

MASCULINITIES AND CULTURE

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SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The urgent need to challenge the cultural construction of masculinity has long been an organizing imperative of feminist and gender-sensitive research in cultural and media studies. Frequently singled out for particular attention by researchers, amongst other concerns, is the extent to which media representations help to reproduce (and thereby reinforce as *normal*) cultural configurations of femininity and masculinity as being *naturally* determined by sexual difference. This kind of essentialist language and imagery typically works to privilege 'masculine' discourses about the world (deemed objective, rational and unitary) over and above 'feminine' ones (held to be subjective, irrational and fragmented) in ideological terms. For these researchers, then, seemingly *common sensical* media representations of masculinity need to be interrogated in ways which avoid tacitly reaffirming as *legitimate* or *appropriate* what are patriarchal assumptions about gendered and sexualized identities, subjectivities and experiences.

In seeking to further extend a critical understanding of the cultural politics of masculinity, John Beynon's *Masculinities and Culture* makes an exciting intervention into current debates. His discussion centres from the outset on the tensions engendered between discourses of 'maleness', based on a conception of physiological difference, and those of 'masculinity' as a complex set of cultural constructions. At issue, in his view, is the need to examine masculinity as it is inflected in culturally specific ways so as to better account for how it is shaped by such factors as class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, nationality and so forth. Here Beynon makes key distinctions between 'masculinity-as-experienced', 'masculinity-as-enacted' and 'masculinity-as-represented', the latter referring primarily to depictions of *what it is to be a*

man in media texts such as films, literature, men's magazines, advertisements, and television. This approach enables him to engage with media accounts of the so-called 'crisis in masculinity' in a way that demonstrates precisely why the concept of a single, fixed and unified masculinity is untenable. Accordingly, in documenting a wide array of socially constructed 'masculinities', ranging from 'Imperial Man' to the 'new lad' and beyond, Beynon elucidates their contradictory, fragmented and contingent enactment in a variety of everyday contexts. This book offers a timely and absorbing exploration of an acutely important area of inquiry, and will be warmly welcomed by readers prepared to recast familiar premises about what counts as masculinity today.

The Issues in Cultural and Media Studies series aims to facilitate a diverse range of critical investigations into pressing questions considered to be central to current thinking and research. In light of the remarkable speed at which the conceptual agendas of cultural and media studies are changing, the authors are committed to contributing to what is an ongoing process of re-evaluation and critique. Each of the books is intended to provide a lively, innovative and comprehensive introduction to a specific topical issue from a fresh perspective. The reader is offered a thorough grounding in the most salient debates indicative of this book's subject, as well as significant insights into how new modes of enquiry may be established for future explorations. Taken as a whole, then, the series is designed to cover the core components of cultural and media studies courses in an imaginatively distinctive and engaging manner.

Stuart Allan

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The book is structured as follows. Chapter 1 raises general issues and debates about gender, masculinity and 'masculinities'. Chapter 2 introduces a historical dimension by examining the construction of masculinities in the Age of Empire. Chapter 3 reviews four interdisciplinary ways in which masculinities have been critically studied and theorized to date. Chapter 4 focuses on the assertion that contemporary men or masculinity, even both, are in a chronic state of 'crisis'. Chapter 5 investigates the origins of the so-called 'new man' and looks at the commercialization of masculinity, something that accelerated during the 1980s and 1990s. Chapter 6 examines the discursive construction of 'Millennium masculinity' in both the British broadsheet press and in popular books over the millennium. Finally, Chapter 7 details six 'research modes' by which masculinities might be studied in different ways and by drawing upon a wide variety of data. Throughout I have tried to write a book which is wide ranging and has intellectual breadth as well as depth. Accordingly I have drawn upon a range of sources, including literature, history, popular culture (in particular film and television), magazines and the broadsheet press, sociology, ethnography, anthropology, as well as cultural, media and literary studies. While the Glossary contains many terms with which readers will be familiar, it (nevertheless) makes an important contribution to the book and provides a summary of the main topics.

Writing is a solitary business at the best of times and one in which the author is constantly reminded of the immense debt owed to others. I want, therefore, to record my warm gratitude to the following, each of whom contributed, whether in large or small part, to this book's appearance:

- Members of the University of Glamorgan Policy Centre, who granted me teaching remission for part of 2000–01. Without this, *Masculinities and Culture* would never have seen the light of day.
- My immediate friends and colleagues in Media and Cultural Studies in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), in particular Tom O'Malley and Philip Mitchell. Since succeeding me as Subject Head of Media-Culture Tom could not have done more to ensure that I completed the manuscript of this book on time. I am equally in debt to Gabrielle Vernon, who has now taken over as Co-ordinator of the European Media and Cultural Studies Network.
- Much-valued friends/colleagues (in alphabetical order) in HASS, namely Steve Blandford, Penny Byrne, Mike Connolly, David Dunkerley, Colin Gent, Peter Jachimiak, Gary Llewellyn, Maggie McNorton, Milena Morgan, Ieuan Morris, Chris Peters, Tony Powell, Adrian Price, Jane Prince, Erin Striff, Andy Thompson and Diana Wallace, along with many others too numerous to mention.
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- The many authors on whose work I draw. I am particularly indebted to Michael A. Budd for his highly original study of Victorian bodybuilding (Chapter 2); and to Frank Mort, Sean Nixon and Tim Edwards for their charting of the commercialization of masculinity during the 1980s and 1990s (Chapter 5).
- This book is the product of teaching about masculinities over some years and is intended to feed back into teaching. I want to thank, therefore, the many past and present undergraduate students of the 'Men, Masculinities and Culture' module in HASS, particularly Adam Gerrish and Maggie Magor, to whose unpublished studies I make passing reference. I am, also, particularly appreciative of two current doctoral students, Peter Jachimiak and Richard Thurston. Both Peter and Richard are engaged in researching in the area of men and masculinities and I briefly refer to their ongoing work.

- The staff of 'Hilltop' Hospital; 'Victoria Road' Comprehensive; and 'Green Acres' Junior School for allowing me to carry out the field studies briefly referred to in Chapter 7.
- The organizers of conferences to which embryonic versions of this book were delivered from 1998 to date at Manchester University; Aberystwyth University; the University of Lodz British Studies Centre, Poland; Nottingham University; Warwick University; the London University Institute of Education; the University of Santiago de Compostela; the University of Wales Conference Centre at Gregynog Hall, Newtown, Powys; and to the HASS Staff Research Seminar, University of Glamorgan. I would particularly like to thank contributors to the 'Posting the Male' International Conference held at Liverpool John Moores University in August 2000, organized by Berthold Schoene-Harwood and Daniel Lea. This impressive gathering proved, if proof was needed, the variety and vitality of contemporary research into masculinities. 'Posting the Male' took place as I was writing Chapter 7, 'Researching Masculinities Today'. It is no coincidence, therefore, that many references to the excellent state-of-the-art papers delivered at Liverpool John Moores feature prominently therein.
- My family, Helen, Sarah and David. I am immensely grateful to Helen for conjuring the well-ordered references out of illegible scribbles on numerous scraps of paper.
- Finally, it is particularly appropriate that I should dedicate this book to the memory of my father, Walter Beynon (1903–74). He was brought up surrounded by the adventure stories of Empire and his childhood coincided with the long 'Edwardian summer' of Imperial ascendancy. At the age of 15 he did something straight out of the pages of *Treasure Island* and *Coral Island*: he cast aside his comfortable surroundings and ran away to sea, the words of a music hall song popular at the time no doubt ringing in his ears:

Daring boys till the end of time
 In every age and clime
 Will run away to sea,
 Having little notion of the mighty ocean
 When it is in commotion
 Or how sick they'll be!
 Life on shore is such a bore
 Whilst on the deep they will surely reap
 Wealth and fame . . .

Thereafter he travelled to every far-flung corner of the then British Empire. Writing Chapter 2 helped me to understand him a little better.

John Beynon
University of Glamorgan
Trefforest, Wales, UK

Terry: 'When I was a lad, things weren't half as complicated as they are today.

A man was a man and a woman was a woman. That was it, no argument!

Now you don't know where you are! . . .'

(Background chorus of 'Yea, that's right, that is!', etc.)

' . . . You've only got to look around at the people who come into this place to see what I mean. They look different and they behave differently from when I was their age. There's blokes that come in here who hug and kiss each other and there's women who weight train and kick box. One of them even applied for the Marines! There's no doubt about it: man-woman-wise, everything's gone arse over tit, if you don't mind my French!'

(Front bar of the Park Hotel, 'Seatown', South Wales, October 2000)

Introduction: 'masculinity' or 'masculinities'?

One thing has to be made crystal clear at the outset: 'masculinity' is composed of many **masculinities**, as this book will illustrate repeatedly and which is reflected in the title. Each chapter explores or points to the existence of a range of masculinities for, while all men have the male body in common (although even that comes in a variety of sizes, shapes and appearances), there are numerous forms and expressions of **gender**, of 'being masculine' and 'being feminine'. Masculinity is always interpolated by cultural, historical and geographical location and in our time the combined influence of feminism and the gay movement has exploded the conception of a uniform masculinity and even sexuality is no longer held to be fixed or innate. As a result it is becoming ever more fashionable to employ the term 'masculinities' (as do, for example, Buchbinder 1994; Connell 1995; Mac an Ghaill 1996) both to reflect our **new times** (Hebdige 1989) and to expose the cultural construction and expression of masculinity to closer and more exacting critical scrutiny. It is hardly surprising that when first encountered, the plural form surprises because it contradicts

the widely held, commonsensical assumption that masculinity is a standardized container, fixed by biology, into which all 'normal' men are placed, something 'natural' that can even be measured in terms of psychological traits and physical attributes. But when we link masculinity to culture (itself, obviously, hugely varied) it immediately becomes evident that in terms of enactment masculinity is a diverse, mobile, even unstable, construction. So, let me emphasize this: whenever 'masculinity' appears it should not be read as implying uniformity but, on the contrary, variety and fragmentation. (In fact, it is best regarded as a 'singular-plural', much like 'data', that can take many different forms.) Indeed, readers are urged to list the range of masculinities they have encountered at the end of each chapter: by the end of the book that list will be considerable.

If 'maleness' is biological, then masculinity is cultural. Indeed, masculinity can never float free of culture: on the contrary, it is the child of culture, shaped and expressed differently at different times in different circumstances in different places by individuals and groups (Berger *et al.* 1995). Men are not born with masculinity as part of their genetic make-up; rather it is something into which they are acculturated and which is composed of social codes of behaviour which they learn to reproduce in culturally appropriate ways. It is indexical of class, subculture, age and ethnicity, among other factors. Furthermore, any easy generalizations like 'working class', 'middle class', 'gay' or '**black**' masculinities are greatly misleading because within each of these broad categories there is considerable variation in both experience and presentation. Indeed, men globally have never shared the same conception of masculinity: as anthropology demonstrates, it is interpreted, enacted and experienced in culturally specific ways (Franklin 1984; Gilmore 1990; Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994). Also, very different versions of masculinity can coexist within the same setting as has been evident even in my own occasional excursions into field settings like schools (Beynon 1985, 1989, 1993), hospitals (Beynon 1987) and prisons (Thurston and Beynon 1995; Beynon, 1996, 2001). Likewise, Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) reject any notion of a fixed **masculine essence**, pointing instead to masculinity's multiple and ambiguous meanings, meanings which alter according to context and over time. They talk of **cultural borrowings** and comment that 'masculinities imported from elsewhere are conflated with local ideas to produce new configurations' (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994: 12). But not everyone, however, is happy with the term 'masculinities'. For MacInnes (1998) its ever-widening adoption is an irrelevance which solves nothing and may even create a whole new raft of confusions. He argues that masculinity exists in the first place only as a fantasy about what men should be like, a chimerical construction to help people order and make sense of their lives.

Shifting to the plural form makes absolutely no difference, therefore, since 'just as there is no such thing as masculinity, neither are there any such things as masculinities' (MacInnes 1998: 40).

Let us momentarily return to the front bar of 'Seatown's' Park Hotel where we started. Maybe the philosophical Terry, observing social change from his nightly vantage point in the corner with his group of elderly friends, is right. Maybe masculinity and femininity (both used in the 'singular-plural') have changed in substance and appearance out of all recognition over the past 70 or so years. Blissfully ignorant of what is currently being written on the subject, maybe he has, nevertheless, put his finger upon something essentially true, namely that masculinity and femininity have become far more amorphous and difficult to define in our society than even in the recent past. But is he right in his assumption that masculinity was once fixed and stable, or is this just part of his overall nostalgia for the world of his long-lost young manhood? What can be said with undeniable certainty is that as we embark upon the twenty-first century masculinity is being placed under the microscope as never before, magnifying the fissures of which we may not have previously been fully aware. This examination is, of course, itself a product of our times, in part a consequence of **feminism** and in part a reaction to it. In spite of the doubts cast upon the usefulness, even the existence, of 'masculinity' as a viable concept, interest in studying and teaching about it (or them!) has snowballed in British universities since 1990, a little later than in the United States. Now it is unusual for programmes in cultural, communication and media studies, along with sociology, literary and film studies, not to make extensive reference to contemporary debates centring on masculinities. Masculinity may be having a crisis (Chapter 4) out there on the streets, but in academe it has never been more in demand as a means of 'unlocking' texts and settings. The sudden spate of recent publications on **literary masculinities** (for example, Knights 1999; Schoene-Harwood 2000) alone testifies to this.

I want now to say something about how masculinity is culturally shaped and how, in all its diversity, it is both experienced and enacted. The concept of **hegemonic masculinity** is then introduced as a prelude to looking at masculinity, first, in a historical context and, second, through the lens of class. By the way, it will already be evident that I am adopting what is best termed a 'culturalist' approach to masculinity. In doing so I sideline perspectives associated with sociobiology and evolutionary psychology and which tend to 'naturalize' male behaviour. Sociobiology, for instance, maintains that there is a causal link between being genetically male and masculinity as a gender. In the most extreme versions men are viewed as puppets to raging hormones which render them innately competitive, aggressive and

violent. Some readers may regard this omission as a gross limitation, so it is perhaps useful to note what Clare (2000), himself a scientist, has to say on biological differences:

Such biological differences as exist between men and women are not of an order that casts in stone men as phallic supremacists, as sexual predators, or as violent killers.

(Clare 2000: 217)

Questioning masculinity

Before moving back to the relationship between biology and gender, a number of questions can be usefully asked. My objective in doing this is to force readers to stand back from any monolithic 'take' on masculinity; re-examine their assumptions and render its 'commonsensical meaning' problematic; and, thereby, destabilize the notion that masculinity is fixed, unified and immutable or, indeed, ever has been. So here goes!

- What is masculinity and how is it 'normally' understood? Is there really something fundamentally masculine locked inside men and shared by them all? Is 'maleness' the same as 'masculinity'? Is there a 'commonality' of male experience? What is the effect of masculinity upon men (and upon women and children)? Are we witnessing the birth of a **new masculinity**, of new ways of 'being a man'? In which case, of what does this 'new masculinity' consist?
- What is the relationship between biology, sex and gender? Do common sets of gender **ideologies** exist and, if so, what is their relationship to class, sexuality, age and ethnicity?
- What is specifically 'male' about masculinity and is it the case that only men can be 'masculine'? Are men less masculine than they were in the past? In what sense can a woman be 'masculine'? Conversely, is it possible for a man to be 'feminine' and, if so, is this either desirable or acceptable?
- Is a man always the upholder of the same definition of masculinity or does an individual's sense and expression of the masculine change as a man ages? Has masculinity changed throughout history and, if so, how? How is masculinity enacted differently in different settings? Why are boys in most societies first instructed and then tested before being accorded the status of men?
- Do men everywhere aspire to be 'manly' in the same way? Are there continuities of masculinity and femininity across cultural boundaries? Why is

the demand upon boys to grow into men held to be so important and does it take different forms in different cultures?

- How do people in different cultures construct an image of ideal masculinity (for example, through rituals, trials of skill, sports and endurance)? Does a **deep structure of masculinity** (Tolson 1977), a global archetype of manliness, exist across different cultures world-wide?

Masculinity under the microscope

As has already been made clear, masculinity has been placed under the spotlight during the 1990s as never before. In 1998 John MacInnes published his important book *The End of Masculinity* in which he argues that the old masculine privileges have now disappeared. This, he claims, is a thoroughly good thing and that, as a result, numerous new possibilities have opened up for men as fathers, husbands, partners, lovers, workers and so forth. Young men are no longer happy to be defined solely by their occupations, as were their fathers, certainly their grandfathers, before them. They are, instead (or so the rhetoric would have us understand), happy to swap domestic and other roles with their partners, while both heterosexual and homosexual men can now adopt an extended range of lifestyles (if, of course, they have the resources). There is now greater tolerance of homosexuality (although, especially outside London and the major cities, a strong, residual homophobia remains) and evidence of this comes in many forms. For example, as I write this (February 2001) the conservative British broadsheet *Daily Telegraph* concluded in one of its editorials that there is no reason why a gay man would not be acceptable as British prime minister. Such things mark a huge advance since until the second half of the twentieth century masculinity (defined here as the socially accepted way of 'being a man') and femininity ('being a woman') were commonly referred to as if they were stable, even innate, states directly linking biology and gender. Such a view appears to derive some support from the often-mentioned case of a little boy, 'John', who suffered a botched circumcision and was reassigned the gender of a girl in the belief that surgical reassignment, along with firm socialization, would yield a well-adjusted girl (most recently reported in K. Jackson (1999) and the subject of a BBC2 *Horizon* television programme in October 2000). However, in spite of the sex-change operation, plus twelve years of social and hormonal treatment, 'Joan' (as she was renamed) never felt like a girl and, as an adult, had an operation to change her back into a man.

Even in the recent past masculine and feminine roles were more clearly differentiated and a woman taking on a male role (or vice versa) was viewed

with the utmost suspicion (vividly captured, for example, in the figure of the resolute Bathsheba Everdene, the farm-owning heroine of Thomas Hardy's novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, 1874). The situation has now become far less clear cut as male and female roles and values have become more similar, so much so that men and women increasingly appear to be able to choose from a shared menu of attributes (although, as previously emphasized, the more privileged of both sexes are more able to choose than the less). Indeed, when people now refer to someone as 'masculine' it is far from clear, post-Thatcher, whether they are referring to a man or to a woman. Yet a little over a generation ago it was held that men were 'naturally' more powerful, competitive, successful, vigorous and successful in sport, as well as in business, far better equipped to operate in the 'real world' outside the home than women. There still remain powerful resonances of this in the west where a tough, heroic, mythic masculinity is deeply ingrained in the national psyche, ironically at a time when its limitations have been cruelly exposed by feminists and others. While western pop culture (whether films, records, television, videos or cyber games) continue to celebrate the 'he-man', certainly since the 1970s there has been a strong hint of parody, even dysfunction, in the portrayal. The outcome is that many men are now upholders of a **hybridized masculinity** that is experienced and displayed differently at different times in different situations. Perhaps what we are currently witnessing at the start of the twenty-first century is nothing less than the emergence of a more fluid, **bricolage masculinity**, the result of 'channel-hopping' across versions of 'the masculine'. Narrow stereotypes, based upon biological differences, have finally been laid to rest. Indeed, no less a figure than the eminent British historian David Starkey has argued that a sharp separation of 'the male' and 'the female' is unsustainable in the present day rich, consumerist west:

We are in a supermarket and we are primarily consumers . . . we have unlimited freedom . . . we are in a world essentially without scarcity. That is why we can behave as we do and we can run two or three families and we can welcome gays and can have this wonderful world without definition . . . [today] there is a confusion between role and nature and we need to get back to a proper understanding of what it is to be a man, woman and human.

(David Starkey in *The Moral Maze*, BBC Radio 4, June 1999)

It would appear that we live at a time when gender identity has less to do with biology than with economic and cultural circumstances. But (as we have seen in the case of the 'eyes-of-the-bar', Terry, quoted above) for many there remains a strong nostalgia for a time when gender differentiation was less ambiguous.

I now return to the connection between biology, on the one hand, and gender, on the other, which has already been touched upon. Although the physiological (the male body) and the cultural (the social relations of masculinity) are obviously linked, the nature of that link needs to be explored carefully because it is not as straightforward as it may, at first, appear. Accordingly, I examine briefly what a small number of leading writers have to say on these and related matters. The authors (some of whom we have encountered before and selected from an increasingly long line) are, in order of appearance, Morgan (1992), Sedgwick (1985), MacInnes (1998) and Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994). All agree that masculinity is socially and historically, not biologically, constructed. A good point with which to start is Morgan's (1992) assertion that what is masculinity (and femininity) is best approached from the standpoint of what men and women *do* (that is, how they behave) rather than what they *are*. If gender is cultural, then it follows that women as well as men can step into and inhabit (whether permanently or temporarily) masculinity as a 'cultural space', one with its own sets of behaviours. In this view 'the masculine' and 'the feminine' signify a range of culturally defined characteristics assignable to *both* men and women. By also introducing sexuality Morgan raises the contentious issue of how far expressions of sexuality are also socially and culturally constructed (see also Simon 1996), thereby producing the 'gender map' shown in Figure 1.1.

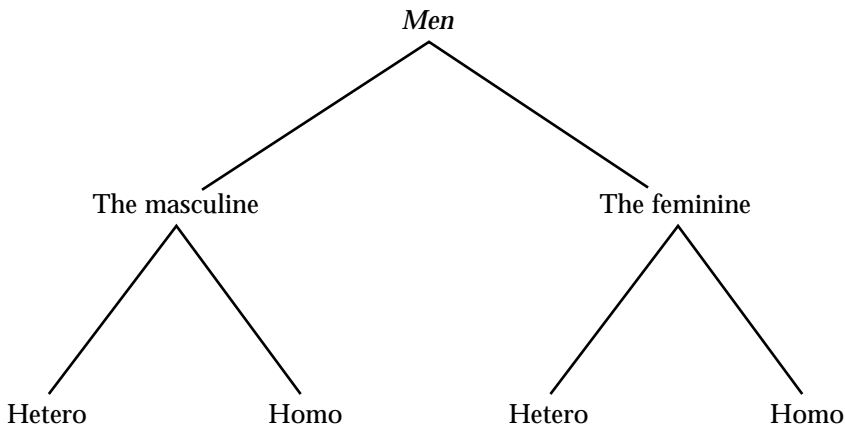


Figure 1.1 Morgan's 'gender map'

Factor in additional elements such as class, ethnicity, age, religion and geographical location, and the picture becomes even more complicated. A few obvious examples will serve to illustrate the point that the biological male and female can step into either male or female gender roles:

- *The tomboy*: this is a masculine identity temporarily adopted by young girls but which, if maintained for too long into young womanhood, raises doubts about their heterosexuality.
- *The transsexual*: 'he' or 'she' can be a 'man' or 'woman' as the situation demands or as they wish.
- *The high-flying female executive*: she heads a large company and has to demonstrate daily leadership, initiative, grit and aggression (traditional masculine attributes), but she is also a devoted wife or partner and a caring and gentle mother in her private life.
- *The male nurse*: he has to be gentle, nurturing and caring, attributes usually associated with the feminine.

Masculinity and femininity are habitually defined in terms of the difference between them, but Sedgwick (1985: 12) repudiates any automatic equating of masculinity with men, arguing that 'when something is about "masculinity", it isn't always "about men"'. She opposes the positioning of masculinity and femininity as a dichotomy, arguing that instead of being at opposite poles of the same axis, they are actually in different perpendicular dimensions and, therefore, what she terms 'independently variable'. Some people score high on both dimensions, others low in terms of stereotypical male and female traits, leading her to conclude that such research indicates only that 'some people are just plain more "gender-y" than others' (Sedgwick 1985: 15–16). One of the most comprehensive explorations of this (and related) issues to date is by MacInnes (1998) in an argument I have earlier touched upon. In his analysis, if 'being male' is largely anatomical, masculinity is most certainly social, cultural and historical, 'something for the girls as much as the boys and, over time, it must surely come to have no special connection to either biological sex' (MacInnes 1998: 45). Masculinity and femininity, as characteristic of men and women, exist only as sociocultural constructions and not as the property of persons. Indeed, they are no more than a set of assumptions which people hold about each other and themselves in certain contexts:

gender, together with the terms of masculinity and femininity, is an ideology people use in modern societies to imagine the existence of differences between men and women on the basis of their sex where, in fact, there is none . . . [it is something] we imagine to exist and which is represented to us in material form through the existences of the two sexes, male and female.

(MacInnes 1998: 1, 10)

He maintains that there can be no simple correspondence between sexed

bodies and masculinity and femininity because ‘genitals and biological capacities aside, men and women are not different . . . Being a biological male does not confer masculinity’ (MacInnes 1998: 77). He forecasts that there will come a time when there will be no difference between men and women apart from the anatomical and, therefore, ‘both in the real world and our analysis of it it is time for the end of masculinity’ (MacInnes 1998: 47). By the **end of masculinity** he means the demise of the belief in masculinity as a gendered identity specific to men. Indeed, this ‘end of masculinity’ would, in his view, be a major step in the direction of global equal rights.

Perhaps even more challenging is Cornwall and Lindisfarne’s (1994: 10) stance that the sexed body and the gendered individual should not be chained together since *both* are culturally constructed. They argue that ‘biology is no more primary or “real” than any other aspect of lived experience’. They hold that (as shown in Figure 1.2) ‘there are male and female versions of masculinity and, equally, female and male versions of femininity’ (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1998: 15). As a consequence ‘male’ and ‘female’ have no intrinsic biological reality and are better understood as metaphors through which identity is constructed, given that ‘an essentialist “male–female” dichotomy cannot account for the ways people are gendered in different places at different times . . . the idea of “being a man” can no longer be treated as universal’ (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1998: 3).

Furthermore, they argue that the three most familiar descriptors (namely ‘men’, ‘male’ and ‘masculinity’) are not necessarily compatible (as, indeed, is the case with ‘women’, ‘female’ and ‘femininity’). Each has multiple meanings and can even describe contradictory aspects. As a consequence, ‘there is no “natural”, nor necessary, connection between men and masculinity’ (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1998: 37).

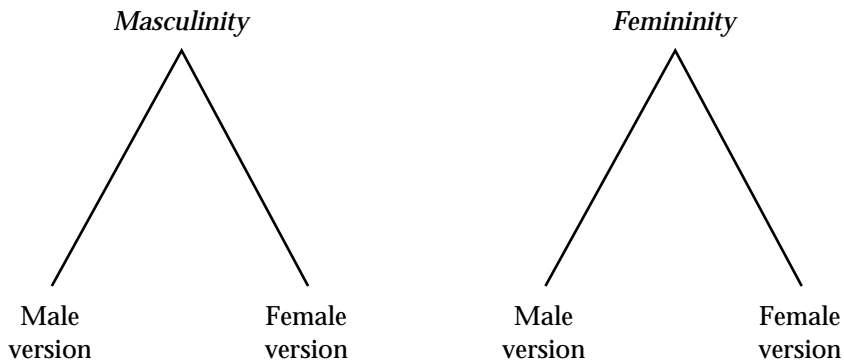


Figure 1.2 Versions of masculinity and femininity

Shaping and enacting masculinities

What are the social factors that impact upon and pattern masculinity? How is masculinity culturally constructed? In Figure 1.3 the principal factors that shape the form, experience and enactment of **masculinity-as-a-text** are itemized. These clearly overlap and, depending on the individual, some will be more influential and enduring than others. Masculinity is never to be set in concrete: rather, it always has the capacity for rapid modification. For instance, we have seen in the example of Terry that as a man ages, his sense and expression of the masculine inevitably change, just as the world evolves around him. Another obvious example of ‘masculinity-on-the-move’ would be a man who changes his class, status, culture and geographical location and becomes upwardly (or downwardly) mobile and, in the process, modifies his sense, experience and enactment of the masculine (or even the ‘masculines’).

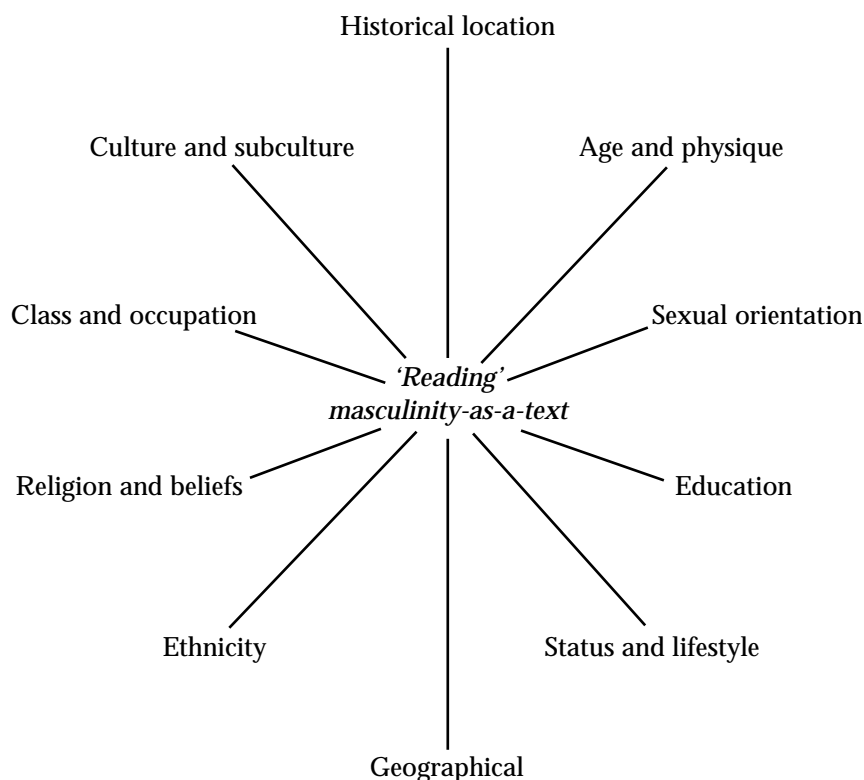


Figure 1.3 Key factors that shape masculinities

How is masculinity displayed? While some approach masculinity as the internalized product of structural features like class and ethnicity, writers like David Morgan (1992) and Judith Butler (1990) present it more as a **Goffmanesque presentation**, a 'dramaturgical accomplishment' (Coleman 1990). Rather than being made up of 'essences' or 'fundamentals', masculinity and femininity are sets of signs that are performed in what Kersten (1995) refers to as a 'situational accomplishment' and Butler (1990) as a 'performative act'. The 1980s (to which I return in Chapter 5) are a good example of this as a whole new range of commercially driven masculinities performed through fashion came into being, including Punk 'collage dressing'. Increasingly personality came as part of the fashion statement: as Edwards (1997) puts it, you were the clothes you wore. The emergence of this narcissistic masculinity mirrored the bigger, structural picture, namely the shift from production-led to consumption-led values, from **Fordism** to **post-Fordism**, from undifferentiated mass marketing to more flexible, niche marketing, in turn facilitated by new technologies of clothing production that could easily be 'retooled' for short runs.

In thinking of 'masculinity-as-enactment' it must be remembered that those who do not perform their masculinity in a culturally approved manner are liable to be ostracized, even punished. For example, in the nineteenth century avant-garde artists and bohemians like Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley contradicted biologicistic, **eugenistic** definitions of masculinity. Similarly, the rock stars of the 1960s and 1970s (from the androgynous David Bowie to the butch Gary Glitter) repeatedly challenged accepted notions of 'the masculine', as did the men's magazines of the 1980s (Chapter 5). As Burt (1995, 1998) and others have demonstrated, in spite of its grace and athleticism, male dance is widely viewed as an invalid expression of the masculine, the antithesis of 'manly' activities and sports like rugby. Applause may be lavished upon the film *Billy Elliot* (2000), but for a young man to aspire to be a ballet dancer in Britain is still likely to occasion raised eyebrows and homophobic innuendoes, even outright censure. Most men are still culturally propelled to incorporate dominance, whether in terms of crude physical strength or displays of 'masculine' rationality and competence, into their presentation of self. Of course, by presenting gender as cultural and performative, the paradigm that holds that masculinity and femininity are straitjackets into which all biological males and females are automatically fitted, begins to be severely undermined. In this view 'the masculine' can be displayed in a variety of ways by both men and women in different places at different times. It also makes itself available as an analytical concept by means of which a variety of settings and behaviours therein can begin to be examined.

I have sought to establish the case for the development and expression of masculinity being shaped by such factors as culture, age, ethnicity, belief system, locality, disability, nationality and sexual orientation and so forth. The outcome of this is that it is open to debate which aspects of 'the masculine' the following might have in common: an unemployed former coal miner in his sixties living in the Rhondda, Wales; a successful City of London stockbroker in his fifties; a poor Indian ekeing out a meagre living off the land in the rural hinterland; a rich, young, gay fashion designer in New York; and a middle-aged, family-orientated schoolteacher in Bolton, Lancashire. Biologically the same, each is positioned to experience and display their masculinity very differently. Tillner (1997) concludes:

the whole diversity of lived masculinities can be understood as specific realizations of a vague set of ideas and demands, images and stories that are defined as masculine, adapted to the concrete situation an individual or group has to cope with.

(Tillner 1997: 2)

An interesting instance of a group having to cope with a particular situation is that of gay men, who still encounter considerable prejudice. When Forrest (1994), for example, talks of the 'butch shift' he is referring to how young, gay men sometimes choose to present themselves through body images, clothes, sporting activities and other signifiers previously associated exclusively with 'straight' men. Other gay men, on the other hand, have adopted **hyper-masculinity** as a presentational strategy, exaggerating signs previously exclusively associated with macho masculinity. So fashionable did this and other 'gay looks' based on a gay iconography heavily featured in the men's magazines and advertising of the 1980s become (Chapter 5) that many heterosexual men adopted it as they would any other fashion, much to the disgruntlement of sections of the gay community at the time.

It is often now asserted that masculinity and femininity are becoming more fluid and that men and women are increasingly occupying a shared middle place. The evidence for this assertion that men are becoming more like women and women more like men is somewhat tenuous and is usually based on isolated instances. For example:

- 'Housefathers' taking responsibility for home and hearth while the female partner goes out to work.
- Women breaking through the 'glass ceiling' and attaining high positions in the professions, running organizations and institutions and adopting a 'masculine' demeanour.

- Groups of young women drinking heavily and behaving in a 'laddish' manner in city 'nite spots'.
- Strong men breaking down and crying (especially in sport, as witness the English footballer Paul Gascoigne (Gazza) and the German world motor racing champion Michael Schumacher).

As far as fashion is concerned, men have certainly become more style and appearance-conscious and have stepped into a domain once almost exclusively associated with the feminine. Led by a gay subculture for whom clothing has long been a crucial identity marker, young men have increasingly come to value designer labels and are highly receptive to subtle, nuanced changes in dress codes, much as women have long been.

Experiencing masculinity

How masculinity is experienced is always on the move, sometimes gradually, sometimes rapidly. Men in the twentieth century witnessed enormous social and cultural changes during the course of their lives which impacted, both directly and indirectly (and differentially, depending on the social and geographical location of individuals), on how masculinity was experienced. Let us take a hypothetical example of a man born in the United Kingdom in the early 1900s and living until the millennium and highlight some of the socio-economic and cultural factors that moulded his experience of masculinity.

The rise of women

The **Suffragette** movement, from its origins in the 1860s, swept into the early decades of the twentieth century when women were finally granted the vote (in two stages, 1918 and 1928). Feminism gathered momentum throughout the 1960s and changed women's experience of the world. By the end of the century some claimed that the chains of patriarchy had finally been broken and that women were no longer 'owned' or controlled by men. Equal rights were, in theory at least, on the statute book and institutionalized. If women's lives had been transformed, so had men's.

Conflict in the twentieth century

Men in their millions died on the battlefields of Europe, most notably during 1914–18 and 1939–45. Any heroic and patriotic notion of it being glorious

to die for king and country was forever severely compromised. The two world wars transformed the lives of both men and women. Men were placed in the combat role and toughness, endurance, courage and emotional reticence were demanded of them. Women had to cope on both the home front and (for many) in the battle zone. They entered into the industrial world in the absence of men, only to be banished back to the kitchen when hostilities ceased. Men returned from fighting one week and were searching for a job the next. It was only later that it was recognized how many had been traumatized by their experiences, but this was prior to the advent of counselling. It is not surprising, therefore, that many encountered immense problems in adjusting to civilian life (Turner and Rennell 1995).

Changes in the world of work

In 1929 the world of work spectacularly collapsed in the Great Depression and throughout the bleak 1930s millions of men were unemployed. In the process they were deprived of one of the great markers of traditional, patriarchal masculinity, namely the role of the **breadwinner**. Many blamed themselves rather than the economic system, devastated by their inability to provide for themselves, their families or aspire to their dreams. Later in the century new technology changed the nature, availability and nature of work. Men could no longer base a sense of masculinity upon heavy graft as the amount of manual labour required in, for example, farming was greatly reduced. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the demise of traditional heavy industries (like mining, shipbuilding and docking). The shift from the mass production of Fordism to the short, flexible production and niche marketing of post-Fordism resulted in more women being employed than ever before, along with an increase in part-time and temporary work. In the process the whole nature of work for most men was utterly transformed.

The advent of the consumer society

The rise of **consumerism** and the **celebrity culture** that now permeates every area of western society had its roots in post-Second World War reconstruction, in particular the development and proliferation of the 'image industries', starting in the 1950s and advancing rapidly in the 1960s. 'Desires' replaced 'needs' and what people were became increasingly based upon what they owned. Goods such as houses, clothes, cars and other indicators of 'success' assumed enormous importance for people's self-images. Indeed, in line with the consumerist ethos a number of commodified masculinities are now on

offer which men can 'buy into' if they have the resources (whether money, looks, age or location: see Chapter 5).

The rise of the gay movement

It is just over a century since Oscar Wilde was arrested, tried and subsequently imprisoned in Reading Gaol, a broken man. The **gay movement** has, in spite of the advent of AIDS, become an influential subculture in both Britain and the United States. Evidence is that people have become more tolerant of gay and lesbian rights, although a strong element of homophobia survives, especially outside centres of gay culture like Soho. The gay movement has, of course, thrown into question the previously largely taken-for-granted 'normality' of heterosexuality.

Changing views on masculinity

It is not only feminists who have attacked masculinity since the 1960s. In the 1970s some men themselves began to call it into question, particularly within the so-called **men's movement** in North America, with their call for **male liberation** (to parallel 'women's lib'). Traditional masculinity began to be regarded as a 'neuro-muscular armour' that forced them to suppress tenderness, emotion and any signs of vulnerability. Writers such as Pleck and Sawyer (1974: 4) argue that men learn too well to repress joy and tenderness, so much so that 'the eventual result of our not expressing emotion is not to experience it'. Masculinity is presented as damaging, driving men down the destructive path of addiction to achievement, power, prestige and profit-seeking. The outcome is that many men are racked by anxiety about the level of their achievement, inept at disclosure and seemingly unable to express their feelings. Indeed, traditional masculinity is seen to be based on a very fragile foundation and what is needed is 'male liberation'. This means a renunciation of the chasing after impossible masculine goals and Pleck and Sawyer (1974) call on men to pursue instead internal satisfaction that comes from fuller emotional involvement in (their) activities and relationships. They must no longer depend on women for love and emotional support, but need instead to employ their creative energies for their own purposes and not just for others' profit. Only by questioning masculinity themselves will men understand who they are, how they came to be that way and what they can now do about it.

It is a risky undertaking to generalize about the impact of these kinds of changes, but what can be said with some certainty is that both the enactment and experience of masculinity was very different at the end of the twentieth century from the beginning. Perhaps the biggest difference is the degree of

fragmentation of the 'masculine text' in 2000 as compared to 1900. After three decades of 'deconstruction' it comes as no surprise that there are now numerous masculinities on offer, a point emphasized by Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994: 1) when they write that 'from the "wounded male" to the "new man", images of reconstructed men appear on advertising bill-boards and television and in magazines and newspapers.'

Hegemonic masculinity

Besides masculinities, another term commonly in play is 'hegemonic masculinity', which defines successful ways of 'being a man' in particular places at a specific time (Kimmel 1994; Connell 1995). In the process other masculine styles are rendered inadequate and inferior, what Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) term **subordinate variants**. Hegemonic masculinity is established either through consensual negotiation or through power and achievement. At its most brutal it is predicated upon raw coercion. The tension between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities is readily observable in many workplaces and organizations. Many are saturated by hegemonic masculine values which are embedded in their structures and practices (Pringle 1989; Burton 1991; Cockburn 1991). Power (which, of course, can be variously defined and displayed) is the crucial factor in hegemonic masculinity and resistance ensures that many sites are ones of ideological struggle for contested senses of masculinity. Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) comment:

Not only 'being a male', but 'being male' can be interpreted differently in different circumstances . . . masculinities are performed or enacted in specific settings . . . ethnographic descriptions of masculinity need to be located squarely with respect to contested interpretations of power.

(Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994: 37–8, 44)

Whereas middle class, professional men are more likely to exert power via emails and memos, men in manual, semi-skilled and skilled occupations are more likely to express power physically. It is a point underlined by Back (1994: 172) when he writes that 'where men are economically dependent on the sale of their labour, the expression of maleness provides a means to exert power'. However, the old working class based hegemonic masculinity, born of the Industrial Revolution and celebrating physical strength, male camaraderie and trade union solidarity, was decimated by Reagan-Thatcher 'free market' and 'trickle down' economic policies. These resulted in the demise of many heavy industries (like, for example, coal mining in South Wales), a

'downsizing' of the labour force, and the advent of a post-Fordism which witnessed an increase in part-time working and the employment of more (usually less well paid) female workers.

How does hegemonic masculinity, as a cultural expression of a proclaimed male ascendancy, manage to attain and then retain its position? A variety of hegemonic representations win ideological consent and alternative constructions are either beaten down, ridiculed or absorbed. For example, many elements of a generalized **new man-ism** (men as more caring, sensitive, domesticated and expressive) now feature in contemporary versions of hegemonic masculinity. Hanke (1992) shows how television contributes to this through its images, plots and narratives. Similarly, Fiske (1987) looks at the construction of 'telemasculinity' by means of the 'engendering' devices of action, adventure, competition and aggression, along with an emphasis upon 'male toys' (whether cars, helicopters, tanks or guns). Furthermore, **masculinism** is celebrated through 'buddydom' and relationships between men (as in archetypal 'buddy films' like *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, 1969). Versions of culturally praised hegemonic masculinities become part of general consciousness, even if they contrast with the more mundane everyday lives of most men. In any sociohistorical context there are a multitude of masculinities (Carrigan *et al.* 1983; Roper and Tosh 1991). Some are hegemonic and are constructed in relation to weaker and subordinated forms and thereby become legitimized as being 'normal' or 'natural'. These are continually shifting so that we can point to diverse masculinities, taking different forms, in different places both simultaneously and at different times. These differences may not be great (and there may be many commonalities) but they are, nevertheless, significant. MacInnes (1998) asks a very interesting question, namely, what historical conditions encourage men (and women) to imagine such a thing as 'masculinity'? He goes on to argue that since masculinity cannot exist as the property of a person but only as a social ideology, what is best studied is

the specific historical conditions under which men and women ever came to believe that such a thing as masculinity exists in the first place; the different forms and beliefs take; and the consequences that they have within such historical conditions.

(MacInnes 1998: 77)

Masculinity in history

Masculinity is positioned in time in two senses: it changes *around* the individual man and *for him* as he ages. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, the

mid-nineteenth century ideal of **Arnoldian masculinity** appears, in our post-Empire, postcolonial era, grossly antiquated (although, clearly, many echoes of it still survive). But change can occur very quickly: for example, the **discourses** surrounding the **new lad** of the 1990s differ considerably from those of the **new man** of just a few years before (Chapter 5). One thing a historical approach to masculinity reveals is that what have attained the status of 'facts' underpinning the 'true' nature of masculinity (and, of course, femininity) are really sociohistorical and cultural constructions. For example, as a result of the division of labour occasioned by the Industrial Revolution (that is, men into the factories, most women consigned to the home) and the resulting patriarchy (based on men's economic superiority), the idea that men were innately practical, rational and competitive, unlike women, was 'naturalized'. Also, in both Britain and the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century (following the debacle of the Crimea and the trauma of the Civil War respectively) there was a determined effort to **re-masculinize** men through sports and outdoor activities and to reverse what was held to be a loss of manliness. Certainly since then manliness has been strongly associated with performance in sports.

I shall have more to say about historical approaches to masculinity later, but in the mean time I refer briefly to three writers, each of whom throws an insightful light on how masculinity has changed over time. I start with Laqueur (1990), who charts the development in Europe between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries of the model of sex-gender, based on biological difference, that is currently so familiar to us. Previously sexual difference was held to be a matter of degree, not kind: to be a man or a woman was to hold a place in society and not to be one or the other of two incommensurable sexes. The ideological distinction between sex and pre-gender did not apply and the move has, therefore, been from a single sex model of human sexual identity to a bipolar one. In discussing this Mangan (1997) comments that:

Galen's anatomical model of the nature of the male and female reproductive organs, which dominated Western conceptions of sexual identity from its inception in the Second Century until the time of the Enlightenment, asserted that women were essentially imperfect men.

(M. Mangan 1997: 8)

Meanwhile, Hoch (1979) identifies two recurring themes in the history of masculinity, namely:

- the 'puritan theme', which celebrates a masculinity based on duty, hard work and the meeting of laudable goals

- the 'playboy theme', the emphasis being upon enjoying life, leisure and pleasure.

Finally, for Connell (1995) the history of masculinity cannot be presented as linear: rather, 'dominant, subordinated and marginalised masculinities are in constant interaction, changing the conditions for each others' existence and transforming themselves as they do' (Connell 1995: 198). He points to three key events:

- the emergence of a domestic sphere for women and a public sphere for men
- the outlawing of homosexuality in medical terms and its criminalization in legal ones, accompanied by the equating of heterosexuality with acceptable (and respectable) manliness
- the expansion of industry in the nineteenth century and the development of a definition of masculinity based on manual labour, wage-earning capacity and 'breadwinning' capability.

Masculinity, class and work

Turning now to class, working class masculinity has been well documented by a succession of researchers in sociology and cultural studies. For example, Hargreaves (1967), Willis (1977) and Beynon (1985) document the development of subversive, working class male subcultures in the lower streams of secondary schools in Britain. This is accompanied by compliant behaviour in the upper streams, epitomized by Willis's (1977) portrayal of the subversive 'lads' and compliant 'earoles' respectively. The former did not perceive school achievement as an opportunity to attain qualification and a good job. Their disruptive counterculture, honed in school and then reproduced in the workplace, eventually proved not to be freedom but, ultimately, capitulation to a life of labour. While there is a tendency on behalf of some researchers to extol fighting and 'having a larf' as valorous 'resistance', others see it as feeding upon the subordination of other young men and young women. Moreover, Back's (1994) study of working class youth in South London reveals a variety of young masculinities rather than a single adolescent form. The young men he interviewed positioned themselves differently in relation to gender, ethnicity and race. He talks of 'estate kids', 'homebirds', young Vietnamese, **white negroes** (white kids who adopted a black identity) and 'apprentices', young men who, in the context of work, had to establish themselves not just as qualified workers, but as 'men'. Most revealing about the study, however, is how some white youths adopted

elements of macho sexuality associated with black, heterosexual men. In doing this Back follows in the footsteps of Gilroy and Lawrence (1988), who look at the white adoption of black cultural forms, style, accent and dialect. Back (1994) demonstrates how the image of blackness appropriated was a stereotyped, essentially white artefact, a white image of 'being black' taken on without necessarily transforming the upholder's racist attitudes. Rather, black youth became the objects of young whites' fantasies about hypersexuality. In comparison young Vietnamese immigrants were viewed as feeble and feminine. Back (1994: 182) concludes that 'the white negro [*sic*] accepts the real negro not as a human being in his totality, but as the bringer of a highly specified and restricted cultural dowry'. Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994: 7), commenting on this, point to a paradox in that 'the appropriation of these images can produce new, popular, anti-racist masculinities, yet simultaneously reinforce racist stereotypes in the wider society'.

The stereotypical picture that emerges is that whereas middle class men can wield institutional power, their working class counterparts employ physical power through fighting, sports (football especially), drinking, ***machismo*** and displays of sexual prowess. Young working class masculinity involves acts of collective bravado, with fighting, public rowdiness and drinking as key signifiers (Willis 1977; Corrigan 1979). Canaan (1996) notes how as they age, working class men sever the link between drinking, fighting and masculinity: no longer able to afford or inclined to drink heavily or exercise physical dominance over young men, they continue to assert dominance in the private domain of the family. Also, whereas young men actively seek out sex, older men come to accord greater value to companionship in their personal relationships. Working class men experience little formal power in the workplace and, as a consequence of this, will frequently adopt macho identities to mask this powerlessness and compensate by dominating in the home. In the past, a working class man gained respect and dignity through being 'handy' and practical and being the breadwinner by providing a 'family wage' so that his wife did not have to seek employment. It is perhaps difficult to appreciate the ignominy that was formerly attached to a man's inability to provide adequately for his family. Along with being a breadwinner and having a housebound wife went a strict sexual division of labour in the household. The valorization of hard labour and the working man's pride in a masculinity based on strength, stamina and pride is beautifully caught by Willis (1977). Recorded in the early 1970s and still vivid, it is a voice from a bygone age of heavy industrial labour:

I work in a foundry . . . you know, drop forging . . . do you know anything about it? . . . no . . . well, you know the factory down in Bethnal

Street with the noise . . . you can hear it in the street . . . I work there on the big hammer . . . it's a six tonner. I've worked there twenty four years now. It's bloody noisy, but I've got used to it now . . . and it's hot . . . I don't get bored . . . there's always new lines coming and you have to work out the best way of doing it . . . You have to keep going . . . and it's heavy work, the managers couldn't do it, there's not many strong enough to keep lifting the metal . . . a group standing there watching you working, I like that.

(Willis 1977: 53)

Other notable studies of working class occupational culture are by Lippert (1977), on the aggressive masculinity of motor workers in Detroit, and Burgmann (1980), on Sydney's building workers. Meanwhile, Collinson (1988, 1992) and Collinson and Hearn (1994, 1996) look at the subcultural reproduction of masculine identities among male manual workers. These identities were expressed through macho acts and speech which demonstrated a mixture of compliance and resistance. Treated as second class citizens, working men were seen to redefine the setting (through jokes, swearing and the 'piss taking' of newcomers) and, thereby, better able to gain some control over their working environment. Shopfloor interaction was both playful and humorous, as well as sexist and degrading. Masculinity was enacted through, for example, the use of jokes and put-downs; sexual and physical threat and harassment; nude calendars and pin-ups; horseplay; and homophobic jokes and activities. The management was rejected as effeminate and incompetent and office staff as jumped-up 'pen-pushers'. Men often refused promotion because of the danger, as they perceived it, of becoming emasculated 'yes-men', unable to 'have a larf' and compelled to allow the bosses to impinge upon their private life by having to take work home.

Definitions of middle class masculinities are also heavily based on work, but in this case career and profession. For middle class men, employment is certainly not something they do just for remuneration: they are likely to be far less alienated from it and be prepared to invest more of themselves in it than their working class counterparts. Collinson and Hearn (1996) point to the fact that many middle class occupations have strongly masculine connotations: for example, a certain masculine mystique abounds in the 'dangerous' and 'sexy' worlds of technology, finance and advertising. Life in the corporate corridors of power and in the City is highly gendered, highly masculine (McDowell and Court 1994; McDowell 1997). Successful professional masculinity has come to be firmly associated with the business suit, the mobile phone, the flashy car, beautiful and compliant women

and the large house or penthouse suite, all indicative of entrepreneurial masculine values (Podmore and Spencer 1987) which, as much as working class masculinity, excludes the feminine. Collinson and Hearn's (1994, 1996) study of managerial culture notes how management differentiates between managers and non-managers, as well as between different types of managers. Men-as-managers exerted their masculinity through absolute control over the men and women beneath them. Indeed, many were seen to have an unhealthy preoccupation with control and quite prepared to display inordinate managerialism and authoritarianism if need be. Still, of course, this may be equally true of women occupying a managerial role and acting in an analogous masculine way. Collinson and Hearn point to a whole raft of dominant 'management masculinities', often drawing upon aggressive sporting and militaristic metaphors. Built into it, too, is the assumption that 'real men' are leaders, can soak up unlimited pressure and, whatever the situation, remain cool, calm and collected. In spite of such work on the enactment of masculinity in the workplace, we still need to know much more about how men exhibit 'the masculine' in a variety of occupations and engage in a range of strategies of control, resistance and compliance.

Given the inescapable impact of globalization upon 'locals' and 'lives' everywhere (Beynon and Dunkerley 1999, 2000), its incorporation into the study of the formation of masculinities is clearly overdue. As Gee *et al.* (1996) note, the new generation of Gordon Gekko-like corporate capitalists operate on a global canvas and have no real commitment to anything or anyone except to the accumulation of capital, both corporate and personal. In a highly innovative paper, Connell (1998) points out that even to understand 'local masculinities' we are compelled to think in global terms. He talks of **global masculinities** (mostly, but not exclusively, associated with the North Atlantic countries) and documents the emergence of one, namely 'transnational business masculinity'. He defines this as 'a masculinity marked by increasing egocentrism, very conditional loyalties (even to the corporation) and a declining sense of responsibility for others (except for the purposes of image-making)' (Connell 1998: 16). Operating on a high octane, sexy mix of corporate power and endless first class travel, transnational business masculinity

differs from traditional bourgeois masculinity by its increasingly libertarian sexuality, with a growing tendency to commodify relations with women. Hotels catering for businessmen in most parts of the world now routinely offer pornographic videos and in some parts of the world there is a well-developed prostitution industry catering for international

businessmen. Transnational business masculinity does not require bodily force since the patriarchal dividend on which it is based is accumulated by impersonal, institutional means.

(Connell 1998: 16)

Researching masculinities: a word of caution

In conclusion I want to turn to Kenneth Clatterbaugh, who is a professor of philosophy at the University of Washington and the author of the highly thought-provoking *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity* (1990). In 1998 he published a similarly challenging paper in which he raises a number of issues that might profitably be borne in mind by readers of this book. He starts by acknowledging the existence of many masculinities such as Black, Jewish, Chicano, gay, middle class and so forth, within which some versions are hegemonic. He broadly defines these 'adjectival masculinities' as 'complex sets of attitudes, behaviours and abilities possessed by distinct groups of individuals' (Clatterbaugh 1998: 25), before attempting to explicate what he terms the current 'conceptual tangle' surrounding masculinities. He argues that listing distinct characteristics such as age, race, wealth and so on is 'insufficient to demonstrate that those so catalogued do, in fact, display distinct masculinities' (Clatterbaugh 1998: 33). In his view,

Masculinities are not like the number of shoes at a gathering . . . their kinds (pumps, loafers, etc.) are not apparent. There are no ready criteria that allow me to identify masculinities . . . It may well be the best kept secret of the literature on masculinity that we have an extremely ill-defined idea of what we are talking about.

(Clatterbaugh 1998: 27)

This, of course, raises a major problem namely, how can masculinities be explored if they cannot be identified? This leads to another question, namely: are 'varieties of masculinity' the same as masculinities? The former would surely imply, as has been previously mentioned, that these varieties have something essentially masculine in common (but precisely what?), whereas the latter could enjoy a high degree of (if not complete) autonomy. Clatterbaugh, while advocating the continued exploration of the diversity and differences among men, nevertheless warns that

talking about masculinities . . . imposes a layer (and a very confused layer) between ourselves and the social reality we want to discuss . . .

we [need to be] clear about what we are doing and about the limits of these enterprises in contributing to our understanding of men.

(Clatterbaugh 1998: 42).

He deplores, moreover, the too-easy equating of 'masculinity' and 'men', describing it as a 'subterfuge' which only goes to compound 'meanings that were intended to treat masculinity as something social and historical, whereas being a male adult was biological' (Clatterbaugh 1998: 39–40). If we are to avoid further confusion and mystification a distinction needs to be drawn at the outset between images and discourses on the one hand, and men and male behaviours on the other:

We should be reasonably clear that we are not talking about men when we are talking about images, stereotypes or norms; and that we are not talking about images when we talk about men, male behaviours, privileges and attitudes.

(Clatterbaugh 1998: 42)

Finally, he finds many (if not most) approaches to studying masculinities unsatisfactory because, he argues, they do not actually throw much light on what 'masculinity/ies' actually is or are! He has reservations about two of the approaches I employ later, what he terms the 'postmodern option', or the ways in which masculinities are produced in and through discourse ('discursive masculinity': see Chapter 6) and masculinity-as-performance, as a 'dramaturgical accomplishment' (see Chapter 7).

A great deal more research is needed of men's actual lived experiences of masculinities before these difficult questions can be adequately addressed. At the risk of sounding evasive it is now time for this chapter to be brought to an end. Its purpose has been to stir things up, to compel readers to think critically about masculinity and the masculinities on offer, both in the world around us and in the past. And it is to the latter that we now turn, stepping back in time to look at how, in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, 'Imperial masculinity' was the norm (both in its 'toff' and 'commoner' versions) and the sociohistorical factors that underpinned this.

Further reading

- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
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