THE SUBVERSION OF MALE HEGEMONY IN CHARLES BUKOWSKI'S WORKS

Zanyar Aziz

S0924199

January 2020

Master's Thesis

University of Leiden

Supervisor: Dr. Sara Polak

Second Reader: Dr. J.C. Kardux

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Chapter I

Early Self-reflection and Subversion of Gender Roles 12

Chapter II

The Beginning of Female Subversion in the Mid-seventies Works 31

Chapter III

Women, *Hollywood* and the Later Poems 46

Conclusion 65

Works Cited 68

INTRODUCTION

In his lifetime, Charles Bukowski published ten collections of poetry, six novels, a travel book and about 200 short stories. Despite the Los Angeles based writer's vast repertoire, and his appeal among not only middle and higher-class readers, but working class people as well, he hasn't been granted mainstream literary recognition. He stood out as an authentic writer of simple yet profound sentences, whose conversational style made his work accessible among a wide audience. He painted a dirty yet realistic and honest picture of American society, its hypocrisy and flaws such as economic inequality, as well as his own flaws and interactions with people (Sounes, xiv-xv).

Most of his prose and poetry were autobiographical, and he expressed his critique of the hardships of working-class life he himself endured in novels such as *Post Office* (1971) and *Factotum* (1975), which deals with his job at the post office in Los Angeles, and other various working-class jobs he had before that *(*Charlson 13). The literary scholar Russell Harrison has called Bukowski "the only major post-War American writer who has denied the efficacy of the American Dream" (13). While this is an overstatement, as there are plenty of other post-war writers who contest the reality of the American Dream, Bukowski is an often overlooked voice who rejected the popular American notion that all work was good, such as menial, repetitive blue-collar labor that he himself experienced at the LA post office among others, rejecting the puritan work-ethic. His unique take on working and living in America found appeal among many working-class citizens who felt overlooked and forced in these jobs, while his work was accessible to them not only in relatable content but also in a clear, minimalistic form.

According to Harrison, the sheer quantity, quality and unique voice of Bukowski's work should have brought him critical appreciation as an American novelist and poet in his lifetime.

Even though he was a counter-culture hero in 1970s America, and very popular in Europe as the most read American author in Germany in the late eighties, Bukowski has not received much serious scholarly acclaim and attention in the United States (Harrison 11). Russell Harrison's *Against the American Dream: Essays on Charles Bukowski* (1994) was the first scholarly work that focused on Bukowski, and was published relatively late for such a popular author. Harrison states that no other aspect of Bukowski has undergone more criticism than his portrayal of women (183). The few critics that did review Bukowski's work thought that he was vulgar and nothing more than a sexist and a misanthropist, which according to David Charlson was the result of his own self-labelling as a "dirty old man". According to biographer Howard Sounes, Bukowski got the reputation of being a chauvinistic sexist mainly from writing the column *Notes of a Dirty Old Man* for the small press magazine *LA Open City*, as he poured a lot of extreme language in his weekly columns to shock readers: instead of woman he would use the word "whore." He would also often portray scenes of rape for shock effect (Charlson 87; Sounes xii, 147).

Fellow writer, poet and lifelong friend Gerald Locklin wrote in his collection of memoirs on Bukowski that one of the reasons why he had trouble in receiving recognition in the beginning of his career in the United States was the fact that many people accused Bukowski of being hostile towards women (Locklin 31-32). Charlson concurs in his biography on the notion that many readers disapproved of Bukowski's work because he often described violence against women (Charlson 115). Small groups of radical feminists would attend his poetry readings to heckle Bukowski critiquing him for being a chauvinist (Winans 11). One critic of Bukowski's gender portrayal was Len Fulton, founding editor and publisher of the *Small Press Review*, who commented in 1973 in the article "See Bukowski Run":

> Bukowski's antics with women, his thoughts about them are one vast and sniggering cliché. He has nothing to tell us about them, because, I'm convinced, he knows nothing about them […] Inside the web of his booze-bull-and-broad exploits lurks a demon sexual jingoist, erupting and irrupting in self-punishing concatenations; hostile, frustrated, pugilistic- fearful of the role into which (he thinks) one is cast by fate of genitalia. (Fulton 31).

In another biting critique on Bukowski's gender presentation, Karin Huffzky stated:

> In his underground society he describes a purely masculine world, in which women are hardly more than splashes of a puddle through which hardy fellows traipse, mostly drunk, or in which they wallow. Then afterwards: wipe off & away! Also most of the times drunk… almost everything in his head is reduced to the magical actions: fuck, drink, fight: beating women… (Huffzky 22)

However, the view that Bukowski solely depicted women negatively has to be nuanced, as Bukowski was more critical of himself and others who viewed and presented women in a certain way. His gender portrayal also changed, most notably in the seventies, to the point where the aforementioned accusations of Fulton and Huffzky can no longer be taken as entirely valid. The research question of this thesis seeks to answer to what extent Charles Bukowski's portrayal of gender reflected male hegemony over women, and how his portrayal of women and men changed over time.

To answer the question how his work presents gender hegemony, I discuss to what extent

the male and female protagonists adhere to hegemonic gender roles as these roles encourage men to dominate and control women, while women are encouraged to be passive and obedient towards men. Did Bukowski throughout his writings perpetuate the idea of male hegemony over women by producing gender stereotypes that present macho male protagonists and obedient women? This thesis addresses these questions by approaching the portrayal of Bukowski's protagonists in novels, poems and short stories, and use theory from gender studies as well as referring to the scholarly debate on Bukowski's gender portrayal. This thesis does not seek to answer what personal position Bukowski held towards women, whether he was a misogynist or not, but rather focuses on how Bukowski's depiction of gender in his work evolved over time.

This thesis refers to a number of scholars who address how Bukowski presented gender in his works. Harrison acknowledges that Bukowski's male chauvinism is undeniable when one looks at his work. However, his chapter titled "Sex, Women and Irony" shows how Bukowski's depiction of women changed over the span of his last thirty years of writing. He argues that during the seventies Bukowski's female characters were described with a higher psychological sophistication. At first, women were presented solely as secondary characters, and were presented only in relation to the male protagonist, and usually focusing on their sexual relations with the male protagonist (Harrison 183-184). A year after Harrison published his essays in book format, David Charlson published the first academic dissertation on Bukowski's prose and poetry: *Charles Bukowski. Autobiographer, Gender Critic, Iconoclast* (1995). He attempts to explain Bukowski's portrayed violence against women through the use of Michael Kaufmann's sociological theory on violence (Kaufman 6-13). Charlson agrees with Harrison that while Bukowski at times played and wrote about macho stereotypes, he "just as often" debunks that image by means of self-deprecating himself and other men (Charlson 43, 91).

Harrison and Charlson write about Bukowski's treatment of gender, but their analysis of

his works don't include gender theory, unlike this thesis which sets itself apart from previous scholarly work on Bukowski as I incorporate gender theory to analyze Bukowski's treatment of gender in both his prose and poetry. I approach Bukowski's prose and poetry through the field of gender studies, based primarily on the gender theory work of Raewyn Connell, Judith Butler, and Michael Kimmel, understanding gender as a social construct, and the gender roles of men and women as complementary and hierarchical to each other. I will examine how the subversion of male hegemony develops in his work diachronically. Some of the ways I examine this development is by noting whether macho masculinity gets undermined by presenting male protagonists as having no control over female characters, and whether male characters express emotions such as sadness, or show to be caring for example, and to what degree and frequency compared to his other work. Other forms of development I look at are among others whether female characters play a central part in the plot, and whether these women are presented as less dependent, and passive and more in control in their relationship with regards to male characters. This thesis further adds to the scholarly discussion on Bukowski by pointing out that hegemonic masculinity is problematized earlier in Bukowski's work than Harrison has claimed, as early short stories as well as *Post Office* present male characters that are aware of their stereotypical gender performance.

To analyze whether Bukowski's characters depict stereotypical gender roles it is important to start with a basic understanding of what those gender roles mean. According to the World Health Organization, "sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women," while gender refers to "the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women." Male and female roles differ per society, as societies adhere to different values, thus gender is subjective (Blackstone 355). The question then is what roles of behavior and attributes has society assigned

to those who are referred to as male and female?

In the sixties and seventies Gender Studies arose which helped to deconstruct the gender roles and gender rules that traditionally have held sway in the US and the Western world. Before this deconstruction began, however, most men followed an ideology for how to behave as men, an ideology which the sociologist Raewyn Connell has termed "hegemonic masculinity." This ideology was the dominant view of the male role up until the sixties when its deconstruction started, which according to Michael Kimmel is associated with being dominant, unemotional and rational. From the seventies on, hegemonic masculinity was viewed as existing on the following standards: "anti-femininity, striving to achieve success, not showing any weakness and seeking adventure, at the cost of risking violence." (David and Brannon; Levant and Richmond 131; Kimmel and Aronson, *Masculinities* 21, 31, 101). Some of the characteristics that fall under hegemonic masculinity include repression of all emotions except anger, homophobia, obscuring one's own vulnerability, being competitive and self-reliant (Rabinowitz and Englar-Carlson 11; Blackstone 335-338).

Amy Blackstone shows that gender roles aren't simply about appropriate behavior for males and females, but also generate different levels of power that men and women hold in society, as masculinity is traditionally associated with leadership. Men have been, and are still seen by many as the economic providers for the family. At the same time white, Western society has traditionally assumed women to be more "naturally" nurturing than men, and have therefore been expected to be full time homemakers who look after the children, and not to pursue jobs or careers. However, if the women were non-white or working-class, then they would have to work as well to top up the family income. This has made women economically dependent on men, thus granting men power over women (Blackstone 337). Blackstone's explanation of the feminist perspective on gender roles would explain why female gender roles are associated with

submissiveness and passiveness, as this gave men more power in the relationship dynamic (Kimmel and Aronson, *Masculinities* 101).

It was only after 1973, under the influence of the gay liberation movement to stop shock therapy to treat homosexuality, and their activism to encourage the removal of homosexuality as a disease from the Diagnostical and Statistical Manual (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association, that the APA finally cast aside the binary idea that men and women possess only either masculine or feminine traits, and acknowledged that men and women possess and could cultivate both feminine and masculine traits simultaneously (Russell 330). This liberating idea allowed for male and female gender roles to become androgenized, and thus loosened the confines of what it meant to be a man or woman, as men were allowed to be more receptive and vulnerable, while women were allowed to be more assertive and independent, for example (Russell 330).

Raewyn Connell and Judith Butler provide the most important theoretical framework for close-reading Bukowski. Judith Butler has written a great amount on the socially constructive nature of gender. She argues that gender, is not biologically fixed, but rather is a social construct that we create ourselves by the repetition of certain, "stylized" acts which we perform. Butler argues that one's gender identity is an amalgam of social cues that you pick up throughout your whole life by viewing and imitating others performing their gender (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 10-12, 178). I will mainly discuss whether male hegemony over women is presented in Bukowski's work by analyzing whether the presented male and female protagonists embody and enact hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, respectively. Hegemonic masculinity is a term coined by Raewyn Connell, which is defined by the notion that there is an ideal masculinity that encompasses all traits that are desired in a man (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 297; Connell, *Masculinities* 76-77). Emphasized femininity has a lot of overlap with traditional femininity and

refers to the femininity that a certain culture views as ideal and encourages (Connell and Messerschmidt 848).

I will give a close-reading of the four 'Chinaski' novels (i.e. the ones with Chinaski as their main character), *Post Office* (1971), *Factotum*(1975), *Women* (1978) and *Hollywood*(1983), as well as a selection of poems and short stories for this thesis. Most scholars and Bukowski biographers such as Harrison and Charlson tend to conflate the Henry Chinaski character with Charles Bukowski himself in their analysis of his writings, as he is regarded by most as an autobiographical author (Charlson 9; Harrison 153, 249-250). I have chosen however to not discuss Chinaski as an autobiographical character as my aim with this thesis is to focus solely on how the characters portray gender over time. This helps to more neutrally and clearly observe changes in gender subversion in the texts. In the first chapter I will look at excerpts of *Post Office* and compare its presentation of male and female characters with early poems and short stories that were written and published in the early seventies or predate the seventies. My comparing of *Post Office* with early poems and short stories to note the differences in the gender performance of these characters is to my knowledge unprecedented and offers a new perspective on the discussion of Bukowski's representation of gender. The second chapter examines gender characterization in *Factotum* and other poems that were published in the mid-seventies to probe whether Bukowski's depiction of men and women indeed started to change in the seventies, and if it did to what extent and in what ways this happened. The third and final chapter is a study of *Women, Hollywood* and poems that were published between the late seventies and Bukowski's passing in 1994. This chapter assesses whether hegemonic gender relations were most notably undermined in the later years, and if so, then what old and new ways does the author employ.

This thesis analyzes whether Bukowski's writings encourage male hegemony over women by presenting male and female protagonists who embody and enact hegemonic masculinity and

emphasized femininity. This thesis argues that throughout his novels *Post Office* (1971), *Factotum* (1975), *Women* (1978), *Hollywood* (1989) and others poems and short stories, Bukowski's portrayal of male and female characters changed diachronically as both start to undermine gender stereotypes, which subverted male hegemony.

Chapter I: Early Self-reflection and Subversion of Gender Roles

This chapter examines Bukowski's poems and short stories he wrote before the seventies, and compares the portrayal of men and women from those early works with his male and female characters in his first novel *Post Office* (1971). This comparison will show that the male protagonist from the earliest works exemplified hegemonic masculinity to a relatively higher degree, because of their more frequent use of chauvinistic insults of women and for being more aggressive and sexist. However, these early poems and short stories also give glimpses of the earliest subversions of male hegemony, as the male characters show their awareness of their gender presentation and also embody and express traditionally feminine traits. This chapter furthermore argues that early awareness of gender performance and the expression of gender role subversion is also extant in *Post Office*, which is something that scholars have neglected to point out.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity

Traditional masculinity is also called hegemonic masculinity, which is a term that gender studies uses in favor of traditional masculinity. Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity is relational in nature as it is constructed in relation to subordinate forms of masculinities, such as gay masculinities or sensitive masculinities, and women. Hegemonic masculinity is the notion that there is an ideal masculinity that men should strive to internalize and perform, and encompasses all traits that are desired in men. Traits that are associated to it are being mentally and physically strong, heterosexual, competitive, able to achieve, and to control women as well as men etc. As gender branches off into subdivisions of masculinity and femininity, hegemonic

masculinity stands at the top of the hierarchical division of gender (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 297; Connell, *Masculinities* 76-77; Howson 60; Sabo and Gordon 8; Connell and Messerschmidt 846). The reason for my usage of the term hegemonic masculinity throughout this thesis to address the macho behavior of Bukowski's male protagonists in favor of traditional masculinity is that the former term more clearly states the hierarchical position of this masculinity in its relational nature to other masculinities as well as its relation to women. I will thus from here on out use the term hegemonic masculinity instead of traditional masculinity when addressing those culturally specific stereotypical traits that are associated with pre-sixties masculine behavior.

The second chapter starts to discuss female characters in Bukowski's works of the mid-seventies that express non-emphasized femininity, and challenge Chinaski's claim to hegemonic masculinity by defying their gender roles of emphasized femininity. Emphasized femininity refers to the femininity that is given the most cultural and ideological support in a given culture. It consists of traits that are defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity, and by doing so guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordinate position of women (Schippers 94). Emphasized femininity is defined by a woman's subordination to men's desires and interests, and traits that are associated with it are compliance and sociability performed by women to accommodate men (Connell, *Gender and Power* 24, 183).

Chinaski as the Epitome of Hyper-masculinity

This chapter starts off by pointing out to what extent Henry Chinaski is a chauvinist in the first novel by looking at his interactions with women and his gender role subversive behavior in *Post Office*, most notably with Betty and Fay respectively. I will then discuss the male protagonists from the early poems and short stories that were written before *Post Office* to show

that these first protagonists were more violent, and chauvinist. All the Chinaski novels, this first novel seems to privilege hyper-masculinity the most as the most appropriate form of masculinity, as the male protagonist Henry Chinaski acts mostly according to hegemonic masculine norms, while the women are mostly presented in a subordinate position. In *Post Office*, Henry meets a woman at work, shortly after acquiring a job as a substitute mail carrier at the post office:

> I think it was my second day as a Christmas temp that this big woman came out and walked around with me as I delivered letters. What I mean by big was that her ass was big and her tits were big and that she was big in all the right places. She seemed a bit crazy but I kept looking at her body and I didn't care.
>
> she talked and talked and talked. Then it came out. Her husband was an officer on an island far away and she got lonely, you know, and lived in this little house in back all by herself.
>
> "what little house?" I asked.
>
> She wrote the address on a piece of paper.
>
> "I'm lonely too," I said, "I'll come by and we'll talk tonight."
>
> I was shacked but the shack job was gone half the time, off somewhere, and I was lonely all right. I was lonely for that big ass standing beside me.
>
> "All right," she said, "see you tonight."
>
> She was a good one all right, she was a good lay but like all lays after the 3rd or 4th night I began to lose interest and didn't go back (Bukowski, *Post Office* 9).

Chinaski never mentions the woman's name. He refers to her as "this big woman" as all of his

descriptions of her are strictly physical, as he states that "her ass was big and her tits were big." She is reduced to body parts and her sexual performance, as he further refers to her as a "good lay." Chinaski says that she 'talked and talked and talked', as he seems only interested in the conversation when "it came out," which refers to the conversation turning sexual. Chinaski is portrayed as a macho player, who cheats on his "shack job" without sense of guilt, as he solely seems interested in sex and quickly loses interest "like all lays after the 3rd or 4th night," when he gets what he wants and dumps her.

Butler argues that men and women's gender is not essential but is created in the process of "doing": "My argument is that there need not be a 'doer' behind the deed, but that the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 142). Thus, what one does genders one's identity as male (or female). Butler suggests that it is the action, the doing (in this case having unattached sex), that makes the subject, instead of the subject producing the action. In other words, it is the act of having unattached sex that makes Henry a man. According to Butler there is no true essential and stable gender identity behind the expressions of gender. A subject who enacts certain performative gender expressions creates his or her gender identity (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 25).

Because a man's gender identity has to be continually created through the repetition of certain gender related expressions or acts in order to sustain their male gender identity, Chinaski continually exhibits hegemonic masculine traits in an effort to stabilize his identity as a man. According to Lynne Segal, women have been put in a position by men to validate most men's masculinity, and thus self-identity is validated among others through "heterosexual success" (Segal, *Slow Motion* 92). Chinaski constantly craves various sexual relations and is promiscuous because his sexual success with women creates and stabilizes his fragile gender identity as a man. This partly explains why Chinaski's need for superficial, non-attached sex with different women,

as his promiscuity is one of those hegemonic masculine traits that define his manhood (Thompson and Bennet 3). Segal concurs with Butler on the notion that masculinity and femininity are not innate, or have an essence. Hegemonic masculinity consists of having power over others: "the power to assert control over women, over other men, over their own bodies […]." (Segal 123). A man who is successful with women and has control over these women is viewed as truly masculine. However, Segal observes that the ascertainment of this masculinity is essentially instable, as it is dependent on a steady and constant supply of confirmation (Segal 123; Smith et al. 162).

Up until the end of the third novel, *Women*, Chinaski constantly and restlessly chases after women, in a frantic effort to establish his gender identity as a powerful man towards the world and himself. The underlying assumption is that, surely, he must be a real man if he has control over women. This means that Henry engages in superficial relations with women in order to establish his identity as a man, rather than trying to connect with women on a deeper level. He bases his identity of himself on the quantity instead of the quality of his relationships. The women in his life only function as a crutch for his feeble feeling of masculinity.

Betty as Mere or More than just Body Parts

This section gives different examples of Chinaski trying to establish his masculine identity through his relations and dealings with the women he meets. Chinaski's treatment Betty in *Post Office* shows Chinaski's sexist objectifying attitude toward women, while showing her to be a passive, emphasized feminine woman, which compared with the later novels shows that this first novel portrays male and female characters in a more traditional manner. Betty isn't given much introduction or importance at first, as she is casually mentioned for the first time: "The way my shack job Betty and I drank there was hardly money for clothes." (10). She is only mentioned

in passing to help explain why Chinaski doesn't have money for clothes. The second sentence in which Betty is mentioned, Chinaski says "I had been up to 2 a.m. drinking and screwing with Betty" (11). The following two times Betty is mentioned she is only mentioned as having a warm behind for Chinaski to warm up against: "I walked out, the old car started and soon I was back in bed with Betty… I pushed up against her warm tail and was asleep in 45 seconds." (11). And: "I went on in and got up against Betty's warm ass." (17). Her background and motivations aren't mentioned. When he does think about Betty when she isn't around, he only thinks about her appearance, "I kept thinking of a hot bath, Betty's fine legs…", and "All I wanted was to get in that chair with that glass of scotch in my hand and watch Betty's ass wobble around the room" (18). Thus, Chinaski is portrayed as exhibiting the hegemonic masculine traits of being a womanizer and an unemotional man, as he is merely interested in Betty as a sexual object.

Chinaski accuses Betty of changing when she gets a job as a typist, and he degrades her for having a voice, as she complains about how the neighbors might think that she is supporting Chinaski: "When one of those shack jobs gets a job, you notice the difference right away" (33). Even though he has been with her for years he talks about her as "one of those shack jobs." He degrades her by calling her a shack job, reducing her to someone he is obliged to have sex with. The phrase "shack job" may also reveal his negative view of her as someone who is dependent on him, as a freeloader of some sorts. In his living arrangement with her, Henry is expected to be the one that has a job and be the source of income to provide food and housing for the both of them. In return for being the provider he expects Betty to be available to him as a sexual object, thus earning her stay in the shack for which he pays rent. Thus, the traditional living arrangement of Chinaski as the economical provider, with her being his stay at home partner whose job in a way as a shack job is to prostitute herself to him, degrades her as a person. In this quid pro quo

relationship the woman is treated as a sex object, while the man has become what Farrell calls a "success object" (Farrell, *Liberated Man* 48-49).

According to Harrison, of Bukowski's first three novels, *Post Office* contains the most chauvinistic language, which is the result of Bukowski not being able to distance himself enough from Chinaski in his first novel (Harrison, *American Dream* 186). In the introduction to the Canongate edition of *Ham on Rye*, Roddy Doyle confirms that Betty is reduced to body parts. Chinaski also sees and describes other women as aesthetic sexual objects when he superficially describes a woman named Joyce: "She had long blonde hair and was good solid meat" (34). Kimmel refers to the Male Role Norms Inventory, which state that objectifying attitudes of men toward sexuality are an aspect of hegemonic masculinity. For men like Chinaski to view women as mere sexual objects helps to see themselves as ideal, hegemonic masculine men because of societal pressures (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 353). Doyle even argues that all women in Bukowski's books "are often just parts of the body," which is a statement that this thesis will dispute (Charles Bukowski, *Ham on Rye* xi).

Sincere Signs of Subversion

This section will now examine the two times that *Post Office* shows Chinaski to undoubtedly move beyond his macho posturing and show authentic vulnerability, starting with Betty and followed by scenes with Fay. Though I previously mentioned Chinaski's unattached and chauvinist relationship with Betty, he breaks away from his indifferent role towards her in *Post Office*, which refutes the scholarly claim that Bukowski's subversion of male hegemony starts in the later novels. Chinaski's indifference towards Betty changes when he learns that Betty is in the hospital after drinking too much alcohol. While formerly resolved to an emotionally distant attitude towards her, Chinaski shows his vulnerable side as he cares for Betty in the

hospital. Chinaski shows his tender and concerned side as he takes a cloth and washes the spittle from Betty's mouth, while she is laying in a hospital bed. He furthermore takes thoughtful care of her by patiently and desperately trying to get her to drink a cup of water and straightening her hair (Bukowski, *Post Office* 65).

Chinaski indeed does seem to have an emotional attachment to Betty when confronted with such a dire circumstance. This scene creates what Butler refers to as "gender trouble," as Henry subverts and displaces the essentialist notion of masculinity, which supports masculine hegemony over femininity (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 44). Henry subverts his hegemonic masculinity as he performs his gender through the male tabooed behavior of expressing vulnerable emotions (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 101). Chinaski suppresses his emotions from others and from the reader when it comes to losing Betty. After her death, he returns to performing his gender identity as a tough man who doesn't have fragile emotions, or fragility so as to not contradict his image of masculine power, which is a strategy men pursue, according to Kaufman, to appear in control towards others but also towards themselves (Kaufman 90; Rowbottom 5; Kimmel, "Homophobia" 128).

I will now analyze Chinaski's relationship with Fay who is the novel's second most important female character, who is depicted mostly as a passive woman. Chinaski significantly subverts his emotionally distant role again but with Fay this time, as he surprisingly shows to have an emotional bond with her in a hospital scene. The same scene also depicts how Henry shows awareness of his gender performance as a hegemonic masculine man, much earlier than scholars have suggested. Chinaski's interaction with his second long-term girlfriend Fay is ambiguous, as Chinaski comes off as an unattached, chauvinist macho, while at times showing his capacity for sensitivity. He describes Fay as lazy and as someone who sits at home, and reads *The New Yorker* and eats chocolates in front of the TV all day. She is portrayed as an emphasized

feminine woman, who stays at home, is provided for by men and has not had more than one or two jobs in her life (Bukowski, *Post Office* 84). In one scene, he gets angry with her because he works all day, while she doesn't seem to take the time to clean the kitchen. He tells her, "I know you want to save the world. But can't you start in the kitchen?" To which she responds, "Kitchens aren't important." An angry Chinaski responds by telling the reader: "It was difficult to hit a woman with grey hair so I just went into the bathroom and let the water run into the tub (84)."

While Chinaski's aggressive traits spring up here, he suddenly shows his sensitive side when Fay starts having their baby in a scene where Chinaski is seen to surprisingly subvert male hegemony yet again. Not only does Chinaski show his emotional attachment as with the hospital scene with Betty, but he also reflects upon his emotionally distant behavior, which shows him to be aware of his hegemonic masculine traits while he also acknowledges that his behavior is to be viewed as bad and unfair to her. When he brings her to the hospital, Chinaski is gentle and calms Fay by telling her "you make it seem so easy", to which she replies, "You're so very nice. It helps." Chinaski's response is "I'd like to *be* nice. It's that god damned post office…" To which Fay emphatically responds with "I know. I know" (Bukowski, *Post Office* 90). Chinaski indicates here that he is aware of performing his gender as an emotionally distant and rough man towards her, and thus acknowledges that men should avoid this kind of indifferent posturing.

His awareness of his own hyper-masculine behavior marks an ironic deconstruction of that behavior at a much earlier stage of Bukowski's writing than scholars have suggested. Harrison argues that the male protagonist Chinaski only starts to get problematized, through irony and self-deprecation, in Bukowski's third novel, *Women* (Harrison 199, 210). Just like the scene with Betty in the hospital, this scene with Fay disputes Harrison's argument by showing that the problematizing of hegemonic macho masculinity is already found early on in *Post Office*. This

scene goes a step further than the scene with Betty as it indicates how self-aware Chinaski is of his own problematic behavior. Although Henry's early acknowledgment of his chauvinist and detached attitude is more subtle and less frequently stated than in *Women*, it clearly is present.

Henry furthermore states that his tiring and demanding job at the Post Office is the reason why he acts distantly and unsympathetically towards Fay, which I argue is not a credible statement. Joseph Pleck argues that because manhood has prohibited most emotions, men were dependent on women's power to express men's emotions and to validate men's masculinity. Men have given these powers over to women "by defining the male role as being emotionally cool and inexpressive […]" (Pleck 7; Segal 92). It's Chinaski's continual adherence to hegemonic masculinity that makes him act emotionally cool and inexpressive towards Fay, not his job. Chinaski drops his aggressive, macho mask when Fay has given birth to their daughter, and Chinaski is allowed to see her. He finds her in a hospital bed, and remarks: "Fay had a spot of blood on the left side of her mouth and I took a wet cloth and wiped it off" (Bukowski, *Post Office* 91). Chinaski's interaction with Fay and Betty points out how even Bukowski's first novel *Post Office* has male characters that at times convincingly express emphasized feminine traits of vulnerability, which contrasts with Chinaski's overall cold and distant treatment of his women.

Aggression and Misogyny in the Early Works

Up until this point in the chapter I have discussed the hegemonic masculine posturing and its subversion by characters from *Post Office*. I will now start discussing the early short stories as well as poems. I will address the violent and sexually aggressive tendencies of male protagonists in the early short stories, which make Chinaski seem to be relatively less aggressive and thus less of a hegemonic male character. The fact that *Post Office* was written later than these short stories

confirms my argument that over time Bukowski presented characters with fewer hegemonic masculine traits such as men becoming less violent and misogynistic.

Though I have frequently stated that men face social pressure that coerces them into emotionally repressed roles, hegemonic norms do allow men to express mainly one emotion, namely anger, making aggression an integral element of hegemonic masculinity (Shelley 12-13, 32). As anger is the one emotion men are permitted to express, they learn from an early age on to channel a variety of emotions through anger. Kaufman argues that the suppression of one's vulnerable emotions like sadness, which happens from boyhood on according to Kimmel, leads to men expressing their pent up emotions such as sadness, through anger, by being violent towards both men and women (Kaufman 90-91; Kimmel, *Masculinities* 101, 353). This explains why Chinaski performs his gender either as an emotionally apathetic man or as an angry and violent man. Chinaski's violence towards women is shown most frequently through language, as he calls women "bitches" or "cunts." Jani Korhonen notes that all of Chinaski's girlfriends are called "bitch" or something similar in all the novels (13). The most violent scene in *Post Office* is described in an ambiguous rape scene where Chinaski rapes a woman who steals his mail, though the line between rape and consent are blurred in this scene. Such violence against women isn't rare in Bukowski's earlier work and seems rather to be the norm and appears more frequent and extreme than is the case with *Post Office*.

The earlier poems and short stories contain male protagonists who mention rape quite casually; as for example in the poem "Interviewed by a Guggenheim Recipient" the male protagonist fantasizes about raping his guest's female companion, which shows the author's early tendency to aim to shock readers (Bukowski, *Madrigals* 110-111). In the short story, "Would You Suggest Writing as a Career?" the male narrator nonchalantly expresses his desire to rape women: "I signed a paper for my hundred bucks, was introduced to the head of the Literature

dept. All sex, she was. I thought, I'll rape her." (Bukowski, *Ordinary Madness* 40).

This violent desire also occurs in the short story "My Stay in the Poet's Cottage," in which the protagonist says: "except I had heard that there was a young colored maid, vury vury nicely built who came around once in a while, so I quietly laid plans to rape her, but she had evidently heard of me too and stayed away." (80). Research shows that when men embrace hegemonic ideals of manhood such as toughness, and dominance over others, their proneness to rape women increases (Smith et al. 167). Moreover, men are more likely to rape when they feel a loss of power that they think they are entitled to, such as losing power over women (Kimmel, *Gendered Desire* 188, 230). Chinaski and other Bukowski male protagonists often want to have control over women's bodies, which is a trait of hegemonic masculinity (Segal, *Slow Motion* 123).

This physical domination is expressed through Bukowski's propensity for portraying rape fantasies, and writing frequently on rape, especially in his early work, which he did to appeal to the readers of magazines. This also stemmed in part from his experiences of writing short stories for underground newspapers, literary magazines and sex magazines such as *Open City, Berkeley Barb, Nova Express, Evergreen Review, Knight, Pix* and *Adam* (Baughan 74, 104; Debritto 9, 154; Sounes 148).[1] As these stories were written for pornographic magazines like *Hustler* among others, Bukowski used extreme language to shock readers by interchanging for example the word women with "whores," and intercourse with "rape." Bukowski did this to cater to the sexual fantasies of his readers with the presupposition in mind that sex and shocking stories sell. Bukowski's publisher John Martin stated that these magazines only wanted sexual stories from him. Martin notes that that's where Bukowski's reputation of a dirty old writer came from, as he was trying to write dirty stories that would have success in these magazines; he wasn't trying to

[1] *Tales of Ordinary Madness* contains stories that were published in 1972.

be a literary writer with the magazines he wrote for during the sixties (Sounes 147). This would explain why his early short stories are more shocking and contain more instances of rape compared with his later produced novels, such as *Post Office*, and poetry that wasn't written for magazines.

Subversion in the Early Works

Similar to Chinaski, the male protagonists in the other early short stories also view women as sex objects but are more sexually aggressive and blunter in their chauvinism. Despite the fact that these early works portray men as more hegemonic than in *Post Office*, some of them also undermine the male macho image, which Harrison neglects to point out as he focuses on the novels. Lida Tervo is the only critic who points out that there are early Bukowski short stories in which hegemonic male gender roles are undermined (Tervo 2-3). Tervo's work, however, was an undergraduate project; no scholarly research has been done on Bukowski's short stories. The 1968 short story "A Rain of Women" exemplifies this early subversion where the male protagonist's inner dialogue reveals his vulnerability. In the beginning of the story the protagonist comes across as a stereotypical chauvinist: "'watch out where you are going,' I said to her legs. I never saw her face" (Bukowski, *Ordinary Madness* 150). The narrative further contains more demeaning language with sentences like "I stared at those legs, stupid bitch, what legs…" (148-149).

Later on in the story, however, the insensitive and sexist protagonist's internal dialogue suddenly reveals his insecurity with women in a moment of vulnerability: "YOU'RE AFRAID OF HER, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, HOW TO ACT, MAN OF THE WORLD, YOU ARE AFRAID, YOU DON'T KNOW THE WORDS…" (151). The protagonist is portrayed more realistically as he is apparently more than a mere chauvinist, as he also seems to

have a vulnerable side which reveals how he struggles with keeping up with the norms of hegemonic masculinity that force men to always feel in control. The male protagonist acknowledges his fears and feelings of having no control over women. He also admits that he doesn't know how to act correctly as a man, how to enact the right gender performance in order to have a conversation with a woman.

The next short story "An Evil Town" also demonstrates how subversion of male hegemony started sooner in Bukowski's work before any of the novels such as *Factotum* or *Women* were published, as he defends homosexual masculinities from hypocrites. In "An Evil Town" the male protagonist encounters homosexuality and heterosexual people being sexual in the new town in which he has arrived, which he argues in a letter to his mother is the result of "The Devil" (Bukowski, *Ordinary Madness* 110). The male protagonist ironically ridicules the protagonist for calling homosexuals evil, while he himself is depicted as a violent and crazy man who ends up gruesomely stabbing and mutilating a hotel clerk for being gay. After stabbing the hotel clerk he continues writing his letter to his mother where he ironically continues condemning the city's inhabitants for being sexual, while not seeming to see his own murderous outburst as bad. Gender relations between men have positioned gay masculinities at the bottom of the masculine hierarchy in a subordinate relation to hegemonic masculinity (Connell, *Masculinities*, 78). Thus, the labelling of Bukowski as a chauvinist writer deserves to be nuanced; because even in his earliest stories does he seems to defend the most oppressed non-hegemonic masculine identities such as homosexual men. Bukowski simultaneously criticizes the religious, hypocritical male protagonist in "An Evil Town" who thinks homosexuality and sexuality are sinful, while he himself violently hurts others.

Orientalism as Western Male Hegemony

Bukowski also expresses Orientalism as a form of male hegemony in his early works. The early poem "The Japanese Wife" blatantly celebrates women's obedience to their husbands, as the male speaker argues that Japanese women are real women because "they have not forgotten" to be "bowing and smiling" (Bukowski, *Madrigals,* 39). The poem that Bukowski wrote in 1960 suggests that ideally, a woman should live to serve her husband, and it expresses male chauvinism more bluntly than Chinaski does in *Post Office*. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the definition of a male chauvinist is a man who thinks that women are inferior to men.[2] Thus, the male protagonist in this early poem, who celebrates hegemonic superiority of men over obeying women, exemplifies chauvinism in a more direct way than the Chinaski character. Chinaski calls Japanese women real women because they are still obedient to men.

Edward Said argued that Asian women are usually subject to male fantasies of power. He argues that according to dominant Western interpretation they "express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing and submissive" (Said 207). These Western male oriental fantasies project and expose Western male longing for women in general to take a subordinate position toward men by adhering to simplifying traits of being merely sensual, stupid and especially submissive. Chinaski's celebration of the oppressive, orientalist view of Japanese women confirms Western male longing for Asian women to be reduced to submissive subjects. Lorber concurs with Butler that "gender is a social creation," and adds that this creation contributes to dividing rights, responsibilities, and work tasks. She argues that this gendered social order "constructs not only differences but [also] gender inequality," which enables male domination over women (Lorber 261, 292). Chinaski is conditioned in the belief that women are

[2] <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/244004?redirectedFrom=male+chauvinist#eid>.

naturally obedient and have an innate desire to serve, which reveals his essentialist notions of femininity. His essentialist notion of gender permits the hegemony of men over women as he thinks that it is in women's nature to be submissive to the hegemony of men.

First Versions of Chinaski

The next two short stories that are analyzed present the first versions of Chinaski before the character appeared for the first time in *Post Office*. These stories support my argument that Bukowski's earliest works, the earliest versions of Chinaski, were relatively more shocking and chauvinist compared with the Chinaski from *Post Office* as well as the later novels. At the same time however, these early short stories also show how in an early story, Chinaski is keenly aware of his gender performance, which predates Chinaski's awareness and self-reflection of his macho performance in *Women*, which according to Harrison marks a change. The 1966 short story "All the Assholes in the World and Mine" starts with a mortician who comes over with his friends to Henry Chinaski's apartment. Henry doesn't know any of these people and as he observes them he says: "There were a lot of women and I felt like raping all of them" (Bukowski, *no North* 152). Such a statement shows the early Chinaski's extreme misogyny to match that of the protagonists of the aforementioned poems and short stories, who also mention their desire to rape women.

According to Kimmel and Richmond, the characteristics of risk taking, womanizing and being alone are all aspects of hegemonic masculinity (Levant and Richmond 131; Kimmel, *Masculinities* 101). This early Chinaski describes himself within the confines of his gender role, as he thinks of himself as a "monk, the loner, gambler, playboy, idiot" (Bukowski, *South of no North* 155). Chinaski postures as a hegemonic masculine man in both this early story and in the novels. However, in contrast to the early Chinaski in this short story, the Chinaski in *Post Office* doesn't fantasize or talk about raping women, which validates the statement that the men

presented in Bukowski's work over time became less misogynistic, and thus less supporting of male hegemony.

Another short story written in 1965 called "A Man Insane Enough to Live with Beasts" also portrays an early version of Chinaski as less considerate of women compared with Chinaski from the relatively later novels, while also portraying him as being aware of his gender performance. He prompts his girlfriend to sexually arouse a convenience store owner, and if needed prostitute herself for groceries, cigarettes and alcohol: "Wiggle your can at him! Make his pecker rise! Take him in the back room if necessary, only get that WINE!" (Bukowski, *no North* 169). Chinaski from the later novels may still objectify women, but he isn't depicted anymore as encouraging women to sell their bodies for groceries. Though this short story shows the early Chinaski to be very disrespectful of women, it simultaneously shows how even at this stage Chinaski in fact was aware of his gender performance as a man. For example, he even comments in this story that his notions of the correct male gender performance originated in his youth. This further shows that Bukowski presented characters that were aware of the exaggeration and unnaturalness of their hegemonic masculinity much earlier than stated by scholars. When Chinaski in this short story starts working in a meatpacking factory, he gives the reader a glimpse of how the lessons on masculinity he learned as a young boy still influence his current need as an adult to adhere to an image of a strong, achieving man:

> I ran toward the truck. The shame of defeat taught me in American schoolyards as a boy told me that I must not drop the steer to the ground because this would prove that I was a coward and not a man and that I didn't therefore deserve much, just sneers and laughs,

> you had to be a winner in America, there wasn't any way out, you had to learn to fight for nothing, don't question […] (Bukowski, *South of no North* 178).

Here Chinaski states that as a boy he learned that manhood is connected to strength, toughness and achievement. He reflects in this scene that he seems to be stuck years later as an adult within the socially required act of performing a strong, tough image of masculinity, which he learned during school and which still makes him suffer. He can't stop the physically tormenting work of holding on to the steer as he is afraid he will be judged by his male peers as weak and not manly enough, because his conditioning at school doesn't allow him to break away from the tough guy character.

Chinaski is afraid of being ridiculed and shamed for not performing his gender correctly in the face of his strong meatpacking colleagues, which gender theory helps to explain. This social shaming serves as a corrective tool which steers the adult Chinaski experiences toward a hegemonic masculine posture, and it was also used as a tool by his former school peers. Butler confirms Chinaski's fear of being shamed for not showing hegemonic masculine characteristics of strength and achievement as not being an exception, as she states that gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences for both genders when a person deviates from their gender roles. Bell agrees with Butler and argues that people can avoid violent repercussion through the act of "conformity/complicity." According to Bell, "violence has been a response to those who attempt to exist outside the established, which is to say, historically reiterated, norms." (Bell 397-398; Butler, "Performative Acts" 522). These two short stories that present early versions of Chinaski exemplify the argument of this first chapter, namely that male protagonists in the earlier works are less respectful of women, and more misogynistic compared to the later male

protagonist in *Post Office*. At the same time both these early short stories and *Post Office* portray male characters that step outside of their prescribed hegemonic masculine gender roles by embodying emphasized feminine traits, which refutes the same scholars' argument that this only occurred later on in Bukowski's works.

Chapter II: The Beginning of Female Subversion in the Mid-seventies Works

Factotum as Departure from the Chauvinist Tradition

This chapter compares *Factotum* (1975) and other poems from the mid-seventies, with *Post Office* to examine the extent to which Bukowski's gender portrayal changed. Bukowski started to set himself apart from the chauvinist tradition of American contemporary writers with *Factotum*. In this second novel Henry starts to diverge from his hegemonic masculinity, which sets him apart from the male protagonists of writers such as Norman Mailer and Henry Miller, who are deemed chauvinist writers. Mailer and Miller's work presents hyper-masculine male protagonists who objectify women, just as Chinaski's protagonists do. However, in contrast to these protagonists, in *Factotum* Chinaski is portrayed more obviously as a man who isn't in control of his relations with women. This loss of masculine control is a theme that runs throughout *Factotum*, as Chinaski is represented as a passive man, as a victim of women instead of an assertive womanizer, who controls them. Furthermore, Chinaski is represented as a victim of women in *Factotum*, which contrasts with the hyper-masculine protagonists of Mailer who are frequently violent towards women (Harrison 153, 155, 188; Kimmel, *Masculinities* 480-481). I disagree with Harrison who argues that Bukowski's departure from writers like Mailer and Miller starts with his third novel *Women* (Harrison 203).

I argue that Bukowski's redemption from producing mere hyper-masculine, chauvinist protagonists starts with *Factotum* and its presentation of Chinaski as male protagonist who isn't in control of the relationship dynamic. This chapter argues that compared with his earlier work, male hegemony is subverted to a higher degree in Bukowski's mid-seventies poems and

Factotum as female characters also start to subvert their gender roles and present Chinaski as lacking control over them, as these women are presented as stronger and sexually aggressive, with women taking on the dominant role in the relationship. While in *Post Office* Chinaski showed glimpses of emotional vulnerability, *Factotum* presents him as physically vulnerable, as he is the victim of rape. Male protagonists show vulnerability in the earlier short stories, poems, and *Post Office*. However, this occurs more frequently in the mid-seventies poems and *Factotum*, which indicates that over time Bukowski's work became more subversive of male hegemony.

In *Factotum* Henry diverts more and more from heteronormative ideals for male gender expression, and this chapter discusses the degree that Henry Chinaski as a character shifts and subverts his gender presentation as a fixed hyper-masculine phenomenon. Butler argues that "if the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformations are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" (Butler, "Performative Acts" 520). Henry's gender identity was formerly based on the stylized repetitive acting out of being a strong, emotionally distant and aggressive man who tries to take suppress his more vulnerable emotions and his relations. He doesn't successfully control his emotions as he is often angry and aggressive, which as discussed in the previous chapter, is the result of the suppression of his undesired emotions such as grief and sadness that find expression through a more culturally accepted emotion for men, which is anger.

However, from *Factotum* on the image of Chinaski as a macho man undergoes a transformation, as Chinaski begins to present a different pattern of behavior. These new acts portray a more vulnerable, passive and helpless Chinaski who is a male victim of women

(Harrison 188). This less hegemonic image that Bukowski presents to the reader subverts the culturally sanctioned notion of men having to posture as powerful. Chinaski isn't presented as trying to subvert cultural norms; rather he still attempts to posture as a strong man who is in control of women but fails to do so. Thus, Bukowski deliberately portrays Henry as a macho man in a more realistic way, namely as a man who tries to look tough most of the time, but who has self-doubt, fears and vulnerabilities.

Martha the Female-subversive Pioneer

Chinaski in *Factotum* is indeed more vulnerable compared with *Post Office*, although this has less to do with emotional vulnerability as shown in the first novel and more with his physical vulnerability, and with his declining capacity to be in control in his relations with women. Chinaski is presented as highly physically vulnerable in the first sexual encounter he has in *Factotum*, which is with a prostitute named Martha. Chinaski gets a surprise visit from Martha who lives in his rooming house. She doesn't tell him she's a prostitute but Henry tells the reader that he knows that she is one. She tells him, "I hear you listening to that good music all the time. I thought I'd bring you a drink" (20). As the scene unfolds male hegemony is subverted in a way that hasn't occurred before in Bukowski's work, as Chinaski becomes a sexual victim of Martha.

It's important to note that Martha is the first female character who clearly subverts emphasized femininity in Bukowski's novels, as this was previously done only by male characters. They drink together in Henry's room, she starts dancing for him, and then Martha decides to sexually assault him without warning:

> […]suddenly her eyes narrowed. I was sitting on the edge of the bed. She leapt on me before I could move[…] She pushed her tongue into my mouth. It was thick with saliva, I

> gagged and pushed her off. She fell on her knees, tore open my zipper, and in a second my soft pecker was in her mouth. She sucked and bobbed[…] My penis rose; she groaned, bit me. I screamed grabbed her by the hair, pulled her off. I stood in the center of the room wounded and terrified. They were playing a Mahler Symphony on the radio. Before I could move she was down on her knees and on me again she gripped my balls mercilessly with both of her hands. Her mouth opened, she had me; her head bobbed, sucked, jerked. Giving my balls a tremendous yank while almost biting my packer in half she forced me to the floor. Sucking sounds filled the room as my radio played Mahler. I felt as I were being eaten by a pitiless animal. My pecker rose, covered with spittle and blood. The sight of it threw her into a frenzy. I felt as if I was being eaten alive.
>
> If I come, I thought desperately, I'll never forgive myself. (21-22).

This scene shows Martha forcing herself upon Chinaski multiple times, with him trying to stop her but to no avail. She jumps on him before he could move away, and when she kisses him he "pushed her off," which makes her fall to her knees. She subsequently aggressively proceeds to perform fellatio on Henry who grabs her by the hair and pulls her of him to protect himself from Martha. Before he "could move" to safety she was on him again, performing painful oral sex on him against his will, while ignoring his clear attempts to stop her from taking control of his body. Sentences such as "she had me" as she almost bites his penis "in half," which "forced" him "to the floor" shows the involuntary nature of his sexual experience. He tries to push her off him for a third time as he "reached down to try to yank her off by the hair," but she ignores this and clutches his balls again to regain power over him (22). He only then lets go of her hair and foregoes any future attempt to yank her head off of his penis out of fear for enduring any more

pain as he describes how her teeth "scissored" and bit harder into his penis when he tries to take her off of him (22). In addition to physically trying to stop her, Henry also verbally communicates multiple times that she should stop by yelling "NO! [...] Martha! Stop! It's over!" (22). She ignores him and after making him orgasm involuntarily for the second time she finally stops. Although he didn't ask for or want her sexual services he pays her 5 dollars afterwards as he thinks he should because she is a prostitute.

This rape scene gives an explicit example of how the gender roles are reversed in this novel. Chinaski is submissive and powerless in this sex scene, and stripped from the masculine frame of control. His attempt to pursue hegemonic masculinity is challenged here, because hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to the subordination of women. The treatment of women as sex objects empowers this hegemonic masculine relational subordination of women, but Martha has turned him into a sex object. Martha is presented as a woman who doesn't adhere to conventional femininity, as she is the sexual aggressor instead of being fragile, vulnerable and a passive sexual participant (Finley 361). She aims to satisfy her own needs and ignores Henry's needs, which in this scene are to stop the sex. She thus challenges his hegemonic masculinity by defying her emphasized feminine role, as emphasized femininity supports men's hegemonic masculine control by culturally subordinating women to men (Donaldson 645, 654, 655). The scene interrupts the pattern of strong male protagonists who are in control, and are the ones who are sexually aggressive in Bukowski's earlier short stories, poems and *Post Office*. As Lauri Leinonen also points out, Martha presents a difference in female character portrayal, as she argues that Martha is "the first character to break the pattern of female characters being the objects and Chinaski being the subject." (46-47).

When comparing this first sexual encounter Chinaski has with his first sexual encounter in *Post Office,* one can see the substantial difference that has occurred in Chinaski's portrayal. In his

first sexual encounter in *Post Office* with the "big lady" whose husband was away, he is portrayed as confident and as mainly, but not exclusively, the dominant sexual aggressor in the relationship. Kimmel argues that having power and control in one's relationships is part of what defines hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 68). Martha is obviously in control of the scene, as she knocks on Henry's door and violently forces herself upon him, disregarding his cries to stop.

Gender Role Reversal in the Mid-seventies Poems

The theme of gender role reversal regarding sex and love that is present in this novel recurs in the poems that Bukowski wrote during the mid-seventies. In the poems discussed here, men are objectified by women who merely want sex, while the men long for emotional satisfaction, which is a reversal of gender expectations. The fact that there are more poems that present men who possess counter-hegemonic traits from the mid-seventies on, compared to the earlier works, bolster my argument that male hegemony in Bukowski's work is increasingly subverted. These mid-seventies poems subvert male hegemony in a new way that Bukowski's poems didn't do before, as they present gender non-conforming women that express more masculine traits. In fact, they express hegemonic masculinity by being sexual initiators, while the women turn the men in the poems into objects of sexual desire, just as Martha makes Chinaski the sexual object. These men in the poems aren't interested in sex as much as women, and express emphasized femininity as they celebrate emotional expression in the poems.

Gender roles are reversed in the poem "My Groupie," for example, as a young woman approaches the male protagonist who is giving a poetry reading on stage. She jumps up on the stage and screams: "'I WANT YOU! I WANT YOU! TAKE ME! TAKE ME!' I told her, 'Look, get the hell away from me.'" In this poem Chinaski is the passive person who is exposed to the

woman's sexual advances, which goes against the hegemonic masculine image of men being assertive pursuers of sexually receptive women. He further turns her down, which shows that the male protagonist doesn't portray the hyper-masculine trait of being a virile womanizer. Both the young woman and the male speaker perform their gender in a non-hegemonic manner as she is the sexual aggressor and he is the sexual object.

The young woman from the "My Groupie" poem seems to express what Mimi Schippers refers to as "pariah femininities," which are qualities that threaten men's social dominion as they are traditionally considered masculine traits. These female characters express masculine traits that society forbids them from having, such as aggressiveness, assertiveness and promiscuity. It is socially unacceptable for women to espouse these pariah femininities because the female expression of these qualities disrupts the patriarchic complementary balance between dominating hegemonic masculinity and subordinate emphasized femininity (Schippers 85, 91, 95). Though on the one hand the young groupie is portrayed in a progressive and modern manner as she expresses these pariah femininities, on the other hand the male speaker in the poem seems to be put off by the assertiveness of the young woman. Usually Bukowski's male characters are the ones that are sexually assertive, but when the young woman starts being assertive the male speaker seems to be irritated by this. Schippers argues that when woman portray pariah femininities that threaten men, such as sexual assertiveness, they are neutralized from being a danger to the gender hierarchy by making the quality undesirable and forbidden for women. She gives the example of how promiscuous women are considered "slut[s]" and women who are assertive are "bitch[es]" (Schippers 95). Bukowski's male speaker in the poem seems to be critical of women who don't fully adjust to the qualities of emphasized femininity, as they are promiscuous and assertive of women, while the male characters in Bukowski's work usually display these same characteristics themselves.

It seems that when women perform their gender as promiscuous and assertive women, they are depicted as aggressively so, like Martha the rapist, or hysterically like the woman in the groupie poem. Therefore, even though Bukowski presents fewer men and women in these poems who express gender stereotypical behavior, he simultaneously upholds the gender hegemony of subordinate emphasized femininity and dominant hegemonic masculinity by negatively portraying women who express their gender through hegemonic masculine traits in this period.

During the mid-seventies, there are more male protagonists in Bukowski's poems that show more sentimentality than Chinaski's earlier work, as can be seen in the poem "Drooling Madness At St. Liz," which was published in 1975. The male protagonist in it states that wise men become wise "because of their feelings" for the women they love. Here Bukowski acknowledges men's emotional life and states that men should respect their emotions, instead of ignoring them like apathetic male stereotypes do. In "A Love Poem" the male speaker is more sentimental and less objectifying compared to Bukowski's earlier work: "mostly the women are very warm they remind me of buttered toast with the butter melted in." The male speaker furthermore says that he is good cook and a good listener, showing his caring and nurturing side instead of hegemonic masculinity. He says that of all the women in his life, "none of them are without meaning, some love well, others not; the best at sex are not always the best in others ways; each has limits as I have limits and we learn each other's quickly." The male speaker does acknowledge that women who are not "good at sex" also had emotional value to him. Thus, the male speaker's hegemonic masculinity is neutralized to some extent as he shows traits that do not fit the stereotype.

Reversing Gender Roles and Control with Laura and Jan

In *Factotum* Chinaski's passivity is further presented by means of his extended

relationship with Laura as she provides for him and Jan who is presented as following her own needs, who I'll be discussing respectively. His passivity in his relationship with Laura is marked by the fact that she initiates the relationship when she finds out Chinaski is broke and soon to be homeless. Most women in *Factotum*, as well as in the poems, subvert their passive roles as they take the initiative in the relationship, which is a novel way in which male hegemony is subverted in the writings, as this didn't occur prior to the mid-seventies writings. Both Martha and Laura initiate the romance, which places Henry in the passive position. His passivity is further shown by his financial dependency on Laura, which contrasts with his former assertive, financial provider role depicted in *Post Office*. Up until the turn of the twenty-first century, men in Western society were socialized to be the breadwinners, leaving sociologists like Jessie Bernard to equate maleness with breadwinning (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 11, 108-109). Modern research shows that self-reliance still is assumed to be ideal for men, more so than for women (Prentice and Carranza 270, 273-274). Chinaski's dependence on Laura to provide for food and a place to stay for him is a new way in which Chinaski's hegemonic masculine image gets distorted.

In the first novel Chinaski degraded the women he was dating for being economically dependent on him as shack jobs, while Laura provides for him as well as take charge in initiating a relationship with him. Laura is Chinaski's first long-term girlfriend in the novel, whom he meets in a bar as he buys her a couple of drinks with his last money, than tells her he's broke and only has a place to stay for two or three days (Bukowski, *Factotum* 47). She tells him to "come with me" and she subsequently buys him food, cigarettes and liquor, which she charges to her patron, a millionaire named Wilbur Oxnard who supports her and two other women named Grace and Jerry. Chinaski initiates the conversation but Laura takes the initiative to leave the bar together and even though she herself lives off the support she receives from Wilbur Oxnard, she takes care of Chinaski's livelihood, which puts Chinaski in a dependent position in their

relationship. They stop seeing each other once Oxnard dies and no longer provides for them.

Just as with Laura, Jan Meadows is another woman who upon meeting Chinaski quickly decides to provide for him in *Factotum*, giving him a place to stay even though they just met: "I was spending my last fifty cents on a greasy hamburger- and we struck up a conversation. She bought me a beer, gave me her phone number, and three days later I moved into her apartment (66)." She buys him a beer and provides him with a place to sleep, thus placing him in this scene in the dependent position in the relationship, as was the case with Laura. Thus, Chinaski's image of an independent man is challenged here, while Jan is depicted as someone with the masculine traits of independency and assertiveness as she provides for him with a place to stay and gives her phone number to him.

Chinaski calls Jan "an excellent fuck," which shows his continued objectification of women, though he doesn't judge Jan for wanting and initiating sex more than himself, which shows he doesn't adhere to the double standard of judging woman for being sexual. Before the 1960s women were raised to think that for them to be sexually active is to violate the social rules of femininity, thus placing themselves outside of the feminine standard. There was a sexual double standard in the 20th century that still holds sway today, which gives men permission to be promiscuous while women face societal punishment for pursuing sexual relations. This gender inequality has been reinforced by the idea that men are more sexual than women are (Kimmel, *The Gendered Society* 222-223). Though women are not presented in a positive light in Bukowski's novels, women like Jan who have strong sexual feelings, more so than Chinaski, are not unusual in his work, and Chinaski does not judge them for wanting sex (Kimmel, *The Gender of Desire*, 5).

Being a virile womanizer is trait of hegemonic masculinity, which presents Chinaski as a non-hegemonic masculine man as he desires sex less than his partners. Sexually liberated female

characters, who exhibit hegemonic masculine traits, desiring sex more than Chinaski, are present in *Post Office, Factotum* and especially *Women*. He somewhat reluctantly surrenders to Jan's sexual needs, as her physical needs in the morning make him late for work, which results in him losing his job at the bicycle warehouse (Bukowski, *Factotum* 68-69). While in *Post Office* Betty complains about Chinaski for not being the male provider anymore, the opposite seems to happen in *Factotum*. Jan complains about Chinaski for not constantly catering to her sexual needs anymore, which is the result of him being tired from gambling every day at the horse racetracks to earn money. She doesn't like Chinaski becoming an economically independent man as a result of his winnings at the racetrack:

> The new life didn't sit well with Jan. She was used to her four fucks a day and also used to seeing me poor and humble.
> "you get a few bucks in your pocket and you're not the same anymore. You act like a dental student or a plumber." (81-82).

Thus, Bukowski depicts Jan as a woman who wants Chinaski to be passively present around the house for her sexual needs, which would make Chinaski express emphasized femininity. Because of Chinaski's new lifestyle, they argue more often, which results in Jan disappearing in the evening to bars. Chinaski suspects that she is cheating on him, because she thinks he has changed into a less exciting person according to him and because he is not able to perform sexually anymore at her will: "I knew she was out there, and I knew there would be somebody else" (83).

One night he decides to look for her in different bars and expects to find her with another man and indeed, he finds her in one bar, sitting on a barstool between two other men, which

enrages him as he feels threatened by his loss of his masculine identity as he loses control over his girlfriend. Even though we never learn whether she was cheating on him or not, Chinaski portrays himself as a victim of an unfaithful woman, as he sat "helpless" at their home, thinking where and with whom she might be cheating on him, until he goes out to look for her in bars and finds her: "I walked up behind her, standing near her stool. 'I tried to make a woman out of you but you'll never be anything but a goddamned whore!' I backhanded her and knocked her off the stool" (83). Men having power and control in relationships is a defining characteristic of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, partner violence occurs more frequently when hyper-masculine men feels threatened in their constructing of and/or adhering to masculine gender roles by controlling their partners (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 68; Moore 83). Henry's conforming to hegemonic masculine values increases the chance that he will treat women violently (Sabo and Gordon 8).

From this point of view on gender, I argue that Chinaski tries to reassert his frame of control as he feels that he is losing control over his girlfriend, which destabilizes his identity as a man. The feeling of losing a sexual partner feels like losing his control over women, and this failure to perform hegemonic masculine expression of control destabilizes Henry's gender identity (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 25). As a result Henry tries to physically force Jan into an emphasized feminine subordinate position by acting out his hegemonic masculine trait of culturally sanctioned aggression in order to feel in control again of his own identity. Gender research by Ray and Gold has shown that hyper-masculine men are more likely to be physically and verbally aggressive towards an intimate partner (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 67-68; Ricardo and Barker 24). He physically punishes Jan for showing the promiscuity that he hypocritically expresses himself when he cheats on Jan (Schippers 95). Kimmel argues that as a proponent of hegemonic masculinity men feel entitled to heterosexual relations and this, I argue, explains why

Henry feels as if he is entitled to sexual relations outside of his relationship with Jan, while he judges and punishes her for wanting the same (Kimmel, *Gender of Desire* 230).

Even though Chinaski calls Jan a whore, John Martin argues that women described in *Factotum* aren't thought of as whores by the protagonist. Instead, they are women that he is trying to relate to: "He admires them from afar and thinks they are way beyond him" (Sounes 147). I only agree with Martin to a certain extent, as Chinaski doesn't think of women in general as whores. He states about Jan: "I couldn't understand why I didn't get rid of her. She was compulsively unfaithful. I kept telling myself that all the women in the world weren't whores, just mine." (Bukowski, *Factotum* 108). He refers to Jan in this scene as a whore for cheating on him, not because she simply is a woman and he thinks they are all whores. Martin claims that Chinaski admires women from afar and thinks they are beyond him, and that this is the reason he calls them whores. However, though Chinaski calls Jan a whore, he doesn't admire her from afar, nor does he think she is beyond him, as he already is in a relationship with her. The only other two women in the novel he calls whores are the two prostitutes Martha and Helen. Martin gives a sympathetic account of Chinaski in *Factotum*, and not in *Post Office*, which supports the notion that Chinaski in the second novel became less of a chauvinist macho. Indeed the turning point for Bukowski's portrayal of men and women came during *Factotum* and poems written in the mid-seventies, as the hegemonic gender roles of passivity and assertiveness are reversed in the second novel, which depicts Chinaski as less powerful and in control.

Chinaski further presents himself as a victim later on in the book as he reveals why he thinks she left him. He implicitly states that she was only interested in his money as she supposedly left him for a "fat real estate operator" because he didn't have enough money anymore coming in from gambling at the race track: "I had $2.08. Jan promised me she'd be waiting when my luck changed but I hardly believed that. The real estate operator's name was

Jim Bemis, he had an office on Alvarado Street and plenty of cash." (267). Money could not have been the reason for breaking up, as Jan picked him up when he was broke when they met. She furthermore began to dislike him when he did start making money by gambling, as Chinaski stated that she would rather have him "poor and humble" (142). Chinaski's inability to understand why Jan left him, and why he couldn't leave her shows how confused and helpless he feels around women, which further marks his vulnerability and shows him in a counter-hegemonic way. As Terry Trueman argues, although Bukowski's work is often regarded as being negative toward women, his work "more often showed a self-deprecating confusion and frustration at his [male] protagonists' powerlessness in intimate relationships with females." (Kimmel, *Masculinities,* 116). This is confirmed by Henry's relationship with Jan, which proves Trueman's statement to be correct, as he judges Jan negatively for leaving him for a man with "plenty of cash," when in reality this can't be the case as mentioned. He therefore seems confused in his assessment of the situation, which shows his powerlessness in understanding what's going on between him and Jan which is typical for his relationships with women.

Chinaski and Bukowski's other male protagonists feel that they are victims of female power, that they are targets of female aggression, as we saw in *Factotum*. Women are denigrated and portrayed as cheaters, as exploiters and as powerful women who abuse, humiliate and use men. Biographer Paul Clements argues that "Bukowski may have described violent sexual acts and depicted women in derogatory terms, but admitted that he felt vulnerable and was easily taken advantage of because of his easy-going nature, which he resented" (Clements 84). Clements' argument is supported by Chinaski hiding his more vulnerable emotions, or expressing them through the emotion of anger as he for example violently bursts out at Jan and calls her a "whore" because he thinks that he is being cheated on. His experiences with Martha and Jan among others present Henry as more physically vulnerable, as well as more psychologically and

emotionally vulnerable respectively. These women pioneer in Bukowski's works with their non-hegemonic behavior as they assert themselves and show that they are more in control of the relation dynamic than the women in *Post Office* and the earlier poems and short stories.

Chapter III: *Women, Hollywood* and the Later Poems

Old and New Ways of undermining Male Hegemony

My analysis of Bukowski's later work shows that it is more subversive of male hegemony than his earlier work as Henry more vulnerable and shows more frequently to be aware of his gender performance. This subversion of male hegemony includes a continuation of gender role subversion by both male and female characters. The later work displays Chinaski's vulnerability again but to a greater extent than before. For example, Henry is seen crying for the first time, and he also admits his insecurity when interacting with women, which is stated more clearly. While in *Factotum* women express male hegemonic masculinity, in *Women* this seems to be more the case as the women are more sexually assertive than Henry. Moreover, these women are presented as wanting a physical relationship, unlike Chinaski. In *Women, Hollywood* and the later poems Chinaski specifically refers to being macho which shows his awareness of male hegemonic posturing as a way of distancing himself from the idealization of it. While Harrison argues that this is a new usage of subversion employed by Bukowski, I showed in Chapter I that the employment of self-awareness of Chinaski started early on, going back as far to the 1965 short story "A Man Insane Enough to Live with Beasts." Bukowski's later work does reflect more awareness of gender as performance than the earlier work.

The higher degree of subversion of male hegemony in the later work also takes form in new ways in his work. For example in *Women,* there are female characters who play a more central role in the plot than was the case in the earlier novels. Furthermore, Henry's hegemonic masculine behavior is ridiculed largely in relation to women, which is done repeatedly and

clearly, which is new for the novel series. What's also new is Chinaski's emotional attachment to Lydia Vance in *Women* and to Sarah Chinaski in *Hollywood*, which is unprecedented in the former novels. While the previous novels focused mainly on the pain, dramas and suffering that occurred in the workplace and the problems Chinaski had because of working menial, degrading, tough jobs, the focus in *Women* is on Chinaski's intimate relationships with the women he meets while making a living as a writer. I will discuss the character Lydia, who plays a more central role in the novel than women have usually played in Bukowski's works.

Chinaski reveals more of his psychological problems in his attempts to have relations, and describes the emotional complexity of having relationships, which according to Clements shows more sympathy for the female characters (Clements 84). Harrison affirms Clements' claim by arguing that *Women* portrays women with more depth and less as mere sexual objects for Chinaski to exploit (183). Harrison further claims when one compares *Women* with *Post Office* that the novel portrays an "increased subtlety of characterization, a more nuanced treatment of psychological dynamics and less reliance on stereotypes" (183). In addition, *Women* signals a change in the portrayal of women and their relationship to the male protagonist from "crude descriptions of events and flat characterizations of women to fuller descriptions, more rounded characterizations and female characters" who have lives of their own apart from Chinaski (184, 198).

Attachment and Ridicule with Lydia Vance as the first Central Female Figure

This chapter will first analyze how Chinaski's hegemonic masculinity is subverted, mainly by considering his relationship with Lydia Vance, and his increased vulnerability in this relationship which the reader is introduced with right in the opening page of the novel. *Women*

immediately opens with an unveiling that Chinaski does not adhere at all to the image of a hegemonic masculine, virile man:

> I was 50 years old and hadn't been to bed with a woman for four years. I had no woman friends. I looked at them as I passed them on the streets or wherever I saw them, but I looked at them without yearning and with a sense of futility. I masturbated regularly, but the idea of having a relationship with a woman—even on non-sexual terms—was beyond my imagination (1).

Chinaski is presented as an insecure man and the opposite of a dominant man who has control over women, as he confesses his inability to have a relationship with the opposite sex. Harrison argues that Chinaski stops trying to adjust to the hyper-masculine image by showing "a new and surprising vulnerability in Chinaski" (199). Henry can't imagine having a relationship with a woman, even as a friend, which shows how deeply insecure he is. Chinaski's posturing as a macho man has made room for self-deprecation, as the self-confidence he exhibited in *Post Office* has dissipated.

The next scene shows that Chinaski tries to dominate his girlfriend Lydia, but the scene ends in the humiliation of his macho masculinity. This is one of many examples of how Chinaski's objectification of women is undermined in *Women*, which happens more frequently than in previous novels and poems (Harrison 197). After a fight with Lydia, Chinaski goes down to the racetrack to bet on some horses and wins $950. He celebrates by deciding to call Lydia and speaking his mind:

> "Listen," I said,
>
> "listen, you bitch. I went to the harness races tonight and won $950.

I'm a winner! I'll always be a winner! You don't deserve me, bitch!

You've been playing with me! Well, it's over! I want out! This is it!

I don't need you and your goddamned games! Do you understand me?

Do you get the message?

Or is your head thicker than your ankles?"

"Hank…"

"Yes?"

"This isn't Lydia. This is Bonnie. I'm babysitting for Lydia.

She went out tonight."

I hung up and walked backed to my car. (Bukowski, *Women* 40-41).

Bukowski mocks Chinaski's aggressive chauvinism in this scene. The reader is first presented with a tough sounding Chinaski, who presents himself as a winner. Being successful is a trait men are pressured to ascertain in order to fit the restrictive mold of hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel, *Masculinities* 103; Levant and Richmond 131). While his monologue starts with Henry being aggressive and chauvinistic, it climaxes with the embarrassing discovery that he has been screaming at the babysitter. This scene shows Chinaski expressing his misogynist gender chauvinism fully and awfully, only to let his appearance of aggressive control in their relation be neutralized with ridicule, which subverts his macho persona. Clearly, hegemonic masculinity is not idealized in *Women* as it was in *Post Office*, where Henry was continuously portrayed as a figurehead of hegemonic masculinity, without ridicule and meager self-awareness of his macho behavior.

Lydia Vance is his first girlfriend in the novel and is the most important female love-

interest of Chinaski of the twenty women that Chinaski meets and is intimate, and though their first time meeting presents Chinaski as an objectifying chauvinist, it simultaneously shows him to reflect on his gender performance. In the novel, Chinaski meets Lydia for the first time as she takes the initiative to meet him during the recess of a public poetry reading. However their first meeting isn't a success as she walks off on Chinaski because of his unrefined, vulgar approach. Chinaski shows an awareness of his gender performance here as he states that he talks like a chauvinist because he doesn't know how to talk to women. "'I'd like to rip that fringe off your jacket—we could begin there!' Lydia walked off. It hadn't worked. I never knew what to say to the ladies." (Bukowski, *Women* 2). The objectification of women is an important element of hegemonic masculinity, as Henry demarcates her as the other, as the opposite of himself by objectifying Lydia. According to Bird, men differentiate between themselves and women through the sexual objectification of the opposite sex, in order to conceptualize themselves "as positively male by distancing the self from all that is associated with being female." Thus, Henry's objectification of Lydia and other women helps to solidify his hegemonic masculine identity. Bird quotes Johnson who argues that male hegemony over women is based on the objectification of women, because objectifying women prohibits identification with women creates symbolical distance between the sexes, which would enable men "to depersonalize the oppression of women." (Bird 123, 128-129).

Lydia's first encounter with Henry starts with him appearing to present yet again his old familiar macho façade, but he shows his awareness of his own gender as a performance. The sentence "I never knew what to say to the ladies" gives the reader insight into Chinaski's thoughts, and surprisingly shows his more vulnerable side, as the sentence undermines his aggressive macho image. Furthermore, as Harrison points out, "I never knew what to say" also indicates that Chinaski clumsily clings to interacting with women according to a stereotypical

image of how he thinks men should express themselves with women, "instead of [acting according to] how he actually feels" (198). Chinaski is self-aware of the fact that he is acting within the confines of men's expected gender role. He does what he deems desirable by those norms, which shows him as highly aware of how he performs his gender.

In a scene that follows Chinaski´s breakup with Lydia, he explicitly refers to his hegemonic gender performance by ridiculing its macho nature. This more clearly stated awareness and ironic self-ridicule of his own macho behavior shows a new subversion of male hegemony which didn't occur in previous novels and writings. The difference in *Women* is that the protagonist "consciously and consistently" is treated with irony to subvert male hegemony (Harrison 198). The word macho is used to ridicule and thus invalidate the appreciation of hegemonic, macho masculinity more clearly. In this scene after his relationship with Lydia has ended, Chinaski shows he is capable of self-reflection by stating that the acting out of his manliness is macho, and thus an exaggerated form of hyper-masculinity: "'But, Hank. Don't forget what you told me about your women.' 'Told you what?' 'You said, They always come back.' 'That's just macho talk.'" (33). Bukowski deconstructs Henry's machismo by letting him ironically self-reflect on his performance to appear to others as a macho man. He clearly self-reflects later on in the story as well when he refers to himself as: "an old chauv pig" (187).

Preceding the attack where Lydia rips out his sleeve, she complains to Chinaski that they "haven't been to a party in months" and that she wants to see people instead of just eating and sleeping and having sex with him, which demonstrates her rejection of emphasized femininity as she doesn't foregoes her own needs for his (33). She wants to have a life, but Chinaski seems content with the domesticated situation. She takes control of her situation as Lydia phones Chinaski and tells him, "'Whenever you get drunk… I'm going out dancing. I went to the Red Umbrella last night and I asked men to dance with me. A woman has a right to do that.'" (37).

She is shown having her own life, and is shown as an assertive woman who does what she wants, and asks other men to dance with her. She satisfies her own needs instead of adhering to the emphasized feminine trait of submitting herself to her male partner's needs.

The next scene shows Lydia's importance to the male protagonist as a female character, as it shows Chinaski's emotional attachment to Lydia. Though the attachment doesn't look as important as the instance when he cares for Betty when she is in the hospital, Chinaski does show his emotional attachment more quickly and over less dramatic events, which shows his newfound willingness to display his vulnerability. Chinaski's ease in showing his emotional attachment to another person shows how male hegemony is undermined to a greater extent, though this isn't necessarily a new way of showing it. "'Ooooh,' she said, 'you've got on a new shirt!'
It was true. I had bought the shirt because I was thinking about her, about seeing her. I knew that she knew that, and was making fun of me, yet I didn't mind." (7). Chinaski doesn't exhibit his usual emotional distance in this scene but rather exhibits vulnerability and an emotional attachment here, informing the reader that he was being made fun of but likes her so much that he doesn't mind. This shows an emotional attachment to a female character that was not shown before in the novels.

This is also the first time Chinaski is presented as thinking about a woman in a non-sexual way, and he speaks about her when she isn't there, which both shows a subversion of hegemonic norms regarding emotional attachment. The phrase that he "was thinking about her, about seeing her" in this case refers to Henry's eagerness to spend time with Lydia, instead of having sex with her. He is interested in her as a person, going so far as to buy a fashionable looking garment for himself to wear to impress her, which is an effort to be validated by a woman that he has not shown before. This shows an emotional attachment to a female character that is new to Chinaski. Bird argues that emotional detachment maintains the norms of hegemonic masculinity. Emotional

attachment reveals vulnerabilities and weaknesses that come at the expense of posturing as being in control, one of the most important norms to uphold hegemonic masculinity (Bird 122, 123). In the previous novels, if a female character wasn't in the scene, she wasn't mentioned. If she was mentioned then she was serving some short sexual purpose. However, even when Henry is with another woman, he thinks about Lydia. When he's driving with Dee Dee to the Sunset Strip for breakfast Henry "kept thinking about Lydia" (48). Chinaski's experiences with Lydia and their conflicts together form the plot of their scenes together. Thus, Lydia's novelty as a character is that she is part of the story instead of a mere background character that is mentioned while the plot unfolds, as is the case for most women in the previous two novels.

Henry Chinaski is further transformed towards demonstrating emphasized feminine traits later on in *Women* as he has made dinner plans with two women, Iris and Debra, for Thanksgiving and is forced to choose between one of them.[3] When he tells Debra that he's cancelling their dinner plans because he's meeting another woman he experiences guilt as he has a breakdown:

> I walked up to her and put my arms around her. I started to tremble and cry.
>
> "Hank, what's wrong?"
>
> […] I grabbed her and held her to me. I was sobbing. The tears flowed like wine. I couldn't stop. Most of me meant it, the other part was running away.
>
> "Hank, what is it?"
>
> "I can't be with you Thanksgiving."

[3] Women like Debra and Sara are sexually assertive as they show initiative by slipping their phone numbers to Henry at poetry gathering. See: (Bukowski, *Women* 208).

"Why? Why? What's wrong?"

"What's wrong is that I am a GIANT HUNK OF SHIT!"

My guilt screwed inside me and I had a spasm. It hurt something awful.

"A belly dancer is flying down from Canada to spend Thanksgiving with me." (250).

Chinaski as a character seems to break through his apathy and emotional detachment in this scene. The scene shows that Chinaski is not a typical exemplar for macho masculinity anymore in *Women*. This is the first time Chinaski cries in the series, which is taboo behavior by hegemonic norms as it shows fragility instead of strength. This is a new way in which male hegemony is subverted, and this is a substantial display of Chinaski defying hegemonic masculinity. Henry's gender identity change, from an uncaring womanizer, to a more emotionally attached, caring man, supports Butler's notion that gender is not essentialist, as Chinaski's own gender is not fixed but open to change. As he performs his gender differently through the expression of his emotions, changes his gender towards a non-hegemonic masculinity (Butler, "Performative Acts," 527-528).

The next scene gives an account of a sex scene between Henry and Laura, a woman he renames Katherine, in which he at first appears as a man in control sexually, but the scene quickly shows how his oversentimentality and him being ridiculed for it by Laura which shows his subordinate and emphasized feminine position in the relationship.[4] During sex, Henry utters phrases such as "Then I gave up trying to please her and simply fucked her… It was like murder. I didn't care; my cock had gone crazy," and "she was helpless." However, briefly after sex Chinaski shows his passivity in the relationship dynamic as he shows his vulnerability through

[4] Katherine is presented as an assertive woman as she starts their sexual relationship by choosing to get into Chinaski's bed when they're both staying at a museum director's house: "I could feel her getting into bed next to me." (Bukowski, *Women* 89).

his emotional attachment to Laura, while Laura takes upon herself the hegemonic masculine role of wanting to keep the relationship merely physical and superficial (Bukowski *Women* 99).

> I thought of marriage. I thought of a house, a dog and a cat, of shopping in supermarkets. Henry Chinaski was losing his balls. And didn't care […]
>
> Her large dark eyes looked at me as I awakened. "Hello, Katherine," I said, "will you marry me?"
>
> "Please don't," she said, "I don't like it."
>
> "I mean it."
>
> "Oh, shit, Hank!"
>
> "What?"
>
> "I said, shit, and if you talk that way I'm taking the first plane out."
>
> "All right" […].
>
> She said, "It's just sex, Hank, it's just sex!" (99-100).

Paul Clements argues that Bukowski's gender portrayal changes most notably in *Women*, as the male protagonist's chauvinistic masculinity is ironically deconstructed. He argues that Bukowski accomplishes this through inverting Chinaski's dominant role of male Casanova and conqueror, blurring the distinction between dominance and submission." (Clements 82, 84, 85). This scene is a good example of how Chinaski's role as a dominant man is deconstructed through inversion. He pokes fun of himself when he appears to embody the opposite of machismo, as he was "losing his balls" for thinking about marrying a woman instead of restricting their relationship to sex. He appears to adopt the emphasized feminine role, as he wants to connect with her on a deeper intimate and vulnerable level, by suggesting to get married, while she seems to be a female

Casanova who just wants sex, and gets annoyed by his urge to settle down.

Scenes like this one in which Chinaski's macho image is ridiculed, such as the one in which he accidentally dials the babysitter, or in which he is turned down for saying chauvinist things, or buys a shirt to impress a girlfriend, these scenes and others show a new way in which male control and macho behavior is undermined. This ridiculing of Henry is a substantial new way in which male hegemony is subverted in *Women* that didn't previously occur in the writings. Thus, this novel undermines male gender hegemony over women to a higher extent the previous two novels, even though the male protagonist still acts as a chauvinist, as his chauvinism is neutralized by ridicule. The women in *Women* continue the subversive practice that started in the mid-seventies writings such as *Factotum,* but this novel more frequently shows women undermining emphasized femininity. They more often take the initiative in their relationships with Henry, they are often successful and independent from men than in previous novels and have their own lives, as Lydia does, and often want sex more than Chinaski.

Settling Down in *Hollywood*

In the last Chinaski novel *Hollywood* (1989) he has settled down and seems healthily emotionally attached to his wife Sarah, as he changes from being the womanizer in *Women* to someone who thinks about her comfort and wellbeing, while enjoying their new domesticated, suburban life together. This novel shows a new way in which male hegemony is subverted as Chinaski is for the first time portrayed to be in a healthy relationship and seen as someone who doesn't merely think about women in terms of sex and emotion. Henry shows that he takes into account how his actions might affect his wife Sarah and he goes out of his way to facilitate her wellbeing. He has changed rather substantially as he isn't a womanizer anymore, and expresses

fewer hegemonic masculine traits that perpetuate hegemonic gender relations. He sexually objectifies women less, especially his own partner, which is rare in the Chinaski novels. Furthermore, he is emotionally attached to his wife. Instead of drinking in a bar with questionable characters, and womanizing late at night, he now enjoys his home life with his wife and their five cats (Bird 121). Nothing seems to matter more the life at home:

> Sarah said finally, "We've got to get home and feed the cats."
>
> Drinking could wait.
>
> Hollywood could wait.
>
> The cats could not wait.
>
> I agreed (Bukowski, *Hollywood,* 159).

Meeting Sarah has changed his lifestyle to the point that there were no more "knocks of unsavory women at 3 or 4 a.m." (59). In contrast to the previous novels, Chinaski stays with one woman throughout the whole novel. In *Hollywood* he doesn't cheat on Sarah, nor does he express intentions of wanting to sleep with other women, which is quite remarkable. His image of an unattached, rough womanizer has changed greatly.

He listens to his wife, and she often corrects him and gives him advice that he gladly accepts. Throughout the novel, Sarah gives advice about his diet: "'Don't eat the meat… Or the cakes: too much sugar.' The gods had sent Sarah to add ten years to my life." (24).
This hardly fits his old macho image of the previous novels. He confesses to be on vitamins and health foods on orders from his caretaking companion Sarah. "No red meat, no salt, no sugar," Chinaski tells an old friend with whom he did drugs with in the old days. Chinaski even jokes

about how if his readers would ever find out how he has been living this healthy, non-self-destructionist lifestyle, and know how he has changed from the image of the macho male protagonist in his novels, they would surely stop reading him: "If this ever gets out my book sales are going to plummet" (252). He doesn't live on the edge anymore as he used to, and has settled down to a stable life where he plays with his cats and enjoys his rose garden, together with his spouse Sarah, which contrasts with his former life where he fights with women, bosses and daily hangovers.

Sarah seems to be the one that changed Chinaski for the better, and he frequently shows appreciation for her more than he does any other woman in any other of the novels or poems, while he shows to think about her needs which shows his emphasized feminine trait of caring for others. He often addresses Sarah in a positive manner, for example, when he meets with Jon Pinchot, the director of his movie: "Dear Sarah was along in case I needed help getting back home" (22). In another scene Chinaski states: "Jon-Luc just kept right on talking. That's all I remember. Except now and then, my good Sarah saying, 'Hank, you shouldn't drink so much. Slow down a little. I don't want you dead in the morning'" (28-29). Henry often shows his caring side when interacting with Sarah: "I turned on my right side, toward the window, because sometimes I snored and I wanted to direct the sound away from her" (30). He tends to make tender gestures like these in a way that expresses affection for a woman that hasn't been expressed before in the novels. He feels sorry for Sarah because there is only beer at a Hollywood party, because he knows "Sarah, she wasn't nutty for beer" (104). Though Sarah isn't a rounded character in this novel as we mainly experience scenes throughout the thoughts and feelings of Chinaski, he shows that doesn't care only about himself anymore. He now actively thinks about the wellbeing of someone else besides himself, and this caring side shows his hegemonic femininity or male femininity.

Hollwood and other late works such as poems show a higher tendency to address macho gender performance more frequently than before. There is a scene in *Hollywood* that shows Henry's awareness of macho gender presentations as he walks into the room of the actor Jack Bledsoe: "There were boxing posters all over the wall. I walked around looking at them. Great. Some of them went way back. I began to feel macho just looking at them" (104-105). Machismo is related to virility and dominance and generally refers to having power over other men and women (Steenbeek 220). Henry shows here his awareness of macho gender performances as an exaggerated expression of masculinity. The male protagonist's awareness combined with having a loving monogamous relationship with his wife, whom he respects, doesn't insult or objectify, shows how his hegemonic masculinity as a character has faded to portray more healthy relations between men and women.

Self-reflection and Gender Role Subversion in The Later Poems

Bukowski's poetry from the late seventies and onward introduce male and female characters that defy hegemonic gender roles in multiple ways, such as the reversal of complementary hegemonic gender roles, which firstly occurred in the mid-seventies, but happens more frequently later on. However, what's also new about these poems is the fact that the male speaker more explicitly states how his hegemonic masculine posturing feels to him, and why he does it. The next two poems I will discuss demonstrate their defying of gender roles, because the female characters in it are depicted as having control in the relationship dynamic with men. In the poem "Sandra" we learn of "slim tall ear-ringed bedroom damsel" named Sandra who herself is presented as a woman who doesn't identify with the status quo of emphasized femininity:

> [Sandra] has brought her prizes
>
> over for me to view:
>
> silent blonde zeros of young
>
> flesh
>
> who
>
> a) sit
>
> b) stand
>
> c) talk
>
> at her command (Bukowski, *Love is a Dog* 15-16*)*.

Sandra is presented as having dominion over the young men in this poem, thus refusing to complement hegemonic masculinity with emphasized femininity. Instead, she exhibits the hegemonic masculine trait of promiscuity, and puts her blonde boys into a submissive emphasized feminine position. She has conquered and exploited these "unscratched boys" who are younger and naïve compared with Sandra the player, who shows these men off as her conquered "prizes". Sandra is the one who gives orders, as the emphasized feminine men she dates are complacent and behave "at her command" (Schippers 94). She has reversed the male and female gender roles of domination and subordination respectively, as she has control over these young men who follow her orders, and thus she subverts male hegemony. The poem "The Escape" also depicts women to be more in control than men, as the male speaker describes the lack of control he has over a woman, along with several other men. He equates this woman he is seeing with a black widow and describes himself and "too many males" who the woman is also dating, as trapped in her web (Bukowski, *Love is a Dog* 37). The female character here is

described as the one in control, the one with influence over the male(s) in the relationship. This seems to be another example of Bukowski portraying women as more empowered in his writing, while the men are vulnerable to her will, as the male protagonist "escaped" being her prey. The vulnerable, scared protagonist from this poem contrasts with the tough, strong Chinaski character from *Post Office*, and the hegemonic male protagonists from earlier produced poems.

Bukowski's poems seems to utilize more romantic language in the later stages of his life, as can be seen in the poem "Texan," instead of his familiar crude sexual description. It describes a 103 pound woman from Texas whom the male protagonist of the poem describes having sex with in a rather different way than readers are used to from Bukowski's male characters: "we make love at least once a day" (Bukowski, *Love is a Dog* 39). This is one of the rare occasions in which a Bukowski male protagonist describes the intercourse he has with a woman in a romantic way. Bukowski's male characters usually describe sex rather crudely in his novels. Linda Karllson argues that the most commonly occurring verb to describe him having sex in *Women* is "mount", to give an indication (28).

The frequent ridiculing of macho behavior in *Women* is replicated in later poems such as "macho man." In this poem the male protagonist is bothered by angry women who call him up to curse and ridicule the "'macho bullshit'" that he writes. They ridicule him for creating hyper-masculine protagonists and tell him "'you're probably a fag, you probably want to suck black dick!'" The protagonist later reveals humorously that he indeed has black male servants who "stand with their black dicks extended" (Bukowski, *War All the Time* 194). The male protagonist's hegemonic masculine writings are humorously shown to be fraudulent, as if the angry women were right about him hiding his homosexuality by portraying his literary characters as hyper-masculine. The admittance of the male protagonist to be gay is off course not to be taken too seriously, but it shows the male speaker's willingness to risk being conflated with

femininity, as gay men embody what Connell refers to as subordinate masculinities (Connell, *Masculinities* 78). Thus, Bukowski shows to be less interested on presenting hegemonic masculinity as he ridicules the speaker's masculinity.

Gender Performance Awareness in "the 6 foot goddess" and the "Bluebird" Poem

Bukowski's male characters in his later poems also demonstrate awareness of their exaggerated masculinity as can be observed in the poems "the 6 foot goddess" and "BlueBird," which I will discuss respectively. When the male speaker in "the 6 foot goddess" is having sex with a woman, he describes how he "yank[s] her head back by the hair," because he's "real macho." (Bukowski, *Love is a Dog* 18). Though this poem's self-reflection seems to celebrate a certain virile machismo, Bukowski's other poems like "Bluebird" demonstrated that when he became older his writings portrayed more sensitive male protagonists, who reflected less celebratory on macho posturing. Just two years before he died of leukemia Bukowski published the poem "Bluebird" in the anthology *The Last Night of the Earth Poems* (1992), which shows the male speaker in the poem to be aware of the suppression of his sensitive side. It also shows him to be conscious of the conflict between his emotionally cool gender performance that he feels society requires of him and the suppression of his inherent hegemonic feminine traits such as vulnerability and his more sensitive emotions. The male speaker in the poem "Bluebird" explicitly states what his gender performance feels like, why he keeps it up, and how hegemonic masculine behavior feels like wearing a mask.

Bukowski explains this conflict through the metaphor of a delicate bluebird that represents his sensitivity. The male speaker hides the blue bird in a cage and never lets it out, which represents hiding his vulnerability and sensitivity from the outside world. He argues in the poem that he intentionally hides these delicate parts of himself from the outside world: "there's a

bluebird in my heart that wants to get out but I'm too tough for him, I say, stay in there, I'm not going to let anybody see you." He shows his vulnerable side when he says "I know that you're there, so don't be sad." The poem shows Bukowski depicting the male protagonist as a man that is afraid to show his vulnerable side because he is aware of the macho image he has created of himself.

The speaker argues that he sticks to his hegemonic masculine image for "the whores and the bartenders and the grocery clerks" and other people he meets to never know that the protagonist deviates from strict hegemonic gender norms. He also argues that his readers in Europe are fans of his hegemonic masculine, indifferent persona and he is afraid that if he shows his vulnerable side he will "blow" his "book sales in Europe". This refers to the author's inclination to keep portraying an image of machoism as this has brought him success. He fears the financial repercussions for not performing the hegemonic masculine ideal of an emotionally detached, invulnerable man. He states that "there's a bluebird in my heart that wants to get out but I pour whiskey on him and inhale cigarette smoke." This can be interpreted as the protagonist drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes to suppress his bottled up emotions, which are desperately trying to come out of him. Another interpretation of this phrase is that the drinking and smoking are part of his act, which are visual cues for other people to identify him as an emotionally detached man. The last lines "but I don't weep, do you?" is a performance of societally required hegemonic masculinity, a lie, as the male protagonist has just gone over the fact that he does have vulnerable emotions, but doesn't share them with others.

His suppression of the emotions of intimacy and attachment is required to not only establish his individual masculinity, but to also maintain the gender hierarchy. The male protagonist of the poem fears the punitive reaction from his readers and the people he meets in the street for showing emotions, as emotional expression is perceived as a weakness and as

feminine, and is devalued in the gender hierarchy, which values and regards emotional detachment with strength (Bird 125). This honest poem produced near the end of Bukowski's life explicitly states the tension that a man endures between performing one's hegemonic masculine, macho gender and one's suppressed vulnerable emotions and how there is a societal pressure that polices one to keep up appearances to others they don't even know.

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that over time Bukowski's writings in general became less chauvinistic by displaying less stereotypical chauvinist male and passive female characters in a dominant and submissive relational position respectively. While scholars have focused mostly on *Post Office, Factotum* and *Women,* this thesis has taken a broader approach to determine whether male hegemony is subverted over time in Bukowski's work, by including poems, short stories and *Hollywood*. Harrison argues that only in *Women* does Bukowski's work start to problematize Chinaski's hegemonic masculinity by showing non-hegemonic behavior and by having Chinaski show awareness of his gender performance. This thesis has refuted Harrison's argument by showing that this awareness of male gender performance by Bukowski's male protagonists starts much earlier on, namely, in both *Post Office* and in the short story "A Man Insane Enough to Live with Beasts." The later novels *Women, Hollywood,* as well as later poetry, however, more often refer to machismo as an exaggerated gender performance than the earlier work, and do this more explicitly by literally using the term macho.

Women begin to subvert male hegemony as well by stepping out of their emphasized feminine roles in the mid-seventies poems and *Factotum,* with women such as Martha, which is a new way in which Bukowski begins to subvert male hegemony. While Chinaski in *Post Office* came across as a self-assured womanizer who was in control, *Factotum* largely shifts the power dynamic in favor of women who are now mostly in control in the relationship. Almost all women in *Factotum* are presented as in control in the relationship, and as dominant, just as the women in the mid-seventies poems. All these women seem to be assertive, while Henry is relatively more passive and has a subordinated position as Martha turns him into a sex object, and he feels betrayed by Jan for supposedly cheating on him. Though these women are presented more

progressively as being less dependent and less subordinate to men, they are negatively portrayed for being so as rapists, prostitutes, cheaters or abusers of men.

In *Women* female subversion is continued but women are presented in a more favorable light. Women play a more central role in the plot, and they are all mostly assertive, financially independent as well as successful. Chinaski shows to have matured as he is able to attach himself emotionally to Lydia Vance as well as Sarah Chinaski in *Hollywood*, while he shows the capacity to cry in front of Debra. He seems to have gained the capacity to feel guilty about his actions and his emotional release of this guilt shows that he has learned to open himself up emotionally to others and move beyond expressing anger. Throughout the seventies, Bukowski's gender portrayal changed drastically, as Chinaski transforms from a macho womanizer, to getting ridiculed in *Women* by women who are assertive, to being happy in a monogamous and loving relationship with Sarah in *Hollywood*. Though Bukowski did not totally forego Chinaski's tough sounding, aggressive attitude, he made him aware of himself, and humanized him to the point where his later work cannot be labelled chauvinist. This thesis has shown that even before the seventies Bukowski undermined hegemonic masculinity, but the later work, especially his late poem "Bluebird" demonstrates that Bukowski was more willing to discuss gender performance explicitly later in life.

This thesis has close-read Bukowski's work through the lens of gender theory, which led to the observation that Chinaski's behavior follows predictable hegemonic masculine patterns that can be explained by this theory. As hegemonic masculine norms dictate that Chinaski must have control over women in order to establish his own fragile identity as a man, he feels the loss of control over his girlfriend Jan for example when she goes out to bars against his will, which makes him think that she is cheating on him. His perception of losing of control over Jan destabilizes his identity as man, which is based on heterosexual success with women and having

control over women, and this destabilization causes him emotional distress. However, as hegemonic gender norms don't allow for Chinaski to feel any vulnerable emotions, such as sadness or hopelessness for feeling abandoned, he feels forced to act aggressively, as the only emotional expression he is allowed to vent is anger. Thus, he expresses his anger by hitting Jan and calling her a whore, which is typical hegemonic masculine behavior. This aggressive behavior allows Chinaski to vent some of his pent-up emotions, which makes him feel in control again as his behavior leads to him reasserting a gender hierarchical dynamic between them with Jan in a subordinate position.

Works Cited

Adler, Peter and Adler, Patricia A. and Kless, Steven J. "Socialization to Gender Roles: Popularity among Elementary School Boys and Girls." *Sociology of Education* 65.3 (1992): 169-187.

Barker, Gary and Ricardo, Christine. *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence.* Paper No. 26, 2005.

Baughan, Michael Gray. *Great Writers. Charles Bukowski.* Chelsea House Publications, 2004.

Bell, Vikki. "From Performativity to Ecology: On Judith Butler and Matters of Survival." *Subjectivity* (2008): 395-412.

Bird, Sharon R. "Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity." *Gender and Society* 10.2 (1996): 120-132.

Blackstone, Amy M. "Gender Roles and Society." *Human Ecology: An Encyclopedia of Children, Families, Communities, and Environments* (2003): 335-338.

Brewer, Gay. *Charles Bukowski.* London: Prentice Hall International, 1997.

Bukowski, Charles. *Factotum*. London: Virgin Books, 2009.

Bukowski, Charles. *Ham on Rye*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2015.

Bukowski, Charles. *Hollywood*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2019.

Bukowski, Charles. *Post Office*. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1980.

Bukowski, Charles. *South of no North*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003.

Bukowski, Charles. *Tales of Ordinary Madness*. London: Virgin Books, 1983.

Bukowski, Charles. *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hill.* Santa Bara: Black Sparrow Press, 1969.

Bukowski, Charles. *The Rooming House Madrigals: Early Selected Poems, 1946-1966.* Santa

Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1988.

Bukowski, Charles. *War All the Time*. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1984.

Bukowski, Charles. *Women*. London: Virgo Books, 2009.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*: *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Ed. Linda J. Nicholson. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988): 519-531.

Cain, Jimmy E., Jr. "Women: The Siren Calls of Boredom." *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* 5.3 (1985): 39-42.

Charlson, David. *Charles Bukowski: Autobiographer, Gender Critic, Iconoclast*. University of Kansas, 1995.

Clements, Paul. *Charles Bukowski, Outsider Literature, and the Beat Movement*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Connell, R.W. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics.* Stanford University Press, 1987.

Connell, R.W. *Masculinities.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005.

Connell, R.W. and Messerschmidt, James W. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society* 19.6 (2005): 829-859.

David, Deborah Sarah and Brannon, Robert. *The Forty-nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1976.

Debritto, Abel. *Charles Bukowski, King of the Underground: From Obscurity to Literary Icon.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Donaldson, Mike. "What is Hegemonic Masculinity?" *Theory and Society, Special Issue: Masculinities* 22.5 (1993): 643-657.

Farrell, Warren. *The Liberated Man*. New York: Random House, 1974.

Finley, Nancy J. "Skating femininity: Gender maneuvering in women's roller derby." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 39.4 (2010): 359-387.

Fulton, Len. "See Bukowski Run." *Small Press Review* 4.4 (1973): 27-31.

Harrison, Russell. *Against the American Dream. Essays on Charles Bukowski*. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1994.

Howson, Richard, *Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Huffzky, Karin. "Big Daddy Is Watching You." *Literatur Konkret* (1979): 22-23.

Karlsson, Linda. "'It was easy to write about whores, but to write about a good woman was much more difficult' – en queer läsning av Charles Bukowskis Women och Love is a dog from hell. " *BA Thesis*. Södertörn University, 2014.

Kaufman, Michael S. "The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence." *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by men on pleasure, power and change*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Kimmel, Michael S., "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity," in *Theorizing Masculinities*. Ed. H. Brod & Michael S. Kimmel. SAGE Publications, 1997: 119-141.

Kimmel, Michael S. *The Gendered Society* 14.6. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kimmel, Michael S. *The Gender of Desire: Essays on Male Sexuality*. New York: SUNY Press, 2005.

Kimmel, Michael S., and Aronson, Amy, eds. *Men and Masculinities: A Social, Cultural, and Historical Encyclopedia, Volume 1: A-J*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO press, 2004.

Korhonen, Jani. "The Portrayal of Women in the Novels of Charles Bukowski." BA Thesis. Luleå University of Technology, 2006.

Leinonen, Lauri. "'Magic and Terrible.' Female Characters and Characterization in Charles Bukowski's Post Office, Factotum and Women." MA Thesis. University of Tampere, 2014.

Levant, Ronald F., and Richmond, Katherine. "A Review of Research on Masculinity Ideologies Using the Male Role Norms Inventory." *The Journal of Men's Studies* 15.2 (2008): 130-146.

Locklin, Gerald. *Charles Bukowski: A Sure Bet*. Water Row Press, 1995.

Lorber, Judith. *Paradoxes of Gender*. Yale University Press, 1994.

Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. Rupert Hart-Davis, 1970.

Moore, Todd M. "Domains of Masculine Gender Role Stress and Intimate Partner Violence in a Clinical Sample of Violent Men." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 9.2 (2008): 82-89.

Plant, E. Ashby, and Shibley Hyde, Janet, and Keltner, Dach, and Devine, Patricia G. "The Gender Stereotyping of Emotions." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 24.1 (2000): 81-92.

Prentice, Deborah A., and Carranza, Erica. "What Women and Men Shold Be, Shouldn't be, are Allowed to be, and don't Have to Be: The Contents of Prescriptive Gender Stereotypes." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 26.4 (2002): 269-281.

Rabinowitz, Fredric and Englar-Carlson, Matt. *APA GUIDELINES: for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men*. American Psychology Association, 2018.

Rowbottom, Simon and Brown, Dorra, and Cachia, Pierre. "The Male Gender Role and Men's Psychological Distress: A Review." *Social Psychological Review* 14.1 (2012): 16-27.

Sabo, Don, and Gordon, David F. *Men's Health and Illness: Gender, Power, and the Body.* SAGE Publications, 1995.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Schippers, Mimi. "Recovering the Feminine Other: Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender

Hegemony." *Theory and Society* 36.1 (2007): 85-102.

Segal, Lynne. *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*. University of Virginia. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Shelley, Maria Tempenis. *Take it like a Man: a Study of Men's Emotional Culture. PhD* Dissertation.
Vanderbilt University, 2007.

Smith, Rachel M., and Parrot, Dominic J., and Swartout, Kevin M., and Tharp, Andra Teten. "Deconstructing Hegemonic Masculinity: The Roles of Antifemininity, Subordination to Women, and Sexual Dominance in Men's Perpetration of Sexual Aggression." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 16.2 (2015): 160-169.

Sounes, Howard. *Locked in the Arms of a Crazy Life*. New York: Grove Press, 2010.

Steenbeek, Gerdien. *Vrouwen op de drempel, Gender en moraliteit in een Mexicaanse provinciestad*. United States: Thela Publishers, 1995.

Tervo, Lida. "'Extreme sensitivity under a poker face': Varieties of Masculinity in Charles Bukowski's Short Stories." Bachelor Thesis. Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2019.

Thompson, Edward H., and Bennet, Kate Mary, "Measurement of Masculinity Ideologies: A (Critical) Review." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 16.2 (2015): 115-133.

Winans, A.D. *The Charles Bukowski/Second Coming Years*. Coventry: Beat Scene Press, 1996.