

The Case of Christopher Rice's *Blind Fall*: How Masculinities Have Conflicted and Evolved

Key words: Gender, Queer, Masculinities, War Narratives, Detective Fiction

Society has undergone serious changes in the range of acceptable behaviors regarding gender; deferring ways of thinking have led to a series of revolutions that have shook the boundaries that used to limit individuals and their identities. Some narrative genres have representations of this struggle but have remained somewhat alienated from analysis of the gender revolutions they depict. One such case is that of War Narratives; the stories of war veterans, former US soldiers or marine corp agents and their experiences during and after their service. These stories offer a rich and utterly interesting field for literary analysis and a wonderful example of them is *Blind Fall* by gay author Christopher Rice. In his novel, Rice depicts the post-war experience of John Houck, a retired Marine who discovers the murder of his former captain, Mike Bowers, and that Bowers had been gay all along (nine months after Bowers saved his life). The ensuing conflicts between Bowers's partner and Houck reflect many of the concepts coined by R.W. Connell and Eric Anderson in their theoretical analysis on hegemonic and inclusive masculinities respectively. Masculinity studies have begun to deal with the emerging and diverse new manifestations of masculinity as a result of the increasing acceptance of homosexuality and other forms of gender diversity; and thus these authors have analyzed these changes from their own perspectives, allowing for a stronger theoretical framework useful in the analysis of literary texts involving such issues. Through *Blind Fall*, Christopher Rice challenges the traditional

hegemonic conceptions of masculinity and the frailty that has so far accompanied the concept of homosexuality through John Houck's struggle to accept his former captain's sexuality, and that of his surviving partner as part of their strength and power as men.

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