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Male Bodybuilding: The Social Construction of a Masculine Identity

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Introduction

Until recently, bodybuilding was regarded as a deviant activity by a broad spectrum of society. Much of the earlier research in the area of bodybuilding focused upon the differences in personality structures of weightlifters and other athletes (Bednarek 239). Bodybuilders were depicted as experiencing feelings of inferiority, lacking masculinity, and displaying narcissistic and homosexual tendencies. Many contemporary scholars continue to describe bodybuilding negatively. Klein for example, describes bodybuilding men as being neurotically insecure, and engaged in a futile search for a hypermasculine body image.

During the last decade, however, North American society has witnessed the emergence of a new somatic culture in which physical fitness became revered, and bodybuilding has become increasingly acceptable. In this somatic culture, the body is seen as an entity which is in the process of becoming; a *project* which should be worked at and accomplished as part of an *individual's self-identity* (Schilling 5). Recognizing the body as a project entails the acceptance that its size, shape and appearance are subject to reconstruction according to the designs of its owner. It requires an individual's consciousness about the management and aesthetics of his/her body. This necessitates the recognition of the body as both a personal and social resource which projects messages about a person's self-identity. Therefore, bodies become malleable objects which can be shaped by the vigilance and hard work of their owners (Schilling 5).

Bodybuilding has become a popular means by which people, particularly men, can assert their self-identities through the development of healthy bodies. Bodybuilding is a good example of the body as a project because the quality and size of bodybuilders' muscles challenge accepted notions of what is natural about male bodies (Schilling 7). By constructing "unnaturally" large and striated muscular bodies, bodybuilders are able to make powerful public and personal statements about who they are (Fussell). Glassner argued that bodybuilding positively

affects one's self-esteem and furthermore, bodybuilders have more positive body-images than athletes in other sports (Bednarek).

In addition, White and Gillet argued that bodybuilding was a response to a "crisis in masculinity" (20). Men often feel powerless and unsure of themselves due to the disparity between masculine traits they are expected to uphold and the social realities of daily life. Padfield argued that social changes which strip individuals of real power may lead to a denial of powerlessness in which flamboyant displays of cultural symbols such as muscularity offer some men a compensatory means by which they can construct and validate a particular masculine identity. Bodywork provides men with a site—their bodies—and a cultural practice—the disciplinary regimens and discourses of bodybuilding—with which to redress personal anxieties through the pursuit of a muscular image that embodies normative masculinity (White and Gillet 20).

Societal attitudes towards men's bodies, and subsequent changes in men's feelings and behaviors regarding their appearance, have prompted this study of the role of bodybuilding in men's lives. Specifically, this study examines how bodybuilding practices and discourses shape men's presentation of self, particularly their sense of masculinity. Bodybuilders pursue a hypermasculine self-identity, reflected in the fact that they aspire to the body type known as "muscular mesomorphy," which is characterized by a well-developed chest and arm muscles and wide shoulders tapering down to a narrow waist (Mishkind et al. 39). The mesomorphic form is tied to cultural views of masculinity which dictate that men be powerful, strong, competent and in control of their environment.

Such a study is necessary since bodybuilding as a cultural phenomenon has largely eluded social inquiry, and therefore we lack sociological analyses of how it affects men's body images and shapes their sense of masculinity. In addition, a study of bodybuilding would highlight an area of sociological research that has until recently been neglected namely, the body.

In this paper, I begin by examining the history of modern bodybuilding, which has its origins in nineteenth century notions of "muscular Christianity" and sport. Being a good disciple of God meant building a strong, disciplined body. It will be shown that modern bodybuilding represents a secularized version of muscular Christianity. Despite its separation from Christianity, bodybuilding has retained its emphasis on moral devotion, hard work and spiritual transcendence of the uncontrolled and unrestrained physical body. Second, I will locate the analysis of bodybuilding within a newly emergent literature—the sociology of the body

which argues that the body is a text. The values of a culture are inscribed onto the body, although not necessarily in a straight forward fashion. Finally, I will discuss bodybuilding as a material practice by which normative masculinity is inscribed on the muscular body. One way in which this inscription process is achieved is through the Protestant Work Ethic which encourages success through personal initiative and hard work. It will be shown that like femininity, masculinity needs to be problematized and recognized as a social construct, not a "natural" homogenous identity.

In nineteenth century Britain and America, educators, physicians and national leaders feared that industrialization had caused the decline of white middle-class masculinity (Mangan and Walvin). President Theodore Roosevelt, for example, argued that men were becoming weak and effeminate, and would be unable to successfully fight in wars meant to further American territorial expansion. Sport was advocated to restore men's physical and spiritual well-being, thereby spawning the movement known as "muscular Christianity," which held that muscular growth, Christian morality and masculinity were inextricably woven in the lives of boys and men. Through athletic activity they developed physical presence, stoicism, the endurance of pain and scrutiny under pressure (Whitson).

The muscular Christian ideology gave rise to modern bodybuilding, which has its origins in the nineteenth-century "Strong-man era" in which professional Strongmen publicly displayed their superior physical strength on stage and in circuses (Chapman). The Strongman, Eugene Sandow, became the first recognizable bodybuilder; he was considered a perfect combination of muscular development and attractiveness. So much so that his embodiment of gorgeous brawn shifted the focus on extraordinary strength to the aesthetics of muscularity.

During the 1950s-60s, bodybuilding declined in popularity. Coward (1) argued that the American public's concerns about health and the body were very different from the current obsession. People felt a basic optimism in the American medical system. The near elimination of infectious diseases through the development of vaccines, improved hygiene, and improvements in surgical techniques, meant that most illnesses could be successfully treated; and advances in medical science and research would enable doctors to control chronic illnesses.

There was, of course, a general commonsensical view that people had to protect their health (Coward 2). World War II had raised people's consciousness about good nutrition and physical fitness. What was largely absent during this period, however, was the intense concern with one's health and longevity which characterizes the public today. There

was no sense that an individual's well-being was their responsibility; that we have to "eat right," and exercise long and hard to reap the positive effects of physical fitness.

Bodybuilding did not become fashionable until the 1970s with the emergence of the health and fitness industry. The ideology of the health and fitness industry, which espouses personal responsibility for one's physical and psychological well-being, coincided near perfectly with the individually-oriented nature of bodybuilding and its promises of superior strength, health and beauty. With the release of the award-winning film *Pumping Iron*, the bodybuilding subculture was introduced to mass audiences, thereby signaling the first real step to cinematic stardom for the film's central character, Arnold Schwarzenegger. The television series *The Incredible Hulk* starring Lou Ferrigno, brought bodybuilding into people's homes in the same way as did the movies *Conan* and *Terminator I, II*, also starring Arnold Schwarzenegger; and lastly, the popularity of bodybuilding thrived as sports such as professional wrestling promoted competition between hulking men. Through these developments along with the health and fitness trend, bodybuilding became recognized as a legitimate occupation.

In the 1990s, bodybuilding has gained an unprecedented popular status. The media focus on the phenomenon of muscle as never before, drawing increasing numbers of people to weight training. Muscle is considered to be attractive, sexy, desirable and healthy; bodybuilders can be observed in modern gyms, television commercials, magazines, movies and on the streets. Bodybuilding has become a billion-dollar industry in America, and a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide (Prokop and Neveux).

Bringing this historical analysis up to date requires an examination of the culture in which bodybuilding exists, specifically how the body and body altering activities such as weight training have become central to Western culture. To appreciate the emergence of this cultural "body boom," I will review the literature written on the body. A review of the social science literature on the body will help to provide a foundation for this study of bodybuilding.

There has been growing academic interest in the body and its status within the discipline of sociology. The sociology of the body has emerged as a distinct area of study, and it has been suggested that the body serve as an organizing principle for sociology (Schilling 1).

Conventional sociological theory treated the body as a "natural" entity with fixed meanings. Its status in society was taken for granted. In contrast, sociologists of the body problematize the relationship between

the body and society; they argue that the physical body symbolically reproduces the vulnerabilities and anxieties of the social body. A major contributor to our understanding of the relationship between the body and the social system is Michel Foucault, who argued that modern bodies are increasingly subject to social controls and interventions aimed at channeling and managing its energies. The body constituted the link between daily practices and the large-scale organizations of power. The forms that some of these linkages take is illustrated in Foucault's work on disciplinary regimens, including the prison, hospital and reformatories. These studies are concerned with how the transition from traditional to modern societies changed the means by which individuals are constructed as embodied subjects and connected to institutions.

Foucault argued that discipline involved the scientifically managed inscription of certain institutional values and knowledge on bodies. This strategy was epitomized by the Panopticon designed by Jeremy Bentham (Foucault, *Discipline* 200). The major effect of the Panopticon was to induce in the inmate a state of consciousness and permanent visibility that assured the automatic functioning of power (Foucault, *Discipline* 201). Ultimately, being under the constant gaze of their jailer was supposed to encourage prisoners to monitor their own thoughts and actions. Disciplines produced subjected and practiced bodies—"docile" bodies—which required the management of the process of bodily actions and their effects (Foucault, *Discipline* 138). Disciplines enabled a detailed political investment of the body referred to by Foucault as a "micro-physics of power," which served to fragment and partition the body's movements both spatially and temporally.

In summary, Foucault produced an insightful analysis which destabilized notions of the body as an essential, pre-discursive entity. Foucault described the body as being socially constructed through relations of power and knowledge. Moreover, because he analyzed in critical detail how disciplinary powers manipulated the body into a docile object, Foucault's theory had the advantage of showing how the material body becomes the target of social control.

Many scholars working on the sociology of the body are indebted to Foucault's insights, but have begun to refine his concepts. Bryan Turner, a leading theorist of the body, argued that Foucault developed an overarching and homogenous concept of discipline which overlooked the complexities of twentieth century disciplinary processes. Therefore, while drawing on Foucault, Turner expanded on his concept of discipline by constructing different historically specific body typologies which are more sophisticated and attuned to the multifaceted nature of modern discipline.

Drawing on Max Weber, Turner argued that the restraint of desire traditionally involved an ideology of *asceticism* as a way of controlling women's bodies. Weber was the major theorist of asceticism and its bearing on the moral regulation of the internal body (Turner, *Body* 92). Weber produced a theory of the relationship between the Protestant ethic and the development of capitalism. The Protestant ethic involved self-discipline and subjective coercion, rather than being an ideology forced upon workers. Protestantism brought about a rational ordering of the body which was thus protected from the disruptions of desire in the interests of continuous factory production (Turner, *Body* 100). According to Turner, an ideology of asceticism regulated the consumption patterns of the affluent middle-class, which was known to over-indulge in bodily pleasures such as food and drink. Therefore, the subordination of such passions required strict adherence to diet, exercise and good works within patriarchal society.

In developing sociological analyses of the body, a discussion of the masculine body is absent. Turner recognized the complexities of feminine embodiment, but he did not consider how masculinity is inscribed on the male body. According to Morgan, the primary reason for this neglect was that historically, the gendered nature of men's lives has been denied; generally, gender has been synonymous with "woman." However, as a result of critical feminist inquiries into gender inequality, researchers such as Kaufman, Kimmel and Messner who study men and masculinities, have begun to examine the issues of men's domination and oppression of women, children and other men (Segal cited in Haddad xii). Like femininity, masculinity is now being problematized. The increasingly critical nature of men's studies is creating a wider premise upon which questions concerning the complexities of masculinities, power and authority can be addressed.

For instance, Kimmel and Messner argued for the critique and consequently, the rejection of the processes by which white, middle class, heterosexual masculinity is normalized. Rather than be treated as the norm, heterosexual masculinity needs to be recognized as the outcome of social power struggles between men and women of different classes, races and sexual orientations. Men's experiences differ from one another according to the structural mechanisms through which power and resources are distributed. Hence, it is a mistake to speak of masculinity as though it is a monolithic, homogenous identity. To do so would involve positing one form of masculinity as normative and making all other masculine identities deviant.

Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity" highlights the heterogeneous nature of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the cul-

tural dominance of white, middle-class, heterosexual masculinity, and the subordination of alternative masculinities. For example, gay men have continually dealt with dominant social discourses and practices which declare them to be abnormal, perverted and deviant (Kinsman 4). Such views create a hierarchy between gay men's experiences as "queer" men and that of "normal" heterosexual men. Consequently, gay men are trying to expose heterosexual masculinity for what it is—a subjectivity that is organized within structures of control and authority (Chapman and Rutherford 11). Its status is being undermined in order to reveal it as one among numerous masculine subjectivities.

An important site for the social construction and reproduction of heterosexual masculinity is sports (Kidd). Through the values and behavioral norms it promotes and ultimately naturalizes, both on the field and in organizational hierarchies, competitive sport is a masculinizing practice. As a sport, bodybuilding is an important practice since ideas about masculinity are inscribed on male bodies. Some men lift weights to construct an aesthetically pleasing body, while others emphasize strength or the personal autonomy derived from bodybuilding as an individualist sport.

The relationship between the male body and the dominant discourses of masculinity converge upon the issue of desire. Consumer culture stimulates men's desires to be attractive, intelligent and effectual individuals through the lure of achieving an ideal masculine body and the promise of future perfection. Male bodies are exploited in advertisements for beauty products such as cologne, deodorants and skin lotions, and in magazines dedicated to health and fitness (Dutton and Laura; Wernick). Men's desires, moreover, are not necessarily mentally or physically healthy—they can suffer loss of bodily health, happiness and/or emotional and social relationships. The pleasure/desire axis thus sustains social forms which keep relationships as they are (Coward 13).

To better explain the relationship between muscles and masculine desire, Fussell's personal biography concerning his four years of bodybuilding provides a useful guide. Fussell argued that bodybuilding provided a unique opportunity to examine the tensions within normative masculinity because muscles are *the* distinctive symbol of masculinity (Wacquant, Pugs 171). Studies have shown that men's self-esteem is higher when their body is large, hard and muscular, thereby commanding attention and respect (Thune cited in Pleck 107). The desire for muscles reveals men engaged in a passionate battle with their own sense of vulnerability (Glassner 292), and bodybuilding stands as the existential *angst* of masculinity because, according to Wacquant (Pugs 171), by "reducing sport to a battle with and against one's body, bodybuilding

strips athletics down to its purely manhood-generating and manhood-affirming functions." Similarly, Pleck (106) argued that if men's self-doubts inspire their muscular development, bodybuilding is "perhaps the archetypal expression of male identity insecurity." Grounded in a politics of the body, bodybuilding is an assertion of masculine dominance as power, mastery and skill through exaggerations of the male physique (Mason 29). A study of male bodybuilders, therefore, could be expected to yield important insights about the mutually constitutive nature of men's desires, the physical body and hegemonic masculinity.

This study consisted of seventeen primarily non-competitive bodybuilders from Saskatoon. Since I was unable to obtain a list of competitive bodybuilders from the Saskatchewan Amateur Bodybuilding Association, respondents were chosen from the California Fitness Centre, Rico's Health & Fitness Centre, Iron Works and the YMCA. The respondents were interviewed in coffee shops or in the Graduate Students' office space in Geology, University of Saskatchewan.

Based on the interview data, the following is a profile of the bodybuilding respondents including their age, marital status, body height and weight and level of education. The respondents ranged in age from 20 to 33, with an average of 25; their weight ranged from 172 pounds to 245 pounds with an average of 196 pounds; and their height ranged from 5'6.5" to 6'4" with an average of 5'9." 65% were single, 29% had girlfriends and 6% were married. At the time of the interviews, 71% of the respondents were enrolled full-time and 6% were enrolled part-time at the University of Saskatchewan. Their areas of study included Anthropology, Near Eastern Archaeology, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Law, Masters of Business Administration, Commerce, Physiology, Physical Education, Agriculture and Chemistry. Respondent #10 attended a technical college to become a Registered Psychiatric nurse; respondents #3 and 4 had a Grade 12 education; and respondent #9 dropped out of school after Grade 11, and was in the process of completing high school equivalency exams.

The number of years the respondents had been involved in bodybuilding ranged from 2.5 to 15 years, with an average of 7; and the number of hours/week they weight-trained ranged from 5.5 to 12.5, with an average of 9. The amount of weight bench pressed ranged from 150 to 345 pounds, with an average of 243 pounds. The average amount of weight squatted ranged from 150 to 1,100 pounds, with an average of 328 pounds.

The interviews were analyzed by conducting a thematic content analysis of the categories, which came from the data itself. The themes which will be discussed are discipline and masculinity.

The respondents' experiences of bodybuilding were examined to determine if and how bodywork practices increased their sense of masculinity. 81% of the respondents believed bodybuilding enhanced their sense of masculinity. Bodybuilding increased their self-confidence in regard to body size, strength, appropriate masculine behavior and attractiveness. Respondent #10 indicated that when he was a young bodybuilder, his large size "commanded respect; I never experienced any conflict. People looked up to me because I was a bodybuilder. Bodybuilding gave me a sense of power—of being 'ten feet tall.'"

Because of his job as a bouncer at a local bar, respondent #6 was explicitly aware of the relationship between physical strength and domination. He argued that bodybuilding made him stronger and better able to subdue antagonistic men. Although he thought brawling was barbaric, he felt self-assured and proud of his ability to force other's submission to his will.

Some of the respondents were ambivalent about the relationship between bodybuilding and masculinity. Respondent #11 said that bodybuilding could not make him feel more manly since he was "a man anyway you look at it"; rather, bodybuilding made him a better man. He took his gender identity for granted by assuming the existence of an essential, unchanging masculine form which is invulnerable to social practices. Respondent #1 said the experience of masculinity was contingent upon social contexts: bodybuilding boosted his masculinity in terms of the ability to train and develop greater physical strength, but not in areas such as public speaking. Lastly, two respondents claimed they did not weight-train in order to feel more masculine, while simultaneously acknowledging that some aspects of masculinity, namely self-confidence and impression management skills, were in fact enhanced through bodybuilding.

The definitions of normative masculinity have changed over the past forty years as men try to construct more personally satisfying gender identities (Ehrenreich). For example, in the 1950s, men often felt oppressed by the husband/provider role and its values of responsibility, self-discipline and protective commitment to women and children (Ehrenreich 169). Consequently, in the 1960s, masculine values emphasized irresponsibility and self-indulgence among men, resulting in the "playboy" era, which offered men an escape from the stifling middle-class preoccupations of monogamous marriage and the nuclear family. The Playmate in *Playboy* magazine proved that "a playboy didn't have to be a husband to be a man" (Ehrenreich 67).

Although contemporary gender conflicts are different from those of the 1950s, specifically many women are employed and increasing numbers of men participate in child-care, disagreement surrounding accept-

able definitions of masculinity continues in the 1990s. Respondent #8 tried to reconcile the prevailing view of masculinity which rewards physical strength and aggression or "brawn over brain" with his vision of greater emotional receptiveness. "Due to my job as an ob/gyn I don't want to look dominating and intimidating. I have to come across to my female patients as sensitive and empathetic, not domineering" (respondent #8). This comment resonated with the "New Age Man" literature (Ehrenreich), which advocates the development of a masculinity premised upon sensitivity, caring and emotional expressiveness in men, while retaining masculinist values such as physical strength.

Physical strength, particularly within the context of normative masculinity, contains a powerful moral dimension. Individual men's self-worth and value is partially determined by their moral devotion and ability to perform tireless physical labour. Such personal initiative forms the basis of the Protestant Work Ethic, which ensures moral salvation and self-control through a systematic method of rational conduct thereby freeing people from irrational impulses (Weber 118-19).

Weber's discussion of the relationship between success, self-control and hard work resonated with the respondents' views on bodybuilding. 94% of the respondents either directly or indirectly adhered to the Protestant Work Ethic. Bodybuilding was treated as a "calling." Through continuous weight training and stringent dieting, which engendered self-discipline and self-restraint, the respondents became physically and psychologically strong, proud, "self-made" men. For example, respondent #15 attributed his success as a bodybuilder to the fact that as a child growing up on a farm, his parents instilled the work ethic in him; he learned that hard work, discipline and pain are requisite to any accomplishment—there can be no benefits without hard work. The respondent thus assumed responsibility for his muscular transformation and its hoped for emotional effects including pride and confidence.

The Protestant Work Ethic and its valuation of continuous, rational labour was also evident in the respondents' attitudes toward body fat, which symbolized laziness, a lack of discipline and willpower. Failing to conform to normative expectations regarding one's appearance inspired shame in those respondents who were overweight in their pre-bodybuilding days. For example, respondent #16 stated,

I felt sluggish and almost embarrassed by the way I looked because I felt like; ...I knew that I should look better and I hated the fact that I'd wake up in the morning and I'd be fat.... I don't want fat hanging out all over the place.... When I look in the mirror now and I see a little bit of fat hanging here or there it just revolts me...bodybuilding makes me more attractive; ...I think it's nicer to look

at someone who has a little bit of muscularity than a big fat guy...to put it bluntly.... My main goal...is to be able to pull off my shirt this summer and not be embarrassed about it.

The respondent perceived a soft, shapeless body as disgusting because it negated cultural standards of masculine desirability including hardness and physical power. Such undesirable characteristics could, however, be alleviated through the development of a toned, muscular body. But this required the endurance of systematic methodical training, the accompanying physical exhaustion and overcoming obstacles including: injuries and that disappointing moment when the muscles reach a plateau and subsequently stop growing.

Bordo (136), in her analysis of the cultural meanings of fat and slenderness, argued that the commitment to building and tightening one's physique "operated as a symbol of successful upward aspiration to those who have the 'right stuff.'" The muscular body is representative of those who sacrifice personal conveniences and transcend physical and psychological pain in order to achieve goals such as an aesthetically pleasing masculine persona and success in worldly affairs.

An appreciation of the hard work and dedication involved in bodybuilding requires an examination of its concrete practice, specifically weight training. In turn, understanding weight training requires an examination of the modes of working out, specifically free weight versus machines; the movements undertaken, specifically sets and reps; and bodily experiences such as pain, which resulted from intensive exercising.

The bodybuilder's workouts are typically divided according to the use of machines and free weights. Free weights are considered to be more dangerous than machines since the user can lose their balance and lose control of the weights, especially when heavy weights are being used, thereby risking bodily injuries. Thus, because of the greater skill said to be involved and the user's greater ability to present himself as a competent athlete, serious bodybuilders tend to denigrate machines and praise barbells and dumbbells for heavier, more complex workouts. 38% of the respondents used free weights exclusively because they forced muscles to work harder and achieve better coordination, and build greater muscle mass. By choosing which and how intensely to exercise each muscle, the respondents had some control of their body size and shape. Such control brought them nearer to the cultural ideal of hyper-masculinity.

A division of movements employing either free weights or machines is between sets and repetitions (Aycock 348). A set is an uninterrupted,

rhythmic sequence of movements performed to exercise particular muscle groups, while a rep is the number of times that a motion is repeated within a single set. There was considerable variation in the number of sets and reps performed in a workout; therefore I was not able to provide an average. The number of sets and reps performed generally depended upon two factors: first, the muscle group being exercised. For example, respondent #11 said because the chest, back and legs are larger muscles than the biceps and triceps, they needed to be worked harder. Second, whether it was a "light" or a "heavy" exercise day in which the purpose of exercising and the amount of weight used differed. The purpose of a light day was toning and the purpose of a heavy day was building muscle mass. For example, respondent #17 performed 5 sets and 10-15 reps on a light day and on a heavy day when he wanted to build more muscle mass, he performed 3 sets involving the use of heavier weights and fewer reps.

An interesting feature of the interviews was the respondents' views on "pain." Pain occupied a high position in bodily sensations that accompany weight training. Pain involved the subordination of the body to regimental discipline, thereby allowing the bodybuilders to make progress in their training. The respondents agreed that pain was necessary for building and maintaining a "ripped" muscular body. "Ripped" is bodybuilding jargon for extreme muscular definition obtainable through possible steroid use, minimum body fat levels and long, strenuous workouts. Pain also inspired some of the respondents to lift weights even harder, surpass personal thresholds and become successful bodybuilders.

The respondents' comments revealed how pain was subtly transformed into desire. For example, although 88% experienced bodily discomforts ranging from nausea, muscle soreness, muscle and tendon injuries, headaches, fainting, stomach cramps, vomiting and hemorrhoids, particularly when using extremely heavy weights, 82% felt that pain was necessary to become a successful bodybuilder—"no pain, no gain." While the respondents identified bodily discomforts such as fainting and muscle injuries as "bad pain" due to their unpleasurable qualities, they liked, desired and sought out *the burn*, a stimulating reaction that was considered vital to successful bodybuilding. Physically, the burn, which one of the respondents said "fe[lt] like a hot towel wrapped around the muscle," resulted when the muscles were exhausted from being exercised to their maximum capacity. Psychologically, the burn was described as a rush, euphoric, stimulating, intensely desirable and invoking feelings of power and strength.

The importance of the burn is revealed in Arnold Schwarzenegger's enthusiastic comparison of *the pump*—which arises after the burn and is

intensely desired and appreciated by bodybuilders—to the male sexual orgasm.

The greatest feeling you can get in the gym or the most satisfying feeling you can get in the gym is the pump. Let's say you train your biceps: blood is rushing into your muscles and that's what we call the "pump." Your muscles get a really tight feeling, like your skin is going to explode any minute. You know it's really tight like somebody is blowing air into your muscles. It just blows up and it feels different, it feels fantastic. It's as satisfying to me as coming is, you know, as having sex with a woman and coming. So can you believe how much I'm in heaven. I'm like getting the feeling of coming in the gym, I'm getting a feeling of coming at home, I'm getting a feeling of coming backstage when I pump up, when I bow in front of five thousand people, I get the same feeling—so I'm coming day and night, I mean that's terrific, right? So I'm in heaven. (Cited in Wacquant, *Review* 176)

Similarly, two respondents described the burn in terms reminiscent of sexual orgasms. Respondent #1 described the burn as an intense sensation in which "you're only conscious of that feeling in the muscle and nothing else.... That's the only thing that exists in your mind for that brief moment in time.... There are a sort of range of sensations that one experiences, but they're all sort of similar. The burn however is different from other sorts of sensations...when one has done it alot...it's overwhelming."

The burn can best be achieved by using light weights, which "allow one to contract a muscle much harder...you can get inside the muscle and there's ways of moving it...and pushing it...to produce an intense sensation.... I always seek to have a more intense sensation of the muscle."

Like Schwarzenegger, the respondent accounted for both the experiential pleasure of the exercise process and its dominance of bodybuilders' psyche as a state of semi-erotic arousal which can be produced at will and constantly renewed (Dutton 277). The burn became a self-sustaining experience: no longer an incidental by-product of muscular exercise, it became the goal of exercise itself. Pleasure and pain did not exist in tension, but were indistinguishable.

In conclusion, weight training was the material practice by which the muscular body was constructed. Through its demands of self-discipline and self-restraint, weight training subordinated the respondents' bodies and reorganized their daily lives around the achievement of perfect masculine physicality. The effects of bodybuilding on masculinity were mediated by desire. By its promise of greater physical and psychological self-control, and aesthetic value, bodybuilding enabled the respondents

to construct a superior self-identity that was premised upon Western cultural ideals of hypermasculinity including power, authority and domination.

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