

Fictions of Masculinity



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We are just beginning to understand masculinity as a fiction or a localizable, historical, and therefore unstable construct. This book points the way to a much-needed interrogation of the many modes of masculinity, as represented in literature. Both women and men who are engaged in critical thinking about genders and sexualities will find these essays always thoughtful and often provocative. --Thas E. Morgan, Associate Professor of English, Arizona State University Peter Murphy has assembled an innovative, challenging, and important set of contributions to a growing field of inquiry into constructions of masculinities in literature, inspired principally by feminist and gay studies. Illuminatingly crossing lines of genders, sexualities, cultures, and methodologies, *Fictions of Masculinity* greatly advances our understanding of representations of men, masculinities, misandry, and misogyny in a wide range of literary works and genres, and helps us to imagine (and thereby ultimately bring about) alternative constructions. --Harry Brod, Editor, *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*, *A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*, and *Theorizing Masculinities*. Women writing about women dominates contemporary work on sexuality. Men have been far more willing to discuss female sexuality than male sexuality, while the most radical and insightful analyses of male sexuality have come from women. When men consider the issue of female sexuality they often speak from

assumptions of security about their own unexamined sexuality. This book maintains that men have to interrogate their own sexuality if there is to be a revision of phallogentric discourse; and, that this revision of masculinity must be done in dialogue with women. The essays included in this collection examine the deep structure of masculine codes. They ask the question Who are the men in modern literature? Examining the force of the dominant values of Western masculinity, they synthesize insights from feminism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, and new historicism. These perspectives help explain how male sexuality has been structured by fictional representations. By examining the images of masculinity in modern literature, the essays explore traditional and non-traditional roles of men in society and in personal relationships. They look at how men are represented in literature, the fiction of manhood. They attempt to unravel the assumptions behind these representations by looking at the implications of this imagination. And they speculate on possibilities for creating a new imaginary of masculinity by identifying what literature has to say about that change. With analyses of a range of genres (novels, poetry, plays and autobiography), Western and Third World literatures, and theoretical perspectives, Fictions of Masculinity provides a significant contribution to this rapidly growing field of study. Contributors are: David Bergman (Towson State University), Miriam Cooke (Duke University), Martin Danahy (Emory University), Richard Dellamora (Trent University, Ontario), Leonard Duroche (University of Minnesota), Jim Elledge (Illinois State University), Alfred Habegger (University of Kansas), Suzanne Kehde (California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo), David Leverenz (University of Florida), Christopher Metress (Wake Forest University), Peter F. Murphy (SUNY, Empire State College), Rafael Prez-Torres (University of Pennsylvania), David Radavich (Eastern Illinois University), and Peter Schwenger (St. Vincent University, Nova Scotia).

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