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Between Vietnam and 9/11: Arnold Schwarzenegger and a New Type of Masculinity in Twins and Kindergarten Cop

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Between Vietnam and 9/11: Arnold Schwarzenegger and a New Type of Masculinity in *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop*

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Abstract

This article argues that the 1990s was a culturally pivotal period in the history of the U.S. Trapped between the Vietnam War and 9/11, that time generated a very unique portrayal of masculinity in film. The article contends that with the release of *Twins* (1988) and *Kindergarten Cop* (1990), Arnold Schwarzenegger became a new hero of the 1990s, showcasing that masculinity of the 1990s was multifaceted. The article imparts the idea that in the 1990s masculinity was not defined by the notions of power, aggressiveness, and emotionless anymore; on the contrary, vulnerability, devotion, and care were the aspects that characterized the new type of masculinity.

Keywords: masculinity, body, aggressiveness vs. softness, family, film, Arnold Schwarzenegger

Entre Vietnam y 9/11: Arnold Schwarzenegger y un Tipo Nuevo de Masculinidad en *Gemelos* y *Poli de Guardería*

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Resumen

Este artículo sostiene que la década de 1990 fue un período culturalmente fundamental en la historia de los EE.UU. Atrapados entre la Guerra de Vietnam y el 11 de septiembre, el tiempo generó un retrato muy singular de la masculinidad en el cine. El artículo sostiene que con el lanzamiento de *Gemelos* (1988) y *Poli de Guardería* (1990), Arnold Schwarzenegger se convirtió en un nuevo héroe de la década de los 90, mostrando que la masculinidad de esta década era multifacética. El artículo presenta la idea de que en la década de los 90 la masculinidad no era definida por las nociones de poder, agresividad y falta de emoción; por el contrario, la vulnerabilidad, la devoción y el cuidado fueron los aspectos que caracterizaron el nuevo tipo de masculinidad.

Palabras clave: masculinidad, cuerpo, agresividad vs. ternura, familia, película, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Masculinity and heroism are the notions that can be applied to every action film. There is an evident connection between the two that can be realized through the analysis of the role the body plays in action films. Yvonne Tasker (1993) claims that “the white male bodybuilder as a star” can be considered the main characteristic of American action cinema (p. 73). Thus, traditionally, every action film has a white male character with a muscular body. Richard Sparks (1996) adds more to the Tasker’s argument saying that action films “dignify and celebrate the suffering and striving of their leading men” (p. 348). Consequently, an action movie character is not only supposed to be strong but he also has to overcome obstacles, and the more difficult they are, the faster the audience can define his manliness. Ultimately, the character’s masculinity helps him become a hero. Thus, masculinity and heroism are inseparable notions when it comes to action films.

But can this tendency be applied to all action films? How do we deal with the action movie genre that is, indeed, not a cinematic innovation but rather a solid platform that has been developing for decades and, has inevitably been influenced by cultural changes? Why Schwarzenegger’s films? Why would we need to return to their analysis now, when decades passed since the films had been released and so much investigation of Schwarzenegger’s persona, his acting skills, and, importantly to this research, of the masculinity he himself as well as his characters generated has been carried out, which eventually proved that both the actor and his characters deserve their own niche in Gender, Cultural, and Film Studies? My main concern is that scholars have vehemently examined Schwarzenegger as a film star, as a politician, and as an embodiment of a certain type of masculinity from quite a similar perspective: what does Schwarzenegger’s masculinity have to tell us? However, I want to define my analysis in terms of a historical perspective and look at the 1990s as a significant decade with a very heavy and weighty limbus. Namely, there had been Vietnam before the 1990s began and there was 9/11 after the 1990s were over. Both events were crucial for the U.S. nation – both were devastating and effective in quite destructive ways. Both were the control points that dictated or at least provoked changes in U.S. militarism. Thus, both are of a profound significance when dealing with such an issue as masculinity. The 1990s stuck in between and, therefore, provided a rich material to investigate. There was an inevitable shift in masculinity in the

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1990s that would differ substantially from the one that the audience could observe on screen before the decade started as well as after it was over. Looking at the events of the Vietnam War and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as well as U.S. interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq that followed in retrospect, one cannot neglect the fact that military activity always demands a so-called “traditional” masculinity. Therefore, the image of a fighter that gets imprinted on screen remains roughly the same in terms of his powerfulness and firmness. This should not necessarily be applied to his appearance – indeed, the comparison of action heroes from the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Rambo from *First Blood* (1982) and its sequences and John Matrix from *Commando* (1985)) and the ones from the 2010s (e.g., William James from *The Hurt Locker* (2008) or Tony Stark/Iron Man from *Iron Man* (2008) and its sequences) will reveal obvious dissimilarities. Yet, my contention is that while Vietnam dictated the emergence of a Rambo-hero and 9/11 of a so-called soldier-protector, not so mechanical as his Vietnam predecessor was but still ready to sacrifice his life for his people and his country and firmly determined to revenge, dispense justice, and clean the world from terrorists (although one should not neglect films like, for instance, *The Expendables* (2010) or *The Expendables 2* (2012), where the huge “Vietnam-era-muscles” return on screen), the 1990s were not about that. The last decade of the twentieth century was a relatively calm page in the history of the United States. Indeed, there were interventions in Iraq, Somalia, and former Yugoslavia, but none of them became a radical point that would provoke significant changes in, first and foremost, the consciousness of American citizens like Vietnam and 9/11, indeed, did.

The 1990s became a symbolic decade when Vietnam was already not so pressingly notorious (or, at least, both the U.S government and American citizens tried to background the excessive feelings of loss, shame, defeat, and guilt). That was also the time when the Cold War was finally over and the fear of potential attacks from the Soviet Union has clearly lessened. The American people wanted to return back to normal and peaceful life, when nobody has to prevail physically or die in action. 9/11 had not happened at that moment so neither the world nor the United States in particular had experienced such a devastating catastrophe yet; nobody had a paranoid fear of insecurity yet. Technically speaking, Americans wanted the 1990s to become a happy decade as they were tired of the Vietnam savagery and had not yet been broken psychologically by terrorists. Therefore, the 1990s

were doomed to become the era of comedies and family movies where ex-soldiers and fighters return to their normal civil life and their roles of fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons. Their warrior masculinity, hence, became unnecessary and had to undergo certain changes as the environment the American man found himself at that time in had changed too – he was not on a battlefield facing enemies but rather in his own house surrounded by his family members. From cultural and cinematic perspectives, this tendency was reflected in a great number of family movies that the 1990s became so famous for, including Schwarzenegger's *Twins* (1988), *Kindergarten Cop* (1990), *Junior* (1994), and *Jingle All the Way* (1996). Therefore, I concur with Michael A. Messner's (2007) speculation that masculinity is "multiple, contextual and historically shifting configurations" (p. 462) and look over the concept of the 1990s' masculinity as well as investigate how the masculinity of the Vietnam era had changed towards 1990. By means of an exhaustive analysis of Schwarzenegger's *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop* that opened the era of a new type of masculinity, I seek to answer the question: What is so peculiar about masculinity of the 1990s?

Despite the fact that apart from "good" masculine men who later turn into heroes, there are always "bad guys" who stand in the way of the positive character and who can also be very muscular, one can speak about "the prevalence of images of heroic masculinity in popular film and television" (Sparks, 1996, p. 351). However, there is a clear tendency in the male heroes' acting out, i.e., they expose their masculinity as a "self-conscious 'performance'" (p. 355), which means that they treat masculinity not as a quality that can be inherited by somebody else but rather as something unique that characterizes only them as particular heroes, thus making them superior. Yet a great number of "heroes" in American cinema turn their acting into a competition where each of them tries to be more masculine. Sparks provides an example of "the star images or *personae* of Hollywood's leading men," particularly, Mel Gibson, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Bruce Willis – who "received much commentary" – arguing that in the 1980s they "exaggerated" their masculinity so that they could be perceived as unique (pp. 355-356):

We see masculinity "hyperbolized" in the ultra-physiques of Schwarzenegger or Stallone; or else we have the "hyper-

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masculine” close-to-the-edge dangerousness of the Mel Gibson character in the *Lethal Weapon* films...

Men do emote, but within a narrow compass. The primary emotions that they evince include grief (for lost love or slain partners) and rage (for the same reasons) ...

...[Their] images...can nevertheless remain physically and emotionally terribly powerful (pp. 356, 358).

This observation proves that in action films of the 1980s masculinity is associated only with physical strength, frightening appearance, and emotionless (even if emotions are expressed, they are minimized and the masculine hero will later revenge the one who caused them).

However, in the period from the 1980s to the 1990s, there was a change in the depiction of masculinity in American action films: a hard-body hero was substituted by a clever and emotional hero, which, as it has already been stated earlier, can be explained by the historical and political peculiarities of the time. To corroborate my argument, I want to quote Tasker (1993) who claims that “the action cinema is populated by wise guys as well as tough guys,” which means that many of the actors and their characters are “known for [their] voice[s] as much as their bod[ies], and [their] role in these films as wise guy[s] enacts a different kind of masculine performance to that associated with the bodybuilder” (p. 74). The features that build up masculinity change every time. Indeed, the “musclemen stars” of the 1980s “beg[a]n to creep into middle age” and they were not so popular in the 1990s (p. 75). In the 1990s, the audience started to associate an actor with the word “successful” only if he was able to portray a “complex character” (p. 75). Arnold Schwarzenegger arguably became a new hero of the 1990s with the release of *Twins* (1988) and *Kindergarten Cop* (1990), vividly demonstrating that masculinity of the 1990s is multifaceted. To be more precise, it was not even Schwarzenegger who turned into a new hero – it was a demanded type of new masculinity that made Schwarzenegger adopt himself to the image of a sensitive and caring man. Therefore, I claim that in the 1990s masculinity was not defined by the notions of power, aggressiveness, and emotionless anymore. Vulnerability, devotion, and care were the aspects that characterized masculinity of that time. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s characters in *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop* aptly illustrate the male hero of the 1990s.

Schwarzenegger's Debut

Arnold Schwarzenegger – an immigrant from Austria – has become famous in the United States first as a bodybuilder, winning a countless number of titles and awards for his excellently shaped and trained body. It was his body that later drew attention of many film directors and helped him start his acting career. He got his first role in *Hercules in New York* (1969), where he played demi-god Hercules and where he was virtually supposed to demonstrate his muscles. Later, he starred in the documentary *Pumping Iron* (1977) that, according to Sara Martín Alegre (1998), was Schwarzenegger's "first turning point" (p. 89). However, he began to gain more popularity after *Conan the Barbarian* (1982) was released. In brief, at first, both the directors and the audience were focused only on Schwarzenegger's muscular body.

Indeed, Schwarzenegger was right in time. Directors of American action cinema of the 1980s were looking for actors with over-muscled bodies. Tasker (1993) claims that in the 1980s the focus of attention was "male power" and "hardness" that could be achieved through "muscularity, a quality traditionally associated with masculinity" (p. 77). Thus, a good action film needed only a muscular man and some action; Tasker, nevertheless, stresses that muscles were the key attribute in every action film (pp. 77-78). It means that the more muscles were displayed, the better the film was, i.e., for the actors of the 1980s, it was important to be muscular-bumped and sweat all the time as they were not solving riddles but exposing their spectacular bodies. The muscular body of an action star was treated as a "static object of contemplation" (p. 80). Additionally, as Ellexis Boyle (2010) argues, "[m]uscles have long been a leitmotif of national and racial supremacy in the cultural imagination of the United States" (p. 47).

However, my assumption is that the launching of Schwarzenegger's career started later with the release of James Cameron's *Terminator* (1984), where he very convincingly played the role of a violent cyborg. Perhaps for the first time, the audience paid attention to Schwarzenegger not just as an artificial object with muscles but as a talented actor. His popularity was increasing over the 1980s, when films like *Commando* (1985), *Predator* (1987), and *The Running Man* (1987) were released. Nevertheless, Alegre

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(1998) argues that in all his 1980s' movies Schwarzenegger's characters looked "alike" due to the actor's "impressive physical appearance" (p. 88). Indeed, those were not only directors who created their characters but also the actor himself contributed to that process. Thus, Schwarzenegger's characters obtained the same masculinity that the actor thought to be "correct." Linda Ruth Williams (2012) claims:

Schwarzenegger became a star first through physical performance, turning to bodybuilding for reasons of masculinity and individualism. Team sports disappointed him because they lacked individual rewards...But more than this, bodybuilding shored up Schwarzenegger's sense of what a real man ought to be (p. 26).

This means that in his characters Schwarzenegger might have reflected his own life principles: he is always tough and staunch, he is an individual, and he is a real man, both on screen and in real life. Richard Maltby's speculation that "the star is always himself or herself, only thinly disguised as a character" (Butter, 2011, p. 151) vividly supports my argument. The words of Schwarzenegger's biographer Laurence Leamer corroborate it, too: "Schwarzenegger was a star whose own persona was his only capital. Arnold was not an actor as much as he was a performer who played various versions of his idealized self on-screen" (Williams, 2012, p. 30).

Like the Terminator, Schwarzenegger and his further action heroes can be characterized as "driven", "focused," and unstoppable (Williams, 2012, p. 29). He was very much different from the characters played by Marlon Brando and James Dean in the 1950s and 1960s, who, according to Alegre (1998), were "much less afraid of emotion and feelings" (p. 88). Michael Butter (2011) states that in the 1980s Schwarzenegger had a "rather stable star persona" (p. 150). The stress, in case of Schwarzenegger, was never laid on his face but on his muscles and body (Alegre, 1998, p. 89). All Schwarzenegger's characters from the 1980s had an "iron determination" (Butter, 2011, p. 153). Indeed, their only aim was to revenge, survive, or kill. They never relied on anybody else and thus always acted alone (that explains why Schwarzenegger's characters never had much to say) (p. 153). They were quite unique or, as Butter puts it, they represented a "highly pronounced otherness": a machine, a barbarian, or an extremely brutal character who often found himself in a very unusual environment or culture

(p. 153). In short, none of Schwarzenegger's characters could resemble a real human-being. Schwarzenegger always represented a superior man whose power and actions could never be repeated by anyone else. He remained an over-muscled object and hardly anybody could identify with him.

Given these facts, Schwarzenegger's action characters were perceived unnatural or, as Tasker (1993) puts it, "manufactured" (p. 78). Apparently, such an impression was created because of the actor's past as a bodybuilder. The audience thought that Schwarzenegger's characters were created in the same way as his muscles: no thinking, just working out. Therefore, scholars believed that Schwarzenegger was trying to draw attention to his body and masculinity by acting out an "excessive caricature of cultural expectations" (p. 78). His characters interested the audience, but they were very often criticized due to the lack of vitality and called "inactive" (Williams, 2012, p. 28). The impression was that Schwarzenegger decided to transform his films into a bodybuilding contest: he posed while the audience contemplated him.

Shifting Norms: The 1990s and a New Type of Masculinity

Toward the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, "the idea of men as invulnerable, nonemotional, working and fighting machines" became a subject of mockery (Messner, 2007, p. 465). Thus, while the 1980s were the time of male heroes – with excessive muscles that stood both for their strength and incontrovertible power of the United States – represented on screen by Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone, as well as some other older actors like Chuck Norris, Clint Eastwood, and their younger peer Jean-Claude Van Damme, the 1990s brought significant changes into the world of American action cinema. Particularly, Stallone starred in *Stop! Or My Mom will Shoot* (1992), Willis appeared as Ernest Menville in *Death Becomes Her* (1992), finally, Arnold Schwarzenegger surprisingly changed the track and played comedian roles in *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop*. Examining specifically Schwarzenegger's filmography, Martin Hultman (2013) even states that analyzing Schwarzenegger's characters over the time, one "can sense shifts in masculinity" (p. 81). As it has already been argued at the beginning of this article, the answer to the inevitably emerging question – What made all

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those actors with hard bodies temporarily forget about their mission to save the world and play calm, kind, naive, and at times ridiculous characters? – is America’s longing desire to have normal, peaceful life. That caused a shift in the representation of masculinity that, as Boyle (2010) nicely puts it, became “more nuanced” (p. 48), as well as in one’s understanding of what a masculine man of the 1990s was.

Tasker (1993) identifies “two main periods in the representation of masculinity”: the first one coincides with the years of Reagan’s presidency, when the hard body is in the focus of attention, and the second one starts with the Bush’s presidency, when the hard body is improved by “incorporating emotions and family-oriented values” (Alegre, 1998, p. 91). Although Brenton J. Malin (2005) argues that the second period starts a bit later, with the years of Clinton’s presidency (p. 8). What is clear, however, is that both the hero of the 1990s and the masculinity this hero represents differ from the ones that were portrayed in the 1980s. Susan Jeffords (1994) draws attention to the political situation in the United States during the two decades, arguing that the American government of the 1990s differed from the one of the 1980s. During the years of the Reagan presidency, “individual actions [were equated to] ...national actions in such a way that individual failings were treated as causes for national downfall” (p. 14). Thus, the image of the hard body both in real life and on screen was “the projection of the national body itself” (p. 26). The United States in the 1990s was, however, “a ‘kinder, gentler’ place, where men were pledged to their families, were reluctant to kill, and were confident, firm, and decisive; where ...they were dedicated to the preservation of the future and the not destruction of the present” (p. 175). This image of the real man created in politics passed on to action cinema and turned old action heroes into “improved” new ones. Therefore, one can speak about an apparent family-centeredness of a new screen identity of muscular actors, including Schwarzenegger.

Twins

Arnold Schwarzenegger’s star persona was changed in the 1990s with the creation of a “new image” in *Twins* and its consolidation in *Kindergarten Cop* (Butter, 2011, pp. 149, 152, 158). Indeed, from a destroyer, Schwarzenegger turned into a real protector; if earlier the audience saw

only emotionless Schwarzenegger, in the 1990s he revealed his sensitive side. Specifically, Butter argues that *Twins* “projects Schwarzenegger as the most intelligent, caring, sensitive and communicative man imaginable” (p. 154). The film starts with the explanation that there was experiment conducted and the audience is told that Schwarzenegger’s character – Julius Benedict – is part of it. But the voice-over points out that the experiment was “designed to produce a *physically, mentally, and spiritually* advanced human being.” These characteristics are pivotal when realizing what kind of a new hero was in demand. As the description signifies, the U.S. did not need just a “physically” strong hero anymore. It needed the one who was “mentally” and “spiritually” strong. Schwarzenegger’s character is exactly the person the country wants.

Julius Benedict was brought up by a scientist on an island, but as soon as he learns that he has a twin brother Vincent (Danny DeVito), he decides to find him. Obviously, Julius’s arrival in Los Angeles brings him many surprises because he has never lived in a city and does not know anything about the outside world. Interestingly, one of the first things that he comes upon in the city is a poster of Sylvester Stallone’s *Rambo III*. Julius is clearly surprised to see a half-naked man posing and demonstrating his muscles. Eventually, the image of Rambo makes him laugh. The audience is aware that Schwarzenegger possesses big muscles too; yet his character hides them under a t-shirt almost all the time because he does not consider them an important feature of his persona – something that he should show everybody and feel proud of. In *Twins*, the accent is obviously made not on the physical appearance of the character but on his spiritual side. Julius is kind, naïve, and sensitive. His physical power that he apparently possesses is nothing to him. He pays attention to the inner qualities of the others but not to the way they look like. The scene when Julius is in prison, waiting for his twin brother to come, illustrates Julius’s nature very well. At first, he notices a guy who resembles him outwardly: he has fair hair, he is tall and strong. However, in an instant, Julius sees Vincent who is short, half-bald, and stout. Despite all these “drawbacks,” Julius meets his brother with a pleased smile upon his face because for him *family* is important. It does not matter what his brother looks like, Julius wants to maintain the relationship with him. Moreover, if Vincent needs any help, Julius is always ready to do everything for him.

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Messner (2007) claims that toward 1990 one can talk about the emergence of a so-called “hybrid” masculinity, i.e., men were still possessing muscles, thus, visually and physically remaining strong and protecting individuals but, in addition to that, they became sympathetic and caring – such a combination was characteristic of hegemonic masculinity in the 1990s (p. 466). The shift was, indeed, noticeable, when compared to the way hegemonic (or normative) masculinity was understood in the 1980s:

Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it.... 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 & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832).

It is important, however, not to take the male softness that became noticeable in the 1990s for homosexuality that is, indeed, brought to the surface in *Twins*. Schwarzenegger’s characters have arguably never been lady-killers or machos whose masculinity and heterosexuality were the crucial aspects in the characters’ nature. On the contrary, Schwarzenegger remained quite reserved in terms of demonstrating and displaying his sexuality. From a machine-like characters (when possessing sexuality and expressing love would rather be an oxymoron), Schwarzenegger’s persona transformed into rather childish and naïve personages on screen. Although the audience never thinks of his characters as playboys, *Twins* obviously makes one question Julius’s sexual orientation, and, hence, the new type of masculinity. Julius always avoids women and, as soon as he meets Marnie (Kelly Preston), he is perplexed as he does not know how to behave with her. We see his astonishment when he looks through a *Playboy* magazine and his obvious embarrassment when Marnie catches him in looking into it. Butter (2011) makes an apt observation that the vigorous sexuality that could quite harmonically be associated with Julius is, instead, linked to his brother Vincent. Therefore, Julius appears to be a completely innocent character: he is not a fighter, he rejects violence, and, finally, he is a virgin. In the end, it is Marnie but not Julius who performs the role of seducer. Apart from taking the role of a man, Marnie also controls the gaze: thus, she is the one who spies on Julius while he is in the shower, which makes

Julius a passive character whereas Marnie becomes an active one (pp. 155-156). Nevertheless, the scene serves as a justification of Julius's heterosexuality, rejecting any misunderstanding or confusion of the new type of masculinity with homosexuality.

Julius is a more approachable character for the audience compared to all the previous Schwarzenegger's roles. Although he still appears to be quite superior, both physically and mentally, his emotionality and ability to react as a normal, or rather ordinary, human-being attracts the audience. Additionally, Butter (2011) points out that *Twins* is the first film where Schwarzenegger appears to have a family; moreover, it is in the center of the plot and Julius cares about it (p. 157). "All I want is make us into a family," says Julius – by that time, the first Schwarzenegger's character who had said that. The theme of family plays into Schwarzenegger's hands – the audience loves him: "He is a friendly, likeable guy who cares deeply about his family and works hard but also enjoys his leisure time, someone who lives and spends his time as they [the audience] probably do" (p. 158).

Kindergarten Cop

Two years later, in 1990, Arnold Schwarzenegger stars in another comedy, *Kindergarten Cop*, where he literally "calms down," although his ability to catch and punish a bad guy proves that he still can "kick ass" if he needs to (Malin, 2005, p. 8). The release of this film to certain extent consolidated Schwarzenegger's new star persona. This time, Schwarzenegger plays a role of a detective from Los Angeles who has to go to a small town and pretend to be a kindergarten teacher. The film arguably presents another way of Schwarzenegger's character development compared to the one the audience can observe in *Twins*. In *Twins*, Julius Benedict is initially a very positive character, while *Kindergarten Cop* first portrays detective John Kimble as the one who largely resembles Schwarzenegger's Terminator: he is wearing a long coat, sunglasses, has bristle on his face, and a gun in his arm – it seems that Schwarzenegger plays the role of a bad guy again until he shows his badge and the audience learns that he is a policeman who tries to catch a bad guy. Butter (2011) argues that in this scene Schwarzenegger's character appears to be "single-minded" again (p. 159): he does not talk much, he follows the criminal destroying everything on his way, no reinforcements are sent to help him, which hints at the fact that he

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always works alone and every time manages to accomplish his mission. Indeed, John Kimble is another version of the Terminator. However, later, working undercover, he has to perform the role of a kindergarten teacher, substituting for his female partner since she is ill. And here the audience observes the character's transformation. Alegre (1998) argues that in *Kindergarten Cop* Schwarzenegger "best combines his old with his new persona" (p. 91). Nevertheless, just like in *Twins*, the sexual orientation of Schwarzenegger's character from *Kindergarten Cop* is put into question. The (temporal) switch of professional occupation is pivotal and worth additional examination. From a police officer with big guns that only intensify Kimble's heterosexuality (as the phallus-shaped guns are displayed to the audience), Kimble turns into a kindergarten teacher, which is traditionally a female occupation. This is perhaps what Messner (2007) calls the "situational display of particular aspects of femininity, strategically relocated within a powerfully masculine male body" (p. 467). His transformation into a kindergarten teacher can be perceived as his figurative castration and, thus, closeness to a female, for he is now surrounded by children and has to spend most of his time with them. Of course, Kimble works undercover, but it is clear that he has to adopt himself to a situation he finds himself in: he has to reject brutality, savageness, and powerfulness that could be easily associated with a man, and accumulate tenderness, kindness, and certain passivity instead. He is clean-shaven, which symbolically illustrates that he has got rid of one-sided power-oriented masculinity – a characteristic feature of a man who would rather sweat and kick somebody's ass on screen instead of paying attention to his appearance. Kimble combines both strength and compassion, thus, displaying a new type of man of the 1990s whose physical appearance is aimed not at intimidating but rather at being given trust. Like in *Twins*, all the hypotheses about the character's homosexuality are proved untenable as the narration proceeds. Indeed, the audience learns that John Kimble is divorced because his wife could not put up with his hard and dangerous job; he has a son whom he loves very much but cannot see as often as he wants to. Later in *Kindergarten Cop*, John finds a new family: the woman who loves him and her son whom, to no surprise, John has to protect from the criminal father. Importantly, this protection, i.e., a certain fight that Schwarzenegger's character gets engaged in, is aimed at restoring the conditions for living in first, society that has to be cleaned off a criminal,

and, second, in the family that is terrorized by the bad father. The contrast one notices between Kimble and the criminal man is pivotal and the audience obviously supports *the real man* – Schwarzenegger’s character who struggles for the well-being of women and children.

The theme of family and, in particular, fatherhood is at the heart of the film. When John Kimble plays the game “Who is my daddy and what does he do?” with the children in order to find out whose father is the criminal, he realizes that many children in his class have a one-parent family; those who live in full families have problems, too, since their dads “do[n’t] do anything” or “watch TV all day long.” John is sympathetic with the children, and this feeling eventually grows into the love of a father. Through games, he teaches them many useful things, reads them fairy tales before they have an afternoon nap. In short, he becomes a perfect kindergarten teacher. He protects one of the children against his abusive father which, on the one hand, can be perceived as the use of violence that was so typical of Schwarzenegger’s characters from the 1980s. On the other hand, the actions of John Kimble can be easily justified because he embodies a good guy, confronting a bad guy who lifts his hand against a child, which for a father figure whom Schwarzenegger plays now is simply unacceptable. Thus, Schwarzenegger’s character is “a strong authority figure [who] provide[s] just the right admixture of authority and paternal nurturing” (Butter, 2011, p. 160).

As for comic effects in the film, Tasker (1993) argues that they come from the “redundancy” of Schwarzenegger’s muscles when he is in the classroom with small children (p. 82). However, the hugeness of Schwarzenegger’s figure is already underlined at the very first moment when he enters the kindergarten and has to speak to the principle – the woman who herself is almost as small as her kids. The choice of Linda Hunt to play the kindergarten principle was arguably aimed at emphasizing how big and visually inappropriate for the role of a kindergarten teacher Schwarzenegger is because he is too big compared not only to children but also to adults who work there. Additionally, the position of the camera at the moments when John Kimble finds himself in the same room with children is important. The director uses low-angle shots that also help him emphasize how gigantic Schwarzenegger looks. It is worth mentioning that the choice of Danny DeVito to play Schwarzenegger’s twin brother in *Twins* was obviously made for the same purpose.

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While disciplining children, John Kimble also disciplines himself. Just like Julius in *Twins*, John is, at first, perceived as an outsider. He does not fit into the community and he has to learn how to become one of them. It applies not only to his clothing that visually makes him look different but also to his behavior (Butter, 2011, p. 161). However, John Kimble's nature does not allow him to become one of those people who shut their eyes to the child abuse and do not respect family values. Schwarzenegger's character is, therefore, again portrayed as a superior one but this time in a good sense. He shows to the audience what it means to be a good man and a father and makes us want to be like him. It is his sincerity that bribes the audience. The important scene takes place almost at the end of the film, when the woman he fell in love with does not want to be with him, blaming him for not telling her who he really is. However, John finds words to explain his behavior:

I didn't mean to hurt you. I wish I was a kindergarten teacher. But I'm not. I'm a cop. That's all I know how to be. I have a son I've hardly seen in the last seven years. I don't mean anything to him. My ex-wife got remarried; she doesn't want me to be part of his life. I lost my family. I should never have let it happen.... I don't want to lose you. I don't want to lose [your son]. I swear you will never have to run from [the criminal] (King, 1999, p. 60).

Twins and *Kindergarten Cop* illustrate the transformation of Arnold Schwarzenegger's star persona. Butter (2011) accentuates that in all the films released after *Kindergarten Cop* Schwarzenegger's characters have "either a real or a symbolic family" (p. 161). Even in his second *Terminator*, he turns into a positive character who portrays a father figure of John Connor – the image so much different from the one the audience has seen in the first part of *Terminator*. Many scholars explain such a shift not only by the new type of masculinity that was spreading throughout America in the 1990s both via politics and media, but also by the fact that by the end of the 1980s Arnold Schwarzenegger married Maria Shriver and by the 1990s they were building their own family, which, according to Tasker (1993), signified Schwarzenegger's "hyper-normality" (p. 81). Thus, not only his characters became more real, Schwarzenegger himself appeared to be a conventionally "normal" man. Moreover, the audience

believed that the way Schwarzenegger behaved on screen coincided with the way he was in his real life (Tasker, 1993, p. 81; Butter, 2011, p. 161; Williams, 2012, p. 22). That was also the time when Schwarzenegger started to get involved in the political life of the United States; that is why the transformation of his characters on screen “to the best” could also be interpreted as Schwarzenegger’s own transformation into a better guy whom citizens could trust. Looking over Liesbet van Zoonen’s (2005) question “Can politics be combined with entertainment?” (p. 1) from a different perspective, one can speculate that the actors who decide to participate in political life risk to be associated with the characters they have played. Whether it happens due to the blurring boundary between fiction and reality that fandom might not always realize or because politics is to some extent another sort of playing, it is significant for an actor to create a positive image on screen in order to be given trust in real life. Both *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop* are the examples where Schwarzenegger rejects hegemonic masculinity of the 1980s, demonstrating that the new heroes he plays are ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of their families. They are protectors for whom family values are of the greatest importance.

Conclusion

What do we make of such a shift in the construction of masculinity? What is gained if muscular, traditional masculinity is traded for a heteronormative consolidation of the family? From cultural perspective, in the 1990s, the United States adhered to the idyllic image of a family and family values. Such a tendency inevitably influenced the construction of masculinity at heart of which was care for the family itself. Film’s response to this was a temporal rejection (or at least minimization) of explosions, shots, and deaths, and centralization on love. The avoidance of fighting on screen and the change in masculinity, however, to borrow from Messner (2007), did not mean that, “successful and powerful men have fully swung toward an embrace of femininity and vulnerability” (p. 466). They just learnt how to combine power with gentleness and, as a result, how to be both a guardian and a loving father/husband/son/brother at the same time. Historically, the shifts in masculinity coincide with, or, in principle, are influenced by specific cultural movements/changes that take place in a particular time.

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For example, according to Messner, one of the reasons for such a strong masculinization of male characters in the 1980s was a reaction to “the cultural feminization of the 1960s and 1970s” (p. 465). In this respect, it is worth analyzing Schwarzenegger’s coined phrase “I’ll be back” that we hear not only in *Terminator* (1984) but in many of his other films, including *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop*. If J. Hoberman (2000) understands the words as a suggestion of the “Eternal Return” (p. 30), while Messner (2007) claims that in *Terminator* the phrase gains a certain symbolic meaning that should be interpreted as a return of a so-called traditionally masculinized man (pp. 464-465), then what do we make of the same phrase in the two films where Schwarzenegger’s masculinity combines conventionally male and female traits? In *Twins*, we hear the phrase in the scene when Julius is trying to find out where his mother is. He holds a shirt front of the man who was responsible for the experiment and, after having got the answer, calmly, although quite resolutely says: “If you’re lying to me, I’ll be back.” Julius lifts his brows, demonstrating the seriousness of his words, as if trying to say: “I am not going to hit you now because this is not how I solve the problems. I am going to believe you. But if you lied to me, I will find you, and then become your worst nightmare.” My speculation is that in this scene Julius’s “I’ll be back” should be interpreted as the signal of a possible change in masculinity. Indeed, if it has already been changed after the 1960s in a way that films became overfilled with muscles of bodybuilders, why cannot it happen again? Schwarzenegger’s rejection of Terminator’s masculinity and his turn to a family guy does not mean that he cannot fight. Quite the contrary, he warns that nobody should misinterpret his kind and naïve appearance – he still can pose a menace, although treats it as “plan Z.” In *Kindergarten Cop*, we hear detective Kimble saying a slightly changed phrase: “Hi kids, I’m back!” He is back from the hospital where he got to after having fought with the main villain in the film. The detective is happy to see the children, and this is reciprocal. One can speculate that the “I’m back” that we hear in *Kindergarten Cop* bears a somewhat different meaning, namely that although the man from the 1990s is not superior physically, he still wins in the end. Detective Kimble walks in the room on a crutch and this is an important attribute that should not be missed. It illustrates that Kimble is, indeed, not a superman and he can be hurt too. However, nobody should doubt the man from the 1990s since, no matter what happens, he can confront the bad guy and he will always be back.

Thus, practically the same phrase, pronounced in dissimilar contexts and under different consequences in *Twins* and *Kindergarten Cop*, symbolizes the same: the new man – the man from the 1990s – remains a hero; yet he does not resort to force without thinking but rather prefers solving problems and, most significantly, protecting his family or the weak with no or minimum violence.

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