay male community via *TBP*.

Chapter Three examines queer style and its relationship with the physical and gendered spaces of Toronto’s gay community through articles, maps, guides, and classified ads presented in *TBP*. Performances of queer style follow the development of

queer sexual spaces surrounding Toronto's gay village. Performances of macho style re-created alternative sexualized spaces for gay men to explore and define their masculinity, shaping the development and visibility of establishments that catered to a gay male clientele, such as the downtown Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). As these spaces changed, *TBP* provided guides for readers to explore and navigate the city. Certain bathhouses and gyms became synonymous with different subcultures in the gay male community, attesting to the significance of style as an outlet for identities, but also the demarcation of masculinities along spatial lines. The newspaper also provided gay men with tips on how to circumvent police surveillance of said spaces, frequently reporting instances of surveillance, entrapment, and brutality. Such tactics on the part of police were responded to with public activism by gay men and lesbians, thus bringing in a third dimension to the relationship between sexuality, space, and place: resistance.⁶¹

Chapter Four addresses whiteness and the racialization of bodies in *TBP*.

Advertisements, photographic exposés on the gay community, and illustrations that added colour (no pun intended) to the pages of *TBP* demonstrate a significant idolatrizing of white bodies in the gay male community. Readers wrote into the newspaper either explicitly expressing their disinterest for non-white men or avoided inflammatory language by describing themselves as white and masculine in search of the "same." Such tactics allowed for readers to circumvent *TBP*'s attempts at monitoring advertisements for racist language, while also reiterating white bodies as the assumed de-facto sexual

⁶¹ One of the most famous incidents of police brutality and raiding of gay bathhouses in Toronto was Operation Soap. Operation Soap was a raid by the Metropolitan Toronto police against four gay bathhouses on February 5, 1981 involving the arrest of more than three hundred men. The CLGA has extensive sources based on CHAT contributors, such as Pat Murphy, and vertical files from the Church-Wellesley Neighbourhood Police Advisory Committee: Toronto, documenting this incident but also provide extensive coverage of instances of police harassment, brutality, and raiding in Toronto over the course of the 1970s and 1980s.

object of choice. In ads that did express a desire for non-white men, race was described and visualized in a fetishized manner that drew upon colonial understandings of gender and sexuality. Furthermore, *TBP* presented racialized constructions of masculinity in book reviews and articles that captured the white imagination of black men as primitive and hypersexual, Asian men as effeminate, Latino men as straddling around notions of white masculinity and challenging definitions of whiteness, and Indigenous men as nearly invisible. These stereotypes, while often challenged by some editors of *TBP*, sparked debates regarding how gay men could and should express their sexual desires and how these politics of sexuality either fit or remained outside the mandate of the newspaper.

Chapter Five focuses on the changing rhetoric around masculinity during the AIDS crisis beginning in late 1981. After AIDS had become widely accepted as a “gay disease,” queer style fundamentally transformed into a politicized statement around health and the viability of the gay male body. Fear for the unknown disease re-inscribed gay male bodies as sites of pollution and gay men faced increasing levels of discrimination in the private and public spheres. Many articles in *TBP* framed the epidemic as one that both debilitates bodies and hampers the sexuality of those afflicted. Drawing similar parallels to the invisibility faced by disabled bodies and the debilitating effects of HIV/AIDS on the masculinity and sexuality of those affected, this chapter addresses a broader discussion of ableist presentations of masculinity in *TBP*. Queer style was performed by afflicted-gay men in order to both cover their bodies from the physical signs of AIDS, and display their bodies as a means of opposing the silence around HIV/AIDS plaguing the queer community. In a society where the macho able-bodied male was championed, masculinity became further intertwined with building beautiful

and healthy bodies to confront stereotypes of AIDS, as well as practicing safer sex through the use of condoms as prophylactics.

These chapters follow a loose chronology around queer style and, in doing so, highlight how political and cultural developments in the gay male community emerged simultaneously alongside queer aesthetics. From 1971 until 1987, *TBP* charted queer style within discussions around the gay male body, bodybuilding, the movement of bodies, and space and place, race, and the reverberations of HIV/AIDS and other debilitating diseases. The thematic order of this dissertation demonstrates the myriad topics that were entwined with masculinity in *TBP*. By placing *TBP* at the centre of these discussions around gay male masculinity and queer style, I link cultural constructions of gender and sexuality as a style with conflicts and challenges facing a self-conscious gay community which had liberation as one of its objectives.

CHAPTER ONE: Visualizing Sex to Sell Issues

If they [male readers] buy the paper initially for the photos, and read the articles as well, are **The Body Politic** editors exploiting the body for the sake of sales or for propaganda mileage? Is it identical to a steam bath selling itself with the promise of an illusory sexual bait?

- Ed Jackson, "Nudity and Sexism," *The Body Politic* 21, December 1975, 13.

In December 1975, Ed Jackson reflected on nudity in *TBP* and questioned whether the inclusion of pornography had any role in shaping understandings of masculinity amongst its readers. *TBP*'s editorial collective, while often dismayed by the hegemonic standard of heterosexual conceptions of masculinity in the gay community, acknowledged that the appeal of white muscular macho bodies sold issues. Indeed, Jackson further admitted in "Nudity and Sexism" that he "would not completely discount the possibility that images **may** have an unconscious impact on those who uncritically accept role playing relationships, or who worship at the altar of masculinity."¹ Jackson's message defended *TBP*'s use of sexual imagery, believing that only those "who worship at the altar of masculinity" and were uncritical of how they performed their gender would adhere to such ideals of masculinity. This suggestion reinforces the individual nature of the sexual politics of desire rather than addressing the relationship between desirability and cultural ideologies around gender performance. This comment is also a significant point of deviation from many other articles in *TBP* that mirror the feminist underpinnings

¹ Emphasis in original. Ed Jackson, "Nudity and Sexism," *The Body Politic* 21, December 1975, 25.

of the editorial collective, such as Herb Spiers's December 1974 critique of *Playboy* in which he emphasized the cultural role of sexualized imagery in social constructions of gender.²

Additionally, Jackson's argument that cartoons and images in *TBP* "may" have the unintended consequence of shaping understandings of masculinity and effeminacy in the gay community attempted to distance the newspaper and its visual content from his preceding statement that "[m]asculinity, virility, butchness—call it what you will—many gay men are caught up by this image, their fantasies, and actions conditioned to imitate it." Jackson recognized that visual imagery played a role in reinforcing the dichotomy between masculine and feminine performances, but defended the editorial collective's artistic freedom by asking, "Do sideburns, moustaches and tattoos have the same unequivocal symbolic impact of 'machismo' as cocks? The only graphic solution would then be to create two identical, featureless figures with no variation in perspective or, indeed, any interest whatsoever."³ By no means arguing against the depiction of penises in *TBP*, Jackson's issue lay with the ways in which symbols of masculinity operate in society rather than the visual medium. Withholding sexualized imagery would have contradicted *TBP*'s agenda of making gay male sexuality visible. Furthermore, placing a moratorium on nudity and sexual images would have affected sales of the newspaper because, as *Playboy* is testament to, sex sells in the postwar era.

Efforts on the part of the collective to include nude and erotic images in *TBP*, as well as a classified section which helped men meet other men, reflected the notion that

² Herb Spiers, Review of "Religion & Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions, Rosemary Radford Ruether (ed), New York, Simon and Schuster, 1974, 356 pages, \$4.50 pbk.," *The Body Politic* 16, November-December 1974, 22.

³ Jackson, "Nudity and Sexism," 25.

sexuality arguably becomes liberated when it is discussed, visualized, and made public. My use of the word “public” in this regard is derived from Michael Warner’s argument that a “public” is both a relation among strangers along common grounds, in this case, sexuality, but also becomes in of itself a “social imaginary.”⁴ *TBP* established one of many alternative publics or “counterpublics”⁵ among its readership by promoting, as Warner would argue, “the kinds of intimacy that bear no necessary relation to domestic space, to kinship, to the couple form, to property, or to the nation.”⁶ The editorial collective promoted the liberation of sexuality from the domestic realm—which the Canadian state had long emphasized—but was not actively opposed to monogamous long-term relationships. This broader rally against the institution of marriage in *TBP* was not a unique stance but part of a general attitude among many gay liberationists who, as Elise Chenier argues, “regarded marriage and the nuclear family as the linchpin of women’s and homosexual oppression.”⁷ Indeed, many in the collective, such as Herb Spiers, were critical of the institution of marriage as a symbol of conformity and heteronormativity.⁸ Broader concerns around heteronormativity lay at the heart of debates

⁴ In addition to being a relation among strangers, Warner further described public as: a group that is addressed by the same speaker, writer, advertisement; a social space where people participate or are reflexive in this space; as having temporality in ongoing discourse; and, as “world making” whereby people belonging to a public engage in a performative act with specific expressions, vocabulary, and gestures that create discourse which shapes the public itself. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 75.

⁵ Warner describes counterpublics as not only being related to a subculture (he gives the example of gay men and lesbian sexual culture), but “enables a horizon of opinion and exchange; its exchanges remain distinct from authority and can have a critical relation to power; its extent is in principle indefinite, because it is not based on a precise demography but mediated by print, theater, diffuse networks of talk, commerce, and the like.” Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 57.

⁶ Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 199.

⁷ Elise Chenier, “Liberating Marriage: Gay Liberation and Same-Sex Marriage in Early 1970s Canada,” in *We Still Demand: Redefining Resistance in Sex and Gender Struggles*, eds. Patrizia Gentile, Gary Kinsman, and L. Pauline Rankin (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017), 30.

⁸ In 1972, Herb Spiers argued that “Through institutionalized pressures like marriage, society attempts to dictate normal sexuality. However, this detaches sexuality from its psychological roots and makes it an external component subject to social rules and regulations.” Herb Spiers, “Creative Psyche and Homosexuality,” *The Body Politic* 4, May-June 1972, 6. This is reinforced by journalist Sylvain Larocque, who argues that “[g]ay and lesbian lobby groups were few and far between in Canada at the time [the

around styles of masculinity of the gay male community in the early 1970s, particularly around the simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the gender binaries found in heteronormative society.⁹

This chapter examines the landscape of visual culture which popularized the white, muscular, able male body that came to be reflected in *TBP* and idolized in Toronto's gay community. More than simply reflections of masculinity appearing in heterosexual culture, *TBP* reflected a conscious and unconscious appropriation of sexualized visual imagery by white gay men who stylized it as part of their identity. As Emmanuel Cooper argues, "The naked male body, however artful the pose, and however much the direct external sexual characteristics are removed, cannot be divorced from the erotic implications of the nude body seen – by women or by homosexual men – as desirable."¹⁰ The purposeful presentation of the male body in *TBP*, particularly the muscular macho male, was similar to *Playboy*'s "pin-up" girl and stylized as overly masculine, in ways that resemble the femininity of the voluptuous curves on the female playmate.¹¹

1970s], and none of them were demanding the right to get married." This claim is reinforced in Larocque's interview with Chris Vogel who, along with his partner Richard North, became the first same-sex couple to challenge Canada's marriage laws in 1974 when they held their wedding. When being interviewed, Vogel claimed that "[t]hey [gay and lesbian lobby groups] felt that marriage was an archaic institution that ought to be destroyed." Sylvain Larocque, *Gay Marriage: The Story of a Canadian Social Revolution*, trans. Robert Chodos, Benjamin Waterhouse, and Louisa Blair (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2006), 17.

⁹ The internalization and self-policing of appropriate gender performances in the gay male community requires an engagement with Foucauldian theories of power and knowledge, and processes of normalization through discourse. Foucault argues, "[P]ower is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. And "Power," insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that emerges from all these mobilities..." Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2012 [1978]), 93.

¹⁰ Emmanuel Cooper, *Fully Exposed: The Male Nude in Photography* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 94.

¹¹ Heeding the words of Emmanuel Cooper, this chapter focuses on *Playboy* rather than *Playgirl* because the poses and attitudes in the latter were notably "passive and quiet rather than virile and active, implying an element of tenderness and care—nudes to gaze upon rather than be aroused by." Unlike *Playgirl* (1973), portrayals of male models in gay periodicals exaggerated common perceptions of masculinity rather than challenged them with characteristics of femininity. Cooper, *Fully Exposed*, 122. In doing so, *Playgirl* functioned as a quasi-gay magazine anyways since readers were either women or homosexual men since these magazines were marketed in manner that suggested, according to Kenneth MacKinnon, "no 'real'—that is, self-categorizing heterosexual—male is expected to see a male object in erotic terms." Kenneth

Muscularity in Queer Visual Culture

Macho style, the focus of Chapter Two, evoked a Roman-Greco style of male musculature, whiteness, and, during its formative years, a working-class aesthetic of Levis denim jeans and white T-shirt. Not only did macho style come to represent an illusory macho ideal of masculinity, it also confronted stereotypes of gay male effeminacy. As a source of pleasure for readers, the macho body was fetishized as an object of beauty, one instinctively centred on its look. Appreciating macho style as an aesthetic resonates with film theorist Laura Mulvey's concept of "fetishistic scopophilia," whereby objects, bodies, and images in visual cultures can become pleasurable in of themselves.¹² Magazines played an important role in shaping the aesthetics of gay male masculinity using macho style in two primary ways. First, they exposed Canadian gay men to a burgeoning international market of gay male imagery and sexualized visual culture on an unprecedented level. Second, these periodicals helped reproduce the muscular body as an ornamental style for gay men by showing it off in a similar manner to clothing. As a result, masculinity and muscularity became enshrined as interconnected concepts; to have muscles meant to be masculine and to be masculine required muscles.¹³

Prior to *TBP*, Canadian magazines such as Alan B. Stone's *Physique Illustrated* (1962-1963) and *Face and Physique* (1962-1964) were aimed at consumers concerned about male health and virility, but largely bought by gay men because they contained

MacKinnon, *Love, Tears, and the Male Spectator* (Madison, U.K.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), 110.

¹² Mulvey argues that fetishistic scopophilia "builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself." Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (New York: Palgrave, 1989), 21.

¹³ While traditionally men are not the object of gazing, the display of musculature is naturalized because, as film theorist and *TBP* contributor Richard Dyer contends, "Muscularity is the *sign* of power—natural, achieved, phallic." Richard Dyer, "Don't Look Now," *Screen* 23 no. 3-4, 1982: 68.

images of scantily-clad muscular men. Historian David Johnson notes that the proliferation and consumption of physique magazines in the United States from 1945 to 1969 is evidence of a burgeoning gay consumer market that validated gay men's attraction to other men by encouraging reader "to identify with the models and see their homoerotic interests as natural."¹⁴ Physique models were presented as statuesque figures who embodied ancient Roman-Greco ideals of the male body and masculinity. Johnson argues that the "invocation of ancient Greece [has] had a long history in the gay community, dating back to the 1920s, as a way for gay men to create a folklore of a collective past and a way to legitimize and naturalize male admiration for the male body."¹⁵ Bodybuilding magazines thus played an important role in shaping gay sensibilities and presenting an aesthetic framework for gay masculinity.

As a way of recovering parts of this visual legacy, magazines and newspapers such as *TBP* and its earlier predecessors drew upon visual imagery as components of gay cultural life. In the January-February 1983 issue of *TBP*, Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) archivist, Alan Miller, examined early bodybuilding publications such as *Physique Pictorial*, *Muscle Power: The Bodybuilder Magazine and Your Physique*, and *Demigods* as gay cultural texts. Titled, "Beefcake with no labels attached," his article was a personal reflection on first reading *Physique Pictorial* in 1960. He noted that physique magazines operated as erotic magazines for gay men under the guise of art or physical culture since many homophile publications in the 1950s were "too political or too obvious (and of course not racy enough) for most gay readers," in the words of

¹⁴ David Johnson, "Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture," *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 4 (2010): 884.

¹⁵ Johnson, "Physique Pioneers," 873.

Miller.¹⁶ In the case of *Physique Pictorial*, art director George Quaintance, a “painter/photographer of gay iconography (whose postcards of cowboys, sailors and Greek soldiers are now famous),” changed the magazine’s visual content to include a playful use of bodybuilders, muscular models, and the boy-next-door type. As a result, Miller argued that, “In the late ‘50s, there was a definite parting of ways between ‘physique’ and serious muscle-building mags.”¹⁷ His observations of physique periodicals in *TBP* not only stressed the importance of visual imagery in cultural constructions of gender and sexuality in gay cultural life, but the intricate relationship between bodybuilding, muscularity, and gay male masculinity as well. In some ways, his article could be read as an explanation as to why *TBP* contained numerous images of chiseled, muscular men, simultaneously suggesting the newspaper had just as much cultural purpose as it did political.

Other periodicals such as *After Dark* (1958-1982), one of the oldest American periodicals to appeal to a lesbian and gay audience, used buff, white macho men on its covers as a marketing ploy to lure gay male readers by the early 1970s (Figure 1.1). Author Daniel Harris describes *After Dark* as “a masterpiece of indirection, a magazine that was all insinuation, an elaborate dance around its unidentifiable subject, which emerged only in hints, winks, and nudges, in photographs of the muscular torsos of aspiring actors or of sultry Adonises sprawled invitingly on satin sheets.”¹⁸ Using images of semi-naked and fully naked dance troupes and muscular athletes with wry smiles, *After Dark* invited readers to not only enjoy their consciousness-raising content but to gaze

¹⁶ Alan Miller, “Beefcake with no labels attached,” *The Body Politic* 90, January-February 1983, 33.

¹⁷ Miller, “Beefcake with no labels attached,” 33.

¹⁸ Daniel Harris, *The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture* (New York: Hyperion, 1997), 65.

Figure 1.1. Cover of *After Dark*, March 1972. Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, *After Dark* fonds.

upon the groins of their statuesque models. The use of male models straddled the division between art and homoerotic pornography, but by no means were writers in *After Dark* uncritical or purposefully opaque about the extent to which muscular bodies had become enshrined in society as the epitome of beauty and masculinity. In 1979, *After Dark* writer Nathan Fain openly acknowledged that:

we find ourselves surrounded by a gigantic open-air exhibit of living, breathing—not to mention jogging—swimming, dancing, skating, weight lifting—human beauty, works of art to rival Tiepolo, Raphael, Veronese; art that works, votes, sweats, ruts, looks at itself in the mirror each morning and think, ‘Boy. Wow. If you aren’t the most gorgeous *thing!*’ An inundation, verily, of national narcissism, the likes of which we’ve never seen before.¹⁹

This muscular aesthetic that Fain referred to was also prominent in other magazines in the United States, such as general interest magazines *Christopher Street* (1976-1995) and *The Advocate* (1967-), and more sexually explicit magazines such as *Queen’s Quarterly* (1968-1980), a national magazine “for gay guys who have no hangups,” and its spin-off, *Ciao* (1973-1980), a gay travel magazine that frequently contained images of nude white muscular men.

Christopher Street was particularly known for portraying muscular men throughout its pages. The magazine’s emphasis on theatre, ballet, and other arts, earned it “a budding reputation as a gay *New Yorker*.”²⁰ However, the magazine also brought into

¹⁹ The national narcissism that Fain addresses was rooted in the shift in postwar definitions of bachelorhood and masculinity. The self-indulgent lifestyle of the single bachelor represented a narcissistic contrast to the conservative notion of spending money and time on the family. Nathan Fain, “The Age of Narcissus: Here’s Looking at Me, Kid!” *After Dark*, January 1979, 37.

²⁰ David Armstrong, *A Trumpet to Arms: Alternative Media in America* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 251.

question how gay men stylized their own bodies and performed their sexuality with articles such as “Patterns of Aging Among Gay Men” by Douglas Kimmell, “Where have all the sissies gone?” by Seymour Kleinberg (Figure 1.2) and Johnny Greene’s “The Male Southern Belle,” and “Gay Rites, Straight Style.”²¹ By mixing discussions of gender and artistic reviews with sexualized imagery in exposés, such as “Butch: Gay Machismo, illustrated,” *Christopher Street* mediated the gendered aesthetics of gay artistry and gay cultural life in America.²² The muscular white models on its covers also presented the message that even high-brow gay culture had been permeated by macho style.

Similar to *After Dark* and *Christopher Street*, masculinity in *TBP* was stylized in a manner that was nearly ubiquitously white, muscular, able-bodied, and pinned up for readers to gaze at. Featured in *TBP*’s August 1976 issue, Graham Jackson’s article, “Toeing the Line: In search of the gay male image in contemporary classical ballet,” included an image of New York City ballet dancer Ed Villella’s muscular, semi-nude body as an illustration to his discussion of ballet, masculinity, and high-art—again exemplifying the tension between sexual allure and respectability for the newspaper. His analysis centred on “Monument for a Dead Boy,” a ballet produced by Rudi Van Dantzig of the Dutch National Ballet and first performed in Amsterdam on June 19, 1965.²³ For Jackson, the ballet’s revival by the New York City Ballet was an opportunity to discuss

²¹ See: Douglas Kimmell, “Patterns of Aging Among Gay Men,” *Christopher Street* 2, no. 5, November 1977, 28-33; Seymour Kleinberg, “Where Have All the Sissies Gone?” *Christopher Street* 2, no. 9, March 1978, 3-12; Johnny Greene, “The Male Southern Belle,” *Christopher Street* 3, no. 5, December 1978, 20-32; and, Johnny Greene, “Gay Rites, Straight Style,” *Christopher Street* 3, no. 6, January 1979, 13-15.

²² See: Victor Amador, Ruth Diamond, Richard Lublin, Janet Mathews, and Bruno Schmidt, “Butch: Gay Machismo, Illustrated,” *Christopher Street* 2, no. 9, March 1978, 13-18.

²³ Graham Jackson, Our Image: “Toeing the Line: In search of the gay male image in contemporary classical ballet,” *The Body Politic* 25, August 1976, 2.

Figure 1.2. Cover of *Christopher Street*, March 1978. Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, *Christopher Street* fonds.

athletic white bodies and deconstruct the implicit femininity inscribed onto male bodies in ballet.

In his analysis, Jackson argued that “society does not recognize gentleness, either in movement or feeling, as being masculine qualities, let alone the basis of male interaction; and it is this unspoken dictum that dance critics and aestheticians are unconsciously observing.”²⁴ Jackson noted the inherent heterosexual expectation placed on male ballet dancers when he referred to an interview with four dancers in issue #40 of the magazine, *Dance Perspectives*. When Bruce Marks, one of the dancers, was asked about masculinity in ballet, he was quoted saying that he felt that “masculinity was a question of ‘weight,’ of keeping close to the earth, of aggressiveness.”²⁵ This traditional understanding of masculinity as involving bulk (meaning muscle) and physical able-bodiedness, as well as being aggressive and “grounded,” was visually destabilized when Jackson used an image of Villella leaping into the air with the caption below reading, “a question of muscle.”²⁶ He included this image taken of Villella to critique how masculinity may be read differently from the audience’s perspective. While Villella, a heterosexual dancer, challenged Mark’s notion of grounded masculinity as a ballet dancer, he was reportedly never asked “to cut down on his butch act—in fact, Villella has made a career of it.”²⁷ Comments by Marks and Jackson’s reference to Villella’s “butch act,” stressed the heteronormative expectations of gender placed on male ballet dancers in order to challenge the suspicion of ballet being popularized by homosexual men.

²⁴ Jackson, “Toeing the Line,” 3.

²⁵ Jackson, “Toeing the Line,” 4.

²⁶ Jackson “Toeing the Line,” 4.

²⁷ Jackson, “Toeing the Line,” 3.

Despite evidence proving that ballet did have homosexual dancers, Jackson noted in his reference to Joseph H. Mazo's book, *Dance is a Contact Sport* (1974), that "homosexual dancers must repress their homosexuality if they are to become great."²⁸ Jackson's conclusion further relayed a gendered division within various schools of dance when he argued that "amid all this silly talk about masculinity, many serious dance lovers switched their allegiance from classical ballet to modern, avant-garde, and experimental forms of dance."²⁹ In her study of gender, sexuality, and the body in the Canadian National Ballet in the 1950s, historian Allana C. Lindgren argues that men were "projected as heterosexual by the choreographic narratives and male-female partnering" in order to challenge suspicions of male homosexuality in ballet.³⁰ The popularization of muscular bodies and butch masculinity in Canadian ballet during the 1950s promoted specific "normative bodies" which were not only white and muscular but quintessentially heterosexual—highlighting the intimate relationship between physical ability and sexuality. In Jackson's case, by highlighting how ballet reflected societal views of gender, sexuality, and ability, he articulated to readers of *TBP* that a specific masculine aesthetic was not only tangible for gay men in bars and bathhouses, but in the realm of the arts. Articles such as Jackson's highlight the ways in which *TBP*'s editorial collective attempted to strike a delicate balance between appearing respectable as a political newspaper, while also addressing sexuality and gay culture in Toronto and other cities across North America.

²⁸ Jackson, "Toeing the Line," 3.

²⁹ Jackson, "Toeing the Line," 2.

³⁰ Allana C. Lindgren, "The National Ballet of Canada's Normative Bodies: Legitimizing and Popularizing Dance in Canada during the 1950s," in *Contesting Bodies and Nation in Canada History*, eds. Patrizia Gentile and Jane Nicholas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 184.

Visualizing Masculinity in Western European Papers

Presentations of masculinity in *TBP* spoke to broader trends of displaying the male body in gay cultural periodicals across North America and Western Europe. From a Western European perspective, the male body appeared in magazines such as the British gay “lifestyle” magazine, *Quorum* (1971-1976), and Italian papers *Fuori!* (1971-1982) and *Lambda* (1976-1982), in a similar manner to the female *Playboy* playmate. Most models wore very little clothing (underwear if so) and would only don other attire, such as leather or a police outfit, to fit into a uniformed aesthetic. Examination of these papers is important to situate *TBP* in a climate in which gender and sexuality in the gay male community became narrowly defined and visualized in the 1970s and 1980s. Images appearing in the aforementioned periodicals also highlight how the content, unique or otherwise, established visual cues for gay male masculinity that helped frame (or stylize) the very content appearing in *TBP* and the importance of synthesizing erotic content with political messages.

The British paper *Quorum* was created in Harrow (now part of London) in 1971 and ran until 1976. The magazine was conceived of as a homosexual publication that fostered gay literacy of world news, promoted political campaigning against homophobia, and provided readers with professional portfolios of photographic art. *Quorum* used graphic photography to entice readers to purchase the magazine. Designed “for the adult male homosexual,” *Quorum* was devoted to providing its readership with an array of nude male models, often thematic based, in a manner similar to *Playboy*.³¹

³¹ Roger Baker, “Editorial,” *Quorum* 1, 1972, 3.

In the first issue of *Quorum*, Editor-in-Chief Roger Baker informed readers that, “We have approached many of the leading physique photographers and are compiling a portfolio of work which has not been seen before and which is of good quality.”³² The magazine actively promoted its use of male pin-ups despite acknowledging in the same issue that they threatened to “reduce real people to the level of sex objects...[,.]exploit sexism[,.]...support the myth the myth that homosexual are only interested in luminous youth....[and]...give those of us who are slightly less than Greek an inferiority complex.”³³ *Quorum*’s emphasis on physique imagery from photographers such as Colin Clarke, who specialized in capturing the body in all of its musculature, hair, and girth, arguably set the tone for how gay magazines *could* and *should* deliver sexualized content to their readers. Consulting individual photographers also meant that the content being provided to readers of *Quorum* was unique to the magazine. This tailor-made content made for *Quorum* would undoubtedly have boosted sales by providing readers with exclusive content.

The white muscular bodies in Clarke’s photo exposés such as “What can you say about a chap like this?”, and “The Changing Room” (Figure 1.3), both from 1974, as well as reader’s demands for these bodies, demonstrates the predominance of white machismo as a desirable gay male style within the gay male community.³⁴ In the exposé “The Changing Room,” for instance, the masculinity of the male models being displayed is reaffirmed by the descriptive context of the changing room. Emmanuel Cooper argues,

³² Baker, “Editorial,” 4.

³³ “Quorum’s Sex Objects,” *Quorum* 1, 1972, 23.

³⁴ Roger Baker noted in *Quorum*’s ninth issue that demand for fashion editorials and Clark’s images was continually growing. Roger Baker, “Editorial,” *Quorum* 9, May 1973, 3. Also see “What can you say about a chap like this?” *Quorum* Vol. 2, no. 6, 1974, 15-17; and, “The Changing Room,” *Quorum* Vol. 2, no. 12, 1974, 14-17. Photographs by Colin Clarke.

Figure 1.3. "The Changing Room," *Quorum* 2, no. 12, 1974, 15.

“[s]hower rooms, swimming pools and bathtime have proved to be contexts in which naked men could legitimately be shown.”³⁵ Despite the presentation of the nude male models as passive objects for the reader, as Mulvey might argue, their placement within the “changing room” links their bodies with stereotypes of masculinity, ability, and sports.

According to sociologist Raewyn W. Connell, “[t]he institutional organization of sport embeds definite social relations: competition and hierarchy among men, exclusion or domination of women. These social relations of gender are both realized and symbolized in the bodily performances.”³⁶ The heterosocial connotations of sports inscribe a heteronormative understanding of machismo onto the male models, one that is reinforced by their relaxed posture and disregard for their nudity. However, displaying their bodies unfettered by sports jerseys or equipment produces a campiness that is both homoerotic and illustrative of the ways in which particular settings shape performances of masculinity. This image highlights the inherent contradiction of sports in defining the “masculine heterosexual” body while simultaneously offering spaces that are homosocial, and where bodies can spill over into alternative notions of sexuality quite easily.

Quorum’s practices should not be taken out of context, however. The magazine appealed to a flourishing gay male culture that increasingly prized visibility, as well as a ramping up of macho style. These images acted as both a means of stylizing gay masculinity in a manner that spoke to masculine figures, occupations and body types in heteronormative society, while also breaking free from pre-existing stereotypes of gay

³⁵ Cooper, *Fully Exposed*, 115.

³⁶ Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 54.

bodies being inherently void of masculinity. The presence of images of white athletic bodies in other queer and queer-friendly European newspapers and magazines, such as Britain's *Gay News*, *Fuori!*, and *Lambda* suggest an increasingly uniform economy of sexuality in various gay male communities across Western Europe and North America.³⁷

Some international periodicals, such as the Italian newspaper, *Lambda*, used a mixture of photographs of naked male models and artwork in an attempt at both making politics "sexier" and promoting Italy's growing gay nightlife. One exposé drew upon imagery by including various macho men as part of a two-page special in the September-October 1979 issue. As a celebration of the male body, *Lambda*'s collage of muscular white men entitled, "Mucho Macho Man," sought to present a homogenized vision of gay male masculinity while also deflecting homophobic assumptions of the weakness and effeminacy (Figure 1.4). Other Italian newspapers such as *Fuori!* only started portraying male nudity through artistic drawings by the mid-late 1970s as a result of advertisers promoting their products or venues and to address certain topics relevant to the male body. For example, Giuseppe Di Salvo's discussion of adolescent sexuality illustrated two semi-naked muscular white men kissing and fondling each other.³⁸ The implication in this image is that adolescent homosexuality has a unilateral look, one that is white and muscular.

In an advertisement for La Clef "(discogay)" discotheque in *Fuori!*, the creator uses the hypersexualized macho artwork of Finnish artist Tom of Finland.³⁹ Tom of Finland's

³⁷ Both *Gay News*, one of the largest LGBT newspapers in the English-speaking world with a readership of approximately 50,000, and *Fuori!* (Fronte unitario omosessuale rivoluzionario italiano "Italian United Homosexual Revolutionary Front") frequently contained images of men that followed a similar aesthetic. See: "British paper struck by financial crisis," *The Body Politic* 90, January-February 1983, 19.

³⁸ Giuseppe Di Salvo, "Per Farlo Meglio [To Do it Better]," *Fuori!* 21, March-June 1979, 35.

³⁹ Advertisement, "La Clef (discogay)," *Fuori!* 24, February-March 1980, 9.

Figure 1.4. "Mucho Macho Man," *Lambda 23*, September-October 1979, 6.

macho, phallogentric style of drawing was extremely popular in gay art in the 1970s and 1980s, reinforcing the desirability of the muscular, macho body. Martti Lahti argues in his analysis of gender in Tom of Finland's work that, "Tom's drawings repeatedly display the images of men in leather and uniforms-bikers, policemen, cowboys, soldiers, sailors, and lumberjacks-all of which have become icons of gay male subcultures. These images have for their part provided gay men with a style to follow, and a model for building their bodies and adapting their body languages and wardrobes."⁴⁰ Indeed, Tom of Finland's drawings of the 1960s inspired macho style by evoking traditional images of working-class masculinity, using men dressed as lumberjacks, police officers, tradesmen, and military soldiers. His drawings simultaneously placed these figures in seemingly homoerotic or explicitly homosexual situations, turning them into examples of "gay resistance" to hegemonic narratives of male gender performance.⁴¹

La Clef's use of Tom of Finland's homoerotic imagery is all the more significant when considering *Fuori!* Founder Angelo Pezanna had described gay establishments in Italy as being "not advertised at all" up until 1978 when speaking in the context of advertising a "new club." In an interview with the *TBP*'s editorial collective in 1978, Pezanna stated that one of the reasons why *Fuori!* could produce homoerotic content without being censored was because the newspaper had a small circulation and did not "represent a danger for the establishment." It should be noted that the newspaper's founding organization, a group with the same name, was also accepted as an official group within the Radical Party of Italy, with Pezanna serving as "the first open

⁴⁰ Martti Lahti, "Dressing Up in Power: Tom of Finland and Gay Male Body Politics," *Journal of Homosexuality* 35, nos. 3-4 (1998): 192.

⁴¹ Lahti, "Dressing Up in Power," 193.

homosexual in the parliament in Italy.”⁴² The Radical Party provided protection against state and religious efforts to shutter the newspaper. In addition, the small circulation of *Fuori!*, its relatively subdued content compared to *Lambda* and other foreign periodicals, and its use of visual content that promoted macho men who did not transgress gender norms, meant that the content of the paper presented little threat to public stability. As a result, *Fuori!* escaped more extreme forms of censorship largely because it operated within a state-sanctioned government party, as well as under a moral code of endorsing gay bars and dance halls which were either under the control of police or heterosexual owners.

The limited censorship of *Fuori!* does not mean that state power was not present in the regulation of content. Instead, *Fuori!* demonstrates the tenuous moral code by which state government policed written and visual content. The case of *Fuori!* does not also mean that the homosexual content in *TBP* went unnoticed or without scrutiny by provincial or federal officials in Canada either. Rather, the limited censoring of *TBP* by state apparatuses in the early 1970s was likely a partial outcome of the editorial collective’s use of content that was grounded in heteronormative ideals of gender. The sexual content of *TBP* in its early years, while occasionally explicit, emphasized the male nude and muscularity rather than homosexual sex acts. Furthermore, *TBP*’s editorial collective complemented their content using imagery published across North America and Western Europe that often adhered to white macho style.

⁴² “Our battle is against moral attitudes,” *The Body Politic* 45, August 1978, 27.

In my interview with Tim McCaskell, the editor of the international news segment of *TBP* from 1974 until 1987, he argued that much of the explicit sexualized imagery found in *TBP* was testament to the emergence of stock image banks in the 1970s:

So what images appeared were images that appeared in advertising. And those tended to be stock images that permeated gay publications right around the world. I mean, I can remember saying to Gerald Hannon one day, I was reading the Italian paper and I think, “you know, this is exactly the same picture as in the ads as people are using in Toronto...the exact one, and what does this mean?”⁴³

The images of men (photographed and illustrative) appearing on the pages of foreign newspapers and magazines were ubiquitous in their defined musculature, whiteness, and masculine demeanor. They were also part of a growing trend of stock images in the 1970s. Emerging in 1974, stock photography banks, such as The Image Bank and Comstock, rented out high-quality, ready-made photographs based on standard American and European advertising practices. Unlike previous photographic images which were produced with a specific advertising campaigns or exposés in mind, these images were made for re-use and have come to comprise of approximately 70 percent of the images in contemporary consumer culture, according to Communications scholar Paul Frosh.⁴⁴ Stock photographs not only created a particular aesthetic style using stylistic codes and preferred subjects, but combined fantasy and reality, drew upon unique metaphorical mores, and renegotiated categories of classification, all of which Frosh argues make them

⁴³ Tim McCaskell (editor for *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, March 20, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

⁴⁴ Paul Frosh, *The Image Factory: Consumer Culture, Photography, and the Visual Content Industry* (Oxford: Berg Press, 2003), 2.

“striking visual materializations of cultural stereotypes.”⁴⁵ Within the context of gay male publications, stock images of male models perpetuated western cultural values around the male body, the aesthetics of musculature, and a standardized whiteness that unified Western European and North American understandings of gay male style.

TBP sat at the intersection of these cultural imaginings of masculinity, sexuality, and the body, as well as the politics that informed these constructions. With its visual content, *TBP* visualized gay male masculinity within a gay liberationist framework; the significance of which provided readers with a template for gender and sexuality that would become enshrined in the community. Attempting to balance sexualized content with liberationist politics served to visualize gay politics and community life along a specific aesthetic. By interweaving the two, *TBP* was an important vehicle by which the white, macho, muscular, able-bodied male had expanded from a cultural image of sexual virility, desire, health, and masculinity, to also become an illustrative representation of the gay male community. Discussions of the importance of visual culture in shaping gay male masculinity were part of broader conversations about the role of images, most notably pornography, in shaping the post-war gendered and sexual landscape

The Politics of Pornography

The simultaneous effort to discuss and visualize sexuality and gender in *TBP* while also advancing gay rights also meant that other forms of art, such as pornography, were discussed for their political and social messages. As an art form involving the display of nude and semi-nude bodies, pornography was a contentious topic in *TBP*, particularly so

⁴⁵ Frosh, *The Image Factory*, 107.

by the late 1970s when feminists became largely divided on the social ramifications of it. The social politics surrounding pornography in *TBP* brought into question the perceived solidarity between feminists and gay liberationists. In addition, efforts on the part of the Canadian federal government to censor erotica raised concerns about the suppression of visualizing gay male sexuality. Evidence of gay male masculinity as a style can be found amongst the debates and coverage of pornography in *TBP*, particularly film scholar and *TBP* contributor Thomas Waugh's analysis of films and photographs at the Kinsey Institute. These instances are a further reminder that visual culture was given a special focus in *TBP* by the editorial collective and those writing for the paper, many of whom were concerned about the aesthetics of desirability in the gay male community.

One reason for the late development of lesbian and gay newspapers and magazines in Canada, rather than simply important material from the United States, was the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) efforts to restrict homosexual content and pornography. Canadian authorities frequently confiscated or reprimanded the transportation, distribution and sale of publications which advertised or endorsed homosexuality, were pornographic in nature, or both. For instance, *Gay* magazine in Canada (1964-1965)—renamed *Gay International* in 1965, was published by the Gay Publishing Company in Toronto, and, according to archivist Donald W. McLeod, “one of the earliest periodicals to use the word ‘gay’ in its title.” Not only did it include general articles on homosexuality, humour cartoons, fiction, and news from American gay and lesbian periodicals, but the magazine drew upon Roman-Greco aesthetics of male musculature, youth, and beauty. According to McLeod, however, *Gay* was discontinued

after issue 15 (July 1965) because of an increasingly hostile environment to homosexual content and media in Canada in the 1960s.⁴⁶

Efforts to restrict pornography in the postwar era strengthened in 1959 when Canadian Parliament passed legislation amending section 150(8) of the Criminal Code of Canada. This amendment reflected, as legal scholar Brenda Cossman argues, efforts on the part of the state to “toughen up on Canada’s obscenity laws” and reinforce the nuclear family and morality in society.⁴⁷ According to Cossman, Section 150 (8) defined obscenity as: “‘For the purposes of the Act, any publication a [sic] *dominant characteristic* of which is the *undue exploitation of sex*, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely, crime, horror, cruelty and violence shall be deemed to be obscene’ (emphasis added).”⁴⁸ *TBP* targeted this regulation as early as 1974 when the newspaper reported that Toronto Police seized pornography from the home of Reg Hartt, the director of the Rochdale Cinema Archives, months prior on November 17, 1973. Hartt was charged with “possession of obscene material for distribution” for having in his possession two gay sex films *Boys in the Sand* and *Bijou* after showing them to the public as part of the Rochdale cinema series that Autumn.⁴⁹ *The Globe and Mail* only reported on the case once on November 16, 1973, highlighting Hartt’s defense that the Rochdale cinema was a film club rather than a public theatre—a challenge to the charge of

⁴⁶ Donald W. McLeod, *Lesbian and Gay Liberation in Canada: A Selected Annotated Chronology, 1964-1975* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1996), 5.

⁴⁷ Brenda Cossman, *Bad Attitude/s on Trial: Pornography, Feminism, and the Butler Decision* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 15. The relationship between moral puritanism and the censorship of pornography is reinforced by Tom Warner when he argues that “Following the Second World War...a new drive to counter the increasing availability of pornography was launched, as a renewed social purity movement took root.” Tom Warner, *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 22.

⁴⁸ Emphasis added by Cossman. See Cossman, *Bad Attitude/s on Trial*, 16.

⁴⁹ “Toronto police confiscate films,” *The Body Politic* 11, January-February 1974, 6.

distribution.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the *Toronto Star* ignored it altogether, stressing the importance of *TBP*'s coverage of it while suggesting that morality cases against homosexuals may not have been considered “newsworthy.” The definition of pornography was tenuous and could be stretched to fit a wide range of material, allowing police to harass and incriminate men considered homosexual or “deviant” using measures that would be considered otherwise severe if carried out on heterosexuals.⁵¹

In 1978, concerns around the social effects of pornography were raised by Member of Parliament Mark MacGuigan, who proposed expanding the definition of pornography again. Presenting the Third Report of the Standing Committee of Justice and Legal Affairs in the House of Commons on Wednesday March 22, 1978, MacGuigan called for the passing of Bill C-207—a bill centred on redefining obscenity for greater “enforcement of the obscenity provisions of the Criminal Code...”⁵² The Committee proposed extending obscene material to include content where “a dominant characteristic of the matter or thing is the undue exploitation of crime, horror, cruelty, violence or the undue degradation of the human person”⁵³ By broadening the definition of obscenity, MacGuigan and the Committee were attempting to draw a boundary between “nudity” as

⁵⁰ See: “Police seize Rochdale porno films,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 16, 1973, 13.

⁵¹ A significant degree of the literature on censorship and pornography approach the topic from either a legal standpoint, considering how definitions of erotic material evolved over time, or the role of feminist groups in shaping efforts to restrict pornography in the late 1970s onward. See: Allan C. Hutchinson and Klaus Petersen, *Interpreting Censorship in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Mark Cohen, *Censorship in Canadian Literature* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Cossman, *Bad Attitude/s on Trial* (1997); and, Susan G. Cole, *Pornography and the Sex Crisis* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 1992).

⁵² The definition of obscenity could also be applied if “the matter or thing depicts or describes a ‘child’ engaged or participating in an act or simulated act of or simulated masturbation, sexual intercourse, gross indecency, buggery or bestiality” or, “displaying any portion of its body in a sexually suggestive manner.” A “child” was understood to be “a person who is or appears to be under the age of sixteen years.” Canada, House of Commons, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*, Issue 18 (March 22, 1978): 8.

⁵³ Canada, House of Commons, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*, Issue 18 (March 22, 1978): 8.

an art form and pornographic content which implied degradation, immortality, violence, and crime. Indeed, this government rhetoric heightened the association between pornography and the decline of morality.

MacGuigan built his case on the detrimental effects of pornography for women and society by calling upon anti-pornography feminists who believed that pornography was inherently misogynistic and objectified women as sex objects. On March 1, 1978, Debra Lewis of the Vancouver Status of Women, gave her testimony, and on March 2, 1978, Lorene M. G. Clark, an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto and Executive Member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, addressed the Committee. In Clarke's statements to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, she argued that, "[t]he typical way in which women are depicted in pornography certainly reflects a view of them as inferior to men, as inherently masochistic, and as primarily of value as instruments for the satisfaction of male sexual desire."⁵⁴ Lewis and Clark's position as anti-pornography feminists was invaluable to MacGuigan since this form of feminism garnered significant support, and viewed pornography as part of a broader struggle against patriarchy and women's objectification as sex objects for male pleasure.

Anti-pornography feminism was one of two feminist positions on pornography, the other being pro-sex (sex-positive) feminism.⁵⁵ Differing feminist opinions on

⁵⁴ Canada, House of Commons, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*, Issue 15 (March 7, 1978): 8.

⁵⁵ According to Helen Hester, anti-pornography feminists, such as Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, perceived pornography as "possessing the power to have a profound and negative effect on the lives of real women." Helen Hester, *Beyond Explicit: Pornography and the Displacement of Sex* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 22. Dworkin equated pornography with historical acts of violence, even referring to pornography as "rape" in her 1998 book *Letters from a War Zone*. See: Andrea Dworkin, *Letters from a War Zone: Writings, 1976-1989* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1988); Similarly, MacKinnon, in addition to building off of Dworkin's hypothesis of pornography as rape, argued that

pornography established what is referred to as the feminist sex wars (also known as the lesbian sex wars or porn wars) of the late 1970s and early 1980s. In comparison to anti-pornography feminism, sex-positive feminism challenged attempts at censorship by arguing for female sexuality to be expressed in specific contexts and venues as part of female agency. The sex wars saw many feminists divided on issues of prostitution, pornography, erotica, lesbian sexual practices, and the role of transwomen in the lesbian community. It was also an important intellectual division that shaped how writers and editors of *TBP* wrestled with similar issues of objectification, legitimizing desire, and validating public expression of gay sexuality. Anti-pornography activist and author Susan G. Cole states that since 1978, Canadian groups such as the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography (CCAMP) and Women Against Violence Against Women have raised numerous complaints about the reach of obscenity laws. The “decency contingent,” the groups she refers to as buttressing traditional notions of morality, “complained that the law’s teeth were not sharp enough,” while CCAMP “complained that the teeth of obscenity dug too sharply into sexuality and home in on sexual violence.”⁵⁶

pornography “constructs women as things for sexual use and constructs its consumers to desperately want women to desperately want possession and cruelty and dehumanization.” Catharine A. MacKinnon, “Sexuality, Pornography, and Method: ‘Pleasure under Patriarchy,’” *Ethics* 99, no. 2 (January 1989): 327. On the other side of the debate, sex-positive feminists such as Lisa Duggan, Nan D. Hunter, Carol S. Vance, and Ellen Willis suggested that female enjoyment of pornography is an example of women reclaiming an aspect of their sexuality; a form of rebellion against the sexual status-quo. Vance and Ellis both argued that anti-pornography feminism further shamed women’s sexuality. See: Lisa Duggan, Nan D. Hunter, and Carol S. Vance, “False Promises: Feminist Anti-Pornography Legislation in the U.S.,” in *Women Against Censorship*, ed. Varda Burstyn (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985), 130-151; and, Ellen Willis, “Feminism, Moralism, and Pornography,” in *Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, eds. Ann Barr Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (London: Virago, 1984), 82-88.

⁵⁶ Cole, *Pornography and the Sex Crisis*, 76.

The attitudes of MacGuigan and the Standing Committee of Justice and Legal Affairs on pornography did not necessarily reflect the attitudes of Canadians by the late 1970s, especially those in urban areas. A survey conducted by the *Toronto Star* in 1977 of 220 *Metro News* readers (Toronto residents) asked readers their thoughts on the availability and legalization of pornography for individuals over the age of 18. The newspaper results suggested Canadians had become quite comfortable with pornography. Of those who responded, 74 percent felt that pornographic material should be available for private consumption for individuals over the age of 18.⁵⁷ The extent to which these beliefs included homosexual pornography are unclear, but it was unlikely at best. As further evidence of the growing consumption of pornography, Mr. P. Maclellan, manager of Public Relations for publisher H.H. Marshall Ltd., informed MacGuigan and the Standing Committee that pornographic magazines comprised approximately 14 to 15 percent of magazine sales, or in monetary terms, approximately 10 million dollars in Canada.⁵⁸ Indeed, the large volume of pornography sales is a testament to the extent to which a sexualized visual culture developed, was fetishized, and consumed in the postwar period.

The consumption of sexuality in mainstream culture, particularly homosexuality, did strictly occur in pornography, but also appeared in documentaries and televised specials covering gay liberation and homosexuality. An early example of the way in which homosexuality, more particularly gay culture, was correlated with sexual deviancy in mainstream media was the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) television

⁵⁷ "For over-18s: Poll shows 74% approve selling hard-core porn," *Toronto Star*, December 28, 1977, A3.

⁵⁸ Canada, House of Commons, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs*, Issue 7 (February 14, 1978): 14.

special, “Nothing to Hide.” Aired on November 30, 1971, the made-for-television documentary focused on providing mainstream audiences with insight into gay liberation. In an undated letter sent to the CBC and subsequently published in *TBP*, the collective described the television special as attempting to cover both gay liberation and gay life from a “very narrow biased viewpoint.”⁵⁹ Members of the collective took issue with many aspects of “Nothing to Hide,” including its dated nature, its overlooking of Canadian and United States organizations such as The Mattachine Society, and its focus on the external aspects of New York City’s community, such as gay bars, steam baths, and the streets.

Most pertinent to Canadian censorship however, was the fact that filming in New York City ignored “issues facing homosexuals in Canada e.g. the effects of the Criminal Code amendment, the relationship with the struggles of Canadian women, Indians and Quebecois...” Despite these issues, it was the emphasis on gender and sexual conformity, as well as the “sloppy” and “bizarre” camera angles that portrayed “the homosexual like an animal in a cage,” the collective argued, that raised questions around how gay sexuality was visualized for mainstream audiences. A central point in their critique of the film was the importance of the imagining both homosexuals and homosexual activity through visual cues. Envisioning sexuality was not only important for sexual liberation, but this evidence suggests that it was also a cause for concern if used in ways that associated homosexuality with a “sordid aesthetic,” in the words of the collective.

The collective also argued that the program was sexist because it excluded lesbians, thereby making homosexuality a male issue. This issue was compounded by the fact that

⁵⁹ George Hislop, Charles Hill, Jerry Moldenhauer, Tony Metie, and Roger Wilkes, “CBC: Put Off? or Nothing to Hide?: Nothing to Show,” *The Body Politic* 2, January-February, 1972, 1.

the program “reinforces strict conformity to sexual roles, denigrating so-called feminine qualities in men and applauding so-called feminine qualities in women.” By only emphasizing the sexualized qualities of gay culture, “Nothing to Hide” reduced gay culture to a life of “pornography, anonymous sexuality, ‘sexual addiction and sadomasochism,’” according to the collective. The visual portrayal of gay male life was particularly concerning in their opinion because “viewers retain far more of the visual impression than of the verbal content.”⁶⁰ Criticism of how gay life was visually perceived in the media compared to written accounts reverberates critic and scholar Marshall McLuhan’s argument in *The Medium is the Message* (1978) that messages in the media change based on the format in which they are delivered. Looking at television specifically, McLuhan argues that “[t]elevision demands participation and involvement in depth of the whole being. It will not work as a background. It engages you.”⁶¹ The concerns of those reporting on “Nothing to Hide” emphasized the power of visual imagery in crafting an unfavorable image of gay community life among viewers.

Since the primary goal of *TBP*’s editorial collective was to build up a strong readership, the threat of sexual suppression or negative connotations around pornography in any capacity raised concerns amongst the collective. For some members, pornography, at least discussion of it, was part of *TBP*’s broader agenda of visualizing, discussing, and liberating homosexuality from social oppression. *TBP* contributor Robert Trow did not view pornography negatively, but rather as “a specialized form of entertainment in that it is designed for one purpose, the sexual excitement of its audience.”⁶² Similarly, editor

⁶⁰ Hislop, Hill, Moldenhauer, Metie, and Wilkes, “CBC: Put Off? or Nothing to Hide?,” 1.

⁶¹ Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (San Francisco: Hardwired Press, 1996 [1978]), 125.

⁶² Robert Trow, “Diamonds in the buff,” *The Body Politic* 10, Winter 1973, 11.

Gerald Hannon felt that stifling erotica restricted individual sexual expression and was too extreme, regardless of whether it exploited women or children:

There should be no laws regulating erotic material merely for being erotic. And there are two good reasons to oppose such legislation, even if one agrees that yes, it does exploit women, and yes, it does abuse children. One. Pornography legislation has always been used, and will continue to be used to harass and stifle erotic that is experimental. Or serves minority tastes. Or is dangerous to accepted 'truths' about the way people relate... Two. It won't work. It never has. We have obscenity laws now and it is still possible to purchase what you want—if you have the money.⁶³

For Hannon, pornography's threat to society stemmed from the perception that it threatened the sexual status quo. Not only were attempts at controlling pornography ineffective, according to Hannon, but they threatened to destabilize "accepted truths" around human sexuality.

Hannon went on to further condemn Lewis and Clark's contributions to the Justice Committee because "[i]f they [the committee] can say that they have Canadian feminist [sic] behind them, so much the better [for them]."⁶⁴ MacGuigan's efforts to regulate and restrict pornography with the aid of some feminists reinforced the argument that sexualized material resulted from, and promoted, the systematic oppression of women. Not only did his case appear less conservative with the support of anti-pornography feminists, but it illuminated pornography as a major point of contention between feminism and gay liberationists.

⁶³ Gerald Hannon, "MP's hit hard at 'porn,'" *The Body Politic* 42, April 1978, 5.

⁶⁴ Gerald Hannon, "MP's hit hard at 'porn,'" *The Body Politic* 42, April 1978, 5.

Feminist scholar and occasional contributor to *TBP* Mariana Valverde responded to Hannon's article in a letter published in May 1978 of *TBP* whereby she refuted Hannon's belief that depictions of sexuality should be unregulated. As a doctoral student in Social and Political Thought at York University at the time, Valverde offered a critical counter-perspective to Trow and Hannon's argument, stating that, "By upholding the 'right' of the porno industry to cater to 'minority tastes', *TBP* is implicitly supporting the view—so dear to the hearts of capitalists everywhere—that sexuality is a commodity, to be freely bought and sold on the open market." In addition, Valverde further problematized Hannon's subsequent critique of Lewis and Clark, describing it as an "indiscriminate condemnation of feminism." While acknowledging that sexuality should be expressed freely and that the government should not attack "all forms of eroticism," Valverde's concerns that feminism was under attack, especially by members of the editorial collective, was exacerbated by strife occurring within feminism around pornography at the time.⁶⁵

Valverde approached sexual erotica and pornography from a more nuanced stance than some of her counterparts in the sex wars. She argued in *TBP* that the aim of "the pornography industry is not to promote either artistic experimentation or sexual liberation, but rather to prey upon people's sexual insecurities and dissatisfactions and make a good buck out of them."⁶⁶ Arguably, capitalism and its patriarchal nature not only led to the exploitation of women, but made them objects for male sexual pleasure, thereby reducing them to little more than tools of sexual gratification. This criticism of

⁶⁵ Mariana Valverde, "Feminism and Pornography: A Reply to Gerald Hannon," *The Body Politic* 43, May 1978, 3.

⁶⁶ Valverde, "Feminism and Pornography," 3.

the commodification of women's bodies was later reflected in her own writings, particularly in her 1985 monograph, *Sex, Power and Pleasure*, whereby she argued that "pornography is not just a male product concocted to satisfy natural male desires. As we have seen, it affects both men and women and is deeply embedded in both cultural and social relations of our society."⁶⁷ Indeed, Valverde later argued in her book that pornography could be empowering for women, but at the risk of becoming a "bandwagon issue" for politicians.⁶⁸

The debate in *TBP* between Hannon and Valverde regarding pornography is an example of how the newspaper operated as a forum in which feminist ideology was both espoused and challenged. It also serves as a reminder that visual culture was understood to have an influential role in shaping the sexual tastes and the consumption of bodies that performed and adhered to gendered ideals within *TBP*. As another contrast to Hannon's laissez-faire argument towards pornography, the editorial collective published an adapted 1977 lecture from prominent anti-pornography feminist Andrea Dworkin titled "Pornography: The New Terrorism?" in August 1978, mere months after Valverde's response to Hannon. Dworkin compared pornography to slavery and argued that it encouraged violence against women. More pointedly, however, she asked "what does it mean that the pornographers, the consumers of pornography, and the apologists for pornography are the men we grew up with, the men we talk with, live with, the men who

⁶⁷ Mariana Valverde, *Sex, Power and Pleasure* (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1985), 145.

⁶⁸ Valverde argues that political campaigns against pornography not only appease right-wing moralists, but avoid issues such as women's equal pay: "Equal pay would cost a lot of money, but a pornography law is free...." Valverde, *Sex, Power and Pleasure*, 144.

are familiar to us and often cherished by us as friends, fathers, brothers, and sons[?]"⁶⁹

Those at *TBP* did not seem to have an answer.

The perception that feminism, particularly anti-pornography feminism, was overly critical of masculinity nurtured some concern over the role of feminism in *TBP* at this time. In our interview, *TBP* writer and David Rayside recalled the relationship between the editorial collective and feminism as such:

Some people would take that core understanding and be significantly influenced by feminism. That would include me. Others would be very wary of too close an association with feminism, particularly because issues of sexual representations were becoming more contested and the whole liberationist idea was more inclined toward the rejection of any normative constraints on behavior rather than critiquing any particular expression of gender or masculinity in particular.⁷⁰

Reader Stephen W. Forster from Dade County (Miami), felt that feminism in gay periodicals frequently disparaged masculinity. From reading various gay and lesbian periodicals, he argued, "as I read through various gay journals, I am constantly informed that masculinity is a 'disease.'"⁷¹ Even famed gay rights activist turned academic, Dennis Altman, felt that gay men should tackle sexism in society but not limit themselves to supporting the women's movement. In a 1974 interview with the collective and prior to the feminist sex wars, Altman was already arguing that it was "strange to argue that gay men should not organise around their own experience of oppression, but around women's

⁶⁹ Foreword by the editorial collective. Andrea Dworkin, "Pornography: The New Terror ism," *The Body Politic* 45, August 1978, 12.

⁷⁰ David Rayside, (volunteer at *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, March 24, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

⁷¹ Stephen W. Forster, "On mud slinging," *The Body Politic* 56, September 1979, 4.

experience of oppression. This seems to me impossible; it is to deny the very real problems that gay men face in society.”⁷² The majority of the nearly all-male editorial collective, however, aligned themselves with anti-sexist rhetoric early on and spent a great deal of effort examining the content of heterosexual pornographic magazines, such as *Playboy*. Doing so reiterated the deep intellectual and political ties between gay liberationists and feminism while also allowing the collective to receive support for *TBP* from lesbians and women’s rights activists. As a result, issues around homosexual pornography emerged rather late in *TBP*’s publication.

Two years following the debate between Hannon and Valverde, film scholar Thomas Waugh, then an occasional contributor to *TBP* from 1977 until 1984, examined male homosexual photographs and films at the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research. Concerned with representations of sexuality in film and popular culture in his own work, Waugh sought to explore the relationship between gender and sexuality in pornography within the context of the ongoing “sex wars” during the early 1980s. Following his visits to the institute in 1982 and 1983, Waugh published two articles in *TBP* beginning with his January-February 1983 article, “A Heritage of Pornography,” which focused on film. After watching over one-hundred underground gay films produced between the 1920s and 1970s, Waugh sought to describe the ways in which an underground gay culture flourished in the twentieth century along aesthetic lines. Warning that his report should not be considered a comprehensive history of gay pornographic film, Waugh nevertheless organized his findings under a broad scope of subheadings that described the

⁷² “An interview: Dennis Altman,” *The Body Politic* 13, May-June 1974, 19.

evolutionary movements in gay pornographic film in the 1920s, 1930s through to the 1950s, and, finally, the 1960s onward.

One of the first revelations he came across in many films of the 1920s was the importance of drag culture. Many “stag films,” whereby a man has sexual intercourse with another man in drag, not only queered traditional heterosexual plots of lovemaking, but presented a contradiction to gay male pornography seen in the 1970s: “the official uniform of the stag film, nudity, is in tension with the play of costume.” The result is that “[t]he gowns get in the way,” as Waugh put it, and the climactic surprise whereby the penis of the drag queen is revealed becomes the spectacle which usurps the importance of sexual intercourse. The spectacle of the costume reflects the importance of clothing in enhancing, hiding, or obfuscating the sex and gender of its wearer in gay visual culture. Waugh further noted that the use of drag in gay films continues into the 1970s, but in non-erotic roles for films such as *Outrageous*.⁷³ Desexualizing drag queens resonates with Viviane Namaste’s argument that drag queens are relegated to the stage and not given a sexual identity or legible gender expression.⁷⁴ This shift is also a testament to the need for films in the interwar era to operate within heterosexual scripts, thereby inadvertently promoting heteronormative expectations and desires within the gay community. His article serves as further reminder that *TBP* was an important forum in Canada for showcasing the importance of pornography and its aesthetics in gay male culture.

⁷³ Thomas Waugh, “A Heritage of Pornography,” *The Body Politic* 90, January-February 1983, 30.

⁷⁴ Viviane Namaste, *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 11-12.

As drag queens became desexualized in films, conventional gender roles in gay pornography arguably originated with the production of bisexual pornography found in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as home movies, sex performance films, and candid films between the 1930s and 1950s. Waugh noted that bisexual pornography was likely the result of gay men involved in the production of these films rather than simply being audience members. “If this is the case, the now familiar situation of the gay spectator turned on by a male image coded as straight (a la *Straight to Hell*) is an old one indeed,” he argued.⁷⁵ By historicizing the desire for heteronormative performances in gay culture through pornography; Waugh validated pornography as an effective art form for shaping gay men’s desires. Simultaneously, however, Waugh did not, explicitly at least, challenge the ways in which the muscular male body continued to remain a central figure in pornography across the century. Instead, his analysis suggested a rough chronology of the cinematic and photographic elements and techniques used in gay male visual culture.

When watching the home movies, sex performance films and candid camera work produced between the 1930s and 1950s by an individual known as AT, Waugh found that some subjects in his sex performance films “are photogenic and well-built enough to be models, dancers or actors on the fringes of the Hollywood studios; others look a bit more ordinary.” The presence of men—ordinary or modelesque—coded as heterosexual in pornography is testament to a growing culture of conformity in North America. Not only are heteronormative performances of masculinity stylized as desirable in these films, but a working-class masculinity becomes entangled with gay male sensibilities. Having a model perform “ordinary” actions, such as “the model as nude worker attacking rocks

⁷⁵ Waugh, “A Heritage of Pornography,” 30.

with a pickaxe” in one of AT’s films, creates an aesthetic reference of “ordinariness” for the audience. This style of a working-class, heterosexually coded masculinity is also found amongst AT’s candid camera work featuring “sailors, the most common icon of pre-Stonewall gay mythology, who become walk-on extras in this first documentary of a gay cruising area,” Waugh argues.⁷⁶ Use of models in narratives such as these creates an important visual marker for butch performances of masculinity. When continuing into the 1960s, Waugh maintains that there were efforts to circumvent censorship of mail-order material in “above-ground erotica” by relying on sexual suggestiveness. One such technique that spoke to styles of gay male masculinity was the emergence of the “beefcake.”

Waugh argues that the “beefcake” became a mainstay in homoerotic visual culture, whether it was in pornographic films such as *Greek Gods* (date unknown), which valorized male statuesque models, or the young men who “decide to wrestle together in their posing straps—an opportunity for several discreet anatomical zoom-ins—before relaxing with a beer” in *Heat Wave* (date unknown).⁷⁷ While these films paved the way for more hardcore erotica such as *Boys in the Sand* (1971), according to Waugh, these also demonstrate the importance of pornography in creating the framework by which the aesthetic of muscular, able-bodied, white masculinity became enshrined in the postwar period. Not all films were merely suggestive in their homosexuality or filled with white protagonists, however. Waugh contends that it is “in the mid Sixties when most of the models stop looking at pictures of women (straightness as a turn-on for the gay consumer) and begin looking at men.” This evolution seems to pertain to Iva Crusty

⁷⁶ Waugh, “A Heritage of Pornography,” 31.

⁷⁷ Waugh, “A Heritage of Pornography,” 33.

Crotch, the Black protagonist of the film *Oh Doctor*, whereby Iva is seated on a sofa reading a gay “skin mag.” By only giving the example of Iva and *Oh Doctor*, however, Waugh inadvertently demonstrates that non-white, explicitly homosexual protagonists were the exception rather than the norm for 1960’s pornography.

Waugh’s analysis of pornography continued to unfold on the pages of *TBP* in March 1984. That month he published, “Photography, Passion and Power,” whereby he argued that, “Fuck photos have always had to serve not only as our stroke materials but also, to a large extent as our family snapshots and wedding albums, as our cultural history and political validation.” Again, Waugh stressed the importance of pornography and visual culture in the formation of gay male sensibilities and gay male culture, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. Key areas examined in the article were brothel photography where models were often photographed having sex, those of statuesque male models posing for magazines such as *Physique Pictorial*, and erotic images of both real military officers and show models dressed as soldiers. Reading these photographs, Waugh argued that, “[I]t is images in interaction with the world, not images in isolation, that we must focus on when we talk about porn, when we talk about how we use images and how they use us.”⁷⁸ Indeed, images, particularly photographs, play an important role in the construction of reality by acting as part of a “system of information, fitted into schemes of classification and storage...,” as Susan Sontag argues.⁷⁹ Like heterosexual pornography, gay pornography crafted a specific understanding and appreciation of the male body that operated within cultural frameworks around age, gender, class, race, and

⁷⁸ Waugh, “Photography, Passion, and Power,” *The Body Politic* 101, March 1984, 29.

⁷⁹ Susan Sontag, “The Image-World,” in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 82.

sexuality. Among these registers, Waugh considered gender to be the “ultimate determining factor of power relations within and around heterosexual pornography,” but not so much in its homosexual counterpart.⁸⁰ Rather, any form of homosexual sex act deviated from heterosexual reproductive sex and, therefore, threatened the social fabric of society.

Without gender differentiation between male and female, Waugh saw power relations in homosexual content through body type, masculinity, and sexuality as a style for gay men. In his words, “the iconography of cigarette, jean-jacket and ‘drop dead’ pose is still with us thirty years later, clonified [sic] into three million walking mirror images. In still photos, it is difficult to denote ‘straight’ precisely...so the macho body type is used as shorthand.”⁸¹ Waugh did not simply challenge the aesthetic of macho masculinity, which was ubiquitous in gay male pornography, but attempted to discover the phenomenon’s roots and the power of visual culture in defining gender. When stressing the importance of “posing” as well as referring to clothing as “iconography,” Waugh’s analysis harks back to Irving Goffman’s concept of sign-vehicles. The positioning and movement of the body, how the body is adorned with clothing and what type of clothing is selected are all elements that make up Goffman’s theory of sign-vehicles as extensions of the self. In this manner, Waugh invariably argues that gay male masculinity was intrinsically linked to the presentation of the self through style and performance. His article also serves as a reminder that *TBP* was an important forum for deconstructing the connections between visual images being consumed in gay culture and the fraught discussions around the politics of gay masculinity, sexuality, and desire.

⁸⁰ Waugh, “Photography, Passion, and Power,” 32.

⁸¹ Waugh, “Photography, Passion, and Power,” 33.

By connecting pornography to how gay men performed their masculinity in the 1970s, Waugh attempted to add a new dimension to debates on pornography by reclaiming pornography as part of a gay cultural heritage. Waugh's articles were a major argument in favour of covering erotica in *TBP*. Considering the importance of pornography in constructing social expectations of sexuality and ideal body types, *TBP* did not exclusively cover gay pornography or pornography laden with homoerotic elements. Rather, magazines such as *Playboy* received the attention of some in the collective quite early on. Much of the collective's aim was to demonstrate, like Waugh would later do, the social implications of pornography on desire and sexuality. Furthermore, concerns over the CBC's equations of pornography and gay sexuality, as well as MacGuigan's efforts at censorship and the tales of Waugh's archival findings, all suggest that early questions from Ed Jackson about the influence of sexualized imagery in *TBP* had been addressed by the 1980s.

Playboy Pin-Ups and Peacocks

No other pornographic publication came under as much scrutiny in *TBP* as *Playboy* since it arguably held the widest audience and influence in reimagining gender and sexuality across North America. Founded in 1953 by Hugh Hefner, *Playboy* emerged, according to historian James Gilbert, when "Hefner realized that [Alfred] Kinsey had discovered a niche market of college boys and young adults for soft-core pornography and he [Hefner] established *Playboy* in part to fill it."⁸² Alfred Kinsey's works, *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (1953), challenged the

⁸² James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 102.

dominant narrative that “healthy sexual behavior meant intercourse in marriage, or heterosexual intercourse, or even intercourse at all.”⁸³ His research reevaluated normal sexual practices, categories of “homosexual” and “heterosexual”, as well as fidelity. In doing so, Kinsey ultimately pushed sex and sexuality into the consciousness of the American public. Historian James H. Jones argues that Kinsey understood homosexuality as both a normal biological phenomenon, but also something that was the result of “cultural and behavioural factors, including early sexual experiences, psychic conditioning, social pressures, and the availability of sex partners.”⁸⁴ He also did not believe that “homosexuality” should be considered a proper identity, instead preferring it as an adjective for particular behaviours.⁸⁵ By separating sexuality from identity, Kinsey sought to present human sexuality along a continuum and, in doing so, created plenty of media attention and debate around sexuality in an era of sexual propriety and Cold War containment. The subsequent publicity helped produce “a tremendous sexual awakening,” in the words of Hefner, among young educated men and women in the 1950s and 1960s.⁸⁶

Capitalizing on this “sexual awakening,” *Playboy* reimagined femininity and masculinity in markedly different ways than pre-World War II constructions of gender.⁸⁷

⁸³ Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, 87.

⁸⁴ James J. Jones, *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997), 426.

⁸⁵ Jones, *Alfred C. Kinsey*, 531.

⁸⁶ Cited from an interview between Hefner and biographer Thomas Weyr. Thomas Weyr, *Reaching for Paradise: The Playboy Vision of America* (New York: Times Books, 1978), 197-198.

⁸⁷ Pre-war constructions of gender centred around heterosexual marriage, domesticity, and female submissiveness. In the early twentieth century women were expected to embody what the idea of “the angel in the house.” This concept was primarily set out in early nineteenth century domestic novels such as Coventry Patmore’s poem, “The Angel in the House,” and stressed the importance of women’s domestic duties. Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 42.

Playboy marketed femininity in the form of scantily-clad women who represented the sexual fantasies of straight men. These girls were presented as central to “pin-up” culture—a culture founded on the representation, and arguably exploitation, of women who evoked traditional notions of femininity and sensuality. Historian Elizabeth Fratterigo contends that “*Playboy*, deemed ‘coffee-table pornography,’ came under attack for its powerful role in normalizing photographs of nude women for a male gaze, which critics viewed as having set the stage for the proliferation of ‘hard-core’ porn.”⁸⁸ For those critical of *Playboy*, in *TBP* or otherwise, the magazine not only normalized nudity in mainstream visual culture, but reinforced tropes of desirability, particularly around body types, and reduced women’s identities to sexual objects—a disavowal of the personal politics of second-wave feminists and gay liberationists.

In 1974, Herb Spiers of *TBP* critiqued *Playboy* for turning female bodies into sexualized objects for male pleasure while reviewing Rosemary Radford Ruether’s 1974 edited collection, *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*. Spiers argued that “Presently, from Playboy to peepshows, women are ogled at as bodies. Their humanity remains denied.”⁸⁹ Ruether herself argued that Saint Augustine’s views towards sex left women to become “literally an extension of the male body, to be used either in a masturbatory way for ‘carnal pleasure,’ or, in a right ordering of the male body in relation to its ‘head,’ in an instrumental way as a mechanism under

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Fratterigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 200.

⁸⁹ Underline in original. Herb Spiers, Review of “Religion & Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions, Rosemary Radford Ruether (ed), New York, Simon and Schuster, 1974, 356 pages, \$4.50 pbk.,” *The Body Politic* 16, November-December 1974, 22.

male control for impregnation and incubation of the fetus.”⁹⁰ Her arguments around Catholicism, particularly Saint Augustine’s teachings, informed Spiers’s argument that women’s puritan image has been revoked by sexual liberation, but “only to the promotion of pruriency[sic].”⁹¹ He then extended the dehumanizing aspect of visualizing women’s bodies to *Playboy*’s pin-culture.

Spiers’s condemnation of *Playboy* continued in a 1977 article, “Promiscuity,” in which he conceptualized how public perceptions of promiscuity, what he referred to as the “playboy philosophy,” created an illusion of sexual freedom which was in fact “enslavement.”⁹² Such a distinction between freedom and enslavement, however, leaves little room for individual agency. Neither does it account for gay male promiscuity, which is transgressive of heteronormative monogamy, as well as the subtleties of how power, liberation, and discipline are coextensive. Seemingly, Spiers’s critique of pin-up culture appeared to be limited to women’s bodies with no mention of male pin-ups, as he himself would later be a pin-up in *TBP*.⁹³ Nevertheless, his earlier 1974 critique began a cooperative effort amongst the collective to problematize the display of women’s bodies

⁹⁰ Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church,” in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 163.

⁹¹ Spiers, “Religion & Sexism,” 22.

⁹² Herb Spiers, “Promiscuity,” *The Body Politic* 31, March 1977, 7.

⁹³ In February 1982, Spiers’s nude image appeared as part of *TBP*’s tenth anniversary celebratory exposé, “Who we were, who we are,” by Gerald Hannon. Amongst interviews with founding members of the collective, a nude image of Spiers with the headline, “Spiers...had the hunkiest body even before it was hot to be hunky” was included in his interview about working on the paper. Others covered in the article had photographs complimenting their profiles as well, but none of them were nude. The purpose of his nude photograph becomes further opaque since his discussion of *TBP* focused on the atmosphere of the collective and crafting their first issue, rather than nudity, sexualized content, or the body. The same critical language of female nudity and pin-up culture in *Playboy* can be reapplied to Spiers’s own self-portrait in this context. His nude image which was intended to be “ogled” at, evidenced by the caption, suggests that his body, and arguably male bodies more broadly, were paradoxical to his previous messages around *Playboy* pin-ups and sexuality. See Gerald Hannon, “Who we were, who we are,” *The Body Politic* 80, January-February 1982, 34.

in the magazine and later helped foster a great deal of discussion around the role of feminism in the newspaper.

In 1975, *TBP* editor Ed Jackson condemned the sexist exploitation of women's bodies in *Playboy* by focusing on women's vain attempts at achieving an impossible standard of beauty. Jackson argued that:

The **Playboy** [sic] image of the buxom blond in a baby-doll negligee would almost be a joke, if women did not continue to measure themselves against this 'ideal.'

Few people can conform to the rigorous standard, so most are coerced into spending vast amounts on cosmetics and clothing to make themselves into an approximation of what they can rarely be, or should not even want to be.⁹⁴

Puzzlingly, however, Jackson's analysis implies that women are somehow more obsessed with their vanity and more likely to be tricked or coerced into conforming to societal expectations of gender than men. Any discussion of gay men measuring themselves to a similar ideal of masculinity was non-existent within the context of heterosexual pornography and men's lifestyle magazines.

Critiques of *Playboy* and femininity all but ignored Hefner's simultaneous effort to reimagine masculinity as part of the postwar consumer ethos. *Playboy* emerged in 1953 with the image of the modern bachelor in mind. Hefner attempted to assuage any concerns of female exploitation in *Playboy* by reminding readers (who were almost exclusively male) that it was first and foremost a guide for young and middle-aged men on how to act on sexual urges in a "natural" and sophisticated way while redefining their masculinity in the process. Hefner described the magazine's mandate in January 1965 as

⁹⁴ Original emphasis in bold. Jackson, "Nudity and Sexism," 12.

follows: “For the insecure young man with time and money on his hands, PLAYBOY provides a guidebook with an authoritative tone beside which Papal encyclicals appear indecisive.”⁹⁵ This editorial credo was concretely established between 1962 and 1965 when Hefner himself published a series of monthly editorials—twenty-five in total—entitled, “The Playboy Philosophy.” Marking the ninth anniversary of the publication, “The Playboy Philosophy” was written to acknowledge *Playboy*’s considerable influence on society and the importance of consumption in defining bachelor masculinity.

By establishing consumption as a necessary activity for the bachelor, an activity traditionally reserved for women,⁹⁶ *Playboy* proved, in the words of Gilbert, that “[e]ven consumption could be rescued from the hands of women by associating it with good taste and seduction.”⁹⁷ Defining masculinity along the lines of consumption rather than production however, catalyzed what Barbara Ehrenreich describes as the “flight from commitment”—a male revolt that can be understood as either “a childish flight from responsibility,” an accommodation to the consumer culture, or as a libertarian movement for social change.⁹⁸ Fratterigo argues that, “*Playboy*’s ‘modern living’ feature, travelogues, and nightclubs created a vibrant tableau of a masculine identity fashioned around material acquisition and pleasure. The magazine’s painstaking reconnaissance of

⁹⁵ Capitalization in original. Hugh M. Hefner, “The Playboy Philosophy,” *Playboy*, January 1965, 53.

⁹⁶ In the United States and Canada, consumption was historically seen as an activity for women (especially middle-class Anglo-Saxon women) whereby they could constitute their identities as “ladies,” wives, and mothers. However, historian Nan Enstad argues that working-class women at the turn of the twentieth century used consumption of fashion, dime novels, and other material goods to achieve some social mobility and establish an identity of “working ladyhood.” The gendering of consumption, or in men’s case the lack thereof, meant respectable masculinity centred on being providers for the household economy, rather than consume at their leisure. See: Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

⁹⁷ Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, 200.

⁹⁸ Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Knopf-Doubleday Press, 1983 [2011]), 171.

the consumer landscape helped to transform readers into an important market for a variety of personal goods.”⁹⁹ As a result, *Playboy* changed masculinity as being primarily defined along a dichotomy between home and work into something that matched the consumer ethic of postwar America.

A great deal of space in *Playboy* was dedicated to providing men with tips and guides on how to take part in the look of the bachelor. In every issue of *Playboy* there were articles and advertisements catering to men’s desire to conform to the ideal bachelor aesthetic. Writers such as David Platt and Fashion Director Robert L. Green wrote editorials on men’s fashion which not only provided a particular aesthetic or style for bachelorhood, but reminded readers that consumption of avant-garde clothing remained a heterosexual male pastime. In doing so, bachelor style normalized nontraditional styles and colours in menswear in the twentieth century as alternative styles of masculinity. For example, in discussing the trend of fur greatcoats in the November 1968 issue of *Playboy*, Green informed readers that “greatcoats bring a new warming trend to the frostiest of football stadia.” Referring to the sport of football, Green simultaneously made fur coats more masculine and, as he frequently alluded to in his articles, reminded readers that “personal style is of paramount importance.”¹⁰⁰ The success of the fashion column was significant, with Hefner himself reporting that “the feature that produces the greatest reader response in *Playboy* each issue -- month in, month out -- isn't the Playmate, it's our articles on male fashion.”¹⁰¹ Hefner’s bachelor stylized his masculinity through clothing,

⁹⁹ Fratterigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America*, 79.

¹⁰⁰ Robert L. Green, “*Playboy*’s Fall and Winter Fashion Forecast,” *Playboy*, October 1968, 96.

¹⁰¹ Hugh Hefner, “The *Playboy* Philosophy,” *Playboy*, December 1962, 75.

leading to a redefinition of how masculinity could be acquired and displayed in a consumer-oriented postwar society.¹⁰²

An example of how bachelorhood was stylized around consumption is with the peacock revolution, a menswear phenomenon between 1967 and 1972. Advertised as a resistance to the “personality type” of man that many emerging corporations desired in the 1940s and 1950s, the peacock revolution was a colourful menswear that embodied neoliberal values around individuality spurred by economic liberalism in the 1960s.¹⁰³ The changing postwar economy, according to Thomas Waugh, “enshrined the organization man as the hegemonic model of masculinity, replacing the cowboy and entrepreneur in the cultural imaginary and in socio-economic organization alike, and shifting the predominant ethos from production to consumption.”¹⁰⁴ Indeed, in 1969, J. Paul Getty wrote an article in *Playboy* challenging the myth of the organization man being ubiquitous in the corporate world, or in his words, “that corporate stereotype of the bland leading the bland...” Getty acknowledged that there were some men who voluntarily donned gray-flannel suits in an attempt to blend into their environments, but that these “yes men” were “least likely to succeed in the business world.”¹⁰⁵ The peacock

¹⁰² Becky Conekin argues that “Hefner had by 1954, it seems, a very clear idea of both what he and his readership should look like. The youthfulness of their attire should be represented by their relative casualness, not their rebelliousness.” Becky Conekin, “Fashioning the Playboy: Messages of Style and Masculinity in the Pages of *Playboy Magazine*, 1953-1963,” *Fashion Theory* 4, no. 4 (2000): 454.

¹⁰³ Christopher Greig argues that corporations prized “conformity, the basis of a conservative, risk-averse, corporative workplace culture that required the development of a more ‘domesticated’ corporate male spirit emphasizing teamwork.” He also argues that in Ontario specifically, “The number of corporations in Ontario tripled from 20,000 in 1946 to just over 60,000 by 1960.” Christopher J. Greig, *Ontario Boys: Masculinity and the Idea of Boyhood in Postwar Ontario, 1945-1960* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2014), xxi.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Waugh, *Romance of Transgression in Canada: Queer Sexualities, Nations, Cinemas* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006), 30-31.

¹⁰⁵ J. Paul Getty, “The Myth of the Organization Man,” *Playboy*, February 1969, 131.

revolution thereby became a means of men reasserting their masculinity aesthetically and in novel ways.¹⁰⁶

The reorientation towards the consumption of goods associated with masculinity undoubtedly influenced how gay male masculinity was stylized over the 1970s. While the peacock revolution was understood to be a predominantly heterosexual phenomenon, advertisements in *TBP* illustrate that gay male life moved in an almost opposite direction. Some gay men undoubtedly styled themselves in colourful clothing, but advertisements for facial hair grooming products, leather clothing and accessories in *TBP* demonstrate a shift towards idealizing a rugged aesthetic of the working class in the gay community—discussed in Chapter Two. Rather than celebrate heterosexual men's changing fashions and loosening sexual inhibitions, *TBP* problematized the ways in which gay male masculinity was reimagined (outside of pornography) along a similar axis to its heterosexual counterpart. However, *TBP* often presented masculinity in a similar fashion to the nude female *Playboy* bunny. Considering the various cultural forces of the postwar period then, it is evident that desirability to conform was not solely the result of postwar concerns of national security and the institutionalization of the nuclear family. Rather, affluence and consumption, an emerging sexualized visual culture in heterosexual lifestyle magazines such as *Playboy*, and the budding desire to manufacture and display the muscular able-body in a time of shifting gender roles, created a unique point of reference for masculinity in urban gay male culture.

¹⁰⁶ The peacock revolution also had the beneficial effect of blurring sexual boundaries, at least in terms of public visibility. Historian Stuart Henderson's study of Toronto's Yorkville neighbourhood reveals how the area's unique bohemian scene in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which informed peacock style, was important for gays and lesbians because they could fluidly mix with other groups, such as the American Beats—a countercultural group that rejected conventional style and materialism, enjoyed recreational drugs, and practiced alternative sexualities. Stuart Henderson, *Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 63.

Conclusion

As gay male culture flourished in the 1970s, magazines and newspapers such as *TBP* pursued the burgeoning market of sexualized visual culture by featuring images of rugged men donning little to no clothing. *TBP* is reflective of an international effort among gay periodicals to wrestle with the visualization of desire. Ed Jackson's quote introducing the chapter represented a tension in *TBP* between navigating the politics of the male body and selling the body to attract readers. Visualizing desire in *TBP* meant visualizing the male body and the embodied understandings and aesthetics of masculinity. Over the course of the 1970s and early 1980s, portrayals of gay male masculinity became increasingly homogenized into an aesthetic that embraced the building of muscular bodies, masculine performances of gender, and showing off the Adonis-like figure, albeit in a manner similar to the women in *Playboy*. Gay and lesbian periodicals inscribed particular connotations of gender and sexuality onto the male body, which put the male body at the forefront of readers' minds. Similar to the *Playboy* bunny, the rugged, muscular White body came to represent the epitome of gay sexual desire.

The similarities between visualizing sexuality in gay culture and mainstream culture is best captured in *Playboy* by Dr. William Simon, a researcher at the Institute of Sex Research in Bloomington, Indiana and co-editor of *Sexual Deviance* (1968). In an article featuring a panel of psychiatrists, lawyers, gay activists, journalists, and essayists, in which they discussed both the causes and consequences of homosexuality and how homosexuals were making room for themselves in society, Simon stated: "the futures of

homosexual and heterosexual are inextricably linked—and we all stand to profit.”¹⁰⁷

Indeed, in the same 1974 interview with *TBP* where he noted the tension between feminism and gay men, Altman argued that “the sexual mores of the gay world are becoming the sexual mores of the straight world. Getting off with someone and not knowing their name until afterwards in [sic] increasingly as true of the straight world as of the gay world.”¹⁰⁸ Ironically, *Playboy* was designed around these “mores.”

While Hefner argued that homosexuality should not be criminalized and marginalized, articles and advertisements in *Playboy* “avoided any hint of effeminacy...as the articles were always tempered with the manly interests of the bachelor,” in the words of historian Carrie Pitzulo.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, *TBP* demonstrates that the image of male homosexuality drew on a legacy of heteronormative white macho masculinity in film and imagery across the twentieth century, culminating in Waugh’s exploration of pornography as part of gay history. The editorial collective’s understanding of visual culture as an important medium in which sexuality and gender are conveyed the importance of stylizing the body as part of a specific—and often debated—understanding of masculinity among its gay male readership.

Gay men’s yearning for a muscular body was no less a response to a growing culture of bodybuilding as it was to the spectacle of nude white muscular bodies scattered through gay-targeted periodicals. In a period that witnessed new displays of masculinity emerge, gay men continued to reinvent their masculinity in the 1970s to assuage notions of effeminacy and weakness. In doing so, however, such practices contributed to the

¹⁰⁷ “Playboy Panel: Homosexuality,” *Playboy*, April, 1971, 191.

¹⁰⁸ “An interview: Dennis Altman,” *The Body Politic* 13, May-June 1974, 19.

¹⁰⁹ Carrie Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies: The Sexual Politics of Playboy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 88.

growth of one of the most iconographic gay male styles: macho masculinity. The “macho clone,” as he was frequently referred to in *TBP*, did not just represent an important aesthetic ritual for many gay men; he also symbolized both an embrace and rejection of the heteronormative status quo. Informed by Roman-Greco aesthetics, bodybuilding, and normalized performances of masculinity, macho style adorned the pages of the *TBP* and other lesbian and gay periodicals. Since macho style internalized heteronormative values of the male body, its continual presence in *TBP* and other gay periodicals in the 1970s relayed social values around masculinity that were already being prescribed by the government and mainstream culture. However, *TBP* editors like Joseph Interrante maintained a critical engagement with gay male masculinity well into the 1980s, with Interrante claiming in 1980 that “You can still be macho and wash the dishes.”¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Joseph Interrante, “A Man’s Place is...” *The Body Politic* 64, June-July 1980, 34.

CHAPTER TWO: Pin the Macho on the Man

We project images of pretty boys, tough boys, wild boys, heartbreakers and whores, all of them a series of facades parading about as modern sculpture. Why would anyone choose consciously to project such an image? Doesn't this confuse more traditional concepts of sexism/role-playing/objectification?

- Tim Guest, "Image Control," *The Body Politic* 43, May 1977, 11.

Our culture, as I see it, is anything but original. We have opted for heterosexual looks and actions. To be the slightest bit nelly is to be a gay leper. We have become prisoners of a stereotype: macho, which looks absolutely ridiculous on most.

- Noel Bari, "Prisoners of a stereotype," *The Body Politic* 67, October 1980, 4.

In May 1984, It Store, a gay novelty store at 52 McCaul Street in Toronto, published an advertisement in *The Body Politic* (TBP) for their game, "Pin the Macho on the Man." Complete with 25 "hilarious units," the game featured a white, muscular stud who had a target over his pelvic region and players were to pin his "macho" on him—similar to pin the tail on the donkey.¹ Macho, in this case, was not something that was automatically inscribed onto the illustrative figure, but was something that had to be acquired through proper placement of his "machismo," and, most importantly, through the eyes of other gay men. Macho represented the apex of gay male masculinity and sexual virility. Macho was a multilayered style that reflected the gay male community's

¹ "Pin the Macho on the Man," *The Body Politic* 103, May 1984, 26.

idea of “straight”² masculinity. The subversion of homosexuality as part of macho style meant passing was integral to a macho performance. In addition to providing gay men with the ability to avoid detection in mainstream society, macho style was also a self-conscious attempt to dress up part of modern gay sexuality. By embracing both straight and gay aesthetics, macho style existed in a queer middle ground. This middle ground, according to Geczy and Karaminas “is a tangible example of the subversion that is a fundamental characteristic of queer style.”³ Macho style partly relied on clothing as sign-vehicles (flannel shirts, baseball hats, jeans, fatigues, and hiking boots), and became more sexualized by the late 1970s when leather and other forms of bondage attributed to S&M (sadomasochism) culture proliferated.⁴

Falling between “passing” as heterosexual and a “campy” performance of masculinity, macho style resonates with Gayatri Spivak’s reading of the artistry of the faked female orgasm, what she describes as “scrupulously fake.”⁵ In a society, which sociologist Raewyn W. Connell argues, “positions homosexual masculinities at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men,” macho style was not just a spectacle; it was an artistic performance with the aim of displacing homophobic stereotypes of gay

² From the first issue of *TBP*, the word “straight” was used to denote heterosexuals and the privileges they receive from hegemonic heterosexual culture. See: Tony Metie, “Unmasquerade,” *The Body Politic* 1, November-December 1971, 1; Jude, “Deconstruction of ‘sexual identity,’” *The Body Politic* 1, November-December 1971, 3; and, “A Program for Gay Liberation,” *The Body Politic* 1, November-December 1971, 14.

³ Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas, *Queer Style* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 87.

⁴ The term “sign-vehicles” lies within Erving Goffman’s concept of dramaturgy. Dramaturgy suggests that individual behaviour is based on interactions with others similarly to a staged production. Sign-vehicles can be facial expressions, material goods, the context of the interaction, or other bodily means of communication from one individual to another. See: Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956), 14-15.

⁵ Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 70.

masculinity.⁶ Echols notes that “Whether gay macho was a parody or a sincere emulation of ‘normal’ masculinity, it provided protective cover for gay men who during the 1970s became a much more visible presence in the urban landscape.”⁷ Drag queens may have led the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City and informed the overt visibility of gay male sexuality in the following years, but members of *TBP* (editors and writers) noted passing as heterosexual proved to be a useful tactic for avoiding police brutality. In the Canadian context, passing as heterosexual was all the more important given government-initiated national security campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s facilitated by the RCMP.⁸ Historians Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile argue that, “[t]he social space of the closet and the practice of living a double life were constructed, in part, through the national security campaigns.”⁹ Macho style was a performance that contained practical benefits of personal wellbeing by shirking connotations of effeminacy and “queerness,” and conform to heterosexual expectations of masculinity.

For *TBP*’s editorial collective, macho style was a source of anxiety and tension, particularly in regard to gay male desire and masculinity. I do not suggest that there was a universal desire among gay men to be macho or with someone who was, but rather the aesthetic of macho masculinity proliferated over the course of the 1970s and 1980s as a constructed object of desire in the gay male community. *TBP* illustrates how macho style came to be a prominent aesthetic within a hierarchy of masculinities throughout the

⁶ Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 78. Also see Giyatri Spivak, “Displacement and the Discourse of Women,” in *Displacement: Derrida and After*, ed. Mark Krupnick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 178.

⁷ Alice Echols, *Hot Stuff: Disco and the Remaking of American Culture* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 123.

⁸ These campaigns produced the “threat of discovery” in the Cold War climate using surveillance and blackmail. Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2010), 48.

⁹ Kinsman and Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers*, 120.

1970s and into the 1980s.¹⁰ Editorials dedicated to macho masculinity and the male body, stories about butch engineers coming out and photographic exposés on S&M culture, as well as classified advertisements, and advertisements for bars, bathhouses, and sex shops reflect the varying, and yet equally pervasive, discourses around macho masculinity. This chapter focuses on the construction, perpetuation, and destabilization of macho style in *TBP* up until 1984. By the early 1980s, HIV/AIDS had produced fear and paranoia around gay male sexuality and masculinity, raising questions about the need to portray gay male bodies as healthy and athletic. In doing so, the disease ultimately changed discourses surrounding gay male masculinity.

TBP's editorial collective, as well as its readers, played critical roles in mediating what it meant to be masculine, particularly macho over the course of the 1970s and early 1980s. However, the editorial collective inadvertently propped up the hegemonic image of the white macho figure, despite challenging constructions of gender and sexual roles on numerous occasions. *TBP* is therefore an important source for analyzing the ways in which macho style was shaped by notions of passing and camp, the body, and whiteness. These notions were integral to the creation and maintenance of macho style as a gay aesthetic. The prominence of macho style also draws attention to the importance of heterosexual masculinity in shaping gay male culture and in defining masculinity as a performative style.

¹⁰ Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas contend that “[m]asculinizing gay identity cannot be seen in isolation as an impatience to the effeminized stereotype but, first, as a touchstone for opening up the possibility for different queer identities; second, to claim masculinity for gays as well as straight males; third, to internalize and embody the desire for maleness and, indeed, the desire to conquer males felt by many gays; and fourth, to recognize the complementary counterpart of the effeminate male in which the more male member is conceived as the giver and the girly boy, the receiver.” Geczy and Karaminas, *Queer Style*, 88.

Macho Style

Macho style was a return to more conservative dress from the bright colours and paisley patterns of the hippie counterculture and the Peacock Revolution of the 1960s to disco culture of the 1970s. In the context of Toronto, Stuart Henderson notes that with the increasing number of hippies, a “scene in which gayness lost its cachet of cool (despite lingering respect and admiration for the Beats),” gay men moved out of the bohemian scene of Yorkville by the end of the 1960s and early 1970s.¹¹ At the same time, queer friendly establishments began moving to Yonge Street making Yorkville increasingly peripheral in the development of a gay and lesbian community. Without the protection that blending in with the artistic Beats community afforded, gay men took charge of their fashion in novel ways. The most visually-defined style was macho. While macho style was not entirely static in its aesthetics, it did consistently play on themes of whiteness and that of Roman-Greco physiques, all the while embracing clothing that exemplified male musculature.

Marlon Brando’s character, Terry Malloy, a dockworker in the 1954 film *On the Waterfront*, was an iconic figure in establishing the early aesthetic of macho style. Brando donned tight denim and a white T-shirt to exemplify his musculature, and slicked-back hair for the “bad-boy” look. Macho style was a 1970s appropriation of this aesthetic until it became more synonymous with the leather subculture of sadomasochism (S&M) in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As Pamela Robertson notes, the Levis-and-denim culture of macho was not only an “exaggeration of gender codes by the ‘right’

¹¹ Stuart Henderson, *Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 64.

sex,” but represented a “hyperbolic masculinization of gay male bodies.”¹² This eventually included leather, with famed gay photographer Robert Mapplethorpe including the material in his own work on the stylization of gay “butch” masculinity.¹³ Mapplethorpe’s photographs of men in leather and denim both reflected gay stylistic practices of “butchness” while simultaneously endorsing macho style as *the* aesthetic of gay male masculinity.¹⁴

To be macho and to don macho style was to be part of macho culture. Macho culture flourished by the late 1970s and early 1980s to the point that the term “clone” was used by some to describe the near ubiquitous presence of macho men in the gay community.¹⁵ In his 1998 sociological study of the macho clone and masculinity in New York’s gay male community, Martin Levine argues, “[f]olkloric assumptions about macho masculinity lay at the heart of the manly presentational strategies. The term ‘macho’ implied overconformity to the traditional male gender role.”¹⁶ Analyzing macho as a hypermasculine performance in *TBP* provides a counter-narrative to Alice Echols’s argument that macho culture emerged in major urban cities across North America in the 1970s with the flamboyancy of disco culture. In her book, *Hot Stuff*, Echols argues that,

¹² Pamela Robertson, “What Makes the Feminist Camp?” in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 274.

¹³ Looking at Mapplethorpe’s work, Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen argue that “Mapplethorpe’s exploration of the relationship between sex and the adornment and stylization of the body is most clearly expressed in his engagement with leather and bondage.” Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Photographs* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2016), 273.

¹⁴ Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen argue that “[t]he wearing of leather is a symbol of ruggedness among the ‘gay set’ as well as the motorcycle gangs. This combination of style, fetishism, and ‘rugged’ masculinity not only informed Mapplethorpe’s self-presentation but would become a chief concern of his creative work in the years to come [1970s onward].” Martineau and Salvesen, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, 273.

¹⁵ Macho style was the dramaturgical elements and accoutrements that made up macho culture. Macho clone was a term used by the early 1980s used to describe those who participated in macho culture and may have identified as macho. Thus, macho style was the visual representation of macho culture and the macho (sometimes “clone”) identity.

¹⁶ Martin P. Levine, *Gay Macho: The Life and Death of the Homosexual Clone* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 57.

“Gay men’s macho style first took off in the discos of New York and San Francisco, where it was most strenuously cultivated, but it spread even to European cities.”¹⁷ While discotheques were spaces in which gay men could display their machismo in flamboyant ways, *TBP* contains evidence of macho in early bathhouse advertisements and classified ads by gay men who did not necessarily partake in disco culture, demonstrating that macho style was the result of many cultural factors.

Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas explain that macho style emerged as “[s]igns of gay identity became more forthright, from earrings in the right ear (or two earrings; why hold back?) to back-pocket coloured scarves and bandannas.”¹⁸ Pocket hankies in particular provided gay men with a hidden code to communicate sexual availability. Macho men appropriated hanky code from the effeminate legacy handkerchiefs once had in the 1960s, only to equate it with the “hip pockets of the New Butch” and the “Fifties theme of ‘His & Hers’ towels sets...,” according to *TBP* columnist John Forbes.¹⁹ In addition to fashion, macho style was shaped by a boon in bodybuilding culture which helped enshrine white athletic bodies as the epitome of desire.²⁰ Nevertheless, Echols’s argument that, “embedded in this macho turn were changes in gay men’s identity and subjectivity” resonates with discussions, debates, advertisements, and imagery around macho style in *TBP*.²¹

As *TBP* demonstrates, macho style was the performance of macho masculinity using a macho aesthetic, eventually growing in Toronto’s gay male community to

¹⁷ Echols, *Hot Stuff*, 122.

¹⁸ Geczy and Karaminas, *Queer Style*, 86.

¹⁹ John Forbes, “Hanky Panky: Beyond the pale & back again,” *The Body Politic* 49, December-January 1978/1979, 18.

²⁰ Geczy and Karaminas, *Queer Style*, 88.

²¹ Echols, *Hot Stuff*, 123.

become a cultural phenomenon by the late 1970s. Macho style involved practices and aesthetics of masculinity largely constructed along heteronormative lines. In her broader analysis of masculinity in heterosexual society, Connell notes that “[t]he number of men rigorously practising the hegemonic pattern in its entirety may be quite small. Yet the majority of men gain from its hegemony, since they benefit from the patriarchal dividend...”²² Indeed, the same effort to perform a legible masculinity within the gay male community can be observed through *TBP*. While macho style may or may not have been donned by most gay men, its rise in *TBP* reflects efforts amongst some segments of the gay community to combat stereotypes of gay male effeminacy.

In *TBP*’s formative years, the primary concern regarding macho style for members of the editorial collective, such as Jerry Moldenhauer, Hugh Brewster, Herb Spiers, Gerald Hannon, and Ed Jackson, was that it created a false impression that the majority of the gay male community fell in line with this aesthetic. As the Guest and Bari quotes at the opening of this chapter suggest, many of the editors and writers of *TBP* continued to view macho style throughout the 1970s as a problematic construction that represented heterosexual influences in the gay male community. Meanwhile, commercial advertisements in *TBP* communicated the opposite—championing macho style as the height of gay male masculinity and sexual virility. Advertisements, news editorials, letters to the editors, classifieds, and cartoons demonstrate the ways in which the

²² Connell, *Masculinities*, 79. Connell also contends with James Messerschmidt that “hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men.” Raewyn W. Connell and James Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 832.

newspaper was a nexus point for constructing, (de)constructing, and policing definitions and understandings of macho masculinity.

In this regard, *TBP* was similar to what Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec would describe as a “heterotopia.” Foucault and Miskowiec describe “heterotopias” as spaces that are unlike everyday existence but are meant to reflect everyday existence.²³ *TBP* was a heterotopia in which advertisements portrayed macho style as unrealistically ubiquitous in the gay community. However, editors of *TBP* frequently problematized the ways in which masculinity was positioned within the binary of the hetero/homosexual matrix whereby effeminacy was considered undesirable. The success and prominence of macho in advertisements, as well as the desire for the macho aesthetic in classified advertisements, exemplify the influence of macho style on the gay community. As Susan Bordo argues, “[r]epresentations of the body have a history, but so too do viewers, and they bring that history—both personal and cultural—to their perception and interpretation. Different viewers may see different things.”²⁴ Indeed, Bordo’s analysis of the male body resonates with the fact that gay men reading *TBP* and those writing for it had different viewpoints on the ways in which the male body should be represented. As a result, macho style, in its various different looks, remained at the centre of debate about what was considered looking or behaving “masculine” or “manly” in Toronto’s gay male community.

²³ Mirrors are just one of many examples of heterotopias. Foucault and Miskowiec argue that “[i]n the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent...” Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 24.

²⁴ Susan Bordo, *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and in Private* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), 29.

Editors of the newspaper began to discuss gay men's idolatrizing of hegemonic heterosexual characteristics of masculinity (rugged, tough, unemotional, athletic, and strong) as early as issue #4 of its publication in 1972. In this issue, editor Hugh Brewster's article, "The Myth of the New Homosexual," served as one of the earliest critiques of heterosexism and gay mimicry of straight conceptions of masculinity and gender in North American gay male culture. It was a response to Tom Burke's December 1969 *Esquire* article, "The New Homosexuality," in which he argued that the middle-class public may be finally willing to, in Burke's words, "empathize with (if not quite approve of)" the stereotype of the homosexual.²⁵ Brewster problematized Burke's equation of homosexuality more broadly with male homosexuality, which ignored lesbians in the process, and argued that while straight society might be ready to accept the homosexual stereotype, gay men were not. For Brewster, contempt for the gay stereotype was the result of two cultural phenomena in the gay community: the first being the desire of some gay men to circumvent any association with femininity by labelling themselves as "bisexual," and the second was a general discomfort toward female homosexuals.²⁶

According to Brewster, this latent misogyny was a result of the gendered split in the gay community and broader heterosexist power structures around sexuality:

'Dyke dislike' among gay men, (even young, 'hip' gay men) is symptomatic of the great split in the gay community, or more precisely the ghetto non-community. The gay ghetto has for the most part functioned only as a kind of pseudo community, a marketplace based on sexual barter, and as such has not encouraged interaction between the sexes. This division results from our oppression and is then furthered

²⁵ Tom Burke, "The New Homosexuality," *Esquire*, December 1969, 178.

²⁶ Hugh Brewster, "The Myth of the New Homosexual," *The Body Politic* 4, March-April 1972, 3.

by our own attitudes, when we see each other as nothing more than sex objects.

Gay community can only be fostered by encouragement of the empathetic bond that exists between gay men and women.²⁷

Macho style was perceived to be a visual manifestation of this fragmentation between gay men and lesbians because it centered on a rejection of effeminate displays of affection in the gay community. Since macho culture spurned the notion that gay men were womanly, deviant, or immoral, the disdain for the feminine man reveals a model of power in gay male culture that largely mirrors disdain for transgressing gender roles in heterosexual culture.²⁸ The notion that macho style embodied gay male misogyny was particularly alarming to members of *TBP* because of their agenda to unite the community, both gay men and lesbians, self-identified feminists and otherwise. As a result, *TBP*'s writing on activism, masculinity, and gay cultural life wrestled with macho style throughout the 1970s.

Most members of *TBP* lamented that macho style, not gayness or effeminacy, was considered sexually desirable because it cloaked the body with pseudo-sexual "normalcy" that mirrored heteronormative gender performances. To don macho style in the early 1970s was understood by many in *TBP* to be the result of internalizing the Cold War consensus of the 1950s and 1960s around "normal" gender performances. Mary Louise Adams argues that during the postwar period, "the fear of being labelled delinquent [homosexual] was an effective form of self-regulation, a threat to those who might transgress sexual or moral standards."²⁹ This culture of fear around delinquency regulated

²⁷ Brewster, "The Myth of the New Homosexual," 3.

²⁸ Levine, *Gay Macho*, 59.

²⁹ Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 82.

gay men's gender performance; socializing gay men to perform their masculinity in heteronormative ways and to desire those who did as well. Indeed, Brewster questioned that while trends in gay culture, such as dress, manners and behaviours may have been loosened from the counter culture movement of the 1960s, "why must we continue to ape heterosexual life-styles?" Evidently, to act macho was to don the "fixed and dogmatic" patterns of behaviour and dress that had, according to Brewster, become increasingly repressive within the community.³⁰

Years after Brewster's article, *TBP* contributor Michael Riordon described macho men as "people who want to have their cake and eat it." For Riordon, macho gay men were those wanting to benefit from sexual liberation but remain in the closet at the same time. Illuminating the deep-seated anxieties around passing, heteronormativity, and macho style by members of *TBP*, Riordon describes his interaction with a closeted homosexual on the topic of gay rights. When the man was asked if he would join in the Gay Rights march, he replied: "'I'd like to throw rocks at them.' [To which Riordon replied] Who the hell is 'them'?? And where does that leave 'you' or 'me'?" The animosity by the unnamed man interviewed by Riordon indicates that some members of the gay community felt there was a conflict of interest between passing and gay activism. Riordon also captured the repressive rhetoric coming out of Toronto's gay leather/denim/motorcycle community when he claimed to overhear an executive there say, "We're only interested in people you could walk on the street with or introduce your mother to without anyone asking, 'Who was that faggot you were with?'"³¹ This instance

³⁰ Brewster, "The Myth of the New Homosexual," 3.

³¹ Michael Riordon, "Voices from the Closet (People who want to Have Their Cake and Eat It)," *The Body Politic* 24, June 1976, 9.

suggested that gay macho men wanted the privileges of sexual liberation but maintain a heteronormative understanding of masculinity in the community. This episode not only affirmed Brewster's earlier fears, but positioned *TBP* as an important cultural commentary on how macho style might serve to highlight the cultural and political divides in the community.

TBP itself operated as a contested space for masculinity by reflecting the tensions between editorial efforts to imagine gay masculinity and that of commercial advertisers. In the 1972 photographic exposé titled, "Celebrate the Body! (towards an alternative aesthetic)," *TBP*'s editorial collective targeted the hypersexual gay male aesthetic:

In the gay media it [aesthetics] has two main expressions: the Monstrous Phallus; where the body is reduced to 7 inches of detumescence, and the Artsy/Don't Leave a Blemish on My Body/Look Intense/Vaguely Like Rudolph Nureyev approach of glossies like *After Dark*. Both concentrate almost exclusively on men between the ages of seventeen and thirty – they have neglected women, they have neglected the young, they have neglected the old.³²

In this article, masculinity was defined and articulated as a problematic construction in which the body and age were at its core. Race, and more specifically whiteness, was not debated until the mid-1970s when readers began addressing the entrenched whiteness evident in classified ads and editorials. Nonetheless, the editorial collective included images of older gay men and women, as well as young people with slim bodies that did not have much musculature as a political statement against the young and buff body of the macho clone. In the caption that followed these images, the collective stated: "In

³² "Celebrate the Body! (towards an alternate aesthetic)," *The Body Politic* 5, July-August 1972, 12-13.

these photographs we present the body unashamedly as [an] object – a joyous, potent object.”³³ While the editors presented alternative images of gay and lesbians in early exposés such as “Celebrate the Body,” macho style was increasingly present in subsequent issues, especially within messages and images in advertisements—almost all of which were contradictory in nature to the political and social message of *TBP*.

In contrast to the range of body types and figures presented in “Celebrate the Body,” advertisements continually drew upon white, muscular, able-bodied illustration and image to promote their services, products, or venues. Since the formation of *TBP*, advertising had been extremely popular, especially since it provided much-needed revenue to the fledgling newspaper in its early years. In a “gaylup” poll conducted in 1972, Doug (last name unlisted) informed readers that “[m]ost readers (a surprising 88.5%) were quite in favour of advertisements” and that *TBP* had begun experimenting with “non-sexist” ads with that issue.³⁴ The definition of what constituted a sexist advertisement is unclear, but by the following issue, any attempt at diverting sexism in advertising had failed. In addition, advertisements for lesbians were almost entirely non-existent, further reiterating *TBP*’s emphasis on building, critiquing and reporting on gay male culture. Many ads appearing in issue #5 onward (1972-) validated the notion that looking and acting macho and butch was ideal for gay men. In attempting to naturalize macho masculinity as a performative style for gay men, advertisements alternatively demonstrate how highly manufactured macho style was and continues to be.

Many advertisers did not present themselves as selling products; rather they were cultivating (and capitalizing) on a budding gay male culture that, for the first time, had

³³ “Celebrate the Body! (towards an alternate aesthetic),” 13.

³⁴ Doug, “Gaylup Poll Results,” *The Body Politic* 4, May-June 1972, 8.

become increasingly visible and commercialized in public spaces. Toronto's gay bathhouses or "steam houses"—the terms were used interchangeably—were notorious for advertising their venues as places synonymous with macho masculinity. Ads for The Club, The Library, and The Barracks are but a few of the striking examples found in *TBP* in the early 1970s that demonstrate macho as a style defined by the heteronormative presentation of the male body. In the Winter 1973 issue of *TBP*, The Club, a bathhouse located on 231 Mutual Street, and The Library, another bathhouse located at 5 Wellesly Street West, portrayed sculpted white torsos or rugged white men that embodied a hypersexualized idea of gay masculinity.³⁵ These advertisements presented specific body types as part of a "uniform" for macho style which helped to institutionalize macho style as an illusory image of gay male sexuality: white, young, muscular, and able-bodied.³⁶ Indeed, advertisements were—and remain—an important facet in the construction of gender and sexuality because they, according to Sharon Cook, exemplify "the modern intellectual and emotional landscape" of society.³⁷ In the context of *TBP*, advertisements reflected particular ideologies around masculinity and encouraged readers to construct a visual identity with macho style as a reference point.

The Barracks, another bathhouse located on 56 Widmer Street, ran an ad in September-October 1974 to promote their venue as a space of sexual opportunity by featuring a white athletic man with no shirt on and his jeans unzipped (Figure 2.1).³⁸ The

³⁵ Advertisement: "The Club," and "The Library," *The Body Politic* 9, 'Winter' 1973, 22.

³⁶ Sharon Cook argues that the observer of visual culture "operates within a prescribed set of conventions and possibilities," or as Foucault would contend, a "regime of truth," a regime that mirrors patriarchal society and is composed of struggles over social power. Sharon Cook, *Sex, Lies, and Cigarettes: Canadian Women, Smoking, and Visual Culture, 1880-2000* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 11.

³⁷ Cook, *Sex, Lies, and Cigarettes*, 5.

³⁸ Advertisement: "The Barracks," *The Body Politic* 15, September-October 1974, 10.

THE BARRACKS

55 WIDMER STREET
TORONTO CANADA

OPEN MONDAY - THURSDAY 6:00 P.M. - 10:00 A.M.
WEEKENDS 24 HRS.

**CYCLE
SPOKEN
FLUENTLY
AT
TORONTO'S
NEWEST
BATH**

ENQUIRE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

366-1292

featuring
THE PLEASURE CHEST
a unique toy store for men

Figure 2.1. The Barracks, *The Body Politic* 15, September-October 1974, 10.

name of The Barracks itself is a queering of the military—a bastion of heterosexual masculinity. Furthermore, the ad communicates the notion that patrons are equally as masculine as heterosexual men in the military. It plays on the homosocial tension of the Canadian military and how there are no women to fulfill the heterosexual expectations for men. The figure is clean-shaven, white, with a defined muscular body, conforming to some elements of Levine’s description of macho clone as “rippling with bulging muscles” and wearing “blue-collar garb—flannel shirts over muscle T-shirts, Levi 501s over work boots, bomber jackets over hooded sweatshirts.”³⁹ The figure’s denim jeans and dog tags around his neck complimented the bar’s advertisement that “cycle” (motorcycle) culture—a culture of rugged masculinity that relied on heteronormative signifiers of denim and leather to display masculinity—was “spoken fluently” there.⁴⁰ While it is not entirely clear what it meant to speak “cycle” because the term was used very infrequently in *TBP*, it likely represented a system of codes, behaviours, and words that facilitated sexual engagement.⁴¹

Those who frequented bathhouses and read this advertisement were sure to know the meaning of cycle, let alone appreciate that Toronto sex toyshop, The Pleasure Chest, endorsed their liberal sexual culture in the ad. Including reference to a sex toyshop affirmed toys, clothing and accessories, such as harnesses, as important accoutrements for men to carry out their sexual fantasies. The Barracks marketed itself as different from

³⁹ Levine, *Gay Macho*, 7.

⁴⁰ Advertisement: “The Barracks,” 10.

⁴¹ Regarding the usage of “cycle” in *TBP*, the only other time it was referred to in the same period as The Barrack’s advertisement was in critical reading of *Time* magazine’s 1969 article, “The Homosexual: Newly Visible, Newly Understood” and their 1975 article, “Gays on the March.” It was acknowledged that Bruce Voeller (then President of the National Gay Task Force in the U.S.) and his partner Bill Blend were important figures in informing *Time* magazine of gay culture, so that the public may “recognize the difference between a transvestite and a cycle slut.” See Advertisement: “The Barracks,” 10

other bathhouses by not only advertising gay men macho bodies in its venue, but products that could enhance their sexual experience. In addition, the inclusion of The Pleasure Chest subliminally reinforced the desirability of the muscular figure by equating his chest with that of “pleasure.” Hence, the muscular chest elicits pleasure or desirability.

Another early representation of the macho clone can be found in the same September-October 1974 issue as the advertisement for The Barracks. H&S Electrolysis Clinic on 112 St. Clair Avenue West in Toronto, advertised its services to have men’s “beards thinned,” and “eyebrows shaped” by portraying a muscular man with little body hair and reminding gay men that it was their duty to “Make the Body Beautiful.”⁴² Facial hair was a prominent visual indicator of macho masculinity in the gay community in the early 1970s. As Christopher Oldstone-Moore argues, “facial hair has always been an important means not just to express manliness but to *be* men.”⁴³ Hair is an important aspect in defining masculinity because it is political.⁴⁴ In Oldstone-Moore’s words, “[b]ecause ideas of proper manliness are bound up with social and political authority, any symbol of masculinity carries political and moral significance.”⁴⁵ However, body hair in the context of hair removal ads was considered unattractive. The hairless macho man in H&S Electrolysis Clinic’s ad stands in stark contrast to the brawny hairy chests in other

⁴² Advertisement: “Make The Body Beautiful—H&S Electrolysis Clinic,” *The Body Politic* 15, September-October 1974, 9.

⁴³ Christopher Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men: The Revealing History of Facial Hair* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 2.

⁴⁴ The politics of hair is also visibly evident in the black Afro-movement. Noliwe M. Rooks argues that hair in African American culture spoke to the political, social, and cultural landscape of the United States, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, looking at the Afro in the 1970s, argues that, “the Afro was understood to denote black pride, which became synonymous with activism and political consciousness.” See Noliwe M. Rooks, *Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture, and African American Women* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 6.

⁴⁵ Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men*, 2.

depictions of macho style, most notably in the work of Finnish artist Touko Laaksonen (Tom of Finland).⁴⁶ The discrepancy between the clinic's depiction of macho style and that of the editorial collective or Tom of Finland demonstrates multiple ways of being macho. It also reveals how business interests refashioned macho style to accommodate their products or services challenging any static definition of it in the process.

The particularities of grooming informed macho style so deeply that Levine contends it separated gay macho style from its heterosexual counterpart: "Straight men might wear these fashions in a less self-conscious, and therefore more disheveled way. Their garments might not fit or match, their facial hair might not be perfectly trimmed."⁴⁷ The cultural significance of facial hair in displaying macho bravado also meant, however, that an absence of hair, particularly baldness, symbolized a loss of manhood. A 1972 article in the *Globe and Mail* by Mike Cowley quoted Dr. Cappon, a Toronto psychiatrist, who said that fear of baldness is "connected to the belief that hair loss means loss of youth, masculinity and virility."⁴⁸ Advertisements for hair restoration clinics marketed their products and services in *TBP* to attract gay men struggling with anxieties around their manliness and appearance. Clinics such as Marcella Ferens, located at 1491 Yonge Street, attempted to assuage men's concerns that baldness signified a loss of masculinity.⁴⁹ In doing so, these clinics relayed the importance of hair in the stylization of masculinity for men.

⁴⁶ Touko Laaksonen is best known under the pseudonym Tom of Finland. He created fetishized cartoon macho men which gained widespread notoriety in U.S. and Canadian gay culture in the 1970s.

⁴⁷ Levine, *Gay Macho*, 61.

⁴⁸ Mike Cowley, "...but men don't believe it," *The Globe and Mail*, June 24, 1972, A20.

⁴⁹ Advertisement: "Marcella Ferens Hair Care Centre," *The Body Politic* 67, October 1980, 39.

If advertisements in *TBP* demonstrate how masculinity was visualized and could be capitalized on, classified ads demonstrate the extent to which these visual markers of gender had become internalized and socially regulated by the newspaper's gay male readership. Since its creation in 1973, the classified ads section grew from being half of a single page to becoming several pages by mid-decade—attesting to its popularity among readers. Many ads refrained from racist or sexist language because *TBP*, similar to other political newspapers emerging out of the 1960s, wanted to have its message match its political and social philosophy, and assured readers that each classified ad was scrutinized to adhere to the Canadian Criminal Code regarding discrimination.⁵⁰ While the editorial collective informed readers since the inception of the Classified section that they reserved the right to edit or refuse any ad, it took until the July 1978 issue for them to release a notice directing readers on acceptable language in ads.⁵¹

Classified ads were reflective of both the importance of visual style as a determinate of masculinity, but also the struggle for macho men to represent themselves as masculine and homosexual—a campy duality that was arguably antithetical. When writing into the classifieds section of *TBP* in hopes of meeting someone, men were often explicit in defining their masculinity. There were numerous ads from men describing themselves as masculine, having a “straight” appearance, or demanding their ideal partner be masculine. For example, an ad in 1973 read, “Male 5’8, 135 lbs, 29 yrs. Ath. bld. [athletic build] masc. [masculine]. vers. [sexually versatile]. Gd. bod. [good body]. Med. end. [medium endowment] Avg. lkg [average looking] Strt. app. [straight

⁵⁰ Historian David Churchill notes that since *TBP*'s early years, “[a]ds making over prohibitions such as, ‘no blacks,’ ‘no fats,’ ‘no fems,’ would...not be published in the paper [*TBP*]. David Churchill, “Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at *The Body Politic*,” *Left History* 8, no. 2 (2003): 116.

⁵¹ Advertisement: “Classified ads communicate,” *The Body Politic* 44, June-July 1978, 29.

appearance] Would like to meet well end. [well-endowed] masc. [masculine]. 6 ft. to 190 lbs. for friendship fun. Do u fit?...”⁵² The difference between the writer’s average looks and his “straight” appearance suggests that he affirmed his masculinity not just in regards to physical traits or clothing, but in the ability to pass as heterosexual. In another ad from 1974, a 29 year-old man named John described himself as “successful” and “good looking” demanded his partner be masculine when he wrote, “You must be slim to slim-medium build, average to good-looking, masculine (no femmes) age to 32.”⁵³ More often than not, however, the men who espoused these desires often described themselves as conforming to the stereotype of macho style and/or desiring one who did.

In corroboration with written descriptions, numerous ads included requests for photographs to ensure that the correspondent was masculine and attractive, meaning that men were determining masculinity based on an aesthetic look, not the tone of voice or body mannerisms that are often understood to be sign-vehicles for homosexuality. The importance of style is best exemplified in a 1974 ad in which the author described himself as a “Lonesome cowboy, young and handsome, easy going, well educated, white, has good cowboy, police and leather outfits. Like high cut cowboy boots. Seek other cowboys, truck drivers and cops for lasting friendship and mutual enjoyment. Will share apt. with right guy. Please, no drugs, drunks, fems, fats, or hippies—just clean cut white masculine guys...”⁵⁴ Ads demanding a specific aesthetic, such as police officers or cowboys, were few and far between in the early 1970s. Their rarity in the earlier half of the decade suggests that the costumed aesthetic of macho style was still budding in the

⁵² Classified ad: “Male 5’8, 135lbs,” *The Body Politic* 10, Autumn 1973, 26. Note: Only season of the year was given to some issues early on in *TBP*’s publication.

⁵³ Classified ad: John, “Spring has sprung,” *The Body Politic* 14, July-August 1974, 30.

⁵⁴ Classified ad: “Lonesome cowboy,” *The Body Politic* 16, November-December 1974, 26.

early 1970s and that the aesthetic look of masculinity had not been entirely defined. However, the appropriation of traditionally heterosexual and extremely masculine occupations or aesthetics, such as police, construction worker, or cowboy, differed from the more generic image of white muscular masculinity being presented in many commercial ads while maintaining a heteronormative understanding of masculinity.

These ads raise questions about the extent to which editors of *TBP* carefully scrutinized submissions. As previously mentioned, the collective began to offer overt guidelines for ad submissions by July 1978. In their advertisement for their classified section, the collective encouraged readers to: “[t]ell them about yourself and your interests—not about what you **don’t** like. Specifying exclusions on the basis of race or appearance (saying ‘no fats or fems’ for instance) is just plain rude...”⁵⁵ Ads that were explicitly discriminatory encouraged the collective to post etiquette rules for submissions. However, attempts at policing classified ads were not always successful since many ads can be found through *TBP*’s publication that conveyed problematic messages around gender or race using subversive language. Many of these ads reflect the internal debates around the collective’s authority to mediate individual’s sexual desires or preferences.

In his article, “Personal Ad Politics,” David Churchill examines the key debates around race and sexuality in the classifieds of *TBP*. His focus on the infamous “houseboy” ad printed in February 1985, whereby a white man requested a Black “houseboy,” highlights the ways in which classified ads sparked numerous debates between editors and readers around the responsibility of gay men to challenge their racialized sexual preferences, many of which are emphasized in Chapter Four.

⁵⁵ Advertisement: “Classified ads communicate,” *The Body Politic* 44, June-July 1978, 29.

Furthermore, Churchill argues that in addition to ads that were inherently discriminatory, “*TBP* members made attempts ‘to educate readers to avoid inadvertent exclusions’ such as GWM (gay white man) seek same,’ by contacting individuals who placed such ads and asking them whether the ad copy reflected what they really wanted to say.”⁵⁶ Ads engaging with the politics of “sameness,” which saw many men describe themselves and demand the “same,” were not as carefully policed and allowed for many to state their racial and masculine preferences. Churchill’s argument that the collective’s attempts to negate exclusionary language rings true, but evidence, such as the “houseboy ad,” demonstrate that these efforts were tenuous at best. What has also been overlooked in any examination of *TBP*’s classified ads is the ways in which ads from the 1970s and 1980s were written to circumvent *TBP*’s restrictions.

To avoid scrutiny or censorship, many men, particularly white men, explicitly described themselves as masculine or having a “straight appearance” and in search of the “same.” For example, a 27-year-old white gay man submitted a classified ad in December 1975 describing himself as “masculine, mustache, non-smoker, light drinker, no drugs,” in search of the “same, 26-35, tall, trim, muscular...”⁵⁷ In this case, “same” applied to masculine, mustache, white, and the man’s smoking, drinking, and drug use, since those were not adjectives used to explicitly describe his ideal partner. Another ad in the same issue featured a 29-year-old who did not disclose his race, but stated he had a “straight appearance” and “wishes to meet the same”—articulating a desire for men with an equally straight appearance.⁵⁸ Finally, in September 1976, an ad appeared by a man

⁵⁶ David Churchill, “Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at *The Body Politic*,” *Left History* 8, no. 2 (2003): 116.

⁵⁷ Classified ad: “Professional white male,” *The Body Politic* 21, December 1975, 26.

⁵⁸ Classified ad: “Male 29, professional,” *The Body Politic* 21, December 1975, 26.

describing himself as “fairly masculine” and “not bad looking” who sought the “same,” or preferably “a policeman.”⁵⁹ Using the word, “same,” opened up descriptors for race, gender, and ability without explicitly doing so. The word “same” became particularly loaded with racialized ideas of masculinity that were the mainstay of the discourse in the classified section. As a result, the politics of sameness provided a space for racialized understandings of masculinity, as well as the privileged place of whiteness, to be conveyed in *TBP* so much so that it created a space for the more controversial “houseboy ad” years later. Despite intentions to assuage racism, ageism and homophobia by members of *TBP*, the politics of “sameness” became a way in which gay men policed and regulated masculinity in addition to requesting both physical descriptions that fell in line with the masculine aesthetic and photographs.

Some readers of *TBP* put classified ads under increasing scrutiny by 1976 because they were understood to be promoting a racialized vision of gay male masculinity. Susan Henderson and Peter Prizer from Portland, Maine wrote into *TBP* in September 1976 complaining that “[p]hrases such as G/WM [gay/white male], ‘young chickens,’ ‘very masculine appearing,’ and others are offensive to persons struggling to free themselves from a culture which, for openers, is racist, classist, sexist, and ageist.”⁶⁰ In response to their letter, the collective members of *TBP* assured readers, “we edit out phrases like ‘no blacks’ ‘no orientals,’ ‘no fats or fems,’ etc...[w]e do allow ads which are directed to generally oppressed groups: ‘Gay male seeks black friend,’ would be acceptable, ‘Gay male seeks white friend,’ would not.”⁶¹ This sparked some ire from readers, such as

⁵⁹ Classified ad: “W/M, fairly masculine,” *The Body Politic* 26, September 1976, 22.

⁶⁰ Susan Henderson and Peter Prizer, “Classified ads questioned,” *The Body Politic* 26, September 1976, 2.

⁶¹ The Collective, “Classified ads questioned,” *The Body Politic* 26, September 1976, 2.

George Peterson, who replied in the following issue that, “to arbitrarily single out some races against which your advertisements may discriminate (while you protect other races) is to commit an act of bigotry and hypocrisy...”⁶² The on-going dialogue between the editorial collective and readers regarding classified ads demonstrate the ways in which various parts of the newspaper (classified ads, letters from readers, editorial commentary) were constantly put into tension with one another because of masculinity and macho style.

TBP’s message towards macho style softened somewhat by the latter half of the 1970s as gay male masculinity and gay male style became subject to critique in mainstream magazines. *TBP* contributor Ralph Lesser wrote into *TBP* in May 1978 defending gay male masculinity and aesthetics from John Hofsess, who had previously described his own experiences interviewing youth in the gay community in the March 1978 *Toronto Life* article, “Looking for Mr. Gaybar: Cruising for Trouble.” Lesser’s response to Hofsess was a political maneuver to defend the sexual expression of the gay community that ultimately defending macho style as a legitimate expression of masculinity. According to Lesser, Hofsess interviewed four members of Gay Youth Toronto (Mark Whitehead, Margo Fearn, Rick Bernath and “Billy”) under the false pretence of writing about the group as a “worthwhile organization.”⁶³ Instead, Hofsess wrote an article that attempted to illustrate the gay community’s exploitation of gay youth in Toronto. Hofsess argued that gay youth were exploited because they were expected to conform to a specific aesthetic. Lesser responded by contending that the interviewees had

⁶² George Peterson, “Classified ads and racism,” *The Body Politic* 27, October 1976, 2.

⁶³ Ralph Lesser, “Looking for Mr. Gay Bar,” *The Body Politic* 43, May 1978, 19.

been manipulated and misquoted to promoted Hofsess's own negative criticisms of the gay community.

For example, Hofsess's quoted Margo Fearn saying, "Most gay men I know have a very narrow range of tolerances. Their ideal partner has to be this, and this, and this—blond hair, blue eyes and always young..."⁶⁴ These limited range of desirable masculine traits were also evident in Mark Whitehead's experience with an escort service in Toronto. Whitehead informed Hofsess that young men were hired to "rip off" and "rob" middle-aged and older clientele who were not only seeking satisfaction, but were "*made* desperate by the ethos of a peterpan [sic] world that treats aging as a contemptible disease."⁶⁵ From these interviews, Hofsess created an image of the gay male community that was narcissistic and oppressive to those who did not conform to expectations around masculinity, sexuality, and youthful virility.

In response, Lesser contended that very little of Hofsess's findings had to do with gay cultural life:

He [Hofsess] reduces the gay social scene to a sensational melodrama: gay men patronizing orgy rooms, lesbians hanging around bars in the company of diesel dykes with vicious Dobermans. Throughout the article Hofsess makes gross generalizations concerning the gay politics and the gays of the 1950s and 60s. The militant fags of the 60s are described as being "so engrossed in drafting manifestoes and the politics of rage" that they forget the human side of their natures.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ John Hofsess, "Looking for Mr. Gaybar: Young, exploited and homosexual: case studies within the real body politic," *Toronto Life*, March 1978, 52.

⁶⁵ Emphasis in original. Hofsess, "Looking for Mr. Gaybar," 56.

⁶⁶ Lesser, "Looking for Mr. Gay Bar," 19.

Lesser further argued that not all members of the gay community necessarily thought of themselves as being marginalized. Instead, he contended, gay men voluntarily participated in macho gay subculture. Gay youth, in his opinion, “have a need for enough autonomy to allow them to learn [and] cope with the differences between the smothering prejudices of heterosexist society and the unfamiliar realm of the gay subculture.”⁶⁷ By differentiating gay culture from heterosexism, however, Lesser did not acknowledge intersections of gay cultural life with heterosexist society, particularly men who did engage in practices such as orgies or stylized themselves as macho. Focused on disproving Hofsess’s arguments, Lesser seemed to ignore some of the questions—introduced at the beginning of the chapter—raised by Tim Guest a year prior in his article, “Image Control,” particularly around macho style as an example of the sexism and objectification of the male body within the gay community.

Early editorial content that spoke out against macho style as an aesthetic of masculinity was contradicted on surrounding pages by advertisements selling the macho body as desirable and classified ads by men who had internalized macho style as *the* aesthetic of the gay community. From their editorials, the collective clearly had a desire to break down the limited gendered and sexual performances that they felt were present in the community. For example, Hugh Brewster’s critique of macho style was just as much a warning about how restrictive performances of masculinity might translate to sexism and disenfranchisement for lesbians or effeminate gay men. Yet, with macho style found in many classified ads and seemingly ubiquitous with bar, bathhouse, and cosmetic clinic advertisements, *TBP* was an arena of competing voices around masculinity in the

⁶⁷ Lesser, “Looking for Mr. Gay Bar,” 19.

gay community. Most notably, there remained a consistent struggle between the intellectual engagement with gender by the collective and advertisements that were part of a larger trend in the queer community on selling macho style. The discrepancy between dismantling macho style on one page and reinforcing it on the next must not be understated. Considering this duality of *TBP* does not mean the newspaper was hypocritical, but rather an important example of how the cultural and political values of the gay community were often at odds with one another.

The Trouble with White Mr. Macho and the Politics of the Aesthetic

As *TBP* broadened the scope of its focus to include the cultural happenings of Toronto and other major cities across Canada, macho style became more visible in the newspaper. The increasing number of articles discussing macho style and gay masculinity in *TBP* was part of a broader shift in the newspaper's focus from political news and issues of activism to the cultural life of Toronto. This was done in part to attract readers and remain relevant to the cultural and social interests of the community. *TBP*'s coverage of contemporary events, such as a beauty contest or a letter from an engineer coming out in a trade publication, served as an opportunity for the collective to bring issues of gender and sexuality to the fore under the context of macho style. Emphasis given to these events demonstrates that many among the collective appreciated the importance of style in the gay community, as well as the ways in which macho style represented the intersection of politics, gender, sexuality, and culture. Unlike the naturalized vision of masculinity in commercial advertisements in *TBP*, editorial coverage of macho style was more

intellectually engaged, deconstructing how macho style might benefit or hinder the gay community.

The editorial collective considered the cultural implications of style and gender on desirability relatively early on in *TBP*'s publication run. *TBP* writer Greg Lehne addressed the growing prevalence of an early macho masculine aesthetic in Toronto's gay community using the results of a questionnaire originally published in the "Autumn 1973" issue asking readers to imagine their ideal date or sexual fantasy.⁶⁸ With his findings, Lehne published a collage in August 1974 from the responses of the fifty gay men (average age 24) who responded.⁶⁹ His questionnaire is particularly important because it asked men to describe the aesthetics of their ideal companion. Lehne noted in the description for the questionnaire that "fantasies and types [physical and personality characteristics] may contribute to the development of sexual barriers."⁷⁰ In doing so, his survey provides a benchmark for grounding changing perceptions and understandings of macho as a style in the middle of the decade. It also serves as an example of how macho style became a lynchpin for discussions about the sexual politics of the gay community.

Lehne asked readers to describe the sex, age, appearance, personality, and type(s) of person(s) in the fantasies, frequency of the fantasies, the class background and job of the person(s), if there is a difference between their sexual type and the person they want to have a long-term relationship with, and whether or not their fantasy was similar or different from themselves. Men's responses included: "Going out with very muscular men, but with a great deal of touching and caressing...", "A beautiful boy who melts in

⁶⁸ Greg Lehne, "Gay Fantasies: A Plea for Information," *The Body Politic* 9, Autumn 1973, 21.

⁶⁹ Greg Lehne, "Gay Male Fantasies: a collage," *The Body Politic* 14, July-August 1974, 22.

⁷⁰ Lehne, "Gay Fantasies: A Plea for Information," 21.

my arms...,” and lastly, “I see myself being carried through the threshold of a door by a veritable Greek God of the utmost physical handsomeness and strength...”⁷¹ This is not to suggest that appearance was the sole desire for these men. Notably, “60% of gay men reported fantasies about a warm, loving relationship.” The visual aesthetic that shaped these ideal male fantasies was almost entirely homogenous with the exception of one responder who stated that, “The guys I fantasize about aren’t effeminate [and] neither are they super-masculine. They are quiet, self-assured in a down-played way, dressed in such a way [and] acting such that it is clear that they are not unhappy with their homosexuality or life in general.”⁷² Based on Lehne’s findings, macho style remained the centrepiece of physical desire, but had not developed any overlap with S&M at this point. Only “6% of fantasies reported by these gay men involved S&M,” according to Lehne.⁷³ The characteristics of macho style were nevertheless athletic, muscular, and further illustrated by the image of a white muscular man naked in an open robe at the centre of the page.

While Lehne demonstrated that many readers celebrated macho style, *TBP* editor Gerald Hannon and his editorials in the newspaper indicate that the collective was much more critical of how the gay community constructed fantasies of gender. Hannon covered Toronto’s first gay male pageant show, the Mr. Club Contest, held at the Carriage House Hotel on December 9th, 1973. The contest prized physique and appearance over personality. Fittingly, two of the judges for the contest were Jerry Batal, American business manager of the Club Bath chain known for promoting white macho bodies in advertisements, and Derek Stenhouse, gay owner of the Manatee, Toronto’s most popular

⁷¹ Lehne, “Gay Male Fantasies: a collage,” 22-23.

⁷² Lehne, “Gay Male Fantasies: a collage,” 22.

⁷³ Lehne, “Gay Male Fantasies: a collage,” 23.

“cooperative” dance club, which was also considered by Brewster to be “the most resolutely sexist of all the clubs, especially in its policy towards women—or lack of it.”⁷⁴ In his coverage of the contest, Hannon resolved that the idolatrizing of these bodies was an example of the “sexist-objectifying-capitalist-exploitation” of the gay liberation movement.⁷⁵ Hannon dismantled the established spectacle of female beauty contests to illuminate the artificial white sexualized body. Rather than representing the gay community as it was—in all of its diversity—the Mr. Club contest was an award ceremony for white bodies that were emblematic of cultural ideals of physical and sexual desire, particularly within the gay male community.

In the first round of the competition, contestants wore t-shirts and jeans for the look of tousled youth. The second round required contestants to don their own choice of clothing which ranged from “attractive to just slightly on the tasteless,” according to Hannon.⁷⁶ Finally, the third round was a swimsuit competition where phallic girth was prized and the outline of genitals encouraged. The third segment in the competition resonates with Bordo’s argument that the penis is endowed with a “tumescence consciousness that is bold, unafraid, at the ready”—all characteristics of manliness.⁷⁷ Indeed, the assertive and bold nature of penis is exemplified in the accompanying cartoon image of Hannon’s article whereby an old judge is inspecting the exaggerated penis of a young buff white man with a “monstrous phallus”—a term used by the collective in their 1972 article, “Celebrate the Body,” to describe one of the hegemonic aesthetics of masculinity in gay media. Clearly the collective, or at least Hannon, thought the judging

⁷⁴ Brewster, “The Myth of the New Homosexual,” 3.

⁷⁵ Gerald Hannon, “...it’s more important to be nice,” *The Body Politic* 11, January-February 1974, 12.

⁷⁶ Hannon, “...it’s more important to be nice,” 13.

⁷⁷ Bordo, *The Male Body*, 45.

of phallic girth bordered comical. Hannon's coverage of the contest highlighted to readers the performative nature of masculinity by describing the contest as a "purely aesthetic act."⁷⁸ He also reinforced macho style as both a butch act that appealed to the sexual desires of the audience, and its unmistakably gay campiness.

Hannon used the Mr. Macho pageant as an opportunity to look at deeper issues of masculinity and desire through an elite intellectual position that was more attuned to feminism and socialism. For him, the Mr. Macho contest and macho style more broadly represented yet another instance of the commercialization of gay male culture. However, the continued presence of commercial and classified advertisements which propagated macho style exemplifies the ways in which *TBP* was a space of competing masculinities. While advertisements continued to present white macho style as the standard aesthetic for the gay male community, and many venues continued to illustrate macho style as the image of gay desirability, Hannon dismantled understandings of gender and sexuality that may have been understood as naturalized. For the losers of the Mr. Club Contest, C. J. Harrington, Master of Ceremonies, consoled them with the advice: "it's more important to be nice." As Hannon points out, however, by having Rod Polich, a white, physically fit, 5'7, 155 lbs, 20-year-old man win this contest based on his looks alone, personality is relegated as a trait for friends, not for sexual partners.⁷⁹

The discourse of macho was further embedded in seemingly mundane events, such as an engineer "coming out" in 1975. In October 1975, an anonymous news brief in *TBP* reported that Trevor Mountford-Smith, a gay engineer for Ontario Hydro and later member of the Gay Alliance Toward Equality, came out in the national trade publication,

⁷⁸ Hannon, "...it's more important to be nice," 13.

⁷⁹ Hannon, "...it's more important to be nice," 12.

Engineering. According to *TBP*'s report, Mountford-Smith's public outing was a response to writer Connie Baillie's article, "Why P. Engs Are Such Sterling Chaps" in the April 1975 issue of *Engineering*. Mountford-Smith responded in a letter dated May 16, 1975, where he stated his issue with many facts, most of all her statement that she had "never seen or heard of an engineer who is gay."⁸⁰ Believing this to imply that heterosexuality was one of the reasons why engineers were "sterling chaps," he boldly declared, "I am a gay engineer, [sic] and am quite willing to acquaint her with this fact."⁸¹ His coming out was newsworthy in *TBP* on account of his profession. Announcing his sexuality meant he was effectively challenging engineering as the "bastion of heterosexual jock values."⁸² The news brief further reported that "predictably, response from other engineers in later issues [*Engineering*] was not positive. One letter was a supercilious poem sprinkled with the terms like 'nancy' and 'queer', another equated homosexuality with blindness and deafness..."⁸³ In reminding readers that many places of work were still largely homophobic, *TBP*'s coverage of Mountford-Smith implicitly emphasized the desirability of passing for gay men while simultaneously heralding for more action against discrimination.

⁸⁰ "Engineer comes out," *The Body Politic* 20, October 1975, 9.

⁸¹ Underlining in original. The letter to the editor was a condensed version of a letter sent directly to Connie Baillie on the same day. Trevor Mountford-Smith to The Editor, *Engineering*, 16 May 1975, File CAN 4010, Mountford-Smith, Trevor, Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

⁸² "Engineer comes out," *The Body Politic* 20, October 1975, 9.

⁸³ Mountford-Smith reported his sexuality in a letter to *Engineering* following the April 17, 1975 issue. It is unclear whether the editorial collective learned of Mountford-Smith's letter from the following issue of *Engineering* or first-hand. Mountford-Smith was later pictured with the collective and captioned as "member of the Gay Alliance Toward Equality; secretary of the Committee to Defend John Damien." "Monitor: Gay in the Seventies," *The Body Politic* 40, February 1978, 18. John Damien was fired from his position as a commission racing steward for the Ontario Racing Commission at some point in late 1974 because he was homosexual. The Committee to Defend John Damien formed to cover court and legal fees. See "because he's a homosexual," *The Body Politic* 17, January-February 1975, 1. Trevor Mountford-Smith to Connie Baillie, 16 May 1975, File CAN 4010, Mountford-Smith, Trevor, Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto, Ontario; and, "Engineer comes out," 9.

Curiously, the news brief included a photograph of Mountford-Smith—a man who clearly embodied macho style (Figure 2.2). Most news briefs up until then did not include photographs because they were bulletins meant to accentuate larger exposés and articles on gay rights, homophobia, world news, and so on. Including a picture that illustrated Mountford-Smith’s rugged whiteness, his tight white dress shirt exemplifying his muscular body, and his pose on a motorcycle reinforced the heterosexist aesthetics of macho style by disavowing any aspect of femininity. His photograph evoked the duality of macho style by containing heteronormative signifiers of masculinity while in the context of coming out. The editorial collective’s decision to include this photograph served a political purpose by challenging stereotypes of gay effeminacy. While the photograph and subtext of the news brief privileged macho style, it supported the critique implicit in Mountford-Smith’s assertion being an engineer and gay were not incompatible. Indeed, Mountford-Smith’s public coming out fit well with the ideological underpinnings of *TBP* that the personal is political.

Contemporary events in *TBP*, such as Mountford-Smith’s coming out, emphasized the deep-rooted correlation between masculinity, particularly macho masculinity, and whiteness. Ruth Frankenberg argues that whiteness is overlooked because of its perceived universality. The privileged position of whiteness is the result of its “unmarkedness,” in the words of Frankenberg, meaning that it is not seen as being marked or fettered by the same racial politics as non-white bodies.⁸⁴ News articles, photographs, and other images frequently featured white bodies exclusively, perpetuating the myth that macho style was exclusive to white gay men. Indeed, Rinaldo Walcott argues that the “unmarkedness” of

⁸⁴ Ruth Frankenberg, “Introduction: Local Whiteness, Localizing Whiteness,” in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Ruth Frankenberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 5.

Figure 2.2 Trevor Mountford-Smith, *The Body Politic* 20, October 1975, 9.

hegemonic masculinity is deeply intertwined with the “unremarkable nature of whiteness.”⁸⁵ The ubiquitous presence of white bodies in an activist newspaper such as *TBP* broadly demonstrates that gay and lesbian political efforts were affected by white privilege. Furthermore, the appropriation of heterosexual conceptions of masculinity by white gay men—the figureheads of the macho style—meant that white male bodies served as mediators or bridges between gay and straight male culture.

Discussions of race were highly contentious when they began to erupt by the fall of 1979. In October of that year, an editorial was published in response to the recent police slaying of Albert Johnson, a “Black Jamaican whom Metropolitan Toronto’s finest considered a ‘troublemaker.’” The article, “Black power, pink triangles” aimed to remind readers that all minorities suffer from police violence and brutality, claiming that, “Gay people know very well how much power the police have, and how they can abuse it. By supporting the organizational efforts of the Black and immigrant communities, we can, together, hope to check that power.”⁸⁶ The collective continued their political effort of connecting the oppression experienced by racial minorities with that faced by the gay community. However, the combative perspectives around race and sexual desire in *TBP* made these efforts seem partly disingenuous.

Ken Popert’s June 1983 article, “Race, moustaches, and sexual prejudice” discussed the unspoken racial content in pornography—more specifically, the uniform whiteness of gay male porn. Written in response to *TBP* not publishing an ad for the gay pornographic magazine, *White Assed Super Pricks*, Popert concluded that gay men are

⁸⁵ Rinaldo Walcott, “Blackness, Masculinity, and the Work of Queer,” in *Canadian Men and Masculinities: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Christopher J. Greig and Wayne Martino (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2012), 191.

⁸⁶ “Black power, pink triangles,” *The Body Politic* 57, October 1979, 7.

not responsible for the racial content of their desires. He believed that gay men could not be blamed for their racist prejudices because any attempt at forcing gay men to modify their sexuality would be a subversion of gay liberation.⁸⁷ Popert was countering the argument of some readers and collective members who argued that gay men constructed their desires on an individual basis, such as Ed Jackson in his December 1975 article, “Nudity and Sexism,” which focused on the significance of sexualized imagery in *TBP*.⁸⁸ Popert’s article further illuminates how discussions of racial desires were continually changing in *TBP*, remaining a polarizing source of contention among *TBP*’s readers and writers alike well into the 1980s.

Despite attempts on the part of the editorial collective to deconstruct male bodies and the racialization of macho style, images of white macho masculinity continued to appear in *TBP* by way of advertisements. In 1976, The Roman (Sauna) Baths, located on 740 Bay Street, published an advertisement that equated hypersexuality, masculinity, and desirability with the statuesque features of a white roman statue prominently on display at the venue.⁸⁹ In an advertisement for the gay bar Dudes, on 10 Breadalbane St., an upcoming opening announced in September 1977 by displaying two muscular white torsos. The Dudes ad described its venue in the following manner: “faces, sounds, toys, **dudes**, friends, denim, mirrors, jocks, games, t-shirts, cruising, moustaches, fantasy, macho, and hunks,” among others.⁹⁰ These highly gendered key words constructed an image of masculinity that not only had physical characteristics (moustaches, macho, and

⁸⁷ Ken Popert, “Race, moustaches and sexual prejudice,” *The Body Politic* 94, June 1983, 34.

⁸⁸ Ed Jackson, “Nudity and Sexism,” *The Body Politic* 21, December 1975, 13.

⁸⁹ Advertisement: “The Roman (Sauna) Baths,” *The Body Politic* 29, December-January 1976/77, 19.

⁹⁰ Bold emphasis in original. Advertisement: “Dudes: a near bar nearby,” *The Body Politic* 36, September 1977, 18.

hunks), but also relied on clothing in the construction of macho style. More broadly, these ads are also testament to the ongoing tension between commercial advertisements and editorial content in *TBP* pertaining to masculinity.

Coverage of reader's sexual fantasies, the Mr. Macho contest, and Mountford-Smith's declaration of his homosexuality in *Engineering*, was in many ways concerned with how gay masculinity was visualized. *TBP*'s coverage of contemporary events contained politicized commentary around cultural norms of gender and sexuality. However, with white macho style remaining the focus of a series of editorial exposés, *TBP* simultaneously seemed to buttress macho style as inherently white. Furthermore, the collective's critical approach towards the pageantry of macho style seemed to adhere to the political motives of the paper. Hannon's critique of macho style and the Mr. Macho contest problematized macho style as an example of the gay male community's obsession with muscularity and masculinity, yet the report on Mountford-Smith seemed to use macho style to counter stereotypes of gay male effeminacy. These contradictory messages, along with the continued presence of commercial advertisements using macho style, demonstrate that *TBP* contained competing understandings of masculinity as it attempted to mediate masculinity from various political standpoints.

Shaping the Macho Body: Desire, Safety and "Self-Oppression"⁹¹

Macho style was contingent on maintaining one's body. Clothing and accessories were long-standing ways in which the male body was shown off in advertisements and photographs in *TBP*. As testament to the myriad ways in which masculinity was

⁹¹ Dan Healey, "Spiteful bunk, divisive nonsense," *The Body Politic* 69, December-January 1980/1981, 7.

constructed on the pages of *TBP*, the 1980s witnessed a significant increase in ads for gyms in *TBP*. These included bathhouse advertisements announcing work out specified areas as an enticement. Richmond Street Health Emporium, a steam bath and gym on 260 Richmond Street East, printed an ad with the image of a very muscular white man with his right arm flexing and the tagline: “Get into it” (Figure 2.3) in March-April 1980.⁹² Another one of their ads in June 1979 featured six white athletic men standing around with only towels covering their naked bodies with the caption, “the busiest” displayed at the top.⁹³ Again, the different elements of *TBP* demonstrate competing mediations of gender and sexuality, particularly around shaping the body. In addition, bodybuilding and S&M became new sources of contention for the collective and readers around macho style in the late 1970s. Macho style inspired various debates among members and reader of *TBP* on the consequences of bodybuilding for performances of masculinity.

Mediations of macho in *TBP* also proliferated with advertisements and reviews of style and sex guides. Premised on the idea that physical appearance was the most important attribute of gay male style, publications such as, *Looking Good*, a “self-care program that looks at the man behind the clothes” by Charles Hix, offered men tips on hair colouring, face washing techniques and use of facial moisturizer.⁹⁴ *Looking Good* was arguably targeted towards a heterosexual audience by challenging associations between effeminacy and vanity. Hix argued that, “most of us men have been conditioned not to look at ourselves. Now’s the time for some shock treatment.”⁹⁵ Heterosexual

⁹² Advertisement: “Get into it, Richmond Street Health Emporium,” *The Body Politic* 61, March-April 1980, 39.

⁹³ Advertisement: “Richmond Street Health Emporium...the busiest,” *The Body Politic* 53, June 1979, 42.

⁹⁴ Advertisement: “Looking Good: A Guide for Men by Charles Hix (photographs by Bruce Weber),” *The Body Politic* 38, November 1977, 18.

⁹⁵ Charles Hix, *Looking Good: A Guide for Men* (Toronto: Hawthorn Books, 1977), xiv.

Figure 2.3 Richmond Street Health Emporium, *The Body Politic* 61, March-April 1980, 39.

imagery was also used throughout the book to reaffirm male interest in style and appearance as unquestionably straight and masculine. Amongst these photographs, however, are images that contain homoerotic undertones, including that of a man showering in a very sensual way under the heading “The Body” and a man in a jock strap playing water polo when discussing exercise.⁹⁶ These images likely appealed to a gay male readership and bring into question the intended audience of *Looking Good*, arguably suggesting Hix’s belief that style and “looking good” transcend sexual orientation.

In a review for *Looking Good*, Hannon problematized the heterosexual imagery in the book. He suggested that:

Looking good is also looking gay. It’s that bit of extra care that ‘men’ shouldn’t take. It’s that *one* ear ring, that ever-so-slightly tinted hair, that hint of bronzer,” to which he continued, “...even among *gay* men, a lot of this stuff is suspect—it’s too fem (if you’re butch), or too frivolous (if you’re serious or radical or committed).”⁹⁷

Hannon understood that appearance had to be cultivated in particular ways in order to fit appropriate performances of gender. He highlighted the tension between a conscientious effort to maintain one’s appearance while also conforming to more rigid standards of butchness reflected in the photographed men throughout *Looking Good*. Indeed, Hannon’s critique of *Looking Good* reinforced Hix’s own argument that “[a]lthough most men don’t do enough to maximize their looks, some go overboard.”⁹⁸ Hannon claimed

⁹⁶ The photograph of the man showering was used when discussing lathering techniques when showering. This image contrasts an image of a man and a woman in a bath tub splashing one another. Charles Hix, *Looking Good: A Guide for Men* (Toronto: Hawthorn Books, 1977), 134. The other image of the man jumping out of the water in a jock strap while playing water polo complimented Hix’s discussion of daily activities and exercises to help men build “a fit body [which] looks good.” Hix, *Looking Good*, 159.

⁹⁷ Gerald Hannon, “Review of Charles Hix, *Looking Good: A Guide for Men* (Toronto: Hawthorn Books, 1977),” *The Body Politic* 39, December-January 1977/1978, 21.

⁹⁸ Hix, *Looking Good*, xiv.

that butch gay men would view too much interest in one's appearance disapprovingly, and though he disagreed with it, he espoused a traditional understanding of masculinity in the gay community.

By August 1979, the prominence of the muscular, fit and attractive body was summed up by *TBP* columnist Michael Lynch when he quoted from author Andrew Holleran's novel, *Dancer from the Dance* (1978), that, "The attractive body is no longer the exception it used to be." In his article on gyms, cruising, and exercise, Lynch interviewed the manager of the Imperial Health Club who noted that many men who frequented the gym on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays were gay, but they embraced straight culture; in the manager's words, "there's not a toke of gay flavour in the place."⁹⁹ Indeed, a regular patron of the Imperial praised the gym as "wonderful because it's so straight."¹⁰⁰ Bodybuilding was therefore understood by some as an activity that not only suppressed homosexuality, but made gyms spaces whereby gay men were encouraged to perform a preconceived notion of heterosexual masculinity.

Ian Young's review of David Carter's *The Iron Game* (1976), described bodybuilding's super-straight façade as being a cover for the support that the gay community provided to bodybuilding as a sport either directly or indirectly to "the tune of millions of dollars."¹⁰¹ Levine argues that within macho culture the body itself was also manufactured to conform to the physique of a gym body: "tight buttocks, washboard stomachs, and 'pumped-up' biceps and pectorals."¹⁰² The homoeroticism latent in

⁹⁹ Michael Lynch, "Young (and old and middle-aged too) Men's Cruising Associations," *The Body Politic* 55, August 1979, 39.

¹⁰⁰ As quoted in Lynch, "Young (and old and middle-aged too) Men's Cruising Associations," 39.

¹⁰¹ Ian Young, "Small press book," *The Body Politic* 41, March 1978, 20.

¹⁰² Levine, *Gay Macho*, 59.

bodybuilding was coupled with reports from newspapers like *Gay News* (Britain) which recounted stories such as *Sovetzky Sport*, a Soviet sport newspaper that believed, “Homosexuality and mental derangement are being caused by the growing cult of bodybuilding in the Soviet Union.”¹⁰³ Literary theorist Johnathan Goldberg argues that “[b]ody-building is haunted by the specter of homosexuality.” In his words, by putting their bodies on display, bodybuilders, such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, are the object of a sexual gaze which “would mean that Arnold is a woman when a gay man looks at him—and this is how Arnold articulates it, equating himself with the female pinup, site of the gaze.”¹⁰⁴

The presentation of the muscular bodybuilder seemed to become conflated with macho style and homophobia in both John Rechy’s book, *The Sexual Outlaw* (1977), and Herb Spiers’s June 1977 review of it in *TBP*. In his book, Rechy argues that “[m]asculine homosexuals still heckle queens, who are true hero-heroines of our time, exhibiting more courage for walking one single block in drag than a straight-looking gay to ‘come out’ on a comfy campus.”¹⁰⁵ *The Sexual Outlaw* provided accounts of Rechy’s sexual experiences, dubbed “the promiscuous experience,” that were separated by “voice overs,” whereby Rechy offered readers his own critical reflection on gay sexuality, gender, nightlife, relationships, and experiences with the straight world.¹⁰⁶ Spiers’s review concentrated on the highlights of gay men re-enacting heterosexual masculinity in Rechy’s book. Again, commentary on macho style from Rechy seemed to serve *TBP*’s

¹⁰³ *Gay News* (Britain) “Body-building builds gays,” *The Body Politic* 39, December-January 1977/1978, 9.

¹⁰⁴ Johnathan Goldberg, “Recalling Totalities: The Mirrored Staged of Arnold Schwarzenegger,” in *Building Bodies*, ed. Pamela L. Moore (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 223.

¹⁰⁵ John Rechy, *The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary* (New York: Grove Press, 1977), 243.

¹⁰⁶ Rechy, *The Sexual Outlaw*, 16.

efforts to dismantle artificial barriers around gender and sexuality and to unite the community.

Spiers supported Rechy's assertions that macho style relied on a "mistaken" masculinity of heteronormative performances of machismo. In his words, "He [Rechy] regrets too all the mistaken machismo, the red hankies and dangling keys which preclude even perfunctory sex communication. He regrets gay mimicking straight, and the false consciousness evident when gays try to appease straight condemnation."¹⁰⁷ By describing gay mimicry of straight masculinity as a "false consciousness," Spiers alluded to macho style as a form of self-oppression among gay men. Spiers's review thus becomes bigger than the book itself. It offered a platform for Spiers to articulate his own concerns around the heteronormative influences going into macho style.

Behind the scenes of *TBP*'s review of *Sexual Outlaw* was a disagreement regarding S&M and macho style between Spiers and fellow *TBP* contributor Ian Young. Rechy had made the argument that S&M was another form of gay male homophobia and self-hatred, one "comparable only in destructiveness to the impact of repressive laws and persecution by cops."¹⁰⁸ Spiers endorsed Rechy's claims about S&M, but also believed that S&M raised the "question of gay love versus gay hate: of loving ourselves and fighting our enemies, or of hating ourselves and acting out in our sex lives our heterosexually inflicted sorrows."¹⁰⁹ This sentiment, however, provoked *TBP* contributor Ian Young to respond in the subsequent issue.¹¹⁰ Young, who himself engaged in S&M, argued that Spiers's

¹⁰⁷ Herb Spiers, "The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary' by John Rechy," *The Body Politic* 34, June 1977, 18.

¹⁰⁸ Rechy, *The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary*, 253.

¹⁰⁹ Spiers, "The Sexual Outlaw," 18.

¹¹⁰ Spiers, "The Sexual Outlaw," 18.

referral to S&M as “sexual suicide” stigmatized and marginalized gay men who found pleasure in it.¹¹¹ In a response to Young, Spiers acknowledged that his earlier criticisms of S&M could also be applied to his own “preoccupation with pyramidal pees” as a manifestation of “unresolved machismo.”¹¹² Rechy’s book, Spiers’s review of his book, and the subsequent responses from Young and Spiers demonstrate how different writing spaces in *TBP* interacted. Book reviews became gateways for broader conversations on masculinity and style, while the letters between Spiers and Young on S&M highlight the transparency of *TBP* as a platform for these discussions. While Spiers’s review suggested a link between the practice of S&M and the aesthetic of macho style—both influenced by heterosexuality and laden with heteronormative ideas of male dominance—Young’s response demonstrated how these reviews did not go unquestioned, especially by those of the editorial collective who felt that S&M was a legitimate expression of gay male sexuality.

The distinctiveness of letters and reviews for debating the consequences of macho style is made ever more apparent when compared to ads appearing at the same time. Commercial ads engaged with the aesthetic elements of S&M by featuring white muscular men donning leather and other accessories. Chaps leather bar featured two cartoon men with moustaches donning leather chaps that exposed their buttocks in October 1983.¹¹³ The following November 1983 issue of *TBP* featured an ad by Leather Craft Ltd., a store at 608 Yonge Street in Toronto, offering readers custom made leather

¹¹¹ Ian Young, “An unappetizing spectacle,” *The Body Politic* 35, July-August 1977, 2.

¹¹² Herb Spiers, “Author replies,” *The Body Politic* 35, July-August 1977, 2.

¹¹³ Advertisement: “Chaps Toronto,” *The Body Politic* 97, October 1983, 44.

garments.¹¹⁴ The ad featured a white butch-looking man with a moustache and beard wearing a Black leather jacket that evoked the motorcycle culture aesthetic previously referenced in the September-October 1974 ad for The Barracks. These ads interwove S&M and macho style and supported the discourse around the desirability of macho style as both a white muscular able-bodied aesthetic and one increasingly empowered by leather and other accoutrements. Unlike S&M, which had a very clear aesthetic involving leather since the late 1940s, macho style only gradually adopted elements of S&M culture, particularly leather and some displays of bondage, such as cuffs and harnesses.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, these ads serve as a reminder that despite more nuanced discussions of gender, S&M, and masculinity in the editorial content of *TBP*, the newspaper simultaneously contained space for ads that simplified and reduced gay male masculinity to a singular aesthetic.

A more moderate approach was adopted by the late 1970s when discussing macho as a desire for normalcy among gay men. Tim Guest's writings introducing the chapter had appeared in *TBP* in May 1978 and marked a more lenient understanding of the objectification of gay male bodies and appearance as part of a complex and subtle form of "role-playing." As an active member of Gay Youth Toronto and the Revolutionary Workers League, Guest witnessed first-hand the effects of masculine stereotypes and the on-going identity crises young people were going through by trying to conform to them. He believed that, "We deal with our objectification in a natural way by expressing our

¹¹⁴ Advertisement: "Custom made just for you. Leather Craft Ltd.," *The Body Politic* 98, November 1983, 4.

¹¹⁵ According to Gayle Rubin, "Among gay men, leather and its idioms of masculinity have been the main framework for gay male S/M since the late 1940s." Gayle Rubin, *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 308.

alienation from it in our appearance—an appearance which tends to be a little extreme, almost a parody of itself—an image which, despite the alienation involved, allows us to exercise some control over our objectification.”¹¹⁶ In other words, gay men were not devoid of agency or action. Like other queer styles, macho style was an ideal that provided some men with agency while excluding and marginalizing others. Guest did not actively praise or idolized macho style, but instead viewed it as another outlet of masculinity for gay men.

Part of the reason for this restrained rhetoric around macho style in *TBP* was macho style’s growing presence in the gay community. Defined as “moustache, plaid shirt, logger’s boots, and ripped blue jeans,” *TBP* writer Noel Bari contended that macho style arguably represented nearly three quarters of the gay population by 1980.¹¹⁷ According to John Allec in August 1983, disco star and macho clone, Paul Parker, was viewed by many as the first star to come out of “the modern gay ghetto, bringing its look and character with him.”¹¹⁸ That look was heavily butch. Next to Allec’s column on Parker’s work was an image of Parker sporting a moustache and an open leather vest revealing his hairy chest for the reader to see. By including Parker’s image, Allec presented a specific aesthetic of what the modern gay ghetto looked like—macho. In doing so, he reinforced leather as an important accessory in how macho style straddled a campy performance of masculinity while still conforming to butch gender roles. The proliferation of disco, a musical genre known for ostentatious clothing and being played at gay-friendly establishments, played a role in promoting macho style. Indeed, in her analysis of disco

¹¹⁶ Tim Guest, “Image Control,” *The Body Politic* 43, May 1978, 11.

¹¹⁷ Noel Bari, “Prisoners of a stereotype,” *The Body Politic* 67, October, 1980, 4.

¹¹⁸ John Allec, “Right on target, but which target?” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 41.

culture, Alice Echols argues that disco promoted the pageantry of the male body, “Worked-out pecs came to be called ‘disco tits.’”¹¹⁹

Costuming gay male bodies with styles that drew upon traditional bastions of heterosexual performances of masculinity (i.e., the police officer, cowboy, or construction worker) added a campy theatricality to gay male sexuality that enhanced the “butch” role these men played. In the 1980s, a greater number of *TBP*’s classified ads contained increasingly specific requests for men donning styles of heteronormative occupations. A classified ad written by a 24-year-old man was published in *TBP* in September 1980 whereby he expressed his desire for an athletic police officer and wanted one for sex as “butch buddies.”¹²⁰ Meanwhile, another classified ad in the same issue described the writer’s desire for a “well-hung muscular male with apartment for occasional weekend encounters...[and]...guys who are into faded levis, western wear, construction boots or leather,” with similar ads following.¹²¹

With macho style surging in popularity as *the* aesthetic of gay male masculinity in the 1980s, there was greater vocalization among *TBP*’s readers regarding the reverse discrimination faced by macho members of the community. In December 1980, *TBP* published a standalone article from reader Dan Healey who was responding to four letters that appeared in the previous issue (Issue #68) criticizing the overrepresentation of macho masculinity in Toronto’s gay male community. Healey used *TBP*, and was seemingly supported by the collective with his published letter, to publicly denounce criticisms of macho style and defend it as a viable manifestation of masculinity. In a moment of

¹¹⁹ Echols, *Hot Stuff*, 126.

¹²⁰ Classified Ad: “Submissive Masculine GWM,” *The Body Politic* 66, September 1980, 37.

¹²¹ Classified Ad: “Shy Inexperienced 28-year-old,” *The Body Politic* 66, September 1980, 37.

frankness, Healey lashed back, “[f]rom the four letters I have cited the message is clear: attacks on personal ‘styles’ are all the rage. The result is a sickening display of self-oppression,” in his words. Healey confronted the stereotype that macho style represented “insanity, irresponsible ‘disco’ closetry, political indifference, reckless consumerism, rudeness in the street, and even hermaphroditism.” He argued that, “[t]hese four letter-writers are ready to dismiss other gay people with amazing alacrity just because they wrap themselves in sarongs or look for ‘attractive 25-year-olds’ to keep them company.”¹²² His accusations of reverse discrimination point to a broader discursive shift around the politics of gender and sexuality within *TBP* as it increasingly offered space for external voices to address the topics of oppression, sexism, and gender.

Others disagreed that clones were marginalized or discriminated against because they embraced a heterosexual understanding of manliness. Reader Conrad Biernacki believed that the heterogeneity of the gay community could be “our greatest strength, not the divisive and destructive weakness you see it as.”¹²³ Other readers used macho style as an opportunity to talk about discrimination more broadly. In October 1981, Peter Bowen, an expat living in Xania, Crete, wrote a letter on discrimination in the gay male community and argued that “[b]eing discriminatory about a partner...especially when it comes to sex, is the name of the game.” He also contended that ageism was an infallible part of gay cultural life. “Ageism (ugly word!) [sic] I’m a victim of myself, I guess, although I don’t feel victimized, unless I read every ad that doesn’t seem to want me as a

¹²² Dan Healey, “Spiteful bunk, divisive nonsense,” *The Body Politic* 69, December-January 1980/1981, 7.

¹²³ Conrad Biernacki, “In our closets, our worst enemies,” *The Body Politic* 70, February 1981, 4-5.

personal, vindictive rejection of me,” he wrote.¹²⁴ Bowen’s comments about ageism validated age discrimination as an infallible part of sexual desire.

Bowen’s discussion of desirability also raised the tenuous definition of masculinity in the gay male community. In his letter, Bowen argued that “‘masculine’ is, after all, a relative term, like ‘tall’ or ‘attractive’—having highly subjective interpretations.” His points of reference to make his argument, however, drew upon macho style. “It [masculinity] doesn’t mean some chest-expanded macho who wants to drive his knee-length hobnail boots into my crotch nightly nor does it even mean being into denim and leather, although it *can* mean these things,” he argued.”¹²⁵ While he also admitted that he feels no less masculine for crocheting, Bowen’s description of macho style and reference to leather and denim positioned it as a pervasive—and stereotypical—point of reference for gay male masculinity.

Leather and denim became notorious signifiers for macho style in William Friedkin’s 1980 film, *Cruising*. Starring Al Pacino as a straight cop investigating the murders of gay men in New York’s S&M bar scene, the film arguably exploited S&M and stereotyped it in gay male culture. *TBP* ran an in-depth article criticizing the essence of the film: “It [*Cruising*]...makes S&M mythologically dangerous and evil, the medium for the message that homosexuality and homicide go together like Peggy Lee’s ‘Love and Marriage.’”¹²⁶ Indeed, the film introduced a correlation between sexual desirability and staying safe; a theme that will be further explored in Chapter Three. The element of danger that the film evoked sparked outrage from some members of *TBP*, in addition to

¹²⁴ Peter Bowen, “So what’s wrong with discrimination?” *The Body Politic* 77, October 1981, 6.

¹²⁵ Italics in original. Bowen, “So what’s wrong with discrimination?,” 6.

¹²⁶ Scott Tucker, “Sex, Death, and Free Speech: The Fight to Stop Friedkin’s ‘Cruising,’” *The Body Politic* 58, November 1979, 26.

many gay men and women critiquing the emphasis placed on macho men, particularly those in leather, who were made out to be representative of the gay community.

Scholar and HIV/AIDS activist Vito Russo wrote into *TBP* from New York endorsing *TBP*'s coverage of the film's controversy, but challenged any backlash against the film. Russo did not understand why gay men were upset with the film, since Hollywood had filmed "what Hollywood has always decided to film—the visible gay ghetto," in his words. His analysis of *Cruising* arguably stood as a precursor to his 1987 book, *The Celluloid Closet*, in which he looked at the portrayal of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender characters in Hollywood films. As Russo lamented in his letter, "What disturbed me greatly was the hostility of the 'respectable' gay community—not to the film or United Artists—but to other gays who had made the free choice to cooperate in their own oppression."¹²⁷ Russo did not question macho style and S&M as emblematic of systematic homosexual self-oppression and self-regulation, but rather focused on the anxieties within the community around Hollywood's portrayal of gay men in leather. Russo's belief that macho style and S&M were voluntary forms of oppression in the gay community kept room for individual agency. His approach to macho style harked back to Ralph Lesser's and Tim Guest's respective arguments that gay men consciously donned macho style. However, Russo saw macho style as a form of oppression, demonstrating that the debate around macho style or the importance of aesthetics in gender presentation had not diminished.

Another such individual who advocated for macho style was Norman Hatton, an English photographer who immigrated to Canada in 1956, working as a coordinator of

¹²⁷ Vito Russo, "Cruising: Questions of class and censorship," *The Body Politic* 59, December-January 1979/1980, 4.

Figure 2.4 Photographs by Norman Hatton presented in "Skinscapes: Photographs by Norman Hatton," *The Body Politic* 74, June 1981, 23.

media services for the University of Toronto's Department of Zoology. Hatton was a prominent photographer in Toronto's gay community with some of his work featured on posters for Toronto's Club bathhouses, Buddy's bar, and in gay magazines *Esprit* and *Directions*. His influential photographic exposé, "Skinscapes," appearing in *TBP* in June 1981 articulated the important relationship between costume and masculinity in gay male culture (Figure 2.4). His subtle use of light and texture to accentuate and contrast the softness of flesh with "the hard look of leather, metal, and muscle" was viewed by the editorial collective as particularly important because his images evoked style as a *being* for gay men.¹²⁸

The individuals in the images were white, muscular, wearing police caps, leather, with some even smoking. A few individuals were lying on the ground exposed while others stared into the camera with an aggressive stance and domineering glare. The theatrical presentation of the individuals in Hatton's photographs, particularly the ways in which the white muscular body is both put on display, are representations of Hatton's perception of how macho masculinity could be claimed by donning leather or engaging in the masculine act of smoking.¹²⁹ In doing so, Hatton's images articulated to viewers that bodybuilding, particularly the macho body, was a process that involved more than

¹²⁸ Editorial collective, "Skinscapes: Photographs by Norman Hatton," *The Body Politic* 74, June 1981, 23.

¹²⁹ In his study of tobacco choices and smoking rituals in late-nineteenth and twentieth-century Montreal, Jarrett Rudy details how men defined gender, class, and ethnic boundaries based on the hierarchy of tobacco products. In his words, "For man, what a man smoked was an expression of how he saw himself and how others interpreted his identity." Jarrett Rudy, *The Freedom to Smoke: Tobacco Consumption and Identity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 46. The use of smoking in the context of Hatton's work gives the models a masculine, rugged element that seemingly liberates them from stereotypes of effeminacy, similar to the ways in which smoking was perceived as liberating women from expectations around femininity, according to Sharon Cook. Since camp plays with the assumed naturalness of gender to an extreme, Hatton's photographic collection demonstrates the ways in which sign vehicles of leather and cigarettes enhance the masculine nature of the figures in the photographs. Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture, 1800-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 3; and, Sharon Cook, *Sex, Lies, and Cigarettes: Canadian Women, Smoking, and Visual Culture, 1880-2000* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 305.

acquiring musculature, it included accentuating the ideal physique with elements of S&M.

Hannon also attempted to challenge the white aesthetic of macho style by including a single man of colour, arguably as a claim against the entrenched whiteness of macho style—a topic examined in greater detail in Chapter Four. Historian Jennifer Evans argues, “images do not passively mirror historical change but actively constitute claims to representation.”¹³⁰ However, there is an exotic theme playing out in the image of the Black man sitting and laying on the bed, all the while posed alongside objects such as a fern resembling a palm tree—theatrically displaying the hints of orientalism already present in the photograph. The positioning and placement of a fern-like plant next to the single man of colour exoticizes the non-white body. White men are defined primarily along their gender rather than race because white people are often considered “nonracial or racially neutral,” as Ruth Frankenberg contends, therefore becoming a standard in which non-white masculinities are compared to.¹³¹ In this instance, the Black body is adorned with oriental objects which displace any perceived relationship or connection with the white bodies in the exposé, while also adding a primitive element to Black sexuality. As a result, Hatton’s campy understanding of masculinity becomes evident in the posing and framing of male bodies; with white bodies at the forefront donning leather and an aggressive stance, and non-white bodies behind in a more submissive, exotic pose.

In one of the most profound statements legitimizing S&M culture as part of macho style, Hatton responded to someone who claimed his poster for his Toronto exhibition

¹³⁰ Jennifer V. Evans, “Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire,” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 2 (April, 2013): 433.

¹³¹ Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 1.

showed too much leather and not enough skin by stating, “Leather is skin, too.”¹³² His comment is explicit reference to how clothing or accessories could fashion the body in a desirable, masculine manner similar to bodybuilding. For Hatton to give leather the same importance and intimacy as the skin of the body positions clothing as an extension of one’s own body and, by extension, their masculinity.

Coverage of Hatton’s “Skinscapes” by *TBP* signified that leather and S&M were becoming increasingly approved of as erotic and non-oppressive manifestations of desire. The prominence of leather as part of macho style is further encapsulated in an advertisement for leather bar Chaps, on 9 Isabella Street. The bar advertised its grand opening on October 6, 1983 by displaying two illustrated macho men clad in leather chaps.¹³³ These cultural representations of macho style in *TBP* reiterate the importance of fashion and clothing as extensions of the self and gay men’s desire to be masculine. They also serve as a reminder of how *TBP* was at times a contradiction of politicized conversations around gender and macho style with exposés on macho artwork and photographs, and advertisements from local businesses which presented a more uniform aesthetic. Indeed, the absence of any serious critique of how Hatton used leather by the editorial collective suggests that the accoutrements of S&M had become re-politicized from self-oppression to sexual expression.

Gayle Rubin argues in her analysis of the leather community in postwar San Francisco that, “Leather jackets, jeans, boots, and Harley caps all became markers for

¹³² Editorial collective “Skinscapes: Photographs by Norman Hatton,” 23.

¹³³ Advertisement: “Chaps Toronto,” *The Body Politic* 97, October 1983, 44.

butch gay men interested, sexually and socially, in other butch gay men.”¹³⁴ The overt costuming of the male body to determine machismo, however, meant that the campiness of macho style became increasingly visible over the course of the late 1970s and into the 1980s. While leather carried various meanings in the gay community—some associated it with S&M while others did not—it reshaped discourses around macho style and bodybuilding after 1982 when it was stereotyped as inherently dangerous and, in the words of Rubin, became “assimilated into concerns over AIDS-related risks and hazards.” Concerns around HIV/AIDS, compounded with the dangerous sexuality in Friedkin’s *Cruising* (a movie that I will discuss in detail in Chapter 3), helped redefine the meaning of leather from a masculine accessory to a sordid and dangerous expression of gay sexuality. In contrast, bodybuilding became seen as an opportunity for gay men to challenge the narrative that HIV/AIDS was rapidly debilitating and weakening the gay male body.

Conclusion

The editorials and advertisements in *TBP* suggest that gay men performed particularized and contextual styles of masculinity that incorporated manliness and homosexuality by which they constructed their very *being*.¹³⁵ Over the duration of *TBP*, discussions of

¹³⁴ Gayle Rubin, “The Miracle Mile: South of Market and Gay Male Leather, 1962-1997,” in *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture*, eds. James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), 254.

¹³⁵ Sociologist Michael Kimmel has written extensively on young male identity in postwar America. His argument is that modern masculinity is in crisis because traditional anchors of male identity are receding and are becoming increasingly impossible to obtain, particularly financial independence the importance of displaying muscle. See: Michael Kimmel, *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era* (New York: Nation Books, 2013); *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and, *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).

macho continually changed to reflect how masculinity and passing bodies were equated with sexual desirability. The tensions that arose around macho style also highlight how the editorial collective negotiated macho style as a hegemonic aesthetic to which many gay men, if able-bodied and white, were encouraged to adhere. Macho style was more than a stylistic expression of masculinity in the gay male community; it was the focal point of numerous articles, debates, and dialogue between readers and the editorial collective on gender and sexuality in *TBP*.

With the collective feeling obligated to mediate representations of masculinity, particularly those they believed stemmed from heteronormative discourses of society, macho style invariably broadened *TBP* from a political newspaper to include gay cultural developments in Toronto and across North America. Furthermore, reader responses in *TBP* demonstrate that the newspaper was an open forum for cultural constructions of masculinity to be debated amongst community members. The open dialogue between the editorial collective and readers gave the paper a unique foothold in the gay community by providing intellectual conversations beyond the scope of lesbian and gay politics. In these discussions of macho style in *TBP*, the white muscular gay male body came to represent broader tensions around gender, sexuality, desirability, and race within the gay male community. Furthermore, commercial advertisements and some classified ads demonstrate that macho style came to include more than the manufacturing of the gay male body but elements of S&M as well by the 1980s. In much of the latter editorial material on masculinity in *TBP*, macho style was not simply seen as a mask used by gay men to hide their sexuality, but had become a problematic negotiation between passing and camp.

By the early 1980s, macho culture had become synonymous with gay masculinity and some gay men were seen as “insidiously” hiding themselves in society. Outside of the community, the presentation of gay male masculinity through macho style fueled anxieties especially on how to identify homosexual men from their heterosexual counterparts. In 1985, Alan Stewart contended in *The Globe and Mail* that, “A middle-aged, balding man in an evening gown is not only immediately recognizable, but recognizable as a non-threat. A gay man is considered a threat to society, not when he wears a dress but when he does not, when he looks like everyone else. A gay man who can pass as a real woman might be a bit upsetting to some people, but a gay man who can pass as a ‘real’ man is even more so.”¹³⁶ In other words, this was a dramatic shift away from Ron Poramro’s argument in 1977 that men who conformed to heteronormative performances of masculinity in public were not a threat. Rather, the “threat” to society was that gay men were not transgressing gender and sexual boundaries enough to be identifiable. Indeed, by 1983, passing was portrayed in *TBP* as a precautionary measure taken by gay men to ensure that they did not face discrimination at work or in society.

The pages of *TBP* exemplify how the numerous and often competing mediations of gay male masculinity reflect an equally diverse cultural landscape in Toronto’s, and arguably North America’s, gay male communities. The editorial collective experienced a great deal of internal tension around the topic of masculinity, particularly as it related to gay liberation and oppression, as well as freedom of sexual expression. Ironically, while macho style became increasingly defined along a single ever-changing aesthetic—

¹³⁶ Alan Stewart, “Making the Truth Palatable,” *The Globe and Mail*, August 3, 1985, 18.

adopting stylistic elements of leather, denim, and S&M—the opinions among *TBP*'s editorial collective and readership on macho culture became more diverse.

CHAPTER THREE: Cruise Controlling Masculinity in Toronto's Gay Ghetto

Certain bars, certain parks, certain washrooms are allowed to be “ours”—most of the time—and we can be our disgusting selves there. If we leave, if we attempt to be ourselves on the job or in the schools or in the wrong park at the wrong time we are fair game. We can be attacked.

- Gerald Hannon, “Learning to Kill,” *The Body Politic* 22, February 1976, 9.

The Body Politic (TBP) editor Gerald Hannon noted in 1976 that public spaces in Toronto were constantly shifting in meaning as sexual and social spaces for the gay community. These spaces shared a recursive relationship with violence and danger. The message that bars, parks, and washrooms could be dangerous was conveyed in William Freidkin's 1980 film, *Cruising*, which upheld the idea that certain spaces, particularly S&M bars and bathhouses, were conducive to variations of macho style—almost all of which were entangled in themes of danger and perversion. The film follows police officer Steve Burns (Al Pacino), a New York City police officer who immerses himself in the gay S&M bar scene of the city's meatpacking district to find a serial killer targeting gay men. Throughout Burns's quest to find the killer, the film raises concern about the relationship between sexuality and staying safe, especially within the “sordid” sexualized spaces of New York's gay nightlife. *Cruising* also presents the narrative that macho style afforded gay men a level of protection from violence.

TBP's coverage of the film was permeated by anxieties around masculinity. Indeed, what would begin as a review or editorial of the film often turned into a discussion of gay

male masculinity, pivoting *TBP* into a platform for gay cultural politics. For example, in February 1980, *TBP* writer Michael Lynch noted that running through gay pornographic magazine *Mandate*'s (1975-2009) interview with six extra cast members from the film was the argument that *Cruising* would counter, in the words of *Mandate*'s editor-in-chief, John Revere, "'established straight stereotypes of gays' with 'unexpected images of gay men as super-macho men certainly capable of taking care of themselves...'"¹ Stylizing macho as a "safe" performance of masculinity in the gay community may have appealed to many gay men's concerns around potential threats of violence, but it also equated personal wellbeing with a young, muscular, white aesthetic. Lynch acquiesced in his editorial that if macho style is one expression of gender afforded by gay liberation then "the logic of the extras is probably inescapable."² By focusing on the nuances around masculinity in the interviews, Lynch transformed a simple editorial piece related to the film into a broader cultural commentary on the purpose of gay liberation and the tenuous relationship macho men and macho culture seemed to have with it.

The editorial collective frequently highlighted the fluid relationship between gay male masculinity and sexuality with space and danger long before, during, and after Freidkin's film. In a similar fashion to Burns's objective in *Cruising*, two Toronto police officers disguised themselves as lovers to search for Neil Wilkinson's murderer, following his death in 1977. The death of Wilkinson was part of a series of murders which plagued Toronto from 1975 until 1978. Other victims, such as 51-year-old Harold Walkley, who was murdered in 1975, provided an opportunity for *TBP* contributor Robin Hardy to generate a discussion around macho style, sexual desirability, safety, and how

¹ Quoted in Michael Lynch, "The logic of the extras," *The Body Politic* 60, February 1980, 34.

² Michael Lynch, "The logic of the extras," *The Body Politic* 60, February 1980, 34.

masculinity is stylized after a particular age in his 1979 article, “Overkill.”³ Coverage of these murders and police efforts to find the killer(s) raised questions and commentary in *TBP* about the need for self-defence. Previously, *TBP* editor Gerald Hannon had stressed the tenuous nature of “safe” space and spaces of violence in 1976, but continued to articulate how working out, taking self-defense classes, and performing a more macho masculinity served as a form of protection in public spaces throughout the late 1970s. However, by the time Hardy’s article, “Overkill” appeared in February 1979, it was noted that “in Toronto, at least, there are still no self-defence courses available for men, except judo and karate lessons.”⁴ Instead, Hardy quoted gay sociologist John Lee, who said that there was “one lifestyle which is safer: the lifestyle of the ‘out of the closet’ gay.”⁵ Being openly gay may have allowed men to avoid dangerous situations and have a support system in the community, but for those who were closeted, understanding which spaces were available, including anonymous public spaces, was paramount.

In the early 1970s, *TBP*’s editorial collective made the newspaper a resource for navigating the physical and social spaces of Toronto’s gay community. They did so by mapping out the city for readers, by discussing the gendered and sexual politics of parks, bars, bathhouses, and gyms, and by publishing advertisements for many of the city’s venues. These efforts helped the editorial collective triangulate the relationship between space, gender, and sexuality in Toronto. *TBP* played an important role in describing the ways in which different aesthetics of masculinity flourished within the purview of particular spaces, as well as mediating the use of queer style by undercover police

³ Robin Hardy, “Overkill: Murder in Toronto-the-Good,” *The Body Politic* 50, February 1979, 20.

⁴ Robin Hardy, “Overkill: Murder in Toronto-the-Good,” *The Body Politic* 50, February 1979, 21.

⁵ Robin Hardy, “Overkill: Murder in Toronto-the-Good,” *The Body Politic* 50, February 1979, 21.

officers for the purposes of entrapment. This chapter brings into focus *TBP*'s repertoire of editorial content, illustrative maps, and extensive dialogue between readers and the collective pertaining to space, masculinity, and style.

Masculinity was stylized and re-stylized by gay men within different sexualized spaces. In regard to terminology, I use the term "space" when referencing the material or physical landscape in Toronto, while "place" involves the shaping of space by taxonomic categories such as sexuality, gender, race, class, and the state. Drawing upon Leif Jerram's understanding that "space is material, location is relational and positional, place is meaningful," I argue that the variety of spaces (gay bars, bathhouses, clubs, parks, alleyways, gyms, and public washrooms) in Toronto available to socialize and cruise were constantly alternating in meaning as gay-friendly places or places of potential violence.⁶ In their discussions of space and place, *TBP*'s editorial collective articulated to readers the excitement and risks of cruising in public, and the consequences of being caught in the numerous raids on gay bars and bathhouses over the course of the 1970s and 1980s.

The complicated relationship between sexual identities, performance of gender, and space is reflected in the formation of Toronto's gay village itself. Geographer Catherine Jean Nash argues that, "The historical evolution of Toronto's gay village has to do with complex and unpredictable power relations ordering and re-ordering association between contested identities and places."⁷ For example, the increasing number of gym advertisements appearing in the *TBP* by the late 1970s represented the growth of macho

⁶ Leif Jerram, "Space: A Useless Category of Historical Analysis?," *History and Theory* 52 (October 2013): 404.

⁷ Catherine Jean Nash, "Toronto's Gay Village (1969-1982): Plotting the Politics of Gay Identity," *The Canadian Geographer* 50, no. 1 (2006): 2.

style physically marking Toronto's urban landscape. Bodybuilding was part of an effort to stylize the gay male body as macho and, in some cases, assuage notions that the gay male body was either weak or, in the early 1980s, debilitated by HIV/AIDS. Indeed, Ken Popert recalls in my interview with him that, "I think a lot of guys built their bodies because it's the only thing they can do to make themselves stronger in the world."⁸ By emphasizing the relationship between the muscular, athletic body, with gyms and masculinity for gay male readers in editorial content and commercial advertisements, *TBP* played an active role in endorsing gyms and bodybuilding as a mainstay of masculinity in Toronto's gay male community.

Dressing to "Cruise to Win"

Cruising was a part of the quintessential gay male experience for many men in 1970's Toronto. Activist, artist and writer John Grube described cruising in *TBP* in 1983 as "a fundamental social skill required by all gay men. It's as basic to a functional gay life as calculus is to engineers or drawing is to artists."⁹ Historian Steven Maynard demonstrates in his 1994 article "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890-1930," that homosexual identities were spatially contingent and cities conducive to what he describes as the "journey to sex" long before *TBP* and gay liberation.¹⁰ The journey to sex helped

⁸ Ken Popert (editor for *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, April 14, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

⁹ John Grube, "Men Looking at Men Looking at Men," *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 34.

¹⁰ Steven Maynard argues that the journey to sex was "the relationship between a man's class background and place of residence with the location of his sexual encounter." Maynard pays particular attention to aspects of the city-building process and the status of men as wage earners, both of which were important conditions for a homosexual subculture to emerge. Steven Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890-1930," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (October 1994): 217.

forge, in Maynard's words, "what has been described as the most 'ubiquitous form' of the homosexual subculture, one revolving around 'public' sex in parks, laneways, and lavatories" at the turn of the twentieth century.¹¹ However, as George Chauncey notes in his 1994 monograph, *Gay New York*—a germinal work in queer urban history—cruising historically "referred to a streetwalker's search for partners before it referred to a gay man's."¹² According to Chauncey, the appropriation of cruising as a gay male activity involved a set of stylistic codes and practices of gender and sexuality to indicate sexual availability and viability as a partner. As a result, cruising became inextricably linked to individual self-presentation and the identity formation for those who cruised.

In his analysis of gay life in London in the early twentieth century, historian Matt Houlbrook notes that men would cruise using a series of codes and practices that "remained hidden from casual observers, so they [queer men] were thus also invisible to official surveillance."¹³ Cruising in the context of early twentieth century London echoed the class component of men's identities found in Maynard's analysis, emphasizing class as a category which separated men who cruised. Houlbrook notes that "[t]his movement [cruising] was often represented by discarding middle-class styles of dress...and disrupting the visual cues of class."¹⁴ Returning to *TBP* and the 1970s, visual cues to cruising developed alongside the stylistic appropriation of working-class culture in the gay community. This was particularly the case when macho style proliferated in the community.

¹¹ Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall," 209.

¹² George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 286.

¹³ Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 76.

¹⁴ Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 210.

During the 1970s, the few articles in *TBP* that focused on the clothing of cruising were primarily humorous in nature. The only guide to appear in *TBP* that explicitly described the use of clothing for cruising was in 1978 by John Forbes. Entitled “Hanky Panky,” Forbes’s article was a satirical reflection on cruising; listing the numerous colours of handkerchiefs and their position in either the left or right back pocket as an indication of what type of sexual “kink” a man was into and whether he preferred to perform said act or have it done to him. The colour black, for example, indicated interest in S&M culture. On the left side meant that the wearer was a “Heavy S&M, Top”—penetrator—while the right side indicated he was a “Heavy S&M, Bottom”—the penetrated.¹⁵ Even as a satire, Forbes’s article demonstrates that there was a system of codes tied to gay men’s accessories. These accoutrements not only facilitated cruising habits for gay men, but helped men ostentatiously display their masculinity and sexual habits.

Reader Amy Groves wrote into *TBP* arguing that handkerchiefs were essential to promoting sexuality and gender. In her words:

Gay men have been sporting them for years, without any apparent disasters—but not with the intention of defining their total sexuality. A piece of cloth hanging out of someone’s back pocket won’t do that any more than an ad in *TBP* will tell readers everything there is to know about a given restaurant. The point of a handkerchief is not to analyze, but to advertise.¹⁶

¹⁵ John Forbes, “Hanky Panky: Beyond the Pale and Back Again,” *The Body Politic* 49, December-January 1979, 18.

¹⁶ Amy Groves, “Lesbian S&M: Valverde roasted,” *The Body Politic* 62, April 1980, 4.

The use of colour-coded handkerchiefs also applied to lesbians, with Mariana Valverde describing the system as offering the opportunity to liberate “women from romantic monogamy, from dependence on one and only one romantic lover or one and only one sexual position; it liberates women from the girl-meets-girl approach to lesbian happiness.”¹⁷ Indeed, Forbes and Valverde described handkerchiefs as a common component in displaying one’s sexuality and sexual habits for women and men alike in the lesbian and gay community.

In addition, *TBP* frequently contained advertisements for guides, such as *Loving Man* (1976) by Mark Freedman and Harvey Mayes, as well as editorials which served an important task by illuminating the role clothing played in the process of cruising. *Loving Man*, for instance, advertised itself in *TBP* as an illustrative guide to male lovemaking as well as a guide for “getting around the bars and the baths.”¹⁸ With regard to navigating bars and bathhouses, *Loving Man* dealt with more universal topics such as conversation starters, bathhouse etiquette, and sexual positions. In doing so, it indicated the presence of a transcript or code of conduct within gay bars and bathhouses. The guide advertised itself as a controversial publication in Canada—as it was published in New York—arguably to enhance its appeal to readers by declaring: “Seized by the Morality Squad in Toronto! (But still OK with Canada Customs)”¹⁹ Being seized by Toronto Police’s morality squad suggests that the guide was not only explicit enough to be deemed worthy of censorship, but that police acquired, and most likely used, gay literature to navigate gay culture and look for codes to cruising. Police efforts to read lesbian and gay literature

¹⁷ Mariana Valverde, “Feminism meets first-fucking: getting lost in lesbian S&M,” *The Body Politic* 60, February 1980, 43.

¹⁸ Advertisement: “*Loving Man*,” *The Body Politic* 41, March 1978, 29.

¹⁹ Advertisement: “*Loving Man*,” *The Body Politic* 41, March 1978, 29.

are extensively documented by Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile in *The Canadian War on Queers*. In their monograph, they note that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) regularly “conducted surveillance of and collected announcements of gay dances and meetings...”²⁰ In addition, RCMP “O” division files demonstrate surveillance and collection of material from gay organizations, such as the University of Toronto Homophile Association, in which they documented newsletters, meetings, and even the approximate number of dance attendees.²¹

Coverage of other guides to cruising, such as Lenny Giteck’s book *Cruise to Win: A Guide for Gay Men* (1982), allowed *TBP* to critique the spatial, stylistic, and even racial elements to cruising. Introduced by *TBP* writer Gerry Oxford in his 1983 article, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” Giteck’s book focuses on interviews with 50 gay men to articulate the nuances of gay male cruising, whether in bars, parks, or washrooms. In attempting to discern if Giteck’s book was an effective guide, Oxford asked six of *TBP*’s readers to describe their own experiences cruising in comparison to *Cruise to Win*. Beginning with his own review, Oxford admitted that the book had its flaws, but was a helpful start for gay men because “[w]hat, after all, can be more self-defeating than standing around in a bar trying to meet a man whom you have chosen on the basis of how well he fits his T-shirt, his jeans, or your fantasies?”²² A theme that resonated with Oxford and readers was the objectification of gay men and the presentation of the gay male body in Giteck’s book. By publishing a formal review and

²⁰ Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation* (University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 503.

²¹ LAC, RG 146, vol. 3115, file “Community Homophile Association of Toronto, Ont.,” O Division, Toronto, August 7, 1973, “Re: Composite Report on the University of Toronto (U. of T.), Toronto, Ontario (Key Sectors Education),” 24.

²² Gerry Oxford, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 31.

reader critiques of this theme, *TBP*'s editorial collective felt that codes and practices of cruising should be debated and tempered in ways that Giteck failed to do.

The presentation of the gay male body in *Cruise to Win* emerges in Giteck's many interviews with men at bars. In one interview, an individual named Jeff noted that displaying machismo was done in stylistic ways, where "they'll [men] stand under spotlights, and they'll be wearing tight T-shirts, or tank tops, or they'll have no shirt on at all, and they'll just stand there and flex."²³ Here, not only is clothing arguably an important component in stylizing the body, but so is the muscular body itself. Highlighting musculature either through tight clothing or by flexing the undressed body was, according to Jeff, fundamental to self-presentation in the gay bar. In addition, Giteck asked psychologist Alan Sable about body stance and cruising to which Sable responded that there was a sexy stance based on "[t]he conventional image of the sexy man—the Marlboro man—[he] has a closed mouth, narrowed eyes, set jaw, and an aggressive kind of body language. It says the man is strong, powerful, independent, a loner, not emotionally vulnerable."²⁴ Giteck's emphasis on the posture of the body as part of a man's image harkened to Erving Goffman's concept of body language as an example of a sign vehicle to indicate one's social presence.²⁵

The role of style in cruising codes was notably addressed in the many letters that followed Oxford's brief introduction. Describing their experiences cruising in Toronto, three of the letter-writers explicitly evoked style and appearance as fundamental to

²³ As quoted in Larry Giteck, *Cruise to Win: A Guide for Gay Men* (San Francisco: Pantera Press, 1982), 11.

²⁴ As quoted in Giteck, *Cruise to Win*, 27.

²⁵ As stated in Chapter Two, the term "sign-vehicles" lies within Erving Goffman's concept of dramaturgy. Included in these sign-vehicles are bodily and facial expressions, as well as other bodily means of communication from one individual to another. See: Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956), 14-15.

cruising. Brian Hickey argued that Giteck's book was a guide to *flirting* not cruising since the myriad forms of cruising described in the book, including "smiling and nodding/winking/waving, appreciative glances at tits, baskets [groins], key-rings and hankies," could be carried out at any time of the day and in spaces beyond gay bars and bathhouses.²⁶ The importance of how one styled their body and presented themselves when cruising was part of a "*fantasy image*," according to reader Michael Caplan, who did acknowledge however, that he was surprisingly aroused by the touch of "someone whose appearance didn't excite me."²⁷ Caplan wrote that he was attracted to the individual because the touch formed a visceral connection that allowed him to project his sexual desires and fantasy image onto the person; marking the importance of individual/personal space in both cruising and the shaping of desirability. Finally, Ken Chaplin of St. Catharines even admitted that standards for appearance and style dwindle as cruising stretches out over the course of the night: "I watch the clock and lower my standards in terms of looks and brains as the minutes tick towards last call." When considering whether *Cruise to Win* reflected his experience cruising, Chaplin did agree with Giteck's argument that being rejected desensitized oneself to it over time, although, he acquiesced, "I'm not sure my rubbery ego could stand it!"²⁸

The editorial collective's decision to publish six reader responses that far outsized Oxford's own review of *Cruise to Win* was not only a reminder to readers that *TBP* was centred in community conversation, but also appeared to challenge previous criticisms that the newspaper was alienating its readership with its intellectual rhetoric. Three years

²⁶ Brian Hickey, "Men Looking at Men Looking at Men," *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 32.

²⁷ Emphasis in original. Michael Caplan, "Men Looking at Men Looking at Men," *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 32.

²⁸ Ken Chaplin, "Men Looking at Men Looking at Men," *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 33.

prior in August 1980, Philadelphia activist Scott Tucker wrote into *TBP* criticizing Ken Popert's concern in April that year that intellectualism had fallen behind activism in the gay community. Tucker had responded, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it [emphasis in original]." ²⁹ Reaching out to readers for their thoughts on *Cruise to Win* helped to distance the collective and *TBP* from criticisms of high-brow intellectual de rigueur and position the paper as a voice of the community, albeit from a white perspective.

Most accounts of cruising in *Cruise to Win* ignored the topic of race altogether, centering white male bodies as the de-facto object of desire. The privileged position of white men when cruising was lambasted by reader Quan Minh, an indigenous reader from Montreal, who argued that cruising was a practice that revolved around "fancy housing and other luxurious things," things that only white men could afford. ³⁰ Another writer, George Xuereb, highlighted how whiteness was contextually defined and relied on cultural frameworks that were continually renegotiated. While on vacation in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico from his home of Winnipeg, Xuereb was picked up at an American disco. He described his experience as becoming "more of a Canadian, shedding a lot of my original Mediterranean characteristics" because he had been actively cruised rather than having to do the cruising. Xuereb saw himself as whiter, illustrating that the exotic space of a disco in Mexico reshaped traditional boundaries of gender and race. The connection he makes between feeling more Canadian and "made to feel attractive without having to make the first move" suggests that not only was his race defined differently in

²⁹ Scott Tucker, "Theory and action," *The Body Politic* 65, August 1980, 4. His response was to Ken Popert's article, "Cruising and Crisis Management," *The Body Politic* 62, April 1980, 47.

³⁰ Quan Minh, "Men Looking at Men Looking at Men," *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 34.

Mexico than it was in Winnipeg, but that being seen as white brought with it a sense of desirability.³¹

Cruising and Entrapment: Dangers and Disguises

With cruising largely taking place in public spaces, its pleasures were only rivaled by the dangers posed by police entrapment and homophobic violence. Some of the risks of cruising came from the involvement of “heterosexual” married men. The editorial collective noted in October 1976 that public sex included: “married men [who] came to the parks, older men who saw an orgasm in the park or a washroom as representative of the totality of gay life, young men wracked by guilt for what they feel driven to do, who have not heard of *The Body Politic* [sic]...”³² The occurrence of “straight” men engaging in homosexual acts in washrooms arguably opened a space in which police could insert themselves for purposes of entrapment.

As early as 1972, Dave Scott of the *Toronto Daily Star* reported on police entrapment of homosexuals in High Park and the use of tactics such as spying on the public in the park’s washrooms by “peering through a baseboard grate.”³³ In a manner similar to Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon, the police in this situation closed off a stall in the washroom and placed a fake ventilation grill to allow them to observe and effectively control gay men’s activity in the cubicle next to it.³⁴ Toronto Police also used a glory hole

³¹ George Xuereb, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 33.

³² *The Body Politic* is not italicized in original. “What do you say to a guy after you’ve blown him in the park?” *The Body Politic* 27, October 1976, 14.

³³ Dave Scott, “Police and Homosexuals co-operate to stop offences in parks, subways,” *Toronto Daily Star*, April 6, 1972, 27.

³⁴ Police voyeurism is another example of a queer performance of police officers because voyeurism is often looked upon as a perversion. The perverted nature of voyeurism is not applicable to police officers in this context, however, because legitimate state “powers” endorse police’s behavior to observe and convict. Foucault argues that Bentham’s panopticon is “a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining

at the Greenwin Square shopping mall and apartment complex near Bloor and Sherbourne between April and June 1979 in order to maximize the possibility for arrests, according to *TBP*.³⁵ Plainclothes officers from Toronto's 51 Division had been reportedly "arresting gay men on an almost daily basis" at this location.³⁶ In the August 1979 issue, the collective reported that Toronto Police had dismantled the spy post in the washroom at Greenwin Square because of pressure from the gay community and city politicians—another example of resistance on the part of the gay community.³⁷

Of all the dangers that public cruising involved—arrest, gang violence, and entrapment—the topic of entrapment was one of the most prominent in *TBP* from the newspaper's inception. Police efforts to entrap gay men by luring them with the possibility of sexual pleasure has been well documented by historians.³⁸ The ways in which style was used by police to entrap gay men, however, remains unexplored. The editorial collective paid significant attention to the ways in which heterosexual police officers dressed the part of civilians and engaged with a queer style that was conducive to ensnaring gay men for public sexual acts and subsequently arrest them for gross

power relations in terms of the everyday life of men." Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 205.

³⁵ A glory hole is a small cut out opening between two stalls which facilitates anonymous sexual encounters. Often oral sex was provided using these openings, and it was considered common practice in public cruising. See: "Cop hides in toilet for entrapment blitz," *The Body Politic* 54, July 1979, 15.

³⁶ "Cop hides in toilet for entrapment blitz," *The Body Politic* 54, July 1979, 15.

³⁷ Ross Irwin, "Cops forced to stop entrapment at Greenwin Square washroom," *The Body Politic* 55, August 1979, 11.

³⁸ Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, along with Douglas Janoff, have noted that municipal police forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) routinely performed undercover operations to locate, entrap and persecute gay men and lesbians in the 1970s and 1980s. While the aforementioned scholars discuss the use of disguise in entrapping gay men, there has been no exploration of how such tactics were carried out on the part of police by using style to either carry out or enhance their success at entrapping gay men. See: Kinsman and Gentile, *Canadian War on Queers* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1996); and, Douglas Janoff, *Pink Violence: Homophobic Violence in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

indecentcy.³⁹ Since 1971, instances of plainclothes officers arresting gay men made coverage in *TBP*. Gerald Hannon referred to the increasing number of arrests and entrapments as the “war on sin” in 1975.⁴⁰ The arrest of a young man cruising an undercover police officer in Allan Gardens park, as well as reports of entrapment in the washroom of the St. Charles Tavern on Yonge St. and the park along Philosopher’s Walk, signaled that the Toronto police and their morality squad were escalating their harassment.⁴¹

In *TBP*’s first issue, writer Rombus Hube reported that the Toronto Police’s morality squad were “cleverly disguised as greasers” while patrolling Philosopher’s Walk, a pedestrian pathway between Queen’s Park and Bloor Street known for its gay cruising.⁴² The appropriation of greaser style—a rock and roll aesthetic popular in the 1950s that informed gay macho style in its formative years—provided the opportunity for the Toronto Police to disguise their officers for purposes of reconnaissance, as well as to potentially appeal to gay men. Police were enticing homosexuals by acting as “agent provocateurs,” a term that became a common reference for officers engaged in tactics of entrapment. On March 5, 1973, then president of the Community Homophile Associate of Toronto (CHAT) and *TBP* writer George Hislop, informed readers of the *Globe and Mail* that “They [police] represent themselves as being interested in homosexual activity, and when approached they arrest the person.”⁴³ According to Robin Hardy of *TBP*, the

³⁹ It cannot be known how often police read *TBP*, but evidence in *TBP* suggests that police continued to respond to knowledge of their reconnaissance by updating tactics of surveillance.

⁴⁰ Gerald Hannon, “War on sin produced gay casualties,” *The Body Politic* 20, October 1975, 8.

⁴¹ Gerald Hannon, “War on sin produced gay casualties,” *The Body Politic* 20, October 1975, 8.

⁴² Rombus Hube, “Toronto Civilian Park Patrol,” *The Body Politic* 1, November-December 1971, 9.

⁴³ As quoted in “Policemen enticing homosexuals, spokesman says,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 5, 1973, 5.

act of touching a plainclothes officer in this context was referred to as “assault.”⁴⁴ Over the course of its publication run, *TBP* continued to post warnings of entrapment in local news, with some messages being as simple as: “Gays cruising in Toronto park areas should take precautions against being entrapped.”⁴⁵ Prior to this, Hislop had published an article in *TBP* on how to avoid being arrested while cruising. His advice: “Don’t grope strangers (introduce yourself first).”⁴⁶ These reports on entrapment and plainclothes police officers highlight the potential consequences of desiring heteronormative performances of masculinity, particularly passing as heterosexual, in gay male culture.

“Passing” in the context of police entrapment involved straight police officers passing in two different kinds of performances. First, police had to pass as ordinary citizens for the purposes of observing and taking photographs of gay men and lesbians at rallies, washrooms, bars, bathhouses, and various other social functions. Second, police officers who entrapped gay men or infiltrated and raided bars and bathhouses had to pass as homosexual or at least sexually fluid in order to enter such venues without suspicion. The rampant homophobia of the Toronto police—evident in their own brutality towards the gay and lesbian community—reinforced a butch performance of masculinity, especially among officers who chose to remain in the closet. The style of plainclothes police officers highlighted a tension between performing homoerotic acts on behalf of a heterosexual state and being read as homosexual or having their masculinity and sexuality questioned by gay men.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Robin Hardy, “Guilty of brutal attack, ‘queerbashers’ get jail term,” *The Body Politic* 44, June-July 1978, 5.

⁴⁵ “Warning,” *The Body Politic* 45, August 1978, 8.

⁴⁶ George Hislop, “Don’t grope strangers (introduce yourself first),” *The Body Politic* 4, May-June 1972, 18.

⁴⁷ Female impersonators in the army, such as the example Jackson uses of “the army’s ‘Kit Bags’ concert party,” demonstrates that even institutions considered bastions of heterosexuality contained spaces (often

During the process of entrapment, plainclothes officers appropriated a form of queer style that embodied the heteronormative components of macho style. Police co-opted macho style as “paraphernalia of state power,” in the words of Anne McClintock. While McClintock examines S/M and fetishism in the late Victorian era, her understanding of S/M and its use of uniforms as a visible reversal of social power and staging of hierarchy lends itself to how police turned macho style into a threat to the very community in which it emerged from—transforming public (or arguably private if only two men were in the washroom together) pleasure into public punishment.⁴⁸ The theatrical performance of plainclothes officers enticing gay men in public washroom facilities may not be considered homosexual, however, because these officers were enforcing heterosexual norms prescribed by the state.⁴⁹

When several gay policemen had phoned or written into *TBP* about being gay and on the other side of the law, Michael Riordon responded with an article on the duality between being gay and working for an institution that enforced heterosexual norms. In his 1978 article, “Remember when ‘Mounties’ meant the Musical Ride?,” Riordon noted that the policemen speaking to *TBP* seemed to be distressed about punishing gay men for actions they themselves could or would engage in and subsequently rationalizing such decisions because they are closeted and must work within a “rigid authoritarian sexually-

the stage) in which the heterosexual, masculine nature of the Canadian military was challenged. However, the drag performance in this instance is arguably nonthreatening because the stage highlights the theatricality or campiness of the soldier’s performance—reminding heterosexual soldiers that their own sexuality is not brought into question by watching. Paul Jackson, *One of the Boys: Homosexuality in the Military during World War II* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 160.

⁴⁸ Anne McClintock argues that “S/M performs the ‘primitive irrational’ as a dramatic script; a theatrical, communal performance in the heart of Western reason.” Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 143.

⁴⁹ Police donning macho style or even plainclothes highlights how state power can be reinvented and scripted to unconventional uniforms, revealing “that social order is unnatural, scripted and invented,” according to McClintock. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 143.

repressed gruesomely macho situation.”⁵⁰ Riordon’s article is particularly important in demonstrating *TBP*’s ability to both destabilize heterosexual institutions such as the Toronto Police by covering the tensions of being gay and on the police force, and broaden the scope of the community to include those who could be considered part of the opposition to gay liberation. Sympathies for gay policemen struggling to reconcile with their duties was only dampened by the harsh realities of police brutality and entrapment, however—a point of contention that continues to reverberate in the contemporary gay community.

Riordon also used this opportunity to describe the ways in which police uniforms grant police officers, who are just citizens, authority and power. Indeed, he wrote, “Take a constable out of Police Drag and you have a plainclothes policeman. Or, as in a baths raid, a policeman in a towel. Trying desperately to conceal a hard-on with his notebook.”⁵¹ His reference to police uniforms as “Police Drag,” insinuated that the police uniform was an example of the theatrical display of power and authority granted by clothing—the stylization of power. The power of uniforms is examined by historian Paul Jackson who notes in the context of homosexuality in the Canadian military in World War Two, that the image of the infantryman in uniform “provided North American culture with what journalist Susan Faludi calls ‘the template for postwar manhood.’”⁵² Faludi argues that in the post-war period, a “quasi-militarized peacetime economy and a national security state” had ushered in a standard of manhood that reflected the United

⁵⁰ Michael Riordon, “Remember when ‘Mounties’ meant the Musical Ride?” *The Body Politic* 39, December 1977-January 1978, 28.

⁵¹ Michael Riordon, “Remember when ‘Mounties’ meant the Musical Ride?” *The Body Politic* 39, December 1977-January 1978, 28.

⁵² Jackson, *One of the Boys*, 8.

States—and arguably Canada—as masculine nations.⁵³ While uniformed police officers embodied the relationship between the state and the policing of heteronormalcy, plainclothes officers could not rely on their uniform to visibly validate their masculinity or heterosexuality.

The theatrics of entrapment had become so pronounced that they even permeated the cultural fabric of gay life in the form of the musical “In Gay Company” at Toronto’s Teller’s Cage in 1975. While the show offered an understanding of which washrooms of the Toronto Subway were dangerous for cruising, Hannon charged the musical with trivializing gay experiences by failing “to give any hint of whatsoever [that] is the human misery attending the many arrests which occur in washrooms like the one in the Bloor-Yonge subway station.” Hannon continued, “[e]ach verse provides a surprisingly comprehensive guide to the washrooms in Toronto that *are* worth cruising, and ends with the big-eyed/big smiles injunction [sic] to avoid the TTC. With a warning like that that, the worst you’d expect in the transit toilets is a long wait.”⁵⁴ Hannon’s critique of how cruising was addressed in the play centred on his belief that it catered to a straight and gay audience who needed to be reassured that the gay urban lifestyle was in no way superior to the suburbs. Here, Hannon makes an explicit criticism of how gay male sexuality is spatially defined as promiscuous and dangerous in the urban core of Toronto. In addition, while “In Gay Company” did not address, in Hannon’s opinion, the life-altering consequences of being arrested while cruising, the musical reclaimed and highlighted the ways in which police officers performed a queer style to regulate

⁵³ Canada and the United States took on a mantle of international leadership that allowed them to flex their national muscle in the the proceeding decades. Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 19.

⁵⁴ Gerald Hannon, “In Gay Company,” *The Body Politic* 18, May-June 1975, 20.

sexuality. The continued use of washrooms, nevertheless, reflects the desirability of risqué sexual encounters in public and the unease about the safety of bars and bathhouses following continual police raids throughout the 1970s.

By 1975, there was widespread use of undercover police officers by municipal police forces to entrap gay men in public washrooms and parks and infiltrate bathhouses and bars. In its July-August 1975 issue, *TBP* reported that Montreal undercover police had arrested “40...in the washroom of Place Ville Marie” earlier that year. They described how “a number of policemen have undergone special training for the campaign. Some officers assume a homosexual part, while others practice handling different situations which an undercover agent might encounter.”⁵⁵ Part of a much larger crackdown on gay and lesbian establishments, February 4, 1975, saw the Montreal Urban Community Police raid the gay steambath Aquarius, charging 35 men with being “found-ins in a bawdy house.”⁵⁶ John Blacklock and Paul Trollope noted that the Montreal Police used undercover officers “in the guise of ordinary bath patrons.”⁵⁷ Following these series of bar and bathhouse raids in Montreal, the editorial collective argued that, “Many gays, afraid to go to the bars or baths, will turn to the streets, the cans, and the parks. Of course, you can pick them off more easily there. And charge them with more serious offences. So maybe they’re [police] are not so dumb after all.”⁵⁸ Indeed, police raids or undercover operations in bars and bathhouses only further fueled entrapment efforts in public.

⁵⁵ “City Cracks Down,” *The Body Politic* 19, July-August 1975, 8.

⁵⁶ Editorial collective, “Olympic Crackdown,” *The Body Politic* 25, August 1976, 1.

⁵⁷ John Blacklock and Paul Trollope, “How a steambath becomes a bawdyhouse,” *The Body Politic* 38, November 1977, 7.

⁵⁸ Editorial collective, “Olympic Crackdown,” 17.

Parks in Vancouver, for example, were described by the collective as a risqué public space for gay men following a series of arrests over the first months of 1977. In May of that year, *TBP* contributor Robert Cook informed readers that Vancouver plainclothes police had arrested approximately “100 gays on morals charges primarily in the English Bay area” since January.⁵⁹ These reports in *TBP* served as reminders to readers of the disguised dangers that lurked within parks, bars and bathhouses. Not only did *TBP* encourage gay men to be conscientious of their environments, but their coverage of plainclothes officers indirectly suggested to readers how heteronormative style in the gay community could contribute to entrapment.

The increase in arrests of gay men by undercover police during the mid 1970s encouraged John Towndrow—a pseudonym—to write the exposé, “Entrapped,” for *TBP* in 1976. Meant to serve as a warning for the risks of public cruising, his article was a reflection on being entrapped at the second floor men’s washroom in the Coliseum at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto approximately five years prior. Towndrow recalled being lured by a police officer disguised as a “fairly handsome, mid-twenties, husky truck-driver type” who had “made some simulated jack-off movements.” While the officer’s clothing was not remarkably campy or “queer,” the combination of his clothing and actions were part of a style of masculinity performed by police to entrap gay men. Following the undercover officer engaging in homoerotic actions and successfully luring Towndrow, his uniformed partner arrested Towndrow and charged him with both counselling to commit gross indecency as well as attempting to procure someone to commit an act of gross indecency. Towndrow’s warning was simple: “don’t get caught.

⁵⁹ Robert Cook, “350 demand end to police harassment,” *The Body Politic* 33, May 1977, 1.

That good-looking truck driver may turn out to be a good-looking but repressed, frustrated and not so friendly cop.”⁶⁰ Apart from stylizing himself in plainclothes, the style and performance of the cop disguised as a “husky truck driver” exemplify the ways in which the state apparatus appropriated queer style to subvert homosexuality.

Towndrow’s story of entrapment, while published to benefit readers, was not entirely well received by some readers, such as Billy Schoefl. In a letter appearing in October 1976, Schoefl challenged *TBP*’s efforts to subvert entrapment by suggesting that stories and exposés like Towndrow’s were not real solutions. Rather than endorsing cruising and the double-life of many gay men, Schoefl felt that *TBP* should be focusing on addressing systemic homophobia.⁶¹ Schoefl’s remarks demonstrate a tension between *TBP*’s editorial collective, who addressed the reality of how masculinity was performed by gay men and police alike in the act of cruising, and some of the more politically-charged readers who thought any assistance in the form of passing to avoid detection detracted the collective’s main objective of eradicating homophobia. In his words:

People like ‘John Towndrow’—pathetic tearoom travelling closet cases—always seem to be asking for what they get. Granted, entrapment is downright awful—but I’m sure that most of you at **BP** [sic] are well aware that the real answer to ending entrapment is to completely obliterate the conception of homosexual behavior as criminal. Men like Towndrow don’t help in the slightest.⁶²

⁶⁰ John Towndrow, “Entrapped,” *The Body Politic* 25, August 1976, 9.

⁶¹ Double life is a term used by Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile regarding the ways in which gay men and lesbian women “negotiated the obstacles created for them through the national security campaigns and the social relations of the closet.” Indeed, the social relations of the closet speaks to Sedgwick’s understanding that gay men and women continually move in and out of the closet depending on environmental and social circumstances. Kinsman and Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers*, 2010, 122.

⁶² Bold emphasis in original. Billy Schoefl, “Entrapped,” *The Body Politic* 27, October 1976, 2.

By referring to Towndrow as a “pathetic tearoom travelling closet case,” Schoefl shames those who engage in public sex by assuming they are closeted, while also critiquing the way in which “closeted” men perform their gender and sexuality. Schoefl suggested that gay men who engaged in public sex and styled themselves as “straight” not only reaped the benefits of cruising, but did little to support the lesbian and gay community. The notion of closeted men who compartmentalize their sexuality for their own benefit echoed *TBP* editor Michael Riordon’s critique only months prior that macho men were “people who want to have their cake and eat it,” and were arguably obstacles to gay liberation.⁶³

Since *TBP*’s early years, editorial content and letters from readers surrounding cruising and entrapment highlighted the consequences of heteronormative styles of masculinity in the gay community. To prevent gay men from being arrested or accosted by plainclothes police officers, the editorial collective dedicated a significant amount of energy and time discussing entrapment strategies used by police. The most significant of these tactics, and perhaps one most intertwined with constructions of gender in the community, was to be aware of how police were appropriating macho style and using it against the gay community. Whether it was Hube’s warning of police adopting “greaser” style or Riordon deconstructing police “drag,” writings in *TBP* connected entrapment and the dangers of cruising with gay male style, framing the presence of undercover police as more than simply an issue of state violence but one of the presentation of masculinity in the gay community.

⁶³ Michael Riordon, “Voices from the Closet (People who want to Have Their Cake and Eat It),” *The Body Politic* 24, June 1976, 9.

***TBP* and Toronto's Gay Spots**

The editorial collective recognized that Toronto offered a variety of venues in which gay men could meet and act on their sexual desires. Back alleys, bathhouses, nightclubs, gyms, and sex shops constituted what was perceived as the “gay ghetto” for *TBP* writers David Newcome and Paul Pearce. When writing in *TBP*'s second issue (1972) they argued that, “[t]he gay ghetto doesn't just include the bars, clubs, and baths. The ghetto is the whole so-called scene in Toronto. People go to some dark corner in a park, or go to some washroom, or walk down a certain part of a street, these are all part of the ghetto as well.”⁶⁴ The urban landscape of Toronto was essential to the formation of a gay culture in the city, offering gay men opportunities and spaces to socialize, engage in sexual activity, and form a community.

Downtown offered a variety of spaces that were conducive for gay sexual pleasure and close in proximity—a direct contrast to the spread-out suburban developments rapidly cropping up at this time. Amerigo Marras, a writer for *TBP*, viewed suburbs as restrictive because they represented state control of sexuality and social interaction: “It is part of the game to believe in a static society and so, for the slave to remain a slave; in this case of suburban living, it is part of the game to train people to maintain the state of things, denying both personal individuality and need for socio-sexual interactions among human beings.”⁶⁵ Nevertheless, he contented that gay culture in its increasing vibrancy was the result of the anonymity, support, and the sheer number of lesbian and gay men found in urban centres, such as Toronto.

⁶⁴ David Newcome and Paul Pearce, “The Gay Ghetto,” *The Body Politic* 2, January-February 1972, 13.

⁶⁵ Amerigo Marras, “Hetero-burbia,” *The Body Politic* 7, Winter 1973, 25.

Cities were the birthplace of gay activism and a modern gay identity. Chauncey stresses the significance of the urban in the formation of gay male identity with his argument that, “Only large cities had the social and spatial complexity necessary for the development of an extensive and partially commercialized gay subculture.”⁶⁶ *TBP*’s editorial collective helped fashion Toronto’s gay community, despite its skepticism of established bars and bathhouses in major Canadian cities. According to Historian Tom Warner, “The anti-ghetto theme...was taken up in the pages of *The Body Politic*. Its first issue re-printed an article highly critical of Vancouver’s bars and clubs, accusing them of ripping off and exploiting their gay patrons.”⁶⁷ The concerns of readers and some within the editorial collective around exploitation in bars and bathhouses continued throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s, but were increasingly tempered by growing awareness of the community’s need for gay-friendly physical landmarks and spaces.

Looking at the number of gays bars and bathhouses in Toronto in 1977, Riordon argued that the higher ratio of bathhouses to bars in Toronto suggested “a socially-repressed Gay male population.”⁶⁸ Riordon’s critique reveals a pejorative attitude towards sexuality, anonymity, and specific spaces of pleasure by some. In another critique of the ghetto, *TBP* writer David Townsend argued in 1983 that despite being “an important tool in our socialization as gays,” bars “encouraged the alcoholism of some; they’ve exacerbated the loneliness and alienation of those for whom they don’t work.”⁶⁹ Despite the collective’s concerns around exploitation, or the need for a “village”—one

⁶⁶ See footnote in Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 133.

⁶⁷ Tom Warner, *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 90.

⁶⁸ Michael Riordon, “Taking Power: one of these days,” *The Body Politic* 34, June 1977, 21.

⁶⁹ David Townsend, “Staying On,” *The Body Politic* 92, April 1983, 29.

that later became an iconic area of Toronto—it *did*, in fact, promote bars and bathhouses in *TBP* to help build a sexual community. The collective assisted gay men in circumventing state efforts to harass and regulate gays and lesbians, as well as carefully mapping out spaces for gay men to engage in sex or, at the very least, to cruise.

In 1973, John Scythes wrote “Toronto’s Gay Spots” (Figure 3.1), offering to help gay men locate spaces in the downtown area (bars, bathhouses, parks, and washrooms) which were conducive for sexual engagement. From bars, bathhouses, and restaurants, to clubs and parks, “gay spots” included private and public spaces—many of which were commercial enterprises advertising in *TBP*. Furthermore, these spaces could not be classified as “safe,” nor were they all strictly sexual. For example, in Figure 3.1, the University of Toronto Homophile Associate (#13), Glad Day bookstore (#16), and the Community Homophile Association of Toronto (#18) provided, more or less, safe spaces for gay men, while not necessarily being sexual in nature. In contrast, Scythes noted Yonge Street around Dundas and Bloor (#7) and the front of the YMCA on College (#9) as being particularly sexual spaces by explicitly referencing “cruising.”⁷⁰

The list of commercial venues in Scythes’s map and their subsequent advertisements in later *TBP* issues also reveals the newspaper’s need for revenue from advertising. Initially, only Glad Day Bookstore on 4 Kensington Avenue advertised in the same issue as Scythes’ map. Many of the venues listed did not have advertisements in this issue, in part, because of the limited available space for ads in early issues of the newspaper, as well as cost and question of readership size. However, once *TBP* proved to be a publication that was sustainable and could attract a viable audience by the mid-

⁷⁰ John Scythes, “Toronto’s Gay Spots,” *The Body Politic* 7, Winter 1973, 6.

Figure 3.1. A Map detailing all gay and gay-friendly spaces in the city. John Scythes, "Toronto's Gay Spots," *The Body Politic* 7, Winter 1973, 6.

1970s, numerous commercial establishments, such as the bathhouses The Barracks and The Library, and Chaps leather bar, placed ads in the paper.

Beyond Scythe's "Toronto's Gay Spots," the editorial collective also charted gay and, less frequently, lesbian spaces beginning in 1974 with the article "Gay Toronto."⁷¹ This was followed by a bodybuilding and exercise guide in 1978, and, finally, the "hot spots" in Toronto during the summer of 1982.⁷² In an interview, *TBP* editor Tim McCaskell recalls:

[t]here was always this feeling that this is where most people go and people need to know this stuff. It hadn't been developed theoretically. Popert did later in the early '80s when he talked about the bars and the baths being to the community what factories were to the working-class. The place where we are actually constituted. There was always a sense that we have to provide this information to the community. That [it] would be crazy not to.⁷³

Indeed, editor Ken Popert declared the importance of gay bars in 1982 when he wrote, "[b]ars and baths are to the gay movement what factories are to the labour movement: the context in which masses of people acquire a shared sense of identity and the ability to act together for the common good."⁷⁴ Popert's sentiments towards gay bars demonstrates the importance of these spaces in the creation and evolution of gay sensibilities, but also the need to have physical spaces in Toronto. His comments reflect the influence of working-class neo-Marxism on lesbian and gay activist thinking in the early 1980s. The

⁷¹ "Gay Toronto," *The Body Politic* 14, July-August 1974, 19.

⁷² Michael Lynch, "Young (and old and middle-aged too) Men's Cruising Association," *The Body Politic* 55, August 1979, 39; and, John Allec and Edna Barker, "Hot Spots: Toronto's Summer of '82," *The Body Politic* 85, July-August 1982, 22.

⁷³ Tim McCaskell (editor for *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, March 20, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

⁷⁴ Ken Popert, "Public Sexuality and Social Space," *The Body Politic* 85, July-August 1982, 29.

ideological importance placed on class and space in the gay community has informed gay and lesbian social histories, such as *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, whereby Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis argue that working-class bars not only contributed to the homophile movement, but “were the central institution of resistance.”⁷⁵ The editorial collective recognized that despite being a forum of resistance—challenging state legislation and covering topics such as police brutality or homophobia in the workplace—*TBP* could also provide gay men with a tangible sense of community by compiling a comprehensive list of places in Toronto.

While these guides were informative for many gay men, they also simultaneously made it easier for police to navigate gay culture. Kinsman and Gentile note that the tactics of the Toronto Municipal Police and the RCMP involved reading lesbian and gay newsletters, newspapers, pamphlets, and posters to acquire a sense of where and when gay activities could be found.⁷⁶ The same map that Scythes published was undoubtedly helpful in aiding police efforts to patrol gay spaces of pleasure, as well as gather intelligence on the gay community. Evidence of police using *TBP* to entrap gay men can also be found in the arrest of Toronto teacher “Bob”—a pseudonym used by the collective—in June 1979 by an undercover police officer for running a bawdy house out of his own home.

On an undisclosed evening in June, Bob received a phone call from the unbeknownst police officer—Wally—who had seen Bob’s classified ad in *TBP*. After

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: This History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge Press, 1993), 150.

⁷⁶ Kinsman and Gentile note that the RCMP monitored *The Body Politic* for its coverage of the upcoming Fifth National Gay Conference held at the University of Saskatchewan from June 29 to July 3, 1977. Kinsman and Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers*, 328.

chatting briefly, Bob invited Wally over to his house for sex and proceeded to show him “his little ‘dungeon’—a chamber off his bedroom where he kept his toys—leather masks and restraints, whips, chains, [and] pictures of men in leather,” according to Hannon.⁷⁷ Wally, who was described by Bob as being “in his early thirties, good-looking, tough, maybe a little reticent but certainly not nervous or uneasy,” produced his badge and informed Bob that he was under arrest for “keeping a common bawdy house,” despite having no physical contact. Hannon’s coverage of Bob’s house being labelled a bawdyhouse highlighted the tenuous definition of sexual spaces for gay men at this time.⁷⁸ It also reiterated the apparent consequences of macho style, particularly since Bob’s desire for “tough” Wally, along with details of bondage and sadomasochism (BDSM), and “pictures of men in leather,” led to his arrest. During the lifespan of *TBP*, never before had a personal residence been cited as a bawdy house because of the resident’s sexual proclivities. Following the arrest of Bob, the editorial collective lamented, “One of our worst fears is being realized.” Indeed, they continued, “It is not a big step...to judging any act of lesbian or gay sex indecent, any home where such acts take place a ‘bawdy house’—and each one of us a potential ‘keeper.’”⁷⁹ If places of pleasure such as bathhouses and even personal residences could be easily redefined as places of danger of the state, then discussions and of the sexual politics of space in Toronto became even more necessary for the livelihoods of gay men and lesbians.

⁷⁷ Gerald Hannon, “Toronto teacher’s home charged as ‘bawdy house,” *The Body Politic* 54, July 1979, 11.

⁷⁸ Bawdy house legislation in the Criminal Code of Canada was frequently applied to gay bathhouses, even if they legitimately operated as sauna and health clubs. In November 1977, *TBP* writers John Blacklock and Paul Trollope argued that “[u]ntil the bawdy house laws are fought head-on by a courageous baths manager, owner or found-in, we will be left with precedent that the baths are bawdy houses within the meaning of the Criminal Code. Baths will continue to be raided and closed in various cities, patrons humiliated and prosecuted and their names published in the press.” John Blacklock and Paul Trollope, “How a steam bath becomes a bawdyhouse,” *The Body Politic* 38, November 1977, 7.

⁷⁹ “A fantasy come true,” *The Body Politic* 54, July 1979, 8.

Indeed, the collective's coverage of Bob's arrest stressed to readers the possibilities of entrapment beyond the scope of alleyways, public washroom facilities, and parks to include private domiciles.

Cruising was not limited to the bars, bathhouses, alleyways, parks, and washrooms of urban life. In 1972, Hugh Brewster described the similarities between his experience of visiting a discreet gay bar in his hometown (unknown) in Ontario and his life back in Toronto. The two tables that made up this small makeshift gay bar in the "Ladies and escorts" room of a small hotel held the same codes, behaviours, conversations, and hidden transcripts that mirrored similar conduct in bars and bathhouses of Toronto. Brewster acknowledged that "the same conversation, the same jargon, 'tricks, butch, queen, etc.,['] and the same desperation" were pronounced in this back room, while the "secret side glances at attractive young men were carefully veiled, as they knew from experiences that the response was usually a punch in the mouth."⁸⁰ The risk of transgressing moral boundaries arguably appealed to many gay men's desire to engage in cruising and possibly a public sexual encounter.

As testament to the importance of spatially mapping parts of urban Canada, the editorial collective expanded the scope of its mapping efforts to include Montreal in late 1973, and Halifax in the June-July issue of 1978.⁸¹ Unlike Scythes's Toronto map, both of these maps categorized and differentiated public spaces from commercial establishments. The map of Halifax supplemented a larger guide of gay establishments and cruising spots in Atlantic Canada and featured two editorials describing meeting

⁸⁰ Hugh Brewster, "The Non-Urban Gay Ghetto," *The Body Politic* 2, January-February 1972, 9.

⁸¹ See "Montréal Gay Spots," *The Body Politic* 9, Summer 1973, 8; and, Robin Hardy, Robin Metcalfe, and Kathy MacNeil, "Atlantic Travel Guide," *The Body Politic* 44, June-July 1978, 15-17.

spaces and cruising for men attending the sixth annual National Gay Conference held in 1978. In comparison to the single-page maps of Toronto and Montreal appearing earlier, the elaborate articles of the 1978 Halifax guide demonstrate a greater effort on the part of the collective to strike a balance between being a political newspaper while also acting as a guide for those travelling on how best to cruise in different Canadian cities. The explicit focus on Toronto and its cruising spaces, as well as the creation of the Out in the City section in 1978—a forum dedicated to the arts and nightlife in the city—serves as a reminder, however, that Toronto readers were the primary focus and audience of *TBP*.

The Aesthetics of Desire and Exclusion in Gay Bars and Bathhouses

Coverage of the brutal consequences faced by those who transgressed gender roles in public raised concerns about personal safety, sexuality and public space early on. Such incidents included the arrest of two men kissing on Bloor St. on February 12, 1976, or when 22-year-old Bob Schissler observed a gang of teenagers threatening gay men in David Balfour Park in May, 1976, and finally, the series of murders plaguing Toronto between 1975 and 1978.⁸² The potential threat of arrest for indecency or violence in public seemed to overshadow the risks of being caught in a police raid of a gay bar or bathhouse. As a result, passing was not necessarily an objective for gay men within a gay bar since it was commonly understood that a patron's sexual orientation was gay. Unlike navigating public parks, washrooms, and the streets themselves, performing a masculinity centred on desirability rather than safety in these spaces. Geographers Gill Valentine and Tracey Skelton argue that, "Clubs and bars provide spaces where people can lose

⁸² Gerald Hannon, "Kiss-in protests conviction of kissers," *The Body Politic* 26, September 1976, 3; and, Merv Welker, "Gay men organize to make park safe," *The Body Politic* 26, September 1976, 3.

themselves and their troubles in music, dance and sex. They are expressive, performative spaces where people can enjoy themselves together in ways that can be empowering.”⁸³

Hannon noted in his 1976 article, “Learning to Kill,” that unlike straight bars which “hum along the edge of violence and frequently spill over,” gay bars were filled with men who “accept their sexuality,” thus passing from fear of violence was not necessary.⁸⁴

As the Mr. Gay Bar contest of 1973 at the Carriage House Hotel, and its winner, Ron Polich signified, gay bars were spaces in which the male body, particularly the macho body, was shown off in homoerotic and campy ways. Indeed, in 1977, Tim (last name unknown), a reader in Toronto, complained to *TBP* that Toronto bars were a “meat market...a never-ending parade of bodies ranging from fag fancy to sub-standard slut, placed on a tantalising [sic] disarray for the less than educated consumer to get indigestion.”⁸⁵ Similarly, bathhouses were spaces where masculinity was put on display for consumption. For instance, The Club Baths contained rooms that were spaced out to allow for patrons to cruise and lounge, but they were forced to the basement in order to meet in the steam room or sauna (Figure 3.2). Men navigated these spaces in unique ways, with men attracted to other men using the various passageways of the bathhouse for sexual proclivities. More notably, these venues lacked access for disabled bodies. The structural barriers of the bathhouses meant they were spaces exclusive to able bodies, reinforcing the able-bodied male as a viable sexual partner and the invisibility of his disabled counterpart.

⁸³ Gill Valentine and Tracey Skelton, “Finding Oneself, Losing Oneself: The Lesbian and Gay ‘Scene’ as a Paradoxical Space,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 4 (December 2003): 855.

⁸⁴ Hannon argued that Not only do gay men “not seem to be violent people,” but that “[f]ights in gay bars and discos are rare.” Gerald Hannon, “Learning to Kill,” *The Body Politic* 22, February 1976, 8.

⁸⁵ Tim (last name unknown), “Consumer Protection,” *The Body Politic* 31, March 1977, 2.

Figure 3.2. The Club Steam Baths (Club Baths of Toronto, vertical file, Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archive), undated.

The voyeuristic and exhibitionist display of a patron's masculinity in the semi-private and private rooms of the unnamed bathhouse is remarkably detailed in the excerpts of a series of letters by a young man from southern Ontario visiting Toronto that were published in *TBP*. Writing to Herb Spiers in 1974, the young man reported being, according to Spiers, "shocked at first by the small rooms where guys lay exposed with the door open, and others strolled down the halls examining them like a product they were pondering upon whether to buy...."⁸⁶ The consumption of bodies appears vividly in the young man's letters whereby men advertised their bodies for the gaze of other patrons.

Not all members of the gay community were fond of the voyeurism in gay bars and bathhouses. A few classified ads in *TBP* expressed distaste for this campy display of sexuality. These ads highlight both the recursive relationship space, sexuality, and masculinity, as well as the tension within the newspaper between readers writing in wishing to escape the very bars and bathhouses that financially supported *TBP* with their numerous advertisements. In the same January-February 1974 issue as Hannon's coverage of the Mr. Gay Bar contest and Rod Polich's macho body, there appeared a classified ad from a 27-year-old white, European male who sought "another masculine guy under 30 whose interests are above bars, one-night stands and gay scene."⁸⁷ In another 1974 ad a 25-year-old white male alluded to the notion that bars were not conducive to meaningful relations: "[I] am not a barfly but do enjoy a night out occasionally."⁸⁸ Finally, a 20-year-old university student described his "straight

⁸⁶ Herb Spiers, "On his way: letters from a small town youth," *The Body Politic* 12, March-April 1974, 17.

⁸⁷ Classified ad: "European Male 27," *The Body Politic* 11, January-February 1974, 22.

⁸⁸ Classified ad: "White male, 25," *The Body Politic* 16, November-December 1974, 26.

appearance” as well as his disinterest in “bars, drugs or social whirl” in 1975.⁸⁹ In the December 1975 issue, three classified ads appeared by individuals who stressed their straight performance of masculinity—both looking and acting—and disinterest in bars and baths.⁹⁰ The belief that a general avoidance of gay bars and bathhouses affirmed a “straight” performance of masculinity stood in contrast to the campy image of hypermasculinity being presented in many advertisements for these spaces in *TBP*. The tension between the classified section and advertisements in this instance demonstrates that *TBP* was home to multiple and contradicting interpretations of masculinity in the community, with entire sections of the paper speaking to one another.

An aversion to bars and bathhouses on the part of some gay men also focused on concerns regarding straight ownership of many of these establishments. Since *TBP*’s formation there were dissenting voices suggesting that the social spaces of bars came at a cost. In 1972, David Newcome and Paul Pearce called for the end to the “exploitation of gays by the club and bar owners,” while lauding CHAT for establishing a gay recreation centre for “people who find the sexually aggressive nature of the now existing ghetto unpalatable.” Newcome and Pearce argued that, “The majority of the businessmen who feed off the gay community show their complete lack of concern for the plight of the people they serve by refusing to take advantage of their position as prominent and influential members of the business community to in any way change societies attitudes towards gays.”⁹¹ Again in 1978, Popert argued that while commercialized gay culture

⁸⁹ The term “social whirl” was used frequently to refer to the gay circuit, scene, or ghetto. Classified ad: Quiet, Intelligent,” *The Body Politic* 18, May-June 1975, 26.

⁹⁰ In total, six ads expressed distaste for gay bars, bathhouses, and spas by 1975. See ads in *The Body Politic* 21, December 1975, 26.

⁹¹ David Newcome and Paul Pearce, “The Gay Ghetto,” *The Body Politic* 2, January-February 1972, 13.

(bars, discotheques and baths) “summons a collectivity into being—it mobilizes people and brings them together for someone’s profit.”⁹² In particular, the concern over straight-ownership of gay bars was rooted in the Marxist ideologies of many in the editorial collective. This is rather unsurprising from a newspaper with the maxim: “The liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves.”⁹³ These tumultuous sentiments did not dissipate following police raids of bathhouses and gay bars in the latter half of the 1970s.

Other grievances with gay bars and bathhouses as community spaces in *TBP* revolved around style, gender, and misogyny in the community. Returning to Scythes’s 1973 map, some venues were described as “guys only,” such as Club Manatee on 14 St. Joseph Street, or the Parkside Bar on Yonge Street at Bredalbane which had a “men’s room all gay.”⁹⁴ These bars illustrate that certain spaces were not only advertised as gay friendly, but partially or exclusively male friendly. Indeed, Hugh Brewster argued in 1972 that Club Manatee—cited in Scythes’s map—was “the most resolutely sexist of all the clubs, especially in its policy towards women—or lack of it. Women are forbidden.”⁹⁵ Restricting women from specific clubs was not only symptomatic of gendered divisions in the gay community at the time, but was arguably the result of gay male misogyny and the “self-loathing and contempt” that plagued gay men, according to Brewster.⁹⁶ The exclusion of lesbians from specific bars reiterates the sexism and policing of gender in the gay community.

⁹² Ken Popert, “Our collective right,” *The Body Politic* 47, October 1978, 19.

⁹³ Quote originated from Kurt Hiller in 1921. *The Body Politic* 15, September-October 1974, 2.

⁹⁴ John Scythes, “Toronto’s Gay Spots,” *The Body Politic* 7, Winter 1973, 6.

⁹⁵ Brewster, “The Myth of the New Homosexual,” 3.

⁹⁶ Brewster, “The Myth of the New Homosexual,” 3.

It was the previous exclusion of lesbians from Jo-Jo's, a gay discotheque in Toronto, based on their dress that demonstrates the importance of style in the gay community. The editorial collective noted in August 1976 that Jo-Jo's was no longer banning lesbians from wearing jeans. Meanwhile, there were no dress restrictions on men. The rationale for the ban, according to the manager, was that lesbians who wore jeans were stereotypically "butches," and known to start fights in the gay bars.⁹⁷ Concerns around butches, as gender theorist Jack Halberstam argues, is a result of "cultural anxiety about the potential effects of femaleness and masculinity," and social expectations around how female bodies should act out scripted notions of female docility.⁹⁸ Identifying and excluding women based on an aesthetic (jeans) reveals how lesbians were identified as "butches" based on styles of femininity, as well as the ways in which aesthetics of an individual could result in their exclusion from particular spaces.

Despite John Allec and Edna Barker writing in their 1982 guide to Toronto bars (Figure 3.3) that "screening at the door is rare," they did admit that "[m]ost gay men's bars in Toronto tend to attract particular segments of the community."⁹⁹ Styles of gay male masculinity were addressed in Allec and Barker's description of costumed gay male bars in Toronto. They described The Barn, located on 83 Granby Street, as a "leather and western, casual stand-up bar and disco."¹⁰⁰ For gay men looking for dinner and a hotel with their leather and denim bar, 18 East (renamed The Tool Box in 1983), named after its location on 18 Eastern Ave, was advertised as the place to be.¹⁰¹ Finally, The Outpost

⁹⁷ "Women in jeans now OK at gay bar," *The Body Politic* 25, August 1976, 3.

⁹⁸ Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 273.

⁹⁹ Allec and Barker, "Hot Spots," 22.

¹⁰⁰ Also see The Barn's corresponding advertisement: "The Barn," *The Body Politic* 72, April 1981, 39.

¹⁰¹ See related ad for 18 East. "18 East," *The Body Politic* 72, April 1981, 39.

Hot Spots: Toronto's Summer of '82

What to do on those hot summer days and nights in Toronto? If you're a tourist, it's a little hard to get a handle on what's going on, so we've drawn up some highlights you might not want to miss.

Any sunny day will find many gay people heading to **Hanlan's Point**, the gay beach at the far end of Toronto Island. Grab the ferry at the foot of Bay Street (bring a bike if you can). On the "mainland" is **Kew Beach**, reached by a very pleasant walk south from the Queen St East streetcar line (see *Beaches*). When you're bored with basking in the sun, take a walk east along the boardwalk. If you're hungry and want more than hotdogs, stroll up to Queen St to sample some of its casual eating spots — **The Beach Café**, **The Beechtree**, **The Palm**.

You can spend a fun afternoon watching the **gay baseball teams** on sunny Saturdays and Sundays from 11 am to 6:30 pm, on the diamond to the north on the east side of Riverdale Park. There are usually a few women participating.

Another way to spend Saturday afternoon is strolling up and down Yonge Street from Bloor to College Sts — chances are you'll see some familiar faces from the night before. Drop into **Return to Sender** (628 Yonge) for the latest in postcards, and look through **Glad Day Bookshop** for lesbian and gay magazines, books and records (648 Yonge, 2nd floor). Then get a sidewalk table at the **Café New Orleans** (Yonge & St Joseph) — the food's dreadful but the sidewalk traffic is always entertaining.

Unfortunately, fun spots for lesbians are few and far between, but of particular interest are **Together** (457 Church St) with a mostly younger crowd, and **The Cameo Club** (Friday and Saturday nights, \$4 cover) at 95 Trinity St, for a casual evening of dancing and pool. **The Mainstage** (251 King St E) is apparently beginning to attract women as well. One recommended and handy place for women-watching is at the south end of **The Eaton Centre**, on the benches under the Michael Snow geese sculptures.

The **Toronto Women's Bookstore** (85A Harbord St) is a must for any visitor. With a good selection of feminist and lesbian reading material, it also serves as a kind of women's community meeting place. Check out the bulletin board or ask one of the helpful women working there about upcoming events. If you need an afternoon refresher break after that, drop into one of the nearby cafés on Harbord St — **Harbord St Café**, **Major Roberts** or **Boulevard Café**. **Free Times Café** (320 College St near Spadina) is another place popular with lesbians.

Most gay men's bars in Toronto tend to attract particular segments of the community, but screening at the door is rare (or at least unofficial), so feel free to roam.

Boots (592 Sherbourne St) always manages to fill up its huge lounge area with a broad variety of men. **The Parkside** (530 Yonge St) is fun for a few early evening drafts and a Saturday stopover is almost a Toronto institution. **The Outpost** (319 Jarvis St) has been the hit of the last few months for any man even faintly interested in denim and leather, but its lack of

outdoor space may be a serious drawback in the summer. **Buddy's** (370 Church St) consistently draws large crowds of collegiate and post-collegiate types, and you really should drop into **Les Cavaliers** (418 Church St) next door for a more relaxed atmosphere — join in the chorus of "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair" around the piano.

Sunday afternoons, peaking about 4:30 pm, will find all sorts of men heading south to King Street East to do the seven block shuffle between the outdoor patios of **18 East** (official home of the leather clubs) and the **Albany Tavern** (base for the baseball teams). Be prepared for a bit of *déjà vu*. Cheap hamburgers are available at both. Later on, until 11 pm (last call on Sundays), the crowds drift up-town to the small dance floor at the **Barn** at 83 Granby St (no cover charge — great music).

Dudes (10 Breadalbane St) is the place to go every night after the other bars have closed down. It's unanimously condemned as an "attitude bar," but it's usually full, nonetheless. Discos generally get off the ground near midnight, except for **The Manatee** at 11A St Joseph St (\$4 cover, men only), not licensed for liquor, which draws the under-18 set early on. **Charly's**, above the St Charles (\$3 Friday, \$4 Saturday, men only), and **Stages**, above the Parkside (\$6, mixed), can usually guarantee good music and lighting. A devoted following flocks to **Stages** at midnight every Sunday to greet the beginning of the week. Friday promises to be a hot night as well.

The Rivoli (334 Queen St W) has a wide variety of events which appeal to the New Wave and art crowds around Queen Street West, including lots of gay people at the Pan-Am dances every Tuesday night, 11 pm to 4 am. **Twilight Zone** (185 Adelaide St W) and **The Voodoo Club** (5 St Joseph St) draw similar crowds. **The Quest** and **Katrina's**, both mixed, attract younger crowds eager to show off the latest fashions. The Quest is also popular with Asian men.

Up-to-date information on coming events can be gotten from the 923-GAYS recorded message line, or by calling the TAG information line, 964-6600. Women can also phone the Lesbian Phonenumber, 960-3249.

Enjoy the summer!

John Allec and Edna Barker □

What's he mean, Shirl, no attitude?

Figure 3.3. John Allec and Edna Barker, "Hot Spots: Toronto's Summer of 82," *The Body Politic* 85, July-August 1982, 22.

on 319 Jarvis Street was described as popular for “any gay man even faintly interested in denim and leather.” The popularity of leather and denim bars speaks to the prominence of macho style—with its denim and incorporation of leather—as popular aesthetic signifiers of masculinity in the community by the summer of 1982. In addition, the venue The Quest, on 665 Yonge Street, was even highlighted by the writers as being “popular with Asian men,” thereby racializing the space as being other than white.¹⁰² By attributing these venues with a particular aesthetic, Allec and Barker’s guide, as well as the bars themselves, established expectations around the stylization of gender and sexuality in their respective spaces.

The consequences of costuming the male body in these spaces was discussed in Danny Cockerline’s January 1985 *TBP* article, “Out of the Closet & Out in the Cold,” critiquing the policing of dress at gay bars. It was a busy Sunday at Cornelius, a gay bar located at 579 Yonge Street in Toronto, when Cockerline was evicted from the bar on the grounds of his eye makeup. “Guys aren’t supposed to wear makeup, only girls are,” said the macho “muscle-bound he-man” who asked him to leave. Despite being dressed in “men’s overalls, running shoes and a military haircut,” Cockerline’s eye makeup was a transgression of gender, something that was becoming increasingly unacceptable at Cornelius and many other bars in the city. Following the lead of Chaps (leather bar) and their campaign against “new wavers”—those who experimented with gender—in the summer of 1983, gay bar Boots required “men in men’s clothing and women in women’s clothing,” while Club 101 began refusing women who looked like “working-class dykes.” Cockerline focused on exclusionary practices in bars because he believed that

¹⁰² Allec and Barker, “Hot Spots,” 22.

heteronormative expectations of gender read from queer style *within* the community were obstacles to gay liberation. Exposing these policies also contributed to the editorial collective's ideological stance that conformity to mainstream expectations—particularly gender—mired the vibrancy of the gay and lesbian community and could inevitably “sanitize the image of gay people,” in the words of Cockerline.¹⁰³

Cockerline described the relationship between queer style and exclusion any practices by referencing the marginalization of drag culture, “unless it’s confined to the stage or the video monitor,” in his words.¹⁰⁴ His understanding of the restrictions on drag reverberates with scholar Viviane Namaste’s contemporary examination of trans peoples in the LGBTQ community. In her book *Invisible Lives*, Namaste argues that, “If drag queens are forced to remain within a space clearly designated for performance, transsexuals experience a similar staging within lesbian and gay male communities.”¹⁰⁵ The actions of bar owners were particularly alarming for Cockerline because bars were some of the few spaces in which many gay men could be openly gay. By restricting the image of gay culture to “masculine ‘normal-looking’ men and excluding the queer-looking ones,” bars were spaces that reinforced heteronormative styles of gender in the gay community.¹⁰⁶ Cockerline’s article also demonstrates *TBP*’s efforts to not only illuminate these discriminatory practices, but articulate how such efforts were testament to deeper heteronormative influences informing gay culture—a fear many in the collective had around the simultaneous proliferation of macho style at this time.

¹⁰³ Danny Cockerline, “Out of the Closet & Out in the Cold,” *The Body Politic* 110, January 1985, 32.

¹⁰⁴ Cockerline, “Out of the Closet & Out in the Cold,” 32.

¹⁰⁵ Viviane Namaste, *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 12.

¹⁰⁶ Cockerline, “Out of the Closet & Out in the Cold,” 32.

Creating a Sexualized Aesthetic of Protection: Gyms and Bodybuilding

Unlike gay bars which were consistently perceived as brimming with gay sexuality, spaces such as gyms were presented in *TBP* as oscillating between being heterosocial and homosocial spaces. Gay men performed their masculinity in the gay bar, bathhouse, weight room and the shower differently, based primarily on how these spaces were coded for sexual contact. The sexual coding of gyms provided a limited, and perhaps false, sense of security for gay men since their ambiguity meant they were not included in the police raids of gay bathhouses and bars that plagued Toronto from the mid 1970s onward.¹⁰⁷ Apart from staying safe, certain bathhouses and gyms became synonymous with different subcultures in the gay male community, attesting to both the significance of style as an outlet for identities and the demarcation of masculinities along spatial lines. Historian Shaun Cole contends that “[t]he queen protects herself by dressing in women’s clothes, and the bodybuilder protects himself in muscles—so-called ‘men’s clothes.’”¹⁰⁸ Viewing musculature as a style of protection can thus be seen as an explanation for the simultaneous increase in gyms in the gay community, resistance towards homophobic violence, and growth of macho masculinity. Indeed, the increasing number of advertisements and discussions of gyms in *TBP* over the course of the 1970s reflect the

¹⁰⁷ This was particularly the case for the Imperial Health Club, a bodybuilding gym that was noted by *TBP* columnist Michael Lynch as not having a “toke of gay flavour in the place.” In his article, he argued that “If the tension between gays and nongays here rates lower than in the Y’s weightroom, it’s because the gay presence here is so well hidden from the nongays.” Indeed, a regular attendee interviewed by Lynch praised the Imperial Health Club as “wonderful because it’s so straight.” Michael Lynch, “Young (and old and middle-aged too) Men’s Cruising Associations,” *The Body Politic* 55, August 1979, 39.

¹⁰⁸ Shaun Cole, *Don We Now Our Gay Apparel’: Gay Men’s Dress in the Twentieth Century* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2000), 724.

rise of macho style as a cultural phenomenon, as well as the spatial movements of the gay male community in Toronto.

By the early late 1970s and into the 1980s gyms and bodybuilding facilities advertised their venues in *TBP* often using sexual innuendos. Unlike Richmond Street Health Emporium which advertised its venue simply using sexualized imagery, advertisements for Backdoor Gym appearing in September 1980 only contained the words “gym & sauna” alongside the image of a keyhole.¹⁰⁹ The illustrative keyhole symbolized a door and, by extension, the exclusivity of Backdoor. It also served as a euphemism for anal sex, whereby the keyhole represented the anus and could be a source of pleasure. The minimalist nature of the ad in contrast to the campy imagery of other gym and bathhouse advertisements also conveyed the message that the Backdoor Gym was a place of discretion. This advertising tactic may have been an attempt at assuring gay men that the space was primarily a gym and therefore safe from homophobic violence or police raids.

Gyms as “safe” spaces were notably discussed in the Out in the City section of the newspaper following its creation in 1978.¹¹⁰ Out in the City was established when the editorial collective realized that beyond lesbian and gay politics, the budding sexualized culture of the community in Toronto warranted critical commentary. What began as a one-page guide to Yonge Street’s nightlife after the 1:00 A.M. closing time of clubs and baths grew to include guides, critiques, and exposés on theatre, cinema, music, bars,

¹⁰⁹ Advertisement: “The Back Door,” *The Body Politic* 66, September 1980, 34.

¹¹⁰ The first “Out in the City” section of *The Body Politic* informed readers on gay- and lesbian-friendly venues, primarily restaurants, along Yonge Street between Bloor Street and Queen Street after bars and baths closed at 1:00 A.M. Irwin Barrer, “Survival on ‘The Strip’ after last call,” *The Body Politic* 47, October 1978, 35.

dancehalls, bathhouses, gyms, art galleries, and community resources that catered to a lesbian and gay clientele by April 1981.¹¹¹ In many ways, *Out in the City* was a reaction to the growing synthesis of politics and cultural nightlife occurring in the 1970s. By offering readers brief insight into these various spaces, *TBP* mapped Toronto's spatial and sexual subculture, and indirectly demarcated "safe" and "unsafe" spaces for sexual activity to take place.

In his 1979 *Out in the City* article, Michael Lynch articulated the relationship between bodybuilding spaces, sexuality, masculinity, and cruising at five different gyms across the city. Beginning with the College Street YMCA, Lynch humourously described the YMCA as the "Young (and old and middle-aged too) Men's Cruising Association." He denoted exceptional tension between the "bodybuilding homophobia" of the weight room and the sexual liberation that came with eye contact of gay male cruising in the showers. In his words, "Before and after classes the locker room comes to life with a gay sensibility: a looseness, a quiet, a tasseled fringe of camp," he argued. The showers were seen as enjoyable because they housed an entire subculture of cruising and sexual codes that confirmed others' gayness; however, the exception was "the weight room, which retains corners...of straight body-building homophobia," according to Lynch.¹¹² Indeed, Popert recalls in an interview that, "[w]hat would happen is that you would progress to the gym floor from the locker room where, you know, body language and eye contact would determine/confirm if there was interest or not, and if there was an opportunity you

¹¹¹ See "Out in the City: A Guide to Goings On in Toronto in the Month of April," *The Body Politic* 72, April 1981, 37.

¹¹² Michael Lynch, "Young (and old and middle-aged too) Men's Cruising Associations," *The Body Politic* 55, August 1979, 39.

went into the steam room to have sexual relations.”¹¹³ The result was that the weight room became a space of tension between gay and straight, unlike the sexual tension of the showers. While the showers liberated sexuality, the weight room suppressed it.

The YMCA in Toronto at 931 College St. increasingly became the host for gay male cruising despite the YMCA organization being broadly cited as an early opponent of gay rights in the first issue of *TBP*.¹¹⁴ Perhaps the result of a lack of fitness venues for gay men in the early 1970s, the YMCA on College was considered *the* gym for gay men to work on their bodies. Popert states in his recollection of working out at the “Y” that, “I think it [bodybuilding] came into gay culture [because] obviously, gay men are concerned, especially in their young years, they are very concerned with making themselves attractive to other people, and it’s also a way to meet people in a quasi-bathhouse context because I have never yet been to a gym where there wasn’t sexual activity—casual sexual activity—going on between men.”¹¹⁵ Lynch described the YMCA as a relatively safe and sexual space to work out: “if you want to be fit and comfortably gay, take your bod to the YMCA. Even the showers are fun.”¹¹⁶ The YMCA remained a cruising scene for many gay men over the course of the 1970s and into the 1980s.

By 1977 there was a substantial increase in the number of reports of sexual activity occurring at the YCMA in Toronto. Writer Ian Young of *TBP* informed readers that the YMCA had an extensive history of homosexual encounters by reminding them of Walter Jenkins, an aide to U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson who got caught in a YMCA

¹¹³ Ken Popert (editor for *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, April 14, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

¹¹⁴ “Vancouver Gay Liberation,” *The Body Politic* 1, November-December 1971, 2.

¹¹⁵ Popert (editor for *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, transcript.

¹¹⁶ Michael Lynch, “Getting pecs: p 39,” *The Body Politic* 55, August 1979, 3.

lavatory doing “unchristian things with another gent” in 1959.¹¹⁷ It was no coincidence that in 1978, *TBP* contributor James Wilson reported that music group The Village People was creating a new album dealing with “among other things, life at the YMCA”—a move that would later make the YMCA symbolically synonymous with gay culture.¹¹⁸

Other bodybuilding facilities, such as Hart House at the University of Toronto were described in a way that virtually promised sexual gratification. Lynch told readers that, “[e]rections are not rare in the showers, and hard cruises of the sort you find at the baths aren’t either. But for a site, the guys either head for one of the many busy cans in the university domain or meet on the outside steps and head homeward.”¹¹⁹ By informing gay men where they could combine the activities of bodybuilding and sexual release, articles such as Lynch’s proved to be an invaluable source for gay men seeking to navigate the spatial politics of gyms in Toronto.

TBP seemed to articulate the pressing need for gay men to navigate gyms for the pleasure of the body more carefully following the closure of the Richmond Street Health Emporium. Part of a larger series of incursions on February 5, 1981, Toronto police raided the Richmond Street Health Emporium, the Barracks, The Club, and The Roman Spa as part of a massive undercover operation.¹²⁰ George Hislop referred to this night as the “gay equivalent of ‘Crystal Night in Nazi Germany—when the Jews found out where

¹¹⁷ Ian Young, “Small Press Books,” *The Body Politic* 37, October 1977, 22.

¹¹⁸ James Wilson, “Under forty in the heart of the city: Village People at Mosport,” *The Body Politic* 47, October 1978, 41.

¹¹⁹ Lynch, “Young (and old and middle-aged too) Men’s Cruising Association,” 39.

¹²⁰ While there were no explicit discussions of the lasting spatial or physical consequences of these raids, there was a report four days later that suggested the closure of lesbian bar, Fly By Night Lounge, on February 9, 1981 was not just a coincidence. While the bar was not under past surveillance, its closure was “a product of the same mentality” as the raids, according to Manager Pat Murphy. “‘Get lost’ says owner and shuts lesbian bar,” *The Body Politic* 71, March 1981, 14.

they were really at.”¹²¹ These raids led to the arrest of approximately three-hundred gay men and the subsequent protest involving 3000 gay men and lesbians.¹²² In their coverage of these police raids, the collective used *TBP* to not only alert the community of the dangers that lurked within bars, but informed readers that health spas and bathhouses were being targeted as bawdy houses—implying that gay gyms were not as safe as their heterosexually-coded counterparts. Coverage of the police’s actions reiterated to gay men that gay bars were similar to bawdy houses and, as Hannon noted in March 1981, the financial strain from damage, fines, and slow business, also communicated to gay men, especially closeted gay men, that many gay spaces were no longer “as safe” to frequent.¹²³ In 1982, Bob Gallagher of the Toronto Gay Community Council (TGCC) argued that “[v]irtually every gay bar in Toronto has been subjected to malicious harassment by the police through the enforcement of minor liquor and safety regulations.”¹²⁴

The consequences of the Richmond Street Health Emporium’s closing were vividly described by reader Paul Agius’ letter to *TBP*. Agius lamented the loss of the “Richmond Street” because it had provided three characteristics that heterosexual gyms lacked: it allowed for voyeurism, it had a nightclub-like atmosphere, and it was a place for cruising. In his words, “Because it was gay, none of the guys would take offence if I stared for a while as he lifted weights or did sit-ups. In this atmosphere I could overcome my fear of really looking at and appreciating the beauty of the male body.” Agius noted that the gym

¹²¹ George Hislop as quoted in Gerald Hannon, “Taking it to the streets,” *The Body Politic* 71, March 1981, 9.

¹²² Cockerline, “Out of the Closet & Out in the Cold,” 32.

¹²³ Gerald Hannon suggested that “[s]ince the raids, there have been several media visits to the baths, all of whom recorded extensive damage, estimated by the owners at about \$35,000.” Gerald Hannon, “Taking it to the streets,” *The Body Politic* 71, March 1981, 11.

¹²⁴ Chris Bearchell, “The cops: pressure still on,” *The Body Politic* 81, March 1982, 12.

increased his success at having sexual encounters and meeting lovers—the latter involving some emotional depth—because it was a space that “seemed to free me from acting or faking my needs and desires.”¹²⁵ Despite the nuances of those needs and desires remaining unclear, it is evident that gyms provided multiple functions for Agius: the manufacturing of “beautiful” male bodies, providing a space for him to gaze unapologetically at other men, and supplying him with potential sexual opportunities.

Agius’s article suggested to readers that gyms provided more “authentic” interactions or connections when compared to cruising at bars because performances of masculinity in gyms were less theatrical or artificial. Bodybuilding provides a tenuous and artificial connection between both “the self” and “the body” as constructions which individuals have direct control over. Susan Bordo describes this process as “plasticity” in her book, *Unbearable Weight*, and further argues that “the body’s materiality is played out *concretely* in our postmodern imagination of the body as malleable plastic, to be shaped to the meanings we choose.”¹²⁶ Bodybuilding can, therefore, be read as an attempt at moulding the body to accommodate cultural expectations of gender or compensate for a void or absence of identity that arguably “manifests itself inversely” as a crisis of masculinity.¹²⁷

For example, the Edmonton bathhouse Pisces Spa which re-opened as The Biltmore, a “private athletic club” for gay men on August 1, 1981, stressed to *TBP* that

¹²⁵ Paul Agius, “Fuming and fighting back,” *The Body Politic* 72, April 1981, 4.

¹²⁶ Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993 [2003]), 38.

¹²⁷ Leslie Heywood, “Muscularity Vanishing: Bodybuilding and Contemporary Culture,” in *Building Bodies*, ed. Pamela L. Moore (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 166. See also Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and, Chris Holmlund, “Masculinity as Multiple Masquerade,” in *Screening the Male*, eds. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (New York: Routledge, 1993): 213-229.

gay men having difficulty being masculine would not be allowed to enter. As The Biltmore, the club's focus was on bodybuilding, according to manager Rick Boviak, "We don't allow hustlers and we don't allow people who have trouble with their masculinity."¹²⁸ To mitigate sexual relations at the club—and police gay male sexuality—members were asked to "sign a statement affirming they have read the rules of the club—one of which is that the premises must not be used for sexual purposes."¹²⁹ While The Biltmore was originally a bathhouse that catered to the unbridled sexuality of its patrons, its new meaning as a place of bodybuilding restricted performances of sexuality and masculinity within it. In doing so, the redevelopment of the space from a bathhouse to a gym seemingly reiterates the relationship between performances of masculinity and places of pleasure.

Under the guise of bodybuilding, gay men could subvert police by using gyms as spaces for cruising, and the showers for sexual contact. However, the fate of the Richmond Street Health Emporium demonstrates that gay "gyms" or quasi bathhouses needed to operate as dedicated bodybuilding facilities rather than spas to avoid surveillance and raids. Gyms, such as the YMCA, were not the subject of the February raids because they were never "gay gyms," but rather a gym in which gay men frequented. This understanding of space resonates with Leif Jerram's idea of space in which spaces like gyms can become gay places, but the relationship between space and place may constantly shift.

¹²⁸ As quoted in Gerald Hannon, "Guilty verdict in Pisces trial discouraging sign for found-ins," *The Body Politic* 76, September 1981, 11.

¹²⁹ Hannon, "Guilty verdict in Pisces trial discouraging sign for found-ins," 11.

Classified ads further reflect the extent to which bodybuilding and gym culture had shaped the desires of many men by the late 1970s and early 1980s. While still only a minority of classifieds used “bodybuilding,” or “bodybuilder” in describing themselves or the aesthetic of their ideal sexual partner, it became increasingly prevalent by the turn of the decade. In January 1982, one man described himself as “Masculine W/M [white male], 38, 160, 5’10” and was in search of a “passive muscular guy to 40. Prefer athlete or bodybuilder.”¹³⁰ Months later in July 1982, another man’s ad was published with the description, “White masculine, muscular, well-educated male, late 20s, into bodybuilding ...”¹³¹ Finally, in September 1982, an ad by a “GWM [good-looking white male], 23, 158 lbs, 5’11, athletic bodybuilder...” appeared.¹³² By the March 1983 issue, a number of ads contained the language of bodybuilding. Working out had become ingrained into gay male community life because it was presented as conducive for sexual opportunities, protection from violence, and as a means of combatting the debilitating effects of HIV/AIDS—the focus of Chapter Five.

Discussions around safety, risk, masculinity, and sexuality in *TBP* reflected the spatial developments occurring over the course of the 1980s, with the collective publishing a map in August 1984 indicating that gyms, bars and discotheques continued to proliferate at the cost of bathhouses.¹³³ Clearly the dangers of police raids seemed to have an effect on both the financial health of gay establishments and patrons’ sense of security in these spaces. This map first and foremost demonstrates a greater number of

¹³⁰ Classified ad: “Masculine, W/M,” *The Body Politic* 80, January-February 1982, 49.

¹³¹ Classified ad: “White masculine, Muscular,” *The Body Politic* 85, July-August 1982, 42.

¹³² Classified ad: “GWM, 23, 158lbs,” *The Body Politic* 86, September 1982, 43.

¹³³ In addition to restaurants, health and social services, accommodations, community dances, sporting leagues, among other categories, the collective noted nineteen bars, three bathhouses, and five discotheques, some of which, such as The Tool Box, continued to be described aesthetically as a “leather club.” See “Your summer guide to Toronto,” *The Body Politic* 105, July-August 1984, 25.

gay bars, bathhouses, services, and accommodations along Yonge Street south of Bloor St. and north of Gerrard St., near Church and Wellesley—considered the contemporary gay “village.” It also reveals, however, that gay urban life mirrored in many ways the stylistic developments of gender in the gay community. The number of gyms in the community almost seemed to fall in step with the ever-greater number of articles and letters from readers on safety, police raids, the gym, and body building in *TBP*.

TBP played an instrumental role in demonstrating the beneficial aspects of gyms, particularly those seen as first and foremost as heterosexual spaces. Gyms were described as spaces where gay men could carry out bodybuilding, cruise, or even engage in sexual activity without much risk from police. While the collective undoubtedly published articles on gyms bodybuilding, and self-defence to help protect members of the community from threats of violence, their articles seemed to add new depth to macho style as a performance of masculinity that was manufactured in the heterosexually-coded weight room. In a direct statement about the protection gyms and muscularity afforded gay men, *TBP* collective member Phil Shaw succinctly wrote in October 1984 that “[w]ith the swelling of gay pride and the need for self-defence, gay men had headed back into the gym even before the hets [heterosexuals] did.”¹³⁴ Shaw’s experience returning to the gym and rediscovering the relationship between his body, gender, and sexuality highlighted his “maturation as a man,” as he called it, but most importantly, “his self-definition as a *gay* man.”¹³⁵ His identity was linked to a space for building a particular macho body that not only separated him from his former “skinny, weak” self, but allowed him to enjoy his particular fetish: gym clothes. The sexual tension of the gym extended

¹³⁴ Phil Shaw, “The Jock,” *The Body Politic* 107, October 1984, 47.

¹³⁵ Italics in original. Phil Shaw, “The Jock,” *The Body Politic* 107, October 1984, 47.

beyond gym clothes, but was also notably present with “The Jock.” The term was used by Shaw to describe butch men who frequented the gym. For Shaw, his gym crush—a heterosexual man named Bruce—came to symbolize macho masculinity and sexual desirability: “He was (and might still be) my Oppressor [sic]—now He [sic] preys on my mind as a sexual symbol.”¹³⁶ Gyms were therefore spaces for both building muscular bodies for protection, but also a place which oppressed gay men into conforming into heteronormative images of macho sex symbols.

Staying Safe: Self-Defence and Style

There was an undercurrent of risk that permeated bar culture in the context of violent attacks, a series of murders culminating in the exposé on Neil Wilkinson, and finally the numerous police raids in the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, *TBP* reported on a violent attack on a gay man leaving Jo-Jo’s discotheque on September 12, 1976.¹³⁷ The circumstances of the attack outside Jo-Jo’s were never fully delved into by the collective, but less than a year later *The Globe and Mail* published an article suggesting that violence against gay men and lesbians was no longer an issue, particularly for those who performed their appropriate gender roles.¹³⁸ Despite reports in *TBP* of arrests and

¹³⁶ Shaw, “The Jock,” 47.

¹³⁷ “Violence at local gay bar,” *The Body Politic* 21, October 1976, 7.

¹³⁸ After conducting interviews with two gay men on Yonge Street, journalist Ron Poramro reported to readers of the *The Globe and Mail* that many gay men, especially sex workers, were no longer being harassed by police on “the strip” (Yonge Street) because they conformed to expectations of gender. His interview with Mansie, a “blond stud” who “looked as tanned and handsome as a professional tennis player and his body was just as lean and muscular,” and his partner, Michael, reinforced the idea that desirability and conservative performances of gender brought safety. When asked if police had harassed him while on Yonge Street, Mansie responded, “I know every gay on the strip and I know what’s going on. The police don’t hassle anybody here. They haven’t bothered anyone here in the 4 ½ years I’ve been here.” The implicit argument was that Mansie and Michael, two sex workers who embodied sexual desirability, were safe from police harassment because they conformed to a relatively conservative standard of masculinity. Furthermore, Poramro alluded to the idea that homosexuality itself did not attract unwarranted negative attention. What attracted attention were public transgressions of gender roles because these lapses were

entrapment at bars and bathhouses and in public, the continued patronage of these spaces demonstrates how danger can become erotic in perceived dangerous spaces. Indeed, as Houlbrook contends, “Cruising—like public sex—was erotic and exciting because it generated the electric thrill of social and spatial transgression.”¹³⁹ Yet, *TBP*’s continued coverage around violence and cruising illustrates a change in how space was discussed in relation to sexuality, gender, and the body, particularly with regard to personal space, safety, and self-defence.

Introduced in the middle of the 1970s, self-defence was portrayed as a masculine activity in *TBP*, one that embodied macho style to an extent. In February 1976, Hannon described his experience taking self-defence classes at the YMCA after being physically assaulted by numerous individuals on Yonge St., north of St. Clair, the previous year. It was the fear of violence which provoked Hannon to begin bodybuilding four times a week. In his words, “I am in danger. That is why I am at the Y four times a week trying to undo the effects of some years of a very sedentary lifestyle, why I spend at least one night a week learning the rudiments of self-defence. Why I have ostensibly joined the ranks of those men who are trying to become Real Men.”¹⁴⁰ Hannon’s sarcasm about becoming a “real man” is not lost in this message. The implication remained, however, that it was through violence and “learning to kill,” as he described it, that he was becoming a “real man.” This statement conveyed the notion that donning a style of masculinity that was heterosexual, aggressive, and even violent—performing heteronormative masculinity in a macho fashion—was a form of protection for gay men.

sign-vehicles indicating homosexuality. Ron Poramro, “Police no longer hassle gays on strip, homosexual says,” *The Globe and Mail*, August 3, 1977, 5.

¹³⁹ Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 210.

¹⁴⁰ Hannon, “Learning to Kill,” 8.

However, the editorial collective assured readers in 1980 that they did not have to be muscular to effectively defend themselves: “[t]he idea of having the perfectly toned body before enrolling in such a course is the wrong one.”¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, Hannon’s article illustrates how threats of violence in the public spaces of Toronto corporally shaped some gay men’s bodies towards a macho aesthetic.

Arguably one of the most prolific examples of the recursive relationship between staying safe and masculinity in *TBP* is Robin Hardy’s aforementioned coverage of the fourteen murders plaguing Toronto between 1975 and 1978. Hardy began by addressing the murder of William Duncan Robinson, a man described as quiet and shy, and who lived alone, and was last seen at 2:30 a.m. Sunday, November 26, 1978. When writing this editorial piece, he contacted John Allan Lee, a gay sociologist and author of *Getting Sex* (1978), who challenged the Toronto Police’s conclusion that Robinson’s murder was unconnected with the fourteen other murders. Lee argued that the victims were all similar in sexual orientation, appearance, and likely faced similar obstacles while cruising. These victims were either young men incapable of safe cruising—they were shy and did not know how to interact with people—or they were “desperate, unattractive and usually older men.” Even Hardy acquiesced that “[t]here are older men who grew up long before the renaissance of gay liberation, men who internalized the vicious myths of the aging, unhappy, friendless gay man.”¹⁴² Not only did Lee propagate the ageist myth that older men were undesirable and unhappy, but that with age came danger.

Lee discussed his friend and the first victim in the series of murders, Harold Walkley, as an example of why older men made likely victims. Walkley was described

¹⁴¹ “Self-defence and self-assurance,” *The Body Politic* 61, March 1980, 41.

¹⁴² Robin Hardy, “Overkill: Murder in Toronto-the-Good,” *The Body Politic* 50, February 1979, 20.

by Lee as espousing desperation: “[f]or some time before his murder he would take anyone home. He was getting older, losing his looks and was lonely. He had difficulty finding lovers he could be compatible with. By the time closing hour came around at a bar he would settle for anything.”¹⁴³ The presumption was that men incapable of conforming to desirable characteristics in the community because of age or appearance put themselves at greater risk out of sexual desperation.

TBP editor Paul Trollope criticized Lee’s interpretation that the murders were linked along aesthetic grounds because it perpetuated stereotypes about age, sexuality, desirability and violence in the gay male community. In April 1979, he penned a letter countering Lee’s argument that the murders were linked through the victims’ style: “Lee has completely internalized the sexist, ageist and objectifying myths which constitute one of heterosexist society’s most powerful weapons against gays.” He further argued that “there is the problem that as gay people we have been brainwashed by the hegemony of straight society’s criteria for defining and severely constraining the idea of ‘physical attractiveness.’”¹⁴⁴ Trollope’s critique of Lee’s conclusion exemplified a continued anxiety amongst the editorial collective around macho style as an overt form of heterosexism in the gay community.

By the 1980s, self-defence was still largely described in *TBP* in individual terms. Despite groups such as the Gay Liberation Union (GLU), which began conducting self-defence classes in 1979, and the Gay Street Patrol formed in 1981 by Toronto’s Right to Privacy Committee, self-defence became increasingly understood as part of a healthy gay

¹⁴³ Hardy, “Overkill,” 20.

¹⁴⁴ Paul Trollope, “If looks could kill,” *The Body politic* 51, March-April 1979, 6.

lifestyle.¹⁴⁵ One such example of this is found in *TBP* writer Robert Trow's 1980 review of R. D. Fenwick's *The Advocate Guide to Gay Health* (1978). A major critique of Trow's was that "gay self-defence is not once mentioned in the guide."¹⁴⁶ Indeed, Fenwick made no mention of self-defence, even when discussing exercise and physical regiments as part of a healthy gay lifestyle. Instead, he focused on aging, exercise, nutrition, and even going as far to remind readers that plastic surgery was an important part of one's appearance. Fenwick quoted a man interviewed for the book stating, "We diet, we pump iron, and we spend lots on hairstyling and clothes, so why not tighten up the skin when the time comes?"¹⁴⁷ Despite emphasizing the correlation between physical and mental health with what Trow's called "gay-positive self-image," Fenwick failed to acknowledge how bodybuilding and self-defence classes provided practical benefits against violence in the urban gay lifestyle.

As further testament to the editorial collective's efforts to shore up community support against violence, Trow argued that the book's "focus on individual action doesn't recognize the importance of collective action by gay people to create conditions in which we can maximize our physical and mental welfare."¹⁴⁸ Instead, physical welfare was described in Fenwick's book strictly in terms of health and the appropriate number of repetitions for ideal strength and muscle development.¹⁴⁹ The emphasis on bodybuilding

¹⁴⁵ Ross Irwin, "Self-defence group to organize patrols," *The Body Politic* 55, August 1979, 13. The Gay Street Patrol was credited by the editorial collective with nearly eliminating the mobs of regulars hurling insults and objects on Halloween night on Yonge St. From the first documented incident in *TBP* in 1971 until the end of the decade, reports of violence on Halloween night on Yonge Street reiterated to readers the dangers of gender transgression in public. See Tony Metie, "Unmasquerade," *The Body Politic* 1, November-December, 1971, 1; David Gibson, "No Hallowe'en mask for homophobia," *The Body Politic* 29, December-January 1976-1977, 6; and, "Boys will be boys," *The Body Politic* 122, January 1986, 13.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Trow, "The best-yet gay health guide," *The Body Politic* 62, April 1980, 35.

¹⁴⁷ R. D. Fenwick, *The Advocate Guide to Gay Health* (New York: Dutton Press, 1978), 156.

¹⁴⁸ Trow, "The best-yet gay health guide," 35.

¹⁴⁹ Fenwick, *The Advocate Guide to Gay Health*, 174.

as an individual exercise aimed at appearance reignited early concerns that macho style was an aesthetic of gay narcissism rather than personal wellbeing. Unlike the self-defence groups of the GLU which policed and protected gay men in the community, the individual protection afforded by donning macho style reiterates earlier concerns by some, such as Riordon, who argued in 1976 that macho style existed within the gay community on an individual sexual level, but was separated from politics because it involved passing rather than confronting homophobic violence directly.¹⁵⁰ Fenwick's focus on exercise and masculine practices for maintaining one's health and appearance relied on biological reductionism for gendered stereotypes. Trow asserted in his review that many of Fenwick's views "restate age-old male and female sex role stereotypes, and deny the efforts of many lesbians and gay men to move beyond these roles." Trow's concern stemmed from a growing effort among the editorial collective to problematize the perceived naturalness of gender, as well as the influence of feminist thought in the newspaper.

The practical benefits of bodybuilding were, however, stressed in May 1980 when *TBP* writer Michael Riordon described the ways in which the body could become a weapon for self-defense. Feet, knees, elbows, and hands could be weapons, allowing gay men to perform more traditional heteronormative understandings of masculinity as aggressive, violent and protective—all characteristics that Hannon referred to in his earlier 1976 article, "Learning to Kill."¹⁵¹ In addition to molding one's body into a weapon, Riordon noted that self-defence included "attitude," which involved learning how to scream in a lower voice by roaring from the belly. This manner of self-defense

¹⁵⁰ Riordon, "Voices from the Closet (People who want to Have Their Cake and Eat It)," 9.

¹⁵¹ Michael Riordan, "The Mirror of Violence," *The Body Politic* 63, May 1980, 25.

can be understood as a performative style of masculinity, one that assuaged notions that the gay male body was weak or vulnerable. Hannon and Riordon's correlation between bodybuilding, aggression, and defence not only reinforced the notion of macho style was a safe style, but more importantly, created the narrative that macho style was an individual performance of protection.

Conclusion

Gay men's masculinity was continually renegotiated and restyled as they moved from their residences to bars and bathhouses for entertainment and cruising, to parks and washrooms to engage in the thrill of public sex, or even the offices of the Gay Self-Defence Group, Gay Asians Toronto, or, by 1983, the AIDS Committee of Toronto for services and a sense of community. *TBP* not only played a critical role in helping gay men cruise Toronto by publishing maps and guides on where to meet other men, but informed readers of the (stylistic) codes involved in cruising via articles and book reviews. Furthermore, the newspaper informed men on how to avoid and, if necessary, confront violence through heteronormative performances of masculinity. As equally as the editorial collective's efforts to discuss and map public and private spaces reflected the social and political climate of police brutality and issues of entrapment, these same discussions and maps followed the stylistic development of macho masculinity seen in Chapter Two. This is most evident in the formation of themed bars, the policing of gender and sexuality by police and doormen at some gay bars, as well as the rise of self-defence classes.

Despite the police raids that threatened the existence of many gay establishments, a map published in August 1984 by the editorial collective suggests that bars and discotheques continued to proliferate at the cost of bathhouses. In addition to restaurants, health and social services, sports, among other categories, the collective noted nineteen bars, three bathhouses, and five discotheques, some of which, such as The Tool Box, continued to be described in terms of aesthetics as a “leather club.”¹⁵² Furthermore, this map demonstrates a greater materialization of gay bars, bathhouses, services, and accommodations along Yonge Street south of Bloor St. and North of Gerrard St.; near Church and Wellesley—considered the contemporary gay “village.”

Ironically, while *TBP* portrayed the gay ghetto as nearly ubiquitously white, it often described the plight and ghettoization of the community in racialized terms. This comparison was notably addressed by Popert in 1980 when he argued that the gay community could be viewed as any another minority community because gays tend to ghetto themselves, like “Toronto’s Chinese or Greeks or Italians.” In his words, “the minority community picture of gays directs attention away from those aspects of gay life which straights find so offensive and alien; things like washroom sex, steambaths, one-night stands.”¹⁵³ Viewing the gay community spatially as a ghetto allowed Popert to highlight the importance of space in defining sexuality in the gay community. However, these same discussions of the ghetto also reproduced western (mis)conceptions of non-white bodies, sexuality, and masculinity. Whether this was an accurate reflection of the racial demographic of Toronto’s gay community is uncertain, but racialized others appeared in the newspaper primarily within discussions of race, not gay community life.

¹⁵² “Your summer guide to Toronto,” *The Body Politic* 105, July-August 1984, 25.

¹⁵³ Ken Popert, “Dangers of the minority game,” *The Body Politic* 63, May 1980, 37.

Thus, *TBP* upheld the notion that white urban communities were, and arguably continue to be, central to the formation of queer identities.

CHAPTER FOUR: “The Cowboy Hat Will Never Fit Quite Right”: Intersections of Race and Masculinity

Sure, we can puff up our tits, buy Lacoste and wear Levis, but the eyes will always be Asian, the skin will always be Black, and the cowboy hat will never fit quite right.

- Lim, “GWM,” *The Body Politic* 78, November 1981, 4-5.

I discovered that ninety-five percent of gay white males were too busy chasing the Aryan Blueboy Sweet Bird of Youth, that they always judged others by white physical standards and that they valued superficial physical appearance over the humanity, the soul, and the feelings of most people.

- Quan Minh, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 34.

At the request of Gerry Oxford for readers to describe their experiences cruising in his 1983 article, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *TBP* reader Quan Minh noted the white standards of desirability that he was held to while cruising Montreal and Vancouver. As a presumably Indigenous man, Minh informed Oxford of how he was also denied access to washrooms in Kenora, British Columbia because they “don’t serve Indians here.”¹ He recounted first-hand how cruising was a “sexual game” that treated men like sexual objects rather than people. The standards of white desirability to which

¹ Quan Minh, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 34.

he (and other non-white gay men) were expected to strive towards arguably meant a subjugation of his racial identity. Minh stated that conforming to a white ideal to turn him into “a gay Uncle Tom who only goes for GWMs [gay white males], who silently accepts the gay politics of racial exclusion or who tries to appear physically as ‘white’ as possible.”² According to Minh, the entrenched whiteness of gay male culture was an impediment to interracial cruising, “except in cases where a white man is either into ‘exotic’ people or is so indiscriminate in selecting sexual partners as to notice and respond to non-white cruisers’ ‘signals.’”³ His experiences are a testament to the ways in which race informed practices of cruising and constructions of gender and sexuality in gay culture. They also illustrate the marginalization that non-white gay men experienced in a subculture already facing discrimination from the state and anti-gay conservative groups.

The continual presence of racial discrimination and stereotyping in *TBP* well into the 1980s inspired readers, such as Fo Niemi, to continually challenge the peripheral position of non-whites in the community. Such rebukes of racism and racial desire occurred in tandem with the formation of racialized groups in the gay community by the late 1970s. Non-white gay and lesbian groups to form during *TBP*’s tenure included Gay Asians of Toronto (GAT), which formed in 1980, and Zami, the first Canadian Black and West Indian gay and lesbian group, in 1984.⁴ Writing into *TBP* in 1982, Niemi, an ardent

² Quan Minh, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 34.

³ Minh believed that interracial interaction is often viewed as a symbol of upward mobility and prestige for non-whites. Quan Minh, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 34.

⁴ In addition to Gay Asian Toronto and Zami, numerous other groups aimed at marginalized gays formed following *TBP*’s publication run. Salaam, a group dedicated at providing support for gay Muslims, was founded in 1991 in Toronto by lawyer, El-Farouk Khaki. According to Aisha Geissinger, Salaam was temporary disbanded after Khaki received death threats from “several persons claiming to belong to Islamic Jihad cells” after writing an article about gay Muslims in a student paper at the University of Toronto. It

critic of racialized understandings of masculinity and sexuality, asked in his letter, “Has this gay culture become so monolithic and ‘white-washed’ that it turns homosexuality into a strictly North American phenomenon which subtly compels Black, Asian, Latin, Native and East Indian gays to relinquish their backgrounds and to pass as gay ‘coconuts’?”⁵ In an attempt to answer Niemi’s loaded question, this chapter focuses on the discussions around race and masculinity in *TBP*, as well as the images, photographic exposés, and classified ads inspiring these conversations. *TBP* reflected the ways in which cultural expectations and assumptions of gender and the able male body were structured by racial categories, and how gay liberationists sought to balance their manifesto of individual sexual freedoms with the racial politics in the community. The newspaper’s white political message of sexual liberation not only exemplified the privileges afforded to white gay men in the community, but threatened to undermine its objective to represent the myriad voices of the gay and lesbian community.

Often the editorial collective’s responses to accusations of racism in the community were reactive (not active), signifying the important role readers played in mediating race in *TBP*. Nevertheless, the dialogue between editors and readers nevertheless illustrates the important role *TBP* played as an early platform for deconstructing intersections of gender, sexuality, and race in Toronto’s, and arguably Canada’s, gay community(ies). Whether it be reviews of film, artwork, and literature, classified ads, or articles on racialized machismo, *TBP* contained numerous different forums by which readers and the

resumed operations, however, in 1998 following news that gay Muslim group, Al-Fatiha, formed in the United States. Aisha Geissinger, “Islam and Discourses of Same-Sex Desire,” in *Queer Religion: Homosexuality in Modern Religious History*, eds. Donald L. Boisvert and James Emerson Johnson (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012), 82-83.

⁵ Niemi, “Blind Narcissism,” *The Body Politic* 85, July-August 1982, 5.

collective alike engaged with social stereotypes of race in the gay and lesbian community; many of which that can be understood using Edward Said's concept of "orientalism"—a process by which the Global South is feminized while the Western world is characterized as masculine.⁶

Jennifer Nash argues that intersectional theorists have a tendency to "ignore the intimate connections between privilege and oppression."⁷ In addition, English scholar Rebecca Aanerud contends that whiteness is constructed "as 'unraced,' or racially 'neutral.'"⁸ This is because white bodies are mistakenly understood to be unfettered by racial politics or processes of power, and therefore do not receive the same critical attention as their non-white counterparts. *TBP* collective member Richard Dyer contends in his much later published book, *White: Essays on Race and Culture*, that "[t]he uncertainties of whiteness as a hue, a colour and yet not a colour, make it possible to see the bearers of white skin as nonspecific, ordinary and mere, and, it just so happens, the only people whose colour permits this perception."⁹ Heading these words, I bring whiteness into closer examination as a means of understanding how racialized understandings of the male body and masculinity were placed along a spectrum which included white bodies as a benchmark for desirable performances of gender and

⁶ In his influential 1978 book, *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure supported the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them')." Differentiating the exotic Orient from Europe broadly reflected in literature, theories, social descriptions, paintings, and photography, and beyond culture, came to shape European ideas of non-white bodies. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006 [1978]), 43.

⁷ Jennifer C. Nash, "Re-thinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 12.

⁸ Rebecca Aanerud, "Fictions of Whiteness: Speaking the Names of Whiteness in U.S. Literature," in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Racial and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Ruth Frankenberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 37.

⁹ Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (New York: Routledge, [1997] 2013), 70.

sexuality. Whiteness, especially as it pertained to white gay activism, informed varying responses to race, sexuality, and masculinity from the editorial collective and readers.

In contrast, non-white masculinities were articulated in *TBP* within colonial frameworks of gender. I engage with intersectionality primarily from the approach of “intercategorical complexity,” which is defined by sociologist Leslie McCall as considering “existing analytical categories to document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality along multiple and conflicting dimensions.”¹⁰ I therefore approach discussions and illustrations of white and non-white masculinities in *TBP* from an intersectional standpoint to capture “the simultaneity of race and gender as social processes.”¹¹

From the mid 1970s onward, *TBP* became a forum for an increasing number of debates around race. Initially included as a means of comparing and understanding the deep-seated nature of gay oppression, race became its own category of analysis by readers and the editorial collective in *TBP* by the latter half of the 1970s. The collective and many readers began discussing race in an effort to problematize the white-washing of gay culture. Debates emerged around *TBP*’s role in policing racism and what desire and masculinity meant in the larger context of race in the gay community. They also raised concerns around the purpose of the newspaper for gay liberation.

The White-washed Politics of Race in *The Body Politic*

For a newspaper aspiring to challenge the way gay men understood themselves and the world around them, *TBP*’s editorial collective was not entirely cognizant of the unique

¹⁰ Leslie McCall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality,” *Signs* 30, no. 3 (2005): 1773.

¹¹ Nash, “Re-thinking Intersectionality,” 2.

experiences of racialized gay men. This was not something unique to *TBP*, however; as writer Jeffery Escoffier notes, gay men and lesbians of colour received very little attention within the formative years of gay liberation because it was “primarily white gay men and lesbians who have settled in gay neighborhoods and owned businesses serving the community.”¹² Meanwhile, lesbian and gay men of color often reside in their ethnic or racial neighborhoods. As a result, he continues, “[g]ay people of color must commute to the gay community districts in order to participate in the gay community—and they often encounter discrimination.”¹³ In the context of Toronto, this meant that organizations such as the Community Homophile Association of Toronto, the Toronto Gay Community Council, and *TBP* itself, were consistently white.

A rationale for the peripheral place that non-white gay men were relegated to in Toronto’s gay community was given in an anonymously-written article in the September 1980 issue of *TBP* entitled, “A minority within a minority.” The editorial spoke of the ways in which Chinese gay men chose to continue to remain on the periphery of gay cultural life because they feared upsetting their Chinese friends and family. The author argued that, “[v]isibility as gays in a homophobic and hostile ‘ethnic’ community is not safe, but an Asian in the gay community has no choice in his/her visibility as an Asian.”¹⁴ This article suggested that new immigrants to Toronto primarily remained within their ethnic neighbourhoods out of fear of alienating their ethnic communities or risking their chance at obtaining Canadian citizenship. In April 1984, *TBP* editor Tim McCaskell stressed that, “gay community leaders were worrying that immigrants caught up in the

¹² Jeffrey Escoffier, *American Homo: Community and Perversity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 211.

¹³ Escoffier, *American Homo*, 211.

¹⁴ “A minority within a minority,” *The Body Politic* 66, September 1980, 41.

raids, many of them people of colour, might face deportation if they were found guilty of bawdyhouse charges.”¹⁵ Immigrants were also consistently informed of proper ways to conform to the Canadian way of life—none of which included acceptance of, let alone education on, homosexuality or gay culture.¹⁶ The article also served as a poignant reminder that ethnic gay men were seen first and foremost for their race rather than their sexuality, regardless of how they styled themselves. The result was the predominantly white makeup of gay activism and gay culture over the lifetime of *TBP*.

By no means was the editorial collective ignorant of race as a social process in the gay community. Nor did the editorial collective *conscientiously* perpetuate existing tropes around racial masculinity, unless attempting to make a strong statement about race and sexual desire. In comparison to sexuality and gender, however, race received relatively little critical attention from the collective until racist pornographic magazines and classified ads appeared, inspiring readers and collective members alike to tackle the issue of racism. Analyses of race became more prominent in *TBP* as the international scope of the newspaper increased by 1980 and interracial groups, such as Black and White Men Together and Gay Asians of Toronto (renamed Gay Asians Toronto shortly thereafter), began formally organizing.¹⁷ Gay Asians Toronto (GAT) was another major Toronto

¹⁵ Speaking about the gay and lesbian community more broadly, McCaskall argued that “For those of us who are not white or Canadian-born, however, coming out may mean giving up far more than a closet. It may mean abandoning culture and language, cutting yourself off from a world that has made you what you are, a world not shared by your new community. And it may mean cutting yourself off from an immigrant community or family that is a major source of support and protection in an alien culture.” Tim McCaskall, “You’ve got a nice body for an Oriental,” *The Body Politic* 102, April 1984, 34.

¹⁶ Franca Iacovetta describes the numerous magazines and government organizations tasked with assisting new Canadians in their acclimation to Canadian society. Magazines such as *Chatelaine* and groups such as Canadian Association for Adult Education, made it their mission to “Canadianize” immigrants through social and cultural uplift. Recipes, exercise, home-making, job skills, and education were all promoted as ways in which foreigners could better immerse themselves in Canadian culture. Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), 10.

¹⁷ As early as 1980, Black and White Men Together groups had been established in several cities with the intent of fostering supportive environments wherein racial and cultural barriers could be overcome. Black

group to form that same year and dedicated itself to building dialogue between the Asian (Canadian born and those of other national origins) and gay community; a reflection of the city's changing racial demographics.¹⁸

In my interview with David Rayside, he reflected on the uneasy effect the topic of race seemed to have within *TBP*, stating that, "I think there was broadly an awareness of that [race] and an unsettlement about that but more acute for some members of the collective than others, and Tim McCaskell was one of those who was especially conscious of the way masculinity was constructed in relation to minorities."¹⁹ McCaskell, a white editor for *TBP* was highly conscious of race in the gay community and one of the most vocal critics of racism among newspaper's editorial collective. His writings appeared near the end of the 1970s and well into the 1980s. They serve as an example of *TBP*'s attempts at mediating the fetishized desires for non-white bodies as an extension of larger processes of white privilege and racism. However, he was writing from the perspective of a white gay man—a recurring critique *TBP* would receive from readers and even by fellow collective members.

and White Men Together received approximately 150 gay men from the U.S., Canada and England at its first annual convention in San Francisco in 1980. The organization aimed to engage in educational, political, cultural and social activities as a means of dealing with the racism, sexism and heterosexism in the community and in the lives of its members. Black and White Men Together planned to start a Toronto group in 1981. The name does not mean that organization was for Black and white men only. Rather, the use of Black and White was to dramatically illustrate its interracial nature. See "Black and White Men goes international," *The Body Politic* 76, September 1981, 17.

¹⁸ David Churchill argues that "[i]n Toronto during the 1980s and early 1990s numerous anti-racist groups sought to provide support, services, and cultural work. These groups challenged the given public culture of Toronto's lesbian and gay community by making the experience of people of colour, living in the Diaspora visible, recognizable, and present. Yet the institutional vitality and growth of these communities, as well as the changing demographics of Toronto, were only marginally represented in the pages of *TBP*, the paper remained largely the effort of white gay men." David Churchill, "Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at *The Body Politic*," *Left History* 8, no. 2 (2003): 125.

¹⁹ David Rayside (volunteer at *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, March 24, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

In April 1984, McCaskell published the article, “You’ve got a nice body for an Oriental,” in which he interviewed Joseph, a Chinese man from Hong Kong, who bluntly stated, “[a] lot of people go to bed with Asians or Black men for very, very racist reasons.” Indeed, McCaskell argued that “[t]he Black man who finds himself expected to be ‘more sexual and well-hung,’ the Asian who finds himself expected to be ‘passive,’ the Chinese who finds himself expected to be ‘interested in older men,’ may find that situation as objectionable as being rejected.”²⁰ Using Joseph’s quote, which attributed the stereotypes of non-white sexuality and masculinity back to white gay men’s sexual expectations, McCaskell argued that overcoming racism was equally the responsibility of white gay men. Considering racism from the aspects of exclusion and desirability, McCaskell highlighted the tension around masculinity, sexuality, and race that, nevertheless, marginalized non-white men to be either invisible or relegated as sexual fetishes. At the same time, centering white gay men and their sexual expectations within conversations on race spoke just as much about the white makeup of gay activism and *TBP* as it did of the experiences of non-white gay men.

The earliest discussions of race in *TBP* appeared in early politics efforts to compare gay oppression with racism. David Newcome and Paul Pearce, writers for *TBP*, argued in 1972 that the “Metro Toronto police do their best to confine us to the ghetto. The Jews, Blacks and other minorities have suffered under this same police oppression.”²¹ Framing gay rights as another example of minority oppression, especially civil rights, was a long-standing tactic common in the 1960s for social movements to garner a broader base of support. For instance, historian Sean Mills highlights how Montreal Black Power

²⁰ Tim McCaskell, “You’ve got a nice body for an Oriental,” *The Body Politic* 102, April 1984, 36.

²¹ David Newcome and Paul Pearce, “The Gay Ghetto,” *The Body Politic* 2, January-February 1972, 13.

advocates in the 1960s, “reached out to Native Canadians in their first attempt to build solidarities across different movements.”²² On September 29, 1969, Edmund Michael, a writer for the Montreal Black community paper, *UHURU*, compared the oppression of Black Canadians with that of the indigenous by using the language of postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon.²³ The shared oppression of seemingly disparate social movements created the image of a more unified resistance to the social, political, and economic status quo.

Equating homophobia to racism continued to unfold years later in *TBP* when excerpts from author and social critic Paul Goodman’s essay, “The Politics of Being Queer,” (1969) were reprinted in May 1979.²⁴ The essay came from *Nature Heals* (1977), an edited collection of Goodman’s reviews and essays between 1945 and 1969.²⁵ In this specific essay, Goodman bluntly states, “my homosexual needs have made me a nigger.”²⁶ Goodman chose the term “nigger” to describe the similarity in brutality faced by gays and lesbians with that of Black men and women.²⁷ Appropriating this language was also in response to puritanical efforts by totalitarian regimes to crush homosexuality

²² Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 113.

²³ Mills, *The Empire Within*, 113.

²⁴ Paul Goodman’s essay “The Politics of Being Queer” was published posthumously, and appeared in an edited collection titled, *Nature Heals*. See: *Nature Heals: The Psychological Essays of Paul Goodman*, ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York: Free Life Editions, 1977).

²⁵ Originally published as “The Politics of Being Queer,” in *Nature Heals: The Psychological Essays of Paul Goodman*, ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York: Free Life Edition, 1977), 216-225.

²⁶ “Paul Goodman: The Politics of Being Queer,” *The Body Politic* 52, May 1979, 25.

²⁷ In Canada, the appropriation of the word “nigger” was done by Pierre Vallières, an intellectual leader of the Front de libération du Québec, and made famous in his 1967 work, *Nègres blancs d’Amérique, autobiographie précoce d’un “terroriste” Québécois* (*White Niggers of America: The Precocious Autobiography of a Quebec “Terrorist”*). The term symbolized the plight of the Québécois and the socio-economic and political pressures on people in Québec through a racial framework that reverberated with anti-colonial and anti-capitalist sentiments throughout the world in the late 1960s. See: Bryan Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 339.

during the Cold War, as well as Huey Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, welcoming “homosexuals to the revolution as equally oppressed.”²⁸ Goodman’s approach to gay discrimination and inequality through a racial framework did not, however, work through the intersectional experiences of non-white gay men. Rather, it was based on instances in which he had faced discrimination, including being fired from various jobs and being excluded from both the publishing world because he was queer and certain gay organizations because his message was too radical.²⁹ By appropriating the derogatory racial term and applying it to both homosexuals and himself, Goodman brings into question how whiteness and race could be redefined in the context of the gay white male community and gay liberation. His adoption of the word also white-washes the brutal history of slavery, particularly in the American South.

As numerous articles in *TBP* demonstrate, the privileged position of white gay men was first and foremost discussed in relation to non-white bodies, masculinity, and sexuality. The editorial collective did not disentangle the politics of race in gay activism in its early years, but they did make efforts to prevent overt racist discourse from appearing in the Classified section of their newspaper as early as Spring 1973. The collective always included a note at the beginning of the classified ads stating: “We reserve the right to edit or refuse any ad.”³⁰ However, a letter submitted to *TBP* in September 1976 by Susan Henderson and Peter Prizer from Portland, Maine suggests that classified ads in *TBP* were not as carefully scrutinized as believed. They argued that some ads were so harmful, racist, and homophobic, that they warranted attention. *TBP*

²⁸ “Paul Goodman: The Politics of Being Queer,” *The Body Politic* 52, May 1979, 26.

²⁹ “Paul Goodman,” 26.

³⁰ “Classified Ads,” *The Body Politic* 8, Spring 1973, 22.

assured them that "...we cannot print ads which are insulting or which discriminate against oppressed groups. We edit out phrases like 'no blacks' 'no orientals', 'no fats or fems', etc."³¹ By assuring Henderson and Prizer, along with other readers, that *TBP* did not condone racism or other forms of homophobia and refused ads that used discriminatory language, the collective inserted themselves into a much larger debate on race, desire, and white privilege.

Such attempts to regulate content, even vaguely, raised concerns from some readers that *TBP* was stifling white men's sexual expressions and desires which was a detriment to the community. George Peterson wrote into *TBP* in October 1976 in response to the letter exchange between Henderson, Prizer, and the editorial collective. Peterson viewed *TBP*'s scrutiny of classified ads as a form of discrimination "against us poor WASPS."³² He argued that, "to arbitrarily single out some races against which your advertisers may discriminate (while you protect other races) is to commit an act of bigotry and hypocrisy." Peterson concluded by saying that, "if one of your advertisers has an objection to meeting Indians or orientals [sic], do you really think that you can alter his views by the simple act of blue-pencilling his ad?"³³ The editorial collective responded in the same issue, noting that: "[i]n Canadian society, we are not preventing anyone from meeting a white person by not allowing phrases like 'white only.' It would be difficult not to meet white people at every turn in Canada. The only possible purpose for saying

³¹ Both Henderson and Prizer's letter and the editorial collective's response were published in the September, 1976 issue of *TBP*. Susan Henderson and Peter Prizer, "Classified ads questioned," *The Body Politic* 26, September 1976, 2.

³² George Peterson, "Classified ads and racism," *The Body Politic* 27, October 1976, 2.

³³ Peterson, "Classified ads and racism," 2.

‘white only’ is to exclude and, intentionally or not, insult members of other races.”³⁴

Peterson never responded following *TBP*’s rebuttal.

Concerns around “reverse discrimination” were uncommon amongst readers and the editorial collective alike, but that did not deter *TBP* editor Ken Popert from writing an article exemplifying the possible backlash poised to erupt, even from within the collective, over scrutiny of white men’s sexual subjectivities. Popert’s article, “Race, moustaches and sexual prejudice,” was a response to the editorial collective’s decision not to run an ad for the pornographic magazine, *White Ass Super Pricks*—a periodical adorned by exclusively white buff men. He argued that racial desires were symptomatic of growing up in a white society. “If my sexuality is racially tinged, it is not because I am a racist, but because I have grown up in a society which attaches great importance to race,” he argued.³⁵ In no way condoning racism, Popert rather believed that racial shadings of desire—and the desire for white macho men—was beyond any individual’s ability to challenge. His argument seemingly naturalized white men’s sexual object choice as fixed while arguing that racial desires were not biological but rather a product of one’s environment.

In his article, Popert argued that the struggle to overcome racism was a “noble sentiment”; however, pushing “ourselves into sex with individuals we’re not attracted to as a way of breaking down the barriers” was “truly repulsive.” For Popert, an individual’s inability to change their racial desires or proclivities was the equivalent of being unable to change one’s sexual object choice from men to women. He compared his sexual preferences to his desire for men with moustaches—who he termed moustachosexuals—

³⁴ Editorial collective, “Classified ads and racism,” *The Body Politic* 27, October 1976, 2.

³⁵ Ken Popert, “Race, moustaches and sexual prejudice,” *The Body Politic* 94, June 1983, 34.

and a lack of desire for “many (most?) Asian and native men;” all of which were expressions of a mysteriously moulded sexuality.³⁶ The lack of facial hair typically associated with Asian and Indigenous men was given as a reason for why his preferences lay elsewhere, further reiterating the importance of donning facial hair as a trait of masculinity. This comparison between racial desire and desire for those with moustaches, however, positioned the racialization of gender and sexuality in the realm of aesthetics and style. As a result, the experiences of people of colour and the realities of racism they face are consequently marginalized and reduced to the by-product of white cultural tastes.

In response to Popert’s article, six letters were published in September 1983 from readers on the topic of race and desire in the gay community. In this series of letters, entitled “Racism and action,” readers challenged Popert’s argument that “[r]acism will go out of our sexuality when racism goes out of society, and not before.”³⁷ Eng K. Ching of Toronto was not convinced by Popert’s belief that racism and the desire for white bodies in pornography was an inevitable consequence of the dominant white makeup of gay communities in North America. He argued that “[b]y refusing to struggle against the racism in our homosexuality, we let straight society define our sexuality and also block the further advances of gay liberation.”³⁸ Ching also acknowledged the intrinsic relationship between the body and sexuality when he noted that white pornography and literature “invalidate my existence, my experiences and my body.”³⁹ This quote illuminates the important role of visual culture in both stylizing masculinity and “validating” acceptable styles of gay masculinity. In Ching’s case, the lack of Asian

³⁶ Popert, “Race, moustaches and sexual prejudice,” 34.

³⁷ Popert, “Race, moustaches and sexual prejudice,” 34.

³⁸ Eng K. Ching, “Racism and action,” *The Body Politic* 96, September 1983, 6.

³⁹ Ching, “Racism and action,” 6.

bodies in “GWM porn [Gay White Male],” as Ching called it, prevented readers from breaking free of preconceived notions of non-white masculinity and sexuality.

Other readers, such as Mair Morton, Holly Cole, Joyce Harley, wrote in to the newspaper challenging Popert’s article as an example of white privilege and its abuse “in defining the reality of the oppressed group.”⁴⁰ Their collectively-written letter compared heterosexism and racism by arguing, “[i]f we expect heterosexual people to be responsible for their homophobia...then how can we justify or ignore our own racism by using the same excuse?”⁴¹ In the longest and most scathing critique of Popert’s article, John Clifton of Guelph, Ontario, critiqued the notion that overcoming racism was similar to being pushed into bed with the undesirable. Clifton did not believe in Popert’s laissez-faire approach to sexual desire, arguing that, “We are responsible for the content of our desires to the extent that we are responsible for the nature of our ideas and attitudes. If we harbour racist beliefs, then these are bound to influence our sexuality.” He continued that “if there is to be discrimination, let it be based upon the realities of individual differences and not upon the pervasive but by no means ineradicable stereotypes perpetuated by our racist society.”⁴² By suggesting that individuals are able to separate themselves from the cultural stereotypes in society, Clifton believed in individual responsibility around desire.

Some readers and *TBP* volunteers took a more nuanced approach towards desirability and race compared to Popert or Clifton. Reader Spencer Brennan agreed with Popert that individuals, gay or straight, are “a prejudiced product of a racially conditioned

⁴⁰ Mair Morton, Holly Cole, Joyce Harley, Boo Watson, Debbie Parent, Yvette Perreault, Stacey Michener, Kathryn Maxwell, Susan Stewart, Suzi Edwards, and Lilith Finkler, “Racism and action,” *The Body Politic* 96, September 1983, 9.

⁴¹ Morton, Cole, Harley, Watson, Parent, Perreault, Michener, Maxwell, Stewart, Edwards, and Finkler, “Racism and action,” 9.

⁴² John Clifton, “Racism and action,” *The Body Politic* 96, September 1983, 8.

society.”⁴³ However, he also cautioned that heterosexism and the “thoughtless stereotyping” of gay men and lesbian women were forms of oppression similar to racism.⁴⁴ Richard Fung, one of the founding members of GAT and a volunteer in the Layout and Production department of *TBP*, agreed with Popert that “racism cannot be effectively combatted at an exclusively personal level, that this is an institution of our society that must be fought in the context of larger social change.” He did feel, however, that there needed to be more effort on the part of all gay men and women to make an effort to challenge racism. In his words, “just as I’m not going to wait for the revolution to grant me my gay rights, I’m not going to wait for the revolution to start fighting against racism.”⁴⁵ Fung’s call for action destabilized the progressive narrative of gay liberation and also stressed that combatting racism did not mean limiting sexuality. On the contrary, confronting racism meant broadening the availability for sexual opportunities for gay men. Finally, Tony Souza, a Toronto reader, argued that Popert’s perspective on this matter denied “the need to *act*,” and would be the equivalent of allowing heterosexism to continue in the gay community.⁴⁶ After all, “[r]acism is about power,” according to Souza, and the editorial collective’s analyses of the issue did not provide a comprehensive understanding of how race intersected with sexuality.⁴⁷

These letters engaged with crude stereotypes of raced bodies and relations of power within the gay community, reinforcing *TBP* as one of the largest intellectual lesbian and gay periodicals to emerge in the 1970s. The various opinions expressed in these letters

⁴³ Spencer Brennan, “Racism and action,” *The Body Politic* 96, September 1983, 6.

⁴⁴ Brennan, “Racism and action,” 6.

⁴⁵ Richard Fung, “Racism and action,” *The Body Politic* 96, September 1983, 6.

⁴⁶ Tony Souza, “Racism and action,” *The Body Politic* 96, September 1983, 7.

⁴⁷ Souza, “Racism and action,” 7.

demonstrate a tension between *TBP*'s effort to mediate individual sexual desire and cultural assumptions around race while still appealing to its readership. The vitriolic discussions not only highlight how ideologically fragmented the gay community was (and continues to be), but that the gay liberationist goal for sexual freedoms revolved primarily around white gay men's autonomy to choose their sexual partner. Gay men of colour desiring white men was not considered in any of the responses, for it was assumed that white gay men were desirable. Rather, these responses focused on the establishment of racism in the gay community, particularly as it became enshrined in pornography such as *White Ass Super Pricks*.

The magazine not only represented the centrality of macho style and whiteness in gay cultural life, but the understanding among readers and the collective alike that pornography was a powerful medium for visualizing sexuality and shaping sexual subjectivities. In his 1984 article, "You've got a nice body for an Oriental," McCaskell best summed up the importance of visual culture in shaping desires when he stated, "we have our own special ways of reinforcing the message that we are, or should be, all white here. Take our porn, for example: the images that we consume and produce are largely for white people."⁴⁸ He even acknowledged *TBP*'s own role in perpetuating such imagery when he noted that "*The Body Politic* is no exception, the vast majority of advertising images are of whites."⁴⁹ Critiquing the ubiquity of white bodies in gay media and even in *TBP*, McCaskell demonstrates that internal debates around *TBP*'s role in changing the white image of gay culture was still very much alive following Popert's article.

⁴⁸ McCaskell, "You've got a nice body for an Oriental," *The Body Politic* 102, April 1984, 35.

⁴⁹ McCaskell, "You've got a nice body for an Oriental," 35.

According to McCaskell, the foundation of whiteness and myths of white masculinity in the gay community were arguably laid by sexology at the turn of the century.⁵⁰ Referring to Canadian historian Michael Bliss's analysis of sexology books such as the "Ought To Know" series of book: *What A Boy Ought To Know*, *What A Young Man Ought To Know*, *What A Young Wife Ought To Know*, and so on, McCaskell argued that early twentieth-century science was partly to blame for racism in society. Bliss argued in his 1970 article, "'Pure Books on Avoided Subjects': Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," that these sex books engaged with the concept of vital "life forces" in the body, which "provided the physiological underpinning for several Nineteenth and Twentieth Century popular beliefs: that the nervous, intellectual child or man was the most liable to have sexual problems, the negroes, who were obviously short of mental ability, must have enlarged sexual inclinations by way of explanation or compensation...."⁵¹ These books perpetuated racist notions of intelligence and sexuality, and upheld ideas of white dominance and privilege which became enshrined in Canada, according to McCaskell, because of eugenic myths around Canada as a "white" country. By raising these points using from an intellectual standpoint, McCaskell was attempting to disseminate knowledge that might otherwise be inaccessible to *TBP*'s readers.

Even prior to the debate around *White Ass Super Pricks* or McCaskell's influential article, the racial politics of sexual desire in the gay community had been raised by

⁵⁰ Looking at the "Ought To Know" series of sexology books published between 1900 and 1915, McCaskell argues that these books, which revolved around "life fluids" and abstinence of "sexual excess," perpetuated racial understandings of sexuality. He cites Michael Bliss, who notably argued that these books explained "that negroes, who were obviously short on mental ability, must have enlarged sexual inclinations by way of explanation, or compensation." McCaskell, "You've got a nice body for an Oriental," 34.

⁵¹ Michael Bliss, "'Pure Books on Avoided Subjects': Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," *Historical Papers* 5, no. 1 (1970): 101.

readers concerned about the institutionalization of white bodies and white masculinity as desirable. In September 1981, aforementioned reader Niemi, submitted a letter to *TBP* arguing that racism and the sexualized nature of gay culture were synonymous.⁵² His letter was a response to fellow reader John Yorke, an Afro-Eurasian Toronto reader who had discussed the multifaceted, closeted bigotry of the gay community earlier in March that year. Niemi contended that, “one can repeatedly accuse others of having discriminatory behaviour, yet such dehumanizing beliefs are so institutionalized that it is virtually impossible to get rid of them.” Niemi further asked, “Do those gays who include in their ads ‘WM wants same’ or ‘Orientals and Blacks welcome’ realize the tiny difference between racial favouritism and racist prejudice? And do gay interracial relationships reinforce white supremacy on an intimate level, allowing the white partner to dominate his ‘coloured’ mate like a straight man and his subjugated wife?”⁵³ These ads were understood by Niemi as more than expressions of desire, but political statements around the body, race, and sexuality informed by historical stereotypes. In articulating how racism could operate from both the perspective of desire and rejection, Niemi sought to decolonize the non-white body from the white opinions of those in the gay community. His continual writings, like other readers, demonstrate that the broader success of *TBP* as an intellectual platform for race relied just as much on input from non-white readers as it did the collective.

TBP reinforced, perhaps inadvertently, Niemi’s concerns of white supremacy in the gay community by publishing a news report in the same issue from *Terres des hommes*, a Swiss organization, which claimed to the 1981 Third International Congress on Child

⁵² John Yorke, “Rudeness rejected,” *The Body Politic* 71, March 1981, 6.

⁵³ Niemi, “Biases overt and covert,” *The Body Politic* 76, September 1981, 5.

Abuse and Neglect that (white) gay tourists were “exploiting” and “corrupting” Sri Lankan boys.⁵⁴ The editorial collective covered this report to stress that gay sexuality and gay tourism were under scrutiny even outside North America and Europe. Indeed, they noted that despite criticisms of the report at the conference, it was supported by delegates such as Dr. Judianne Densen-Gerber, a “longtime [sic] crusader against ‘kiddy porn.’”⁵⁵ Instead of focusing on processes of power in the context of the Global South, the collective framed anti-pornography activist Densen-Gerber’s support for *Terres des Hommes*’s findings as an example of conservative society’s efforts to morally connect homosexuality, pedophilia, and pornography. In doing so, the message coming from *TBP* seemed to suggest that gay tourism in the Global South was not as problematic as it might appear; a likely consequence of the editorial collective’s rebuttal of long-standing myths around pedophilia.

The editorial collective’s effort to pivot concerns of gay tourism away from issues of white privilege and colonialism was further accomplished by informing readers that John Stanford, the editor of gay travel guide *Spartacus*, had previously spoken out against exploitation of “third-world boys” in a series of *Spartacus* editorials in 1980 called, “The Rape of the Third World.” Stanford argued that some gay tourists “go with loads of money, hand it out like confetti, and, in so doing so, destroy the pride and satisfaction of native life-styles - and then we complain bitterly of the results.”⁵⁶ However, *Spartacus* stated in profiles to countries such as Sri Lanka that, “[a]ge of consent has so far not been a problem either (providing, of course, all parties are willing)

⁵⁴ “Third world boy love attacked at congress,” *The Body Politic* 76, September 1981, 17.

⁵⁵ “Third world boy love attacked at congress,” 17.

⁵⁶ “The Rape of the Third World,” *Spartacus*, April 1980, 8.

and most boys from slightly before puberty onward are sexually active...”⁵⁷ According to *TBP*, Stanford defended tourists’ relationships with youths in a proceeding editorial, arguing that those in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand “who became sexual companions of adults, even foreign adults, did rather well, [and] lived happily.”⁵⁸ *TBP*’s news article appeared to insinuate that youth in the Global South benefitted from sexual tourism while neglecting the subordinate position, sexual and otherwise, of these Sri Lankan and Indian boys to the white men who were having sex with them.⁵⁹ In addition, *TBP* reinforced non-white men as passive sex objects by stressing white male tourists as the sole actors in these deeper power relationships—ones stemming from colonialism and unacknowledged in the context of this article.⁶⁰

Four months after the report on gay tourism and the response from Stanford, *TBP*’s editorial collective reprinted a first-hand account of the experiences of white gay tourism in the Global South that nuanced earlier dismissals of sexual exploitation. Originally appearing in *Australian National Gay Community News* (also known as *Gay Community News*) in April 1981, an article by Peter Jackson describing his trip to Calcutta, India on New Year’s in 1981 was republished in *TBP* as an example of the

⁵⁷ “Sri Lanka (Ceylon),” *Spartacus*, April 1980, 474.

⁵⁸ “Third world boy love attacked at congress,” *The Body Politic* 76, September 1981, 17.

⁵⁹ According to gender scholar M. Jacqui Alexander, gay travel guides reinforce a “certain intransigent colonial relationship in which previously scripted colonial cartography of ownership, production, consumption, and distribution all conform to a First/Third World division in which Third World gay men get positioned as the objects of sexual consumption rather than as agents in a sexual exchange.” M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 79.

⁶⁰ Mrinalini Sinha argues in her book, *Colonial Masculinity*, that constructions of masculinity in the context of British colonial India linked white European masculinity with colonial rule and effeminacy with subjugation, establishing unique gender hierarchies within Indian society around religion, caste, class, and political positions. In her analysis, she notes that the creation of the “effeminate Bengali” was a response to political and economic shifts at the end of the nineteenth century whereby British elites reaffirmed colonial rule by embodying the patriarchal concept of the “manly Englishman.” Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate Bengali” in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 14.

systemic exploitation of non-white gay men in the non-western world.⁶¹ Jackson's article framed white privilege in the gay community as a consequence of capitalism, not gay culture. Jackson's article also served to promote *TBP*'s Marxist agenda by framing sexual exploitation in economic terms. Jackson believed that the economic transaction associated with the procurement of sex in the Third World illustrated the intricate relationship between whiteness, sexuality and Western capitalism.

During his trip, Jackson noted the wide availability of sex from men and women alike. "It would have been a simple matter to tell a rickshaw-driver-cum-pimp ('you want girl? Nice, clean student girl? We go?') that a boy would be better. For a price, sex was very much available," he argued. When at his hotel, Jackson even witnessed boys loitering in the lobby, occasionally coming into his room unannounced and offering services, to which he declined. He hesitated to pay for sex from young men because he believed it was exploitative: "To pay a boy for sex, I felt, would have been...obtaining pleasure from somebody else's misery, degrading us both in the process—me because I exploited, the boy because his smooth, lithe body was his sole commodity."⁶² The negotiation for sex with young homosexual men in foreign countries was, for Jackson, a form of colonial conquest carried out on the bodies of these young gay men. By framing sex tourism through the lens of race, Jackson's article exposed different power relationships that developed in a more global context of desire, sexuality, and the commodification of the body. His article also comes three years after *TBP*'s publication of Goodman's essay, demonstrating the collective's decision to publish material that went

⁶¹ Article originally appeared in the *Australian National Gay Community News* 3, no. 3 (April 1981). Peter Jackson, "Calcutta, New Year's 1981," *The Body Politic* 80, January-February 1982, 22.

⁶² Jackson, "Calcutta, New Year's 1981," 22.

beyond simply articulating homosexual hardship using the language of the oppressed to examine white privilege and power from the perspective of the oppressor.

Despite his trepidations around engaging in sex with the local population, Jackson did, however, insinuate that he had sex with a somewhat wealthy 25-year-old Indian man named Ashok who worked for his father's tea exporting company. While walking down Sudder Street, Ashok kept pace with him in his car until Jackson finally got in, demonstrating a universality of cruising that was ubiquitous in the western world. "I sat silently wondering at how geography (a street) and technology (a car and a streetlamp) can determine aspects of gay behaviour across cultural boundaries," he wrote.⁶³ Still living at home and careful not to be seen parked on Sutter Street—the centre of Calcutta's red-light district—Ashok took Jackson to the Whooley River wharfs where it was insinuated that they were intimate. This sexual connection was strictly physical for Jackson, but he felt that it was not exploitative because Ashok was financially secure—indicating a class element to negotiating sex in Calcutta. His argument complicates the narrative of white exploitation of young men in the non-Western world by suggesting that non-white men could be agents in sex, but only if their class and finances allowed for it. Thus, the message to readers of *TBP* was that those who engaged in any financial transaction with destitute young men in the non-Western world—unlike Ashok who did not need the money—were exploitative and exerting white capitalist privilege. As a result, the relationship between oppression and class become foregrounded while simultaneously softening intersections of race.

⁶³ Jackson, "Calcutta, New Year's 1981," 23.

As a whole, *TBP* was undoubtedly torn between challenging the privileged position of white gay men—a large percentage of their readers—and not coming off as attacking white masculinity. Drawing on capitalism as the framework which afforded white men to take advantage of those in the Global South raised the issue of white privilege in areas outside North America and Europe; yet, it did not include a reflection of similar practices back in Toronto. In Jackson's article, white foreigners were described as the purchasers of sex, thereby centering white men as actors in homosexual relationships, and relegating Asian men as docile and the objects of consumption, never fully granted agency. The same issue of agency (or lack thereof) seemed to affect gay men of colour in Toronto's gay community. The writings of Niemi and Jackson were reminders to readers of *TBP* that race was a deeply entrenched issue even for the gay community, despite activists such as Paul Goodman framing their oppression in a similar manner to that of African Americans.

De/Colonizing Non-White Bodies and Masculinities

Addressing race and non-white masculinity could potentially result in vitriolic backlash from readers and fellow collective members. One way in which *TBP*'s editorial collective highlighted issues of racism in gay culture in a relatively benign manner was through book reviews. Literary engagement allowed *TBP*'s writers to challenge cultural constructions of both white macho style as a hegemonic image and non-white masculinities without sourcing blame on any individual or party in the gay community. In some reviews, *TBP* covered seemingly mundane elements of gay literature appearing over the course of the 1970s and early 1980s, such as the ubiquitous presence of wealthy

white protagonists, to highlight how literature reflected the desires of the gay community. In doing so, these reviews were set up to establish writing as an important catalyst for shaping the sexual desires and imaginations of readers; suggesting that the written word was as influential in visualizing sexuality and gender as the images found in pornography.

For example, in October 1982, Richard Summerbell wrote a review of gay author Gordon Merrick's seven novels (each having printed over a million copies in 1982), where he stressed the privileged position of whites in Merrick's works and the ways in which the author seemingly described non-white masculinity. He noted numerous key characteristics that made for an enticing read: Merrick's protagonists are extraordinarily attractive and monetarily wealthy, the stories are phallogentric, and most notably, the protagonists are American and Anglo-Saxon.⁶⁴ While these characteristics create an effective means of escape for readers, they also equated desirability with whiteness. Indeed, Summerbell even noted that the good feelings that make up most of his books are limited to those with "the correct physical equipment and racial background."⁶⁵ He acquiesced, however, that the ubiquitous presence of white, masculine, wealthy protagonists arguably catered to a white readership in North America.

At its core, Summerbell's review of Merrick's work did not explicitly situate stereotypes of race in historical context, but rather highlighted how Merrick's books constructed an image of non-white sexuality and masculinity that might, to his dismay, appeal to gay misogynists and racists. When covering Merrick's *Now Let's Talk About*

⁶⁴ Richard Summerbell, "Success: Romantic Formulas for Hot-Blooded Best-Sellers," *The Body Politic* 87, October 1982, 34.

⁶⁵ Summerbell, "Success" 35.

Music (1981), Summerbell emphasized the racial disparity between Gerry, the protagonist, and the non-white characters, but only to highlight the privileges afforded to the former. His critique thereby becomes more about the perceived benefits attributed with whiteness than the racist formulations found in the book. In *Now Let's Talk About Music*, protagonist Gerry is described as bemoaning “the featurelessness of Orientals and deplores their lack of penile magnitude.”⁶⁶ When staying at a hotel in Sri Lanka in preparation for Baron von Haller’s yacht party, Gerry is greeted in his room by a young Sri Lankan hotel attendant. Merrick describes the boy in this instance as having an “attractive body common to all in this part of the world, slight and shapely, despite the statistics about disease and malnutrition. His tight trousers betrayed no sign of male attributes, a less happy characteristic of the East.”⁶⁷ The stereotype of inadequate penis size for Asian men is deeply rooted in colonial traditions of effeminizing Asian men.

In Merrick’s *The Lord Won’t Mind* (1970), Summerbell noted that the book’s lead character, Charlie, “sees American Blacks as ‘an army of monkey-faced servants, children, [and] animals.’”⁶⁸ Indeed, while visiting his grandmother, C. B., one summer in New York state, Charlie and C. B. engage in a somewhat lengthy conversation about her maid, Sapphire, an African-American woman who aspires to be an opera singer. In their exchange, C. B. describes how she entertains Sapphire’s dreams because “[t]hey’re [African Americans] like children or very nice animals. It’s a scientific fact that their craniums are smaller than ours. One must humour them up to a point.”⁶⁹ While the book is placed in the 1930s, and Merrick may be making a commentary on the overt racism of

⁶⁶ Summerbell, “Success,” 35.

⁶⁷ Gordon Merrick, *Now Let's Talk About Music* (New York: Avon Books, 1981), 10.

⁶⁸ Summerbell, “Success,” 35.

⁶⁹ Gordon Merrick, *The Lord Won't Mind* (New York: Avon Books, 1971 [1970]), 47.

the period, he frames non-white characters around racist discourses that perpetuate notions of racial inferiority.

The primitiveness applied to African Americans in *The Lord Won't Mind* was similarly found in Owen Levy's 1982 novel, *A Brother's Touch*. TBP writer David Morrison charged Levy's book with portraying Black men as "invariably 'giant dudes' with 'think, purple lips.'"⁷⁰ Both books played on colonial tropes of Blacks as uncivilized, pre-modern, and biologically underdeveloped.⁷¹ Crafting an image of Black men's bodies as inherently primitive reiterates a racial difference between Black and White men.⁷² In a critical reading of novels, short stories, and articles from authors Pauline E. Hopkins and James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*, among others, Siobhan B. Somerville argues that "narratives function as literary vehicles for exploring historically specific structures of racialization, sexuality, and power."⁷³ In Merrick's works, white men are active, sexual beings who are assumed to be "civilized," biologically "superior," and possess the privilege of choosing their sexual partner; a stark contrast to the crude sexual stereotypes used to describe people of colour.

Instead of deconstructing these racial tropes, Summerbell focused on the romances around the beautiful white protagonists. They served as a reminder to readers that white

⁷⁰ David Morrison, "The body in the barrel," *The Body Politic* 84, June 1982, 36.

⁷¹ Established since Black slavery in the sixteenth century, these stereotypes were only enhanced with nineteenth century scientific racism. Scientific racism in the second-half of the nineteenth century was bound up in Darwinian theories of evolution and a developing body of statistics that entered the human sciences. Racist biological rationales for Black primitiveness extended beyond intellect and included notions of Black male hypersexuality and unbridled masculinity. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1981), 102.

⁷² Siobhan B. Somerville notes that according to evolutionary theory and "the logic of recapitulation, adult African Americans and white women were at the same stage as White male children and therefore represented an ancestral stage in the evolution of adult white males" in the nineteenth century. Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 24.

⁷³ Somerville, *Queering the Color Line*, 80.

macho style was *the* embodiment of gay sexuality. Indeed, Summerbell stated in his review that Merrick's novels "grant their readers power. And the great vortex out of which that power spins is the phallus, embodiment of 'the male principle.'" ⁷⁴ What Summerbell failed to do in his review, however, was articulate that Merrick's white protagonists, who were all well-endowed, simultaneously validated the notion that white gay men possessed the authority to de/sexualize the non-white body. When he did finally discuss race near the latter end of the review, he stated that the ways in which non-whites were portrayed were "unfriendly elements of Merrick's books." ⁷⁵ His decision to highlight racial tropes in the books and describe them as "unfriendly", however, marginalized the books' colonial discourses of gender and sexuality and again bring into question the extent to which writers for *TBP* felt it was their duty to complicate white privilege in gay culture, particularly if they themselves were white.

The exoticization of the Black body in *TBP* can also be found in the newspaper's publication of some of Norman Hatton's 1981 photographs from his work, "Skinscapes." Discussed in Chapter Two in the context of macho style, the collective published a series of pictures by Hatton featuring white macho men clad in leather along with a single Black man. The photographic project could be read as an attempt to construct an image of Black masculinity that was part of macho style and opposite of "hypersexual" primitiveness often attached to Black bodies. However, placing the Black man with a fern or palm-like plant off to the side simultaneously evokes an orientalist perception of Black masculinity. ⁷⁶ Consigning the only Black body with an object associated with the exotic

⁷⁴ Summerbell, "Success," 34.

⁷⁵ Summerbell, "Success," 35.

⁷⁶ Norman Hatton, "Skinscapes," *The Body Politic* 74, June 1981, 23.

or Orient unequivocally extended his aesthetic to the colonial context. Furthermore, the Black man's physical positioning of sitting and then laying on the bed in a passive manner while being unencumbered by leather also relays the notion that Black bodies could not be macho and were passive objects for the reader's pleasure.

Despite being part of a collection on macho style, Hatton's photograph of the Black man inadvertently depicts Black masculinity as never fully part of macho style. For example, not donning leather or engaging in smoking like the other white models in the collection—which were elements of macho masculinity that Hatton was attempting to convey—suggests the Black model was not capable of performing a macho masculinity like the white men in the other photographs. Indeed, Historian David Churchill argues that “the whiteness of the 1970s gay ‘clone’ had a presumed status, not invisible but rather present, unacknowledged, a given. One would not, for example, describe someone as a ‘white clone’ because a clone was already assumed to be white.”⁷⁷ In addition, the exotic overtones in Hatton's photograph of the Black individual worked against the inclusion of Black masculinity in macho culture.

There was a desire evoked in some classified ads in *TBP* for non-white men to conform, at least in part, to white macho style, however. In 1978, a 28-year-old man who was “5’11”, 175 lbs, [with] medium complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, moustache,” desired “butch, goodlooking [sic] Blacks and East Indians with moustache for fun time.”⁷⁸ By requesting butch Black men and East Indians who donned moustaches and were butch, the author is imposing an understanding of macho style onto non-white

⁷⁷ David Churchill, “Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at *The Body Politic*,” *Left History* 8, no. 2 (2003): 125.

⁷⁸ Classified ad: “28 Years Old,” *The Body Politic* 44, June-July 1978, 30.

bodies. Moustaches were particularly analogous with macho style in the gay community by the late 1970s. In another ad published March 1983, a “straight-mannered” 26-year-old “Attractive Oriental” sought “[h]unky, hung, moustachioed clone, athletic, topman, couple, bi, mildly kinky, 21-45, white, Black, all welcome.”⁷⁹ This man’s desire for a clone with a moustache may have reiterated the importance of facial hair as part of macho style, but by extending clone to include non-white men, he challenged macho as a white aesthetic. Finally, in February 1984 an ad appeared from an “attractive Black male” in search of the macho aesthetic, including “Black, Italian or Greek bodybuilders.”⁸⁰ By extending bodybuilding to the Black body as an aesthetic, the author reconstituted the macho body to make space for Black bodies in macho culture. However, the few instances in which non-white macho style was requested in *TBP* not only suggests that non-white macho style was uncommon, but that white machismo seemed to remain at the centre of broader equations of masculinity, physique, and sexual desirability.

Ads by white writers expressing desire for non-white men implicitly communicated white gay men as vanguards of gay sexuality who granted non-white recipients the privilege of responding. In essence, the message in these ads was that non-white gay men required written affirmation to respond. A September 1979 ad from a “Scottish Canadian Male” in Toronto seeking “lasting friendship” noted at the bottom: “Would also like to hear from Asians or Blacks.”⁸¹ Another White male from Toronto wrote in 1980, “Sexy Black dudes, Asians, write too.”⁸² Finally, some ads sought to fetishize Latinos and Blacks with kink, while also being “inclusive.” A white 28-year-old male sought “young

⁷⁹ Classified ad: “Attractive Oriental,” *The Body Politic* 91, March 1983, 45.

⁸⁰ Classified ad: “Attractive Black Male,” *The Body Politic* 100, January-February 1984, 57.

⁸¹ Classified ad: “Scottish Canadian Male,” *The Body Politic* 56, September 1979, 39.

⁸² Classified ad: “Male, White, Tall, Slim,” *The Body Politic* 61, March 1980, 36.

studs under 35 with huge tools and good bodies” and stating that “Blacks, latinos welcome.”⁸³ Despite the editorial collective notifying their readers of acceptable practices regarding classified ads, it is evident from the continued prevalence of these types of ads that racism did not operate strictly as a means of exclusion.

The fetishization of non-white gay men in *TBP*’s classified ads suggests that gay men of colour were often regarded as an exotic sexual proclivity or niche aesthetic. In July 1979, a white male desired a Black man because “Black men are the best lovers,” he argued.⁸⁴ A white Toronto man in his late 30s was in search of (preferably) a Black “steady strong bull as close friend who can use my body” in October 1980.⁸⁵ Other classified ads propagated myths around Black endowment, with ads requesting a “well-endowed Black man up to 35 years”⁸⁶ in May 1982, and another seeking a “well-hung Black guy under 35” in the January-February 1984 issue.⁸⁷ Meanwhile some individuals expressed desire for Black men in relatively neutral ways. In August 1978, a “Blond, 37, 155 lbs,” man, sought “young guys, preferably Black, for good times in bed and out.”⁸⁸ The subversive process of “othering” non-white bodies and masculinity may not have been an intention of gay men writing into *TBP*’s classifieds section, but it did perpetuate racial understandings of Black sexuality and endowment.

In regards to the racial politics of classified ads, reader Niemi took the opportunity to respond to a classified ad that appeared in the March 1983 issue by a white man from Toronto searching for “Black Men/ other ‘exotic’ races/ nationalities...”⁸⁹ The original

⁸³ “Do They Gasp,” *The Body Politic* 114, May 1985, 47.

⁸⁴ Classified ad: “Black men are the best lovers,” *The Body Politic* 54, July 1979, 39.

⁸⁵ Classified ad: “Sensual, Slim, Tanned Blond,” *The Body Politic* 67, October 1980, 41.

⁸⁶ Classified ad: “Want to Meet,” *The Body Politic* 83, May 1982, 42.

⁸⁷ Classified ad: “Generous Business Man,” *The Body Politic* 100, January-February 1984, 56.

⁸⁸ Classified ad: Blond, 37, 155lbs,” *The Body Politic* 45, August 1978, 29.

⁸⁹ Niemi, “GWMs and racial stereotypes,” *The Body Politic* 94, June 1983, 4.

ad by a man named “Andy” began with his desire for an “exotic” non-white man.⁹⁰ Use of the term “exotic” to describe Black people and other non-whites was particularly offensive to Niemi, who argued that “it implies the notion of white supremacy and colonialism left from the ‘White Man’s Burden’ days.”⁹¹ By referring to the White Man’s Burden, Niemi suggested that language in classified ads that prized whiteness as desirable and labelled non-whites as “exotic” was not only rooted in the xenophobic and racist mentality of colonialism, but perpetuated the notion of racial uplift. To be clear, becoming the object of desire for white macho men was the focus of this uplift. This sentiment was shared by reader Quan Minh, who mentioned in his aforementioned letter in 1983 that “[i]nterracial interaction...is often a symbol of upward mobility and acquired prestige for a lot of non-whites.”⁹² Indeed, in an October 1979 ad by a 24-year-old “Oriental gay male,” who was “Canadian born,” he stated that he wished to “explore the fascinating and vibrant styles of the white Caucasian homosexual world.”⁹³ This man’s desire to access white homosexual culture and its styles suggests that not only were there multiple gay worlds, but that each one revolved around the stylization of the body and race. As figures that seemingly represented the gay male community, white (macho) men were perceived by Niemi and Minh as gatekeepers, not only policing non-white masculinity and non-white bodies in the community, but raising their stature once desired.

Other classified ads, however, demonstrate that racialized understandings of gender were continually (re)negotiated and brought into question. There are instances in which

⁹⁰ Andy, “Attention Black Men,” *The Body Politic* 91, March 1983, 43-44.

⁹¹ Niemi, “GWMs and racial stereotypes,” *The Body Politic* 94, June 1983, 4.

⁹² Quan Minh, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 34.

⁹³ Classified ad: “This Oriental Gay Male,” *The Body Politic* 57, October 1979, 39.

white men expressed desire to be dominated by Asians—a complete reversal of stereotypes of Asian submissiveness. A “docile” white male from Toronto wrote into *TBP* in September 1980 requesting an “Asian master” who was “aggressive, into trying S/M, W/S [water sports].”⁹⁴ Another white male in his early 30s wrote into the same issue wanting to be “dominated by husky, clean shaven guys, esp. Blacks and Asians.”⁹⁵ In other ads, Black men addressed the racial stereotype of Black dominance. A 25-year-old Black man in Montreal described himself as “passive and lonely,” searching for “affection, gentleness, love, warmth, sophistication...”⁹⁶ Another Black man sought a “rugged masculine dominant male up to 22.”⁹⁷ While these ads challenged racial tropes of sexuality, many of them relied on language associated with power, such as “domination.” In using scripts of subordination and domination, these ads conveyed any reversal of power relations between white men and gay men of colour as the equivalent to a fetish or sexual kink.

Some Latino men writing into *TBP*’s Classified section used “white” as an adjective in addition of “masculine” and “straight-acting” to nuance or subjugate their ethnic identity. One such ad read, “Attractive white Latino, 25, masculine, beard, not sophisticated, straight-acting, seeks buddies. Looking for same (same-35).”⁹⁸ Another man from an unnamed small-town in Ontario described himself in June 1985 as “white, masculine Latino man, 28, hairy, bearded, 5’7” 142 lbs, attractive” and sought a man who was “masculine, tough and tender and down to earth.”⁹⁹ Defining oneself as both white

⁹⁴ Classified ad: “Asian Master Wanted,” *The Body Politic* 66, September 1980, 37.

⁹⁵ Classified ad: “I Am Turned On,” *The Body Politic* 66, September 1980, 37.

⁹⁶ Classified ad: “I Need Attention,” *The Body Politic* 47, October 1978, 44.

⁹⁷ Classified ad: “Young Attractive Black Male,” *The Body Politic* 81, March 1982, 44.

⁹⁸ “Classified ad,” *The Body Politic* 78, November 1981, 40.

⁹⁹ “Smalltown Man,” *The Body Politic* 115, June 1985, 47.

and Latino reiterates the privileged position of whiteness in many Latin American cultures that idealize Spanish-European heritage.¹⁰⁰ In addition, these ads demonstrate the tenuous definition of “white” and who constituted being “white.” While not all self-described Latino men used such language to stylize or white-wash their bodies, the ads that did suggest a broad understanding of the perceived benefits of whiteness in the construction of gay sensibilities.

Questions and concerns about racism in classified ads were addressed to Toronto’s gay community by readers such as John Yorke. In March 1981, Yorke sarcastically noted that he was “unable to...bear the ‘shame’ of probably being the only Afro-Eurasian ‘clone’ on Howard Street.”¹⁰¹ His sarcasm was directed at Dan Healey, the author of an article in support of macho style as a viable display of gay male machismo in the December 1980/January 1981 issue of *TBP*. Yorke criticized Healey for arguing that macho clones were unjustly persecuted in the gay community because they were believed to have internalized their own oppression. What appeared to irritate Yorke the most was that he understood himself to be one of the only non-white clones in Toronto—a testament to the recursive relationship between macho style and whiteness. On an aesthetic level, Yorke took issue with the feeling that he could not partake in macho

¹⁰⁰ Steve Garner argues that the “Spanish rule of blood purity, *limpieza de sangre*, which maintain a social class and racial hierarchy in Spain, was transposed as the corner stone of early colonial rule.” The concept of racial or blood “purity” continued well into the nineteenth, and arguably twentieth, century and simultaneously created specific notions of racial “impurity.” Garner describes the mixing of races as being the equivalent of impurity and associated with “violence, laziness, backwardness and [an] unconquered nature.” Steve Garner, *Whiteness: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 88-89.

¹⁰¹ John Yorke, “Rudeness rejected,” *The Body Politic* 71, March 1981, 6.

culture and enjoy his ethnic clothing caftans or djallabahs¹⁰² at the same time.¹⁰³ Not only did Yorke use *TBP* as a forum to address the lack of critical engagement with whiteness in macho culture, but he attempted to dismiss any claims of white gay men being oppressed in the community—a consistent theme among gay liberationists.

Three months later, Yorke submitted another letter critiquing the racism prevalent in the Classifieds section of *TBP*. Reading ads from the February 1981 issue, Yorke noted 15 of the 41 ads from Toronto were either covertly or overtly racist. As he described it, “[t]hey ranged from ‘We are: white, 21-35, moustache, no beards, 5’8, well-built, good-looking. You are same’ to the insidious liberal ‘(blacks welcome).’” He also stated that sixteen of the ads were ageist and another sixteen came from closeted gay men, stressing that racism in the gay community was deeply entangled with other forms of discrimination.¹⁰⁴ In addition to reiterating the trend of racial exclusion/inclusion noted previously, Yorke’s findings highlight more covert forms of racism through the politics of sameness. Racism could be communicated implicitly through use of the word “same,” which was prominently by white men who described themselves as straight-acting or straight looking. Use of the word “same” reinforces Churchill’s argument that to be macho meant to be assumedly white. In addition, “same” frequently meant masculine or possessing a straight-acting gender performance. The prominence of these ads, however, counters Churchill’s additional point that *TBP*’s editorial collective carefully scrutinized ads for “inadvertent racism.”¹⁰⁵ While Churchill briefly touches upon use of “same” and

¹⁰² Djallabahs or Djellabas are loose fitting unisex robes often worn in the Maghreb region of western North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya). Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *World Clothing and Fashion: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Social Influence* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 15.

Yorke, “Rudeness rejected,” 6.

¹⁰³ Yorke, “Rudeness rejected,” 6.

¹⁰⁴ Yorke, “Overt Prejudice,” *The Body Politic* 74, June 1981, 4.

¹⁰⁵ Churchill, “Personal Ad Politics,” 116.

TBP's efforts to include that in their policing of language in classified ads; findings from Yorke, as well as many ads before and after his own analysis, indicate that "same" was used consistently to circumvent *TBP*'s regulations about racist language in ads.

In light of Yorke's conclusion, reader Peter Bowen, a Canadian expat living on the Greek island of Crete, responded in a letter defending white men's racial preferences. "If we prefer WASPs..., then we're racists; if we like or are attracted to or want to get to know non-whites, then we're something called 'insidious liberals,'" he argued.¹⁰⁶ Apart from demonstrating white privilege, this letter more importantly sparked a response from Lim (last name withheld), a Public Relations officer for Gay Asians of Toronto. In his own letter, Lim argued that combatting racism was the responsibility of the entire gay community. Using Bowen's own words as an example of the need for action on the part of the editorial collective to reduce discrimination, Lim contended that, "When you are white, whether you are hairy or hairless, muscular or slim, well-endowed or not, you are still white. However [sic] the ethnic division of sexual preferences places Asians, Blacks and latinos [sic] in a subordinate position."¹⁰⁷ For Lim, white men were capable of donning various forms of gay style while gay men of colour were relegated to racial stereotypes. Indeed, in his quote that introduced the chapter, Lim heeded that gay male style was *white* style, and any attempts to participate in white gay male culture, even aesthetically, were futile.

Lim's comments were fuelled partly by a much broader movement among gay men and lesbians of colour to collectively voice their concerns. GAT was particularly vocal in

¹⁰⁶ Peter Bowen, "So what's wrong with discrimination?" *The Body Politic* 77, October 1981, 6.

¹⁰⁷ Lim, "GWM," *The Body Politic* 78, November 1981, 5.

TBP because it was founded by *TBP*'s own volunteers Gerald Chan and Richard Fung.¹⁰⁸

As one of the first major non-white gay organizations to form during *TBP*'s tenure, GAT was dedicated to connecting the Asian and gay community, and providing a platform for Asian gay men and lesbians to discuss their unique intersectional experiences in the gay community, as well as their encounters with racism.

Prior to Lim's comments, Fung had described Asian stereotypes in November 1979 as being partly the result of exclusion from white macho style. "I feel like a fortune cookie in a tray of cheese Danishes...I can't grow a moustache. I'm stuck with the costume I was born with. It's a costume because I have been to Asia only on holidays and I don't speak any Asian language. Yet someone can tell me seriously that he 'really gets off on orientals,'" he argued.¹⁰⁹ Fung's use of the word "costume" to describe his Asian heritage crafted race as a seemingly artificial part of his identity. In doing so, he framed the aesthetics of gay male style (of which race was fundamental), as central to the ways in which race was perceived and read on the body in gay cultural life. His comments also stressed how gay cultural life centred (and arguably still does) on middle-class white men and their masculinity, sexuality, and style, while the desire for him as an Asian man was a sexual fetish. Broadly speaking, he noted that Asians, Latin Americans, and Blacks

¹⁰⁸ Gay Asians of Toronto (later renamed Gay Asians Toronto) was created as a peer discussion group in 1980 by Richard Fung and Gerald Chan to deal with racism and homophobia unique to non-white gay men in Toronto's community. Gay Asians Toronto was later joined by Nito Marquez and Tony Souza, the latter being a contributor to *TBP*. In the words of Tom Warner, "GAT's [Gay Asians Toronto] purposes were: promoting unity and mutual support among gay Asians; organizing social, culture, educational, and recreational activities for its members; providing culturally sensitive social and support services; and advocating on issues relevant to their community's concerns." Tom Warner, *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 185.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Fung, "Gay marchers flood Washington," *The Body Politic* 58, November 1979, 17.

existed on the periphery as “oysters in this meat market” in his words, while Indigenous were not even recognized.¹¹⁰

Discussions of Indigenous gay men were rare during the lifespan of *TBP*. Indigenous issues were fleetingly covered in the newspaper, with exceptions such as a report in February 1979 discussing the development of Saskatoon’s new Gay Community Centre. The centre was established as an attempt to reach out to gay Metis and native people.¹¹¹ Activist groups for First Nations emerged in the 1980s largely beginning in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Historian Scott Morgensen notes that Nichiwakan was one such group in Winnipeg that came about in the 1980s, while Vancouver had “already hosted the Native Cultural Society, which brought Native people together in an annual drag ball and other activities.”¹¹² In Toronto, groups such as Gays and Lesbians of the First Nations in Toronto which switched its name to 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations (later 2-Spirits) in 1991 had formed after *TBP* ceased publication in 1987.¹¹³

It should be noted that over the course of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the terms “Native” and “Indian” were sometimes used interchangeably, making it difficult to know if some people requesting or self-identifying as “Indian” were specifically referencing First Nations, East Indians from Asia or West Indians from the Caribbean. Some classified ads, such as one submitted in February 1982 by an East Indian man, were particularly specific in what they meant by the term “Indian.”¹¹⁴ On the other hand, First

¹¹⁰ Fung, “Gay marchers flood Washington,” 17.

¹¹¹ “New Gay Centre boosts native gays,” *The Body Politic* 50, February 1979, 11.

¹¹² Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 78.

¹¹³ Julie Depelteau and Dalie Giroux, “LGBTQ Issues as Indigenous Politics,” in *Queer Mobilizations: Social Movement Activism and Canadian Public Policy*, ed. Manon Tremblay (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2015), 67.

¹¹⁴ Classified ad: “Male, East Indian,” *The Body Politic* 80, January-February 1982, 49.

Nations could be quite specific in defining themselves as “Native Indian,” with one particular ad from a 30-year-old “Native Indian” in Toronto who was looking for a “tall, hairy gay or bi male [and] into active/passive French and active greek [sic].”¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the exclusion of Indigenous or Metis peoples from the majority of conversations on race perpetuated their invisibility in the community.

As non-white gay men collectively voiced their concerns and acquired a greater foothold in *TBP* and their respective communities by the late 1970s, they began to shape some gay cultural texts emerging in the period. Dr. Jack Morin’s 1980 book, *Men Loving Themselves: Images of Male Self-Sexuality*, was an illustrative text that featured a variety of non-white bodies in a range of sexual poses. In a review of the book, *TBP* editor Michael Lynch praised Morin’s effort to offer a wide range of body types, ethnicities, and class backgrounds in his photographic essay of twelve men masturbating.¹¹⁶ Morin’s collection not only highlighted the positive, sensual, and deeply intimate experience of masturbation, but emphasized the sexuality of four non-Caucasian men, one bodybuilder, a man with a physical disability, two over the age of forty, and the others from various class backgrounds. Lynch stressed the importance of Morin’s work for visualizing non-white able-bodied sexuality. Indeed, he included a photograph featured in the book of *TBP* contributor, Lim, masturbating on a bed. Doing so was just as much a political decision as it was an erotic one. Featuring Lim, an ardent critic of racism in the gay community communicated to readers that *TBP* was aesthetically inclusive in terms of race. In the image, however, Lim is surrounded by rose petals, raising questions about the

¹¹⁵ Classified ad: “Educated Native Indian,” *The Body Politic* 85, July-August 1982, 42.

¹¹⁶ Michael Lynch, “One on one, or sex and the single man,” *The Body Politic* 72, April 1981, 34.

exotic or oriental nature being evoked in the scene and how Lim saw his portrayal following the publication of the image in *Men Loving Themselves* and *TBP*.

In another attempt to visualize Asian masculinity differently from stereotypes of passivity, docility, and effeminacy, the editorial collective published an ad for *TBP* on the back cover of the 95th issue (July-August 1983) featuring an Asian man lifting a weight as a way of conveying the intellectual workout readers get by reading the newspaper (Figure 4.1). The ad included the text: “To get results, you have to work out regularly with us, once a month.”¹¹⁷ The individual in this ad is a muscular Asian man who is stretching while maintaining a direct stare at the viewer. His gaze, muscular body, and active stance assuage notions of fragility, docility, and submissiveness. His body is also one that is manufactured in the gym and could be read as an attempt to be macho. Rather than use a white macho body to sell subscriptions to *TBP*, the decision to use an Asian man positions the paper as a mediator of masculinity, race, and desire in the gay community. With this ad, the editorial collective is communicating that not only can Asian men be macho, but that all readers can “workout” by reading *TBP*. By associating reading *TBP* with exercising, the editorial collective styled the newspapers as part of a desirable, healthy lifestyle. Not only would readers receive an intellectual workout, but the stimulation would be as pleasurable, and arguably as beneficial, as going to the gym.

In McCaskell’s aforementioned article, “You’ve got a nice body for an Oriental,” he too included an image of an Asian Man on both the cover of the article as well as the bottom of the second page as a statement for greater visibility of non-white gay men in *TBP* and other mediums (Figure 4.2). Positioned in a seductive pose and wearing only

¹¹⁷ Back cover: “Get More Definition,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 56.

GET MORE DEFINITION!

So, you think maybe it's time for another workout. You're feeling the need to firm up those opinions, put on a little intellectual weight, add some definition to your outlook.

Well, stop kidding yourself. Exercising only now and then is a waste of time. To get results, you have to work out regularly with us, once a month. To get into the habit, you need to subscribe.

And, remember, a regular workout is cheaper. Why pay \$1.75 each time when you can buy a membership for as little as \$13.95 a year?

Just fill in the order form below and mail it to us or use the convenient postage-paid card inside this issue.

I want regular workouts.

So, bill me for the next ten issues of *The Body Politic*, each delivered in a plain brown envelope, for just \$13.95 (US \$15.95 outside Canada).

☐ Mr ☐ Ms _____

Address _____

City & code _____

Mail to TBP Subscriptions, Box 7289, Stn A, Toronto Ont M5W 1K9. CF11

Figure 4.1 Back cover of *The Body Politic*. "Get More Definition," *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983.

underwear, the model is lean/slightly muscular, and is looking directly at the camera, capturing the gaze of the reader. While being “served” to the reader in an almost passive and objectified pose, McCaskell’s quote regarding standards of beauty is also present within the image frame, changing the inherently sexualized image of the man into an equally political one. This combination of visual and written language forces the reader to consider their own sexual tastes and perceptions of Asian sexuality and masculinity while also acknowledging the sexuality of the model, albeit along with notions of Asian passivity.

Reception to McCaskell’s article in the months following its publication was mixed, demonstrating racial tensions among readers of *TBP* and a concern from some of them that the purpose of the newspaper was becoming increasingly convoluted. Initially, reader Scott Lee submitted a letter in May 1984 describing the exposé as “informative” and mindful that most gay men, in Lee’s words, were “xenophobic (afraid of the unknown and unfamiliar) rather than racist.”¹¹⁸ However, Richard Maddocks, a white reader from Toronto, condemned the article as an example of *TBP* overstepping its role in the community in a letter the following month. While making it clear that he did not defend racism, Maddock did take issue with the editorial collective’s apparent hypocrisy for addressing racism and accusing the community of racist tendencies when, “only six Asians, total, have participated [in *TBP*], and only two do now.” He continued that, “[i]f Asians are not getting fair and adequate gay media coverage, part of the blame can be laid directly on *TBP*’s doorstep.”¹¹⁹ Not only did the white makeup of *TBP*’s editorial collective make them susceptible to accusations of white privilege, but the backlash by

¹¹⁸ Scott Lee, “Cloning effects and xenophobia,” *The Body Politic* 103, May 1984, 4.

¹¹⁹ Richard Maddocks, “Gays and racism: asking too much?” *The Body Politic* 104, June 1984, 4.

Figure 4.2 Tim McCaskell, "You've got a nice body for an Oriental," *The Body Politic* 102, April 1984, 35.

Maddocks suggests that some readers perceived the newspaper's efforts to address racism as hollow. Criticisms that *TBP* was too intellectually engaged or alienating were not new; however, Maddock's argument that *TBP* could partly be blamed for racism in the gay community was.

Part of Maddock's argument that *TBP* was tackling issues beyond its purview revolved around positioning white gay men, the newspaper's primary readers, as racists in the community. Echoing reader George Peterson's previously mentioned concern in 1976 that the collective's scrutiny of classified ads was an attack on white gay sensibilities, Maddocks cautioned McCaskell to "not dump on the gay community just because it was once primarily white and male." Clearly Maddocks felt that *TBP* had no business reprimanding the gay community for racism, even calling the article a "4700 word dirge" that the community was expected to accept.¹²⁰ Maddocks demarcated boundaries on the type of cultural commentary expected in *TBP* by highlighting the racial background of McCaskell and the rest of *TBP*'s editorial collective. His letter demonstrates that some white gay men felt their privilege in the community was under attack by *TBP*, and criticized the newspaper in return for losing focus.

The impassioned writings around race partly developed from the politicized discussions of macho style and heterosexism over the course of the 1970s and early 1980s. A few among *TBP*'s editorial collective began to look beyond gender and especially issues concerning heterosexism and masculinity to consider the experiences of non-white men. Many times, however, readers were the ones to provoke the editorial collective to further examine and comment on issues of race in gay liberation and the

¹²⁰ Maddocks, "Gays and racism: asking too much?" 4.

community. Seemingly separate discussions of race and gender in the newspaper became increasingly intertwined around the topic of desirability. Desire (or lack thereof) for racial bodies and racialized performances of gender came to an explosive conclusion near the end of *TBP*'s lifespan. Some within the collective used *TBP* as an opportunity to vocalize concerns of racism and even visualize non-white sexuality in an opportunity to reflect and celebrate the various faces of the community. Others within the collective, however, saw *TBP*'s mandate to promote gay and lesbian sexual freedoms as a more important cause. As a result, readers took up a great deal of the burden to address racism in *TBP*. Their contributions not only expanded the parameters of *TBP* by challenging the editorial collective's position on a number of matters regarding sexuality and race, but, in doing so, demonstrate that the significant influence readers had in making *TBP* an example of community-based activism.

Explosion of Rage: The Houseboy Ad

One of the most provocative moments around race and masculinity in *TBP*'s history was the "houseboy ad" published in February 1985. A classified ad appeared in which a gay white man, described as "handsome" and "successful," put out a search for a "young, well built BM [Black man] for houseboy."¹²¹ The term "houseboy" was not new to the Classified section—it first appeared in an ad by a Calgary business executive searching for a "young lover houseboy."¹²² In this case, however, the term "houseboy" reiterated a discourse of slavery that raised an incredible amount of discussion and backlash around

¹²¹ Classified ad: "Black Male Wanted," *The Body Politic* 111, February 1985, 44.

¹²² Classified ad: "Business Executive," *The Body Politic* 22, February 1976, 18.

TBP's responsibility to challenge racism in the gay community. In my interview with David Rayside, he recalled that the houseboy ad sparked:

an extremely intense discussion about what liberation meant in relation to people's sexual desires and whether sexually...desiring and exoticizing a person of colour or not desiring people of colour was...part of the nature of sexual desire. It was not *The Body Politic*'s job to cast judgment on that and other people disagreed. There were limits and reinforcing prejudicial judgments about sexual attractiveness or sexual roles was inappropriate. That was a huge battle and I attempted to edit a bunch of the long internal memos that were exchanged on that subject to convey a sense of internal disagreement on that issue.¹²³

To afford readers transparency around the decision-making process of this ad, the editorial collective published a joint statement entitled, "31 Words," which also included three letters from prominent gay Asian activists, as well as the internal memos from various collective members and their thoughts on the ad. The debate that ensued challenged earlier messages of racial inclusion in *TBP* and gave readers insight into how disparate the once seemingly unified editorial collective had become.

The concerns surrounding the houseboy ad and sexual suppression were similar to the "sex war" debates on pornography and feminism in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Just as the sex wars involved ideological differences between feminists who either saw pornography as sex positive or as an example of patriarchal misogyny, the houseboy ad ignited pre-existing tensions between sexual liberationists who felt the ad exemplified freedom of expression and anti-racists who framed it as an offensive extension of white

¹²³ David Rayside (volunteer at *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, March 24, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

privilege. Reiterating the simultaneity of oppression and privilege, Churchill argues that the houseboy ad controversy was a “continuation of a larger political dispute around political ethics, consent, and power that had created conflict between the predominately male members of the newspaper's collective and lesbian feminists.”¹²⁴ Gerald Hannon defended the houseboy ad writer for his expression of sexual desire, albeit in a crude manner. Using his own feelings towards non-white men, Hannon articulated two crude stereotypes of Black and Asian men to bluntly make his point:

*I feel it—I don't want a houseboy, but I think I would like a big Black stud to fuck me because I know he's going to be passionate and have a big dick, and that's also a little scary, and I'm also afraid he's going to smell and how am I going to handle that, and I don't really want to have sex with most Asians, although a lot of them are cute but they're so damned quiet and exquisite....*¹²⁵

Hannon acquiesced that such stereotypes are “harmful,” but his argument nevertheless evoked racial understandings of Black and Asian masculinity. By doing so, he seemingly prioritized sexual liberation over the racial and gender stereotyping of non-white bodies.

According to David Churchill, the tension around the houseboy ad among the editorial collective was primarily generational. He notes that there existed ideological differences between “the ‘older’ liberationists at the paper and ‘newer’ workers and collective members who were committed to ‘a broader range of social causes than gay liberation,’ and as a result somewhat less inclined to commit body and soul to the

¹²⁴ David S. Churchill, “Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at *The Body Politic*,” *Left History* 8, no. 2 (2003): 127.

¹²⁵ Gerald Hannon, “31 Words,” *The Body Politic* 113, April 1985, 32.

paper.”¹²⁶ While stressing the divergent understandings of gay liberation and sexual expression in Toronto during the mid 1980s, Churchill’s article on the houseboy ad focuses specifically on how its publication heightened pre-existing tensions around sexuality and race in Toronto’s gay community. Churchill covers “31 Words” extensively in his article, but what has yet to be explored is the way in which masculinity was framed and visualized in *TBP* in response to the houseboy ad.

The editorial collective extended the houseboy ad as part of an ongoing conversation around the visualization of the body and sexuality by featuring two images in “31 Words.” Of the two images appearing alongside the series of letters dealing with racism and the houseboy ad, the first is an illustrative drawing of a possibly non-white man being held in cuffs and objectified by two white men at a market of sorts (Figure 4.3). The second image is a photograph of a Black and White man embracing, evoking a sexualized message that is comparatively neutral in its racial undertones. While the race of the figure being gazed upon in the first illustrative drawing is uncertain, the inclusion of the image in a debate around race constructs the image as a reflection of racialized power. The drawing also appears next to bolded text from Tim McCaskell’s memo to the collective on January 28, 1985 which stressed the houseboy ad as an example of structures of power that have resulted in historical stereotypes around race and gender.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Churchill cites Gerald Callan Hunt’s article, “Division of Labor, Life Cycle and Democracy in Worker Co-operatives” *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 13 (1992): 9-43. Churchill, “Personal Ad Politics,” 118.

¹²⁷ Tim McCaskell’s quote next to the image stated, “Although we demand the freedom to play with the symbols of social power, our goal is overcome the abuse of that power in the real world. ...The ad does not ask for someone to *pretend* to be Black [sic]. The racial difference required is *real*. The Power difference is *real*. The ad calls for a real relationship based on historical stereotypes....[emphasis in original]. Tim McCaskell. “31 Words,” *The Body Politic* 113, April 1985, 31.

Both images reflected the topic of desire and race; however, the first illustrative image interweaves desire for the muscular Black body with desire for the colonial “other.”

The assumedly non-white man in the illustrative image appears to be wearing leather or metal cuffs and is chained and elevated, as if on display for the two white men cruising him. The way in which his naked body is donned with cuffs and his buttocks are observed and eroticized while at a “Market” evokes references to slavery that are highly problematic. However, the image can also be read in the context of BDSM which has its own codes of submission and a “script” of domination, and the artistry of Tom of Finland, who sought to fetishize queer desire for well-endowed muscular bodies. Nevertheless, the image revolves around emphasizing the privilege of white gay men to objectify white and non-white bodies for their pleasure and consumption.

In a lettered response published alongside the memos in “31 Words,” *TBP* volunteer Richard Fung condemned the editorial collective for allowing publication of the ad and espoused previous accusations that *TBP* was a platform for, at best, maintaining white dominance in gay culture, and, at worst, racism.¹²⁸ “I am sorry if people see this as repressive, but I cannot justify one person’s pleasure at someone else’s expense and oppression, especially when it’s mine,” he contended. Unsurprised by the volatile reactions surrounding the “houseboy” fantasy, as well as the collective’s decision

¹²⁸ Several months prior, Fung had screened the video profile, *Orientations*, about lesbian and gay Asians in Toronto on Thursday, November 8, 1984. Made in cooperation with Gay Asians Toronto, the film captured the racial and ethnic nuances that shape the lives of minorities within the gay community. In his review of the film, writer Philip Solanki described how subjects candidly spoke about topics such as racism, sexuality, politics, and coming out, in a way that was both sympathetic and allow both whites and non-Asians to “gain insight into their own unintentional biases.” Philip Solanki, “Exploring a double identity,” *The Body Politic* 110, January 1985, 23. For film screening, see: “Orientations,” *The Body Politic* 108, November 1984, 27.

Figure 4.3 The Black body on display. Illustration accompanying “31 Words,” *The Body Politic* 113, April 1985, 32.

to publish the ad considering the collective's previous efforts to temper charges of racism with the right of sexual expression, Fung argued that, "by advocating sexual libertarianism as its main priority over community organizing, the paper maintains the colour, class and, up til [sic] recently, gender of the people who work there."¹²⁹ The 1980s were thus marked by a tension between those white readers and editors who accepted any form of sexual expression and desire as valid—similar to Hannon's views on pornography—and their non-white counterparts who challenged the processes which informed these desires. By continuing to concentrate on maintaining gay liberation and the freedom of sexual expression in Canadian society, *TBP* struggled to keep abreast of changing racial politics within Toronto's gay community.

The racial politics of representation in the gay community brought into greater focus by the mid 1980s transformed *TBP* into a periodical wrought by multiple voices, including those from the non-white periphery. Some readers, such as Brian Mossop, maintained that the anti-racist rhetoric of the *TBP*'s editorial collective was reason enough for racial minorities to continue to support the newspaper. In his words, "[g]ay Blacks and Asians should in my view continue to support *TBP* as long as it opposes racially motivated bashings, racist admission policies at bars and the like."¹³⁰ For Mossop, any anti-racist efforts by the collective were enough to be considered inclusive.

Rhetoric alone, however, did not sway Siong-huat Chua, founder of Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians, from publishing an article a few months later in *TBP* stressing that the white makeup of gay liberation was a much deeper demonstration of privilege and power. In his 1985 editorial, "Beyond Racism," Chua complicated the relationship

¹²⁹ Richard Fung, "31 words," *The Body Politic* 113, April 1985, 30.

¹³⁰ Brian Mossop, "The classified debate," *The Body Politic* 115, June 1985, 10.

between non-white gay men, white “anti-racists,” and the experiences of gay men in the Third World. He nuanced the precarious situation of “anti-racist” white men and women who challenged racism with the belief that white people “will always be at the centre of all social processes, always the motivators, always the initiators of all human activity.” Chua believed that the appropriate response to the white makeup of gay liberation was continual input from racial minorities and people of the “Third World.” He argued that, “[w]hile people of the Third World have always contributed to the advance of capitalism from passive positions as subjugated and economically exploited groups, it is important that we do not now take a back seat in the modern liberation struggles engendered by the progress of capitalist development.”¹³¹ So while *TBP*’s efforts were commendable, the newspaper and its largely white editorial collective seemingly exemplified global hierarchies of power and race stemming from colonialism.

Appearing near the end of *TBP*’s publication run, Chua’s article and the houseboy ad demonstrate that the issues of racism and racialized stereotypes of gender and sexuality were still unresolved by the time the newspaper ceased publication. As a result, the very nature of gay liberation and meanings of inclusivity remained tenuous at best. For Chua, racial inclusion was contingent upon racial identities becoming an “organic part of the community.”¹³² Yet, the numerous discussions around the houseboy reveal an discussions of race as part of an ongoing struggle in the gay community to overcome constructions of race that informed understandings of sexuality and gender. While some amongst the editorial collective sought to deconstruct racial sexual desire (or the lack thereof) to illuminate deeper historic discourses around race, such complications of

¹³¹ Siong-huat Chua, “Beyond Racism,” *The Body Politic* 119, October 1985, 30.

¹³² Chua, “Beyond Racism,” 30.

sexual desire in the gay community wrought ire from some readers and from some of those within the collective who felt that individual sexual expression outweighed racial politics. As a result, *TBP* played a fundamental role in providing a platform for both non-white gay men to articulate their intersectional experiences in the community, and their white counterparts who sought to deflect, and in some instances, uphold, the entrenched whiteness in gay liberationist circles.

Conclusion

TBP acted as a mediator for strained discussion of race between the nearly all-white editorial collective and their more racially diverse readers. As a political newspaper, *TBP* was positioned by some as representative of the whitewashing of gay activism, relegating the involvement and contributions of non-white men to the periphery. Serving as a cultural periodical as well, the newspaper tempered calls of racism in the gay community under the banner of sexual freedom and liberation. Yet the topic of race proved more than simply an opportunity to discuss masculinity, desirability, and individual sexual preferences in *TBP*. It was a topic that revealed the ideological differences within the community and the newspaper's editorial collective.

Returning to McCaskell's article, "You've got a nice body for an Oriental," he wrote:

Our standards of beauty, of who is hot, or even who is gay, are produced and reproduced along specific genetic lines. They convey the message that a Black or Asian person is definitely a specialty item for a subgroup with exotic tastes. Normal taste, normal gay, is white, and not only for whites. Gay men of colour who find

themselves attracted only to whites are not an uncommon phenomenon in our white-dominated society.¹³³

His words seemingly resonate with contemporary issues around race in the gay community. They also stress that for non-white gay men, their sexuality and gender performance were contingent upon racialized understandings of their body. From the stylization of their bodies in photographs to their portrayal in books and articles, non-white gay men experienced varying degrees of fetishization and exoticization. By no means were all non-white men treated equally, nor did they have their masculinity brought into question in similar ways. Rather, the various historical stereotypes and narratives around Asian, Black, Latino, and Indigenous bodies served to inform different styles of masculinity.

Discussions of race in *TBP* offered more than a re-evaluation of the racial makeup of gay liberation or the lack of non-white representation on the pages of *TBP*. White men represented a benchmark for masculinity in the gay community because white machismo was emphasized in gay literature, pornography, and classified ads men used to connect with one another. As classified ads demonstrate, non-white gay men were often expected to embody *expectations* of racialized performances. The racialization of masculinity compartmentalized non-white gay men into the various niches of gay culture. On the other hand, classified ads, articles, and photographs in *TBP* of white male bodies also demonstrate that oppression and privilege—white and non-white—intersect in complex and simultaneous ways.

¹³³ McCaskell, “You’ve got a nice body for an Oriental,” 34.

Broadly speaking, anxieties around race and sexual desire demonstrated that *TBP* was not merely a political actor in gay liberation, but an important cultural catalyst in problematizing gay male desire. Differences between the editorial collective and readers about the topic of sexual desire and race aside, *TBP* served to root political and social inequities in gay community life onto the body and performances of masculinity; serving as a testament to the importance of styling the gay male body and masculinity in gay male culture. While attempting to unify and support the status quo in gay activism, the editorial collective seemingly alienated parts of the various ethnic and racial groups in the gay community. *TBP* was a forum for issues around race, desire, masculinity, and sexuality that were unique to the gay community to be vocalized. However, this meant that the more vitriolic movements of racism in *TBP* threatened to disintegrate any sense of unification in the gay community or gay activism that it had previously tried to build. *TBP* was more than a mediator of racialized understandings of the body, it was a tool used by men from various ethnic and racial backgrounds to demonstrate that gay male cultural life had been shaped by processes of power and oppression, privilege and subjugation, all of which was styled in the form of the gay male body.

CHAPTER FIVE: Stylizing Death and Disability

As gay individuals, we must come to see death and dying not as opposed to life, but rather as a part of living. In short, we must make dying gay—in *our own terms*. Morbid? Not at all. The only morbidity lies in turning our back on our ill or dying friends, or abandoning them to die straight deaths within alien families or institutions.

- Michael Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” *The Body Politic* 88, November 1982, 33.

The words above concluded Michael Lynch’s November 1982 article in *TBP*, “Living with Kaposi’s,” in which he described his New York City friend, Larry’s (a pseudonym for a man later identified as Fred), long battle with Kaposi’s sarcoma (KS), an AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)-related cancer. When in hospital for treatment, Larry’s mother, Selma noted that her son “persisted in calling his illness ‘Kaposi’s,’ which to her was his way of saying to everyone he was gay.”¹ KS was not only a highly visible skin disease—forming lesions on the skin of its victims—but it became synonymous with gay men and gay promiscuity when it was discovered to be a common secondary disease of AIDS.² With the arrival of HIV/AIDS, *TBP*’s editorial collective began to investigate reports of the disease, turning what was originally believed to be propaganda of the far-right homophobic majority into an all-too-real struggle for survival. In the many discussions around AIDS and its preliminary stage, HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), *TBP* disentangled gay men’s sexuality,

¹ Michael Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” *The Body Politic* 88, November 1982, 33.

² “‘Gay’ Cancer and burning flesh: the media didn’t investigate,” *The Body Politic* 76, September 1981, 19.

masculinity, and bodies from disease. In doing so, *TBP*'s editorial collective offset narratives of gay men as victims of disease by buttressing (desirable) gay male masculinity as active, virile, and healthy.

For Fred, the lesions on his skin were a corporeal reminder that gay male masculinity was becoming refashioned along the lines of health. Health and muscularity took on new meaning in the pageantry of gay male masculinity whilst those weakened and debilitated by HIV/AIDS became increasingly secluded from gay culture. Stories such as Fred's are heart-wrenching and they should not be read as merely case studies for tracing the development of gay male masculinity. The emotions in these stories—compassion, anger, sadness, trauma, and love—illustrate the significance HIV/AIDS had in shaping gay communities across North America by bringing people together as well as tearing them apart. Within these narratives, however, are discussions around gay male masculinity that demonstrate just how important stylizing the gay male body was during the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s.

Numerous reports and articles in *TBP* described the “debilitating” and “disabling” effects of the disease. Use of such language turned the HIV/AIDS-affected body into something comparable to the physically disabled body—unable to perform gender or sexuality in a desirable or “normative” manner. *TBP*'s coverage of the cultural reverberations that HIV/AIDS had in both gay and mainstream communities solidified the recursive relationship between the personal and the political. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argues that “disability is a representation, a cultural interpretation of physical transformation or configuration, and a comparison of bodies that structures social

relations and institutions.”³ Gay men with HIV/AIDS were culturally interpreted, especially during the early 1980s, as being unable to meet expectations of how bodies should function and operate on a sexual level in a society that centred on neoliberal and capitalist ideals of ableism.⁴ As a result, HIV/AIDS threatened to obstruct or debilitate gay male sexuality as it had been socially imagined, particularly by raising concerns about the safety of gay male promiscuity.

This chapter examines narratives of disability and disease in *TBP* in order to demonstrate how gay male masculinity developed within a gay ableist culture deeply affected by HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS-affected body and those perceived as disabled were made invisible, effeminized, or construed as being void of any sexuality. Narratives of disability and disease wove together during the HIV/AIDS crisis, styling gay male bodies perceived to be disabled or diseased in a similar fashion. Simultaneously, as the HIV/AIDS-afflicted body was debilitated by the disease, its muscular able-bodied counterpart took on new meaning as an aesthetic of healthy and “normal” gay male sexuality. The dichotomy between the unhealthy and healthy, diseased and non-afflicted, disabled and abled body was marked by tension and, at times, hostility. Termed

³ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 6.

⁴ Dan Goodley argues that “[w]hile some bodies and populations are deemed more precarious than others, we are all debilitated in and by neoliberalism capitalism.” Citing Jasbir Puar’s article, “Prognosis Time: Towards a geopolitics of affect, debility and capacity,” he further contends that “[m]any of us fail to meet the demands of neoliberal ideals. And debility is to be found at that moment when dis/ability collides.” Dan Goodley, *Dis/ability Studies: Theorising Disablism and Ableism* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 95. Indeed, Puar argues that “an increasingly demanding ableism (and I would add, an increasingly demanding disable-ism—normative forms of disability as exceptionalism) is producing nonnormativity not only through the sexual and racial pathologization of certain “unproductive bodies” but more expansively through the ability or inability of all bodies to register through affective capacity.” See: Jasbir K. Puar, “CODA: The Cost of Getting Better: Suicide, Sensation, Switchpoints,” *GLQ* 18, no. 1 (2011): 154.

“horizontal hostility”⁵ by writer and activist Eli Clare, he argues that “[m]arginalized people from many communities create their own internal tensions and hostilities, and disabled people are no exception.”⁶ Comparing the representation of disability to HIV/AIDS bodies reinforces scholar Lennard Davis’s argument that with “disease-generated disabilities—AIDS, tuberculosis, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, chronic illnesses—the instability of the category ‘disabled’ begins to appear.”⁷

Although the discourses of death and disability seemed to collide with each other, I focus on each differently, but always with their collusion in mind. In doing so, I demonstrate how the seemingly different narratives of disability and disease intersected at the site of the gay male body and queer style. Dividing this chapter between HIV/AIDS and disability disentangles overlapping tropes around health and the body while highlighting the body as an important cultural text. Discussions of queer style and gay male aesthetics in *TBP* during the formative years of the HIV/AIDS crisis wove together issues of frailty, disease, and death with narratives around disability, marking the gay male body as a site of tension around the aesthetics of health, sexuality, ability, and masculinity in the gay community.

A “Gay Cancer”

“Gay cancer” was a term many readers of *TBP* came across in September 1981. The newspaper reported that KS, a rare form of cancer, had been found among forty-one gay

⁵ This term is the same as horizontal/lateral violence which consists of violence and/or tension that perpetuates oppression within a marginalized group. See: Rebecca M. Voelkel, *Carnal Knowledge of God: Embodied Love and the Movement for Justice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 110.

⁶ Eli Clare, *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999 [2015]), 108.

⁷ Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London: Verso Press, 1995), xv.

men, mostly in the New York City and San Francisco metropolitan areas.⁸ The findings originally emerged on July 3, 1981, when Lawrence Altman of the *New York Times* published an article titled, “Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals.”⁹ This piece was then subsequently reprinted through the *New York Times* news service in hundreds of North American newspapers.

TBP’s editorial collective thought that the *New York Times* article was a means of sensationalizing gay culture. In an un-authored report in *TBP*, it was argued that the *New York Times* article misrepresented linkages between gay men and KS because there were numerous errors in Altman’s approach to the unpublished work of Dr. Alvin Friedman-Kien, which linked KS with gay men. For instance, the author(s) took note of Altman’s suggestion that Kaposi’s sarcoma is “rapidly fatal and largely incurable,” despite medical evidence arguing that it is “one of the forms of cancer easiest to cure.” As further evidence of media sensationalism of gay culture, *TBP* reported that the same news article by Altman also included erroneous details of a fire at a former gay bathhouse in San Francisco on July 10, 1981.¹⁰ Nevertheless concerned with gay men’s health, the editorial collective dedicated an entire back-page story to details around the “supposed” unique circumstances in which KS was appearing in numerous young, sexually-active gay men.

In the *TBP* article, “Moral lessons; fatal cancer,” Drs. Bill Lewis and Randy Coates, expressed their skepticism of Dr. Friedman-Kien’s findings of KS in gay men since the disease manifested itself in men over 50 years of age and grew at a relatively slow pace. Lewis and Coates suggested that the coverage of KS among young gay men was part of a

⁸ “‘Gay’ Cancer and burning flesh: the media didn’t investigate,” *The Body politic* 76, September 1981, 19

⁹ Lawrence K. Altman, “Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals,” *New York Times*, July 3, 1981, A20.

¹⁰ “‘Gay’ Cancer and burning flesh: the media didn’t investigate,” *The Body politic* 76, September 1981, 19.

more insidious message from mainstream media that gay men should re-examine their lifestyles. Lewis and Coates attempted to abate readers' fears of the disease by including information on symptoms of KS and what to do if the disease is suspected. Toronto physician, Dr. Donna Keystone, who had a sizable gay clientele, informed Lewis and Coates that "gay men have been coming to her with suspicious skin lesions after reading a recent report on KS in the *Globe and Mail* [sic]." ¹¹ Indeed, Robert Trow argued months later in March 1982 that "the medical world has pointed to the gay male syndrome of numerous sexual contacts, repeated infection with sexually-transmitted diseases, heavy antibiotic treatments over periods, and overuse of recreational drugs." ¹² Thus, medical discourse of the time framed this rare form of skin cancer as a "gay disease" by suggesting that KS was linked to gay men either genetically or through lifestyle choices. ¹³

If any doubt about the disproportionate presence of KS in gay men still existed in late summer of 1982, it was dispelled in the July-August and September 1982 issues of *TBP*. As the first reference to AIDS appeared—then referred to as ACIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) as well as GRIDS (Gay-related Immunodeficiency Syndrome)—it was reported that "[o]f the 300 cases reported across the United States, 242 are homosexual or bisexual men." ¹⁴ In September 1982, Trow informed readers that five cases of the disease had been reported in Canada. As a consequence to the controversial medical and media reports on the transmission and cause of AIDS, Trow

¹¹ Bill Lewis and Randy Coates, "Moral lessons; fatal cancer," *The Body Politic* 77, October 1981, 43.

¹² Robert Trow, "'Gay' cancer linked to genetic factors," *The Body politic* 81, March 1982, 15.

¹³ Despite a news clipping from New York in the May 1982 issue of *TBP* stating that Kaposi's sarcoma was found in nine heterosexual women, additional findings of the disease in twenty-three men in the United States helped to gender the disease as male and perpetuate the medical scrutiny of gay men's bodies. "Gay cancer found in straight men, women," *The Body Politic* 83, May 1982, 17.

¹⁴ "Kaposi research hurt by cutbacks," *The Body Politic* 85, July-August 1982, 16.

noted a report in the July 1982 issue of *The Gay Men's Health Crisis Newsletter*, a New York City publication, stating that “the city’s gay men are abandoning drugs and casual sex in droves, convinced that ‘life in the gay fast lane kills.’”¹⁵ For many gay men, AIDS became an epidemic that was already reshaping gay male culture. Performances of masculinity and certain sexual practices which had once seemed ubiquitous in gay male culture, such as cruising, were now being re-evaluated by gay men.

The combination of news coverage, medical opinion, and religious concerns around KS was dubbed the “moral-medical right” by Michael Lynch in November 1982.¹⁶ Lynch and others scrutinized medical discourses that offered crude and oppressive definitions of gay people frequently linking homosexuality with illness. *TBP* served as a platform and counternarrative for those distrustful of medical expertise, especially as some within the medical establishment associated HIV/AIDS as a “gay disease” in its formative years, by increasing its coverage of gay men’s sexuality, bodies, health, and masculinity in its own flurry of articles.

Lynch witnessed first-hand the toll this “gay cancer” had on New York’s gay male community on various trips visiting friends and political allies from the summer of 1981 onward. He realized when he met with friends, including the aforementioned Fred, that HIV/AIDS was not some fictitious epidemic whose creators wanted to strike fear and panic into the minds of Americans. Rather, disease was taking hold of the gay community by 1982—triggering angst about how it spread, the health of those affected, how to hide or cover up the symptoms, and whether a cure was imminent. Recalling these events as they unfolded in our interview, David Rayside points to Lynch’s visit as a major shift in

¹⁵ Robert Trow, “AID disease reported in Canada,” *The Body Politic* 86, September 1982, 14.

¹⁶ Michael Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” *The Body Politic* 88, November 1982, 35.

the editorial collective's approach to HIV/AIDS: "We thought it was just a hoax and another way of demonizing homosexuals, and finally it was Michael Lynch that [sic] really told me [that] something serious is going on and we need to address this [pandemic]." ¹⁷ Lynch's coverage of his trip to visit Fred in New York City in the November 1982 issue was an important episode in verifying the morbid reality of HIV/AIDS. It is also a textual narrative of how the disease refashioned gay male masculinity and the gay male body.

According to Lynch, Fred acquired a small support group led by his lover, Bruce, after being diagnosed with KS. He was dismayed, however, that many of his good friends "stopped seeing us, even stopped bothering to call." Fear of the illness resulted in Fred's exclusion from social circles. Bruce tried to somewhat maintain a life outside of hospitals and the four walls of their apartment but "Fred was resentful of this." ¹⁸ His resentment stemmed from feeling invisible and/or feared by those caught up in the hysteria of contagion. Discourse around HIV/AIDS and KS constructed those affected as sexually unviable, undesirable, and even invisible. Coverage of the cultural effects of HIV/AIDS in the context of Fred was an important move away from discussing HIV/AIDS strictly as it pertained to renewed attempts to pathologize gay men's bodies. The emphasis placed on Fred's sense of invisibility, his body, and his appearance in Lynch's article turned what might be just an example of HIV/AIDS into one of the earliest cultural commentaries of the importance of the healthy body in gay male culture.

¹⁷ David Rayside (volunteer at *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, March 24, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

¹⁸ Lynch, "Living with Kaposi's," 34.

In 1981, Lynch returned to New York City to visit Fred in the hospital, noting that “[h]e had lost half of his hair because of the chemo, and his skin was all broken out.” By way of coping, Lynch, Bruce, and the others who stuck by Fred, used humour to soften the impact of the disease on his appearance. After Fred returned home, Lynch quipped that “I don’t think of Fred as having cancer anymore. I don’t remember what he looks like with hair!”¹⁹ Throughout his bouts with chemotherapy and later battling tuberculosis, Fred linked his masculinity with his facial hair. In 1982, when Fred had finished his first round of chemo, Lynch noted that he had “grown back his hair and, a source of great pride, his moustache.”²⁰ As noted in chapter two, moustaches were near ubiquitous with macho culture at this point in time. Thus, to regain his moustache was to regain a sense of machismo, virility, a connection with gay culture, and a legible performance of gay masculinity. In stressing the significance of facial hair for Fred, Lynch’s article was an evaluation of how HIV/AIDS might shape queer style, particularly the presentation of gay men’s bodies in the community. Coverage of these details also provided readers with an early insight into the cultural reverberations of the disease, touching on the social repercussions of centring gay culture on the male body. On November 20, 1982, the same day that the December issue of *TBP* was on Toronto newsstands, Fred was receiving visitors in his apartment in New York City. He died the next morning.

In addition to describing his experience with Fred, Lynch criticized the medical profession because, in his words, “the medical model treated homosexuals as objects, alien creatures to be studied and classified and labelled. In short, under the medical model

¹⁹ Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” 34.

²⁰ Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” 35.

homosexuals became pathological.”²¹ For Lynch, the politics of the medical establishment were worrisome and could be found in the links forged between HIV/AIDS and morality by Dr. Daniel William and Lawrence Mass, two prominent voices of this epidemic in mainstream and gay media. Surprisingly, these two doctors mentioned in Lynch’s article responded to his critique of scientific medical models and medical “expertise.” Medical professionals were often quoted in editorials on gay health, the body, and sexual intercourse, but rarely did they respond directly in *TBP*.

Dr. William, a physician in New York City, argued that HIV/AIDS should be viewed strictly in terms of “voluntary behaviour,” particularly multiple partners over a period of time, and not “synonymous with gay sexuality.” However, he also addressed Lynch’s saddening story of Fred, contending that, “had he known the relative risks of different behaviour long before he became ill, he would have changed that small portion of his total gay life style that so drastically shortened his life.”²² For Lynch, the suppression of sexuality or reimagining gay male sexuality along a heteronormative framework of monogamy was antithetical to gay liberation since promiscuity was considered one of the gay community’s “cherished institutions,” in his words.²³ Indeed, he charged William and Mass as seeking to “rip apart the very promiscuous fabric that

²¹ Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” 37.

²² Daniel C. William, “AIDS: sex, sickness and facts,” *The Body Politic* 90, January-February 1983, 4.

²³ Nancy E. Stoller argues that “[g]ay male sexuality in the seventies was historically marked by less emphasis on the creation of ‘family’ or on sexual monogamy. The impact of gay liberation movements on gay male sexuality has recently been discussed in many venues, primarily because of the belief that patterns of sexuality among gay men have been responsible for the rapid spread of the epidemic [AIDS].” Nancy E. Stoller, “From Feminism to Polymorphous Activism: Lesbians in AIDS Organizations,” in *In Changing Times: Gay Men and Lesbians Encounter HIV/AIDS*, eds. Martin P. Levine, Peter M. Nardi, and John H. Gagnon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 175. Aversion to monogamy for gay liberationists is also cited in numerous monographs on gay liberation. See: Barry D. Adam, *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995); and, Kathleen Hull, *Same-Sex Marriage: The Cultural Politics of Love and Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

knits the gay male community together.”²⁴ Lynch argued that the medicalization of the gay male body threatened the sexual freedoms afforded by gay liberation, particularly promiscuity, which had become “the foundation of our identity,” in his words.²⁵

Dr. Lawrence Mass of New York City perpetuated Lynch’s concerns by arguing that *TBP* and the collective fuelled the gay community’s aversion from healthy (heteronormative) sexual habits. His response was blunt: “I would suggest that *TBP*’s coverage of this epidemic that has killed approximately two hundred gay men, that threatens to kill many hundreds more, and that includes a growing number of cases in Canada, parallels *TBP*’s coverage of fistfucking.”²⁶ Mass was critical of *TBP*’s priorities and suggested that a heteronormative approach to sexuality would benefit the gay community. In addition, having *TBP* offer more information or room for medical reports on HIV/AIDS could potentially curtail gay male promiscuity. However, doing so also risked changing the very message of *TBP* from sexual liberation to one of sexual conformity. For Lynch, an increase in coverage of the medical discourses in *TBP* could add legitimacy to medical pathologies of gay men’s bodies and sexuality, effectively returning power to the medical community which so often used “dehumanizing” language.²⁷ *TBP* was built on facilitating gay sexual engagement, and medical discussions of HIV/AIDS which sought to curb sexual practices posed a threat to this model of sexual liberation.

Reiterating Mass’s points of contention with Lynch, Dr. Brian Willoughby, a doctor from Vancouver, scathingly wrote a letter into the same issue stating, “Might I

²⁴ Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” 36.

²⁵ Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” 35.

²⁶ Lawrence Mass, “AIDS: sex, sickness and facts,” *The Body Politic* 90, January-February 1983, 5.

²⁷ Lynch, “Living with Kaposi’s,” 37.

simply suggest that we would all be best served by supporting Mr. Lynch in his dancing career and disregarding [sic] his writing.”²⁸ Willoughby believed that Lynch was blindly critical of any genuine attempts on the part of the medical profession to understand this health crisis. Yet, by dismissing Lynch, Willoughby’s statement embodied many of the grievances that the community had with elitism in the medical profession. Lynch reiterated these sentiments towards the political undercurrents of medicine and sexuality in a rebuttal published in the same issue. He stated, “These two letters, in failing to address my main argument concerning medical control over our lives, assure me that continued iffiness [sic] is still our wisest policy. But the two letters are encouraging signs.”²⁹ Despite having his credentials and authority on the matter of gay health being challenged, Lynch still felt that the letters were an indication that members of the medical community were willing to have a conversation about gay men’s health in an open forum. Providing a platform for medical professionals to encourage a tempering of gay male sexuality seemed to go against the collective’s anti-monogamy stance that celebrated sexual freedoms.

Lynch’s article was well-received by readers, with many calling for greater coverage of mental and physical health in *TBP*. Don Oppen of Winnipeg, Manitoba believed that such a feature would make “*The Body Politic*...a useful tool to all.”³⁰ The article also seemingly sparked a discussion in the January-February 1983 issue about the confusion and concern around contracting AIDS, and its influence in reshaping gay identity. For Gary, a man in Kitchener, Ontario, Lynch’s article provided a relatable

²⁸ Brian Willoughby, “AIDS: sex, sickness and facts,” *The Body Politic* 90, January-February 1983, 5.

²⁹ Michael Lynch, “AIDS: sex, sickness and facts (Michael Lynch replies),” *The Body Politic* 90, January-February 1983, 6.

³⁰ Don Oppen, “Physical Pain, mental anguish,” *The Body Politic* 89, December 1982, 4.

experience for him and his lover, who had recently been diagnosed with cancer. Gary noted both a similar tension existing around sexuality and cancer with his own family and lover, as well as the lack of support from local gay friends. He argued that the absence of members from the gay community was because illness and dying were not part of gay life.³¹ In 1983, the year this letter was penned, AIDS was only starting to become ingrained into gay culture as a “consequence” of promiscuity.

Many readers were actively engaged in discussions of HIV/AIDS—some supporting *TBP*’s coverage for its “humanity” and others condemning it for its “shrieky” and “bathetic” tones.³² The mixed reactions surrounding discussions of HIV/AIDS highlight the sensitive nature of the disease, particularly as it risked reshaping (and even eliminating altogether) activities and behaviours that had become synonymous with gay men’s masculinity, such as cruising. These sentiments were exacerbated by the increasingly convoluted information around HIV/AIDS transmission by various medical and community opinions in the early 1980s. As a result, gay men’s bodies became a battleground between the conservative segments of society, the medical profession, and gay community politics. This was dubbed “AIDS panic” by Ed Jackson in March 1983.³³ Nevertheless, the empathetic tone of the collective around gay male masculinity and sexuality in the context of HIV/AIDS sparked new questions and debates amongst readers around individual sexual choices, responsibility for personal wellbeing, and how

³¹ Gary, “AIDS: sex, sickness and facts,” *The Body Politic* 90, January-February 1983, 4.

³² Jerry Rosco from New York City was supportive of Lynch’s article on AIDS. Meanwhile, Rich Grzesiak, Assistant Editor at *Philadelphia Gay News*, argued that *TBP*’s article “The Case Against Panic” in November 1982 was unfairly critical of American print media and Dr. Lawrence Mass’s work. See: Jerry Rosco and Rich Grzesiak, “AIDS alternatives,” *The Body Politic* 91, March 1983, 4.

³³ Ed Jackson, “Red Cross: resisting AIDS panic,” *The Body Politic* 91, March 1983, 17.

gay men might restylize themselves to combat media portrayals of their bodies as frail, infected, “polluted,” and even “disabled.”³⁴

The Cultural Reverberations of HIV/AIDS on Sexual Liberation and Promiscuity

In *TBP*, the AIDS-afflicted body was described in many instances using the language of disability. References to the unique debilitating effects of the disease established the healthy and sexual desirable figure as “normal” and the unhealthy and sexually undesirable subject as “abnormal” within the gay community. *TBP* reflected the tension between portrayals of gay men with AIDS that raised awareness of the disease and its debilitating effects, and the actions of men attempting to subvert stigmatized notions of their masculinity and sexuality. Gay men stylized their bodies in ways to subvert the heteronormative/ableist gaze on their “abnormal bodies,” and labels of pollution and dread both within and outside the gay community. Sociologists Kathy Charmaz and Dana Rosenfeld argue that visible effects of disabilities transform the *disappearing* body into the *dysappearing* one.³⁵ In the case of gay men with HIV/AIDS, their bodies were highlighted for their inability to function—primarily sexually—as expected.

³⁴ The notion of bodily “pollution” emerged in the last two centuries alongside an obsession with hygiene, purity, and personal cleanliness were associated with morality and social stability. Deborah Lupton notes that the body in the Victorian era was “understood more at the level of the subconscious than the conscious, as a system with potentially vulnerable points of entry that must be guarded.” Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self* (London: Sage Press, 1996), 114. Furthermore, the body could be contaminated by sexually transmitted diseases, thus requiring medical regulation and medicine to cleanse the body of the symptoms of an immoral lifestyle. The relationship between disease and morality is notably highlighted by Judith Walkowitz’s whereby she argues that prostitutes in the nineteenth century were seen as being both a “source of pollution and a constant temptation to middle-class sons,” thereby requiring intervention from Victorian public-health policy in order to control the corruption of the respectable working class and middle class. Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 34.

³⁵ Kathy Charmaz and Dana Rosenfeld argue that “[w]hen the body fails to function in expected ways, it changes from a disappearing entity (one of which we are unaware) to a *dysappearing* one, which means appearing dysfunctional to ourselves and to others.” Kathy Charmaz and Dana Rosenfeld, “Reflections of the Body, Images of Self: Visibility and Invisibility in Chronic Illness and Disability,” in

In August 1985, Hannon expressed “disgust” in his article, “Reflections on the Black Death,” that his friend, Jim Black, lay in a hospital bed while “[d]eath seemed to be inside him clawing its way out and the not very pretty of that struggle were everywhere on his thin and wasted frame.”³⁶ This visceral recapturing of death “clawing” out of Black was a traumatic illustration of HIV/AIDS that gave the disease a life of its own. Meanwhile, Hannon’s articulation of the “thin and wasted frame” of Black provided a corporeal image of the AIDS-affected male body as if it were a frame with no painting, a hollow shell of what was once filled out with muscle, vibrancy, and desirable masculinity. Historian Heather Murray argues that “[t]he physicality of AIDS went far beyond connotations and hints of contamination....Those with full-blown AIDS became shockingly disfigured.”³⁷ For Hannon, Black served as both an example of the horrific realities of HIV/AIDS and communicated to readers that HIV/AIDS threatened to fundamentally reshape the gay male body and gay male style.

Lynch recalled the withering effects AIDS had on Fred’s body in the March 1983 issue of *TBP*. He wrote: “Fred now was utterly weak, a skin-and-bones echo of the vibrant thirty-three-year-old redhead Bruce had met sixteen months before.” In his description of Fred’s death, Lynch included details that reinforced an aesthetic of AIDS for readers. Details, such as his lover Bruce straightening “the illness-thinned body on the bed,” established in the reader’s imagination an image of emaciation that has long been synonymous with disease.³⁸ Indeed, the reference to Fred as “skin-and-bones” evoked an

Body/Embodiment: Symbolic Interaction and the Sociology of the Body, ed. Phillip Vannini (New York: Routledge, 2016), 46.

³⁶ Gerald Hannon, “Reflections on the Black Death,” *The Body Politic* 117, August 1985, 27.

³⁷ Heather Murray, “Every Generation Has Its War,” in *Gender, Health, and Popular Culture*, ed. Cheryl Krasnick Warsh (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2011), 245.

³⁸ Michael Lynch, “This Seeing the Sick Endears Them,” *The Body Politic* 91, March 1983, 36.

aesthetic of the male body far removed from the idealized muscular body. In offering these details, *TBP* served to aestheticize the HIV/AIDS-afflicted body, characterized by a lack of muscle, vibrancy, sexuality, and strength—all critical components in the construction of masculinity.

In the gay community, emaciation had become the aesthetic of AIDS since the early 1980s. In their monograph, *Looking Queer*, John De Cecco and Dawn Atkins quote gay activist Victor D'Lugin saying, "For a long time, outside and inside the community, the face of AIDS was the emaciated body."³⁹ Indeed, the loss of muscle and undesirable thinness symbolized a loss of masculinity because emaciation was embedded in tropes of frailty and vulnerability, the opposite of muscularity and strength. When those who developed AIDS began to see their bodies waste away from the disease or a related illness, their ability to communicate strength, vitality, and masculinity through their body also disappeared. As a result, AIDS threatened to cloak gay male sexuality and the body under discourses of disease when it had earlier been shown off.

Those with HIV/AIDS experienced what Robert McRuer describes as "stigmaphobic distancing."⁴⁰ McRuer applies this concept to disability in the gay community whereby more stigmatized members of the community (in this case gay men with HIV/AIDS) are distanced from by those desiring to be "normal," or at least seen as normal. Despite groups such as the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) forming in 1983 and calling for greater financial, social, and political support for AIDS victims, AIDS reshaped understandings of desirability and sexual normalcy. Some men reportedly saw

³⁹ John De Cecco and Dawn Atkins, *Looking Queer: Body Image and Identity in Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender Communities* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 351.

⁴⁰ Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), viii.

themselves as “lepers,” disabled, or abnormal following their diagnosis. Others attempted to use their condition as a platform to vocalize a need for greater awareness and support, and referred to their condition as one that resulted in their isolation from society.

In September 1983, Vancouver social worker Bryan Teixeira wrote an article on AIDS in *TBP* describing the symbolic meaning of AIDS in the gay community and how the disease was reshaping the social and sexual fabric of the gay male community. Inspired by Susan Sontag’s reference to the leper as a social text for corruption in her book, *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), Teixeira argued that as long as AIDS was labelled a “gay disease,” gay men were at risk of denying themselves the pleasures of gay sex and, in the process, condemning those with AIDS “not as brothers to be supported,” but as “lepers to be denied.”⁴¹ Teixeira articulated how the AIDS-positive individual risked ostracism from the gay community as “AIDS indicates some small degree of contamination.”⁴² Indeed, these sentiments around bodily pollution and AIDS would be reiterated by Sontag herself in her 1989 monograph, *AIDS and Its Metaphors* (1989), where she contends that, “AIDS has a dual metaphoric genealogy. As a microprocess, it is described as cancer is: an invasion. When the focus is transmission of the disease, an older metaphor, reminiscent of syphilis, is invoked: pollution.”⁴³ For those *visibly* affected with AIDS, such as Lynch’s close friend Fred, the disease became an example of the health *and* social risks associated with promiscuity.

⁴¹ Broadly looking at meanings of illness in history, Sontag argues that “disease itself (once TB, cancer today) arouses thoroughly old-fashioned kinds of dread. Any disease is treated as a mystery and acutely enough feared will be felt to be morally, if not literally, contagious.” Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978), 6.

⁴² Bryan Teixeira, “AIDS as Metaphor,” *The Body Politic* 96, September 1983, 40.

⁴³ Susan Sontag, *AIDS and Its Metaphors* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989), 17.

Becoming a pariah seemed to be the social consequences of the disease for 28-year-old Peter Evans, who described the social stigma he faced as a person with AIDS to Ed Jackson in an interview for *TBP* published in October 1983. After being diagnosed with AIDS in December 1982 while living in London, England, Evans's symptoms included Crohn's Disease as well as bouts of Psoriasis. The latter, and notably more visible symptom, led him to quit his job because people had begun to refuse his service as a waiter. Evans described the social repercussions he felt from having AIDS as the "leper approach."⁴⁴ After returning home to Ottawa between late 1982 and early 1983 because doctors in London felt incapable of treating him, Evans described feeling isolated from friends and family, society, and even other patients with AIDS during his time in hospital.⁴⁵

In the article "Going Public with AIDS," Jackson referred to Evans as "Canada's national person with AIDS" because he was one of the most outspoken advocates for HIV/AIDS research.⁴⁶ In this instance, Jackson positioned Evans as a prominent voice to address the stigmatization and unique issues faced by people affected by the disease. In her biography of Michael Lynch and AIDS activism, Ann Silversides notes that Evans "put a face on AIDS. He appeared at press conferences in Winnipeg, Toronto, and Ottawa, gave scores of media interviews, and spoke at many public forums."⁴⁷ His interview with Jackson served as another personal account, albeit politically driven, by *TBP* to undermine the invisibility of those affected by AIDS. Jackson's article was not

⁴⁴ Ed Jackson, "Going public with AIDS," *The Body Politic* 97, October 1983, 28.

⁴⁵ Jackson, "Going public with AIDS," 29.

⁴⁶ Jackson, "Going public with AIDS," 28.

⁴⁷ Ann Silversides, *AIDS Activist: Michael Lynch and the Politics of Community* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 69.

just a commentary on mainstream society, but of the gay community itself, serving as a reminder that a new closet in the gay community formed when people with HIV/AIDS became hidden in hospital rooms or their private residences. Six months after going public, on January 7, 1984, Evans succumbed to the disease. His obituary in *TBP* by the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) read, “Beyond grief, though, we are proud to have known Peter. He demonstrated to all Canadians that a person with AIDS has much to teach his friends, the general public, and those who have or live in fear of this syndrome.”⁴⁸ Even in death, Evans was framed as an example that AIDS could cloak its hosts with stigma and fear.

Phil Shaw’s review of Arthur Bressan Jr’s 1985 film, *Buddies*, demonstrated how the arts could convey the horrific realities of HIV/AIDS while serving as a “mirror” for constructions of disease, sexuality, and gender in gay male culture.⁴⁹ Featuring only two white characters on screen, one of which is a “very out and very angry man with AIDS now confined to his hospital bed,” the film centres on a white narrative of the disease. By arguing that the film reflects the gay community, Shaw’s praiseworthy review simultaneously buttressed HIV/AIDS as a white gay male disease, and one that was visibly horrific. Included in his review was an image of a man with AIDS who held a somber appearance with darkened eyes and a lesion under the lip (Figure 5.1). The face is an important part of the body in the context of HIV/AIDS because the disease’s effects on it were difficult to cover from the gaze of onlookers. Heather Murray argues that, “[t]he faces of those suffering with AIDS, too, could be ravaged by the purple-brown lesions of Kaposi’s sarcoma, as though gay men with AIDS carried the visual lacerations

⁴⁸ Obituary: “Peter Evans (April 20, 1955 - January 7, 1984), *The Body Politic* 101, March 1984, 10.

⁴⁹ Phil Shaw, “A celluloid valentine to the gay community,” *The Body Politic* 127, June 1986, 32.

Figure 5.1. Film still photograph used to illustrate Phil Shaw, “A celluloid valentine to the gay community,” *The Body Politic* 127, June 1986, 32.

and markings of a perceived non-ascetic life.”⁵⁰ These aesthetic elements, along with the hospital gown, create a style of AIDS—disheveled, sullen, and noticeably ill with corporeal markings of disease.

While the film created this image, *TBP* chose to include it in order to capture the horrific realities of HIV/AIDS on the gay male body. A film still photograph published by *TBP* evoked a sense of hopelessness, frailty, and sadness that encapsulated wider discourses of disease, emasculation, disability, and undesirability. Despite the scene containing a healthy looking young man in the background, perhaps to demonstrate the support or love that one may receive if diagnosed with the disease, the man dying from AIDS is foregrounded and appears lonely and internally isolated—evoking HIV/AIDS as a disease that renders gay men’s bodies or even identities invisible or vastly marginalized. Thus, *TBP*’s inclusion of this image exemplifies how the newspaper straddled reinforcing the undesirability of the HIV/AIDS body while simultaneously addressing stigmas of the disease.

Indications that HIV/AIDS was unraveling the image of unity in the gay community was present in Michael L. Callen’s letter to *TBP* in April 1983. As a gay man living with AIDS in New York City, he critiqued Lynch and Lewis’s coverage of the disease and dismissal of medical opinions months prior. Their criticisms, in the eyes of Callen, minimized the deaths of approximately four-hundred gay men because of the potential moral backlash against gay male promiscuity. In his words, “As a gay man with AIDS, I am disgusted by Lewis’s and Lynch’s willingness to belittle the very real possibility of my own death, and by Lewis’s willingness to sacrifice my life because of

⁵⁰ Murray, “Every Generation Has Its War,” 245.

his selfish and short-sighted fear that ‘lesbians and sexually active gay men are going to have their rights denied and infringed upon—all because four hundred cases of a disease have appeared among twenty million of us.’”⁵¹ As the number of HIV/AIDS cases in Canada slowly grew, *TBP* was charged by individuals such as Callen as prioritizing gay men’s sexual lifestyles in the name of liberation rather than concentrating on the sexual transmission of the disease. Callen’s rejection of *TBP*’s mandate of sexual liberation suggested that the newspaper risked alienating the very people that seemed to be facing the consequences of it. Furthermore, *TBP*’s shifting emphasis on gay and lesbian culture throughout the 1970s seemed to culminate in the backlash it received by those who felt that the paper was more concerned with how HIV/AIDS might affect sexual lifestyles and the image of the community than those actually affected.

After reading Quan Minh’s letter in Gerry Oxford’s 1983 article, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” Toronto reader Michael Young criticized the “high-profile emphasis given [to] promiscuity” in it, believing that endorsing promiscuity reinforced an image of gay life that restricted gay men to notions of hypersexuality. Introducing Chapter 4, Minh’s letter to Oxford described the racism he had experienced while cruising in Montreal. He described it as an important practice in gay culture.⁵² Refuting the importance of cruising and sex in gay culture, Young argued that promiscuity affected gay men’s health by subjecting them to sexually transmitted diseases while emotionally “reducing sex to the level of a mundane, meaningless experience that lessens the individual’s feelings of self-worth.”⁵³ Following Young’s critique, David Palmer, another

⁵¹ Michael L. Callen, “AIDS: killing ourselves,” *The Body Politic* 92, April 1983, 5.

⁵² Quan Minh, “Men Looking at Men Looking at Men,” *The Body Politic* 95, July-August 1983, 34.

⁵³ Michael Young, “Cruising: not the whole story,” *The Body Politic* 97, October 1983, 4.

reader from Toronto, also pushed for monogamous relationships over promiscuity as a response to *TBP*'s coverage of cruising. He felt that "[a]fter countless men, styles of clothing, drugs galore, nights of partying and a handful of lovers, I look closely and discover that it has given me practically nothing."⁵⁴ It was the threat of AIDS that made him reconsider his participation in the bars and baths of gay male culture up until that point.

Toronto reader Harvey Hamburg felt that AIDS warranted a curbing of some sexual expression but within a manner that still validated gay men's sexuality. Wondering why *TBP* did not promote less risky sexual practices, Hamburg acknowledged fears of a "self-oppressive gay response to AIDS," but concluded that gay men's sexual practices would inevitably change as the number of infected increase.⁵⁵ Finally, reader James Johnstone wrote to the newspaper in 1984 arguing that monogamous relationships were increasingly attractive as the threat of AIDS persisted. The myth of gay male promiscuity, in Johnstone's words, "is going to decimate and eventually destroy us, not AIDS."⁵⁶ These opinions on promiscuity reflected the extent to which HIV/AIDS had raised fundamental questions around the responsibility of *TBP* to act as a moral compass for gay men.

Some writers for *TBP* had begun re-evaluating the role of promiscuity and cruising in gay culture, leading them to question how gay men might express their sexuality and, indirectly, their masculinity in the climate AIDS. By the mid-1980s, the disease multiplied in Toronto, though the city was spared the worst of the epidemic compared to New York City or San Francisco. In February 1984, Jackson reported that eleven cases of

⁵⁴ David Palmer, "Cruising: not the whole story," *The Body Politic* 97, October 1983, 4.

⁵⁵ Harvey Hamburg, "AIDS: reluctant reporting," *The Body Politic* 97, October 1983, 7.

⁵⁶ James Johnstone, "Taking Issue," *The Body Politic* 103, May 1984, 6.

AIDS had been diagnosed in Toronto, all of whom were gay men between their mid 20s to early 40s.⁵⁷ *TBP* contained AIDS statistics since the discovery of the disease in 1981 and noted an increase of infected from 11 in February 1984 to 39 in the metropolitan Toronto area in December of that same year.⁵⁸ More broadly, the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control in Ottawa recorded a total of 165 cases of AIDS in Canada as of January 8, 1985.⁵⁹ This relatively small number stood in stark contrast to U.S. figures. Heather Murray notes that AIDS casualties had multiplied from 1,400 in 1983 to 15,000 by 1985 across the United States.⁶⁰ It was also at this time that scientists had reportedly discovered evidence linking AIDS to a virus that affected the immune system.⁶¹ Despite disproportionate infections rates, the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in the United States pushed *TBP* writers to rethink identity and sexuality in the gay male community.

TBP collective member Rick Bébout included a section on the ramifications of HIV/AIDS on gay men's sex lives near the end of his December 1983 article, "Is There Safe Sex?" Following a questionnaire conducted at Toronto's Hassle Free Clinic in September 1983, Bébout reported that of the "90 responses, 58 percent said their sex lives had changed in the past year, and cited concern about AIDS as one reason." While respondents stated that they had more sex in the recent past, "[a]bout a quarter said they had less anal sex, active or passive—though 15 percent were fucking *more* often. Seventeen percent said they'd started using condoms; 21 percent reported an increase in

⁵⁷ Ed Jackson, "Murder and other sorts of mayhem," *The Body Politic* 100, January/February 1984, 15.

⁵⁸ Ken Popert, "Gay recruits needed for AIDS research," *The Body Politic* 109, December 1984, 9.

⁵⁹ Ken Popert, "Test shows AIDS bug well-established here," *The Body Politic* 111, February 1985, 14.

⁶⁰ Murray, "Every Generation Has Its War," 238.

⁶¹ What is now referred to as HIV was then known as HTLV-3 in 1984. A news report from San Francisco described a California study published in the August 24, 1984 issue of *Science* magazine which found "anti-bodies to what appears to be the same virus in one-hundred percent of AIDS patients tested, 92 percent of patients with lymphadenopathy syndrome and 93 percent of sexual partners with AIDS patients." See "AIDS-test ambiguities raise concern," *The Body Politic* 107, October 1984, 17.

mutual masturbation.”⁶² It was also noted in a subsequent survey of 105 gay men in four gay bars by *TBP* reporter Jim Bartley that, “More than half of the men Bartley talked to said their sex lives had not been affected by AIDS. Three-fifths of these were monogamous.”⁶³ These varied results indicated that some gay men had adopted condom use, changed sexual practices, or entered monogamous relationships in response to early reports of HIV/AIDS. Bartley’s results are also tenuous because he was interviewing men already at bars potentially cruising for sex, as well as those already in monogamous relationships, the latter having a reduced risk of contracting HIV.

Classified ads in the middle of the decade suggest that AIDS was gradually at the forefront of many men’s minds when searching for a partner. More commonly, there were ads whereby gay men described themselves and/or their ideal partner using terms such as “healthy,” “health-conscious,” and to the dismay of some, “clean” to articulate sexual viability without necessarily mentioning HIV/AIDS. Prior to the discovery of AIDS, “healthy” appeared alongside other adjectives such as “muscular” and “fit,” while “clean” was associated with personal hygiene or venereal disease.⁶⁴ During the AIDS epidemic, however, these words took on new implicit meaning. The use of the adjective “clean,” gradually increased by 1983 in classified ads, many of which included “clean” to explicitly state sexual safety. A man from Edmonton wrote in March 1983 that those responding to his ad should be “clean and responsible.”⁶⁵ The narrative of disease and

⁶² Italics in original. Rick Bébout, “Is There Safe Sex?: Looking Behind Advice on AIDS,” *The Body Politic* 99, December 1983, 36.

⁶³ Bébout, “Is There Safe Sex?” 36.

⁶⁴ For instance, a classified ad from Toronto in May 1981 requested someone who was “clean, have pleasant personality...” while noting that the author was not into “bars, baths, drugs, liquor, poppers, big social life.” Classified ad: “Toronto,” *The Body Politic* 73, May 1981, 38. Another ad in December 1982 by a 37-year-old gay man in Toronto described himself as “discreet and clean” while avoiding “VD like the plague.” Classified ad: “Imaginative and Sensitive Male,” *The Body Politic* 89, December 1982, 40.

⁶⁵ Classified ad: “Edmonton—Lonely, Mid Age GWM,” *The Body Politic* 91, March 1983, 42.

individual responsibility is again evoked in this ad, accompanying debates around individual changes in sexual behaviour at the time. In February 1984, a 35-year-old white man described himself as “[c]lean and discreet.”⁶⁶ The use of “clean” and “discreet” as complementing adjectives in this instance indicate that some readers felt that discrete performances of sexuality and the successful passing of one’s gender were conducive to being healthy. This subliminally fuelled the perception that openly gay men with AIDS or other diseases were unclean or “polluted,” reverberating a history of stigma associated with the diseased body.⁶⁷

Behavioural changes resulting from paranoia and concern around health were reflected in Hannon’s account of New York City’s JOE club in May 1985. Fear of contracting HIV/AIDS led some gay men to change their cruising tactics and supplement oral and anal sexual intercourse with mutual masturbation. Hannon noted that there were entire spaces being constructed in New York City dedicated to providing gay men with space to masturbate in a group setting. His experience with New York’s JOE Club was an example of the much larger argument that *TBP*’s editorial collective was making in the mid 1980s: HIV/AIDS may have changed gay male sexual practices, but it did not diminish them.

⁶⁶ Classified ad: “Versatile, Masculine Male,” *The Body Politic* 100, January/February 1984, 56.

⁶⁷ The term “polluted” draws upon a historical metaphor of disease, particularly syphilis, as a form of pollution, poison, or lack of hygiene that the ill were often viewed as having. Alison Bashford argues that pollution” held moral meaning as it represented a polarity to “purity” and operated along gendered lines, with women’s bodies coming under medical and moral scrutiny shaped by middle-class Victorian culture. Alison Bashford, *Purity and Pollution: Gender, Embodiment and Victorian Medicine* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), xii. In addition, Susan Sontag notes that sexually transmitted diseases, such as syphilis, doubly invoked stigmatization in the nineteenth and century precisely because it was primarily transmitted through sexual intercourse—a “taboo” topic. Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors* (London: Penguin, 2013 [1989]), 39.

Hannon's article also serves to highlight how HIV/AIDS refashioned the aesthetics of gay masculinity to accommodate these changes in sexual practices. When visiting the city, Hannon informed readers that he had been whisked through a discreet entrance where he was handed a rule sheet for men and noticed, among the many patrons, "two guys in cop outfits. The Fluid Patrol."⁶⁸ In the JOE Club, no bodily fluids were allowed to be exchanged. The policing of ejaculation in this space by two men donning police uniforms was a queer appropriation of actual police surveillance in society. While previous use of police uniforms in the community had challenged and highlighted the superficiality of power associated with police, in this instance, the outfit is rewoven with the same authority to scrutinize and control sexuality as that of state police. With the Fluid Patrol's campy aesthetic, health had become refashioned as a security matter in the context of HIV/AIDS, making queer spaces both sites of "police" surveillance and a place to resist it.

The editorial collective's attempts to quell social anxiety about gay male sexuality were somewhat ineffective. While highlighting the very real stigma that those HIV/AIDS could expect to encounter, the personal accounts of Fred or Evans, or the artistic representation of AIDS in film were constructed as morbid narratives about the potential decline of the gay male body. The editorial collective seemed to replicate the language of disability when describing their AIDS-affected bodies. Framing these individuals in *TBP* as isolated in apartments or under medical observation communicated to readers that HIV/AIDS threatened to confine the gay male body in a similar manner to those perceived as disabled.

⁶⁸ Gerald Hannon, "Joining the JOE Club," *The Body Politic* 114, May 1985, 51.

Disability and Masculinity

The first detailed discussion of gay men with disabilities in *TBP* appeared in February 1980 when Gerald Hannon wrote an exposé describing the second closet that most men with disabilities experience.⁶⁹ With the title, “No sorrow, no pity,” Hannon’s article contended that “at the back of our own closets we have built another one, and into it we have shoved our gay deaf and our gay blind and our gay wheelchair cases, and we’ve gone on with the already difficult enough problems of living as gay people.” In Hannon’s opinion, the lack of visibility for gay people with disabilities in the community or *TBP* stemmed from the same oppression faced by gay men and women in mainstream society. Using the metaphor of the closet, Hannon took disability out of the realm of medicine and the body and made it an issue in the gay community. Indeed, he acknowledged that while race, class, sexuality, and gender were significant registers in gay culture and reflected in *TBP*, disability had perhaps been forgotten because of “our dogged insistence on our essential health as gay people, on our persistent view of ourselves in our own media as whole, active, healthy, bright and beautiful.”⁷⁰ Health and the portrayal of healthy bodies in discussions of disability in *TBP* before the HIV/AIDS crisis were refashioned once the latter epidemic erupted and wrought the gay male body.

To add a human(izing) and empathetic element to his article, Hannon began with personal anecdotes of Richard (last name withheld) and Scott McArthur, two gay men with disabilities living in Toronto. Richard had been blind since birth while McArthur

⁶⁹ Heeding the advice of Lennard J. Davis that “‘person with disabilities’ is preferred by many to ‘disabled person’ since the former term implies a quality added to someone’s personhood,” I use “gay men with disabilities” and “people with disabilities” as a conscious effort to avoid reducing people’s identity to their disability. See Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, xiii.

⁷⁰ Gerald Hannon, “No sorrow, no pity,” *The Body Politic* 60, February 1980, 19.

was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy after oxygen to his brain was cut off during birth. Both men described the difficulties of being gay while under the supervision of parents and medical professionals at institutions for the disabled. According to them, two of the biggest obstacles facing gay men with disabilities were the lack of privacy and the contradiction that their disability construed them as asexual despite the fact they identified as homosexual.⁷¹ Disability was described in no uncertain terms as being a hindrance to sexual viability and performances of masculinity. Indeed, the notion of homosexuality also shares a long history with “disability.”⁷² Disability rights activist James Charlton argues that assumptions around disabled asexuality stem from both a medicalization of disabled bodies as well as an inherent paternalism that consigns those perceived to be disabled as children.⁷³ The perception of asexuality was a dramatic shift from early twentieth century narratives of those with cognitive disabilities as “social menaces and sexual predators,” according to Michelle Jarman.⁷⁴ Those whose minds did

⁷¹ Disability Studies scholar Tobin Siebers notes that disabled people lack privacy because they are frequently inundated by medical observation which include an invasion of their space. In addition, he maintains that “[o]ne of the chief stereotypes oppressing disabled people is the myth that they do not experience sexual feelings or that they do not have or want to have sex...” Tobin Siebers, “A Sexual Culture for Disabled People,” in *Sex and Disability*, eds. Robert McRuer and Anne Mollow (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 39.

⁷² As a term that historically encompassed “abnormal” sexual urges, Michel Foucault credits German psychiatrist Carl Friedrich Otto Westphal and his 1870 paper on “contrary sexual sensations” as the birthplace of the modern homosexual and the placement of homosexuality as a psychiatric, psychological and medical disorder. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990 [1978]), 43.

⁷³ James I. Charlton, *Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 58.

⁷⁴ Michelle Jarman specifically considers race and lynch mobs in the Southern United States in the context of her analysis, raising the question of whether sexual unease around Black bodies was entirely driven by disability or fear of Black sexuality. The distinct difference between the sexual menace and the docile asexual, which is largely unclear in current scholarship, appears to centre on the difference between cognitive and physical disabilities. Michelle Jarman, “Dismembering the Lynch Mob: Intersecting Narratives of Disability, Race, and Sexual Menace,” in *Sex and Disability*, eds. Robert McRuer and Anne Mollow (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 92.

not function in ways understood to be “normal” were relegated to the periphery of society, homosexuality being no exception.

Constantly under the supervision of staff at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Richard and his peers called the place “The Zoo,” because people would always be coming through to observe the “poor blind kids.” Having little opportunity to explore his sexuality as a result, Richard noted that this constant observation fuelled the perception that “Blind people don’t fuck.”⁷⁵ However, Richard was able to perform acts of oral sex on his roommate after the chaperoned dances held every second Friday. In doing so, he reclaimed his sexuality as a gay man in an ableist culture where able-bodiness and sexuality are woven together.

Hannon noted that as a result of Richard’s blindness and lack of access to written material on gay culture, “he developed some very peculiar ideas about what gay people were like.” Unable to perceive gender and sexual mannerisms visually, Richard had to discern gayness by “the stereotyped lisping, mannered male voice.” Evaluating sexuality by the tone of voice meant that Richard’s aesthetic of gayness and masculinity—or in this case effeminacy—was auditory rather than visual. This was a break from conventional methods of communicating sexual viability in a visual culture. According to Hannon, Richard “knew that he and those ‘queenly’ voices were after the same things, and somehow it was all wrapped up in a man who would be taller than he, and have a deep, resonant voice and a furry, muscular arm—something he could get to check...since it happens to be perfectly okay for a blind man to take another man’s arm when walking.”⁷⁶ Moreover, Richard’s emphasis on the lisp in a man’s voice is evidence that queer style

⁷⁵ Hannon, “No sorrow, no pity,” 20.

⁷⁶ Hannon, “No sorrow, no pity,” 20.

encapsulated much more than a visual aesthetic. Masculinity comprised of the ability to enunciate clearly and with a deep tone of voice. The lack of such characteristics could be read as a failed performance of masculinity and indicative of effeminacy, even homosexuality.

Social barriers, such as being refused entry into bars or a lack of service, discouraged people with disabilities from making themselves visible in gay culture. Richard noted being belittled by other gay men, many who were particularly surprised that he intended to attract someone. “One man came up and asked if I knew what kind of bar this was. I said, sure, it’s a gay bar. He said you mean you go home with people? And I said no, I simply stand around all night like a statue,” he told Hannon.⁷⁷ Activist for the rights of people with disabilities, John Kellerman, also described to Hannon in the article how he was refused into gay baths in Winnipeg for being disabled, though he did make sure to mention that he had not experienced discrimination at gay bars in Toronto. The ostracism he faced as a man with Cerebral Palsy discouraged him from socializing and being present in spaces able-bodied gay men took for granted. “I want to develop a relationship with someone, but nothing much has happened with either men or women. I’ve often wanted to go to the baths, but I’m afraid to because I’m afraid they wouldn’t let me in,” he told *TBP*.⁷⁸ Despite Kellerman’s more positive experience in Toronto, Hannon and others in the editorial collective were wary of the “welcome” attitude towards gay men with disabilities.

In a survey on Toronto establishments following Hannon’s article, it was noted that, “It’s also pretty easy to talk a good game to an inquiring reporter — both the St

⁷⁷ Hannon, “No sorrow, no pity,” 20.

⁷⁸ Hannon, “No sorrow, no pity,” 21.

Charles and Parkside taverns made welcoming sounds, but I'm told both have refused service to CPers [people with Cerebral Palsy] in wheelchairs."⁷⁹ Discriminatory practices at these establishments reinforced the invisibility of people with disabilities in a gay culture that decades prior had been invisible itself. Hannon's examination of the discrimination faced by those with a disability appears to have been sparked, at least partially, by his interview with Kellerman. No stranger to activism, Kellerman had previously requested \$2,000 from the Ontario provincial government in 1974 to fund a conference on sex and sexuality for people with disabilities.⁸⁰ Kellerman was actively involved in organizing the International Year of the Disabled taking place in 1981. Furthermore, the Canadian federal government had begun considering independent living resource centres as part of an effort to allow those with disabilities to overcome structural, financial, and social barriers, culminating in the federal government's *Obstacles Report* (Special Committee on the Disabled 1981).⁸¹ Coverage of disability could thus lend itself to a positive reception and recognition of *TBP* at conferences and workshops on disability and promote the newspaper as an inclusive forum for all marginalized groups.

Hannon's article further suggests that the editorial collective became critical of the transformation of gay bars into places of exclusion based on an ableist style, rather than simply places marked by niche aesthetic styles such as leather or denim. Physical boundaries, such as stairs, also prevented those with disability from socializing with other

⁷⁹ "Stair trek: nightlife by wheelchair," *The Body Politic* 60, February 1980, 22.

⁸⁰ Hannon, "No sorrow, no pity," 21.

⁸¹ Don M. Fuchs, "Breaking Down Barriers: Independent Living Resource Centres for Empowering the Physically Disabled," in *Perspectives on Social Services and Social Issues*, eds. Jacqueline S. Ismael and Ray J. Thomlison (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1987), 193.

gay men. Indeed, Hannon asked readers to consider the “next time you’re at your favourite gay spot, count the stairs.”⁸² In addition, a report on disabled people’s access to gay Toronto establishments complemented Hannon’s exposé. The anonymously-written report written for *TBP* surveyed business owners and managers of local gay bars, bathhouses, and discos. While many owners welcomed those with disabilities, the report noted that “Most gay watering holes in this town do seem to have a lot of stairs, and none have washrooms adapted to wheelchairs, so a willingness to be friendly certainly doesn’t solve all problems.”⁸³ However, discussions of exclusionary practices or the lack of accessibility at gay bars and bathhouses did not appear in city guides following this article, notably John Allec and Edna Barker’s “Hot Spots” guide to Toronto in July-August 1982, raising questions about *TBP*’s role in facilitating accessibility in the gay community.⁸⁴ Making no mention of disability or accessibility assumed that readers of the newspaper were able-bodied and simply narrowed disability to an issue of health, wellbeing, and even oppression, as if Hannon’s exposé had not occurred at all.

In an attempt to rethink what it means to be disabled, Hannon argued that infancy and old age had some of the same effects of disability. He argued that while limitations from age are “not the same as spending your life blind, or deaf or in a wheelchair...it does indicate that we are talking about a spectrum here, not discrete and mutually exclusive groups.”⁸⁵ Broadening the scope of disability to include nearly everyone at one stage or another in their life was an effort to bring the experience of having a disability

⁸² Hannon, “No sorrow, no pity,” 19.

⁸³ “Stair trek: nightlife by wheelchair,” 22.

⁸⁴ John Allec and Edna Barker, “Hot Spots: Toronto’s Summer of 82,” *The Body Politic* 85, July-August 1982, 22.

⁸⁵ Hannon, “No sorrow, no pity,” 22.

that much closer to readers. In doing so, Hannon challenged the static nature of able-bodiedness and highlighted the inevitability of impairment, a move that would later be taken up by scholars in the late 1990s.⁸⁶ He did not, however, counter cultural stereotypes of disabled bodies as being void of masculinity or sexuality. Concluding “No sorrow, no pity,” Hannon interviewed gay activist Tom Warner who told Hannon of a time when he was picked up by a man who was unable to walk. Warner proceeded to go to bed with him only to find it did not work out because “his legs were so cold. I flinched every time they touched me and of course he sensed it.”⁸⁷ Warner’s experience stresses a reactionary discomfort with how the man’s body failed to perform. Furthermore, it demonstrates that even those conscious of disability and desirability struggled to negotiate their own desires with cultural constructions of bodies. Indeed, expectations of how bodies ought to perform affected Warner’s ability to be intimate with the man, and again reiterates the intersection of able-bodiedness and sexuality.

Hannon’s article undoubtedly provoked greater dialogue in *TBP* around disability within the community. In June 1981, Fo Niemi, a reader who was equally vocal about racism plaguing Black, Asian, and Latino men, called for “[a] clearly visible and well-organized handicapped gay group [that] will help promote the needs and goals of disabled gays and facilitate the members’ reintegration in the mainstream of society.”⁸⁸ Heeding this call, seminars for gay and disabled men and women appeared in the classifieds section of *TBP* in the early months of 1981, such as those organized by Wilf Race and Chris (last name withheld) who advertised their “[f]our-session seminars for

⁸⁶ See Deborah Marks, *Disability: Controversial Debates and Psychosocial Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1999); and, Clare, *Exile and Pride* (1999).

⁸⁷ Hannon, “No sorrow, no pity,” 22.

⁸⁸ Fo Niemi, “Support for disabled,” *The Body Politic* 74, June 1981, 5.

physically disabled gay men.”⁸⁹ Other organizations informed readers that they were accessible for those with physical and cognitive disabilities. *TBP* served as an important catalyst in calling for grater accessibility in the community and forming support groups and seminars.

The prejudice of society seemed to be half of the battle for 19-year-old Warren Camp of Mississauga, Ontario. Writing into *TBP* in November 1983, Camp was responding to Hannon’s article years prior. He began by challenging the use of the term “disabled,” arguing that “it has done as much to reinforce stereotypes today as the archaic ‘crippled’ did in years past.”⁹⁰ Camp’s critique demonstrates a concern that various physical or mental disabilities were generalized together, reducing people to the same experiences of oppression. Instead of focusing on his physical disability, Camp saw the opportunities that his prosthetic legs provided.⁹¹ As someone with two prosthetic legs but not in need of a wheelchair, Camp admitted that his ability to get past the physical barriers and socialize in bars made his coming out easier. This view ran counter to Hannon’s approach to disability as an obstacle in of itself, indicating that people living with disabilities nuanced the ableist viewpoints of *TBP*’s editorial collective.

Similar to Richard and Scott in Hannon’s article, Camp described his own experience with the popular sentiment that people with disabilities are not, or should not, be gay. In his opinion, this view had much to do with how gay male masculinity has been styled around the body. “With so much emphasis placed on physical appearance, they

⁸⁹ Classified ad: Wilf Race and Chris, “Gay and Disabled,” *The Body Politic* 73, May 1981, 40.

⁹⁰ Warren D. Camp, “Not disabled,” *The Body Politic* 98, November 1983, 6.

⁹¹ Camp’s understanding of his prosthetic legs as liberating rather than confining is similar to disability activists’ approach to wheelchairs in the 1980s. Wheelchairs grant mobility rather than bind users. See Mary Johnson, “Sticks and Stones: The Language of Disability,” in *The Disabled, the Media, and the Information Age*, ed. Jack Adolph Nelson (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing, 1994), 34.

[disabled people] represent an unsightly fringe element. They're better off just not coming out!" he argued. His point reiterated Hannon's aforementioned argument that the gay community had built a closet within itself. Evidently, the International Year of the Disabled and coverage of disability in 1981 had done little to change the politics around desirability and disability.

Camp challenged the framing of the body in the construction of masculinity and sexuality during his many conversations with men at the bars. His goal was to demonstrate that disability is a fraction of a person's identity and that "[w]hen all the clothes are shed and we are stripped down to raw reality, we find warts on everyone, making that a fact of life to be reckoned with, and *not ignored* [emphasis in original]."⁹² This statement was a critique of the performative element of masculinity as a style that involved covering up of the flawed elements of the body. By comparing disability to "warts" found on everyone, Camp positioned disability within the realm of aesthetics, suggesting that what constituted disability was a matter of perspective since nobody epitomized the ideal body. It also articulated how disability was socially viewed as a stylization of the body that required covering up. Hence, in the gay community, style was just as much about covering up or ignoring aspects that did not adhere to values of desirability, particularly white, macho able-bodiedness.

Some gay men with disabilities contested erasure in *TBP* through classified ads. Ads from men with disabilities or individuals requesting men with perceived disabilities were ephemeral and inconsistent at best, but they did exist in greater numbers after Hannon's exposé on disability in February 1980. In May 1982, Scott, a 30-year-old gay

⁹² Camp, "Not disabled," 6.

white man living in Toronto, described himself as, “wheelchair-bound with cerebral palsy,” and ensured the reader that “experience with disabled was unnecessary.”⁹³ The following month, Richard, the man who was blind in Hannon’s interview, submitted an ad stating that he was aroused by “taller, hairier huskily-built types. Late 20s to early 30s preferred, but young at heart matters most.”⁹⁴ Not only did Richard refer readers to his personal description in Hannon’s article, but he also requested a picture at the end of the ad. In his interview, Richard had mentioned how he determined “gayness” by the sound of someone’s voice rather than rely on visual markers. To request a photograph seems to defy the stereotype that blind gay men were unable to read, let alone appreciate, the visual elements of queer style. While it is unknown if Richard examined the photograph himself or had it described to him, this ad further demonstrates that gay men with disabilities also took part in the policing and perpetuation of desirable queer styles.

Others ads specifically requesting gay men with disabilities appear to counter any holistic narrative of disabled asexuality. A submission by a man in Toronto in search of men with disabilities stressed the “sincere” intentions of his ad. In October, 1980, the “gay male, 23, 6’1”, 170 lbs” wrote in seeking an “amputee or disabled under 25 for sincere relationship.”⁹⁵ Another classified ad written in December 1984 by Alan, a 28-year-old “straight acting” white man, requesting “people who use leg braces, wheelchairs, and especially amputees. Nothing kinky, just an honest friendship/relationship wanted. Ages 21ish to 32ish.”⁹⁶ It is unknown if Alan himself identified as disabled, but his request for a disabled partner suggests that not all gay men saw disability and sexuality as

⁹³ Classified ad: Scott, “GWM, 30, Good-looking,” *The Body Politic* 83, May 1982, 41.

⁹⁴ Classified ad: Richard, “Very Huggable Person,” *The Body Politic* 84, June 1982, 42.

⁹⁵ Classified ad: “Gay Male, 23, 6’1”, *The Body Politic* 67, October 1980, 41.

⁹⁶ Classified ad: Alan, “Toronto/Belleville/Ottawa,” *The Body Politic* 109, December 1984, 40.

incompatible. In addition, Alan's ad suggests that his desire for traits we associate with the disabled body broadly lay within the realm of fetish or kink by explicitly stating that his desire for someone disabled is "[n]othing kinky." In doing so, his ad reads as if his attraction to gay men with disabilities requires justification—reiterating ableist cultural expectations around masculinity, sexuality and desirability. Disability was not only made out to be an example of bodily "otherness," but as fetishized spectacles of abnormality. The dual narratives of asexuality and fetish articulate that bodies perceived to be disabled are not seen as being able to produce a sexuality but rather become desirable by the "kinky" sexual proclivities of able others.⁹⁷

Tensions around HIV/AIDS and Queer Style

The rise of private bodybuilding classes and at-home workout videos was partly a response to concerns over the transmission of HIV/AIDS and combatting the mainstream public's image that all gay men were diseased, weak or both. The unsure nature of AIDS transmission in the formative years of the epidemic, notably 1981 and 1982, raised concerns that sweat and saliva were ample routes for infection. Dr. Roger Enlow, Director of the New York City Department of Health's Gay and Lesbian Health Concerns, noted that a panic ensued soon after the term "body fluids" was used in association with HIV/AIDS in an interview with Rick Bébout for *TBP* in 1983. Enlow was quoted as saying, "people started asking things like 'What about sweat

⁹⁷ The fetishization of disabled bodies is partly the result of disability as spectacle in nineteenth-century American "freak shows." Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argues that nineteenth-century "[f]reak shows framed and choreographed bodily differences that we now call 'race,' 'ethnicity,' and 'disability' in a ritual that enacted the social processes of making cultural otherness from the raw materials of human physical variation." Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, 60.

contaminating pools and equipment in gyms?”⁹⁸ Even as late as October 1985, Bébout reported that Canadian magazine *Maclean's* had improperly noted that “researchers discovered that heterosexuals could catch the disease through sex contact—or even from a victim’s saliva.”⁹⁹ In August 12, 1985, *Maclean's* not only perpetuated fear of HIV/AIDS transmission through saliva, but described the “gaunt appearance” and “grey pallor” of individuals, such as Toronto bartender Pierre-Donat Robitaille, or the decayed teeth of a Montreal man named William.¹⁰⁰ The characteristics used to describe these individuals in their article, “The new terror of AIDS,” crafted an aesthetic of queer style that centred on disease, frailty, and decay. Furthermore, by perpetuating myths around HIV/AIDS transmissions, inaccurate reports found in magazines and newspapers subsequently marked gyms as a space of tension between gaining macho style and musculature by bodybuilding and the perceived threat of losing it by coming into contact with others’ sweat on the equipment.

An ad for workout video, *Muscle Motion*, was published in *TBP* in October 1984 and drew upon the able-bodied muscular gay (white) male as both the object of desire, as well as living proof that gay men’s masculinity had not been entirely consumed by AIDS. Appearing at a time when home workouts were becoming popular in mainstream culture with Video Cassette Recorders (VCRs) sales booming, part of *Muscle Motion*’s appeal may be as a response to concerns around the sanitary conditions of gyms.¹⁰¹ Featuring the

⁹⁸ As quoted in Rick Bébout, “Is there safer sex?” *The Body Politic* 99, December 1983, 33.

⁹⁹ Rick Bébout, “A day in the media life of disease,” *The Body Politic* 119, October 1985, 32. Originally found in Glen Allan, “The new terror of AIDS,” *Maclean's* 98, no. 32, August 12, 1985, 32.

¹⁰⁰ Glen Allan, “The new terror of AIDS,” *Maclean's* 98, no. 32, August 12, 1985, 32.

¹⁰¹ For a history of Video Cassette Recorders (VCR) and its success over Betamax and simultaneous growth in consumer markets over the 1980s, see: Joshua M. Greenberg, *From Betamax to Blockbuster: Video Stores and the Invention of Movies on Video* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2010).

men of Chippendale's male dance troupe, the video was aimed at gay male consumers with promises to enhance muscle tone and strength while putting "the bulge back in aerobics."¹⁰² *Muscle Motion* was thus offering to appease consumers' sexual tastes while helping them style themselves as macho.

According to David Buchbinder, "Although the early appalling media images of emaciated patients with AIDS led briefly to a foregrounding of the *overweight* male body as demonstrably HIV-free, the muscular male form rapidly reasserted itself, now not only reclaiming its position as *the* object of male homosexual desire but also proclaiming its status as healthy—indeed, even as 'unnaturally healthy.'"¹⁰³ Not only was macho style embodied by the Chippendale's dancers, but it was championed as being the aesthetic of health, virility, and sex. Kathy Charmaz and Dana Rosenfeld argue that "[p]eople who blur or hide views of their frailty or disability employ a range of Goffmanian/dramaturgical techniques to produce a publicly and privately valued self, e.g. deference, physical grace, and props that signal healthy bodies."¹⁰⁴ In the context of *TBP*, where articles seemed to relay the frailty, vulnerability, and debility of HIV/AIDS-affected bodies, macho bodies parading about would seem like a welcome relief, even if it reduced gay male sexuality and masculinity to the macho aesthetic.

The contrast between the healthy muscular male adorning much gay (and straight) visual culture and the image of the AIDS-wrecked body was most notably discussed in *TBP* after news broke that famous Hollywood actor Rock Hudson was diagnosed with AIDS in July 1985. Strewn across the front page of almost every tabloid, Hudson's health

¹⁰² Advertisement: "Muscle Motion," *The Body Politic* 107, October 1984, 40.

¹⁰³ Emphases in original. David Buchbinder, *Studying Men and Masculinities* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 144.

¹⁰⁴ Charmaz and Rosenfeld, "Reflections of the Body, Images of Self," 38.

condition and more insidiously, his homosexuality, exemplified how HIV/AIDS and homosexuality could be portrayed in the media. Writing in *TBP* in December 1985, film scholar Richard Dyer argued that the revelation that “‘virile,’ ‘muscular,’ ‘square-jawed,’ ‘masculine’” Rock Hudson was gay fundamentally challenged “US men’s style of antiseptic machismo.”¹⁰⁵ He stated that popular conceptions of masculinity and heterosexuality were not only defined by physical traits such as muscularity or a square jaw, but that those qualities resulted in “stable” and normative heterosexuality. Dyer stressed that straight conceptions of heterosexuality were artificial, using Hudson’s ability to pass as a way to demonstrate that not all gay men were effeminate or weak. In doing so, Dyer, and by extension *TBP*, validated the practice of passing as a legitimate expression of gay male masculinity to disentangle HIV/AIDS, debility, and effeminacy from the gay male body.

Challenging assumptions around gay male masculinity was important considering that before-and-after photos of the Hollywood actor risked portraying gay men as frail, weak, and emasculated. Positioning “Rock [as] healthy, strong, gorgeous in stills from films and in early pin-ups, side by side with Rock tired, haggard, tragic” represented a “chronology,” according to Dyer. Hudson embodied this narrative by turning from a “healthy, strong, gorgeous” man while in the closet into a man whose masculinity and virility was lost to his homosexuality. Dyer best articulated how this chronology styled and *was styled* by gay masculinity when he said:

Such a juxtaposition of beauty and decay is part of a long-standing rhetoric of gayness. It is a way of constructing gay identity as a devotion to an exquisite surface (queens are so

¹⁰⁵ Richard Dyer, “Rock: The Last Guy You’d Have Figured?” *The Body Politic* 121, December 1985, 27.

good-looking, so fastidious, so stylish, so amusing) masking a depraved reality (unnatural, promiscuous and repulsive sex acts). The rhetoric allows the effects of an illness gotten through sex to be read as a metaphor for that sex itself.¹⁰⁶

Dyer's discourse around beauty and decay drew upon the process of aging in the gay community. In earlier articles in *TBP*, aging was articulated as an undesirable aspect of life and, in the case of the murders of Neil Wilkinson and Harold Walkley (see Chapter 3), a potential cause for violence to occur to gay men out of sexual desperation. In this regard, *TBP* demonstrated the ways in which HIV/AIDS changed the "chronology" of gay male style from that which became old to that which became diseased and unhealthy.

His analysis also highlights two aspects of gay male style. First, the healthy male body is representative of heterosexuality while the frail male body becomes emblematic of homosexuality. Second, gay male style had not only been polarized between "beauty and decay" in the past, but became increasingly so during the AIDS epidemic. This point suggests that "gayness"—as a performance of sexuality and gender—potentially masks that which is undesirable. The muscular, healthy male body offers a surface that both reflects cultural constructions of desirability, but rebukes the "depraved reality" that gay sex potentially leads to the destruction of gay men's bodies. Indeed, writing at the time of the AIDS epidemic, scholar Jeffery Weeks recorded first-hand the effects of AIDS on gay male style in his book, *Sexuality in Its Discontents* (1985). In it, he notes: "AIDS is a disease of the body, it wrecks and destroys what was once glorified."¹⁰⁷ That which was glorified, however, was the muscular, white, able body.

¹⁰⁶ Richard Dyer, "Rock: The Last Guy You'd Have Figured?" *The Body Politic* 121, December 1985, 29.

¹⁰⁷ Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and Its Discontents: Meanings, Myths, and Modern Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 2002 [1985]), 50.

In an attempt to address the inert whiteness of HIV/AIDS, *TBP*'s coverage of non-white AIDS patients challenged the widely held belief that AIDS was a "white gay man's disease," in the words of Harry Britt, a gay member of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors.¹⁰⁸ Drawing from an interview Britt conducted with an unnamed San Francisco newspaper, *TBP*'s editorial collective used statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Britt's message to craft a narrative that the whitewashing of gay culture was partly to blame for cloaking non-white men with HIV/AIDS as invisible.¹⁰⁹ Individuals such as Roger Bakeman, a reader and Ph.D. student in Atlanta, Georgia, also helped challenge the white narrative of HIV/AIDS by writing into *TBP* in March 1986, arguing, "Some people think that AIDS is just a white boy's disease. Since 25 percent of AIDS cases have occurred among blacks, another 15 percent among others (mainly Hispanic), and only 60 percent among whites, this is clearly not true."¹¹⁰ Despite publishing news that highlighted the diversity of HIV/AIDS cases, advertisements in *TBP* aimed at curbing unprotected sex in Toronto did not reflect this changing discourse. The tension in how HIV/AIDS was visualized differently between news articles and advertisements situated *TBP* again as a mediator of the imaginations and realities of HIV/AIDS in the gay community.

In May 1985, ACT produced an advertisement encouraging men to wear protection when engaging in sexual intercourse while featuring two seemingly white men engaging

¹⁰⁸ *TBP* also quoted him as saying, "Gay" triggers into the American consciousness a certain image—a white image." "AIDS stat reveal more non-white cases," *The Body Politic* 100, January-February 1984, 24.

¹⁰⁹ *TBP* reported in February 1984 that statistics from U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recorded a much higher rate of AIDS among ethnic minorities in the United States. In CDC's report, "57.9% of AIDS patients were white, 21.1% were non-Haitian blacks and 14.1% were of Latin American origin. Asians and native Americans each made up less than 1% of the total cases. Of the total, 4.7% were Haitian." "AIDS stat reveal more non-white cases," 24.

¹¹⁰ Roger Bakeman, "Not colour specific," *The Body Politic* 124, March 1986, 11.

in sexual intercourse.¹¹¹ At this point, anal sex was known to be a significant mode of transmission for the disease. In a subsequent ad released in October 1985, ACT informed readers that “1 in 4 gay men in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver have already probably been exposed to the AIDS virus,” while including the image of a muscular, assumedly white, male torso (Figure 5.2).¹¹² While these images might suggest that muscular white body was not healthy, they did produce the underlying message that muscular white men were both representative of the gay community and having regular sex, thereby putting themselves at risk. ACT was likely using such imagery to appeal to a wide audience and encourage them to practice safe sex. Other ads and articles provided information on alternative sex acts or tips on getting comfortable with condoms before sexual intercourse.¹¹³ ACT’s ads, however, also drew upon the legacy of white muscular men as both sexually active and sexually appealing in the gay community.

Narratives challenging and provoking the gay community to reconsider the sexuality, desirability, race and gender of those affected by HIV/AIDS were more exceptional. One such case was that of Fabian Bridges, an impoverished Black gay man who ventured from Cleveland to Houston between July 1984 and May 1985. In May 1986, *TBP* cabled a news report from San Francisco’s *Bay Area Reporter* that Bridges had been given a meagre amount of money from the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) so that they could trek his journey from Cleveland to the West Coast of the United States and report on the harsh reality of gay men with AIDS. Their documentary, *Fabian Bridges*, was part of a

¹¹¹ Advertisement: “Anal Sex,” *The Body Politic* 114, May 1985, 4.

¹¹² Advertisement: “1 in 4,” *The Body Politic* 119, October 1985, 27.

¹¹³ In particular, Kevin Orr of *TBP* reported in December 1984 that ACT educated seven gay men on how to incorporate condoms into their sexual routines. Orr noted that “[m]any gay men have never tried them before, including all of the testers. It was a new experience for them and some were more successful than others.” Kevin Orr, “Condoms: Gay men try them for size,” *The Body Politic* 109, December 1984, 31.

Figure 5.2. "1 in 4," *The Body Politic* 119, October 1985, 27.

larger television special by PBS titled, *AIDS, a National Enquiry*.

According to the newspaper report, Ray Hill, an activist who provided Bridges with food and shelter in Houston after being found by police, charged the documentary with reinforcing myths and fears around gay people and AIDS. The film implied that Bridges was a “prostitute who knowingly spread AIDS to his clients.” John Barnich, another individual who helped Hill care for Bridges in Houston, believed that Bridges told reporters he was a prostitute out of denial. He was quoted in the report as saying, “What more appropriate form of denial (that he has AIDS) than to say he is still having sex and getting paid for it.” This comment suggests that people with AIDS were expected to no longer have sex. Furthermore, it proposes that Bridges was acting as a prostitute in a “paid performance,” as Barnich called it, which can be read as both him exerting agency as an impoverished gay man, while also being exploited for a particular AIDS narrative by mainstream media.¹¹⁴ Either way, the coverage of Bridges in *TBP* was a critique of how men with AIDS or the symptoms of another sexually-transmitted disease were expected to perform their sexuality and gender differently or not at all from uninfected men.

Gay journalist Douglas Janoff referred to some of those affected with HIV/AIDS as “demons among us,” in an article submitted to *TBP* in 1985, but it was never published because the collective felt the language and fear-mongering was too strong. Janoff shed light on this would-be article in a letter submitted to *TBP* in February 1986. According to Janoff, the article centred on his interview with an unnamed gay man living with AIDS in

¹¹⁴ “Exploited for headlines,” *The Body Politic* 126, May 1986, 22.

Montreal.¹¹⁵ Janoff noted in his letter that the individual had bragged about how he had unprotected sex with men while knowing his HIV/AIDS status. “Horrificed” with this revelation, Janoff came to the conclusion that “not all people with AIDS are suffering stoicly [sic]. There are also people with AIDS who are irresponsible, selfish and psychotic.”¹¹⁶ As a warning to queers living in Montreal, Janoff’s letter was simultaneously a call for a greater sexual regulation of people with AIDS through identification. It was unclear whether Janoff believed policing people with AIDS involved the state or should remain within the gay community, but the ethical issue of identifying those with HIV/AIDS being posited from within the community was particularly concerning to *TBP*’s editorial collective considering that provincial and federal governments had begun to mull a similar idea over.

In the same issue, Ed Jackson expressed dismay over the passage of the Ontario Health Protection Act which made it the only province to request that positive findings of reportable diseases be conveyed to public health officials. He worried that this legislation would increase the distrust between the gay and medical community. The ambiguously-worded Act might also be used by public health officials to detain healthy gay men. More insidiously, those working for the state could also gain support by conjuring up the notion of the “‘loose cannon’—the active prostitute or promiscuous homosexual who refuses to stop having unsafe sex with unwitting strangers,” in Jackson’s words. Just as Janoff desired to regulate gay men with HIV/AIDS, this new piece of legislation meant that gay men with AIDS would be required to have regular check-ups while new infections could

¹¹⁵ In Janoff’s letter, he stated that the individual with AIDS was re-diagnosed as having AIDS-related complex—ARC, which meant he could still give the AIDS virus as it was understood.

¹¹⁶ Douglas Janoff, “Opening debate on sexual responsibility,” *The Body Politic* 121, December 1985, 11.

potentially be linked back to them. In the words of Jackson, “Screening people as opposed to screening blood, keeping the records and the use to which those records might be put to use are the real issues.”¹¹⁷ Indeed, the efforts of the Ontario government to exert a level of bureaucracy over people with AIDS—even if just for statistical purposes—differentiated people with AIDS as “other” while regulating how they performed their sexuality and gender.

Janoff posited in his letter that his complaint may “open the floor to a full-scale debate...on the ethics of identifying sexually-irresponsible people with AIDS and ARC—maybe even to the proportions of the ‘[B]lack houseboy’ debate!”¹¹⁸ In his thinking about public health, Janoff imposed his perception of morality onto already stigmatized bodies, expecting those infected to conform to separate standards of sexual activity. Ken Popert attached a response to Janoff’s letter in the same issue indicating why *TBP* decided to forgo publishing the article. First, Janoff took an exceptionally long time to respond to the editorial collective’s concerns and failed to edit the article to meet *TBP*’s standards. Second, Popert felt that the article “arouses the reader’s fears and then heartlessly proposes the man with PLS as a defenceless scapegoat.” Popert provided details surrounding the man that were not included in Janoff’s letter, such as his lack of sufficient food, depression, paralysis of one hand, and distrust of the AIDS groups Janoff worked with.¹¹⁹ In doing so, he attempted to humanize the experience of a man whose sexuality and body were labeled as taboo for Janoff. Popert’s response also spoke to the politics of visibility for those infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS. While it was

¹¹⁷ Ed Jackson, “AIDS: Double Exposure,” *The Body Politic* 121, December 1985, 17.

¹¹⁸ Janoff, “Opening debate on sexual responsibility,” 11.

¹¹⁹ Ken Popert, “Opening debate on sexual responsibility,” *The Body Politic* 121, December 1985, 11.

important for *TBP* to express support and make those with HIV/AIDS visible in the community, any formal regulation and identification of these individuals was considered *too* visible, particularly if it involved the state.¹²⁰

The consternation around sex, the body and health led to new forms of self-regulation among gay men. While not the formal regulation of sexuality Janoff proposed, the accounts of three men interviewed by *TBP* writer Rob Joyce in May 1986 demonstrated that those with HIV/AIDS could be ostracized by other gay men. The resulting isolation was another form of sexual regulation in the gay community. Warren Jensen, Kevin Brown, and Lawrence Fisher were the subjects of Joyce's article, "Life and love after AIDS," an article describing how HIV/AIDS changed the sexual lives of three community-engaged gay men. Brown's interview highlighted how AIDS turned the gay male body as a source of pleasure into a source of fear. Brown told Joyce, "For awhile you go through a real feeling that you're some kind of Typhoid Mary or something; or that you're a walking death even if someone touches you. It's a real stopper. You're in a bar and you see someone nice and then you say, 'By the way, you know, I have AIDS,' and you pick them up off the floor." Even worse, the fear of HIV/AIDS had the potential to turn into anger as noted in Fisher's interview. After not having informed a partner of his status (though he was adamant on condom use), Fisher recalled being berated by the same man after he had learned that Fisher had AIDS. Expletives aside, the man told

¹²⁰ The understanding of HIV/AIDS as a disability was reinforced by the Ontario government's efforts to regulate HIV-infected bodies in a similar fashion to disabled bodies by rendering them docile. In 1986, *TBP* reported on the expansion of the Ontario Human Rights Code to include people with AIDS as another way in which HIV/AIDS and disability intersected. When Borden Purcell, then chairperson of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, was specifically asked about the Act, he stated that people with AIDS were now protected under section 9(b) of the Human Rights Code (1981): "AIDS as an illness would fall within the definition of handicap." This institutional equation of AIDS as a disability only served to formalize broader understandings of AIDS as a debilitating disease and those with it as being disabled or "handicap." Ed Jackson, "Code forbids AIDS bias," *The Body Politic* 124, March 1986, 17.

Fisher that he “would never have had sex with him in the first place if he had known he had AIDS.”¹²¹ These episodes served to illuminate the prejudices against those with HIV/AIDS within the gay community. However, this article also unintentionally communicated to readers that such treatment was not uncommon and thus HIV/AIDS did not just deteriorate one’s health, but one’s social standing in the gay community as well.

The mere presence of this article demonstrates that some among the *TBP* collective felt it necessary to assuage perceptions that AIDS meant the end of intimacy in the gay community. The three men shared a common characteristic. As Joyce put it, “unlike some gay men who disavow their sexual orientation after diagnosis, all three wear it with a shine.”¹²² The men featured demonstrated to Joyce and readers of *TBP* that AIDS was either shrouded under the self-oppression of one’s sexuality or it was “worn”—perhaps not physically, but mentally—in a way that encouraged visibility of the disease. This stood in contrast to a separate report in the same issue that some gay men had “[g]iven up sex altogether (still not a popular option, and vows of celibacy have a way of dissolving in desperate moments) or, more likely, given up trying to make it safe every time.”¹²³ Whether it was gay men dressed as police officers regulating group masturbation or men determining sexual desirability if someone appeared healthy, gay male masculinity was continually restylized as HIV/AIDS fueled panic.

¹²¹ As quoted in Rob Joyce, “Life and love after AIDS,” *The Body Politic* 126, May 1986, 14.

¹²² Joyce, “Life and love after AIDS,” 13.

¹²³ Editorial collective, “The quandary of advice,” *The Body Politic* 126, May 1986, 26.

Conclusion

TBP served as a vehicle for information on HIV/AIDS and cultural expectations around sexuality and the embodiment of healthy masculinity. With the fear and panic that HIV/AIDS had incited, ideas of gay male masculinity were re-envisioned as the disease permeated gay cultural life. In the formative years of the epidemic, namely 1981 and 1982, there were discussions that gay men's homosexuality or promiscuity were the cause for the various illnesses that gay men seemed to be suddenly experiencing. As debates around gay male promiscuity raged on, the ubiquitous white, able-bodied, muscular macho male had taken on the mantle of health and virility. The consequence of this was a polarization of macho style as the embodiment of health against the diseased, frail, and sickly male body as the aesthetic of AIDS.

Within *TBP*, the similarities in depictions of people with HIV/AIDS and those perceived to be disabled entrenched an "abnormal" body in the gay community that buttressed macho style as normal. *TBP* reflects how and why the privileged position of white muscular able masculinity remained unfettered even as fears and misinformation around HIV/AIDS slowly diminished with research and treatment. The gay male body was a site of tension as discourses around disability and disease became further entangled in a world of HIV/AIDS. Stereotypes of asexuality and emasculation that had surrounded men with disabilities long before HIV/AIDS had partly extended onto able-bodied gay men in this new climate. The similarity in tropes of disability and disease when looking at masculinity as a style demonstrates that bodies perceived to no longer function as expected became restylized or rather, cloaked, under similar discourses of health, sexuality, and ability.

Even nearing the end of *TBP*'s publication in 1987, questions around the freedom of gay men's sexual and gender expression were raised amongst readers and the editorial collective alike. Over the course of the 1980s, the newspaper described the rapid development of anxieties both from outside and within the community around the regulation of sexuality and the gay male body. In a climate of social intolerance and fear around the health of gay men outside the community some gay men felt compelled to restylize themselves and their sexual lifestyles to something akin to heterosexual monogamy; some men did not. Nevertheless, the performance of gay male masculinity became increasingly narrowed under a banner of healthy heterosexual "normalcy." Similar to other sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS brought with it significant discussions about the aesthetics of disease. But unlike those diseases discovered before it, HIV/AIDS centred on the gay male body and sparked apprehension around disability—resonating with Weeks's powerful quote that AIDS wrecks what was once glorified.

CONCLUSION: Reflecting on Masculinity in *The Body Politic*

In *TBP*'s final issue, Gerald Hannon reflected on the collective's decision to cease publishing the paper: "And though I wept the night we did it, and though I woke trembling from an agonizing nightmare that same night, I would be lying if I said I didn't feel a sense of relief as well. It was like putting down something heavy that I'd been carrying for years."¹ The burden to continue *TBP* proved to be too much. The editorial collective did not grieve the end of *TBP*, nor did they take its folding as evidence that lesbian and gays had achieved equality. Rick Bébout stated that *TBP* shuttered because sales of the newspaper were gradually decreasing, classified and advertisement revenue were down, and letters from readers were steadily declining.² Thus, on December 16, 1986, the editorial collective decided that the gay community might be better served through other means, one of which was *TBP*'s successor, *Xtra!*, a magazine that spoke to a new generation of gay men and women, and one printed every two weeks for Toronto residents.³

In his reflection, Hannon also described three images that encapsulated his experience working on the newspaper. A picture of him with his then lover Chris Lea on Christmas Eve, 1982; a photograph of a kicked-in door, a smashed-in wall, and a cot from the February 5, 1981 police riots; and, finally, a photograph of several of the collective in front of the Ontario legislature in 1974. In his words, "One leads me through a very particular person to the whole network of interlocking faces (and sometimes

¹ Gerald Hannon, "Sentimental Journey," *The Body Politic* 135, February 1987, 43.

² Rick Bébout, "What Happened?" *The Body Politic* 135, February 1987, 5.

³ Bébout, "What Happened?" 4.

bodies) that were this place. Another plunges me into the community turmoils [sic] that created and polished gay life in this city. And one takes me through the day-to-day civil rights plodding that climaxed in this province on December 16, 1986.”⁴ Each one of these images strikes a chord with the chapters of this dissertation. From the interactions between readers and writers, in classified ads or otherwise, to the sexual politics of space and place, Hannon’s images represent the varying aspect of gay cultural life in Toronto and *TBP*’s role in capturing it.

These same photographs also play a part in constructing a largely unchallenged understanding of gay cultural life in the 1970s and 1980s. The images are a visualization of the support network *TBP* provided, the consequences of unchecked state power, and the importance of standing up for civil rights. They also craft a particular narrative that speaks to the relationship activists and community members had with one another, their sexuality, public and seemingly private places and spaces, and the politics of gay liberation. The photographs stress *TBP*’s political accomplishments rather than the cultural and social debates that raged on in the paper. As a result, the legacy of *TBP* is one framed primarily in the context of liberationist politics rather than in the context of a burgeoning gay cultural life rife with tensions and anxiety around gender, race, sexuality, and the body.

This dissertation has demonstrated that *TBP*’s political focus was augmented by an effort to mediate understandings of masculinity and sexuality in Toronto’s gay community. I decentre conventional understandings of gay liberationist politics in the newspaper by capturing the ways in which *TBP* seriously considered masculinity and

⁴ Hannon, “Sentimental Journey,” 43.

aesthetics as part of the gay cultural and political landscape. The five chapters in this dissertation examine *TBP*'s engagement of masculinity from a thematic perspective establishes a chronology that is both unique to *TBP* yet also reflective of the aesthetic developments around masculinity, race, bodies, and sexuality. *TBP*'s editorial collective examined, critiqued, and used the power of visual culture to shape performances of masculinity. They also incorporated discussions of masculinity with regards to the sexual opportunities of space. Finally, the editorial collective analyzed the repercussions of white macho style for non-white gay men and those debilitated by disease or otherwise. The multitude of content on masculinity in *TBP* challenges a conventional notion of "political" content in *TBP* which misses the deeper discussions and presentations of sexuality, desire, and aesthetics. *TBP* addressed queer style as a politicized statement charged with deeper social, cultural, and political meanings. In doing so, *TBP* was an important vehicle for broadening the politics of gay liberation to encompass the politics of queer style and the body.

Like Hannon, I have provided images in this dissertation that represent the broad scope of *TBP*'s dealings with masculinity, race, ability, health, and the body. Using a queer analysis to deconstruct the newspaper's visual and textual evidence over the course of its publication, I have demonstrated that *TBP* mediated assumptions around what it meant to be masculine in the gay community by challenging, promoting, and visualizing macho style as an aesthetic throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. However, as a newspaper desperately in need of funding during its formative years, *TBP* included visual content and classified ads that propagated the same constructions of masculinity that some collective members had sought to challenge. Undoubtedly an intellectual periodical,

TBP struggled to engage its readership with appealing content and imagery while also offering stimulating material that opened the newspaper up to critique by those who felt that the paper had become elitist, out-of-touch with its readers, and even condescending in tone. Nevertheless, *TBP* offers insight into a burgeoning subculture that fought for visibility and diversity while simultaneously privileging the ability to pass as heterosexual and conform to heteronormative expectations of masculinity.

This dissertation has also explored the importance of *TBP* as an interactive platform between gay activists, readers, and collective members who sought to promote sexual liberation at any cost and their counterparts who felt that sexual liberation had social costs within the community, particularly for those who fell outside the white macho style aesthetic. The extensive involvement of readers holding the editorial collective accountable for their content and opinions made *TBP* a joint effort between the editorial collective and its reader base. Letters from readers and the subsequent responses to them from various members of the community not only reinforce the importance of queer style as a politically-charged statement in the community, but demonstrate that *TBP* was a forum for the exchange of ideas rather than a unilateral medium. The extensive dialogue between readers and collective members meant that *TBP*'s engagement with issues of masculinity, race, and sexuality was always tangled in broader community politics. The tumultuous conversations around masculinity taking place on the newspaper's pages also illuminate the tension between the collective's efforts to appear as a cohesive voice of gay liberation and the disorganized, fragmented, and oppositional viewpoints presented by many readers. By providing a space for various ideas and opinions to be supported, challenged, and addressed, *TBP* encouraged readers

to express their concerns, questions, and assumptions around gender, race, sexuality, and ability. In doing so, *TBP*'s success at relating to the community was by no small margin the result of the very readers who read and supported it.

Despite the arguments I have made in this dissertation around queer style and masculinity, there are further stories to be told about the relationship between *TBP* and femininity, disability, and trans people. For example, *TBP* presents as a rich source of new research for writing a queer disability history. My treatment of this history in Chapter Five is a solid beginning into this research. Future research in disability studies may consider the relationship, or lack thereof, between queer disability groups that emerged in the late 1970s and more mainstream activism, such as *TBP*. Doing so would historicize the processes that have sustained contemporary queer stigma around bodies labeled as disabled. The newspaper is also a useful source to explore how gender “transgressions,” notably drag and transgenderism, were, and continue to be, policed within the queer community.⁵

In addition, my thesis does not thoroughly account for the relationship between class, gender, and sexuality because *TBP*'s editorial collective assumed a middle or upper-class readership that was not necessarily reflective of the socio-economic realities

⁵ Viviane Namaste points out, many others who did not conform to rigid ideals of masculinity were excluded from village life or relegated to the periphery. For example, the organizers of the 1992 Montreal Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade attempted to ban drag queens. This was because “drag queens...exceeded “respectable” community standards” and as such, should be relegated to the stage and excluded. This material informs my discussion of representations of queer style because it both pervaded the queer community and shaped definitions of gay male masculinity, female masculinity, and fashion as it related to the negotiation between blending in and standing out in the public domain. Viviane Namaste, *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 11.

of many within the gay community. I have demonstrated at points in this dissertation that the intellectual content in *TBP* was a source of contention for some readers who felt the newspaper did not speak to working-class experiences. However, I only engage with these moments of alienation as they pertained to masculinity, demonstrating that discussions of masculinity indirectly raised apprehensions among some readers around the scope of collective's agenda. Additional work exploring the intellectual disconnect between members of the community and activists during the 1970s and 1980s would benefit from using *TBP*. Such research would highlight how activist literature could polarize some within the queer community along the lines of education and class, not simply race, ability, or gender. Indeed, future work can read the spoken and unspoken messages with regard to other activist periodicals.

Recalling Masculinity in *The Body Politic*

Reading *TBP* as an archive reveals how narratives around gender, sexuality, and race sit in tension with the memories of former members of the editorial collective. The collective members that I interviewed provided a progressive narrative of *TBP* as a publication which continually strove towards greater inclusivity and visibility for members of the lesbian and gay community. In my interviews with Hannon, Ken Popert, David Rayside, and Tim McCaskell, I noticed a trend with regard to discussions on gay male masculinity. When I asked Gerald Hannon about *TBP*'s role in shaping or mediating masculinity, his answer was concise yet equally complex: "I don't think we addressed it directly very much from my memory of what I wrote."⁶ Indeed, all interviewees felt that

⁶ Gerald Hannon (editor for *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, July 17, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

gay male masculinity was a tenuous topic. In fact, Rayside believed that despite gender being integral to *TBP*, “there was a variety of views, or sometimes just an ambivalence about how to think about various expressions of masculinity.”⁷ In my own analysis, I noticed that discussions of masculinity permeated the various conversations on politics, bars, travel, health, and art. The issue of masculinity and bodies and how they are related to sexuality was so ubiquitous that former collective members could not see how queer style and masculinity shaped everything they wrote about.

Approaching *TBP* from the theoretical framework of queer style shows that styles of masculinity lie at the heart of tensions that threatened to increasingly divide the community. The newspaper provides a repository of cultural and political debates from readers and writers alike that demonstrate how masculinity was moulded over the 1970s and 1980s. Re-interpreting *TBP* as an archive functions to position the newspaper as a part of memory making for some of the editorial collective, such as Tim McCaskell, and his book on the history of Canadian queer activism from 1974 to 2014, *Queer Progress: From Homophobia to Homonationalism* (2016).⁸ The interviews reinforce my own misgivings about how *TBP* has been remembered and how it has been accessed as an archive in of itself. They have guided my own analysis of tensions within the collective, but they also offer insight to understanding the ways in which the collective negotiated its own role in gay cultural life by working through apprehensions around sexual desire and masculinity.

⁷ David Rayside, (contributor to *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, March 24, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

⁸ See Tim McCaskell, *Queer Progress: From Homophobia to Homonationalism* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016).

Former members of *TBP* are interviewed on a frequent basis regarding the history of gay liberation in Canada because of their status and role as early “activists” in the community. Viewed in high regard, former members of the collective hold considerable authority in historical narratives of *TBP* and gay activism in Toronto. My interviews with four former collective members exemplify historian Penny Summerfield’s argument that oral history is a “powerful recovery role, in that it could rescue for the historical record the lives of social groups for whom other kinds of records were sparse or non-existent, or in which the angle of vision was only that of those in power.”⁹ Indeed, oral history has been a useful methodology in the writing of queer history since the mid-1980s; however, critical engagement with queer oral methodologies is still in its infancy.¹⁰ Moreover, marginalized groups and their contributions, such as those touched upon in Chapter Four on race and racism or Chapter Five on disability and disease, are relegated to the periphery of historical narratives of heroic activism because they raise questions around the unity and cohesiveness of the movement. More work is needed that challenges the ways in which interviews with former editorial collective members shape memory-making in this realm of Canadian queer history. Indeed, the limited formal role given to people of colour or people with a disability in early activist organizations and

⁹ Penny Summerfield, “Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews,” *Culture and Social History* 1, no. 1 (2004): 66.

¹⁰ Oral accounts have been invaluable in an exhaustive list of queer history, including but not limited to: Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Michael David Franklin et al., *Queer Twin Cities: Twin Cities GLBT Oral History Project* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Heike Bauer and Matt Cook, eds., *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and, Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

publications and how they are subsequently forgotten actually illuminate the interstices in these formal narratives of queer activism.

Oral historian Alessandro Portelli argues that “memory is not an instantaneous act of recall...but rather a process and a generator of meaning.”¹¹ Portelli’s book, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*, is an intervention in the making of history by engaging with storytelling and oral history to show how the past is accessed in ways that are meaningful to the present. Indeed, in Paula Hamilton’s reflection of Portelli’s work she contends that, “[t]o struggle with the past is also to pose questions of the present—what the past means in the present.”¹² Comments from former collective members stand in stark contrast to the discussions and content appearing in the newspaper. I do not dismiss these oral accounts for any “misrememberings” or exaggerations as many traditional critics of oral history, such as Eric Hobsbawm, have done.¹³ Rather, I see these discrepancies as a political act of remembering.

Arguably, the notion that *TBP* had little influence in reinforcing or challenging styles of masculinity stemmed from a belief among some collective members that American cultural forces played a greater role in shaping Canadian content. When asked how *TBP* approached masculinity, McCaskell argued that “the hegemonic notions of masculinity probably came up from the States rather than were generated here in Toronto.”¹⁴ Placing such importance on American content for the construction of gender and sexuality in Toronto’s gay community signifies how interconnected gay cultural life

¹¹ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 254.

¹² Paula Hamilton, “The Oral Historian as Memorist,” *The Oral History Review* 32, no. 1 (2005): 13.

¹³ Summerfield, “Culture and Composure,” 66.

¹⁴ Tim McCaskell (editor for *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, March 20, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

was across North America, yet it does not take into account how *TBP* allowed for queer Canadian voices to actively engage in this conversation. In its book and film reviews, letters, editorials, and news reports, *TBP* was an important Canadian vehicle for allowing Canadians to address Western European and North American ideals around the male body, whiteness, gender, sexuality and health. Indeed, there was no Canadian publication that was as far-reaching in scope and volume as *TBP*.

These interviews also raise numerous questions about how we think about and recall performances of gender. Reflecting back on the words of Judith Butler that gender is assumed to be an “internal essence” and is naturalized through “a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body,” I question if recollections of gender are equally naturalized or “performed.”¹⁵ Greg Denning’s argument that retelling the past is a performance, involving “the whole person, all the senses, all the emotions, memory, a sense of presence, co-ordination of mind and body,” is particularly useful in approaching how the largely white cisgendered male collective have come to shape narratives of *TBP* and Canadian queer history.¹⁶ Some of those interviewed did not necessarily see gender as a focal point of discussion in *TBP* because feminist critiques of gender were naturalized throughout it—after all, the collective was very much informed and polarized by feminist interpretations of gender at the time. In *TBP*, gender was nearly invisible except for when it was made *highly visible*.

Apart from the instances in which gay male masculinity was made the direct subject of an article or exposé, some interviewees, such as Hannon, did not recall much in

¹⁵ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge Press, 1999 [1990]), xv.

¹⁶ Greg Denning, *Performances* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1996), 20.

the way of having discussed gender. Perhaps this was the result of having an almost entirely white male collective edit, write for, and publish *TBP*, making the political and volatile moments around race in *TBP*'s history all the more memorable while leaving conversations around gender behind. Or maybe it was because the theoretical tools to dismantle gender, notably examining gender as "a primary way of signifying relationships of power," in the words of Joan Scott, did not emerge until the mid 1980s, leading some to believe that gender could not be discussed before first being deconstructed.¹⁷ Ken Popert suggested in his interview that, "We might not have had the right vocabulary for talking about it or an extensive enough analysis, but certainly that [gender] was *the* subject right away, one of the subjects."¹⁸ Indeed, discussions of gender *were* woven into the very fabric of *TBP*.

In his interview, David Rayside, a collective member deeply involved in *TBP*'s fundraising efforts, claimed that during the publication of *TBP* "[t]here was certainly a sense that there was a contestation in the community, or not contestation necessarily—there was a strong sense, because these are smart and observant people, that there were versions of masculinity played out in the larger community."¹⁹ Readers and writers alike approached masculinity as a construction with apprehension and uncertainty. *TBP* contained differing viewpoints around masculinity which frequently challenged racial, sexual, and gendered stereotypes that hindered or limited gay men's sexual desires and expressions. For example, in the May-June 1975 issue of *TBP*, Boston, Massachusetts

¹⁷ Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1069.

¹⁸ Ken Popert, (editor for *The Body Politic*), interview by Nicholas Hrynyk, April 14, 2015, interview 1, transcript.

¹⁹ Rayside, interview 1, transcript.

reader John Kyper decried the near ubiquitous whiteness of sex and masculinity in gay culture after reading Rand Holmes's comic, *Harold Hed*. The comic was of two white men engaging in sex after discussing psychiatry and supposed "cures" for homosexuality. For Kyper, it suggested that gay sexuality and gay life centred around white men. He demanded that the community better reflect its diversity: "We need to see more Blacks, Orientals, Indians...."²⁰ Kyper's call for greater racial inclusion was illustrative of a growing dissatisfaction with white gay activism among some readers. Indeed, more discussions and letters from readers addressing race and racism followed in the latter half of the 1970s. This is not remembered, however.

McCaskell's memory of the fight for racial diversity in *TBP* is heightened because of his extensive writings on the subject. Joining the collective as a volunteer in 1974 and subsequently taking a brief hiatus between 1976 and 1977 before returning, Tim McCaskell noted that the collective's difficulty in understanding the influence of race on gender and sexual desirability was a reflection of their hesitation to address the changing racial makeup of the gay community: "By the '80s, we're [Toronto] approaching almost a quarter of racialized people. So the fights around race that happened in *TBP* happened around the absolute incomprehension of this white collective of anything that wasn't white. They just did not get it."²¹ Furthermore, it demonstrated that many within the collective had difficulty understanding the intersectional experiences and viewpoints being expressed by readers and contributors in letters—reinforcing the argument that *TBP*'s overall ability to challenge and mediate constructions of masculinity relied in great part to the readers of the paper.

²⁰ John Kyper, "More Hedd," *The Body Politic* 22, February 1976, 2.

²¹ McCaskell, interview 1, transcript.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the “houseboy ad” sparked a discussion of race and masculinity in February 1985. Rayside recalled that in the wake of the ad, “there was an extremely intense discussion about what liberation meant in relation to people’s sexual desires and whether sexually desiring and exoticizing a person of colour or not desiring people of colour was for some people thought to be part of the nature of sexual desire. And it was not *TBP*’s job to cast judgment on that and other people disagreed.”²² Undoubtedly a critical moment for discussions of race in *TBP*, the houseboy ad represented long-standing divisiveness in the gay community and amongst *TBP*’s readers. Long-time collective member Popert referred to the houseboy ad when discussing the fetishizing and eroticizing of non-white men. He felt that in retrospect, there was a lot of “misplaced anger” over the ad, but that it effectively “facilitated some sort of discussion [on race].”²³ Placing so much importance on the houseboy ad for triggering discussions of race seemingly disregards the previous instances in which issues around race, masculinity, and desire were raised by editors, such as McCaskell, and readers.

Altogether, the interviews suggest that the contentious moments in *TBP*’s history, such as the houseboy ad, played a central role in how gender, race, and sexuality are remembered and forgotten. What does the emphasis on the houseboy ad reveal about the banality of white masculinity in gay periodicals at the time? Furthermore, how does it usurp and erase the numerous discussions around race, desire and sexuality that occurred *before* the houseboy ad ever appeared? In his interview with me, Hannon assumed that the collective had taken a more proactive approach to racism in the gay community. This suggests that contemporary politics around racism in the gay and lesbian community shift

²² Rayside, interview 1, transcript.

²³ Popert, interview 1, transcript.

our understanding of past political and social practices as arguably more inclusive than they actually were. My understanding of these interviews as performances of contemporary queer politics is informed by Irial Glynn and J. Olaf Kleist's monograph, *History, Memory and Migration*, where they note that politics inform the very consciousness of how we perceive the past. In their words, "the politics of memory are historical and respond to general developments and changes in society, both by adjusting the perception of the past to shifts in social constellations and because actors can utilise memories to meet new challenges."²⁴ The interviewees emphasized *TBP*'s political accomplishments and, apart from McCaskell, stressed the inclusivity of the newspaper in a manner that spoke to contemporary concerns around misogyny and racism in the gay community.

Each former member of the collective felt that masculinity was primarily discussed when broader questions of race, health, or HIV/AIDS were brought up. The process of erasing racial minorities, people with disabilities, or those afflicted with HIV/AIDS is one facilitated by how *TBP* is remembered and archived in the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, as well as in the memories of those so deeply invested in its activity during its publication. If the more mundane conversations and moments around registers such as race, ability, and health are not viewed with importance, it reinforces white, able-bodied hegemony in gay culture and naturalizes it as *the* experience of gay life in the 1970s and 1980s. The retelling of *TBP*'s role in mediating understandings of masculinity by those interviewed thus becomes part of a performance of commemorating

²⁴ Irial Glynn and J. Olaf Kleist, "The Memory and Migration Nexus: An Overview," in *History, Memory and Migration: Perceptions of the Past and the Politics of Incorporation*, ed. Irial Glynn and J. Olaf Kleist (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 10.

activism, specifically white activism, along with particular narratives around gender and sexual equality in the gay community.

My analysis of how masculinity is recollected and/or forgotten in the interviews exemplifies how gender is reconstructed in the very retellings of *TBP*'s history. I do not suggest that my own poststructuralist analysis of *TBP* is either somehow closer to the "truth" or more "accurate." Indeed, David Rayside cautioned me in his interview that a poststructuralist reading of *TBP* could slip into misrepresenting the newspaper's focus or agenda or that of the editorial collective.²⁵ Heeding his words, I use the interviews as opportunities to substantiate my analysis or highlight the discrepancies between how masculinity *TBP* is remembered or forgotten compared to the discussions that took place.

As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, the voices of those who were non-white, living with a disability, or afflicted by HIV/AIDS do appear in *TBP*. They do so in the Classified section, letters to the collective from readers, or in editorials on these subjects. Reading *TBP* for these voices not only reveals the sought-after visibility that so many desired, but challenges the newspaper as simply an archive of gay activism of the 1970s and 1980s. *TBP* was not simply a political newspaper, but a mirror, or a "heterotopia" in the words of Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, for cultural values and beliefs around gender, sexuality, race, and the body.²⁶ The newspaper both reflected and refracted an increasingly visible gay culture that positioned gay cultural life as a space for white, able-bodied gay men and women.

²⁵ Rayside, interview 1, transcript.

²⁶ Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 24

Mediating Gay Male Masculinity and a Modern Gay Identity

While *TBP* was a liberationist newspaper bent on fighting for the sexual freedoms and equality experienced by heterosexuals, it was also a periodical that was, in some ways, restricted by heteronormative expectations around the stylization and performance of gendered bodies. This was most commonly evident in advertisements, articles, and images in *TBP* equated masculinity with whiteness, effeminacy with Asian bodies, sexual virility and hypermasculinity with black bodies, and invisibility or a lack of sexuality with disabled bodies and bodies affected by HIV/AIDS. Classified ads also perpetuated these tropes in their quest for a sexual partner, along with the equation of masculinity and passing. In spite of conversations around masculinity, cruising, race, ability, and HIV/AIDS during *TBP*'s latter years, the ubiquitous presence of white macho "clones," as flagged by Martin Levine, up until the newspaper's folding demonstrates that white able-bodies continued to inform the imaginations of gay men on how masculinity should be stylized.

The editorial collective's mediation of gay male masculinity occurred alongside the earliest presence of heteronormative constructions of masculinity and macho style in the gay community from 1971 onward. Masculinity and ideas of what it meant to be masculine, how masculinity looked, and how to perform culturally acceptable masculine behaviour and actions revolved around a self-regulation of gender by gay men and women. Throughout its pages, *TBP* reflected an institutionalization of white bodies as the benchmark on a spectrum of masculinities and how macho culture became an almost-exclusively white ableist subculture that remains enshrined within the gay male community. As macho culture became deeply entrenched in the gay male community, it

not only alienated non-white gay men, but relegated those with disabilities and female masculinities as inherently inferior performances of gender and sexuality. The continued presence of macho culture in the gay community helps to reinforce gay activism, the gay community, and gay public spaces as privileged spaces for white able-bodied gay macho men, leaving those who do not conform voiceless and invisible. Indeed, this is reflected in the very memory-making of *TBP*.

TBP is memorialized for many great achievements centred on the politics of gay liberation. The focus of *TBP* as a political engine of gay and lesbian activism—while undoubtedly true—creates a specific political and social narrative, one that becomes archived throughout these various mediums. As a result, *TBP* becomes remembered for its role in confronting homophobic violence, heralding calls of unrest and protest, and fostering a budding gay community in Toronto. Yet at the same time, *TBP*'s attention to constructions of gender, sexuality, race, and ability in a flourishing and highly visible gay culture risks being forgotten. This dissertation is an intervention in that assumed progressive white narrative by demonstrating that anxieties and tensions around the presentation of gay male style lay at the very heart of *TBP*'s political efforts for gay liberation and efforts to construct a contemporary gay identity.

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Research Ethics Office
Research Ethics Board
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Ethics Clearance Form – New Clearance

This is to certify that the Carleton University Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical clearance. The REB found the research project to meet appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human, 2nd edition*, and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

Date of Clearance: March 09, 2015

Researcher: Nicholas Hrynyk (Student Research: Ph.D. Student)

Department: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences\Womens and Gender Studies (Pauline Jewett Institute of)

University: Carleton University

Research Supervisors (if applicable): Prof. Patrizia Gentile and Prof. James William Opp

Project Number: 102706

Alternate File Number (if applicable):

Project Title: "Pin the Macho on the Man": Portrayals of Gay Male Masculinity as a "style" in Toronto's The Body Politic, 1972-1985

Funder (if applicable):

Clearance Expires: May 31, 2015

All researchers are governed by the following conditions:

Annual Status Report: You are required to submit an Annual Status Report to either renew clearance or close the file. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the immediate suspension of the project. Funded projects will have accounts suspended until the report is submitted and approved.

Changes to the project: Any changes to the project must be submitted to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board for approval. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

Adverse events: Should a participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. You must submit a written record of the event and indicate what steps you have taken to resolve the situation.

Suspension or termination of clearance: Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2nd edition and the Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Louise Heslop

Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board

Andy Adler

Vice-Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board