

Men and masculinities in Nordic cinema and its
American remakes:
A comparative analysis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tässä maisterintutkielmassa analysoin kahta pohjoismaista tuotettua elokuvaa sekä niiden amerikkalaisia elokuva-adaptaatioita. Analyysin tavoitteena on saada selville, kuinka kyseisissä elokuvissa esitetään miehiä ja maskuliinisuutta sekä verrata näitä kahdessa eri kulttuurisessa kontekstissa tuotettua elokuvaa tästä näkökulmasta. Tutkielman aineistoksi valikoituivat tanskalainen <i>Brødre</i> (2004) ja norjalainen <i>Kraftidioten</i> (2014) sekä molempien amerikkalaiset uudelleenfilmatisoinnit <i>Brothers</i> (2009) ja <i>Cold Pursuit</i> (2019).</p> <p>Tutkimuksen menetelmäksi valikoitui tekstianalyysi, jossa tekstin käsitteellä ymmärretään mikä tahansa merkitystä tuottava asia, tässä tapauksessa elokuva. Kyseinen menetelmä mahdollistaa sekä elokuvan yksityiskohtaisen tarkastelun sekä laajemman kontekstin huomioimisen, johon elokuva sijoittuu. Analyysin yhtenä keskeisistä käsitteistä käytettiin hegemonista maskuliinisuutta, joka huomioi useiden maskuliinisuuksien hierarkkisen jäsentymisen tietyssä kontekstissa. Lisäksi analyysissä tarkasteltiin elokuvia maskuliinisuuden kriisin näkökulmasta. Vaikka maskuliinisuuden kriisi on nykyäänkin paljon keskustelua ja eriäviä mielipiteitä herättävä aihe, se mahdollisti elokuvien mieshahmojen sekä maskuliinisuuden ristiriitaisten ja usein mahdottomien miehiin kohdistamien odotusten tutkimisen. Lisäksi analyysissä keskityttiin maskuliinisuuden sekä mieshahmojen representaatioihin valituissa elokuvissa.</p> <p>Analyysissä tehdyt huomiot ja tulkinnat jäsenneltiin neljään kategoriaan, joista ensimmäinen keskittyi mieshahmojen keholliseen ilmentymiseen sekä hahmoja esittäviin näyttelijöihin. Toiseksi analyysi esittelee hahmojen fyysistä toimintaa ja erityisesti heidän harjoittamaa sekä heihin kohdistettua väkivaltaa. Kolmas kategoria keskittyy siihen, miten mieshahmot sijoittuvat suhteessa muihin hahmoihin sekä yhteiskuntaan ja sen maskuliinisuutta kohtaan luomien odotusten ja roolien suhteen. Lopuksi analyysi käsittelee hahmojen sisäistä kokemusta miehuudesta ja erityisesti millaisten ongelmien ja kriisien kanssa hahmot kamppailevat.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tuloksena ilmenivät useat maskuliinisuuden ristiriitaisuudet esimerkiksi miehiin kohdistettujen odotusten ja arvojen suhteen. Tämä näkyi erityisesti siinä minkälaiset mieshahmot ja heidän piirteensä esitettiin tavoiteltavina ja arvostettuina sekä puolestaan siinä, mikä esitettiin näiden vastakohtana. Elokuvat heijastivat myös kriisiä sekä hegemonisessa maskuliinisuudessa että miehen asemassa yhteiskunnassa ja perheessä isän ja aviomiehen roolissa. Eri kulttuureissa tuotettujen elokuvien välillä löytyi myös eroja esimerkiksi naisiin kohdistuvan väkivallan ja miesten välisten suhteiden esittämisessä sekä elokuvien poliittisessä sisällössä ja -korrektudessa.</p>	
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1. Introduction

In the introduction to *Masculinity: Bodies, Movies, Culture* (2001), Peter Lehman recalls a conversation he had with a female colleague about the ability to use film to talk about topics they could otherwise not discuss, such as sexuality. Instead, they were able to discuss such topics indirectly through movies. Even though they might talk about sexuality in movies, what they actually were discussing were themselves and their own lives. Lehman goes on to argue that “both in the movies and within our culture, representing, showing, and even talking about many areas of masculinity, sexuality, and the male body are still nearly taboo” (Lehman 2001: 1-2). What Lehman’s story shows is that movies are a way to address and represent things that would otherwise not receive attention and would not be talked about. This makes movies a great medium to approach the subject of masculinity, especially when, as Lehman points out, many aspects of masculinity are a taboo that might not be spoken of directly. If this is truly the case, that masculinity and its representations in culture are taboos, this thesis aims to shed light on this topic by exploring masculinities as they are presented in cinema.

Before proceeding further, we should define what is actually meant by ‘masculinity’ in this thesis, especially when there is often disagreement over the exact meaning of masculinity (Kahn 2009: 3). Kahn (2009: 2), for example, defines masculinity as “the complex cognitive, behavioural, emotional, expressive, psychological, and sociocultural experience of identifying with being male” while also pointing to the plurality of masculinities. The existence of multiple masculinities between and within cultures as well as over time is central to this thesis and will be discussed in more detail later. Masculinity is also often contrasted with femininity and, as Connell (1995: 68) argues, the concept of masculinity is relational, existing only in contrast with femininity. For there to be a concept of masculinity, Connell continues, the culture in question has to perceive men and women differently: “No masculinity arises except in a system of gender relations” (ibid. 71). In the words of Connell, masculinity refers to “‘doing gender’ in a culturally specific way”, meaning that there is no single fixed masculinity (ibid.). Rather than accepting essentialist views and universal truths about gender, this thesis emphasises the changing and fluid nature of masculinity, even if considering masculinity as a hypothetical construct that cannot be observed or measured directly makes studying it a complicated process (Kahn 2009: 2-3). The fluidity of masculinity is elaborated by Shaw and Watson (2011: 1) when they write that “[m]asculinity is not a solid, immovable construction. An individual does not

guard one definitive gender position: from moment to moment, forces redictate, replace, and reimagine its reconstructing”.

However, when speaking of masculinities, we should make a distinction between what men are expected to be like and how men actually live their lives. After all, masculinity should be seen as a construct of social relations, rather than a role that men should try to live up to (Sipilä 1994: 20). Still, as Jokinen (2000: 210-211) points out, there are assumptions and ideals about manhood in Western cultures that men are expected to adhere to. These include physical strength, social and economic power, rationality and stability, the ability to defend oneself and their family as well as heterosexuality. Such expectations and models of masculinity are based on the sexual differences between men and women, making manhood and masculinity to be what women and femininity are not, while constructing masculinity as the norm. However, masculinity is not seen as a given but, it has to be earned instead through various acts and initiation rites. Thus, rather than consider the aforementioned features as norms that define masculinity, we should instead think of them as expectations of society, not inherent qualities of men.

Finally, we should make a distinction between one’s sex and gender. When using the word sex, we are referring to aspects of one’s biology that can be used to differentiate people of one sex from those of another (most commonly men and women) (Kahn 2009: 52). Gender is “a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do”, not determined by one’s biology (Connell 1995: 71). Thus, if we adopt Connell’s view of gender, we can speak of masculinity and femininity as “configurations of gender practices” (ibid. 72). A similar view has been proposed by Judith Butler (1999: 179) who has argued that gender is performative, referring to gender as “an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts”. In other words, people constitute gender and our sense of being by “doing” (Benshoff 2016: 250). This view of gender as constituted by performance has been used to challenge the idea that masculinity is a stable and monolithic identity (Grant 2011: 5).

What is of interest in this thesis are the ways masculinity manifests itself in different cultures, and more specifically, how masculinity appears in film. The two cultures that this thesis focuses on are those of the Nordic countries and the United States. In order to explore how masculinity is presented in the movies originating in these two cultures and how these two might differ regarding the topic of masculinity, this thesis will analyse cinematic adaptations of

Nordic movies produced in Hollywood. However, while doing this, I claim that this is not a straightforward or simple task, especially due to the contradictory nature of the two central themes of this thesis: masculinity and remakes. Firstly, the way men are expected to behave and express their masculinity, as well as the values associated with masculinity, have changed and developed throughout history even within a single cultural context. It seems that today these different values associated with masculinity are in conflict and contradictory, with newer forms competing with the ideals of manhood from previous generations. As will be discussed later, this places a strain on men as they attempt to meet the expectations of society. These contradictions are also reflected by movies when, as according to Gates (2006: 49), “almost every historical moment of cinema purports conflicting images of masculinity”. In addition, as will also be discussed later, many have proposed that masculinity defines itself in contrast to its opposite, such as femininity, and everything that masculinity is not. In a similar manner, movie remakes pose similar contradictions. This is because, despite their popularity and the abundance of cinematic adaptations of other movies as well as the huge profits they can offer, some view movie remakes in a more negative light, as derivative and exploitative of work done by others. As I will show later, this negative reaction is even greater when the remake is produced in Hollywood and adapts a cinematic text of some other culture and language.

In the following section, I will place this thesis in the field of adaptation studies by first introducing theory of adaptation more generally, before proceeding to the topic of movie remakes, a specific form of adaptation. After exploring cinematic adaptations of other movies, I will broadly introduce the context of Nordic cinema and discuss the concepts of national and transnational cinema. These two concepts are extremely relevant for this thesis’ discussion of remaking and especially the context of film in the Nordic countries. After exploring adaptations, remakes and filmmaking in the Nordic countries, the thesis will proceed to explore another central subject of this thesis, masculinity. The third section will begin by placing masculinity in the context of film studies, followed by an introduction to two issues central to the topic: hegemonic masculinity and the crisis of masculinity. The section will then close with discussion of representations of masculinity in cinema.

2. Transnational movie remakes of Nordic cinema

This section begins with a more general introduction to adaptations, including the definition of adaptations and a look at different approaches and attitudes towards the process of adaptation as well as its end-products. This is followed by an introduction to a specific type of adaptation: the movie remake. The discussion of movie remakes in general then proceeds to a discussion of Nordic cinema, the concepts of national and transnational cinema as well as remaking practices between different cultures, especially those of the United States and the Nordic countries.

2.1. Adaptations

In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Hutcheon & O’Flynn (2013: 7-8) suggest three ways to define and describe adaptations. First, the word ‘adaptation’ can refer to the actual product that is “[a]n acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works”. This kind of adaptation is the product of the second meaning of ‘adaptation’: the actual process where something is adapted or, as Hutcheon & Flynn (ibid.) write, “[a] creative *and* an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging”. Here the acts of appropriating and salvaging refer to the way one perceives adaptations as either exploitative and derivative or, for example, as a form of preservation of narratives that would otherwise be forgotten. Thirdly, adaptation can also refer to the process in which the product of adaptation is received. This “extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work” involves memories of other works that the adaptation’s recipient may have (ibid.). Thus, adaptation functions as a form of intertextuality.

Similarly, Gérard Genette (Genette et. al. 1997: 1-5) writes of “transtextuality”, referring to the different ways in which texts relate to other texts, while making a distinction between five different forms of such relationships, intertextuality being one of them. The other four include paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality¹. According to Robert Stam (2005: 4-5), hypertextuality, the fourth category of Genette’s transtextuality, is the most relevant one for adaptations as it refers to “any relationship uniting a text --- to an earlier

¹ Although hypertextuality is the one that is most relevant for this thesis, the other four are defined here briefly, as discussed by Genette (1997, 1-5): intertextuality refers to the relationship between two texts or “the actual presence of one text within another”. Paratexts are titles, subtitles, book covers, etc. that provide a text with a setting and commentary. Metatextuality generally refers to critical commentary of one text in another. Finally, architextuality is the inclusion or omission of a classification or categorisation of a text by itself.

text". Genette (1997: 5) calls these the 'hypertext' and 'hypotext' while referring to "a text in the second degree --- i.e. a text derived from another preexisting text". Using Genette's concept of hypertextuality, Stam (2000: 66) explains film adaptations as "hypertexts derived from preexisting hypotexts that have been transformed by operations of selection, amplification, concretization, and actualization". Multiple adaptations of a single source text, he explains, are hypertextual "readings" that have been "triggered" by the same hypotext, such as a novel. The earlier adaptations of a single source create a single "cumulative hypotext" that can be used by filmmakers who want to create their own version of the source text. For example, when adapting a novel, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, into a movie, the adapter may choose to use the original novel as the hypotext from which to draw inspiration or alternatively the multiple cinematic adaptations done before. In addition, it is possible to use the "cumulative hypotext" of all *Frankenstein* adaptations, as well as the original novel, and make a movie much like the titular monster, stitched together from bits and pieces of different narrative and cinematic elements.

The study of adaptations has focused mostly on the media of film and literature (Hutcheon & O'Flynn 2013: xxvii) and especially on novel to film adaptations, comparing the two works with each other. Often these case studies have remained within the boundaries of the two works in question only to conclude that "the book was better" (Ray 2000: 44), generally prioritising the source text or 'the original' (Hutcheon & O'Flynn 2013: xv). In addition, the field of adaptation studies has embraced fidelity of the adaptation as well as "fidelity criticism" (Hutcheon & O'Flynn 2013: 6-7). The fidelity of any adaptation refers to its faithfulness to the property it is adapting and assumes that the work that is being adapted, or alternatively the medium of adaptation, has some "essence" or "core" that can be adapted (Stam 2000: 57-58). In a similar manner, it has been argued that some vague, as well as subjective, 'spirit', 'tone' or 'style' of the original needs to be captured in order for an adaptation to succeed, while according to others, the original work's story is the essence that should be adapted (Hutcheon & O'Flynn 2013: 10). However, Robert Stam (2000: 3-4) has questioned the possibility of strict fidelity when adapting for example a novel into a film. With intermedial adaptations, changes between the two works are inevitable and, as Stam (ibid.) argues, literal fidelity in such cases would even be undesirable. Whether, fidelity to the original property is possible or should be the goal of adaptation, assessing a work's fidelity (or lack of it) to the original can reveal ideological aspects of one or both works. This can manifest itself, for example in the change of

geographical location or time period, presenting themes that were not present in the original story (Bordwell, Thompson & Smith 2016, 516-517).

Another point of interest when analysing adaptations from one art form to another, is the different equivalences between the adaptation and the adapted work. As different media and art forms overlap, the overlapping points of contact create equivalences between the two forms. The question of equivalences forces adapters to decide if they want to adapt only the original property's narrative elements (what in the case of film adaptations can be referred to as "cinematising" the original) or if they want to adapt formal features of the original as well (Bordwell, Thompson & Smith 2016: 518-519). For example, if one was to adapt Bram Stoker's *Dracula* into a movie, the adapter would have to decide whether or not to keep the original book's form that mostly consists of different characters' journal entries describing their experiences narrated in the first person singular form, by finding a cinematic equivalent to this form of narration. When adapting an interactive medium such as a video game into a movie, the adapter would have to decide if they should try adapting only the original game's story and characters or also its style, consisting of computer-generated graphics and other characteristics of video games that are not conventionally found in cinema.

Another important question concerns the differences that can be made between the two works as changes are likely to occur due to different media's conventions of storytelling that provide both restrictions and new possibilities as opposed to other media (Hutcheon & O'Flynn 2013: 35). Also, because there cannot be "a one-to-one correspondence between pages of the book and minutes of the film" the length of the two media involved in an adaptation is bound to affect the adaptation process (Bordwell, Thompson & Smith 2016: 522). Longer books will have to be condensed and some aspects of the story will be omitted as adaptations will often add new characters to a story but sometimes also combine multiple characters and their function in the narrative into a single character. Alternatively, when adapting a shorter piece of writing, the story needs to be stretched out to fit the requirements of a feature film, for example by using the original story only as the film's basic premise (Bordwell, Thompson & Smith 2016: 523-525).

According to Naremore (2000: 6), the first American full-scale academic analysis concerning film adaptation was George Bluestone's *Novels into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction into Cinema* in 1957, where he argues that film adaptations of novels "metamorphose" novels into another medium that has its own formal or narratological possibilities". In addition,

he recognises the aesthetic differences of the two media and argues that the difference is as great as with two very different art forms such as ballet and architecture. This difference was also acknowledged in André Bazin's (1997: 49) essay *Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest*, where he uses the concept of 'digest' – literature that has been already digested – to argue that cinematic adaptation can be used to make literature more accessible for an audience. However, this is not necessarily because of simplification of the original work, but instead because the new mode of expression is easier for the viewer to take in. This is not to diminish the value of the filmic adaptation as, according to Bazin (ibid.), "the difficulty of audience assimilation is not an a priori criterion for cultural value".

However, this view about the value of adaptation is not shared by many others who often see an adaptation of any work as inferior to or derivative of the original, a view that has rooted itself in the field of adaptation studies (Bortolotti & Hutcheon 2007: 443; Hutcheon & O'Flynn 2013: xiv). For example, in the criticism of cinematic adaptations of novels, the language used about adaptations is often judgemental and hostile, using words like "infidelity", "betrayal" and "violation" to describe the new version of a prior work. Feelings of disappointment, infidelity and unfaithfulness can be borne in one's mind when the adaptation does not match one's mental fantasy of the original and fails to capture what could be considered the original's most central features (Stam 2000: 54-55; Stam 2000: 3). This kind of thinking about adaptation also prioritises the original work while devaluing the newer adaptation of said original (Hutcheon & O'Flynn 2013: xv).

More recently, such criticism of adaptation has been challenged and adaptations have been seen in a more positive light. For example, in Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2013), she defends adaptations by stating that "to be second is not to be secondary or inferior; likewise, to be first is not to be originary or authoritative" (Hutcheon & O'Flynn 2013: xv). Later she goes on to say that "[m]ultiple versions exist laterally, not vertically", referring to the varying motivations behind making and consuming adaptations. In her article with Bortolotti, Hutcheon also challenges the idea that an adaptation's success could be evaluated solely according to its faithfulness to the original (Bortolotti & Hutcheon 2007: 444-445). According to them, this is partly because an adaptation should be judged as a work that is independent of its source text, but also because "the impact of an adaptation can far exceed anything measurable only by its degree of proximity to the adapted work" (ibid.).

Even if adaptations can have a bad reputation among moviegoers and critics alike, this does not seem to be reflected in the number of adaptations, for example in filmmaking. In 1997, 20% of movies made in Hollywood were based on a novel, while another 20% were based on other properties (Bordwell, Thompson & Smith 2016: 512). In addition, many award-winning Hollywood movies have been adaptations. For example, this is reflected in the practices of the Academy Awards; they have recognised the significance of adaptations by dedicating a separate category for adapted screenplays (Boozer 2008: 13). As the range of possible source material for adaptation ranges from various written and visual media to radio, electronic media and theme parks (Hutcheon & O’Flynn 2013: xiii), the number of adapted works is not surprising.

2.2. Remakes

While adaptations refer to any work that is based on an earlier pre-existing property, film remakes are more specific as they are always intramedial: movie adaptations based on an earlier movie. In fact, many consider remakes to be a subset of adaptations due to this relationship between the original work and adaptation(s) of that work (Herbert 2008: 28-29). In providing a definition of remakes, Thomas Leitch (2002: 37-39) defines a remake as “a movie based on another movie, or competing with another movie based on the same property”, while also emphasising the movies involved in this process as ‘properties’ that are competing with each other as the remake threatens the original’s economic viability. Leitch argues that remakes distinguish themselves from other adaptations because of their ‘triangular relationship’, involving the original movie, the remake and the property that both movies are based on. He states that it is typical for film producers to pay for the adaptation rights of the original property, such as a novel, and not the original film based on that property.

According to Leitch (2002: 45-50), a remake can position itself in relation to either the original movie or the source material both the original movie as well as the remake are based on. Thus, he distinguishes between four types of remakes: readaptations, updates, homages and true remakes. Readaptations are based on an earlier literary source and aim for fidelity to that source, while ignoring the original film adaptation. The goal of updates is to transform the source text in some way as they aim not to be subordinate to the original but directly compete with it instead. Homages pay tribute to some earlier movie and position themselves as secondary to the film they are dependent on. Finally, true remakes attempt to update the original movie they are based on. Leitch (*ibid.*) also argues that true remakes aim “to eliminate any need

or desire to see the film they seek to replace”, emphasising the competitive relationship between the two movies.

Although Leitch’s model of remakes describes some remakes well, it is also flawed in many respects. Firstly, Leitch’s triangular relationship assumes that all remakes of movies involve some non-cinematic original source, even though movies do not have to be based on any prior property, other than a screenplay made specifically for that movie (Herbert 2008: 30-31; Verevis 2006: 14-16). In his critique of Leitch’s model, Herbert (2008: 30-31) also points to overlaps in Leitch’s categories and critiques his theory for valuing some ‘original’ work over the remake: “Leitch maintains a rhetorical distinction, perhaps inadvertently, between “original” and “copy,” thereby reinforcing a hierarchy of precedence of an existing text over the remake”. In addition, according to Verevis (2006: 16-18), Leitch’s taxonomy of remakes also assumes that remakes are in competition with other versions of some earlier property when, in fact, creators of the original movie can be involved in making the remake. In addition, both the original movie and its remake can benefit from the remaking process, for example in the form of publicity for the earlier version, as is often the case with remakes of foreign and older movies. Even though remakes can compete with the property they are based on, Verevis (ibid.) argues that “contemporary remakes generally enjoy a (more) symbiotic relationship with their originals”.

There have been others who have also attempted to describe the different types of remakes, basing their taxonomies according to the different ways a movie can relate to the work it is based on. For example, Druxman (1975, cited in Verevis 2006: 7) distinguishes three categories of Hollywood remakes: “the disguised remake” (the original film is ‘disguised’ by some changes), “the direct remake” (some changes are possible but the original movie is acknowledged) and “the non-remake” (uses the same title as the original but follows a new narrative). Meanwhile, Greenberg (1998, cited in Verevis 2006: 8-9), basing his taxonomy on that of Druxman (1975), presents the categories of “acknowledged, close remakes” (little or no changes to the original narrative); “acknowledged, transformed remakes” (some substantial changes to some aspects of the original) and “unacknowledged, disguised remakes” (some changes but without acknowledging the original movie). These different categorisations reveal the desire “to provide exhaustive lists of film remakes” as well as “precisely define the category, or various categories, of the remake” (Verevis 2006: 11). This kind of approach to defining remakes is also reminiscent of the type of study relating to genres, by constructing a corpus that is supposed to contain the movies that undoubtedly describe that genre (e.g. Altman 1999).

However, these attempts to define remakes (even if through various typologies) is necessary as, depending on one's definition of a remake, all movies could be said to remake others due to their repetition of narrative elements from other properties (Evans 2014: 304; Harris 2014: 116). In addition, a film can be seen as remaking the genre to which it belongs, making the genre in question the film's intertext (Verevis 2006: 25). Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, I will use the definition provided by Constantine Verevis (2006) when he writes that:

[...]film remakes are understood as (more particular) intertextual structures which are stabilised, or *limited*, through the naming and (usually) legally sanctioned (or copyrighted) use of a particular literary and/or cinematic source which serves as a retrospectively designated point of origin and semantic fixity. In addition, these intertextual structures (unlike those of genre) are highly particular in their repetition of *narrative units*, and these repetitions most often (though certainly not always) relate to the content ('the order of the message') rather than to the form (or 'the code') of the film. (Verevis 2006: 21)

In other words, remakes need to acknowledge the original movie that is used as an intertextual point of reference. Due to being based on another single film, according to Herbert (2008: 33), movie remakes "[correspond] directly with Genette's model of hypertexts and hypotexts". It should also be noted that the remake resembles the original film's narrative structure as to be recognised as a reworking of an earlier movie. Thus, remakes need to both acknowledge and resemble the original film they are remaking. Although this definition can leave ambiguity over some films' status as a remake (for example when the original is not directly credited or with movies that are based on the same property but treat it differently) (Verevis 2006: 22), the definition provided by Verevis is sufficient in defining most remakes well.

As discussed in the previous section, attitudes towards adaptations can be very negative and hostile, for example on the grounds of infidelity and unfaithfulness to the original. Movie remakes are not an exception to this, and it could be argued that the opposition faced by film adaptations of other films is even greater than by those based on literary sources. Some of these negative attitudes are described by Hutchinson (2007: 172-174) who argues that the remaker can be seen as a criminal by some, as well as a thief who plagiarises the original movie. Some critics of remaking movies argue that seeing a remake of another movie triggers a trauma in the person who experiences the remake and is reminded of the original movie. In addition to this "psychical violence" towards the viewer, the remake inflicts "physical violence" in the form of theft as it assaults the original movie and its director by stealing some aspects of the original. In some cases - such as Akira Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* (1961) and its un-acknowledged remake,

Sergio Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), as discussed by Hutchinson (ibid.) - the remake can also cause 'practical violence', for example in the form of legal fees due to copyright infringements.

This stigma on remakes tends to be more severe when Hollywood decides to remake a foreign-language movie. This is because, while Hollywood remakes of domestic films only cause discussion regarding which movie is better, remakes of foreign films have led to accusations of America's financial exploitation of other cultures as well as cultural imperialism (Koos & Forrest 2002: 6; Verevis 2006: 3). However, according to Koos & Forrest (2002: 12), intercultural remaking of movies is not practiced only by Hollywood as the process works both ways, but unlike remakes made in Hollywood, ones made in Europe, for example, do not face the same kind of criticism, partly because they cannot compete financially with their American counterparts. Likewise, Americans are not the only ones facing criticism for their remakes of foreign films. The foreign filmmakers who allow their movies to be remade in America can be seen to give up their artistic status and making a disservice to their national cinema. Still, there seems to be a double-standard at play considering remakes, greatly positioned against Hollywood: American remakes of foreign movies steal from some other culture in a form of negative cultural appropriation while foreign film-makers "adapt, readapt, cite, pay homage to, parody, but do not remake" (Koos & Forrest 2002: 29). In addition to the outrage caused by remakes of foreign films, remaking art films is an equally controversial practice. Thus, Koos and Forrest (ibid.) argue, that this "leads one to assume that foreign pictures automatically merit art status".

As was discussed above, American remakes of foreign language movies (i.e. movies not in the English language) have tended to cause the most controversy. Not surprisingly, the majority of work done on film remakes has focused on Hollywood and its remakes of other countries' movies, especially ones from Europe (Smith & Verevis 2017: 3). Indeed, many critics have accused of American filmmakers of exploiting and tampering with the original foreign film in various ways. For example, foreign movies remade in America are often said to remove aspects of the other culture that are foreign to Americans, while retaining aspects that are considered to be 'universal' (Koos & Forrest 2002: 27-28). In addition, Hollywood remakes are said to change the source material with the intention to reach wider audiences and gain mainstream appeal, in a process that can be referred to as 'mainstreaming' (Bucciferro 2018: 782-783). Similarly, some have also argued that remakes of foreign movies may end up transforming the original movie into generic Hollywood genre productions (Stenport 2016:

440). However, more recent scholarship on Hollywood's remaking of foreign movies has attempted to challenge the claims that American cinema by default mass produces commercial and lesser quality copies of European countries' high culture and art films (Smith & Verevis 2017: 3-4).

In addition to removing local aspects of the original, Hollywood remakes are also argued to add new features of the American culture and context while making the remake more politically correct for the American audience (Gemzøe 2013: 293-294, Verevis 2006: 3). Overall, discussion about movies has been very Hollywood-centric as film productions from other countries are referred to as 'international film', placing Hollywood and movies produced in the United States at the centre of the entire film industry, while defining other film industries and movies produced elsewhere as "international" or "peripheral" (Bucciferro 2018: 780). Thus, the next section turns to the topic of these international films and discusses the place of the Nordic countries among cinemas of the world.

2.3. National, transnational and Nordic cinema

As this thesis is concerned with adaptations of films from one culture to another, the concept of national cinema is highly relevant here, especially when, as argued by Bucciferro (2018: 781), national cinema shows how movies can reflect social or national concerns and are thus a point of interest for researchers. The term 'national cinema' has traditionally been seen as concerning films produced in a certain national context that somehow exhibit various aspects of that culture while also being involved in the construction of national identity (Kuhn & Westwell 2012: 277). In addition, when speaking of national cinemas, the films of one nation are inevitably defined against films of other nations (Seppälä & Kääpä 2012: 10). However, there is no single accepted definition of the term and the concept has lately been under criticism, for example because it is often used prescriptively to describe what kind of movies should be considered national cinema "instead of describing the actual cinematic experience of popular audiences" (Higson 2002: 52-53). In order to question the discourse of national cinemas, some other criticisms have pointed to the effects of globalisation on national boundaries and the fact that people of a nation do not constitute a homogenous whole (Kuhn & Westwell 2012: 432). Thus, during the 1990s the term 'transnational cinema' has entered the discussion regarding films and film studies in response to the limitations of the national cinema concept (Higbee & Lim 2010: 9).

Much like national cinema, transnational cinema does not have a single accepted definition and ‘transnational’ is often used synonymously with ‘international’ (Kuhn & Westwell 2012: 432). Yet, three approaches to transnational cinema have been proposed. The first one focuses on the binary of national versus transnational, referring to the aforementioned limitations and shortcomings of the concept of national cinema and the possibility of the production, distribution and exhibition of films to transcend national borders, while the second approach is concerned with regional connections and cinemas with “a shared cultural heritage”, such as the cinema of the Nordic countries (Higbee & Lim 2010: 9; Seppälä & Kääpä 2012: 2). The third approach “relates to work on diasporic, exilic and postcolonial cinemas” (Higbee & Lim 2010: 9) and is concerned with how some movies can critique as well as deconstruct national identities and cultures (Seppälä & Kääpä 2012: 17-18). Thus, in this approach, according to Seppälä and Kääpä (2012: 17), national culture can be understood as “a hegemonic tool that normalises the mainstream culture and the privilege of those in power”. Although the themes of national categories and nationhood still prevail in contemporary film studies, “transnational relations and interactions” have become another central issue (Hjort & Petrie 2007: 11). In summary, the concept of transnational cinema emphasises connections between the global and local/national in movies as well as the tendency of movies to not be limited by national boundaries. According to Kuhn and Westwell (2012: 432) film studies saw a ‘transnational turn’ during the 2000s, with an increasing amount of work done on the topic ever since². This thesis will engage in this ongoing conversation as well in its attempts to provide new perspectives on transnational cinema in the Nordic context.

Considering the concepts of national and transnational cinema is relevant here because, as I will discuss later, the movies analysed in this thesis are very much transnational in nature. In addition, the Nordic films of this thesis can also be labelled as exemplars of ‘small nation’ cinema, a concept that should also be introduced here briefly, especially when these smaller national cinemas come in contact with the much larger and powerful Hollywood film industry. Small nation cinema is generally used for example to refer to countries with small domestic markets and a language that is not widely understood in other countries as well as countries where Hollywood films tend to dominate domestic exhibition of movies (Kuhn & Westwell 2012: 381-382). Thus, the concept defines small nations in relation to larger ones also in terms of their film industries (Hjort & Petrie 2007: 2). A country’s population, geographical size,

² For example, Kuhn and Westwell (2012) point to an academic journal *Transnational Cinemas* which was established in 2010. There are also a number of books and edited collections dedicated to the topic such as *Transnational Film Remakes* (Smith & Verevis 2017).

gross national product (GNP) as well as a country's domination and "rule by non-co-nationals over time" have also been used to characterise "small nationhood" (Hjort & Petrie 2007: 4-6). Thus, as small nation cinema is still relatively recent area of inquiry (Kuhn Westwell 2012: 381-382), its definition and meaning are quite broad. Considering cinemas of small nations and those of larger ones, one argument in favour of Hollywood remakes is the fact that smaller national film industries, such as the ones of Nordic countries, can benefit from the exposure provided by the remaking of their movies (Stenport 2016: 439). However, at the same time, Hollywood's involvement in the filmmaking practices of other nations can lead to fears of "the erosion of cultural difference and non-commercial filmmaking practices" due to submission to Hollywood's interests (Hjort & Petrie 2007: 9).

According to Elkington and Nestingen (2005: 10), the national cinema model of film production in the Nordic countries is the result of three factors: production, state support and critical reception. Despite some films, filmmakers and actors that have been successful both internationally and in their native country, Nordic cinema has been working with what Elkington and Nestingen (*ibid.*) refer to as the "by us, for us" model. Due to the Nordic countries' small domestic markets that make financial gains based solely on domestic audiences difficult, Nordic national cinemas have been supported by the countries' governments and, until the late 1980s, these countries' local film institutes prioritised the production of art house films and movies addressing social issues, or so called 'valuable films' (Gustafsson & Käätä 2015: 4). At least in 2005, approximately half of the funding of movies produced in the Nordic countries came from these film institutes, for movies made for domestic audiences as well as for ones screened abroad. Elkington and Nestingen (2005: 11-12) point to the Nordic countries' tendency to emphasise the role of cinema for national culture and cinema as a form of cultural expression. This is also evident in the collection of national filmographies and histories of national cinemas. While this national cinema model has been important for these countries, during the turn of the millennium, Nordic cinema has been transitioning from this national model towards more transnational and global one. For example, this international turn can be seen in certain Norwegian movies that have started to emulate Hollywood genre productions in pursuit of global markets (Henlin-Strømme 2014: 190).

When observed from the outside, Nordic cinema is often seen as a homogenous whole (Gustafsson & Käätä 2015: 5), which is evident in the way national differences between the countries have often gone unnoticed by foreign audiences (Åberg 2015: 91). However, as discussed above, the Nordic countries' (i.e. Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland)

cinemas are considered to constitute a unified region of filmmaking, as is evident for example in many books discussing the films of the Nordic countries under the same title of Nordic cinema³. When comparing the Nordic cinemas, Danish and Swedish productions have overshadowed the region's other countries, Norway, Finland and Iceland. Despite some internationally successful individual movies, as well as filmmakers and actors who have made their way outside of their native Nordic countries, the three other Nordics have not produced nearly as many cinematic successes as Denmark and Sweden (Herbert 2008: 420; Lunde 2015: 241-243). When it comes to remaking, although not numerous, Hollywood has produced some remakes of Nordic movies and television series. As the Nordic countries are known especially for their crime stories, it is not surprising that many popular remakes to originate from the Nordics can be placed in the crime genre. The Swedish/Danish television co-production *Bron/Broën*, being an example of the Nordic noir genre, has been remade in multiple different countries and languages, while the Danish television series *Forbrydelsen* has also been remade in America as *The Killing* (Gustafsson & Käätä 2015: 1; Harris 2014: 111-112). As the remaking of crime films and series shows, the internationally successful remakes based on Nordic productions have tended to be of some "global" genre (Stenport 2016: 440-441).

When considering that Nordic popular culture fits the Hollywood framework both politically and ideologically, one would think that there would be more remakes of movies made in the Nordic countries. In addition, foreign-language movies, such as those made in the Nordic countries, have the advantage of their exotic location while not being in the English language, thus giving them the association with quality and artistic value (Stenport 2016: 442) that could interest foreign audiences and producers. Yet, the number of Nordic remakes is still quite small. Considering the number of remakes based on films produced in the Nordic countries, Stenport (2016: 437) lists 10 Hollywood remakes of Nordic films made between 1996 and 2012 while Wikipedia lists 4 American remakes of Norwegian movies ("American remakes of Norwegian films," 2020) and 6 remakes of Danish movies ("American remakes of Danish films," 2020) without distinguishing between small independent productions and bigger budget Hollywood films.

³ These include, but are not limited to, *A Companion to Nordic Cinema* (Hjort & Lindqvist 2016), *Nordic Genre Film: Small National Film Cultures in the Global Marketplace* (Gustafsson & Käätä 2015), *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition* (Elkington & Nestingen 2005) and *Films on Ice: Cinemas of the Arctic* (MacKenzie & Stenport 2015).

2.4. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to broadly explore the concepts of adaptation and remaking, as well as the general context of national, transnational and Nordic cinema, in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of why and how films are adapted, while also placing this thesis in the field of adaptation studies and the study of Nordic cinema. As this thesis analyses and compares two movies, the original and the remake, it is necessary to discuss this aspect of the films to better understand the relationship between two versions of the same film. In addition, by showing that remaking of foreign films in Hollywood has mostly focused on the movies of countries other than the Nordic ones, such as France in Europe and Japan in Asia, this discussion has opened an area of inquiry that has thus far been less explored. The small number of American remakes of Nordic cinema also offers an area of the international film industry that has received less attention in similar comparative film studies. These aspects, in addition to the researcher's familiarity with the region, its cinematic tradition and culture in general, make Nordic cinema a fruitful point of interest when analysing Hollywood's remaking practices of foreign language cinema and allows this thesis to participate in the small but growing field of inquiry on the topic. Now that the reader better understands the first central aspect of this thesis (i.e. adaptations, remakes and Nordic cinema), the following chapter introduces and discusses the second one: masculinity and how it relates to movies.

3. Masculinity and movies

This section about masculinity and how it relates to movies, begins with a more general introduction to the study and history of masculinities on film, exploring some previous work done on the subject, as well as some central concepts regarding the study of gender in movies. This is followed by a discussion of the crisis of masculinity, a central and highly debated topic in the study of masculinity in general, not just in the context of movies. The section then proceeds to an introduction to the concept of hegemonic masculinity and how it is relevant for this topic in particular. Then, the section concludes with a discussion of representations of masculinities in the context of movies.

3.1. Masculinities on film

Depictions and representations of men and masculinity have been studied and discussed in the context of movies as numerous essays and books have been dedicated to the topic (see e.g. Butters 2014). One of the first authors to write about masculinity in American cinema was Joan Mellen in her 1977 book *Big bad wolves: Masculinity in the American film*, where she argued that male characters in Hollywood, up to that point, had been “unrealistic fabrications of masculine extremes”, even though there are different kinds of representations of masculinity on-screen (McDonald 2020: 384-385; Shary 2013: 5-6). Other influential and highly cited works following Mellen’s book include Laura Mulvey’s essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), as well as Steve Neale’s response to Mulvey in *Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema* (1983) (McDonald 2020: 384-387).

Approaching Hollywood cinema from the point the point of view of psychoanalytic theory and using it “as a political weapon” (Aitken 2007: 120), Mulvey’s (1997: 447) *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* argues that a film includes three different looks: that of the camera, audience and characters in the story. These three looks are presumably male and are directed at and objectifying women, the objects of the ‘male gaze’ where the look of the male character is combined with that of the spectator. In other words, Mulvey is arguing that what is presented on-screen, is presented for, and seen from the point of view of a man. Mulvey also argues that women are depicted as the passive visual objects to be looked at, while men are active, controlling the gaze and driving the narrative forward. Meanwhile, the visual spectacle of a woman, according to Mulvey, is there to work against the development of narrative, “to

freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation” (ibid. 442). Further, Mulvey argues that sexual objectification is impossible for the male figure who is “reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like”, or his “screen surrogate” (ibid. 443).

While Steve Neale (1993) does not contradict Mulvey in his response, he argues for the male characters and their bodies to be the centre of spectacle as well. In Neale’s view, the gaze of the spectator is controlled by the looks of the male characters. These looks, however, are not those of desire, but ones of fear, hatred or aggression instead, avoiding eroticism of the male bodies (McDonald 2020: 386; Neale 1993: 18). According to Neale (1993: 18), “[w]e are offered the spectacle of male bodies, but bodies unmarked as objects of erotic display”. Neale concludes by agreeing with Mulvey that “the spectatorial look in mainstream cinema is implicitly male” and that “erotic elements involved in the relations between the spectator and the male image” are repressed by the male viewer (ibid. 19). This repression and rejection of male bodies as objects of pleasure shows how mainstream cinema has not come to terms with male homosexuality, which according to Neale, “is constantly present as an undercurrent, as a potentially troubling aspect of many films and genres, but one that is dealt with obliquely, symptomatically, and that has to be repressed” (ibid.). Thus, he argues that women are the object in mainstream cinema while men are not looked at in a similar manner and that this is one of the reasons why representations of masculinity in movies have not been discussed.

These two texts have later been criticised for the way they approach the issue of gender. In their analysis of movies with the means of psychoanalysis, Mulvey and Neale overlook other aspects of identity, such as ethnicity, and privilege gender. For example, Nixon (1997: 321) states that Mulvey and Neale’s “emphasis on psychosexual structures produces a reductive account of identity conceived fundamentally in terms of sexual difference”, producing “the acquisition of gender and sexual identity as the bedrock of identity”. Mulvey’s writing has also been criticised for its binary and essentialist view of gender, that fails to see that masculinity does not always align with activity, or femininity with passiveness. Men can be sexually objectified as well, and erotic looks can be exchanged between characters of the same sex (Oleksy 2007: 376).

Although these two texts by Mulvey and Neale have been important and influential to the discussion about gender in visual media, according to Stella Bruzzi (2013: 6-11) in *Men's Cinema : Masculinity and Mise En Scene in Hollywood*, the study of masculinities in film has more or less been synonymous with the representation of men’s bodies in film. In addition,

according to Bruzzi, criticism of masculinities in film tends to use Mulvey and Neale's texts as a starting point, failing to move beyond the scope of the two texts, especially that of Mulvey. Bruzzi's book deviates from this type of criticism that has focused mostly on the representation of male bodies by arguing instead that masculinity also resides in the form of the film. Approaching the subject like this opens new ways to view masculinities in film by focusing on the visual style and presentation of the movie rather than the actual physical representations of characters on screen. In addition, according to McDonald (2020: 389), "[t]here is also a direct connection here to the initial points raised by Mulvey, which returns to an interrogation of film form as intimately intertwined with gendered meanings".

Despite Mellen's book as well as Mulvey and Neale's articles, the study of masculinity in film (or 'Masculinities in Film Studies') was not established in the same way as feminist film analysis. Interest in masculinity in film truly began in the 1990s, focusing on such themes as plurality of masculinities and the 'spectacularity' of masculinity in movies (referring back to Neale's article). These themes, as well as masculinity in movies more generally, are discussed in books such as *Screening the male: Exploring masculinities in Hollywood cinema* (1993), *You Tarzan, Masculinity, Movies and Men* (1993) and *Me Jane: Masculinity, Movies and Women* (1995). However, these collections focused mostly on movies made in Hollywood, paying less attention to productions and representations of masculinity outside of the United States (Powrie, Babington & Davies 2004: 1-4).

At the beginning of the 2000s, when Powrie, Babington and Davies (2004: 12-14) edited the collection of writings titled *The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema*, they argued that male characters in movies had become increasingly more damaged than in the previous decade. They recognised two types of extremes in the male characters: the feminised and the damaged man. According to them, the man's suffering has feminised him but may only function as a distraction from the power he actually possesses. However, this depiction of damaged men could also be seen as a way to make these male characters more accessible to women viewers and that by being de-masculinised by the damage caused by patriarchy, these male characters are then reconstructed, pointing to the redemptive power of the damage. This men's suffering and damage brings us to the following section discussing the much debated topic of crisis of masculinity.

3.2. Crisis of masculinity

In addition to the emphasis on male bodies in the discussion of men and cinema, there is another aspect that has been much debated and written about in the entire field of men's studies: the crisis of masculinity. According to Bruzzi (2013: 10), "'crisis' became a term, particularly in the 1980s, virtually synonymous with masculinity", while Grant (2011: 10) argues that "[t]he crisis of masculinity has a history at least as long as that of cinema". Although many, but not all, scholars and experts believe that such crisis of masculinity exists, what it actually means, what causes it, how it can be 'cured' and what kind of effects it has are not agreed upon (Kahn 2009: 166). Some proposed 'symptoms' of this crisis are men's problems regarding health, violence, crime and education (Morgan 2006: 110-111). It has been recognised that men suffer from these problems at a disproportionate rate and some argue that these problems are caused by masculinity and what it means to men (Kahn 2009: 165, 193).

Discussions about the crisis of masculinity as it is depicted in movies, has focused, for example on the movies made in post-World War II America, and especially film noir movies. Many have argued that these movies depict the struggle of men, haunted by horrors of the war, as they are trying to come to terms with the changes in society, especially the changed role of women who, during the war, entered many areas of work traditionally occupied by men (Grant 2011: 6). Indeed, the crisis of masculinity is often considered to reflect some perceived threats to masculinity that are specific to that time, such as homosexuals, changes in the role of men in work as well as the increased role of women in the workforce (Lahti 1994: 219; Morgan 2006: 110). However, film noir is only one example of the numerous periods, genres and regions of film-making that have been written about in regard to the crisis of masculinity (McDonald 2020: 388).

As suggested by the film noir example, some factors deemed responsible for this crisis in Western countries include the rise of feminism and the changes in Western capitalism, as men's position in the working life was threatened by women and the industry-based economies began shifting towards ones based on service and information. This crisis caused men to re-evaluate their masculine identity as "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (Mercer 1990, cited in West 2000: 13). In line with the crisis of masculinity in post-war America, some have argued that a similar crisis emerged with the "great recession" of 2008 that led to millions of lost jobs in America alone. Much like the film noir movies of post-

war America, this economic decline was also reflected in the films produced during and after the recession, although these movies tended to present the recession as a crisis of the middle-class while giving less attention to its effects on working classes (Boyle & Brayton 2012: 471-472).

Another proposed cause for this perceived crisis has to do more with masculinity itself, as it has been argued that the rigidity of masculinity - the dominant masculine roles and expectations as well as the rejection of femininity – are the reason for men’s problems (Kahn 2009: 220-221). According to Kahn (2009: 211), this rigidity makes men unable to adapt to changes in society. However, there are yet others who argue that, despite providing many men with power, patriarchy is the cause of men’s powerlessness and problems (ibid. 237), as are the entitlement and privilege that men are struggling to maintain and let go of due to various changes in gender relations, leading to anger and frustration (ibid. 258-259). Similarly, Horrocks (1995: 18) suggests that the fragility of masculine identities is indicated by their strenuousness. Rather than explore all possible causes for and consequences of this crisis, the aim here has been to demonstrate the varying and competing views that surround the debate about the topic of the crisis of masculinity. However, what can be stated with some certainty is that these problems, anxieties and disillusionment men struggle with can and have been represented in movies.

As Gates (2006: 45-50) points out, the turn of the millennium saw a number of “masculine crisis” movies, such as *Fight Club*, *Memento* and *American Psycho*, that could be read as proof that there certainly was a crisis of masculinity during this era. However, the popularity and number of such movies about men in crisis, are not necessarily evidence of an actual crisis. Even though movies can reflect developments that are taking place in society, there still is no direct and accurate parallel between film and reality. Rather, the emergence of “crisis movies” could be a consequence of Hollywood’s tendency to use popular topics to draw in audiences and the audience’s interest in the topic. However, these movies can act as a platform to explore questions concerning gender as well as the changing expectations and conceptions of masculinity. Hence, instead of seeing movies as representing masculinity in crisis, it has been argued that movies engage in dialogue with audiences about “the changing nature of masculinity rather than merely indulging in generic conflicts” (Shary 2013: 8) and about “the ceaseless challenges to and valorization of heteronormative ideals --- in a constantly changing society at specific points in time” (Grant 2011: 6).

Indeed, the concept of “masculinity in crisis” is not supported by everyone. It has been argued that masculinity has always been unstable and that referring to a “crisis” would imply that there has been “a once stable, coherent, unified masculinity” prior to this crisis (Bainbridge & Yates 2005: 303; Rehling 2009: 2). After all, as masculinity is not “a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals” (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 836), but rather fluid and changing in nature, the focus should be on the plurality of masculinities instead (ibid. 846). In addition, by talking of a crisis, the current situation is contrasted with some form of “traditional” or “conventional” masculinity that is in conflict with various changes in society and the gender order (Morgan 2006: 116). Thus, a state of crisis is seen by many as a permanent characteristic of masculinity, rather than an exception (Lahti 1994: 219).

Connell (1995: 84) presents another counter-argument against the crisis of masculinity by arguing that masculinity is “a configuration of practice *within* a system of gender relations” and that one cannot speak of “the crisis of a configuration”, but of “its disruption or its transformation” instead. However, according to Connell, instead of the crisis of masculinity, it is the entire gender order as a whole that can be said to be in crisis and refers to its “crisis tendencies”: “Such crisis tendencies will always implicate masculinities, though not necessarily by disrupting them” (ibid.). These crisis tendencies can manifest themselves as attempts at emphasising and restoring forms of dominant masculinity. Connell gives examples of the Rambo -movies and “the gun cult” that emerged as a response to movements such as Women’s Liberation as well as the defeat suffered by the United States in Vietnam. Similarly, at different times during the 20th century, national crises and trauma have had an emasculating effect and were followed by periods ‘remasculinsation’ (Walsh 2010: 9).

Whether or not one can speak of a “crisis”, the instability of masculinity and anxieties of men are represented in movies and are a common theme in contemporary cinema. In addition, movies work as a platform to renegotiate masculinity and challenge some older rigid forms of being a man, which can be seen in the way more traditional depictions of male characters are replaced by alternative masculinities (Bainbridge & Yates 2005: 302-307). Whereas in the 1980s Hollywood movies focused on externality and spectacle in the form of muscular (white) male bodies, action and explosions, movies of the 90s focused more on male characters’ internal struggles rather than their physical abilities (Jeffords 1993: 245). In a similar manner, Gates (2006: 41) notes how the typical hypermasculine muscled action hero of the 80s gave way to more ‘positive’ masculinities during the late 90s. These characters, who according to Gates were a “reaction to changing social conceptions of masculinity”, could instead be “passive,

boyish, spectacular, and more driven by brains than brawn” (ibid.). This development also coincided with a decrease in the emphasis on physical differences between men and women. In addition, Bainbridge and Yates (2005: 313) write about how “[c]ontemporary cinematic representations of masculinity shift along a continuum”, with static and familiar representations of masculinity “endlessly repeating familiar patterns and tropes” on one end and new, more creative as well as fluid masculinities in transition at the other end. These new alternative forms of masculinity can challenge the older ones, making masculinity “increasingly subject to renegotiation” while “popular cinema provides one space in which such renegotiations take place” (ibid.). However, in contemporary cinema, there is potential for both of these two to occur.

3.3. Hegemonic masculinity

Another important aspect when discussing masculinities, and one I argue to be very much related to the previously introduced crisis, is the concept of hegemonic masculinity, that recognizes that there are multiple types of masculinities and that they are related to each other in a hierarchical order. As argued especially by R. W. Connell, hegemonic masculinity refers to the hegemony of a dominant masculinity that subordinates other masculinities as well as femininities, resulting in a hierarchy. However, hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed type, but it is instead specific to a culture and is a “historically mobile relation”, meaning that the type of dominant masculinity changes over time and across cultures (Connell 1995: 76-77; Sipilä 1994: 19-21). In fact, hegemonic masculinity can change when it is challenged by other masculinities that replace the dominant one, possibly leading to the hegemony of “more humane, less oppressive, means of being a man” (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 833). This kind of development is important because hegemonic masculinity is a “cultural burden” on men and requires men to prove their masculinity and manhood in different ways, possibly leading to various issues such as health problems, suicide and violence (Sipilä 1994: 22). However, hegemonic masculinity is detrimental not only to men but also women, as the goal of hegemonic masculinity is to reinforce the system of patriarchy (Kahn 2009: 30-32), which generally refers to a social system dominated by men and one that prioritises men as well as aspects associated with manhood (ibid. 23).

Connell’s (1995: 76-81) hierarchy of masculinities includes dominant, complicit, marginalised and subordinated masculinities. However, these should be seen “as positions in

relation to one another” rather than as “personality types” (Levy 2007: 253). Dominant masculinities are the “idealized and socially expected ways of being male” and are embodied, for example by those in possession of wealth and power (Kahn 2009, 32-33). Many men aspire to reach the form of masculinity that is dominant in their culture even though they do not meet the requirements to do so, for example by having the wrong colour of skin or not meeting the physical requirements (ibid. 34), and despite the fact that “hegemonic masculinity does not necessarily translate into a satisfying experience of life“ (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 852). Although dominant masculinity can embody itself in an actual person, such as actors, the model of hegemonic masculinity does not have to be based in reality and is often depicted in media and other cultural products, for example by characters in a movie (Connell 1995: 77; Jokinen 2010: 131-132). Despite being out of reach for most men, hegemonic masculinity embodies “the currently most honored way of being a man”, thus being normative but not normal (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 832). Still, many men with great social power are not necessarily the embodiments of hegemonic masculinity, as other aspects can prevent them from acquiring the hegemonic status (ibid. 838).

Even though all men are not able to meet the requirements of the desired form of masculinity, they can still benefit from hegemonic masculinity as it enforces patriarchy and subordinates women. This refers to complicit masculinity as people in this position still reap the benefits of hegemonic masculinity despite not being the ones in the dominant position (Connell 1995: 79-80). Men who are complicit in this way, as a result of their actions, gain advantages that are based on their gender, such as better wages than women. This kind of complicit behaviour is often not conscious and even most women support hegemonic masculinity even though it can affect them negatively (Jokinen 2010: 132). However, hegemonic masculinity does not necessarily stand out as a clearly separate form but, instead, there can be some overlap between hegemonic and complicit masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 839).

As hegemonic masculinity involves the subordination of other groups, the hierarchy includes also what are called subordinated masculinities. Connell (1995: 78-79) emphasises “the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men” in the contemporary European and American society. This does not involve only the stigmatisation of homosexuality and being gay, but actual material consequences that are manifested in many forms such as violence, oppression and discrimination. In a system of hegemonic masculinity, homosexuality as well as other forms of subordinated masculinities, are likened to being

feminine. Men who fall into this category can be seen as unmanly and not men, for example because they express themselves in a way that is rejected by the hegemonic forms of masculinity. Finally, marginalised masculinities include, for example men belonging to certain ethnic, religious or racial groups that are left outside of the dominant culture (Kahn 2009: 36-37). For Connell (1995: 80-81), this means “the relations between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups” but also between subordinated masculinities. In addition, according to Connell (ibid.), “[m]arginalization is always relative to the *authorization* of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group”.

Although the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been highly influential, and one I argue to be relevant for the present study as well, it has also attracted some criticism. These criticisms are addressed by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) in their article *Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking The Concept*, where the two authors re-evaluate and reformulate the concept to answer some of its criticisms. Some of the criticisms of the concept introduced in the article include, for example the ambiguity of hegemonic masculinity and who actually represents it, that the concept is reduced to only the negative aspects of masculinity and also the concept’s shortcomings to properly address the masculine subject and patterns of gender relations. In their response, Connell and Messerschmidt reformulate aspects of the concept by suggesting the incorporation of “a more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy” (ibid. 848); recognition of local, regional and global masculinities; theorisation of the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity as well as consideration of contradictory and competing dynamics among masculinities that can possibly lead to change and ‘positive’ hegemonic masculinity. In addition, they reject two of the concepts features entirely, those being some of the concept’s earlier tendencies to theorise masculinities in terms of fixed character types or collections of traits as well as the overly simplistic model of social relations regarding hegemonic masculinities, including women’s position in relation to hegemonic masculinity.

To summarise, the concept of hegemonic masculinity allows one to perceive the plurality of masculinities, their place in a hierarchy as well as how different masculinities are unequally valued and privileged in society. The concept also shows how dominant masculinity can be contested, leading to the reconstruction and change of hegemonic masculinity over time. By approaching masculinities as varying across different contexts and not as static, the concept allows this thesis to explore masculinities across cultures and without falling to essentialist and over-simplified claims regarding men and masculinity. Although the ambiguity of hegemonic masculinity has been named as one of its weaknesses and has led to ‘incorrect’ applications and

usages of the concept, this ambiguity also allows it to be applied in new contexts and fields (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 853-854), thus providing this thesis a useful tool for analysing masculinities in the context of Nordic cinema and its Hollywood remakes.

3.4. Cinematic representations of masculinity

Because this thesis is interested in the way a certain group of people (i.e. men) are depicted in movies, the analysis and discussion are inevitably concerned with representations. As Richard Dyer (1993: 1-3) argues, representations affect the way social groups are treated in life, how people belonging in these groups perceive themselves and how they are seen by others. Representations are also culture-specific and do not have a single interpretation as people make sense of representations based on the cultural codes they have in their possession. Still, even though representations have real consequences for people, they are not reality. However, representations do not simply reflect the world in which we live but are involved in constituting it (Hall 1997: 5-6).

One reason that makes analysing representations of men interesting is that, according to Dyer (1993: 4), traditionally representations of those in power (such as heterosexual white men) have gained less attention, thus constituting these groups as the human norm. By bringing attention to aspects of masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality, Dyer speaks of making “normality strange, that is, visible and specific” (ibid.). As white heterosexual men dominate screen-time and are proportionately over-represented in contemporary popular cinema, their representations in movies should be analysed in more detail in order to “shatter the illusion that normative masculinity is a seamless identity” and contest them as the human norm (Rehling 2009: 2-3). Similarly, Kimmel (2005: 3-5) writes of masculinity as a sort of default and men as the “invisible gender” because of their privilege. He argues that when one is privileged by, for example their gender or colour of skin, this aspect of themselves becomes invisible to them. Because of this, I argue that understanding how men and masculinity are represented, for example in movies, is important for making visible inequality between different groups (including different groups of men) as well as imbalances in power.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity discussed above is relevant for studying representations of masculinity in movies as Hollywood has tended to be interested in the depiction of exemplary masculinities. Indeed, as Connell (1995: 213-214) argues, culture is

important for producing exemplary masculinities in order to maintain the hegemony, for example by depicting masculine heroes for the purposes of military recruitment. However, as already discussed above, these depictions can be far from reality. Culture is not used only for the (re)production of these desirable forms that men should aspire to but also to deny those who do not meet the required standards of manhood. This kind of “promotion of exemplary masculinities” can be one possible response to crisis tendencies in the gender order, according to Connell (*ibid.*). Although the focus here will be on movies, they are far from being the only possible avenue for the reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity. However, this does not mean that all movies and Hollywood productions are made with this intention.

Similar to the exemplary masculinities discussed by Connell, Roger Horrocks (1995: 16-18) writes of ‘myths’ – types of “collective fantasies” – that are involved in the process where gender is learned as people absorb sets of “complex interlocking unconscious myths about men and women, how they should behave, think, feel, dress, work, make love, speak, and so on”. He continues that masculinity needs to be maintained for it to persist and, as a consequence, myths about masculinity reward conformity for adhering to these myths while punishing for transgression. Gender, according to Horrocks, “is embodied in various myths, which teach, warn, punish and reward” (*ibid.* 20). Involved in mythical narratives are exemplary icons (Horrocks names Clint Eastwood as one) who have transcended everyday reality and are associated with numerous “emblematic meanings”. These icons can be real people or fictive ones, such as actors and the characters they play (*ibid.* 17).

In reference to Theresa de Lauretis, Järviluoma, Moisala and Vilkkö (2003: 6) explain that, in Western countries, representations of gender are products of ‘technologies of gender’, including cinema, and that “[t]he impact of these mediated images of gender on people's gender beliefs and gender performance cannot be underestimated”. Thus, focusing on the ways gender is represented and produced in mass culture, including cinema, is of importance as the way people are depicted, for example in movies, affects the way they are generally perceived by others and themselves. This in turn affects the types of representations produced of these groups, such as men and women, as representations are involved in changing perceptions of certain groups while also revealing how these views can change in time (Paasonen 2010: 45-46). Even though movies are only one medium where representations of gender are produced and presented, the effects of these representations do matter and should be critically evaluated. This is important also in the case of masculinity, especially because “[m]ass culture generally assumes there is a fixed true masculinity” (Connell 1995: 45).

Yet, the representations of masculinity in media can be contradictory and, regarding movies, “almost every historical moment of cinema purports conflicting images of masculinity” (Gates 2006: 49). One example of the varying representations of masculinity, according to McKay, Mikosza, & Hutchins (2005: 13-16), is the emergence of the ‘new man’ and ‘new lad’ in the 1990s, both of which appeared in numerous lifestyle magazines targeted at men. Much like the ‘softer’ male image that became more popular in the 90s, the new man was depicted as involved in childcare and other activities that were traditionally associated more often with women. After this, as a response to the new man especially in the UK and Australia, the new lad became a popular model of masculinity targeted at men in the media. The new lad exhibited behaviour of ‘traditional’ forms of masculinity, such as drinking, risk taking and many misogynistic activities. However, this kind of variation of even contradictory masculinities in the media shows that hegemonic masculinity has become less culturally secure, even though it still holds power regardless of other challenging representations of men. Similarly, Grant (2011: 11) point to the instability and varying nature of masculinity, at least in American cinema, and how it “is an always-shifting concept, revised and reconstituted by the discourses of popular culture, including movies, as the needs of the historical moment require”.

Referring to Judith Butler’s idea of performativity and performing gender, Gates (2006: 37) argues that “[c]inema offers a constructed, performed, and ideal masculinity while promising its audiences that it is a real and attainable one”. Despite being mostly fictional, characters of a movie are played by real human beings which makes the boundary between reality and fiction ambiguous for the viewer. This real-life actor then embodies a certain masculine image through his performance of a character in a movie. This, Gates argues, affects the viewer and their conception of masculinity, because cultural objects can influence audiences’ attitudes and perceptions. Both women and men are affected by this as the male character exhibited on screen is “to be looked at as an ideal of masculinity for heterosexual women to desire and heterosexual men to want to emulate” (ibid. 39).

All of this is not to suggest that all representations of men and depictions of masculinity in the media are made with the intention of reinforcing more harmful dominant masculinities and encouraging toxic behaviour by men. However, by critically analysing masculinities in the media, some of the more nefarious, as well as positive, masculine representations could be revealed. In addition, representations of masculinity can be seen as the ‘natural’ ways of being male, thus conditioning people to certain types of behaviour and ideas concerning masculinity (Kahn 2009: 106). Although popular media’s and culture’s effect on people’s perception of

gender should be considered, they should not be seen as omnipotent in shaping audiences' views and behaviour. For example, Roger Horrocks (1995: 29) points to audiences' agency in interpreting texts (such as movies) and their possibility "to actively subvert or oppose the text's dominant reading", leading to numerous, even contradictory interpretations made by individuals.

3.5. Conclusion

This section has introduced various aspects of masculinity and its study in the context of movies. By providing background on prior work on the topic, this section has placed the thesis in the field of film studies as well as men's studies. In addition, by discussing hegemonic masculinity and the crisis of masculinity, this section has given some of the most central tools that will be used in the analysis and discussion of the chosen movies and their depictions and representations of masculinities. The criticisms faced by these concepts were also discussed and addressed in order to acknowledge that the subject of masculinities is not simple or without its debates and contradictions. Thus, with a better understanding of the wide field of men's studies and masculinities as well as the study of masculinity in cinema, the thesis is able to proceed to the aims, research questions, data and methods of the analysis.

4. Set-up of the present study

This section will first begin by introducing this thesis' aims and goals as well as the most central concepts and themes discussed in later sections. This is followed by the specification of the research questions that will guide the selected films' analysis and discussion that follows. Then, the chosen movies, as well as why and how they were chosen, are discussed, followed by a brief description of the movies' plots and some details of their production. Finally, the methods of analysis are introduced and their relevance and appropriateness for this thesis are explained. As will be discussed in section 4.3., there are no pre-existing established frameworks for this kind of study, and thus the aim is to assemble the best and most appropriate tools for the kind of analysis this thesis is concerned with as well as convince the reader that the chosen methods are fit for this particular thesis and its aims.

4.1. Aims and research questions

This study will focus on two movies made in the Nordic countries and the American remakes of both movies. When analysing the movies, my aim is to discover what kind of changes have been made, what has remained the same as well as what has been removed and added. My goal is not simply to list these things, but instead to analyse their significance to masculinity, as it is depicted in the movies, rather than to make surface-level observations. Instead of assessing the remake's fidelity to the original movie and evaluating the movie's success as an adaptation, the purpose of this thesis is rather to explain the effects that faithfulness or unfaithfulness (for example in the form of changes) to the original may have, again, regarding masculinity. Both movies (i.e. the original and the remake) are analysed as representing masculinities of the culture they are set and produced in. However, by also comparing the two movies with each other, the aim is to highlight differences between the cultures of production and to show aspects of masculinity that are unique to either culture, according to the representations of the analysed movies. Thus, the American remake's status as an adaptation will be acknowledged if and when necessary, and both movies are analysed as being located and produced in a specific cultural environment. By studying both versions of a movie, the goal is to understand the type of masculinities that are present in that culture, how they are valued and how they relate to each other and the culture as a whole. This will be accomplished by using the concepts introduced

earlier, most importantly hegemonic masculinity and the crisis of masculinity as well as the broader understanding of remakes, remaking practices and Nordic cinema.

Because there does not seem to be a consensus regarding the ‘crisis’ of masculinity, as discussed above, a definition for it as used in this thesis is required. Based on the discussion surrounding the topic, I will argue that the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and the ‘crisis’ of masculinity are related to each other in the way that this ‘crisis’ is a consequence of different masculinities trying to come to terms with the changes in hegemony in a patriarchal society. Certain dominant masculinities are attempting to maintain their hegemony and dominance against perceived threats to their position, such as the various (possibly changing) expectations of manhood as well as changes in gender relations, and this may lead to anxieties and problematic behaviour in men. As hegemony suggests, there is some kind of hierarchy and the crisis can manifest in the ways that other non-dominant masculinities lower in this hierarchy will struggle to gain recognition and possibly challenge the currently dominant form of masculinity or alternatively comply with maintaining the hegemonic position of some other form. However, I would question the idea that all men’s problems and all questionable behaviour exhibited by men could be explained solely by their masculinity as one’s gender does not override other aspects of their identity, such as ethnicity, nationality, class and age, to name a few. After all, there are other aspects of one’s identity than his/her gender alone. Thus, one aim of this thesis is to inspect if the male characters’ crises could be related to masculinity or if there is something else going on.

The following research questions will guide the processes of analysing and discussing the chosen movies:

1. How do the movies represent masculinity in its various forms as well as the crisis of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity?
2. What differences as well as similarities can be found between the original and the remake and what kind of significance they have for the representation of masculinity in each cultural context?

4.2. Data

As discussed in section 2.3., there are very few American remakes based on Nordic movies (especially larger Hollywood productions), and thus the number of possible movies for this

study was quite small. Out of this small corpus of potential movies, the topic of masculinity emerged as a recurring motif, thus leading it to be the point of interest for this thesis. There were a few potential movies to be analysed here, but the scope of this thesis limited the number of movies to four, including both the original Nordic movies and their American remakes. The movies chosen for analysis are a Norwegian movie titled *Kraftidioten* (2014) and its American remake *Cold Pursuit* (2019) as well as Danish movie titled *Brødre* (2004) and its American remake *Brothers* (2009).

Other potential movies included the Swedish films *Män Som Hatar Kvinnor* (2009), remade as *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* (2011) and *Turist* (2014), remade as *Downhill* (2020). The former of these two, based on the popular series of books by Stieg Larsson, was excluded as much attention has already been paid to the books and this pair of movies. For example, a book edited by Donna King and Carrie Lee Smith (2012) already focuses on the books as well as the cinematic adaptations, discussing them from the point of view of gender and feminism. Meanwhile, *Turist* and *Downhill* were left out of the study as the American remake was still unavailable at the moment of writing.

4.3.1. *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*

The Norwegian film *Kraftidioten* and its American remake *Cold Pursuit*, follow a plough truck driver, called Nils Dickman in the original and Nels Coxman in the remake, who is awarded as the citizen of the year by his community where he lives with his wife and son. However, his son is killed by a local drug gang when the boy's friend steals cocaine from the gang. Although the other man escapes, the main character's son is killed and his death is made to look like an overdose. When the police do not do anything about his death, Nils/Nels becomes depressed and is close to killing himself when his son's friend approaches him and tells the truth about his son's death. Because he does not get help from others, Nils/Nels decides to hunt down the criminals himself and begins to kill the gangsters one by one while trying to find out who is in charge of the gang. While Nils/Nels is secretly killing the criminals, his wife becomes distant and eventually leaves him.

Nils/Nels gets his estranged brother involved in his plan to get revenge and is advised by him to hire an assassin who then betrays him and reveals Nils/Nels' last name to the villain. However, the criminals mistake Nils/Nels for his brother, who used to work for the villain's

father, and kill the brother instead. Along the way, the criminals mistakenly think that their members are being killed by a rival gang and, in revenge, kill one of the other gang's members, which ignites a war between them. This in turn enrages the leader of the rival gang as one of his kin is killed and he promises to get revenge on the main villain and his goons. During all this, the main villain is in the middle of divorcing his wife and is fighting for the custody of his son, whom Nils/Nels abducts in order to lure out the criminal boss and kill him. The film culminates in a big gun fight between the two gangs that kills all of the criminals, except the rival gang's old patriarchal leader. The film ends as Nils/Nels and the other gang's leader drive into the sunset in Nils/Nels' plough truck, having got their revenge on the film's main villain.

The original Norwegian movie (titled *In Order of Disappearance* in English but referred to with its original title here) was released in 2014 and was directed by Hans Petter Moland and written by Kim Fupz Aakeson. The film was remade in 2019 as *Cold Pursuit* and was also directed Moland; its script was written by Frank Baldwin. The Norwegian setting of the original movie is relocated to Colorado in the American remake. Although both movies have been labelled as thriller, action and crime movies, *Kraftidioten* is also referred to as a (dark) comedy, whereas this label is not used of the remake⁴. As of the moment of writing, there is no prior research done on either of the two movies.

4.3.1. *Brødre* and *Brothers*

The Danish film *Brødre*, which was remade as *Brothers* in the United States, tells the story of a man, called Michael in *Brødre* and Sam in *Brothers*, who works for the military and leaves to serve in Afghanistan. Before leaving, he and his family reunite with his brother Jannik/Tommy who is released from prison after assaulting a bank employee. Soon after arriving in Afghanistan, Michael/Sam's helicopter is shot down and he is assumed to be dead. Back in Denmark, his wife Sarah/Grace is left alone with their two daughters and a funeral for Michael/Sam is arranged. Meanwhile, Jannik/Tommy becomes close with his brother's wife and children while trying to get his life on track.

⁴ The original Norwegian film's physical release labels the film as "comedy, action, crime", while the remake's genres are "action, drama, thriller". This slight 'change' in genre, I argue, is due to the remake's more exaggerated characters and less realistic and gritty aesthetic, as some of the original film's dark humour is derived from the juxtaposition of outrageous violence and actions by characters with the film's realistic look and style.

At the same time in Afghanistan, Michael/Sam is alive and is being held captive with another soldier by the Afghan terrorists who, after some months of captivity, force Michael/Sam to beat the other soldier to death with a pipe. Soon after this incident, Michael/Sam is rescued and returns home to his family. However, he has been traumatised by his experience and is unable to confess what he had done to the other soldier while in captivity. His changed behaviour concerns the others and he also believes that his wife has been unfaithful to him with his brother. Finally, the tension within the family grows, culminating in Michael/Sam destroying the family's kitchen that was renovated by Jannik/Tommy and his friends. Jannik/Tommy comes to calm down his brother but is attacked by him instead. The police arrive to arrest the enraged Michael/Sam, who then threatens them with a gun and demands to be shot by the police. His brother manages to calm him, and Michael/Sam is arrested by the police. At the end of the movie, Michael/Sam is visited in prison by his wife and he begins to cry, confessing to his wife that he killed the other soldier in Afghanistan.

The Danish original (also with the English title *Brothers*) was released in 2004, and it was directed by Susanne Bier. Bier also co-wrote the film with writer Anders Thomas Jensen. The American remake titled *Brothers* was released in 2009 and was directed by the Irish director Jim Sheridan and written by David Benioff. The setting of the Danish film is changed to an American small town, but both movies' main characters leave for Afghanistan, Michael for the International Security Assistance Force and Sam for the US Marines. There has been some prior academic research focusing on and comparing the two movies from the point of view of cultural adaptation (Gemzøe 2013), national identity (Shriver-Rice 2011) and the psychological effects of war in the remake (Shriver-Rice 2013). These three studies will be referred to during the analysis and discussion when necessary.

4.3. Methods of analysis

The approach chosen for this thesis is multidisciplinary. This is because in my analysis of the original movies and their remakes I wish to take into account different aspects of gender and cinema. Thus, in addition to adaptation and gender studies, this thesis will be concerned with film studies as well as film analysis regarding men and masculinities. This is done to gain a better understanding of the ways in which the movies represent gender, not just on the level of their narrative but also in the ways the visual form of the movies is involved in the processes of meaning making. Because popular cinema has tended to be interested in "the construction of

ideal images of femininity and masculinity”, this makes film studies “a logical perspective from which to address the question of masculinity in the contemporary era” (Gates 2006: 6). Although adaptations are independent works, they are also created and received in relation to earlier works that are always present in the background. This is why adaptation studies tend to be comparative studies (Hutcheon & O’Flynn 2013: 6). This kind of comparative studies can “look into how movies produced in different countries tackle certain topics” (Bucciferro 2018: 782). Thus, this comparative approach to analysing the movies concerned with here is an appropriate way to see how masculinity is represented in different cultures.

There are other possibilities that analysing movies offers for this research. Mikos (2013: 412) calls a film text an “instruction manual for the performance of meaning”, making it “possible to find the implied viewer in the textual structure of films”. Thus, by analysing the movies it is possible to gain a better understanding of the assumed audiences of these movies and how the movie constructs the viewer. Of course, the viewer cannot be assumed to be male, because, as Connell (1995: 230) notes, both men and women are “bearers of masculinity”⁵. Analysing with whom the viewer is supposed to identify in the movie could give an idea about the people being addressed with the movie and what kind of masculinity is being promoted as well as looked down upon. In addition, as products of mass media and arts can be used to “read” and interpret gender (Järviluoma, Moisala and Vilkkö 2003: 24), the use of film to analyse masculinity is an appropriate approach for this particular task.

While the reception of the movies will be taken into consideration in regards to gender, my analysis will not make assumptions about the audiences’ prior experiences with these movies, i.e. whether or not they are experiencing the adaptations *as adaptations* (Hutcheon & O’Flynn 2013: 6), whether they view the original Nordic movies as subjects of adaptation, or whether the viewer is completely unaware that the film is an adaptation. This aspect of adaptations, as well as their reception by audiences, is certainly fascinating and interesting for further research but unfortunately, for research economical reasons, it is outside the scope of the present study.

Some of the earlier discussions of masculinity have referred to the existence of some ‘traditional’ or ‘new’ masculinities. In addition, there are examples where masculinities have been divided into categories based on specific types of traits, roles or archetypes that are seen

⁵ This works the other way around as well because, as also argued by Connell (1995: 10), “femininity is always part of a man’s character”.

as universal to all men and that see masculinity as having some “true essence”, such as the ‘Archetypes for Masculine Energies’ model (Kahn 2009: 55). As different masculinities should not be seen simply as fixed character types, in order to “prevent the acknowledgment of multiple masculinities collapsing into a character typology” (Connell 1995: 75), my goal here is not to create such categories that will describe different manifestations of masculine characters in these movies. However, it might be useful to compare them to some widely recognised types of characters in cinema as well as the types of masculine traits that have been valued at different times in history. As the discussion in this thesis so far has already implied, this study does not assume such essentialist conceptions of masculinity, but sees masculinities as multiple and fluid in nature. While the movies’ characters may resemble some familiar kinds of characters or stereotypes, they should not be reduced to simple types that are defined by individual aspects of their personality and identity. Instead, this study aims to see the films’ most central characters as complex and more like real people rather than simple caricatures. Yet, I am expecting some characters to be more stereotypical and one dimensional than the more developed protagonists who are given more time on-screen and are given more depth than less important side characters. However, there is still the possibility for the movies to utilise various types and stereotypes, for example in the way certain characters are depicted.

As the analysis of film is lacking “a universal method of analysis” (Mikos 2013: 421), this thesis will not use any specific pre-existing framework in its analysis. Instead, this study will approach the movies with the means of textual analysis, as it is relevant for any study interested in the ways meaning is created by different ‘texts’ and aims to reveal the most likely interpretations of those texts (McKee 2003: 1). The word ‘text’ is not used here to refer only to written texts but rather to “something that we make meaning from”, such as a book, movie or a piece of clothing (ibid. 4). In addition to being a way to gather information about how others make sense of the world, McKee (2003: 1) describes textual analysis as “a methodology - a data-gathering process - for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live”. By adopting this method for analysing the movies, it is possible to find similarities and differences between different cultures’ sense making practices (ibid. 14), after all, different cultures make sense of reality in different ways (ibid. 4). Thus, using textual analysis is an appropriate method for this study in order to gain understanding of how masculinity is perceived and represented in two different cultures.

Because textual analyses include a close reading of a text, a small number of texts is required to gather a sufficient understanding (Lockyer 2008: 866). However, instead of focusing solely on the text that is being analysed, textual analysis requires also knowledge of the context in which the text was produced. Thus, to gain a better understanding of the analysed texts' explicit messages as well as their implicit subtexts, knowledge of the historical and cultural context is utilised during analysis whenever necessary. Looking at other connected texts and understanding the genre that is being analysed is also necessary in order to ensure a sufficient level of understanding (Hawkins 2017: 1775-1776). To summarise, in order to arrive at the most likely interpretation of the movies, I will be considering McKee's (2003) four categories of "relevant intertexts: the same ones that audiences have on hand when they interpret [a] text". These are, as borrowed from McKee:

1. Other texts in the series
2. The genre of the text
3. Intertexts about the text itself⁶
4. The wider public context in which a text is circulated.

(McKee 2003: 92-93)

This understanding of context allows me to explore the most likely interpretations of a given text in their context, while abandoning the idea of having a single correct reading of a text. In other words, there is no single real or correct interpretation and meaning to a text. This includes also the intended meaning by a text's creator (McKee 2003: 66-67). However, this does not mean that any interpretation is valid, as textual analysis requires evidence in order to claim that an interpretation of a text is a likely one (ibid. 70-71). Thus, this method of analysis is post-structuralist in nature (ibid. 9-13).

Because, according to McKee (2003: 76), one should analyse only the parts of a text that are most important and interesting in order to answer one's questions driving the analysis, only aspects of the movies that are in some way significant for the topic of masculinity are of interest here. In fact, McKee states that "[i]t's fine just to pick out the most interesting and relevant parts of a text for analysis: in fact, this is the correct approach for poststructuralist textual analysis" (ibid. 80).

⁶ Here McKee (2003: 97-98) uses the term 'intertext' to refer to "publicly circulated texts that are explicitly linked to the text" that is being analysed. In the case of this thesis, these could include other texts where the movies or other movies in their genres are discussed and interpreted by others.

I will argue that textual analysis gives the researcher room to navigate the analysis process and allows the discussion of things that emerge from the text that is being analysed, especially in the case of multimodal texts such as movies that allow meaning making through several modes. However, one should also acknowledge the limitations and drawbacks of the method. Because, textual analysis is based on assessing the most likely interpretations made in a specific context of a text produced in another context, the results of the analysis depend on the researcher, their ability to observe things in the text as well as the researcher's knowledge of the text, its context and whatever is being analysed within that text. Thus, when discussing the movies and results gained from them during the analysis, this thesis will provide evidence and arguments to justify the interpretations and, as a consequence, make convincing claims of the analysis' validity. This evidence can be extracted directly from the movies or from additional sources concerned with the topics discussed in this thesis. During certain points of the analysis, I will be using screenshots of the movies whenever the pictures can be used to elaborate on the analysis. This will be made in accordance with copyright and fair use laws, as the intent is to comment on the movies and cite them by using screenshots (e.g. "More information on fair use," 2020; Copyright Act 404/1961, 22 §).

Despite the absence of a specific method of research for analysing movies, Mikos (2013) provides a 14-step list that can function as the guide for the analytic research of film. This includes the following steps and will be used to guide the research process of this thesis in order to provide a systematic structure for analysing the chosen movies, and also to support the textual approach introduced above:

1. Development of a general cognitive purpose
2. Watching the visual material
3. Theoretical and historical reflection
4. Development of a concrete cognitive purpose
5. Development of questioning
6. Sampling of the material for analysis
7. Fixing of analytic tools
8. Collection of data
9. Description of data collection
10. Analysis of data – Inventory of the film components
11. Interpretation and contextualization of analysed data

12. Evaluation I – Assessment of the analysed and interpreted data
13. Evaluation II – Assessment of the results with the regard to the cognitive purpose and the operationalization
14. Presentation of the results.

(Mikos 2013: 419)

The movies are watched first to collect initial observations and to get a sense of the movies' themes and story. During the second viewing these observations are analysed further, while also writing what Bordwell, Thompson and Smith (2016: 87-88) call a 'plot segmentation'. In short, a plot segmentation means writing out each scene as well as smaller parts within different scenes into an outline, a kind of "architecture of the movie". Writing such segmentation, they argue, helps one to see the film's overall development as well as differences and similarities between parts of the film. This method will be helpful especially when comparing the original and its remake, as both the remake and the original will likely follow the same general story. The segmentations also help to compare the different movies with each other to find similarities and differences that are relevant for the analysis. The final third viewing focuses on smaller details of the movies and individual scenes that may be found to be integral for the analysis.

The movies studied in this thesis will be analysed by focusing on some of the concepts regarding masculinity that were introduced earlier. These include how hegemonic masculinity is made evident in the movies and their characters as well as how the male characters' anxieties or crises are depicted. As discussed above, these two are strongly connected. The analysis will also focus on any aspect of the movies that may shed some light on the representation of male (and female) characters. Jokinen (2000: 125-126) presents two approaches to studying representations of masculinity. The first one focuses on men and masculinity in a text, whereas the second approach, referred to as "critical" by Jokinen, aims to say something about the social reality and masculinities in a specific time and place, by asking what kind of effects the representations can have, what they tell about a culture and how they have been formed. This thesis adopts the latter approach but considers also the more concrete manifestations of men and masculinities in the movies.

The terms 'original' and 'remake' will be used when discussing the movies. However, this is not to make any assessment about the movies, their success or value as cinematic products. Neither will be assumed to be superior or more valuable due to their place of origin or order of production. This dichotomy between an original and a remake is made only for the

sake of convenience and clarity when referring to different movies. Similarly, despite there being disagreement about whether or not there is a crisis of masculinity, the term ‘crisis’ will be used here in the sense it was defined above. The purpose is not to take make definitive assertions about this debate, but instead the term is used to refer to the different ways masculinity may be renegotiated in and by the movies, as well as the ways men’s anxieties and problems are depicted in these movies. If indeed this ‘crisis’ is a characteristic of masculinity, these movies may be assumed to reflect how these crises manifest in the different cultures that are focused on here.

As was mentioned earlier, men are not the only ones “bearing masculinity”, because those who are biologically women may be masculine as well and identify as men. Similarly, in addition to women, men can have feminine characteristics and exhibit feminine behaviour while considering themselves to be a woman. Because of gender being a cultural construct (i.e. not dependent on one’s biological sex), assessing the gender of the films’ characters can be difficult if it is not explicitly stated in the films. Thus, even though one cannot make assumptions about someone’s gender only based on their physical appearance or behaviour, for the sake of convenience this thesis will assume that all of the movies’ characters represent the gender that their biological sex would (traditionally) suggest. Making such assumptions in real life might not be appropriate but in order to avoid having to address this aspect of the characters later on, while avoiding unnecessary complexity of the analysis, I will make these assumptions about the movies’ characters.

In order to provide some structure for the analysis of the movies, a division of “sites of masculinity” presented by Kirkham and Thumin (1993: 11) will be used. These sites introduced by them will be used to guide the analysis and interpretation of the movies, and after the analysis, what they entail will be re-evaluated and appropriated for the purposes of the discussion and presentation of results. In the introduction to the seminal collection of texts about masculinity in film, *You Tarzan: Masculinity, Movies and Men* edited by Kirkham and Thumin, they distinguish between four different sites of masculinity that the authors have observed emerging in the writings surrounding masculinity and movies.

It is at these sites that various traits of masculinity are signalled; these may be qualities either asserted or assumed in the signifiers of themes quite consciously concerned with an interrogation of masculinity. Broadly these sites are *the body*, *action*, *the external world* and *the internal world*. (Kirkham & Thumin 1993: 11)

The *body* refers to the “material construction” of male characters such as the “visual representation of the male”, the way they dress as well as the actor’s presence and star persona. The male body in *action* includes violence, aggression, skill and endurance and is referred to the male characters’ “filmic construction” of *doing*. These two, body and action, are “both sites where assumptions about masculinity are made manifest”. *The external world* concerns issues of power and the interaction of male characters in regard to each other as well as the “conventions and institutions against which [the male characters] operate”, including the position of men as opposed to ‘the other’. Finally, *the internal world* refers to the internal experience of being male (ibid. 11-12). Although Kirkham and Thumin do not use the word ‘crisis’ (rather they speak of anxieties), this fourth site of masculinity is the one concerned with this issue, including questions about what it means to be a man and how these questions and anxieties about masculinity manifest in the movies (ibid. 22-26). Because as viewers we cannot access the male characters’ thoughts directly, aspects of the internal world will manifest themselves through visible and auditory elements of the movies and need to be interpreted to access these issues regarding masculinity (ibid. 12).

To summarise this section, the analysis will be exploring how masculinity is represented in the chosen movies and what these movies tell about masculinity in the cultures of their production. The chosen approach for this is (post-structural) textual analysis that focuses on interpreting the movies by utilising information about the various levels of context of the movies as well as the researcher’s knowledge about them and the context surrounding them. Central to this analysis are concept regarding masculinity (especially hegemonic masculinity and the crisis of masculinity) and adaptations introduced earlier. In addition to men’s studies and adaptation studies, the analysis will be guided by film studies in general. The analysis will also focus on the four sites of masculinity discussed by Kirkham and Thumin (1993), using these sites to gain a better understanding of these specific aspects of masculinity in the chosen movies.

5. Analysis: Masculinity in *Brødre*, *Brothers*, *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*

In the following section, the results of the analysis are presented by comparing the original Nordic movies with their American remakes, while also making comparisons between the films produced in the same cultural context. Any aspects discovered during the close reading of these movies that are relevant for the research questions will be addressed and some individual scenes will be analysed in more detail to elaborate the observations. The discussion following this analysis brings together all the findings arising from the analysis of the four movies and discusses the significance of these findings for the different ways masculinity is represented. The analysis will begin with the hypothesis that different versions of the analysed movies will differ in some ways because, in addition to repetition, differences between a source text and its adaptation are inevitable (Hutcheon & O’Flynn 2013: 114). This is because, as various aspects of the original, such as language and setting, may be changed while others, for example the basic narrative structure and characters, are retained. However, there is also the expectation that some similarities and equivalences between the movies will occur as well. These are also analysed and discussed when they are relevant for the issue at hand.

The results of the analysis will be divided into four categories based on the four sites of masculinity that were broadly introduced earlier. After the analysis, these sites will be divided further into smaller themes based on different themes that emerge from the analysed movies. This further division is devised in a way that minimises overlap between the four categories and the smaller themes within them. Each of the following sections begins with a brief introduction and definition of the themes that are going to be discussed and ends with a conclusion that collects the main points regarding the site of masculinity in question as it manifests itself in the movies.

5.1. The Body: masculinity personified

According to Mikos (2013: 416), film characters and actors have great importance in representations as these “film figures” are used in society to determine roles as well as concepts of identity. In addition, as Jokinen (2000: 120) points out, “fictional men represent real men” and thus influence people’s perception of what men are or can be like. Because of this effect that fictional characters can have, it is important to consider what kind of characters are presented on-screen in the four analysed movies. The most visible and concrete manifestation

of masculinity in movies comes in the form of the characters' bodies. As was discussed earlier, writing about masculinity in movies has focused heavily on men's physical representations. However, because the physical aspect of being a man or a woman is integral to "the cultural interpretation of gender" (Connell 1995: 52), it is necessary to also consider what the films' characters look like, how they dress and what kind of bodies they inhabit. These things, in addition to the actors embodying the characters on-screen, can tell viewers a great deal about the films' characters. Thus, in addition to the physical aspects of the characters, this section also discusses the actors who have been chosen to play them. This section also aims to introduce the main characters in more detail to make the following analysis easier to follow for the reader.

Considering the actors as well is crucial for understanding and interpreting characters due to the "intertextual baggage" (Gabbard 2001: 16) the actors carry with them from their real-life persona as well as previous roles. The use of certain actors, I argue, helps the filmmakers easily communicate things about the characters as audiences will make assumptions based on their prior experiences with the people in the movie (in case they are familiar with them already). Although all viewers will not have the same reaction to recognising the films' actors through their real-life personae and other characters played by them, according to Boyle and Braton (2012: 477), this kind of intertextuality has become a part of action adventure films produced in Hollywood. This is due to the actors' development into celebrities; thus characteristics associated with them will seep their way into textual meanings derived from the movies. The actors who embody a character have also an effect on the masculinity of the characters (and the films in general) because, as argued by Gates (2006: 22), "certain stars carry with them specific associations of masculinity".

5.1.1. Masculinity mediated by actors and characters

Out of these four movies, the most interesting actor to discuss, regarding masculinity, is Liam Neeson who plays Nels Coxman in *Cold Pursuit* (Image 1). Neeson has established himself as an older action star in several roles during the decade prior to the release of *Cold Pursuit*, most notably in movies such as the *Taken*-trilogy (2008, 2012, 2014), *Non-Stop* (2014), *A Walk Among the Tombstones* (2014), *Run All Night* (2015) and *The Commuter* (2018) among others. In these roles, Neeson often plays an ageing (former) police officer, a father, an alcoholic or a combination of the above. In many ways, his character in *Cold Pursuit* follows the type of trend seen in many of his movies made during the late 2000s and 2010s. The resurgence of Neeson

as an action star in his 60s has been explained by Hollywood cinema's saturation with younger men and the lack of older men like him who represent a 'truer' masculine form than his younger counterparts (Boyle & Braton 2012: 483). One could argue that he has been typecast for the role of Nels Coxman, a rugged and quiet man in search for revenge. If the audiences are familiar with Neeson and his earlier roles, they will associate his character in *Cold Pursuit* with his other movies. Thus, his character's change from a kind but quiet husband and father into a merciless avenger would not seem too improbable if the viewer is used to seeing him in other violent roles playing similar characters and knows to expect this kind of character to be played by him.

The character of Nils Dickman is played by the Swedish actor Stellan Skarsgård (Image 2) in the original Norwegian movie. Compared to his American counterpart, Skarsgård's portrayal of the character is more ordinary and 'every-man-like' as his appearance and stature do not adhere to the image of an action hero unlike the tougher and rugged Neeson. Compared to Liam Neeson, Skarsgård's appearance lends itself better for the Norwegian film's more comedic tone when the grumpy yet pleasant family man becomes a ruthless killer, juxtaposing the character's appearance with his actions. In fact, his portrayal of the character of Nils resembles "the emotionally suppressed blue collar worker" (Hjort & Lindqvist 2016: 3) stereotype of the Nordic countries. Still, both characters differ from the generic action film tough guy character and remind one more of the quiet and older (but still manly) characters of some Westerns, such as ones played by Clint Eastwood. Thus, Neeson and Skarsgård, as well as the characters played by them, subvert the image of a masculine, youthful and well-built action movie hero with their depictions of aged and more rugged men.



Image 1. Nels (Liam Neeson) in *Cold Pursuit*.



Image 2. Nils (Stellan Skarsgård) in *Kraftidioten*.

The aforementioned "intertextual baggage" of an actor can have a great effect on the viewer also regarding the character of Papa, the old patriarchal leader of the Serbian gang in *Kraftidioten*, as he is played by Bruno Ganz. The effect on the viewer is due to his previous and highly acclaimed role as Adolf Hitler in the German film *Der Untergang* (*Downfall*). If the viewers recognise him and associate his character with Hitler, this is going to have a significant

effect on their identification with and attitudes towards the character of Papa. In *Kraftidioten*, Papa, whose main motivation is getting revenge on the film's main villain for killing one of his family's men, is depicted as old and somewhat fragile yet threatening and dangerous. For most of the movie his character seems to emulate that of Marlon Brando's Don Vito Corleone in *The Godfather* as he quietly gives out orders to the other men who view him as a fatherly figure. The corresponding character in *Cold Pursuit*, White Bull played by Tom Jackson, is instead a leader of a gang of Native Americans belonging to the Ute tribe. He serves a similar function in the narrative as Papa, as an elderly and wise father figure for the other men. However, instead of fragile and quiet, his character is more imposing and active. For example, in a scene where the criminal family says its goodbyes to a dead relative, Papa whispers into another man's ear to give a speech while White Bull stands above the others and yells out his speech, "Blood for blood. Son for son", telling the others that they will get revenge on their dead son.

The two elderly men's hatred is directed at the films' villains, Ole Forsby (better known as 'The Count') in *Kraftidioten* where he is played by Pål Sverre Hagen (Image 3), and Trevor Calcote (or 'Viking') played by Tom Bateman in *Cold Pursuit* (Image 4). In both movies, he is a sophisticated and wealthy businessman, as well as the leader of a criminal enterprise, who lives in a house filled with design furniture and modern art. In the American version his character is similar to that of the sadistic and violent yuppie white-collar worker Patrick Bateman of the film *American Psycho* as both characters hide their violent and sadistic nature behind their groomed appearance. In the original Norwegian film, Viking is depicted as more feminine in appearance and behaviour than The Count and is depicted as a more comedic character. For example, when The Count gets upset, his anger comes off as that of a child who is not given what he wants, whereas Viking's anger is more threatening.



Image 3. The Count (Pål Sverre Hagen) in *Kraftidioten*.



Image 4. Viking (Tom Bateman) in *Cold Pursuit*.

Although he goes through a similar character arc, the character of Michael is changed to some extent in the American remake of the Danish film *Brødre*. In the original film, Michael, played by Ulrich Thomsen, is fairly non-descript in his appearance and personality. He has the

authority of a military personnel but is depicted as a loving father and husband as well. Meanwhile, in the American remake, the actor portraying the same character is Tobey Maguire who, prior to the release of *Brothers*, was well-known for playing the main character of the three *Spiderman* films directed by Sam Raimi. Although he is also depicted as a good father and a husband, his appearance and presence are lacking the authority of his Danish counterpart as Sam is physically more frail and pale than Michael, even before his captivity and traumatic experiences in Afghanistan.

Michael's brother Jannik, played by Nikolaj Lie Kaas in *Brødre*, also differs in appearance from Jake Gyllenhaal's character of Tommy in the remake. Even though the remake depicts Tommy as an ex-criminal and a tough guy with a leather jacket and tattoos, his facial features are much softer and feminine than those of Jannik who, along with his brother, looks much more rugged and mature than his American version. Overall, the most significant changes made to the two brothers seem to regard their appearance as the Danish film's Michael and Jannik are depicted as more ordinary-looking and mature than the remake's Sam and Tommy (Images 5 and 6). Thus, the two characters *Brødre* (in fact all characters of the movie) look more authentic and like real people when compared to the American remake. The realism is emphasised with the film's grainy quality and documentary-like style of filmmaking, reminiscent of the Danish Dogme 95 filmmaking movement⁷.



Image 5. Jannik (Nikolaj Lie Kaas) and Michael (Ulrich Thomsen) in *Brødre*.



Image 6. Sam (Tobey Maguire) and Tommy (Jake Gyllenhaal) in *Brothers*.

⁷ Dogme 95 was a filmmaking movement based on a manifesto devised by filmmakers Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg. The manifesto's guidelines prohibited the use of sets, props or the manipulation of sound and lighting as well as other limitations. Hand-held camerawork was also a requirement. This made filmmaking a "rule-bound practice" and a game with the intention to, for example, subvert the Hollywood-style of making movies as well as "[r]eleasing filmmakers from a studio or state-controlled aesthetic" (Badley 2010: 54-55).

5.1.2. Physical representation

The four movies represent the male body in different ways and especially physical damage done to the body as well as its failures. Although both movies focus on the mental trauma of one of the main characters, the way *Brødre* and *Brothers* depict physical damage differs significantly. In the original Danish movie, Michael's physical wounds are hardly acknowledged. The only scene where this is presented is when the terrorists discover him lying on the ground with blood on his face after the soldiers' helicopter is shot down. Meanwhile, the remake depicts the damage done to the two captured American soldiers in great detail, for example when Joe, the other American soldier, is shown being tortured with a hot piece of iron by the terrorists. Later the movie presents the damage done to Sam's body during his captivity. After returning home, Sam is shown shaving his beard without a shirt in a close up with his back towards the viewer. Then, as his wife Grace enters the bathroom, the camera zooms out, revealing Sam's scarred back and lingering on the view as his wife wonders what the terrorists had done to his husband while touching the wounds on his husband's body (Image 7). In addition, throughout the rest of the movie there are visible wounds on Sam's face, reminding of the physical violence he encountered. Thus, in addition to the character's mental trauma, unlike the Danish original, the American movie focuses on physical damage done on the male body, displaying Sam's scars as a physical manifestation of the memory of his captivity.



Image 7. Grace looking at Sam's wounds after he has returned from Afghanistan.

The two movies also exhibit a bare male body differently. Whereas the remake does not show any explicit nudity of male characters, the Danish original begins with a scene in a Danish military base where Michael speaks to other soldiers as they are showering. The other men turn towards Michael and, although their reactions to him are shot as to show only their upper body,

a brief establishing shot from a longer distance presents the group of showering men completely nude, without trying to hide their bodies. The scene also establishes Michael's character as a supporting and respected leader as he encourages the men who will soon be leaving for Afghanistan. However, this scene is not present in the remake. Instead, the American movie contains scenes where Sam and Tommy are depicted shirtless and showing their muscular chest and abs. The scenes with Sam also show that he has tattooed his wife's name on his chest. Even though the original film is missing such scenes, both movies present Sarah/Grace in shower or bath, although explicit nudity is avoided by framing. Thus, the representation of women in a revealing manner is normalised while depictions of men are fewer and less explicit.

Overall, the scene of the soldiers showering in *Brødre* presents the naked men without focusing on the men's bodies in any way as the camera shows them only briefly and reveals the men's facial reactions instead. The scenes where Sam and Tommy are shown shirtless in *Brothers* present the men differently as their muscular upper bodies are presented with great detail by not cutting away from them but lingering on the view instead. The lighting of these scenes also complements the exhibition of the two men whereas in *Brødre* the showering scene is shot as if with natural light. Thus, the American remake contradicts with Steve Neale's (1983) claims that men's bodies cannot be put on display as a spectacle to be looked at without having them in the middle of some kind of action. Rather, in these scenes *Brothers* presents male characters as objects to be looked at. In addition, in later scenes both Sam and the other American soldier are depicted as passive victims of the terrorists' torture, for example when Sam is shown tied to a pole or when the other soldier is held down and tortured with a hot piece of iron. Meanwhile, the Danish film is able to present the nude men as well but without making it a pleasurable spectacle for the viewer to observe, suggesting that the in the Danish movie nudity is not seen as big of a deal unlike in the remake where great attention is paid to instances where the men are exhibited half-nude.

Kraftidioten and *Cold Pursuit* do adhere more on Neale's argument that men need to be shown in action or as carrying the traces of violence and mutilation in order to be looked at by the viewer. The two movies also focus less on the characters' bodies, for example as they do not show the main character carrying any traces of damage or violence on his body, unlike *Brothers*. However, Nils/Nels' physical form is shown to be failing in another ways. In a scene where he has beaten up one of the gangsters, he is panting and out of breath. The gangster is lying next to Nils/Nels' plough truck covered in blood and near death but does not reveal any information about his boss. Tired from abusing the man, Nils/Nels lays next to him and out of

breath. The gangster then asks if ‘the old man’ is tired. Still out of breath, Nils/Nels responds approvingly and they both laugh until Nils/Nels takes out his rifle and shoots the other man. In later scenes of *Kraftidioten*, Nils is also shown greatly struggling with the dead bodies of his victims as he carries them and throws them down a waterfall. Although he is presented as strong and capable of taking out a number of professional criminals, neither of the two movies depict Nils/Nels as an almighty action hero. This contrasts him with his victims who are all able-bodied and younger than him. However, the original Norwegian movie depicts Nils as more of an ordinary man whereas the remake’s protagonist is stronger looking and more like an action movie hero, although an older one at that.

An important aspect of the male characters’ physical representation is the way they dress. This is most evident in *Brødre* and *Brothers* as one of the defining characteristics of the characters of Sam and Michael, as well as some other characters, is their military uniform. In these movies, the uniform serves two somewhat contradictory purposes: on the one hand it distinguishes the characters from others as belonging to the army, while on the other hand diminishing their individuality as they blend in with the other soldiers and military personnel. Gates (2006: 43-45) discusses the importance of characters’ clothes and uniforms in the context of detective movies. Referring to Judith Butler’s (e.g. Butler 1999) concept, she points to the possibility of male characters to engage in “masquerade” by using uniforms or the clothes of their profession to “[conceal] vulnerability, emotionality, fear, and other characteristics seen as effeminate and unmanly” in “a masquerade of manliness” (ibid. 44), thus revealing their performance of masculinity to be a false one. The use of a uniform, she argues, allows the characters to hide “personal vulnerability and appropriate the power and authority evoked by the uniform” (ibid. 45), while also defining the character as his job. Similarly, the “masquerade of hypermasculinity” can be used to disguise the male characters’ inner crises (ibid.).

Considering this use of clothes by the male characters, the army uniforms of Sam and Michael function as a façade of toughness, hiding their inner feelings while in captivity and later as they return home. However, the symbolic meaning of the military uniform is in a larger role in *Brothers*, both in the scenes taking place in America and Afghanistan. As the uniform functions as an indicator of authority and power, this is exploited by the terrorists as they strip the two soldiers of their uniforms and torture them. For them, the American soldiers’ uniforms hold no power and only distinguish the two men as enemies. The uniform of the Western soldiers clearly distinguishes them from the Afghan terrorists who are dressed in stereotypical terrorist clothing as in most representations of Middle-Eastern gunmen in popular culture. Later

in the scenes taking place in America, the military uniform is used to connote patriotism and heroism, for example during Sam's funeral where several men, including Sam's father Hank, are dressed in a military uniform. However, back home with their families Sam and Michael are no longer able to use their uniform to hide their inner struggles or appear tough. As a consequence, without the safety of their military uniform they eventually break down as is displayed during the climactic violent outburst and the emotional final scene.

The use of a uniform as protection and a means of hiding one's emotions is depicted in the original Danish film when Michael goes to visit Niels' wife and son (Image 8). He arrives at their home wearing his army uniform, thus representing the military. Although it is not specified if he intends to confess his killing of Niels (which he does not do), facing the wife and son of the man he killed is a great struggle for him, and he has to hide behind his military uniform. He speaks kindly of Niels and, because Michael is the only one who knows about his death, assures that Niels will return home alive. Meanwhile in the remake, Joe's wife and son come to visit Sam's wife and Sam encounters them by accident while wearing ordinary clothing. During this encounter, Sam hardly says a word and is only able to stare at the small child who looks up at him in return, clueless about what the man in front of him had done to his father. Unlike in the Danish film, during this scene in the remake Sam is depicted as an ordinary man rather than an authoritative figure who is representing his job like Michael in the corresponding scene of the original.



Image 8. Michael visiting Niels' wife in uniform.

Clothes are used to distinguish different characters in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* as well. The criminal gang led by The Count/Viking all dress in suits and maintain a formal business-like look throughout the entire movie, signalling wealth and sophistication. The gangsters also wear very similar clothing, emphasising the structured nature of their gang and

identifying them as belonging to a group. Meanwhile, Nils/Nels' character dresses in ordinary clothes, often including a thick jacket and pants he uses on his job as a plough truck driver. Much like the army uniform in the other two movies, wearing the clothes of his profession defines Nils/Nels as representing his job as a plough truck driver. This way, the two movies distinguish him from his enemies by juxtaposing the opposing characters' appearance. This is made especially evident in a scene in *Cold Pursuit*, when Nels, dressed in a brown leather jacket, beats up and kills one of the gangsters who is wearing a light-pink suit. In *Cold Pursuit*, the other rival gang also stands out due to their clothing that in some way represents their ethnic identity as Native Americans. Meanwhile in *Kraftidioten*, only the patriarchal leader of the Serbian gang stands out with his Eastern-European clothing and fur hat, while the others dress in less distinct clothing that do not indicate their Serbian roots.

5.1.3. Conclusion

In this section I have argued that the casting of the films can influence the viewer's perception of characters as the films do not exist in vacuum but the experience of watching them, and the interpretations made of the movies, are affected by the real world as well as the viewers' prior experiences. Then, this section focused on the male characters' physical representations and found that the characters' masculinity is established and constructed by the way they look, and more specifically, how they appear in contrast to others, for example with their use of clothing. The use of clothing served also a function in the narrative as both *Brødre* and *Brothers* used the military uniform to convey the characters as shut in emotionally and also as belonging to a hierarchical institution of the army. Similarly, *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* also signalled the characters' ethnicity and standing in society as well as their in-group hierarchy with their clothes.

I also argued that the American and Nordic films exhibited the male body differently, with *Brothers* focusing more on the physical marks of damage on the characters. The American film also presented the male body as a spectacle to be looked at while the Danish original did not. Meanwhile, *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* presented the characters either in action, for example driving cars, shooting and beating others, or being hurt by others as well as covered in blood and bruises. In addition, these two movies used the protagonist's physical limitations and representation to subvert the image of a stereotypical Hollywood action hero, especially in the Norwegian *Kraftidioten*.

5.2. Action: performing masculinity

Returning to the earlier discussion about depicting male characters in action, Steve Neale (1983: 13-14) argues that in order to display men in movies, they have to be displayed in action. This provides an excuse for the (male) spectator to engage in looking at the characters' bodies, suppressing the threat of sexual exhibition of the male body, while the mutilation of bodies and violence inflicted on men in movies act as ways to disqualify the male body as an object of desire. Considering that Neale's article was written in the 1980s, I argue that analysing these movies produced decades later could challenge Neale's (as well as Mulvey's) arguments about the way men (and women) are presented on screen, how they are viewed by audiences and if the exhibition of a male body still serves a similar function as discussed above. In addition, if we follow Judith Butler's idea of gender being constituted through repeated performances (e.g. Butler 1999), we have to ask how masculinity is constituted via the actions of the characters of these movies. After all, as Järviluoma, Moisala, and Vilkkko (2003: 13) argue in reference to Butler, "there is no gender identity prior to the expression of gender" as "gender identity is constituted by the repetition of performative expressions". Thus, this section focuses on the ways characters construct their masculinity and masculine identity through actions.

Firstly, I will discuss the significance of the movies' genres in regard to the male characters, but also, because of its significance in the four movies, this section focuses especially on the depictions of violence and the effects they have for representation of masculinity in the movies. As discussed in section 4.3., understanding a text's genre is crucial in textual analysis in order to make sense of the likely interpretations made of a text and ones that work within the genre in question (McKee 2003: 95-97). In addition, (movie) genres often utilise stereotypes of gender or "promote extreme versions of gender performance", and because of this are often studied together⁸ (Shary 2013: 8). Thus, I will explore how *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* utilise conventions of the Western genre as well as how *Brødre* and *Brothers* can be located in the tradition of (American) war movies.

The way *Cold Pursuit*, and *Kraftidioten* to some extent, follow many conventions of the Western genre has an effect on the movies' representation of masculinity and how the male characters and their actions can be interpreted. Although both movies are more generally

⁸ Shary (2013: 8) provides a list of such analyses of gender and genre, including books on the two in general as well as work done on masculinity and different genres such as detective and action movies.

modern crime (comedy) films, they are in many ways similar to Westerns, or in this case, “disguised westerns” (Ray 1985, cited in Gabbard 2001: 17). Firstly, the main characters emulate the archetype of a silent and impassive male character of Westerns (Horrocks 1995: 74), who in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* only have exchanged their horse into a plough truck and their revolver into a hunting rifle. Nils and Nels also embody the “official hero” character of westerns, who in the end comes together with the “outlaw hero” (Ray 1985, cited in Gabbard 2001: 17), or the foreign gangster boss in these two movies, as he and Nils/Nels drive into the sunset in his plough truck.

Other aspects of the western in these movies include the battle between an ‘ordinary’ man (Nils/Nels) versus a rich man (Count/Viking), white man and his Native American counterpart (for example Nels and White Bull), the lone hero and depiction of male loneliness (Horrocks 1995: 60-67). Hutchinson (2007: 179-182) also points to Westerns’ border town settings, violence, a morally ambiguous protagonist who is also caught between the battle of two opposing sides, the liminality as well as fragility of the (male) body and masculinity in general. These themes may be found in other genres as well, but according to Horrocks (1995: 70), the element of wild nature is one of the central features of the Western. Indeed, in both *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, nature is a central part of the movie, not just as a setting or background for the events, but also as a ‘character’ in itself, with its function in constructing the main character as a masculine man of whose job is to tame the wilderness as well as its sublime vastness that is amplified by the film’s widescreen aspect ratio⁹.

The reason I am referring to these aspects of the Western is that, as Roger Horrocks (1995: 56) puts it, “it is a masculine genre par excellence”. For Horrocks, the genre also “explores some of the contradictions of American masculinity: it is required to be ‘tough’, but not too tough or it becomes outlawed” (ibid.). He goes on that “there is a tragic tinge to the western, as men find that they are cast out from the towns they helped to build, or watch others marry and raise children, while they are condemned --- to ‘wander forever between the winds’” (ibid.). In many ways, these quotations together with the aforementioned features of the Western genre, describe *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* well: the main character is a central figure of his small town community but is not provided with help when he needs it. He must be tough and take justice into his own hands, even if it means going beyond the limits of the law.

⁹ Henlin-Strømme (2014: 187) argues that conquering and surviving the harsh Arctic nature has been associated with masculinity in the Norwegian national discourse, and still today, “[w]hite nature continues to figure prominently in the Norwegian cultural imaginary”.

His son is killed and his wife leaves him, while he is desperately seeking for justice for the wrongs done to him by a charismatic villain.

However, this illusion of Nils/Nels as a cool and tough Western hero is challenged during the final shootout between the two rival gangs in the middle of which he finds himself. As the shooting begins, Nels/Nils becomes disoriented, which is presented by the film's muffled audio and slowed-down action while also having the character helplessly observe the surrounding chaos and killing. As suggested by his confused and alarmed expression, for a moment it seems that he realises the mindlessness and futility of the violence and that he is way out of his league among the violent professional criminals. However, he soon collects himself, and in an ultimate feat of masculinity, climbs in one of his vehicles, uses it to rip a tree from the ground, removes its branches and then drops the tree to impale the main villain's expensive sports car. Then when the villain is stuck in his car, he is shot by the rival gang's leader. As mentioned above, nature is a central aspect of the Western and here Nils/Nels is further distanced from the main villain by using nature as a weapon against him.

Whereas *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* rely on many conventions of the Western genre, both *Brødre* and *Brothers* follow many traditions of American war movies, for example ones set in the Vietnam war, which also has an effect on the films' representations of masculinity. According to Gemzøe (2013: 285-289), when released in 2004, *Brødre* marked a revival of an older genre of Danish war movies. Yet, despite having its roots in Danish culture and filmmaking practices, *Brødre* also borrowed heavily from the tradition of American war movies, making it a kind of remake as well. Thus, the film is influenced by American movies as well as many wars of The United States, such as the Cold War and the Vietnam War.

According to Storey (2015: 180), Hollywood's depictions of Vietnam are a form of Orientalism, and in the same way as many narratives about the Vietnam war, both *Brødre* and *Brothers* depict the Western protagonist 'going native' as he succumbs "to the primeval power of the alien colonial environment". This is presented in the two movies as Michael and Sam are both forced to kill the other captured soldier against their will. At first both characters refuse and throw away the pipe they are given as a weapon to beat the other man. However, both men are then yelled and screamed at while having a gun to their head. As the scene progresses, both Michael and Sam are shown becoming more enraged and giving in to a primal rage. The terrorists' screaming intensifies, the duration of individual shots becomes shorter and eventually both characters begin screaming before proceeding to beat the other soldier to death.

Even though both movies frame and edit the action as not to show any brutal violence in detail, the brutality of the violence is conveyed through Michael/Sam's furious expression. This is especially evident in *Brødre* as the camera shoots Michael almost from the position of the man he is assaulting, looking up at him as he beats the other man (Image 9). Michael's struggle and disorientation are also emphasised with the use of jump cuts and shaky hand-held camerawork, whereas in the remake the scene's editing is more frantic and the viewer is provided with multiple angles of both Sam and the surrounding men. Unlike in the remake, the scene in *Brødre* does not contain any music or non-diegetic sound and the act of beating is much slower and less spectacular. In the original film, the beating also lasts much longer and focuses more on Michael than the terrorists surrounding him. Thus, in *Brødre* the scene emphasises Michael's struggle and traumatic experience whereas in *Brothers* the focus is more on the act of killing.



Image 9. Michael beating Niels in *Brødre*.

After a while, Michael is pulled away from the dead man, whereas in *Brothers*, after killing Joe, Sam throws down the pipe and yells “There!” at his captors. The two men are then taken back to captivity where they remain in a catatonic state until their rescue. This scene in both movies shows Michael and Sam abandoning the values of Western civilisation and giving in to some primal masculine power and rage within them. However, rather than becoming stronger by asserting their masculine power, the two characters are destroyed instead, becoming passive and weak.

5.2.1. Violence

In addition to being a common theme in the analysed movies, violence is an important aspect of action of movies in general. When discussing how it relates to masculinity, it thus deserves its own section here. As Connell (1995: 83) writes, generally speaking, most cases of major violence occur between men and violence is central to gender politics among them, as well as for claiming or asserting one's masculinity. In case they are the dominant group in a culture, men may also feel the need to use violence to sustain their privilege and, in fact, in some cases men might even feel justified to inflict violence, being "authorized by an ideology of supremacy" (ibid.). However, this need to use violence for dominance is simultaneously proof of the instability of men's power and points to "crisis tendencies" in the gender order (ibid. 84). Considering the films' representation of violence is an important aspect of the analysis as, even though seeing violence in cultural products such as movies does not necessarily make one violent, it can influence people's perceptions and attitudes towards violence (Jokinen 2000: 50). Considering violence in this context is also necessary as, unfortunately, "violence is a gendered phenomenon; the gender of the perpetrator of violence is that of a man" (ibid. 12). In addition, the importance of addressing violence in these movies should not be underestimated when, as argued by Jokinen (2000: 22), dismissing violence perpetrated by men reinforces their patriarchal power and control. However, as violence can take various forms, it should be noted that this section focuses only on scenes of physical violence. Other kinds of violence will be discussed throughout the other sections when necessary.

The motivation for violence between the movies varies, and different characters use violence to different ends. To analyse this, we should make a distinction between two types of violence: instrumental and expressive violence (Bacon 2010: 13-14). The violence inflicted by the main character in *Cold Pursuit* and *Kraftidioten* is an example of instrumental violence as he uses it to achieve a goal: to get revenge on those who killed his son. This implies that violence is seen as unavoidable in order for the main character to achieve his goal, and it is justified as a means to an end. The violence of Sam and Michael in the other two movies is an example of expressive violence as the two men are shown to be forced into violence in order to survive their captivity in Afghanistan. In this case, the characters are forced at gunpoint to kill the other soldier while for Nils/Nels, violence is something he needs to use to get revenge but still something that he decides to do himself rather than being forced into.

Although violence is depicted as painful and ugly, the two pairs of movies depict the consequences of violence differently. While in *Brødre* and *Brothers* violence leaves Michael/Sam as mentally damaged and traumatised and eventually breaks his family, in the other two movies, after all of the killing and carnage, the two older men (Nils/Nels and the mob boss) have got their revenge on the main villain and drive away happily with a pile of bodies in their wake. Ending *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* in this manner reinforces the two characters' violent and lethal adventures in search for revenge as justified as the two have gained peace and reached their goals through violence and killing. The disregard towards the death of male characters is also presented by having each death be followed by a black screen with the name of the killed character and some symbol such as a cross. This presents each death as just another obituary one might read in a newspaper or the text engraved in a tombstone. After all, as Sipilä (1994: 22) argues, a male character may be killed in a movie without a great emotional effect on the viewer¹⁰. An untimely violent death is also depicted as a natural part of men's lives in a scene in *Brothers* where Sam goes to see the grave of Joe, the man he was forced to kill. While Sam walks away from the grave, the camera zooms out, revealing endless rows of identical tombstones that belong to other soldiers killed in combat. Although the film might be paying respect to the heroism and sacrifice made by its citizens who have died for their country, this scene can be interpreted also as symbolising the consequences of America's involvement in war and the price it has paid for it, with the lives of countless men (and women).

Even though the violence in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* is not as spectacular as in most Hollywood action movies, it is still made entertaining at times, more so in the American remake. A good example of this is the scene where Nils/Nels kills his second victim, called Ronaldo in the original and Limbo in the remake, whose identity he extracted from another criminal (whom he also killed by strangling). This scene differs significantly in the two movies as in the Norwegian movie Nils is shown stalking Ronaldo at night in an empty building under construction. He roughs him up and puts the barrel of his gun in his mouth after punching his teeth out. Ronaldo reveals the identity of the next criminal and is then shot with Nils' sawn-off hunting rifle. Although the scene thus far has been quite brutal in its depiction of violence, the scene ends with a heroic shot of Nils pulling out his gun and shooting Ronaldo who is shown falling in slow-motion against a plastic tarp with blood splattered on it. Apart from the final

¹⁰ Sipilä (1994: 22) gives this as an example of the paradox of how men can be seen as worthless or devalued despite their respected social status.

shoot-off between the criminals, this scene contains the most cinematic and aestheticised depiction of violence and death in the movie.

The same scene in the remake takes place in a store owned by Limbo that sells wedding dresses and suits. The character of Limbo is depicted differently from his Norwegian counterpart as he clearly stands out by wearing a pink suit while happily presenting dresses to his customers, while Nels walks into the store wearing a leather jacket and looking out of place in the environment. After the other customers have left, Limbo suspects that something is wrong and pulls out a pistol at Nels, who easily disarms him and proceeds to interrogate him while Limbo is pleading Nels not to kill him. The scene ends with a similar slow-motion death of the criminal, but this time taking place in a brightly lit store and with the character falling back on a rack of white wedding dresses that are painted red with his blood. However, before shooting Limbo, Nels is about to walk away but hesitates and asks him who is the best quarterback in the history of (American) football, a question that was asked on the radio in an earlier scene while Nels was driving his car. Even though Limbo gives the correct answer, Nels pauses for a moment and shoots the man anyway (Images 10 and 11), thus showing that he is looking for further justification for his killing as he expects the other man to answer incorrectly. In this version of the scene, the criminal is killed because he is not masculine enough as he dresses in pink, sells women's clothing and is physically weak in contrast to Nels. The remake also presents Nels as what the other man is not with his manly clothing, physical strength over the other man and his question about football that determines if the other man should live or die.



Image 10. Nels turns to shoot Limbo.



Image 11. Limbo falls against a rack of dresses covered in blood.

In both *Cold Pursuit* and *Kraftidioten* violence is depicted as the only possible way for the two rival gangs to settle their differences. When Nils/Nels kills one of the local gangsters, they mistake this as an attack by the rival gang and decide to get revenge by killing one of the other gang's members, leading to a conflict between the two groups. When the local gang

attempts to make peace, by sending the other criminal gang the head of the person who is said to be responsible for the murder, the messenger gets shot, and the violent conflict escalates further. In this way the two movies depict violence as the only way in which the two rival groups (of men) are able to communicate, showing that peaceful negotiation is not possible and leaving violence as the only possible means to settle the conflict. Similarly, the whole conflict that serves as the backdrop for *Brothers* and *Brødre*, is the consequence of back-and-forth violence between opposing factions. However, in *Brothers* the terrorists' motivation for capturing the two men is to send a message to Americans about their unjustified presence in Afghanistan. Thus, the terrorists use violence as a form of communication which depicts them more cunning and intelligent than the ones in the Danish original.

Violence does not occur only between men but within the characters' families as well. However, the four movies all depict domestic violence very differently, although in each movie the instigator of violence is a male character. In *Cold Pursuit* and *Kraftidioten*, Viking, the leader of the local criminal gang, is constantly head to head with his ex-wife who is threatening to get sole custody of their son. This conflict culminates in a scene where the wife storms into Viking's place after Nils/Nels has abducted their son. Thinking that his husband is responsible for the kidnapping, she angrily accuses him of this, causing him to lose his temper. In *Kraftidioten*, her accusations cause him to punch her in the face before explaining the situation. However, in *Cold Pursuit* this scene is changed significantly as the wife dodges his punch and strikes back by grabbing Viking by his genitals. She then keeps him in her grab until he promises to fix the situation. All this takes place in front of the criminal boss' goons, leaving him humiliated and emasculated. This symbolic castration of the main villain significantly changes the way he is perceived by the viewer as well as other character, diminishing his power and influence over others.

Violence against women is used in both movies to juxtapose the protagonist with the film's villain. In both movies, after Nils/Nels and his wife go to the morgue to identify the body of their son, they sit in their car and Nils/Nels says to his grief-stricken wife that their son was not a druggie. Angry that her husband is in denial about their son and his death, Nils/Nels' wife pounds her fists against his shoulder. In both movies, rather than lose his temper, unlike the villain, he only sits in the driver seat of the car and hardly reacts. Contrasting this with how the movies' villains react to confrontation by their (ex-)wife (i.e. trying to punch her), suggests that the hero never attacks a woman, while those who do are sadistic criminals.

Comparing the way in which these two scenes are played out in the Norwegian original as well as the American remake can tell us something about how domestic violence is perceived in these two cultures. In both movies domestic violence perpetrated by men is shown in a negative light, as even though in *Kraftidioten* the villain succeeds to punch his wife, this is depicted as a despicable act and him losing control. Meanwhile Nils/Nels' refusal to defend against his wife is depicted as the right thing to do. However, in *Cold Pursuit* the villain's wife getting back at his husband is shown as an empowering moment for her and an even greater scene of embarrassment and disempowerment for the villain than in the original movie. Just like with Nils/Nels getting revenge on his son, this scene justifies violence, although this time in the form of a woman controlling his husband.

The depiction of domestic violence is changed between *Brødre* and *Brothers* as well. During the films' climax, Sam/Michael destroys the family's newly renovated kitchen in a fit of rage caused by the trauma of his experience in Afghanistan. In *Brødre*, Michael uses his bare hands to destroy the kitchen and attack his wife and brother while in the remake Sam uses a metal rod to beat various objects in the kitchen, much like when he killed Joe with a metal pipe in Afghanistan. In *Brødre* this scene also shows Michael attacking his wife, forcing her to call for help and escape into their daughters' room. Before getting to safety, she is first thrown around by the drunken and enraged Michael. She is also choked by his husband in an earlier scene that is missing from the remake where he accuses her of sleeping with his brother. The final scene is altered in some ways in *Brothers* as, to begin with, Sam is not shown to consume any alcohol, unlike in *Brødre* where Michael's drinking is shown to be the catalyst of his rage-fuelled episode. The remake does not show Sam inflicting any physical violence towards his wife as he directs his violence towards inanimate objects and his brother as, in both movies, Sam/Michael's brother becomes the victim of violence as he arrives to defuse the situation, trying to peacefully calm Sam/Michael. In *Brødre*, it is also implied that Michael might hurt the children as well, when he yells that he is going to kill them all, as Sarah and the two girls are hiding in another room. Although he does not carry out his threat, this threat to children is still removed from the remake, implying that domestic violence involving children is a much greater taboo in the United States than Denmark. The two American remakes' refusal to depict physical domestic violence where a man hurts a woman, shows that it is a controversial taboo subject and depicting it even in a fictional film would not be politically correct. However, as the example of *Cold Pursuit* suggests, women can be shown hurting men.

The weapons used by the characters also have an effect on their manliness and are used to juxtapose different characters. In *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, the use of firearms distinguishes the two criminal gangs from the protagonist, as the criminals all carry small handguns, while Nils and Nels use a hunting rifle as their weapon of choice. Even when the films' protagonists need a smaller weapon to carry with them, they saw off the rifle's barrel rather than opt for a smaller calibre gun. The use of a hunting rifle is significant for the characters of Nils and Nels in other ways as well. Firstly, both movies establish him as a hunter when in *Kraftidioten* his office contains pictures of him posing with deer and other wildlife he has killed while in *Cold Pursuit* he has a dead deer hanging in a storage room of his house. Establishing him as a hunter who kills his own food and is familiar with the Norwegian/Colorado wilderness sets him apart from his rich white-collar adversary. Secondly, the image of Nils/Nels as a hunter gets a different meaning when, instead of hunting wild animals, the men who killed his son become his prey. Weapons distinguish also the terrorists of *Brødre* and *Brothers* from the Western soldiers who utilise modern weaponry and vehicles, such as rockets and helicopters, whereas the terrorists have battered assault rifles, pistols, trucks and even swords, as pictured in a scene in *Brothers*, where the two American soldiers are threatened with beheading. This further establishes them as barbaric and uncivilised terrorists who are willing to kill others in a painful manner, unlike the Western soldiers who are effective and organised in their warfare.

Much like the weapons used by the characters, they are set apart also by the vehicles they drive. In *Kraftidioten* the main villain is driven around in an expensive sports car while in the American remake he gets around in an electric Tesla. His car with its feminine curves and shapes further sets him apart as a wealthy (illegitimate) white-collar businessman from his blue-collar worker counterpart who drives a massive and manly plough truck. The two men are juxtaposed even more in *Cold Pursuit*, as Viking's electric car emits only a small buzzing noise while Nels' truck lets out a manly rumble and is shown going through large heaps of snow and even destroying the criminal gang's much smaller cars. In one scene, Nils/Nels even lists the specifics of his truck and marvels its strength and size. Thus, although quite clichéd, the two movies show how size matters for the depiction of male characters' masculinity, both in regards to their weapons and vehicles: the rugged and manly protagonist is armed with a long rifle used to kill large prey while driving an enormous and powerful plough truck that can push through all obstacles. Meanwhile, the more effeminate white-collar criminal boss packs a smaller calibre pistol and is driven around in a slim and smoothly shaped sports car.

In summary, both *Cold Pursuit* and *Kraftidioten* seem to reinforce the idea that men are the perpetrators of violence while also suggesting that different forms of masculinity are incompatible with each other, leading to violence between men. However, as the male characters differ in other aspects of their identity, these two films suggest that masculinity is not the only cause of violence. In *Cold Pursuit* and *Kraftidioten*, the different men and groups of men differ in their ethnicity, social status and sexual orientation, and these differences are used to juxtapose male characters with each other. In both movies, it is the lone married 'traditional' working class man who is against a rich upper class 'new man' type of character and his goons. They in turn fight against a group of criminals defined by their identity as an ethnic minority. This same applies to the foreign assassin who is sent to kill the criminal boss. Within the criminal gang, there are also two gay men who play a central role in bringing down the gang from the inside. By setting these different masculinities against each other in a violent conflict, both movies show the tension caused on the one hand by the reinforcement and attempts to sustain hegemony by one group and, on the other hand, the challenge posed to this dominant group by complicit, marginalised and subordinated masculinities.

5.2.2. Conclusion

In this section, I have argued that the four movies use the conventions of their genres to imply things about male characters. Although this is dependent on the viewer's familiarity with other movies, the use of generic conventions establishes male characters in a certain way. In addition, I focused in detail on the four films' depictions of violence, motivations and weapons as violence is a central element in these movies' narrative. This section also showed how the depiction of domestic violence presents the American remakes as more politically correct and in unease about the topic of gendered violence. Meanwhile, the depictions of men-to-men violence are shown in great detail in all four movies, which is not surprising as it is the most accepted and visible form of violence, for example in cultural products such as movies, and society in general (Jokinen 2000: 29). In addition, such prevalence of men's violence in these four movies point towards instability of the male characters' power, but also to "crisis tendencies" in the modern gender order, as argued by Connell (1995: 84).

Considering the above analysis, I argue that all four movies, but especially *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, use violence to build their characters' masculinity and establish them as men by depicting their violent tendencies and skills at hurting or being hurt by others. However,

simultaneously violence is depicted as a source of the characters' crises and ultimately the reason for the films' central conflicts. Thus, violence is both a destructive and constructive force in the lives of the male characters as well as their masculinity.

5.3. The External World

This section will discuss the male characters and their place in the world. This includes their relationships with others in their families, groups of friends and other men, institutions such as the military as well as how these characters are contrasted with what they are not. As all four movies centre on white heterosexual men living in a Western country, the films contrast them with women, homosexuals, foreigners and members of other ethnicities. Thus, analysing how the central characters are represented as opposed to who they are not can reveal attitudes and more implicit ideologies surrounding the movies. This is connected to the final topic of this section which is concerned with various expectations and roles the characters are expected to live up to.

5.3.1. Relationships and family

In all four movies, family life and its values are highly valorised as the family unit is shown to both redeem some of the characters while providing stability for others. As Aronson and Kimmel (2001: 44-47) argue, in contemporary Hollywood movies it is children, not women, who can change and redeem bad male characters. They argue that men and women in movies need some external agent to transform these characters¹¹. Indeed, all four movies display this in different ways. This is evident especially in *Brødre* and *Brothers* as the alcoholic ex-criminal character of Jannik/Tommy begins to change after becoming a part of his brother's family. As the movie progresses, he becomes more involved in the life of his brother's wife and daughters, consoling the wife, playing with the girls and renovating the family's kitchen. The stability of family life (and children) are shown to make him 'a good citizen' as he gets a job, eventually finds a girlfriend and apologises to the woman he assaulted before going to prison. The character's development becomes evident especially in the scene where he tells Sarah/Grace about his apology to the bank employee he robbed years before. In one of the earliest scenes of

¹¹ Interestingly, though, Aronson and Kimmel (2001: 47) argue that for female characters this redeeming force comes in the form of gay men instead of children. Although their argument is interesting and applies for the male characters of this thesis' movies, it also poses some troubling questions about the agency of the characters themselves in their attempts to change.

both movies, as Jannik/Tommy is being driven from prison by his brother, he gets upset when Michael/Sam brings up the subject of apologising to the bank employee. While in *Brothers* Tommy just ignores his brother's suggestion, in *Brødre* Tommy pulls the handbrake of his brother's car, bringing them to a halt and nearly causing them to crash. This kind of issues with anger-management and irresponsible risk-taking are in stark contrast with the character Jannik becomes during the film. In both movies, due to his development as a person, after their father returns alive from Afghanistan, the girls tell their mother that they would rather be with Jannik/Tommy. Seemingly, this change in his character is motivated by taking responsibility of his brother's family, proving Aronson and Kimmel's point of the redemptive power of children as well as traditional family life and values.

Similarly, in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, one of the key moments for the development of Nils/Nels' character occurs after kidnapping the main villain's son. He takes care of the boy and tries to keep him safe during the climactic gunfight at the end of the movie. During a scene at his house, Nils/Nels is asked by the boy to read a bedtime story. Nils/Nels tries to explain that he does not know any stories but ends up reading the manual for his plough truck. After telling the boy to go to sleep, the boy pushes himself against Nils/Nels and asks if he has ever heard of Stockholm syndrome, implying that the boy has become fond of his kidnapper. In the remake, this scene in question could be read as Nels trying to make up for the distant relationship with his son who was killed earlier. By taking care of the main villain's son he shows that he is able to care for the boy, acting as a father figure for him and succeeding in what the villain failed to do, as Viking hardly shows any actual affection towards his son and tries to manage the boy's life according to his own wishes instead. The corresponding scene in the original movie cannot be interpreted in similar way, as Nils is not presented as being conflicted about his success as a father, unlike Nels in the remake.

The relationships between male characters and their sons and fathers are revealing about them as men, especially in *Brødre* and *Brothers*. Both movies depict the relationship between Jannik/Tommy and his father as troubled and their mutual communication as difficult. For example, Jannik/Tommy is told by his father that he should be more like his brother and the two are shown arguing on multiple occasions. However, the character of Henning/Hank, the boys' father, is changed in the remake as he is a Vietnam veteran, whereas in the Danish film his occupation or involvement in the army are not specified. In this sense, Sam is following his father's footsteps by going to the army, while Tommy does not get along with Hank and does not want to be or become like him. Still, both men resemble their father as both Tommy and

Hank are alcoholics, suggesting that the problem with drinking runs in the family. His time in Vietnam also damaged Hank in some ways as he tells Sam that he had trouble talking to his late wife about his time in the war and took his pain out on his sons.

Because of this scene, Hank's character is shown to grow and develop as he recognises his past mistakes when he sees himself in Sam and warns him not to do what he had done years ago by not speaking of his traumatic experiences in war. The interpretation of this scene made by Shriver-Rice (2013: 170-171) is more cynical, as she suggests that Hank's presence is a reminder for the viewer that, much like his father, Sam may never recover from his trauma and that, despite his words, Hank's behaviour in the scene implies that he is "an unlikely source of emotional support for Sam". However, I see this scene as a turning point for Hank, as he is able to project himself on his son and realise his past failures. A similar development of the men's father is not depicted in the original Danish movie as Henning is not a war veteran. The aforementioned scene in the remake implies that, in addition to Tommy, Sam has also become like his father as both men have been badly affected by their experiences in war, while in the Danish film, Henning's problems and past are not explained. Because of this, in the original Danish film, it is actually Jannik who resembles his father more than Michael who, prior to his time in Afghanistan, lived a happy life with his family without problems with drinking or mental instability.

An interesting father-son relationship depicted in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* is that of the main villain and his son. The villain is controlling his son's life in both movies as he imposes a strict diet on the boy by making him follow a vegan and preservative-free diet in the original (like the villain himself), and a monotonous but extremely healthy diet in the remake. However, it is implied that the boy does not want to be like his father, for example when in both movies he secretly eats sugary cereal with one of his father's goons or much rather drives with Nils/Nels in his plough truck than in his father's expensive sports car. An early scene in both movies depicts another difference between the villain and his son as the boy questions his father's entire life philosophy of violence and power. In both movies the boy is presented as small and weak while also having problems with a bully in school. In *Kraftidioten*, after hearing about the bully, the boy's father tells him that he is bullied because the bully sees him as weak and then advises the boy to fight back. However, in both movies the boy seems to be wiser than his father as he comments that fighting back would make him as bad and stupid as his bully. Interestingly, then, the villain's son explicitly refutes violent revenge, the main driving force of the entire narrative as different male characters are motivated by getting revenge on each other:

the main character wants to kill the villain for killing his son, the patriarchal mob boss wants to kill the villain as well for killing one of his kin, and the villain wants revenge on both in return. Ironically, the small boy is the only sensible male character of the two movies by rejecting violence and revenge as solutions to conflicts.

Comparing the different movies reveals differences in how the fathers' legacies are to be followed by their sons. In *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, the main villain has inherited the criminal enterprise from his father and, one would assume, wants his son to follow his footsteps in charge of the gang in the future. However, his son does not want a life of violence and revenge as shown by the rejection of his father's advice. The American *Brothers* depicts an opposite kind of relationship where, as mentioned above, Hank sees himself in Sam and recognises the same issues he struggled with in his past. He also advises his son not to be like him but learn from Hank's own mistakes instead. Hank's inability to communicate about his traumatic experiences to his wife led to problems which are not all explained in the film, apart from his drinking and whatever he ended up 'taking out on his sons'. However, Sam does not listen to his father's advice and only speaks to his wife when the damage has already been done at the very end of the movie. Thus, even though in both American remakes the father advises their son who does not listen, in *Cold Pursuit* Viking tells his son to use violence like him whereas in *Brothers* Hank tells Sam to not be like him in order to avoid hurting others and himself.

All of the movies also centre on issues of marriage and the characters' attempts to keep their marriage from falling apart. The marital problems faced by the characters, however, are all partly caused by external forces: the war in Afghanistan in *Brødre* and *Brothers*, and the death of the protagonist's son in the hands of a violent drug gang in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*. The former two movies present the marriage of Michael/Sam and his wife as happy prior to him leaving for Afghanistan. Their longing for each other is presented with alternating shots between Michael/Sam in Afghanistan and Sarah/Grace back home, implying that the two are thinking of each other, both before and after his assumed death. However, when he returns back home, the strain of his mental trauma as well as the suspicion and accusations about his wife's unfaithfulness cause Michael/Sam to become closed in and eventually violent. Although she tries to get his husband to speak about his traumatic experiences, he does not open up until the last scene of both movies. Thus, in both the original Danish film and its American remake, it is the character of Sarah/Grace who tries to hold the marriage together despite his husband's problems. The two movies differ to the extent of their problems' severity, as in the remake Sam never hurts his wife while in the original movie Michael physically attacks Sarah on two

occasions. While in the aforementioned two movies it is the wife who tries to save the marriage, in *Kraftidioten* Nils attempts to reach out to his wife who becomes distant and eventually leaves. Although Nels' wife also leaves him in *Cold Pursuit*, the American remake presents Nels as the one who becomes distant as he seems to be only occupied with getting revenge for the death of his son and does not respond to his wife's accusations for not getting to know his own son.

One significant difference between the American and Nordic movies is the role of the male characters' wives in the family. In both *Kraftidioten* and *Brødre*, the wives of Nils and Michael both have jobs, as Nils' wife works in secretarial tasks in his company while Sarah is shown to go to work in a school, possibly as a teacher. However, in the American remakes, the two women are not shown to be working and are depicted mostly doing various tasks and chores at home. Thus, the American remakes reinforce traditional roles in the family with the women at home and raising children while the men act as the 'breadwinner'¹². Interestingly, though, the Nordic films depict the roles of the husband and wife as more equal in the family. This could possibly reflect the exceptional level of gender equality in the Nordic countries, for example in terms of men and women's roles in the family (Gottzén, Mellström & Shefer 2020: 6), at least in comparison to the American context. Nonetheless, these male characters are strongly defined by their professions in all four movies and even the villain of *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* emphasises the difficulty of his job (i.e. being a criminal) to his ex-wife and how she has been able to benefit from all of the money he has brought to their family.

5.3.2. The Other: Gender, sexuality and ethnicity

In a text titled "Masculinity as homophobia: fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity", Michael Kimmel (2004: 182) argues that our understanding of masculinity and being a man in our culture is a consequence of "setting our definitions in opposition to a set of 'others'—racial minorities, sexual minorities, and, above all, women". Kimmel is not alone in his claim as numerous others have argued that masculinity is defined in contrast to the 'other' and everything that represents what this specific type of masculinity is not (e.g. Bruzzi 2013: 25; Connell 1995: 154; Gates 2006: 30; Jeffords 1993: 256; Järviluoma, Moisala &

¹² According to Morgan (2006: 114), this ideology of a 'male breadwinner' is said to persist even "in times where it is of little relevance" or significance. This may be one cause for the perceived 'crisis' as individual men may have doubts about their role as the head of the family even if such traditional views of men's roles are no longer relevant (ibid. 114-116).

Vilkko 2003: 12; Segal 2007: xxiv). As all four movies analysed here concern mainly white heterosexual men living in a Western country, this section addresses how the movies deal with all that these characters are not. This issue should be discussed in detail because, as Kimmel argues, a specific type of masculinity “that defines white, middle class, early middle-aged, heterosexual men is the masculinity that sets the standards for other men, against which other men are measured and, more often than not, found wanting” (ibid. 184). However, despite other factors of one’s identity as a man, such as ethnicity and sexuality, what according to Kimmel is seen as essential to being a man is not being like women. For him this “notion of anti-femininity” indicates how “masculinity is defined more by what one is not rather than who one is” (ibid. 185).

By changing the power dynamic between both Viking and his wife, Nels and his wife as well as by adding a new female minor character, in *Cold Pursuit* female characters are given more agency and power than in the original Norwegian movie. However, the movie also contains more misogynistic behaviour by male characters. This is especially evident in a scene that is missing from the original film. This scene is set up earlier as two of the gangsters are in a car and waiting for a Native American who they intend to abduct. While they are waiting, one of the gangsters explains a trick that he uses to score women. He explains that he goes into a motel and lies naked in bed with a 20-dollar bill placed on his genitals. Then when a maid enters, he offers her the bill. This story makes the other gangster somewhat impressed. During the same scene in *Kraftidioten* the two gangsters discuss the weather instead and why they have to put up with the cold. The other states that in all of the hot places everything else is much worse. Later, in the scene from *Cold Pursuit* that is missing from the original movie, one of the gangsters is shown putting his motel trick into action. However, instead of a maid entering the room, a group of Native American gangsters walk in, and upon seeing the naked man on the bed, they look at each other and laugh before shooting him. The camera faces the Native American gangsters, and the man is not shown getting shot but the scene ends with the dollar bill slowly falling on the floor with a bullet hole through it, suggesting that the man was literally castrated as a consequence of his womanizing and misogynistic behaviour. Thus, although the remake contains significantly more explicitly misogynistic characters and behaviour, the inclusion of such elements is used to condemn misogyny and toxic behaviour.

Cold Pursuit contains another scene where such misogynistic behaviour is followed by the death of a character. In both movies, a janitor of the local school is able to provide information for the main villain about Nils/Nels kidnapping his son. He is offered money for

telling The Count/Viking and his men instead of going to the police. In both movies he is killed off-screen after telling about the kidnapping. However, in *Cold Pursuit*, while explaining how he knows that Nels is behind the kidnapping of Viking's son, he brags about his sex life with his wife in great detail, apparently trying to impress the other men. Such behaviour is hardly present in either *Brødre* or *Brothers*. However, when male characters do engage in misogynistic behaviour they are punished for it. For example, in *Brødre* the soldiers' helicopter is shot down after the men onboard have engaged in loud and raunchy discussion about women and Middle-Eastern prostitutes. However, their talk is interrupted by a rocket that is implied to kill everyone, except Michael. The same scene in *Brothers* does not display the soldiers engaging in such toxic behaviour. Rather, the only men who act this way in the movie are the prisoners yelling obscenities from behind bars at Tommy as he is being released from prison.

One important change between *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* is the ethnicity of some of the characters. The Serbian criminal gang is changed into Native Americans while the assassin, a Japanese man from Denmark called 'The Chinese', is turned into a black man called 'The Eskimo'. Whereas in *Kraftidioten* the characters are emphasised for being foreigners based on their appearance, language and nationality (i.e. not Norwegian), in *Cold Pursuit* these characters are still Americans. However, their ethnicity marks them as outsiders and different from the other characters. This othering of some of the characters adds a more political aspect to the film by emphasising the marginalisation of these characters and the groups they represent. Still, the film does not focus much on the racism encountered by African Americans and the history behind it. However, the history of the Native Americans' and their place in the American society is acknowledged very clearly, especially as the film takes place in Colorado.

By changing the group's ethnicity, the film acknowledges the problematic history of Native Americans in the United States. The film also acknowledges that this is still an ongoing issue and a touchy one. A scene that highlights this aspect of the movies focuses on White Bull, the leader of the Native American gang. He and his goons are shown entering a luxury skiing resort where the group of men clearly stand out of the setting and other people. They are then told that if they want a room they need to have a 'reservation'. This upsets one of the Native Americans and soon the lady at the hotel's reception realises the double meaning of the word. After threatening to ruin their business by leaving bad reviews online, the Native Americans are given special service at the resort. Although, this is played off for humour, the scene shows how the issue of native Americans and reservations is still very much a relevant and a painful part of American history. The scene at the resort is followed by White Bull walking around a shopping

area and looking into stores with Native American-styled clothing and a bust depicting the head of a Native American man. He does not express any strong emotions at seeing these things, but the scene clearly shows his confusion at the commodification of his culture and identity. In a later scene when the other Native Americans are playing in the snow, White Bull observes skiers going downhill. The scene is shot in slow-motion, showing White Bull joyously watching the skiers and imitating their movements. Following this, he turns towards the open landscapes of Colorado, spreads his hands and laughs. However, his expression soon changes, displaying anger and despair as he screams in pain (Image 12). His voice cannot be heard by the viewer as the scene plays only with non-diegetic music, emphasising his painful expression and anguish of having his heritage taken from his people and appropriated by the former colonisers. This skiing scene is included in the original movie as well, but instead shows the Serbian gang leader blissfully observing the skiers and the Norwegian nature that is foreign to him (Image 13).



Image 12. White Bull screaming in despair in *Cold Pursuit*.



Image 13. Papa observing skiers in *Kraftidioten*.

Much like *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*'s war between the two rival gangs, *Brødre* and *Brothers* also include a conflict between two vastly different cultures: the West versus the Middle East. However, the characters of the two movies have a different role in the conflict. For example, in *Brødre* the two brothers' father says how Michael is going to Afghanistan to rebuild the country and do his job, while in *Brothers* Sam is seen as a hero and fulfilling his duty as an American patriot. The duty of protecting one's country and patriotism are emphasised further as the grandfather is a war veteran himself and speaks how proud he is of Sam. Meanwhile, he tells Tommy how he should be more like his brother, explicitly communicating his disappointment and preference of Sam.

The way in which the terrorists are depicted differs to some extent between *Brødre* and *Brothers*. In both movies they are depicted as savages who gain pleasure from watching Sam/Michael beat the other soldier to death but their motivations for capturing the two soldiers are different. In *Brødre* they need Michael to show them how to arm a rocket launcher they had

acquired, while in *Brothers* they torture the two men until they get the other to speak on camera, stating how the Americans' presence in Afghanistan is wrong. Thus, in the American remake the terrorists are more organised and their motivation for capturing the two soldiers serves a larger purpose unlike in *Brødre* where they only want to know how to use a weapon. However, in *Brothers* the terrorists are depicted as more sadistic as they use torture to get what they want. The threat of violence and death is still present in both movies.

The terrorists' motivations are also made more explicit in *Brothers*¹³. For example, both movies contain a scene where the terrorists kill one of their own by shooting him in the head. However, while in *Brødre* Michael and Niels observe this from afar, in *Brothers* the two Americans are brought out to witness the execution and are explained by an interpreter that the man used a satellite connection to contact his wife and needs to be killed for it. The savagery of the terrorists is emphasised in this scene by having the executed man's relative, a young boy, present at the scene. Overall, the American remake emphasises the terrorists' ability to use technology, for example by having them use a video camera to send a message about the Americans' occupation of their country. The terrorists have learned how to use technology and are able to use the camera and media as weapons to further their goals at getting the Americans out of Afghanistan (Gemzøe 2013: 290). Meanwhile, in *Brødre* the terrorists need Michael's help to use technology, i.e. the rocket launcher, and are thus depicted as less intelligent and driven by a clear motive.

One notable detail in the two movies is that all of the terrorists are men. In *Brothers*, there is a young boy who is shown in some scenes taking place at the terrorists' camp and who is later shown dead after the Americans' assault. The only scene taking place in Afghanistan that includes other than a male character comes early in the film as Sam is filming his surroundings before being captured. In these scenes he films ordinary children and women who are presented in a sympathetic light, unlike the terrorists. Much like the terrorists of these two movies, the gangsters of *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* are also all men. Only in *Cold Pursuit* the Native American mobsters have women working for them, but they are shown only engaged in secretarial tasks, sitting in front of computers. Thus, all four movies depict men as engaged in the violent conflicts that function as the central causes for the characters' problems.

¹³ Similarly, in his analysis of 1970s horror movies and their remakes, Roche (2014: 101) found that aspects of the original movies that were left implicit, such as character motivations, were made more explicit in the remakes made in the 2000s.

The movies approach homosexuality differently, as in *Brødre* and *Brothers* its effect can be seen implicitly while in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* it is addressed directly and has an effect on the narrative. In the latter two films, two of the criminals working for The Count/Viking are revealed to be closeted homosexuals in secret from the other men and their employer. After they have disposed of the assassin's body, the two men - one of them older and manly while the other is younger and more feminine in his features - are sitting together in a car. In *Kraftidioten* the two men make jokes about the Asian assassin whom they had killed before caressing each other and then beginning to kiss. Similarly, in *Cold Pursuit*, before engaging in kissing, the other of the two men (called Geir in the original and Mustang in the remake) promises that the two men will make a holiday trip together to Europe with the money he won in fantasy football. However, in this scene the younger of the two is concerned about the others finding out about their relationship and intimacy. Thus, the two men are not accepted as themselves in the group but need to mask their true selves behind a masquerade of a violent and tough facade. Interestingly, when compared to many other movies' stereotypical depictions of gay characters, the two men are presented just like all the others in their group without expressing exaggerated or stereotypically gay characteristics or behaviour.

In both movies the two gay characters are central to the story as the younger of the two is killed when he gets on the main villain's nerves. He suggests that they should send an apology to the rival gang for killing one of their members. Following his suggestions, The Count/Viking shoots him and tells the others to send the dead man's head to the rival gang as an apology, while his secret lover is only able to look in shock. Then at the end of the movie, Geir/Mustang gets his revenge on the villain by informing the rival gang about his whereabouts, leading to a lethal gun battle between the two gangs. By doing this Geir/Mustang is able to redeem himself by turning against the evil main villain. Considering that the other gang's patriarchal leader Papa/White Bull fires the final bullet that kills the villain, it is the two marginalised men who are instrumental in bringing down the villain, an exemplar of toxic hegemonic masculinity.

Although homosexuality is not explicitly addressed in *Brødre* and *Brothers*, it is present in both movies as an underlying tension. A scene where this can be observed in both movies occurs when Jannik/Tommy is renovating the kitchen with his male companions. One of them gets paint all over himself and needs new clothes. While waiting for Sarah/Grace to get his 'dead' husband's clothes for him to wear, the unfortunate man is standing in his socks and underwear as the others look in amusement. They then make comments about his pudgy mid-section such as "You have a lovely body", and ask "Do you work out?", while laughing at his

embarrassment. The other male characters' way of addressing the bare male body thus shows the tension caused by the exhibition of a nearly nude body of another man. This scene presents the other men's need to turn their looking into a joke in order to justify their engagement in looking at another man and how his body makes them uncomfortable, while also allowing them to prove the other men (and perhaps themselves) of their heterosexuality. After all, according to Kimmel (2004: 186), "manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval", and this will certainly apply to a man's heterosexuality. Thus, the men in this scene can be seen as exaggerating their masculinity in order to come off as real men and not gay (ibid. 191). For such group of straight men, the flipside of friendship is the threat of being seen as homosexual (Jokinen 2000: 222).

While this scene is similar in both movies, *Brødre* and *Brothers* also differ to some extent in their reaction to homosexuality and relationships between men. Although in both movies the two brothers are shown embracing each other when they are reunited, first after Jannik/Tommy is released from prison and again when Michael/Sam returns from Afghanistan, affection for other men outside of their families is depicted as problematic in the American film. This is depicted through the two captive soldiers' mutual relationship as it reveals the underlying tension and threat of homosexuality and male intimacy between the two characters. In the Danish film, the two captured soldiers' mutual interaction is marked by camaraderie and support as Michael tells Niels that they will get out alive, comforts him and gets the terrorists to give him water as a reward for arming the terrorists' rocket launcher. Then, when Niels has lost all hope and is in despair, Michael gets close to him and holds Niels while convincing him that things will get better (Image 14). The American remake presents the two characters' relationship quite differently, as Sam hardly shows any sympathy towards the other man who, after some months of captivity, gets upset at Sam for saving him from drowning in a lake after their helicopter crashed. Thus, in the remake, even when the two men have only each other to rely on, they cannot get along and, instead of support and closeness, the two men's relationship is defined by their difference in rank, arguments and emotional distance. This reinforces Lynne Segal's (2007: 86) argument of how intimacy with other men can represent a threat to one's masculinity. However, the Danish film presents the two men as capable of finding hope and compassion from each other without a threat to their heterosexuality or masculinity.



Image 14. Michael comforts Niels as they are imprisoned by Afghan terrorists.

The Nordic and American movies differ in the depiction of heterosexuality in other cases as well when in *Cold Pursuit*, but not in *Kraftidioten*, one of the gangster's behaviour reveals the insecurity about his masculinity and sexuality. The earlier discussion about violence already referred to one of the gangsters and his trick for getting women to sleep with him, and these scenes in particular reveal the fragility of masculinity and the need to prove one's identity as a heterosexual man. The scenes with this character question his masculinity and depict his insecurity about his manhood as, for him it seems, that masculinity is something that needs to be proven and accomplished. For this character, women have become numbers and achievements, as he knows exactly how many times out of a hundred his trick works and it has become an established ritual that is repeated over and over again in hope of sexual pleasure, but also for power over women. After all, he explicitly states that his trick works because he is able to exploit the maids' low wages by paying them more than their employer. Listening to his explanation about the method makes one question whether he is even doing it for his own pleasure or whether he is doing it to convince himself about his adequacy as a man instead, and to prove his heterosexuality, as well as some masculine ideal that he hopes to live up to. This character's "exaggerated heterosexuality" could then function to deny any question of homosexuality (Bourdeau 2011: 48). Interestingly, this aspect of the character is missing in the original film and has been added to the remake, implying that this is a greater issue and source of anxiety for American men.

5.3.3. Expectations and roles

As was discussed earlier, representations can affect people's perception of themselves. The movies seem to support this idea that the expectations and roles one might try to live up to can be influenced by popular culture, as is evident in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*. In both movies, when questioned about some of the characters' various nicknames, Nils/Nels' brother explains that having nicknames is a thing that gangsters do. When Nils/Nels asks his brother why he is called 'Wingman', he says that it is a reference to *Top Gun*. In *Kraftidioten*, he says to his brother in English, "You can be my wingman". This shows how the gangsters involved in the criminal world have become to some extent alienated from the real world and are instead playing characters, much like actors in a movie. In addition, in *Kraftidioten*, when Nils exclaims that "a father must revenge his son's death", his brother asks when has Nils become Dirty Harry, making another reference to American popular culture.

The effects of popular culture on the characters' perception of themselves and others is to some extent different between *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*. Whereas in *Cold Pursuit* it would seem natural that the criminals copy practices from their own culture, in *Kraftidioten* the criminals are emulating American culture. In the American remake, although Nels is perplexed by his brother's comment about the origin of his nickname, in a later scene the roles are reversed when Wingman asks where his brother got the idea for disposing his victims' bodies, by wrapping them in chicken wire and throwing the bodies down a waterfall. This time it is Nels whose life has been influenced by popular culture when he tells that he got the idea from a crime novel. The characters' obsession with popular culture then implies that they are solely playing characters and not their true selves and, in a way, performing someone else's masculinity that they have learned through fictional representations.

The perception of certain masculinities does not concern only the way men see themselves but also how they are seen by others. This is depicted in a scene found in *Brothers*, when a discussion about terrorists during a family dinner turns to the question of whom the 'good guys' (i.e. American soldiers) know to shoot. One of Sam's daughters comments that they only shoot the 'bad guys' (i.e. terrorists). When asked who the bad guys are, she responds that they are "the ones with the beards". In the movie this is played off as a joke and her comment gets an amused reaction from most of the adults in the scene. However, this scene shows the effect of representations in popular culture and media (for example, movies and news reporting) have on the collective unconscious and people's perception of certain groups. In fact,

even though the movie uses this scene for a comic effect, this idea presented by the small girl is reinforced by depicting the terrorists as men with beards, very much adhering to the stereotypical image of middle eastern terrorists in popular culture (Image 15)¹⁴.



Image 15. Terrorist threatening Sam with a gun.

The expectations and ideal attributes of masculinity are depicted quite differently in *Brødre* and *Brothers*, especially when analysing the characters of Michael and Sam. In the scenes set in Afghanistan, the American remake emphasises the character's toughness in order to survive his captivity. For example, in multiple scenes Sam tells the other American soldier to stay strong and not give the terrorists any information. In addition, early into their captivity, after the terrorists have discovered the other soldier's family photos, Sam tells him that he no longer has a son or a wife, it is only the two of them: "The only person you know is Private Willis and Captain Cahill. You know nothing else". Thus, he emphasises that they are unequal in rank and that the other man needs to follow his orders in order to survive, but also to suppress his emotions and affection towards his family. This is one of the notable differences between *Brødre* and *Brothers*, as the relationship and interaction between Sam and the other captured soldier is based on the hierarchy of the military, whereas in *Brødre* Sam does his best to comfort the other soldier, a radar operator called Niels, even though Michael is his superior. In contrast, the two men's mutual relationship in *Brothers* is nearly hostile as the other soldier yells at Sam, for example blaming him for saving the other man's life when their helicopter crashed.

¹⁴ This kind of stereotypes can be used as "short cuts" to easily condense a great deal of information about what is being represented (Dyer 1993: 12). For example, the viewer of a movie can be informed about certain characters' motivations based on their appearance as a terrorist. This kind of "typification" establishes a character immediately in the viewer's mind (ibid. 22).

Later when the other soldier is being tortured Sam yells at him to not give the terrorists anything. However, the other soldier breaks and, while being filmed by one of the terrorists, sends a message that the Americans should not be in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Sam is depicted as strong-willed, calm and tough. Thus, the movie presents the other American soldier as mentally weak for giving in to the terrorists' will. Not long after, Sam is forced to kill the other soldier, further establishing him as tough and the other man as weak. Thus, the other man is punished for his weakness by having the more strong-willed Sam beat him to death. In the original Danish film, there is a similar dynamic when Michael is depicted as calm and has to assure Niels that they will make it out alive. However, later when the terrorists see that Niels is no use for them, they tell Michael to kill him: "To live, you must be of use. He's of no use. Kill him".

Unlike in the remake, here Michael is allowed to live because he is useful for the terrorists by arming the rocket. Thus, it seems that the other soldier is chosen to die because of his weakness and lack of masculinity as he is unable to operate the large and heavy weapon, unlike Michael who arms the rocket with ease. In other words, lack of masculinity is what leads to the other soldier's death and, in both movies, the other man's death also functions to emphasise Sam and Michael as tough and powerful characters, even though they are mentally (and physically) damaged as a result of exerting their power. The contrast of the two character is emphasised earlier in *Brødre*, first when the captain who tells Michael about Niels' disappearance shows a picture of Niels and tells Michael that "he can barely wipe his own ass without help". Then later when Niels and Michael are being held captive, Niels laments how he will not survive, telling Michael that "I'm not like you guys. --- I can't do all this stuff". Thus, this again presents Niels as less tough and manly while establishing Michael as what Niels is not.

When looking at the roles men are expected to occupy in these movies, the most interesting character is that of the villain in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*. In both movies he is depicted as a sadistic criminal who is willing to punch his wife, who wants to control his son's life, has racist ideas about ethnic minorities and kills people. At the same time, he is depicted as a philanthropist and humanist¹⁵ who values loyalty and sticking to one's morals while also donating money to charity. He is fond of modern art and design and pays close attention to his (and his son's) diet, trying to be as healthy as possible and, based on his appearance, puts effort

¹⁵ For example, after he is killed, to announce his death the film displays his name accompanied by a peace sign in *Cold Pursuit* and the Happy Human logo (a symbol of secular humanism) in *Kraftidioten*.

into looking clean and youthful. Thus, his character portrays the contradictory ideas about what it means to be a ‘good’ man in the contemporary world, as even though Western cultures value assertiveness and strength, men are also expected to be sensitive and abandon the negative values associated with so called ‘traditional’ masculinity. In many ways Viking embodies the ‘new man’ type discussed earlier, although a violent one exhibiting toxic masculinity. Placing this exaggerated new man character as the film’s villain and against a protagonist who exemplifies a more traditional form of manhood¹⁶ suggests how these two different (although not necessarily competing) types of masculinity are valued differently. By making this ‘modern’ man the villain, the two movies represent men who exhibit this kind of masculinity as suspicious and a threat towards the positive values of traditional masculinity exemplified by the protagonist.

In *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, it is implied that the films’ protagonist and villain are both appreciated by their community only due to some instrumental benefit they provide. Nils and Nels are valued by the community for being integral for people’s lives as they could not get anywhere without someone keeping the roads open. Thus, Nils/Nels is seen as a utility that keeps society functioning. This becomes evident as, when he needs justice for his son, he is left alone, both by his community and his wife. The films’ main villains, Viking and The Count, are also valued by the community, because they are shown being active in charity and financing local schools, even though they are criminals and overall hostile and unpleasant men. This in turn implies that people are willing to look the other way and not hold one responsible for even acts of crime if they are wealthy, influential or beneficial for their community.

The four movies also represent how men are expected to behave in society in order to be appreciated and valued. In *Brødre* and *Brothers* this can be seen in the attitudes of the two main characters’ father towards his two sons. As an army veteran himself, Hank speaks of his son as a hero who is fulfilling his duty as an American citizen to protect his country. On multiple occasions he tells Tommy that he should be more like his brother. Tommy and Jannik also admit how they see their brother as better than themselves, for example when Jannik tells his father that “I know Michael was always better at the things men should be good at” or when in the remake’s corresponding scene Tommy says “I know Sam was always smarter than me”. To

¹⁶ Both Nils and Nels’ last names alone, Dickman and Coxman, imply how manly his character is. The characters’ names do not go unnoticed by others as in both movies his name is made fun of by the two police officers and the members of the local group of criminals.

this, Henning/Hank tells his son that Michael/Sam was different than him as he never gave up, implying that perseverance is a valuable attribute of men and one that Jannik/Tommy is lacking.

However, in *Brothers* as the film progresses, Hank's relationship with Tommy improves and he begins to appreciate his son and even signals that he is proud of Tommy. However, his appreciation of Tommy is not based on him as a person but rather on what he has or does. For example, he is impressed that Tommy was able to renovate his brother's kitchen, that he has a job fixing things and that he eventually gets a girlfriend. The relationship between the two men is similar in *Brødre* but with less confrontations between the two. For example, after Sam's funeral in *Brothers* the two get into a fight and Hank tells Tommy that he will never be able to replace Sam and that he has never been proud of Tommy, while in *Brødre* the two men's argument is shorter and less aggressive. In addition, Henning is not an army veteran in the original Danish movie. It would seem then, that in his father's eyes, the value of Tommy/Jannik is tied to some masculine traits and deeds that he has accomplished, these being involvement in manly occupations (such as fixing things), work and a heterosexual relationship. Thus, the two films imply that masculinity has to be earned and proven with various attributes associated with being a man such as work, certain skills and qualities as well as heteronormativity.

Both movies also present Michael/Sam's career in the military as an admirable quality that makes him more valuable as a man. The masculine qualities of his profession are emphasised even more with the remake's more explicit patriotic and militaristic imagery, such as the film's great number of uniformed men, American flags and shots depicting the small American town with shop windows and newspaper headlines supporting the American soldiers. Sam's manly profession is also referred to in a scene where his wife Grace jokingly suggests that she should go to Afghanistan instead, while Sam stays home with the kids. Her comment implies that the idea of a woman going to the army and a man staying home would be absurd according to traditional American gender roles¹⁷. This scene and similar patriotic imagery are missing in the original Danish film. Thus, the American film reinforces the idea that being in the army is for men and an occupation associated with American masculinity.

In the American remake, the fact that the two brothers' father suffered greatly because of his experiences in Vietnam is revealing about Sam's character as well. Despite seeing the

¹⁷ This scene could also be interpreted as Grace being tired of being the one who has to stay at home while his husband gets to fulfil his career. This interpretation would then imply that the 'positive' hegemonic masculinity of Sam, consisting of happy family life with his wife and children, would instead force his wife to adopt the traditional role of a housewife.

effect that war can have on a person, Sam still wants to pursue a career in his father's footsteps, protect his country, prove his manhood and become an American war hero, even at the price of losing his own life or becoming damaged much like his father. However, the film can be seen as deconstructing the idea of a war hero, as suggested by Shriver-Rice (2013: 168, 176). For example, Sam's identity as a war hero is in conflict with the reality of his actions as he is perceived by his community as a hero while being haunted by the knowledge of what he did in Afghanistan, knowing that what he did is far from heroic or admirable. A scene where Sam's identity and view of himself is challenged is when he encounters the wife and son of the soldier whom he killed and is told by her that he is "a good man". This same conflict is missing in *Brødre* as Michael is not seen as a great patriotic hero like Sam in the remake.

In addition to the way men are expected to be, the movies also depict the type of behaviour that is accepted of men. *Brødre* and *Brothers* differ from each other in this sense, especially regarding the characters of Jannik in the original Danish movie and Tommy in the American remake. In multiple scenes, things done by Jannik that either do not cause any reaction in others or are seen as amusing and harmless, are frowned upon when done by Tommy in the remake. A scene where this is most evident occurs soon after the funeral. Sarah/Grace is unable to sleep and receives a call from the drunken Jannik/Tommy who is at a bar and has run out of money. In the original film, when Sarah arrives at the bar to pick up Jannik and pay his bill, she laughs together with Jannik as he jokes about the bartender's enormous nose. They are both in a good mood while driving back and share their feelings about Michael until Sarah begins to cry. In the American version, Grace is extremely upset at Tommy and the drive back is skipped entirely. Similarly, others in the family, including the children, find Jannik's somewhat politically incorrect jokes amusing, such as when he jokes that Sarah has to wear pants because Michael is used to shooting anything in a dress (referring to Afghan women in burqas), whereas even slightly inappropriate behaviour by Tommy gets annoyed reactions, especially from Grace. This is another example of the American remake's political correctness that requires men to behave in a certain appropriate manner. This political correctness of the remake was observed also by Gemzøe (2013: 292-293) as she suggests that some of the more politically incorrect aspects of the original might have been too inappropriate for American audiences, or remaking the "humorous lightheartedness" of the original was too difficult.

5.3.4. Conclusion

Analysing this site of masculinity, the broadest and most extensive of the four, revealed how the four movies' male characters are positioned as opposed to others in the world. This included both men and women, men of other colour, class, nationality and sexuality as well as others in their family. As was discussed above, family values and children were central, especially in *Brødre* and *Brothers* for the growth and development of male characters, as were the values of traditional family life. However, the relationships between sons and fathers were found to be problematic, either because the male characters refusal to live according to their fathers' wishes or, as in the case of Sam, because they had become too much like their father who advises them to avoid the same mistakes done by them. The male characters face problems in their marriages as well and in all of the movies except *Kraftidioten*, the wife tries to save the marriage.

As has been discussed already on multiple occasions, the male characters are constructed and defined in juxtaposition to other characters. This is evident in the four movies, for example when the strength and toughness of Sam and Michael are emphasised against the weakness of the other soldier or when Nils/Nels' traditional manhood is contrasted with the toxic masculinity of the charismatic and youthful villain. Similarly, different male characters' ethnicities were used to establish them as what the 'other' is not, for example by depicting the brutality and barbaric behaviour of the Afghan terrorists. As most of the central characters are white heterosexual men, their reactions to homosexuality and gay characters are also depicted, both explicitly, as in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, or implicitly, as the assertions of some male characters' straight masculine identity shows in *Brødre* and *Brothers*. *Kraftidioten* and especially *Cold Pursuit* also stood out for their depictions of toxic masculinity and misogyny that were then used to critique such aspects of masculinity and men's behaviour.

In addition, this section explored some expectations and roles the male characters tried to live up to, however not always succeeding in their efforts. *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* presented the effect of popular culture on male characters as they attempted to live up to a fictional or someone else's version of masculinity. Similarly, the depiction of the foreign terrorists is affected by common conceptions of Middle-Eastern gunmen in *Brothers*. In the same film, the struggle to live up to the role of a tough and patriotic American war hero is shown to be one of Sam's struggles. The four movies also depict the kind of masculine traits that are valued in society, for example when, in his father's eyes, the value of Jannik and

Tommy is defined by his ‘success’ as a man or when Nils/Nels and the villain are valued solely for their instrumental value for the community.

5.4. The Internal World: experience of being male

This section looks at what the movies have to say about the internal experience of being male. This has a lot to do with the earlier discussion about the crisis experienced by many men and one that is said to affect masculinity in many ways in varying contexts. Because movies “play an important role in the articulation of psychic and cultural anxieties around masculinity and its perceived crisis” (Bainbridge & Yates 2005: 302), analysing this crisis and anxieties of men through film can be revealing of these issues.

This section is concerned with the vaguest sites of masculinity as well as the most difficult to discuss because, as a viewer of a movie, one cannot directly access the minds of the movies’ characters. Instead, closely analysing the movies is needed in order to understand this internal world of the male characters, for example by interpreting the characters’ actions and dialogue as well as the ways in which the characters’ internal experience may be reflected by *mise-en-scène*, editing, camera angles and other aspects of filmmaking. However, there is bound to be some overlap with the other sections discussed above especially because, if one chooses to believe some of the strongest claims about the topic, crisis is central to masculinity, “a condition of masculinity itself” (Walsh 2010: 9), and one that will have an effect on the entire experience of manhood.

5.4.1. Crises and anxieties

One problem and source of anxiety for the male characters is their feeling that they are inadequate as men and their role in society is threatened. In both movies, one problem for some of the characters is the threat to their role and identity as fathers. In *Brødre* and *Brothers*, this is shown when Michael/Sam returns from Afghanistan to see that his brother has become a part of his family’s life, has renovated the family’s kitchen (suggesting that Sam was not man enough to do so) and has replaced him as the girls’ closest male figure. For example, in a scene where the five of them (the two brothers, Sarah/Grace and the two girls) go ice skating, Michael/Sam only watches as the others are having fun on ice. Later, after a confrontation

within the family, Michael/Sam leaves their house and returns the following day. When he approaches the two girls who are playing outside, they no longer seem happy to see him. In fact, the two girls are scared of him and need to be reassured by their father not to be afraid. In the original film, this scene is preceded by Michael physically assaulting his wife and leaving the house in a fit of rage, thus making him seem more threatening for the rest of the family.

Throughout the two movies, after returning home from Afghanistan, Michael/Sam asks both his wife and brother if they had slept together while he was assumed to be dead. His brother tells that nothing happened between them, thinking first that Michael/Sam is joking by making such accusations. When asking his wife, she tells the truth that they only kissed once. However, this does not convince him and the conflict culminates when during one of the girl's birthday party, Michael/Sam's older daughter yells at his father, telling him that he should have stayed dead and that their mother was sleeping with Jannik/Tommy all the time when he was away. The girl's accusation is not explained in the original film, although in the American remake her bad mood is implied to be caused by Tommy arriving at the party with a new woman, suggesting that she is jealous for no longer being paid attention by Tommy. Although, she is lying, her father now believes that his wife has been unfaithful. Thus, his role and identity as a father and a husband have been greatly damaged and his masculinity threatened.

As was discussed earlier, women are given more agency and power in *Cold Pursuit* than in *Kraftidioten*. Thus, especially in the American remake, women become a threat to the masculinity of some characters, especially the characters of The Count and Viking. Throughout both movies, he is being threatened by his ex-wife with the custody of their son and she accuses him of being an inadequate father. In response to his wife's behaviour, in addition to using physical violence in an attempt to silence her, he sees it necessary to emphasise his wealth and difficult job, for example as reasons for not attending events at their son's school or telling his ex-wife how he can afford a more expensive lawyer than her. Both movies contain a scene where his wife is portrayed as particularly threatening for him, especially with the way the scene is presented visually. The scene begins with the Count/Viking laying in a bathtub with his eyes closed. For example, in *Kraftidioten*, the camera slowly pans to the left and then up to reveal his wife standing and looking down at him. As she greets him, he is startled and jumps in the tub. The presentation of the scene is particularly powerful at establishing the power relation between the two: the man is naked in the tub while his wife looms over him. Although the Count is shot at eye-level from a medium distance as he is sitting in the tub, the reverse shots

of his wife are from a low angle, making her seem threatening and powerful as she looks down on his husband while the viewer looks up at her (Images 16 and 17).



Image 16. The Count's ex-wife standing over him.

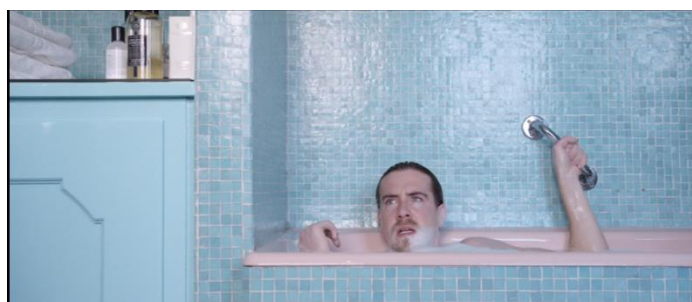


Image 17. Reverse-shot of The Count looking up at his ex-wife.

Another male character whose masculinity is threatened by a woman is Wingman, the protagonist's brother. In both movies he is married to a domineering Thai woman. However, she is given a backstory only in the remake as Wingman explains how he was supposed to beat her for stealing when he was still involved in crime but ended up marrying the woman instead. Although she is depicted as assertive and quite intense in character, she functions as a positive force in her husband's life by demanding that he no longer gets involved in crime and the people he used to work with. This is shown when she is suspicious and hostile towards Nils/Nels, whom she thinks to be one of Wingman's former criminal friends. Yet, Wingman is depicted as being domesticated by his wife, even more so in the remake as she yells orders and tells him, and his brother, what to do. The relationship between the two is difficult to interpret, however. Even though they seem to care for each other, after Wingman dies and she is standing next to his grave with Nils/Nels, rather than placing down flowers like he does, she spits on his late husband's grave angrily and walks away dragging a large travelling bag behind her through the snowy landscape. Overall, unlike in *Kraftidioten*, the female characters of the remake complicate the theme of masculinity as qualities that have traditionally been identified with men are embodied in these female characters as well, for example in the physical violence inflicted by Viking's wife, the assertiveness of Wingman's Thai wife and the female police officer's drive for fighting violent criminals when other men refuse to. Thus, unlike the other three movies, *Cold Pursuit* proves Connell's (1995: 230) claim that women are also "the bearers of masculinity".

In *Brødre* and *Brothers*, after getting home from Afghanistan, one of the central conflicts is caused by Michael/Sam's inability to open up about his experience and tell what happened to him while in captivity. In *Brødre*, Michael is unable to tell anyone that he was forced to kill the other captive soldier and after being rescued he is questioned if he saw anyone else at the camp.

He says that there was no one else but him and only later tells his superior that he saw Niels, who is assumed to be missing. However, he begins to say something to his superior, possibly about what happened to Niels, but stops and remains silent instead. This shows how Michael is conflicted about revealing the truth as he wants to tell how he killed the other man but is unable to do so. In *Brothers* the other soldier's body is found at the camp and the video of Sam killing him is accidentally destroyed during the attack by American soldiers. In both movies Michael and Sam are later confronted by the other soldier's wife and son. However, this is presented differently in the two movies. In *Brødre* Michael seeks Ditte, Niels' wife, and tells her that he saw Niels while in captivity. However, when she asks if he might still be alive, Michael cannot tell her the truth but lies instead, saying that Niels will surely return home alive. During their conversation Michael is sitting next to Niels' toddler son and, in a way, seeing the man whom he killed back in Afghanistan. In *Brothers* this scene is quite different as the other soldier's wife and son come to visit Sam's wife, rather than Sam himself wanting to talk to her.

Overall, a central issue in the movies is the lack of communication and men's inability to communicate with other people. This is foreshadowed early in *Brødre* in a scene where Michael has arrived in Afghanistan and contacts his wife. However, their conversation is interrupted as the phone's connection is not functioning properly. This then becomes a recurring motif throughout the entire movie as Michael (as well as Sam in *Brothers*) cannot tell his wife, or anyone else, about what he did and what happened to him in Afghanistan despite being asked directly. Michael and Sam's inability to communicate then leads to the deterioration of their relationships with others, violence and the final breakdown that sends the two men to prison (or a mental institution in *Brothers*). The toughness of the character is emphasised in the remake as Sam speaks to his superior and tells that he needs to get back to Afghanistan despite being rescued only recently. However, when telling this, instead of being instructed to recover from his experiences, Sam's toughness and insistence to go back are met with admiration by his superior, showing the unhealthy ideals men are supposed to live up to. Sam also tells him that the others do not understand him and what he had gone through. Yet, despite his claim about not being understood, Sam has not been shown even trying to tell anyone about his experience, despite being asked even by his father who has had similar experiences of war. Thus, the remake depicts Sam as wanting to fulfil his duty as an American and a man, even at the expense of his own wellbeing and mental health.

A scene between Sam and his father, which is missing in *Brødre*, shows how the problem with communication is a generational issue that has affected the whole family and is not a

problem of Sam alone but one of all the family's men. In the scene, Sam's father Hank asks if he is alright, sensing that something is wrong with his son. When Sam responds that he is fine, Hank tells him that he can talk to him about whatever is on his mind, going on to tell how he was unable to speak to his former wife after returning from Vietnam and then taking it out on his sons instead. Although it is not explicitly stated, this is also the reason for Hank's, as well as Tommy's alcoholism, as argued by Gemzøe (2011: 291) who suggests in her article that "Tommy's failures as a son are indirectly explained by the father's traumas in Vietnam" and that "the terrors of war are internalized", which then becomes an issue that is passed from father to son. In addition, for Shriver-Rice (2013: 177), Hank's problems are caused by the lack of self-reflection about his traumatic experiences of Vietnam and his idealised image of the US military despite most Americans' critical view of the war he fought in.

This same lack of communication is a central issue and cause of problems in the other two movies as well. Firstly, this is a problem the main character struggles with, especially in *Cold Pursuit*. Sometime after Nels' son is killed and he has become estranged from his wife, she asks him if he knew anything about their son, for example what kind of music he liked. When Nels is unable to provide an answer, she asks what the two men talked about during their hunting trips, to which Nels replies that they discussed hunting. Not pleased with his answer, she walks away. This scene is not included in the original film and establishes the relationship between Nels and his son while also displaying Nels' problems with communicating with others. Even though this scene is not included in the original Norwegian movie, there are scenes with Nils and his wife where it is his wife instead who refuses to speak. For example, during a scene where the two of them are having dinner together, Nils reaches out to touch his wife's hand to which she only pulls back in a sudden motion. In another scene (found in both movies) that takes place after Nils has killed the first one of the gangsters, he walks to his wife and asks if she wondered where he was last night (as he drove to the nearby city to interrogate and kill a man called Jappe/Speedo). When asking his wife, Nils is smiling and expressing pride for doing something to catch his son's killer. However, he does not receive any response from his wife who just sourly stares at the monitor of her computer. The two movies then differ to some extent as in the original Nils tries to establish a connection with his wife who is distant and refuses to speak while in the remake Nels is the more passive one, for example when he does not respond to his wife's questions about their son. However, in both movies this lack of communication leads to the same result as the main character's wife leaves while he is away, leaving only an empty note behind her and thus symbolising the absence of communication and use of words.

In addition, to the problems with communicating by the films' protagonists and their families, *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* also depict the miscommunication between other male characters. For example, the relationship between Nils/Nels and his brother is presented as problematic as the two have not spoken with each other in years when Nils/Nels shows up at Wingman's house to ask for help. However, this conflict between the two is not explained. The death of Nils/Nels' brother is also one instance where miscommunication leads to problems and eventually his death. When Nils/Nels orders an assassin to kill the villain, on his brother's suggestion, the killer goes to the villain instead and attempts to make a deal with him. The assassin tells The Count/Viking that he has been paid to kill him and that he will reveal the name of the person who ordered the killing if The Count/Viking pays him. When the villain agrees, the assassin only gives the name 'Dickman'. Thinking that Nils/Nels' brother Wingman, who is also a former employee of the villain's father, is behind this assassination attempt, The Count/Viking gets him killed rather than Nils/Nels who actually ordered the assassination. Before his death, as Wingman realises that the villain has confused him for his brother, whom he wants to protect, Wingman tells the villain that he has "a cancer in his ass", so they can do whatever they want with him. As a consequence, Wingman gives his life to protect his brother, exemplifying a kind of sacrificial masculine ideal that requires one to make great personal sacrifices and even lose his life, thus symbolising some of the unattainable ideals that men are expected to live up to. In addition, this scene exemplifies the extent of men's refusal and inability to communicate with others, as one of the characters loses his life because of insufficient communication.

Closely related to the issues with communicating, the films' male characters struggle also with displaying their emotions. This makes it at times difficult to interpret *Kraftidioten's* "emotionally suppressed blue collar worker" character of Nils in particular. For most of the movie, apart from few instances of anger, his character is played by Stellan Skarsgård as serious and stone-faced. The only instances where he exhibits positive emotions are when he has just killed the first one of The Count's goons and asks his wife if she had wondered about his whereabouts the previous night. However, when he does not receive an answer, Nils' face returns to the usual stoic expressionlessness.¹⁸ The only other times when Nils seems somewhat pleased and content is when he is driving through the sublime Norwegian landscapes in his plough truck. These scenes occur at the beginning of the movie before his son is killed and during the final

¹⁸ Just as Horrocks (1995: 75) comments about the heroes of the Western genre, at times Nils' "stoicism is akin to autism".

scene as the film's villain is dead. The former of the two scenes of him driving the truck is accompanied by a voice-over of his speech as he accepts the 'citizen of the year' award and he modestly tells how he should not be awarded for doing something he enjoys, i.e. driving his plough truck and keeping the roads open. In both movies, the speech he is expected to give is also a source of anxiety for him as he tells his wife that he does not want to be speaking in front of the people.

Nels in *Cold Pursuit* is played by Liam Neeson in a similar manner but with more and stronger emotions. For example, when he encounters his late son's friend, he yells at him and demands to know about the son's death while pushing the boy against the wall. The main character is much more held back and less violent in the corresponding scene of the original film. Prior to this scene, Nels also displays greater grief and agony as he is getting ready to end his own life than his Norwegian counterpart, as Nels is shown visibly shaking and grimacing as he puts the barrel of a gun in his mouth. Additionally, in the American remake, Nels expresses more positive emotions than Nils, for example in an early scene where he arrives home with his son. This scene is missing in the original movie as the father and son are never shown interacting with each other. Another scene that has Nels expressing happiness shows him driving the plough truck together with Ryan, the main villain's son whom Nels had abducted the previous day. In this scene both the boy and Nels are smiling and laughing as Ryan sits on his lap and navigates the truck. The same scene in *Kraftidioten* is missing the light-heartedness of the remake. Thus, when comparing these two men in the original Danish movie and the remake, it seems that the American character is allowed to express a wider range of emotions, both negative and positive ones. Yet, both movies still depict the protagonist as introverted and struggling to show others how he feels.

Meanwhile the two films' villains, The Count and Viking, seem to have the opposite problem as they cannot contain their inner negative emotions or process them in a constructive and non-violent manner. In both movies his anger and frustration result in violence and aggression as is seen when he punches (or tries to punch) his ex-wife. However, his issues with anger are not limited to this single scene or caused only by the woman, even though she is a source of much anxiety to him. Other instances where he gets upset in a similar manner include a scene where he hears that one of his men has gone missing and he is soon shown screaming at his phone or when he thinks that the rival gang has kidnapped his son and begins spouting racist remarks about the other gang's members. In both movies then, the villain's problems with containing his negative emotions are presented as a weakness and an undesirable trait while the

calmness of the main character (and even the other criminals) is depicted in a more positive manner, although not completely problematic either. Thus, both *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* present two extremes of the exhibition of emotions in the form of the protagonist and the villain as one is closed in and unable to show his feelings while the other cannot contain his negative emotions that results in rage and aggression instead.

The same kind of problems with showing emotions are present in the other pair of movies, although the male characters of these two movies are emotionally more complex. The father characters of the two brothers are both shown struggling with intimacy and exhibition of emotions. For example, in *Brødre*, Henning and Jannik are talking about how they were both acting stupidly when they began arguing after Michael's funeral. After only a few words into their conversation, Henning says how it was good to talk things through properly and begins to fuss about coffee, trying to change the subject. When Jannik pushes on and tries to talk more with his father, Henning snaps and becomes agitated for a moment. In the remake, the conversation is equally brief until Tommy starts talking about his brother.

However, the two characters also differ in some ways. A scene that illustrates this well in *Brødre* occurs when the drunken Jannik arrives at his brother's house only to find that he has been killed in Afghanistan, being the last one in the family to find out. He then drives to his parent's house where his father, who is also in the middle of drinking, seems happy to see him. However, once Jannik goes to his mother she is in the middle of rearranging records and begins to cry as Jannik speaks to her. He does not say anything but gets close to her and places a hand on her shoulder (Image 18). The emotional weight of the scene is emphasised with the use of close-ups of the two characters and their mourning. Meanwhile, Henning is shown sitting in another room and continuing to drink with a pained expression on his face. Thus, this scene implies that Henning was unable to console his wife and used alcohol to escape the situation instead. Only once Jannik arrived at their house, his mother was able to get comfort after hearing about the death of her son. This is reinforced by Henning's delighted expression upon seeing his son, as he does not have to be the one consoling his wife.



Image 18. Jannik consoling his grieving mother.

In the remake this scene is changed to some extent as it is Tommy who is consoled by his stepmother, as he only sits outside of their house before being brought in. This scene also shows Hank depressed and engaged in drinking alcohol. As his son enters the house, Hank is shot from long distance through a doorway, with the figure of Tommy obscuring the right side of the screen, making Hank look small and as if he is getting closed in by the edges of the frame (Image 19). He is unable to say anything to Tommy at first and only offers his son a drink of strong liquor, which he denies. In the American version, both men are shown unable to console others in their grief or seek comfort for their own pain, as Tommy just ends up sitting outside his parents' house and Hank numbs his sorrow with alcohol. Thus, Jannik in the Danish film is depicted as more empathetic and able to cope with negative emotions better than Tommy in the remake and is also able to comfort others unlike his American counterpart. This becomes evident in the funeral scene as well, when Jannik again comforts his mother while singing a hymn, unlike Tommy in the remake who just stands silently some distance away from the others.



Image 19. Hank drinking after hearing about his son's death.

As the scene at the father's house shows, the movies represent some characters' problematic use of alcohol in dealing with their inner crises and anxieties. However, the way this is done differs to some extent. The use of alcohol and problems caused by it are more present in *Brødre* and *Brothers* where it is depicted both as a problem and in a more positive manner as well. The depiction of alcohol and drinking is more conflicted in *Brødre* where both Jannik and the boy's father are alcoholics. Jannik is shown drinking in bars and then needing others' help in getting home, or irresponsibly driving under influence while his father drinks alone at home or secretly from a flask, as in the scene after his son's funeral. In *Brothers*, Tommy and Hank are depicted in a similar manner. Both movies also depict alcohol as a reason of much conflict within the family, as, when after Michael/Sam's funeral, his brother does not allow their father to drive them home, because he has been secretly drinking. In both movies, the father gets upset and begins verbally abusing his son.

Considering the use of alcohol, the character of Michael is changed in this sense in the remake. In *Brødre*, Michael is not shown engaging in excessive drinking until the end of the movie. Prior to the film's climax where Michael loses his nerve, destroys the family's kitchen and attacks his wife, he is shown drinking hard liquor and downing large amounts of alcohol. This scene would suggest that Michael is using alcohol as a coping mechanism to deal with his mental anguish, but instead it triggers his violent side and leads to him attacking his wife. Meanwhile in *Brothers*, Sam is not shown drinking and his destroying the kitchen is a consequence of the mounting pressure he is experiencing and his extreme jealousy and suspicion over his wife's infidelity. Despite depicting the negative aspects of alcohol, the two movies also show its more positive uses, for example during the scene where Jannik/Tommy and Sarah/Grace are having an intimate discussion by a fireplace while drinking and smoking or when Jannik/Tommy and his friends are renovating the kitchen and drinking beer.

In *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, alcohol plays a more sinister role, even though it has less significance for the plot than in the other two movies. In both movies, alcohol is used to signify the desperation experienced by Nils/Nels. During the scene when he is attempting to end his own life, Nils/Nels is first shown taking a long drink from a bottle of hard alcohol before putting the barrel of a rifle in his mouth. This scene shows how he is unable to cope with the grief of losing his son but cannot bring himself to commit suicide without numbing himself first with alcohol. The use of alcohol also emphasises his anguish for the viewer and depicts alcohol as problematic and harmful. Another scene with a similar function can be found in *Cold Pursuit*, as Nels is sitting alone at a bar and drinking but does not seem to gain any pleasure from this.

Thus, both movies emphasise alcohol's negative effects on the main character. Similarly, in *Brødre* and *Brothers*, alcohol is shown to be partially causing the male characters' problems, even if drinking is not depicted solely as a problem or a negative thing.

As has been discussed already, both Nils and Nels are driven to attempt suicide after their sons are killed and they are faced with problems in their marriage. As was alluded to earlier, the two movies present this scene somewhat differently as, although he is shown to be in pain, in the Norwegian film Nils does not express great emotional anguish as he prepares his gun to shoot himself. In *Cold Pursuit*, the same scene presents Nels from a long distance, making him seem small in the frame. In a close up, as he puts the barrel of the gun in his mouth, he is seen trembling and grimacing as he prepares to end his life. Although this scene is rather grim, it also gives some levity for the viewer in both movies as his son's friend who has been hiding in the next room emerges and speaks to Nils/Nels. Seeing him, the suicidal man looks awkwardly at him, dumbfounded with the barrel of the gun in his mouth in a scene of pitch-black humour (Image 20). Even though the American remake presents this scene in a more dramatic manner, the two movies do not differ greatly apart from the stronger emotions exhibited by Nels in the remake.



Image 20. Nils looks at his son's friend with the barrel of a rifle in his mouth.

However, *Brødre* and *Brothers* handle the issue of suicide and mental trauma completely differently, as the Danish original does not allude to suicide at all, unlike the American remake. During the film's climax, the police have arrived at Sam's house and he is standing on the lawn with the police on one side and Tommy and Grace on the opposite side. Sam is holding a gun and frantically pointing it back and forth as the police yell at him and Sam screams incoherently about the things he has done, fires his gun in the air and demands that the police shoot him. The stand-off intensifies and finally Sam puts the gun to his head, threatening to shoot himself

(Image 21). The others start yelling and pleading him to put the gun down, but their voices are taken over by a non-diegetic Arabic-sounding musical cue, the same one that played earlier in the movie when Sam is beating the other American soldier to death. The presentation of this scene, especially regarding the use of music, suggest that Sam is suffering from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) as he becomes disorientated and is momentarily taken back to the moment in Afghanistan when he killed his fellow soldier. This does not mean that Sam's mental struggles can be explained solely as a symptom of his PTSD, but this scene gives a reason for his behaviour as opposed to Michael whose mental breakdown at the end of *Brødre* is not explained as clearly. Overall, the issue of mental trauma plays a larger role in the remake as it is implied that Sam has been seeing a therapist after his rescue from Afghanistan, while this is not referred to in *Brødre*. In addition, Sam is closed into a mental hospital at the end of the film while Michael ends up in prison.



Image 21. Sam pointing a gun to his head.

Sam's PTSD is depicted in another scene of the film as well. After getting home from Afghanistan both Michael and Sam are shown suffering from insomnia, and during a night-time scene in *Brødre*, Sarah discovers Michael in the middle of the night ominously sitting in their dining room and eating children's cereal while staring ahead. Sam's concerning behaviour is depicted as well in a night-time scene in *Brothers*, as he is pictured in the family's new kitchen rearranging glasses and plates. He tries to place the dishes in a symmetrical and aligned manner and seems frustrated with their order. While being occupied with obsessively trying to organise the dishes, Sam hears a sound coming from outside and jerks towards the window. The camera pulls back and reveals that Sam is holding his pistol as if ready to shoot anyone who might try to enter the house (Image 22). He then proceeds to patrol the house with his gun to check that no one has entered the house. Thus, Sam is clearly presented as paranoid, thinking that he is still in danger and wants to protect himself and his family from some imagined threat. In *Brødre*,

Michael is also shown organising the dishes in a similar obsessive manner, but the corresponding scene is set during day-time and does not involve a gun. In fact, it is implied that Michael does not even own a gun and has to grab one from the police during the film's climax as they are distracted by handcuffing his brother. By showing Sam with a gun, the American film establishes him as dangerous sooner in the film in anticipation to an inevitable mental breakdown due to his PTSD.



Image 22. Sam pulls out his gun after hearing a sound at night.

5.4.1. Conclusion

This section has explored the various internal conflicts the films' men struggle with. These included their insecurities as men when faced with threats to their manhood, for example by women and other male characters. This, one could argue, is an example of hegemonic masculinity being contested by men who want to obtain that position as well as those in the dominant position struggling to live up to the demands of hegemonic masculinity but failing to do so. Examples of the latter would include the characters of Sam and Michael who no longer can fulfil their roles as fathers as well as The Count and Viking who are threatened by their ex-wives and other men who want to kill the two.

Another source of problems for the films' male characters was their inability to deal with and express their emotions. This manifested in the movies as silence and passivity as well as violent outbursts of rage caused by the men's inability to talk. These problems were also found to manifest as the problematic use of alcohol as it was both a symptom and a cause of the characters' troubles. Yet, for the characters of Nils, Nels and Sam, their internal struggles mounted too far and resulted to suicidal behaviour. Overall, this section has highlighted many of the difficulties the men of these four movies struggle with, which are also not confined to

the cinematic worlds these characters inhabit but represent real anxieties of real men. For example, many of the characters exhibit what has been referred to as normative male alexithymia, or the “inability to describe or even be aware of one’s emotions”, as well as male relational dread, meaning the anxiety caused by situations where men need to show empathy or communicate with others (Kahn 2009: 217). Thus, these fictional men’s experiences represent problems that are reality for many men.

6. Discussion

This final section of the thesis will discuss the results of the analysis and their implications for the films' representations of masculinity and what the films imply about men and masculinity in the American as well as the Nordic culture. Based on the findings of the analysis, this section explains the contradictions of masculinity found in these movies, followed by a discussion of the remaking practices of the movies and how they too are significant for representations of masculinity. Finally, the thesis ends with some concluding remarks about the results, successes and limitations of the research as well as some points about the opportunities this thesis has provided for the future.

6.1. The contradictory nature of masculinity

This thesis began with reference to the contradictory nature of masculinity in contemporary Western society, with its conflicting expectations of men, the ways men are depicted in media products, such as movies, as well as masculinity's need to define itself against its opposite and what it is not. These contradictions are very much present in the analysed four movies as well, despite representing two different cultures of production. Thus, the four analysed movies seem to support Segal (2007: 103) when she writes that "masculinity is structured through contradictions". In this section I will discuss the findings of the analysis in regard to these contradictions of masculinity by presenting four that emerged during the analysis.

Firstly, the films' depictions of masculinity and fatherhood show how conforming to the ideals and norms of society do not necessarily translate into a happy family life. In the Danish film *Brødre* and its American remake *Brothers*, the character of Michael/Sam is no longer adequate as a father for his two daughters after he comes home from the war, carrying with him the mental trauma of his experience. The girls who once liked their father have become more fond of his brother whose character very much differs from the 'ideal' role model for the two children as he smokes, drinks excessively and has a history of violent crime. Thus, the two movies depict a crisis of fatherhood as the qualities that once were considered to contribute to a happy and meaningful fatherhood are no longer sufficient. This contradiction is even stronger in *Brothers* where, even as a patriotic war hero, Sam is no longer capable of being a good enough father for his children who have become alienated from their father and would rather be with their misfit uncle. Yet, the same two movies also show how Jannik and Tommy are able to

develop as men and live a happier life, even if it comes with the price of conforming to the values of the dominant culture.

This same contradiction is present in the other two movies, *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*. Here we can return to Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005: 852) statement about how "hegemonic masculinity does not necessarily translate into a satisfying experience of life". In these two movies the characters of The Count and Viking embody dominant masculinity in their cultures as the two men are wealthy, powerful, influential and even famous in their local communities. Despite this they have not succeeded as fathers for their young sons who are trapped between the custody fight of their parents while becoming fond of the much more ordinary kidnapper who represents traditional values of masculinity instead. Although in *Cold Pursuit*, Nels struggles with his own shortcomings as a father, his relationship with Ryan, the villain's son, leads him to develop as a person and a fatherly figure. These two movies show that although Western culture values youthfulness, wealth and power, they do not necessarily translate into a happy life and successful fatherhood as the young boy of these movies finds a new, better father in an older, less wealthy and ordinary man.

Thus, much like the crisis of American masculinity following WW2 as the working life began its transition from blue-collar professions into white-collar ones, with women also occupying many positions at work, these two movies display a similar crisis, but in regards to men's roles in the family and society: the white-collar villain's dominant masculinity is threatened by his ex-wife, ethnic and sexual minorities as well as the blue-collar protagonist. A similar opposition of blue- and white-collar men was found by Boyle and Braton (2012: 474-475) in their analysis of *The Expendables*¹⁹, with the "effeminate" white-collar villain and his henchmen as well as the "manly" ageing blue-collar heroes. In *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, as well as *The Expendables* as analysed by Boyle and Braton, the defeat of the main villain "can be read as a symbolic "expending" of the avaricious white-collar boss by the diligent but exploited working-class man" (ibid.). There is another similarity between the movies analysed here as well as Boyle and Braton's analysis when they note that "in the latest crisis of masculinity narratives, while the white man imagines himself as slighted to the margins of society alongside his fellow racialized Americans—his very lamentation of being marginalized maintains his place at the center" (ibid. 477). Although their comment is made in regards to movies made soon in the wake of the "Great Recession", it rings true to the two movies analysed

¹⁹ *The Expendables* and its two sequels are action movies with an ensemble cast of mostly older male action heroes, such as Sylvester Stallone and Bruce Willis.

here as well, as the character of Nils/Nels is ultimately marginalised much like the other characters exploited by the gang of white-collar criminals, i.e. the assassin and members of the other criminal gang marked by their ethnicity. Thus, in this sense, *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* follow the tradition of masculine crisis movies of the late 2000s' recession where the white male protagonists find their place in society threatened, despite the privilege their gender and colour of skin provides them.

The second contradiction presented in the movies also concerns one of this thesis' most important concept: hegemonic masculinity. The question the films raise is what is presented as the dominant kind of masculinity that subordinates other men and women. In *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* this is evident in the hegemonic masculinity of the films' main villains, The Count and Viking, as the two hold both hard (violent henchmen, guns) as well as soft (money, influence) power. By making these two the films' villains, the movies depict the dominant masculinity of these two characters as evil and instead takes the side of the marginalised and subordinated men who fight against the villains. Thus, it is interesting to note what kind of men these two movies depict in the hegemonic position. The Count and Viking are both modern, feminine and 'new' as opposed to the traditional manhood represented by the protagonists and the other criminal gangs' members. In a way then, *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* present this new more sophisticated man, who has become alienated from traditionally manly things such as manual labour and nature, as a threat to traditional values of manhood and vice versa. The two villains also exhibit behaviour and traits associated with 'toxic masculinity' such as dominance, control, rage and opposition of women (Haider 2016: 558-559; Hamblin 2016), or generally all negative aspects of masculinity (Flood 2018). Thus, The Count and Viking are depicted as embodiments of many negative aspects of masculinity and men, as opposed to the protagonist and hero of the movies who is the exemplar of traditional masculine values. Although Nils and Nels are also problematic characters and their actions and behaviour can be ethically questionable and their morals vague, they are still the ones the viewer is supposed to identify with and root for.

The other two movies, *Brødre* and *Brothers*, present a different kind of depiction of dominant masculinity in the form of Michael and Sam. Both are white heterosexual middle-class men who live a happy and stable life. They are also influential due to their reasonably high rank in the gendered institution of the military. Thus, these two movies represent hegemonic masculinity as a healthier and more positive ideal for men to follow unlike the Norwegian movie and its remake where hegemonic masculinity is synonymous with violence,

misogyny and toxic behaviour. However, *Brødre* and *Brothers* show that even the dominant position of the two characters is not stable when the two characters return home from war as damaged and traumatised. As a consequence, they are alienated from the rest of society and their families. In these movies, Jannik and Tommy are the ones exhibiting some behaviour one could label as toxic, although, them being adopted by the family helps them develop as men and abandon some of their bad ways.

What the analysis has shown is that comparing the Norwegian film and its remake with the other two movies, demonstrates how hegemonic masculinity is specific to a culture and time as the two pairs of movies represent hegemonic masculinity differently. In addition, in *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* the values of hegemonic masculinity are to be contested and challenged while *Brødre* and *Brothers* depict them as something that men should pursue for a satisfying and secure live. As has been argued for example by Bainbridge & Yates (2005: 306-307), since the early 2000s movies have presented stories where the distinction between good and bad are no longer obvious. This is the case with these four movies as well when Nils and Nels, despite being the protagonists and ‘heroes’ of the movies, are also violent killers while Michael and Sam play the role of a husband and father but are also threats to their families’ well-being and safety. Thus, these movies provide more complex and morally ambiguous objects of identification for the viewer, and because of this, “open up spaces in which alternative modes of masculinity can be imagined” (ibid.).

A third significant contradiction can be observed in the films’ message about the characters’ crises and the resolutions that follow at the end of their narratives. What *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* seem to imply is that revenge, violence and killing can be used to reach one’s goals, as is presented by the characters of Nils/Nels and Papa/White Bull who both find peace after the villain is killed. However, getting their revenge comes with a great price of numerous dead men from both gangs as well as the death of Nils/Nels’ brother. Nonetheless, both men seem content as they drive towards the horizon with the plough truck in the film’s closing shot. The film’s ending has an upbeat tone that is emphasised with the character’s positive mood and music, despite the death and chaos the two characters have left behind. The films can hardly be called critical of violence either as both depict it mostly in an entertaining manner. The ending of the two movies has also another bleak interpretation when one considers the character arc of the protagonist as he has hardly grown or developed as a person during the narrative. In fact, both movies end and begin in exactly the same manner with shots of Nils/Nels driving his plough truck through snowy landscapes, implying that everything is still the same and the character

has not learned anything about his challenges and the violence he has inflicted upon others. Even though Nels has to question the relationship with his son and both movies show the main character taking care of the small boy, at the conclusion of the narrative neither have changed much.

Although the ending of *Brødre* and *Brothers* is quite bleak as Michael/Sam is sobbing in his wife's arms and confesses to killing the other man, it is also more hopeful and does not allow equally cynical interpretations as discussed above. During *Brødre* and *Brothers*, Michael and Sam have gone from living a happy and secure life to emotionally scarred individuals who have been alienated from their loved ones. The cause for their anguish has been implied to be their difficulty in talking about their traumatic experiences and confess what they have done. In addition, in *Brothers* Sam is denied the role of a patriotic war hero, the images of which prevail in American culture. Despite others' perception of him as heroic, the reality of his actions and experiences conflict with the way others see him. Thus, in both movies the characters of Sam and Michael remain victims of the war without being redeemed by getting revenge and defeating their terrorist captors, unlike in heroic and victorious narratives of war.

The final scene of both movies finally shows the two men overcoming their inability to speak, which can be interpreted as a moment of growth for the characters. Thus, although the ending is tragic and sad, there is still hope as Michael and Sam can begin healing from the damage done to them. While in the other two movies the protagonist gets a 'happy' ending but has not learned anything along the way and is in denial about the chaos and suffering he has caused, in *Brødre* and *Brothers* both brothers have gone through a great tragedy but have been able to grow as a result. In a way then, the ending of the latter two movies contain a more hopeful message about men and their ability to change, even though this change comes through suffering. If "male power can be consolidated through cycles of crisis and resolution" (Segal 2007: xxiii), this becomes evident in these four movies as Nils/Nels goes through the crisis of losing his son and wife but comes through unchanged, Jannik/Tommy has gone through years in prison but is able to grow with the help of his family and Sam/Michael's happy life is ruined by his traumatic experience and he begins to heal once he is able to open up to his wife.

The fourth contradiction the movies present regards the role of violence in the movies. The most critical of the four films towards violence is *Brødre* as all of its instances of violence, both in Afghanistan and at home, are depicted as hopeless acts of brutality and pain. Ultimately, the film ends with a message about the futility of war and violence as well as its negative effects

on individuals, when Michael proves his masculine power and manliness by beating the other soldier to death but in doing so, ends up destroying himself as well. Although, *Brothers* does not glorify personal violence and implies that the Americans' presence in the Middle-East is problematic, it still very much valorises the US Military, an institution built on violence. Thus, although its message on the dangers and destructive power of violence as well as proving one's manhood through violence are similar as in the Danish original, *Brothers* seems conflicted in its negative view on violence and paying respect to those who inflict it on others in the name of the military. Still, the depictions of violence in both movies show their critical stance on military conflict as films that are critical of war depict violence as "barbaric, meaningless and morally wrong" (Kirkham & Thumin 1993: 17), which both movies most certainly do.

The two other movies seem to take a completely different stance on violence, however. As mentioned earlier, in both movies violence and its consequences are depicted as ugly and painful, yet entertaining. The films' message about violence seems also contradictory when both movies present how mindless the characters' violence is and how it only results in destruction and pain. Despite this, violent revenge is also the only way in which the main character and the other gang's patriarchal leader Papa/White Bull are able to find peace and be happy again. The final shootout of the movies seems to question its message of violence for a moment as Nils/Nels is hopelessly caught in between the two gangs killing each other. However, as also discussed earlier, following this moment where the main character seems to question all of the violence he has inflicted and experienced, he gets himself together and the film returns to its manly power fantasy as the main character gets in his vehicle and impales the villain's car with the trunk of a tree. Thus, despite the up-beat tone of *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit's* endings, both movies act as tragic lessons in the effects and futility of violence as well as the vicious cycle the male characters are trapped in, trying to construct their masculine identity through the only way they know how to communicate and solve things: violence. Ultimately then, violence is more proof of the male characters' crises, insecurities and loss of control because, as Connell (1995) writes:

[v]iolence is part of a system of domination, but it is at the same time a measure of its imperfection. A thoroughly legitimate hierarchy would have less need to intimidate. The scale of contemporary violence points to crisis tendencies --- in the modern gender order. (Connell 1995: 84)

In summary, the films prove how the lives of men are filled with contradictions concerning for example their role in society and family, the expectations others (and themselves) have of

them and how they should prove and construct their manhood. No wonder that many perceive masculinity to be caught in perpetual cycles of crisis and resolution as men struggle with the contradictory, unstable and often unattainable ideals of hegemonic masculinity, only to find that what is seen as ‘correct’ and desirable masculinity does not bring them happiness.

6.2. Remaking masculinity

Unlike argued by Verevis (2006: 3), the two American remakes are more political than the original Nordic movies. This same observation has been made by Gemzøe (2013: 293-294) in her article on *Brødre* and *Brothers*, where she also points to the removal of local detail of the Danish original in favour of new American local detail that is added in the remake. When considering the new context of the narrative, setting a story about the Afghanistan war in America rather than in Denmark is due to have changes to the story’s meaning. As Gemzøe notes, the remake “has to account for the political situation in the US about the war in Afghanistan, which is no small task” (ibid. 290). The American audience that the remake addresses can then identify more with the ‘good guys’ of the war in the film’s “dichotomy of good and bad in an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ war saturated national state of mind” (Shriver-Rice 2013: 171). Meanwhile, for the Danish viewer of the original film, the ‘us’ is less clearly defined by nationality due to Denmark’s smaller role in a global conflict of multiple nations.

This relocation of the war-narrative from Denmark to the United States, I argue, also changes the films’ focus and message about the central issues. While *Brødre* is more about men’s issues in the family as well as their disillusionment with their place in society as men, the central issue of *Brothers* is more American as the United States is greatly involved in the war in question, which has affected more American families and soldiers in combat than in Denmark. Thus, the remake is more about the war and its effects on individuals and those close to them, while the original portrays more general issues of manhood and family life. In fact, as pointed out by Shriver Rice (2011: 21), the director of *Brothers*, Jim Sheridan, has gone on record stating that the focus of his film was more on post-traumatic stress disorder than politics. Meanwhile, the Danish original (and many Danish films in general) is aiming for “intimate psychological ‘realism’ that feels *emotionally authentic*” (ibid. 10), thus focusing more on the individual characters than the effects of war. This ‘emotional authenticity’ and intimacy are emphasised by Susanne Bier’s realistic and almost documentary-style filmmaking, using hand-held cameras and extreme close-ups of the characters, as opposed to Sheridan’s more

conventional style of Hollywood filmmaking. Bier's style of filmmaking and choice of aesthetic style also make *Brødre* more realistic and natural when compared to the artificiality and studio-level production of *Brothers*. In addition, Bier's use of a visual style reminiscent of the Danish Dogme 95 movement marks the film as recognisably Danish for those familiar with the style of filmmaking in question²⁰. As I argued in an earlier section, the American remake aims to explain Sam's condition with PTSD caused by his traumatic experience, while the cause of Michael's mental breakdown at the end of the movie is more ambiguous. This kind of ambiguity and removal of references to domestic violence in the remake are examples of what Mazdon (2017: 30) calls "moral clarity" that is typical of Hollywood remakes.

Much like the change of context had an effect on the politics of *Brødre* and *Brothers*, the same applies to *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit*, although here the changes concern racial politics, gender and politics of the welfare state. Throughout *Kraftidioten*, there are scenes that allude to the Norwegian society and the welfare state its citizens live in. This issue is explicitly brought up by two of the Norwegian gangsters as they are sitting in a car and one of them complains about the snow. As a response, the other man goes on listing places that, in his view, are much worse or uninhabitable, including many third world countries but also places like California and Spain. He argues that there are no sunny or warm welfare states and ends his rant by stating "Sunshine or welfare". In a later scene, two of the Serbian gangsters are also sitting in a car and wondering why Norwegian women are picking up their dogs' poop. They begin talking about Norway and the other explains how good their prisons are: warm food, dental care, no rape and nice guards and other prisoners. All of this is unbelievable for the other Serbian man.

By commenting on the Norwegian welfare state, the film points to its flaws and contradictions. Despite a system that aims to provide well-being for all its people, there are criminals who thrive on the sale of drugs while men like Nils suffer the consequences. Thus, a central issue of the film is the main character's loneliness in an environment of well-being and prosperity. After Nils' son is killed and he asks what the police and authorities are going to do about it, he is only told that they cannot do anything if his son decided to ruin his own life with drugs (as his death is made to look like an overdose). When Nils does not accept that his son was a junkie, his wife gets angry at him, becomes distant and eventually leaves him. The death

²⁰ According to Stenport (2016: 440), many Nordic films can be defined as psychological or analytical dramas with emphasis on character development. In this sense, *Brødre* (as well as other movies directed by Bier) exemplifies this tradition of Nordic filmmaking, in addition to its aesthetic influenced by the Dogme 95 movement.

of his son, the complete lack of help and his wife's behaviour towards him, drive Nils to attempt suicide. He gains back his will to live only once he decides to get revenge and doing himself what society failed to do for him. Even though Nils is awarded as his community's most valuable person, he is still left alone when something concrete needs to be done. This shows, how even in a welfare state like Norway, men are left to depend on themselves, even at their lowest point²¹.

Again, the change of context has an effect on the American remake's politics. As the United States does not follow the same kind of welfare state system as Norway, the removal of these aspects of the original film make sense. In the remake, these aspects are replaced by commentary on gender and racial issues, the latter of these two being a significant part of the narrative. As was discussed in the earlier sections, the remake gives female characters more agency and power, while also increasing the time these characters are shown on-screen. A significant change is also the addition of a female police officer whose investigation is followed in detail in the remake, while his male colleague is depicted as lacking any interest in the job of stopping the violent crimes taking place. However, despite the addition of the female character, her role in the narrative remains to discover information the viewer already possesses and re-explain what has happened in the movie so far. Thus, unfortunately the inclusion of more women in the story saturated by male characters does not serve a greater purpose apart from functioning as an expository device for the viewer. Meanwhile, the change of Serbians into Native Americans has a great significance for the racial politics of the remake as was also discussed in the previous section. Because of these changes in setting as well as political aspects of the films related to gender, race and society, the main characters' loneliness and alienation are presented slightly differently in the two movies: Nils' loneliness is emphasised by setting the film in a Norwegian welfare state that aims to provide a good life for everyone, while despite the privilege of being a white heterosexual man, in the remake Nels becomes just another person among other marginalised people in the American society, i.e. the Native Americans, African Americans, homosexuals and, one could argue, women as well.

As discussed throughout section 2., adaptations and especially American remakes of foreign movies are often attacked by critics on the grounds of exploitation of the original film and the culture that produced it. Although, it is true that both *Brothers* and *Cold Pursuit* have stripped

²¹ Henry Bacon (2010: 63) shows that movies depicting characters exercising vigilante justice (*Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* being such) reflect distrust and scepticism towards society. By being failed by society, the protagonists of such movies are then justified to inflict violence and take justice into their own hands.

away recognisably local details of the original movies (for example the original language, setting and other cultural references) and replaced them with ones more suitable for the new American context, this has been done in order to use the original narratives to comment on something relevant for the new American context. Thus, the remakes are not solely the same movie but done again in America and for American English-speaking audiences. In addition, unlike argued by Hutchinson & O'Flynn (2013: 147) that Hollywood adaptations can “[deemphasise] any national, regional, or historical specificities” of the original, the analysis has showed how the remakes are in fact more specific in their representation of national identity of the new American context than the original movies where the culture of production is less prevalent in the movies.

Considering the taxonomies of remakes discussed in section 2.2., both movies could be placed either in Greenberg's (1998) categories of “the acknowledged, close remake” with hardly any changes to the original or “the acknowledged, transformed remake” with “substantial transformations of character, time and setting”, or somewhere in between the two as argued by Gemzøe (2013: 289) about *Brødre* and *Brothers*. This is due to very minor changes to the overall stories of the original movies as well as the significant effect of the change of cultural setting for the films' narratives. Thus, my analysis of these movies points towards the insufficiency of taxonomies made to define remakes as they seem to concern the movies only on a very surface-level without considering the effect of changes that can be made in a remake.

When comparing the original Nordic movies and their remakes, *Brødre* has gone through the process of “mainstreaming” (Bucciferro 2018: 782-783) as its American remake has replaced Bier's art film aesthetic with a more generic Hollywood style. Similarly, *Kraftidioten's* gritty and realistic style is cleaned up to some extent in the remake²². In other words, the remakes have ‘translated’ the original movies' mis-en-scène, cinematography and other cinematic means of signifying (Evans 2014: 306) into something more appropriate for American audiences as well as Hollywood's standards of filmmaking²³. However, analysing these remakes puts some critics' accusations of remakes as cultural imperialism into questionable light due to the films' (especially *Cold Pursuit's*) anti-colonial sentiment and critical view of the American culture, history and involvement in global conflicts. In addition,

²² Despite an aesthetic that is more appropriate for a Hollywood film, the visual style between *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* remains consistent. For example, the remake includes several individual shots and lines of dialogue that have been copied directly from the original Norwegian film (although the dialogue has been translated into English).

²³ Another way this is evident in *Brothers* is its music, as the original's soundtrack consisting of mostly acoustic and classical music has been replaced mostly by rock and electronic-based music.

one can hardly call *Cold Pursuit* derivative and exploitative of the original Norwegian movie because, despite being written by an American, the remake is also directed by Hans Petter Moland. As the remake is directed by the same person as the original, the idea promoted for example by Leitch (2002), that remakes directly compete with the original, seems questionable as well.

The evaluation of the films' originality becomes increasingly muddled when one considers that, as discussed in section 5.2., *Brødre* and *Kraftidioten* rely on conventions of two very much American genres (i.e. the (Vietnam) war movie and the Western) prior to being remade themselves, leading to a back-and-forth process of borrowing and adapting where questions of originality are no longer clear-cut. Thus, in addition to exploring representations of masculinity in the two Nordic movies and their American remakes, this thesis has been able to “[complicate] the model of a unidirectional transnational film remake” (Smith & Verevis 2017: 5-6) by providing evidence that challenges some negative and rigid views on Hollywood's cinematic adaptations of foreign movies. Much like Hutchinson's (2007: 172) analysis of *Yojimbo* and *A Fistful of Dollars* (a case where a Japanese samurai movie influenced by Westerns is remade as another “Spaghetti Western” movie), the analysis of these Nordic films and their remakes reveals a “dialogue within a wider film genre”.

One question that should be addressed is why these two movies were remade in The United States. Considering that when movies are remade in another country, the original already speaks “to both local and global concerns” (Stenport 2016: 440)²⁴. Thus, there was something about the two Nordic movies that was relevant for the new American context as to be remade there, as it seems unlikely that these two movies were remade solely based on their remakes' potential for financial gain. Thus, I argue, that while the Danish *Brødre* was concerned with the psychological consequences of war in the individual and his family as well as the issues of family life and masculinity in general, the context of the Afghanistan war, the external threat of terrorism and the concrete effects of war in the American family were more important when remaking the film. Meanwhile, the Norwegian *Kraftidioten* comments on the contradictions of the welfare state and more specifically the struggles of men within it as they are trapped in a vicious circle of violence and their inability to communicate. The American remake uses the same narrative to comment on domestic issues about race, gender, violence and the struggles

²⁴ For example, many of Susanne Bier's movies are very ‘global’ as they often juxtapose local Danish setting and issues with foreign and global ones (Lunde 2015: 237; Stenport 2016: 449). Such movies directed by Bier include *Efter Bryllupet* (2006) and *Haevnen* (2010) as well as *Brødre*.

of men with their contradictory roles and expectations. I also suggest that, while *Brothers* was made in the wake of the turmoil of 9/11 and the global wars of the United States, *Cold Pursuit* shows that the country has turned towards internal issues due to the United States' greater stability on a global scale, or at least because internal issues have become a greater concern for Americans. As the Trump administration and the ensuing polarisation, the #metoo-movement and riots concerning police brutality towards minorities, to name a few, were very much relevant issues during the film's release, *Cold Pursuit* could then be seen as a sign of introspection on the part of the American society as it attempts to come to terms with its own history and issues specific to the late-2010s²⁵.

Looking at the movies through the concept of transnational cinema, I also propose that the transnational nature of the two Nordic movies is one of the main reasons why the films were remade. By commenting on the effects of a global war on the local in *Brødre* as well as the welfare state system and effects of globalisation in *Kraftidioten*, both movies touch on issues not limited by their national boundaries. This, I argue, is why the two movies are suitable for remaking in an American context where local American detail can be added to comment on the global wars of the United States as well as its colonial history and racial segregation. Thus, from a transnational perspective, even though American remakes are often accused of cultural imperialism and stealing other nation's films to fit their own purposes, these two remakes are also concerned with issues of transnational cinema, for example by questioning the American national identity. Yet, the two remakes are still very much American and exemplifying American cinema.

Overall, considering the changes made between the original Nordic films and their American remakes shows that the remakes are uniquely American whereas the original Nordic films could for most parts be set in many other countries without any significant changes. As Shriver-Rice (2011: 10) points out, despite containing some cultural elements specific to Denmark, *Brødre* is not nationally specific and could be remade in the United States simply by changing the language. However, as I have discussed in detail, the American remake contains several changes that place it more specifically in America. For example, the film emphasises the patriotism of American soldiers by establishing its location in the opening shot of the film, which shows an American flag being lifted up a flagpole before cutting to a group of soldiers

²⁵ This argument is supported by Gates (2006: 24) when she writes how “[s]hifts in politics, economy, gender relations, race relations, and important events have an impact on how a society views itself and, in doing so, this view colors and informs the cultural products of that society”. Thus, the two Nordic movies, as I have argued, have changed in various ways when remade due to these ‘shifts’ in the American society.

running in formation and chanting in unison. Similarly, *Kraftidioten* is marked by its Norwegian setting mostly by the film's language, snowy landscapes and references to the welfare state whereas the remake is concerned with the history of colonialism of the United States, and racial as well as gender inequality. Due to this unique Americanness of *Cold Pursuit* and *Brothers*, I propose that the remakes are specifically concerned with representing the masculinity and experience of American men while the Nordic originals' masculinities are less restricted by national borders but instead represent the experience of Nordic men in general.

6.3. Concluding remarks

To summarise the main findings of this thesis, the analysis found some differences in the depiction of hegemonic masculinity in the four movies. In *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* hegemonic masculinity was exemplified by the films' modern young villains and was characterised by several negative and so called 'toxic' aspects of masculinity, while the protagonist represented more traditional and family-centric values of masculinity. However, the villain's hegemonic masculinity was threatened both by the protagonist but also by a woman, as well as other men in a marginalised position due to their ethnicity and place in society. In *Brødre* and *Brothers* hegemonic masculinity was embodied by a white heterosexual family-man working in the military. This was contrasted with foreign violent terrorists and the character's misfit ex-criminal brother. However, this kind of hegemonic masculinity focused on traditional family values was not stable, but under threat instead. This threat to dominant masculinity, as well as the struggle of men to obtain hegemony, was a central cause of crisis for the male characters. This crisis was symptomatic of and caused for example by violence, alcoholism and most importantly male characters' inability to communicate as well as express their feelings, but also by conflicting images of heroic masculinity and one's perception of self.

As for the differences between the Nordic and American movies, the change in context had some effects on the way masculinity was represented. The remakes were generally more concerned with the male characters' appearance and bodies, as shown by the exhibition of men and damage done to their bodies in *Brothers*. *Brothers* also focused more on generational issues in the main characters' family as the boys' father is a military veteran unlike in the Danish film. The issue of homosexuality and relationships between men were also depicted differently. Both *Kraftidioten* and *Cold Pursuit* have gay minor characters who are important for the narrative, without depicting them in a stereotypical manner. Meanwhile, the Danish *Brødre* is able to

present a close and emotional relationship between two men without implications of homosexuality, whereas in the American remake the mutual communication between these two men is marked by distance and power, suggesting an underlying fear of being seen as not manly enough. Although all four movies contain numerous instances of male-to-male violence, the remakes have removed all depictions of physical domestic violence towards women. In fact, the American *Cold Pursuit* gave female characters more agency, for example by changing the gender of one of the characters and significantly changing the power dynamic between the villain and his wife. This remake also contained more misogynistic and toxic behaviour that was used to portray certain male characters in a negative manner. The change in context also had an effect on the ethnicity of some characters in *Cold Pursuit*, where foreign male characters of the original are changed into marginalised men of the American society.

Overall, the four films reflected the various contradictions of masculinity, most importantly, the expectations men struggle with, the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, the crises of masculinity as well as the use of violence and its effects. The American remakes were found to utilise the original Nordic movies to address issues of the United States, its history and the national identity of its people. Although the American movies turned the original films into more generic Hollywood productions and changed some aspects of the Nordic movies, the use of the original movies' narratives to critique and portray different concerns of the new context challenges some critics' accusations of Hollywood remakes of foreign movies as exploitative and derivative.

Considering the aims of this thesis and what was gained as a result, the decision to focus not only a single pair of films but on two instead, proved valuable for observing differences and similarities between all four movies. This approach also allowed new aspects to emerge from the movies that would not otherwise have been as apparent, if not for the comparison of another movie. Thus, the thesis' approach was comparative, not only between the original Nordic films and their American remakes, but also between the films produced in the same cultural context. In addition, the films were compared to others in their respective genres and the generic conventions they follow. Although the decision to analyse two pairs of movies increased the workload of the present study, doing this allows for more generalisable conclusions that do not apply only to a single movie (and its remake).

The decision to approach the movies with the means of post-structuralist textual analysis proved useful as well. This method allowed me to make interpretations beyond surface level

observations of the movies, whereas focusing on the context of the movies' production as well as the surrounding hypotexts, made it possible to come up with interpretations that would not otherwise been possible by analysing only the movies themselves. For example, as a result I was able to place the films in their cultural and historical context as well as their respective genres of filmmaking. Finally, the decision to utilise the four sites of masculinity as a loose framework for the analysis proved successful as the different sites were not concerned only with who the male characters are and what they do but also considered their internal world as well as their place in relation to others and society at large. Although these sites are only one possible way of approaching the issue of masculinity in movies, they provided this thesis a framework to explore masculinities from multiple perspectives and thus helped to constitute a holistic view of the subject.

However, as the analysis focused only on two movies and their remakes produced in a specific region and remade in another one, the findings cannot be applied to all possible contexts. For example, even if the analysis found certain aspects of masculinity to be valued in the Nordic context, this may not be applicable somewhere else. In addition, the findings also tell about a specific moment in history and more work on older, as well as future movies, is needed. It should also be acknowledged that the analysis in this thesis has not addressed the role of women and femininity in great detail, even if they too have an influence on the construction of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 848). This thesis also has left much room for future research concerned with other regions and cultures other than the Nordic countries and the United States. Still, this study has provided valuable insight into the cinematic representations of masculinity in the Nordic countries and has been able to highlight some of the differences and similarities with representations produced in Hollywood. In addition, my analysis was able to challenge some older negative views on American movie remakes and I was able to show that, despite keeping the original film's narrative more or less intact, the remakes were able to utilise the original film's story to comment on issues relevant to the new geographical, temporal as well as cultural context. As the number of Hollywood's remakes of films produced in the Nordic countries is still quite small but growing, more research needs to be done in order to map this uncharted territory of film studies more generally, but also in regards to the representations of masculinity and gender in cinema.

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