THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE MULTIPLE MASCULINITIES IN KATE ATKINSON'S *LIFE AFTER LIFE* AND *A GOD IN RUINS*

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This MA- thesis focuses on the representations of masculinities in Kate Atkinson's novels *Life after Life* (2013) and *A God in Ruins* (2015) using masculinity and men's studies as the theoretical approaches into the analysis. The aim of the study is to show how there are multiple masculinities and how the patriarchal structuring of society that places men above women is not beneficial for all men. All men are not equal regarding their masculinities nor does society appreciate all representations of masculinity equally. In fact, it is shown how especial.ly traditional masculinity can have negative effects on men and toxic masculinities on women.

The theoretical background relies significantly on the works of R. W. Connell, as well as several others that have had an impact on the area of research during the recent years masculinity and men's studies has been on the surface. These works provide the framework for the multiple masculinities examined in the thesis and provide evidence to the multiplicity of the subject.

Patriarchal society and the limiting and slowly changing molds of masculinities are not beneficial to women nor men and the structures of society and the environment provided causes aggression and violence among men. Masculinity and men's studies remains a controversial point of study and the study of men needs to be justified still. For these reasons it is all the more vital that this type of research is done and the attitudes towards men and masculinities is changed in order to gain equality among men as well as among men and women.

Keywords: masculinity, masculinities, men's studies, patriarchy, Kate Atkinson

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1. Introduction

Reading Kate Atkinson's *Life after Life* (2013), focus is easily directed throughout the novel on the main character Ursula and the unpleasant and sometimes plain horrible treatment she received from various different characters. Furthermore, the ones responsible for the bad and even violent treatment can be traced straight the male characters. When beginning to formulate the subject of this thesis, the feminist perspective surfaced first. However, after being inspired to read *A God in Ruins* (2015) as it is a companion piece to the previous novel, began to formulate a notion of the importance of bringing to light the male perspective of both novels and where the reasons for specific actions stem from. Does violence towards women and the subordination of them by men actually originate from biology as has been claimed often, or does society have a much larger impact in reality.

While feminism and women's studies already have a long history, reaching over centuries, masculinity and men's studies have only started to gain attention during the last few decades. Power hierarchies, the subordination of women and violence of men towards women are much depicted in literary traditions and patriarchal societies are studied from the perspective of women and how they are dominated. Often the voice of men is kept silenced. What type of masculinities are there? Why do these men use violence towards women? What is the driving force behind different actions, and to which sources can the reasons be traced to? How does society's ideals of masculinity impact individual men? "In understanding gender inequalities it is essential to research the more privileged group as well as the less privileged" (Connell 2002, 2), giving justification and showing the need for studying men as well.

The study of masculinity and the field of men's studies provides the theory and background for this thesis. According to Connell: "gender is a way in which social practice is ordered" (Connell 1995, 71). Moreover, society is constructed on the power of men. However, while society privileges men, simultaneously the structures of society also place demands upon men and patriarchy creates toxic models of masculinity , in addition to misplaced sense of superiority of one gender over the other. Inability to fulfill one's public role, for example at work, can cause problems in the private sphere. The patriarchal constructions of society do not benefit all men but place some above others. Inability to

fit into the role of society and the lack of emotional support can cause psychological problems that may have various consequences upon individuals themselves as well as the people around them. In addition to women, men belonging to groups of marginalized masculinities have also been placed beneath those depicting traits of traditional masculinity. In this thesis I aim to examine in the theory section the different types of masculinities. Furthermore, these different types of masculinities will be discussed in relation to how patriarchy functions and has affected the development of them. The analysis section will further address how multiple masculinities can be recognized throughout the novels.

Types of masculinities and how they are present in modern day literature, will be examined through the two novels mentioned. The novels depict the issues of masculinity differently, *Life after Life* leaving much thinking to the reader as *A God in Ruins* shows more clearly the effects. Focusing on the various male characters, the different masculinities are examined, however, as the length of the thesis is limited, all characters will not be included as there are several supporting characters that are a part of the plot only for a short period.

Life after Life centers around Ursula Todd and the many men that had an effect on her life are analyzed in depth. It is set between 1910 and 1960 where traditional, more conservative gender roles are prominent throughout the storylines. As is typical to the times portrayed in the novel, men are the ones women have to rely on for their well-being and financial security. The women, or mainly women in regard to this thesis, are subjected to the decisions and whims of men. This often leads to being in harm's way as men are shown to make poor decisions trying to assert their higher position in regard to women and other men and in doing so often subject women to many forms of violence, both mental and physical.

A God in Ruins focuses more on Teddy Todd, Ursula's younger brother and continues his story and is set mainly in the 1990s. His character is examined from the viewpoint of how the concept of masculinity has changed and expanded during his lifetime, while still carrying the weight of earlier expectations and strict frames. In addition, there are characters that portray completely different characteristics that differ greatly from the norms of 'traditional' masculinity, not fitting to this mold, showing the negative impact it can have on individuals. For example, Teddy's daughter's husband Dominic is an interesting character especially due to his lack of traditionally masculine

characteristics earlier deemed necessary for a man to have. These include his incapability to take responsibility regarding his family as well as himself. He does not work, nor provide for his family, and behaves often highly immaturely and is powered by heavy drug use. His son Sunny is a sensitive child with difficulties in learning, which are completely overlooked, and he is branded as lazy. He especially is a victim of imposed masculinity.

Throughout the analysis, the various different male characters will be placed on a spectrum and the aim is to show and acknowledge that there are several different masculinities, not only one, and how they have different roles in the society. Trying to fit everyone in one mold that is considered the ideal is not only far-fetched but also harmful to individuals themselves as well as to the entire society and its people. As masculinity is not an isolated concept but is one aspect of a much larger structure, the changes it experiences affects the structures of the entire society. Which is also another reason why the study of masculinity is integral, as the changes are fundamental for the society to move towards true equality. To begin the examination of the novels they will first be introduced briefly, followed by the theory and methodology. Then the thesis continues to the analysis section of the novels and lastly, in the conclusion the findings will be tied together in the concluding remarks.

2. Introducing the Novels

The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief overlook of the two novels that are analyzed in this thesis. *Life after Life (*henceforth *LAL)* was published in 2013 and received critical acclaim as well as was much enjoyed by its readers. Rising from the author's feelings regarding having been born right after the Second World War and needing to acknowledge that it happened. The other novel to be examined, *A God in Ruins* (henceforth *GIR)* published in 2015, is a companion piece to the first novel. To some extent the novels overlap while the stories happen in different times and the focus has changed from one character to another.

2.1. *Life after Life*

*"*Darkness fell*"* (*LAL*, 598) as Ursula's life again and the reader has lost count of the numerous deaths Ursula has experienced throughout the novel. *Life after Life* tells the story of Ursula Todd as she tries to navigate through life and stay alive. throughout the novel her life ends in multiple ways only to have her be born again and repeatedly she is forced to try to avoid the various traps that are thrown in front of her. First, she is strangled by the umbilical cord only for her to die only few years after her rebirth by drowning, then she fell of a roof, died of the Spanish flu and due to complications of an illegal abortion etc. and every time her story loop back to the night she is born. As Ursula repeats the years of her life again several times, she learns to react to these near-death experiences and manages to avoid them the next time she encounters them. Slowly, she begins to have a feeling of her previous lives and she utilizes this to her advantage.

Miss Todd's life is much influenced by the many men she encounters, and her life is affected by their presence. Her father Hugh Todd is a supportive father and clearly favors Ursula above the other children. He is supportive and loving and it seems that in the case of her parents, the traditional gender roles of the parents are switched in many ways as her mother remains cold and even negligent towards her. The eldest brother Maurice is constantly causing trouble and is not much interested in his sisters as in his opinion girls are not as intelligent or as strong as boys, hence they are unworthy of his attention and time. The two younger brothers on the other hand are sweet and loving boys, creating much contrast between themselves and Maurice, Teddy especially favors his

sisters, but Jimmy as well has a very different mindset. In addition to her family, great impact in her life had Maurice's friend Howard, as he fancied Ursula and after an innocent kiss, he later raped her, and she died due to complications when she tried to abort the child. Later on in her life Ursula suffers serious abuse in the hands of her husband Derek and in another scene finds herself in an affair with a married man.

Ursula's life contained more than a few lifetimes worth of incidents and events but also, she is surrounded by different types of male figures from the loving father to a cold brother, and an abusive husband. The men in her life provide much material for the examination of the masculine. Life in the novel is as unpredictable as the weather and often, so are the men.

2.2.   *A God in Ruins*

A God in Ruins follows the life of Ursula's brother, Edward "Teddy" Todd as he aspires to navigate from a safe childhood through the Second World War as a bomber pilot to becoming a schoolteacher and onwards to his late years. The novel shows how Teddy grew from a well-behaved boy to a model citizen, doing his duty to the country and surviving the war against all odds. Upon returning home he is faced with a future he did not believe he would have, marrying his childhood sweetheart, settling in with her and raising a family. Throughout the story the war plays an important role in his life, while he lost many of his fellow men during the war, Teddy is to witness the world post-war and is seen struggling to move on. Growing older he has to learn to live in the reality that after every new generation, the significance of the war dulls as there are continually less people who experienced it. The new generations taking their safety for granted at times saddens Teddy and he has a difficult time adjusting to the change brought by time.

Throughout the novel Teddy represents many roles of a man. In ways he can be considered an ideal man portraying traditional ideals of masculinity as well as newer ideas of what a man can be. He is the ever obedient and nice child, although lacking a sense of adventure fit for a boy. Growing up he performs his duties as first a soldier and later as a husband, a father, and a grandfather. After the death of his wife Nancy, Teddy devotes himself to his daughter Viola, depicting admirable character and a seemingly 'healthier' masculinity in caring for her daughter by himself instead of hiring someone to raise her

or simply remarrying. Considering all these characteristics, the examination of Teddy's character from the point of view of masculinity is highly interesting. In addition to Teddy, the novel also introduces new male characters. Among them are Teddy's grandchild Sunny and Sunny's father Dominic, who are trapped in the crossing of what is expected from them regarding how they embody masculinity and how they see themselves. They are raised mainly in an environment of ignorance and with society's expectations and traditional norms forced upon them.

3. Theory and Methodology

Firstly, it is important to establish the reasons why it is important to study men and masculinities as they often have a negative reputation as it is believed by many that studying men and masculinities is not important because they are the oppressors. Men's studies and especially the concept of masculinity is still often misunderstood and the study of it is disregarded, as "mass culture generally assumes there is a fixed, true masculinity beneath the ebb and flow of daily life" (Connell 1995, 45). This is however a misguided way of thinking about masculinity and in reality, it has been culturally constructed and preserved. In the theory and methodology sections the theoretical background of masculinity and men's studies will be examined in depth, what it actually entails and why it is important to study, before moving on to the analysis of the novels. The importance of masculinity studies has often been objected to as it has been seen as another way of men trying to ascertain their powerful position. However, masculinity is often mistakenly understood in a negative way instead of what the purpose of it actually is and in reality, "masculinity studies is not a conservative backlash but a social necessity" (Horlacher 2015, 1). It has been problematic for researchers to separate male from the generic man, meaning the overall human experience, and what men as individuals experience. As men and masculinities are being studied more in depth, are the findings of the male experiences in many cases different from the pictures of power and oppression that men are accused of.

As masculinity studies is yet a fairly new field of study, I will begin from the 1980s as the field began to gain more attention during that time, in order to better define the importance of this type of analysis. Furthermore, as most of the events of the novels examined are set in the mid-1900s, it is beneficial for the purposes of the analysis of the novels to chart the development of the theory from its considered starting point as it still is widely less familiar than, for example, feminist studies. Throughout the theory section multiple masculinities will be examined as masculinity is an umbrella term for a wide spectrum of masculinities. The term masculinity will be further defined as well, in terms of the differing masculinities. Lastly the concept of patriarchy in relation to masculinity is overviewed as it has been long linked with men and masculinity.

In the theory section I aim to give a brief but careful overview of the theoretical framework for this thesis. Throughout the theory and analysis, the works of R. W. Connell

in the field of masculinity functions as the foundation of this thesis as her work has laid much of the groundwork in the field and for future study. While the majority of her groundbreaking research on masculinity was done in the 1980s and 1990s, the contents are still relevant and useful to this day. Especially her work on hegemonic masculinity draws much attention among scholars. In addition, there are later works of hers that have been used as well as adding others for the integrity of the text and to provide new and fresh perspectives.

Masculinity studies has long been overshadowed in importance by feminist studies and the academic field itself is very young in comparison. Feminism has already gone through several waves of change and built itself on the subordination of women by men, blaming women's hardships solely on men. However, men have been overlooked for a long period of time as well. The last couple of decades have finally seen an increase in the interest in studying men and masculinity. While women have faded from view by being forced into the shadow of men and confined to the private sphere, men on the other hand have faded from view by being in the front. It is time to bring men to the front.

3.1. Defining Masculinity

The terms masculine and masculinity, as well as feminine and femininity, are often confused with each other when used. For that purpose, it is important to note the distinctions between the terms and to better define what is meant by masculinity. As these terms are strongly linked to the concept of gender and gender itself is a culturally defined and constructed concept, the defining of masculine and masculinity is rendered difficult. Differing from simply masculine traits as both men and women can have these traits, while they are considered more appropriate to men. These traits include robust build, deep voice, being tall and strong as opposed to preferred feminine traits of being small and dainty, having higher pitch and softness in their voice. Masculinity on the other hand is usually discussed only in regard to men. For defining masculinity on which the entire thesis builds upon I will use the definition by Andrea Waling (2019, 364), who defines it as follows:

> Masculinity is understood as a set of practices, norms and behaviors associated with the idea of being male, believed to stand in opposition to femininity and women. When we talk about a notion of a 'traditional masculinity',

we mean a series of traits perceived to be essential in being a true or authentic man, such as being a provider, being aggressive, being strong, being stoic, and being a leader, among others.

As will be shown in the analysis of the novels, these norms are shown prominently in the various male characters. However, this definition can also be seen causing problems, as some do not fit into this categorization and their overcompensation to be masculine and as 'proper' men, leads to questionable actions. Alternatively, some are portrayed to have these traits excessively, which often leads to the same results. Instead of fixating on this one definition of how to be a man and what type of traits are appropriate to have, through research it has been tried to show that in reality there are several types of masculinities that should be seen as equal.

3.2. Masculinity Studies and Men's Studies

While the spotlight has been focused on men for a few decades now, men are still in many ways obscured in the shadows and public discussion has remained "strained, silly, and sometimes flat-out wrong" (Kimmel 2010, 1), and in many cases men are evermore trying to prove their masculinity and resist what they think is feminizing masculinity altogether instead of seeing possibilities in the equalization of sexes. As mentioned, for masculinity and men's studies it has been problematic to justify its importance as a necessary and beneficial field of study. The benefits of women's studies have been more easily understood as important in rectifying the wrongs women have faced and changing the ways in which women are seen. As men's studies exist in relation to women's studies and masculinity studies in relation to feminist studies, it has caused difficulties to explain the importance of understanding men and why they behave in the ways that they have done throughout history. In addition, men's studies have received backlash for the attempt to redeem men by trying to explain, for example, that the reasons for men using violence against women is not in truth an innate trait based purely on biology but originates from cultural and societal demands placed on men as well.

At this point it is important to distinguish the relationship between masculinity and men's studies. Masculinity refers to the set of ideas, qualities and attributes placed on men. These are the historically ideal characteristics that are considered to be important

for men to possess. Masculinity is "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture" (Connell 1995, 71). While these characteristics were considered to stem from being a man, masculinity studies began as a field of study concerning these traits and central to the discipline is the idea of traditional masculine qualities being socially constructed. The study of women has concentrated for centuries on the ways in which women are disadvantaged in regard to men and how they are subordinated and oppressed by men. The advantages of men have also been taken into focus by masculinity studies, but scholars have begun to examine that although men as a group are privileged in various ways, not all men are equal in this way and power hierarchies can be found among men. As individuals they may face problems and discrimination among other men while the society discriminates them as a part of a group.

While masculinity studies and men's studies are often used as interchangeable terms, there are differences to be found as well. Masculinity studies has mainly focused on literary studies and representations of men and masculinities in literary traditions, men's studies on the other hand has risen from the field of sociology. From there, it has spread further into other fields and disciplines, as "men's studies questions assumptions that have passed beyond the horizon of usual scholarly inquiry to bring them back under critical purview. These assumptions about masculinity are so widely shared that they cease to appear as assumptions" (Brod 1987, 2). Masculinity studies have focused more on the masculine traits and the roles of men. Men's studies have brought to light the need to study men as men, not only by their assumed qualities. In this thesis, the emphasis will be on masculinity studies.

During the late 20th century, when the study of masculinity was beginning, it was a response "to the idea that masculinity was natural or essential […] and normative configuration to which actual males do or do not conform" (Reeser 2005, 13). Men were regarded as having certain traits and characteristics that can be placed in a spectrum. On one end, there are masculine characteristics thought suitable for men and on the other end there are traits that were considered feminine. Developing the correct masculine traits was seen as essential for a person to be a man. New Research began to question these ideas of masculinity. Joseph Pleck was one of the first scholars to begin the discussion of male identity as a much more complex entity and how instead of the idea that gender precedes

action, actions are what creates gender. From there on the study of men and masculinity has expanded to become a varied field spreading across disciplines. He first proposed the idea of traditional masculinity, which contained the idea of men as strong and brave, good leaders and providers, who are independent and determined. This model of men was and is stoic and immutable. Later, R. W. Connell introduced the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which contained the mentioned qualities but expanded on the ideas of where men's dominant and power positions arose from and how they are connected to the subordination of women.

Recent decades have seen many shifts in the behavior of men. Men have been able to overcome limits that traditional masculinity often has placed on them. As "[m]asculinity has been paraded before us, consciously and intentionally, as perhaps never before" (Kimmel 2010, 5), it has also become more acceptable to show a wider range of emotions and to discuss them more freely, men have become involved in the private sphere and more often help with domestic work as well as take part in the upbringing of children. However, as time passes, "new role models for men have not replaced older ones, but have grown alongside them, creating a dynamic tension between ambitious breadwinner and compassionate father, between macho seducer and loving companion, between Rambo and Phil Donahue" (Kimmel 1987, 9). As masculinity studies has progressed further, it has become visible that masculinity is an umbrella term that fits many different types of masculinities under it and they are not static but are subject to much change.

3.3.   The Various Masculinities: Defining Terminology

The concept of masculinity and how it is produced through actions is not a linear line however, as masculinity is not a closed concept nor is there only one type of masculinity. While "most discussions of masculinity tend to treat it as if it is measurable. Some men have more of it, others less. Those men who appear to lack masculinity are, by definition, sick or generally inadequate" (Brittan 1989, 1), in reality, many types of masculinities can be recognized and are placed on different levels in the power hierarchy of masculinities. This hierarchy places usually men who possess trait of traditional masculinity at the top and at the bottom those who have less of these qualities and a lack of proper masculine qualities in considered to lean too much towards the feminine. As

femininity has been mainly considered to be a problem of individuals differing from the assumed heterosexuality, it can be said that "the idea of a hierarchy of masculinities grew directly out of homosexual men's experience with violence and prejudice from straight men" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 3). This was due to masculinity traits being linked to power and the use of power. While men as a group are thought to be privileged and the ones to subordinate women, it is only the 'central' ones that can do so. Among men there are also those groups that are being marginalized and often forgotten, mostly referring to the individuals differing from the heterosexual norm. These different types of masculinities always exist in relation to one another and cannot stand on their own. The idea of hegemonic masculinity was formulated comparing the different masculinities and placing it in relation to non-hegemonic masculinities that includes marginalized and subordinate masculinities.

3.3.1. Traditional Masculinity

Beginning from the concept of traditional masculinity is a good point to begin as it has been the central idea of masculinity throughout centuries. Traditional masculinity has its roots, as the name already suggests, in traditions. As all masculinities, traditional masculinity also has been socially constructed and maintained and it contains different variations. Often it is also confused with hegemonic masculinity, but these are, however, two different concepts. In addition to this, it is not always or only negative in which contexts it is mostly used. Although the term is widely used, people are often blind to it and its meaning.

Traditional masculinity creates the frames for the behavior of men and their interactions with each other as well as with women. Boys are introduced to ideas of traditional masculinity already in childhood through how they are raised and educated, the environment they inhabit as well as the people around them who affect the development of their psyche. Because "traditional masculinity has developed from men's interactions with others, within society, to provide constant feedback for men on expected behaviors, or social norms, and social conduct, or gender socialization" (Rivera and Scholar 2019, E1), it creates specific gender roles which men are expected to conform to and can vary throughout societies and cultures. In addition, it is not an unchanging

constant but changes and transforms through men's interactions and according to society's expectations.

What is essential in traditional masculinity is how it differs from feminism and what is expected of women. It has a wide-ranging effect on men as it defines men's place in the world, how they may act. However, traditional masculinity also limits men. For example, according to the study conducted by Rivera and Scholar, traditional masculinity has a great significance to men's health in particular. It prevents men from receiving the care they may need, as health problems, be they physical or mental, are considered signs of weakness and as such not acceptable (Rivera and Scholar 2019, E5). This is often witnessed in men no matter what the ailment be, men tend to suffer in silence as complaining or showing of weakness is considered unmasculine in the framework of traditional masculinity.

3.3.2. Hegemonic Masculinity

Throughout the field a central concept in studying men and masculinity alike is the concept of hegemonic masculinity. From the beginning of masculinity studies in the 1980s it has influenced other gender related fields and connects masculinity studies to them. "It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 832) and according to the idea of hegemonic masculinity, some men would be placed above others, not only women but men as well. This would be achieved through accomplishments that would justify power hierarchies between men. As such, the idea is strongly linked to patriarchy and the hierarchies it creates. The idea of hegemonic masculinity thus justifies the study of men and masculinity further as it creates strong hierarchies and subordination other men who are 'less'. Hegemonic masculinity has become a large model used widely and has many applications to the study of masculinity.

Women's equality has been increasingly visible and prominent both in the private spheres of the home and in the public sphere of society. This idea of equality has been difficult for many men to swallow and some have protested these developments, some have rebelled against it, but most have either ignored, simply accepted, or eagerly embraced it. The problem of equality for men does not however lie in the simple fact of

simply being equal, but in the notion of what it may take away from men and their feeling of being feminized within the process towards equality. Another discouraging fact for men is the amazingly fast pace in which women have made themselves comfortable in the realms previously belonging to men.

From the beginning, hegemonic masculinity has been a subject of disagreement and it has been claimed to parade men in a macho form. While power hierarchies are acknowledged to still exist, the type of man defined through terms of hegemonic masculinity, the powerful breadwinner that uses violence against women if needed in order to subordinate them, is not. However, the idea of hegemonic masculinity fits well into ideas of patriarchy and patriarchal domination, as hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell and Messerschmitt's research, is what retains the power positions of men (Connell and Messerschmitt 2005, 832). Of course, hegemonic masculinity also is subject to change over time and it too will be replaced by newer forms as the power hierarchies within a society begin to shift when women gain equality in regard to men.

3.3.3. Hybrid, or Marginalized, Masculinities

In opposition to hegemonic masculinities the concept of hybrid masculinities has entered the field of masculinity studies in the recent years. Hybrid masculinities contain the new type of masculinities that have become open to the younger generation as a result of the changing ways of viewing men and masculinity. It distances men from the views of hegemonic masculinity. The changes in how men behave and present themselves are noticeable in hybrid masculinities, expanding the definitions of masculinity and showing the constant change they are subject to. Hybrid masculinities also includes marginalized masculinities that have been overlooked and subordinated by the powerful, who consider them too effeminate, and "a growing body of sociological theory and research on men and masculinities addresses recent transformations in men's behaviors, appearances, opinions, and more" (Bridges and Pascoe 2014, 246). Those concerned with the study of hybrid masculinities seek to research and theorize these different transformations and fit them into the larger spectrum of masculinities, as it is not yet a widely acknowledged term among scholars.

Hybrid masculinities is a highly useful term in the field of masculinity especially concerning the overall change in motion concerning gender in general. As gender is

becoming more widely acknowledged to be a cultural construction as opposed to being entirely a factor of biology, it also forces change within the study of men and masculinity. As a fairly new phenomenon, "[w]ork on hybrid masculinities has primarily, though not universally, focused on young, white, heterosexual-identified men. This research is centrally concerned with the ways that men are increasingly incorporating elements of various 'Others' into their identity projects" (Bridges and Pascoe 2014, 247). Hybrid masculinities is showing a new direction for more liberated ways for men to produce their masculinity.

Hybrid masculinities "[c]ritically highlights this body of work that seeks to account for the emergence and consequences of recent transformations in masculinities" (Bridges and Pascoe 2014, 246). It aims at changing how masculinity is seen and challenges the inequalities regarding gender and sexuality. However, the increasing visibility of hybrid masculinities also could indicate the growing acceptance of masculinities differing from the traditional as well as there not being as dire a need to emphasize the differences between masculine and feminine as there has been before. "Hybridization is a cultural process with incredible potential for change. Research on hybrid masculinities has primarily documented shifts in – rather than challenges to – systems of power and inequality" (ibid., 256), making it imperative that the hybrid masculinities along with other masculinities is research and studied in depth.

3.3.4. Toxic Masculinities

Lastly, the concept of toxic masculinity is introduced. As there are multiple negative aspects attributed to masculinity ranging from homophobia to misogyny and violence, it is important to recognize these characteristics. During the 21st century these began to be categorized under the term of toxic masculinity to separate these different qualities of masculinity as a separate category. While "[t]oxic masculinity has become a framework for popular and scholarly understandings of the gender factor in social problems" (Harrington 2020, 2), such as use of violence against either women or even other, marginalized masculinities, it has not so far been further theorized within masculinity studies. The term toxic masculinity derives from biology and toxicity, meaning something that destroys living organisms. In literary theory this can be translated rather straightforwardly as a destroying force mainly in the relationship between men and

women as toxic behavior and the aggression connected to this is often seen directed towards women.

In her research paper, Andrea Waling problematizes the use of toxic masculinity as it furthermore continues to highlight masculinity as the only way of being for men: "using a term such as 'toxic masculinity', we continue to position men as victims of a broader vague entity, rather than highlighting their agency in the reproduction of masculinity" (Waling 2019, 363). In addition, it has been placed next to 'healthy masculinity', continuing this way to create binaries in this instance within gender as well as between them. The use of terms such as toxic or healthy to describe a type of masculinity do typologize masculinities within strict limitations, they are however highly useful terms for the purpose of literary studies and used extensively for the purposes of this paper. While they may indeed support inequality and gender hierarchies, they are also highly useful for explaining the reasons behind them. Furthermore, "'toxic masculinity' is believed to be responsible for aggressive and predatory heterosexual behavior resulting in sexual and domestic violence committed by men" (ibid., 366), which can be seen in the novels through various characters whose masculinity can be considered as toxic. It is important to recognize how toxicity develops in an individual, what are its consequences and how it could be avoided.

3.3.5.   Healthy Masculinity

Around the same time discussions of toxic masculinity began in the 21st century, also a concept of healthy masculinity, sometimes also discussed as positive masculinity, began to emerge. This has its roots in the feminist field as it combines feminine traits with within masculinity. "'Healthy masculinity', sometimes known as positive or progressive has arisen recently as a way to teach men and boys the responsibilities they hold in being men, and masculine" (Waling 2019, 363-367) and has its basis in the feminist way of thinking that people need to acknowledge the different issues regarding all aspects of life from social to political. Men need to distance themselves from oppression of both women and other men for the gender hierarchies and injustices to be torn down. Men have a responsibility of their own masculinity as it is placed on all men and through masculinity men gain power, whether they want it or know what to do with it. It is also up to men to

avoid the toxicity which easily becomes a part of that masculinity. Healthy masculinity aims at encouraging men and boys to be better in order to break down gender hierarchies.

In addition, central to the concept of a healthy masculinity, is the idea that boys need to be helped to engage with their emotions instead of suppressing them. Connected to this idea according to Waling is also the need for emotionally fulfilling relationships with women (Waling 2019, 367). Instead of hierarchies and power relations in a relationship, it would be more beneficial for men to dismantle these and aspire towards engaging relationships with equality between the couple. While a useful concept regarding the needed changes in men engaging with their emotions and with relationships between men and women, it is flawed in its strict thinking only consisting of the existing gender binaries. It does not truly take into consideration how it could include individuals exhibiting other sexualities or those that do not fit or belong strictly to either of these two genders. But it is a necessary steppingstone in the progress of masculinities and their development towards more positive and balanced outcomes.

3.4.   Masculinity and the Concept of Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a concept that gives men a dominant position regarding women, allowing men to subordinate and oppress women. It is a "[c]ultural (ideological) system that privileges men and all things masculine, a political system that places power in the hands of men and thus serves male interests at the expense of women" (Madsen 2000, xii). As a historically prominent system with roots deep within the society, patriarchy has allowed men to stay in power, especially the father has overruled others in the family, but women have been excluded from having power especially. It is "[a]n impersonal and complex structure of relations among men which manages the exploitation of women" (Connell 1995, 38). However, patriarchy does not mean power for all men among each other or equality in general, but it creates divisions among men as well and not only between the sexes.

Especially as a theoretical tool for literary studies, the concept of patriarchy has much to offer. Patriarchy allows writers the "scope and opportunity to create complex, multifaceted representation of male dominance" (Palmer 1989, 69), showing how patriarchy functions and what are its effects on people. Not only women, but men as well. "It is, in fact, as a vehicle for the depiction of the workings of male power that concepts

of patriarchy and patriarchal relations are most effective" (ibid), rendering women under the power and dominance of men. Within feminist and masculinity studies patriarchy has been a wide-ranging concept and how it is seen and examined has varied regarding who is using the term. Patriarchy has been a central concept within feminism and women's studies from the beginning, but it is also an integral part of men's studies as well. While feminism has concentrated on the exclusion of women and bringing forth the female presence and experiences, men's studies has aimed at "the emasculation of patriarchal ideology's masquerade as knowledge" (Brod 1987, 40). Instead of trying to undermine the efforts of women's studies, men's studies try to deconstruct the patriarchal ideology as being a universally accepted male experience. Men's studies aim at revealing the inadequacy of patriarchy, as while women see it as making women invisible in many ways by placing men at the center, it at the same time hides men and blinds them from view for the same reason. In order to deconstruct patriarchal structures and ideologies, men's studies must stand on equal ground with women's studies.

Patriarchy, as well as other social constructions, is not immune to changes and the concept has gone through much change especially after the emancipation of women and the entering of women to the public sphere from the realm of the home. This has meant changes to the power of men and a change has been seen in men's power as it has shifted more from public to the private sphere. As men's positions of power in the state are no longer as secure as they have been before, the focus has transferred continuously more to the private, to some extent in order to fill the gap left by women moving more towards the public. However, the 'patriarchal dividend', as Connell refers to how patriarchy divides the genders and how inequality between the sexes still exists and further, "men as a group gain real and large advantages from the current system of gender relations. The scale of this 'patriarchal dividend' is indicated by the fact that men's earned incomes, worldwide, are about 180 percent of women's" (Connell 2002, 8). While changes between power relations have taken place, great inequalities are nonetheless present. For this to transform, more changes must take place in the attitudes of people, but as individual men in particular take interest in advancing social conditions, fighting discrimination, and demanding equalization, can the structures of the old patriarchy be deconstructed.

4. Analysis

In the analysis section the characters will be examined in depth: how do the characters represent the different types of masculinities and what effects the categorizations according to which they are treated? In addition, the positive as well as the negative impacts of society's expectations on men are explained. Furthermore, the characters are categorized by their most distinct masculine qualities. Although there are more dimensions to be found in each character, for the clarity of the analysis, the characters have been connected with a certain type of masculinity they most clearly exhibit in their behavior.

While it has already been established, masculinity is not static and unchanging, but is subject to the changes in the society and in the attitudes of people towards it. However, "in everyday and academic discourse, we find that men are commonly described as aggressive, independent, competitive, insensitive, and so on […] Men are seen as having natures which determine their behavior in all situations" (Brittan 1989, 4). This can be seen to apply in literature as well and in this analysis section, it will be examined how this appears and why.

First, the effects of traditional, or conventional, masculinity on the development of boys will be examined. Treating the growing adolescence according to the expectation of them depicting traditional masculine traits can be seen to have a negative impact on their development. Through this study the aim is to show how young boys would benefit from an upbringing that closely takes into consideration the needs of each individual as well as personal traits and treats them accordingly. The next section scrutinizes fatherhood in regard to masculinities is studied, followed by toxic masculinities and the inflicting of physical and sexual violence as a way of exhibiting power and maintaining a feeling of control. Sexual violence is also seen to be used to exert one's own masculinity. Lastly a character's conflicting masculinity is examined, and a marginalized masculinity introduced along with a section of men's war experiences and the effects it can have on an individual's psyche.

4.1. Influence of Conventional Masculinity on development of boys

A God in Ruins shows a different perspective into the lives of its characters, differing greatly from *Life after Life.* Especially in regard to the character of Sunny, the depth of his struggle is shown along with the consequences of treating and educating boys with methods that are connected to the ideas of masculinity. In the novel the idea of differences and different needs becomes clear as well as the fact that not everyone can be shaped the same way. It has been increasingly researched within various fields that childhood and especially the early ages are pivotal times in regard to healthy development, and they lay the ground to an individual's later years.

According to the study of Judy Chu, it is a time of change especially in the lives of boys as it is the timeframe when gender and behavior are shaped as well as experiences that have already taken place are reinforced (Chu 2014, 8). During this time children learn to resist acting immediately according to their impulses and begin to learn self-control. This control is guided by outside forces and the pressure of one's surroundings and can lead to much inappropriate behavior if not done correctly. Furthermore, for boys' early childhood is an integral time of development because it is during that time when boys begin to distance themselves from their mothers and begin to identify with their fathers. Researchers have begun to notice the implications of the pressures directed at boys trying to conform to the society's norms of masculinity. As Chu notes in her work (ibid., 8):

> The growing realization that pressures for boys to conform to masculine norms may negatively impact their development—coupled with concerns about young boys' susceptibility to behavioral and learning problems— suggest our need and readiness for a new way of looking at boys and thinking about their development that both emphasizes their agency and awareness and considers what factors influence and motivate individual boys as they respond to their gender socialization.

The need to focus on how boys are socialized is becoming evident and the effects of especially traditional masculinity are various disruptions and problems in the development of boys are noticed more effectively. In *A God in Ruins* the effects of boys' socialization gone wrong is evident in the characters of Dominic and Sunny, as well as the impact being expected to conform to expected norms of masculinity. Sunny and Dominic can be seen to have developmental distortions due to poor upbringing. Mainly this means outdated methods and failure to recognize the needs of a child as an individual.

This would have been particularly important for Dominic and Sunny, as they can be seen to exhibit problems in learning and are particularly sensitive. Dominic grew up to become a drug addict who ended up killing himself, almost managing to kill Sunny as well. As can be seen in how Sunny's grandparents treat him, it can well be assumed that the treatment of Dominic was very similar. Having lived an emotionally stunted childhood, Dominic's character was shaped against that background as well, only he reacted differently than Sunny. The ideas of traditional masculinity and enforcing them through upbringing and education can be highly harmful for individuals. Traditional masculinity, while being only one of the many masculinities that exists, has long been privileged and most noticed (Seidler, Rice and Dhillon 2019, 1122). In the novels it is visible that traditional masculinity is the prevailing one and thought to be the appropriate one according to which children are educated and brought up on.

In her study of the development of boys and the pressures they face change them, according to her effects on the development of boys when they are forced to adapt to the society's ideals of masculinity. Sunny is shown to be a very sensitive child and for a long period of time his needs and wants are neglected by both his parents and later his grandparents. Having to spend the summer holidays with his father's parents, who expect him to act perfectly, change his demeanor greatly. Nights at his grandparent's house he spends crying on a pillow, wondering why he is treated so badly, worse than the dogs that behaved much worse than him.

The lack of emotional support and how emotions and especially showing them in public is not accepted becomes evidently clear when Sunny's father passes. Not only did he die in a train accident because he sat on the train tracks with Sunny as the train approached and was killed with Sunny only just managing to throw himself out of the way despite Dominic having a strong hold of him. Sunny had to witness his father's death and right after the accident, he was sent to school. "Sunny was expected to get on with things as if nothing had happened" (*GIR*, 342) and in addition to this, he was made responsible for his father's death. This was Simply because he had been with his father at the time and had he not been with him, Dominic would not have been at the tracks and so he would still be alive. Others thought Dominic sacrificed himself for Sunny's life, claiming that Sunny had run off to the tracks and Dominic had barely managed to save him before the train hit him. This was how the train driver had seen it. Even the paper wrote about Sunny's behavioral problems and no one seemed concerned for the state of

Sunny's mind following this accident. Obviously dealing with this type of tragedy and trauma is difficult to anybody, but even harder for a seven-year-old child. This had a great impact on him and not receiving help dealing with his emotions, he began to act irregularly. It has been noted that "boys have certain relational capabilities that are important to their health and happiness but are often overlooked or underestimated […] and may be at risk as boys adapt to dominant norms of masculinity that manifest, for instance, in their school and peer group cultures" (Chu 2014, 9) and suppressing these emotional needs leads to behavioral problems.

Often during those times schools were divided by gender, girls went to school with other girls and boys with other boys. Dividing children according to gender is not seen as beneficial anymore and in reality, both gain from being taught and socializing together. In regard to boys, studies have shown that there are significant behavioral changes when the composition of the group changes. When boys interact in groups consisting of only boys, they tend to lean more in traditional masculine traits as well as steer away from feminine qualities. In mixed groups on the other hand, boys are given the possibility to challenge traditional masculine traits and engage emotions better.

Fueled by the bullying done by his classmates at school he began to act violently, and the school reported that "'he's almost feral […] Biting, kicking, screaming, fighting everyone in sight. He took quite a chunk out of Matron's hand. You would think he was raised by wolves.'" (*GIR*, 342) The school's immediate response was that he must be taken away from there, instead of trying to find the source of the problems and the reasons for his bad behavior. As a response to this his grandmother simply remarked that he was never properly disciplined by his mother, which she felt was the reason he misbehaved so badly. As stated by Chu (2014, 146): "through observing and interacting with adults, these boys were learning that adults tend to view boys as troublesome and to respond to them accordingly", explaining how bad behavior a reaction to events is not only but also learned, if the adults will see a child in a certain way, that child is not open to changing his behavior. However, the study of positive masculinity and the benefits boys would gain from receiving an upbringing that included emotional support and engaging of emotion shows that often violent actions especially stem from repressed emotions and not being able to address them or direct anger and frustration towards accepted outlets. This would allow boys to alter their behavior in the face or controversy.

Boys socialization happens in all environments, but it is school that has the most impact on it, because it is where boys interact more with other boys and they learn to act according to expectation, "although boys' gender socialization often begins at home, their exposure to cultural messages about masculinity and societal pressures to conform can intensify during early childhood when many children enter schools for the first time" (Chu 2014, 63). It is in school that children internalize the norms and learn of the expectations placed on them. For especially boys, being in school shows them that being a proper boy does not only depend on who they are but is based on their actions. When certain norms of masculinity are expected of them, the only whey for boys to prove their masculinity is by acting accordingly. If boys are being aggressive in school and the teacher's only response is that it is only boys being boys, then they will learn that this type of behavior is the norm. The boys in Sunny's school exhibit these internalized norms. Furthermore, possibly another explanation to the harsh treatment of Sunny by the other boys, could be found in boys' sense of enjoying doing things they are not supposed to do. Even if bullying is not always intervened with, it is nonetheless not accepted as such. For some, bullying is also a way to assimilate into the group, as peer pressure has a great influence in the actions of boys.

Another problem with boys often arises from bullying and confrontations between boys. Sunny was bullied because of his father's death which itself is already a sensitive and painful subject, but also due to, for example, his accent that was not the right one according to his classmates. The bullying that took please included both verbal and physical abuse. No adult intervened with this behavior nor did anyone ask Sunny the reasons for his behavior before judging him. The bullying included burning Sunny, pulling his shorts down and threatening to put a ruler up his behind. The latter was fortunately interrupted by the Matron telling them that was "enough fun and games" (*GIR*, 343). This type of behavior was accepted within the school as the normal kind of playing boys engaged in. It was and is not only an occasional occurrence when boys are left to their own devices but is a problem in places to this day. As they are not reprimanded and educated relating to behavioral issues and the use of violence, they learn to think behaving in such ways is acceptable, often creating problems in life later.

Sunny's character shows distinctly an instance where a boy would have benefited from positive masculinity. Because Sunny was forced to cope with things mostly by himself, not receiving help or understanding when he could not cope well, he grew up to

be an indifferent and passive teenager. If his emotions and sensitivity had been considered and he had been treated in a way that better fitted his needs, his character could have shaped into something highly different. The preteen and teenage years are crucial for the development of boys' masculinities. It is when boys become acclimated to society's standards.

While some may not purely recognize traditional values in themselves, men and boys yet measure themselves against these values, leading them to feel discontented about themselves. Many boys come to accept the multiple gaps that exist between how they feel and see themselves versus how they are seen and expected to be (Chu 2014, 5). At the young age of 7, Sunny had already resolved to the fact that he did not behave and act the way he was expected to and the result of this was his belief of being at fault himself for not being able to meet the standards placed upon him. It is recognized that girls need close and responsive relationships with others, but that boys need them as much as girls, is yet to be better acknowledged. This creates problems in developing into balanced adults. Sunny on the other hand succeeds in finding a balance, regardless of the various difficulties and ill treatment he faced because he was not able to conform.

4.2. Complicit Masculinity and the Concept of Fatherhood

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is often misinterpreted and mostly it is seen as a negative concept. It conceptualizes men's subordination of women and explains how men have become to be on top of the social hierarchy, it also explains how some men are able to rise above others. However, it is not only negative but has positive sides to it as well, "hegemony did not mean violence, although it could be supported by force; it meant ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion" (Connell and Messerchmidt 2005, 832). Managing to embody the masculine traits society deems proper for men to have is important as well as inherited respect attached to certain family names and money. These aspects of masculinity can be seen in the characters examined in the following subsections. These are men of power and importance. They followed the path laid out for them as well as behaved in the manner that was deemed appropriate. They do not necessarily assert their power in particularly visible ways, as the ground is already laid out for them. This type of masculinity is also considered complicit masculinity, benefiting from a power hierarchy built and maintained by others. Hegemonic

masculinity has become the normative form of masculinity as it has distinguished from the other forms of masculinity. Why it has gained so much attention rises from its contents as "it embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men" (ibid., 832). Hegemonic masculinity also benefits those that do not actively take part in promoting it.

In the actions and behavior of the character of Hugh Todd in *Life after Life*, a complicit masculinity is shown as he does not need to strengthen his position by showing masculinity, he is a calm and gentle man in everything he does. He simply maintains his position through basic actions. To gain from patriarchy and the divide between men and women, it is not however necessary for all men to be in the frontline. He cares for his wife and children in the expected manner: he is present and supportive but maintains the boundaries of proper fatherhood and remains distant to certain extent. He is unjust, but he does have expectations regarding his family. In regard to the women in his family, he did not want them to cut their hair as short hair on women was considered unladylike. It is with little details that patriarchy is maintained while not reinforced.

However, the most important aspect of being a husband and a father is to provide for his family as "the one thing that has been non-negotiable has been that a real man provides for his family. He is a breadwinner" (Kimmel 2010, 17). This emphasizes how a man is judged by his ability to provide, as without this quality, he is not a man at all. Hugh Todd is in this regard a true man, as he not only provides for his family, but provides the means to a comfortable life. In addition to this, he works at a bank and as working with money has been seen as a truly honorable trade, the work of a gentleman, Hugh is well respected in his circle of acquaintances.

An important aspect of especially traditional masculinity has always been the concept of fatherhood. Marrying and having children has been, and to some extent still is, one of the basic expectations for both men and women. The importance of fatherhood is more often a crucial point of conversation when talking about the well-being of children. Regarding the development of male children, masculinity has, and the proper role models are important and the presence of a father in the children's life is crucial for the proper development. Before fatherhood has been viewed as something to be taken for granted. Children automatically respect their father and recognize their authority and that fathers do not need to take part in the emotional sides of their children's upbringing. The

role of the father was to teach, manly to boys, how to change a tire or fix a car. Emotionally they mainly remained cold and distant. In the research conducted by Platin, Månsson and Kearney (2003, 3), they noted how it is becoming continuously better recognized that fatherhood is constructed not only through practice, but also through relationships. Indicating that emotional closeness and vulnerability towards children is necessary for a positive childhood and for creating a meaningful relationship. A meaningful relationship with one's father helps boys receive a better-balanced upbringing and also helps in their future relationships.

Hugh's shortcomings as a father became especially clear when Teddy compared him to their neighbor as he noted how "Hugh was close to Pamela and Ursula, of course, but Teddy was always rather surprised at the way Major Shawcross was so free with his feelings, kissing and cuddling 'my girls' and often reduced to tears merely by the sight of them" (*GIR*, 136), which was a not a typical characteristic to be seen in a man. Teddy's observations of his father are also why Teddy eventually grew up to be somewhat emotionally distant, as according to Chu, boys acquire their masculine qualities mostly from their fathers in early childhood, when they begin to distance themselves from their mothers and begin to identify with their fathers (Chu 2014, 75). This is crucial for boys regarding how they are perceived by others as no one wants to be a mama's boy. To avoid that, boys must shift their attention to their fathers instead. In the case of Teddy, his father remained somewhat distant and did not spend much time with his children individually, leading to different levels of emotional coldness regarding their close relationships.

When considering traditional masculinity, problems arise also regarding fatherhood. In this sense the same characteristics depicting internalized ideals of traditional masculinity can be seen to some extent in all male characters of the novels. Mainly issues are seen regarding emotions as "traditional ideas of masculinity also involve an allied commitment to stoicism, to mastering pain and limited emotional expression" (Fox and Pease 2010, 20). Children not receiving emotional support and love from their fathers is often balanced by that given to them by their mothers. Still this loss of required affection affects both boys and girls. In Ted's case this lack of showing emotions and affections creates a particularly big rift between him and his daughter Viola, as she lost her mother at a young age and was raised by his father. She grew up believing his father was somewhat indifferent towards her but especially she felt deprived of love and support when she needed it most. The fact that she saw her father help her mother

pass on when a tumor had already almost taken her means she would have needed even more support from her father. However, he blocked his emotions and, in the process, left Viola's emotion without consideration.

4.3. Toxic and Hypermasculinity: Power Through Violence

Negative male stereotypes are the roots of toxic masculinities. It is the result of traditional masculinity that limits emotional growth and the expression of certain types of emotion especially in boys and young adolescents which leads to men growing up to be cold and emotionally restrained. Boys are taught to suppress emotions that are considered feminine and therefore suitable for girls and women but not boys. It is not acceptable to show emotions such as empathy, sadness, or fear but instead emotions such as anger can be shown. The showing of some emotions and suppressing others shows toughness of character and distances from others. Not conforming to these render masculinities vulnerable. Toxic masculinity surfaced in the mid-2010s as a widely used concept and researchers began to define it more in depth. However, the term did not arise from discussions of masculinity, but was brought to wider use in the discussions of feminism "since 2013, feminists began attributing misogyny, homophobia, and men's violence to toxic masculinity" (Harrington 2020, 1). Though it has become a widely used term, it has not been thoroughly defined and often left without a definition entirely regardless of many peppering the term in academic papers.

4.3.1. Violence in the Domestic Sphere

Domestic violence is a subject often talked about but still many suffer in silence. It is often unanimously agreed that the blame falls on the person responsible for inflicting violence and that is true, but there are also underlying reasons for violence and abuse that may not be as black and wight as is thought. The reasons for violence are not always inherent but a result of a chain reaction that changes a person's disposition, making them feel entitled to do as they justify being right. A chain reaction can be detected behind the behavior and actions of Derek's character, as difficulties and feelings of inadequacy drive him. As "[t]he precariousness of manhood can create anxiety among males who feel that

they are failing to meet cultural standards of masculinity" (DiMuccio and Knowles 2020, 25), can it lead to changes in a person. Why this may lead to the use of violence may very well stem from use of violence being learned as normal behavior. To Ursula, Derek claimed his father had drowned instead of the truth that he was living elsewhere and was no longer together with his mother. It is not indicated why this is, but Derek's behavior and aggression could well be learned from his father and it is highly likely that he abused both Derek and his mother.

Upon their first meeting, Derek Oliphant portrayed to Ursula the perfect image of a man. He was traditionally handsome, seemingly strong and in that first encounter, a perfect gentleman, as a proper man ought to be. However, the first impression and the three months of courtship that preceded their wedding, did not entail to Ursula the extent of Derek's many, and some highly dangerous, shortcomings as a humane person and a decent man. The safety that Ursula felt in that first moment when Derek helped her after she injured herself coming home from work would eventually disappear entirely. That safety turned into fear and trepidation of pain and suffering over any encounter between the couple, as Derek became continually more violent towards Ursula, directing his frustration towards her. Eventually, Derek's use of violence reaches a point where he eventually kills Ursula by beating her to death.

Derek's use of violence in order to assert and maintain power can be understood to rise from his own feelings of incompetence and inability to promote the accepted kind of masculinity and to fill his role as a man in the society. "Men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honor, prestige, and the right to command" (Connell 1995, 82), as according to patriarchy's definition, the right to command Derek receives through his gender, but honor and prestige can diminish in the eyes of others if an individual is not able to maintain those. In this Derek is failing and mainly it is seen through his work life, which the frustration experienced by Derek stems from hardships in his work and furthermore his inability to completely fulfill this role to his and the society's satisfaction. The many cultural expectations directed at men and boys in particular is for them to be strong both physically and mentally. Showing emotion, weakness, or lack of control is despised. This shows how different men's positions can be in the power hierarchy and Derek has been placed almost at the bottom of it. He is marked a sissy, because the lack of proper masculine qualities means he must be too feminine.

At the school Derek teaches it is shown how he is unable to do his job properly as his colleagues describe how "[h]e's never been able to control a class. Ruddy awful teacher, of course" (*LAL*, 277) and he is constantly in trouble for hitting the boys in his class too hard. While disciplining children in this manner during the early 20th century was not uncommon or frowned upon, Derek's excessive violence towards the students becomes obvious in these descriptions. "Since the country's founding, American men have felt a need to prove their manhood" (Kimmel 2010, 16), this type of show of manhood shows in Derek's behavior both at home and at work. In the private sphere he treats Ursula as an object designed to please him and tend to his needs and at the school, he tries to assert his power over the pupils and gain the respect of his peers through disciplining the boys. Often the need to prove one's masculinity is more prominent in the work environment, as men worry about the image they send to other men. However, even when the boys do obey according to what Derek tells them, they still knock behind his back and call him "Mr. Elephant" (*LAL, 278).*

The first indications towards Derek's questionable character are seen already during the wedding reception. When he is corrected by Ursula's mother Sylvie to have misquoted *Hamlet*, "a shadow passed over Derek's face" (*LAL*, 262). It is a very small indication but nevertheless marks the instant that his darker character started to show and the façade he had started to slowly fade away. After the wedding, his behavior changes completely as Ursula remarks that "she married one man […] and woke up with another, one as tightly wound as Sylvie's little carriage clock" (*LAL*, 263). His actions portray how he maintained an amiable air simply until he had fulfilled his role to become a husband.

Violent behavior of men towards women can have several reasons. A significant effect stems from the ways in which men and boys are socialized within a society. From early childhood boys are expected to be tough, they are allowed to certain extent to fight each other as the phrase boys will be boys is still much used. In this way boys are shown that violence is acceptable and to some it may cause problems as they do not learn that society does not condone violence. According to Harrington, one reason for occurrence of violence in young men derives from "emotionally absent fathers" (Harrington 2020, 3), and in Derek's case, not having a father present at all, this is very likely true. Why Derek's father is not present in his life might provide more information, however him being alive but not in contact with his son could have left a worse void in Derek. Combined with the harsh upbringing provided by his mother, which overlooked his

specific needs, leading to distortions in his character. In addition, "men who lack adequate fathering pursue unrealistic cultural images of masculinity and feel a constant need to prove their manhood" (ibid). To avoid toxic masculinities, men need to have the right type of role models. Toxic masculinity can be avoided by showing boys what masculinity truly means and the right ways to discipline their own masculinity.

While single parent households, where sons are raised by their mothers alone, in themselves do not necessarily mean that boys will develop traits of toxic masculinity automatically. It is however impertinent for boys and young men to grow up in an environment that supports the right type of masculinity. This can be viewed on the level of an entire society and how the structures of society must be changed in order to 'cure' men of toxic masculinity. In many instances toxic masculinity is a normative trait in a culture, but it is possible to change it. Fatherhood in itself can shape individual boys but on a societal and cultural level it is vital to shape ideas of masculinity and especially emotional development of masculinity.

4.3.2. Sexual violence as a Way to Insert Power and Dominance

The reasons why men result to raping women has widely been linked to gender in research, but how this link functions and why has often been quite ambiguous. The aim of this section is to open why men rape and what is associated with it. One aspect that often arises within this conversation is the entitlement of men towards women and this has been theorized as an important factor. In their research covering masculinity and the variables relating to rape, Hill and Fisher the factor of entitlement connected masculinity and tendencies to rape (Hill and Fischer 2001, 39). As entitlement is a variable of traditional and hegemonic masculinities, it is taught to boys from an early age. When discussing sexual violence of any kind, people are often quick to place blame and depending on the point of view, women are blamed for seducing men or dressing too provocatively and men are blamed for the actions they take. While rape is of course a gruesome and difficult experience for women and to move forward from that is not an easy task, acts of sexual violence are not as black and white as is often thought. This type of negative behavior has its roots deep within the structures of society. It is a complicated problem with various influences and reasons behind it.

It has been argued that masculinity originates from the male body and that men cannot be changed. Furthermore, masculinity sets the limits of behavior for men: men are aggressive and action such as violence or even rape stems from the inability to restrain these actions resulting from feelings of lust or passion (Connell 1995, 45). Rape in itself is a manifestation of patriarchy and men's dominance over women. It is a means of intimidating women or in some cases it can be seen as an entitled act performed from a place of power and not specifically meant as a way to subordinate. "Most men do not attack or harass women; but those who do are unlikely to think of themselves deviant. On the contrary they usually feel they are entirely justified, that they are exercising a right. They are authorized by an ideology of supremacy" (83). Physical dominance over the other sex is based on hierarchical superiority and the simple existence of women is to please.

In *Life after Life* this type of ideology is seen in Howie and his treatment of Ursula. Despite them having met previously, Howie first shows any interest in Ursula on the night of her 16th birthday, which is widely defined as the legal age of consent. However in the situation of the novel consent was neither asked nor did trying to resist advances do anything to prevent Ursula from being first taken advantage of and later even raped. This type of behavior exhibits quite obvious signs of hypermasculinity, which is linked to aggression and sexuality, in this case leading to sexual violence. Those that have hypermasculine inclinations display traits of machismo in their personality. These may include insensitive or even dangerous stance towards women, considering violent behavior an indicator of manliness and finding dangerous situations exciting.

The scene in the novel, there can be multiple motives for Howie's actions. After the episode in the staircase where the rape happened, Howie's reaction afterwards was "'English girls', he said, shaking his head and laughing" (*GIR*, 227), indicating his thoughts of how his actions are justified and even expected as his notion of 'English girls' seems to render Ursula as an active and even willing participant, as if she indeed wanted what happened as well. Another viewpoint is to see Howie as an actor establishing his own manliness and masculinity, enforcing the negative stereotype of what being a man means: it is seen as important to be tough and dominating early on and actively enforce this type of masculinity. In addition to this "[a]t a between-groups level of analysis, research has shown that men are more likely than women to feel it is acceptable to pressure someone into sex and to assign responsibility to the victim" (Hill and Fischer

2001, 39), which also explains the light nature with which Howard reacts to the situation that aspired between himself and Ursula, how he does not give it a second thought nor is he seen questioning his actions. However, rather than the male body itself being the producer of masculinity, it is a blank surface which is shaped by its surroundings. Both biology and social influence combine to produce gender differences in behavior (Connell 1995, 46). Which indicates that this type of behavior does not solely stem from the inside but is affected by outer forces. Although sexual desire is most often the driving force behind sexual violence, it is also an act of dominance, a way of showing power.

4.4.   Masculinity and Connections to Infidelity and Adultery

Cheating is another act that is immediately condemned by others regardless of whether the cheater is a woman or a man. If only the other person is already in a relationship, the fault most often falls on them. However, it is yet again men that are thought to be the ones that cheat although it always takes two people. Most individuals believe they can explain why men cheat, be it again linked to their nature and biology or something else. "We all think we understand fidelity" (Walker 2020, 1) and most do regard it an inherent quality of men. Men are regarded as the villains and women as the victims, both the wives and mistresses. However, as Walker (ibid.) points in her book, the men that cheat are also the men that are respected and liked, who are thought to never 'lower' to such acts. (ibid) When looking closely at men who cheat and why, other perspectives can be seen. While cheating is not to be considered acceptable, it can be understood in a broader frame why it is done. Walker's study shows how mostly the driving force for men is dissatisfaction regarding their marriage. For some it is the lack of emotional connection, for others the absence of attention or sex (ibid., 2). However, most of the men still expressed a need to continue in their relationship or marriage. While it is questionable why men who have begun to resent their wives do not seek other ways of coping with their situation. It is not necessarily beneficial for anyone to result immediately in judging.

The topic of cheating is explored mainly in *Life after Life* through the relationship of Ursula and a man working in the admiralty, called Crighton. Throughout *Life after Life* Ursula is seen having other casual relationships with different men, but Crighton offers an intriguing insight to how men experience extramarital relationships. It can be seen how different the relationship is without the society's expectations. When in a relationship

publicly there are evident expectations. First marriage and then children. Without these expectations a much more freely expressed type of masculinity can be seen. Crighton seems to feel his masculinity is secure while treating Ursula as an equal. In Walker's research, men in marriages instead, "[s]poke of a gradual slide over the years into feelings of emasculation, which they believed to be provoked by the state of their marriages. Men described sexual dynamics lacking sensuality and genuine enthusiasm on the part of their primary partners. They spoke of marriages where they no longer felt seen or valued" (Walker 2020, 3). As the reasons for infidelity generally are linked to an unhappy situation within marriage, it can be argued that Crighton's marriage had begun to have these same qualities, leaving him searching validation for his masculinity elsewhere. As "participation in infidelity presented an opportunity for validation, and affirmation of their senses of themselves as masculine, attractive, and wanted" (ibid.), which is an integral part of relationships for everyone, it may help to see why some men result to cheating. As the monotone of marriage sets on a couple, it may be extremely difficult to break that and find meaning and affection in said relationship. Infidelity is seen as a solution, an escape, by men who care for their wives and families but are not willing to face the problems they have in their marriage.

4.5. Conflicted Masculinity

Teddy appears at first to be a freer character regarding his masculinity. At first glance he seems a more compassionate, caring, and centered character. However, upon closer examination, he too is still bound by the many expectations of society, the problems of his masculinity only run deeper. As a child, and being a particular favorite of the entire family, he was prone to always behave well and do what he was told. Wanting to please everyone he grew up to the very standards society places on boys and men. He married his childhood sweetheart as was expected, worked first in a bank as was his father's preference and later as a teacher for the simple reason that he would need to support the children they would naturally have with his wife. When the Second World War broke out, he enlisted among the first to perform the duties of a good citizen, man, and soldier. He survived the war, and it did not limit his capabilities to perform his duties. However, for Teddy his life felt like "[t]he future was a cage closing around him" (*GIR*, 138) as he tried

his best to fulfil the roles he was given. The cage felt so tight that while even the idea of war altogether was a horrid for most, to Teddy, it meant freedom.

While the ideas of men as the providers of the family is prominent in *Life after Life*, a significant shift in ideas can be seen already in its follower *A God in Ruins*. It is set a few decades further from the ending events of *Life after Life* in the mid-20th century, when men were posing themselves the question: should their wife work? the answer was mainly that they should not have to work as a man should be able to support a family by himself (Kimmel 2010, 17). A change in men's attitudes that has largely gone without much resistance or attention, is that women have moved from housewives to become supporters of the family. Especially young men do not expect to be the providers of their families, but the financial side is carried by both parents. As seen in *A God in Ruins*, both Teddy and Nancy work and furthermore are both further educated as well. Even though Nancy is still seen as having a 'women's job' as she is a teacher and teaches at a school for girls.

The many expectations of society have already been mentioned and how from an early age boy are expected to behave in certain ways and to like certain toys and activities. Teddy Todd was made to feel the pressures of society regarding profession, marriage, and family. For example, his marriage to Nancy seemed to be decided for him. As children they were best friends and spent a great deal of time together. As a result, their families began thinking they would eventually marry. When thinking about love, Teddy did not know if he knew what love between a wife and a husband was.

The extent of Teddy's feelings of entrapment in his role is seen in how he reacted to the war and participating in it. While the enthusiasm for participating in the first World War was understood partly in the novelty of it, the Second World War, and the excitement to participate is harder to comprehend. However, for a person feeling caged, it could be better understood because Teddy described the prospect of war as follows: "the cage doors were opening, the prison bars falling away. He was about to be freed from the shackles of banking. Freed too, he realized, from the prospect of suburbia […] and harness of marriage" (*GIR*, 143). Teddy realized at an early age the expectations that were placed on him as well as thought there was no diverting from the path laid out in front of him, showing the extent society's expectation of masculinity has.

What does make Teddy different regarding his development is that he grew up socializing and playing with girls, which has been proven to benefit the development of boys. Boys as well as girls benefit from engaging with their emotions, but they are not

let to do so to an extent that would be beneficial. "Studies indicate that boys as well as girls seek to cultivate and sustain close interpersonal relationships throughout their lives. Yet, older boys and adult men report having fewer close relationships and lower levels of intimacy within the relationships they do have" (Chu 20, 6), and this change in the depth of relationships is seen in Teddy's life as well as his close relationships decrease the older he becomes. The loss of relationships indicates that as traditional masculinity impacts an individual's life more as they age and become full members of the society, emotional coldness also settles on. They move further away from deeper relationships. The reasons this happens lies with the traits of masculinity, as toughness and independence are contradictory to showing emotion. In addition, the suppression of emotions itself is considered a part of traditional masculinity.

A specific influence on Teddy can be seen in how his aunt treated him. Her decision to make him the basis of her novels about a boy named Augustus had a great impact on Teddy's psyche and self-image. While it was pressed at every point the book was mentioned that it was a representation of Teddy, the reality was much different. In the cover he appears "[w]earing a schoolboy's cap. He was accompanied by a catapult […] The boy was disheveled and had a half wild look on his face" (*LAL*, 219), causing much discomfort to Teddy as he did not recognize himself from the depiction and the novels remained as uncomfortable memories in his mind that he tried to suppress. Teddy was forced on the pages of a book and his character was openly … While his aunt was very proud of her work, to Teddy, "Augustus, however, would plague him one way or another for the rest of his life" (*GIR*, 53) as Teddy had been figuratively forced into a mold that represented him in no way. Possibly Teddy also felt failure as a child due to the books, as he was aware from the beginning that he was not what his aunt thought he ought to be.

Teddy personalized a different type of masculinity as a child, or even the lack of a traditional masculinity, but his upbringing and education, especially in regard to attending a private boys' school, managed to pluck those characteristics out of him and molded his masculinity towards the traditional. Because for men, "being peaceable rather than violent, conciliatory rather than dominant, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest, and so forth" (Connell 1995, 67), it is not acceptable, leading to the removal of these gentler dispositions of boys.

In her research on the behavioral development of boys in the stage of early childhood, Chu (2014) noted that boys inhabit very similar places in their power

hierarchy. Those of higher position were seen to embody the traditional masculine traits, being tough, particular about the company they kept and seeing the way they were perceived among others as important. On the lower ranks were boys that were not as particular about who they played with and what type of games, they let their personality and interests guide them (Chu 2014, 11-14). As in the study, it is evident in the character of Teddy also how being in the company of girls as well as boys results in a much more balanced attitude in boys and a softer nature.

4.6. The War Experience: Masculinity and Trauma

Lastly, traumatization of men is often overlooked if there are no significant and clear signals of it, such as physical evidence of trauma or not being able to function normally. The ideas of masculinity have a great impact on why trauma is not considered to have a significant impact on men. It is not properly understood in regard to gender and how trauma is experienced.

> Conventional approaches to deployment trauma, however, do not appear to have considered the depth of the social character of the self, and, thereby, trauma. This is in part because they tend to rely upon an assumption that an individual person is substantially continuous and largely comprehensible as a separate, independent entity. (Fox and Pease 2012, 18)

To understand trauma and its effects on the male psyche, the experiences on war zones must be connected to the individual and understood in individual contexts of experience.

An important and significant impact on the character development of Teddy and Hugh is represented by their experiences in war. Participating in the war efforts leads most people with one type of trauma or another. As mentioned, masculinity plays an integral role in how men experience this trauma. This compares somewhat to the experiences of women who have faced traumatic experiences mainly including physical or sexual violence. More closely considered these include domestic abuse and rape. While women's trauma is more widely recognized, the inner workings of male trauma and how masculinity affects the experience of it is less understood and deserves a closer examination.

The nature of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is recognized as the direct result of life-threatening incidents that were directed to an individual directly and affects

the ability to function physically, however trauma in a more general form has been less studied. "[t]rauma involves more than disruption of one's identity, but extends to the experience of, and assumptions about, the world in which the person lives [...] These assumptions are not those of the traumatized person alone, but are drawn from, and shared with, a wider community. The disruption of an individual's experience of trauma is thus not only a personal event, but an intensely social event as well" (Fox & Pease 2012, 18). When no biological or physical dysfunction can be detected, a person is thought to be able to separate their self and their identity from the events that happened. This in part is a direct consequence of how masculinity is thought of.

This type of thinking applied to Teddy and Hugh as well. As they returned from their respective wars intact and sane, their war experience was more or less ignored. In the beginning of the 21st century the implications of masculinity in dealing with trauma has not been understood in its entirety. Why trauma has not been dealt with more closely regarding men and masculinity stems mainly from the idea of masculine toughness: "a man experiencing trauma is then, from the perspective of this conversation, seen to be exhibiting feminine traits—as not being himself" (Fox and Pease 2012, 521). A man not entirely in charge of his faculties and showing weakness is considered unmasculine and as such it must be feminine. This again shows clearly why it is important to reformulate the ideas of masculinity and femininity and why it would be important to accept that men also would benefit from what are considered feminine qualities.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to show and examine the different representations of masculinities embodied in the various male characters in Kate Atkinson's novels *Life after Life* and *A God in Ruins*. Throughout the novels it is present that there are in fact multiple masculinities that can be recognized, instead of only one masculinity. The development of the different characters and the type of masculinities they acquire are dictated by the surroundings and the type of upbringings they receive. The development of masculinity begins early on in childhood, and early childhood can be seen as the crucial point which shapes boys the most. It was shown how many have difficulties trying to conform to the ideals widely accepted in a society and how differing from the expected norm leads to a person being bullied, unappreciated and undermined. In addition, the feelings of not reaching expectations while being forced to conform to certain norms can result in aggression and violence due to feelings of having failed as a man.

Throughout both novels several different types of masculinities could be found within the numerous characters that provided a great deal of material for examination. The novels provided a wide scope of characters for this study. As proven by the analysis, masculinity and men's studies are wide ranging areas of study and the multiple types of masculinities do not fit into well-defined categories but have a fluidity to them that produce material for a fruitful examination. The attitudes towards masculinity and men's studies have seen a major change during the last decades and the value of research has begun to be acknowledged. As defining these different masculinities has helped to better understand men and the changes that are needed, the work towards gender equality is not yet over. As Waling noted in her research "in order to better engage men and boys on issues of gender inequality, we need to move away from terms such as 'toxic' and 'healthy masculinity', and instead focus on deconstructing gender binaries regarding who van engage or enact particular expressions of gender" (Waling 2019, 363). The various masculinities need to be better recognized and accepted and a better understanding of gender reached. Masculinity is not a static concept that remains unchanged throughout time. It is not innate to men but is shaped through upbringing, education, environment, and society. The study on masculinities is important for the understanding that in reality there are shifts and changes constantly. Masculinity cannot be defined as one mold that all men are supposed to fit, but that there exist several different masculinities. Having masculine traits should not also automatically mean the absence of feminine traits. The

opening of society to approve masculine traits in women and feminine traits in men would benefit both genders. The reality of masculinity being constructed through actions and this construction being guided by surroundings continues to be further acknowledged.

The benefits of acknowledging all masculinities as acceptable would benefit not only men and boys, but women and the entire society also. The thought of society being built in a way that gives men the advantage prevails largely. However, men have a shorter life expectancy than women, suffer more often from mental health problems, and are much more likely to commit suicide. This would indicate a different reality, where men suffer from how the society is built. In this thesis it was defined that there is more than one masculinity as well as how these masculinities differ greatly from each other. These different kinds of masculinities are also treated and categorized differently and placed on a power hierarchy. Traditional masculinity can be seen placed above others as presenting less similarities with femininity and hybrid or marginalized masculinities are on the bottom.

Both of the novels were set in the mid and late 1990s and as such represent a past as it is seen in the time of the writing. While they are an interesting viewing to the past and show many discrepancies in how gender and masculinity are seen and expected to manifest in men and boys, it is a fictitious narrative that gives a glimpse to what it could have meant to be male in the society throughout the 1900s. The way the ideals of masculinity are subjected upon children and young adolescents has a great impact on their development and to the type of adults they grow up to be. Most of these characters would most likely have benefited from the right type of examples about masculinity, but most importantly the need for an upbringing that does not place one type of expression of masculinity over another. The need to focus on every child's specific needs is evident.

In addition to the effects imposed masculinity may have on growing boys, the importance of fatherhood was examined. Fatherhood has been a necessity for men in order to continue their bloodline and they have not been involved in raising children. It was only when boys became old enough to be taught skills and tasks deemed necessary for them to learn, did fathers participate in teaching them. However, it has been proven that how fatherhood is seen needs to change as an emotional connection between fathers and their children would greatly affect the emotional growth of both boys and girls. Instead of seeing childrearing and childcare as emasculating and feminizing, its importance is recognized as pivotal.

Violence often raises much discussion and is seen as quite black and white by many. There are those who use violence and are to be condemned instantly, and those who are targets of it. Nevertheless, the examination of male aggression and use of violence could be noted to be manifold in the analysis. The reasons behind violent behavior, whether it was physical or sexual violence, was not straight forward. Use of aggression was shown to stem from various reasons. Aggression can be a learned way of behaving that has been acquired in childhood or it can result from neglect or feelings of failure, in men, regarding their ability to embody proper masculinity. Use of sexual violence was seen to arise from acting according to male domination and establishing one's own manliness. Probably the factor of excitement added to these as well. As violence and showing of aggression in different situations was noted to originate from social surroundings rather than the body itself, so was the occurrence of infidelity of men in marriages shown to have multiple driving forces. As masculinity can be seen important in the novels, infidelity is linked to feelings of emasculation and the need to feel manly.

While these are not accepted behaviors in men, they still cannot be solely blamed and condemned for these actions as the environment they live in and the pressures and expectations placed upon them shape their characters and drive their decisions. As noted by Chu (2014) as well "[b]oys' relational capabilities became less apparent as they became more focused on gaining other people's approval and acceptance and, to that end, learned to align their behaviors with group and cultural norms" (36), reinforcing the idea that society, culture, and the people surrounding an individual have a much greater impact on the development of boys than nature or biology, and this needs to be better researched and acknowledged.

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Appendix

Tiivistelmä

Pro Gradu -tutkielmani käsittelee maskuliinisuuden monia esiintymiä Kate Atkinsonin *Life after Life* (2013; suomeksi *Elämä elämältä*, 2014) ja *A God in Ruins* (2015; Suomeksi *Hävityksen jumala*, 2017) romaanien mieshahmoissa. Maskuliinisuustutkimus sekä miestutkimus ovat tutkimuksenaloina vielä verrattain nuoria, varsinkin verrattuna naistutkimuksen historiaan. Naistutkimuksen sekä feminismin tutkimuksen juuret ulottuvat pitkälle 1800-luvulle sekä tutkimuksen tärkeyttä on ollut helppo perustella naisiin kohdistuvalla sorrolla, jonka harjoittajia ovat olleet miehet. Naisiin on kohdistunut niin henkistä, fyysistä kuin seksuaalista väkivaltaa, mihin feministit ovat pyrkineet puuttumaan. Tällä tavoin miehet on kuitenkin jätetty varjoon, sekä ylenkatsottu se, miten kaikki miehet eivät ole niitä, jotka sortavat ja jotkut ovat itse sorrettuja. Vaikka patriarkaatin ajatellaan arvottavan miehet naisten yläpuolelle, se samalla myös arvottaa osan miehistä toisten yläpuolelle. Maskuliinisuuksia on myös useampia kuin vain yksi, toisin kuin usein ajatellaan. Työssäni pyrin selvittämään: minkälaisia maskuliinisuuksia ylipäätään on olemassa, miksi jotkut miehet käyttäytyvät väkivaltaisesti naisia kohtaan, mikä on ajava voima tällaisen käyttäytymisen takana, sekä miten yhteiskunnan oletukset miehisyydestä vaikuttavat miehiin oikeasti.

Valitsemistani Kate Atkinson romaaneista *Life after Life* ilmestyi vuonna 2013 ja se saavuttikin suosiota niin lukijoiden kuin kriitikoiden silmissä. Kaksi vuotta myöhemmin ilmestynyt *A God in Ruins* on edellisen romaanin kumppaniteos ja jatkaa aiemman tarinaa, kuitenkin eri päähenkilön kautta. *Life after Life* keskittyy Ursula Todd nimiseen tyttöön, joka joutuu elämänsä aikana kokemaan monia vastoinkäymisiä, jotka johtavat tämän useaan kuolemaan. Jokaisen kuoleman jälkeen Ursulan tarina kelautuu takaisin vaiheeseen, jossa tämän tarina oli vielä niin sanotusti oikeilla raiteilla. Pikkuhiljaa Ursula alkaa tunnistamaan jo eläneensä elämät, joiden avulla tämä onnistuu navigoimaan oikealla polulla. Tutkimusaiheena teoksesta tekee mielenkiintoisen siinä esiintyvät mieshahmot sekä miten he vaikuttavat Ursulan elämään. Tarinan varrella nähdään monia eri esiintymiä erilaisista maskuliinisuuden ilmentymistä sekä näkyvissä on miten maskuliinisuuden odotukset vaikuttavat miesten henkiseen ja psyykkiseen kehitykseen.

A God in Ruis siirtää huomion Ursulasta tämän nuorempaan pikkuveljeen, Edvard "Teddy" Toddin elämään. Teddyn elämää seurataan aina tämän lapsuudesta aikuisuuteen, miten tämä selviää toisesta maailmansodasta aina vanhuuteen saakka. Teddyn kehitystä aikuisuuteen säätelevät monet asiat ja tämän pyrkimys miellyttämään ympärillään olevia ihmisiä ja heidän odotuksiaan saa Teddyn tuntemaan itsensä usein tyytymättömäksi elämäänsä. Kuitenkin aikuistuessaan hänkin mukautuu yhteiskunnan odotuksiin. Teddy avioituu lapsuudenystävänsä ja mielitiettynsä Nancyn kanssa ja heidän tyttärensä Violan synnyttyä muuttavat lähiöön asumaan. Teddyssä on kuitenkin nähtävissä tasaisemman maskuliinisuuden kehittyminen ja hän onnistuukin välttämään pahimmat perinteisen maskuliinisuuden sekä toksisen maskuliinisuuden ansat. Teddyn lisäksi mielenkiintoisia tutkimuksen kohteita romaaneissa ovat tämän tyttären mies sekä poika, joissa erityisesti on uudella tavalla huomattavissa millainen negatiivinen vaikutus perinteisen maskuliinisuuden pakottaminen yksilölle voi olla.

Kuten jo aiemmin mainittiin, teoreettisena työkaluna työssä on maskuliinisuusteoria. Ennen itse maskuliinisuuden käsitteeseen syventymistä on tärkeää ymmärtää eroavaisuudet miestutkimuksen ja maskuliinisuustutkimuksen välillä sekä miksi maskuliinisuuden ilmentymien tutkiminen on tärkeää. Maskuliinisuuden ajatellaan usein olevan pysyvää sekä aina tietyt ominaisuudet sisältävää. Tämä ei kuitenkaan ole totta, vaan maskuliinisuuksia on useita sekä niihin sisällytetyt arvot ja ominaisuudet muokkautuvat ajan mukana. Maskuliinisuus on siis sosiaalisesti rakentunutta sekä ympäristö vaikuttaa siihen merkittävästi. Maskuliinisuus on myös olemassa ainoastaan yhteydessä feminiinisyyteen ja feminismiin. Maskuliinisuus onkin noussut pintaan juuri feminismin muokatessa naisten asemaa ja naisten vallattua uusia alueita kodin ulkopuolelta. Teoriaosuudessa keskeisenä teoriataustana ovat R. W. Connelin tekstit maskuliinisuudesta, sekä näiden lisäksi myös muita tekstejä, jotka tukevat työn argumentointia.

Jotta maskuliinisuuden esiintymiä voidaan tutkia, on erilaiset maskuliinisuuden esiintymät ensin tunnistettava sekä niille on annettava määritelmät. Tässä osiossa käydään läpi perinteinen maskuliinisuus, hegemoninen maskuliinisuus, hybridi-, tai marginalisoidut maskuliinisuudet, toksinen maskuliinisuus sekä niin sanottu terveellinen maskuliinisuus. Kaikki nämä ilmentävät erilaisia maskuliinisuuden piirteitä, jotkin niistä ovat negatiivisia, toiset positiivisia ja osa neutraaleja. Jotta maskuliinisuutta voitaisiin

ymmärtää paremmin, on näiden läpikäyminen olennaista. Teoriaosuuden päättää katsaus maskuliinisuuden sekä patriarkaatin yhteyteen. Patriarkaatin katsotaan usein olevan jo vanhentunut käsite, eikä vastaavaa naisten sortoa tai yhteiskunnan epätasa-arvoisuutta esiinny riittävästi, jotta voitaisiin puhua patriarkaatista. Tämä oletus on kuitenkin väärä ja todellisuudessa patriarkaatti on kyllä muuttanut muotoaan ja miehen vallan siirtyessä enemmän poliittisesta yksityiseen, on sitä hankalampi tunnistaa ja nimetä. Toinen usein väärinymmärretty asia patriarkaatin suhteen on sen mieltäminen kaikkia miehiä hyödyttäväksi rakenteeksi. Todellisuudessa patriarkaatti hyödyttää vain tiettyjä miehiä ja vain murto-osa on niitä, jotka aktiivisesti ylläpitävät yhteiskunnan patriarkaalisia rakenteita. Myös patriarkaatti on altis yhteiskunnan sille aiheuttamille muutoksille ja avaimena patriarkaalisten rakenteiden purkamiseen onkin asenteiden ja ajatusmallien muuttaminen oikeaan suuntaan.

Teoriaosuuden jälkeen alkaa analyysi osio, jossa paneudutaan analysoimaan romaanien eri mieshahmojen maskuliinisuuksia sekä miten nämä maskuliinisuudet ovat todellisuudessa muodostuneet. Heistä voidaan huomata, miten eri maskuliinisuuksia arvotetaan hyvin eri tavoilla. Osiossa henkilöhahmojen maskuliinisuuksien tutkimiseen syvennytään tarkemmin. Tarkastelun alla on, miten maskuliinisuudet tunnistetaan, sekä miten ne esiintyvät ja miten hahmojen kohtelu on riippuvaistaan heidän kyvystään sopeutua yhteisön maskuliinisuuden ihanteisiin. Tarkoituksena on todentaa miten pakotetut maskuliinisuuden sekä miehisyyden mallit vaikuttavat poikien kehitykseen sekä poikien että miesten kykyihin tulkita omia tunteitaan, sekä mitä niiden tukahduttamisesta voi koitua.

Ensimmäisenä tarkastelun alla ovat Dominic ja tämän poika Sunny. Molempien hahmojen kehitykseen vaikuttavat sekä tunteiden että tarpeiden laiminlyönti nuoresta iästä lähtien, sekä myöhemmin kasvatusmetodit, jotka ovat jo vanhentuneita ja ihannoivat perinteisen maskuliinisuuden ominaisuuksia. Sunnyn kohdalla voidaan tarkemmin todentaa, miten tärkeää aikaa varhaislapsuus on lapsen ja erityisesti poikien kehityksen kannalta. Varhaisen lapsuuden aikana pojat ottavat välimatkaa äiteihinsä ja alkavat enemmän samaistua isiinsä. Tässä kohtaa hyvä miehen malli sekä kasvatus, jossa otetaan huomioon poikien yksilölliset tarpeet, on erittäin tärkeää. Tällöin esille nousevat myös huomattavat erot poikien käyttäytymisessä ja psyykessä, kun verrataan niitä poikia kenelle tytöt kelpaavat leikkikavereiksi sekä niitä, jotka pitäytyvät muiden poikien

seurassa. Tyttöjen seurassa enemmän viihtyvillä pojilla voidaan todeta parempi kyky näyttää ja käsitellä omia tunteitaan sekä heidän yleisilmeensä on pehmeämpi. Sunnyn kohdalla voidaan nähdä monia ongelmia lähtien siihen, miten häntä yritetään kasvattaa, hänen äitinsä jättää tämän oman onnensa nojaan, kun taas tämän isoäiti yrittää väkisin sovittaa Sunnyn tämän miehisyyden muottiin. Tämän lisäksi koulu johon Sunny lähetetään, kasvattaa poikia kovalla kädellä, kun taas Sunnyn voidaan selkeästi nähdä olevan pehmeämmän sekä ymmärtäväisemmän opetusmetodin tarpeessa.

Seuraavaksi siirrytään käsittelemään osallista maskuliinisuutta, sekä isyyden konseptia. Vaikka joidenkin miesten on aktiivisesti toimittava hegemonisen maskuliinisuuden sekä patriarkaatin rakenteiden ylläpitämiseksi, tämä ei kuitenkaan ole tarpeellista kaikkien kohdalla. Joillekin on mahdollista olla aktiivisesti vaikuttamatta ylläpidettävään järjestykseen, mutta he voivat kuitenkin samalla hyötyä patriarkaatin tuomista eduista. Näin on Hugh Toddin laita. Hänen ei tarvitse vahvistaa asemaansa maskuliinisuutensa kautta, vaan pitää sitä yllä pienillä teoilla, jotka yksistään eivät vaikuta vallan ylläpitämiseltä. Yksi esimerkki on tämän suhtautuminen taloutensa naisiin, joiden olemukseen ja toisinaan tekemisiinkin tämä puuttuu hienovaraisin elein ja sanoin.

Perinteiseen maskuliinisuuteen on olennaisesti kuulunut isyys. Naimisiin meneminen sekä lasten hankkiminen on erityisesti aiemmin ollut, mutta on myös edelleen tärkeää sekä naisille että miehille. Romaanien sijoittumisajankohtana perheen jatkaminen oli edelleen tärkeä tehtävä miehille ja kunniakysymys. Lasten syntymän jälkeen isän roolin kuitenkin voidaan huomata vähentyvän ja Hugh pitääkin usein pidempää välimatkaa lapsiinsa, jos ei fyysisesti niin hän on henkisesti kuitenkin etäinen. Tällä on myös suuri vaikutus lapsiin, sillä on todettu isän roolin ja läheisyyden olevan olennainen osa tasapainoista kasvua niin tytöille kuin pojillekin, mutta erityisesti pojille hyvä isän malli on erityisen tärkeä. Myös Teddyn kohdalla voidaan huomata, miten tämän etäisyys tyttäreensä on hyvin pitkälti osasyyllinen näiden kylmään yhteyteen. Monesti ajatellaankin, että vanhemmat onnistuvat vasta lastenlastensa kohdalla ja tämä voidaan nähdä Teddyn kohdalla. Tämä on ainoa hahmo, jonka todella nähdään olevan vuorovaikutuksessa lastenlastensa kanssa ja heidän kanssaan tämän onkin sisäistänyt paljon pehmeämmän ja ymmärtävämmän tavan kasvattaa heitä. Perinteisen maskuliinisuuden sekä isyyden konseptien välillä on ongelmallisuuksia. Perinteinen maskuliinisuus pitää isän kauempana lapsista ja painottaa äidin roolia lasten

kasvattamisessa. Tämä pitäisikin purkaa lasten ja erityisesti poikien paremman kasvuympäristön vuoksi.

Maskuliinisuuden negatiivisia esiintymiä ovat toksinen ja hyper maskuliinisuus, joissa henkilön maskuliinisuus on vääristynyt. Näin käy, kun poikien on tukahdutettu tunteensa, joiden ajatellaan olevan miehelle liian feminiinisiä. Tunteiden kuten empatian, surun, tai pelon näyttäminen ei ole suositeltavaa ja tämän sijaan tunteet kuten viha ja aggressio nousevat pintaan. Nämä kovemmat tunteet sopivat paremmin erityisesti perinteisen maskuliinisuuden piiriin. Toksinen maskuliinisuus on maskuliinisuustutkimuksenkin piirissä suhteellisen uusi käsite, joten sen tarkempi tutkiminen on tarpeen. Derekin ja Howardin hahmot ovat erinomaisia esimerkkejä toksisen sekä hypermaskuliinisuuden esiintymistä. Perheensisäinen väkivalta on lähes aina miehen tekemää ja naiset joutuvat sen kohteeksi.

Väkivaltaa käyttämään päätyneitä miehiä arvostellaan hyvin rankasti. Vaikka väkivallan käyttö ei olekaan suotavaa tai millään tavalla hyväksyttävää käytöstä, olisi tärkeää ymmärtää mikä johtaa väkivallan käyttöön. Yleensä syy ei ole niin yksinkertainen ja suoraviivainen, että se olisi henkilöstä itsestä juontuvaa, biologiaan liitettävää käyttäytymistä. Väkivaltaisuudelle löytyy taustalta aina jokin syy. Toiset oppivat väkivallan käytön olevan normaalia ja sallittavaa huonoilta roolimalleilta, toisilla on vääristynyt kuva maskuliinisuudesta, toisilla taas johtuu väkivallan käyttö omista väkivallan kokemuksista. Myös oma ympäristö vaikuttaa monella tapaa. Derekin kohdalla yhdeksi syyksi voidaan nähdä miten tämän vertaiset kohtelevat tätä alempiarvoisesti. Toinen indikaattori on tämän isä. Isästä ei juuri puhuta, kuin muutaman maininnan verran, mutta hahmojen käyttäytymisestä voidaan päätellä joitain asioita tästä. Derek väittää isänsä kuolleen ja jättäneen tälle merkittävän perinnön, todellisuudessa tämän isä on edelleen hengissä ja elää toisaalla. Ehkä Derekillä on vaikea ja jopa mahdollisesti väkivaltainen lapsuus takanaan.

Howard on esimerkki hypermaskuliinisuudesta, jolloin maskuliinisuuden piirteet ovat vääristyneet niin sanotuksi ylimaskuliinisuudeksi. Howardin voidaan nähdä käyttävän seksuaalista väkivaltaa pönkittämään omaa voima-asemaansa sekä kykenevänsä dominoimaan muita. Raiskaus on usein linkitetty tutkimuksissa sukupuoleen, mutta miten ne linkittyvät toisiinsa on usein jäänyt vaille tarkennusta. Kuten väkivallan käytön suhteen aina, myös seksuaalisen väkivallan käytölle on monia syitä.

Raiskauksen on väitetty liittyvän nimenomaan miehen seksuaalisuuteen himoon, mikä ajaa tekoihin. Se on kuitenkin ennemmin patriarkaatin ja miehen ylivallan esiintymä. Sen avulla vallalla olevaa järjestystä voidaan pitää yllä. Kuitenkaan kaikki miehet eivät alennu kyseiseen tekoon, suurin osa elää sovussa naisten kanssa. Mistä tämä käyttäytymismalli todellisuudessa siis kumpuaa. Jos kyse olisi vain biologiasta, todennäköisesti kaikki toimisivat enemmän tai vähemmän niin. Hypermaskuliinisuus on myös maskuliinisuuden vääristymä, jossa väkivaltainen käyttäytyminen naisia kohtaan ajatellaan mittaavan maskuliinisuutta. Myös itse kielletty toimita voi toimia motivaattorina, kun kielletyt asiat tai toiminnat nostavat innostuksenpintaan. Tosiasiassa miehen ruumiin voidaan katsoa olevan lähes tyhjä pinta, jota ympäristö muokkaa. Sosiaalinen ja biologinen yhdistettynä luovat käyttäytymisen mallit. Jotta väkivaltaiseen käyttäytymiseen kyettäisiin todella puuttumaan ja kitkemään, vaatii se muutoksia yhteiskunnan tasolla, eikä painetta voi kohdistaa vain yksilön muutokselle.

Perinteisen maskuliinisuuden ihannointiin liittyy monia ongelmakohtia. Myös miesten uskottomuus voidaan yhdistää tähän, sillä kysymys on maskuliinisuuden heikentymisen estämisestä. Kun miesten pettämistä aletaan tarkastella ja kiinnitetään enemmän huomiota sen takana oleviin syihin, voidaan niiden huomata olevan todellisuudessa moninaisia. Crighton, yksi Ursulan rakastajista, naimisissa oleva perheenisä. Yksi syy pettämiselle löytyy avioliiton dynamiikan muuttumisesta sekä miehen tunteista olevansa riittämätön sekä jäävänsä vaille rakkautta ja ihailu, mikä on tärkeää jokaiselle. Hän ei kuitenkaan ole valmis jättämään vaimoaan tai perhettään. Miehiin kohdistuvat yhteiskunnalliset paineet näkyvät myös parisuhteissa. Perhedynamiikka on hyvin tarkasti määritelty, mutta salasuhteissaan tämä voi olla vapaampi, eikä tämän tarvitse kokea oman maskuliinisuutensa vaarantuvan. Uskottomuus tarjoaa väylän paeta avioliiton monotoniaa, sen sijaan että ongelmat kohdattaisiin.

Teddyn maskuliinisuuden taas voidaan aika-ajoin nähdä olevan konfliktissa. Lapsena hyvinkin erilaisen ja vapaan persoonallisuuden omaava Teddykin joutuu kasvaessaan huomaamaan, ettei yhteiskunta hyväksy tätä sellaisena kuin on. Tämän takia hän myös lopulta päätyy alistua yhteiskunnan asettamiin normeihin. Kuitenkin hänessä on nähtävissä myös pilkahduksia tahdosta tehdä toisin ja olla välittämättä yhteiskunnan vaatimuksista, samalla kun tämä elää elämäänsä odotusten mukaisesti. Lapsena tämä oli innokas tekemään niin kuin tältä pyydettiin ja odotettiin. Samalla kuitenkin Teddy oli myös hyvin tunteellinen lapsi ja toisin kuin muut pojat, viihtyi erinomaisesti siskojensa

sekä naapurin tyttöjen seurassa. Myöhemmin Teddy meni naimisiin lapsuuden ihastuksensa kanssa ja he saivat yhdessä tytön. Teddy kuitenkin koki samalla olevansa vangittuna omassa elämässään ja hänestä tuntui, että vaihtoehdot oli otettu häneltä pois. Hieman ristiriitaisesti Teddy kokikin vapautukseksi alkavan toisen maailmansodan, joka tarjosi muutosta sen hetkisestä elämästä. Erityisesti lapsena Teddyyn vaikutti hyvin paljon myös tämän täti, joka valitsi Teddyn seikkailukirjasarjansa sankarin malliksi. Todellisuudessa Teddyllä ja kirjan poikahahmolla ei kuitenkaan ollut mitään yhteistä ja kirjat vaikuttivat vain negatiivisesti Teddyyn henkiseen hyvinvointiin sekä kehitykseen.

Viimeisenä tarkasteluun on otettu sotakokemus ja sen vaikutukset maskuliinisuuteen, sekä miten trauma muokkaa maskuliinisuutta. Traumalla ei tässä tapauksessa tarkoiteta monilla sotilailla sodan jälkeen todettu *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD) sairautta, vaan kokemuksellista traumaa, joka jättää jälkensä mutta ei välttämättä näy henkilön kyvyissä toimia yhteiskunnassa. Teddy ja Hugh molemmat osallistuivat aikansa sotiin, Hugh ensimmäiseen ja Teddy toiseen maailmansotaan. Sotatraumoja on verrattu naisten kokemuksiin fyysisestä ja seksuaalisesta väkivallasta, lähinnä kodin piirissä. Naisten trauma tunnetaankin varsin hyvin, mutta miesten kokemukset ovat jääneet vielä pitkälti huomiotta, vähintäänkin kun on kyse henkisistä traumoista. Heidän on ajateltu kykenevän erottamaan traumaattiset kokemukset persoonastaan, ja tällä onkin ollut suoria vaikutuksia maskuliinisuuden kehittymiseen negatiivisesti.

Tämän gradun tarkoituksena oli tutkia maskuliinisuuden eri representaatioita Kate Atkinsonin romaaneissa *Life after Life* ja *A God in Ruins*. Molempien romaanien miesten henkilöhahmoista olikin löydettävissä monien eri maskuliinisuuden ulottuvuuksien esiintymiä, joiden avulla pystyttiin tarkastelemaan maskuliinisuuden käsitteen moninaisuutta. Maskuliinisuuden todettiin muovautuvan pitkälti lapsuudessa ja varsinkin varhainen lapsuus vaikuttaa vahvasti poikien kehitykseen. Hahmot kategorisoitiin sen perusteella, millaisen maskuliinisuuden piirteitä näissä esiintyi selkeästi eniten, kuitenkin todellisuudessa ei ole olemassa selkeitä kiinteitä ja pysyviä maskuliinisuuksia, vaan päällekkäisyyksiä esiintyy. Jotta miessukupuolta voitaisiin ymmärtää paremmin, on näiden maskuliinisuuksien tutkiminen tärkeää. Sitä kautta voidaan mahdollisesti tulevaisuudessa alkaa sukupuolen käsitteitä dekonstruoimaan ja siten rakentamaan niitä uudelleen, yhteiskunnallisten ajattelutapojen uudelleenrakentamisen kautta. Maskuliinisuuden parempi ymmärtäminen myös auttaisi erityisesti poikien kasvua ja

kehitystä, kun heiltä ei odoteta tiettyyn maskuliinisuuden ideaaliin mukautumista. Myös feminististen ominaisuuksien sulkeminen miespersoonan ulkopuolelle voi olla jopa haitallista, mutta pojat vähintäänkin hyötyisivät siitä, että esimerkiksi tunteiden käsittelyä tuettaisiin sekä kasvatusta ja opetusta yksilöitäisiin, jotta jokainen voi kasvaa aikuiseksi omana itsenään.