Part I
Defining and Locating Masculinities

This opening section presents key definitions and perspectives within the sociology of masculinity which inform, to some degree, all the subsequent chapters in this volume. The nature/nurture debate, masculinity as ideology, male power, the gender order, hegemonic masculinity, and masculine identity and subjectivity are all discussed. While the three chapters do differ somewhat in their theoretical persuasion, they are unified in their dismissal of any understanding that masculinity is a singular, biological, inevitable, core construct of males.

R. W. Connell, in the opening chapter 'The Social Organization of Masculinity', challenges any comfortable notion we might have that masculinity is either a coherent, monolithic system, or a 'character type'. In so doing, Connell's piece sets the tone for the entire book in that he defines masculinity as a configuration of practice within a system of gender relations. Connell makes the point that masculinity is inherently relational and does not exist except in contrast to femininity. Therefore, to understand masculinity we must first understand something of the historical dynamics of the gender order. In this chapter, Connell revisits the four common approaches which present masculinity as essential to men: socio-biological theories; positivist approaches typified in masculinity/femininity scales; normative definitions depicted in the media and expressed in sex role theory; and semiotic approaches that frame masculinity and femininity as symbolic contrasts. Connell proposes that we must understand gender, and specifically masculinity, as a **structure of social practice**, one that is reproduced within historical situations through daily actions. The implication is that if we take a

dynamic view of the process of gender and think of masculinity and femininity as gender projects, we now begin to see the fractured and shifting nature of gender identity. From this perspective, one that is further explored in following chapters, it can be seen that there are multiple masculinities, often marked by internal contradictions and historical disruptions. However, these multiple masculinities are not necessarily equally valued or powerful across the social web. Connell goes on to outline the dynamics of **hegemonic masculinity** while emphasizing the importance of relations among men that produce subordinated and marginalized masculinity projects. Connell concludes that the gender order is far from stable. Indeed, the modern gender order appears to be experiencing something of a legitimacy crisis, in part arising from the influence of feminism and global struggles for gender equality.

Arthur Brittan's chapter, 'Masculinities and Masculinism', directly challenges biological accounts that posit one, singular, masculine nature. In so doing, Brittan offers a means by which to understand something of the power effects of dominant forms of masculinity. Gender norms, and specifically masculine norms, go through cultural and historical transformations producing multiple and variant masculinities. Thus, Brittan reminds us that biological 'facts' are inevitably mediated by social, cultural values. In understanding the place of masculinity in gender, Brittan proposes that we distinguish between masculinities and the **dominant ideology of masculinism**. In introducing the concept of masculinism, Brittan defines it as a core ideology underpinning male power; a belief system that is resistant to the vagaries of fashion and social change. Brittan proceeds to discuss the concept of masculinism in some detail, emphasizing that while men do not collectively 'form committees to ensure their domination', the ideology of masculinism presents male power as given. So, in this respect, Brittan advances the debates within the sociology of masculinity quite significantly, in that he argues for seeing masculinities as non-biological, plural and changing, but connected to a larger ideology which operates in the service of males by positing male–female differences as natural and, thus, unchangeable.

In chapter 3, 'Postmodernism and the Interrogation of Masculinity', David Gutterman continues the critique of the Enlightenment concept of a unitary, transcendent subject. Gutterman argues that while an individual's identity may appear in simple binary categories (like man and woman, heterosexual and homosexual), identity should be recognized as multiple, contradictory, contingent, precarious and temporary. Binary notions of gender identity have become ossified and naturalized in most societies, in the process coming to have a direct bearing on social values and systems. However, while gender identities may, in common-sense terms, be understood as stable, they are, on the contrary, highly unstable

and contingent on numerous social and cultural variables. Gutterman goes on to note that sometimes these contingencies become branded and it appears that we have little power to challenge or reshape them. In presenting a case for recognizing masculinities as dynamic processes with political possibilities, Gutterman explores the notion of identity as performance. Drawing on post-structuralist and post-modern perspectives, he argues that **identity is something that one does rather than what one is or one has**. Individuals have at their disposal, through discursive subject positions, a vast array of scripts available to them as members of a culture, community, or group. However, these scripts or discourses are never totalized or absolute. As examples, Gutterman cites two places where strong, traditional scripts are being challenged: through gay male gender identities and the subjectivities and practices of pro-feminist men. By offering counter-expressions of masculine performance, gay men and pro-feminist men challenge the naturalness of the division of feminism and masculinism while dismantling categories from positionings as the 'Other'. Yet while acknowledging the positive political possibilities that can ensue from challenges to traditional masculine identities, Gutterman warns that counter-performances of gender identity can, themselves, be construed as having a natural, stable core.

1

The Social Organization of Masculinity

R. W. Connell

The main currents of twentieth-century research have failed to produce a coherent science of masculinity. This does not reveal the failure of the scientists so much as the impossibility of the task. 'Masculinity' is not a coherent object about which a generalizing science can be produced. Yet we can have coherent knowledge about the issues raised in these attempts. If we broaden the angle of vision, we can see masculinity, not as an isolated object, but as an aspect of a larger structure.

This demands an account of the larger structure and how masculinities are located in it. The task of this chapter is to set out a framework based on contemporary analyses of gender relations. This framework will provide a way of distinguishing types of masculinity, and of understanding the dynamics of change.

First, however, there is some ground to clear. The definition of the basic term in the discussion has never been wonderfully clear.

Defining masculinity

All societies have cultural accounts of gender, but not all have the concept 'masculinity'. In its modern usage the term assumes that one's behaviour results from the type of person one is. That is to say, an unmasculine person would behave differently: being peaceable rather than violent, conciliatory rather than dominating, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest, and so forth.

This conception presupposes a belief in individual difference and personal agency. In that sense it is built on the conception of individuality that developed in early-modern Europe with the growth of colonial empires and capitalist economic relations.

But the concept is also inherently relational. 'Masculinity' does not exist except in contrast with 'femininity'. A culture which does not treat women and men as bearers of polarized character types, at least in principle, does not have a concept of masculinity in the sense of modern European/American culture.

Historical research suggests that this was true of European culture itself before the eighteenth century. Women were certainly regarded as different from men, but different in the sense of being incomplete or inferior examples of the same character (for instance, having less of the faculty of reason). Women and men were not seen as bearers of qualitatively different characters; this conception accompanied the bourgeois ideology of 'separate spheres' in the nineteenth century.[1]

In both respects our concept of masculinity seems to be a fairly recent historical product, a few hundred years old at most. In speaking of masculinity at all, then, we are 'doing gender' in a culturally specific way. This should be borne in mind with any claim to have discovered transhistorical truths about manhood and the masculine.

Definitions of masculinity have mostly taken our cultural standpoint for granted, but have followed different strategies to characterize the type of person who is masculine. Four main strategies have been followed; they are easily distinguished in terms of their logic, though often combined in practice.

Essentialist definitions usually pick a feature that defines the core of the masculine, and hang an account of men's lives on that. Freud flirted with an essentialist definition when he equated masculinity with activity in contrast to feminine passivity – though he came to see that equation as oversimplified. Later authors' attempts to capture an essence of masculinity have been colourfully varied: risk-taking, responsibility, irresponsibility, aggression, Zeus energy... Perhaps the finest is the sociobiologist Lionel Tiger's idea that true maleness, underlying male bonding and war, is elicited by 'hard and heavy phenomena'.[2] Many heavy-metal rock fans would agree.

The weakness in the essentialist approach is obvious: the choice of the essence is quite arbitrary. Nothing obliges different essentialists to agree, and in fact they often do not. Claims about a universal basis of masculinity tell us more about the ethos of the claimant than about anything else.

Positivist social science, whose ethos emphasizes finding the facts, yields a simple definition of masculinity: what men actually are. This

definition is the logical basis of masculinity/femininity (M/F) scales in psychology, whose items are validated by showing that they discriminate statistically between groups of men and women. It is also the basis of those ethnographic discussions of masculinity which describe the pattern of men's lives in a given culture and, whatever it is, call the pattern masculinity.[3]

There are three difficulties here. First, as modern epistemology recognizes, there is no description without a standpoint. The apparently neutral descriptions on which these definitions rest are themselves underpinned by assumptions about gender. Obviously enough, to start compiling an M/F scale one must have some idea of what to count or list when making up the items.

Second, to list what men and women do requires that people be already sorted into the categories 'men' and 'women'. This, as Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna showed in their classic ethnomethodological study of gender research, is unavoidably a process of social attribution using common-sense typologies of gender. Positivist procedure thus rests on the very typifications that are supposedly under investigation in gender research.

Third, to define masculinity as what-men-empirically-are is to rule out the usage in which we call some women 'masculine' and some men 'feminine', or some actions or attitudes 'masculine' or 'feminine' regardless of who displays them. This is not a trivial use of the terms. It is crucial, for instance, to psychoanalytic thinking about contradictions within personality.

Indeed, this usage is fundamental to gender analysis. If we spoke only of differences between men as a bloc and women as a bloc, we would not need the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' at all. We could just speak of 'men's' and 'women's', or 'male' and 'female'. The terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' point beyond categorical sex difference to the ways men differ among themselves, and women differ among themselves, in matters of gender.[4]

Normative definitions recognize these differences and offer a standard: masculinity is what men ought to be. This definition is often found in media studies, in discussions of exemplars such as John Wayne or of genres such as the thriller. Strict sex role theory treats masculinity precisely as a social norm for the behaviour of men. In practice, male sex role texts often blend normative with essentialist definitions, as in Robert Brannon's widely quoted account of 'our culture's blueprint of manhood': No Sissy Stuff, The Big Wheel, The Sturdy Oak and Give 'em Hell.[5]

Normative definitions allow that different men approach the standards to different degrees. But this soon produces paradoxes, some of which

were recognized in the early Men's Liberation writings. Few men actually match the 'blueprint' or display the toughness and independence acted by Wayne, Bogart or Eastwood. (This point is picked up by film itself, in spoofs such as *Blazing Saddles* and *Play it Again, Sam*.) What is 'normative' about a norm hardly anyone meets? Are we to say the majority of men are unmasculine? How do we assay the toughness needed to resist the norm of toughness, or the heroism needed to come out as gay?

A more subtle difficulty is that a purely normative definition gives no grip on masculinity at the level of personality. Joseph Pleck correctly identified the unwarranted assumption that role and identity correspond. This assumption is, I think, why sex role theorists often drift towards essentialism.

Semiotic approaches abandon the level of personality and define masculinity through a system of symbolic difference in which masculine and feminine places are contrasted. Masculinity is, in effect, defined as not-femininity.

This follows the formulae of structural linguistics, where elements of speech are defined by their differences from each other. The approach has been widely used in feminist and poststructuralist cultural analyses of gender and in Lacanian psychoanalysis and studies of symbolism. It yields more than an abstract contrast of masculinity and femininity, of the kind found in M/F scales. In the semiotic opposition of masculinity and femininity, masculinity is the unmarked term, the place of symbolic authority. The phallus is master-signifier, and femininity is symbolically defined by lack.

This definition of masculinity has been very effective in cultural analysis. It escapes the arbitrariness of essentialism and the paradoxes of positivist and normative definitions. It is, however, limited in its scope – unless one assumes, as some postmodern theorists do, that discourse is all we can talk about in social analysis. To grapple with the full range of issues about masculinity we need ways of talking about relationships of other kinds too: about gendered places in production and consumption, places in institutions and in natural environments, places in social and military struggles.[6]

What can be generalized is the principle of connection. The idea that one symbol can only be understood within a connected system of symbols applies equally well in other spheres. No masculinity arises except in a system of gender relations.

Rather than attempting to define masculinity as an object (a natural character type, a behavioural average, a norm), we need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives. 'Masculinity', to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through

which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture.

Gender as a structure of social practice

[. . .] Gender is a way in which social practice is ordered. In gender processes, the everyday conduct of life is organized in relation to a reproductive arena, defined by the bodily structures and processes of human reproduction. This arena includes sexual arousal and intercourse, childbirth and infant care, bodily sex difference and similarity.

I call this a 'reproductive arena' not a 'biological base' to emphasize that we are talking about a historical process involving the body, not a fixed set of biological determinants. Gender is social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not social practice reduced to the body. Indeed reductionism presents the exact reverse of the real situation. Gender exists precisely to the extent that biology does *not* determine the social. It marks one of those points of transition where historical process supersedes biological evolution as the form of change. Gender is a scandal, an outrage, from the point of view of essentialism. Sociobiologists are constantly trying to abolish it, by proving that human social arrangements are a reflex of evolutionary imperatives.

Social practice is creative and inventive, but not inchoate. It responds to particular situations and is generated within definite structures of social relations. Gender relations, the relations among people and groups organized through the reproductive arena, form one of the major structures of all documented societies.

Practice that relates to this structure, generated as people and groups grapple with their historical situations, does not consist of isolated acts. Actions are configured in larger units, and when we speak of masculinity and femininity we are naming configurations of gender practice.

'Configuration' is perhaps too static a term. The important thing is the *process* of configuring practice. (Jean-Paul Sartre speaks in *Search for a Method* of the 'unification of the means in action'.) Taking a dynamic view of the organization of practice, we arrive at an understanding of masculinity and femininity as *gender projects*. These are processes of configuring practice through time, which transform their starting-points in gender structures.[7] [. . .]

We find the gender configuring of practice however we slice the social world, whatever unit of analysis we choose. The most familiar is the individual life course, the basis of the common-sense notions of mascu-

linity and femininity. The configuration of practice here is what psychologists have traditionally called 'personality' or 'character'. [. . .]

Such a focus is liable to exaggerate the coherence of practice that can be achieved at any one site. It is thus not surprising that psychoanalysis, originally stressing contradiction, drifted towards the concept of 'identity'. Post-structuralist critics of psychology such as Wendy Hollway have emphasized that gender identities are fractured and shifting, because multiple discourses intersect in any individual life.[8] This argument highlights another site, that of discourse, ideology or culture. Here gender is organized in symbolic practices that may continue much longer than the individual life (for instance: the construction of heroic masculinities in epics; the construction of 'gender dysphorias' or 'perversions' in medical theory).

Social science has come to recognize a third site of gender configuration, institutions such as the state, the workplace and the school. Many find it difficult to accept that institutions are substantively, not just metaphorically, gendered. This is, nevertheless, a key point.

The state, for instance, is a masculine institution. To say this is not to imply that the personalities of top male office-holders somehow seep through and stain the institution. It is to say something much stronger: that state organizational practices are structured in relation to the reproductive arena. The overwhelming majority of top office-holders are men because there is a gender configuring of recruitment and promotion, a gender configuring of the internal division of labour and systems of control, a gender configuring of policymaking, practical routines, and ways of mobilizing pleasure and consent.[9]

The gender structuring of practice need have nothing biologically to do with reproduction. The link with the reproductive arena is social. This becomes clear when it is challenged. An example is the recent struggle within the state over 'gays in the military', i.e., the rules excluding soldiers and sailors because of the gender of their sexual object-choice. In the United States, where this struggle was most severe, critics made the case for change in terms of civil liberties and military efficiency, arguing in effect that object-choice has little to do with the capacity to kill. The admirals and generals defended the status quo on a variety of spurious grounds. The unadmitted reason was the cultural importance of a particular definition of masculinity in maintaining the fragile cohesion of modern armed forces.

It has been clear since the work of Juliet Mitchell and Gayle Rubin in the 1970s that gender is an internally complex structure, where a number of different logics are superimposed. This is a fact of great importance for the analysis of masculinities. Any one masculinity, as a configuration of practice, is simultaneously positioned in a number of structures of

relationship, which may be following different historical trajectories. Accordingly masculinity, like femininity, is always liable to internal contradiction and historical disruption.

We need at least a three-fold model of the structure of gender, distinguishing relations of (a) power, (b) production and (c) cathexis (emotional attachment). This is a provisional model, but it gives some purchase on issues about masculinity.[10]

(a) *Power relations*   The main axis of power in the contemporary European/American gender order is the overall subordination of women and dominance of men – the structure Women's Liberation named 'patriarchy'. This general structure exists despite many local reversals (e.g., woman-headed households, female teachers with male students). It persists despite resistance of many kinds, now articulated in feminism. These reversals and resistances mean continuing difficulties for patriarchal power. They define a problem of legitimacy which has great importance for the politics of masculinity.

(b) *Production relations*   Gender divisions of labour are familiar in the form of the allocation of tasks, sometimes reaching extraordinarily fine detail. (In the English village studied by the sociologist Pauline Hunt, for instance, it was customary for women to wash the inside of windows, men to wash the outside.) Equal attention should be paid to the economic consequences of gender divisions of labour, the dividend accruing to men from unequal shares of the products of social labour. This is most often discussed in terms of unequal wage rates, but the gendered character of capital should also be noted. A capitalist economy working through a gender division of labour is, necessarily, a gendered accumulation process. So it is not a statistical accident, but a part of the social construction of masculinity, that men and not women control the major corporations and the great private fortunes. Implausible as it sounds, the accumulation of wealth has become firmly linked to the reproductive arena, through the social relations of gender.[11]

(c) *Cathexis*   Sexual desire is so often seen as natural that it is commonly excluded from social theory. Yet when we consider desire in Freudian terms, as emotional energy being attached to an object, its gendered character is clear. This is true both for heterosexual and homosexual desire. (It is striking that in our culture the non-gendered object choice, 'bisexual' desire, is ill-defined and unstable.) The practices that shape and realize desire are thus an aspect of the gender order. Accordingly we can ask political questions about the relationships involved: whether they are consensual or coercive, whether pleasure is equally given and received. In feminist analyses of sexuality these have become sharp questions about the connection of heterosexuality with men's position of social dominance.[12]

Because gender is a way of structuring social practice in general, not a special type of practice, it is unavoidably involved with other social structures. It is now common to say that gender 'intersects' – better, interacts – with race and class. We might add that it constantly interacts with nationality or position in the world order.

This fact also has strong implications for the analysis of masculinity. White men's masculinities, for instance, are constructed not only in relation to white women but also in relation to black men. Paul Hoch in *White Hero, Black Beast* more than a decade ago pointed to the pervasiveness of racial imagery in Western discourses of masculinity. White fears of black men's violence have a long history in colonial and post-colonial situations. Black fears of white men's terrorism, founded in the history of colonialism, have a continuing basis in white men's control of police, courts and prisons in metropolitan countries. African-American men are massively over-represented in American prisons, as Aboriginal men are in Australian prisons. This situation is strikingly condensed in the American black expression 'The Man', fusing white masculinity and institutional power. As the black rap singer Ice-T put it,

> It makes no difference whether you're in or out. The ghetto, the Pen, it's all institutionalized. It's being controlled by the Man...Ever since 1976, they stop trying to rehabilitate Brothers. Now it's strictly punish-ment. The Man's answer to the problem is not more education – it's more prisons. They're saying let's not educate them, let's lock them the fuck up. So when you come outta there you're all braindead, so yeah it's a cycle.[13]

Similarly, it is impossible to understand the shaping of working-class masculinities without giving full weight to their class as well as their gender politics. This is vividly shown in historical work such as Sonya Rose's *Limited Livelihoods*, on industrial England in the nineteenth century. An ideal of working-class manliness and self-respect was con-structed in response to class deprivation and paternalist strategies of management, at the same time and through the same gestures as it was defined against working-class women. The strategy of the 'family wage', which long depressed women's wages in twentieth-century economies, grew out of this interplay.[14]

To understand gender, then, we must constantly go beyond gender. The same applies in reverse. We cannot understand class, race or global inequality without constantly moving towards gender. Gender relations are a major component of social structure as a whole, and gender politics are among the main determinants of our collective fate.

Relations among masculinities: hegemony, subordination, complicity, marginalization

With growing recognition of the interplay between gender, race and class it has become common to recognize multiple masculinities: black as well as white, working-class as well as middle-class. This is welcome, but it risks another kind of oversimplification. It is easy in this framework to think that there is *a* black masculinity or *a* working-class masculinity.

To recognize more than one kind of masculinity is only a first step. We have to examine the relations between them. Further, we have to unpack the milieux of class and race and scrutinize the gender relations operating within them. There are, after all, gay black men and effeminate factory hands, not to mention middle-class rapists and cross-dressing bourgeois.

A focus on the gender relations among men is necessary to keep the analysis dynamic, to prevent the acknowledgement of multiple masculinities collapsing into a character typology, as happened with Fromm and the *Authoritarian Personality* research. 'Hegemonic masculinity' is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable.

A focus on relations also offers a gain in realism. Recognizing multiple masculinities, especially in an individualist culture such as the United States, risks taking them for alternative lifestyles, a matter of consumer choice. A relational approach makes it easier to recognize the hard compulsions under which gender configurations are formed, the bitterness as well as the pleasure in gendered experience.

With these guidelines, let us consider the practices and relations that construct the main patterns of masculinity in the current Western gender order.

Hegemony

The concept of 'hegemony', deriving from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy

of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.[15]

This is not to say that the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity are always the most powerful people. They may be exemplars, such as film actors, or even fantasy figures, such as film characters. Individual holders of institutional power or great wealth may be far from the hegemonic pattern in their personal lives. (Thus a male member of a prominent business dynasty was a key figure in the gay/transvestite social scene in Sydney in the 1950s, because of his wealth and the protection this gave in the cold-war climate of political and police harassment.)[16]

Nevertheless, hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual. So the top levels of business, the military and government provide a fairly convincing *corporate* display of masculinity, still very little shaken by feminist women or dissenting men. It is the successful claim to authority, more than direct violence, that is the mark of hegemony (though violence often underpins or supports authority).

I stress that hegemonic masculinity embodies a 'currently accepted' strategy. When conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded. New groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony. The dominance of *any* group of men may be challenged by women. Hegemony, then, is a historically mobile relation. Its ebb and flow is a key element of the picture of masculinity.

Subordination

Hegemony relates to cultural dominance in the society as a whole. Within that overall framework there are specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men.

The most important case in contemporary European/American society is the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men. This is much more than a cultural stigmatization of homosexuality or gay identity. Gay men are subordinated to straight men by an array of quite material practices.

These practices were listed in early Gay Liberation texts such as Dennis Altman's *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*. They have been documented at length in studies such as the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board's 1982 report *Discrimination and Homosexuality*. They are still a matter of everyday experience for homosexual men. They include political and cultural exclusion, cultural abuse (in the United States gay

men have now become the main symbolic target of the religious right), legal violence (such as imprisonment under sodomy statutes), street violence (ranging from intimidation to murder), economic discrimination and personal boycotts. It is not surprising that an Australian working-class man, reflecting on his experience of coming out in a homophobic culture, would remark: 'You know, I didn't totally realize what it was to be gay. I mean it's a bastard of a life.'[17]

Oppression positions homosexual masculinities at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men. Gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity, the items ranging from fastidious taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure. Hence, from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, gayness is easily assimilated to femininity. And hence – in the view of some gay theorists – the ferocity of homophobic attacks.

Gay masculinity is the most conspicuous, but it is not the only subordinated masculinity. Some heterosexual men and boys too are expelled from the circle of legitimacy. The process is marked by a rich vocabulary of abuse: wimp, milksop, nerd, turkey, sissy, lily liver, jellyfish, yellow-belly, candy ass, ladyfinger, pushover, cookie pusher, cream puff, mother-fucker, pantywaist, mother's boy, four-eyes, ear-'ole, dweeb, geek, Milquetoast, Cedric, and so on. Here too the symbolic blurring with femininity is obvious.

Complicity

Normative definitions of masculinity, as I have noted, face the problem that not many men actually meet the normative standards. This point applies to hegemonic masculinity. The number of men rigorously practising the hegemonic pattern in its entirety may be quite small. Yet the majority of men gain from its hegemony, since they benefit from the patriarchal dividend, the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women.

Accounts of masculinity have generally concerned themselves with syndromes and types, not with numbers. Yet in thinking about the dynamics of society as a whole, numbers matter. Sexual politics is mass politics, and strategic thinking needs to be concerned with where the masses of people are. If a large number of men have some connection with the hegemonic project but do not embody hegemonic masculinity, we need a way of theorizing their specific situation.

This can be done by recognizing another relationship among groups of men, the relationship of complicity with the hegemonic project. Mascu-

linities constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy, are complicit in this sense.

It is tempting to treat them simply as slacker versions of hegemonic masculinity – the difference between the men who cheer football matches on TV and those who run out into the mud and the tackles themselves. But there is often something more definite and carefully crafted than that. Marriage, fatherhood and community life often involve extensive compromises with women rather than naked domination or an uncontested display of authority.[18] A great many men who draw the patriarchal dividend also respect their wives and mothers, are never violent towards women, do their accustomed share of the housework, bring home the family wage, and can easily convince themselves that feminists must be bra-burning extremists.

Marginalization

Hegemony, subordination and complicity, as just defined, are relations internal to the gender order. The interplay of gender with other structures such as class and race creates further relationships between masculinities.

New information technology became a vehicle for redefining middleclass masculinities at a time when the meaning of labour for workingclass men was in contention. This is not a question of a fixed middle-class masculinity confronting a fixed working-class masculinity. Both are being reshaped, by a social dynamic in which class and gender relations are simultaneously in play.

Race relations may also become an integral part of the dynamic between masculinities. In a white-supremacist context, black masculinities play symbolic roles for white gender construction. For instance, black sporting stars become exemplars of masculine toughness, while the fantasy figure of the black rapist plays an important role in sexual politics among whites, a role much exploited by right-wing politics in the United States. Conversely, hegemonic masculinity among whites sustains the institutional oppression and physical terror that have framed the making of masculinities in black communities.

Robert Staples's discussion of internal colonialism in *Black Masculinity* shows the effect of class and race relations at the same time. As he argues, the level of violence among black men in the United States can only be understood through the changing place of the black labour force in American capitalism and the violent means used to control it. Massive

unemployment and urban poverty now powerfully interact with institutional racism in the shaping of black masculinity.[19]

Though the term is not ideal, I cannot improve on 'marginalization' to refer to the relations between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups. Marginalization is always relative to the *authorization* of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group. Thus, in the United States, particular black athletes may be exemplars for hegemonic masculinity. But the fame and wealth of individual stars has no trickle-down effect; it does not yield social authority to black men generally.

The relation of marginalization and authorization may also exist between subordinated masculinities. A striking example is the arrest and conviction of Oscar Wilde, one of the first men caught in the net of modern anti-homosexual legislation. Wilde was trapped because of his connections with homosexual working-class youths, a practice unchallenged until his legal battle with a wealthy aristocrat, the Marquess of Queensberry, made him vulnerable.[20]

These two types of relationship – hegemony, domination/subordination and complicity on the one hand, marginalization/authorization on the other – provide a framework in which we can analyse specific masculinities. (This is a sparse framework, but social theory should be hardworking.) I emphasize that terms such as 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'marginalized masculinities' name not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships. Any theory of masculinity worth having must give an account of this process of change.

Historical dynamics, violence and crisis tendencies

To recognize gender as a social pattern requires us to see it as a product of history, and also as a *producer* of history. I define gender practice as ontoformative, as constituting reality, and it is a crucial part of this idea that social reality is dynamic in time. We habitually think of the social as less real than the biological, what changes as less real than what stays the same. But there is a colossal reality to history. It is the modality of human life, precisely what defines us as human. No other species produces and lives in history, replacing organic evolution with radically new determinants of change.

To recognize masculinity and femininity as historical, then, is not to suggest they are flimsy or trivial. It is to locate them firmly in the world

of social agency. And it raises a string of questions about their historicity.

The structures of gender relations are formed and transformed over time. It has been common in historical writing to see this change as coming from outside gender – from technology or class dynamics, most often. But change is also generated from within gender relations. The dynamic is as old as gender relations. It has, however, become more clearly defined in the last two centuries with the emergence of a public politics of gender and sexuality.

With the women's suffrage movement and the early homophile movement, the conflict of interests embedded in gender relations became visible. Interests are formed in any structure of inequality, which necessarily defines groups that will gain and lose differently by sustaining or by changing the structure. A gender order where men dominate women cannot avoid constituting men as an interest group concerned with defence, and women as an interest group concerned with change. This is a structural fact, independent of whether men as individuals love or hate women, or believe in equality or abjection, and independent of whether women are currently pursuing change.

To speak of a patriarchal dividend is to raise exactly this question of interest. Men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command. They also gain a material dividend. In the rich capitalist countries, men's average incomes are approximately *double* women's average incomes. (The more familiar comparisons, of wage rates for full-time employment, greatly understate gender differences in actual incomes.) Men are vastly more likely to control a major block of capital as chief executive of a major corporation, or as direct owner. For instance, of 55 US fortunes above $1 billion in 1992, only five were mainly in the hands of women – and all but one of those as a result of inheritance from men.

Men are much more likely to hold state power: for instance, men are ten times more likely than women to hold office as a member of parliament (an average across all countries of the world). Perhaps men do most of the work? No: in the rich countries, time-budget studies show women and men work on average about the same number of hours in the year. (The major difference is in how much of this work gets paid.)[21]

Given these facts, the 'battle of the sexes' is no joke. Social struggle must result from inequalities on such a scale. It follows that the politics of masculinity cannot concern only questions of personal life and identity. It must also concern questions of social justice.

A structure of inequality on this scale, involving a massive dispossession of social resources, is hard to imagine without violence. It is, overwhelmingly, the dominant gender who hold and use the means of

violence. Men are armed far more often than women. Indeed under many gender regimes women have been forbidden to bear or use arms (a rule applied, astonishingly, even within armies). Patriarchal definitions of femininity (dependence, fearfulness) amount to a cultural disarmament that may be quite as effective as the physical kind. Domestic violence cases often find abused women, physically able to look after themselves, who have accepted the abusers' definitions of themselves as incompetent and helpless.[22]

Two patterns of violence follow from this situation. First, many members of the privileged group use violence to sustain their dominance. Intimidation of women ranges across the spectrum from wolf-whistling in the street, to office harassment, to rape and domestic assault, to murder by a woman's patriarchal 'owner', such as a separated husband. Physical attacks are commonly accompanied by verbal abuse of women (whores and bitches, in recent popular music that recommends beating women). Most men do not attack or harass women; but those who do are unlikely to think themselves deviant. On the contrary they usually feel they are entirely justified, that they are exercising a right. They are authorized by an ideology of supremacy.

Second, violence becomes important in gender politics among men. Most episodes of major violence (counting military combat, homicide and armed assault) are transactions among men. Terror is used as a means of drawing boundaries and making exclusions, for example, in heterosexual violence against gay men. Violence can become a way of claiming or asserting masculinity in group struggles. This is an explosive process when an oppressed group gains the means of violence – as witness the levels of violence among black men in contemporary South Africa and the United States. The youth gang violence of inner-city streets is a striking example of the assertion of marginalized masculinites against other men, continuous with the assertion of masculinity in sexual violence against women.[23]

Violence can be used to enforce a reactionary gender politics, as in the recent firebombings and murders of abortion service providers in the United States. It must also be said that collective violence among men can open possibilities for progress in gender relations. The two global wars [in the twentieth] century produced important transitions in women's employment, shook up gender ideology, and accelerated the making of homosexual communities.

Violence is part of a system of domination, but is at the same time a measure of its imperfection. A thoroughly legitimate hierarchy would have less need to intimidate. The scale of contemporary violence points to crisis tendencies (to borrow a term from Jürgen Habermas) in the modern gender order.

The concept of crisis tendencies needs to be distinguished from the colloquial sense in which people speak of a 'crisis of masculinity'. As a theoretical term 'crisis' presupposes a coherent system of some kind, which is destroyed or restored by the outcome of the crisis. Masculinity, as the argument so far has shown, is not a system in that sense. It is, rather, a configuration of practice *within* a system of gender relations. We cannot logically speak of the crisis of a configuration; rather we might speak of its disruption or its transformation. We can, however, logically speak of the crisis of a gender order as a whole, and of its tendencies towards crisis.[24]

Such crisis tendencies will always implicate masculinities, though not necessarily by disrupting them. Crisis tendencies may, for instance, provoke attempts to restore a dominant masculinity. Michael Kimmel has pointed to this dynamic in turn-of-the-century United States society, where fear of the women's suffrage movement played into the cult of the outdoorsman. Klaus Theweleit in *Male Fantasies* traced the more savage process that produced the sexual politics of fascism in the aftermath of the suffrage movement and German defeat in the Great War. More recently, Women's Liberation and defeat in Vietnam have stirred new cults of true masculinity in the United States, from violent 'adventure' movies such as the *Rambo* series, to the expansion of the gun cult and what William Gibson in a frightening recent study has called 'paramilitary culture'.[25]

To understand the making of contemporary masculinities, then, we need to map the crisis tendencies of the gender order. This is no light task! But it is possible to make a start, using as a framework the three structures of gender relations defined earlier in this chapter.

Power relations show the most visible evidence of crisis tendencies: a historic collapse of the legitimacy of patriarchal power, and a global movement for the emancipation of women. This is fuelled by an underlying contradiction between the inequality of women and men, on the one hand, and the universalizing logics of modern state structures and market relations, on the other.

The incapacity of the institutions of civil society, notably the family, to resolve this tension provokes broad but incoherent state action (from family law to population policy) which itself becomes the focus of political turbulence. Masculinities are reconfigured around this crisis tendency both through conflict over strategies of legitimation, and through men's divergent responses to feminism. While the tension leads some men to the cults of masculinity just mentioned, it leads others to support feminist reforms.[26]

Production relations have also been the site of massive institutional changes. Most notable are the vast postwar growth in married women's

employment in rich countries, and the even vaster incorporation of women's labour into the money economy in poor countries.

There is a basic contradiction between men's and women's equal contribution to production, and the gendered appropriation of the products of social labour. Patriarchal control of wealth is sustained by inheritance mechanisms, which, however, insert some women into the property system as owners. The turbulence of the gendered accumulation process creates a series of tensions and inequalities in men's chances of benefiting from it. Some men, for instance, are excluded from its benefits by unemployment; others are advantaged by their connection with new physical or social technologies.

Relations of cathexis have visibly changed with the stabilization of lesbian and gay sexuality as a public alternative within the heterosexual order. This change was supported by the broad claim by women for sexual pleasure and control of their own bodies, which has affected heterosexual practice as well as homosexual.

The patriarchal order prohibits forms of emotion, attachment and pleasure that patriarchal society itself produces. Tensions develop around sexual inequality and men's rights in marriage, around the prohibition on homosexual affection (given that patriarchy constantly produces homosocial institutions) and around the threat to social order symbolized by sexual freedoms.

This sketch of crisis tendencies is a very brief account of a vast subject, but it is perhaps enough to show changes in masculinities in something like their true perspective. The canvas is much broader than images of a modern male sex role, or renewal of the deep masculine, imply. Economy, state and global relationships are involved as well as households and personal relationships.

The vast changes in gender relations around the globe produce ferociously complex changes in the conditions of practice with which men as well as women have to grapple. No one is an innocent bystander in this arena of change. We are all engaged in constructing a world of gender relations. How it is made, what strategies different groups pursue, and with what effects, are political questions. Men no more than women are chained to the gender patterns they have inherited. Men too can make political choices for a new world of gender relations. Yet those choices are always made in concrete social circumstances, which limit what can be attempted; and the outcomes are not easily controlled.

To understand a historical process of this depth and complexity is not a task for *a priori* theorizing. It requires concrete study; more exactly, a range of studies that can illuminate the larger dynamic.

NOTES

1 Bloch 1978 outlines the argument for the Protestant middle classes of England and North America. Laqueur 1990 offers a more sweeping argument on similar lines about views of the body.

2 Tiger 1969: 211. Tiger goes on to suggest that war may be part of 'the masculine aesthetic', like driving a racing car at high speed . . . The passage is still worth reading; like Bly's *Iron John*, a stunning example of the muddled thinking that the question of masculinity seems to provoke, in this case flavoured by what C. Wright Mills once called 'crackpot realism'.

3 The deeply confused logic of M/F scales was laid bare in a classic paper by Constantinople 1973. Ethnographic positivism on masculinity reaches a nadir in Gilmore 1990, who swings between normative theory and positivist practice.

4 Kessler and McKenna 1978 develop the important argument about the 'primacy of gender attribution'. For an illuminating discussion of masculine women, see Devor 1989.

5 Easthope 1986; Brannon 1976.

6 A strictly semiotic approach in the literature on masculinity is not common; this approach is found mostly in more general treatments of gender. However, Saco 1992 offers a very clear defence of the approach, and its potential is shown by the collection in which her paper appears, Craig 1992.

7 Sartre 1968: 159–60.

8 Hollway 1984.

9 Franzway et al. 1989, Grant and Tancred 1992.

10 Mitchell 1971, Rubin 1975. The three-fold model is spelt out in Connell 1987.

11 Hunt 1980. Feminist political economy is, however, under way, and these notes draw on Mies 1986, Waring 1988, Armstrong and Armstrong 1990.

12 Some of the best writing on the politics of heterosexuality comes from Canada: Valverde 1985, Buchbinder et al. 1987. The conceptual approach here is developed in Connell and Dowsett 1992.

13 Interview with Ice-T in *City on a Hill Press* (Santa Cruz, CA), 21 Jan. 1993; Hoch 1979.

14 Rose 1992, ch. 6 especially.

15 I would emphasize the dynamic character of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which is not the functionalist theory of cultural reproduction often portrayed. Gramsci always had in mind a social struggle for leadership in historical change.

16 Wotherspoon 1991 (chapter 3) describes this climate, and discreetly does not mention individuals.

17 Altman 1972; Anti-Discrimination Board 1982. Quotation from Connell, Davis and Dowsett 1993: 122.

18 See, for instance, the white US families described by Rubin 1976.

19   Staples 1982. The more recent United States literature on black masculinity, e.g., Majors and Gordon 1994, has made a worrying retreat from Staples's structural analysis towards sex role theory; its favoured political strategy, not surprisingly, is counselling programs to resocialize black youth.
20   Ellmann 1987.
21   For patterns of wealth, see the survey of US millionaries by *Forbes* magazine, 19 October 1992. On parliaments, see 1993 survey by Inter-Parliamentary Union reported in *San Francisco Chronicle* 12 September 1993, and United Nations Development Programme 1992: 145. The results of time-budget studies may surprise some readers; see Bittman 1991.
22   The argument here draws on Russell 1982, Connell 1985, Ptacek 1988, Smith 1989.
23   Messerschmidt 1993: 105–17.
24   For the general concept of crisis tendencies, see Habermas 1976, O'Connor 1987; for its relevance to gender, Connell 1987: 158–63.
25   Kimmel 1987; Theweleit 1987; Gibson 1994.
26   A response documented in great detail by Kimmel and Mosmiller 1992.

REFERENCES

Altman, Dennis. 1972. *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson.

Anti-Discrimination Board, New South Wales. 1982. *Discrimination and Homosexuality*. Sydney: Anti-Discrimination Board.

Armstrong, Pat and Hugh Armstrong. 1990. *Theorizing Women's Work*. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Bittman, Michael. 1991. *Juggling Time: How Australian Families Use Time*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, Office of the Status of Women.

Bloch, Ruth H. 1978. 'Untangling the roots of modern sex roles: a survey of four centuries of change'. *Signs* 4: 237–52.

Bly, Robert. 1990. *Iron John: A Book About Men*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Brannon, Robert. 1976. 'The male sex role: our culture's blueprint of manhood, and what it's done for us lately'. pp. 1–45 in *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*, ed. Deborah S. David and Robert Brannon. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Buchbinder, Howard, Varda Burstyn, Dinah Forbes and Mercedes Steedman. 1987. *Who's On Top? The Politics of Heterosexuality*. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Connell, R. W. 1985. 'Masculinity, violence and war'. pp. 4–10 in *War/Masculinity*, ed. Paul Patton and Ross Poole. Sydney: Intervention.

—— 1987. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.

Connell, R. W., M. Davis and G. W. Dowsett. 1993. 'A bastard of a life: homosexual desire and practice among men in working-class milieux'. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 29: 112–35.

Connell, R. W. and G. W. Dowsett, eds. 1992. *Rethinking Sex: Social Theory and Sexuality Research*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Constantinople, Anne. 1973. 'Masculinity-femininity: an exception to a famous dictum?' *Psychological Bulletin* 80: 389–407.

Craig, Steve, ed. 1992. *Men, Masculinity and the Media*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Devor, Holly. 1989. *Gender Blending: Confronting the Limits of Duality*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Easthope, Anthony. 1986. *What a Man's Gotta Do: The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture*. London: Paladin.

Ellmann, Richard. 1987. *Oscar Wilde*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Franzway, Suzanne, Dianne Court and R. W. Connell. 1989. *Staking a Claim: Feminism, Bureaucracy and the State*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin; Cambridge: Polity.

Gibson, James William. 1994. *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Gilmore, David D. 1990. *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Grant, Judith and Peta Tancred. 1992. 'A feminist perspective on state bureaucracy'. pp. 112–28 in *Gendering Organizational Analysis*, ed. Albert J. Mills and Peta Tancred. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1976. *Legitimation Crisis*. London: Heinemann.

Hoch, Paul. 1979. *White Hero, Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity*. London: Pluto Press.

Hollway, Wendy. 1984. 'Gender difference and the production of subjectivity'. pp. 227–63 in *Changing the Subject*, ed. J. Henriques et al. London: Methuen.

Hunt, Pauline. 1980. *Gender and Class Consciousness*. London: Macmillan.

Kessler, Suzanne, J. and Wendy McKenna. 1978. *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*. New York: Wiley.

Kimmel, Michael S. 1987. 'Rethinking "masculinity": new directions in research'. pp. 9–24 in *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kimmel, Michael S. and Thomas E. Mosmiller, eds. 1992. *Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776–1990, a Documentary History*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Laqueur, Thomas W. 1990. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Majors, Richard G. and Jacob U. Gordon. 1994. *The American Black Male: His Present Status and his Future*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Messerschmidt, James W. 1993. *Masculinities and Crime: Critique and Reconceptualization of Theory*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Mies, Maria. 1986. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*. London: Zed Books.

Mitchell, Juliet. 1971. *Woman's Estate*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

O'Connor, James. 1987. *The Meaning of Crisis: A Theoretical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Ptacek, James. 1988. 'Why do men batter their wives?' pp. 133–57 in *Feminist Perspectives on Wife Abuse*, ed. Kersti Yllö and Michele Bograd. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Rose, Sonya O. 1992. *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century England*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rubin, Gayle. 1975. 'The traffic in women: notes on the "political economy" of sex'. pp. 157–210 in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York. Monthly Review Press.

Rubin, Lillian B. 1976. *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family*. New York: Basic Books.

Russell, Diana E. H. 1982. *Rape in Marriage*. New York: Macmillan.

Saco, Diana. 1992. 'Masculinity as signs: poststructuralist feminist approaches to the study of gender'. pp. 23–39 in *Men, Masculinity and the Media*, ed. Steve Craig. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Sartre, Jean Paul. 1968 [1960]. *Search for a Method*. New York: Vintage.

Smith, Joan. 1989. *Misogynies*. London: Faber & Faber.

Staples, Robert. 1982. *Black Masculinity: The Black Male's Role in American Society*. San Francisco: Black Scholar Press.

Theweleit, Klaus. 1987. *Male Fantasies*. Cambridge: Polity.

Tiger, Lionel. 1969. *Men in Groups*. New York: Random House.

United Nations Development Programme. 1992. *Human Development Report*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Valverde, Mariana. 1985. *Sex, Power and Pleasure*. Toronto: Women's Press.

Waring, Marilyn. 1988. *Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women are Worth*. Wellington: Allen & Unwin and Port Nicholson Press.

Wotherspoon, Gary. 1991. *City of the Plain: History of a Gay Sub-culture*, Sydney: Hale & Iremonger.