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**Heuristic mutilation as a male tool: from epistemophilic sadist voyeurism to
necrophilic onanistic masochism**

Juan G. Etxeberria

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

This paper explores, from an ideological perspective, how the so called hegemonic masculinity model makes men's relationship to women more difficult, particularly, the complex ways female bodies influence men to discover, exploit, and increase their own problems. Bodies, sexuality, and eroticism in their most polysemic and transgressive meanings are considered here political weapons, confirming literature and cinema as cultural expressions that show evidence of the postmodernist crisis of authority. Both cultural manifestations offer important spaces for socio-biological practices where desire transforms itself into the expression of the cultural moment and their main characters' identity.

Modern philosophy has been haunted by the problematic mind-body relation, and in the twentieth century, phenomenologists called into question its very foundation, the unbridgeable Cartesian dualism which divided reality into mind, *res cogitans*, and matter, *res extensa*. They went beyond this model and dared to prioritize what Heidegger had privileged: "the body phenomenon is the most difficult problem."¹ Since then, the body has constituted one of the most active areas of philosophical reflection, representing, as in Merleau-Ponty, not just a natural possession, but our essence; as a matter of fact, the French philosopher's notion of the flesh, "*la chair*," and his consideration of the body as an intertwining of structures and forces that interact without the agency of a controlling centre, is

the root of Foucault's assumption of the body as the basis of the contemporary ideological system, and of the new understanding of subjectivity where the body is the key site of the so called "bio-politics" regulation. As a further consequence, after Anthony Giddens² defined the existential contradiction of human societies as a mixture of the cultural and the natural, none of the corporeal realities could be any longer analysed in the traditional way, but had to be seen from a constructivist perspective, which explained all types of manifestations including sexuality, considered by Pierre Bourdieu "*une invention historique*."³

In the same vein, what follows has as its main goal to consider men's general attitude towards female bodies, and the not so different, but definitely more specific reaction of some men to women's corpses as an auto-erotic experience, using film and literature's hybrid nature to convey social stereotypes and to represent their contradictory system; this side effect of male sexuality, born from the Freudian scopic drive and developed through clinical fetishism, usually ends up in tragic consequences, a clear example of the current crisis of hegemonic masculinity that inspired some of the works of the age. Taking into account the Sadean reading of literature as "*le tableau des mœurs séculaires*,"⁴ and given the overwhelming corporeal presence in literature as well as in most of the cinema titles in the last decades of the twentieth century, examples will be drawn from Anglophone fiction to study how problems are increased, when not caused, by their characters' masculinist ideology, from Martin Amis's *Money. A Suicide Note* (1984) to Paul Auster's *Ghosts* (1986) or Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991), and from Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) to Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia* (2000), in terms of movies. These are but some of the many works where the body and sexuality become the centre of postmodernist fiction, considering this term in its heuristic dimension to deal with the most excruciating problems of these decades and revealing its true nature behind the bright side of its hedonistic material consumism.

Far from the classical definition of unity in space and time, our contemporary concept of body requires an interdisciplinary approach to understand the union of its physical, psychological and cultural elements, all of which constitute its comprehensive meaning. Turned into a *tabula rasa* on which every message can be written, its powerful discourse as a cultural construction has remained central to corporeal feminism, with its denunciation of how gender identity both influences and is influenced by the implied legal, political and sexual hierarchization of bodies. These widespread assumptions changed into a body obsession by the end of the twentieth century, when the anxiety caused by the AIDS pandemic produced a traumatic mixture of hateful horror and horrible admiration that helped to reaffirm a conservative tendency and witnessed the explosion of the male body as a crucial signifier of hegemonic masculinity in Western societies. Moreover, this socio-political reading of the body completed the unfinished biological project with the civilising set of controls embodied in the economic, social and psychological aspects necessary to be a member of that selective group. The range of developed attributes and learned skills that Pierre Bourdieu considers part of the “physical capital”⁵ helps us see the body’s symbolic nature and allows its use as the perfect synonym of the male self, whose literal embodiment has enabled men’s power not just through labour production, but also through sexuality and physical violence. In re-examining the Freudian conceptualization of sexuality and desire, theorists have contributed to the consideration of eroticism as another polysemic field whose limits—not only the scientific and legal ones, but also those posed by religious and philosophical prejudices—are constitutive of a discourse, an interrelated system particularly beneficiary for a specific group whose authority is difficult to challenge. Once sexuality was separated from reproduction, its discursive power has been even more evident, as Jeffrey Fracher and Michael Kimmel pose: “that we are sexual is determined by a biological imperative toward reproduction, but how we are sexual, where, when, how often, with whom, and why has to do with cultural learning and with how meaning is

transmitted by a cultural setting.”⁶ Sexuality, the natural human ability to derive pleasure from bodies by instinctually impelling one body towards another, has acquired a more symbolical and metonymical meaning, especially as the representation of what is missing, the way to compensate for cultural male incompleteness: “Sex is used recurrently as a symbol of the search for meaning and fulfilment all men engage in.”⁷ Sexuality, then, stands for what men desire, and can be read as a means to achieve knowledge and power, identifying the Foucauldian *volonté de savoir* with the Nietzschean will to power. An epistemological semiotics of sexuality implies that every gesture and every practice are to be seen in their political transfer to power relations, making it impossible to interpret sexual acts as only a question of physical pleasure, since the subject is created in gaining access to the control and subordination of other bodies. Desire, knowledge and power are then part and parcel of every historical pattern of sexuality whose principal site of action, the body, is constituted as a specific historical entity easily subjected to institutions, in Foucault’s approach. Its subjection to law makes of its most daring manifestations something negatively powerful in the bourgeois context, as Bataille suggests: “Eroticism as seen by the objective intelligence is something monstrous, just like religion.”⁸

Applying these notions to hegemonic masculinity is hardly surprising, since sexuality is considered the foundation of gender identities and maintains male and female division in a dualistic hierarchical opposition—one of the reasons why critics like Gayle Rubin have argued that sex is always political.⁹ By the time sexuality has become a project to obtain power, male bodies are transformed into heuristic tools trained to extend their subjective authority into other bodies in a generically specified way: “The visual sense always has and probably always will play a major role in men’s sexual responsiveness” (Brooks 1995, 2). It is the most characteristic male drive, scopophilia, which for Freud is, as any other instinct, between the mental and the somatic, the one that works mentally when selecting the most charming individuals as objects of love. The scopic experience as the first

form of male control over female subjects objectifies them—“sexual objectification in and of itself is considered the norm of male sexuality” (Stoltenberg 1990, 45)—and fragments their bodies as a defensive strategy to be used against the impact that their wholeness would exert on men. The well studied split between the active male gaze and the passive female body increases the importance of sexual parts, which society needs—or used to—to protect from general vision. The most extreme consequences are observed in the voyeuristic fetishization which pervades such works as *American Psycho*, which best represents Lukács’s definition of the novel as “the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God.”¹⁰ This type of works, so appalling at the end of the twentieth century, can be seen as examples of what Gary R. Brooks calls the Centerfold Syndrome. Its five elements—“(a) voyeurism, (b) objectification, (c) the need for validation, (d) trophyism, and (e) the fear of true intimacy” (Brooks 1995, 2)—describe what sex means for most men, a model reaffirming men and women’s relationship in traditional terms, and establishing what the right place for women is: “Women, for you, they’re just pornography.”¹¹ Apart from being insulting to women, the male role born from such consumption paradigm has proved to be psychologically unhealthy for men. As a putative standard of male sexuality, the Centerfold Syndrome aims at dealing with the visual dimension of fetishism and voyeurism, two male perversions that, while representing men’s oxymoronic juxtaposition of attraction and fear towards the female body, are only deemed pathological by the American Psychiatric Association under such limiting conditions as their periodic recurrence, their involvement with non-living objects or their disruptions of men’s functioning in the work-place (Brooks 1995, 112). Far from soothing, the absence of the penis as a visual sign transforms women into threatening icons the way Freudian castration anxiety detailed, a feeling which can only be counterbalanced by violent and dangerous means, either sadist voyeurism or objectifying fetishism. Both extremes exaggerate sexual difference and cause distress because of their life-death game and their eternally unattainable nature, the perfect metaphor for men’s crisis.

Besides, the fetishistic dead load of body parts produces a fragmentary male desire, even more violent when in order to achieve power, men explore the female body as part of their epistemophilic ambition. Knowing the female body and knowing through it is so vital that sometimes natural vision must be completed by technical devices—“As usual, in an attempt to understand these girls I’m filming their deaths”¹²—since they render more specific details, for example, an “edit switch that’s also capable of time-lapse recording, which allows me to, say, record a decomposing body at fifteen second intervals or tape a small dog as it lies in convulsions, poisoned” (Ibid, 307). Other technicalities, the perfect scenery and editing, close-ups and slow camera, early introduced by the homicidal maniac cameraman in Powell’s forerunner of the slasher films *Peeping Tom* in 1960, have become a classic in serial killers fiction, stressing the role that dismemberment and fragmentation have played in filmic language; in this case, a single action, watching, is transformed into the much more satisfying symbiotic double action, filming and torturing,—“On a Wednesday night another girl, who I meet at M.K. and I plan to torture and film” (Ibid, 326)—of the killing eye¹³ that is able to study every single detail of irresolvable problems such as the invisible feminine orgasm, or the moment when a living creature passes away. However, female bodies contain obscure zones, private parts, hairy spots that far from just attracting men’s gaze and animal basic instincts, provoke their macho ego, and contribute to transform that desire into something much more complex. Among those body parts, breasts, backsides and vaginas represent Mary’s and Pandora’s duplicitous myths as sources of nurturance and pleasure, both objects of men’s attraction and repulsion. Natural curiosity renders them fascinating and frightening at the same time, and their social taboo status increases their power. It is contemporary society, the “natural” heir of the Victorian obsession with the exploitation of power relations through physical punishment, the only one responsible for making the evolution from flagellation to spanking only more delightful. These simulacra of the sexual acts have stressed what Freud had already proved: “The sexuality of

most male human beings contains an element of aggressiveness—a desire to subjugate.”¹⁴ As a result, the Hebrew semantic connection between the meanings of knowing and loving in the verb *yadah* can be completed, since men’s three ways of lust, the one to know, *libido capiendi*, the one to love, *libido amandi*, and the one to dominate, *libido dominandi*, are linked through their common use of violence. They support each other and share interacting characteristics to contribute to human action not just from the biological and psychological point of view, but also depending on their social, political and economic context: “Pornography and money enjoy a close concordat” (Amis 2005, 69). Consequently, a common means of defence maintains and protects the patriarchal hierarchical structure: “The ultimate proof of power/masculinity is violence.”¹⁵ Therefore, the change of social roles implies something difficult to swallow for those who, like the American psycho, Patrick Bateman, overreact when invited by an ex-girlfriend—“The women’s movement. Wow” (Ellis 1991, 242)—just before biting her fingers off, stabbing at her breasts, cutting out her tongue, “seeming so much smaller than in her mouth” (Ibid, 246), and “fucking” her twice in the mouth, which helps us understand the real nature of the not so private events, as clearly stated in Kimmel’s and Messner’s work: “Violence against women is the illogical consequence of insecurity, anger, the need for control, the need to assert and demonstrate manliness.”¹⁶ Sexuality as revengeful vehicle should have been expected, given its importance for men and because of the therapy of orgasm, accepted as a primal part of ideological masculinity to transform in bed whatever is wrong with daily routine. This false division between sex and the rest of activities (denied by Stoltenberg: “How a man acts in sex and how he acts in general are not separate spheres, but perhaps rather a unity, perhaps a continuum, perhaps fundamentally the same problem”¹⁷) allows for the wrong idea of sexuality as an independent sphere where social pressures and conventions can be forgotten, facilitating the breaking of rules to reassure men’s power. Even though sex cannot tell all the truth, its confessional power to relay private truths could be

relied on. As stated in the first sexuality studies – e.g. Krafft-Ebing, Freud – sexual pleasure is not a world on its own but an access to personal identity, contacting our inmost part and making it intelligible. If this confessional power applies to most men, where sexual deviants are concerned, their going one step beyond socially acceptable violence by having female sexual parts as the main focus of mutilation is no longer shocking. Their mysterious combination of the power to bring life and to take it away from those who cannot avoid falling prey to their attractiveness is probably the reason why these gendered parts are seen as evil, and hence in need to be destroyed. This insane process of false victimization only reaches its most disgusting peak in some extreme cases; nevertheless, Gilligan states its common pattern: “All violence is an attempt to achieve justice.”¹⁸

When the semantics of the female body assumes the cultural significance of a symbolic dangerous construct, then, it becomes a battleground for men’s desires, where the beautiful but unclean elements cannot be dealt with and reconciled inside men’s brain, since they produce a shameful feeling that has to be eliminated in a definitive way, which explains why killing is never enough if the killer is not capable of getting rid of his own dirtiness in the redemptive process of torture and mutilation. This dark side of male sexuality – where sadism and masochism shake hands, pleasure and pain are not opposites, and rules and transgressions are the two sides of the same coin – can only be interpreted by its codes of violence. Away from its supposedly primitive innocence, the multi-axial nature of male perversions is read as the ultimate evidence of the main component of the hegemonic model, the impossible coexistence of the above mentioned dichotomous feelings towards the female body. When sexuality must be used to both express frustrating emotions such as anxiety and anger, and also give solution to non-sexual problems, then, it is probably transformed into perversion as Robert Stoller defines it: “the erotic form of hatred.”¹⁹ If it is true that “sexual perversions spring out of a frustration of the sense of life” (Glicksberg 1971, 22), it is obvious that unhappiness traps men in this thirst for power, and sexuality becomes a

completely different acquired characteristic. Violent sexuality turns into sexual violence, as when the main character in Paul Auster's *The Locked Room*, one of the short stories in *The New York Trilogy*, accepts that he liked "fucking" Fanshawe's mother in a sense that had nothing to do with pleasure because he was doing it for hate, identifying sexual desire with the desire to kill. As a matter of fact, it is no coincidence that the crisis in hegemonic masculinity goes hand in hand with the high number of literary perverts – "Sexual abnormality becomes a dominant theme in much of modern American literature" (Ibid, 21-2). The main explanation must be found in how men want to have as much control in their bedroom as they lack elsewhere in their lives. The inferred objectification of the woman implies that their desire is in men's hands and when they admit to fulfil wishes that are not their own, their institutional propping role becomes by proxy a masochistic dependency. Given the lethal combination of narcissism and sadism that dominates among psychopaths, the most insane violence can be expected, but always with the same rationale behind, the absolute imperative of preventing their victims from laughing at them, since all their victims' suffering is aimed at a disturbing way of compensation, in the already mentioned justice idea analysed by Gilligan, for the pain they feel: "My pain is constant and sharp and I do not hope for a better world for anyone. In fact I want my pain to be inflicted on others. I want no one to escape" (Ellis 1991, 376). Again, there is not a qualitative difference between the accepted social standard and its psychotic version; in fact, Timothy Beneke describes hegemonic masculinity as compulsive, as "the compulsion or need to relate to, and at times create, stress or distress as a means of both proving manhood and conferring on boys and men superiority over women and other men."²⁰ Consequently, psychos' reaction in bed is not completely separated from the social determinants which they have learned in order to maintain the gender division, as data prove, the increasing number of attacks can only be explained by problems outside the bedroom: "Those societies where rape was common were those that believed strongly in the inferiority of women and encouraged physical

aggression in men.”²¹ It is not a coincidence that most of the controversial fiction produced in the 1980s and 1990s reflects the influence of the capitalist system and its exploitation not just on money and stocks but also on its violent discourse about the body and sexuality, counting on the unhealthy interest produced by risky practices that subvert many of the binary oppositions upon which society establishes the difference between pleasure and pain, life and death, or good and evil. As any other commodity, they represent a danger in the postmodernist narrative, since sexual desire is viewed as sick when individuals push their experiences to the limit, bringing their characters face to face with death in what are considered transgressions to good sexual practices, that is, heterosexual, monogamous, intra-racial, adult, procreative, private, married, free and “vanilla” sex.

The attractive fixation on the most abject of these extreme experiences that reduce humans to pieces of meat has worked to describe the case of real and fictional sexual psycho-killers, who sometimes, as in the case of Bateman in *American Psycho*, according to Laura E. Tanner, share the same language, “taken directly from the testimony of serial killers and from public records of their actions.”²² It is a question of degree how far they go to satisfy their need for validation; pursuing the link Lacan or Bataille studied between sexuality and death in their bound desire to affirm life and to check its limits, these excessive infractions become sexual aberrations and torturous mutilations where psychos are in touch with their own frustrating anxieties in an unavoidable way, searching for something to compensate for their partly literal but mainly moral *horror vacui*, their absolute emotional stiffness. Their notorious numbness allows them to speak about the most despicable acts in the third person as if just standing by and watching without active participation, and not as an act of will. In a way, their passivity could be explained by the search for their missing phallus by a return to the only peaceful moment of emotional satisfaction, the mother-child union, which can be

looked for in the victim's open body; the sacred and the prohibited, hand in hand, are accessed in an attempt to find a pacificatory truth.

Sexuality turns itself into a structured technical torture, as they both share a ceremonial domain where proficient celebrants obtain the necessary degree, quality, intensity and duration to make sure their pressing need to contact the divine is answered back and communion takes place. Furthermore, both have a limitless field since all human parts can be equally eroticized to produce pleasure and tortured to cause pain. Besides, the suffering and purification involved in torture and sexuality necessitates the infliction of pain, the objectification of the victim's body and the knowledge to read its symbolic meaning. Even the primitive way of knowing through all the senses is reproduced by the master of ceremony, who unsatisfied with his eyes, uses his other senses to get in touch with the unknown text and recover his power:

Her breasts have been chopped off and they look blue and deflated, the nipples a disconcerting shade of brown. Surrounded by dried black blood, they lie, rather delicately, on a china plate [...]

Her vagina has discharged a brownish syrupy fluid that smells like a sick animal [...] I spend the next fifteen besides myself, pulling out a bluish rope of intestine, most of it connected to the body, and shoving it into my mouth, choking on it, and it feels moist in my mouth and it's filled with some kind of paste which smells bad... I want to drink this girl's blood as if it were champagne and I plunge my face deep into what's left of her stomach, scratching my chomping jaw on a broken rib (Ellis 1991, 344).

Psychic outlaws celebrate these ritualistic ceremonies to seek the human soul with knives, blades and screwdrivers in order to compensate for their total lack of confidence in a system that idealises female bodies to a point they are considered the instrument for men to attain their masculinity; a system that, after having stimulated their damaged nature, has dumped them as voiceless outsiders, useless men. So they are fascinated with the body's interior and look for the raw reality to

transcend social demands, a relic of their cannibalistic desire to express revenge on the object identified as the origin of their pain. They attempt to discover the mystery of their interiority, the miraculous nature of the porous surface where every orifice is a locus of exchange between the inner and the outer worlds, a point of conversion for the outside inside the body and the inside outside, all of it through secretions and filaments that form a virgin landscape for the psycho to discover. After the disappointing results of seeing in that absence of the female genitalia all the hidden presence of her power, the psycho cannot manage its objectified reality.

This epistemophilic interest needs its own language, something different from the arbitrary nature of conventional words. The language of pain uses acts instead, performing them through repetitive and theatrically exaggerated gestures. The new formulae to show dismemberment, which goes beyond the physical text and body to express a social and moral mutilation, destroy conventional language and go back to original behaviour where pain can be shared only through sounds and cries without referential content, in order to send the true message all by itself. The sourcing voice is the victim's suffering that explicates Wilde's idea of truth behind suffering. The victim's body becomes an ironic echo-chamber expressing the torturer's inner nature as a last resort to communicate his suffering in order to make it disappear. Female bodies are destroyed by the psycho who has identified and recognized them as the source of his pain, and looks for the certain end of his suffering, unveiling their mysteries. Women in their objectified role are reduced to instrumentalized scapegoats and victims of men's compulsive defensive aggressiveness; however, they are also used as the psycho's last opportunity to feel something, in a desperate attempt to confirm his subjectivity by enjoying the objectivity of the corpse, a state of being outside the self against a physical body to define himself through violence. Nevertheless, their necrophilia is not satisfactory. One of the main characteristics of psychos, the parallel and independent vision

outside reality about themselves, falls into pieces when they glimpse their own reality.

Needless to say, these are but the first lines of a “rock ‘n’ roll suicide.” The first shocking contrast between the active torturer and the passive victim is eventually substituted by a more appropriate vision in which both are exactly the same, tortured, maimed, torn apart and dead. Women’s bodies stop stimulating the psychos’ fantasies to reflect their own nature in a mirror where they can appreciate their self-portrait, and so, knowledge is transformed into selfknowledge: “Sexuality has become imprisoned within a search for selfidentity.”²³ In an ironical cross between ancient medicine and Lacan’s deconstruction of the traditional subject-object relationship through the *corps morcelé*, the process of knowledge could be analysed in the common device of learning about oneself through somebody else’s body. On the one hand, Laqueur has astonishingly proved how not just gender but also sex is constructed²⁴; on the other hand, this one-sex system is dominant in children’s fantasy until they recognize themselves in the Lacanian mirror stage as a separate being from their mother’s body. In these paradoxical examples, self recognition equates the alienation in which two bodies are perceived as one until they are really observed. In the case of psychos who maim their victims, the revengeful alienated form of recognition, where they obsess over bodies seen as polysemic texts, allows them to learn about themselves. In the epidermic information readers get about most contemporary fiction characters, more defined by acts than words, their morality is seen as a reflection of the world around them. Bateman, the epitome of elegance and good taste, is a metaphor of the superficial capitalist world he symbolises, where subjectivity is denied and neither plot nor characters or closure demand a psychologically structured narration. This is precisely the key argument of the novel, its most disturbing refusal to show individual human action as a response to any logical plan, as a parody of an age when conservative positions were acting on their victims in a much more homicidal and inevitable way:

[...] a flood of reality. I get an odd feeling that this is a crucial moment in my life and I'm startled by the suddenness of what I guess passes for an epiphany. There is nothing of value I can offer her [...] And though the coldness I have always felt leaves me, the numbness doesn't and probably never will (Ellis 1991, 378-9).

Fragmentation of the discursive body works as the perfect signifier of the psycho's mental state. The physical dismemberment of the object is an ontological metonymy of the subject's identity. As Carol Clover proposes: "Body, tortured, maimed, destroyed in so many 'slasher' films, and opened up in the occult horror film [...] is precisely that which the male viewer seeks out as a symbol of himself."²⁵ It is the dead body that tells the psycho who he is. Finally, the identification of both selves in the absence of life can also tragically confirm the Freudian process of identification as opposite to desire in which the cannibal only devours people he is fond of. In a clear example of what hegemonic masculinity is, violence is not limited to female bodies. The psycho, unable to identify himself as a man, ideally becomes one of the group by getting power back from some of its members. The fusion of the self with the other as a way of not losing someone's energy is clear in Jeffrey Dahmer's acts and in his words, being his only explanation that he "wanted to possess them permanently,"²⁶ that is, the seventeen young men he had murdered and dismembered before he was arrested in 1992. In any event, this permanent connection may have as well another turn of the screw, depending on how metaphorical their union is, because it can actually be quite literal, when it is not just the psycho's mental state that is deprived of life, but his body as well. The killer's suicide puts a definitive end, not only to escape from arrest, as in the case of Mark Louis in *Peeping Tom*, but as a final reaction to admitting who he really is. The tragic end, with all the corpses on the stage, is an example of the individual suicide as a redundant attempt to free from men's constraints, and the definitive confirmation of Kaufman's triad of violence against men, women and oneself as basic pattern for the construction of masculinity.²⁷

Psychos go to extremes, but *shadenfreude*, the pleasure experienced in the seeing of suffering, is a characteristic of the hegemonic model motto “no pain, no gain,” which reaches its truest power in Elaine Scarry’s sententious reflection: “To have pain is to have certainty.”²⁸ It underlines the fact that most psychos need to cause pain in order to feel anything, if only physically. This might be the reason why self-mutilation is so common among those who cannot stand not being alive and fight literally to bring their dead self back to life. They are also trying to be part of their group by becoming a man through physical pain. Unfortunately, the path from outwards to inwards sensitivity is not an easy one. Their violence on themselves is their onanistic way to communicate their impossibility to love: “Sexuality is not the antithesis of a civilisation dedicated to economic growth and technical control, but the embodiment of its failure” (Giddens 1992, 203).

The only certainty in these examples is the lack of humanitarian feelings in the male dominant model which explains, apart from its necrophilic inclination, its necrotic state. No matter how many times Tom Cruise’s character, Frank Mackey, in the film *Magnolia* (2000), obsessively repeats his message about respecting the cock and taming the cunt, it is to be interpreted as the parodical sociopathic result of the somatophobic pandemic starting at the end of the twentieth century to support the hyper-masculine ideology which tries to make invisible its visible crisis:

Nothing was affirmative, the term “generosity of spirit” applied to nothing, was a cliché, was some kind of bad joke. Sex is mathematics. Individuality no longer an issue. What does intelligence signify? Define reason. Desire – meaningless. Intellect is not a cure. Justice is dead. Fear, recrimination, innocence, sympathy, guilt, waste, failure, grief, were things – emotions that no one really felt anymore. Reflection is useless, the world is senseless. Evil is its only permanence. God is not alive. Love cannot be trusted. Surface, surface, surface was all

that anyone found meaning in... this was civilization as I saw it, colossal and jagged (Ellis 1991, 375).

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NOTES

- 1 Eugin Fink and Martin Heidegger, *Heraclitus Seminar 1966-1967* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979) 146 in Donn Welton, ed. *The Body: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) 124.
- 2 Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991).
- 3 Pierre Bourdieu, *La Domination Masculine* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998) 142.
- 4 Marquis de Sade, *Idée sur les romans* (Paris, 4th ed., 1800) 42.
- 5 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge 1984).
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