

Eroded Emblems: Boy Bodies in the Late 20th Century West

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“and I believe thee as a vision sent
to a mourner in perpetual banishment”¹

Jeffrey Minter, in his dissertation about “The Romance of Boyhood” details how in John Greenleaf Whittier’s 1855 poem *The Barefoot Boy*,² the boy’s body is invested with economic significance. In its iconography,

“The boy’s red lips, bare feet, tan cheek, rolled up pants, and torn hat all converge in a blazon of American boyhood, attributes that, taken together, normalize the economic dynamic at the core of the image, transforming them into a thing of beauty”.³

As an American spectacle, Minter argues, the boy’s body has catered to a range of preoccupations from frontier masculinity and Jeffersonian agrarian idealism to national pathology. For instance, the boy was an Emersonian “emblem of self-reliance”, persisting into fin-de-siècle America as “an emblem of disenchantment toward the new conditions of American life, growth pains, for example, of urban poverty and racial and ethnic difference”.⁴ My paper will address what I consider to be the erosion of “the boy”’s metaphorical currency, more specifically boy bodies, over the *longue durée*. I submit this already sounds suspect to the contemporary ear, which is more tuned to nations’ preoccupations with *particular* (i.e. *eventual*) bodies⁵, with statistical aggregation of bodies, and generally more easily with girl

¹ Warren, Edward Perry. (1913). *The Wild Rose. A Volume of Poems*. London: Nutt. (Published under the name Arthur Lyon Raile), p. 30. As cited by Mader, D. H. (2005). The Greek mirror: the Uranians and their use of Greece. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 49(3-4), 377-420.

² *The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier*, Cambridge edition, ed. H. E. S. (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1894).

³ Minter, G. Au. (2003). *The Romance of Boyhood: Agrarian Idealism and the Anxieties of Economic Modernity in 19th Century Representations of the American Boy*. Ph.D Dissertation, Harvard, pp. 83-85.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5, 6.

⁵ E.g. Banet-Weiser, S. (2003). Elian Gonzalez and "The Purpose of America": Nation, Family, and the Child-Citizen. *American Quarterly*, 55(2), 149-178.

than with boy bodies.⁶ Also, salient eventual bodies are in the contemporary analysis usually dealt with as “child” or “teen” not “boy” bodies.⁷ Although an iconographic study of the Euro/American boy remains to be written, here I should note that such a study of necessity will be heretic because it will have to be critical of the almost *obligatory*, but certainly *immediate* visual deconstructions of the contemporary eye.

The current status of boys (subaltern males in postfeminist society) is complex enough to make this analysis sufficiently interesting. The *bodied boy* is to be distinguished from a number of other icons by which it may seem to be eclipsed (and confused) for most parts of the modern era; among these: “the child-body”, the “masculine body”, and the pedagogical (entitled) body. This is already an important part of the analysis. The default gaze tends to behold male/masculine children/youth/adolescents: products of an historicizeable analytic intervention, of a reductive *studium* (Barthes),⁸ a composition legitimized in terms of *the logic* rather than *the cause* of political status quo.

Of course this opens up a tough discussion of social ontology (genealogy), representation, semiotics and spectator responsibility. The part of this historical question I want to focus on is what the image of “the boy” is allowed to represent, how it is *emblematically deployed*. The OED allows that an emblem denotes “A picture of an object (or the object itself) serving as a symbolical representation of an abstract quality, an action, state

⁶ Collateral evidence for this is provided by the number of PhD dissertations and books that tune in on contemporary problems with the spectacularized body, none of which focuses on boys: Nash, I. (2002). *America's Kid Sister: Teenage Girls and Popular Culture, 1930-1965* (PhD, Bowling Green State University); Churchill, B. A. (2003). *The Lolita phenomenon: The child (femme) fatale at the fin de siècle* (PhD, University of Alberta, Canada); Heltsley, M. (2004). *From Lollipops to Lolita: The Making of the Pageant Child* (PhD, Southern Illinois University); Sinclair, M. (1988). *Hollywood Lolita: The Nymphet Syndrome in the Movies*. New York: Henry Holt / London: Plexus. Compare Robson, C. (2001). *Men in Wonderland: The lost girlhood of the Victorian gentleman*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, and Roth, Ch. A. (2000). *Cherry ripe: "Cult of the Little Girls" narratives in late-Victorian Britain* (PhD University of Florida).

⁷ This *eventualist* part of the analysis obviously has to reckon with problems not arising in the iconography of the fiction *per se* of “the boy”, for instance the status of the *virtual* body in juridical discourse.

⁸ Barthes, R. (1981). *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill & Wang. Translated by Richard Howard.

of things, class of persons, etc.” I am particularly stressing the visual and projective aspect of the body as an arena of ideological struggle⁹ and display. In historical contexts a boy’s body could be emblematic in a number of ways. Stoic, it illustrated tribal supremacy; circumcised, it fulfilled ancient covenant¹⁰; inscribed, it reinstated the *kosmos*; inseminated, it hosted the seminal substance of manhood. After their first kill, boys were “blooded”¹¹ (or otherwise “marked” as among the !Kung), paraded and celebrated by the entire community. In archaic and ancient Athens, “the viewing of [boy] athletes, and the fetishization of their images was central to not only the development of the young athlete, but to the ideal stability of the culture of the polis”.¹² Thus, “A victory in both boys’ and men’s [athletic] events was considered a liturgy, a public service which not only honored the victor but also provided his descendants with a prestige which could be used in politics and the law courts”; fathers “paid poets handsomely to sing the praise of their victorious offsprings”.¹³ We can see this much later in history as well. Sharpless¹⁴ points to *Tom Brown’s* “ideology of man-making [depending] on the [...] buoyant celebration of male physicality, of the health, play, and pleasure in boyishness”. The boy, in fact, was an early, hence innate, display of the physicality, hence of *the realness*, of masculinity, for instance as defying and escaping the delimiting nag of maternal governance.¹⁵ Men, specifically in periods of history considered

⁹ E.g. Ajzenstadt, M., & Cavaglion, G. (2002). The Sexual Body of the Young Jew as an Arena of Ideological Struggle, 1821–1948. *Symbolic Interaction*, 25(1), 93-116.

¹⁰ Bilu, Y. (2003). From Milah (“Circumcision”) to Milah (“Word”): Male Identity and Rituals of Childhood in the Jewish Ultraorthodox Community. *Ethos*, 31(2), 172-203.

¹¹ Boyle, J.A. (1969). A Eurasian Hunting Ritual. *Folklore*, 80(1), 12-16; Berry, *Shakespeare and the Hunt*, p. 39 et seq.; Proctor, *Hunting and Mastery in the Old South*, p. 106 et seq.

¹² Haworth, M. (2005). *The Grooming of Athletes: Seeing in the Greek Symposium*. Building knowledge of the past and present through acts of seeing, Archaeology Center at Stanford University, February 4 - 6, 2005.

¹³ Papalas, A. J. (1991). Boy athletes in ancient Greece. *Stadion*, 17, 165-192.

¹⁴ Sharpless, G. P. (1997). *The erotics of culture: Masculinity and the Victorian public school*. PhD Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, p. 46.

¹⁵ Cf. Rotundo, E. A. (1990). Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in Nineteenth Century American. In Carnes, Mark C., & Clyde Griffen (Eds.), *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

“critical” (that is, where male authority or male-invested projects came under siege or subjected to challenge) project masculinity backward (*nostalgia*), inward (the *interior boy*)¹⁶ and outward, through an aggressive claim to pedagogical expertise (*boyology*).¹⁷ At such occasions, men appear to fall back on “the boy” *per se*, that is, a body defying and resisting the analytic performances of the welfare state and the concomitant scientific apparatus that makes “minors”, “children” and “subjects” out of boys.

Variably analyzed in terms of “romance”, “cult” or “idealization”, versions of “the boy” as a premodern and modernist site of frontier endeavour and elite grooming of character have been both specifically alluring visually, and specifically opportune modes of allegorical display.¹⁸ According to Camille Paglia, “The kouros records the first cult of personality in western history”.¹⁹ In a similar vein, the *pais kalos* was “the representational paradigm of high classic Athens” as well as “the ultimate symbol of Renaissance art”.²⁰ In poetry, boy books, boyology and paintings of the 19th century, but in general throughout history, boys could be productively admired as *beautiful* (i.e. significantly handsome in a signifying way) and in unabashed nostalgic registers²¹ since they alone could personify the promise of the

¹⁶ For notes on interiority, see Lowry, R. S. (1997). *Domestic interiors: Boyhood nostalgia and affective labor in the Gilded Age*. In J. Pfister, & N. Schnog (Eds.), *Inventing the psychological: Toward a cultural history of emotional life in America* (pp. 110-130). New Haven, CT, US: Yale University Press, and Strycharski, A. Th. (2004). *“stronge and tough studie”: Humanism, education, and masculinity in Renaissance England*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, pp. 191-266.

¹⁷ Kidd, K. B. (2004). *Making American Boys: Boyology and the Feral Tale*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁸ On the other hand, we must reckon that iconic salience may be an artefact of the ethnographic and historiographic process, where perceived (opportune?) Otherness easily (*and perhaps too easily*) translates to the work of *introducing* the trope other than distilling it.

¹⁹ Paglia, C. (1990). *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 111, 115, 117, 118. “It is an icon of the worship of beauty, a hierarchism self-generated rather than dynastic”. Indeed, the iconic boy used to be “the Greek angel, a celestial visitor from the apollonian realm [...] emotional vernality, spring only. He is a partial statement about reality. He is exclusive, a product of aristocratic taste [...]. He is form seceding from form-making [...] an epiphany, eye-created, he binds up the many into a transient vision of the one, like art itself [...] an ideal space between male and female, effect and affect”.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123, 148.

²¹ “No earthly object is so attractive as a well-built, growing boy” (H.W. Gibson, *Boyology or Boy Analysis*); “O happy boy with untaught grace! / What is there in the world to give / That can buy one hour of the life you live / Or the trivial cause of your smiling face!”-- To a Boy Whistling, *The Complete*

nation, the polis, the soil, the word, and the sword—in other words; culture, the making of Man. This contextualizes a large part of the circum-Mediterranean and near to far Asian cult of the boy, hardly anything of which survived the reign of the post-industrial Anglo-American world.²²

Twentieth century America did romanticize its boys but tried to maintain a strictly rational and instrumental attitude in dealing with their bodies. Now situated in his sexually available years, “the boy” around WW2 came to represent a selling pop cultural icon, where it even fulfilled more than a flat consumer function. Medovoi²³ analyzes how this cultic boy needs to be situated in the 1940s emerging subject position of “the teen” (exclusive to or at least “closely linked to the postwar ideological requirements of the American national character”)²⁴ and how it figured in the later recycling of the *bad boy* trope. *Boy*, since “The future of democracy in the gendered terms of postwar political discourse on youth, required an oppositional moment in the American teenagers, a moment encoded as one of masculine rebellion”.²⁵ In fact “The popular mythology surrounding the ‘good war’ tended to conflate American boys with America itself”.²⁶ As Steven Cohan concurs, the iconic boy was staged by postwar young Hollywood stars whose youth was “interpreted, both on film and in the fan discourse, through the trope of boyishness which mainstream American culture repeatedly drew upon after the war when representing deviations from hegemonic masculinity as a boy’s

Works of James Whitcomb Riley, Vol. 1 (1916). Examples of paintings: John George Brown, *The Berry Boy*, ca. 1877.

²² For an analysis of this, consider Skier, S. (2004). Western lenses on male same-sex relationality in Pashtun Afghanistan. *queer* 1 (Spring), 11-22.

²³ Medovoi, L. (2005). *Rebels: youth and the Cold War origins of identity*. Durham: Duke University.

²⁴ Medovoi, L. (1995). *Bad Boys: Masculinity, Oppositional Discourse, and American Youth Culture in the 1950s*. PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, p. 12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁶ McConachie, B. A. (2003). *American Theater in the Culture of the Cold War: Producing and Contesting Containment*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, p. 157.

impersonation of manhood, as a performance that always falls short of the original”.²⁷ According to Cohan, this amounted to “an important reconfiguration of masculinity in movies of this period because their ‘new look’ challenged the conflation of ‘gender’ and ‘sexuality’ underwriting the symbolic economy with which ‘boys’ were made legible as the opposites of ‘men’ ”.²⁸ British rock critic Simon Frith²⁹ even speaks of a “cult of the Boy”. Later, the eternal *pueri* of the American 1960s were androgynous counterfigures that defied meritocratic adherence to profit and practicalities.³⁰ *The boy*, hence, became a semiotically saturated *gender style*, if only necessitated by the decidedly dystopian status of adulthood in late 20th century.³¹

It should be added that the trope of *the boy* is now routinely messed up with the (intellectually appealing) trope of *the adolescent*. Officially the notion of boy-ness was liberated from its ties to specific life phases, but as in the capitalist appropriation of “the adolescent”, curator of travelling art exhibition *Will Boys Be Boys?* notes, men have gone from at least *the option* of a romantic and religious struggle for the boy to “an economic model” rendering him “a co-opted figure of manufactured desires and emasculated forms, as a safe and marketable image”.³² A new era of celebration, then, but one that is progressively distanced from issues of cultural permanence and transcendence, one based on studied reproduction (chronometry and psychometry).

²⁷ Cohan, S. (1997). *Masked Men*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 203.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Frith, S. (1988). Oh Boy!, in *Music for pleasure* (pp. 169-170) at p. 170. New York: Routledge. Originally published in *Village Voice*, 1985.

³⁰ Schechter, H. (1983). The Myth of the Eternal Child in Sixties America. In Ch. D. Geist, & J. Nachbar (Eds.), *The Popular Culture Reader* (pp. 81-95). Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press; Schechter, H. (1988). *The Bosom Serpent: Folklore and Popular Art*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

³¹ Bly, R. (1996). *The Sibling Society*. New York: Vintage/Random House; Côté, J. E. (2000). *Arrested Adulthood: The Changing Nature of Maturity and Identity*. New York: New York University Press.

³² Momin, Sh. M. (2004). *Will Boys Be Boys? Questioning Adolescent Masculinity in Contemporary Art*. New York: Independent Curators International (exhibition brochure).

Thus, boys have been of major interest to social commentators for incorporating the spectre and narrating the tale of the socio-political project at large; in the contemporary West, however, this “function” has been muted into a stylistic commentary on hegemony. We find the boy body delivered from the frontier image of the settler, imperial, “muscular Christian”, World War, gang, and class experience to the demands of the health industry, the egalitarianist imperative of the “gender” ethos, and the militaristic calculus of psychological developmentalism. The boy body, here, ceased to function as a grand social symptom (since it tells the modest tale of psychological not cultural dysfunction) *and* as an emblem for cultural mobility (telling the modest tale of psychological not cultural agency/necessity). On the contrary: as Sami Timimi comments, in “our” attitude to (particularly boy) bodies, we have rather become “a symptom of the cultural disease we purport to cure”.³³

Boys have stopped being beautiful, that is to say, *metaphorically imperative*. Why? The artistic legacy of “the beautiful boy”³⁴ has perhaps been too well rehearsed to require comment from an ethnohistorical viewpoint, however it is tale-telling how, even as a history, Western calligraphy of the boy appears to be poorly tolerated in the contemporary experience. Expectedly contemporary reflection on this point (Camille Paglia³⁵, Germaine Greer³⁶, Alexander Kennedy³⁷ and Harris Mirkin³⁸, notably; Cf. Higonnet³⁹) is sparse and, certainly

³³ Timimi, S., & Taylor E. (2004). ADHD is best understood as a cultural construct. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 184(1), 8-9.

³⁴ Genres of boy-celebrating texts, in English usually identified in terms of “love” and “eros”, are known throughout world literature, including Arabic poetry of the early Ottoman Period, medieval Hebrew religious verse, medieval Japan, premodern Urdu poetry, Greece, Rome, Victorian “Uranians”, and some late 20th century Western oeuvres. The anthropological boy, then, emerges as an intertextual space between specifically eulogic and aesthetic genres of “the boy”, their genealogies, and their place within larger cultural contexts (writing/reading as such, writing/reading the subject, writing/reading the intersubjective, writing/reading limerence/the aesthetic/the divine/the mythic).

³⁵ *Sexual Personae*, cit. supra.

³⁶ Greer, G. (2003). *The Beautiful Boy*. New York: Rizzoli.

³⁷ Kennedy, A. (2003). *“See that boy: looking at boys and men through art and theory”: queer theory and practice deployed as a deconstructive and strategic method for art historical enquiry*. Thesis (Ph. D.), University of Glasgow.

³⁸ Forthcoming monograph, also previous conference presentations.

for Greer's work, immobilized by unfortunate levels of ethical and *ad feminam* reductionism. It also seems that the *image* of the boy and the *tale* of the boy have drifted apart in the public experience, but I would add that this is the case primarily where administrative entities ("adult", "minor") or reductionist 20th century political concepts ("sexuality", "gaze") are observed, not the ethnohistorical species of "the boy" *per se*.⁴⁰

Here I observe that today to contemplate "boyhood" as such (that is to say, other than the analytic products of its academic discourse), *much less to engage in an iconography of boys*, has become an altogether suspect enterprise.⁴¹ A little bit of history may be in place here. The boy's body, and its deployment, throughout history has commented on, and thereby regulated, what I would call *gender stasis*. From Greece, imperial China and Edo Japan to the Renaissance stage, the boy is "a liminal creature who transcends conventional limits of gender and place",⁴² "a provoker of category crises, a destabilizer of binarisms, a transgressor of boundaries, sexual, erotic, hierarchical, political, conceptual"⁴³— "for some a scheming *femme fatale* and for others a more trustworthy incarnation of the feminine than the members of the female sex [showing] that social identity was constructed theatrically, that role-playing was the basis of social hierarchy [and unmasking] the fact that men are the authors of the

³⁹ Higonnet, A. (1998). *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood*. London: Thames & Hudson.

⁴⁰ An illuminating challenge of images vs. tales was the media ramification of the 1960s eugraphic book *The Boy: A Photographic Essay* (Eds. Georges St.Martin & Ronald C. Nelson, 1964, New York: Book Adventures) found to be in the possession of Michael Jackson (possibly an early 1980s gift by a fan), which was seized from his bedroom in 1993 and reassessed in 2005 in terms of its possible "propensity toward child molestation" (MSNBC, April 29, 2005).

⁴¹ The issue of embodiment specifies the question proposed by Low (1996, pp. 36-37) asking "what is the cultural investment in the ideological figure of the 'boy' at the turn of the century? Why is the boy's story such a powerful myth? What kind of grammar and syntax of desire does the boy's story articulate for its readers?" Low, G. Ch. L. (1996). *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism*. New York: Routledge.

⁴² Peterson, J. M. (1991). *"This is not the women's age": Changing representations of gender in 17th-century English drama*. Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania.

⁴³ Garber, M. (1992). *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. New York & London: Routledge, p. 90.

feminine”.⁴⁴ Boyhood being “an intermediate gender term” meant gender itself being prosthetic.⁴⁵ According to Barbour,⁴⁶ acting boys “enabled mutual enjoyments among persons perhaps otherwise divided by gender-based hostilities”. Bryan, lastly and more generally, argues that boy actors “inhabited a range of subject positions, sometimes dominating and impudent, at others passive or alluring that allowed audiences to imagine a flexible sense of self”: variably “enabling, fantastical, and apart from the adult gender identities and therefore desirable to a range of dispositions from heterosexual to homosexual to maternal”.⁴⁷ Thus, “in taking up the boy and making him a cornerstone of its economy and artistic endeavors, the early modern English theatre capitalized on the boy’s symbolic currency and dependence, as well [as] his centrality in the production of early modern English male subjectivity”.⁴⁸

We may remember that the later, fin-de-siècle boy signified “the coming of age of the modern gay and lesbian sensibility: his protean nature displayed a double desire--to love a boy and to be a boy”, the boy being “the defining, best agent who best expressed who they were”.⁴⁹ From this it would seem that the boy was an eligible text/icon given his liminal sexual position and appearance providing “the necessary combination of familiarity, ambiguity, and distance”.⁵⁰ This “Uranian” (retro-Hellenistic, at times Christian) episode of idealization, Vicinus argues, occurred where anxiety-producing sameness, in the framework

⁴⁴ Volpp, S. A. (1995). *The Male Queen: Boy Actors and Literati Libertines*. Dissertation, Harvard University, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁵ Johnston, M. A. (2004). *Playing with the beard: The economic constitution of masculinity in early modern English children's drama*. PhD Thesis, The University of Western Ontario.

⁴⁶ Barbour, R. (1995). 'When I Acted Young Antinous': Boy Actors and the Erotics of Jonsonian Theater. *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 110(5), 1006-1022, at p. 1007.

⁴⁷ Bryan, E. D. (2005). *In the company of boys: The place of the boy actor in early modern English culture*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, iv, 11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁹ Vicinus, M. (1994). The Adolescent Boy: Fin de Siècle Femme Fatale? *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 5,1, 90-114. Reprinted in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, ed. Richard Dellamora (University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 83-106, at p. 91, 92.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

of fertility and biology, necessitated an “accentuation” or “exaggeration” of difference elsewhere, namely in “age”.⁵¹

Obviously Freud has little to say about boys *per se*, other than in terms of a range of topo- and chronological intrusions, most notably in terms of the zonal body, body stages, and the Oedipal fate. Much later American psychologists came to colonize the boy body as a diagnostic site of necessary “gender conformity” and (still later) “age appropriate sexuality”. As second wave feminism reinvented women (performers, authors) and men (viably homo- and metrosexual and boyish), and as anxiety was gradually drained in the post-Stonewall experience of sameness, the Uranian *accentuated boy* could be absorbed in a variety of new cultural performances around new composite social entities. On the one hand, activist, representational or scientific interest could be invested in the new “male homosexual adolescent”⁵² (for instance as irritated by perennial “homophobia”), on the other we got “homosexual paedophilia”, with distinctly American terms like “abuse” and “predation” replacing earlier, decidedly more gendered notions including “corruption”, “recruitment” and “seduction”.⁵³ As has been thoroughly historicized the grand, perennial romance of “the boy” has been completely rewritten through a range of familiar late 20th century Western binaries, among these: sexual vs non-sexual, disorder vs normality, minor vs adult, psyche vs ethos. This analytic aggression has temporarily halted the iconic salience of “the boy”, and renders its embodied commentary on gender stasis not only obsolete but in fact off limits. Paradoxically, the linguistic versatility of the lexeme *boy* in post-war America suggests that

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁵² Janssen, D. F. (exp. 2007). Re-Queering Queer Development: Notes on a Post-Developmental Approach. Forthcoming in *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, 5(1).

⁵³ For an appraisal of this historical twist, see Angelides, S. (2005). The Emergence of the Paedophile in the Late Twentieth Century. *Australian Historical Studies*, 37(126), 272-295.

the trope of *the boy* has been increasingly opportune for a number of marginalized minorities, ethnic and sexual.⁵⁴

Concluding

In short: as an image, the boy is no longer reduced to the auctorial objective, the proposed external cause or poetic project, but instead it is reduced to what is supposed to *be* (which in turn is reduced to what it is regarded as entitled to *become*). The boy's body, hence, fails to signify what it is already a promise of, it instead signifies a degree of (masculine, civil) "maturity" which is immanent and delivered to expert Logos.

This also has a broader ramification. Where societies have generally *initiated* aspiring tribesmen, the West rather *commemorates* their accomplishments. The tribal boy is put to metaphorical death to allow a "female thing" to come into salient existence (typically being a symbolic and spectacular "girl" or "wife" in the process), while "boys" in the contemporary Occidental experience linger on as the archive of the mind, in perverted imagination, in the marketing spectacle, and in the phantasmagoric and cartoonized products of gender fashion.

⁵⁴ See Janssen, D. F., *Boy: Ethnolinguistic Observations*. Forthcoming (exp. January 2007) in *Thymos: Journal of Boyhood Studies*, 1(1).