

# Palgrave Studies in (Re)Presenting Gender

Series Editor

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The focus of Palgrave Studies in (Re)Presenting Gender is on gender and representation. The ‘arts’ in their broadest sense – TV, music, film, dance, and performance – and media re-present (where ‘to represent’ is taken in its literal sense of ‘to present again’, or ‘to give back’) gender globally. How this re-presentation might be understood is core to the series.

In re-presenting gendered bodies, the contributing authors can shift the spotlight to focus on marginalised individuals’ negotiations of gender and identity. In this way, minority genders, subcultural genders, and gender inscribed on, in, and by queer bodies, take centre stage. When the ‘self’ must participate in and interact with the world through the body, how that body’s gender is talked about – and side-lined or embraced by hegemonic forces – becomes paramount. These processes of representation – how cultures ‘give back’ gender to the individual – are at the heart of this series.

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Carmen Dextl · Silvia Gerlsbeck  
Editors

# The Male Body in Representation

Returning to Matter

palgrave  
macmillan

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## PREFACE

The drawing from Michelangelo's *Studies for the Libyan Sibyl* (ca. 1510–1511) portrays Sibyl, the priestess of the Oracle of Zeus-Ammon. While this sketch, one out of a series, might be familiar to us, it is also profoundly defamiliarizing: What exactly do we see here? What is portrayed? We see the rear view of a part of a body, the figure's head slightly tilted, eyes looking downward, the facial features soft, almost delicate, with a slim nose and high cheekbones, and braided hair. The viewer's eye is immediately drawn to the muscular back and equally sinewy arms, the clearly visible overall high muscle tone of the figure's body. Drawn with red chalk, which was especially suited for the particularized, highly naturalistic study of anatomical detail, the powerful muscular body and soft delicate face that converge in this figure challenge the categorization of the figure in terms of sex and gender. We might be familiar with the finished painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City for which these sketches laid the ground, yet the story of the studies on which the sketches are based is intriguing: While some of the drawings portray softer anatomical forms, which the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) in New York City describes as “feminine”,<sup>1</sup> this sketch is based on a young

<sup>1</sup> The image and quote stem from the website of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which owns the drawings: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/337497>. Last accessed July 27, 2021.

male model posing for Michelangelo in his studio and presents us with—as the Met puts it—a more “masculine” body. This de-entanglement of notions of sex and gender from the body seems a fitting way to open our volume, as it underscores these concepts’ characteristic “conceptual fuzziness”. This book is thus motivated by inquiring into how more nuanced understandings of and insights into these concepts can be gained from analyzing the male body as it emerges in representation.

Regensburg, Germany  
Erlangen, Germany

Carmen Dextl  
Silvia Gerlsbeck

# CONTENTS

1	<b>Returning to Matter: New Perspectives on the Male Body in Representation</b>	1
	Carmen Dextl and Silvia Gerlsbeck	
<b>Part I Non/Conforming Bodies</b>		
2	<b><i>Brother to Brother: A Rereading of Black Masculinities in Embodied Performance</i></b>	27
	Michael McMillan	
3	<b>'You're a Real Man After All': Fashioning the Male Physique in Twentieth-Century Boxing and Wrestling Magazines</b>	53
	Ana Stevenson and David Patrick	
4	<b>Basil Dearden's <i>Violent Playground</i> (1958): Masculinity, Class, and Sentimental Politics</b>	75
	Christian Krug	
<b>Part II Fashionable Bodies</b>		
5	<b>Refashioning the Male Body: Contemporary Media Representations of the Spornosexual and the Waif</b>	99
	Jay McCauley Bowstead	

- 6 English Dandies and French *Lions*: Policing the Male Body in Popular Print and Visual Culture Between 1815 and 1848 123  
John Finkelberg
- 7 *Stiliagi* Masculinity and the Re-Fashioning of the Male Body in the Soviet Union (1948–1958) 147  
Alla Myzelev
- Part III Passing Bodies
- 8 Claiming the *Flâneur*'s Body: Cross-Dressing Women, Autobiographical Self-Fashioning, and the Pleasures of Passing and Not Passing as a Man on the Street 173  
Sandra Dinter
- 9 Jake and Ellen in Transition: On Clarissa Sligh's Mutable Bodies 195  
rl goldberg
- 10 "A Most Unlikely Hero": Disability, Masculinity, and Sexuality in Harlequin Superromance Novels 215  
Jonathan A. Allan
- Part IV Pioneering Bodies?
- 11 Of Cyborgs, Aliens, and Tricksters: Posthumanist Perspectives on the Male Body in Caribbean Speculative Literature 239  
Carmen Dext and Silvia Gerlsbeck
- 12 Fashionable Men in Skin-Tight Pants: Shifts in Body Images and Concepts of Masculinity in the History of Men's Legwear 263  
Melanie Haller
- 13 "Isn't It Pretty to Think So?"—Disability and the Queering of Masculinity in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* 287  
Martina Kübler

<b>14 Coda: Rereading the Male Body—The Cultural Power of Representation</b>	<b>307</b>
Carmen Dextl and Silvia Gerlsbeck	
<b>Index</b>	<b>313</b>

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*Narrative*, the book is a phenomenological account of trans self-writing and interrogates the ways in which trans texts are received as pedagogy.

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## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 5.1	A muscular gymgoer sports a dragon tattoo (© Alamy Stock Photo, n.d.)	102
Fig. 5.2	a and b; A model walks for Ludovic de Saint Sernin Fall 2020 Runway (© Alamy Stock Photo 2020)	111
Fig. 6.1	Charles Philipon’s “Longchamps / Des Poupées sur des Chaises” (© The Trustees of the British Museum)	129
Fig. 6.2	Charles Philipon’s “As Tu Frisé mon Toupet?” (© Bibliothèque Nationale de France)	134
Fig. 6.3	Cham’s “Oh hé! Ce Cavalier! Ohè!” (© Bibliothèque Nationale de France)	140
Fig. 7.1	Violent fight or romantic attraction? Film still from Valerii Todorovsky’s <i>Stiliagi</i> (00:19:26)	148
Fig. 7.2	Caricature comparing a <i>Stiliaga</i> to a parrot (Dukhovichnyi and Slobodskii 1960, 9)	158
Fig. 7.3	A <i>Stiliaga</i> as long-haired and inept camp counselor (Fedorov 1958, 6)	160
Fig. 7.4	Caricature of a flamboyantly dressed male <i>Stiliaga</i> (Zmoiro 1958, 15)	162
Fig. 12.1	Image of a model wearing Kapow brand men’s leggings © Kapow Meggings	265
Fig. 12.2	Complex interfacing in suits (Sprenger 2009, 121)	271
Fig. 12.3	Eldridge Cleaver’s ‘penis pants’ ( <i>Rolling Stone Magazine</i> [US], October 1975)	275