

## **The Jungian Psychology of Cool: Ryan Gosling and the Repurposing of Midcentury Male Rebels**

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### **Abstract**

What is defined as masculinity in this country is very nebulous. There is the archetypal ideal male, but there are plenty of visions of masculinity such as the “rebel” and “outcast” which do not easily fit in that category. These rebel archetypes appear in such actors as James Dean, Steve McQueen, and Dustin Hoffman. This research project looks at the connections between 1950s and 1960s Hollywood film and current American independent cinema through the lens of psychoanalyst C.G. Jung’s work on archetypes, specifically those appearing within the male youth population of America. It is designed to analyze the “how” and “why” of American youth masculinity in mid-20th century cinema and how it reshapes to appear in the star Ryan Gosling. To collect the necessary research, intensive reading of both primary and secondary sources will be required as well as close analysis of 50s, 60s, and current cinema. This is not simply a film analysis in the vein of Jung; it is a gender study using Jungian and post-Jungian psychoanalytic theories. The anticipated conclusion(s) of this study is/are that Jung’s theories can justify that modern American indie cinema reincarnates “cool,” young stars of the 50s and 60s not simply because these stars are symbols of youth culture and fashion but because this kind of masculinity is an archetype of the American psyche, and our psyche projects these images as cultural symbols through film.

**Keywords:** Archetype, Midcentury, Masculinity

### **1. Introduction**

In *Crazy, Stupid, Love* (2011), Emma Stone’s character, Hanna, upon seeing him shirtless, asks Ryan Gosling’s character, Jacob Palmer, “Are you photoshopped?” According to an interview with Askmen.com, Gosling “didn’t do any sit-ups for the movie.”<sup>10</sup> The actor goes on to joke that “James Cameron has a program called ‘Ab-atar.’ All you have to do is wear a motion-capture suit, and it gives you abs.”<sup>10</sup> So why is the question of the existence or nonexistence of Gosling’s abs even important? This question and Ryan’s sarcastic answer imply that culture shapes what is expected of actors, how actors are representative of the times, and how they embody cultural norms and expectations. We have a subconscious projection of a character like Gosling’s in *Crazy, Stupid, Love* (CSL) having chiseled abs and a perfect personality, but where does that image come from? How did it shape to appear in our cultural conscious? What are the archetypes dictating our image of idealized manhood on screen?

This essay looks at the connections between 1950s and 1960s American film and current American independent cinema through the lens of psychoanalyst C.G. Jung’s work on archetypes, specifically those appearing within the young male population of America. It is not simply a film analysis in the vein of Jung; rather, it is a gender study using post-Jungian psychoanalytic theories. What is defined as masculinity in this country is very nebulous: there is the archetypal male, but there are plenty of visions of masculinity such as the rebel and outcast that do not easily fit in that category. These archetypes appear in such actors as James Dean, Steve McQueen, and Dustin Hoffman. This paper analyzes the “how” and the “why” of American youth masculinity in the previous eras and how it reshapes to

appear the roles of Ryan Gosling. For example, in a direct way, Gosling's movie *Drive* (2011) features multiple allusions to Steve McQueen's entire career. But on a deeper level, this essay intends to analyze how and why the characters of these films have established a specific kind of genre and masculinity, which, for practicality, I will refer to as *Male Rebel* cinema. The archetypes of this genre prove fascinating in how they appear in a multitude of genres, even in a mainstream romantic comedy as I will discuss with *Crazy, Stupid, Love*.

Possibly, the most culturally representative actors are those deliberately appealing to younger generations (i.e. adolescents or post-adolescents). As Timothy Shary states in his book *American Youth on Screen*, "Teen films continue into the twenty-first century as an important cinematic genre, and as a revealing indicator of adolescent trends as well as cultural attitudes about youth."<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that Shary implies that teen films had always been indicative of the times. And that makes sense, for adolescents have mainly been the age group to pioneer new trends. Shary asks, "Does the industry depict minorities to fulfill the expectations of the majority, to appeal to the minority, or a balance of both?"<sup>14</sup> Related to this question, my study does not necessarily look at strictly youth films, however. Because adolescents are particularly affected by the staying power of a character (James Dean, for example), I am qualifying some of these films as "youthful" because they have a particular importance to adolescents. But what needs to be analyzed is how this rebellious, not misguided but guideless, fragmented male population came to be integral to American culture and why that matters.

## 2. Jungian Archetypes in Males

The overarching issue once these films guided towards young adults started coming out, in retrospect, is why these kinds of characters even exist. Underlying Jung's primary theories are the more recent post-Jungian takes on film (<sup>1, 4, 5, 7, and 15</sup>). With my study, I will analyze how young male characters function in their films in relation to Jung's theories on archetypes. Underpinning the archetypes that Dean, McQueen, and Hoffman established are archetypes of our subconscious, which Jung outlines in "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious." He proposed three principle archetypes: the *shadow*, the *wise old man*, and the *anima*: respectively, the reflection of oneself, the knowledge-bearing figure, and the female figure. However, it needs to be clearly noted that Jung's archetypes *are not* the same archetypes that the characters themselves have created. The fact that our subconscious creates archetypes that reappear is central to his psychodynamic postulates. These archetypes are just extremely culturally specific to Post-World War II and twenty-first century America.

The *shadow* is the best seen as the realization of oneself, i.e., cognition of one's unconscious. Jung states, "The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one's own shadow. It is the world of water...where I experience the other in myself and the other-than-myself experiences me."<sup>8</sup> The *shadow* can thus be seen as the reflection of oneself. It could also be interpreted as the out-of-body experience, which is undoubtedly an archetypal experience. However, the *shadow* does not always need to be seen as such a literal manifestation; it can be seen as metaphorical. Characters will often come to a point in their story when they have a metacognitive enlightenment. A simple reinterpretation of an event might be able to be seen as a *shadow*-esque situation because that information they had not previously uncovered is brought to light, and the character(s) must adapt himself accordingly.

To foil the self-reflective nature of the *shadow*, Jung proposes the *wise old man*. In its most basic terms, this archetype is a knowledge-bearing figure, which is clear to see in many films; "[h]e is the enlightener, the master and teacher, a psychopomp."<sup>8</sup> One thing that many of these movies deal with is the father figure, especially in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and *The Graduate* (1967). We see in these films the protagonists not encountering themselves as they would in the situation of the *shadow*, but they are encountering their fathers or an older male on whom they had relied in the past but now see as unreliable, hence the protagonist's rebellion. Yet perhaps this archetype is figurative; that *wise old man* could be the social norms to which adolescents conform until their sexual and psychological dawning when they realize they are falsified, which forces them to question themselves and their universe. These characters become rebellious and form new masculinities due to their denial of the knowledge-bearing father, the typical male role. They realize the falsified world, and they turn inward for their knowledge, simultaneously facing themselves in a *shadow*-like fashion and reincarnating the *wise old man* within themselves. And in that sense, this situation becomes completely archetypal.

Jung's third archetype, the *anima*, the un-male or not-self (animus for the female archetype), plays a large role in the exploration of masculinity. In Jung's words, the *anima* is as follows: "For the son, the anima is hidden in the dominating power of the mother, and sometimes she leaves him with a sentimental attachment that lasts throughout life and seriously impairs of the fate of the adult."<sup>8</sup> Given the blend of incarnations for this archetype, it is easy to find the non-masculine counterpart in a series of films revolving around cool, attractive, rebellious young men. In many of these movies, there is a lack of male camaraderie, suggesting that many of these characters are experiencing

a binary life: one side through themselves as masculine characters, the other side a life lived vicariously through their female counterparts. This female archetype is not meant as a counter to the male. The *anima*, in these films, is a non-male vehicle through which life can be explored.

In total, the plot points, climax, and conflict resolution of all these films revolves at least in part around the protagonist's female counterpart. In *Rebel*, Jim Stark's internal conflict with not being able to protect his friend Plato is resolved through his relationship with Judy. In *The Graduate*, the plot begins with Mrs. Robinson seducing Ben, and the conflict is resolved by Ben winning-over her daughter. In *Bullitt* (1968), Frank's (Steve McQueen) internal issues with his life are brought to light through his female detective foil, highlighted by her line: "Do you let anything really reach you?" Regarding the non-male character role in film noir, Luke Hockley states, "Jung suggested that the contrasexual archetype, [...] In essence, the suggestion is that both sexes have the capacity for the full range of human experience, but that culturally, certain types of behavior have been ascribed to men and women."<sup>6</sup>

To more specifically apply the *anima* or the "contrasexual" character, the femme fatale offers the most straightforward embodiment of the archetype. The interactions that are brought to light are those between female foils (and/or antagonists) and male (usually antagonists but sometimes foils). So although the protagonists are not typically interacting with a large group of males, they do balance their interactions between the sexes (but not usually in a positive way). Jung, in addition to these three archetypes, proposed a pseudo-archetype that overshadows the *shadow*: the *persona*, which, in its simplest terms, is a façade of oneself. Hockley mentions that "[i]f the psyche has become overly reliant on one element, then a compensatory opposite is thrown up. In the case of the detective, the over-identification with his persona leads to an encounter with the archetype of the *shadow* (as the criminal) and the contrasexual archetype (as femme fatale)."<sup>6</sup> It is easy to see how this transfers over to movies like *Bullitt* (which embodies many film noir characteristics), *The Graduate*, and *Rebel*. All these characters are putting up a front in one way or another to protect themselves from themselves. The approach that must be taken to see how the characters encounter a variation on the "femme fatale" and the *shadow* is by viewing how the characters' layers are shed throughout the films, for it is through the femme fatale that these characters will contend with their *shadow*. Since the *anima* provides the "full range of human experience," those experiences that are vicariously lived out through the *anima* propel the male protagonist towards his *shadow*, and particularly in *Rebel* and *The Graduate*, that is the "coming-of-age," which would not occur without the *anima*.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. The "Ideal" and "Real" Archetypes of "Cool"

As Sally Porterfield states, "The archetypes, despite their origin in the collective unconscious, are nonetheless influenced by cultural context, assimilating contemporary standards that keep them fresh for each succeeding generation."<sup>13</sup> Into the sixties, the rise of teen rebel movies escalated. Thus began the era of a different kind of "cool" – the Steve McQueen kind of cool. The era of motorcycles and car chases became a genre, pioneered the decade before by Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (1953). However, these movies were directed less towards teenagers. The men of these movies were young adults, in their twenties and maybe into their early thirties. Timothy Shary elaborates on this by stating that "while small studios pumped out a cycle of [motor]cycle movies, their only relevance to teen movies is that many teens went to see them, and they appealed to teen fantasies of law-breaking liberation."<sup>14</sup> But what differs about Steve McQueen from the actors of these late-sixties, drugged-out movies is that McQueen remained a functional member of society. It is possible that McQueen's character is, ironically, the *wise old man* to many of these teen moviegoers. McQueen goes against the grain but is able to discern right from wrong (and he is still cool despite being a cop, who would be an antagonist to any character in a motorcycle movie). McQueen's character in *Bullitt* always knows the right thing to do, where to go, and how to get what he wants. For all intents and purposes, he fulfills all the requirements to be the *wise old man* without even being wise or old. But he does not necessarily take on the realistic personage of Dean's and Hoffman's characters. A police officer is too far removed from everyday life for many teenagers, yet he serves as a basis off which Dean's and Hoffman's rebellion can be analyzed. McQueen is the *idealized* rebel archetype, an almost hypothetical model of what it means to be rebellious. Teenagers can model how they view rebellion through a character like this because they *idolize* that kind of character. With Dean and Hoffman, teens *empathize* with the characters on screen, thus creating a much more emotionally intimate interaction between cinema and viewer.

In contrast to McQueen in *Bullitt*, James Dean in *Rebel* offers a significantly different image of rebellious manhood. The significance of Dean's character is embodied in his rebellion without a distinguished motive. The film's title seems like it might have been written by his father or mother rather than someone empathizing with the protagonist, a youthful audience member astonished at the red jacket-clad teen's inability to get along with even the

slick-haired “greasers” (who were also seen as rebels). This relates to Jung’s archetypes in various ways, chiefly the *shadow* in that *Rebel* is a coming-of-age story. This kind of narrative is repurposed time after time, and what makes it come back is the fact that in each story, the character encounters himself (or herself) in a way that had not been done before. In *Rebel*, the main character, Jim Stark, begins with being taken into the police for being drunk in public. The next day, he attends a new high school in which he begins to altercate with some of his peers. He is challenged by them to a game of “chicken” later that night, which requires two people to drive towards a cliff, whoever jumps out first being the “chicken.” Jim jumps out first, and his peer drives over the cliff. Jim also befriends a troubled student named Plato, who has various run-ins with the law throughout the film. To change the perspective, the protagonist also faces conflict with his parents; their roles are crumbling and being challenged as Jim starts to make decisions for himself. His parents, specifically his father, no longer represent the *wise old man* archetype in that they are not reliable to him anymore. It is through the experiences Jim has with his peers and his parents that he encounters life in new ways. This is, in a broad sense, the brush with the *shadow*.

With the dawning of the sexual revolution in the 1960s, the Jim Stark form of rebellion can be seen as “graduating” into a new age embodied in Dustin Hoffman in *The Graduate*. Fresh out of a successful college career, Hoffman’s character reaches a stalemate in his life in which he is seduced into a sexual relationship with a longtime family-friend, the much older, Mrs. Robinson (who has a daughter Ben’s same age to whom he turns for love after he rebels against the misguided and sexually unfulfilled Mrs. Robinson). Mrs. Robinson fulfills the role of the *anima*. Ben explores his post-collegiate adulthood through her. Although he has already come of age, he has an emotional and sexual dawning through his relationship with her. And this leads to the appearance of the *shadow*. Due to Ben’s sexual encounters, he must face himself at multiple points in the movie, during which he grows as a character because he becomes more aware of himself. But there are many points in the film where those sexual rendezvous have nothing to do with Ben realizing himself, such as the graduation party at the beginning. Also, typical to the *Male Rebel* film, *The Graduate* tackles the father role (i.e., the *wise old man*), all of whom Ben denies (his own father, Mr. Robinson, the landlord at Berkeley). In the same sense that Dean’s red jacket in *Rebel* renders him a striking contrast to black leather jackets of his antagonists, Ben’s red sports car in *The Graduate* symbolizes that despite the character reaching the pinnacle of success as a young man, that does not prevent him from being immune to self-doubt and unable to fully assimilate into post-college adulthood. And he becomes aware of this inability through his interactions with the three archetypes.

#### 4. Subculture and the Male Rebel

The primary question of this study considers how these midcentury rebel characters are repurposed in current American cinema and how Jung’s analytical psychology can explain what has happened in these two eras of cinema. In *The Collected Works (Volume 6)*, Jung states, “There are undoubtedly products whose symbolic character does not depend merely on the attitude of the observation consciousness[...].” (qtd. in <sup>5</sup>). What has happened with the actors and films in question is in fact the opposite of what Jung postulates above. The important facet about Jung’s theories to note is that “[w]hether a thing is symbolic or not depends chiefly upon the attitude of the observing consciousness” (qtd. in <sup>5</sup>). What has dictated the reappearance of this young-adult masculinity has been the cultural consciousness/psyche that is viewing and interpreting these actors’ characters.

Another important facet of viewing these films is analyzing the social context in which they appear. Counterculture or subculture would exist without a mainstream culture to be countered (or under which a subculture can be submerged). This process is justified by the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (OTD), proposed by Marylinn Brewer: “[ODT] proposes that individuals have two fundamental and competing human needs—the need for inclusion and the need for differentiation—that can be met by membership in moderately inclusive (optimally distinct) groups.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, these males are rebelling against mainstream culture and, consequently, form their own culture. They are simultaneously included and differentiated—thus arises subculture. As a result of these subgroups, it is vital to pay close attention to what it is the protagonists are rebelling against or countering, the social context for the subversion.

When interpreting these archetypal rebel characters, it is important to consider the hegemony, which, in sociology, “refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life.”<sup>2</sup> When observing McQueen in *Bullitt*, he by no means leads a lavish lifestyle as he lives in a typical San Francisco apartment, wears relatively nice clothes, and has an iconic car, but he is no James Bond. Ben Braddock in *The Graduate* lives a very upper middle-class lifestyle. So does the character’s economic marginalization or lack thereof matter? If cultural paradigms determine the reemergence of this masculinity, then the validity of McQueen’s or Hoffman’s masculinity is determined by what sociologist R.W. Connell states about hegemony: “I stress that

hegemonic masculinity embodies a ‘currently accepted’ strategy. When the conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded. New groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony.”<sup>2</sup> The easy “old solution” that can be pointed to in this context is World War II and twentieth-century ideals of masculinity. The nuclear family of the fifties had to be ruptured in some way as not everyone saw that environment fit, leading to “challeng[ing] old solutions.”<sup>2</sup> Hence, we have Dean pioneering the cool, romantic, peripheral male, which comes to the cultural forefront (i.e., integration into the hegemony). And we see this kind of masculinity steadfastly upheld throughout the sixties and well into today.

## 5. Sociocultural and Jungian Application in “Gosling” Cinema

Before exploring the specific Jungian archetypes and the resulting socio-psychological relations in Ryan Gosling’s postmillennial rebels, there are two points that need to be stressed. At times, Gosling’s characters are the types commonly found in certain genres, as specifically seen in *Drive* and its noir archetypes. On the other hand, other characters are much more implicitly similar to previously created characters, resulting in a much different kind of interpretation, as seen in *Crazy, Stupid, Love*. Also, while the archetypes of two cinematic periods (1950-60s and 2000s) are paralleled in this study that does not mean the films themselves are supposed to be seen as narrative or even genre parallels. This analytical approach is employed to understand the youth rebel archetypes themselves as they manifest onscreen and does not necessarily characterize other filmic classifications.

### 5.1 Drive (2011)

In *Drive*, the nameless main character (referred to by the screenwriters and director as “Driver”), played by Ryan Gosling, is a stunt driver for Hollywood films and a mechanic under his mentor Shannon (Bryan Cranston). He also facilitates heist jobs as the driver. He meets Irene, played by Carey Mulligan and her young son, Benicio (Kaden Leos). After weeks of spending time together, Irene finds out that her husband will be coming home from prison in a week’s time. Once Standard Gabriel (Oscar Isaac) returns from jail, Driver finds out that the man is still involved with some mobsters who need Gabriel to pay them back. To protect Irene and Benicio, Driver decides to aid Standard in a heist that will return the money that to mobster Nino (Ron Perlman) and the former movie producer, Bernie, played by Albert Brooks. The heist is botched, and Driver has to face the repercussions of getting involved with the wrong kind of people.

Beyond representing narrative elements typical to the car chase movies of the 1960s and 1970s, *Drive* is also a neo-noir film. This genre, as stated by Mark T. Conrad, “describes any film coming after the classic noir period that contains noir themes and the noir sensibility.”<sup>3</sup> One of these essential elements, as Hockley states in his essay on the noir genre, is how the setting and the cinematography function in molding the psychodynamic aspects of the film. To convey the duality of Gosling’s character, colors are drastically pitted against each other in precisely the same way that high contrast black and white filmography “further reinforces the underworld and unconscious dimensions of [noir] films.”<sup>6</sup>

That duality accentuates the *persona/shadow* of Gosling’s character. The *personas* of the ‘stunt driver’ and the ‘real life’ driver character are very distinct: the stunt driver wears a mask, and the real driver does not (until he needs to). Yet they are the same person. Further in the movie, there are more distinctive mirrors or reflective images. When Driver first hijacks the black Ford Mustang, he slyly walks up to the car, and once he places the lock-pick into the window, a reflection of the character appears on the side of the car. One might think this would suggest a duality, but in this case, the reflection is not different from the subject. As such, the character seems to be fully aware that the person he plays in the stunt movies, the driver/facilitator, and the non-driver (the man whom Irene sees) are all one in the same. Once Driver goes on a personal vendetta to return the money to Nino, there is a scene in which Driver enters his dressing room at the movie studio. He picks up the mask he wears for the movies and stares at it as the camera zooms-in on his face. At this point in the film, Gosling’s character puts on what Jung calls the *persona*. This is not the real Driver anymore. In the beginning of the film, the character did not carry any weapon; he was only a facilitator. In this situation, Gosling’s character needs to encounter his untrue self to come full circle and encounter the *shadow* in a new light. This is where the plot takes a turn towards a “coming-of-realization” story (which would most likely be categorized in a similar way to the “coming-of-age” narrative). After using the *persona* to preserve his anonymity when taking revenge on Nino, Driver eventually reencounters Albert Brooks’ character at the Chinese Restaurant. The two men go out to the parking lot, so Driver can return the million dollars to Bernie, who stabs him. Driver stabs Bernie back. The camera switches angles to the literal shadow of

Driver defeating the gangster, who grows limp and slowly falls to the ground while Driver holds strong. In this moment, Gosling's character is facing himself in that he is his past actions and mistakes, which are manifested in Brooks' character. At the end of the movie, Driver defeats the repercussions of those actions and drives away.

Like many aspects of the *shadow* archetype in this film, the *wise old man* archetype is quite easily detected in Bryan Cranston's Shannon. Driver is Shannon's apprentice in the garage, and Shannon has guided Driver towards many of the career successes that the young man has achieved. But the aspect of Shannon that becomes integral to the movie is his connection with Bernie. Once Driver's heist is botched, Shannon immediately loses his credibility. In both *Rebel* and *The Graduate*, the father figure loses his authenticity. In *Drive*, Gosling's character also loses the *wise old man* in two ways: Shannon's trust is completely lost, and Shannon is murdered. Similar to how Jim Stark and Ben Braddock find their own wisdom within themselves once they figuratively lose their father figures, Driver's father figure is literally lost. Driver must then utilize his internal compass to guide him rather than rely on Shannon.

Like the three *Male Rebel* movies discussed previously, there must be a female counterpart through whom the male protagonist can "have the full range of human experience" (therefore exemplifying Jung's archetype of the *anima*).<sup>6</sup> Harkening back to the noir characteristics of this film, Carey Mulligan plays the role of the *anima*. And Irene is not only the *anima*, but she is the thing itself that starts the plot. Her *anima* qualities serve Driver in the sense that he not only experiences intimacy and love through Irene, but he experiences the role of a father through the *anima*. In essence, the plot would not exist without Carey Mulligan's character, suggesting even more so that Driver is living a life through Irene.

The midcentury *Male Rebel* movies created the archetypal foundations for this kind of independent production. There is the "coming-of-realization"/"coming-of-age" narrative structure, involving dynamics between the *shadow*, the *wise old man*, and the *anima*. It is hard to imagine Gosling as anything less than ideal in this film given his position in mainstream culture; he is the hegemony among post-millennial young-male actors. So this movie seems to fit the role of the *idealized rebel*. Although he is breaking laws by facilitating a robbery, he still retains a moral high ground because he is trying to protect Irene and her family. And when he does get ahold of the money, he only wants to return it to its owner. He does not keep it for himself. These characters remain relevant due to their idealized personalities that are perpetuated by American culture, further facilitating these kinds of characters as their own genre.

## 5.2 Crazy, Stupid, Love (2011)

According to Tamar Jeffers McDonald, "[E]ven when we know a genre works, can tick off its expected components and predict the order which the events will occur, there can be something in the romantic comedy—whether it is escapism, comfort, wish-fulfillment, or irony—which keeps audiences enjoying, and consuming, the films of this genre."<sup>11</sup> *Crazy, Stupid, Love* is a seemingly run-of-the-mill romantic comedy, but it was well-regarded critically. However, this comedy is more than just a detailing of modern love. The film revolves around Cal Weaver (Steve Carell), a middle-aged, middle-class male, feeling victimized by his wife's (Julianne Moore) affair with a coworker and a divorce. Forced to reassess his life—and his manhood—he frequents the bars, where he happens to meet the handsome womanizer Jacob Palmer, played by Ryan Gosling. Jacob takes Cal under his wing in order to help Cal get back on his feet through a new version of himself physically, stylistically, and emotionally. Various plot lines run parallel throughout the movie, with only a few of them directly coinciding; that is, until the end of the film when all of them converge in a barrage of coincidences, the types often found in comedies.

Although this movie is worlds away from the independent nature of *Drive*, *Male Rebel* archetypes appear in a similar fashion in this mainstream Hollywood film. The first instance in which the *shadow* appears in this movie is when Palmer encounters Cal for the first time. Palmer sees his own repressed loneliness in Cal's emotional isolation from the rest of the world—the only difference is that Palmer is repressing his loneliness through sleeping with a copious amount of women, and Cal is using alcohol to repress his thoughts of loneliness. Nonetheless, Palmer sees his real self reflected in Cal. If it were not for his ability to woo women in the bar—his *persona*—Palmer would be in the same position as his older counterpart. The isolation Gosling's character feels is especially evident later in the film when he asks Emma Stone's Hanna, to ask him "a personal question." This move explains why Palmer would take such initiative in helping Cal recover from his recent life changes. Palmer empathizes with Cal's isolation and wants to relieve Cal as a way to avoid his own repressed emotions. This is partly where Jacob becomes rebellious. He rebels against himself in a very obvious way: no one who is comfortable with themselves would be so insistent on picking-up so many women. The second instance in which Palmer encounters his shadow is when Cal has revamped himself into a womanizer. When Jacob and Cal first encounter each other, Cal does not pose any threat to Jacob. By the end of the film when Jacob encounters Cal as the father of his girlfriend—Hanna—the situation becomes very similar to how Ben Braddock encounters Mr. Robinson. In *The Graduate*, Mr. Robinson functions as

a *wise old man* before Ben begins the relationship. Then, while Ben is in Berkeley trying to contact Elaine, he encounters Mr. Robinson as a *shadow* in that Ben is fulfilling the same position that Mr. Robinson should be. The relationship between the two is connected in a way that makes them rivals. The same situation occurs in *Crazy, Stupid, Love*. Carell's character is trying to win back his wife when his daughter brings back her boyfriend, who just happens to be Jacob. Cal is repurposed as the *shadow* again because Jacob sees Cal trying to win back his wife as he is trying to keep his girlfriend. They are now filling the same positions in parallel relationships.

Unlike the previous film, Gosling's character actually fulfills two archetypes: the *shadow* and the *wise old man*. Gosling's character is not old by any means, but he is evidently very wise. When Cal has to start over his life, Jacob is there to help him. Cal relies on Jacob for everything when it comes to his midlife makeover. The *wise old man* is there to bestow knowledge onto a subordinate. However, the end of the movie ironically restores the conventional roles. Carell's character actually becomes the *wise old man*, and Gosling's character becomes the subordinate. The way that Jacob Palmer becomes rebellious is through his role as the *wise old man*. Palmer is admired so much because he does not succumb to the dull syndrome of being middle aged, wearing New Balance sneakers. He firmly establishes himself as the suave, clean-cut type, rebelling against the social norm of being a male and not having to care about the way one appears physically and stylistically. Gosling's character becomes the authority on caring about one's style, though that authority is, ultimately, still subordinate to the traditional father role. This movie embodies Steve Neale's points on gender in mainstream cinema: "[T]here is constant work to channel and regulate identification in relation to sexual division, in relation to the orders of gender, sexuality, and social identity and authority marking patriarchal society. Every film tends both to assume and actively work to renew those orders, that division."<sup>12</sup> By the end of *Crazy, Stupid, Love*, despite the quirky role-switching throughout the movie, the social paradigm of supposed gendered "normalcy" is reestablished; the film exemplifies social homeostasis in the face of uncertain archetypal roles.

Whether his relationships come in the form of one-night stands or through true romantic relationships such as with Hanna, Jacob is living his life through women. Although the *anima* is usually seen as one specific woman, the *anima* (in this movie) can be seen as women as a whole. Until Cal comes around, and even when Cal becomes a part of Palmer's life, Gosling's character is not seen once socializing with another male. This is another way by which Gosling's character becomes rebellious. Most hegemonic men are pictured having a large social group, filled with males and females. They socialize in a bisexual paradigm. Jacob Palmer, on the other hand, functions only in a unisexual social paradigm (with the exception of Cal). All of his experiences are lived-out solely through the opposite sex, even if those experiences are initially emotionally empty. And this even becomes apparent when he begins a relationship with Hanna, which signifies a deeper *anima* connection. Although this is a singular woman and cannot be seen as the same environment as womanizing at a bar, his personal experiences are carried out through Hanna. They socialize in a sexual *and* romantic way rather than just sexual. So despite the relationship dynamics being worlds apart from "one-night stands," Hanna still functions as an *anima*. And Palmer becomes rebellious to his new found love because he is so straight-forward in his interactions with her from the beginning and throughout their relationship. He is high status, and he is daring. But, most importantly, he also feels true, romantic emotion, which most males like him would not be expected to exhibit.

Palmer also exemplifies a contradiction. As Neale suggests, masculinity onscreen often embraces contradiction: "[it] is the contradiction between narcissism and the law, between an image of narcissistic authority on the one hand and an image of social authority on the other."<sup>12</sup> Although Jacob Palmer seems idolized in much the same way as Driver and Frank Bullitt, the situation Palmer is in is actually feasible, though he exhibits that "narcissistic authority" that Neale discusses. Yet Palmer is subordinated by the reestablishment of roles. He is put into place under traditional social authority, thus making him much more realistic. That idolized womanizer image is brought back into reality by Hanna and Cal. Real heterosexual males can empathize with Palmer—maybe not to the extent that he picks up women but in how he faces casual and serious relationships as an everyday issue.

## 6. Conclusion

By embodying elements of those elements of the characters from the 1950s and 1960s, Gosling has created his own form of subculture. But what will be Ryan Gosling's role in future generations? Will culture look to him as an archetype of masculinity as our current culture looks to McQueen, Dean, and Hoffman? To put it simply, male icons appear to function on a continuum. When societal paradigms warrant different writing, images, music, and film, those different images become even more salient in the culture because they are groundbreaking. And that groundbreaking moment in cinema serves as a defining image of that culture. No doubt, Ryan Gosling has had a

pervasive effect on American culture. And as film, literature, and pop-culture perpetually resurface the past to understand current times, Gosling's current film may serve as a basis for interpretations of masculinity in the future.

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