

The Labourer: Masculinity, Fantasy, Fetish and The Phallic

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BA FINE ART

2016

WORD COUNT 8480

PRE12356316

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The Labourer: Masculinity, Fantasy, Fetish and The Phallic

Working class: The social group consisting of people who are employed for wages, especially in manual or industrial work (Oxford English Dictionary)

This dissertation will centre on the idea of the labourer. I will use the labourer in the sense that it is a synonym for the individual working class man employed to do manual or industrial work. Through this exploration of the working class labourer I will discuss masculinity, industry, gender, fantasy and issues surrounding the phallic.

I will do this through investigating questions such as: What does the labourer represent and how is he made a stereotype of masculinity? Does the metrosexual man or the white collar worker feel secure with his sense of masculinity? It is important to note how the media and pop culture represent the labourer, and is it the way the labourer is portrayed which allows erotic fantasy of the labourer to develop?

The erotic fantasy of the labourer is prevalent amongst many women. With the rise of the Metrosexual man, termed in 1994, it resulted in a heightened desire for a rougher, tougher and more overtly masculine partner. This is not a new fantasy, as lusting for men characterised by Homo Faber is seen in novels such as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. However, it is particularly common in today's society to see this fantasy represented in: porn, pop culture, the media and erotic fiction. It can be suggested that this is a reaction to the prevalence of the metrosexual man.

With matters surrounding gender and sexuality currently taking the spotlight in the media, with emphasis on LGBTQ¹, it is important not to forget heterosexual men and the 'Crisis of Masculinity.' Stemming from the collapse of UK industry the 'Crisis of Masculinity' relates to increasingly open

¹ LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer

gender roles a sense of detachment from Homo Faber. Does Homo Faber still exist? Is the Labourer the last of the Homo Faber?

Amongst many women there is a desire for men to have Homo Faber characteristics whilst also wanting men to continue to take an active role in domestic responsibilities, such as raising children. Becoming more domesticated, but also desiring a masculine man. For men it may feel like contradictory expectations creating a potentially daunting task for men to understand their responsibilities and role. It can be especially challenging for working class men, where traditional gender roles are common place due to their close relationship to industry. With the decline of heavy industry, it can result in men feeling emasculated.

The *Being a Man* Festival at London's South Bank Centre is a three-day event full of discussions about what it is to be a man in the 21st century. Issues tackled ranged from how men should define masculinity to are men taking too much time over their appearance? Over the course of the event, nothing was said regarding heavy industry: what it is to be a working class man facing difficult decisions because of the decline of heavy industry? The panel discussions were invariably middle class, cosmopolitan men discussing their middle class, cosmopolitan outlook on lifestyle and masculinity. The fact that it was in London clearly shifted the content of the event away from areas of previous heavy industry. The context of the location of the festival altered what elements of masculinity and what it is to be a man were addressed. The concerns and queries were predominantly based around the creative or the white collar worker. What issues would the event raise if it was located in Stoke-on-Trent, for example, where the decline of industry has affected lots of young working class men and made them either question their role as man or their masculinity. Not through choice at a nice event, but through the *real event* of their industry being in severe decline and not being able to take pride in 'following in their father's footsteps.'

Though outlining these issues in the first section I hope to be able to use it as a tool to understand whether it is our detachment from industry which has lead women to fantasise over the

idea of the labourer. This research will look into how the media and pop culture bring issues of masculinity, gender and class to the forefront. An example being Miley Cyrus using the labourer as a vehicle to project her concerns around gender in her music video, *Wrecking Ball*. Cyrus's sexualised image of the labourer raises issues surrounding gender, masculinity and fantasy whilst also provoking queries around the idea of the phallic woman. Another pop culture reference I will look at is Coca Cola's Diet Coke advert which shows women lusting over a muscular labourer. Is it due to our detachment from industry that pop culture is able to sexualise the labourer or have women always desired Homo Faber?

Masculinity

Homo Faber is Latin for man the maker. Men have often subscribed to the role of fabricator and using their hands practically to build, fix and work. Hannah Arendt says that ‘Man working and fabricating and building a world inhabited by himself would still be a fabricator, though not Homo Faber: he would have lost his specifically human quality’ (Arendt, 1958, p.22) thus Homo Faber must extend past purely fabrication and the action of fabricating to serve for others than just himself. This suggests building to provide shelter for a dependent, hunting for food and protecting his family are then assumed duties of the Homo Faber. These are key factors in our perception of masculinity; power, practicality and protectiveness. Technology has diluted the potency of each action, for example protection now comes in the form insurance policy rather than physical defence. A labourer can still be said to have a connection to the term Homo Faber in its original sense as he is still man the maker, whereas the white collar worker can be said to be detached from the idea of Homo Faber due to his increased detachment from making, fabricating and labouring.

Although men are not *expected* to be associated with Homo Faber in current British society, there does appear to be a growing trend for western men to feel dissatisfied with their white collar, middle class lifestyles and desire to work more practically in part returning to the idea Homo Faber. Crawford’s book suggests that the reason ‘segments of the student body at community colleges [are] people who already have a four-year degree and return to get a marketable trade skill’ (Crawford, 2010, p.12) they are doing so do to their dissatisfaction of white collar jobs as well as the economic fact that ‘98 percent of those who graduate get jobs in their first year after finishing’ (p.12). Crawford speaks of his personal journey from completing a physics degree but unable to find work he becomes an electrician, ‘I felt pride in meeting the aesthetic demands of a workmanlike installation’(p.14). This sense of pride and satisfaction gained from doing a manual, physical job can be a factor in confirming

a man's sense of masculinity. With the current confusion and options surrounding the role of the male, it is suggested that it can be as simple as returning to the role of the labourer or which can provide clarity for young men who are unsure of their role or sense of masculinity.

The idea of Homo Faber and the *modern man* is now something that is discussed openly. Southbank Centre, London, annually hosts the 'Being a Man Festival', an event dedicated to discussing issues surrounding men today including expectations of man and masculinity and how men cope with it. Rick Edwards hosted a discussion around men's fashion. The panel included: Terry Betts, Ekow Eshun, Adnan Ansari and Harris Elliott. These men's occupations range from writers, to the previous director of Selfridges. The idea of the suit is interesting as it is an item which unifies labouring class and middleclass professions: the boiler suit and the office suit.



Fig1: Balmain

Through uniforms we make a lot of assumptions about a person. Boiler suits were traditionally the attire of the labourer, as they are practical with many pockets whilst protecting your other clothes from dirt whilst building and making. However, the designer for the SS14 Balmain collection, created a boiler suit, but not made with Homo Faber in mind. Being made of fine fabrics it is clearly not intended to be worn on a building site, but aimed at the fashionable metrosexual man. This fully demonstrates how the traditional ideas of man and masculinity are being reinvented and the ideas of the roles men play in society are becoming even more free. Whilst this is a good thing for many, the flux of what it means to be male can be a difficult thing to partake in. Many people still recognise the traditional characteristics of men to be power and strength, but it is not necessary to conform to that stereotype anymore. Men have choice in their behaviour, responsibilities and image. There is no longer prescribed criteria for a man to possess physical and mental strength. This openness and freedom is helped by social media as, lifestyle, occupations and attitudes are available for all to see. This freedom and opportunity can come with its own set of problems as young men struggle to work out their own idea of masculinity.

‘Males have never had to deal with image issues before it’s always been a women’s problem. We never had to worry about whether our hair is right or our make-up is right. All of a sudden social media comes and people aren’t getting a true representation... everyone else looks good, and I look crap... males have got pressure... body image issues, and we don’t know how to cope with it. Searching for an identity and they look for that through body image- I want to be male, I want to be more male, I need muscles.’ (Anon, *Dying for a 6 Pack*, 40:26)

Reggie Yates’ documentary *Dying for a 6 Pack* comments on the extremes men are taking with their bodies, obsessing over the ultimate goal of a six pack. These men put themselves under incredible levels of pressure stemming from their vanity in the hope of feeling more masculine. Influenced by the media, the gym goes beyond a healthy work out and exercise to unhealthy levels. With this toxic level of desire to appear masculine and toned, the stress on their bodies and the using of steroids can cause death from heart attacks and strokes. Using steroids increases their testosterone levels, making

these men feel more masculine and powerful whilst helping build muscle. This extreme dedication to achieving the perfect body has resulted in many struggling with body dysmorphia, something more commonly associated to women. This is because they have already achieved a muscular physique yet feel the need to take it to extreme levels. These men are coping with an identity crisis, unable to stop until they reach the body they feel society expects them to have. These men are searching for control and find it through planning their diet, (with social media trends such as #eatclean), exercise and their appearance, enabling them to feel in control, powerful and directed, which are the traditional signifiers of masculinity. It is only in the past few decades that men have chosen to use their appearance to prove their masculinity rather than their job or providing for and protecting this family. It was an attitude and display of practical ability rather than purely an aesthetic one. Interestingly the heterosexual men striving for their six pack are not only putting their bodies through this to appear more attractive to women, but also to gain respect and attention from other male gym goers. Kyle explains ‘the attention I want is from these lads here and I’m happy... I want praise’ (31:03, Dying for a 6 Pack). These men are competitive over who has the best body: competitiveness being a trait of masculinity. This competition is further fueled by social media with Instagram and Twitter hashtags such as: #eatclean #hardwork #sixpackabs #gohardorgohome.² The men’s determination in the gym becomes motivated by social media and their attitude about image becomes more extreme due to it being so readily available.

This new genre of metrosexual, is termed the ‘Spornosexuals’ (Simpson, 2014). Interestingly ‘When [Kyles] not on the building site, women pay Kyle to take off his clothes, of course his body matters’ (29:25, Dying for a 6 Pack). As a labourer he would be considered a conventional example of a masculine man, yet working as a stripper in the evenings creates an unconventional juxtaposition of occupations. Stripping is something not necessarily associated with the rough, tough stereotype of the labourer, distanced further due to Kyles motive to exhibit his body to other men. This desire for men

² Examples of Twitter and Instagram Hashtags, (#), used to show ‘trending’ topics

to appreciate his body could be seen by the other men in his industry as a homosexual thing to do, as it is thought of as a predominantly heterosexual industry due to, 'their (labourers) masculinity was tied up with body-bound notions of hetero-sexuality' (Theil, 2012, p106). The film *The Full Monty* (Cattaneo, 1997) follows redundant labourers become strippers to earn money following the collapse of the steel industry. Because their motive is to provide money for their dependents rather than Kyle's need to seek appreciation, they can still be viewed as the masculine Homo Faber despite doing something not typically associated with Homo Faber. Kyle being a labourer, now provides an interesting hybrid of the Metrosexual and the Homo Faber, as he is able to build and fabricate, but is obsessed with his appearance, only stripping to have his body valued by others.

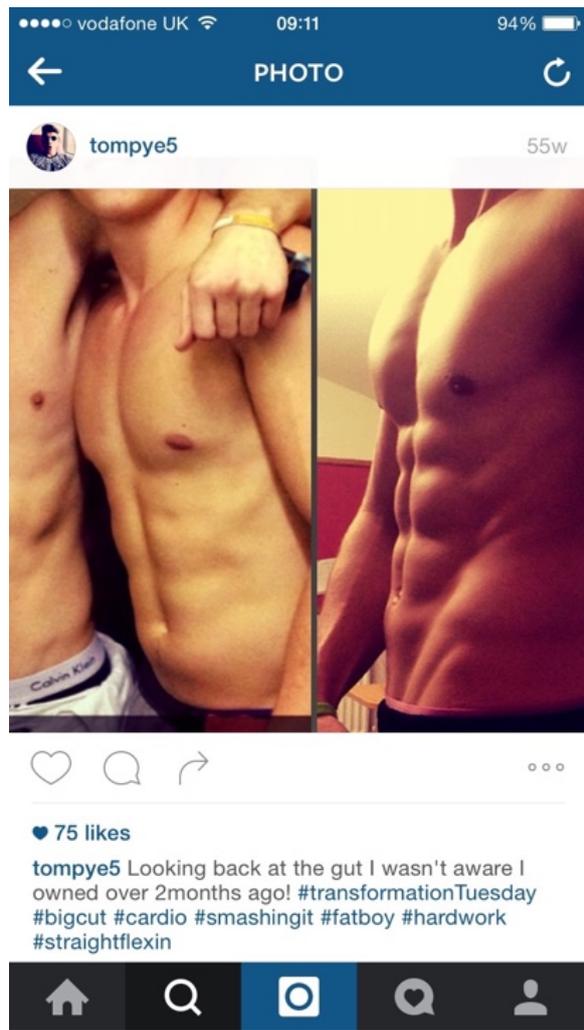


Fig 2: A) Pye, T. 2014, Instagram
B) Pye, T. 2014, Instagram

Previous to the ‘spornosexuals’ there was the more common term Metrosexual, coined by Mark Simpson in 1994,

‘The typical metrosexual is a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis — because that’s where all the best shops, clubs, gyms and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference’ (Simpson, 2002).

Patrick Bateman from the film *American Psycho* (Harron, 2000) is a good example of the metrosexual man: working in an office, wearing expensive suits and taking care of his appearance. He is obsessed with his image and grooming ritual, previously something only women or homosexuals would be assumed to partake in. Bateman demonstrates the struggles of looking good, earning a high salary and feeling constantly in competition with his colleagues. He is completely detached from reality through his desire to look the best, earn the most and he is ‘his own love object’, which is a signifier of the metrosexual according to Simpson. Of course Bateman’s character demonstrates the pressures that can be felt by being a man in the twenty first century. The pressure of trying to be a certain type of man engulfs him. It is pressure from other men and society that can make it difficult for men to feel comfortable with themselves and their own concept of masculinity. The metrosexual man quickly spread across the country and was no longer just for ‘sissys’³ working in the City.

With its ties to heavy industry, the North of England was traditionally thought of as the heart of masculine culture. With mining and the steel industry being huge sources of employment men were thought of as tough and predominantly the working laboring class. However, today the North of England is home to the Spornosexual. *Geordie Shore* is a program that broadcasts the partying lifestyles of a group of Newcastle’s finest examples of spornosexual men. Image, sexuality and virility are the key themes of the show emphasized by the men’s well-built bodies. They are very much

³ Sissy: a boy who other boys dislike and laugh at because they think he is weak or interested in activities girls usually like. (Cambridge Dictionaries)

considered working class and have made their careers and money through being the ultimate spornosexuals. These men are considered by many as having the perfect body. Gaz in particular, who has released his own range of supplements aimed at the men watching the show, aspiring to look like him. He explains that despite the party lifestyle portrayed on the program he still 'got up every morning, downed a protein shake and hit the gym' [Gaz, cited by Harris, 2014]. His dedication to his muscular body is not just for his personal goals, but because his entire income and celebrity status relies on him looking a particular way. In the context of Newcastle and its previously heavy industry, it is interesting how rapidly this image obsession has become in just one generation. The parents of spornosexual men view the way young men pamper and preen themselves as something homosexual men would be interested in: 'Everything I do me mam says that's gay, are you sure you're not gay' (Anonymous, 2:34, Wotherspoon).



Fig 3: Gaz and the 'Dream Boys', The Mirror, 2015

Stoke-on-Trent was previously an area of heavy industry, famous for its potteries, however,

'When those industries collapsed there was nothing for a young man to do. Its demoralising knowing that when you finish school there's no industry to go towards. It affects a lot of young men. Cage fighting fills the void' (Stoked up in Stoke, 2015, 0:55).

For many young men in Stoke-on-Trent it was always expected that they would follow in their fathers and grand-father's footsteps and go and work as labourers in heavy industry. Without having this structure to follow these young men lack direction and motivation. The cage fighting gym offers the men the same idea of control and increased feeling of masculinity as the spornosexual gym goes in *Dying for a Six Pack*. For these cage fighters, working out offers more than vanity and control, it provides them with a patriarchal environment. This patriarchy provides a system of respect amongst the men and fills the void that the male industrial environment would have given them. An environment

which they cannot be part of anymore and feel they are lacking. Cage fighting has given some members the ‘drive to succeed’ (Stoked Up in Stoke, 1:54). One fighter followed a path of drugs and alcohol due to his disillusionment at the fact that he couldn’t find a job in industry like his father had before him. Shame, stress and frustration are key reasons why these men joined the the cage fighter gym. Shame from not working in industry is a popular emotion of the men interviewed in Stoke on Trent, many had hoped to feel the same sense of pride in working in industry as their fathers had felt. Feeling like they can not live up to their own and their family’s expectations is a difficult thing for these young men to contend with as it is not their fault that they cannot be part of the industry. This must be testing on their own opinion of their own success and masculinity.

Kellingley Colliery in West Yorkshire, was the last deep coal mine in Britain to be shut down and has left men feeling disillusioned, ‘Mining is a tough, manual job that comes with a sense of pride...if your used to making things, if you’re a manual worker and used to providing for your family that way, it’s not good when it ends’ (Hunt cited by Wallop, 2015). Pride in the industry and the pride of being able to support their families is a huge element of their sense of masculinity. When industry comes to an end it is clear that it can be very difficult to adjust to working elsewhere. ‘When I got on the apprenticeship I thought that was pretty much a job for life...the conditions aren’t great...but...I can’t think of anywhere that has the same level of camaraderie’ (Robertson, cited by Wallop, 2015). For the young men in Stoke and the men at Kellingley Colliery, their situation is comparable to Ruskin’s notes of men post industrial revolution. Ruskin states that ‘in freeing man from physical labour, it deprived him of the pride in muscular prowess which had made his work acceptable simply because it was demanding or dangerous’ (Ruskin cited by Anthony, 1984, p.154). Ruskin understands that is it the level of bravery and masculinity required with these jobs that allow these men to be satisfied. Through working in tough conditions it declares their position as Homo Faber, thus working in industry was considered by Ruskin as ‘refreshing, wholesome and necessary’ (p.154).

‘The belief evident in both heterosexual and homosexual upper-class ...culture, that the working class woman or man [is] somehow more spontaneous, closer to nature than other people’ (Weeks, 1996, p.376). Oliver Mellors in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (Lawrence, 1928) would comply with Weeks assessment that the working class man is closer to nature. He is a game keeper and lives in a lodge in the depths of the woodland, exaggerating his closeness to nature. Mellors is the ultimate Homo Faber, he is a working man, practical, strong and almost animalistic in his basic lodgings in the wood, akin to a fox’s den. His relationship to the woodland and his Homo Faber status allows the reader to understand his and Connie’s affair as natural and instinctive. Clifford, Connie’s husband, is upper class and fully detached from the concept of Homo Faber. He lacks spontaneity and is unable to demonstrate his emotions; his wheelchair acting as a metaphor for his inability to be emotionally, physically or sexually available to Connie. This idea that laboring working class people are more in tune with nature and their bodies is continued with Dennis’ opinion that ‘Labouring people are more body orientated than mind orientated’ (Dennis, 2009, p.98). Labouring on a daily basis would make one think a labourer was more aware of their body. How one’s body feels, acts and responds are made more apparent after a hard days labour due to the aches and pains incurred. Kyle from *Dying for a 6 Pack*, is a labourer and would be classified as fully body orientated. His whole perspective and lifestyle revolve around his body, how people view his body and how he views other people’s bodies. As a labourer, when he is not in the gym, he is working manually for his occupation. Having a strong physique must make manual work easier for Kyle. This is used to authenticate the masculinity behind his gym body as he can apply his muscular frame to a masculine profession, justifying his vanity.

Labourers tend to have a lower level of education due to not needing high qualifications to do the work. This adds to Dennis’ understanding that the labourer is less mind orientated than the upper classes who traditionally value education to a higher extent. Being ‘mind orientated’ could interfere with one’s ability to be spontaneous due to over analysis of the scenario through having the higher level of education, or due to the upper class want to maintain a ‘stiff upper lip’ affecting the ability to

be spontaneous. This is comparable to Giddens stating that ‘awareness of the body is basic to ‘grasping the fullness of the moment’’ (Giddens, 1991, p.77), with ‘mind-orientated’ men then assumed to not act in the moment. Although Giddens does not speak of class, Giddens relates ones ‘awareness of the body’ to ideas of impulsiveness, something Weeks suggests as working class. Kyle is working class yet unable to act impulsively due to his regime of working out daily and the need to ‘eat about five or six meals a day’ (8:10, *Dying for a 6 Pack*). Kyle being metrosexual hinders his ability to be what Dennis assumes the labourer to be. Dennis’s theory could only apply to the Homo Faber labourer.

Mellors in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* is working class and can be said to be ‘spontaneous’, ‘closer to nature’ and able to act on the ‘fullness of the moment’ because he is Homo Faber. Although Connie in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* is upper class, she is not mind orientated but body orientated, as she is the one who seeks the sexual relationship with Mellors. The game keeper is able to reciprocate these feelings and be the man Connie wants because of his affinity to nature and working class status; allowing him to be the passionate lover she desires.

Fantasy, Fetish and The Phallic

Freud states that the phallic stage usually lasts until a child is about 6 years old. The young boy's phallic stage is termed the Oedipus Complex, where he realizes he is supposedly attracted to his mother, thus jealous of his father, wanting to remove him from the situation and take position with the Mother. In this stage the boy may have seen his parents having sex and may interpret this as a violent act, thus increasing his disdain for his father whilst also seeing that the mother has no penis; the boy assumes the father has castrated the mother. The young boy is now afraid that he could also be at risk of castration as it is the only possible solution he can think of to explain why his mother has no penis. His fear of castration is increased by the anxiety that his father might find out his desire for his mother. Castration theory is symbolic of the feeling of lack of control and wanting to dominate a partner to reduce the risk of this occurrence by being the more powerful partner. With traits of masculinity including power and dominance it can be seen that the desire to appear masculine is also a desire to over-ride and suppress castration anxiety.

According to Freud 'the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mothers) penis that the little boy once believed in' (Freud, 1927, p.352). The fetish object relates to the moment when the little boy find his mother has no penis, for example the foot or shoe fetish stems from the time the 'boy peered at the woman's genitals from below, from her legs up' (Freud, p.354). This moment is replicated in *Sex With Horny Builder* (eporner, 2014) where the laborer lies down to look at the pipes, as she step closer he peers up her skirt, seeing her bright red stiletto heels in the process. The director is clearly aware of this as a common fetish and makes a concerted effort to incorporate the shot [see fig4]. The trauma incurred in the *realization* is manifested in the shoe or the foot as the substitute of the Mother's penis, so this soothes the boys fear of the same thing happening to his penis. Fetish objects do not have to always relate to the phallus formally, such as pipes or high heels, despite being substitutes for the mothers lacking penis as 'the phallus symbolizes the penis to the extent that it differentiates itself from

the penis' (Butler, 1993, p.84). Construction tools can be fetishized because of their direct visual relation to the phallus, yet for an object to become fetishized it does not have to look like a penis despite being symbolic of it. For example, Freud's explanation of fur fetish. He says fur is fetishized as it is synonymous with the Mother's pubic hair. It is symbolic of the penis thus in a sense phallic, because the man identifies with it as the point where he realizes his mother does not have a penis. It becomes the penis substitute, thus fetishized allowing the fur to be symbolic of phallic despite not looking penis like in form.

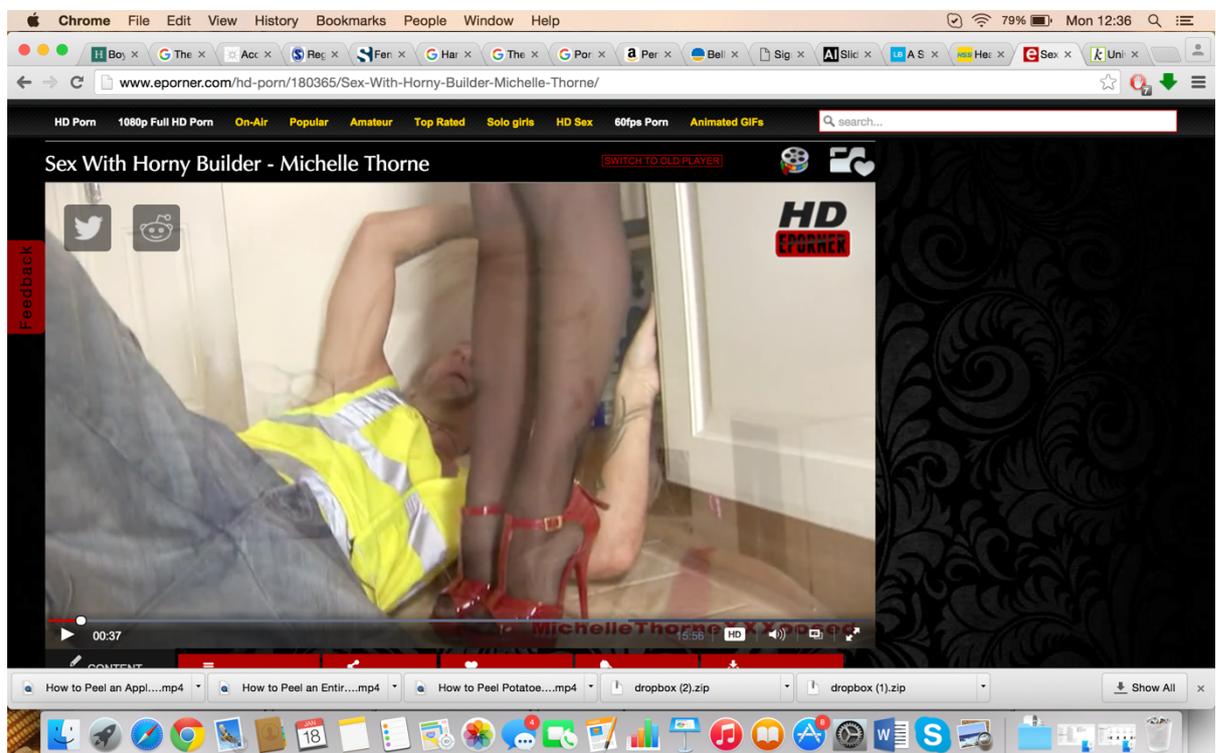


Fig 4: Eporner, Sex with Horny Builder, 2014

The fantasy of the construction site and the labourer is popular with heterosexuals and homosexuals. Porn sites host a huge range of pornography based on the fantasy of the labourer. The fantasy of the labourer for women could be based on Jung's term the Electra complex. The young girl sees her father as being strong and powerful: a *masculine* man. These characteristics are then deployed onto the labourer as he is linked to Homo Faber thus maintaining traditional ideals of masculinity. Usually the fantasy of the labourer tends to not develop into fetish as it is the circumstance or situation

which is regarded erotic rather than a specific object or body part. The fetishist might be drawn to the idea of the labourer and construction site environment as a whole, if they were termed Mysophilia (Chenney, 2004, p.118) in which the fetish is of dirty or unsanitary places or objects: a construction site being a locale of dirt and mud. Another fetish relevant to the labourer would be the informal term Salophilia, *sal* being latin for salt, it is a fetish for salty things, predominantly body sweat and semen (Griffiths, 2013). The labourers manual activity producing sweat allowing for him to be fetishized by the Salophile. This is where the fantasy and fetish of the labourer might coincide. These examples of fetish create desire towards the labourer due to the context of his occupation. Fetish has various levels ranging from one to four, four being that the object/body part which is fetishized takes precedence over the actual act of sex. Their fetish for the object surpasses the want for sex, and they are totally satisfied by the fetish (Steele, 1997, p.11) The fantasy on the other hand, is more the eroticization of a realistic idea or imaginary scenario. The woman fantasizes over the laborer having a muscular body able to satisfy and protect her, rather than the reality of ‘the image of the bottom-baring, overweight builder’ (Cooper Citing Ellison, 2013): enhancing the reality of the labourers physique for erotic purposes.

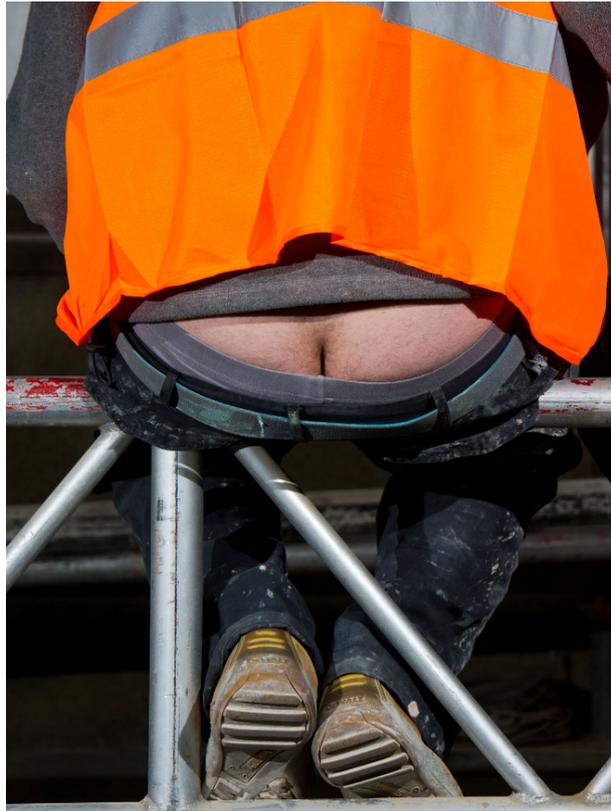


Fig 5: Rex Features, 2013, Independent

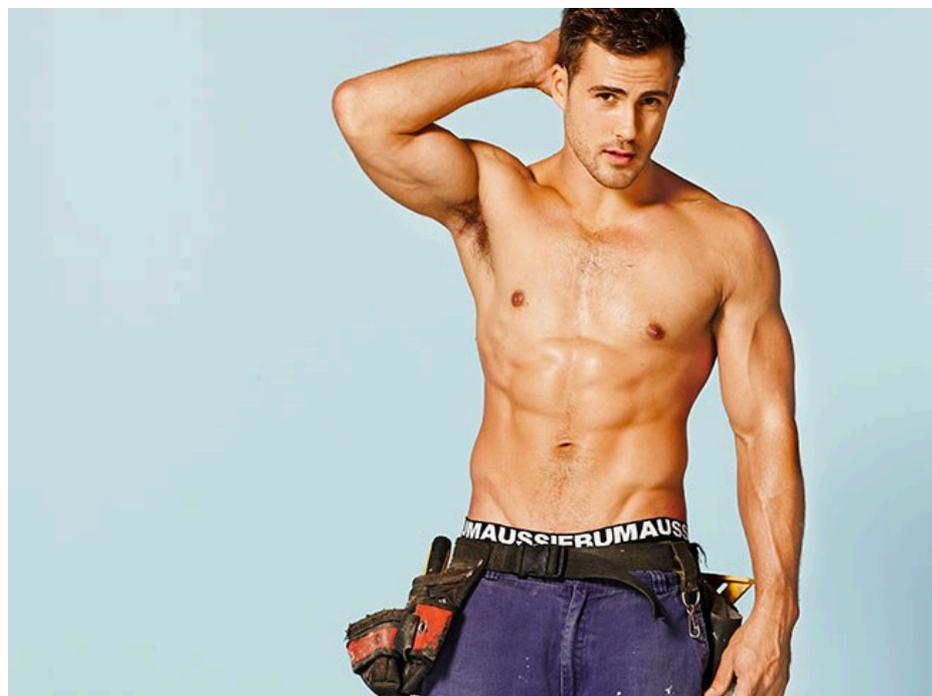


Fig 6: Cosmopolitan, 2013

Coca Cola cottoned onto the fantasy of the labourer in 1994. They released an advert for Diet Coke showing women purposefully coinciding their break with the labourers break in order to look at his body while he enjoys his beverage. The advert's use of voyeurism enhances the idea of the fantasy. The women appear middle class in their appearance and they are working white collar jobs. The sense of voyeurism from the office block exaggerates their higher class, insinuating they are looking down on him socially, through looking down physically. Despite this, they lust over him as he exhibits his muscular physique, his body emphasising his connection to Homo Faber. Coca Cola appears to be addressing the rise of the metro-sexual man, as the advert was released within a year of the term metro sexual being devised. It appears to comment that although men are taking more care of their appearance and beginning to question the concept of masculinity, they are not necessarily fulfilling these women, despite men taking more of an active role in bringing up children for example. Coca Cola echo's the desire many women have towards the more rugged look of the labourer. The advert has been made multiple times over the past three decades, always showing women lusting over labouring men. The 2013 version demonstrates that despite the metrosexual man becoming the norm, compared to 1994, by 2013 the fantasy of Homo Faber was still present, with the Daily Star reporting that 'More than a third of women aged 19 to 79 agree[ing] that men in hard hats got them hot under the collar' (Haworth, 2015). This can be said to be due to 'the popular valorisation of physical strength as a fundamental aspect of virility' (Bourdieu, cited by Thiel, p110) with the labourer the idea of virility is exaggerated due to Homo Faber, as the physical strength has been achieved through hard manual labour in order to provide for his family, this is in contrast to the metro-sexual who's muscular body is formed through going to the gym, assuming vanity.



Fig7: A) Diet Coke Break



Fig7: B) Diet Coke Break

Erotic fantasy writing for women, (by women), is readily accessible on blogs with many of the stories revolving around the fantasy of the labourer. ‘The demands of hard physical work were noticeable, he had a gruff look, his big hands were calloused and rough’ (NatalieH, 2012). With the description of the labourers calloused hands it emphasises the fantasy of Homo Faber, as it is a result of working with his hands to make and fabricate in order to provide for his partner and children. The calloused hands are symbolic of the labourer’s dedication to work hard manually and to assume his role as sole provider. Imagining a strong, hardworking man allows the reader to imagine the labourer as brave, protective and masculine. Historically speaking, these would be qualities a female would look for in a suitable partner as it suggests the best chance of her children surviving, today in western culture these attributes in a male partner are unnecessary but there maintains the desire for these characteristics. These factors subscribe to aspects of the Electra Complex with the father figure providing for and protecting the mother and daughter.

The fantasy of the labourer is based on submission and dominance, which is the basis of porn and most fantasy. In porn involving the labourer, the plot is usually that a woman is in need of ‘DIY’ assistance. This immediately makes the woman appear vulnerable and allows the male to dominate, thus exaggerating his sense of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 1987, p.185). Being able to fix practical problems using his hands secures his identity as Homo Faber thus also maintaining his masculinity. A man working in a white-collar job might watch this genre of porn as a way to connect with Homo Faber, using the fantasy of the labourer as a substitution for his own lacking Homo Faber characteristics, despite the labourer never actually completing the contracted job. The porn star, representing Homo Faber, dressed as labourer, is shown to be able to satisfy the woman’s sexual desires.

Of course this is because he is a porn star, however by portraying him as a labourer it reinforces Dennis’s suggestion that the working class are more body orientated, confirming to the viewer that the labourer’s Homo Faber status also makes him a better lover, which in turn could reinforce the non-

Homo Faber's insecurities of his own virility. Furthermore, the fact that the woman is having sex with the labourer while her husband is at work, suggests that the white collar working husband, is unable to satisfy her sexual or emotional needs, allowing her fantasy to develop. The woman in *Plumber Cheating Wife* (Porn Hub, 2014) makes continuous references to how dissatisfied she is with her husband, belittling his dominance by calling him the 'The supposed man of the house' and emphasising the labourer's physique, 'Its nice to see a boy who takes care of himself, my husband is corporate, so he's gone podgy' (14:17). The woman's character parodies Connie's character in *Lady Chatterley* in their shared dissatisfaction with their non-Homo-Faber husbands; their desire has driven them to affair's with working class men. The way in which *Plumber Cheating Wife* is filmed in the style of a spy cam, showing the husband setting it up in his white collared shirt before leaving for work with the suspicion his wife is being unfaithful. This exaggerates the woman's desire of the fantasy of the labourer as it shows it as a pre-conceived idea to seduce the plumber rather than it being a spontaneous act. Of course, it is fictional, but producing it in a way that appears more true to life than highly produced porn, makes the fantasy appear more real, increasing its feasibility, thus increasing its erotic charge.



Fig8: Porn Hub, Plumber Cheating Wife, 2014

Weeks and Dennis both comment on their assumptions that the working class are closer to nature and more body orientated and Bataille offers his commentary on the Kinsey Report, which suggests through data collected from men that the labouring class do have a higher sex drive or a better sex life. Research showing that labouring men are reaching a higher frequency of orgasms per week than men working in white collar professions, 'The more humanised men are, the more their exuberance is diminished. Here are the details: the high frequency rate occurs with 15.4% of labourers...8.9% of upper white collar workers' (Bataille, 1986, p.159). Bataille's point being that men become more humanised with white collar work and reduce their proximity to nature by working in these professions. The Kinsey Report says that a high rate of orgasms for a man would be seven per week, 'but the normal rate for anthropoids is classed as high rate...once a day' (p.156, Bataille). Thus,

Bataille suggests that with labourers holding a higher percentage of the male population reaching high frequency, it shows a closeness to nature that non labourers do not possess. Therefore, the association that labourers are more aware of their bodies needs and desires leads further into the understanding that many women fantasise over the labourer and why the phrases such as ‘labourers are better with their hands’ not only insinuate their proximity to Homo Faber but their sexual expertise.

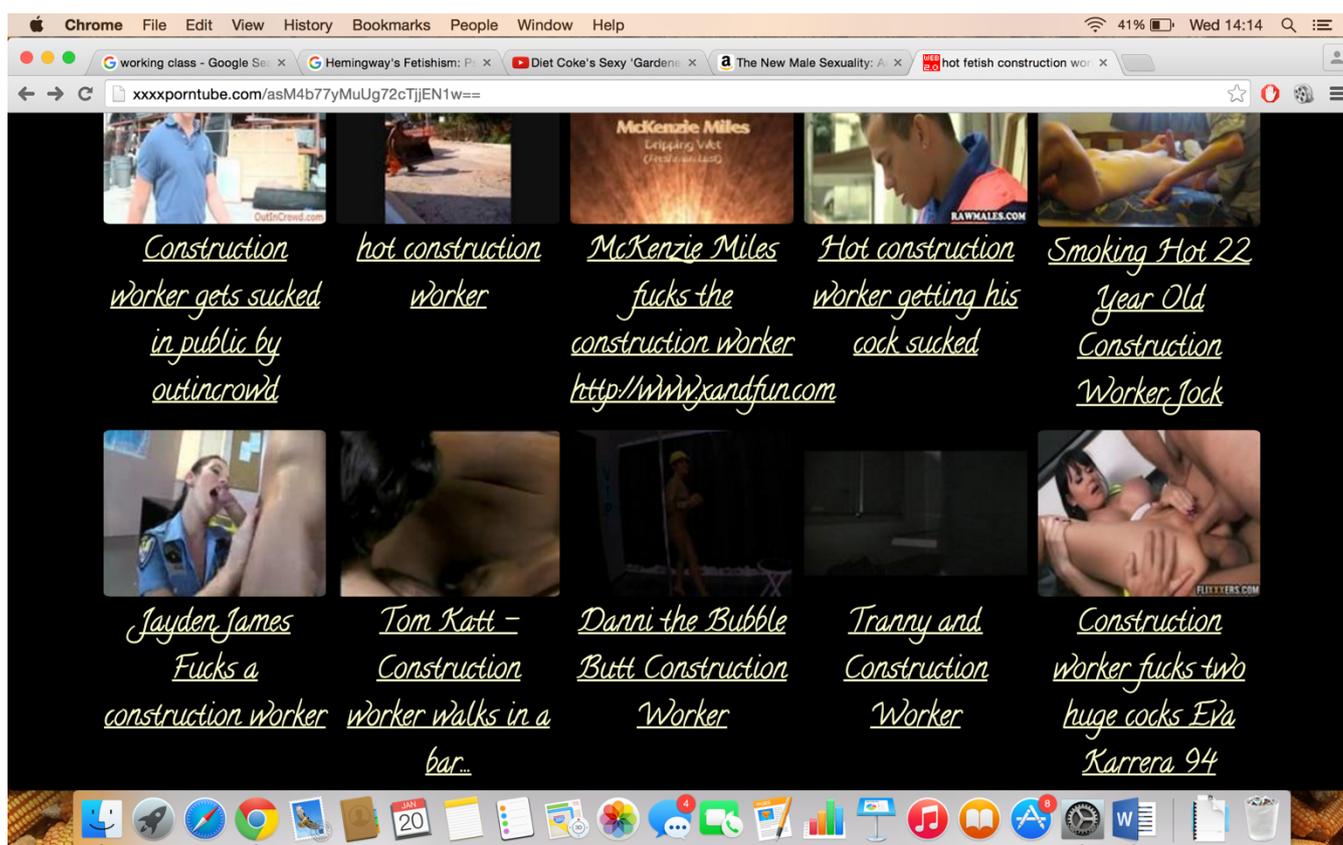


Fig 9: xxxporntube.com, Screen Cast, 2016

The laboring man is frequently in direct contact with phallic objects. If we take Freud’s thoughts on castration anxiety and phallic substitution around the idea of fetish, could it be suggested that the labourer becomes a labourer due to his castration anxiety? This idea cannot be backed up because the labourer would have to be consciously aware of his fetishist intent for the construction equipment for this to be the case thus it cannot be generalized to all labourers. Furthermore, the labourer is not in

control, the labourer is not in the dominant position because he is essentially unskilled, thus working manually. The labourer is at the end of a long line of authority figures in white collar positions. He uses these phallic objects because he is required to and directed to, rather than wanting to. This reduces his sense of control, and his lacking in control means the labourer does not look at these phallic objects as fetishistic thus this is not representational of using the phallic tools because of castration anxiety. Context also affects this, as realistically, labouring men end up in construction careers due to their environment. Working class family expectations of 'masculine pride... [taking] precedence over...formal education examinations and middle-class achievement status' (Theil, p.120). The laboring man is seen as masculine and apparently at ease with his sense of masculinity, thus perhaps he is not immediately concerned with the issues surrounding castration anxiety, as by fulfilling his idea of masculinity, he would feel in a position of dominance, thus risk to the laboring mans penis is reduced. Theil describes what could be understood as extra defense mechanisms to maintain a strong sense of masculinity to continually suppress castration anxiety by embracing the stereotype of the labourer:

'I was struck by how their demeanour was specifically masculine. This masculine posturing performed through tough stances and facial gestures, loud, deep voices, constant profanities...confrontational and aggressive' (Theil, 2012, p107)

'The phallus girl is... not only a penis but also a child' (Fenichel, 1955, p.18). Cyrus's frame is reminiscent of a pre-pubescent girl. In *Wrecking Ball*, Cyrus is seen crying and her tantrum like behavior also links her to a child, this means Cyrus is more closely relatable to the phallus girl rather than the phallic woman. 'Men fall in love with little girls in whom they see themselves embodied, and to whom they give what their mothers denied them' (p.10) again demonstrating the male narcissism and ego in reference to the penis and phallus, as through loving the phallus girl, she is representative of the penis. By loving the phallus girl, they are able to be closer to the position of the father through the protective role required by the phallus girl. The man thinks his dominance protects him from risk of castration, as the phallus girl is a non-threatening person due to her age, thus he is protecting his

penis. Despite being small, the phallus girl is still phallic, and so she holds the control and dominance associated with the phallic woman. 'Her smallness, her outward weakness which stands in such contrast to her ...strength and all the characteristics which...share with the...phallic' (p.9) could negate the Freudian rescue fantasy because although she appears to need rescuing due to her apparent vulnerability and youth, she does not, because she is phallic. This can be likened to Cyrus in the way her acts of vulnerability in the video are counteracted by us seeing that Cyrus is in control, and she maintains a mocking, but all knowing gaze. It is as though she understands her power and influence and would embrace the idea of embodying the phallus girl.

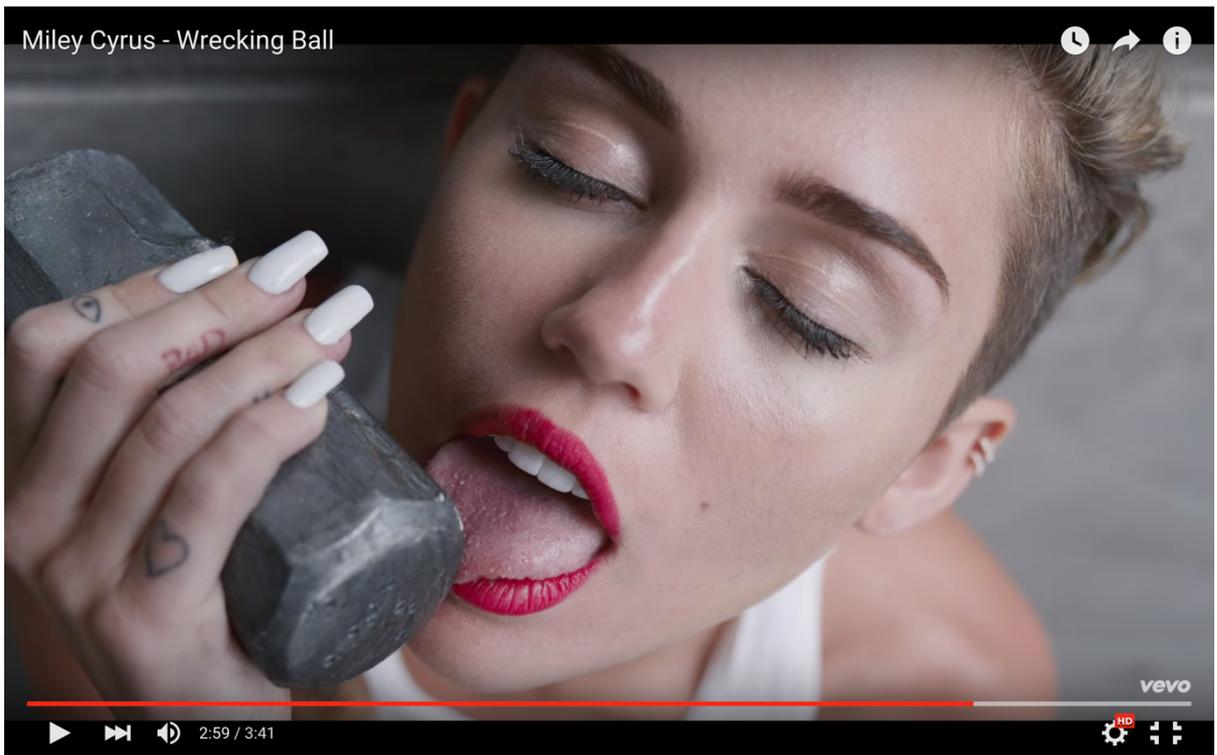


Fig 10: A) Miley Cyrus, Wrecking Ball, 2013

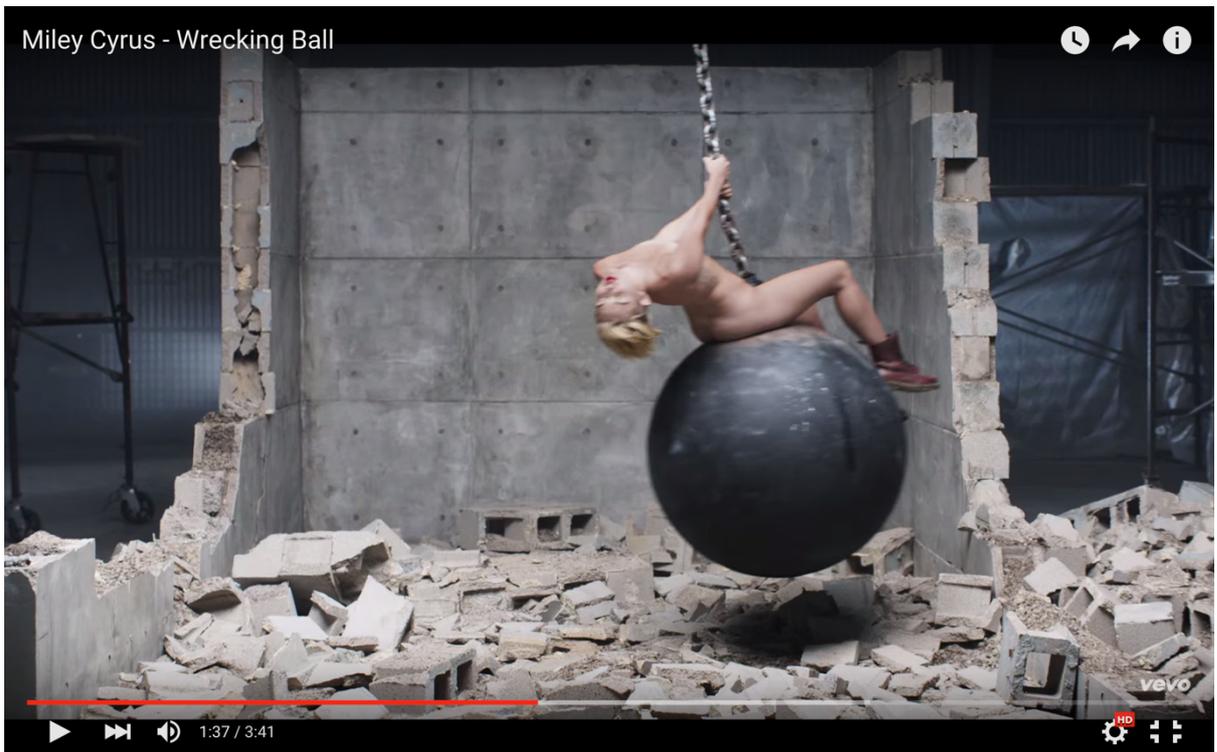


Fig 10: B): Miley Cyrus, Wrecking Ball, 2013

Allegorically speaking Cyrus can be said to be fellating the sledge hammer in the video. First it is suggesting sexual desire for the male viewer as she licks the hammer and looks into the camera lens. However, Miley Cyrus could be said to be using the tool to *mock* the male gaze. The man imagines she is licking his penis when she licks the tool. Likewise, when she wraps her legs around the chain on the wrecking ball, this is comparable to the penis being between her legs during copulation. However, the sledge hammer and metal wrecking ball chain are phallic and never become flaccid, thus emasculating the male viewer. His misinterpretation that her desire is for his penis attacks his sense of virility and masculinity as her desire is for the phallic object, and not his only sometimes erect penis, further increasing Cyrus' power.

This attack on his sense of masculinity is exaggerated by the tools chosen. The sledge hammer is phallic, manual and designed to be used by the singular person, creating a connection to male masturbation. The weight of the tool suggests the user requires strength and power in order to operate it, using it proficiently entailing an exhibitionism of masculinity. Cyrus on the other hand is a petite woman who is using the sledge hammer to smash down a wall. Cyrus undermines the man's ideal that labouring men using sledge hammers are strong and powerful as she is a weak woman using it proficiently. This undermines the idea that only masculine men can use the tool competently. Cyrus's act of using the phallic tool aggressively, after licking it, again puts her in the position of dominance which reminds the male viewer of castration anxiety, as it is insinuated that the male viewer's penis is under threat by this emotionally volatile woman. Cyrus's act of licking the hammer shows her sexual desire, and in doing so she allows the hammer to also embody fetishistic desire as it is an obvious substitute for the penis.

Interestingly the video is directed by Terry Richardson, a photographer and director renowned for his misogynistic attitude. Does Richardson's chosen creative direction of Cyrus's *Wrecking Ball* video go some way in demonstrating his own personal issues of Freud's castration anxiety? Richardson's approach is to make the women 'appear underage, abused, look like heroin

addicts' (Adams citing Rasmussen, 2013). Doing this secures his dominance over the women, as by making them feel and look vulnerable he is protecting his own manhood, masculinity and genitals. Directing Cyrus to appear vulnerable and crying in the opening shots of the video allows Richardson's desire to be dominant to be appeased. Cyrus then swings on a wrecking ball, the wrecking ball being phallic, I assume Richardson sees this as a way to show Cyrus's dependence on hegemonic masculinity as a form of structure and also to fulfill her sexual needs. However, Cyrus appears to be satisfied by the power that the phallus provides, rather than it demonstrating her desire for a man and penis. This creates a mocking element to the video, as I think Richardson understands that Cyrus accepting to perform in this way, is in fact her admitting her desire for his penis. Cyrus is not heterosexual, which might exaggerate his want to Richardson desire to surround her with phallic objects. It is as if Richardson is trying to prove to her that she should desire his penis, (or penis' more in general), as without this desire he becomes obsolete. His misogynistic attitude exacerbates his ideal that women are reliant on men and must thus desire penis. Cyrus's sexuality is a risk to Richardson's idea of hegemonic masculinity.

Cyrus's sense of androgyny and not labelling her sexuality other than 'equal', allows her to call into question ideas of gender and masculinity. Cyrus claims dating men made her feel like a 'femme-bot...And then when I was with a girl, I felt like, 'Oh s—, she's going to need someone to protect her, so I'm going to need to have this macho energy' (Cyrus cited by Steinmetz, Time.com). This awareness and feeling the need to protect a female partner, is hugely masculine, as it flatters the position of dominance and strength. Cyrus's use of 'macho energy' in Wrecking Ball is facilitated by her using the labourer's character, she is challenging the perceptions of femininity, masculinity and gender roles by being able to access all these issues with the content of the video. Her use of pop culture to raise these issues is beneficial as it puts the question of gender, class and how it is represented into the forefront of the media whilst also being a public display of her own challenges of understanding her virility as an androgynous woman. With Cyrus it is not as clear cut as the Freudian

idea that is it because of her penis envy that she appears masculine and using herself as a phallic symbol to counteract her insecurities of lacking a penis.

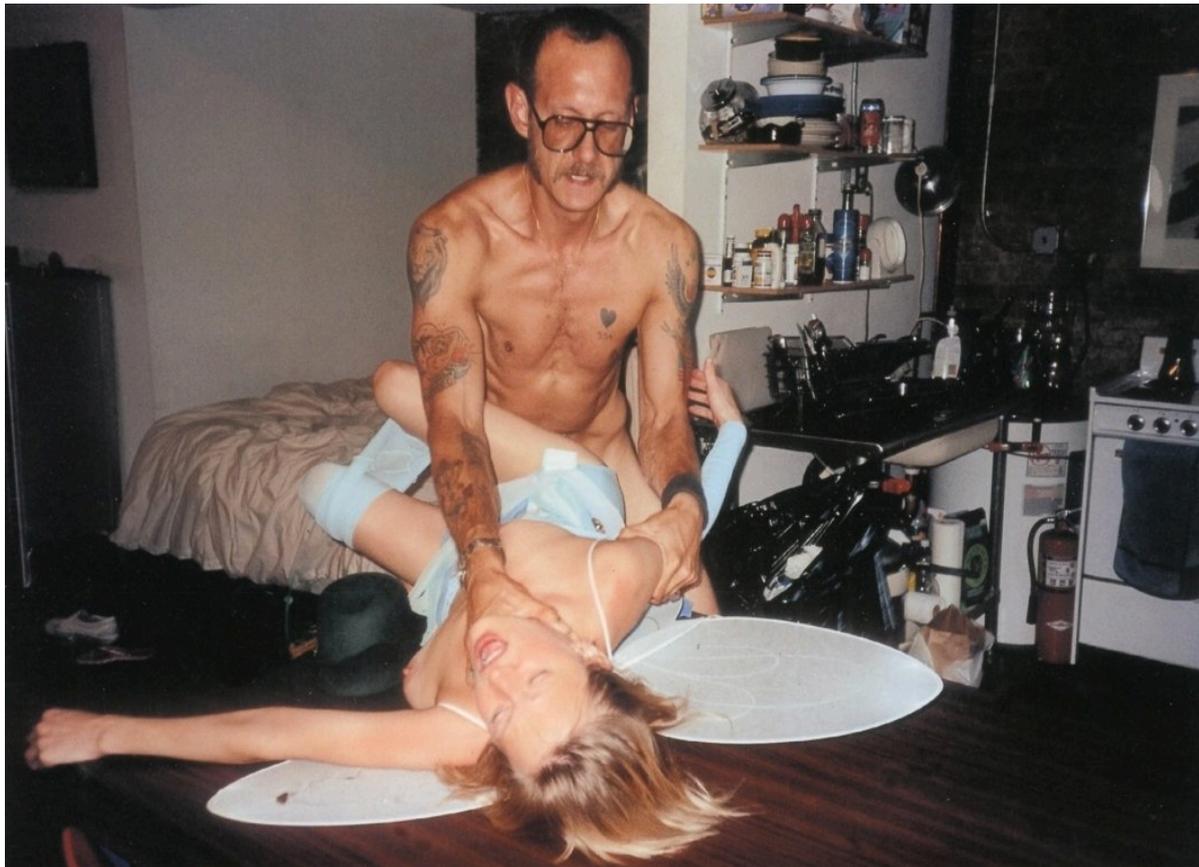


Fig 11: Terry Richardson, The Fappening, 2014

‘The strap on dildo provides the agency to a woman that the man’s penis simply does not ... the lesbian has more sexual agency wearing a strap on dildo than the male with his perpetually premature ejaculator’ (Butler. H. 2004, p.185)

The sledge hammer acts in the same way that the strap-on dildo does, giving Cyrus more sexual agency than Richardson and her previous lover. Cyrus does not just represent the phallus, she is the phallus girl. Her dominance has resulted in the break-up of her and her lover, ‘I never meant to start a war... and instead of using force, I guess I should have let you win’ (Cyrus, Wrecking Ball, 2013) as Cyrus has not given in to the (assumed) male figure in the relationship, but held her position of dominance and explains she initiated the aggression in the relationship. When Cyrus smashes down the wall she fully demonstrates the power and strength associated with the phallus, thus she *represents* the phallic. This is exaggerated by her choice of clothing in the video.

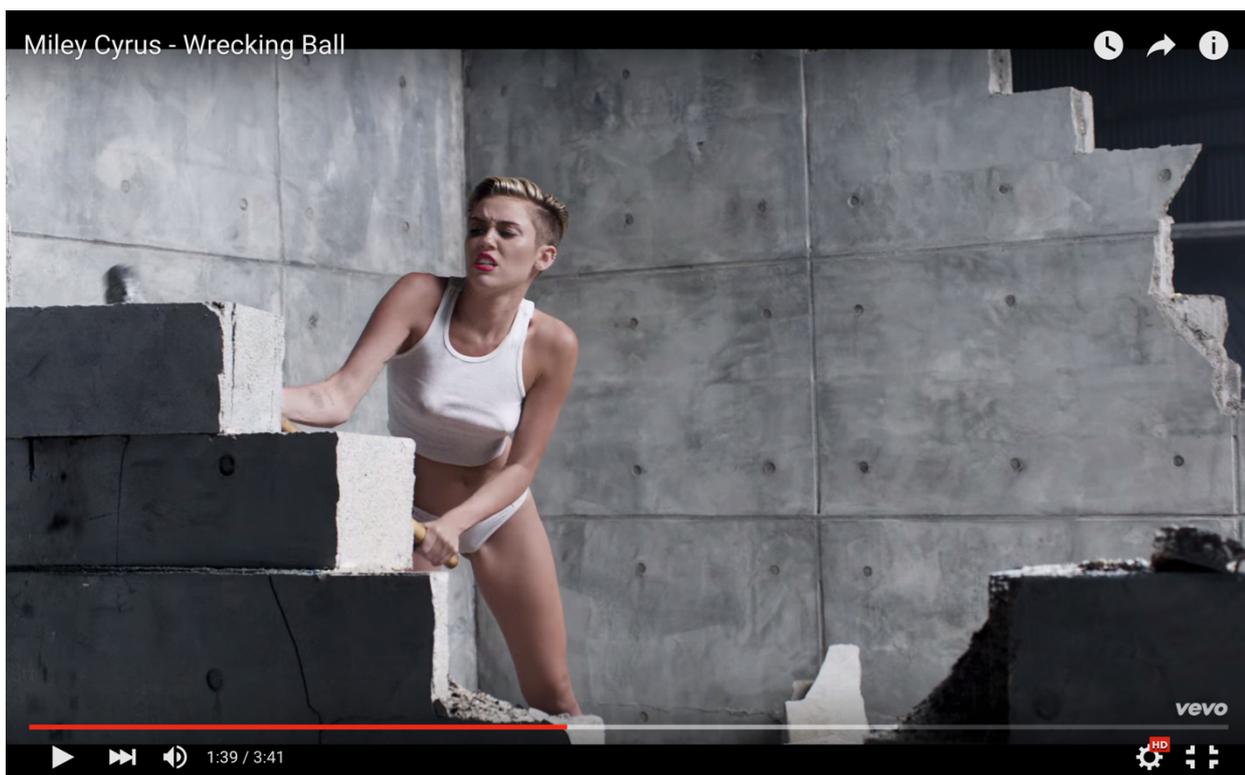


Fig 12: Miley Cyrus, Wrecking Ball, 2013

The styling of Cyrus in *Wrecking Ball* is representative of the male labourer, wearing workman's boots and a white vest, in slang terminology it is a wife-beater. Her androgynous look exaggerates Cyrus as phallic. 'The phallus is...sexless' (Bowie, p128) despite having masculine qualities it does not have to be represented by the male, therefore Cyrus's attire is unnecessary, as she is already phallic. However, in choosing to emphasize her position as phallic with her clothes it enhances her sense of ridicule of masculine stereotypes, which is symbolized by the vest and boots. The vest is worn by men as it highlights the masculine attributes of a muscular physique. This contrasts to Cyrus's petite form, where her nipples are visible through the garment. The wife beater could be said to be symbolically fetishistic through its connection to dominance and violence, repeating again the irony of her wearing it while appearing as the phallus girl.



Fig 13: Tom Hardy, Wenn, 2014

The decline of industry has emasculated the labourer. Homo Faber is seen by many of the working class as the masculine ideal. It is engrained in our culture that it is a demonstration of masculinity to be able to build and repair things. The dilution of Homo Faber characteristics has been common amongst White Collar workers for many years, it is with the closure of industry that is now risking working class men's proximity to Homo Faber. Yes, the labouring man has the characteristics of Homo Faber, but will these men be able to maintain the characteristics when they are no longer employed in industry? This concern is prevalent in Stoke-on-Trent and Kellingley Colliery, West Yorkshire. Even employed labourers who identify with Homo Faber might feel they are unable to achieve 'full' Homo Faber status due to the amount of components in labouring jobs being pre-fabricated elsewhere. This dilutes the labourer's role to something more allied to assembly.

Currently we are experiencing a shift in western society in terms of gender roles. Through this, the idea of the masculine Homo Faber can be fantasised over as our proximity to the labourer has become further detached, allowing for there to be the room for it to be romanticised, idealised and even eroticised. It is the idea that a man is at risk doing hard manual work in order to provide for his family, which initiates the fantasy of the labourer.

Cyrus's *Wrecking Ball* video actively communicates the issues surrounding masculinity and gender. Bringing these questions into pop culture allows for them to be discussed openly and casually. The conversations surrounding videos like *Wrecking Ball* are needed in today's society with the ever increasing questions about gender roles. Despite the communication surrounding masculinity it is increasingly difficult to hold on to the essence of Homo Faber. With the attributes of Homo Faber being used in fashion or as media tools, it further emphasises detachment from the reality of the labourer and Homo Faber. It also seems that detachment from Homo Faber can be increased through geographical location. Living in the countryside provides a multitude of professions which can be considered particularly masculine such as tree surgeons and agricultural jobs, especially when

contrasted against particularly 'city' jobs such as banking. Does the prevalence of Homo Faber correlate to place? Does location affect one's idea of masculinity and the labourer? The North of England and South of England are prone to stereotyping each other: there is healthy competition between the two ends of the country, this also happens between city and country dwellers. Maintaining this competition will continue to exaggerate the stereotypes of masculinity and idea of Homo Faber, based on location as well as occupation. Combining this and growing detachment from industry, the idea of the labourer will continue to be fantasised about and the labourer as we understand it will become a nostalgic symbol.

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