Tschachler, Heinz. *Washington Irving and the Fantasy of Masculinity: Escaping the Woman Within*. McFarland, 2022.

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"Like other men who were becoming frustrated by efforts to keep up with the relentless pressure to modernize," Heinz Tschachler contends in this study's prologue,

> Irving was obsessed with being a man, and, suffering from his perceived femininity, throughout his career was questing for the self-image of a man whose masculinity seemed secure. He finally found it in George Washington, whose image allowed him to come to terms with his own purportedly 'female' defects, especially his shyness and uncertainty. (10-11)

From this central idea Tschachler sets out to explore the intersection of Washington Irving's life and his works through a psychoanalytic examination of masculinity as it appears across the author's career, from the "troubled masculinities" of earlier texts like *A History of New York* author's own struggles with his "anima consciousness"—the "woman within" of the book's subtitle and Tschachler's Jung-inspired term for the "feminized masculinity" (8) that plagued Irving with self-doubt and insecurity much of his life. Thoroughly researched and solid as an introduction to many of the broader scholarly conversations involving Irving, Tshachler's scholarship here offers in-depth analysis of the "jostling of ideologies of manhood in a highly conflicted emotional drama about the successful life," both as Irving lived it and as he explored it through his writings (10-11).

Tschachler's examination begins with a clarifying of terms in his prologue and opening chapter, where he sets up the struggle between Irving's more feminine internal self and the images of masculinity projected onto him by social and familial forces. Presenting this turmoil in Jungian

terms of anima and animus, respectively, Tschachler suggests that while "the traumatic conflict between inner self and socially sanctioned self would have a paralyzing effect on most people," Irving used his writing to both process and transform his Jungian "shadows": "the line-up of male figures in his writings—his masculine archetypal imagines—served … to transform a sense of his own precarious form of male self-hood, his imperfectly realized masculinity, together with his purportedly female defects" (8). The next set of chapters explores this act of transformation: Chapter Two delineates "residual" masculinities tied to sentimentalism and the traditions of English gentility, Chapter Three explores the "troubled masculinities" of characters like Rip Van Winkle and Ichabod Crane as they navigate the changing sociocultural landscape of the United States, and Chapter Four presents the "exemplary manhood of Columbus" and the other archetypal masculinities of Irving's Spanish writings as "a kind of halfway point in the arc that eventually led Irving back to George Washington" (106).

From this halfway point Chapter Five returns to the United States and its history, where Irving attempted to temper the "rugged individualism and egotistical ruthlessness that characterized the cult of masculinity at the time" with "the sentimental capacities of the affections" in works like *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), *Astoria* (1836), and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (1837) (140). Finding these frontier heroes "unsuitable as archetypes of achieved masculinity," however, Irving "set his sights on George Washington" as the true exemplar of America (166). Tschachler's final chapter explores Irving's vision of Washington as "uphold[ing] the old Federalist hope of civilized urbanity and 'statesmanship of the highest order' in the midst of democratic leveling and vulgarity," a combination and "amplification of the archetypes" that finally becomes "a benefactor, a father who benevolently rules over his family, both of kin and of the nation" (167). As Tschachler concludes in his epilogue, "In Washington, Irving transformed the figure of his own desires into

an avatar of masculine perfection," the complementary animus image to Irving's own anima consciousness (197).

Tschachler's psychoanalytic approach in this study is at its best when it engages with Irving and his works not just in isolation but as a product of the times, the historical moments of U. S. sociocultural history where the nature of manhood itself was shifting. Tschachler helpfully connects these changes to the continuing development of capitalism in the United States, where the emphasis goes from the community-minded, land- and standing-based ideals of manhood of the older, English and European genteel tradition, to the self-made, rugged individualist masculinity of American entrepreneurs and speculators. As Tschachler frames it,

> The old paradigm of 'communal manhood' was rooted in the life of the community and qualities of a man's character; in contrast, the new paradigm of 'self-made manhood' came to be based on individual achievement, direct action, entrepreneurial competition and, on the downside, profound anxieties. (62)

These are the very characteristics that find expression in Irving's gallery of masculine archetypes over the course of his career, from the sentimental, pseudonymous figures of Jonathan Oldstyle and Diedrich Knickerbocker, the character of the Squire in *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), and the Dutch burghers of various tales to the integrated masculine perfection of George Washington, where

> Irving reconciled the two mutually excluding ideals of aristocracy and republican simplicity, of Englishness and American exceptionalism, by emphasizing that Washington actually worked, felicitously combining 'industry and temperance' with 'riches,' without producing 'luxury' and, consequently, 'effeminacy, intoxication, extravagance, vice and folly.' (139)

Given Tschachler's previous publications on currency and the monetary history of the United States, which he mentions in the prologue "meant that a book project on Irving had to be shelved" (1), it is not surprising that this historical situating is a strength of the current text. Indeed, by framing Irving's writings in this way, Tschachler places them in a useful broader context, helping to ground the biographical and psychoanalytic approaches in ways that make them more generally applicable for readers not otherwise be interested in these types of criticisms. Additionally, Tschachler's copious notes and frequent presentation and synthesis of previous scholarship provide helpful background in almost all areas of discussion, giving readers less familiar with Irving and his texts plenty of foundation for the current analysis.

Surprisingly, the Jungian apparatus of the text is its weakest point, primarily because it is mostly unnecessary for Tschachler's argument, grounded as it is both biographically and historically. Tschachler does a fine job of presenting Irving's own "imperfectly realized masculinity" and the ways it finds representation and compensation in his works without much need for Jungian terminology; in fact, the extra explanation and clarification that comes with the Jung-inflected aspects sometimes serves to cloud the flow of ideas, making what might otherwise be a tighter and more coherent thread less so. After the first chapter, where it is discussed most directly, the text's Jungian apparatus feels almost like an afterthought, its terms appearing infrequently and often in ways that do not seem to add much to the argument as it is currently developing.

For example, Tschachler recounts Irving's commitment to literary art thus:

> Irving decided to become a writer in order to achieve a 'socially sanctioned identity.' The decision would allow him both to eschew male subject formation in terms of business and to imaginatively delineate all kinds of alternative masculinities, all in the project of

integrating his own imperfectly realized masculinity. (74)

This clearly captures Tschachler's larger argument without any reference to Jung, anima consciousness, or the archetypal masculine images Tschachler references in laying out his Jungian framework. The majority of the analysis and argument built on it functions well with terms grounded in general descriptions and explanations of the sociocultural masculine and feminine of a given time and their expressions in both historical and fictional figures as archetypes in a non-technical sense; in contrast, the more technical Jungian terms often feel vague or redundant when they appear. Overall, while the Jungian ideas Tschachler employs are by no means harmful, they contribute less than they probably should to an otherwise thorough exploration.

For the general reader, Tschachler's study serves as a good introduction to Irving's life and the role of his writings both privately and as part of the growing cultural life of the United States, especially in connection with entrepreneurial capitalism and its effects on ideas of manliness and success. Those with more background in Irving scholarship may find it less useful overall given how much of Tschachler's work here is grounded in previous biography and analysis, but there should still be plenty of interest. For readers of *I19* specifically, the text may not offer much: the fantasy of the title is that of psychology rather than of genre, giving it little overlap with the journal's usual focus, especially in later chapters. Tschachler's third chapter, with discussions of *Rip Van Winkle* (1819) and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820), is the most likely place for the readership of *I19* to find new insights or connections to the folk and fairy tale traditions of this journal's purview. Overall, Tschachler provides an interesting analysis of one of nineteenth-century America's most recognizable authors via the intersection of biography, psychology, and the shifting definitions of masculinity in the early United States.

Brian P. Elliott teaches at the University of Montana Western in Dillon, Montana. His research and teaching interests include early American literature, Transatlantic romanticism, depictions of violence in literary texts, and lately, graphic novels. Brian is also in the early stages of a project on the psychology of lying and deception in early American literature.