

学校代码: 10730

分类号: H31

密级: 公开

兰州大学
硕士学位论文
(学术学位)

论文题目 (中文) 格雷厄姆·斯威夫特《水之乡》男性气质研究

论文题目 (外文) A Study on Graham Swift's *Waterland* from
the Perspective of Masculinity

作者姓名 李晶文

学科专业 外国语言文学·英语语言文学

研究方向 英国文学

教育类型 学历教育

指导教师 蒋翊遐

合作导师 无

论文工作时段 2017 年 3 月至 2019 年 4 月

论文答辩日期 2019 年 5 月

校址: 甘肃省兰州市城关区天水南路 222 号

硕士学位论文

M. A. Thesis

格雷厄姆·斯威夫特《水之乡》男性气质研究

A Study on Graham Swift's *Waterland* from the Perspective
of Masculinity

李晶文

Li Jingwen

学 院：外国语学院

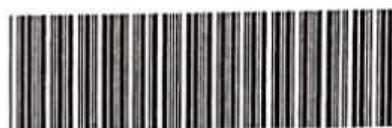
学 号：220160919860

学生姓名：李晶文

导师姓名：蒋翊遐

学科名称：外国语言文学·英语语言文学

论文题目：格雷厄姆·斯威夫特《水之乡》男性气质研究



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Date: 2019年5月29日

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been finished without the help of many people. First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to show my respect and to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Jiang Hongxia, for her guidance and assistance in the writing of the thesis. Over the past three years, I am deeply impressed by her profound knowledge, meticulous scholarship, and deeds that have inspired me to keep composure in face of difficulties.

Besides, I am indebted to all the teachers during my three-year postgraduate studies from the bottom of my heart. They are Professor Yuan Honggeng, Professor Mao Gang, Professor Shi Yanling, Professor Yang Shihu, Professor Gao Hongxia, Professor Shi Juhong, Professor Zhao Xia. Their dedicated teaching spirit and diligent academic pursuit touch me a lot. I'm taught by their words and influenced by their deeds, and all those would benefit me a lot.

I also would like to thank my classmates who are always ready to discuss with me on my thesis and encourage me when I have problems. Finally, I owe my parents and friends a lot for their support and love.

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格雷厄姆·斯威夫特《水之乡》男性气质研究

摘要

格雷厄姆·斯威夫特是当代英国最有影响力的作家之一。对历史的关注是其小说最明显的特征，1983年出版的《水之乡》是一部典型的“历史编纂元小说”。因此，国内对该小说的研究大多集中于历史层面。事实上，《水之乡》与斯威夫特其他小说一样，都关注了男性的生存困境，而国内外学界对此类问题关注甚少。本论文拟从康奈尔男性气质理论入手，对《水之乡》中男性气质类型进行分析。文章认为小说中的三位男性人物托马斯、汤姆、迪克分别属于支配性男性气质、共谋性男性气质、从属性男性气质。本文的分析揭示出隐藏在男性气质背后的危机和焦虑，并证明男性气质不是一成不变的，而是在特定的社会文化背景中构建的。

小说中不同时期三位男性人物男性气质的变化表明，男性气质危机不仅是转型时期个人的问题，也是国家的问题。英国在由农业国向工业国的转变过程中，国家身份中原有的男性气质有所削弱。斯威夫特对男性气质危机的关注表现了其对英国社会乃至人类生存状态的忧思。

关键词：格雷厄姆·斯威夫特，《水之乡》，男性气质，危机，重塑

A STUDY ON GRAHAM SWIFT'S *WATERLAND* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MASCULINITY

Abstract

Graham Swift is one of the most influential writers in contemporary Britain. Concerning about history is the prominent characteristic of his novels. Published in 1983, *Waterland* is a classic “historiographic metafiction” and most scholars focus their researches on the historical issues of the novel. But actually, like other Swiftian novels, *Waterland* considers male characters’ existential dilemma, yet few scholars have paid attention to the problems concerning its male characters. This thesis, based on Connell’s theory of masculinities, explores three main characters masculinity — Thomas’s hegemonic masculinity, Tom’s complicit masculinity and Dick’s subordinated masculinity, revealing the crisis and anxiety hidden. It is argued that masculinity is by no means a monolithic whole but constructed in specific social and cultural contexts.

The changes of three characters’ different masculinities show that the crisis of masculinity is not only the personal problem but also the nation’s crisis happening in transitional period. In the course of Britain’s transition from an agricultural country to an industrial one, British masculinity has been weakened gradually. Swift’s concern about the crisis of masculinity in *Waterland* shows his worries about men’s living conditions as well as the development of whole human beings.

Keywords: Graham Swift, *Waterland*, masculinities, crisis, reconstruction

Introduction

With the publication of several ingenious works, Graham Swift has built a reputation as a major novelist in contemporary Britain. So far, he has created ten novels, most of which are characterized by growing concern about notions of history. Although he has only produced a dozen novels, they have received wide recognition, above all, his third novel *Waterland*.

As one of Swift's most popular works, *Waterland* draws attention of a large number of scholars at home and abroad for its profound insights into history issues and the relationship between history and stories. In this novel, Swift questions the traditional history by presenting historical uncertainties and deconstructs the grand narrative by expressing his main idea that history progresses in circles like a mobius strip.

Domestic and foreign scholars have approached *Waterland* from the perspectives of thematic preoccupation, narrative techniques, postmodern features, characterization, and so forth. Although a multitude of researches have been done, there is still room for further studies.

The author of the thesis attempts to analyze the crisis of masculinity in Graham Swift's *Waterland*. Like his other works, *Waterland* depicts the twentieth-century Britain as a world "littered with physical and mental cripples, a world savagely scarred by the twentieth century's brutality, especially in the shape of its two world wars."¹ In reading this novel, the author of the thesis finds the novel can be analyzed from the perspective of masculinity, which only a few scholars have touched upon. So such a study of the novel is necessary and valuable. This thesis aims to discuss three male characters' representation of masculinity, their crisis of masculinity and their attempts to reconstruct the ideal masculinity in *Waterland*. By doing so, the author of this thesis expects to give a better understanding of Swift's novels and draw some inspiration by learning lessons from reconstruction of the ideal masculinity so as to deal with the relationship between men and women more appropriately.

There are four chapters constituting this thesis except Introduction and Conclusion.

Chapter one provides a sweeping introduction to Graham Swift and his major works, a relatively systematic literature review on *Waterland* as well as the theory of masculinity.

Chapter two focuses on representations of three characters' masculinity based on Connell's classifications of masculinity. Thomas is a representative of hegemonic masculinity because he not only obtains wealth, fame and power through diligence, the pioneering spirit but also exerts considerable influence on the whole region. Tom's masculinity is a bit complicated. Compared with the headmaster Lewis, he is the subordinated party while he manifests complicit masculinity in social life where he does not simply display authority but shows women considerable respect. Dick Crick is a typical bearer of subordinated or marginalized masculinity because born as a freak, he is often teased or despised.

Chapter three explores three characters' troubles of masculinity. Thomas seems to have successfully constructed his hegemonic masculinity but actually it is only constructed on the surface. As he ages, he feels anxious and depressed for he is confronted with the loss of power and domination both in family and in public society. Tom's troubles of masculinity are mainly caused by his wife Mary Metcalf who becomes infertile because of botched abortion in adolescence and thus Tom can never be a father. Differently, Dick is treated as a creature like eels instead of the lover in his relationship with Mary and is always in the fear of being uncovered that he is the murderer of Freddie Parr.

Chapter four considers the reconstruction of the masculinity based on the discussion of the male characters' type of masculinity and its crisis. Thomas aims to reconstruct ideal masculinity by means of improving relationships with his families and others. Tom expects to rebuild a sort of ideal masculinity through story-telling and Dick endeavors to reshape his masculinity through violence.

Chapter One *Waterland* and Masculinities

1.1 Graham Swift and His Major Works

Graham Swift has already established himself “as a major novelist and may prove to be the most outstanding English novelist of the final quarter of the twentieth century.”² On May 4, 1949, he was born in Catford in South London. His mother was from an elite area in Sydenham, while his father, a naval pilot in the Second World War, was the son of a lower-class family. Aware of his father's wartime experience, the Second World War, which Swift never went through, has been his great history lesson. It proved that the Second World War recurred in his novels. He attended prestigious Queen's College, Cambridge where he got his bachelor's degree and master's degree in 1970, majoring in English literature and then he went on a further study for his doctor's degree in York University. After graduation, he experienced different jobs and most of the time worked as a teacher of creative writing in Further Education Colleges in London, which benefited his literary career a lot. It must be a long time before he drew the attention of academic circle. He started his career as a short story writer, but actually what made him well-known was the publication of his first three novels, that is to say, *The Sweet-shop Owner* in 1980, *Shuttlecock* in 1981 and the most acclaimed *Waterland* in 1983. In 1984 Swift became a member of the Royal Society of Literature, and has received honorary degrees from the University of East Anglia and the York University.

Although he wrote only ten novels since 1980s, it is worth mentioning that they have received high praise. His first novel, *The Sweet-Shop Owner*, tells the story of Willy Chapman who runs a sweet-shop in South London. The most attractive part is about the bargain between the quiet Chapman and his emotionally damaged wife who has to accept life's deprivations. But it is a bargain that is threatened by their clever, angry and unforgiving daughter.

His second notable work *shuttlecock*(1981) describes a son's obsession with his father's ostensibly heroic experience during the Second World War, winning the

Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize in 1983. Or rather, it deals with finding out the truth of the past by intertwining personal experience with historical events. An anonymous reviewer criticizes this novel that “Swift finds secret in strands of time, then, as a cat might tease a ball of yarn, unravels his history, tugging at the essence of humanity with the drawstring of history” at *Boston Herald*. It is fair to say that this is also appropriate for his rest novels.

Statistically speaking, *Waterland* is Swift's most studied work and once was selected as the best English novel of the year by the *Guardian* and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize but missed. For its profound insights into notions of history, complicated relationship between history and story as well as mixture of multiple genres, *Waterland* has won massive number of appreciative audience and also drawn large number of celebrated critics and scholars at home and abroad.

Last Orders came out in 1996. It is regarded as Swift's premier work and depicts a journey begun in a pub in London's East End by four friends intent on fulfilling a promise to deliver the ashes of their dead drinking-partner in the sea, receiving the prestigious Booker Prize, as well as the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. This novel belongs with a classic work of polyphony.

The Light of Day in 2003 tells the story of a murder, a love affair and a disgraced former policeman turned private detective. *Tomorrow* was published in 2007 and investigates complex themes of parenthood, coupledness and identity via the personal thoughts and memories of the protagonist, Paula, as she lies awake one night in bed. Four years later, *Wish You Were Here* came out. As Jack Luxton travels to collect the body of his brother, repatriated from the war in Iraq, and take it to the family burial plot in North Devon, he relates the history of the Luxton family and their traditional professions of farming and military service. Swift's latest novel is *Mothering Sunday: A Romance* (2016) which is a subtle, erotically charged novella suspended between past and future.

Besides, Swift has written *The Magic Wheel: An Anthology of Fishing in Literature* (1985) in collaboration with David Profumo, a nonfiction *Making an*

Elephant: Writing from Within (2009) and short stories *Learning to Swim* (1982), *Chemistry* (2008), *England and Other Stories* (2014). *Learning to Swim and Other Stories* (1982) is praised as “an admirable collection...a most impressive work of fiction” by *The Times*. Similar to Swift's novels, these stories are mostly narrated in first person and their themes are also echoed in his later novels, for example, the incest of father and daughter in the sixth story “Hotel” embodied in *Waterland* (1983).

Appreciating his novels, it can be clearly seen that Swift is a writer “obsessively fascinated with the role of historical events in his character's life”.³ In his novels, he invariably holds the view that the past has the great impact on the present. Thus his characters who were wounded by history would return to the past to seek refuge. As the impressive features in Swift's novels, intertextuality and the mixture of genres are also worthy of studying. For instance, the elements of “insanity, illegitimacy and misplaced parents echo Dickens and Wilkie Collins.”⁴ Besides, *Waterland* is a typical piece of work which contains several genres such as the detective story, gothic novel, fairy-tale, etc..

In sum, Graham Swift is a writer who never loses his enthusiasm for creative writing and he believes that the power of imagination is most important for novelists. Besides, he is expert in narrative. For him, history as narrative is a personal rather than a factual reality, a fact reflected in his use of first person narration in almost a stream of consciousness manner.

1.2 *Waterland*

The year 1983 witnessed Swift's most acclaimed novel, *Waterland*, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and won the Wnnifred Holtby Award of the Royal Society of Literature, the *Guardian* Fiction Prize of the year as well as Italian Premio Grinzane Cavour in 1987. The title of the novel relates to its setting in The Fens in East Anglia. *Waterland* is concerned with the nature of history and its importance. For this reason, it is associated with new historicism. It also belongs to the category of postmodern literature for it contains the characteristics associated with postmodern

literature, such as the fragmented narrative where events are not told in chronological order and an unreliable narrator actions.

Waterland relates to the story of Cricks and Atkinsons. It is narrated by Tom Crick, a middle-aged history teacher in the first person. Tom, a man with keen interests in the nature and purpose of history, is confronted with the plight that his wife has been accused of kidnapping a baby and he is about to be laid off from his job. Faced with students' question of the relevance of learning historical events, he uses the impending forced retirement as an excuse to unfold the story of the Fens and his genealogy instead of traditional historical curriculum to his students. These stories form the substance of the novel which takes place mainly in two time frames: the present, and the year 1943 when Tom Crick is fifteen years old. The traumatic events of his adolescence reach forward in time to affect the present. The structure of the novel, which frequently moves back and forth in time, also suggests the fluidity of the interaction between past and present. The novel is essentially a dramatic monologue, the history teacher in the classroom recounting his own life story as well as that of his ancestors. Despite the awareness of their presence, Swift's narrators hardly interact with their audience. In *Waterland*, schoolboys are addressed directly as children.

Peter Widdowson once said "Graham Swift awaits his critics".⁵ In most cases, *Waterland* has definitely elicited applause from a wide range of scholars, critics and reviewers. Peter Prescott, an American author and book critic, praised that "so artful is Swift, sure-handed with his diverse material, And his prose, for its resonance and clarity, makes immersion in *Waterland* a pleasure".⁶ The British novelist and publisher Joseph Lloyd Carr commended that *Waterland* is "in the Big League — innovatory, moving, memorable".⁷

Yet, there are also some critics and reviewers who have produced hostile commentary. Considering the construction of characters, Michael Gorra contends that "*Waterland* lacks passion, or rather its passion is all for history itself and not for the people who are affected by it".⁸ Moreover, Hilary Mantel makes unfavorable comparison between *Waterland* and *Ever After* in her "Blood Ties", a book review of

Ever After. She argues that “it seems to be a convention”⁹ to refer to “*Waterland*, his best book”¹⁰ when writing about Graham Swift, but actually it would be a great thing to kick over the traces, declaring *Waterland* “a mere bagatelle”¹¹ beside *Ever After*.

1.3 Literature Review

Western scholars have approached *Waterland* systematically from such perspectives as historiographic metafiction, Eco-criticism, feminism, traumatic issues, sentimentalism, intertextuality, etc..

In *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* published in 1988, Canadian critic Linda Hutcheon portrayed *Waterland* as a historiographic metafiction which refers to “both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages”.¹² Since then, many scholars have followed suit. Damon Marcel Decoste declares that *Waterland* is “committed to the exploration of, and exhortation to, historia as inquiry and not just as narrative,”¹³ placing “narrative at the center of the novel’s understanding of historical and biographical memory”.¹⁴ Pamela Cooper asserts that the convergence of narrative and historiography is “the obvious focus of *Waterland*’s intellectual endeavor”.¹⁵

Besides, there is another group of Swift criticism focused on “mourning and/or melancholia, inscribing the melancholia narrative personae into the broader pathologies of nation, empire or age”.¹⁶ Lewis MacLeod points out that this category “think[s] of the mourning in terms of some kind of nostalgia for traditional masculine signposts and norms”.¹⁷ Adrian Poole insists that Swift’s characters mourn “a whole world in which (their) ideas of manhood were formed”.¹⁸ Emma Parker believes they are confronted with the loss of masculinity and they must learn “how to live as a man and express maleness when traditional models of manly being have lost their validity”.¹⁹

Ronald H. Mckinney reveals that there exists a “growing convergence possible for the postmodern and environmental movements”²⁰ in *Waterland* which employs the ecological metaphor for land reclamation as its central device to present “how

postmodern praxis can avoid both mindless optimism and hopeless despair”.²¹ Alan Forrest Hickman investigates how human beings interact with the nature, aiming to draw some inspiration for people's existence in modern times.

In terms of feminism, Katrina M. Powell analyzes how Swift represents the body of female characters in *Waterland* focused on feminist theory. She believes that despite representing Mary's subjectivity, Swift “privileges the male act of story telling, an act that Metcalf is unable to fulfill”²² because she loses her curiosity and refuses to tell. Pamela Cooper interprets *Waterland* as a post-colonial text whose “topography mirrors that of the female body.”²³

Critics also attach great importance to the traumatic issue in *Waterland*. Stef Crap's *Trauma and Ethics in the Novels of Graham Swift: No Short-Cuts to Salvation*(2005) details the issue of trauma and redemption and describes character's attitude toward trauma as well as ethical issues aroused by trauma. Crap contends that contemporary researches on traumas show scholars' respect to the “other” because they give trauma victims a chance to express themselves.

Jakob Winnberg's monograph *An Aesthetics of Vulnerability: The Sentimentum and the Novels of Graham Swift*(2003) investigates aesthetics of vulnerability in Swift's works. Winnberg holds that “sentimentality is articulated with a postmodernist aesthetics, which involves the techniques such as double-coding and reflexivity, but also with a postmodern ethico-spiritual thinking that involves notions of alterity, sensibility and vulnerability”.²⁴

In China, academic circle began to pay attention to Swift and his works, especially *Waterland* in the 1990s. Statistically, there are two monographs, about sixteen M. A. theses and doctoral dissertations, as well as a multitude of articles and reviews related to *Waterland* retrieved from CNKI.

Two monographs are Su Chen's *Representing the Traumatic Past: The Study of Graham Swift's Fiction* (2009) and Wang Yanping's *Historical Narrative in Postmodern Literary Horizon: The Study of Graham Swift's Fiction* (2014). Su Chen has discussed the relationship between traumatic narrative and the past from three

aspects of “evasion”, “acting-out”, “working-through” of the traumatic past. She declares that trauma is a sort of thing that Swift’s characters have to face. However, they fail to break away from the impact of trauma by means of constructing narrative and of evading the traumatic past. Thus their urgent task is to face the trauma fearlessly instead of evading.²⁵

Wang Yanping focuses on historical narrative in Swift’s novels. She contends that Swift constantly and unconsciously reveals such a humanistic concern, that is, returning to “history in mind”,²⁶ and finally she concludes that “the ultimate goal of any narrative is to return to the spirit and soul”.²⁷ In Lu Yu’s view, history in *Waterland* is constructed just to meet men’s need to outwit the reality or keep it under control. Both of the two treat history as narrative not traditionally factual reality.

From the perspective of ecocriticism, Guo Xin revealed that Atkinsons’ history was closely linked with the nature based on Marx and Engels’ view on geographical environment in historical materialism, and Atkinsons’ tragedy showed that people should have a deep reverence for the nature. Du Jianbing pointed out the “existential predicament”²⁸ in *Waterland* by means of unveiling conflicts between man and nature, between man and other man, between man and himself. Wang Yumiao holds that human and nature are supposed to coexist peacefully. These three all expressed that human beings should protect and respect the nature. Human beings and the nature should coexist harmoniously.

Besides, unique narrative techniques and features employed in the novel have drawn considerable attention similarly. Su Boya discussed narrative features in *Waterland* from three aspects: narrative time, unreliable narrator and polyphony respectively. Zhang Naiyue interpreted circular narrative in *Waterland* through “the circle of time, the circle of sentiment and the circle of destiny”.²⁹ Moreover, Jin Jia approached *Waterland* from dynamic intertextuality which fully showed “the contradiction between the idea of progress and regression as well as the tensions between various genres, discourses and voices which echoes postmodern cultural intertexts—plurality values and truths.”³⁰ Employing Bakhtin’s chronotope, Fang

Danna and Jiao Wei analyze the narrative time and space in *Waterland* to present Swift's temporal and spatial cosmology. Du Yonggai's "A Magic Realistic Interpretation of *Waterland* by Graham Swift" is a typical analysis of *Waterland* from magic realism.

Comparing *Waterland* with Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Yi Ying explores Swift's existential philosophy in the postmodern context. In her opinion, people should have strong curiosity and the ability to tell stories so as to free themselves from sufferings in postmodern world. Yang Wenlong centers on "nothingness of reality" and proposes that "the sense of responsibility and everlasting human curiosity"³¹ are proper ways to human existence in such a reality.

From the above, it is clear that researches on *Waterland* have been done from various perspectives such as trauma, historical narrative, ecocriticism, narrative techniques, existential philosophy and so on. However, critics in China have paid little attention to masculinity which is of great importance to understand Swift's novels for their exclusive male narrators. Thus a study of masculinity in *Waterland* is necessary and valuable in order to fill the research blank.

1.4 Theory of Masculinity

It seems very strange to discuss issues of masculinity under patriarchal system. It may be only when something goes wrong or when it goes into excessive overdrive that we really notice it. Masculinity refers to a series of distinctive characteristics of men. It is an indispensable part of men's studies. Thus it is necessary to mention men's studies at the outset in order to explore masculinity.

Men's studies is established no more than half century. Historically, it is women's movement around the 1970s that greatly influenced and drove men's studies. With the flourishing of women's movement centering on the critique of male-dominated system and eradication of their oppression, men gradually became aware of the problems of themselves and at the same time their response to such a change resulted in men's studies. Brod defines men's studies as "the study of masculinity and

male experiences as specific”,³² rather than a universal paradigm for human experience. Rocco L. Capraro describes men’s studies as “an emerging, interdisciplinary field of knowledge concerned primarily with men’s experience, identity, and development throughout the life course.”³³ It mainly focuses on the lives of men who “are framed or made meaningful by prevailing models of what it means to be a man in any particular historical or cultural milieu.”³⁴ According to him, men’s studies best understands as “the study of masculinity itself.”³⁵

When it comes to the concept of masculinity, plentiful words like “strength”, “bravery”, “confidence”, “self-control”, “authority”, “violence”, “aggression”, etc. can spring to our minds before we definitely know what it is. But actually, people may not think about it seriously when asked what masculinity is, for they often “take it for granted”³⁶ or as something “produced by nature”³⁷ under patriarchal system. However, masculinity is by no means a sort of thing taken for granted or produced by nature. It takes shape only within the specific social and cultural context. It varies when social context varies. Just as Ben Knights holds that masculinities “are not given but achieved through a constant struggle with countervailing tendencies”.³⁸ Michael Kimmel interprets masculinities as “the social roles, behaviors, and meanings prescribed for men in any given society at any one time”.³⁹ Austrian sociologist R. W. Connell who is best known for studies of social construction of masculinity defines masculinity as “configurations of gender practices”⁴⁰ within a system of gender relations. In this sense, masculinity is under no circumstance taken for granted, but rather socially constructed. This is one of the key points of studies of masculinity.

We have noted that masculinity is socially and culturally constructed, thus indicating an emphasis on gender, not biological sex. This is the first question to be clarified. Feminists have made a clear distinction between sex and gender. Sex often belongs to a biological category, referring to biological apparatus, while gender is described as a “structure of social practice”⁴¹ by Connell and often associated with social roles and behaviors performed by certain sex within a culture. As Justice Antonin Scalia wrote

The word “gender” has acquired the new and useful connotation of cultural or attitudinal characteristics (as opposed to physical characteristics) distinctive to the sexes. That is to say, gender is to sex as feminine is to female and masculine is to male.⁴²

Furthermore, biological sex is stable while gender is ever changing and depends on specific context. According to Connell, gender is not only a personal identity, but also a social structure, and should be understood in power relations, production relations, emotional relations, and symbolic relations. Simply put, masculinity or femininity refers to what it means to be a man or a woman. Thus, what it means to be a man or a woman varies in different society at any time. The concept of masculinity is “inherently relational.”⁴³ It is constructed in constant reference to the notion of femininity. Simply put, masculinity is often interpreted as anti-femininity or “flight from the feminine.”⁴⁴ Anyway, it is not appropriate to say that one is a man or a woman just because he or she possesses male or female organs. When people say what a girl or a boy should do or should not do, they are meaning social expectations of each gender.

Besides, masculinities are historical. It has been stressed that masculinities take shape only at particular times and places and thus unavoidably vary. That is to say, they develop and change in the progress of history and thus are dynamic. According to Connell, there are mainly four factors associated with the formation of masculinities. The first one is cultural change from which new interpretations of sexuality and personhood are generated. It also places an emphasis on individualism and autonomous self which are cultural preconditions of masculinities. The second is the development of overseas empires where “conquistadors” might be the first group to live up to norms of masculinities in modern sense. The third is the flourishing of the cities which shaped an idea that “one must have a personal identity as a man or a woman, rather than simply a location in the social order as a person with a male or female body.”⁴⁵ The last one is the outbreak of the European civil war. In 18th century, patriarchal order was strengthened by centralized state. Thus, the definition of the hegemonic type of masculinity came into being and people began to associate it with

subordinated and marginalized masculinities. Gentry masculinity also came into being at that time. It is brutal and violent for its connection to the state and often relates to the authority over women in the family.

Erving Goffman (1963) wrote:

In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports. . . . Any male who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself—during moments at least—as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior.”⁴⁶

This is what we call “hegemonic” masculinity. It has become a standard that men employ to evaluate whether they measure up. However, it is pluralized masculinities not singular masculinity that draw scholar’s attention. Recognizing the diversity of masculinity, sociologists begin to examine the ways in which different groups of men construct different types of masculinity. Such a perspective can be seen in several works, such as Harry Brod’s *The Making of Masculinities* (1987), Michael Kimmel’s *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity* (1987), and Tim Carrigan, R. W Connell, and John Lee’s “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity” (1985), Jeff Hearn’s *The Gender of Oppression* (1987) and R. W Connell’s *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (1987) as well as *Masculinities* (1995).

“All masculinities are not created equal”⁴⁷ because the definitions of masculinity are not equally valued in a same society. Connell classifies masculinity into four types, namely, hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalization. This is the main contribution she has made to studies of masculinities. According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity can be defined as “the configuration of gender practice ... which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.”⁴⁸ It is often associated with power, authority and wealth. But that is not to say the most powerful people are always bearers of hegemony. This is the idealized form of

masculinity which men hardly could live up to.

In the whole society, there are specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men. Connell points out an obvious case of subordinated masculinity in contemporary western society where heterosexual men dominate homosexual men. But it is not the only form of subordinated masculinity. Some heterosexual men and boys who are removed out of legitimate male communities also belong to this group. They are often described by assaulted words, such as sissy, mom's boy, wimp, freak, geek, idiot, to name just a few.

Complicity is employed to account for the situation where a large number of men "have connections with hegemonic project and do not embody hegemonic masculinity".⁴⁹ Masculinities "constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy, are complicit in this sense."⁵⁰ That is to say, men can benefit from dominated position as a whole on the one hand, and on the other hand they can avoid the risks or dangers compared with those men who possess the hegemonic masculinity. There are another form of complicit masculinity where "marriage, fatherhood and community life often involve extensive compromises with women rather than naked domination or an uncontested display of authority".⁵¹ In this case, those men who not only perform their duty well as a breadwinner in family, but also show respect and love to their wives and children are also bearers of complicit masculinity.

Either hegemonic masculinity, or subordinated masculinity, or complicit masculinity is constructed and developed in internal gender relations. While marginalized masculinity is the product of interplay of gender with other external factors, like class, race and so on. Thus marginalization can be interpreted as "the relations between masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups."⁵² And generally speaking, it is "relative to the authorization of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group."⁵³ For instance, white men as a whole occupy the dominant position, while black men are subordinated. Some successful black men whose wealth or fame allows them in the higher social status than most of

the white. But they fail to improve the black's social status wholly and thus are incapable of holding the authoritative position. Black men of this kind represent marginalized masculinity.

However, men's masculinities are confronted with various problems. Roger Horrocks contends that "the masculine gender has all kinds of benefits, but it also acts as a mask, a disguise"⁵⁴ thus it is "in deep crisis".⁵⁵ While Connell employs "crisis tendency"⁵⁶ instead of the phrase "crisis of masculinity" or "crisis of femininity" to describe difficulties of masculinity or femininity. The invalidity of legitimacy of patriarchy and wide-scale emancipation of women are most obvious factors resulting the crisis of masculinity. It has been noted that masculinity is tied to virility, power, authority and control, thus men can feel the anxiety of emasculation once they lose theses characteristics owned by a real man. Melancholia can also threaten men's masculinity.

Threatened by the loss of masculinity, men begin to take actions either to preserve their masculinity or to construct ideal masculinity through various means. Violence plays an indispensable part in the formation of masculinity. Traditionally, many dominated groups wield violence to exert influence on other group or to maintain their dominated position. Besides, violence has its position in gender politics among men. For example, men are main subjects of most violent events, like crime, military attacks and homicide. Thus men often attempt to build their masculinity by perpetrating violence against the weak part.

Chapter Two Types of Masculinities in *Waterland*

Raewyn Connell, Michael Kimmel and Jeff Hearn, as well as other critics and scholars in the studies of masculinity all point out that there are multiple types of masculinities. Further, Connell proposes four types of masculinities within gender relations, namely, hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalization. After close reading, the author of this thesis finds that Thomas Atkinson, Tom Crick and Dick Crick are representatives of hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity and subordinated masculinity respectively. Thus the main task of this chapter is to discuss these three male characters's type of masculinity.

2.1 Thomas Atkinson's Hegemonic masculinity

In Connell's opinion, hegemonic masculinity maintains the legitimacy of patriarchy and guarantees the domination of men as well as the subordination of women. It is always equated with success, achievement, reputation, power, authority and violence. However, this is not to say it is the most powerful or rich people who embody the hegemonic masculinity. Film stars can be in this case. Individuals who have institutional power or wealth may not the bearers of hegemonic masculinity unless they have authority over others. Hegemonic masculinity is constructed only if there is "correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual."⁵⁷ This can be instantiated by the top level of business, government and military. Anyway, hegemonic masculinity is by no means monolithic, rather dynamic. When particular time and space vary, it varies simultaneously. As Connell thinks, hegemonic masculinity is the sort of "masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable."⁵⁸ Thus, hegemonic masculinity might drop to a position of subordination, when men fail to meet challenges from other groups. The author of this thesis aims to explore Thomas Atkinson's hegemonic masculinity at first.

Thomas Atkinson, who is spurred and enlightened by his father William Atkinson, is the first generation to develop Atkinson's enterprise in the Fens. The success in business intensified his hegemonic masculinity which is often related to possessions, power, fame and social status. As a symbol of success, power as well as charm, money is often taken to judge men's achievements and authority and to display their masculinity, dignity and social values. Money is an important benchmark for men's success and individual values. Therefore, men, with wisdom, courage and luck, strive to make money and amass a fortune in business world in order to maintain their dignity and prove their masculinity. Thomas Atkinson is such a man with the hegemonic masculinity, which is mainly embodied not only in his successful career and marriage but also in his harmonious relationship with others.

Owing to his family, Thomas is never a man lacking enthusiasm and ambition which, to a certain degree, are inherited from his forefathers. From the rise of Atkinsons, it can be clearly seen that they were enterprising and pioneering. Although they were shepherds from the hills of Norfolk, they always got the idea of becoming rich and powerful. Once they made their minds to do something, they will do it well at any cost. It was during the enclosure movement that "idea-conceiving" Atkinsons made a great fortune and began to sow barley in their fertile land. From then on, they dreamed of becoming a bailiff at first and then a farmer of substance.

Living in the hills of Norfolk for a long time developed Atkinsons' unique psychological traits. They are scarcely pessimistic and negative compared with Cricks. Ecologists point out that the relationship between nature and human beings depends on where they live for a quite long time. Specific climate and land, geographical features and local species do have a great influence on the shaping and development of local people's physique and psychological traits.⁵⁹ This can be used to demonstrate that the environment plays an important role in the shaping of psychological traits of Atkinsons and Cricks. Guo Xin holds that geography and climate are main factors that influence Atkinsons psychological characteristics.⁶⁰ On the one hand, sunny and cloudless days in the hills are conducive to the shaping of Atkinsons' strong and

optimistic character. On the other hand, high position allows Atkinsons to “look down from the hilltop in an expansive and prophetic manner” like God. (67)

Fathers' Characters, such as ambition, dominance, self-reliance and authority have great influence on the development of their sons' masculinity. As the successor of William Atkinson, Thomas Atkinson owes his success not only to his own wisdom, but also to the foresight of his father who “commands his son's attention and directs his gaze towards the west, to where the Fens lurk in the misty distance.”(67) Although Thomas was told fine oats and wheat could be sowed and grew well in the peaty soil in the Fens area, only the land where they stood was admirable for malting barley. Thus Fenmen usually bought malt from the uplands of southern Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire where very good malt was yielded. However, it was very expensive to import malt from the uplands due to a wide variety of tolls on the Cam and Ouse. Besides, natural hazards of troublesome waterways made the import very hard and can not ensure supplies. Anyway, people of the Fens spent a lot of money but only bought inferior ale. William dreamed that their barley-seeds would be made into surpassing malt in their own malting house one day and sold it in the Fens, he said that “the man who builds a malting house at Kessling and has the keys of the river will bring wealth to a wasteland. And himself.” (68)

With his father's instruction, Thomas began to expand and prosper family business further to the remote Fens. He bought the marsh and peat-bog along the Leem at a bottom price and then sold it at a very high price. Later, Thomas Atkinson moved to Kessling where he reached the summit of his career. In business, he dug dykes and built drainage, locks, and the most fashionable malting house as well as a barge pool even in his fifty-ninth year. Since then, Atkinsons' barley has been processed into malt in their own malting house and they brought it down to the Fens. In politics, he held power as the Chairman of the Leem Drainage Commission. “A confident and far-seeing man, a man of hearty and sanguine, rather than phlegmatic, temperament, he offers work and a future to a whole region.” (16) In hard times, he provided people with shillings and foods as well as jobs so no violence occurred in the

town. This not merely won him reputation and other people's recognition, but also proved his authority on others. "He is becoming a monument. Man of Enterprise, Man of Good Works, Man of Civic Honour." (75) As a man full of ambition and spirit of enterprising, Thomas achieved success in business and social status ultimately.

Furthermore, Thomas's hegemonic masculinity can also be embodied in his marriage. He married Sarah Turnbull, a rich young lady of eighteen and daughter of a brewer of Gildsey. She kept a good household and came from a middle-class family, which exactly matched well with the image of angel in family that is conceived to be helpful to the establishment of a man's ideal masculinity. Choosing wife is crucial in the construction of masculinity, for it is closely related to the wealth and sexuality of men. The greater fortune one man has, the more likely he is to marry a wife from high social status. As a man of great fortune, it is perfect match for Thomas to marry a young and fecund woman other than one from lower class. As Jane Austen put in *Pride and Prejudice*, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."⁶¹

Apparently, Thomas Atkinson, depending on the spirit of pioneering, diligence, kindness, not only obtains wealth but also wins respects from others as well as high social status. His marriage with the young and beautiful Sarah makes it possible for him to maintain his dominated position in the family. On the surface, he has successfully built his hegemonic masculinity as a man of great fortune and authority.

2.2 Tom Crick's Complicit Masculinity

Large number of men who "have connections with the hegemonic project but do not embody hegemonic masculinity"⁶² possess the complicit masculinity. They are incapable of holding the dominant position, but they can get dividend from patriarchal society simultaneously. In addition, men who need to compromise with women rather than displaying absolute domination or authority in the family or in public sphere are also representatives of complicit masculinity. In *Waterland*, Tom Crick is a typical

example of complicit masculinity. Firstly, although he can not reach the standard of hegemonic masculinity, he can benefit from the patriarchal society as a man. Furthermore, he is a good-natured person who always respects wife and loves children.

The narrator Tom Crick is a history teacher in his fifties and has lived in London with his wife Mary Metcalf for nearly thirty years. He is a man with a “Platonic disposition and a brainy head”. (48) When he was a schoolboy, he was clever and studious. He showed keen interests in history that he always buried himself in history books. Thus, entirely different from his brother Dick Crick who was even deprived of the right to be educated, he was often “given the privileged role of the bright schoolboy of whom much was expected and who was therefore to be protected from all things menial”. (37) Well-educated and good-natured, he obtained a decent job as a history teacher at a grammar school after returning from battlefields. He married Metcalf and they settled in Greenwich where they lived a rather comfortable and enviable life without worrying about money.

However, he cannot reach the standard of hegemonic masculinity. In the 1980s, “the Afghan crisis, the Tehran hostages, the perilous and apparently unhaltable build-up of nuclear arms” (7) brought the terror and emptiness to the whole society in Britain. Men are expected not only to be confident, optimistic, brave and strong, but also to take family or social responsibilities so as to go through the tough period. Only men with these characters can own the hegemonic masculinity because they embody the “currently accepted” ideals. In *Waterland*, Tom is timid and shy. There is a streak of sorrow in him because his mother's death casts a everlasting shadow on him and he is also suffering the heavy guilt for three lives, namely, Freddie Parr, the aborted baby and Dick.

Unsurprisingly, Tom has been also greatly influenced by the environment in the marshland in such respects as personalities, behaviors and thoughts. Firstly, water plays an important role in the shaping of Cricks' personality. They become so dull and silent that Swift uses “Phlegm. A muddy, silty humor” (15) to describe their

personalities. Tom is clever enough but also fragile and sentimental enough. Moreover, Cricks are “fixed people” (14) because they are always resigned to the present situation and reluctant to move forward. In this case, Tom always has to come to terms with the reality. In most circumstances, he is satisfied with the present situation and sometimes if things go wrong and he has no ability to cope with, he would try his best to adapt to the reality. He is never an ambitious man who strives for success and thus he refused to be headmaster in the beginning of his career. For him, what the most important thing is history or story.

From the above analysis, it can be clearly seen that Tom failed to measure up to the standard of the hegemonic masculinity but he was most likely to maintain sort of complicit masculinity.

Although men are not up to the standard of the hegemonic masculinity, they can obtain “dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command”.⁶³ Also, they can get material dividend. Men’s average incomes are much higher than women’s average incomes. Men are much more likely to hold a position in major areas. In *Waterland*, Tom was a history teacher by profession, while Mary worked as a nurse looking after the elderly. In this case, politics of masculinity concerns not only questions of personal life and identity but also questions of social justice.

In whatever times, “masculinity, understood as sexual or social reproductive capacity, but also as the capacity to fight and to exercise violence (especially in acts of revenge), is first and foremost a duty”.⁶⁴ Tom’s profession as a teacher made it possible for him to perform the duty well as a breadwinner in the family compared with his brother Dick and other playmates. Well-educated and good-tempered like a gentlemen, he was by no means a husband of chauvinism and scarcely displayed absolute domination, control or authority to his wife. Indeed, he was a man full of masculinity because he always respected his wife and cared her more. When Mary told Tom: “I’m going to have a baby. Because God’s said I will,” (148) he was so shocked and desperate that he could do nothing but repeated the words: “I think you

should see the doctor. I want you to go to the doctor". (148) When Mary kidnapped a baby from supermarket because of schizophrenia, he tried his best to persuade her to return the baby to the baby's mother. He believed that by doing so, things could return to normal and they could move forward continually.

To sum up, although Tom is a well-educated and good-tempered man, he is not up to the standard of the hegemonic masculinity because his fragile personality does not conform to current social ideals. But he can maintain the complicit masculinity because he not only provides bread and butter for the family, but also respects his wife, shares households with her and never perpetrates violence against her.

2.3 Dick Crick's Subordinated Masculinity

In the analysis of subordination, Connell points out that homosexual men are the most typical carriers of subordinated masculinity by comparison with the dominance of heterosexual men. But they are definitely not the only male group owning the subordination. The men who are described as sissy, mother's boy, wimp, geek, dweeb and so on also belong to this group. In this case, there exist possibilities for some heterosexual men and boys to be completely expelled from legitimate male communities. In *Waterland*, Dick is just such a man with subordinated or marginalized masculinity, which can be illustrated by his eel-like appearance and deprivation of the right to be educated.

In *Waterland*, Dick is the only man who has been given the priority to his physical descriptions in details. Dick, the product of incestuous relationship between his mother Helen Atkinson and his grandfather Earnest Richard Atkinson, is expected to be born as a "Saviour of the World," (220) but ironically he is a "potato-head, not a hope for the future. A numbskull with the dull, vacant stare of a fish..." (242) Because of mental defect, Dick becomes "the daily butt of the other kids"(242) and no one, including his younger brother Tom, would like to play with him. As Swift describes, Dick has

A long potato-coloured face, with a heavy jaw and a slack mouth which hung invariably open, emitting a thin, unconscious wheeze. His eyelids flickered. When Dick was moved, only his eyelids showed it. The muddy complexion neither flushed nor paled; the mouth remained limp; the eyes themselves starred. The eyelids alone registered emotion. But although they registered emotion it was impossible to tell merely from their movement what emotion was being signaled. (27)

The above shows that Dick is not handsome and is a man with dull expressions so that it is very hard to see whether he is happy or not. He is more like a machine in that he hardly expresses his emotions even faced with a familiar person's corpse. When Faced with Freddie Parr's dead body, Dick shows no feelings compared with Tom's pray and his father's desperation because in his eyes, the removal of a body is nothing different from his daily work of removing silt.

Dick represents the subordinated masculinity first because he is treated as a disgusting creature instead of a human symbolically. He is the only person who is quite similar to eels in the respects of physical appearance, talent in diving and ignorance about everything, although other characters also bear some similarities to eels more or less. Firstly, there are similarities between Dick and eels in appearance. When Mary looks at the eel Dick presents her as a gift, she immediately associates it with Dick because "it has little panting gills and, behind them, delicate whirring pectoral fins not unreminiscent of Dick's whirring eyelashes..." (253) It is very humiliating for a man to be compared to creatures, even disgusting ones. Secondly, Dick is talented in diving. He has a "long, but finless, scaleless body" (190) which makes him resemble eels extremely. Due to his eel-like figure and talent in diving, he becomes the champion in the swimming race organized by Mary. Last but not least, Dick is always ignorant about everything because of his mental defect. He cannot read or write and even cannot speak a simple sentence partially because he is deprived of the right to be educated. So he keeps silent like eels most of the time. Regarded as eels rather than human being, Dick is placed at the bottom of the social status, or even worse than that, he is removed out of the society. This greatly hurts his dignity and identity as a man. He holds a subordinated position in the whole society.

What is worth mentioning is why Dick is deprived of the right to be educated. The school headmaster said that Dick is incapable of studying, but “he’s good with his hands ... and a strong pair of shoulders ... no shame, in honest manual work...” (242) It means that reading or writing unfits Dick but he can do some manual work requiring no wits. Hence Dick is “assigned a lifetime of daily toil” (37) which makes a sharp contrast with his younger brother Tom, a future history teacher. Generally speaking, Dick should have been paid more attention to and been taught for his mental defects, but actually he is “deliberately abandoned” (37) by his parents, especially by his father Henry Crick. Because he believes that one is “better never to know” (324) and thus he wants to keep Dick “happily in the dark”. (324) In Swift’s novels, characters frequently are faced the simple question that “is it better to know things or not to know them?”(118) Would it be happier to know things or not to know things? In *Shuttlecock*, the protagonist Prentis is also faced the situation where he endeavors to discover his father’s heroic experience during the war, but ultimately the truth proves to be a disaster for him. In *Waterland*, Dick is not permitted to be educated, to know more things, or accurately to say, he is forbidden to know the truth. He is a freak? Or he is the product of a incestuous relationship? Whatever the truth will bring about, terrible consequences will be generated actually.

Knowledge is power. When Dick is deprived of the right to learn, he becomes weak and powerless. Thus he belongs to the group of subordinated masculinity. Except for inability to write or to read, the most important is that he cannot express himself properly and exchange with others effectively. But the capacity to express own feelings and to tell the truth is also very important for men. The mental defect has affected Dick heavily in the way of thinking and behaving in social situations. But the deprivation of the right to be educated makes him in an inferior position in social relationships. So being incapable of dealing with social situations and relationships, he will be harassed by a sort of horror even in his twenties.

Dick can only work as a manual worker for his illiteracy and strong physique. Occupation is closely related to masculinity for it embodies one’s wealth, fame and

social status. As a worker of removing silt, Dick belongs to the lower class, including labors, convicts, homosexuals and men from other races. Compared with his younger brother Tom, an intellectual, he can only do the dirty and toil work.

It would be impossible to deal with issues of masculinity without considering what might be the most central aspect of masculinity, namely the male body. Because the male body is “one of the main avenues through which culture attempts to construct masculinity”.⁶⁵ For example, “national constructs are often tied to the male body, which functions as a locus where ideas about the nation are formed, worked out, or problematized through a sort of body politic”.⁶⁶ Connell reveals the need to “assert the activity, literally the agency of bodies in social processes”,⁶⁷ where bodies are theoretically regarded as “sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct.”⁶⁸ According to her, “the body is virtually assaulted in the name of masculinity and achievement”.⁶⁹ This can be illustrated by that athletes often live with damaged bodies and pains. A national champion in sports could not fight when pushed around for fear of bad publicity nor drink too much because of training schedules and thus what makes him become masculine is what he is forbidden. Bodies play an essential part in social practices such as sport, labour and sex. In the eyes of sportsmen, excellent physique can be meaningful only when associated with the triumph in competition. In one word, male bodies can be seen as a locus to construct ideal masculinity, but also can make it possible for men to become the victims of masculinity.

Dick's extremely strong body and talent in diving allows him to pass the swimming test, from which he obtains Mary Metcalf's recognition and admiration. In Chapter “Child's Play”, the apparent characteristics of bodies under boys' swimming trunks arouses Mary's curiosity in a game of removing clothes. To Mary's disappointment, when boys stripped off their swimming trunks, “four wrinkled, irresolute and slightly sticky members revealed, amidst nests of incipient pubic hair; which attempt to stand up, go limp and stir again feebly.” (184) Hence, as Dick appears and joins in their activity, both other boys' “masculine pride and Mary's

feminine authority receive a check.” (186) Because “a tubular swelling of massive and assertive proportions” (186) under Dick’s straining swimming trunks was so impressive that other boys felt ashamed and humiliated while Mary was attracted entirely by what she had seen. Mary is daring and even dominated in front of other boys, but when she sees Dick’s mature body she immediately have a flush on her face like a women in love because she considers that:

Perhaps (...) that, quite apart from this fact of sheer and astonishing dimension, Dick is four years everyone’s senior. Here, after all, wrapped in infantile trappings, is a man (a little tuft of hairs in the centre of Dick’s breastbone). What other wondrous faculties might this otherwise dumb creature possess ...? (186)

Apparently, Mary was entirely attracted by Dick because he was a man full of machismo and is totally different from other boys. In her eyes, Dick, as an adult, is a more proper object to satisfy her curiosity, especially curiosity about sex. Although he is a man full of strength, he is by no means aggressive and thus less likely to perpetrate violence against her. More importantly, although he has an attractive body suitable for sexual exploration, he knows nothing about sex, which means it is not necessary for her to invest too much energy in their relationship. Thus, Dick is tricked and coerced by Mary as he is always teased by others. Although he attracts Mary for his strong body, he is not treated as a man equally and thus his self-esteem as a real man is hurt.

To sum up, this chapter considers Thomas, Tom and Dick’s representations of masculinity in *Waterland*, Thomas is an ambitious and a successful businessman and he constructs the hegemonic masculinity by means of obtaining wealth, fame and high social status. Tom is a typical example of complicit masculinity in the novel. He has a decent job and thus he could be a good breadwinner. As a good-natured man, he often respects women and loves children and thus he manifests the complicit masculinity. And Dick, as a freak, bears the subordinated masculinity, for he is treated as a creature rather than a man and is deprived of the right to be educated. Thus he positions at the

bottom of the social ladder.

Chapter Three The Loss of Masculinities in *Waterland*

Around the 1980s, many received versions of masculinity and male identity were called into question or undermined by rapidly changing patterns of employment, especially the accelerated decline of the unlinear male career. Many male novelists of the period, such as James Kelman, Ian McEwan, Roddy Doyle, Martin Amis and Graham Swift and so forth, engaged with this turmoil. Their works not only mirror the crisis of masculinity, but also contribute to the debate about it. Different as their contributions are, they stimulate quite a group of scholars and critics to “talk about key issues to do with what it means to be a man at the end of the millennium”.⁷⁰

In his novels, Swift not only shows his concern about historical issues, but also has an intention to uncover male characters' plight or crisis in understanding themselves as men through male's perspective. In *waterland*, male characters are often stuck in various crises which will, more or less, weaken their masculinity. Thus in this chapter, why they become fragile will be discussed.

3.1 Thomas Atkinson's Loss of Hegemonic Masculinity

Although Thomas Atkinson derives his identity from his success in the career from which he obtains wealth, power, fame and social status, he is likely to be confronted with the crisis of masculinity because his hegemonic masculinity is only constructed on the surface. Thomas is an ambitious and a confident man even in his sixties. But as he ages, he suffers from heavy gout which makes him an fragile man. He is faced with the danger of losing control and domination in the family or in public sphere. Simultaneously, he is losing the support and trust from people for his violent ways of amassing fortunes. More importantly, he becomes an outsider in his family because he is an unqualified husband and an absent father. So he is in great danger of losing hegemonic masculinity.

Thomas achieved his success in the career in the end of the 18th century and the

beginning of the 19th century when Britain was experiencing a radical change in society. As the earliest country to start the Industrial Revolution, Britain mastered the most advanced technologies in the world at that time. The rapid development of capitalism brought drastic changes in every aspect of social life, such as changes in social and cultural values which had exerted great influence on people's thoughts and behaviors. In the course of the transition from Georgian Era to Victorian Era, the society began to attach great importance to personal virtues gradually. Unsurprisingly, it was the middle-class gentlemen who ought to be admired and widely accepted by the society at that time and thus they were representatives of the hegemonic masculinity. While the labors, homosexuals, perpetrators positioned at the bottom of the social ladders were often despised and rejected by the society and they were believed to possess the subordinated or marginalized masculinity. With the large-scale development of the Industrial Revolution, there emerged large number of industrial giants who under no circumstance belonged to the group of hegemonic masculinity, although they had great fortunes. Because they were often notorious for bloody ways of accumulating wealth, which was not identified with cultural and social values at that time. Thus these industrial giants are far from the carriers of hegemonic masculinity. This is true of Thomas Atkinson.

The rise and fall of Atkinsons is a microcosm of the society of the Great Britain. The Atkinsons rose from rather modest beginning during the Enclosure Movement, further developed into high success in the first half of 19th century but declined in the age of Edward. The rise of the Atkinsons parallels the reach of British empire. Thomas takes full advantages of the Industrial Revolution to expand and prosper Atkinsons' family business to its heyday. In capitalist societies, accumulating wealth is often through violent ways, such as speculation and oppression. In those days, industrial giants were only interested in quick profits and thus it was inevitable for them to achieve success in rather bloody ways. By doing so, they amassed great fortunes and became powerful but actually their loss outweighed their gain. Because they devoted themselves only to the prosperity of the business through brutal

oppression but without paying any attention to its negative effects, which in turn brought them greater disaster.

In his chasing after wealth desperately, Thomas is portrayed as a man of greed, violence and disloyalty. The most important thing for him is high profits at all costs. He dug more drainage-ways and reclaimed large scale marshland to establish his commercial empire but paid little attention to its possible problems such as damages to the natural environment and loss of people's support. In an area of marshland, it is a tough work to drain away the water to prevent the region from flooding when it rains. Too many drainage-ways and excessive reclamation of lands makes it even more difficult to drain away the water because when it rains heavily, the water will easily overflow its banks and cause floods. As an important productive factors, natural force should not have been neglected in the production or life. It is due to Thomas's greed for wealth and failure of protecting the natural environment that leads to the floods in the winter of 1815 to 1816, which is a catastrophic damage to Thomas himself, even to the whole region. Thomas spent his late life in the period followed by Victoria Era which places a high value on personal virtues. Undoubtedly, Thomas is most likely to be rejected by the society valuing moralities gradually for his notorious behaviors in amassing fortunes. He becomes a self-interested business and gradually loses people's trust in him because of his disloyalty. Although his latent crisis was invisible at that time, once it broke out it would be a deathblow.

A real man must voluntarily take on social responsibilities, which can also serve a foundation for his actualization of individual self-worth. In his acclaimed book entitled *Personal Social Responsibility*, Arvind Devalia defines personal social responsibility as "recognizing how your behavior affects others, and holding yourself accountable for your actions".⁷¹ In the expansion of his business, he brings catastrophic damages to the natural environment which is closely related to human being's existence. he fails to exert great influence on others, although he provides money and foods during the turmoil.

In addition, with the development of his career, Thomas is distant from other

men because they worship him as a god instead of a number of them. He feels unhappy and even solitary, for men no longer treat him as a member of their group. People in the town no longer trust him and support him because his violent ways of amassing fortunes brings the whole region the disaster. Simultaneously, his success in business makes them feel ashamed.

Thomas is becoming aloof. He can no longer stand by one of his new drains and clap the shoulder of the man who has helped dig it. The labourers who once worked beside him — the Cricks perhaps among them — now touch forelocks, venerate him, regarded him as a sort of god. And when, with the express purpose of showing he is not aloof, he enters the tap-room of the Swan or the Bargeman and orders a pint for every man, a silence descends on these haunts of mirth, like the hush inside a church. (75)

Kimmel argues that masculinity is a “homosocial enactment,”⁷² because as men “we are under the constant careful scrutiny of other men. Other men watch us, rank us, grant our acceptance into the realm of manhood. Manhood is demonstrated for other men’s approval. It is other men who evaluate the performance”.⁷³ Thus men test themselves, perform their achievements, and take risks, all because they want to get other men’s approval or want other men to recognize their manhood. Men are always in the competition with other men to prove themselves. In this case, Thomas always competes with other men to prove himself as a real man. As a successful businessman, Thomas provides supplies and employments for the region and protects it from the turmoil in hard times. Once men were willing to work for him and work hard, for he created them a promising future. In this situation, he won men’s approval. However, his achievements allow other men to be in the shadow of him and make them feel ashamed. Thus, he is not accepted by other men as a member of them any longer. Masculinity as homosocial enactment is a double edged sword. It has good sides and it also has bad sides as every coin has two sides. Lynne Segal’s words also prove this case.

The closer we come to uncovering some form of exemplary

masculinity, a masculinity which is solid and sure of itself, the clearer it becomes that masculinity is structured through contradiction: the more it asserts itself, the more it calls itself into question.⁷⁴

More importantly, Thomas also meets with difficulties in his family relationship because devoting himself to the prosperity of Atkinsons' business, he pays little attention to his wife and children. For a man, it is necessary to take on social responsibilities, but his first duty is to take on family responsibilities. Thomas's hegemonic masculinity is displayed in his family where dominant father plays the role of a breadwinner, while obedient mother is responsible for care-taking of children. He believes that a real man should not reveal any emotion and his main responsibility is to provide money and foods for his families, which means that he should "work hard and sacrifice himself, day in and day out, for the good of his family."⁷⁵ Though he provides the best living condition for his wife and children, he ignores the love to the wife from a husband and the love to children from a father. He is an "absentee landlord at home and an absent father with his children."⁷⁶

In 1819 she is thirty-seven. The playful, girlish looks which once won him fancy (and suited his business ends) have been transformed by the years into something richer and mellower. Mrs. Atkinson is beautiful; with a beauty which is apt to remind Mr Atkinson of the beauty of an actress — as if his wife occupies some strong lit stage and he, for all his public eminence, watches from a lowly distance. It seems to him that he has worked hard and achieved much and yet failed to give due attention to his wonderful creature with whom, once, he bounced so casually through the rituals of procreation. (75-76)

Thomas was growing old and becoming doting while his wife was still "in her prime", (76) even more attractive. It is stressful and anxious for men to become aging for they have to meet with possible crisis such as unhappiness in relationships, frustration in career and despair about future prospects. Moreover, drastic changes in their disposition are also resulted from attacks of diseases, gradual decline of physical strength as well as libido. Weak and sentimental, they become depressed and anxious,

especially unfaithful to their wives. As a man possessing hegemonic masculinity, Thomas feels the need to dominate and to control in the family or in public sphere, while aging makes it difficult for him. He cannot keep his wife in control nor make decisions in the business any more. He watches his wife go out and attend parties while he is confined within doors. Jealously, he begins to suspect that his wife cuckolds him so that he shows a disposition to violence and hit Sarah on her face with rage, leading to the perpetual loss of her wits as well as hate of his sons and judgement of a whole town.

Thomas fails to be a qualified father for he does not perform well his duty as a father. There are “at least two alternative ideals of fatherhood that have been historically important: the father as ruler and the father as educator”.⁷⁷ He is a good breadwinner but is not a qualified educator, for he does not set a good example for his sons. When he was young, he was taught to be a real man by his father William. But his sons George and Alfred never receive education from their fathers. They show him no intimacy but deep hate after he hit Sarah. “In the home itself, the father’s major responsibility is that of disciplinarian, and secondarily one of the role model for male children”.⁷⁸ In this case, Thomas fails to play a role model for his sons.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that Thomas Atkinson has successfully constructed his hegemonic masculinity by obtaining wealth, status, authority and others’ approval, but at the same time he is confronted with the danger of loss of hegemony. Actually, it is risky to construct masculinity because there exists paradoxes or “inconsistencies in images of manliness.”⁷⁹ For example, men are always expected to show little intimacy with women, but in this case they have to face the greater fear of homosexuality. Therefore, when Thomas believes that it is legitimate for a real man to show no intimacy with his wife, no nurturing to his children, he is alienating from his wife and children. Simultaneously, he is expelled by other men, which means social bonds which Thomas has established with other men collapse. So it is fair to say that Thomas superficial hegemonic masculinity is performative and in danger.

3.2 Tom Crick's Wounded Complicit Masculinity

Graham Swift's protagonists are often exclusively males and have a sense of fragmentation in understanding themselves as men. They are often depicted as guilty, damaged, vulnerable, diffident figures, retracing their tormented past in order to find out how they get to the present dispiriting situation. In *Waterland*, Tom Crick is confronted with the problem in marriage, for his wife goes mad and steals a baby from the supermarket. Simultaneously, he is forced to be retired early by the schoolmaster, Lewis.

Tom Crick is a history teacher in his fifties. He was interrupted the lesson of the French Revolution by his students, especially a boy named Price in a provocative manner, by protesting that "history was 'a fairy-tale'" (6) and that the only important thing about history is that "it's got to the point where it's probably about to end". (7) Recognizing the fear of whole class, he began to relate his own stories and family history as well as the history of the Fens instead of the course in curriculum. Simultaneously, his wife abducted a baby and said "God told me to do it"⁶ so he was forced to retire early. Furthermore, he was troubled by great guilt for three deaths in 1943, namely, Freddie's death, his aborted baby and Dick's death.

Masculinity has been historically defined as "flight from women, the repudiation of femininity".⁸⁰ Psychologically, to "develop a secure identity for himself as a man"⁸¹ is the main task for a little boy. The fear of castration compels the little boy to reject his identification with mother and turns to identify with "the actual source of his fear",⁸² his father. As a consequence, he is capable of developing masculine personality and heterosexuality simultaneously by way of removing Oedipal love for his mother to the female substitute and develop a romantic relationship with her.

In 1937, Helen Crick passed away, casting a heavy shadow on her family, especially on her younger son Tom whose "whole life might have been different" (283) if his father had told him that his mother was dead rather than "she's gone". (281) Because in the understanding of a nine-year old boy, it was hard to equate die with the

word “gone” which seemed that his mother was “somewhere far away, inaccessible, invisible, yet still there” (283) but someday she will be back. This allowed him to try his best to find the image of his departed mother, namely, Mary Metcalf who was “adventurous, inquisitive, unrestrainable” (117) in adolescence and was believed to be the origin of the sin. Indeed, both of the two should be responsible for those three lives.

In patriarchal society, men as a whole are in the position of domination and control in the family, public sphere and even the whole country while women are objects subordinated by men. Therefore, it is men that possess hegemonic masculinity compared with women. “Men often view women in terms of the Madonna-Whore complex, in which some women are categorized as morally superior, and other women morally inferior to men”.⁸³ Women are expected to be submissive, obedient and domestic to measure up or will be denied by society as the image of “whore”.

Obviously, there was little physical description of Tom in the novel perhaps because more attention had been paid to his personality and virtues. He should have acted as the role of domination and possessed a sort of hegemonic masculinity but in fact it was Mary who occupied the dominant position and thus Tom was forced to be passive and submissive. In this situation, he was confronted with the anxiety of castration and the loss of hegemonic masculinity along with the loss of dominant position in their relationship and in family. To some degree, Tom's masculinity was mainly troubled by his wife Mary.

As a daughter of a farmer and Roman Catholic, Mary was expected to be cultivated as a elegant fair lady or a sort of restrained Madonna. But ironically, her behaviors did not quite match with her father's expectation. On the contrary, she behaved like a whore-like girl because of her boldness and unrestraint. For instance, she coaxed Dick into having sex with her while she was dating with his younger brother. Apparently, the game of removing clothes between young girls and boys had been unable to meet her curiosity about sexuality and gradually she became even more daring in the sexual exploration, full of prostitution and debauchery. By doing so,

she subverts traditional female stereotype as restrained, silent and obedient in sexuality and it seemed that she is in an attempt to pursue sexual freedom from which men feel threatened and castrated.

As Tom said, Mary was always “the bolder of the two of us” (51) and more active part in their relationship, even in almost every aspect. In the Chapter “About Holes and Things”, there was a clear description about Mary’s boldness and initiative in their first sexual exploration. “It was she whose fingers first got the itch and were at work before I dared, and only then at her prompting—her grabbing and guiding of my hand, her pulling up and pulling down of clothing—to use mine.” (51) In the above description, Mary was represented as “the initiator, the Eve”⁸⁴ who seduced reticent and plaintive Tom. In Pamela Cooper’s view, Tom bear a striking resemblance to Adam of Genesis who says to his creator, “The women you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it”. Both Eve and Mary are constructed as instigators in that they are privileged to take initiatives in their actions. Katrina M. Powell states that Swift constructed Mary as initiator at least for two reasons. One is to display that woman’s control over her own body can lead to tragedy, the other is to show “Mary’s transition from a strong woman to a weak woman as a result of her sexual curiosity”.⁸⁵

Mary’s control over her own body proves to be a failure, which implies that women’s endeavors to achieve goals through the control over their bodies are doomed to fail in the patriarchal society. Driven by sexual curiosity, she not only made love with Tom but also seduced his brother Dick to do so. When she was pregnant, she told Dick the baby was Freddie Parr’s, which directly resulted Freddie’s death. In this situation, these three males were all tricked and fell in the trap of Mary, the vicious Eve. Tom was extremely scared confronted with Freddie’s dead body, but is not half so scared as when he was told by Mary that “I told him it was Freddie. Dick killed Freddie Parr because he thought it was him. Which means we’re to blame too”. (35) From then on, Tom bore the heavily psychological burden and a feeling of guilty which haunted him in the rest of life.

For Mary, she clung to the belief that she was responsible for the death of Freddie because “if this baby had never ... Then Dick would never ... And Freddie ...”, (295) thus if the baby was aborted she can obtain forgiveness and everything would go back to its origin. As Wilt pointed out, Mary’s abortion was

both her effort to emerge from herself, from her guilty-imprisonment, and her effort to expiate one death with another, to punish in herself the sexual curiosity that led to Dick’s murder of Freddie. It is a ritual of abasement and sacrifice which Swift’s narrative connects with her Roman Catholicism.⁸⁶

So she stood high and jumped on the ground in order to abort the baby “like a scolding, pestered mother”. (293) As the father of aborted baby, Tom was excluded as an outsider for he was never definitely told that he was the father of the baby and with regard to the abortion, Mary did not consult with him but decided to have an abortion by herself. In patriarchal society, the decision-making is men’s right, which is associated with masculinity because the power of decision-making is determined by their dominant power in family, in public sphere or even in country. In the case of abortion, Mary not only deprived Tom’s proper right of decision-making as a man but also threatened his identity as a father, leading to the loss of his fatherhood. He was confronted with the problem of masculinity, for his baby was snatched away. Masculinity is closely tied to fatherhood. A real man must have heirs to continue his family lineage. Women’s abortion often brings negative results. This is the transition of Mary from a “place of potential ripeness”⁸⁷ to “an empty vessel no longer able to be filled”.⁸⁸ With no doubt, Mary bore not only physical pains but also psychological breakdown from abortion, and to make matters worse, she should suffer the infertility, which was a big blow to Tom’s fatherhood and their harmonious family. As a consequence, Tom can never to be a father, which extremely weakened his masculinity. Hence, Tom’s masculinity is wounded by his wife Mary who should be blame for the ending of Cricks’ family lineage.

The scene of Mary’s abortion was horrified. But Tom, the father of the baby, just

acted as an outsider. When the baby was taken away before his eyes, he could do nothing but to blubber. This shows his impotence to change the situation. Scared and guilty, he hesitantly moved to the little window from which he can see the bloody and brutal scene of abortion. Mary's initiatives either in the decision to abort or the act of abortion allows Tom to shirk his responsibility in this tragedy on the one hand, and also implies the negative effects of women's act of control on the other hand. From the perspective of masculinity, Tom failed to measure up because he did not actively and boldly shoulder his responsibility for Mary and the baby, instead he escaped for his vulnerability and cowardice.

It is known that a real man is expected to show no weakness or women's traits. He is often believed to be powerful, strong as well as determined and act as the support to his family, to the society or to the whole country. However, the male protagonist Tom is under no circumstance a man of this kind. "He is timid, he is shy—this fledgling adolescent. He has a sorrowful streak." (47) Partially because he was always haunted by his mother's death and even still not yet got over from missing her. In this point, he is most likely to be understood as a mum's boy and does not realize the independence entirely. Desiring for love and protection, he regarded Mary Metcalf as the substitute for his mother. "She will be a prop to him; that she will always be, just as she was in those days when she lost her curiosity, stronger than him." (120) Even when they took walks in the park, it was often observed that "it was he who lean[ed] on her rather than she on him". (124)

Additionally, Tom's masculinity was also weakened by his students in that his self-esteem was wounded and authority as a teacher was challenged by them, especially by Price who daubed "cheeks with an off-white make-up which gave to his face the pallor of a corpse". (6) Once Price interrupted the lesson about the French Revolution for the purpose of provocation and asserted that "history was 'a fairy-tale'". (6) And what matters was the "here and now. Not the past. The here and now — and the future". (6) So they showed their dissatisfaction to Tom's history lessons by saying assaulting words like "you can stuff your past". (141) Because it

was useless to focus on the past in currently severe conditions.

In *Waterland*, almost every character is shrouded in terror. Apocalyptic elements, such as doomsday, ineffective saviors, unsuccessful redemption, mysterious revelations and so forth, can be found in the British novels from the 1980s and the 1990s and in new millennium. “The Afghan crisis, the Tehran hostages, the perilous and apparently unhaltable build-up of nuclear arms” (7) brought the terror and emptiness to the whole society. Under this circumstance, the education is for “practical relevance to today’s real world” (22) or for the future. While for Tom, he insisted that only “history itself: the Grand Narrative” (62) can fill the vacuums and dispel the fears of the dark. He repeatedly emphasized that his understanding of “here and now” is entirely different from that of Price’s. For him, “here and now” refers to traumas in the past and is often related to traumatic events like the death and violence while Price focuses on current social conditions.

I believed, perhaps like you, that history was a myth. Until a series of encounters with the Here and Now gave a sudden pointedness to my studies. Until the Here and Now, gripping me by the arm, slapping my face and telling me to take a good look at the mess I was in, informed me that history was no invention but indeed existed—and I had become part of it. (62)

In sum, Tom’s masculinity is mainly troubled by his wife Mary in that she always holds the dominated position and takes initiatives in their relationship and thus Tom is forced to be in a subordinated position. In addition, Mary is infertile due to the botched abortion in adolescence. Thus Tom can never to be a father and cannot to perform his duty as a father. His masculinity is weakened.

3.3 Dick Crick’s Troubled Subordinated Masculinity

Dick, to certain degree, had nothing different from eels in Mary’s eyes in that both of them were little creatures which had no ability to exchange in words, needless to say, in spirit. This determined that Dick would never be treated equally as a lover

but only was a docile pet waiting to be chosen in their relationship. At that time, the only thing Mary desired to do was sexual exploration whatever possible consequence would be generated. Swift deliberately set a sort of contrast between Dick and eels to allude to Dick's animality in body and mentality. For Mary, their relationship began with mutual attractions of each other's body by instinct and it would be doomed to end for lack of exchange. Clues can be found that

for despite her qualms regarding eels, for which there are very good reasons, she has to admit that, returned to its native element, no longer wriggling and writhing but curled up passively round the bottom of the pails in a state of semi-shock, this eel is not an unhandsome creature. It's sleek and smooth-skinned. It has little glimmering amber eyes which, for all one knows, could be the windows of a tiny eel-soul. It has little panting gills and, behind them, delicate whirring pectoral fins not unreminiscent of Dick's whirring eyelashes ... (253)

Although Mary was disgusted at the sight of Dick's eel-like appearance, she was never hesitated to take on her sexual exploration with him to satisfy her demands. In their relationship, it was Mary who was in the position to control and dominate, while Dick was forced to be subordinated. For Dick, Mary was the first person or to say the first female, besides his mother, willing to talk with him and ask a "gift" which

No person (if we exclude the rituals of family birthdays when Dick — good with his hands — produced for his Mum such wonders as a money-box made from a cocoa tin) has ever sought of him before. A gift. A gift. Something of his own that another would value. And so momentous is this concept that he is rendered quite incapable of making it actual. (250)

Despite mentally defective, he felt that he has found himself an "previously unimagined mental territory" (251) where he can not reach by only staying with his motor-bike. It was "a beautiful feeling" (251) that he never experienced. In Mary's biological lessons, he was told that "Holes and Things" (260) will give birth to babies. However, once he asked his father the question, 'Wh- where do ba-babies come

from?" (256) and he was told "they come from love, Dick. They're made with — love" (257) which "is a very important thing. It's a wonderful things. It's the most wonderful things there is ." (257) Hence, he shaped the idea that to obtain love is to have a baby, and the baby is the fruit of love, or to say, is what love for. Lacking knowledge about sex, he was coaxed into having sex with Mary who, surprisingly and fearfully, found the fact that she can not take on sexual exploration with Dick successfully and she must stop her educational experiment because the swelling under his trousers was "too big" for her.

One of the extreme fears of a man is that "he will be revealed as impotent, either literally or symbolically."⁸⁹ There are two meanings of the word impotent in *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*: having no power to change things or to influence a situation; unable to achieve an erection and therefore unable to have full sex. Thus, in Mary's eyes, Dick became impotent as he was unable to have sex with her for his "too big" phallus. In this case, he was impotent not because erectile dysfunction but because in specific context he cannot have sex with a woman. As a consequence, he was abandoned and even committed murder which brought him a disaster.

While for Dick, this was understood as a sort of dislike for he was defective, he was a work of failure thus she did not want him. Failing to have sex with Mary, Dick became crazy and panic and he wanted to have a baby to alleviate his sorrows. Therefore, every time he went out for a date with Mary, he always embraced Mary tightly with his loving hands and tries his nest to make a baby. He put his loving hands on Mary's tummy which was the place where babies first make their presence known.

Women, weak in themselves and sources of weakness, being the embodiments of the vulnerability of honour, of h'urma, the sacred of the left hand (female, as opposed to the male sacred of the right hand), and always exposed to offence, are also strong, armed with the weapons of weakness, such as devilish cunning, thah'raymith, and magic.⁹⁰

According to Pierre Bourdieu, men, within the system of oppositions that link

them to women, are situated on the side of “good faith and naivety (niya), the perfect antitheses of *thah'raymith*” which roughly means vicious intrigue and is often owned by women. This can be employed to well illustrate the case of Dick and Mary. For Dick, Mary was the first female, besides his mother, even the first person to actively come close to him and ask him for a gift, which perhaps meant he was charming and had some good qualities attracting her. But actually, this was just his fantasies. The truth was that Dick, who surely possessed good qualities like naivety, fidelity and perseverance, fell in Mary's vicious trap and became her experimental object because of mental shortcomings and ignorance about sexual affair. As a freak, Dick's self-esteem and heart as a man were badly wounded.

Chapter Four Attempts to Reconstruct the Masculinity

Confronted with the loss of masculinity, men start to take actions to cope with various problems or plights in the construction of masculinity and make every effort to reconstruct their ideal masculinity, although their efforts are possibly in vain.

4.1 Thomas Atkinson's Attempt to Reconstruct the Masculinity by Improving Relationships

“Masculinity is never something you can feel at ease with. It is always something that you have to be ready to defend and prove.”⁹¹ Instead of keeping silence, men begin to take actions to express or articulate their emotions and feelings. Daring and adventurous, men are always expected to be capable of dealing with problems. Hence, confronted with the plight of expulsion from men's community, being an absentee landlord in the family, Thomas feels the urge to preserve and affirm his identity as a real man. To be a real man is “not simply enough *to be*: a man must *do, display, prove*”.⁹²

Intimacy which refers to “a process in which two caring people share as freely as possible in the exchange of feelings, thoughts, and actions”,⁹³ is less likely to occur in male-male relationships. Generally speaking, homophobia makes it impossible for men to express intimacy toward other men. But actually, “taboos against male to male intimacy is absent in many cultures.”⁹⁴ Male-dominated images characterize the ideal of friendship. Women are incapable of having true friendship, but men's friendships are like “souls mingling and blending with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them”.⁹⁵

Traditionally, men prefer the company of other men to the company of women to affirm their masculinity. Evidence of one's masculinity is also presented for others to recognize. Real men must win recognition and respect “for their ‘masculine’ endeavors – those that incorporate a display of daring and courage”.⁹⁶ One phrase of

defined masculinity by Robert Brannon says “Give ’em Hell” which is interpreted as “exude an aura of manly daring and aggression. Go for it. Take risks.”⁹⁷

Thomas endeavored to integrate into male community in the region as he was expelled from it. In the beginning of his career, no man was reluctant to work with him, work for him without “complain of his ignorance or his impatience or his parsimony”. (69) However, he, as well as his forefathers, felt no compunction about thriving the family business in a tyrannized manner, which has serious consequence for the loss of human heart. In this case, it was extremely urgent to restore the relationship with other men. Desiring for being accepted, he took the initiative and walked into pubs, a perfect place to build man-man relationships, to express his purpose of showing intimacy to others, but failed apparently. As Cricks believed that “what water makes, it also unmakes. Nothing moves far in this world. And whatever moves forwards will also move back. A law of the natural world; and a law, too, of the human heart”. (73)

Further, Thomas had actively done a great deal to remedy the tragedy of Sarah who had lost her wits in the consequence of committed violence by Thomas. The traditional men expect women to “acknowledge and defer to his authority”.⁹⁸ Women are often regarded as objects of sex or bearing children in marital relationships. This kind of relationship is by no means intimate or romantic, often “only pragmatic arrangements of convenience”.⁹⁹ Evidently, marriages only perform economic and procreation functions more than intimate ones. This can be illustrated by Thomas’s marriage with Sarah as the result of partially concerned interests. He took Sarah as his wife partially because of the fact that men prefer younger women as their spouse to prove their masculine charm, partially because of the benefit gained from this marriage.

However, the situation is changing. It is women rather than men who are “experienced as the primary validators of masculinity.”¹⁰⁰ It is men’s relationship with women rather than men’s relationship with other men that are claimed to be intimate. Men are expected to be involved in family affair and are obliged to take on the

responsibility of nurturing the children with women. There exists a need for more respect and care to women in family, more involvement in activities of children, more harmonious and healthier relationship between wife and husband, between father and children. For a real man must be a qualified husband and father at first. Connell also conveys the same idea in the analysis of complicity which says

Marriage, fatherhood and community life often involve extensive compromises with women rather than naked domination or an uncontested display of authority. A great many men who draw the patriarchal dividend also respect their wives and mothers, are never violent towards women, do their accustomed share of the housework, bring home the family wage.¹⁰¹

On the one hand, the men who possess complicit masculinity can get benefits from patriarchal society, and on the other hand they can avoid risks compared with the men owned hegemonic masculinity whose construction is full of tensions and risks. The aforementioned description shows that to compromise with women in marriages or in other relationships is not to say a man lacks authority, on the contrary, it proves he has owned some masculine traits admired by women, or even universally accepted by whole society. From the above, it is known that the kind of complicit masculinity requires more equality in marriage than hegemonic masculinity.

Thomas will arrange, at great expense, for eminent physicians to come from Cambridge to examine his wife. He will conduct Sarah like some rare exhibit round the consulting-rooms of that learned city. He will take her to London to be examined, tapped, probed and considered by still more eminent men of medicine, and will donate to St Bartholomew's Hospital the sum of £500 for 'the Further Investigation and better Relief of Maladies of the Brain'. (78-79)

Apparently, Thomas desires and endeavors to restore to the improvement of family relationship to protect his male identity. In Victorian era, family life, as a cultural ideal being exalted by that society, became an indispensable standard for determining whether one held the hegemonic masculinity or not. Tosh has studied the relationship between family life and ideal masculinity. He put that:

In 19th century, for nearly a century, family was considered as men's territory, and it could satisfy the deepest emotional needs of men. At that time, the objective facts demanded men to love their family, to be responsible and loyal to their wives as well as to be solicitous of their children.¹⁰²

Hated and unaccepted by his children is a big blow for a man. He is an outsider in his family because he is a failed husband and unqualified father. It is an irony for his masculine identity. Thomas makes his best to improve his relationship with his sons, but fails. They show him no respect, no intimacy, and even in his funeral, they express no sorrow at all.

From above, it is concluded that Thomas endeavors to preserve his masculinity through improvement of relationships, but fails. The hegemonic masculinity is hard to achieve because the constructing the hegemonic masculinity is in greater danger compared with other types of masculinity. Thomas's hegemonic masculinity is only constructed on the surface and thus it is hard to maintain.

4.2 Tom Crick's Attempt to Reconstruct the Masculinity by way of Telling Stories

From previous chapters, it is obvious that Tom's masculinity was weakened and he got into troubles. He used story-telling not only as a means to deal with the trouble but also as an attempt to preserve his masculinity.

Confronted with the present dilemma, Tom began to resort to narration which "stem[ed] from our instinctive needs both to tell stories and confess crimes and misdeeds".¹⁰³ Tom's story-telling constitutes the most part of the text. "Within the framework of the novel, there is no alternative to narrativization and its consequent fear."¹⁰⁴ Telling stories is a necessary act because "it is only when Crick fully re-remembers and singularly confesses the traumas of that fateful summer of 1943 ... that he has a chance to undergo a narrative catharsis."¹⁰⁵ In the Chapter "About the Story-telling Animal", Tom gave a definition to "man", which says

But man — let me offer you a definition — is the story-telling animal. Wherever he goes he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting markerbuoys and train-signs of stories. He has to go on telling stories, he has to keep on making them up. As long as there is a story, it's all right. (62-63)

Obviously, it is a necessary act to tell stories for Tom. At first, his troubled masculinity is presented by his depression and guilt for traumatic events occurring in adolescence. That is to say, if he successfully works through traumas, he is capable of preserving masculinity. According to Su Chen, confronted with traumatic events, victims not only expect to avoid them by narrative, but also hope to find possibilities of redemption in them.¹⁰⁶ Thus only story-telling serves as a way out of traumas through repeated recollections of the past, can he “belatedly tell the story and experience a narrative catharsis”.¹⁰⁷

Additionally, when he was challenged by Price by saying “history is a fairy-tale”, in order to prove that history definitely exists, he started to abandon the course in curriculum and turned to his personal stories, including the Cricks’ and Atkinsons’ family histories, the history of Fens, his personal experiences in adolescence during the 1940s and his present dilemma. To them he presented

The equivocal gift of history — burdensome yet instructive — to carry into their futures. And thus the history teacher — though his relation with his young charges echoes first the paternal, then the grandpaternal, though he sees in their face (but does not admit it) less and less the image of the future, more and more that of something he is trying to retrieve, something he has lost — could always say (he acquires a penchant for paradox) that he looked back in order to look forward. (126)

“What history teaches us is to avoid illusion and make-believe, to lay aside dreams, moonshine, cure-alls, wonder-workings, pie-in-the-sky — to be realistic.” (108) By doing so, he not only earned respect from students again but also built an intimate relationship with them. In the Chapter “And Adieu”, when headmaster Lewis formally announced Tom’s retire, Price and other students strongly resisted Tom’s departure by

crying “No Cuts! Keep Crick!” (335) Tom successfully obtained students’ respect and recognition and thus he realized the construction of masculinity.

Besides, as a consequence of Mary’s barren body, Tom can never be a father and thus he is unable to perform his duties as a ruler and an educator. Most importantly, he ought to be responsible for the ending of Cricks’ family lineage. In Martha’s house, when he was told to throw the aborted fetus into the Ouse, he was doomed to bear heavy psychological burden for the rest of life. Ben Knights says that “while Mary is physically and emotionally scarred, Tom’s wound takes the form of a profound distrust of female inner space as a suitable container for the future”.¹⁰⁸ Hence, Tom will “strive to generate his own offspring”¹⁰⁹ and “substitute cultural for biological paternity”.¹¹⁰ In this sense, both Price and the reader can symbolically or culturally represent Tom’s aborted baby. The clue that Tom desired for an heir can also be found In the Chapter “A Teacher’s Testament” where there is a scene that Tom invited Price to have a drink. When the barman suspected whether Price was over eighteen, Tom replied that “I should know. He’s my son”. (241)

From the above, it is apparent that Tom’s traumatic experiences in adolescence cast a so heavy shadow on him that he shows melancholy mood and suffers deep guilt in the rest of his life. Apart from this, the absent heir makes him fail to perform duties as a father and thus his masculinity is weakened. Confronted with these problems, he turns to story-telling to find explanations and solutions for the present dilemma by means of retracing the past. More importantly, he aims to construct his masculinity as a symbolic father by telling stories to his students and readers. “To influence the young by telling them stories is a form of symbolic fatherhood.”¹¹⁷ Fortunately, he succeeds because in the course of telling, he wins students’ recognition and respect by reauthorizing himself through narrative.

4.3 Dick Crick’s Attempt to Reconstruct the Masculinity Through Violence

It is necessary to make clear at the outset that the concept violence in this thesis is based on gender inequality, gender discrimination and gender stereotype and victims contain females as well as those males who possess the distinctive characteristics of females or are in the bottom of social ladder like females. In *Waterland*, Dick Crick who kills Freddie Parr is a man of violence.

Men are members of a powerful social group that is invested with power. Similar to other powerful groups, dominance is produced and maintained in a wide variety of ways, including “persuasion, influence, force, violence, and so on”¹¹² Violence plays a particularly important role in the construction and maintaining of masculinities. It is often men who are “the main *doers*” of all kinds of violence, such as violence to women, to children, to other men, to animals and so forth. Men frequently perpetrate violence against others collectively or individually to enforce power and control. Powerless men are more likely to use violence, although they may become subordinated and withdraw. Jeff Hearn points out that violence “is behaviour chosen by men, and is the product of choice within a structural context of hierarchical power arrangements.”¹¹³

Violence can be seen as a response to external conditions. From this vision, violence functions as reaction to “threats to relatively given or relatively stable social roles and social goals.”¹¹⁴ Hearn interprets aggression and violence as “a response to psychological frustration, ‘emotional illiteracy’, individual stress, social stress, or economic and political deprivation.”¹¹⁵ The same argument can be employed to illustrate violence, especially men’s violence. Men frequently wield violence to deal with problems not because they are always violent at all time but because they take violence as the only way “when their goals are blocked and other means of proceeding (such as non-violent alternatives) are unavailable or ineffective.”¹¹⁶

Unsurprisingly, violence has close associations with masculinity because violence, as a social function, allows men to experience what it means to be a man. On the one hand, it is the possible problem of masculinity; on the other hand, it contributes to the construction and preserving of masculinity. It, “as a modern strategy,

guarantees both individual and social control, while maintaining and perpetuating hierarchy and inequality.”¹¹⁷ With the transforming of capitalist society from producers' society to consumers' society, the society no longer puts a high value on good qualities of manual workers like strength, endurance, toughness, diligence, honesty, etc.. They are often tied to cheating, pornography, sadism and violence and other vicious factors in society. Consequently, working-class men make every endeavor to build their specific masculinity through violent ways, which is believed to be the heroic and best masculine behaviour itself.

In *Waterland*, Dick earnestly expected to make a baby with Mary. Unfortunately, it proved to be disillusionment because he did not realize that he would be less likely to be a father. So strong he was that he looked like the kind of man who was likely to display a tendency of violence. Clues can be found in the novel for the protection of Tom Crick who was actually most likely to be her baby's father, Mary told Dick that it was Freddie Parr who was the father of her baby. Besides, when Tom investigated and verified the truth that Freddie Parr was murdered by his brother Dick, he was caught in great horror. In Dick's eyes, Mary was not only his lover but also his property. It was Freddie Parr who stole her away and destroyed his wonderful dream. For Dick, perpetrating violence was the only effective means to react to the threats. Consequently, he murdered Freddie Parr in the hope of winning back his possessions. In fact, with psychological frustration, deprivation of the right to know and anxiety about being discovered to be the murderer, Dick wanted nothing but violence.

However, possible consequences resulted from violence are destructive and fatal. The subject of violence is doomed to be self-destructive on the one hand, and the specific masculinity he endeavors to build through violence will also prove to be Utopian on the other hand. Swift's male characters always betray a fascination with secrets. In *Waterland*, until curiosity drives Tom to open his Grandfather's chest which contains a piece of murder weapon, a bottle, he discovers an extremely shocking secret that Dick is a product of incestuous relationship between Helen and her father. Such a secret is a great disaster for Dick because he even does not

definitely make sure who he is, who his true father is. It is very humiliating to know that he is a product of an abnormal relationship which should not have happened. Humiliation is one of the sources which make men ashamed, because the recognition of fear proves that they are not as manly as they pretend. Dick feels so ashamed of the truth of his birth. Simultaneously, he is so scared to be caught for murdering Freddie Parr that he finally dives into the water to escape. Men who attempt to construct masculinity through violence, either spend their terrible lives with anxiety or suffer the pain from emasculation and eventually go to self-destruction regrettably.

Conclusion

Graham Swift is among a generation of celebrated novelists who were born around the 1950s, including Peter Ackroyd, Julian Barnes, Kazuo Ishiguro, Martin Amis and Salman Rushdie. These novelists achieved prominence in the late 1970s and the early 1980s when the second wave of the feminist movement was over and male identity was called into question. Thus their works in that period, more or less, reflected the crisis of masculinity. Published in 1983, *Waterland* deals with men's experience of crisis and their efforts to get out of the crisis.

Thomas Atkinson is a representative of the hegemonic masculinity in *Waterland*. Firstly, he achieves success by obtaining wealth, power and fame in his career. Secondly, he is a man of confidence, diligence and pioneering spirit. And thirdly, he marries a young and beautiful wife who is obedient, domestic and thus is much helpful to maintain his hegemonic masculinity. As he ages, he becomes weaker and weaker. Realizing that he is in danger of losing the domination and control, he attempts to construct ideal masculinity through the improvement of relationship with families and other men, but he fails. On the surface, Thomas Atkinson has constructed successfully the hegemonic masculinity. However, the hegemonic masculinity represented by him is performative. Superficial construction of hegemonic masculinity directly leads to its potential crisis and anxiety.

Unable to handle present plight, the narrator Tom, a mentally damaged man like other Swiftian male characters, feels the urgent to find an explanation from the history for his present crisis. Early retirement, unhappy marriage with no child and deep guilt for Freddie Parr's death, Dick's death and his aborted baby in adolescence compel Tom to contemplate what kind of man he ought to be to face the tough reality bravely. In order to cope with the present plight, he has to resort to story-telling for the construction of the ideal masculinity. By doing so, his students and readers can be understood as his symbolic children and thus he successfully constructs his masculinity as a father. In this sense, Swift's novel shows that narrative on the one

hand is capable of coping with the past burden and confronting the future difficulties, and on the other hand plays an important role in the construction of masculinity.

Dick is expected to be a saviour by Earnest but proves to be a freak ironically. He is the bearer of subordinated masculinity, for he is deprived proper rights and expelled from legitimate male circles. He perpetrates violence against Freddie Parr to show that as a real man, he is able to protect the woman he loves. But violence is an extreme way to manifest masculinity because it is a double-edged sword. It helps to construct men's masculinity, but also brings disastrous consequence to the perpetrator. Hence, Dick is doomed to fail to reconstruct masculinity in this way.

Based on Connell's classification of masculinity, this thesis investigates the male character's representation of masculinity, the loss of masculinity and reconstruction of ideal masculinity. By analyzing three male characters' masculinities at different times, this thesis demonstrates that masculinity is not only socially constructed in specific contexts but also historic and dynamic. In addition, through the crisis of masculinity, Swift reveals men's castration and existential dilemma caused by either external or internal factors and shows his deep concern and sympathy for men's existential conditions. By examining the male characters' attempts at reconstruction of their ideal masculinity, Swift indicates that beginning to realize their existential crisis, men take actions actively instead of keeping silence, and also hopes that men could overcome their troubles by means of learning the lessons from reconstruction of masculinity.

Notes

All the numerals in round brackets in this thesis are references to the numbered pages in *Waterland* (Swift, Graham. London: Vintage, 1992).

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2. Janik, 1989, 74.
3. Malcolm, 2003, 9.
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6. Prescott, 1984, 75.
7. Carr, 1988, 22.
8. Gorra, 1985, 12.
9. Mantel, 1992, 23.
10. Ibid., 23.
11. Ibid., 23.
12. Linda, 1988, 5.
13. Decoste, 2002, 378.
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15. Cooper, 1996, 372.
16. Benyei, 2003, 40.
17. MacLeod, 2006, 375.
18. Poole, 1999, 155.
19. Parker, 2003, 89.
20. Mckinney, 1997, 821.
21. Ibid., 821.
22. Powell, 2003, 75.
23. Cooper, 1996, 373.
24. Winnberg, 2003, I.
25. 苏, 2009, 31-34.
26. 王, 2013, I.
27. Ibid., 2013, V.
28. 杜, 2010, I.

29. 张, 2014, III.
30. 金, 2003, 5.
31. 杨, 2014, III.
32. Brod, 1987, 40.
33. Kimmel, 2004, 533.
34. Ibid., 533.
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36. Reeser, 2010, 1.
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38. Knights, 1999, 10.
39. Kimmel, 2004, 503.
40. Connell, 1995, 72.
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42. J.E.B., 1994.
43. Connell, 1995, 44.
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45. Connell, 1995, 188.
46. Goffman, 1963, 128.
47. Brod & Kufman, 1994, 124.
48. Connell, 1995, 77.
49. Ibid., 79.
50. Ibid., 79.
51. Ibid., 79-80.
52. Ibid., 80-81.
53. Ibid., 81.
54. Horrocks, 1994, 1.
55. Ibid., 1.
56. Connell, 1995, 81.
57. Ibid., 77.
58. Ibid., 76.
59. 王, 2008, 124.
60. 郭, 2012, 138.
61. Austen, 2005, 2.
62. Connell, 1995, 79.

63. Ibid., 82.
64. Bourdieu, 2001, 51.
65. Reeser, 2010, 91.
66. Ibid., 92.
67. Connell, 1995, 60.
68. Ibid., 60.
69. Ibid., 58.
70. Knight, 1999, 168.
71. Arvind, 2008, 152.
72. Brod & Kaufman, 1994, 128.
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75. 詹, 2010, 435.
76. Brod & Kaufman, 1994, 123.
77. May, 1996, 194.
78. Ibid., 198.
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81. Ibid., 126
82. Ibid, 126.
83. 詹, 1990, 132.
84. Powell, 2003, 64.
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86. Wilt, 1990, 114.
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88. Powell, 2003, 66.
89. Horrock, 1994, 98.
90. Boudieu, 2001, 51.
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100. Ibid., 132.
101. Connell, 1995, 79-80.
102. Tosh, 2007, 1.
103. Russell, 2009, 117.
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108. Knights, 1999, 176-177.
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