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## RADICAL REVISIONINGS?: THE THEORIZING OF MASCULINITY AND (RADICAL) FEMINIST THEORY

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**Synopsis** — Radical feminism is a diverse and evolving body of thought. The feminist assertion that it has been much maligned, caricatured and misrepresented has been well documented. Contemporary feminists would seek to add to our understanding of radical feminism as a complex and important perspective. What has not been recently considered is how radical feminism is utilized by male theorists, specifically those who theorize masculinity and who consider themselves sympathetic to feminist concerns. Feminists have been both optimistic as well as critical of men's attempts to utilize feminist theory in this context. However, male theorists are currently mapping out new research agendas on masculinity, as well as reviewing their theoretical and methodological bases for this project. The central question I pose, using radical feminism as a case study, is whether those earlier feminist criticisms have been attended to, and if these theoretical and methodological reworkings are fully informed and questioned by the richness and diversity of feminist thought. © 2003 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

### INTRODUCTION

My focus here is on how feminist theory, especially radical feminism, has been utilized and theorized in contemporary theories of masculinity. There have been recent writings from feminists which add to our understanding of radical feminism as a body of thought, for instance, [Richardson \(2000\)](#) and [Thompson \(2001\)](#). Male masculinity theorists themselves are currently reassessing previous knowledge claims and future research priorities and directions. Feminists have kept a careful gaze on men's theorizing over the last two decades since men began to theorize gender and feminism in an explicit and supposedly feminist empathic way. But it is important that such new theoretical and methodological shifts are both acknowledged and charted by feminists and other interested parties, such as gay and Black men. So though [Denise Thompson \(2001\)](#), in her efforts to rework radical feminism in terms of current issues, raises important new concerns and perspectives, how radical feminism is utilized by male theorists in relation to masculinity is not considered. How feminist theory is dealt with in this sense needs to be a continuing, central feminist concern.

There has been much debate on whether and how feminists should welcome and engage with men who seek to have a dialogue with feminists. Men's attempts have ranged from wanting to enter the space

of Women's Studies, to setting up their own field of study as "men's studies," being more discipline based or theorizing from the position of "the critical study of men and masculinities." Samuel Adu-Poku argues that feminists such as [Klein \(1983\)](#); "...have portrayed men's intrusion in feminism as an attempt to appropriate women's experiences and discursive spaces to sustain patriarchal representations of women as "other" ([Adu-Poku, 2001, p. 157](#).) Other feminists have both agreed with and disagreed with Klein's views. I have argued for example, that men's studies can be seen to want to "complement" Women's Studies and does not recognize the power issues inherent in this "complementary" approach ([Robinson & Richardson, 1994](#)) (see [Richardson & Robinson, 1994](#); [Skelton, 1998](#) for further feminist discussion of these issues.)

But why is it specifically important to raise, in the contemporary theoretical climate, male masculinity theorists' acknowledgement and use of feminist theory? I have argued elsewhere ([Robinson, 2003, forthcoming](#)) that there are three central reasons for this, which I will summarize briefly here.

One is that key male masculinity theorists such as [Bob Connell \(2000\)](#), [Jeff Hearn \(1998a\)](#) and others, in the USA, such as [Mckay, Messner, and Sabo \(2000\)](#), have started to be more thoughtful about their own and others theorizing on masculinity. It could be

argued that the male masculinity agenda for the next century is being put forward. In what ways is feminism being theorized in relation to this new order?

Since the mid 1980s, research on men and masculinity has grown rapidly, with an increasing number of books, web sites and courses on diverse topics and areas. (Connell, 2000; Whitehead, 2000) So, another reason is that the critique from feminists and others on male theorizing of masculinity is continuing, in diverse ways and from various disciplines, to address this development. In a UK context at least, the critical focus has generally been discipline based, in the areas of psychology, education and history for example. These discipline-based studies, (see Griffin & Wetherell, 1992; Skelton, 1998; Wetherell & Griffin, 1991) do not usually and explicitly address as a main theoretical priority how feminist theory is used, cited, and analyzed within masculinity theory. As well, Chirs Skelton (1998) illustrates the sometimes uncritical acceptance that there are “good guys” (pro-feminist writers or critical studies of men and masculinities theorists who attribute and use carefully feminist ideas) and “bad guys” (those who want to institutionalize masculinity theory in the form of men’s studies.) It is also not debated in this context whether and how contemporary male masculinity theorists have attended to earlier feminist criticisms of appropriation and misuse of feminist theory.

Lastly, it is important to consider who exactly the audiences for masculinity theory are. It could be argued that why it does not reach a wider and specifically feminist as well as a more general audience, is partially because of its continuing, and I will show, still limited dialogue with feminism.

In my 2003, forthcoming article, I reference the work of masculinity theorists in recent collections who claim to have a close engagement with feminist ideas, for instance, Digby (1998). This raises issues of men’s diverse relationships to different feminisms and feminist theories, how men write as male feminists or otherwise, and which particular theoretical routes they are taking as well as which feminist critiques have been dealt with. (See also Adams & Savron, 2002; Jardine & Smith, 1987; Kegan Gardiner, 2002; Lingard & Douglas, 1999.)

Here, I adopt another approach in assessing how far specific feminist criticisms on the ignoring and stereotyping of feminist theory, have been dealt with by male writers on masculinity over the last two decades. Specifically, I am concerned with how different feminist perspectives have been adopted within diverse accounts of masculinity. It has been asserted that socialist feminism has been defined in a narrow sense (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994). I have

argued (1996), as has Jalna Hanmer (1990), that radical feminism in particular has been caricatured and misrepresented. Men too have critiqued other men’s theorizing in this respect. For instance, McMahon (1999) argues that the material radical feminist Christine Delphy has been under used. Also, though I accept simplistic pigeonholing of feminist positions is debatable, and thankfully, a rigid acceptance of such categories on feminist theory courses is now often questioned, many feminists still identify with (and theorize from) particular (if shifting) positions (see Stacey, 1997 for a discussion of feminist typologies).

In assessing radical feminism, I am concerned particularly with those men who have been theorizing within the parameters of “men’s studies,” such as Brod (1987) in a USA context, and those more aligned with the area of study known as “the critical study of men and masculinities,” such as Hearn and Morgan (1990). The latter are often referred to by themselves and others as “pro-feminists” not “male feminists” and have been seen at times to be more in sympathy with feminist criticisms and concerns. Feminists of course have always theorized masculinity (see Canaan & Griffin, 1990 for diverse examples of this). Here though, I am analyzing *male* theorists, for it is (mainly) men who have aligned themselves with the two categories outlined, which do however contain anomalies and crossovers. It should be noted that it has been the subject of debate as to whether men can or indeed should identify as male feminists, with different opinions on this coming from self proclaimed male feminists, pro-feminists, male to female transsexuals, and Black men (for instance, see Hale, 1998; Kaufman, 1994; Kimmel & Messner, 1995; Lemons, 1998; Rubin, 1998; Schacht & Ewing, 1997, 1998; Shepherd, 1998 for continuing views on these various standpoints).

The earlier feminist critique of male masculinity writing, including its institutionalization in the form of men’s studies, as well as critiques from others such as gay and Black men, have been well documented. Issues included have been that questions of difference have not been attended to, to fears that scant institutional resources would be directed away from Women’s Studies to men’s studies for instance. These criticisms centered on accusations that theorizing by male theorists often only made token reference to feminism. Feminism was usually referred to in a general way without the citation of the work of individual feminists. Engagement with feminism has been seen to be reduced to one or two feminists who represent only one strand within a particular perspective. Furthermore, only feminists and types of feminism which were seen to be sympathetic to men’s

issues and problems was generally acknowledged (for examples of these criticisms, see [Canaan & Griffin, 1990](#); [Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994](#); [Hanmer, 1990](#)). One question is whether these previous critiques and questions have been dealt with. It is also important to assess the continued relevance of feminist criticisms to contemporary masculinity theorizing in the context of male masculinity theorists' new theoretical and research agendas.

## RADICAL FEMINISM

Though radical feminist theory and radical feminism as a social and political grouping are intimately connected, I am concentrating here on radical feminist theory, but for debate specifically on men, masculinities and radical feminism as a political movement, see [Clatterbaugh \(1997\)](#), [Connell \(1995\)](#), [Messner \(1993, 1997\)](#) and [Stoltenberg \(2000a,b\)](#).

The relationship of masculinity theory to radical feminism, or more specifically, the caricaturization and stereotyping of radical feminism as a body of thought in masculinity writing, serves both to illustrate and allows us to assess key aspects of criticism by feminists in relation to men's theorizing. It is important to ask whether male theorists addressed and responded to those criticisms and to ascertain whether some masculinity theorists chose to use radical feminist theory in ways which contradict the feminist assertion that radical feminist thought was simplified. These questions are particularly relevant when assessing the new epistemological and methodological claims of contemporary masculinity writers. Crucially, are their contemporary attempts to reshape and give reflexive form to theories of masculinity, paralleled and informed by a reformulated relationship to a variety of feminisms?

I have not attempted to address every mention of radical feminism in theories of masculinity. Indeed, my selection of masculinity theorists raises the dilemma of highlighting certain theorists whilst ignoring others, thus helping to create a canon of theorists (more or less) acceptable to feminists. However, my selection encompasses writing which spans the categories of men's studies and the critical study of men and masculinities, as well as writings from different countries. It is also important to acknowledge that there are different approaches by masculinity writers in terms of how radical feminism is utilized and defined. Furthermore, profeminist writers, those assumed more sensitive to feminism, are scrutinized.

Radical feminists, for some time, have argued that not only those outside of feminist theory, but that feminist theorists themselves have caricatured, marginalized and misrepresented radical feminism. A central issue, which an investigation into the misrepresentation of this particular perspective reveals, is the essentialist/social constructionist debate. Radical feminists are often accused of being a historical, universal and of using essentialist ideas, for instance, the belief that they view femininity and masculinity as innate traits. Individual radical feminists are also sometimes used to represent and embody a generalized radical feminist viewpoint. An important objective of radical feminists has been to show that radical feminist theories have engaged with how "race," class and (hetero) sexism interlock—thereby responding to criticisms often leveled at radical feminists who are accused of universalism and subsuming all women under a sisterhood framework. ([Bell & Klein, 1996](#)) Radical feminists have also pointed to the diversity of radical feminist approaches. However, the objective here is not to see radical feminism, or indeed any feminist theory as beyond criticism. Some radical feminists can, arguably, be seen as essentialist or a historical, or, importantly, guilty of reproducing theoretical dichotomies which they accuse others of doing. Or as Diane Richardson argues: "There are, of course, criticisms that can be made of radical feminism, serious gaps in understanding, and areas that are under-theorized" ([Richardson, 2000, p. 67](#)). But as she ([Richardson, 1996](#)) has also argued, radical feminism is an influential, broad and developing body of thought. Crucially, she invites accurate and effective criticism of radical feminism, which is important for feminist theory to evolve in good faith generally.

Such stereotyping can be seen to be the context within which some of the masculinity theorists have attempted to discuss and utilize radical feminism. It could therefore be argued that if feminist theorists themselves indulge in dichotomies and stereotypes of certain feminist positions or if "malestream" works continue to omit or underplay mention of the influence and importance of radical feminist thought ([Winter, 2000](#)), then how can male masculinity theorists themselves not replicate these theoretical acts of bad faith? But I would assert that many of the masculinity theorists choose not to "hear" those debates within feminism which challenge caricatured views of radical feminist ideas. It should be noted that others however, have attempted to do so.

Anthony McMahon has asked in what ways and to what extent is feminist theory addressed by male masculinity theorists. He asserts that often, feminist theory is not acknowledged at all and that feminists are

seen not to have theorized masculinity. Furthermore, he argues, as feminists have, that: "...masculinity literature selectively appropriates forms of feminism whose accounts of gender relations de-emphasizes key issues of sexual politics" (McMahon, 1993, p. 675). In relation to the representation of radical feminism, his view that many male theorists direct attention towards a reified personality and away from interested male practices can help explain why this specific strand of feminist thought has been ignored or caricatured.

Denise Thompson (2001) argues that radical feminism has not been welcomed into the academy, (though this has sometimes been a mutual decision), and agrees with Catharine MacKinnon that: "...radical feminism is not one form of feminism among others, but simply feminism 'unmodified'" (Thompson, 2001, p. 1). Seen in this (albeit debatable) context, then it could be argued that it is no accidental theoretical slippage that male masculinity theorists have ignored radical feminism. Thompson's view, that radical feminism has focussed on the worst excesses of the social system which is male supremacy, can explain men's reluctance to embrace this body of thought and self-interest in refusing to do so.

### MASCULINITY THEORY AND RADICAL FEMINISM

Within masculinity theory there has been a tendency not to name or refer directly to either perspectives or specific feminists, and specifically radical feminists. For example: "...some feminist approaches have viewed masculinity and male dominance as simple mirror images of each other" (Roper & Tosh, 1991, p. 20.) The assumption here is that radical feminism is the obvious culprit. Other writers can and do name radical feminists as a group if not as individual theorists. For instance, Graham Dawson names and shames radical feminists per se when discussing similarities between radical feminism and nationalism:

Paradoxically, however, radical feminism in itself promoting a view of essentialist differences between "male" and "female"—shared much common ground with the dichotomies of gender found within nationalist discourse...Where nationalism lauds the soldier as its ultimate expression, radical feminism denigrates him as the quintessence of masculine brutality. (Dawson, 1994, p. 17)

However, no references are offered or evidence produced to support the assertion of radical feminist

essentialism generally or the specific accusation that is made. Another earlier feminist criticism of masculinity theorists' use of feminist theory is how it is reduced to one or two feminists, who in reality, represent only one strand of thought within the broad body of feminist theory. For instance, Clatterbaugh (1997) while defending the political and theoretical context that radical profeminist men work and theorize within, ironically argues too that it is radical feminists who endorse conservative ideas that women and men are naturally inferior or superior, so men are seen as not able to overcome their nature. He cites Alison Jagger's critique of Mary Daly's essentialism, thus conflating radical feminism to one feminist, and gets a woman to do his dirty work (or reading) for him.

Another contradictory response, I have argued elsewhere (Robinson, 1996) is from Victor Seidler who, when discussing rape, stereotypes radical feminism by asserting: "On the other hand, what about the radical feminist assumption that all men are potentially rapists?" (Seidler, 1994, p. 99). He goes on to make a (reasonable) assertion that it is important, in his opinion, to hold onto recognition of men's power in heterosexual relationships, as well as accepting how women and men can collude in this together. But this is then supported by his blanket statement that radical feminists only stress men's power and its connection to women's oppression, and that radical feminists can be seen to deny women's struggle for autonomy. Seidler (1994) also repeats the old platitude that all radical feminists automatically assume that women should separate from men in heterosexual relationships before they can discover independence and autonomy (see also Seidler, 1989).

In later work, Seidler (1997) does not now reference radical feminist thought directly, but obliquely refers to it: "Men have often felt defensive in the face of feminism, and especially the notions that have been around for the last 20 years that 'all men are shits' or that 'all men are insensitive' or possibly that 'all men are unemotional'" (Seidler, 1997, p. 202). This kind of condemnation makes it even harder for feminists to challenge such unsubstantiated generalizations and thus engage in dialogue with masculinity theorists. As a writer on masculinity who is perceived to appreciate feminist thought, Seidler has argued rightly that feminism has informed central ideas of social theory and philosophy. He has the clear view that: "It is not unusual these days for men to pay lip-service to feminism and to women's struggles in their opening paragraphs, only to go on to ignore the implications of these studies for the work they are

engaged in" (Seidler, 1990, p. 218). But his profeminist stance of acknowledging feminism is ironically undermined by his lack of knowledge of the different emphases within a feminist perspective. Other theorists, despite positive attempts to do justice to feminist theory, can also replicate this confused response.

MacInnes (1998) challenges established ways of thinking about masculinity, sex and gender, arguing that these terms are ideological, used to imagine the existence of differences between women and men, when there are none. Masculinity is located within the context of debates around modernity. In criticizing radical feminists such as Dworkin (1981) and others such as Chodorow (1978) and Dinnerstein (1976) (and though not necessarily agreeing with his findings), he does engage in detailed critique of a multiplicity of perspectives and positions. His view that Chodorow and Dworkin are "ensnared in the fetishism of sexual difference" (MacInnes, 1998, p. 97), though arguable, at least starts to rework how male masculinity theorists have characterized feminist theorists into distinct and preconceived positions and perspectives. However, his view that Dworkin's ideas fit "more obviously into an essentialist analysis of sex-difference" (MacInnes, 1998, p. 95) is evidence that masculinity theorists, whilst busy attempting to see and use feminist theory in a wider, more representative and original sense, can still accept unquestioningly the old essentialist accusations. It also reveals that theorists such as MacInnes do not admit there is dissent and disagreement around these issues, both from the theorists in question and others (see also Horrocks, 1994 for further evidence of this contradictory position).

Such stereotyping of radical feminism becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when masculinity writers uncritically cite each other's unchallenged views on feminist thought. For instance, Frosh (1994) utilizes Seidler's anti-radical feminist views. He argues that radical feminism defines masculinity as by nature oppressive, though also cites earlier work of Seidler (1991), that radical feminism's positive feature has been to place issues of male violence at the centre of an understanding of social relations. But it has also, as Seidler, and so Frosh asserts, denied that men have the possibility of change. Thus, a theoretically inauthentic version of radical feminism is continually circulated amongst male masculinity texts.

Many of the masculinity writers cite Segal's (1990) *Slow Motion* for speaking of the importance of a plurality of masculinities in different contexts. This work was undoubtedly influential as a text on masculinity and one, which has influenced me, argu-

ing as it did for the need to look at specific masculinities whether they be camp, Black-macho, working class and/or anti-sexist. Segal's (1987) earlier book, *Is the Future Female* however, was seen by many radical feminists as caricaturing radicals as essentialist (Richardson, 2000). Segal's ideas on radical feminists are also highlighted in *Slow Motion*, which masculinity theorists often took and still take as a bible for a social constructionist, empathic viewpoint of men's ability to change. Her views on radical feminism in more recent work: *Why Feminism? Gender, Psychology, Politics* (Segal, 1999), are also argued with by Scott (2001). Scott sees Segal in her latest work as dismissing radical feminism to the point of making it disappear.

As well as the deifying or ignoring of particular feminists, the continued and uncritical use of the same text can also be seen in different accounts of masculinity theory. For instance, the American, Michael Messner (1997), describes radical feminist men's discourse as being built on the reductionist focus on male sexual violence, which is attributed generally to radical feminism, whilst Segal (1987, 1994), is seen with (unnamed) others, to have legitimately critiqued radical feminists for their ignoring and marginalizing of issues such as pay, childcare and welfare reform and thus the needs of mothers, working women, the poor, and women of color. As well, socialist feminism alone is seen by Messner here to broaden the terms of feminist debate about men and masculinity, while radical feminism reputedly reduces explanations of women's oppression to pornography and rape.

The Australian David Tacey (1997) talks about a feminist scholarship which has defeatist pessimism about men's ability to change, which is footnoted as a feminism referenced by Lynn Segal. Though he implores men to read feminist and feminist inspired writings, the only feminist work he names, is again, Segal's (1990) *Slow Motion*. Similarly, the British theorist Roger Horrocks cites Segal's *Slow Motion* as "one of the best books written about men" (Horrocks, 1994, p. 9). He also praises her ideas in *Is the Future Female?* Which he sees as being critical of feminism which is essentialist and denies any hope of transformation between women and men. Furthermore, the radical feminist movement, particularly in America he argues, has dissolved all social injustices into one great oppression of women by men. Messner (1993), Horrocks (1995) as well as Connell (1995, 1998) provide other evidence of this crude use of Segal and her arguable critique of radical feminism by masculinity theorists (these include those seen as generally in sympathy with feminist thought) as



justification to ignore feminist theorists outside of particular texts or positions.

However, it is important to recognize that other masculinity theorists have engaged in careful and meaningful ways with feminist ideas and texts. Others still have critiqued some male theorists' unreflexive and disingenuous use of feminist theory. As, David Morgan argues: "...when writers currently writing on men and masculinities are talking about the influence of feminism they are talking about a process of considerable complexity....The influence is not simply upon theories—indeed it is possible that men's theories have not been influenced enough by key feminist theories" (Morgan, 1992, p. 187).

For example, Arthur Brittan in 1989, while accepting that a number of radical feminist writers appear to espouse an essentialist position, also asserted that this was not the issue. He argued that male writers on masculinity had still not taken the radical feminist discussion of rape seriously, and this failure is defended by the accusation of essentialism, which then has the effect of invalidating and neutralizing a feminist analysis. Given that Brittan was writing in 1989, and that radical feminism still remains the *bête noire* of many masculinity theorists, it is clear that progression of thought is far from linear in its development on this topic.

Other male theorists have responded to particular feminist criticisms. Pringle (1995) cites specific feminists who have been (constructively) critical of developments in masculinity, for instance, Canaan and Griffin (1990), Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) and Hanmer (1990). He defines Seidler's approach to radical feminism as rather negative, appearing as it is to be based on an over-stereotypical representation of the view that all men are rapists, a perspective often attributed to radical feminists. Further to this, he specifically references radical feminists who would refute Seidler's views. He also cites Harry Christian (1994) for not naming the feminists Christian infers are radically antimen and who believe all men hate women.

Hearn (1998b) has also consistently engaged with the diversity of feminist thought, including those theorists who could be termed radical feminists or who have been influenced by their ideas. For example, in his discussion on welfare, social policy, feminism and masculinity, he acknowledges radical and lesbian feminist critiques of men's sexuality and violence and the importance of the concept of patriarchy in the context of recent debates. He goes on to cite specific and diverse radical feminists such as Firestone (1970), Delphy (1977, 1984) and MacKinnon (1982, 1983) in relation to the concepts of

gender, class, biological reproduction, sexuality and household relations and work, and their use for debates around men and masculinity. He therefore avoids both a dismissive attitude towards radical feminist insights and the tendency I have noted, by some masculinity theorists, to not quote or cite specific feminists. In his discussion on men and violence, he draws on radical feminist research on violence experienced by women from men known to them, to develop his own arguments on the "ambiguities and complexities of men's support for men who have been violent to known women" (Hearn, 1998c, p. 148). Neither "kow-towing" nor genuflecting to feminist theory in the process of constructing new theories on masculinity, he is attempting to engage in a constructive dialogue (see also Hearn, 1996).

Similarly, Pringle (1998) in a discussion of men, childcare and policy, references a broad range of feminists, including radical feminists, and constructs a framework for men in challenging oppressive gender power relations. In this context, he includes earlier feminist critiques of masculinity (Hanmer, 1990; Robinson, 1996). He also references the work of current masculinity theorists around such issues as maintaining a focus on the core concerns of relations between women and men, rather than on men alone, and how to maintain at the centre of analysis the issues of power and men's violence's. He demonstrates that a synthesis of different feminist perspectives, when imaginatively connected to the insights of male masculinity theorists, can be theoretically productive. Pringle avoids the argument, which asserts that men should slavishly follow a feminist agenda, but does so without being either defensive or apologetic (see also Stoltenberg, 2000a,b, who has clearly been influenced by radical feminism).

## NEW AGENDAS: UNEXAMINED ASSUMPTIONS?

As we go forward into the next decade, I have argued (Robinson, 2003, forthcoming), that it would seem to me that the key issue for male masculinity theorists is one of not just acknowledging the validity of different feminist perspectives, nor even one of defining and illustrating their complexities. The crucial task is to question and demonstrate, whether and how, the refocusing of epistemological and methodological concerns in the frameworks of contemporary masculinity theory are being challenged and changed by a thorough incorporation of different feminist viewpoints and stances.

Masculinity theorists have, since the 1980s, problematized central issues and concepts such as hegemonic and counter hegemonic masculinities, recognized that there are a plurality of masculinities including gay and Black masculinities, redefined the sex/gender distinction and, more recently, have attempted to chart the progress and the epistemological and methodological bases of different strands of masculinity theory (see Connell, 2000; Hearn, 1996, 1998a; MacInnes, 1998; Pease, 2000; Peterson, 1998; Shepherd, 1998 for discussion of these shifts in the theories and concepts of masculinity). This is the current framework in which male theorists are attempting to make sense of and inform their concern with feminist theory. But are their recent and redefined epistemological concerns informed by the question of how feminist theory has been made invisible, caricatured and only seen as partial in past accounts of masculinity? Do masculinity theorists continue to reproduce those versions of feminism which have, as I have shown, sometimes been uncritically represented in masculinity theory?

To take just one theorist in this explicit context, Bob Pease (2000) is a masculinity theorist who reflects certain trends in masculinity theorizing. For example; an increasing tendency to analyze masculinity in terms of a critical post modernist framework, a willingness to embrace a wider diversity of feminist theorists than before and a more complex and located stance on their own and other men's theorizing of masculinity and use of feminism. Pease (2000) responds to earlier feminist criticisms that men have not always acknowledged feminist theory that men try to divide feminists by recognizing some but not others or that men engage with feminism only to co-opt or conquer it. For instance:

Feminist object-relations theorists, such as Chodorow (1978) and Dinnerstein (1976) have been the most popular among men whereas radical feminists, such as Dworkin (1981), Griffin (1981) and Daly (1975), and materialist feminists, such as Delphy (1984) and O'Brien (1981), tend to be either ignored or heavily criticized. (Pease, 2000, p. 12)

If one touchstone for assessing masculinity theorists sensitivity to feminist theory is if and how they engage with radical feminism, then he directly addresses this issue. However, elsewhere in this work, he also holds the simplistic and monolithic view that early radical feminists stressed essentialist differences, asserting an essential feminine which was repressed by male domination. This is contrasted with post

modernist feminists, who alone, are seen to challenge humanistic notions of essential natures. The caricaturization of radical feminists by Segal (1987) is also, once again, accepted without question. Further more, post modernism and only post modernism gives a basis for avoiding the dangers of taking the experiences of white middle class women as representative of all. Though there is a theoretical willingness to address at one level critical injustices to certain theorists and perspectives, masculinity theorists such as Pease (2000) and Petersen (1998) can still accept an uncritical notion of a linear development of trends in feminist thought, and only choose certain references to examine these shifts in ideas.

However, Pease's conceptualizing of the dialectical relationship between masculinity writing and feminist theory is also evident in his work, and more obviously so than for some other and earlier masculinity theorists. He reflects contemporary developments which would seek to account for both the increasingly sophisticated epistemological foundations of masculinity theory as well as the complex state of play of contemporary feminist theory;

This is not to argue, however, that feminist theory should set the agenda for men's studies. Men have to take responsibility for the questions that emerge in their explanations of men and masculinity. (Seidler, 1994, p. 112)

...Making those to whom we are responsible arbiters of practice and research would, yet again, take away responsibility from men. This process of accountability must involve dialogue with women. (Pease, 2000, pp. 6-7)

## CONCLUSION

As I outlined earlier, feminists have critiqued in diverse ways, men's attempts to utilise feminist theory in their construction of new theories of masculinity. Skelton (1998) has argued that feminists still need to keep a watchful eye on masculinity theorists' attempts to theorize issues such as boys under achievement at school, as well as examine our own agendas. A different and arguable stance is taken by Bartky (1998), who has asserted that male theorists have now earned themselves a place at "our" table. I would contend though that dialogue cannot fully and meaningfully occur until feminist theory and its connection both to theorizing on men and masculinity and men's theorizing on the process itself, fully informs current debates on masculinity. This also

entails male theorists continually readdressing their own motivations for engaging with feminist theory as intellectual and political contexts develop and change. Prominent masculinity theorists such as Connell (2000), in their attempts to construct a brave new research agenda for contemporary masculinity theory, do not always make the relationship of this restructuring to feminist theory a theoretical priority, nor is it discussed explicitly enough. An unanalyzed and taken for granted entente cordiale with feminism will do nothing to encourage the furthering of a mutually productive exchange of ideas.

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