Performing Masculinity: An Analysis of Performativity in Ani Katz's *A Good Man* (2020)

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Abstract

Arguably to be socially acceptable and meet the criteria for a decent man, males must complete specific 'character roles' that come with societal demands. Ani Katz's novel, *A Good Man* (2020), is a dark and compelling psychological thriller concerning a family man compelled to commit heinous crimes. Thomas Martin was a devoted husband, brother, and son who protected women from the unpleasant truths of life. He is troubled by a string of bizarre and unsettling nightmares. He feels consumed by his past and doubts his self-worth. The study investigates his attempts to present himself as a monster at times and a victim at others. The main character tries to live up to social norms re gender-appropriate behavior and perform according to stereotypes. Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990) argued for the concept of gender performativity. The idea is that gender and gender stereotypes accentuate social acts that individuals perform daily. These performances support traditional ideas of 'man' or 'masculine.' Gender identity is determined by how one sees oneself and how other people react to one's gender performance. Butler's notion of gender performativity is used to analyze the gender performativity of Katz's main character, Thomas Martin, as a masculine figure.

Keywords: gender performativity, stereotypes, family man, identity, expectations

Introduction

In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), feminist philosopher Judith Butler introduced the concept of 'gender performativity'. She claims, "behavior is unaffected by a person's gender at birth. Instead, individuals adopt particular socially acceptable behavior."[1] This behavior encompasses a person's movements, speech, attire, and actions. Butler argues that gender is performative rather than intrinsic, challenging conventional views of gender as a fixed, fundamental quality. The gender of a person is a performance carried out to satisfy social expectations and not a true reflection of who they are. Judith Butler makes the case that gender is a social construct. She questions the notion that sex and gender are different from one another, with sex being biological and gender being culturally produced. Butler contends that this erroneous distinction creates a division within the ostensibly cohesive topic of masculinity or feminism. Without gender, sexed bodies cannot signify, and the appearance of sex before speech and cultural imposition is only a result of how

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[1] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 10.

gender functions. Sex and gender are artificial ideas. Butler investigates the relationship between power as well as sex and gender categorization via the works of philosophers Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray. Arguments conceal the impossibility of ever 'being' a gender since they both presuppose the existence of a female 'self-identical being' in need of representation. According to Butler, gender is performed rather than intrinsic, and behaviors that are meant to represent gender work to provide the appearance of a stable gender identity. If the appearance of having a gender is, therefore, a result of culturally influenced behaviors, the gender 'man' (like the gender 'woman') remains reliant and open to interpretation and resignification. There is no firm, universal gender if this is the case:

> As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.[2]

"One is not born, but rather becomes a woman"[3] is among the most well-known explanations of the distinction between sex and gender. The implication that every individual grows up with sexual organs is not intended by de Beauvoir; rather, she means that we should think that the social roles that men and women play are a result of a range of socialized behaviors. The distinction is essential for comprehending the majority, despite being a crucial aspect of humanity's identity in general, it is all too commonly disregarded in the employment of the concepts of sex and gender. Societal factors rather than biological factors drive gender differences. Gender is so deeply woven into the social fabric that it becomes standardized and seems to be a fundamental part of existence compared to a historical artifact. It is unknown how precisely this happens. Gender essentialism, which holds that being male or female has intrinsic and immutable features, is directly opposed by Butler's thesis.

According to essentialist theories, some features, behaviors, and functions are fixed and determined by biology. Butler contends that gender is a socially produced performance rather than a permanent essence. She argues that what we see as "masculine" and "feminine" is not defined by biology but is instead influenced by society and cultural conventions. Though their opinions changed over time, individuals like Sigmund Freud and early psychoanalysts in Western philosophy and psychology made contributions to essentialist theories regarding gender. For instance, Freud's early theories focused on biological determinism and the notion of inborn gender disparities. In "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," it is said that "the little girl derives the notion of her own sex from the idea of the male organ."[4] In Freud's Oedipus complex theory, he thought that part of girls' development entailed learning to live without a penis. He considered the theory a crucial component in developing feminine identity.

As Judith Butler explains, these roles are created for us rather than us creating them. The debate heavily utilizes words like 'social constructivism', 'gender essentialism', and Butler's theory. Butler's theory employs a theatrical metaphor, but performativity is not the

[2] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p. 11.
[3] Simone de Beauvoir, Constance Borde, and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 2015), p. 283.
[4] Sigmund Freud, *The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1924), p. 124.

same as a 'performance.' It is not a costume that one wears one night and takes off the next, like a Shakespearean actor performing masculine characters then feminine characters. Instead, According to Butler, a performative action is one that both conveys ideas and creates a person's identity. Saying 'I do' at a wedding or admitting guilt during a trial becomes a spouse or a prisoner, are a couple of instances of performative speech. Similar work is done by gender-specific performative behaviors; but, because these acts are repeated, they also develop the identities they communicate to others:

> The situation has now become far less clear cut as male and female roles and values have become more similar, so much so that men and women increasingly appear to be able to choose from a shared menu of attributes although, as previously emphasized, the more privileged of both sexes are more able to choose than the less.[5]

According to de Beauvoir's theory, we don't have a self at birth; rather, we develop one via social pressure to fit in as Butler puts it. Gender norms differ significantly between historical eras, cultures, and subcultures, as one could anticipate for any cultural construct. And since they are created, they may alter in a variety of ways. Butler, therefore, claims that there is no justification, to use the phrase for stating that someone is playing their gender incorrectly. Gender identity "is a performative accomplishment," she writes "compelled by social sanction and taboo…. gender is… an identity instituted through *repetition of acts*."[6] Butler explains gender as a constant production and replication of a phenomenon, asserting that "Identity is performatively constitute,"[7] providing a clear articulation of her idea of 'performativity.'

In *Gender Trouble* (1990) Butler created a postmodernist understanding of gender. Butler defined gender as a social role that people can play or acquire and that society recognizes and accepts. Butler claims that gender is an ongoing act that continuously takes on new meaning. In Butler's worldview, gender is transient, malleable, dependent, and performed. She rejects absolutes. This perspective opposes conceptions of authenticity, authority, universality, and objectivity as well as essentialisms, fixed identities, and meanings. According to Butler, in a way, the action that one commits or performs is an act that was already in progress when one appeared "Gender is an impersonation . . . becoming gendered involves impersonating an ideal that nobody actually inhabits."[8] For this, it will be vital to examine how deeply embedded in society traditional male stereotypes are. Male stereotypes or masculinities function as a part of a larger system. Gender is the social phenomenon that distinguishes males and females based on a particular set of identifying characteristics: "The body is not a thing, it is a situation."[9] The categorizing of the sexes produces and maintains socially constructed differences. Men and women behave differently and interact differently to sustain their gendered identities. Even though this difference is highly disputed and intensely argued. Sexuality, contra gender, refers to the assessment made based on biological considerations that are universally recognized:

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[5] John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Philadelphia: Open University, 2002), p. 6.
[6] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p. 120.
[7] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p. 166.
[8] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p. 167.
[9] Beauvoir, Borde, and Chevallier, *The Second Sex,* p. 46.

> The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of gender as a constituted social temporality.[10]

Complex and multifaceted depictions explore the nuances of male characters, showing them as multifaceted people with a range of emotions, strengths, foibles, and vulnerabilities. This enables a more accurate and accessible portrayal of males, eschewing outdated clichés and providing a complex examination of masculinity.

Some readers appreciate books that break assumptions and depict masculine characters that violate gender norms or otherwise challenge or subvert stereotypes. These stories can encourage readers by promoting a more inclusive and forward-thinking perspective of masculinity by displaying a variety of masculine experiences and behaviors. These narratives attempt to inspire reflection and societal change by examining the negative impacts of toxic masculinity as well. It also encourages readers to question unfavorable gender stereotypes and promote more positive male-female interactions. Empathy and emotional intelligence are two traits that many readers find appealing in books about male characters because they are given the chance to demonstrate vulnerability, empathy, and emotional intelligence. Such stories can aid in removing the social constraints that frequently prevent men from openly expressing their feelings, building a better knowledge of the human condition, and fostering stronger emotional ties. Raewyn Connell explains:

> The story, by-lined Amanda Park, quotes a psychologist and counselor, Mary Beth Longmore, explaining that the sexes have different purposes when they speak. Women also don't understand that men view having information as a form of hierarchy - so people with more information are further up the hierarchy ... Ms Longmore said it was for this reason that men tended not to ask a stranger for directions, because it was admitting that they were in some way inferior.[11]

Gender intersects with other facets of identity, including race, class, sexual orientation, and disability. Readers' perspectives on the performativity of males in novels might differ depending on their tastes, cultural circumstances, and societal beliefs.

Men in literature are portrayed in a variety of ways, reflecting continuous conversations about gender roles, representation, and equality. Butler contends that gender is not something we are, but rather something we exhibit. The idea of gender performativity has several important components, including the concept that gender is viewed as a constant performance or enactment of behaviors, gestures, and styles that are traditionally associated with femininity or masculinity. Cultural expectations and standards are present in these performances since they are socially taught and repeated. Gender is seen as a social construction, which means that society both creates and reinforces it. It is influenced by social, cultural, and historical settings rather than just biological sex alone. Cultural differences and historical changes affect gender

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[10] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p. 179.
[11] Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (New York: Routledge, 2021), p. 3.

roles and expectations. Gender performances, repetition, and reinforcement refer to repetitive behaviors that are constantly reinforced by social interactions, institutions, and conventions. Individuals help to maintain and reinforce cultural standards by consistently acting in ways that conform to gender expectations. Although some lesbians argue that butches have nothing to do with "being a man," others insist that their butchness is or was only a route to a desired status as a man. These paradoxes have surely proliferated in recent years, offering evidence of a kind of gender trouble that the text itself did not anticipate.[12]

Normative constraints are governed by a set of rules and regulations. While some actions, looks, and attitudes are seen as deviant or transgression for a given gender, others are considered normal. People who don't adhere to these standards may experience societal pressure, prejudice, or marginalization. Resistance to prevailing gender norms is possible through subversion and resistance as a result of performativity. Individuals can disrupt and challenge conventional ideas of gender by purposefully defying or subverting anticipated gender performances, creating room for alternate expressions and identities. According to Butler's study, people actively participate in the recurring actions and behaviors that make up their gender rather than merely having a set gender identity from birth.

Butler, contends that rather than having a set and constant nature, gender is a social construct that is regularly reproduced and reinforced via ordinary behaviors and interactions. Important discussions and debates regarding the social construction of gender, the drawbacks of binary thinking, and the potential for resistance and subversion within gender norms have been encouraged by Butler's theories. Butler contends that gender is more performative than intrinsic. Gender is something that one does via habitual acts, behaviors, and gestures rather than something that one possesses. Gender is constructed via these recurrent presentations. Social conventions, cultural expectations, and institutions contribute to its creation and reinforcement. People learn and internalize the expectations placed on them by society, acting in ways that conform to these standards to blend in and be seen as belonging to a particular gender. Society has created standards and expectations which maintain traditional gender stereotypes and hierarchies. People who do not adhere to these standards may be subject to societal pressure, discrimination, or marginalization.[13]

Ritualization and repetition as gender performances are repetitive behaviors rather than solitary acts. They are reinforced by cultural practices, language, and social interactions. They are ritualized and reenacted in daily life. People support the preservation and perpetuation of gender norms by reproducing these performances. Butler emphasizes the possibility of subversion and resistance in gender performativity, even though it may appear to be limiting. Individuals can challenge prevailing conventions and create room for alternate expressions and identities by purposefully defying or subverting anticipated gender performances. This subversion can prompt people to reconsider how society views gender. As performances overlap with various types of identity and power relations, we may talk about intersectionality. Race, class, sexual orientation, and ability are just a few examples of overlapping identities that may affect how people perceive and perform their gender. Butler's theory challenges the

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[12] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p. 11.
[13] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

notion that sex is a fixed, necessary, and independent factor in determining gender.[14] Instead, it draws attention to how social practices shape, perform, and reproduce gender. While allowing for the possibility of resistance and other gender expressions, it reveals how gender is molded by society's expectations and power systems. Dan Kindlon states that:

> Stereotypical notions of masculine toughness deny a boy his emotions and rob him of the chance to develop the full range of emotional resources. We call this process, in which a boy is steered away from his inner world, the emotional miseducation of boys. It is training away from healthful attachment and emotional understanding and expression.[15]

Men's stereotypes can differ between cultures and are pervasive in many countries. Stereotypes are exaggerated and oversimplified opinions or assumptions about certain groups of people.

Here are a few preconceptions about men that are frequently held. This stereotype of males as being physically strong, emotionally stoic, and able to handle any situation is known as the 'strong and tough man'; the stereotype that says males should control their feelings and project toughness at all times. The breadwinner is a stereotype that claims males should be the main provider in their families. It may put pressure on males to put their professions ahead of other responsibilities and uphold gender stereotypes. The stereotype of the aggressive and dominating man suggests that males are by nature aggressive, forceful, and domineering. It can result in expectations that males should be aggressive, assertive, and dominant in a variety of social and professional settings. Because of the perception that males are less expressive or emotional than women, men are expected to hide their sensitivity or refrain from asking for emotional assistance. It may make it more difficult to communicate emotionally and may make it more difficult to receive help for their mental health. The stereotype of the Player or Casanova is that men prioritize their pleasure and are primarily interested in chasing several sexual partners. It can strengthen negative ideas about male entitlement and disregard for emotional connection. According to the stereotypes, males are less capable or caring when it comes to caregiving responsibilities like parenting or household chores. It can perpetuate established gender norms and hurdles for males who want to take on caring responsibilities like in the novel *A Good Man* by Ani Katz. The 'manly' hobbies and interests according to this stereotype, include sports, motor vehicles, or outdoor activities essentially associated with men. Society typically worsens unequal gender dynamics which eventually puts constraints on personal expression, and promotes restrictive expectations. Promoting inclusion, equality, and appreciation of the many experiences of men can be challenging.

Ani Katz's *A Good Man* (2020)

Katz's psychological thriller *A Good Man* delves into Thomas Martin's dark and complicated inner world. The narrative follows Thomas, who appears to be an average man with a reliable job, a wife, and two children, as he struggles with a mounting feeling of unhappiness and

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[14] Judith Butler, "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics," *AIBR: Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2009), pp. i-xiii.
[15] Dan Kindlon, *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p. 4.

disappointment in life. As the story progresses, Thomas's sense of emptiness and longing for something more fulfilling in his life becomes more and more overwhelming. He begins to reflect on his decisions and the responsibilities he has taken on as a spouse, father, and provider. The novel's first few words include precautionary statements. He says, "That's what I did for a living… I spun stories, made things like death seem clean and manageable – attractive, even."[16] Take the truncheon he buys, for instance, "The billy club was for protection,"[17] says Thomas. Protection against both material and more ethereal hazards; "It was easy to believe that my life as I knew it was just a paper façade, waiting to be punctured by horrors that could take me from my family – or worse, take my family from me."[18] Thomas's innermost worries, anxieties, and wants are all revealed by Katz as she probes into his mind. When dissatisfaction turns into a deadly obsession, the book takes a dark turn. He develops an obsessive fascination with Alice, a coworker, and becomes fixated on her. This gradually gets out of hand, sending Thomas down a dark road of deceit, trickery, and, in the end, violence. The novel examines issues related to identity, masculinity, and the darker sides of human nature.

The psychological complexity of Katz's protagonist is deeply probed, and the result is a disturbing depiction of a man who is on the verge of insanity. The work poses concerns about the nature of kindness, the facades individuals put on, and the possibility of hidden evil. Katz uses evocative and reflective wordings throughout the narrative to build suspense and lure readers further into increasingly tormented thoughts. The story offers a terrifying look at the intricacies of human behaviour, especially when societal pressures and personal unhappiness come together. Overall, the novel is a compelling and unnerving book that explores issues of identity, obsession, and the effects of repressed impulses while probing the depths of one man's disintegrating mind. The nuances of Thomas' personality and the motivations behind his strange behaviour leading to traumatized situations are explored. With his parents' less-than-ideal marriage, the death of his elder sister, and being left to care for his mother and his two younger twin sisters, DeeDee and Kit, Thomas had a nightmare childhood. "Being traumatized means continuing to organize your life as if the trauma were still going on—unchanged and immutable—as every new encounter or event is contaminated by the past."[19] His wife Miriam and daughter Ava, whom he refers to as 'my girls' throughout the novel, are likewise closely protected by him. He wants to shelter them from the world by enclosing them in a bubble of safety. He is compelled by a basic need to protect his family from threats, disturbances, and so on. The narrative is told from Thomas's point of view, giving readers an intimate and unnerving insight into his reasoning. His sense of self is shaped by cultural pressures and expectations, which Katz unpacks, as she explores identity and masculinity throughout the story.

In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, Karen Horney examines the fundamental makeup of neuroses in light of their cultural presumptions. She discusses a variety of subjects, including the neurotic desire for intimacy, guilt, and the pursuit of power, status, and ownership. "Every society's culture is largely what it thinks of as 'real.' and therefore to a

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[16] Ani Katz, *A Good Man* (Waterville, ME: Thorndike Press, 2020), p. 10.
[17] Katz, *A Good Man*, p. 24
[18] Katz, *A Good Man,* p. 25.
[19] Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), p. 63.

considerable extent is real in its effects."[20] Thomas struggles with the idea of becoming a 'good man' according to society's expectations, yet he grows more and more frustrated with his life and feels stuck in a monotonous loop. Alice, Thomas's coworker, plays a vital part in the story. Thomas develops a fixation on her after discovering in her a source of fascination and solace from his unhappiness. The boundaries between desire, control, and morality are blurred as a result of his fixation with Alice, which drives him to take on several risky and deceptive activities. Katz's evocative and contemplative style draws readers into the protagonist's frightening environment. As the novel unfolds and Thomas's behaviors grow more unpleasant, the author skilfully creates a sense of dread and suspense.

Examining how societal pressures and individual frustrations may lead people to do evil deeds, Katz casts doubt on the idea of what it is to be a 'good' person. Her novel explores the hazy line between normalcy and obsession, challenging readers to consider their perceptions. The issue of masculinity and its performative aspect is explored throughout the novel, with the novel exploring the demands and expectations placed on males in society via the journey of the protagonist, shining light on the negative effects of adhering to cultural standards of masculinity. Performative masculinity is the view that masculinity is not a natural or unchangeable feature but is instead created and enacted via behaviors, actions, and outward manifestations. The protagonist Thomas Martin battles with how he presents himself as a man and the harm that it causes in his life. Thomas makes an effort to exhibit the characteristics commonly linked to being a 'good man' in society throughout the whole book. He wants to be powerful, emotionally detached, prosperous, and in charge. But as the narrative progresses, it becomes clear that Thomas's portrayal of masculinity is a mask concealing deeper fears and challenges, stating that he "was afraid that Mariam would notice the skid marks of dried grease around the rims of the plates and the crusty residue at the bottom of our tumblers. I saw that her fork was dirty and took it from her, but before I could replace it my mother snatched it away from me."[21] The novel's examination of performative masculinity by Katz reveals the negative consequences of upholding strict gender standards. Thomas always battles to uphold his fabricated masculinity, which causes him to become disconnected from his feelings and unable to establish real connections with others. He is caught in a loop of suppression and denial and eventually collapses. The work also questions the idea that masculinity is a fixed idea. Through other male characters who are all battling with their performances and expectations, it depicts several incarnations of masculinity.

The story emphasizes the value of self-reflection and honesty, arguing that people can only find true fulfillment when they let go of pretending to be someone they're not and accept who they are. The piece provides a provocative critique of performative masculinity, illuminating the difficulties and drawbacks of adhering to social expectations stating that "we should be reasonably clear that we are not talking about men when we are talking about images, stereotypes, or norms; and that we are not talking about images when we talk about men, male behaviors, privileges, and attitudes."[22] Thomas seems to live a typical life, doing what is expected of him in terms of being a decent husband and parent by society. However, he has a

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[20] Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), p. 125.

[21] Katz, *A Good Man,* p. 115.

[22] Kenneth Clatterbaugh, *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity* (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 42.

discontented and restless undercurrent underlying this outward appearance of normalcy. He starts to lose control over the life he cherishes so much and those with whom he is keen to safeguard and keep content. What we witness is someone going insane, which has been made worse by years of remorse over his sister's death and his father's actions. Additionally, he believes he could have done more to make sure his younger twin sisters got an education, saw more of the world, and led regular lives outside of the house. As it is, they have lived a fairly segregated life, and are now responsible for caring for their ill mother while Thomas bears the financial burden, stating that "I can help. I can take care of the girls, And you. …. Of course I do. I always will …. Just tell me what you need …. That's fine, I said quickly. That's fine. I can give you money. It's no problem. Everything will get better." [23] Thomas is shown as being extremely reflective and contemplative. He struggles with an overwhelming sense of emptiness and with his decisions and duties. His reflection prompts him to look for something more significant, and it is this endeavor that launches the narrative. Character development for Thomas occurs as the story goes on. His unhappiness gradually transforms into an obsessive fixation with Alice, a coworker. He develops a fixation on her and an obsessive infatuation with her that dominates his thoughts and behavior. Thomas' fixation pushes the lines between morality, control, and desire to the point that it takes him down a dark path. Connell states that "there is a mismatch between the social character of gender issues and the individualized practices with which the counter-culture generally handles them. Therapeutic methods of reforming personality treat the individual as the unit to be reformed and propose more individuality as the way forward, searching for a 'true self' or a 'real me'." [24]

Conclusion

Judith Butler has criticized gender essentialism and tried to dismantle these rigid and binary ideas of gender, highlighting the part that social and cultural structures have influenced how we see gender. This article examined the performances of the main character of Katz's *A Good Man*, Thomas Martin, as a masculine figure, taking into account Butler's concept of gender performativity. Thomas's personality is presented as complicated and has several facets throughout the entire book. He is plagued with a feeling of inadequacy and a need for approval. His choices and behaviors result from a rich reservoir of fears and repressed desires that take unsettling and worrisome forms over time. Katz uncovers Thomas's mind to examine the intricacies of his personality and the motivations that drive him. The writer vividly depicts Thomas's internal conflicts and contradictory emotions. Katz uses Thomas Martin to examine issues with identity, masculinity, and the effects of repressed impulses. In addition to posing challenging issues about the nature of morality, control, and the complexity of human behavior, the book allows readers to explore the depths of Thomas's disintegrating mind. Thomas's discontent and fixation with Alice interfere with his ability to act masculinely. The unraveling of his persona reveals the gaps in his identity and calls into question the idea that adhering to the conventional masculinity ensures fulfillment or pleasure.

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[23] Katz, *A Good Man,* p. 125.
[24] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 167.

The novel emphasizes how the performativity of masculinity may be constrictive, harmful, and ultimately unsustainable through the lens of Thomas's character. There is room for additional research into the many coping methods people use to manage their neurotic inclinations, including neurotic demands and how people attempt to satisfy them. "A neurosis is characteristically defined by an emotional conflict so basic and so long-enduring as to give a special coloring to the personality structure, as well as to the neurotic symptoms;"[25] Thomas mentions this in the book's conclusion, saying that he always aimed to do things the correct way. It investigates the effects of living up to society's expectations for males and challenges such assumptions. We have illustrated how the influence of one's socially constructed identity and expectations leads to psychological impact and repercussions which can give rise to trauma regret, and neurotic conditions. The research can aid in further exploration of the psychology of males in many cultures and societies throughout the globe.

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[25] Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time,* p. 104.