

Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and R. W. Connell, eds.: *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005

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1 The publication of the book *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* marks a watershed moment for the field of critical men's studies. Edited by leading researchers in the field, Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and Robert W. Connell, the collection provides a rich overview of developments within critical men's studies, primarily from a social science perspective, establishing the viability of, and productivity within, the field. The book includes key articles by those researchers who have had a meaningful impact on the development of the studies on men and masculinities, as well competent and interesting articles from newer, yet still accomplished, voices. The book provides a solid foundation upon which one could teach an upper level undergraduate or graduate course on critical men's studies, largely from a social science perspective. However, those who come to the study of men and masculinities from the humanities may find a lack of representative articles because, as the editors assert in the introduction, "even though there are important debates from the humanities," "it is the social sciences that have produced the greatest amount of research on men and masculinities" (3). Consequently, the scholarship within the humanities does not find ample representation throughout the book. Certainly, providing what is perceived as "fair" representation across disciplines is a challenge for any book that seeks to provide an overview of such an interdisciplinary topic as the critical studies of men and masculinities.

2 The book is divided into five sections. The marrow of the book begins by presenting essays that offer various theoretical perspectives for researching men and masculinities, including social theory, feminist theory and queer theory. By selecting these essays to commence the volume, the editors have provided diverse perspectives through which to theorize masculinity, one that is informed by approaches that speak to both the social sciences and the humanities. Such variation in approach is critical to providing a sense of the complexity and depth involved in studying masculinities. Each article aptly provides a historical context for its chosen theoretical perspective, a discussion of interventions into the theory as well as future directions for theorizing masculinity. Judith Kegan Gardiner touches on the issue of race in her article on feminist theory. However, an additional theoretical exposition that focuses specifically on the intersection of masculinity and race / ethnicity would have been a welcome addition to this section of the book. Of course, one must take into consideration that there are many lenses through which one can view masculinity and the

editors obviously had to make choices that cast the broadest net.

3 The second section entitled, "Global and Regional Patterns," urges readers to reflect on how global contexts, globalization, development, and postcolonialism influence the construction and iteration of masculinities. Here issues of race and ethnicity gain a greater theoretical voice, as if to answer my concern regarding race in the first section, and the range of voices is impressive. Robert Connell, for example, provides a framework for reconceptualizing masculinities as "a feature of world society" and for understanding "men's gender practices in terms of global structures" (72). Certainly there is a tendency to think of masculinities locally and individually, and Connell urges us to push past the local toward a rethinking of masculinity in terms of macrocontexts. This section provides postcolonial perspectives on masculinity in the third world, as well as reflections on masculinities within specific cultural contexts such as Latin America, East Asia and Europe. Black masculinity in Africa and the U.S. also are discussed in detail. The chapter authored by Robert Morrell and Sandra Swart covers an impressive array of ideas related to postcolonialism, development and indigenous knowledges, and includes the ways in which men have functioned as both the oppressed as well as the oppressor in various times and locations.

4 Section three focuses on the structures, institutions and processes that undergird and influence masculinity in societies. The collection of articles in this section addresses all of the major socializing institutions, such as the family, the legal system, the educational system, the media and the workplace. The section also addresses issues of class and sexuality, which are tied to the broader structures of capitalism and heterosexual normativity. Because I am intrigued by the intersection of hegemony, ideology and the social construction of identity, I was compelled by this particular collection of essays and their interrogations of those broader social structures that ultimately dovetail together to reinforce particular conceptualizations and performances of masculinity. Morgan's article on class, which leads the section, is particularly provocative. Morgan rightly points out that historically class has not been gendered, and "it has been only in relatively recent times that any discussions of gender and class have come to focus on the practices of men rather than those of women" (176). There is a lacuna in the intersection of masculinity and class, and Morgan lays out a great case for exploring this important terrain further.

5 The fourth section, entitled, "Bodies, Selves, Discourses," provides an overview of the ways in which the experience of embodiment intersects with the performance and reception of masculinities. The essays span a range of relevant topics invested in corporeality such as sports, violence, bodily normativity and transgendering. Michael Messner's article reviewing

the work completed at the intersection of masculinity and sports is foundational because sports continues to be a central site where hegemonic masculinity is reified and where men establish their dominance not only over women, but also over other men.

6 The final section, which is given the title "Politics," offers an eclectic and important mix of essays that reflect on the historical and contemporary intersections of masculinities and nationalism, terrorism, militarism and citizenship, which is particularly fitting for the complex global political situation in the 21st century. As Paul Higate and John Hopton argue, "the nexus linking war, militarism, and masculinities has remained an enduring and consistent feature of societies and their cultures across time" (432). At the turn of the 21st century, the U.S. has seen a resurgence of the intersection of masculinity and militarism, with dramatic implications for U.S. foreign policy, and material implications for human life. For instance, Carl Cameron, reporter for the conservative U.S. Fox News network, posted fabricated quotations on the network's website declaring that 2004 democratic presidential candidate John Kerry had stated, regarding himself and incumbent President Bush, "I'm a metrosexual-he's a cowboy." Oliver Burkeman in the *Guardian* newspaper reported, "the 'metrosexual' story taps into a persistent theme underlying the election race, in which the Republican party and its supporters in the media have sought to make a campaign issue of the candidates' perceived masculinity." The intersection of masculinity, war, terrorism, and citizenship has salient implications for human life, and can be seen not only in the U.S., but around the world, such as in Scandinavia and the Middle East, as Michael Kimmel aptly points out in his chapter entitled, "Globalization and its Mal(e)contents: The Gendered Moral and Political Economy of Terrorism." The final chapter of the book by Michael Flood provides a fitting ending because it focuses on men's collective struggles for gender justice through anti-violence activism, providing a humane perspective on how and why to untangle oneself from unjust power relationships. Flood demonstrates how some men are fighting to educate others about patriarchal and heterosexual privilege and working to end abuse and promote social justice. Flood also shows what a precarious position these men face, as the backlash against pro-feminist / anti-sexist men can be vicious and, I would argue, dangerous. Consequently, from this reader's perspective, such efforts should be encouraged, recognized and praised.

7 Without question, Kimmel, Hearn and Connell have gathered intriguing and worthwhile essays that provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the major developments in critical studies of men and masculinities. The book is a "must read" for those interested in the critical study of masculinity. Editing such an important collection is undoubtedly fraught with difficult choices regarding what should be included. Certainly it is

impossible to cover or include every disciplinary area to that discipline's satisfaction, yet the editors have done, in this reader's view, a respectable job addressing key concepts and ideas. Of course, coming from the humanities, I would have liked greater representation of work from this realm of inquiry. In particular, greater discussion of the implications of masculinity's representation in the media (television, film, advertisements, comic books) would have been welcomed, as the media is such a pervasive and powerful force in the lives of so many. Of course, I would be remiss if I did not disclose that my primary area of research involves the media. Disciplinary proclivities are neither shocking nor new, but the study of men and masculinities has always been an interdisciplinary enterprise and, as it continues to grow, I believe it will be a mutually reinforcing enterprise between the humanities and social sciences.