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**Deconstructing Modern-Western Masculinity
in Three Film Adaptations of *Peer Gynt***



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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis considers what R.W. Connell terms *hegemonic masculinity* and what George L. Moss terms *manliness* in three film adaptations of Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* directed by David Bradley (United States, 1941), Bentein Baardson (Norway, 1993), and Uwe Janson (Germany, 2006). Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as, "[...] the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy which guarantees [...] the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell 1995, 77). Besides a handful of the most elite, wealthy and powerful men, very few live up to these standards. Most men are positioned somewhere beneath them, either pushing their way to the top or complicit with the trickle-down effects these ideals establish within their own social order. George L. Mosse writes in his book *The Image of Man*, "[...] manliness not only was thought necessary for running bourgeois society but also served to define it, side by side with family life, which was said to be at the heart of modern culture" (Moss 1998, 143). It is this manliness, this hegemonic masculinity ideal, that runs steadily and profusely throughout all three adaptations of *Peer Gynt* which I aim to highlight clearly within the following pages.

1.a CONTEXTUALIZING THE ADAPTATIONS

To understand the similarities and differences between each adaptation we can use Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation for each film in the context of the, "What? Who? Why? How? Where? When?" (Hutcheon 2006, VII). Hutcheon's *what* is the form that an adaptation takes. For example: a comic strip to a play, a film to a novel, or a play to a film. Each medium contains its own "[...] communicational energetics" (Gaudreault and Marion 2004, 65). Thus, using Ibsen's play and transferring it to film constitutes a shift in these energies. Hutcheon summarizes that, "film is usually said to be the most inclusive and synthesizing of performance forms [...]" and that the medium of film "[...] opens up new possibilities" (Hutcheon 2006, 35). If this is to be believed as true, this shift in media not only warrants a closer look but demands it. If a camera can "[...] isolate some element of a scene and bestow upon it not only meaning but also symbolic significance by its act of

contextualizing” (Hutcheon 2006, 71), then it must be explored. In such a shift the adapted text changes, it is altered and becomes its own work of art complete with nuances, subtleties, and subtext. Of course, there are potentially negative effects of this transposition as well. When moving a piece of literature to the screen there is often a reduction of scope. An example would be Uwe Janson’s adaptation where he has edited and cut many of the scenes such as Peer’s travels to Morocco, his encounter with the Boyg, and his long monologues. In Janson’s adaptation these are gone. Whether this makes for a better or worse version of *Peer Gynt* is debatable; however, it remains non debatable that it is altered and, therefore, contains themes and ideas that have been, thus far, untouched and unscrutinised. Furthermore “The text of a play does not necessarily tell an actor about such matters as the gestures, expressions, and tones of voice to use in converting the words on a page into a convincing performance” (J. Miller 1986, 48). Rather it is, “[...] Up to the director and the actors to actualize the text and to interpret and then recreate it” (Hutcheon 2006, 39). In these choices made by both actors and directors throughout each of the three adaptations lies the body of my thesis.

Each of these three film adaptations have been created between the 1941 and 2006 in Western countries (the United States, Norway, Germany) placing them all well within a modern masculine context which was “[...] in the making at the end of the eighteenth century” (Mosse 1996, 17). Janson’s adaptation is set in present times. Baardson’s is set somewhere within the 19th century in Norway. The same can be found with Bradley’s adaptation, however, Bradley’s was filmed entirely within the United States, and attempts to mimic the Norwegian landscape as closely as possible. In the context of Hutcheon’s theory this is our *where* and *when*. So, we are working with modern masculine adaptations set in Western culture. While Ibsen was also working during this time, masculinity has changed and evolved over time in relation to social norms and ideal constructs of hierarchy. Thus, we are working with new creations that need further exploration and deconstruction. The context in which these adaptations are set is important for understanding why these sources were chosen in the first place as, “Adaptations [...] constitute transformations of previous works in new contexts. Local particularities become transplanted to new ground, and something new and hybrid results” (Hutcheon 2006, 150). With the defined parameters of modern Western

masculinity, we can begin to see the effect of each adaptation within the context and masculine culture they are set in. Take for example Bradley's *Peer Gynt*, made in 1941 when the United States was in the midst of World War II. While the perspective of gender roles began to shift during the war, due to the need to have women helping in the factories to help supply the troops, they were still widely viewed as being inferior to men. Look at any advertisement, movie, or book from the time period and they are riddled with now seemingly absurd gender stereotypes. Bradley's *Peer Gynt* is no different, and in this regard without knowing the cultural context that this adaptation is taking place within, these stereotypes and absurdities make little sense.

On face value it seems obvious that David Bradley, Bentein Baardson, and Uwe Janson are the *who* (adaptors) in the framework of Hutcheon's theory. Yet the adapted text "[...] is not something to be reproduced, but rather something to be interpreted and recreated, often in a new diegetic, narrative, and axiological, that the adapter can use or ignore" (Gardies 1998, 68-71). To say it in another way, an adaptation is its own work created within its cultural setting guided by the adapted text. It is the adapter as well as the actors, editors, and cinematographers who influence the adaptation and create a piece that is more of a collaborative adaptation than one single person's adaptation. So, while Bradley, Baardson, and Janson are credited as being the "adaptors" of *Peer Gynt* for their given productions, any given adaptation has many adaptors.

As for *why* these filmmakers are making these adaptations there is, from my research, little to link any of them to political motives though it is not impossible. Yet each of the adaptations can be linked to one of the following: religion, financial motives, and cultural critique. A more obvious example is Baardson's adaptation of *Peer Gynt* as his was produced by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK). Scholar Ellen Rees has written, "NRK is a state-controlled broadcasting corporation in a country that [...] still has a state-funded People's Church ("Folkekirke") headed by the monarch"; she continues on to say "[...] NRK regularly sends programming with explicitly religious context on Christian holy days [...]" (Rees 2015, 375). Baardson's *Peer Gynt* was released during the Christmas season of 1993. Knowing this it becomes a bit easier to understand the *why* of such an adaptation. With

Bradley's *Peer Gynt* it could be assumed that he did it for "art's sake." Self-funded and using amateur actors and minimal equipment, this was his directorial debut. Uwe Janson's motives for making his adaptation remain unknown, perhaps it was simply, "[...] intended as tributes or as a way to supplant canonical cultural authority" (Hutcheon 2006, 93) or it could have been created, "[...] to engage in a larger social or cultural critique" (Hutcheon 2006, 94). Certainly, this last motive can be applied to all of the adaptations and will be the main context in which my work is focused. Whether intentional or unintentional most works of art, including the three examined in this thesis, are a critique and examination of the culture and society in which they are set.

This brings us to Linda Hutcheon's *how*. All three are film or television adaptations designed to be shown either in a movie theater or at home. All three directors had a specific audience for their adaptation. Again, all three adaptations came after *Peer Gynt* was already widely known within the three societies. In the United States there had been seventy-five showings by 1941. In Germany there were a staggering three hundred and thirty-eight showings by 1941. In Norway, there had been forty-nine recorded shows by the same year (IbsenStage). It is safe to say that, in Norway, long before 1993, *Peer Gynt* had already been deemed Norway's "national epic." By 2006, when Janson's adaptation was released, *Peer Gynt* had long been solidified as a staple of Ibsen's work across Europe. Needless to say, by the time of the premieres of the adaptations, *Peer Gynt* was well known in all three countries among theatrically inclined audiences and literature audiences alike. By adapting the play to a film medium, it created a new audience for their own work which in turn created a larger audience and spanned a wider age range. All three of these films are in their own language and filmed in their own countries leading me to believe that these adaptations were not intended to be transcultural but rather intracultural. Before moving on let me briefly summarise all three adaptations.

David Bradley's *Peer Gynt* film adaptation was created in 1941 in the United States of America, at the beginning of the United States' involvement in World War Two. While it was filmed entirely within the United States it was designed to feel like the viewer was experiencing this within Norway. Charlston Heston, born in Wilmette, Illinois in 1923, plays

the lead character in the first film he was ever credited with. This adaptation of *Peer Gynt* was, quite literally, the beginning of his career. He would go on to huge Hollywood success, appearing in over one hundred films and television shows. He was nominated for countless Emmys, Golden Globes, and Oscars throughout his career. He won his only Oscar for his lead role in the 1959 film *Ben-Hur* (IMDB). Heston passed away in 2008 at the age of eighty-four. David Bradley, born in Winnetka, Illinois in 1920 had already directed two small films by the time of 1941. His career, while not as long as Heston's, would be filled with large Hollywood budget films such as *Julius Caesar* in 1950, in which he and Heston once again worked together as Heston played the title role. Bradley's film career went quiet after 1968 and, in 1997, he passed away (IMDB). *Peer Gynt* was an amateur production, filmed entirely on one camera and was supported by a cast of local amateur actors. It would prove to be the first successful film that Bradley and Heston made in their long and successful careers.

Bentein Baardson's *Peer Gynt* is a film adaptation created in 1993 and set in Norway. Paul-Ottar Haga, born in Norway in 1965, plays the lead character. At the time of making this, Haga was at the beginning of his career. He would continue to appear in, mainly Norwegian, television and films throughout his life. His latest credited work was in 2017 and he currently still lives in Norway. Interestingly, Bentein Baardson already had a successful career as an actor before this production and would continue to afterwards. Born in 1953 in New York City, Baardson attended a prominent theatrical school in Norway and would go on to perform at many theatres throughout the country. His directorial debut was in 1979 with a production of *The Strongest*. He would continue to direct many productions throughout his life; everything from dramas to musicals to prominent Shakespearean works (Lyche, Norwegian Biographical Lexicon). *Peer Gynt* was only the second film he was credited with directing, his film directorial debut being five years prior on a production titled *Fornuftige dyr* (IMDB). In 1994, Baardson directed the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Lillehammer to great success. This adaptation of *Peer Gynt* was produced in part by NRK (Rees) as a three part mini series to be broadcast on television over the course of multiple days during the Christmas holidays. In 2006 Baardson would revisit *Peer Gynt* once again, directing a performance of it in Giza during the Ibsen Festival (Stavanger Aftenblad). Currently Baardson still lives and works in Norway.

Lastly, Uwe Janson's *Peer Gynt* is also a film adaptation. Created in 2006 it is filmed and placed in Germany. Robert Stradlober, born in 1982, plays the title role while Karoline Herfurth, born in 1984, plays Solveig. Stradlober and Herfurth already had successful careers before taking these roles. Stradlober had won multiple film awards by this point in Germany and Canada and would continue to after this production. Herfurth would go on to many more projects and many awards as well (IMDB). Yet their success was small compared to the long career that Janson had already had by 2006 (IMDB). Born in Germany in 1959, Janson's directorial debut was not until 1990 with the film *Verfolgte Wege*. He would continue to teach and work on a wide array of different styles of productions, from psychological thrillers to heavy dramas to light comedy. With his adaptation of *Peer Gynt*, he took a very different approach than he had with his previous works, redefining his style to much critical acclaim in Germany (Filmportal). It should be noted that all three continue to work in German television and movies to this day. Janson's *Peer Gynt* is a film adaptation that was made for a TV movie.

1.b THEORY

As already mentioned, as I explore Western masculinity in my thesis, I will draw upon the work of R.W. Connell as well as George L. Mosse. While my paper will be intercultural in nature, Connell's *hegemonic masculinity* and Mosse's *masculinity standard* can be found easily within each time period and adaptation I will scrutinize, specifically in relation to R.W. Connell's *subordinate masculinities* and Mosse's *countertypes*, which is to say "[...] those who stood outside or were marginalised by society [...] those who were perceived as asocial because they failed to conform to the social norms" (Mosse 1995, 56). I will reference a few gender theorists including the American philosopher and gender theorist, Judith Butler. In *Gender Trouble* Butler expands upon French theorist Michel Foucault's thought that: "The body is the inscribed surface of events [...]" (Leitch 2018, 2373). Butler takes this idea one step further and proclaims that, "[...] if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false" (Butler 1990, 2384). Butler then claims that while there is no true gender, "[...] gender is a performance

[...]” (Butler 1990, 2487). Using Butler’s theory we are led to believe that all gender is *performative* because, “[...] the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all” (Butler 1990, 2387) and that, “gender reality is created through sustained social performances” (Butler 1990, 2388). Every living being is a constructed identity created and molded by their performativity.

Ibsen Scholar’s Chengzou He and Jørgen Lorentzen have written on the subject of masculinity in Ibsen’s work, though they both have neglected *Peer Gynt* from their studies thus far. They highlight Ibsen’s work within bourgeois masculinity and the double perspective saying that the male characters in his work are, “[...] inspired and harmed by the bourgeois idea of manhood” (He 2008, 142) as well as Ibsen’s work in relation to fatherhood and patriarchy, “The patriarchal father appears in almost all of Ibsen’s works” (Lorentzen 2006, 821). Chengzou He explains that the idea of the successful man leads them to fight for their success, but those power distortions also lead them to their demise. Chengzou He theorizes that, “This double exposure informs most of the representations of Ibsen’s men” (He 2008, 143). Lorentzen highlights fatherhood in productions such as *The Wild Duck* and even goes so far as to suggest a link between patriarchal figures within Ibsen’s plays and patriarchal figures in Ibsen’s own life.

Anthony Clare, an Irish psychiatrist and author, writes in his book *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis*, about the public vs. private spheres in which men and women exist. He proposes the theory that men want to, “[...] become more capable of expressing the vulnerability and the tenderness and the affection we feel” (Clare 2000, 221) yet men struggle to do so because of the long-standing idea of the power of *patriarchy*, “[...] that set of relations of power that enable men to control women” (Clare 2000, 8). Clare continues on to explain that women trying to break free of such patriarchy move towards a *public* sphere whereas men often see this as proof that the *public* sphere is superior to the *private* and have no incentive to reevaluate their own position within it (Clare 2000, 8).

Film maker and feminist theorist Laura Mulvey’s notion of the *male gaze* will come up as well. Her essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” is based in psychoanalysis and

highlights that the male viewer objectifies and eroticizes the females within the film to lessen the discomfort that they themselves feel by being sexually objectified (Mulvey 2018, 1953). I will use her work to build my analysis upon, while attempting to refrain from engaging directly with the psychoanalytic theory. Robert Goddard's article "Looks Maketh The Man" and Keith Schuckmann's article "Masculinity, the Male Spectator, and the Homoerotic Gaze" both challenge Mulvey's work stating that the *female gaze* is just as influential as the *male gaze*. Goddard approaches his work from a first-person perspective rather than that strictly of the viewer (as Mulvey does) and thus will be beneficial as I compare male and female gazes between different adaptations.

It must briefly be addressed as to why I have chosen to work with adaptations specifically and how I will work with them. Linda Hutcheon, whose theory I will rely on for this states that, "[...] an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative - a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing" (Hutcheon 2006, 9). She states that adaptations can be described as:

- An acknowledged transposition of a recognisable other work or works
- A creative and an interpretative act of appropriation/salvaging
- An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work (Hutcheon 2006, 8).

Each of the three adaptations that I will use in my thesis can be categorized using the aforementioned parameters. All of them publicly recognize and advertise their origin in Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. Each has a different creative approach to the original. And each one, though cut in some places within different adaptations, remains true to the story line and much of the text written by Ibsen. Each one has its own aura but each one carries the spirit of the adapted text. In essence, "adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication" (Hutcheon 2006, 7). While publicly advertising their parallel to (and origin in) Ibsen's text, each of the following adaptations are highly original in their own takes of Peer as a man and the setting in which he is placed.

Hutcheon also addresses the specific shift in medium, from text to film, and its effect on the viewer saying, “[...] the telling mode (a novel) immerses us through imagination in a fictional world; the showing mode (plays and films) immerses us through the perception of the aural and the visual [...]” (Hutcheon 2006, 22). In the mode of showing we are no longer creating our own world rather we must conform to the world and forward momentum of the director’s choice (Hutcheon 2006, 23) and in that mode, depending on what time frame the work is based in, it can reflect the social and political setting it is created within (Hutcheon 2006: 28). Bradley’s adaptation, set in 1941 often reflects the ideal masculinity of its time: stoic, morally righteous, just, and courageous, without challenging it. Baardson’s, set in 1993, highlights masculinity through a heightened and exaggerated version of itself making it impossible to ignore during a time when this issue was not in the forefront of the social conversation. Janson’s adaptation, set in 2006, is a complex and subtle look at masculinity. Having come quite a great distance in regard to gender roles, woman’s rights in the workplace, and gay and lesbian rights, the theme of masculinity did not need to be punched through the wall of indifference, but instead continued on the nuanced conversational path that had already been forged. Each one, as Hutcheon highlights, is a product of its own time and tells a different story because of it.

Each of these theories will be brought together, some more strongly than others, throughout the following chapters of my thesis. In my gazes chapters I rely heavily on Mulvey’s work as it is what I have used to frame my own analysis upon but, even so, I have often brought her work together with the likes of Connell and Mosse’s theories. The theories of Mosse and Connell provide the framework in which my work is placed and viewed from throughout my work. It is their theories and the work they have already done which allows me to continue my own. While much of their work tends to overlap in some areas, they each have specific fields into which they dive further into. As we continue into the chapters I will use both, some more than the other depending on the chapter topic. The other theorists provide the foundations for the niche topics which are touched upon throughout my work whether it be Butlers *performativity* or Lorentzen’s *Patriarchal Father*.

I am not the first person to look closely at adaptations of *Peer Gynt*. Notably, Associate Professors Sofija Christensen and Per Esben Myren-Svelstad co-wrote an article titled “‘Akin to Peer Gynt’ - Remolding Peer in Adaptation.” In their article they use a similar method of analysing their adaptation of focus, a graphic novel Ibsen/Moen/Mairowitz. They also use Linda Hutcheon’s theory on which to build their analysis.

As they [adaptations] select, reject or highlight certain features of a text, we argue that adaptations function almost like barometers, revealing what a text means for a particular audience in a particular place and time. In our case, the graphic novel might be regarded as a particular performance of Ibsen’s dramatic text that in some sense ‘measures’ what Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* means in 21st century Norway (Christensen and Myren-Svelstad 2020, 46).

Their work is recent, having been published in April of 2020. It strikes me that, without prior knowledge of their work nor they of mine, our analytical approaches are strikingly similar. If anything, it serves to reinforce the validity of my work and that it has a strong foundation on which to stand. Their decision, to focus on this topic, is also interesting as I believe that, in the field of Ibsen studies, the focus will continue to shift towards these modern adaptations. While they focus primarily on one graphic novel, and I attempt to highlight a masculine perspective in three film adaptations, I cannot help but feel like kindred spirits pushing the field into another, under explored, realm.

1.c METHODOLOGY

I have begun by watching each adaptation separately, viewing them at face value. Watching them again I have taken note of uncanny moments. These uncanny moments can often be traced back to Peer either confronting, embracing, or running from his idea of hegemonic masculinity. As I have viewed these three different adaptations, themes have started to emerge that clearly show connections to one another and to each scholar’s work. Each film uses voyeuristic features, specific gazes, hierarchy, and sex in ways that often take the same form, but also often, in different forms. In Baardson’s work it is constant physical abuse, in

Janson's it can be found in the oddly present slapping and the metrosexual aesthetic; in Bradley's it is the eroticization of the male body and the masculine standard that Peer complies to. Using the idea of performative actions and cinematic theory I can pinpoint the gestures and the physicality of the character. Working in the context of performativity it naturally leads to the exploration of sex-roles, hegemonic masculinity, and bourgeois masculinity. Set within a specific social environment (modern Western masculinity) I will then be able to draw correlations, bringing it from a theoretical idea to a concretized conclusion.

Other themes of note found thus far call for the use of feminist film theory. Mulvey's notion of various types of gazes is paraphrased by film scholar Robert Stam as "[...] that of the camera, that of the characters looking at one another, and that of the spectator, introduced to voyeuristically identify with a masculinist gaze at woman" (Stam 2000, 174). I will go through each film and break down, scene by scene the camera positioning (framing) in relation to the characters and Peer. Subsequently there begins to emerge patterns that tell a distinct masculine story. These details are found in the framing and cinematographic choices. These choices also tell a specific story of the Peer that the adaptation wants to present, specifically the choice to include or not include scenes with sexual intercourse. Which adaptations have made the choice to include scenes that entail sexual intercourse? Is there nudity depicted in them? If there is only nudity in some of them but not others, why was that choice made and what narrative does that tell? I will look closely at the eroticization of Peer across each adaptation and see if I can find similar patterns in the others. In using feminist film theories in relation to gender and masculinity studies these choices will begin to make sense, drawing them from a subconscious level to a conscious level. I will present my work in four main chapters within the body of my thesis, dividing up each chapter thematically. Each adaptation will be discussed in the chapter and how it is situated in relation to the theme.

My focus will be on these three adaptations in a modern Western cultural setting, and all of them are set within a period ranging from 1941 to 2006. The issue that becomes immediately apparent when embarking on this project is that there are a limited number of masculinity

studies and theories, far outnumbered by feminist theories and scholars. Inevitably, I will be using feminist theory and gender studies. However, I will be using it sparingly to highlight the way that we can define me in relation to women or as a place to work from. It should also be noted that there are works from scholars such as Leo Kenner and Oliver Gerland that address *Peer Gynt*. Works such as these, however, address it from a psychoanalytical standpoint. While these are immensely interesting, they will be of less use to me as I am interested in Peer from a masculine, gender, and cultural studies standpoint.

Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt* in 1867 on the heels of his breakthrough play *Brand*. While this work's creation, and its spotlight on masculinity, could be chalked up to coincidence, there is evidence to suggest that there were outside influences that may have contributed and helped spur its creation.

There are distinct turning points in that [masculinity] history, even if they did not fundamentally affect the male ideal. The fin de siècle was one such period: the years roughly from the 1870's to the Great War gave a new impetus to both masculinity and its countertype. [...] The enemies of modern, normative masculinity seemed everywhere on the attack: women were attempting to break out of their traditional role; "unmanly" men and "unwomanly" women [...] were becoming ever more visible. They and the movement for women's rights threatened that gender division so crucial to the construction of modern masculinity (Moss 2010, 78).

The context in which *Peer Gynt* was created seems increasingly more appropriate and understandable. If *A Doll's House* is a commentary on femininity and the female role, *Peer Gynt* is a natural predecessor of that discussion within the context of masculinity. I imagine some may argue that Peer is not an "unmanly" man (to use Mosse's words). Of course, this can vary from production to production but, generally, Peer is presented to the viewer in the same light: as a vagabond. Mosse defines vagabonds more generally with the following passage:

Vagrants should be added to the list of outsiders, unkempt and dirty, and usually shown with ugly features. They upset all norms of bourgeois society: they had no work or place of residence and therefore were not integrated into any community. Moreover, they had no family (Mosse 2010, 72).

In all of my research I am not sure I have found a more fitting description of Peer. It is as if Mosse read Ibsen's work and directly lifted it from his pages. In the following chapters I will go into greater detail but, for the sake of the reader, I have briefly shown that my thesis is not unmerited in its roots. It is my hope that in my work it becomes clear that, at the hands of Ibsen, Bradley, Baardson, and Janson we watch Peer run headfirst into this idea of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity. My aim is to bring these to light and into our academic conversation so that these dialogs can be had about all of Ibsen's work and the exploration of the masculine role that lies within each one of them. In the following chapters I will begin by defining the parameters in which we can set each *Peer Gynt* adaptation, as well as pinpointing this normative hegemonic masculinity he chases. I will then look at violence, sex, patriarchal systems, and how they are used and weaponised in modern masculinity and these films. Following this we will explore cinematic gazes in depth, from both a male and female perspective. Finally, I will touch on alternative masculinities, specifically, the empathic male and the places where we find him within these adaptations.

2. DEFINING THE MASCULINE PARAMETERS IN WHICH PEER CAN STAKE HIS CLAIM

This masculine dilemma, which runs through all adaptations of *Peer Gynt*, can be found originally in Ibsen's "[...] dual attitude towards patriarchy. He deprives the men [in his plays] of their dignity while he seems to want to give them the potential to create another type of masculinity, one that is both open and capable of listening" (Lorentzen 2007, 822). If we work backwards from that, Peer's 'other' masculinity that is 'open' and 'capable of listening' can be found in his relationship with Solveig. Peer spends his whole life ignoring her, however, and instead fights for his claim to hegemonic masculinity. Nonetheless, Peer had an opportunity early on in his life to make such a claim. In fact, none other than the Dovre King handed it to him on a platter. In Act 2 Peer meets the Green Clad Woman and is taken to Rondane, where they negotiate that Peer shall have, "Half of it [his kingdom] now, with her; half when I am gone / as one day I shall be, my not-quite-yet son" (Ibsen 2016, 208). In this exchange Peer is offered half of a kingdom. It is much of what he has dreamed of, yet Peer runs away at the end of the scene forfeiting it all. He gives all of it up; part of a kingdom and vast power because in order to do so he must forfeit his, "[...] heritage as a man" (Ibsen 2016, 210). Peer refuses this claim to hegemonic masculinity because it would require him to give up his claim to humanity and the social constructs that he understands that define masculinity. If it were not for that, he would gladly accept the offered position of power.

We, as the audience, begin to understand that there are limitations to Peer's masculine ambitions and that the definition of being a man is one of the most important things to Peer, more so (as we come to understand with him running away) than any of the power he seeks. Peer himself says when talking with the aged Dovre King in Act 5, "[...] how resolutely then I fought, / swore I would stand firm on my own two feet, / abjuring love, renouncing power and glory, / in order to retain my self and soul" (Ibsen 2016, 325). As he says himself, Peer's issue all along has not been of simply wanting power, love and wealth; rather he wants power, love and wealth as defined by modern masculinity. All of the riches in the world mean nothing to him unless it can be achieved within a hegemonic masculine setting. All of the adaptations use this scene similarly as it is almost impossible to use it for anything other than

what it is: a declaration of Peer's resolve to stake a claim within hegemonic masculinity in a modern patriarchal society. Each adaptation, while differing in setting, costuming, cinematography, and acting has identical narrative arches within the scene and reach the same conclusion. Each Peer enters with the Green Clad Woman into Rondane, each one is presented with the dilemma of gaining power and wealth at the cost of their humanity and each one rejects it by fleeing. Everything the Dovre King has to offer Peer means nothing to him unless it can be defined by and compared to the social standards of humanity.

Perhaps the most confusing and absurd part of *Peer Gynt* lies in Act 4 Scenes 12, 13, and 14 where Peer encounters Begriffenfeldt. Often it is cut from productions and adaptations as it is in Janson's and Bradley's. In Baardson's, however, it remains. If we are to view the scene through the masculine lens, which has been discussed thus far, Peer's time in Cairo is, in essence, the straw that breaks the camel's back. It is the culmination of Peer's masculine desires. He arrives in Cairo and is greeted by Begriffenfeldt as "[...] 'the coming one', 'the new man'; / 'he whose coming was foretold by the prophet'" (Ibsen 2016, 280). Peer is instantly assumed to be a God-like figure, a title that he himself has always dreamed of. Peer is none of these titles, either in character or in namesake yet they have been bestowed on him, once again seeming to realize his hegemonic masculine ambitions. It is the only point in the entire play that Peer is referred to as "emperor" by anyone other than himself (Ibsen 2016, 284). Here in Cairo Peer is surrounded by everyone who is themselves, "[...] here: each is himself, here, to the nth degree. / Each to himself, impurities excised, / himself at sea with all the canvas raised" (Ibsen 2016, 284) yet Peer quickly comes to understand that everyone here is insane. It is in this place that Peer has been given the title of emperor; here where everyone is 'himself' Peer reigns. As noted earlier, Baardson's is the only adaptation that includes Peer's time in Cairo. In his adaptation all the people seem to be in a zombie-like state, covered in dried mud so that each person appears light grey and as if in a trance.

Begriffenfeldt leads him into a large mass of people where he first witnesses a man hanging himself. Minister Hussein then approaches him. Here Baardson has made the choice to make Hussein, Peer Gynt himself. He uses the same actor to portray both Peer and Hussein in the scene by cutting back and forth between the two, using jump cuts, in a crude yet effective

manner. Hussein says, “I am used as a sand-shaker when in fact I’m a pen” (Ibsen 2016, 288) he continues on to say, “I have capacities that no one can comprehend. / I wish to write well, and yet I scatter sand” (Ibsen 2016, 289). Baardson’s decision to use the same actor to play both parts, makes Hussein’s words hard to ignore as mere madness. Hussein desires to be the pen. Writing, in this time period, was often associated with men. Women who wrote were viewed as anomalous and often hid behind male pseudonyms. I believe it could be argued that it still is often a sign of power within our modern society. Peer wants to be viewed that way, as being a part of hegemonic masculinity and the upper levels of society. He wants to be a creator, a pioneer, a forward thinker. Yet Hussein is used as a sand-shaker, a tool used to either help dry the already inscribed ink or to smooth the rough paper on which someone would write. Peer is a part of a simple masculinity that, by no fault of his own, has been predetermined for him by social norms and opportunity. He is not a pioneer; rather he is a simple tool, which the pioneers use.

Some may argue that *Peer Gynt* is about defining one’s own identity in an abstract and universal sense. This is a more widely accepted interpretation, however I believe that this interpretation misses an important aspect that relates to masculinity specifically. I believe that *Peer Gynt*, despite different adaptations, cuts, and thematic elements, fits squarely into a masculine dilemma and I argue that, from the very first scene until the very last, defining one’s own masculinity within a heteronormative society is what the entire play is about at its core. The Button Moulder and his Master desires Peer to be a, “[...] shining button / on the worlds waistcoat” (Ibsen 2016, 321), yet Peer aspires to be the entire outfit.

2.a SETTING THE NORMATIVE CULTURE

The culture from which Peer comes from in each adaptation is the root cause for any of his actions in the entire play and is thus a *normative* culture that must be concretized. According to Connell, *normative* culture can be defined as a set standard within the culture that: “[...] masculinity is what men ought to be” (Connell 1995, 70). The first scene in all three adaptations, with the exception of Baardson’s, (between Peer and Aase) cannot place him within the culture, as the viewer has no other men to compare to Peer (except Aases own

comparisons of him to other men in the family). It is in Act 1 Scene 3, where we meet Aslak and the Bride's Father, where the comparison can be made and the normative culture set. While there are many other male characters involved within this scene, all are lesser extremes of Aslak and the Bride's Father. The Bride's Father is the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity. He has a successful (in the sense that he has children) family and wealth coming from, what can be assumed is, a prosperous farm. In Janson's adaptation the Bride's Father is shown wearing a white suit jacket and dress pants. He flaunts his pristine boat to the other young men. It is in this contrast with the opening scene, with Peer and Aase's run-down shack with junk stacked up outside, that the viewer understands the culture in which this adaptation is set. In Bradley's adaptation and in Baardson's *The Bride's Father* is presented very similarly: large houses, fine clothes and expensive toys. Within these adaptations of *Peer Gynt*, the Bride's Father is the manifestation of hegemonic masculinity as well.

In Scenes 2 and 3 we are also introduced to Aslak, the blacksmith. Aslak can be defined as the complicit masculine man. While he uses violence to support his authority, he himself has very little due to his seeming lack of wealth. That being said, he is presented as wealthier than Peer in all adaptations. In Janson's adaptation he wears a clean button-down shirt with a clean sweater over top. In Baardson's and Bradley's work he is wearing a suit. Yet Aslak is not portrayed as having anything more than the clothes on his back, his apparent business, and the interest of the women around him. The presentation of Aslak correlates directly to Connell's comments on the complicit masculine man.

The number of men rigorously practicing 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, the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women (Connell 1995, 79).

Aslak is such a man, gaining from those who practice hegemonic masculinity without having to himself. He benefits from the subordination of women while not practicing hegemonic masculinity himself. Of course, even if he wanted to practice hegemonic masculinity it would be impossible for him to do so without a better financial standing within the culture. From

these two characters and the analysis of them within the adaptations it is clear that we are introduced to a culture that can be defined as normative. The normative culture in which Peer is created supports the project of hegemonic masculinity.

Peer, coming from a lower-class family rests outside of that masculine definition. He has no power, he has no wealth, he has no land, he has no formal education, he has no father, and his only family is his mother. Yet Peer cannot be defined as being complicit within the hegemonic project as Aslak is. He daydreams of being rich, of holding power, of being emperor of the world saying, “Everyone, everyone, knows / who this emperor is - *Peer Gynt* - and these fine fellows / his liegemen, a thousand all told” (Ibsen 2016, 183). This idea of being not only an emperor, but the emperor of an entire planet is an idea hardly fit for masculine complicity. He is not content with sitting back and benefiting from the few men, such as the Bride’s Father, who embody hegemonic masculinity. Rather Peer desires to be one of those few men and he strives to be one of, “[...] the frontline troops of patriarchy [...]” (Connell 1995, 79). But this task is far easier said than done especially when considering Peers circumstances. Within the first five minutes of each of the adaptations the normative masculine culture is established; the viewer is taken from the first scene, between mother and son, to the large wedding scene precisely because, “The definition of masculinity is not the construction of an isolated individual, but is the collective work of a group” (Connell 1995, 168). It is this norm that is, “[...] nearly impossible for any man to meet [...]” (Connell 1995, 70) that Peer will strive for throughout the rest of the films.

2.b USING VIOLENCE TO STAKE A CLAIM TO HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Connell remarks that, “It is the successful claim to authority, more than direct violence, that is the mark of hegemony (though violence often underpins and supports authority)” (Connell 1995, 77). If a man such a Peer has no authority in material land or money what is left for him but to support his claim to hegemonic masculinity through violence? Thus, it is hardly surprising to find the use of physical abuse and violence throughout adaptations of *Peer Gynt*.

Searching through all the stage directions I have attempted to uncover any references to violence in Ibsen's text. The hypotext, after all, should hold the seeds for the use of these social tools in any adaptation. In Act 1 Scene 1 Peer "lifts her [Aase] up" (Ibsen 2016, 178). In Scene 3 he "holds [Solveig] by the wrist" (Ibsen 2016, 192) and "stands in her way" (Ibsen 2016, 192). In Act 2 Scene 6 it is assumed he has to physically defend himself against the trolls. In Scene 7 Peer tries to attack the Boyg where he "can be heard lashing out at things around him" (Ibsen 2016, 216). And then at the end of Scene 8 Peer once again is seen "seizing Helga by the arm" (Ibsen 2016, 220). After these initial spats all is calm until Act 4 Scene 1 where we find a much older Peer discussing his business dealings: "Chiefly I shipped Negroes to Charleston [...]" (Ibsen 2016, 243). While there is no stage direction written I have included this excerpt because in owning a slave trading business, it is implicitly implied that incredible pain, torture, and death has been caused by his actions and at his hands in order to secure the profit and social power he currently holds; by implication, he must have used violence to secure his claim to hegemonic masculinity. I find it important to note, however, that he is speaking of his actions of the past, a point that I will make clear in the following paragraph. In Act 5 Scene 2 Peer physically fights the Cook off from the dinghy, essentially killing him by forcing him to drown. While Peer's murder of the cook is an example of physical violence it is, arguably, a justifiable use of it as it is an act of self-preservation. While Peer commits physical assault in previous acts, except for his actions with the Cook, there are none to be found after Act 3. What is found in this analysis of Ibsen's text is that he explicitly says that Peer must use physical violence throughout the play by "holding Solveig by the wrist," "lashing out" at the Boyg, "seizing Helga by the arm," and fighting the Cook from the dinghy. While Peer's actions with the cook and Boyg can, arguably, be justified as acts of self-defence, I would argue that his actions with the female characters would then also need to be classified as acts of self-defence. Peer must defend his masculinity through the use of violence in order to secure himself food, shelter, and work in the normative culture he is in. Ibsen concretely set up the masculine normative culture in which Peer must try and survive on which the adaptations build further upon.

Some of the more striking moments I have found are when Peer is on the receiving end of an assault with Anitra delivering a "[...] stinging blow to his [Peer] fingers" (Ibsen 2016, 273) in

Act 4 Scene 8 and Berggriffenfeldt restraining him by the arm and, “straddling him” in Act 4 Scene 13 (Ibsen 2016, 290). Being viewed within hegemonic masculinity this sudden reversal, in stark contrast to Acts 1 through 3, is understandable. Ibsen’s young Peer believes that he has nothing with which to fight for his place within hegemonic masculinity, except his use of violence. After he leaves for America and starts his slave trade it becomes apparent that Peer believes he has begun to carve out a place within the higher echelons of this masculine system and claim authority (acquiring money, land, wealth, and name recognition) by using violence (the slave trade). Peer is not finished on his quest to become emperor of the world when we meet him again at the beginning of Act 4. Peer then goes on to become a prophet, a lord, and a master, until the end of Scene 8 where Anitra steals his jewelry, slaps him, and leaves him alone in the sand. This reversal of gender roles upends Peers understanding of hegemonic masculinity. While the women at the beginning of the play did not accept Peer as being a part of the few elite hegemonic males (because he wasn’t), by the time Peer encounters Anitra he himself believed that he had achieved his goal.

Without the social constructs of gender roles being kept in place his idea of hegemonic masculinity falls apart. Connell says, “masculinity does not exist except in contrast with ‘femininity’” (Connell 1995, 68). Thus, his eventual return to Solveig is not a sign of redemption but rather an admittance of defeat. Despite the horrible atrocities Peer created his whole life chasing his dream of hegemonic masculinity he never actually achieved any of it. If he had stayed with Solveig and settled down instead of leaving the cabin, while he would not be a part of the elite, he would have secured his own place within the social masculine constructs. This is something he could have been proud of or, at least, content with. This claim goes against the usual interpretations of *Peer Gynt*, with scholars arguing back and forth about whether or not Peer is redeemed by his return to Solveig. Professor and Ibsen Scholar Frode Helland, in his article “Empire and culture in Ibsen. Some notes on the dangers and ambiguities of interculturalism” takes a more neutral tone saying, “Ibsen - in my view - leaves his ending open and ambiguous” (Helland 2009, 153). Perhaps it is a redemption in some sense, in the idea that he has salvaged any of his masculinity at all but, in the grand prospect of the hegemonic masculinity he was trying to achieve, it is an admittance of failure. Christensen and Myren-Svelstad believe that this is, “[...] Peer’s predicament: Living in danger of being melted into a new and more solid form” (Christiensen, Myren Svelstad 2020,

63). If we believe this to be true then Peer's return to Solveig is him resolving himself to being melted down into an easily recognisable and socially normative masculinity.

In Baardson's adaptation of *Peer Gynt* the use of physicality is a drastic, continuous assault. The film opens with Peer bare-knuckle boxing Aslak, an addition that cannot be found in the adopted text. Aslak is cheered while Peer is booed, and it ends as Peer has his face shoved into the mud by Aslak. This scene is followed quickly by a scene with Aase where Peer pushes, hugs, lifts, grabs, and physically restrains her throughout. During the wedding party he assaults many of the men (shoving, grabbing them by the front of their shirts, etc.), but, most striking is how he assaults Solveig and other women at the party. Peer grabs Solveig repeatedly by the arm, pulls her into an unwanted embrace twice, roughly caresses her face, shakes her around like a doll, and pushes her into a corner. The other women around are subjected to much of the same behavior. Peer goes as far to grab another man's girlfriend and, against her will, pull her into him tightly in a manner that cannot be interpreted as anything other than sexual. As the film continues we watch him throw Ingrid to the ground, chase the three Seter Sisters, attempt to punch the Green-Clad Women, and pin Anitra down as he has sex with her as she stares ahead blankly, giving the viewer the impression that this act is not consensual. Peer, arguably, physically assaults (or attempts to physically assault) all of the female characters that he comes in contact with in this film. Connell says, "Violence is a part of a system of domination, but it is at the same time a measure of its imperfections. A thoroughly legitimate hierarchy would have less need to intimidate" (Connell 1995, 84). Baardson's Peer is clearly trying to clobber his way up the hierarchy. Introduced at the beginning we see Peer in rags that are literally falling off his body while drinking large quantities of alcohol, caked in mud and dirt. In Ibsen's text Peer looks at himself remarking, "Look at yourself – your filthy rags - / I wish you had some decent togs" (Ibsen 2006, 184). Baardson's subtlety is minimal so the masculine hierarchy in which Peer is set and positioned within becomes immediately clear. Without a legitimate claim Peer uses violence in an attempt to create one. Whether it is physical violence against women where, "Intimidation of women ranges across the spectrum from wolf-whistling in the street, to office harassment, to rape and domestic assault" (Connell 1995, 83) or physical violence against men where "violence can become a way of claiming or asserting masculinity [...]" (Connell 1995, 83)

Peer is seen doing all of it. He attempts every possible way of claiming his place within hegemonic masculinity through violence.

When looking at Peer's violence in this adaptation a few patterns emerge. The first is his physical relationship with Aslak. While the viewer watches them fight and shove at each other, they also act as if they are friends. One moment Aslak is holding Peer by the jacket and threatening him outside the party, the next they are sharing a drink and a laugh as they enter the party side by side. Aslak and Peer both seem to use violence in the same way, having the same notion that violence will allow them to control women and solidify a place for themselves within the hierarchy. I would argue that Peer has learned this mode of power from Aslak as he is the only other male figure that is featured prominently throughout the film. We also know that he is one of the few males that Peer has had in his life thus far. It can be assumed that, without a father figure, and only Aslak to compare himself to, Peer has taken on many of his qualities and habits. Aslak is the male that Peer compares himself to constantly; even Aase compares Peer to him in Act 1 Scene 1 (Ibsen 2006, 175). It could be argued that it is after this specific conversation with Aase that Peer starts to compare himself to him. While Aslak, who works as a smith, has the foundation of a job and an income on which to further his claim to hegemonic masculinity, Peer has none of that. This may be the source of his frustration, and a motivating factor for his failed attempts at asserting dominance through violence. Gender theorist Michael Kaufman says in his article "The Triad of Men's Violence" that "[...] These acts of violence and the ever-present potential for men's violence against other men reinforce the reality that relations between men, whether at the individual or state level, are relations of power" (Kaufman 1995, 18). Peer and Aslak are much more similar than they are different as they are both vying for power and status in relation to each other through the use of violence. However, Peer is unwilling to sacrifice his own "freedom" by securing a job for the sake of masculinity. I argue that these actions highlight Peer's conformation to masculinity stereotypes while, at the same time, his conscious attempt to break them.

When Peer uses violence against women, attempting to appear more attractive and appealing to them, he is often hurt and ashamed when they inevitably turn him down and/or laugh at

him. The most striking moments of the film come when others fight back. The first moment comes when the Green Clad Lady arrives at his cabin with their troll child. She corners Peer as their troll child smiles and, as Peer raises his fist to hit her, she grabs it. Immediately Peer cowers, instantly losing any physical superiority he had a few seconds before. When he awakes on the floor of the forest after returning from Morocco he is attacked by the Strange Passenger. (Baardson's adaptation cuts the setting of Peer's ocean voyage and blends the Passenger's dialog from Act 5 Scene 1 and Scene 2) The Strange Passenger chokes him with his cane as Peer begs and whimpers. He then throws Peer into a pool of water and holds him under water and laughs as Peer drowns and the last few bubbles of air rise to the top before the water becomes still. It is these moments where Peer's thin claims to some sort of hegemonic masculinity are destroyed all together. He has nothing of substance (no land, job, or relationship), and when the final layer of male violence is ripped away, he is left emotionally naked and desperate.

Janson's Peer is far more understated than Baardson's Peer, in regard to physical abuse and violence. In Janson's adaptation Peer makes almost no attempt at all to assert his claim to masculinity through it. The relationship between Aase and Peer as well as Anitra and Peer are, however, important exceptions. The film opens with both Aase and Peer. Aase slaps Peer lightly at one point, and Peer slaps her back. She kicks him as he runs away. He picks her up and carries her off and then she, in return, picks him up and carries him until, finally, Peer sets Aase on top of the roof of their house. When Peer arrives at the wedding, he grabs two women in an attempt to make them dance with him. These two scenes are the only scenes in this adaptation that depict anything that could be defined as physical abuse (except for his scene with Anitra which will be discussed later). It is within these scenes that Peer briefly attempts (and fails) to assert his claim to hegemonic masculinity via violence. In an interesting contrast to Baardson's Peer, Janson's is unwilling and unable to establish his masculine dominance over other men. When pushed to fight the other men and Aslak at the party he simply lies on the grass, not raising a fist. These other men are stronger than him, and in greater numbers while he is slight and by himself. It is impossible for him to fight back in this context and he would fail even if he tried.

On the surface it would seem that the difference between Janson's and Baardson's Peer, is that Janson's does not try to stake a claim to masculinity through violence. However, in the scene with Anitra the viewer is shown a different side of Janson's Peer. He and Anitra lie together on the bottom of the boat. Peer's shirt is unbuttoned and open while Anitra is naked from the waist up. The camera pans up her stomach and past her breasts as Peer traces his finger along her stomach. It is implied that they have finished having sexual intercourse and now are lying there together. Peer is seemingly kind, entranced by Anitra's physical beauty as he explores her body. Yet as his hand continues to explore, and the camera pans up with him his hand comes to rest around Anitra's throat. As it rests there, we are offered a close up on Anitra. She is looking away from Peer with absolutely no expression whatsoever. While Peer is smiling lightly and relaxed, Anitra looks empty, almost disgusted, and most certainly unhappy. This tableau, of Anitra looking away dead eyed with Peer's hand draped across her throat is perhaps the most striking image that fully encompasses their relationship and its correlation to Peer's quest for hegemonic masculinity through violence. Anitra has slept with Peer for his status of authority and all that comes with it, not for who he is or the man that he is. Fascinatingly enough, the portrayals of Peer in the other adaptations fail to realize this dynamic in the moment and it is only in retrospect that they come to understand what has happened. Janson's Peer, however, realizes this as he lies there with her. As he kisses her neck, she simply lies there still and silent; unresponsive. The film cuts to a close up on Peer and the viewer watches him go from happy to angry very quickly as he realizes the reality of the situation. It is at this moment that Peer understands that, for Anitra, their entire relationship has been based on transaction rather than love or affection. Peer strikes out at Anitra, covering her face with his hand and forcefully pushing it into the pillow while his other hand wraps tightly around her throat. Anitra fights back in turn, defending herself. They struggle for some time before Anitra gets out from underneath him. She does not flee as one might expect, rather she cups his face in her hands and, almost pitying, says farewell to him. With that she leaves the ship and Peer's life forever. This scene with Anitra is executed in such a way that the viewer, if looking closely, begins to see how Peer has both achieved an aspect of masculinity while simultaneously disliking it. Peer has used his status of wealth and power to take advantage of a woman. Peer wanted a beautiful woman (Anitra) and she wanted wealth and the power that comes with it. However, in his anger, we see the same issue

that arises again and again in modern contexts: men who use their wealth and status in exchange for something, yet cannot cope or understand when the reality of the situation is laid bare. It is only human to want to be wanted, to be desired, to be respected. But when it is money and status that is being desired (something anyone may have) it causes many men to become defensive, even angry. Thus Peer, instead of accepting the situation and living with those feelings, physically attacks Anitra. He projects the anger he feels at himself onto Anitra and continues to attempt to justify his own actions while physically assaulting her. He seems to think that it is not his fault this happened, rather it is hers. Peer has achieved a cornerstone of hegemonic masculinity yet cannot cope with the moral consequences that come with such actions.

In Bradley's *Peer Gynt* the physicality is prevalent throughout the film; seemingly cloaked in a Peer who is striving to be "morally righteous". These actions become almost natural in the context that Bradley creates. Much like the other adaptations, Peer forcefully carries Aase against her will while she kicks and screams and punches him. He forcefully pulls Solveig close to him, his arm wrapped around her waist tightly as she leans back from him, obviously uncomfortable and held there against her will. While we do not see Peer eloping with Ingrid, we watch the other characters watching them in shock as a place card comes on the screen saying that Peer is carrying Ingrid up the mountain, "[...] under his arm like a pig" (Bradley 1941). The characters quite literally liken Ingrid to farm stock in the way that Peer is holding her. The idea of anyone carrying another human being "like a pig" cannot be interpreted as anything other than physical abuse. Much like a pig being carried to slaughter under the farmer's arm, Ingrid also is being carried off to social slaughter (losing her virginity outside of wedlock) by Peer. It is no exaggeration when she exclaims later in the film, "You can hang for what you've done" (Bradley 1941). During this same exchange Peer pushes her down the hill and, as she climbs back up the hill and clings to his leg desperately, he stands tall with his hands on his hips. Such a blatant tableau leaves little doubt as to the hierarchical relationship Peer has with her.

When Peer reaches Morocco and finds Anitra, he is more physical than he is anywhere else in the film. He playfully wrestles with her, both laughing and enjoying it, and pins her down. It

is more of a flirtatious dance than physical abuse, but most definitely a clear display of power and masculine domination. When Peer later tries to kiss Anitra she throws sand in his eyes saying, “How dare you treat Anitra that way” (Bradley 1941). Yet Peer then chases her across the beach, trying to grab her repeatedly while stumbling about. Anitra is no longer smiling and the scene is no longer a flirtatious game but has taken on a much more sinister undertone. When Peer does catch her, he pins her arms against him and kisses her deeply. Anitra continues to fight against him even as he kisses her, her feet kicking in the air. Eventually she gives up and the screen fades to black. This scene sheds obvious light on the use of sex to stake a claim to hegemony, which will be addressed in a later chapter. For the moment we must look at it from a purely physical standpoint. Peer is using his strength, his physicality in a violent and forceful manner, most often with the woman surrounding him. As Connell theorizes, Bradley’s Peer quite obviously uses violence to assert his masculinity. Through the use of such tactics he believes that he is one step closer to hegemonic masculinity.

2.c DEFINING CONSENSUAL SEX VERSUS SEXUAL ASSAULT IN MODERN CULTURE

When discussing physical violence (specifically physical violence against women) and sex, a question must be raised as to the definitions of rape, sexual harassment, and consensual sex. Let me begin by acknowledging that this issue deserves more than a few pages and that it is highly subjective and culturally determined. Since I am addressing these issues and using these terms in the section above, I want to specify what I am basing these claims upon. Looking first at consensual sex, the American non-profit sexual healthcare organization Planned Parenthood defines sexual consent as:

[...] An agreement to participate in a sexual activity [...] Both people must agree to sex – every single time – for it to be consensual. Without consent, sexual activity (including oral sex, genital touching, and vaginal or anal penetration) is sexual assault or rape (Planned Parenthood).

Sexual assault is defined as:

Illegal sexual contact that usually involves force upon a person without consent or is inflicted upon a person who is incapable of giving consent (as because of age or physical or mental incapacity) or who places the assailant (such as a doctor) in a position of trust or authority (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Rape is defined as:

Unlawful sexual activity and usually sexual intercourse carried out forcibly or under threat of injury against a person's will or with a person who is beneath a certain age or incapable of valid consent because of mental illness, mental deficiency, intoxication, unconsciousness, or deception (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

For the purpose of this section I must briefly clarify that these ideas are focused on sexual assault and not on rape, as that is another matter entirely. The issue that presents itself fairly quickly when it comes to sexual misconduct can be found in many current events. Take for instance, Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein, who was recently sentenced to 23 years in prison for sex crimes. Six women took the stand against him claiming that he either sexually assaulted them or raped them. According to the New York Times, four other women were allowed, “[...] to testify about their own encounters so that prosecutors [could] establish a pattern of behaviour, even though their allegations [were] too old to be charged as crimes under New York State law” (Ransom and Feuer, 2020). “Tarale Wulff, Dawn Dunning and Lauren Young – were all aspiring actresses who said Mr. Weinstein lured them to hotels on the pretense of helping their careers, and then sexually assaulted them” (Ransom and Feuer, 2020). These women felt that it was mandatory to indulge Mr. Weinstein in these sexual acts in order to obtain work. While one of the four women who testified claimed she had been raped, these other three were claiming they had been sexually assaulted. From their own testimonies we know these women were not physically forced to commit these sexual acts, so this does not fall under the category of the definition of rape. If we view it through the definition of sexual assault it would seem to make sense that it is clearly a case of a person

PEER: Then get one!

ANITRA: How, Master?

PEER: No problem at all.

It's true that you're up to the gills in stupidity

But in this particular that's not deleterious.

We can squeeze one in. Come, let me measure your skull.

There's plenty of room; I knew there would be.

As I've said, things will never go very deep

Where you're concerned; but even so a soul

You shall have, my child; though one that's small (Ibsen 2006, 264).

It is this conversation where Peer presents his offer. She is to fulfil him sexually and he will give her a soul and everything that comes with being in the presence of a prophet such as status and wealth. Anitra immediately puts Peer on a pedestal and in a position of authority calling him "master." While Ibsen's text says nothing of them having sexual intercourse, the three film adaptations often border on suggesting with one adaptation going so far as to show the act happening on screen.

The idea of sexual assault within this scene can be difficult to argue due to the complexity of the scene. In Ibsen's text there is no intercourse, no sexual acts committed. Because of this, and the parodies of Arab culture, the scene is widely viewed as being written in an ironic mode. Helland remarks, "The text is ambiguous – on the one hand marked by oriental cliché's that were typical of their day, but on the other full of ironic exaggerations [...]" (Helland 2009, 152). Peer appears to hold all of the power yet, by the end, he is left in the desert confused with his jewels stolen and having received no sexual gratification. My argument around sexual assault (within this scene) does not pertain to Ibsen's text but, rather, to the film adaptations in which the ironic mode is often lost. Helland continues saying these ironic exaggerations "[...] may ridicule and partly undermine the same cliché's" (Helland 2009, 152). I would argue that, in some adaptations the ironic exaggerations are so greatly inflated that any sense of irony is lost. And where the ironic mode no longer exists, the scene takes on a much more sinister tone.

Of course, even this argument has its clear flaws and counterpoints. Firstly, unless what is going to be exchanged is explicitly stated, it is always debatable. Secondly, it is only within the past few decades that we have come to understand sexual assault under the terms that we currently define it by. Often men will claim that they did nothing wrong in these situations because they believed that their victim had consented. If a man is not aware of (or chooses to ignore) his own personal position of power, and how his actions affect those who could benefit from it (and offers a quid pro quo) it is still his fault for using it to bend another human being to his sexual gratification. Anitra has the free will to make her own choices and may choose to sleep with Peer, ultimately, it is the responsibility of the person who wields such powers to understand its effects and use it productively. By telling Anitra she needed him to give her a soul in exchange for her “seductive” presence, it is no longer simply Anitra’s choice. She believes that in order to have a soul (the one thing that everyone feels they must have in some form or another) she must offer herself to him in return. She has placed him in a position of truth and authority and believes him while Peer clearly understands that he wields no such power and is simply attempting to manipulate her.

It is interesting how men in positions of power, for example Weinstein and Peer, understand and interpret these situations from their own perspectives. Weinstein had allegedly been doing this practice for many decades. He was shown to have had a clear pattern of this behavior yet he denied all of the allegations, claiming that they were consensual. It is my opinion that Weinstein honestly believed his own claim (or had conditioned himself over many decades to believe that) after all, two of the women, “[...] acknowledged on cross-examination that they not only had friendly communications with Mr. Weinstein after their alleged attacks, but later had consensual sex with him” (Ransom and Feuer, 2020). It is a murky subject that often lies in the eye of the beholder. It is also possible that Peer does not understand the responsibility that comes with his authority (faked or real) or, perhaps, he does understand it and chooses to indulge in the abuse of it like Weinstein. Either way, Peer uses his assumed position of authority towards his selfish desires and commits sexual assault against Anitra.

In Baardson's adaptation it is clear that she gives him sexual gratification in return for a soul, status, and wealth as we see in the conditions that Peer has set at the beginning of their interactions. Unlike in Ibsen's text, Baardson opens the scene in Morocco with Peer hosting a luxurious party with worldly guests sitting around him. These guests include the four male guests which Ibsen has in his text, but unlike Ibsen, these men are all accompanied by their wives or female partners. Directly next to him is Anitra. She is largely ignored by both Peer and the other guests. He makes no attempts to impress her or woo her, yet he is comfortable with her. The viewer is given the clear impression that these two have spent plenty of time around each other. In addition to this lavish party, which includes a roasted pig, dancers, dozens of servants, fine cutlery, wine, and more, Peer is dressed in a perfectly tailored white suit. His hair is slicked back and perfect. Baardson has combined Anitra's scenes into the scenes he has previous to meeting her (in Ibsen's work). While some aspects of Peer's story become clearer with these cuts, others become more complex and certain aspects are arguably lost entirely, which then open up the door for arguments such as mine that Anitra is already in a sexual relationship with Peer. On top of this the viewer also witnesses Peer having sexual intercourse with her later on in the scene. This use of his masculine positioning is sexual assault.

Referring back to my introduction, and Ellen Rees' observations on the subject, it must be kept in mind that Baardson's adaptation was influenced by the Norwegian church in its production as it was produced by NRK. Knowing this it becomes a bit easier to understand the influences and the objective of such an adaptation. In the final scene we see Peer and Solveig in a perfect Pietà tableau beneath a cross, indicating that Peer has been "saved" at long last. When viewed through a Christian masculine lens there is an apt social message that a man is neither defined nor glorified through drinking, violence, and sexual promiscuity; rather, a man is glorified as a husband, a father, and a responsible head of household. This idea can also be traced back to these scenes in Morocco with Anitra by his side, and their marriage-like relationship. Placing such a message in a hegemonic masculine context it quickly becomes ironic as the idea of being a loyal husband, a father, and the head of the household is solidified deep within masculinity structures. In essence, Baardson and NRK's *Peer Gynt* is telling men not to go about trying to be too masculine, that striving for

hegemonic masculinity will only lead to self-destruction, and that they need to accept a place within the masculinity constructs in order to be a constructive male. Do not fight against your masculine identity as defined by your circumstance and culture; simply accept your place within it and you will be saved. Yet by trying to place oneself within it, a man can often commit acts of sexual assault and manipulation such as Peer does, I would argue, with Anitra in this adaptation.

I would argue that, in Baardson's work, the ironic mode between Anitra and Peer is lost and sexual intercourse has clearly and obviously been had. There is no place within Ibsen's text, or Bradley's adaptation, where it is clearly stated that they either kiss or have sexual relations in any way. In Janson's adaptation the viewer is shown Peer attempting to bed her and her running off. It is only Baardson who seems to feel moved in the same direction that I am also intrigued by. Long before Peer encounters Anitra he has already had a child with The Green Clad Woman and has taken the virginity of Ingrid. Both of these events each took place, from their meeting to their intercourse, in an incredibly short time period. The question then becomes, why would his actions be any different with Anitra? One argument could be that she is beautiful and unique in Peer's eyes. Perhaps this is something he feels he needs to commit longer to in order to conquer as she also sees through his game. However, he essentially calls her "filthy" but that her filth is a "[...] precondition to sexual wealth" (Ibsen 2006, 263-264). We know that he views Anitra strictly through a sexual lens. Ingrid, on the other hand, was a friend of his family. She is a woman whom he considered marrying at one point, or at least convinced her he had considered it. She was liked by Aase, which is not a small feat. Ingrid was attractive, well mannered, and well liked within their community. Yet Ibsen makes it quite clear that Peer exercises his power and takes her virginity, leaving her in a terrible position. It is a position much worse than that of Anitra's. A man so quick to feed his sexual appetite and take Ingrid's (a former friend and almost wife) virginity, seems highly unlikely to wait to have sexual intercourse with a woman he views as being strictly sexual in nature. After giving Anitra the Opal there is a convenient scene break in Bradley's adaptation. The next time we see Peer he is well groomed, longing for Anitra, as she lies snoring next to him. It is, presumably, the next morning. This version is similar in Ibsen's and Janson's work. Traditionally this is seen as Peer, quite literally, grooming himself for sexual intercourse with

her. However, I find it quite difficult to believe that nothing sexual has happened between them during the night or scene break. It is no coincidence that this break was placed here. It is a clever trick placed there by Ibsen, leaving the viewer with more questions than answers. And thus, we find ourselves here. I believe it was placed there intentionally by Ibsen because it is possible that they did or did not have sexual intercourse. Ibsen's text leaves the viewer equally divided as to what has occurred or not occurred. Bradley's adaptation and Janson's adaptations, while debatable, seem to fall in step. These works have strong arguments in favor of using the ironic mode.

Between the three adaptations and Ibsen's adapted text we have a foundation for two arguments. Firstly, that Peer uses his masculine positioning to have sexual relations with Anitra. Secondly, that no sexual relations ever occur at all and it is Anitra who is the one who manipulates Peer. The third argument that can be made against both of these is that it is entirely possible for the viewer, and Anitra, to justify this transaction as consensual whether sexual relations are had or not had and thus nullifying either argument. Yet even from a modern perspective it is clear that transactional or not, Peer is attempting to exercise his masculine power over Anitra. And it is that attempt, thwarted or not by Anitra, that make it clear that this is sexual assault. It is the outside viewers' perspective that we must trust, when it comes to judging these issues, informed by what we know and what we have come to understand in our modern cultural experiences.

I have addressed the more complex argument with Anitra first, however there is another clear example of sexual assault between Peer and Ingrid. Ibsen is quite clear that Peer takes her virginity after eloping with her from the wedding. By doing so, he has ruined her future as a wife and her reputation within the community. Janson and Baardson also depict this unquestioningly in their adaptations. It is only Bradley's work that is more ambivalent and white-washed to fit the 1940's American viewer palate (nothing too risqué or overtly sexual). However, even Bradley cannot avoid Ibsen's original intentions as the title cards throughout the scene imply that sexual intercourse has taken place. While this action alone does not constitute sexual assault, Peer has exercised his place of power over Ingrid to destructive ends. It is understood that, at some point before his "elk hunt" Ingrid wanted to marry Peer

however he refused. Mads Moen (Ingrid's fiancé) turns to Peer when she refuses to come out of her room. Ingrid elopes with Peer soon after, believing that they will continue to build a relationship and a life together. Yet it is clear that Peer had no intention of doing that. In Act 2 Scene 1 Ingrid is openly "weeping" saying, "Oh, I feel so betrayed" (Ibsen 2015, 196). Peer coerced her into having sex with him by pretending to want a relationship. Ingrid had placed Peer in a position of trust that he subsequently took advantage of and thus ruined her entire future.

Examples of this can be found in modern contexts quite freely. One party wants more than just sex, the other pretends to also want that too, until after they have had sex, and then leaves. If we were to classify this act as sexual assault, as a society, we would be overwhelmed. My argument is that it is the context in which such an act takes place that determines whether it can be classified as sexual assault. For Janson's adaptation, set in modern-day Germany, Peer certainly takes advantage of Ingrid and the situation at hand, but it is not sexual assault. He has not ruined her entire future. He has not destroyed her reputation and committed a "hanging crime" (Ibsen 2015, 197). If a woman's life were to be ruined and a man to be hung every time they had sex before marriage in modern culture, we would not have much of a population left to speak of. But in the context of Ibsen's, Bradley's, and Baardson's work, this is sexual assault. It will alter the course of her life forever and it is a "hanging crime" within the contexts of their work and adaptations.

3. USING SEX TO STAKE A CLAIM ON HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

In Janson's adaptation Peer elopes with Ingrid at the wedding and the scene following opens on a wide shot of a small cabin and Peer walking across the porch in only his boxers and two glasses of champagne in hand. The camera cuts to Ingrid as Peer hands her a glass of champagne and cuddles into her. She is also naked. Her breasts exposed, she lies comfortably with Peer with her wedding dress draped across her legs and waist. They kiss, giggle, drink, and banter. Both Peer and Ingrid's hair is clearly disheveled. They have just had sex and now are enjoying the afterglow of it. The champagne adds a sense of celebration. Eventually, as others approach, Peer leaves quickly. We watch him drive the boat into the sunset, hands raised above his head victoriously. It is in this moment that Janson's Peer understands that violence is not the only way in which he can dominate. While Ingrid thinks the champagne is to celebrate the new depth of their relationship, Peer celebrates his newly found tactic towards claiming a normative masculine identity. Peer has come to the understanding that he can use sex to stake his claim to masculinity. He has understood what Adrienne Rich, in her article "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", calls 'compulsory heterosexuality,' the idea that both cultural and social pressures on women make them feel that they must make themselves sexually available to men (Rich 1980, 237) but, "heterosexuality is also enforced on men" (Connell 1995, 104).

Whether Peer understands this second part or not is debatable. Certainly, he understands on a subconscious level, that this is what he can do to stake a claim using the resources he has at hand. It also must be considered that, perhaps Peer just wanted to have sex for the sake of having it. In this setting, however, Peer has stolen Ingrid away from her own wedding and had sex with her that night only to leave her hours later. While perhaps the physical joy of sex was appealing, Peer could not have been unaware of the social and hierarchical consequences of his actions, even in such a modern setting as that in which Janson's adaptation takes place. What better way is there for a man to position himself above another than by taking their daughters/fiancés virginity the night of her wedding? We, as the spectator, watch over and over again as Peer uses this tactic with Ingrid, the Three Seter Girls, the Green Clad Woman, and Anitra. Peer successfully exploits the cultural pressures for compulsory heterosexuality in

order to rise through the ranks of masculinity. What Peer is incapable of understanding during most of the film, or unwilling to admit, is that there is a place within masculinity for him if he stays with Solveig and a life with her. It is a simpler, far less ambitious masculinity, but a valid form, nonetheless. Yet as Peer states, he is uninterested in settling, he wants to be a king. He wants to be emperor of the world. It is only through his many sexual escapades and his slow understanding of his actions and their consequences that he realizes that Solveig always has been his only morally sound claim to masculinity. Both his sexual promiscuousness with women and his wealth from the slave trade are frowned upon in traditional hegemonic values. It is only Solveig that remains. Thus, Peer returns to Solveig having lived his whole life (or in Janson's film: the past two days) in pursuit of hegemonic masculinity when his place within the hierarchy was somewhere farther down.

What is especially fascinating regarding Janson's adaptation is the masculine type that he seems to be striving for. It is a bit of a conundrum as Peer seems on one hand to strive for hegemonic masculinity while, simultaneously, practicing countertype masculinities. Looking specifically at the examples given above, we see clear support of his push towards hegemony. It is, however, his actions with Ingrid and Anitra (when compared to masculinity history) that tell another narrative. Peer clearly and definitively has sex with Ingrid (and implied with Anitra) in Janson's adaptation. This action, having sex with someone before being married, was an action that was previously reserved for "degenerates," or sub-masculinities, by those who had worked to define normative or hegemonic masculinity. By the 1890s in Germany, "degenerate" men, "[...] were not simply normal men with effeminate manners or appearance but so-called abnormal men and women who flaunted their sexual deviance, their own unorthodox woman- or manhood" (Mosse 1996, 86). While this clearly pertained to lesbians and homosexuals it also encompassed those who were sexually promiscuous, as one of normative masculinity's central ideas was that of, "[...] restraint and self-control [...]" (Mosse 1996, 94). Peer lacks such restraint as he demonstrates clearly with his actions involving Anitra and Ingrid. The other argument would be that Peer does have such restraint but chooses to ignore it. I would argue that he has such restraint but chooses to ignore it as it is these "degenerates" who, "[...] considered themselves in active revolt; they wanted to obtain not only freedom of expression but the overthrow of traditional manner and

morals” (Mosse 1996, 94). Peer strives to set himself apart, to live outside of the normal constructs of masculine culture. He repeats throughout the play, “I am what I am [...]” (Ibsen 2014, 240). The irony of his words and continuous failure to find a fixed identity is only accentuated by Peer’s seeming counter masculinity that also attempts to adhere to hegemonic masculinity constructs. He likes to think of himself as incomparable, as setting a new path never taken before him. The journey of *Peer Gynt* is not watching a normative man being a normative man; rather it is watching a boy attempt to become a normative man and all the stumbling blocks and confusion along the way. Peer uses sex in a way that seems (in the moment) to support his quest of individual masculinity and it does, within those moments. It is his actions at the end of the adaptation, his ending up with Solveig, that solidify the fruitlessness of his hegemonic claims and make the viewer realize that these experiences have allowed Peer to achieve a simple normative masculinity.

The setting of this adaptation (2006), should also not be ignored as modern cultural influences have changed the western ideals of masculinity. In today’s time and Western society, sex is rarely frowned upon outside of wedlock. It is socially acceptable and often encouraged. However, even today, the undercurrent of praising male sexual restraint and glorifying monogamy runs strong. Random sex is encouraged until a certain point, at which a man is expected to get married and settle down with one partner. Whether Janson’s adaptation and Peer’s use of sex within it is viewed from a traditional masculine standpoint or a highly modern standpoint, Peer is attempted to proudly embody a countertype. He is a boy looking to become a man who, while striving to create his own masculinity, ends up making a plethora of mistakes on his way to achieving hegemonic ideals. Peer’s use of sex (and his active defiance of masculinity) serves to reinforce his claim to hegemony rather than diminish it. The first line of the adaptation (and the adapted text) summarize the sexual and masculine journey of *Peer Gynt* beautifully with Aase’s words, “Lies, Peer, lies!” (Ibsen 2014, 169).

David Bradley’s *Peer Gynt* is a much quieter, tamer, purer version at surface value than the others in regard to sexual intercourse and the use of sexuality. There is no sexual intercourse depicted in the film and very little insinuated. Bradley has gone to great lengths to cut and

edit the adapted text in order to avoid such encounters in a way that can be justified to the viewer. For instance, where Ibsen has written that Peer clearly has taken Ingrid's virginity, Bradley has edited the piece so that Peer merely steals her away for a few hours before sending her back home, using Ingrid's line, "It's a hanging matter to forsake me now" (Bradley 1941) on an intertitle in a way that seems to assume she is reacting to him stealing her away rather than him having obviously taken her virginity, which are two very different circumstances.

When Peer encounters the three Seter Girls there is no dialog at all in Bradley's adaptation. The actors are not physically attractive or seductive, rather the three women are seemingly submissive. They dance around Peer as if to entertain him and feed him fruit as he sits lazily against a tree. The scene, which was originally sexually charged at the hands of Ibsen with lines such as, "There'll be three beds put to use / tonight in the seter house" (Ibsen 2016, 202), is unrecognizable. The same editing can be found in Peer's conversation with the Green Clad Woman. There is no sexual tension, no feeling that Peer is falling in love with this woman. The original text does not specify directly whether she and Peer have sexual intercourse, and Bradley's does not either. He takes it a step further and, by removing almost any feeling from it at all, flattens it completely. The closest that there is to a semblance of sexual intercourse within the scene can only be assumed by the audience after the Green Clad Lady comes back with Peer's troll-child.

In Bradley's film, when Peer meets Anitra he is lying on the sand with her when he slowly leans in to kiss her. She sharply pulls away and stands up and throws sand into his eyes as an intertitle flashes saying, "How dare you treat Anitra that way" (Bradley 1941). Peer then proceeds to chase her around and after yanking her arm, forcefully picking her up and kissing her, she finally stops fighting and starts to kiss him in return. The screen then slowly fades to black. As it fades up again there is an intertitle that reads, "Having conquered; Peer departs [...]" (Bradley 1943). In Ibsen's text Anitra exposes Peer's fake hierarchical façade, steals his most valuable belongings, and runs away. Needless to say, Bradley's alteration of the adapted text is quite substantial. In Ibsen's text Anitra even goes as far as to assault Peer, "She delivers a stinging blow to his fingers and gallops furiously away [...]" (Ibsen 2016, 273).

Bradley's choice of editing lays plain the idea that his Peer was not only attempting to achieve an ideal masculinity through the use of sex but that he succeeded at it. This simple intertitle implies to the viewer that Peer has had sexual intercourse with Anitra. We know that this is what he came for in the first place so the only thing to "conquer" is Anitra. Thus, referring back to my previous chapter, I would argue that Bradley's work also depicts sexual assault. Furthermore, Bradley justifies these actions of Peer's. At the end of Act 3 Scene 3, when Peer leaves Solveig at the cabin, Bradley has added a note in his adaptation, which Peer leaves for her. This note is nowhere in the adapted text. It reads as follows:

My Darling,

A man must never be judged by his actions. Sometimes fate takes the matter out of his hands. I am leaving you now, and my happiness too. But someday I will be back. Wait for me Solveig.

Always, Peer (Bradley 1941)

If a man is not responsible and should never be judged on his actions, then who is responsible for them? Perhaps a greater being, but mostly it becomes the woman. Women in Bradley's *Peer Gynt* are constantly being held responsible for Peer's actions. It is Anitra who must try to set the boundaries between them but, if she cannot fight off Peer's advances (both literally and figuratively), then Bradley suggests it is her fault and not Peer's. Bradley's work clearly marks that Peer is only a man and a man must try to climb the hierarchal ladder however he must, whether it be through violence or sex. Therefore, Peer is only doing what is ostensibly "natural" for him. The film, from an objective standpoint is a justification of men's pursuit of power through sexual manipulation while pinning the responsibility squarely upon the woman. If we go back to Rich and her essay "Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" she says, "[...] Women have always resisted male tyranny" (Rich 2018, 1530-1531). In Ibsen's work we see this resistance with the Anitra character shown clearly. Yet in Bradley's work, due to his personal choices, women are seen, "[...] Primarily as 'sexual beings whose responsibility is the sexual service of men'" (Rich 2018, 1524).

In Baardson's adaptation the use of sex is blatant and unapologetic. While the adaptation does not lead the audience to assume Ingrid and Peer had sex, their scene is sexually charged. They lie together, fully clothed, on the ground as Peer strokes her face and caresses her breasts; kissing her down her stomach. It is a scene of two people passionately intimate, yet Peer quickly leaves her there by herself. Towards the end of the film, when the viewer finds Peer in Morocco, he is very wealthy. He is wearing fine clothes and he is hosting a feast for his guests; a whole pig is seen being roasted as other servants walk around with fruit plates and dance. Later in the evening we find Anitra spooning Peer, surrounded by food, and lavish pillows. They both wear clean embroidered clothing and a large amount of gold jewelry. Anitra caresses him, paying special attention to his groin in an obvious attempt to sexually arouse him. Finally, he turns her over, lays himself on top of her, and thrusts into her. As Peer continues to thrust, he speaks looking straight ahead, never at her. Anitra lies silently below him, never looking at him. Instead she most often is looking at her wrists, covered in large golden bracelets. While this seemingly sexually gratifies Peer, Anitra seems completely despondent. Even as Peer climaxes she does not utter a sound. This is not an act of two lovers having sexual intercourse rather, as discussed in a previous section, it is sexual assault. Frode Helland remarks on Baardson's 2006 production in Giza, "Baardson's *Peer Gynt* fell through because it adopted an arrogant and ignorant approach to culture *and* empire and without regard for the dangers and ambiguities of interculturalism" (Helland 2009, 156). While Helland is talking about a production over a decade after ours, I believe that Baardson has made the same mistake in both his 1993 film adaptation and his 2006 stage production. This moment cannot be interpreted as anything other than a man with high status and power using that status to take advantage of a woman. Peer's violent behavior with women have evolved and developed, along with his status of power, into more complex means of claiming a place within hegemonic masculinity. That coupled with the adaptations lack of regard towards interculturalism leads it down this singular destructive path.

The only other point during the adaptation where Peer has sexual intercourse is with Solveig in Act 3 Scene 2. This is a choice made by Baardson that is not in the adapted text whatsoever. When the screen fades up from black Peer and Solveig lie naked, cuddling each other next to a fire on a bearskin rug. As Rees mentions in her book *Ibsen's Peer Gynt and the*

Production of Meaning, this image is ridiculously cliché (Rees, 2014). I, however, would take this a step further and argue that it is cliché because of its hegemonic masculine undertones. Manly men hunt, but the toughest men hunt bears; an animal that can kill a man much easier than a man can kill it. But the manliest of men, the hegemonic men, have passionate sex on the skins of the deadly animals they have slain against all odds. In this scene it is suggested that Baardson's Peer has not only slain deadly animals, but he has also "slain" beautiful women. In the scene Solveig and Peer talk quietly, caressing each other's faces, kissing softly occasionally, and holding each other. Like Anitra, she also spoons Peer, her arm draped around his shoulder however the contrast between the two scenes could not be more drastic. While Anitra's scene feels like sexual assault, Solveig's scene is an intimate exchange between two mutual parties. It is only within this scene and the final scene with Solveig where the audience glimpses his intimacy. And what is a relationship without intimacy? Sociologist Lillian B. Rubin answers that by saying "Some would say that men need women to tend to their daily needs – to prepare their meals, clean their houses, wash their clothes, rear their children – so that they can be free to attend to life's larger problems" (Rubin 1995, 280). Each one of these encounters, (Ingrid, the Seter Sisters, Green Clad Lady, and Anitra) do fit within a hegemonic masculine archetype and seem to propel him on his way, but it is only with Solveig that he has something more complex. "[...] It's reassuring to be able to put away the public persona – to believe we can be loved for who we really are, that we can show our shadow side without fear, that our vulnerabilities will not be counted against us" (Rubin 1995, 280). It is with Solveig that Peer is able to put away his public persona for something far more intimate and authentic. In Baardson's adaptation, it is only with Solveig that Peer dismantles his walls and barriers. He doesn't fight or yell or rant. Yet, as the viewer knows, Peer leaves Solveig there in the cabin and forges ahead attempting to concretize shallow relationships. In a hegemonic society, men are supposed to have control over women, they are not supposed to feel equal. It is this terrifying concept of intimacy that drives Peer away, "for when we show ourselves thus without the masks, we also become anxious and fearful" (Rubin 1995, 280). It is not until the end, as he lays his head in Solveig's laps that Peer realizes that this intimacy is, and always has been, his claim to masculinity. We find that, between the three adaptations, there are a variety of perspectives on sexual relations each one significant in their own way.

4. THE PATRIARCHAL FATHER

All of the adaptations include the first scene between Aase and Peer about his hunt with the buck. In this scene we, the viewer, see that Peer is a man incapable of providing for his family. He is incapable of completing a “simple” task that all men are expected to be able to do; it is a task that is so heteronormative that it is a part of compulsory heterosexuality. We then listen to Aase claim, “You’re a no good like your father [...] oh how much better things were with your grandfather [...]” (Bradley 1941); it is a small comment but one with powerful resonance. Jørgen Lorentzen writes in his article “Ibsen and Fatherhood”:

The patriarchal father appears in almost all of Ibsen’s works. We meet him in an idealized form in the grand megalomaniac, Brand. He acts as a social pillar as Consul Bernick, who governs societal development, supposedly in the best interests of society [...] (Lorentzen 2007, 821).

Lorentzen’s article focuses heavily on *The Wild Duck*. He also briefly touches on *A Doll’s House*, *Ghosts*, and *Pillars of Society*. He compares and contrasts the works (mainly *The Wild Duck*) to fatherhood and even how it mirrored Ibsen’s own life in many ways. I will make no such attempt to link my work to Ibsen, however, he does not mention *Peer Gynt* anywhere within his article. While I find it understandable that he found *The Wild Duck* to be more suiting for his specific work, it is a gap that can be filled by my own work in the perspective of the patriarchal father. In the following, I will examine the role of the patriarchal father in these three adaptations of *Peer Gynt*.

I argue that the patriarchal father appears in Bradley’s *Peer Gynt* as his grandfather. He is the patriarchal father Peer’s father never was and that Peer is not. He presents the idea of a man who has control of his household and who can provide for it as being essential to defining a bourgeois masculinity. Chenghou He sums this up in his article, “Ibsen’s Men in Trouble: Masculinity and Norwegian Modernity,” saying, “The tension between desire for success in work and family life and fear of failure informs the crisis of masculinity among men” (He 2008, 136). As the play opens, in the very first scene Peer’s own mother tells us that he does

not live up to these standards. In addition to these social standards imposed on Peer, we also get a first-hand encounter with the double standard that men are held to. Aase shames Peer for fighting with Aslak the blacksmith saying, “I’m shamed nigh to death. / You terrify the girls, / fight the worst men in miles” (Ibsen 2016, 175). Yet when Peer replies that it was not Aslak who was bested but rather himself Aase responds, “I could spit for shame. / Beaten by him, / that guzzling tosspot? All my days / I’ve suffered, but this takes the bays!” (Ibsen 2016, 175). This double standard, which is portrayed in all three adaptations as well, highlights the problem of hegemonic masculinity: the desire for men to be both morally righteous and just, while simultaneously being physically tough and strong. In order to gain such status violence, sexual manipulation, and a lack of empathy are necessities along the path to get there. In order to be a patriarchal father a man is expected to balance both of these in equal proportions.

Bradley’s adaptation focuses heavily on the idea of Peer becoming the Patriarchal Father. His lack of empathy shows itself in the majority of scenes throughout the adaptation. Even in Act 5 Scene 2, when Peer is pulling the Cook from the keel, he does so with a smile while pushing the other man’s head beneath the inky water. This, combined with the ease with which he physically and sexually uses women, only begins to change in the last ten minutes of the film when he watches the man he killed be buried. He then encounters the Button Moulder who tells him he that he has, “[...] Failed to follow out what the Master intended you to do” (Bradley 1941). Upon hearing Solveig singing, Peer begs for one more chance to be “successful” to which the Button Moulder says, “Go, Peer, and set your house in order” (Bradley 1941). Peer then climbs back to the cabin where Solveig waits for him and the film fades to black. The Button Moulder’s comments are the same in Ibsen’s work, where he says, “Go to her then. Set your own house in order” (Ibsen 2016, 338). This phrase “set your house in order” is taken directly from the Bible. In 2 Kings 21: 1 it says, “[...] Hezekiah became mortally ill and Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live'” (King James Bible). This idea is that of putting all of one’s affairs in order and solving any problems they may have. In Bradley’s adaptation Peer is not successful in the eyes of the Master, who, presumably, is God. He is able to correct this and become successful only by fixing the

problem. By living a morally and spiritually just life with Solveig he not only starts to become the Patriarchal Father that he never was, but he finds both success and salvation. But it should be noted, he sacrifices his personal masculinity ideal while doing so.

The Patriarchal Father in Baardson's *Peer Gynt* manifests itself in a different way than Bradley's. While the dialog between Aase and Peer is kept in the first scene and Peer is again, compared to his father and grandfather (though only in a brief passing line), Baardson utilizes the relationship between Peer and Aslak in a way that none of the other adaptations do. In the adaptations by Janson and Bradley, Aslak is simply the Blacksmith. His lines are identical to Ibsen's writing. His actions fulfill Ibsen's text; no more and no less. Yet in Baardson's adaptation we find Aslak everywhere, especially at the beginning of the film. As mentioned in a previous chapter Baardson had added a bare-knuckle boxing fight at the beginning between the two. He also has added moments between the two that are not scripted in the adapted text. There is no additional dialogue that has been added but instead there are many more moments between the two. When the two of them meet outside of the wedding party and exchange threats, Aslak waits for Peer at the entrance to the barn. He extends his arm and a bottle of booze, which Peer takes. Aslak smiles and pats Peer on the back and they walk in side by side. Once there they stand together and survey the party going on below, both smiling. When Aslak introduces himself to the Bridesmaid's Father, the man smiles and shakes his hand. Peer sees this and then attempts to introduce himself to the man, where he receives a cold and silent stare. Later at the party Peer tries (and fails) to court Solveig as Aslak looks on smirking. Once Solveig has walked away, he comes from behind and makes a "naying" sound (as a horse does) to Peer, to which Peer rolls his eyes. When Peer later sees Aslak laughing and grabbing at a group of girls while smiling directly at him, Peer slams a door to avoid seeing anymore. These exchanges give the viewer the distinct impression that these two men mean much more to each other than simple rivals. Aslak is a pillar of this community. As a blacksmith his work is crucial to the profitability and growth of the businesses within the community. He has his own business and income. He is popular with the girls and good looking. He is a good fighter whom everyone seems to respect. I argue that these interactions highlight not only a friendship between the two but also Aslak's

embodiment of the Patriarchal Father in the eyes of Peer. After all, Peer has no other men in his life to look up to so who else would take on the role of a father figure to him than Aslak?

Perhaps the most mystifying adaptation when it comes to finding the Patriarchal Father is Janson's work. His Peer seems the most abstract of all of them, often smiling through lines such as, "[...] to hell with all women" (Ibsen 2016, 198) when he leaves Ingrid and laughing through lines such as "Don't croak at me, vile bird of prey" (Ibsen 2016, 184) when he is confronted by Aslak before the wedding party. Yet the father figure within this adaptation could not be clearer. Janson presents him as The Button Moulder. Janson has edited and rearranged Peer's scenes with the Button Moulder, who appears only in the fifth act of Ibsen's text, into seven separate scenes that appear throughout the film. During Peer's encounter with the Three Seter Women he is on a bench nearby watching him. As Peer is about to cave to the sexual temptations of the women, he speaks out saying, "Now, Peer" (Janson 2006) at which Peer runs away from them and jumps into the water. Throughout Peer's encounters in the film, the Button Moulder is almost always there watching. When Peer sits with him and speaks it is calm and collected, and like a mentor and a mentee. Often Peer picks at things around him while the Button Moulder speaks and smiles reassuringly at Peer; he is patient and wise. Other times the Button Moulder is seen relaxing in a tree speaking down to Peer as Peer stares up at him. But, if the Button Moulder is the Patriarchal Father in Janson's adaption, it is not in the traditional sense of the phrase. While the other two adaptations are set in the 19th century with undertones of the 20th century, Janson's is clearly set in the 21st century. Everything from the costume choices, to the scenery, to the boats, to the sets tells the viewer that this is a modern adaptation and is intended as such.

If the Button Moulder is our Patriarchal Father, then he is a more sophisticated one in terms of the evolution of masculinity as we understand it from a modern context. Just as society changes so do our masculinities. While many of the masculinity traits so far described can be easily found in modern day cultures, the Button Moulder's masculinity lies somewhere between normative and a subordinate masculinity if described by R.W. Connell or a countertype if described by George L. Mosse. This countertype was and still is defined in

relation to hegemonic masculinity or normative masculinity. A countertype masculinity can be characterised as, “[...] those who were different from the rest of the population or those who were perceived as asocial because they failed to conform to the social norms” (Mosse 1996, 56). Janson’s Peer Gynt does not strive for hegemonic masculinity rather he strives for a different form of masculinity all together. Janson’s Peer Gynt is a clear countertype. From his ragged clothing to his introversion in social situations to his physical appearance (the actor Robert Stradlober is not ugly, but he is not “traditionally” handsome either), Janson’s Peer is a countertype. Harkening back to my introduction, I find Mosse once again spot on with his description of the vagabond countertype often being, “[...] unkempt and dirty, and usually shown with ugly features. They upset all norms of bourgeois society: they had no work or place of residence and therefore were not integrated into any community. Moreover, they had no family” (The Image of Man, Page 72). Yet even within a highly modern and culturally in-touch work like Janson’s the cultural form of the Patriarchal Father still exists. In Janson’s world the Button Moulder, while not overtly normative, is the most normative, parental figure we are offered. He is nurturing, kind, responsible, relaxed and all seeing. What is clearly different about this characterization of the Patriarchal Father is the lack of brutality and the overt sensitivity of the character. These are two characteristics that have not been previously associated with the Patriarchal Father. I would argue that this is where modern masculinity in a modern adaptation comes into play. While it does not fit the mold in every traditional sense, neither do many modern masculinity traits. That then raises the question of the Button Moulder not being a part of hegemonic masculinity at all. Mosse states that “[...] restlessness, perpetual movement, but also formlessness characterized the outsider” (Mosse 1996, 59). From a cinematic standpoint The Button Moulder’s stability is manifested physically. He is rooted to the ground in almost every scene: sitting, standing, or laying down. The viewer never sees him move quickly (the most is one or two steps throughout the entire film), there are no sudden steps, and every move is purposeful. If we are to believe Mosse, in that the outsider is defined by restlessness and perpetual movement, then the Button Moulder is the exact opposite. While it could perhaps be argued that his appearances throughout the film are random, I would argue that they are purposeful. By the viewer never seeing the Button Moulder move from place to place and instead simply appearing wherever Peer may be, it concretizes the idea for the viewer that every movement of his holds a certain

weight. Each movement is justified, necessary, and thought through. His mentorship of Peer, his appearances during and after difficult moments throughout Peer's story, and his physical demeanor and relationship to Peer help us to understand that the Button Moulder assumes the role of the Patriarchal Father in this adaptation.

5.a THE SEXUALIZING GAZE DIRECTED TOWARDS THE FEMALE BODY

While defining Peer Gynt's masculinity through the Patriarchal Father and physical violence are both a part of the social fabric that forms masculinity, the subject (due to the adaptation's medium) must be also discussed in relation to the *male gaze*. Laura Mulvey, in her work on the *male gaze* in the essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", argues that "[...] mainstream Hollywood 'narrative' film looks at women as passive objects subordinated by the male gaze" (Mulvey 2018, 1953). She continues on to specify that the (specifically male) viewer objectifies and eroticizes the females within the film to lessen the discomfort that they themselves feel by being sexually objectified. Within the essay Laura Mulvey breaks down cinematic techniques into three gazes:

There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion (Mulvey 2018, 1965).

It should also be noted that Mulvey's model is often regarded, by many scholars, as being "overly deterministic" (Stram 2000, 175). Nonetheless, as I am using her model to approach the problem of the depiction of masculinity rather than femininity, I find it justifiable using the broader strokes of Mulvey's method for this example. It is easy to find everyday examples that can justify its uses. The husband who perceives his partner to no longer be sexually attracted to him. The man who is uncomfortable with his physique. The man who is not gifted at sports. The man who makes less money than his fellow man. Professor of sociology, Barry Glassner, addresses this exact issue in his article, "Men and Muscles," where he gives the example of Larry. Larry is a thirty-six-year-old man who is constantly uncomfortable with his thin physique. Glassner asks the question, "Why doesn't Larry simply work out a few hours a week so that he can feel decent about himself physically?" (Glassner 1995, 255). Larry, is like other men who have never fit in physically to a masculine ideal. Glassner proposes that this is dealt with in one of two ways: leaning into it or consciously pushing away from it. Larry, because of his upbringing and complex relationships with his parents, chooses to push away from this ideal physique and attempt to forge his own path.

The irony is that, despite his attempts at this he “[...] still has a puny body he’s ashamed about” (Glassner 1995, 255). While I cannot speak to Larry’s sexualization of women it is easy to see where such resentment and objectification of the opposite sex spawns from. The idea of males objectifying women, because of their discomfort with their own sexualization (or lack thereof) can be found as causes to both the sexual gaze directed towards women, as well as the sexual gaze directed towards men. It is a well-oiled wheel that simply goes around and around, with each gaze feeding into the other and justifying the other, neither stopping to examine what can be done differently. While many other factors are at play, I would argue that a man’s discomfort with himself is one of the root causes of the issues discussed in this chapter. It is often the simplest of issues that create the largest and most difficult to overcome.

In Bradley’s adaptation, the camera’s male gaze is quite strong and obviously so. Nearly every single close up (a shot that fills the screen with part of the subject, usually the face for reactions) looks up towards Peer’s face rather than the usual close up where the camera is placed at roughly the same level as the subject’s face. The effect is ominous and overpowering, giving the audience, the spectator, the feeling that Peer is naturally superior to all other characters in the film. Other characters’ close ups, such as Aase’s and Anitra’s and Solveig’s are few and far between and when they do exist the camera is placed on eye level, or even occasionally from above. On a very literal level Bradley’s cinematography is informing the spectator that everyone is inferior to Peer Gynt. It then only makes sense that the spectator is biased towards Peer and unsympathetic in regard to his treatment of women. Why should he not treat them this way? They are inferior to him.

If we look at a specific example in Bradley’s adaptation it becomes even clearer. The first shows itself in the scene between Ingrid and Peer after they have eloped from the wedding. As the screen fades up from black the viewer sees a mountain and Peer leading the way up it as Ingrid follows behind trying to slow him down. Eventually Peer pushes her and turns towards her where the dialog for the scene commences. At this point Peer is literally standing above her looking down as Ingrid looks up at him. The male gaze informs us that Peer is a leader. He is climbing and attempting to get somewhere whereas Ingrid is a mere follower; her frantic grasping at his clothes as Peer pushes her away only reinforces the idea of

hierarchy. Peer shoves her down the hill saying, “Go on back to your father!” He continues to climb while she stumbles behind him, falling at his feet exclaiming, “Dearest-” and begging Peer to take her with him. Peer stands, hands on his hips as the camera pans up his body until he asks, “Well, what have you got to offer?” (Bradley, 1941). This tableau, of a man standing with hands on hips, is an image of masculinity that can be seen throughout the 19th and 20th century in advertisements, military recruitment campaigns, and other films. A variation of this can still be seen with logos like Mr. Clean with his large and muscular arms crossed, feet set apart, and chest out. This bodily position communicates that a person is asserting power in some way while being set in their opinions and perceived truths. Mr. Clean has no interest in taking any cleaning tips from us. Ingrid is a woman clinging to a man as he continues to succeed. The male gaze that is depicted during this scene aims to lead the viewer to the consensus that this hierarchy is true and justified. The irony is that while the male gaze of this adaptation tells the viewer that Peer has the power and Ingrid is simply an object, in reality, he has nothing while she has all the power.

This irony is depicted subtly in a brief moment where Ingrid, for the first time, moves to stand above Peer on the mountain and threatens, “Remember it’s a hanging matter to forsake me now.” For a moment, in this shot, the male gaze is shattered. The spectator, if fully conscious of the situation, understands that this power that Peer seems to inherently wield over Ingrid is a lie created by his belief in hierarchy. Mulvey argues that women in film represent a deeper issue, namely their “[...] lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure” (Mulvey 1989, 1961). She explains further saying, “[...] Women as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified” (Mulvey 1989, 1961). In this adaptation Ingrid represents that manifestation of anxiety for the male viewer as they project themselves onto Peer. Ingrid, with her line to Peer about him hanging for his actions is not only a threat of castration but of death. Thus, the male viewer, projecting his own subconscious on Peer, could react with, “[...] complete disavowal of castration by the substitution of a fetish object [...]” (Mulvey 1989, 1961). As Peer and Ingrid stand on the mountain, her walking away and him looking down towards her as he scales a rock face he exclaims “Oh, the devil take all women! Yes, all but one!” I would argue that Solveig is Peer’s “fetish object.” It is to her he

turns whenever confronted with threats against his masculinity. Whether it is Ingrid's threat of death or the Green Clad Woman's threat of a child, Solveig is the object through whom he escapes.

When this scene is viewed in contrast to the previous scene and Peer's interactions with Solveig during the wedding feast, the male gaze is comparatively calmer with Solveig. While the viewer understands that Peer is immediately attracted to Solveig, she is not sexualized or objectified in the same manner or to the same extent as Ingrid is. All of the shots between Solveig and Peer are on the same level, neither framed up or down at each other. Mainly they converse side by side. The male gaze informs the viewer that this woman is one who is "pure," a woman who is worthy of equal footing and stature. While she and Peer are literally only on equal footing the male spectator immediately puts Solveig on a figurative pedestal. A pedestal, that is, in comparison to the other women that are depicted in the adaptation. Solveig is Peer's fetish object in that she is always there for him if he should ever want her yet she is neither excitingly powerless or interestingly powerful. There is no immediate fear, for Peer, of Solveig's castration of him. Anitra expects him to be rich, the Green Clad Woman expects him to be strong, the Three Seter Sisters expect him to be sexually gifted, Ingrid expects him to be a strong head of household. Of all the women, it is only Solveig who seems to have very little expectations of Peer. When Peer's anxiety of these woman's expectations becomes too much for him to bear and he is confronted with this idea of masculine castration, it is Solveig who becomes the fetishised object who he runs back too as she has very little expectations of him. This idea further enforces my earlier argument that Peer's return to Solveig is an admittance of defeat, for his masculinity cannot live up to any of these woman's standards besides, perhaps, Solveig's.

Continuing through Bradley's adaptation we find the Three Seter Sisters entertaining Peer with dancing and lavish praise on him as they feed him fruit and stroke his hair. Once again, the male viewer is conditioned to think that this is natural. The male gaze tells men that this is an unquestionable idea. Women take care of men and nurture them on their journeys throughout life because it is a foundation of hegemonic masculinity. In the next scene the viewer is introduced to the Green Clad Lady. She is framed by herself; angelically walking

through the woods in a flowing dress. Immediately Peer says, “[...] you are a lovely woman!” (Bradley 1941) and with that the Green Clad Lady has already been objectified. Having had no previous dialog or encounter the spectator now views her through a voyeuristic lens. They then trade claims about the power of each other’s parents and the size of their kingdoms as they both cross their arms and stick their chins in the air proudly. Once again Peer is placed above the Green Clad Lady, standing a few feet higher. Quickly the Green Clad Lady gives into Peer and takes his hands saying, “Oh, Peer, I see that we are splendidly suited!” (Bradley 1941). This back and forth can be framed in the masculine idea that a man must have control over his household. To the spectator, Peer has unmistakably claimed control over this woman and of his household.

The most striking of all Peer’s interactions with women consists of his scenes with Anitra. Of those two scenes with Anitra, Anitra has only seven close ups. Of those, four are of her living within her environment (in this case a seductive looking dance as Peer looks on). The other three shots of her are reaction shots. The other twenty-four shots that make up the two scenes are of only Peer (shot from below and him looking upward at her) or of both of them in a wide shot. Anitra is introduced to the viewer from the beginning in a close up of her body as she dances back and forth seductively. The viewer is encouraged to admire her physical form and is informed that Peer finds this woman highly sexually attractive. The camera cuts between shots of her swaying seductively back and forth to Peer staring at her, mouth slightly open and occasionally smiling. Throughout the entire scene Anitra is established as an appealing object to Peer that he is clearly superior to, not just in framing but in actual screen time. We, the spectators, only have Peer’s male gaze from which to view and understand Anitra. As the scenes involving Anitra continue Peer attempts to have sexual intercourse with her, kissing her deeply and literally chasing her around, grabbing her by the arm and carrying her away while she fights. The male perspective informs us that Anitra is erotic, attractive, and a sexualized object; Peer and Anitra’s interaction is seen as a promiscuous, fun, and flirtatious encounter, rather than what it really is, namely a man manipulating and taking advantage of a woman by utilizing his position of power. It is a clear-cut example of hierarchy in action, yet the gaze of the camera lends itself to the male spectators easily assuming a masculinist gaze towards woman and thus the scene is giggled at and accepted

easily rather than gasped at in horror for, “[...] the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic objects for the spectator within the auditorium [...]” (Mulvey 1989, 1959). The male spectator, on some level, enjoys this display of hierarchy. The idea of watching a man take what he wants is gratifying, even visually, when one subjugates oneself to masculine stereotypes. However if this same encounter, of Anitra attempting to run away from Peer as he yanked her by the arm and carried her off kicking and fighting on a secluded beach, were to be viewed through a female gaze it would be seen for what it is: misogynistic and sexual assault.

If the male gaze within Bradley's adaptation runs throughout like a steady stream, the male gaze within Bentein Baardson's work resembles something closer to a dam; either we find nothing at all or everything at once. During the party scene at the beginning, immediately the viewer is greeted with a mixture of men and women. They are happy, drunk, and festive. During one scene the men all stand in one room drinking while a group of women stand in the room adjacent giggling and looking towards the men. These women are not presented as individuals, rather they are presented as a group of objects to be desired and waiting to be claimed. Aslak does just that in the following scene grabbing them around the waists and kissing their necks while they laugh. Later Peer forces himself into a back room where he finds men and women lying together and making out. When he enters a couple stands up. Peer grabs the woman by the waist and pulls her close to him, their faces almost touching where they exchange a few words before she walks off. During this exchange the woman's partner simply stands there watching. It implies to the viewer that these women are disposable. It implies that women, in Baardson's world, are objects which can be used and discarded as needed. The physical enticement of a woman is more important than an emotional connection. From the very outset of this adaptation the viewer is informed that women serve a purpose and that is to be a sexual partner and support to their significant others. Nothing more and nothing less.

During the same party Peer meets Solveig for the first time. She enters the party from the top of the barn while Peer, mid drink, stops and stares up at her. This is the only time in the entire film where Peer stares upward towards any female character. It is also the only point in the

film where the viewer understands that Peer views this woman as unique and special, whereas he simply finds the rest of the women desirable. The telling moment is Peer's reaction. It is only when he sees Solveig for the first time that his face is blank, expressionless, and he is at a loss for words. Yet, after this brief moment, Peer quickly reverts to his usual practice and begins to exploit her as a woman. In his physicality with Solveig Peer grabs her from behind and wraps his arms tightly around her waist. We, the viewer, watch her face clearly as she is turned towards the camera. Her reaction seems to imply that she is simultaneously enjoying his physical action and also made uncomfortable by it. In the course of this scene Peer does it three separate times. The reaction of Solveig to these physical encounters betrays a darker undertone which is the idea that it is a man that she needs in her life in order to be comfortable and to be complete. If this idea is of any debate we only need to continue to watch as, in the very next scene (when Peer runs off with Ingrid) we watch Aase break down into hysterics. She cries, screams, drinks, runs, falls headfirst into the mud, etc. All the while Solveig is by her side. Aase is the stereotype of a woman who does not have a man to lead the household and hold things together. It is Aase's scene that solidifies the already prevalent theme that a woman must have a man to support (and support her) in order to be complete. It is not surprising that Baardson had decided to place Solveig next to Aase for this whole scene, as it is this scene where the viewer can see the consequences of living without a man and watch Solveig absorb this information as well.

After eloping with Peer from her own wedding, Ingrid rides into the frame on Peer's back; her arms and legs wrapped around him. Peer is the strong man, going where he decides. Ingrid is the weak woman who supports him and goes where he decides. While this action is not inherently sexual in nature, there is something undeniably sexual about being in physical control over another human being. Sexual fetishes such as BDSM are, and always have been, an ingrained part of modern and ancient society. Ingrid's seeming willingness to elope with Peer from her own wedding and then proceed to venture wherever Peer desires without question or pause and literally on his back (an image that mimics that of riding an animal, visual metaphor for sexual intercourse in and of itself), is a sexually charged decision. Ingrid represents sex to both Peer and to the audience. Domination is an obvious way to assert power, specifically in sexual relations. In the example given above the audience might

assume that Ingrid immediately takes on the submissive role to Peer's dominant one. This idea is also reinforced by the cinematographic choices. Throughout all of Ingrid and Peer's scenes together, Peer is always standing closest towards the camera while Ingrid is always positioned behind him. At no point does she try to upstage Peer, pushing her way forward or moving from her position. These choices imply to the audience that Peer is more important. He is the (figuratively) dominant personality and (literally) dominant character to Ingrid's submissive.

Moving forward through Baardson's work the male gaze becomes ever stronger. The Three Seter Sisters are scantily dressed. They are slender young women with beautiful long hair and perfect features. Their costumes show off the shape of their bodies and exposed cleavage. The audience is introduced to them from Peer's perspective, staring down at them from wooden scaffolding. The women smile seductively up at him and the audience quickly understands that Peer views these women as objects for the taking. Thus, the audience is also directed to understand them as such. The Three Seter Sisters' seductive gazes upwards and teasing jeers only further reinforce the idea that they desire to be wanted by Peer. They want to be wanted by a man. Peer climbs down from his scaffolding and, quite literally, attempts to take these women as one would an object. He chases them and gropes at the air trying to catch them as they evade his grasp, giggling all the while. The spectators, informed by the cinematic and acting choices, look at these women as willingly sexual objects. Again, Baardson repeats what we have already seen with Ingrid.

This pattern of sexual domination is relentless throughout the adaptation. It is not long after that the viewer is introduced to Anitra. Sitting next to Peer during his business meeting in Morocco, she wears a short, embroidered shirt that exposes her stomach and emphasizes her breasts. It is suggested that she is exotically beautiful. She is silent and obedient. At one moment Peer stands and lightly runs his hand up her face as she stares up at him adoringly as she continues to sit. Also present at this meeting are Mr. Cotton, Monsieur Ballon, Herr Von Eberkopf, and Herr Trumpeterstaale. What Baardson has done though is include all of these men's wives at the table as well. He has gone so far as to give them lines of dialog as well. Every time the camera focuses on one of these men during the meeting the shot always

includes their wives. Anita, however, is only occasionally shot side by side with Peer. More often than not, it is only Peer in the shot. This choice by Baardson lends itself to the viewer categorizing this group of women in two ways. The first being, a free thinking, well spoken, educated, and independent woman aka the spouses of the guests. The second being, a woman who is simply a submissive object to be touted about in public and used in private. There seems to be no point at all of Anita being at the table other than as an object Peer wants to show off to the other businessmen who are dining with him.

At another point Peer walks past two other female servants who are dancing: swaying their hips seductively while staring at him. He stares back looking them up and down as he walks. These women are also dressed similar to Anita, leaving little to the imagination. Later in the adaptation the viewer meets these two women again. This time Peer observes them dancing while slumped against a pillar. The camera follows one of the women's buttocks in a close up as it sways back and forth. The camera cuts between this and Peer watching, informing the viewer that this is what Peer is choosing to observe and urging the viewer to do the same. Eventually the camera pushes in, directly into and past the woman's posterior, where we find Anita laying in a seductive pose on a pile of blankets and pillows staring at Peer. She then begins to dance herself as the camera pushes in on a close up of her exposed stomach and pelvic region as she sways her hips back and forth. Peer simply sits on the floor watching her closely, seemingly fixed on her body, as the viewer is also guided to do. As he yells out, all three women stop dancing and immediately lie down. The women lie outstretched, long legs on full display. As Peer rises and approaches Anita the other two women exit and Anita kneels at his feet on the bed. The shot includes both of them and the viewer is presented with a tableau. Anita is on her knees staring up at him as he stands and looks down at her. He then lies down with her as she spoons him. She then starts to rub his crotch and feeds him grapes. They begin to have sex shortly after and as they do so the viewer watches as Peer slowly thrusts into her as he continues to monologue, looking off into the distance. Anita simply lies beneath him, smothered and silent. This entire encounter with Anita and the other women has the clear signs of the male gaze hard at work. It sexualizes and objectifies these women at every opportunity, leaving the spectator with few options other than viewing them as sexual objects. These types of physicality, both in humans and in animals (laying down, physically

placing yourself below another, giving sustenance to the leader first, etc) are all basic hierarchy dynamics used to determine places within societies. Anitra is bluntly being placed physically beneath Peer; a direct reflection of the relationship they have. The viewer is being forcefully suggested to view Anitra at the service of Peer Gynt.

While other adaptations such as Bradley's have a subtle male gaze, the relentlessness of it in Baardson's is impossible to ignore. Unlike Bradley's work though, Baardson takes the male gaze a step further. The male gaze of the camera and Peer do not simply objectify one woman, rather, his objectifies an entire culture of women. The viewer is aware of this from the very first business meeting where Anitra is objectified. She is given far less camera time, dressed scantily, and is silent throughout. She is no more than a simple decorative piece upon the table on which they are all dining. The servant women who dance for him personally, twice, portrayed in the same seductive fashion as Anitra pushes the viewer to lump together all of these Moroccan women. Helland writes, "Peer's meeting with Anitra is permeated with ironic parodies of western stereotypes of Arabs in general, and of women from that part of the world in particular" (Helland 2009, 139). Helland's work concerns itself with Ibsen's original work and when we apply that idea to Baardson's work, I would argue that the ironic modes are lost while the stereotypes remain. This is due to one main choice by Baardson to combine action from later in act 4 with action from the beginning of the act. Instead of tricking Anitra and the rest of the Moroccan people into believing him as a prophet or, as Helland comments, *the Prophet* (Helland 2005), Peer has already capitalized on their society. "Peer takes little interest, for example, in his African surroundings as such, but is all the more obsessed with the idea of colonising North Africa [...]" (Helland 2009, 138). This decision to combine the two parts of the script is understandable from a director perspective yet, any hint of irony is then lost. "What nevertheless saves Peer Gynt from being simply another manifestation of the orientalism of the day, is, according to Oxfeldt, that Ibsen uses irony in his text as a means of undermining Peer's outlook" (Helland 2007, 139). Baardson's choices within this adaptation leave the viewer with a clear "manifestation of orientalism."

This attitude transfers over to Peer's direct interactions with Anitra as well. We are told by the camera and the directorial decisions that there is nothing special about Anitra, she is simply

one of many women who are beautiful and seductive and ready to be taken. Stereotyping an entire culture for the sake of protecting normative masculinity is nothing new. As we know, normative masculinity cannot exist by itself. It must be defined by countertypes. R. W. Mosse gives an example of this in his book saying, "Jews, then, were often 'feminized,' through for the most part they were pictured with their passions out of control, predators lusting after blond women" (Mosse 1996, 70). If an entire group is able to be stereotyped and lumped together as "outsiders" for the sake of defining and concretizing normative masculinity, it is entirely probable (and likely) that those from completely different countries and cultures would experience the same thing. Baardson effectively isolates and demeans an entire culture of women (and men) through his depiction of them through a strong male gaze. They are given little to no dialog, they never speak in public, they wear revealing clothing, they are highly sexualized by the camera, they all participate in identical actions. There is no effort (from Peer or the camera's perspective) to understand them or individualize them or show any sort of cultural appreciation. In fact, the camera and the directorial choices (as highlighted earlier) actively work to set them apart from the other women. Anitra and these Moroccan women are depicted only as sexual objects ripe for the taking. Part of Mulvey's theory states that:

Traditionally, the women displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic objects for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen (Mulvey 2018, 1959).

If we are to believe this then Baardson's display of women (and the male gaze that it so heavily relies upon during this sequence) informs both the viewer and Peer, that we are the masters and these women are our obedient and willing sex slaves. This makes sense when viewed within stereotypical hegemonic masculinity modes because there is nothing that can concretize one's claim to manliness quicker than power over others; no matter whether that power be hard, soft, or sexual. As history has shown over and over again (whether it is Jews, Christians, or Moroccan women), the easiest way to justify that claim to power is to

stereotype, suppress, and dehumanize the given group until you have a one-dimensional collective.

Baardson and Bradley's work handles the male gaze with blunt and on-the-nose strokes. In contrast with them is Janson's adaptation, where the gaze is subtler and more symbolic than it is physically present. But, as with the other adaptations, I will work through the film chronologically. Like the other adaptations, Janson's opens with Peer and Aase. In this work she is wearing a nice summer dress that shows a little cleavage, and some leg from the knees down. Interestingly Aase also wears a pair of heeled sandals. The oddity of this stands out when viewed in relation to the other adaptations. The others present Aase in unflattering clothes, usually dirty. Baardson goes so far as to present her with rotting yellow teeth and face coated with dirt. In comparison Janson's Aase is highly sexualized. The camera follows Aase walking down the road with Peer. Her legs are long, her hair blows in the wind, and the sun is on her face. Perhaps the simple sexualization of this scene is not visible to the casual viewer but, to those who view these adaptations and productions of *Peer Gynt* in relation to one another, it is immediately clear.

Continuing into Janson's adaptation, during the wedding party, Aslak appears with his friends and two girls while Peer is lying on the ground, daydreaming. Both girls wear sun dresses that show their cleavage. One of the girls, the viewer comes to understand, is Aslak's girlfriend. As Peer and Aslak speak the girl backs herself up into Aslak who proceeds to wrap one hand around her neck and the other hand around her breast. The camera focuses on only these two characters for a few seconds while they hold this pose, forcing the viewer to look at this girl from a sexual standpoint. Later at the party Aslak physically grabs her and pulls her so hard that she loses her balance. We also see him briefly gripping the back of her neck tightly and speaking angrily to her. Peer replicates this behavior in his own way later on with Ingrid. After fleeing the wedding by boat the two lie together on the porch of a cabin. The camera follows Peer over to Ingrid where the viewer sees Ingrid's breasts on full display, her wedding dress draped around her waist. The camera sees more of the back of Peer's head than the front and the focus is thrown onto Ingrid. Again, the viewer is being informed that we, and Peer, should see Ingrid as sexually attractive. She is desirable and Peer has

conquered her. Just as quickly as he is there, he leaves. As he does, Ingrid watches him leave, clutching her wedding dress around her naked body. This tableau serves to solidify the male gaze. She is a beautiful object who, after tasting the fruits of what Peer has to offer, only desires more of the man. These brief encounters suggest to the viewer that these women are nothing more than sexual property.

Throughout Janson's adaptation there are poses or tableaux that are repeated. One of them is that of a female, in a skirt or dress, sitting with her legs spread while Peer kneels practically between them. The viewer first encounters this with Aase during the first scene of the film. We also find it later when Solveig and Peer are reunited, and she finds him working on his boat. The repetition of such a pose seems to suggest something more than just chance. By repeating it the viewer understands that it is not just an actor's or director's choice but, rather, something more complex. Immediately the position of the female characters can be understood as sexual. To generalize, most women wearing skirts or dresses, cross their legs when they sit (or close their legs). They have often been actively taught this—both overtly and indirectly-- in the family and other social contexts. If they are outside where it is windy (as it is in Janson's adaptation) there is a higher chance of them doing so. If there were to be a person who was to kneel at their feet, there is no doubt that the one wearing such attire would immediately cross their legs or press them together. That is unless, that person is not only comfortable with the person kneeling at their feet (essentially being able to look up their dress) but also sexually attracted to in some form or another. This tells the viewer that these women in Janson's adaptation serve a sexual function and motivation for Peer rather than forming any individuality of their own.

As Budd Boetticher has put it:

What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance (Mulvey 2018, 62).

It is not until towards the end of Janson's adaptation that we see Peer and Aase together once again. They are at their house and Aase sits on the bed as Peer goes to lie down with her. There is a close up on Peer that follows where Aase begins to stroke his face with her foot. While not entirely sexual it does seem to suggest it and Peer seems to enjoy it, smiling throughout. He then crawls up her body and lays on top of her. At one point she kneels on the end of the bed and we watch Peer come up from behind her and wrap his arms around her, stroking her face lightly as they kneel there, cheek to cheek. While this behavior could be understood as normal in a different setting, the fact that they are both on the bed and everything that has proceeded this leads the viewer to believe that is abnormal behavior for a mother-son relationship. It is sexual behavior of the kind we associate as between two lovers. This is solidified to the viewer as he spoons her and they begin to passionately kiss before she dies. The moment is almost on-the-nose Freudian. It is this moment where the viewer realizes that Aase has been sexualized the entire film and, if Freud is right in assuming that every male child wants to kill his father and have sex with his mother, it is the male gaze that brings this moment to life as the, "[...] male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly" (Mulvey 2018, 1959). Of course, this analysis is entirely theoretical. It is possible that this is simply my male gaze that I have projected onto the main character and it is I who fantasize this as well as everything else I have stated thus far. It is a disturbing thought that I would refute but one that cannot be ignored in the process of dissecting the male gaze.

To further solidify my argument of the sexualization of both Aase and Solveig, I would point to the subtle mirrored sexualizations of them that can be found in the film. It shows most prominently when Solveig and Aase have their private conversation in the grass towards the beginning of the film. Janson has blocked and filmed it so that the women lie next to each other, faces almost touching. It is an incredibly intimate moment. The sexualization of this shot within a framework of same-sex desire can be debated, but with the understanding of their relationships to Peer it seems to only reinforce the male gaze as the viewer sees these women individually attracted to Peer and also, potentially, mutually attracted to Peer and each other. After all, we are to come to understand later, that Peer and Aase clearly do not adhere to normative relationship constructs.

The Three Seter Sisters, Anitra, and the Green Clad Women are the only female characters in the film portrayed as blatantly wearing makeup. The costuming for the Three Seter Sisters is much more formal than the women shown before or after in the adaptation. They wear cocktail and evening dresses, their hair and makeup done perfectly. The film cuts between Peer's conversation with them sitting on a swing and surrounding him; kissing him, stroking his body, and ruffling his hair. The women's cleavage is clearly shown as they moan lightly as they kiss him and look at him with clear sexual intentions. The viewer, much like Peer, has few options other than seeing these women as sexual beings. Much of this can also be seen in The Green Clad Women as well. Her hair is done perfectly, her makeup applied generously, and her green dress is ironed and in great condition. The contrast between Peer and these two groups of women may be chance the first time but by the second time (with the Green Clad Lady) it becomes a pattern. On one hand the viewer is shown these women who are put together, beautiful, who have clearly used some time on their physical presentation. On the other hand, the viewer sees Peer, his hair ruffled and greasy. His clothes are drab green and ill-fitting, seeming to hang off (clinging to his waist and shoulders for dear life) more than they fit him. Yet even in this starkest of contrasts, these women are sexually attracted to Peer. This sets up a dynamic for the viewer that we are to believe that women are most desirable when they are fully "put together" while a man must only be himself. The depiction of these women, at the hand of Janson and his film crew, feeds this idea to the extreme with their choices regarding these female's appearances.

Despite the examples given and extrapolated on above, it is still Peer's encounter with Anitra that invokes the male gaze the strongest. As Peer lays stomach down in the sand a pair of bare feet step into the frame (here the film suggests the same symbolism as we see with Aase stoking Peer's face with her foot). The camera then slowly pans up Anitra's bare legs, to her pelvic region, to her chest, and finally to her face. The viewer almost expects to hear the phrase "The name's Bond. James Bond" uttered next. As we know, this shot alone is a blatant and unapologetic example of the male gaze strongly at work. Like the Three Seter Sisters and the Green Clad Women, Anitra wears makeup and an outfit that shows off her physical figure. It is Peer's reaction, seeming almost at a loss for words as he stares up at her, that the viewer

understands that we are also supposed to be flabbergasted by her beauty. As the scene continues Anitra makes her way to the bow of the ship where the camera focuses on her poised on the bow in a feminine pose. In case the viewer somehow does not understand the symbolism of this shot, the choice was also made to place a figurine of a mermaid directly in front of her. It is an oddly clumsy choice that is less on-the-nose than it is hitting-you-in-the-face-with-a-baseball-bat. Traditionally mermaids represented seduction, allure, flirtation, beauty, and charm among other traits. They echo the Sirens from Greek mythology, whose intoxicating sexuality would lure sailors into the waters and to their deaths, or entire ships into rocky coasts where they would be shipwrecked. In fact, the symbolism of the mermaid is not entirely new to Ibsen's own work. Danish translator and professor, Marina Allemano, addresses this image of mermaids within *The Lady by the Sea* in her article "Mermaids Losing Their Heads". She begins by explaining the context in which they are often viewed saying, "During the middle ages, the mermaid also becomes strong erotic figure in European folklore: beautiful woman, whose white well-shaped breasts and long golden hair (or green for added exotica) are emphasized" (Allemano 199-2000, 5). This in itself is a fitting setting in which we find Anitra is set. She continues her article saying, "Common to [...] Ibsen's mermaids are the sea element, the feminine yearning for man, and the woman's definitive choice to let her man go, not in the traditionally destructive way, but literally by letting him go" (Allemano 1999-2000, 7).

Despite her observation regarding an entirely different piece of Ibsen's work, the theme is strikingly similar to that which we see in *Peer Gynt*. Janson's choice, to link Anitra directly to the image of a mermaid, is both logical and fitting. As Anitra sits there, poised directly behind the mermaid, she is, quite literally, being depicted as an entirely sexual being whose characterizations amount to only her sexuality and cunningness. This idea is driven home later as it is implied that Peer and her have sexual intercourse

. Her breasts are exposed as she is naked from the stomach up while the camera focuses entirely on her. Once they are finished, she lays sleeping. The camera holds a close up on Anitra's body as Peer's hand traces from her pelvic region, up her stomach, across her still exposed breasts, and to her face. All the while the camera follows. Peer sees this woman as sexually stunning and the viewer is also suggested that we should view Anitra in the same

fashion. It is not her personality that the viewer, the camera, or Peer are interested in, rather it is her physical assets and sexuality that are to be appreciated.

These examples, however many there may be throughout all adaptations, do not give us answers as to why Peer acts this way and why we see Peer through this masculine lens that he has created and embraced. Once again, I will trace this back to Glassner's work. These actions certainly stem from the desire to fit into a masculine hierarchy but, on much simpler levels, they stem from Peer's mother's ridicule, his town folks' constant disappointment, being bullied by the other boys, and the abandonment of his father. These factors in turn have shaped who Peer is: a young man who is deeply unhappy with his own physical self. Peer is a boy whose objectification of women is a learned coping mechanism that offers temporary respite from the constant perceived disappointment he brings those around him. It is only Solveig, who seems to never be disappointed in him, to whom he begins to show genuine affection and respect. Peer has nothing to prove to her, and she does not ask him to prove anything. Ingrid seems to think that he is the masculine ideal (which he cannot bear the burden of). The Three Seter Sisters tease him and challenge his sexual stamina. The Green Clad lady challenges his power. Anitra challenges his wealth. It is only with Solveig where Peer can be his own self for the first time ever in his life.

5.b THE SEXUALIZING GAZE DIRECTED TOWARDS THE MALE BODY

For centuries men have been viewed and judged by their physique. There are clues from as early as the Neolithic Era that the ideal image of a man had begun to be defined as being strong, large, and muscularly defined. The ideal male body can be found in abundance in the form of Ancient Greek sculptures. The men are depicted with bulging biceps, broad shoulders, large pectorals, and defined abdomens. And with this modern masculinity, judging a man's masculinity turned from being, mostly, about moral values to "[...] a set standard of beauty" (Mosse 1996, 23). Once again Glassner's work in "Men and Muscles" is relevant. He writes:

The captains of industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were portrayed as almost animalistic in their physical power and drive. Aspiring young men were urged to display their own commitment to the same values. A 1920s manual for salesmen, like some of its counterparts in the 1980s, recommended exercises each morning, because muscular strength “imparts a feeling of enthusiasm, physical vigor and power of decision that no other faculty can give” (Glassner in Kimmel and Messner 1995, 252).

In the same way that the female body is sexualized, the male body is as well. It is, however, easier to understand the female body being sexualized within a hegemonic masculine context. At first glance it would seem odd that in the same context, the male body would be sexualized as hegemonic masculinity defines itself, in part, by its separation from sub-masculinities and outsiders which include homosexuals (Mosse 1996, 72). But as much as a hegemonic man may not want to judge the physical beauty of another man, it is a clear definition of manliness as it “[...] displayed the ingredients essential to modern masculinity” (Mosse 1996, 47). Men’s masculinity, depicted in film, cannot be discussed without addressing the idea of the sexualized gaze towards them as well as the undertones of a homoerotic gaze and how as Schuckmann phrases it, “[...] masculinity is being constructed as an erotic spectacle” (Schuckmann 1996, 671). I am in no way victimizing men, but that being said, men are viewed in a sexually masculine context, not just by women, but also other men.

When we encounter Peer at the beginning of Baardson’s adaptation he is shirtless, fighting another man. The actor playing Peer, Paul Otta Haga, is attractive and fit. While he is not Spartacus he is not thin either. His physique is quite average. His muscles are somewhat defined as he swings his fists back and forth; his abdomen flat without bulging muscles but neither is there any excess fat. His physique combined with his physical actions of fighting another man lays the foundation, from the start of the film, for the constant comparison to an ideal masculine figure. His constant physicality with women and men, referenced in the earlier chapter, continues to reinforce the idea that physicality and physique, being perceived as *manly*, is key for Peer’s quest to claim a higher masculinity. Later in the film, after Anitra

has left him, the viewer sees Peer completely naked. Here his physique is on display for the audience. His shape and curves show off his fitness as he walks slowly away from camera before turning back and leaning against a pillar, his genitals exposed before he lazily covers them with a shirt. Peer is comfortable in his own body and he doesn't care what the viewer thinks, and it is that confidence that allows the viewer to also feel reaffirmed in his physical manliness. Peer seems to have little care about his own body image and, "His body arouses desire by virtue of the absence of his own desire, which invests him with a intense erotic power" (Schuckmann 1996, 673).

The male physique and the erotization of the male body often go hand in hand. Schuckmann comments that, "It seems that masculinity as an erotic spectacle has almost displaced the importance of the image of the objectified female [...]" (Schuckmann 1998, 671). While Schuckmann's work addresses the action genre of the 1980s and 1990s, it is also relevant to Baardson's adaptation. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the film opens with Peer fighting Aslak. Both of them are shirtless, covered in dirt and hay and pig feces. They lash out at each other, breaking noses and tossing each other around. They grapple with each other, wrapping their arms around each other's naked torsos and grabbing at each other's pants. It is a scene that has been depicted many thousands of times before in cinema and will be again for the foreseeable future. Fist fighting is a depiction of men in their most basic and vulnerable form. The fact that they are both shown shirtless while doing so only solidifies my theory that there is yet another layer of sexualized masculinity that is introduced, and that is the homoerotic gaze.

The fight is filmed and choreographed in such a way that there is no real sense of danger for either of these men and, having set aside our concerns for their safety, our gaze immediately turns to their physical forms. The viewer is shown torso shots of both Peer and Aslak on multiple occasions both separately and when intertwined with each other in combat. At one point, Aslak picks Peer up and hoists him on his shoulders. He then proceeds to spin him slowly around two times before throwing him to the ground. There is absolutely no point, in the context of a real fight, where one opponent would take the time and the energy to do such a thing. Skin to skin Aslak slowly spins, his muscles flexing triumphantly as Peer's buttocks

stick helplessly up in the air. It a scene that is homoerotic in the most primal of senses. Immediately following this scene, we watch Peer bathe himself and climb out of a tub, his pants part way down his buttocks and dripping with water from head to toe. It is important to remember that these scenes are nowhere in the adapted text; these scenes were added by Baardson by his own choice. Since they are the very first scenes that open his film, they set the tone for the rest of what follows and were, presumably, chosen with great care and thought. When Aslak is next seen, he startles Peer. Grabbing Peer's shirt, he says, "Ditt lortne svin. Reis på deg, gutten min" (Baardson 1993) which translates to roughly to, "You're a dirty pig. Get up, my boy." It is interesting that in the English translation Aslak simply says, "Hey, up you get!" (Ibsen 2016, 183) It is a small moment in the context of the entire adaptation. However, these two sentences have much different connotations. In the context it is used in Baardson's adaptation, "gutten min" is incredibly condescending. Much more so then, "Hey, up you get!" would ever be. Once again it solidifies the idea of Peer being submissive and boyish to the dominant Aslak. I can imagine that some may wonder if it is a stretch to argue that showing two men in dominant and submissive positions is sexual in nature. But it is both natural and normal. In modern day culture it simply takes a quick Google search to understand how closely domination and submission go hand in hand with sexual ideology. It was no coincidence that *Fifty Shades of Grey*, an erotica novel centered around BDSM submission that sold 15.2 million copies between 2010-2019 in the United States (it is estimated that over 125 million copies have been sold worldwide), was as successful as it was (NPD). It is only a matter of time before such a book is on the bestseller shelves again but this time with two men or two women as the main characters. While I cannot say that Baardson was or was not creating a sex object out of Peer, Peer can absolutely be perceived by viewers as exactly that. Through a homoerotic lens Aslak is the dominant to Peer's submissive in their relationship.

During the previously mentioned, bear-rug post-sex tableau, an interesting dynamic comes into play. There is not a single shot of Solveig that shows her beneath her shoulders. She feels pure, protected, as if she is supposed to be seen for more than her sexuality. On the other hand, Peer is shirtless. In one shot in particular Solveig sits in the foreground, framed from the shoulders up. Behind her sits Peer, slightly out of focus, and shirtless. The dynamic that is

created is a stark reversal of what we normally find in modern cinema and implies that it is Peer who is sexually objectified in this scene.

Coincidentally there is a theme that seems to tie all of this up quite nicely and that is Peer's sexual submissiveness. When he is lying with Solveig after they have had sexual intercourse, she is the one spooning him. Similarly, when he first lies down with Anitra, she is the one spooning him, rubbing his groin and feeding him. While “being the small spoon” is not an uncommon thing for a man, it is a vulnerable position. Being the one who spoons another gives a sense of protection and control. You know what that person needs, and you are there for them. For a heterosexual man, this sense of control and power and confidence plays a factor when lying with a woman. Often being the receiver during cuddling can be seen as weak and vulnerable, which are traits that no hegemonic man would ever want to display in front of a woman. In essence, this reversal begins to look like a switch in gender roles between Peer and his lovers. The viewer could also be inclined to view Peer as something to be sexually conquered and commanded. All of this coupled with Aslak’s domination of Peer at the start and his confident nudity, begin to shed some light on how the idea of the sexualization of the male body and the homoerotic gaze are firmly entrenched in Baardson’s adaptation.

Bradley’s use of the male body as a spectacle, while not as blatant as Baardson’s, cannot be ignored. As mentioned in a previous chapter, in his scene with Ingrid, Peer stands with his hands on his hips. As he does so the camera slowly pans up from his crotch to his torso and finally to his face. As I have noted, this shot is used to assert Peer’s dominance over Ingrid. But if that was the only purpose the shot served there are superior ways to achieve that. For one, all you have to do is hold a wider shot showing Peer with his hands on his hips looking down towards Ingrid. Bradley chooses a different approach. In his close-up pan-up body shot he invites the viewer to look at Peer as a sexual object. If you have ever watched an old (or even recent) James Bond film, you will be familiar with this type of shot. Bond sees a woman, the camera cuts to the woman where it slowly pans up her (usually) scantily clad figure, asking the viewer to see the woman as an appealing sexual object and sympathize with the main character (as Bond himself sees her this way). The only difference here is that

the roles are reversed. This shot invites the viewer to see Peer as the appealing sexual object thus the audience may sympathize more with his leaving Ingrid despite the fact that he took her virginity and is in the process of leaving her. It is easier to understand if you think that Peer himself can “do better.” Film, in general, introduces an odd oxymoron in the idea that, in the masculine ideal a man marries and settles down and has a family and works a steady job and takes care of his family, etc. In films, however, very few movies try to depict this masculine ideal truthfully. There are many reasons behind this but the main one is that, frankly, it often makes for a terribly boring film. While we, the viewer, want to relate, when we are watching a film we do not, usually, want to see our lives portrayed on the screen. We are interested in the adventurous, in the dangerous, in the taboo. It is before we begin a film, between turning on the TV and the opening credits, that we have often already accepted this sexualizing gaze towards women and towards men because it is that gaze that allows us to continue living in the suspension of disbelief, however absurd or horrendous the situation may be.

In addition to this moment, there are two scenes in Bradley’s adaptation of Act 2 where Peer is shirtless. The first is in the company of the Trolls and the Dovre King and the second is the next scene where he is building a cabin. But there is nothing within the adapted text that requires Peer to remove his shirt. There are no stage directions, plot lines, or specific dialog that calls for it in any way. Neither of the other two adaptations have Peer shirtless in either scene. The actor, Charlton Heston, is attractive and fit. He is young and toned and covered in what appears to be oil, to simulate sweat. He is tied to a wooden stake, chest thrust forward and his arms clasped behind his back. All of this was a conscious choice on behalf of the artist team on the film. Removing his shirt implies that Peer is a man and when, “to be an adult male is distinctly to occupy space, to have a physical presence in the world” (Connell 1995, 57) what better way is there to do that than shirtless, with exposed flesh? In the following scene Peer has escaped the Trolls and is building his house in the forest, once again shirtless and wielding an axe.

Chivalry and manly honor, in the modern age, meant not only moral but also general physical toughness. Physical skill and dexterity had always been prized as necessary to

defend one's honor, but now the new society in the making looked at the entire male body as an example of virility, strength, and courage expressed through the proper posture and appearance (Mosse 1996, 23).

The physical act of building one's own house and swinging a heavy axe is a masculine act. Creating shelter for yourself and future family is intelligent, difficult, and worthy of respect. It takes a balanced and insightful man to do such a thing. These are potentially sexually attractive features in a masculine man for a woman who is happy to fit into a normative hierarchy. On top of these factors, Peer is shirtless, his muscles flexing as the ax rises and falls.

In the scene in the hall of the Troll King, Peer is not only partly nude, but also bound up. Once again, as in Baardson's adaptation, we are confronted with this idea of the eroticization of the male body through bondage and submission. In Schuckmann's article he claims that male stars, consciously constructed as sex objects happened, "[...] only rarely (for instance, in spectacular historical epics such as *Ben Hur* [1959] or *Spartacus* [1960] [...])" (Schuckmann 1996, 672). Whether or not Bradley's Peer was consciously constructed as a sex object is not for me to determine. Notably, Charlston Heston starred in *Ben Hur* and is one of the sex objects to which Schuckmann refers. The writer of the script Gore Vidal explains in a letter to the Times,

[...] Faced with a hopeless script for Ben-Hur, I persuaded the producer, Sam Zimbalist [...] that the only way one could justify several hours of hatred between two lads – and all those horses – was to establish, without saying so in words, an affair between them as boys; then, when reunited at picture's start, the Roman, played by Stephen Boyd, wants to pick up where they left off and the Jew, Heston, spurns him (The Guardian 2016).

Perhaps it is just a coincidence or perhaps it is the continuation of the sexualization of the actor on screen. I would argue that the sexualization and eroticization of the male body happens far more often in an unconscious manner. In 1941, at the beginning of the

involvement of the United States in World War II, I find it unlikely that Bradley was concerning himself very much with undertones of BDSM (bondage/discipline, dominance/submission, and sadism/machoism) in his film, however, it is absolutely possible that it was his intended image. But, through a modern cultural lens, this image of Peer, as submissive, is undeniable. Suddenly this character, who dreams of domination of every kind (taking girls virginity, aching to become a king, enslaving others for his financial benefit) is helpless and half naked, tied with ropes and hoisted in the air. Whether or not the viewer chooses to see this as a sexualization of Peer is debatable however, the link to it cannot be denied.

On the other end of the spectrum of physicality we have Janson's Peer. The actor playing him, Robert Stadlober, is very skinny and lanky. While the intended or unintended focus on the sexualization of the male body by Baardson and Bradley may have been an attempt to help justify Peer's claim to masculinity, it highlights how self-aware Peer is of it himself. Their Peers often pick and idly stroke their bodies and push their chests out in different scenes. Janson's Peer is anything but concerned about his physical appearance. He is calm and easy. His steps are measured and calculated. The other Peers tend to crash around from scene to scene, yet Stadlober, does nothing of the sort. There is a standard within masculine stereotypes that 1) you must be confidently manly, and 2) you must look confidently manly. In the first two adaptations Peers look the part but do not act it. Janson's Peer acts the part but does not look the part. It should briefly be noted that I am not arguing that Janson's Peer is unattractive because he is skinny which I will address more in depth later in this chapter.

While Baardson's and Bradley's Peers are attractive because of their physique (when comparing it to a hegemonic masculine ideal), Janson's is attractive (again comparing it to this ideal) because of the way he acts. In addition to this, as I have discussed throughout my work, the stereotypical man is not the only definition of attractiveness nor is it the blanket norm for those who are attracted to men. Stadlober as Peer clearly fits a certain "type." His boyish looks and unique features place him in a clear sexualized category of men, both in the homosexual and heterosexual community. This boyish fetish undertone is enforced strongly in Janson's film as well. When Peer encounters the Three Seter Sisters, they are, as mentioned above, wearing formal dresses with earrings, hair done, and makeup which

contrasts sharply with Peer's physical presentation. These women are confident, seeming to laugh at Peer rather than with him. They roam around him as predators would circle a prey. They push him around, shoving him in different directions. They slap him lightly, they grab his hair, they pin his arms to his side, all while smiling and Peer looks lost. Finally, one of the sisters grabs him by firmly holding the hair on the top of his head and pulls his face close to hers as she speaks in an aggressive low tone before shoving him away. She is clearly and unmistakably dominating Peer. If their actions were not clear before in their positions of power, they are clear now. And yet the sisters enjoy this and find him wildly attractive. Peer has become the fetishized boy.

Janson's Peer, boyishness and all, is a countertype masculinity. If we think back to Glassner's conversation with Larry, Janson's Peer is similar to Larry. He is perpetually unsatisfied, insecure and often dealing with it by objectifying women. We must ask the question, why is Peer unsatisfied and insecure? One argument is that Peer is objectified by those around him (both women and men) and that he is simply dealing with them with the defences that he has available in his toolbox. He has learned about these "tools" from other men around him and throughout his life, most notably Aslak. Thus, we find a cycle. Peer is objectified by others. Peer objectifies others in return. This cycle simply repeats and repeats and repeats. That is, until Solveig comes into place. While Bradley's and Baardson's adaptations may signify her as a religious savior for him, to me she signifies a respite or scapegoat from social and physical norms and objectifications in which Peer has become so entangled in Janson's film.

6. THE EMPATHIC MALE

We have discussed hegemonic masculinity and sub masculinities and alternative masculinities. We have followed the paths and strategies that Peer uses in each of the three adaptations in his quest to find his own form of masculinity, most of which are destructive to anyone and everyone around him. While this construction of masculinity remains fairly dark and foreboding, there is glimmer of yet another type of masculinity that we can classify as: the empathic male. As I have discussed, for generations masculinity has planted its claims on a few fundamental foundations. These foundations are reproduced in our everyday lives each and every day. Men drink beer and not “girly” drinks. Men are fit and muscular. Men work hard and provide for their family but do not concern themselves with taking care of their family. Men do not cry or talk about their emotions. Men do not cook or involve themselves with fashion or decorative things. These are just a few examples that come immediately to mind.

As we have discussed, these examples are simply the tip of the iceberg. Underneath lies darker and colder ideals even more firmly set. These ideals have only just begun to shift within the past few decades. Western societies are slowly seeing the rise in stay-at-home dads, more women working in the workplace, an embrace of the emotionally available man (and with it a shift in the sexualization of men from simply physical to emotional), and the blurring of traditional gender lines. No longer is the physically fit man who is the breadwinner for the family enough. Societies are beginning to emphasize the need for a more well-rounded masculinity, a masculinity that encompasses many of the previous ideals, but which also accounts for the emotional side of a man. Jack Sattel, a professor of Sociology, comments on this idea of the “inexpressive male” (originally conceptualized by Balswick and Peek in 1971) saying, “[...] Male inexpressiveness is of no particular value in our culture [...] It is an instrumental requisite for assuming adult male roles of power” (Sattel 1976, 294). Traditional, inexpressive men will often argue that this shift is causing a detriment to masculinity as we no longer have the same work specific knowledge that their generation has and the generations of men had before them. I would argue that, with our increasing need for a specialized workforce, this progression was inevitable and should be embraced and, if

anything, this specialized workforce has allowed, and even forced, men to reexamine masculinity ideals. It is not only the older men that push back against these new ideals, it is also the younger generation.

Young adults are currently fond of using the derogatory term “simp” to describe an emotionally well-rounded man or someone who they see as catering too much towards a woman, whether it be a woman they like, their girlfriend, or their wife. Urban Dictionary defines a “simp” as: “Someone who will say anything to please someone, particularly a girl, in hopes that they will be in good favor with that person” (Urban Dictionary, 2020). If a man stays at home to spend time with his partner and their family, rather than going to the bar with his male friends, he may be called a simp. If a husband must discuss plans being made with his wife before committing to something, he may be called a simp. To be labeled a “simp” at this moment in time, takes only the slightest violation of traditional hegemonic masculinity ideals. Working as a teacher, I often hear this term being used around school by children between the ages of thirteen to fifteen. I do not personally remember such a period in my young adult life, but this is my working explanation for it: my parents, who grew up in the 1970’s did not actively attempt to shift gender roles (though there was, arguably, a brief time during the 70’s and Vietnam where an attempt was made). It was not until my own generation, folded into this specialized work environment, and pushed by shifting gender perspectives, that we have begun to actively reshape our understanding of masculinity. With this shift we have begun to see push back as well within the home. Male children are being raised in the mold of either some form of this new empathic masculinity or in the form of the old hegemonic masculinity, the inexpressive male. When they are old enough to bring these ideals into our communities and schools and society it is not surprising that the easier path to follow is the path more traveled. Michael Ian Black wrote an opinion piece for the New York Times in 2018 titled “The Boys Are Not Alright” in which he discusses the idea that men and, specifically boys, are unable to express themselves and be vulnerable without being attacked and emasculated because they are not being “manly”. Black writes:

Too many boys are trapped in the same suffocating, outdated model of masculinity, where manhood is measured in strength, where there is no way to be vulnerable without

being emasculated, where manliness is about having power over others. They are trapped, and they don't even have the language to talk about how they feel about being trapped, because the language that exists to discuss the full range of human emotion is still viewed as sensitive and feminine (Black, 2018).

That being said, there can be no doubt that masculine ideals have shifted and continue to shift over the past two decades. Even doing a simple Google search one can find articles in the dating section of the online magazine *Muscles and Fitness* with titles such as “20 Things That 20 Real Women Say Make You Manly.” When magazines such as these, specifically created for literally what their title advertises, are publishing articles quoting women saying, “A manly man is compassionate, humble, and full of heart. He can laugh at himself and cares about other people’s happiness [...]” (Muscles and Fitness), I think that we can concretely confirm this shift. It should be noted that in that same article there is another woman saying that what she finds manly is, “Physical attributes like broad shoulders, larger hands, taller height, confidence, self assured, not a flat butt, masculine facial attributes” (Muscles and Fitness). Here we have the perfect example of these two separate masculinity ideals at battle with each other in our modern western societies. The push and pull between these two masculinities can be found throughout our cultures, even in our mainstream music. If you listen to the likes of Tekashi 69, an American rapper and singer you will hear lyrics such as, “Play me like a dummy, like bitch, are you dumb? / Are you dumb, stupid, or dumb, huh? / Yeah, you got some money, but you still fuckin' ugly / Stupid, listen / When I talk, you better listen” (Lyrics). Almost as popular, but drastically different in style, you can find “Juice Wrld”, an American rapper, singer and songwriter from Chicago who passed away in 2019. His songs often include lyrics like, “This is the part where I tell you I'm fine, but I'm lying / I just don't want you to worry / This is the part where I take all my feelings and hide 'em / 'Cause I don't want nobody to hurt me” (Genius). Both Juice Wrld and Tekashi 69 had achieved worldwide fame and recognition in the music industry within the past few years. These two artists reflect these conflicting masculine ideals: the inexpressive vs. the empathic.

This newly found masculinity progression is a difficult path and, as we have discussed, it is not only children that succumb to cultural pressures and habits and resort to these old ideals.

We can find this repetition and continuation in adults, as stated above, and in the work which I have focused on in my thesis: in Ibsen's work, Baardson's adaptation, and in Bradley's adaptation. While I would like to believe that Ibsen was actively taking a stance against this inexpressive male ideal, he feeds into them himself in his text. Bradley seems unconcerned entirely and Baardson often leans so far into them that they can often come off as farcical. It is only Janson's adaptation that seems to embrace this new empathic masculinity. I should clarify that I think Bradley and Baardson's adaptations are incredibly insightful on this issue. Without the contract of their work it would be much more difficult to pinpoint it within Janson's work. Their adaptations are also a much more common portrayal of Peer than Janson's is. Ibsen's Peer is written as being inexpressive in nature. His actions throughout the play continually justify that choice. Sattel writes,

To effectively wield power one must be able both to convince others of the rightness of the decisions one makes and to guard against one's own emotional involvement in the consequences of that decision; that is, one has to show that decisions are reached rationally and efficiently. One must be able to close one's eyes to the potential pain one's decisions have for others and for oneself. [...] I would argue, in a similar vein, that a little boy must become inexpressive not simply because our culture expects boys to be inexpressive but because our culture expects little boys to grow up to become decision makers and wielders of power (Sittel 1976, 294).

It is hard to come up with a better example of this inexpressive male, than Peer Gynt. He has learned from the society around him that, in order to be successful and powerful, he must sacrifice his empathy. From his lavish stories, to his flippant treatment of women, to his wealth acquired from trading slaves. The climax of this inexpressive male can be found in his scene with The Cook in Act 5. After their boat sinks on the way back to Norway, Peer and The Cook both cling to a keel to stay afloat. The Cook begs Peer to let him live saying, "Sir, spare my life, / I beg! My children! My poor wife!". Yet Peer, "*seizes a fistful of [the Cook's] hair*", makes him recite the Lord's Prayer, and then, "*releases his grip on the Cook, who sinks*" (Ibsen 2006, 299). Peer believes that he must sacrifice his empathy in exchange for power and he shows himself willing to do so to the utmost extremes. I would like to think

that Ibsen was aware of this in his own work and was attempting to comment on it rather than embrace it. I would not say that Bradley and Baardson are actively supporting and encouraging this inexpressive male but rather that they have, perhaps, taken Ibsen's work too literally in this aspect. It could be argued that, they have utilized this inexpressive male in order to highlight the shift within it when he is reunited with Solveig at the end as, "For many males [...] through progressively more serious involvements with women (such as going steady, being pinned, engagement, and the honeymoon period of marriage), [these males] begin to make some exceptions" (Balswick and Peek 1971, 365-366). Bradley and Baardson both end their adaptations with Peer's reunion with Solveig. Baardson's Peer cries on the shoulder of Solveig, while Bradley's Peer walks slowly towards the cabin which he has built long ago with Solveig waiting for him thanks to his short note and the power of true love. I believe it was the filmmakers' intentions to highlight this shift from the inexpressive male to the empathic male, however, with the sheer amount of horrific acts committed by Peer, it is extremely difficult for the viewer to sympathize or care much by the last four minutes of the films and thus the tactic becomes ineffective. Bradley and Baardson attempt to tackle this issue and bring it to the forefront however, it is in comparison to Janson's Peer that we see how strongly inexpressive these Peer's truly are.

Janson's Peer is empathic, kind, thoughtful and engaged. He listens and responds directly to the other actors in his scenes. He is usually face to face with them, maintaining eye contact. To the viewer, he gives off the impression of being grounded and honest and genuine. He is a man who is in touch with himself and others. It is a stark contrast to the other two Peers who are constantly speaking while turned away from their scene partners and who seem to be addressing themselves or an unseen audience to which they are gracing with their presence. Baardson's and Bradley's Peer engage in many asides and monologues which reinforce the idea of a self-obsessed man. Janson has done away with these asides and monologues for the most part. If Janson's Peer does have his own lines to himself it is set in such a way that it feels natural. For example, towards the beginning of the film, as he is making his way to the wedding, he lies on his back in the grass daydreaming and speaking a bit to himself. It does not feel performative or self-indulgent as the others tend to lean towards, intentionally or

unintentionally. This self-awareness, or lack of self-indulgence, whether on the part of the actor or the director, sets a path towards this empathic man.

This Peer not only listens and engages with other women he is speaking with, Janson makes sure that the viewer understands just how in touch with others his Peer is. When Solvig and Peer first meet at the wedding, they simply stare at each other and speak their lines telepathically. This Peer, unlike the drunk, groping, clingy, clumsy Peers of Bradley and Beardson (during this scene), understands people of the opposite sex and how to connect with them. Peer's ability to emotionally connect with others is highlighted by his relationship with his mother, Aase. While other adaptations depict Aase as irritating and squealing and high pitched and winey, Janson has done exactly the opposite. Janson's Aase is kind, quiet, and strong. Peer's relationship with her perpetuates this calm and caring strength. While they joke and physically push each other around, there is a deep and undeniable connection between the two.

The film opens with the two of them walking down a road together, side by side, talking normally and seeming to enjoy each other's company. There is no yelling, no laughing at one another. There is a respect that is ingrained within their relationship that does not exist in the superficial layers of Ibsen's work or the other adaptations. Even when Peer does pick up Aase and move her around, it is with a certain degree of fragility and caring. When Aase dies, he is there with her, kissing her often and holding her close. This scene, as discussed briefly earlier in my thesis, can feel borderline incestuous to the viewer. Whether or not this was Janson's intention I cannot say, but his intention to create a mutual and powerful relationship and bond between the two of them is easy for the viewer to understand, and is certainly undeniable. Interestingly, this moment of Aase's death in Janson's adaptation was the first time that I, as a viewer, understood that Peer's storytelling was both a curse and also a blessing. It is his story that soothes her passing. When she does pass Ibsen's, Beardson's, and Bradley's Peers simply leave. Janson's Peer begins to cry and curls himself deeper into her, his head on her chest and his hand wrapped around hers. It is an emotional moment that is beautiful and raw. When this moment is played by the tough man, the man who avoids emotional pain (or the actor unable to connect to his own self for this moment), as it is played in the other adaptations, we the

viewer understand the moment as being fake and it makes us hyper aware of being an audience member and the moment crumbles. These masculine stereotypes do not exist within Janson's empathic *Peer Gynt* (or within Robert Stradlober's acting) and thus, we the audience, are able to relate and experience this moment side by side with Peer. It is authentic. The film solidifies this empathic man in the following scene where we see Peer carrying his mother's body out to a pier by the sea and jumping in with her. This scene is not in Ibsen's original text nor is it in either of the other two adaptations, but Janson chose to have Peer honor his mother with a fitting burial because it is what his Peer would do.

Another discrepancy between Janson's work and the others is that, in Ibsen's text, Peer is offered beer from the Master of Ceremonies (Ibsen 2008, 188) and drinks hard alcohol from a flask (Ibsen 2008, 189). In Bradley and Baardson's adaptations they recreate these images showing Peer drinking beer and hard alcohol from a flask (Baardson's Peer aggressively so). We encounter Peer's drinking again in Morocco as he dines with Mr. Cotton, Monsieur Ballon, Herr Von Eberkopf, and Herr Trumpeteerstraale. This time, instead of beer or hard alcohol he is drinking red wine. While red wine is still masculine, it implies a certain status to the viewer. Once again, Bradley and Baardson perpetuate Ibsen's original image. It is only Janson's Peer where this, seemingly innocent, imaging is flipped on its head. Janson's Peer does not drink at the wedding feast, he does not drink any hard alcohol in the film, he does not drink beer, nor does he even get drunk. Peer drinks only one time throughout the film. As he lays with Ingrid, post sexual intercourse, they each enjoy a glass of champagne. This choice is nowhere in Ibsen's text. This choice, to exclude the drinking from the rest of the script and insert this champagne drinking at this point, was entirely purposeful on Janson's part. Champagne, like rose or a daiquiri or a sidecar, can be classified as a "girly" drink (a view which my former mixologist self firmly disagrees with). This moment is a clear rebuttal and rejection of the stereotypes surrounding masculine drinking culture.

This empathic Peer could be justified in his upbringing within this depiction of the Gynt family. More likely is that, with this film taking place in 2006, masculine ideals had already begun to shift. By 2006 western societies had begun to gravitate towards the empathic masculine ideal rather than the older hegemonic masculine ideals. I have talked much about

Stradlober's skinny physique. Many women in the film, specifically those that are together or interested in Aslak and his group of friends, are not attracted to his physical appearance as it does not fit into a normative masculine stereotype. That is not to say that other women in the film do not find him attractive. Others, as we know, find him wildly attractive. It could be argued that, perhaps, they are attracted to him in a fetishized boyish.

Yet there is another perspective from which we can view Stadlober's attractiveness, which is as a metrosexual. We often categorize men such as him as this in modern society. Mark Simpson wrote an article titled, "Meet the Metrosexual" for Salon in 2002. It is a highly provocative piece, in which he claims that David Beckham is one, but it is useful in our examination of Stradlober's Peer. Simpson claims that, "The stoic, self-denying, modest straight male [...] had to be replaced by a new kind of man, one less certain of his identity and much more interested in his image - that's to say, one who was much more interested in being looked at [...]" (Simpson 2002). Stadlober's Peer certainly fits this mold in many ways. Firstly, the idea of someone who is uncertain of his own image, as Peer is continually trying to find himself throughout the entire film, resonates clearly. From a costuming standpoint we see Peer in his rag like clothes for almost the entire film. Yet, in his scenes with Anitra he is dressed in a beautifully patterned shirt, tapered pants, and a sports jacket. He looks very fashionable and clean. He looks like a metrosexual. Yet this categorizations should not negate his sexual orientation in fact "He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference" (Simpson 2002). This idea could explain all of his failed relationships throughout the adaptation. It is not the women, but Peer who is more in love with himself than anyone else around him besides Solveig. This metrosexuality, a purposeful push against traditional masculine ideals and physical stereotypes, highlight an enlightened Peer. This Peer understands the modern times in which he lives and that, in order to be attractive, he can be metrosexual while, simultaneously, being empathic.

He uses his terrific interpersonal skills and emotional connections to his advantage again and again. He uses them with Ingrid, with Solveig, with the Three Seter Sisters, and with the Green Clad Woman. Some now suggest that empathy is genetic (U.S. National Library of

Medicine), while others argue that empathy is learned. I would argue that, while it is Janson's empathy (whether genetic or learned) that has made this Peer possible, and it is Peer's learned empathy that enables him to act the way he does. The viewer understands that this adaptation is set in a modern society and thus Peer's upbringing is in a modern context that emphasizes the empathic male rather than the inexpressive male. We see it in this original take on his and Aase's relationship, seemingly nurturing and kind and open. While on one hand, this Peer seems like a much more wholesome character it could be argued that he is, in fact, just a more complex and manipulative Peer than the others. Empathy, just like any other trait, can be used in a multitude of ways, not all of which are good. It can certainly be used in ways to aggressively stake a claim to hegemonic masculinity in a seemingly harmless way.

7. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this process I outlined Hutcheon's *who, what, where, when, how, and why* briefly and how they translated to these three adaptations individually. In reflection I believe that I am better equipped to answer some of these questions again in a more specific way with a masculinity perspective in mind. Our *when, where, who, and what* remains relatively the same as no amount of research or analysis can change these. However it is the *why* and *how* that have shifted during the course of my research that I will discuss in the following paragraphs.

David Bradley's *Peer Gynt*, an adaptation filmed at the beginning of these artists' careers takes little risk. It is less an original painting than it is a paint-by-numbers. They follow Ibsen's structure in its entirety, often at the film's disadvantage. When Peer returns to Solveig at the end of the film, he looks identical to the Peer that spoke to Aase at the beginning of the film. Bradley did not attempt to even hide this by placing Heston in different costuming, wigs, or makeup. This, in and of itself, is telling of what Bradley expected of the viewer; a total suspension of disbelief. The adaptation does not expect or invite the viewer to look at the film's choices in the moment, rather it proposes the choices as facts. From my analysis I have found that Bradley's Peer strives for hegemonic masculinity while, simultaneously, underplays it constantly with Heston's seemingly carefree and uninvested attitude towards most of the women. The film seems to suggest, on some level, that there is nothing odd or strange about Peer's actions, that these choices are made by each and every man coming into himself. I cannot say that I entirely disagree with this idea however, the film normalises these displays of hegemonic masculinity with such a carefree attitude that they become concerning.

During the time that this adaptation was made (1941), I do not think we could expect the critical lens, from which we view it from today, to be so widely embraced. Bradley's work is less a piece commenting on society or even influenced by religion, but rather, an invitation for the viewer to accept and indulge in their hegemonic masculine desires, justifying them as normal no matter the consequences and destruction. Its production for film rather than a theatrical piece suggests that Bradley intended his work to reach a wider audience while,

simultaneously, creating a more intimate and progressive (in relation to the theatre) experience. I would suggest that Bradley's work was created by men, for men, as a way for them to indulge in watching another man attempt to practice hegemonic masculinity in a safe, dark environment where their own masculine identities felt safe, uncompromised, and unscrutinised.

Bentein Baardson has created his adaptation, shaped by the backing of NRK, in a way that seems to support a Christian ideology. Ironically, it is the most violently and unapologetically masculine of all three adaptations I have looked at in my work. While the *why* could be chalked up to simply religious motives it is also, in my opinion, an attempt to comment on society. Baardson's work was filmed for television and aired around Christmas, further informing us that it was supposed to relate, on one level or another, to Christian values. What Baardson misses in regards to the irony within his own adaptation, he makes up for it by having it aired in this context. This made for TV film adaptation was intended to reach a large Norwegian audience of all ages as families relaxed together during the holidays. The film overflows with physical violence, nudity, sexual assault, racial stereotypes, and belittling imagery directed towards woman. There are two explanations for such a film being made for this audience, the first being that due to a lack of directorial guidance the film comes off as a toxically masculine romp. The second, more plausible, explanation is that it was the makers intent to parody masculine culture in a way that would guide the viewer towards understanding that hegemonic masculinity is not what men should be striving for. As discussed though the irony, and subsequent parodic themes, are often lost within Baardson's work and the adaptation rather seems like an open endorsement of hegemony and violence, specifically violence against women in the name of masculinity.

It is my opinion that Uwe Janson's adaptation has tackled the difficulties of the masculinity themes in *Peer Gynt* with a grace and insightfulness that the other two adaptations lack. With his adaptation being created in 2006 it only seems reasonable that his work is the most in sync with our understanding of masculinity, and the dialogs being had around it, in a modern context. Janson's work comments on hegemonic masculinity however, instead of exaggerating Peer's quest for hegemonic masculinity, Janson's work guides Peer through it

from a multi-masculine identity perspective. Instead of using the same hegemonic masculinity ideal over and over again, his Peer tries a few different masculinities, each with a variant of success. His Peer is not loud or boisterous and violent. Janson's Peer reflects the modern man, an intelligent man navigating the treacherous and the, often, self sabotaging path of masculine identity. Throughout the film he utilises empathy, charm, kindness, hegemonic, and countertype modes. His character is fluid, his identity changing constantly. Bauman comments the following, "In our fluid world, committing oneself to a single identity for life, or even for less than a whole life but for a very long time to come, is a risky business. Identities are for wearing and showing, not for storing and keeping" (2004, 89). This seems to be what Janson's Peer understands. This work, like Bradley's, was created for film and an intimate setting.

There is an undeniable link between all three works and the modern masculine constructs in which we all operate in our day to day lives. These Peers are living their own lives within their fictional worlds yet, as Mulvey stated, film creates a unique space where the viewer can live vicariously through the characters. The consequences and effects of each of these films is wider than the critics and reviews. These films effect each and every man who views it and speaks to their own masculine identity on some level or another; either weakening or reinforcing their beliefs.

I have discussed masculinity and its relationship to these three film adaptations of Peer Gynt in the context of sexualization (both male and female), violence, patriarchy, hegemonism, and empathy. I have looked at theorists and scholars and compared their works and applied them to my personal experience of each of these adaptations. While I am proud of the work and believe it has validity, it all balances on my ability to analyze these films. Of course, if I have done a poor job, my thesis has little foundation to base itself on. But that, in of itself, is debatable as each and every person's experience with a film or any piece of theatrical art may be different. Someone can watch the same thing as me and walk away thinking an entirely different thought. It is important that, if my work is to be used, the reader understands that this is my own personal analysis.

Another immediate issue is that, in my work, I have addressed masculinity in a modern Western frame. Framing it as “Western” masculinity is, of course, a generalization and these masculinity stereotypes vary from country to country. There are many scholarly works on the differences between American and European masculinity. There are surely differences between each and every European country as well. It could be argued that, in placing them all under “western culture,” I have watered down my findings and painted too broad of a stroke. While those claims would not be unwarranted, I believe that my focus on Western masculinity as a whole serves as a point from which others and myself can continue to research. I do not believe that the struggles of masculinity lie only in these three adaptations and Ibsen’s own *Peer Gynt*, rather it is my opinion that these lie in almost all of Ibsen’s work and the subsequent work that was created from it.

Within the field of Ibsen Studies, the emphasis that has been placed on, and the attention paid to, the feminist perspective is overwhelming. I believe it is a natural progression to turn our attention toward masculinity. If we have not yet analyzed and understood both prospects, on any given subject, then our sight is limited and our foundations weak. It is my hope that as these discussions continue to be had within academia, they will continue to be had in our theaters, in our schools, and in our everyday lives because, “sex roles could be changed by changing expectations in classrooms, setting up new role models, and so on”(Connell 1995, 23). Connell continues saying, “Masculinity is not just an idea in the head, or a personal identity. It is also extended in the world, merged in organized social relations” (Connell 1995, 29).

Masculinity is an exhausting construct to attempt to understand, let alone trying to understand it as a male and the self-reflection it requires. Most days feel like a struggle for those of us who attempt to embrace a more holistic masculinity rather than a hegemonic masculinity and I cannot imagine how exhausting it must be attempting to fulfill a hegemonic masculine role. I say this because it is important that we, and others, do not assume to think that we are alone in this. Just as we are meeting these ideas head on in the 21st century, Ibsen and millions of other artists, scholars, and every day men have been doing so for generations. We must continue to honor their stories and their works, with our own.

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