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Masculinities Theory and Practice

Understanding masculinities, manhood, and men is critical for feminist theory. First, men are not universal or undifferentiated, and seeing men and boys in a more complex, real way helps to identify inequalities more clearly. Second, the intersections of masculinity with other critical identity factors or traits, especially race, class, and sexual orientation, tell us more about the interaction of privilege and disadvantage, an interaction that operates for some women as well and that operates differently for men than for women. We can learn from those intersections more about resistance and change, as well as the pull of privilege. Third, men pay a price for privilege, and those gender burdens should be exposed and addressed. This may create alliances between women and men, rather than identifying men solely as beneficiaries of gender privilege or men and women as adversaries struggling in a zero-sum game. At the same time, the power and privilege attached to masculinity must insistently be kept in view even as male disadvantage is acknowledged and added to the agenda. Finally, dismantling male privilege and restructuring masculinity requires understanding how masculinities are constructed as well as identifying and envisioning new masculinities. Masculinities scholarship may help to prove long-held feminist claims of the incorporation of male standards and concepts in structures and institutions. Research about the production and reproduction of masculinities in areas such as workplace discrimination could be especially helpful in countering cultural and structural discrimination.

Overview of Masculinities Theory

An overview of masculinities theory may be useful to keep the broad parameters in view before exploring in greater detail this body of scholarship. A starting point is noticing its name. It is not “masculinism” or “masculinist theory,” which would parallel feminism and feminist theory. This asymmetry of naming reflects the asymmetry of the focus and content of masculinities

theory as compared to feminist theory. “Masculinism” or “masculinist” are awkward terms that suggest the glorification of male power and privilege. “Masculinities” reflects the focus of many scholars in the field on understanding, first and foremost, how male identity is constructed and sustained. While there is a commitment to the goal of fighting inequality, the focus of much of the scholarship has not been on how to undermine or reduce patriarchal power. Feminism and feminist theory, by contrast, remain focused on issues of inequality far more than on issues of identity.

Theoretical work has developed several core concepts that pervade masculinities scholarship. Masculinities are viewed as socially constructed, rather than biologically given, and therefore as changeable and fluid. There is not a singular masculinity but rather multiple masculinities. Among these masculinities, many scholars agree that there is a dominant hegemonic masculinity, although other scholars are critical of this concept. Masculinities are as much about men’s relationship to other men as they are about men’s relationship to women. A primary orientation of masculinity is negative definition: it is critical not to be a woman and not to be gay. Finally, although masculinity is associated with power, many men feel powerless.

According to masculinities theory, masculinity, in any form, is not a biological given, not a thing that one has; rather, it is socially constructed, a set of practices that one constantly engages in or performs. In that sense, it is interactive: the individual relates to the social/cultural construction, but the individual also remakes and changes it, potentially, rather than simply following the script. It is fluid, not fixed, neither universal nor timeless, but rather changeable and malleable. Seeing masculinity as a social construct rejects and critiques the notion of a set or stable sex role that one acquires, or the notion of masculinity as an inevitable phase of development from child to adult, from boy to man. Indeed, this perspective even rejects the notion that only males perform masculinities: because it is a social construction, while it is dominantly used or performed by men, it does not require a biologically male body. Women can be masculine also. There are female masculinities, and those can expose masculinity in some unique ways.

The approach is closest to cultural feminism, yet the underlying dynamic is different. The focus of masculinities scholarship is on identity and practices, in the sense of exposing what masculinities are and how they function and are felt. The purpose of cultural feminism is to identify things associated with women and argue that they should be equally valued, that inequality is linked to the lack of value or support attached to the qualities associated with women and the practices of their lives. Inherent in

this claim is that female-associated qualities and practices are valuable. The critique of cultural feminism is that it might unintentionally reinforce the limitation of women to those identities, qualities, practices, and life courses associated with women, that it reinforces limits. Within masculinities study, because men as a group are not subordinated and things associated with men are not devalued, the examination of what constitutes masculinities—the acquisition, sustenance, and practices of masculinities—lacks a clear goal, even when there is an express concern about equality and social justice. Much of what is associated with men is deemed of value, so it is not a matter of claiming value. Those things that are not valued, or that we might want to detach from masculinity because it is a negative (violence, for example), raise a unique issue and might point in the direction of analyzing how those qualities are acquired and how they might be discouraged (or other more positive values encouraged), but this has not been the focus of much of the analysis. What also might be helpful from this approach is identifying what is male/masculine in structures and institutions, so that dominance/hierarchy or sexual advantage can be identified (and presumably eliminated).

A key piece of masculinity theory is that masculinity is not unitary; hence the name of the field is masculinities, plural. There are multiple masculinities, although some scholars would also point out that there are some critical links between them, suggesting some universality. Multiple masculinities do not, however, mean that all masculinities are equal. Rather, many scholars argue that there tends to be a preferred, dominant masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity identifies the most empowered, those at the top of the male hierarchy. In relation to hegemonic masculinity, there are subordinate masculinities and also subversive masculinities. Not surprisingly, the subordinate masculinities are defined especially by race and class. Also important to remember is that within race and class identities there are multiple masculinities (not a singular “black male masculinity” or “gay male masculinity” but rather a range of masculinities subsumed under race and sexual orientation identities). Subordinate or subversive masculinities hold the promise of resistance and new models but also the concern that denial of power will translate into the oppression of others who are situated lower in the hierarchy, rather than collaboration or solidarity with others who are subordinated. Antiessentialism is recognized as critical to the development of masculinities theory, yet masculinities scholarship reflects difficulties carrying out that insight, which mirrors difficulties in implementing antiessentialism in feminist theory as well.

There are two common pieces to defining masculinities: masculinity means being not feminine and not homosexual. It is this negative defining that is so critical, it seems, to issues of power and hierarchy. Race and class add to the key definitional pieces of who are the top men.

Masculinity is as much about men's relation to other men as it is about men's relation to women. Indeed, it seems that competition and hierarchy with other men may be a more intense component of masculinity. In addition, one's standing and place is never secure; masculinity is often described as something never attained but rather something that must be consistently achieved on a daily basis. The importance of men's relationship to other men is brought home particularly by thinking about the different spaces and places that men and women occupy in their daily lives and what spaces are male only, or dominantly male, as compared to homosocial female environments. Within homosocial environments, men are constantly evaluated and tested.

This sense of constant testing may be linked to men's experience of power. Ironically, men, although powerful and empowered as a group, feel powerless. Some men are indeed powerless; others are powerless because the demands of masculinity are that it must be constantly proven; it can never simply be achieved and claimed. It is easy to be a woman; it is a constant struggle to be a man. The boundaries placed on men are significant, and the expectations to meet dominant norms disserve men in relationships with both women and men. It may be that the significance of men's relationships to men explains why women disappear frequently in masculinities analysis. In the same way that men are unidimensional and essentialized in feminist theory, so too is the same tendency present regarding women in masculinities theory.

Leading Theorists: Sociologists

The roots of modern masculinities scholarship lie in psychology, but it is sociologists that have led modern developments. In the following sections I separately explore the work of leading sociologists and psychologists who have developed theories of masculinities, but scholars in the field regularly cross disciplinary lines and include other disciplines as well.

R.W. Connell, one of the leading theorists in the field, in a rich body of work develops a broad perspective on gender as well as specific insights on masculinity. On gender, Connell emphasizes our attachment to the concept of gender difference, despite the similarities between women and men: "Women and men are psychologically very similar, as groups. We should long

ago have been calling this field 'sex similarity' research" (2002a, 42). Connell identifies four structures of gender relations: power relations, production relations, emotional relations, and symbolic relations. Men's dominance is reinforced by the state, yielding what Connell calls the *patriarchal dividend*, the benefit all men claim from their dominance in the gender order, or "the advantage to men as a group from maintaining an unequal gender order" (142). The pervasiveness of dominance means that it is taken-for-granted oppression, leading to assumptions that patterns are natural or given.

Connell argues that we need to focus on "processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives. Masculinity . . . is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (2005b, 71). Connell, then, focuses on how masculinity is created and practiced and in particular how it embodies inequality and dominance.

Connell's core concept, and one that has been embraced by many other masculinity scholars, is the concept of *hegemonic masculinity*: "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (2005b, 77). Dominance is achieved by authority, not by violence. Hegemony means cultural dominance and support, and rarely dominance that is violently claimed. There is complicity by those who do not meet the hegemonic standard: as Connell notes, few men meet the definition of hegemonic masculinity, but most men benefit, reaping the patriarchal dividend even if they do not fulfill the definition (*ibid.*). There are other masculinities, subordinate and resistant. Not all men benefit similarly from hegemonic masculinity, and particularly the benefit varies by race, class, and age. Hierarchy and multiplicity are key parts of this core concept, as is the notion that the dominated support their own subordination.

Modern masculinities, according to Connell, are defined by their response to various challenges and crises: the collapse of patriarchy and widespread support for the emancipation and equality of women; women's participation in paid labor; and the challenge to sexuality with greater acceptance of gay masculinity (2005b). What is critical, however, according to Connell, is that masculinity has been responsive to change, redefining patriarchy. Patriarchy has not collapsed; only the idea of patriarchy or its acceptance has: "What has crumbled, in the industrial countries, is the *legitimation* of patriarchy" (226). In order to move this dismantling of patriarchy further, Connell's agenda

includes “contesting men’s predominance in the state, professions and management, and ending men’s violence against women, . . . changing the institutional structures that make elite power and body-to-body violence possible in the first place, . . . ending the patriarchal dividend in the money economy, sharing the burden of domestic work and equalizing access to education and training, . . . ending the stigma of sexual difference and the imposition of compulsory heterosexuality, and reconstructing heterosexuality on the basis of reciprocity not hierarchy” (229–30).

According to Connell, you cannot achieve equality without dismantling hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005b). This would include “reembodiment” for men, “a search for different ways of using, feeling and showing male bodies” (233). The model must be gender specific and distinctive because of men’s position: “the model of a liberation movement simply cannot apply to the group that holds the position of power” (235; see also Connell 2000b).

A second leading theorist of masculinities, Michael Kimmel (2004), focuses on issues of inequality, power, and difference. Kimmel points out that structures create differences between men and women, using, for example, Rosabeth Kanter’s research on corporate organization and culture. Kimmel argues against the use of the concept of gender difference, stating that difference is a product of gender inequality and is used to legitimate inequality. As an example, he points to how we conceptualize and describe sex differentiation. In fetal development, all embryos begin as “female” and then differentiate; similarly, in puberty, sex hormones change bodies, causing the development of secondary sex characteristics. How we think about those two events says a great deal about our thinking about difference and hierarchy (see also Fausto-Sterling 1995). Kimmel (2004) argues that the focus should be on reducing gender inequality; only then can difference be celebrated rather than used to justify injustice.

Kimmel emphasizes the invisibility of gender to men, as well as the invisibility of men as objects of gender study: “we continue to act as if gender applied only to women. Surely the time has come to make gender visible to men. As the Chinese proverb has it, the fish are the last to discover the ocean” (2004, 6). As one consequence of this invisibility, we ignore what Kimmel exposes as men’s lack of a sense of power, despite their clear gender advantage. While social constructionist approaches identify gender as power relations, the assumption that all men recognize, feel and use that power is false. Rather, “although men may be in power everywhere one cares to look, individual men are not ‘in power,’ and they do not feel powerful. . . . Men as a group are in power (when compared with women), but do not feel powerful”

(100). Power is an attribute of group life, not of individual life; “it can neither be willed away nor ignored” (100; see also Kaufman 1994). Kimmel notes that a definition of masculinity as striving for power comes from women’s perspective; from men’s perspective, they commonly see themselves as powerless. Out of this sense of powerlessness comes the desire for control. Masculinity thus is about fear and shame and emotional isolation (see also Coltrane 1994). This is consistent with David Leverenz’s insight that manhood is about defense against humiliation; underlying everything is *fear* (1986). The sense that masculinity is a constant struggle, never achieved but always needing to be proved, is a powerful piece of this sense of powerlessness (Faludi 1999).

Kimmel also focuses on the construction of gender by the interaction of people and institutions. We “do” gender not in a vacuum but in the context of institutions constructed with gender in mind: “Our social world is built on systemic, structural inequality based on gender; social life reproduces both gender difference and gender inequality” (2004, 113). Those institutions include school, work, and families. Kimmel looks for what correlates with more or less inequality. For example, he finds that fathers’ involvement in childrearing and women’s control of property are central to status and equality (ibid.). He also sees as critical the need to examine the relationships between different systems of power in order to destroy inequality (2002b, xi).

Jeff Hearn is a third important masculinities theorist whose work is explicitly from a framework that considers power the critical gender issue (2004). Hearn would distinguish men’s studies from critical studies on men, with the former focusing on the descriptive and the latter insisting that power issues are critical, as well as explicitly connecting to feminist and queer theory. Hearn suggests a shift in theorizing from masculinity to men, and focusing on the *hegemony of men*. Hearn argues that masculinities research has focused too narrowly on gender relations: “It is time to go back from *masculinity to men*, to examine the hegemony of men and about men. The hegemony of men seeks to address the double complexity that men are both a social category formed by the gender system and dominant collective and individual agents of social practices. . . .” The deconstruction of the dominant and the obvious, the social category of men, remains urgent. What indeed would society look like without this category, not through gendercide but through gender transformation?” (59). Hearn embraces the concept of hegemony but focuses not on the construction of masculinity but rather on the construction and sustaining of male power. In the process, he particularly examines “taken-for-granted power,” which is where hegemony sustains itself by support from those who are dominated.

Hearn's insistence on staying focused on power unravels and reorients theory in a significant way. Power is a part of social relations, actions, and experience. Much of it is taken for granted, which renders it invisible. Hearn points out that the concept of hegemony is helpful, since the concept includes the active consent of the dominated. He raises an excellent question: is dominance tied most essentially to the gender system or to the economic system? (2004).

Lynne Segal in her classic work on the subject of masculinities is unequivocal that the economic system is critical: "masculinity gains its meanings, its force and appeal, not just from internalized psychological components or roles, but from all the wider social relations in which men and women participate which simply take for granted men's authority and privileges in relation to women" (1990, 294). Dismantling male power, in Segal's view, requires "the pursuit of change in the economy, the labor market, social policy and the state, as well as the organization of domestic life, the nature of sexual encounters and the rhetoric of sexual difference" (294). Fundamentally, she sees the goals as those of socialist feminism: "the world of caring, sharing and cooperation ideally characterizing family life" (318). Others would also answer Hearn's question by noting the importance of the work environment and the expression of masculinities in the workplace: "On the one hand, men often collaborate, cooperate and identify with one another in ways that display a shared unity and consolidate power between them. Yet on the other hand, these same masculinities can also be characterized simultaneously by conflict, competition and self-differentiation in ways that highlight and intensify the differences and divisions between men" (Collinson and Hearn 2001, 162).

Hearn's approach means looking at men in relation to each other, and in relation to women and children, and looking at how government categorizes men (2004, 60). His approach is gender specific but asymmetric: he takes the position that critical study of men and masculinities means support of feminism but that the study of men does not have parity with the study of women (Hearn and Morgan 1990a). According to Hearn, the critique should be "anti-sexist, anti-patriarchal, pro-feminist, and gay-affirmative. . . . [And] the underlying task . . . is to change men, ourselves, and other men" (Hearn and Morgan 1990a, 204). He captures the dominance of men in sociology with the term *malestream*, a substitution for mainstream, denoting how the discipline historically almost exclusively focused on men, but not as gendered beings. This is akin to noting how feminists critiqued history as "history" (Hearn and Morgan 1990b, 7). Hearn's vision is the "possibility of the abolition of 'men' as a significant social category of power" (2004, 66).

Others who have contributed to an examination of male power that complements Hearn's work include John Remy and Sylvia Walby. Remy (1990) discusses the concepts of androcracy, patriarchy, and fratricide and the institution of the male hut (associated with male bond and fraternity). What is particularly striking about Remy's work is his focus on homosocial environments or areas of homosocial or dominantly homosocial power, and the policing of entry to only some men and no women. Remy defines androcracy as "rule by men," divided into patriarchy, or "rule of the fathers," and fratricide, or "rule of the brothers/rule of the brotherhood." Both forms are based on an institution that he calls the men's hut. German social scientists identified a key aspect of androcracy as *Mannerbund* or "men's league." The place of power in androcracy is the men's hut or men's house: "This is the place where those males who have earned the right to call themselves *men*, or are in the process of attaining this emblem of privilege, gather" (46). In order to enter the hut, men must go through a rite of passage, which usually includes some tests.

Sylvia Walby (1990) focuses on power as expressed in the concept of patriarchy, which justifies the domination of women as a group. She identifies six critical structures where patriarchal power is expressed: household production, wage work, the state, male violence, sexuality, and cultural institutions. Practices create structures. The movement over time has been from private to public patriarchy, according to Walby.

Two other critical theoretical voices are James Messerschmidt and Don Sabo, both of whom bring insights from masculinities and crime. Messerschmidt (1993) criticizes both criminology and feminism for their analyses of crime. Criminology generally has not studied men as men, and when it has, it tends to see men in an essentialist, biological way grounded in sex differences and inevitable male behavior (Daly and Maher 1998b; Naffine 1996; Walklate 2004). Feminism, while refocusing on women as victims and perpetrators, has tended to portray men still as unidimensional perpetrators and rarely notices men as victims of crime. Messerschmidt sees the dominance of men as victims and perpetrators of crime as explained by crime being merely another way of doing gender: "Crime by men is not simply an extension of the 'male sex role.' Rather, crime by men is a form of social practice invoked as a resource, when other resources are unavailable, for accomplishing masculinity" (1993, 85). The content of men's practices varies by race and class. Reducing inequality, in his view, is the best long-term way to reduce crime.

Sabo similarly sees prison as an extension of normal patterns of masculinity and argues that imprisonment reinforces violent masculinities: "The prison

code is very familiar to men in the United States because it is similar to the male code that reigns outside of prison” (Sabo, Kupers, and London 2001a, 10). If we could challenge the mentality that supports prisons, it might lead to thinking in terms of our broader social prisons. “Perhaps the most essential problem of men’s liberation is getting men to understand themselves individually as victims of sexual inequality without losing sight of why they are the collective oppressors of women. We believe it is necessary to rethink and reshape our understandings of the prison itself as an element within the larger gender order” (17).

David Gilmore’s fascinating cross-cultural anthropological work (1990) adds a different perspective to masculinities, exposing similarities in concepts of masculinity and manhood. Although Gilmore’s work is frequently cited in support of the view that manhood is a universal and timeless essence, he makes it clear that masculinity is learned and constructed, not inherent. He also points out that cross-culturally manhood is seen as something to be attained that is not easy, and he contrasts this with how femaleness and womanhood are viewed. “Manhood is a test in most societies,” according to Gilmore, confirming that it is stressful and never fully achieved (220). Gilmore also finds manhood is consistently associated with three things: “One must impregnate women, protect dependents from danger, and provision kith and kin” (223).

Another interesting take is that from the discipline of geography, or geographies, in an edited collection by van Hoven and Horschelmann (2005b; see also Thorne 1993). What is so interesting about this approach is thinking about space as representing gender: pubs, sports areas, workplaces are all places where masculinities are made and performed. As with other disciplines, this is one that is male oriented, and only recently has it considered masculinity, again emphasizing the asymmetrical nature of masculinities and feminist theory. Daphne Spain (1993) talks about gendered spaces, separating architectural space (within a building) and geographic space (between and among different buildings). She explores how spaces reinforce gender stratification. It is fascinating to consider how men and women move differently through space, especially those spaces that are singularly male versus singularly female. What happens in spaces that are exclusively or dominantly male is suggested by work on the military, where the resocialization of recruits is based on a masculinity norm of “physical toughness, the endurance of hardships, aggressiveness, a rugged heterosexuality, unemotional logic, and a refusal to complain, coupled with continual testing to assure that these qualities are maintained” (Barrett 2001, 81). The military is the epitome of a “gendered institution” that creates “gendered identities” (ibid., 97).

Leading Theorists: Psychological Perspectives

A second disciplinary focus in masculinity theory and scholarship originates in psychology. **It is quite different from the sociological perspective.** On the one hand, the concept of masculinity seems more rigid and stereotypical, particularly with respect to trying to “measure” masculinity. Because psychologists often evaluate mental health against an assumed norm, the tendency toward essentialism is dramatic. Another respect in which there are differences is that a definition of masculinity is used clinically, to treat someone who has a psychological disorder. This is masculinities “on the ground” and affords an insight into the impact of masculinities on individual lives as well as on society. A third difference is that the focus for some psychologists is describing human development and articulating what is “normal” when it comes to gender, which again inherently tends toward a singular concept of masculinity (Lunbeck 1994).

Psychologists have been interested in boys as well as men. The patterns they identify link the development of the two. **A common connecting link is the lack of emotional, empathetic, and relational development. Among the issues identified by one researcher are men’s lack of early childhood contact with adult males and frequently an adult dissatisfaction with their relationships with their father; the suppression of emotion taught from an early age, which has lifelong psychological, physical, and social implications; difficulty in creating and sustaining intimate relationships and a general lack of healthy, robust relationships with others; significant mental health issues connected to divorce or the breakup of adult relationships, contrary to the social model of independence; a disproportionate involvement in violence and a disproportionate representation in prisons; and a shorter average lifespan than women (Kilmartin 2000).**

One scholar provides three psychoanalytical models of masculinity (Richards 1990). First, there is Freud’s, in which identifying with the father is defensive and includes castration anxiety. Second, there is the model of Chodorow and others, in which the threat is not the father but the mother, who may engulf the boy, and the task is resisting dependency. **So these first two models define masculinity as a negative, defensive task.** The third model is of identification with the father as a loving adult, an identification that is important to selfhood. It is only in this third model “that we have an image of masculinity as a benign, indeed necessary, quality of psychic life in men” (164).

Oddly, of course, it is primarily men who have developed psychological theories, yet they have done so without thinking about men as men. As

late as the early 1990s, research was sparse. Gender-aware work began with fathers and then emerged in psychotherapy for men. The classic notion was that there is a male gender role, and the process of psychological development is learning or attaining that role. This was seen as involving two basic steps, called “disidentification” (Blazina 2004). Boys first have to sever their ties with their caregiver mothers and then have to take the second step of identifying with their father. “These developmental tasks have been held as necessary steps toward emotional autonomy, psychological separation, and most important here, securing the development of the masculine self” (151). As this description indicates, inherent in this view is a model of masculinity that includes autonomy, separation, and a “masculine self.” As Blazina indicates, this classic model has been unhealthy for men, leading to what he calls the “fragile masculine self” that either avoids healthy emotional relationships or is overdependent (153). He argues that the need for change requires less restrictive gender roles for boys and healthier relationships for adult men. Particularly important to this revised model is moving away from what has been identified by Bergman (1995) as “relational dread,” that is, teaching boys that relational interaction should be avoided by requiring separation from their mothers. Concern with the emotional tasks of boys and their relationship with mothers is a strong theme picked up by psychologists who have focused their work on boys, and the emotional issues of adult men are a pervasive theme among all psychologists.

Assumed in the disidentification process is a “masculine self” that must be attained. This assumes a kind of innate “maleness” or “masculinity” with a biological base that must be achieved (Phillips 2006). Social constructionists challenge the biological basis of this gender role and argue that it is socially and culturally constructed and taught, rather than biologically based. Further, the masculinities theorists in the psychological field have seen the role not as positive but as problematic. This shift is critical because it is a shift from the individual focus to a societal focus: “There is a very large and consequential difference between understanding masculinity, gender, identity, and development as innately predetermined and influenced by society and understanding them as socially produced through pervasive and insidious norms of identity, development, and behaviors. The former view focuses the disciplinary and clinical gaze primarily on man. . . . The latter view is more complex, multidimensional, and difficult as the focus is on the societal level as well as the individual as a social being” (ibid., 421).

Joseph Pleck is the leading scholar who has challenged and reoriented the concept of gender role (1981). Most importantly, Pleck argues that men vio-

late much of their gender role, so that it is a model of strain rather than a role that is achieved and practiced easily (Phillips 2006). “The replacement paradigm proposes that contemporary gender roles are contradictory and inconsistent; that the proportions of persons who violate gender roles is high; that violation of gender roles leads to condemnation and negative psychological consequences; that actual or imagined violation of gender roles leads people to overconform to them; that violating gender roles has more severe consequences for males than for females; and that certain prescribed gender role traits (such as male aggression) are too often dysfunctional” (Levant and Pollack 1995a, 3).

Pleck identifies three core ideas from his model of **gender role strain**: “A significant proportion of males exhibit long-term failure to fulfill male role expectations. . . . This dynamic is ‘gender role *discrepancy*’ or ‘incongruity.’ Second, even if male role expectations are successfully fulfilled, the socialization process . . . is traumatic, or the fulfillment itself is traumatic. . . . This is the **gender role *trauma***’ argument. . . . Third, . . . the successful fulfillment of male role expectations can have negative consequences. . . . This is the **gender role *dysfunction*** argument” (1995, 12). Pleck sees as critical to this strain and negative outcome the role of masculine ideology. Pleck sees similarities between his work and the core concept of social constructionism but argues that it is part of the ideology of masculinity that it has to be constantly proved, not because it is men’s essential nature.

Pollack (1995) takes a very different tack, focusing on the process of emotional development and its lifelong consequences. Pollack’s theory utilizes Nancy Chodorow’s work to create object relations theory grounded particularly in the experience of boys and its consequences for adult men (Phillips 2006). He sees the development of empathy as critical for men and connects the lack of empathy to the forced separation of boys at a young age from their mothers; this enforced separation leads men both to seek isolation and to desire relatedness and intimacy (Pollack 1995). The favorite emotion of men is anger, Pollack argues, because that is an emotion that is allowed. Pollack argues for a redefined masculinity that retains concepts of difference and celebrates positive male traits: “redefining a new, postfeminist masculinity, . . . creating a masculinity that distills what is historically, proactively, and positively male-gendered yet remains respectful of women’s specialness as well, . . . a redefinition, from a critical, psychoanalytic perspective, of boys’ early developmental struggles for gendered selfhood. . . . As boys, men suffer a traumatic abrogation of their early holding environment, that is a premature psychic separation from both their maternal and paternal caregivers”

(35). Pollack characterizes male gender identity as problematic because of male identification with mothers: boys must separate while also valuing their connection with their mothers. He sees socialization models that require separation as “a gender-specific vulnerability to *traumatic abrogation* of the early holding environment, an *impingement* in boys’ development” (41).

Pollack calls for greater empathy toward men in order for men to learn to be more empathetic. He also sees engaging in nurture as critical to repairing and reorienting men, so that men can transform themselves (1995). His particular focus has been on the emotional life of boys, discussed in further detail later in this chapter, and he identifies the educational system as well as families as the essential environments within which boys develop and are socialized.

Bergman is the third leading psychological theorist, and he focuses on the importance of development of self in relation, power-with instead of power-over and autonomy, and sees this as most likely to occur in midlife, when autonomy so clearly fails (1995). Instead of focusing on identity, Bergman focuses on the relational piece: greater relationship and intimacy is what creates a powerful person. The goal is the “relationalization” of men and women, with the goal of establishing creative and collaborative relationships.

Bergman agrees that a critical component for men is separation from their mothers, and in general, from relationship, as an essential step in becoming a man (1995). In contrast to classic theorists who saw this separation as essential to identity, Bergman sees relationship as essential to identity: “Rather than identity before intimacy, relationship *informs* identity in a continuous, ongoing process—the more connected, the more powerful” (73). Bergman describes the development of boys as identifying relationship as bad because it is being like mother, while fathers fail to create a strong emotional relationship with their sons. In addition, boys learn male violence and power. The toll this takes on relationships and the need to reorient only comes for many men in midlife, when the desire for connection outweighs socialization to the contrary.

Bergman argues for a vision of “non-self-centered, mutual relationships” and of “grow[ing] in connection, . . . collaborative, co-creative” (85). “What is being suggested here is not the feminization of men but the relationalization of all, men and women both, . . . moving into a power-with way of living. . . . In shifting the paradigm from self-other to relationship, we are entering the realm of the common good” (88–89).

One other psychological perspective on masculinity is that articulated by feminist paradigms in psychology (Addis and Cohane 2005). Feminist per-

spectives focus on power differences as critical to gender analysis. Material differences are not necessarily reflected in individual or subjective senses of power. "First, members of a privileged group are typically the least likely people to be aware of their privilege. . . . The second reason that many men may feel subjectively disempowered is that there are great emotional costs to the constant striving to erect and maintain positions of power. . . . Finally, power is not distributed evenly among all men" (642). Although feminist paradigms have been used primarily to treat and analyze women, there is no reason the feminist focus on power relations could not be used for men as well.

The difficulty of describing or agreeing on what masculinity is or should be is reflected in the work of scholars who have critiqued methods and measurements of masculinity (Hoffman 2001; Levant and Richmond 2007; Smiler 2004; Thompson and Pleck 1995; Whorley and Addis 2006). What seems especially stunning is the lack of integration in the field, reflecting a difficulty in translating recent theory into measures and a failure to link with other gender work. Masculinity was easier to measure when it was seen as a natural thing to attain or a socially constructed and acceptable thing to learn; when you problematize it, and multiply it, it becomes much more difficult to measure. The efforts to create measures seem to lead in the direction of stereotyping rather than investigating resistance or variation and toward reinforcing binary notions of gender and sex. It also exposes that the subjects of research have been predominantly white males.

The more complex and multiple the notions of masculinity, also the more difficult it has been to apply insights clinically, particularly the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Bankart 2005; Bennett and Jones 2006; Speer 2001). Speer complains that hegemonic masculinity does not explain how masculinity is reproduced, and she questions how useful is a dominant definition that no man ever achieves or that few do. At the same time, the notion that there are multiple masculinities is important in order not to essentialize men. Speer also frankly acknowledges the value of a less problematized masculinity: "Feminism has traditionally needed to have a stable object (patriarchy, men and so on) that is intrinsically negative, measurable, and linked with identity to work with, and against which we can collectively mobilize. There is no room for an 'always indexical' element to masculinity, as one would never be able to pin it down and capture it for long enough to make claims about the workings of social power. To some extent, then, selective reification of the object of our critique is unavoidable" (Speer 2001, 129). Bennett and Jones talk about the negative aspects of masculinity, the concept of the "male harness," meaning particularly the model of stoicism and success (2006, 333).

Bankart has the strongest critique of masculinities analysis not helping clinically, arguing that the concept of hegemony has the odd consequence of reinforcing a narrow notion of masculinity rather than the multiple masculinities that are also part of the model (2005, 435).

A significant portion of the research about boys has come from work of psychologists, especially from clinicians who treat boys and see patterns that they connect to the development and socialization of boys. The two substantive areas that have generated this examination in particular are boys in relation to education and to crime. Much of the focus of this research is on adolescents. What is especially striking is the pattern of emotional openness and expressiveness for young boys, and the gradual suppression of emotion and empathy, which leads to a lifetime pattern of both same- and opposite-sex relationships being stunted. The developmental pattern often targeted is the pattern of mother care and the demand that boys separate from their mothers. A second focus is schools and their view of boys. There is awareness, as there has been with girls, that our gender socialization carries serious consequences. But those consequences are different for boys and girls. It is especially apparent that education disserves both. There also is the clear concern regarding how young masculinity translates into juvenile justice issues.

Two authors who stand out as the articulators of the crisis about boys, and the lack of support for boys' development of empathy, are William Pollack and Dan Kindlon and his coauthors (Kindlon, Thomson, and Barker 1999; Pollack 1998, 2000). William Pollack, the author of *Real Boys* (1998) and *Real Boys' Voices* (2000), articulates a simple thesis to explain the yearning and emotional difficulties of boys: boys early on in their development are expected to separate from their mothers, and their fathers do not replace that relationship. This emotional price plays out in their differential patterns in school and in relationships, because of the "boy code" (1998, xxiii). Pollack discusses the myths and impact of the myths about boys. His main focus is the development of empathy. As discussed in the previous section, he also sees the emotional difficulties of boys as the foundation for the problems of adult men. Other scholars call the way masculinity is socialized "emotional miseducation" by teaching men "emotional stoicism" (Chu, Porche, and Tolman, 2005).

Boys have equivalent emotional expressiveness to girls until elementary school; increasingly from that point, their emotional lives are driven below the surface, particularly through a process of shaming. The education system reinforces this process and treats boys differentially, contributing or even causing their difficulties with school. Pollack catalogs myths about boys and

argues that they are simply that, myths. They include “boys will be boys,” or the myth of testosterone controlling boy behavior; that “boys should be boys,” meaning boys should be “tough”; and that boys are by nature dangerous, even toxic. Pollack argues that boys are and can be empathetic and that they desire connection and relationship, but we fail to support this emotional development for boys. Pollack describes a very gender-specific role for mothers and fathers in developing the emotional skills of boys, a role that counters the separation model for mothers with connection and independence and that strengthens the emotional connection between fathers and sons. Pollack also describes the tension in the definition of masculinity that boys face, between egalitarian, caring manhood and traditional dominating masculinity (Pollack 1998).

Dan Kindlon shares Pollack’s perspective that our socialization pushes boys into “lives of isolation, shame and anger” (Kindlon, Thomson, and Barker 1999, ix). He links this to the emotional suppression that we socialize in boys, so that they lack “emotional literacy” (5). Emotional literacy includes the ability to “identify and name our emotions, . . . [to recognize] the emotional content of voice and facial expression, . . . and [to understand] situations or reactions that produce emotional states” (5). Kindlon points out that as boys mature, they express less emotion, although there is evidence that they still feel plenty of emotion. Like Pollack, he disputes the role of testosterone and aggressiveness.

School is again a major institutional problem for boys’ self-esteem. School is structured around a curriculum more closely linked to girls’ developmental capabilities than those of boys (Kindlon, Thomson, and Barker 1999). In addition, boys’ activity level also makes them more likely to “look ADHD” (ibid., 45). Kindlon notes that “history is full of great men who were notable misfits in the school environment,” with Gandhi being an example (49).

Kindlon calls masculinity “The Big Impossible,” a wonderful term borrowed from the Eastern Highlands of Papua, New Guinea, naming the standard that cannot be achieved (78). He sees boys as in a very stressful testing period in adolescence: “A boy lives in a narrowly defined world of developing masculinity in which everything he does or thinks is judged on the basis of the strength or weakness it represents: you are either strong and worthwhile, or weak and worthless” (78). This testing includes massive amounts of teasing and taunting about being “gay” or a “fag,” all meant to limit male behavior. This leads to significant amounts of depression in boys, as well as a high rate of completed suicides—although more girls attempt suicide, more boys succeed. Annually of nearly two thousand sui-

cides among fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds, 85 percent are boys. Essential to a different model of manhood, Kindlon argues, is a model that includes and values emotional attachment. Kindlon suggests seven key factors to transform boys (241–56):

1. Give boys permission to have an internal life, approval for the full range of human emotions, and help in developing an emotional vocabulary so that they may better understand themselves and communicate more effectively with others.
2. Recognize and accept the high activity level of boys and give them safe boy places to express it.
3. Talk to boys in their language—in a way that honors their pride and their masculinity. Be direct with them; use them as consultants and problem solvers.
4. Teach boys that emotional courage is courage, and that courage and empathy are the sources of real strength in life.
5. Use discipline to build character and conscience, not enemies.
6. Model a manhood of emotional attachment.
7. Teach boys that there are many ways to be a man.

Newberger, like Pollack and Kindlon, sees as a major problem boys' lack of emotional literacy (1999). "If the playing field is level at the beginning of life and infant boys and girls are pretty equally capable of friendliness, compassion, empathy and the like, and if emotional expressiveness can lead to a greater capacity for closeness and intimacy, then why should it be discouraged in boys? What is gained by the suppression of their emotional life?" (64). Newberger focuses on the creation of character. What he seeks to create is safe passage; what he wants to help boys avoid is the pattern that high-risk boys have for sexual activity, drugs, alcohol, violence, and crime. He argues that American institutions fail to support safe passage or intervene effectively to prevent high risk, leaving teenagers to a very individualistic model that especially disserves boys.

A second thread of research on boys focuses on the social context and meaning of adolescence. The pressure to conform to hegemonic masculinity, and the narrow range of acceptable alternative masculinities, makes puberty and adolescence a critical time in the development of masculinity. In addition, it is a time when the notion of gender difference is at its peak. School is a major site of gender construction, with peers as the most important influence at this stage.

James Messerschmidt has done fascinating work on adolescents and crime (1993, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). Messerschmidt exposes how little has been done about gender with respect to adolescents and crime. Even though crime is dominated by men as perpetrators and victims, gender as a factor is rarely studied. He sees gender not as imposed but as received and performed, what he calls structured action theory. Gender is never finished; it is always something both received and created (2000b). In his book *Nine Lives* he looks at the stories of nine boys involved in criminal sexual activity, and how they construct their masculinity by their actions, often creating power through sexual domination that they do not have in their lives as boys. Masculinity is achieved by the use of violence and, in the case of the boys he studied, the use of sexual violence. He identifies a culture of cruelty and peer abuse, producing cool guys and tough guys. Messerschmidt recommends several ways that this culture and these practices could be challenged and reoriented in a way that links parents and schools: managing the “culture of cruelty and the widespread peer abuse that it produces”; challenging dominant masculinities in schools; “making gender relations a core subject matter” in a way that is gender relevant and gender specific; shared parenting; good mothering and fathering; and “emphasis on empathy and pluralism in schools” (ibid., 143–46).

Boy culture is diverse. There are different voices, not solely those of white males. Yet a common thread is the concept of insecure masculinity—acting out to cover the sense of insecurity—and how boys are “bent” by gender at adolescence (Way and Chu 2004b). One study exposes how Hmong American boys have to create a sense of themselves amid racism and gender marginalization that constructs them as not “real men” or “real Americans” (Lee 2004). It is impossible for these boys to achieve the hegemonic ideal. Another study of immigrant boys notes that immigrant girls outperform immigrant boys and ties this to lack of social support and negative school experiences and expectations, which may be linked to stereotypes that are related to subordinated masculinities (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2004).

The same sense of exacerbated or intensified struggle to become or be is expressed in a study about African American adolescent males, among whom hypervulnerability is translated into hypermasculinity (Stevenson 2004). “When Black adolescent males are using exaggerated macho identity stances, they are, in fact, coping. This coping is essential in social and ecological environments where danger to personal and familial safety is high” (60). Some of the coping styles are labeled as “cool pose” and “reactive coping.” “Being missed, dissed, and pissed represents the struggle of construct-

ing identity within a quicksand of false Black male images and is as vulnerable as one can get” (60). The study includes the familiar and devastating statistics on the presence of young black males in the criminal justice system and the evidence of racial profiling in all aspects of their daily lives. Society’s perception of threat also carries over to schools, where young black children are expected to land in jail. Cornel West calls this the problem of nihilism (Stevenson 2004, 62; West 1993).

Hypervulnerability translates into showing off: “The more one experiences pressure to ‘show oneself’ and demonstrate masculine competency, the greater the hypervulnerability. The reason is that ‘showing off’ one’s manhood is an emotionally immature process. This manhood is insecure and is based on what one does rather than who one is” (Stevenson 2004, 63). This is a masculine ideal that all men are subject to, but because minority men have less access to the tools needed to accomplish hegemonic masculinity, they make use of what they have, with the result being more violence and negative social interactions. What is striking about this analysis is that the ultimate perversion of the hegemonic ideal exposes the core danger for all men, which is heightened for disadvantaged men. The ideal limits their freedom. “True freedom can only come if they recreate their image and redefine the questions for themselves” (64).

Judy Chu describes how she found, contrary to the popular image of boys as relationally impaired and emotionally deficient, that boys were “clearly capable of thoughtful self-reflection and deep interpersonal understanding” (2004, 83). Self was negotiated with friends, family, and social expectations. Boys both resist and accept external pressures, but they are definitely aware. Parents are not totally irrelevant to adolescents. Instead, parents are a source of guidance and an ultimate place of support. Among certain boys for whom the cultural norm is one of family obligation (especially among Asian and Latin boys), that value is also recognized (Jeffries 2004). Hegemonic norms are enforced by peers, but boys have a private world of thoughts and feelings that often deviate from the norm (B. Walker 2004). Peers are clearly dominant, but there is a tension between individuals and this peer culture (O’Donnell and Sharpe 2000).

Psychological perspectives on adult men and boys contribute significantly to understanding masculinities and exposing the costs of current societal norms. The challenge for psychology is sustaining multiple norms. Even more so than in sociology, the push in psychology is toward a singular norm. The development of research on nonhegemonic, alternative masculinities is critical for inscribing antiessentialism at the core of masculinities theory.

Subversive/Alternative Masculinities

Although masculinities theorists consistently adopt the perspective that masculinities are plural and that race, class, and sexual orientation play a critical role in constructing those masculinities, the scholarship in these masculinities remains sparse. Thus the critique of masculinities scholarship as essentialist in practice, though not in articulation, remains true. In this respect it mirrors the challenges and shortcomings of implementing antiesentialism that persist in feminist theory as well.

These alternative masculinities, however, are critical to exposing the hierarchy within masculinity, the role of other identity factors, and the interaction of privilege and disadvantage. Most significantly, they suggest a less hierarchical, more egalitarian model of masculinity. This would argue for placing these marginalized models at the center.

Finally, the development of theory around sexual orientation, including the development of queer theory, is one of the progenitors of masculinities scholarship. The ongoing relationship between masculinities and queer theory is an important theoretical perspective to explore. Because queer theory resists sex/gender classification and “grand” theorizing as undermining the queer project, it is both a creative and yet sometimes unsatisfying force within masculinities theory.

Racial Minority Men

The literature on the masculinities of racial minority men primarily focuses on black men. There is a much smaller literature on Latino and Asian men. Minority men provide examples of resistance to hegemony but also sometimes demonstrate acceptance of gender inequality as entitlement, or of male equality as a priority, so resistance and support of hegemonic masculinity are tied together. An example of this is the sign carried by civil rights protestors in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1968 stating “I Am a Man” as a claim to equality (Berger, Wallis, and Watson 1995b). Carried by black men, this claim prioritized their equality in relation to the accepted standard of equality: white men. Implicitly, it might be viewed as asserting the primacy of race over gender, that the demand for racial equality should come first and perhaps that true equality would include exercising equivalent patriarchal power to white men. Forty years later in a commemorative march honoring the Birmingham protest and the death of Martin Luther King Jr., women as well as men carried the same posters, bringing black women’s equality into the picture in an oddly gendered way.

The distinctive masculinity of African American men has been labeled “cool pose” by Richard Majors. “Black men often cope with their frustration, embitterment, alienation, and social impotence by channeling their creative energies into gesture, clothing, hairstyle, walk, stance, and handshake” (Majors 2001, 211). The pose, Majors argues, is both resistance and assertion against the race and gender subjugation of black men. At the same time, men of color sometimes follow the dominant script. Razack (2002) has asserted that when men of color are complicit in dehumanizing others, it is not compensatory humiliation but rather doing exactly what white men do, following the hegemonic script.

The masculinities of other men of color are just as distinctive, merging resistance and acceptance of hegemonic norms and cultural/racial traditions (Atkins 2005; Lazur and Majors 1995). Cheung (2002b) reminds us that in constructing a distinctive Chinese masculinity, the temptation is to draw from traditional models that subordinate women, such as the Chinese masculinist heroic tradition or the scholar warrior (see also Krishnaswamy 2002; Louie 2003). Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner (1994) suggest that the Latino stereotype of macho masculinity may be a response to oppression, similar to findings of research on African American males. Equally or more significantly, they point out, immigration triggers a shift in gender relations, with a diminishment of patriarchal authority, more shared decision-making, and more power for women, who challenge patriarchal authority. Based on their study of the shifts in Latino masculinity, they strongly argue that the best way to undermine hegemonic masculinity is to study marginalized and subordinate masculinities.

Two other scholars that explore the possibility of models of change from subversive masculinities are Michael Awkward and Devon Carbado. Both focus on men as feminists and specifically on the place of black men in black women’s feminism (Awkward 1999; Carbado 1999a; see also Adu-Poku 2001). Awkward suggests a potential model for masculinity grounded in the black feminist critique of feminism, a way of seeing the interaction between masculinities and feminist theory that is very atypical of white feminists or white male masculinities scholars. His view suggests that an outsider perspective can negotiate the difficult dance that is needed if masculinities are to be of value to feminist theory.

Awkward talks about the necessity of examining the benefits and disadvantages of feminist discourse: black men could be purely self-interested, or they could use this perspective to explore the privileges and position of men. One of the possibilities that black men have to offer relates to the structure of

the black family and the strong role of mothers. Black men, he argues, using the work of Hortense Spillers, know the female within to a far greater degree than most men. “It is the heritage of the *mother* that the African-American male must regain as an aspect of his own personhood—the power of ‘yes’ to the ‘female’ within” (1999, 372, citing Spillers). Feminism, Awkward argues, might allow for reconceptualizing a black man in a nonoppressive way—in other words, masculinity that is not patriarchal and not linked to racial oppression.

Another positive characteristic of black masculinity is the value placed on responsibility. This is the key value noted in a review of the literature on African American men by Hammond and Mattis (2005) that exposes the value attached to responsibility and accountability, as well as showing a relational construction of manhood. This suggests a very affirmative model of manhood, contrary to the negative core of hegemonic masculinity.

Devon Carbado (1999b) also explores male feminism, arguing for the necessity of men coming to terms with male privilege, including heterosexual privilege. He claims male feminism must be male-centered (which masculinities is) but that it should focus on disconnecting from power. Carbado also critiques the dominance of men in racial discourse, as privileged victims in antiracist analysis (1999c, 2006).

Elijah Ward (2005) similarly raises concerns about black masculinity, particularly the links between black masculinity and homophobia. Ward argues that black masculinity is characterized by hypermasculinity, constructed in defense of the fear of black men and the denial of black men’s personhood, and incorporates strong homophobia while denying a discussion of sexuality. One consequence of homophobia, he points out, is the deterrent effect on relationships of affection between black men. Neal (2005) similarly raises the concern that the need for strength and opposition in black masculinity can express itself in homophobic, misogynist ways.

The example of black masculinity also exposes how masculinity, particularly subordinated masculinity, includes an externally imposed model, and that model may conflict with masculinity constructed from within by men themselves. The denigration of black men has been strong and persistent. This is powerfully evident in the example of lynching. Manhood was at the core of lynching, a violent response to the perceived threat of black men being equal to white men. In addition, lynching was a way for white men to prove themselves to other white men. Lynching commonly included castration, and it was a public event. Acting like a white man was considered insubordination and an insult (Messerschmidt 1998). At the same time, during the Jim Crow

era, black men asserted manhood despite its denial, to “man” the race (Ross 2004). The most common crime resulting in lynching was approaching, or being accused of assaulting, a white woman. Bound up with these gender and race messages against black men is also a denial, in a strange way, of the contemporaneous treatment of black women. “The institutionalized rape of black women has never been as powerful a symbol of black oppression as the spectacle of lynching” (Carby 1987, 39).

Frank Cooper (2006) suggests that the contemporary external construction of black masculinity differentiates between the “good” black man and the “bad” black man. Cooper examines how cultural representations function as a push to discipline black men to be “good” black men, emulating whites but still subordinate to white males. Gail Dines’s study of pornography (2006) is perhaps an extreme example of these cultural representations. She finds the presence of black men to be widespread in porn, mostly animalistic, negative images linked with degrading images of white women.

Subordination remains typical, playing out structurally, in education, work, health, and criminal justice. Education exposes a pattern of lost opportunity and denial (J. Davis 2006; Ferguson 2000). Work has been epitomized by the denial of the breadwinner role by denial of economic opportunities (Pamela Smith 1999b). Health data expose significant differences in morbidity and mortality (Rich 2000). Finally, there is the highly disproportionate, epidemic representation of black men in all aspects of the criminal justice system (Brunson and Miller 2006; Provine 1998).

The created and imposed masculinities of racial minorities present the opportunity to expose hierarchy, see the dynamic of resistance, and suggest other models of masculinity. Race operates in complex ways that trump gender privilege. The development of greater study of race and of minority men holds great promise both to suggest models for change and to move gender analysis to take on race as an issue.

Queer Theory

Another influence on masculinities theory, and an alternative to hegemonic masculinity, is masculinities within the gay and lesbian communities and the insights of queer theory. As with racial masculinities, there are both external and internal masculinities. Homophobia is a powerful piece in the construction of masculinities. Men define themselves in relation to other men, often in homosocial environments (Kimmel 1997b). If “not being like women” is the negative definition of masculinity, that avoidance is also

strongly linked to “not being gay.” Indeed, men’s strong homophobia is linked to their need to avoid being feminine in order to meet masculine norms (Wilkinson 2004; see also Hegarty and Massey 2006). This is expressed in avoiding men who are perceived as feminine, antigay harassment and violence, and men themselves avoiding characteristics and behaviors that would identify them as feminine or gay (Bartlett 2007; Kilianski 2003). These behaviors and attitudes begin in adolescence as “heteronormative masculinity” (Korobov 2005), which makes gay and lesbian youth particularly vulnerable (S. Martin 1996). Homophobic attitudes and behaviors are manifested strongly in the workplace with sexual harassment of gay men or men perceived as violating the norms of masculinity (Schroeder 1998).

Unlike other forms of discrimination, homophobia frequently is socially justified and defended, based on rationales that homosexuality is sinful, that it violates the rules of nature or is unnatural/deviant, that it violates social norms of sexuality, and that it is associated with other social evils such as prostitution and moral debauchery (B. Green 2005; Herek 2007). What one scholar calls “sexuality injustice” is distinctive because it is not expressed as disadvantage but rather as displacement: gays and lesbians are viewed as outside of civil society (Calhoun 1995). But as Sylvia Law pointed out in her classic work (1988), discrimination against gays and lesbians is powerfully linked to sexism: it represents a way of enforcing sex norms for both women and men. “Homosexuality is censured because it violates the prescriptions of gender role expectations” (196). The explicit regulation of homosexuality is one of the key ways in which law regulates masculinity and reinforces a particular male norm (Reinheimer 2006; Valdes 1995). This is done by the absence of legal protection, such as the absence of a federal cause of action for employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, which permits discriminatory workplace culture that reinforces a narrow male norm of masculinity. Limiting marriage in most states only to opposite-sex couples and the criminalization of sexual practices associated most strongly with the intimacy of gays and lesbians also reinforce gender norms (Reinheimer 2006). The regulation is accomplished by linking sex, gender, and sexual orientation (Valdes 1995).

Asserting a legal theory to combat discrimination against gays and lesbians, as well as asserting a positive identity and culture of gays and lesbians, inevitably contributes to a more expansive notion of masculinity. Since being “not gay” is such a defining part of masculinity, undermining the negative perception and behavior toward being gay liberates all men. The focus of theory on gay and lesbian civil rights, and of queer theory, however, has not

been on reconstructing masculinity but rather on sexuality, as it is sexuality that has been the defining characteristic of condemnation and regulation.

Queer theory pushes more radically, challenging the assumption of a gay/lesbian identity and more generally the notion of identity (Jagose 1996). One scholar identifies four major claims of queer theory: “(1) sexuality is central, not marginal, to the construction of meaning and political power; (2) identity is performative, not natural; (3) political struggle is better understood as ironic parody than as earnest liberation; and (4) popular culture provides a unique insight into the everyday operation of political power that may under certain circumstances transform, rather than simply mirror, status quo power relations” (Burgess 2006, 401). Queer theory in particular attacks the notion of categories, particularly the binary notion of sex and gender (Hostetler and Herdt 1998). Instead of arguing that gays and lesbians are an identifiable category or class with a culture and interests that fit within a civil rights concept of rights, queer theory contests categories themselves as reproducing hierarchy by accepting the notion of categories (Kepros 1999–2000). Queer theory rejects identity politics and finds categories repressive instead of liberating (ibid.). The focus of queer theory includes exploring how sexual identities are socialized and limited, how heterosexuality becomes the dominant position and sustains itself, arguing that sexuality is based on unstable, changing categories and not limiting itself to a “queer position” on sexuality (Schlichter 2004). Thus, “queering” an area of study or analysis is not limited to gay and lesbian issues; rather, it is a way of critiquing categories, seeing how categories limit, and refusing to use categories to achieve liberation and equality. The approach of queer theory, then, as applied to the study of masculinities would challenge the category itself. Moreover it would challenge the promotion of heterosexism by raising arguments grounded in concepts of privacy and antidiscrimination (G. Smith 1998).

Queer theory both challenges the categories of sexual orientation and disrupts heteronormativity (A. Green 2007). “Queer theory seeks to demonstrate that all sexual behavior is socially constructed and that sexuality is not determined by biology” (Brooks and Parkes 2004, 89). “The *principle* of ‘queer’ . . . is the disassembling of common beliefs about gender and sexuality. . . . The *activity* of ‘queer’ is the ‘queering’ of culture. . . . As *theory*, [it] leads to the rejection of all categorizations as limiting and labeled by dominant power structures” (Kirsch 2000, 33). In this respect queer theory is very distinctive from mainstream gay and lesbian politics, which have emphasized a category and argued for the recognition of equal rights and justice for the category (Currah 2001).

A chief criticism of queer theory has been whether it can translate into pragmatic political strategy. “[If] the insights of queer theory were to be seriously integrated into the reasoning of the rights advocates of sexual minorities, those advocates would find themselves facing something of a quandary: how to articulate a rights claim on behalf of an identity that is, in fact, radically contingent—an illusion, a fiction, or at best, an only occasionally coherent narrative” (Currah 2001, 180; see also Ball 2001). A second critique is seeing queer theory and feminism as being at odds, because feminists would reject discarding the category of women and because of a fear that “queer” has a dominantly male orientation (Halley 2004; McLaughlin, Casey, and Richardson 2006; Zeidan 2006). Another critique of queer theory is the need for greater diversity or antiessentialism (Hutchinson 1997; Mingo 1998; Valdes 1998).

Several insights from queer theory are particularly useful for masculinities. One is Kenji Yoshino’s concept of covering, his exploration of the ways gays and lesbians hide their true selves in order to avoid discrimination and harm (2002; see also Hanna 2005). Something akin to covering, I would argue, is more broadly part of masculinities, since so much negativism is part of the definition and it is so harmful to deviate from the norm. Also, the pressure to conform affects all men. A second insight is that if the concept of affirmative action is used to remedy the treatment of gay men and lesbians in the workplace, then inevitably it would expand the culture of permissible masculinity, but it could do so in such a marginalized way that it would reinforce hegemonic norms (Byrne 1993).

Queer theory has enormous potential for masculinity because it rejects the category and exposes it as clearly socially constructed and malleable. It argues for change not by recognizing the category but by rejecting it. It disrupts the sense of inevitable, natural binary sexual opposites. One example of this disruptive potential is Judith Halberstam’s work on female masculinities (1998). Because masculinity is socially constructed, it is a performance that does not require a male body. If masculinity is performed by a nondominant body, do we get a glimpse of a nondominant masculinity? Halberstam emphasizes that female masculinity is not simply women aping men. Her work on tomboys reveals how much greater the concern is for male effeminacy than female masculinity. Halberstam also emphasizes that female masculinities are multiple, and not all are progressive. Simply crossing a boundary does not mean oppositional masculinities (173).

Surprisingly, within queer theory there is not a lot of specific focus on masculinities. Because categories are challenged, no alternative masculinity

is explored since that would accept categorization or identity as real. On the other hand, it is very clear that homophobia is powerfully used to construct and limit masculinity. This is especially well demonstrated in Pascoe's book *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* (2007). Pascoe describes the culture of masculinity in high school and how "fag" is used most often not as a label for homosexuality but rather as a label for behavior considered unmasculine. Pascoe's work rests on Butler's insight that gender is performative and interactive; we follow the scripts, but we also change and modify them. What he observed with adolescent boys in a California high school were repeated acts of "sexual mastery and the denial of girls' subjectivity" (14), as well as relationships of rivalry and limits between boys. The insight that homophobia is a key piece of dominant masculinity is well established. What Pascoe observed is how it is used to discipline all boys and men. "Fag is not only an identity linked to homosexual boys but an identity that can temporarily adhere to heterosexual boys as well. The fag trope is also a racialized disciplinary mechanism" (53). The term is used less to accuse someone of his sexual orientation and more to limit what he can do: "Fag may be used as a weapon with which to temporarily assert one's masculinity by denying it to others. Thus the fag becomes a symbol around which contests of masculinity take place" (82). So the epithet means "You're not a man" (82).

A formal policy of defining manhood as not being homosexual is within the organizational mission of the Boy Scouts, which is to make boys into men (Poirier 2003). The defense of the policy of exclusion of gay scoutmasters became a defense of an explicit model of masculinity: "compliance with the Scout Oath ('morally straight') and Law ('clean'), and unacceptability of an 'avowed homosexual' as a role model" (279). The preferred heterosexual model is identified as "normal" and "natural," not as socially or culturally chosen and constructed. The antigay exclusion is linked "to the issue of constructing a normatively heterosexual masculinity and at the same time maintaining that that masculinity is natural and normal" (303).

One of the potentials of same-sex relationships is another form of masculinity or masculinities. There is some evidence of more reciprocity in same-sex relationships (Connell 1992). Scholars who have considered gender conflict theory in the context of same-sex relationships have found not that same-sex male relationships generated double the conflict but rather that conflict was lessened, suggesting a different relational model (Wester, Pionke, and Vogel 2005). If there is the potential for a different model of masculinity from gay men, it might come from a detailed understanding of gay men as individuals and in relationship, and how they construct alternative masculinities.

Critique and Concerns

As this broad overview of the field suggests, the field of masculinities scholarship has expanded enormously. Within the field exists the kind of healthy disagreements characteristic of most gender scholarship. Two areas of debate that merit attention when considering the role of masculinities scholarship in feminist analysis are criticism of the concept of hegemonic masculinity and concerns about the goals of masculinities as a field. First, the concept of hegemonic masculinity, although widespread in the field, has drawn considerable critique. Stephen Whitehead, among others, finds the use of the term to be reductionist (2002). According to Whitehead, the benefit of the concept of hegemonic masculinity is the attempt to connect male power to institutions and structures and to expose the power of some men. But it has the tendency to be read as if gender relations are predictable and preordained. He suggests as an alternative the term *masculinism*: “the ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination [comparable to patriarchy]” (97; see also Brittan 1989). Richard Collier similarly critiques the concept as oversimplified. Collier (1998) argues that it lacks a nuanced study of the relationship between sex and gender. He is wary of the idea that there is such a thing as essential masculinity, and he also argues that the concept tends to refuse to recognize anything positive in masculinities. Others critique the tendency toward a static view of masculinities, as opposed to a view that emphasizes how masculinity remakes itself and changes constantly (Demetriou 2001). Although the theory embraces multiple masculinities, the tendency also is to focus on the dominant form, thus reducing masculinity to a single essence (Petersen 2003; see also Halberstam 1998; Spector-Mersel 2006).

Other scholars critique hegemonic masculinity as simply vague and ambiguous. John MacInnes (1998) points out the lack of a definition of masculinity in the literature and argues, as some others have, for focusing instead on material inequality, using a human-rights approach to move away from a false gender-difference position. He argues persuasively that “in contrast to the politics of identity . . . pursuing a politics of justice and equal rights to its logical conclusion is a more radical option, once we have solved the problems caused by the confusion of sexual genesis and sexual difference” (59). Jeff Hearn also raises the problem of imprecision in definition and makes four proposals: to use the term more precisely, to focus analysis on men instead of masculinity/-ies, to focus on the discourse, and to explore the differential experiences of women and men regarding men (1996, 214).

The critique has not gone unanswered. Connell and Messerschmidt, in a joint 2005 article, summarized five critiques of the concept: (1) that the underlying concept is flawed because it deemphasizes power and dominance; (2) that the concept suffers from ambiguity and overlap; (3) the problem of reification, portraying men as simply violent and toxic, explaining lots of bad things; (4) the lack of good theory of the subject; and (5) the lack of clarity about how hegemony is sustained (837–44). They reiterate, however, that the core of the concept is hierarchy and the plurality of masculinities. They justify the concept as still sound, although they suggest the need for reformulation in four areas: analyzing the nature of gender hierarchy, developing a greater geography of masculinities, examining the role of bodies, and exploring the dynamics of masculinities. They also point out the asymmetric positions of men and women and the importance of a vision of democratizing gender relations.

The second significant area of critique in the field involves concerns about the implicit goals of masculinities theory. Harry Brod is critical of masculinities theory becoming separatist and argues that it is essential that it retain the perspective of viewing men in relation to women. “Too much of what was written on masculinities did not sufficiently emphasize, if it noted at all, that masculinities are also patriarchies” (1994, 86). Roussel and Downs (2007) also critique the concept of masculinities as insufficiently focused on femininity. The focus on masculinities, they suggest, is “a strategy to end the displacement operated by feminist [analysis]. . . . We should resist the whole apparatus of masculinity and stop defining ourselves as masculine at all” (180, citing Seth Mirsky).

Nye (2005) questions whether the theory of hegemonic masculinity is about erasing masculinity or reforming it. In an interesting interchange, several theorists considered whether men can (and should) be proud to be men. Harry Brod (2001) argues for the need for a “male affirmative foundation” for men to work with one another. What Brod means by male affirmative is men standing together for justice. He also makes the observation that the movement rarely speaks in the language of “brotherhood,” reserving the term for men of color and not using it for the white men who predominate in the men’s movement. Schmitt focuses on the conflict between being profeminist and still seeing value in being a man; he sees having pride in being a man as confusing. Yet he argues that it is necessary both to fight against oppression and still to be proud. For him, “pride means not hating ourselves” (2001, 397).

A follow-up piece to this dialogue by Bob Pease (2002) identifies three ways men might relate to feminism: first, because they benefit from women's oppression, they might reject feminism or a different masculinity; second, because men are oppressed by masculinities, out of self-interest they might join in the feminist project; and finally, if they are devoted to ethical and moral stands, they might be drawn to feminism in order to imagine a relationship with women that is ethical and moral (as opposed to built on oppression). Pease argues that significant change requires changing material and structural conditions, and two ways he suggests are important are encouraging empathy in men and reconceptualizing their pain as need.

Feminist analysts have also been critical of the goals of masculinities scholarship. Hanmer (1990) argues that the lack of parity between analysis of men and women is apparent when you ask the core questions of feminist analysis about men. According to Hanmer, women's questions about oppression and overcoming oppression relate to powerlessness. For men, the issues are totally different: "The study of men involves the recognition of the use and misuse of social power that accrues to the male gender, of recognizing benefits even when none are personally desired" (29). This recognition would lead to examining, for example, men's relationships to women and children in the family or violence against women and children, analysis that could be done from both a male and female perspective. She also emphasizes that feminists have had to call attention to the lack of focus on women. Men, however, have not lacked from being studied and have been assumed to represent all people. What has not been present is studying them as gendered beings, in gendered institutions, engaging in gendered practices, as part of their history, sociology, and so on. Sally Robinson (2002) makes the point that masculinity and feminism are not complementary inquiries and that men must be distanced from masculinity without being distanced from feminism.

Judith Kegan Gardiner (2002a) expresses similar concerns in an overview of masculinity scholarship. She notes the asymmetrical relationship with feminism (3); the presence of a victimization model in masculinities, despite men's retention of power (5); the common rhetoric of men or boys in crisis (7); a sense of ambivalence toward feminism (9); and that it is a "coded" field that actually focuses on heterosexual masculinity and crisis (10). Meg Luxton (1993) reminds us of the profound differences between the gender issues of women and men, making masculinities very tricky for men and for feminism. She sees the issue for men as taking responsibility for their privilege, while "feminism is an emancipatory project" (351).

The concerns regarding the goals of masculinities analysis as well as the debates within the field regarding theoretical concepts should not be a deterrent to benefiting from what masculinities scholarship can bring to feminist analysis. It counsels caution but not rejection. The critiques simply remind us to use this perspective with care and subject it to rigorous questioning. This analytical approach, recognizing that insights are frequently partial and subject to change, useful in some but not all situations, has been the hallmark of much feminist analysis as well as other bodies of scholarship.

In the next chapter I summarize masculinities theory and then explore how it can enrich feminist analysis by further amplifying and solidifying feminist critique. It can further expose gender issues that have remained largely invisible. The mutual gain of these two bodies of scholarship from dialogue, critique, and critical absorption most importantly might lead to greater gender justice.