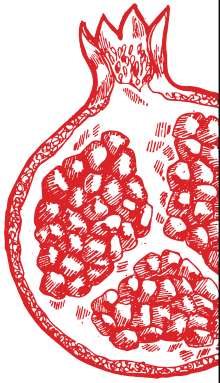


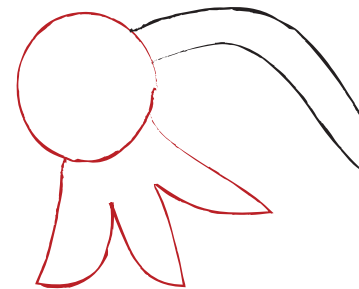
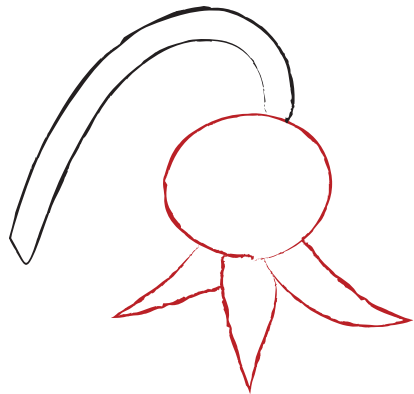
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**REINVENTING THE WHEEL?
—OR IMAGINING COLLABORATIVE SPACES
AT THE INTERSECTION OF MASCULINITY
STUDIES AND FEMINIST STUDIES IN BIBLICAL
SCHOLARSHIP**

Mikael Larsson

Source: *Advances in Ancient, Biblical, and Near Eastern Research*
1, no. 2 (Fall, 2021), 109–144

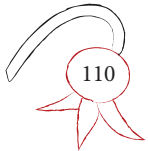
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Abstract

This article examines whether masculinity studies carry on the feminist legacy in biblical scholarship. The investigation proceeds through close readings of a selection of works that, in different ways, highlight the interactions between masculinity studies and feminist studies. To begin with, I trace the development of masculinity studies in three major anthologies on masculinity in biblical traditions (Creangă 2010a, 2019b; Creangă and Peter-Ben Smit 2014). The focus here lies on masculinity scholars' explicit positioning in relation to feminist studies, through connection or disengagement, set against actual dialogue with feminist biblical scholarship. Secondly, I address Deryn Guest's queer critique of masculinity studies in *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies* (2012), along with her proposed theoretical platform, "genderqueer criticism." Thirdly, I consider two examples from the other side of the table, namely feminists exploring masculinity, through the works of Claudia Camp (2013) and Rhiannon Graybill (2016a). Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the challenges in the field and make some suggestions to facilitate cooperation in the future.



Cette contribution se demande si les « masculinity studies » (études sur la masculinité) déploient l'héritage féministe au sein des études bibliques. L'enquête procède à travers une lecture détaillée d'une sélection d'ouvrages qui, de différentes façons, soulignent les interactions entre les études sur la masculinité et les études féministes. Pour commencer, j'étudie le développement des études sur la masculinité dans trois anthologies importantes qui analysent la masculinité dans les traditions bibliques (Creangă 2010a, 2019b; Creangă and Peter-Ben Smit 2014). L'accent porte ici sur la façon dont les chercheurs et chercheuses sur la masculinité se positionnent par rapport aux études féministes, en indiquant une connexion ou un désengagement. Je compare ce positionnement avec le dialogue réel avec les approches féministes dans les études bibliques. Dans un deuxième temps, je prends en compte la critique queer des études sur la masculinité par Deryn Guest dans *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies* (2012) ainsi que sa proposition d'une plateforme théorique « genderqueer criticism » (la critique genderqueer). Troisièmement, je présente deux exemples de l'autre côté de la table, c'est-à-dire des chercheuses féministes qui explorent la masculinité, à travers les ouvrages de Claudia Camp (2013) et Rhiannon Graybill (2016a). Enfin, je conclus par une discussion des défis à relever dans les sciences bibliques et je fais quelques suggestions pour faciliter la coopération à l'avenir.



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Mikael Larsson

Does masculinity studies¹ carry on the feminist legacy? The purpose of this article is to assess the state of this question for biblical studies. Exploring the interaction between masculinity studies and feminist studies from different vantage points, I delineate how connections as well as disengagement manifest. In conclusion, I reflect on some

* An early version of this article was presented at EABS/SBL International Meeting, Berlin, August, 2017, “Doing Biblical Masculinity Studies as Feminist Biblical Studies? Critical Interrogations.” I am indebted to Claudia Camp (Fort Worth), Valérie Nicolet (Paris), Klara Goedecke (Uppsala) and the reviewers at *AABNER* for their valuable comments.

¹ No consensus exists on naming of the field. I follow the authors’ designations, here including “Critical studies of Men” (Hearn), “Critical studies of Men and Masculinities” (Hearn), “Critical Studies of masculinities” (Guest), “Critical masculinity studies” (Thomas, Marchal), “Critical Men’s studies” (Krondorfer), “masculinity studies” (Clines, Moore, Low), “biblical masculinities” (Creangă, Nissinen, Smit), “masculist interpretation” (Haddox). When I speak of masculinity studies, I do not anticipate a specific relation to feminism.

challenges for future research and suggest a few altered practices to counteract the endless reinvention of the wheel, namely, learning from the history of feminist studies rather than wasting effort to rediscover what is already known.² The exchange between masculinity studies and feminist studies breaches the broader issue of the direction of research on gender and sexuality, in particular its drive towards greater specialization.³ I am interested in why each new branch seems to start with a phase of data collection before developing properly critical tools, or why the interaction between subfields is not more intense, when it could advance the accumulation of knowledge.

In the formation of masculinity studies, the key concept “hegemonic masculinity” drew explicitly from feminist theory. Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell and John Lee (1985, 589–91) take Gayle Rubin’s “sex/gender system” as a point of departure, in the first systematic proposal of the theory of multiple masculinities (1985). Two years later, Connell (1987, 183–88) considers hegemonic masculinity alongside “emphasized femininity” in her elaboration of the theory in *Gender and Power*. In her seminal work *Masculinities*, furthermore, Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as a “configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of *patriarchy*, which guarantees...*the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.*”⁴

Among subsequent masculinity scholars (in biblical studies), however, continuity or discontinuity with feminist studies is not always clear. One may take such a relationship for granted or acknowledge it



² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 175) identifies “kyriarchal power structures” as forcing new generations of feminists to “reinvent the intellectual wheel.” Kathleen Gallagher Elkins (2020, 19) calls on scholars in another context, childhood studies, to credit feminist forerunners in order to avoid reinventing the “proverbial wheel.”

³ See, e.g., Deryn Guest 2012 and Schüssler Fiorenza 2017.

⁴ Connell 2005, 77 (my emphasis). Connell (2005, 65) elaborates that even though the term “patriarch” was overgeneralized in the 1970s, it captures “the power and intractability of a massive structure of social relations,” involving “the state, the economy, culture and communications as well as kinship, child-rearing and sexuality.” See also Guest 2012, 135–36.

as part of history, without necessarily engaging further with feminist scholarship. The more general issue of men's participation in feminism sometimes blurs the discussion, but goes beyond the scope of this article.⁵ On a personal note, I always found deconstructing masculinity a feminist cause, but was hesitant about the need to create a new field (Sjöberg 2006, 17).

Focusing on the interaction between masculinity studies and feminist studies, this investigation proceeds through a close reading of a selection of works that highlight different aspects of the conversation.⁶ I begin by considering three volumes edited by Creangă (2010a, 2019a) and Creangă and Smit (2014), which together constitute an effort to introduce and further masculinity studies in biblical studies.⁷ Sketching how these volumes represent masculinity studies and its development provides a context for their engagement with feminist studies. My next step is to take into account Deryn Guest's (2012) queer feminist critique of masculinity studies as well as her proposals for the gender field as a whole.⁸ Thirdly, I explore what a feminist study of masculinity may look like, through the works of Claudia Camp (2013) and Rhiannon Graybill (2016a).⁹ Based on these analyses, I then assess the state of engagement between masculinity studies and feminist studies. Finally, I reflect on some of the emerging challenges and synthesize a few suggestions for future co-operation in this diverse field.



⁵ The wide range of labels for those men who have attempted to join (“pro-feminist, anti-sexist”) serves as evidence for the difficulty of solving this issue. See Marchal 2014, 266–67.

⁶ I make no claim for comprehensiveness. Moore (2014), Marchal (2014), Haddox (2016a), Low (2016), and Smit (2017, 24–43) offer surveys on masculinity studies in biblical studies. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (1994) and Jennifer Glancy (1994) initiated the field. Moore and Anderson (2003) and Økland (2015) also contribute to introduce and advance the field, as do Creangă (2010a, 2019b) and Creangă and Smit (2014). Recent monographs include, e.g., Murphy 2019a and Kirova 2020 for the Hebrew Bible, and Asikainen 2018 and Stegmann 2020 for the New Testament.

⁷ See Larsson 2015 and 2020.

⁸ See Larsson 2014.

⁹ See Larsson 2014 and Larsson 2018.

Launching masculinity studies in biblical studies

Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond (2010a), the first volume edited by Creangă, concentrates primarily on the hegemonic masculinity of men in leadership positions in the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic history. I detect two main impulses. The first is to identify recurrent stereotypes of masculinity. A pioneer of this approach, David Clines offers a list of defining criteria for masculinity (taken from Exod 32–34) that includes being a warrior, a persuasive speaker, remaining womanless and embodying physical beauty.¹⁰ Susan Haddox (2010), reading the patriarchal history, adds honor to the list, whereas Maria Haralambakis (2010) traces a masculinity focused on self-control in *Testament of Job*.¹¹ These contributions constitute a form of “image-of-men” criticism, where masculinity features as a rather stable entity.¹² In contrast to feminist predecessors like Phyllis Trible (1978) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983), however, these masculinity scholars make no attempt to rehabilitate the figures gendered as male, and their critique of gender stereotypes remains largely implicit (except Clines 2010a, 54).

A second impulse is to differentiate between various masculinities and problematize hegemonic ones in particular, either through historicizing or intersectional approaches. Creangă (2010b), for example, identifies different versions of hegemonic masculinity in early and late strands of the conquest narratives, and he can thereby address the complex relationship between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities.¹³ Disability is a decisive factor in C. Strimple and O. Creangă



¹⁰ David Clines contributed to placing masculinity on the agenda of Hebrew Bible studies through a series of publications (e.g. Clines 1995, 1998, 2002 and 2003).

¹¹ See also Mark George (2010), who finds a multifaceted masculinity involving, e.g., the body and social status.

¹² There are overlaps between George (2010) and Clines (2010) with regard to their criteria of masculinity, although the former’s are more complex. Haddox (2010, 15–16) uses a fixed set of criteria, while differentiating between insubordinate and hegemonic masculinities in her conclusions.

¹³ Sandra Jacobs (2010) offers another example, exploring the relationship between the rainbow and circumcision as covenantal sign, comparing P with Ugaritic material as well as later rabbinic interpretation.

(2010), who argue that leprosy, in the story of Naaman's healing, functions as a material metaphor for the prize of defying hegemony. Roland Boer (2010) contests biblical scholars' use of the concept of hegemony altogether and exposes privileged priestly masculinity in Chronicles as unstable and contradictory.

The two impulses of this volume, to map and to deconstruct, are somewhat in tension with one another, and the volume's engagement with critical theory is rather uneven. Clines's charge that the field is poorly under-theorized is valid for a few contributions (like his own), but certainly not all.¹⁴ Assessing and refining the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 846–47) reject the practice of setting up trait lists (establishing masculinity as a fixed character type) and see it as a misapplication of the theory of multiple masculinities. Although hardly surprising in a first volume, such trait lists attest to a certain lack of connection not only with feminist theory, but also with theorizing among masculinity scholars.

Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded (Creangă and Smit 2014) testifies to a notable maturing of the field and includes New Testament and apocryphal material. I identify several significant points of development. First, contributors engage in dialogue with a wider range of theoretical counterparts, such as psychoanalysis (Hooker 2014), deconstruction (Măcelaru 2014) and queer theory (Macwilliam 2014). Secondly, contributors more consistently take issue with hegemony. Milena Kirova (2014), for example, challenges what she perceives as a dichotomy between hegemonic and marginalized masculinities and Hilary Lipka (2014) argues that hegemonic masculinity needs to evolve to remain dominant.¹⁵ Thirdly, contributors pay more attention to subordinate and marginalized masculinities, for example by exploring the masculinity of “ordinary” men like Mary's husband Joseph (Glessner 2014), or that of “failed” men like Saul (Măcelaru 2014).¹⁶ Fourthly, the volume includes studies on the (hegemonic) masculinities of women figures, Athalya (Macwilliam 2014) and Thecla (Smit 2014), which



¹⁴ See Clines 2010a, 55–65 and Clines 2010b, 234.

¹⁵ See also Neutel and Anderson 2014 and Hooker 2014.

¹⁶ On marginalized men, see Asikainen (2014, 160, 181–83) and Haddox (2010, 15–16).

destabilizes the essentialist assumption that masculinity necessarily goes with biological men or femininity with biological women.¹⁷ *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* features a more multilayered view of masculinity, with clearer affinities to intersectional feminist theory in comparison to the earlier volume.

Hebrew Masculinities Anew (Creangă 2019a) displays an even greater developmental leap and covers masculinities in poetry, wisdom literature and the latter prophets more fully. An important new initiative is the thematic studies on aging (Kirova 2019), money (Murphy 2019b), circumcision (Jacobs 2019) or scribal activity (DiPalma 2019) in relationship to masculinity. Kirova (2019) concludes for example that old age features as a blessing as well as a curse, constituting both a threat and an asset to hegemonic masculinity. These essays manifest a change of focus from individual men in leading positions to the anonymous “everyday” man. Another significant feature is that the volume offers systematic reflection on the development of the field. This includes both historiography (Wilson 2019) and looking ahead (Macwilliam 2019), as well as building on previous masculinity studies, for example around the figure of Moses (Kalmanofsky 2019).¹⁸ Furthermore, contributors interact more intensely with queer theory, moving beyond Butler towards Sedgwick (Graybill 2019), Halberstam (Likpka 2019) and Goldie (Haddox 2019).¹⁹ Considering the interdependence between masculinity and femininity is also a new trait. Kelly Murphy’s conclusion that the patriarch in Proverbs need the right kind of wife to embody ideal masculinity to some extent rebuts previous claims that “biblical” masculinity presumes a distancing from women.²⁰ Finally, in continuity with the previous volumes, *Hebrew Masculinities Anew* further addresses the masculinity of the deity (Clines 2019; Purcell and



¹⁷ Exum (1998, 225 and 2000, 106) argued early on that feminism needs to study both men and women as gendered subjects. More recently, Susanne Scholz (2013, 8) attests that feminist interpretation remains focused on “female characters and imagery.”

¹⁸ Similar impulses appear in Creangă 2014 and Rosenberg 2019.

¹⁹ Rosenberg (2019) considers queer masculinities in relation to patriarchy.

²⁰ Murphy 2019b. Clines (2010a, 57–59) speaks of the “womanless male” as one of four key characteristics of biblical masculinity.

Focht 2019) and of women (Lipka 2019), and offers critique of hegemonic masculinity (Rosenberg 2019).²¹

A complimentary or fraught relationship?

In surveys of masculinity studies in biblical studies, scholars like Joseph Marchal (2014, 261, 269), Susan Haddox (2016a, 177), Katherine Low (2016, 345), and Peter-Ben Smit (2017, 9, 24, 36) all point to the secondary character of masculinity studies, as a complement to, or extension of, feminist studies. Marchal (2014), Koosed (2017) and Moore (2014) also point to tensions, by describing the link as, for example, a “fraught relationship” (Marchal 2014, 261).²² Such discourse implies the existence of two separate parties, a questionable claim on theoretical as well as historical grounds.²³ A fundamental problem is the (implicit?) assumption of feminist studies as a homogenous entity along with the idea of a linear development of this tradition of scholarship, with one generation of feminists supplanting the other.²⁴ The common “wave metaphor” for the different stages of feminist studies has been criticized for bolstering a simplified historiography,



²¹ Clines (2019) surveys the language of masculinity; Purcell and Focht (2019) evaluate the contest of masculinities between YHWH, pharaoh and Moses; Lipka (2019) addresses Jezebel’s maneuvering between masculinity and femininity; and Rosenberg (2019) problematizes how queer masculinities can also be detrimental to women (in the case of Abraham and Sarah).

²² Koosed (2017, 231) recognizes a “creative tension” between feminism and masculinity studies. Moore (2014) states that “tensions have not vanished entirely.” Note that Low, Marchal and Koosed all appear in volumes on feminist interpretation.

²³ Low (2016, 363) argues that masculinity is a construct just as femininity. Calvin Thomas (2001, 61–62) problematizes that notion, arguing (from feminist theory) that such discourse hides the fact that differently gendered bodies have asymmetrical relations to power. Jeff Hearn (2017) regards attention to power as decisive in research on masculinity, where the epithet “critical” signals alignment with feminism.

²⁴ Schüssler Fiorenza 2017, 175–77. Esther Fuchs (2008, 207, 219) argues for the need to balance between a “centripetal” approach (seeking coherence) and “centrifugal” one (recognizing pluralism) in feminist biblical studies.

overstating progress and contributing to inter-generational conflict among feminists.²⁵ Refraining from such language here, I strive to be as specific as possible when I trace and critique the attitudes towards feminist studies in the anthologies. While mainly focusing on theoretical positioning in introductions and final responses, I furthermore sketch the extent of the actual interaction with feminist scholarship in the contributions.²⁶

David Clines and Stephen D. Moore represent opposites in their final responses in *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond*. Whereas Clines (2010b, 234) diagnoses masculinity studies as lagging far behind feminist studies, Moore (2010, 241–42) blames feminist studies for the difficulties of masculinity studies to “take off” in biblical studies.²⁷ Clines (2010b, 238) identifies three main problems with the study of masculinity (in biblical studies): lack of “theoretical refinement,” lack of “passion” and failure to address the masculinity of the divine. Clines perceives the study of masculinity to be at the stage feminism was in the 1960s and ’70s, namely oriented towards data collection, which he finds both necessary and insufficient.²⁸ He furthermore polemicizes against an alleged “objective” stance in



²⁵ Jo Reger (2017) considers the discursive legacy and resilience of the metaphor in providing historical legacy on the one hand, while excluding groups of women (women of color, working class, non-academics) on the other. With Wiegman (2002), Reger (2017, 199–203) cautions for the danger of “presentism.” Cf. Linda Nicholson (2010, 34–35) and Yvonne Sherwood (2017, 9). In the historiography of feminist biblical studies, the wave metaphor is less frequent. For example, Pamela Milne (1997) speaks of “phases” (but calls for more dialogue between feminist scholars), whereas Helen Leneman (2013, 12) identifies only two waves in biblical studies. Heather McKay (1997) and Esther Fuchs (2008) argue, from different positions, for the need to harbor pluralism within feminist biblical studies.

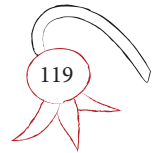
²⁶ I treat the volumes in chronological order for reasons of clarity; it is not suggestive of a linear development.

²⁷ “It (the study of masculinity) still has a long way to go to match the range and depth of feminist biblical criticism, but it has not been starting from scratch; it has been able to model itself on the progress of feminist criticism of the bible” (Clines 2010b, 234).

²⁸ Clines postulates somewhat of a paradox in that data collection must precede theorizing, but also that it presupposes rudimentary theory. Cf. Clines 2010a, 62 and Clines 2010b, 238.

relation to the material and suggests that masculinity scholars engage in “consciousness raising” and “apology” (Clines 2010b, 238–39).²⁹ I understand Clines as calling for more activism and clearer ideological standpoints. The gap in research on YHWH’s masculinity is to some extent addressed in following volumes.

Moore bemoans the poor development of masculinity studies in biblical studies for entirely different reasons (in this context).³⁰ He proposes two explanations for the state of affairs: first, masculinity studies stands in a “symbiotic relationship with feminist studies” and secondly, feminist biblical studies have insufficiently embraced intersectionality (Moore 2010, 241–42). Potentially agreeing with Clines that masculinity studies is stuck in the past, Moore here holds feminist exegetes accountable for the field’s alleged shortcomings. While rehearsing some of the womanist and post-colonialist critique of feminist studies of the 1970s and ’80s, he fails to do justice to early considerations of, for example, ethnicity or masculinity in feminist biblical scholarship.³¹ Neither does he make clear how the alleged enmeshment with feminist studies constrains masculinity studies or what is to gain from a more autonomous relation. I do not see how a call for more intersectionality could be a call for independence from feminist studies; rather, it mirrors a concern to keep up with developments within feminist theory.



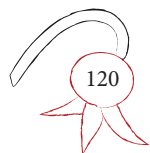
²⁹ Connell (2005, 234–35) identifies “consciousness-raising” as an example of how the Men’s Liberation Movement imitated the Women’s Liberation Movement in the 1970s, concluding that it led to “marginalization and disintegration” rather than “mobilization and group affirmation.”

³⁰ In other contexts, e.g., Moore 2003, 1–4, Moore recognizes the impact of feminist studies on masculinity studies in terms that are more favorable. In a later survey article (Moore 2014), Moore takes a position similar to Clines (2010b), claiming that masculinity studies suffers from a lack of political passion, and suggesting that this might explain biblical masculinity studies’ “modest inroads into feminist studies.” Furthermore, an excerpt of Moore’s seminal work, *God’s Gym*, is republished in the feminist companion series (Moore 2009).

³¹ Moore 2010, 242. For example, Claudia Camp (1985) investigated gender and ethnicity, and Cheryl Exum (1992 and 1993) anticipated the interest in men as well as women figures.

Moore makes two important points that somewhat jar with his critique of feminist studies. To begin with, his recognition of feminist suspicion against masculinity studies is highly relevant for the historiography of the field, although not supportive of the notion of symbiosis.³² Furthermore, I find Moore's suggestion plausible that the anti-feminist stance of conservative men's movements outside the academy has clouded popular perceptions of masculinity studies.³³ To me, it would seem logical to implicate the men in those political initiatives, rather than feminist biblical scholars, for the assumed slow progress of masculinity studies. The rhetoric of symbiosis/independence clouds the fact that Moore's critique of feminist biblical studies is a critique from within the feminist theoretical tradition.³⁴

The responses in *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded* are closer to Clines than to Moore. As the voice from outside biblical studies, Björn Krondorfer directly supports the call for more passionate scholarship. He argues that biblical studies could learn from Critical Men's Studies in religion when it comes to its critique of power and its "transformative" (activist) interpretative practice (Krondorfer 2014, 289–95). Martti Nissinen (2014, 272) contests that one should consider masculinity studies as a countermovement to feminist studies, but perceives an imbalance between the two. Whereas feminist studies has a clear agenda in promoting women's rights, he finds masculinity studies more vague and abstract through its connection to theory rather than



³² Moore 2010, 242–43. Four years later (Moore 2014), Moore perceives feminist suspicion as having diminished. Cf. Thomas 2001, 61; Hearn 2004, 50; and Low 2016, 351.

³³ Moore 2010, 242 n. 3. Cf. Koosed 2017, 231. In Connell's historiography (Connell 2005, 204–11), the pro-feminist men's movement of the New Left in the 1970s was superseded by increasingly anti-feminist therapeutic ones (e.g. Bly 1990), directed towards individual growth rather than social change.

³⁴ Cf. feminist sociologist Nancy Chodorow (1989), who problematizes the socialization of men and women into different roles/ideals (such as nurturing, independence). In a later survey (Moore 2014), Moore more clearly frames his critique from within feminist (and queer) theory, suggesting for example a rediscovery of gender as performance, by engaging scholars like Butler, Foucault, Halperin and Winkler.

real people.³⁵ In my view, Nissinen implies a feminist-aligned agenda, when he rhetorically asks if “masculinity, or being a man, really is void of any positive and empowering elements that could be of value when fighting injustice and struggling for a better world.”³⁶

In the introduction to *Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded*, Creangă identifies as feminist and attests to overlaps and “shared interests” between feminist studies and masculinity studies.³⁷ He also recognizes a difference in task: feminist studies deals with androcentrism and patriarchy, masculinity studies with hegemony. This distinction leaves me wanting further clarification, since, as noted above, the concept of hegemonic masculinity explicitly elaborates on the concept of patriarchy. What critical difference does the new nomenclature make, and how does it advance analysis? In addressing Clines’s charge of lacking passion (and thus pursuing Nissinen’s query), Creangă argues that masculinity studies should go beyond critique and deconstruction to “offer viable models of masculinity.”³⁸ Creangă thereby aligns masculinity studies with the reconstructive quest of feminist biblical scholars like Phyllis Trible (1978) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983).

In their reconsideration of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt open up for the possibility that hegemony could fail, or that one could conceptualize hegemony in non-toxic ways.³⁹ This option comes with an important qualification, however, that data



³⁵ Nissinen 2014, 281. Clines (2005, 222, 236, 241–43) attests to the lack of a social base for a pro-feminist men’s movement, and explains it as a function of having to work against the interests of a majority of men. Nissinen’s claim exclusively situates masculinity studies within the academy, in contrast to the feminist tradition of bridging critique and activism. See, e.g., Schüssler Fiorenza 2014.

³⁶ Nissinen 2014, 281. Smit (2017, 27–28) claims that masculinity has an agenda, “undoing gender injustice.”

³⁷ Creangă’s claim to feminism here (Creangă 2014, 5–6) accords with his stance in Creangă 2007.

³⁸ “It is also our responsibility to offer viable models of masculinity that promote well-being, healthy relationships/marriages/unions, good parenting, peaceful conflict-resolution, and responsible living among all people and creation.” Creangă 2014, 10. Cf. Nissinen 2014, 281.

³⁹ Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 583) refer to Richard Collier (1998) and his notion of an alternative “positive” masculinity.

points to the difficulty of putting this into practice.⁴⁰ Delineating models of “good” masculinity, in my view runs the risk of re-positing an insidiously stable subject as ideal and thereby creating an abject space for deviant masculinity.⁴¹ I find such a vision inconsistent with the central idea in the anthologies, namely that masculinity is multifaceted and changing. Attempts at reconstruction necessarily need to integrate postcolonial and queer theoretical critique of feminist studies, to avoid an unfortunate step backwards or to prevent cooptation for reactionary political agendas.⁴² As far as I can see, however, none of the contributors in Creangă’s three volumes argues for a specific version of masculinity as legitimate. Refraining from claims to normativity, a few delineate alternative masculinities.⁴³ In doing so, these studies point to the plurality and instability of masculinities, thereby destabilizing the (homogenous) vision of conservative men’s movements.⁴⁴



Hebrew Masculinities Anew offers further pledges of allegiance with feminism, but also elaborations on why the alliance matters. By way of introduction, Creangă (2019a, 11–12) stresses the “partnership” with feminism, and aspires to an intensified dialogue. Outlining the history of the field, Wilson acknowledges the extent to which masculinity

⁴⁰ Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 583.

⁴¹ Valérie Nicolet (2019) exposes this logic in Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

⁴² Connell (2005, 139) warns of the political risks of reforming (individual) masculinity, in that it ultimately would help modernize patriarchy rather than abolish it. Jordan B. Peterson (2018) constitutes a recent example of how bolstering “good masculinity” may serve a reactionary political agenda. Creangă (2014, 8) calls upon masculinity studies to befriend specifically queer and postcolonial studies. Disregarding intersectionality would accord with Moore’s (2010) unfavorable perception of the field. I have elsewhere argued that activism can come to full expression through critique (Sjöberg 2006, 223–24). Ann Jeffers (2017) provides a recent example that critical and reconstructive efforts may overlap.

⁴³ Most clearly, Nissinen (2019, 267–69) posits the “ideal lover’s agency” (along with the hegemonic and the parental) as one of three male agencies in the Song of Songs, for the audience to dream about, and that can be shared by men and women.

⁴⁴ With Marchal (2014, 268) and Hearn (2017, 24), I recognize destabilizing the claims of men’s movements as an important task for masculinity studies.

studies are indebted to feminism and, *nota bene*, sharply differentiates between masculinity studies and attempts at “reclaiming manhood” by men’s movements.⁴⁵ Gil Rosenberg (2019, 43–44) advocates a renewed focus on patriarchy rather than non-normativity for masculinity studies. For him, returning to feminist studies through queer theory could be a way of achieving precisely the “passion” that Clines requests (Rosenberg 2019, 44). In Macwilliam’s (2019) final outlook, masculinity studies’ relation to feminist studies is a non-issue; focus lies instead on evaluating Connell’s multiple masculinities model.

Actual interaction

Actual engagement with previous feminist scholarship provides hard evidence to evaluate more general declarations of allegiance. In *Men and Masculinity*, only Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska (2010, 171) builds directly and more ambitiously on feminist forerunners like Cheryl Exum and Mieke Bal, in her investigation of Samson’s masculinity. Brian Charles DiPalma (2010, 36 n. 2) considers the risk of drawing attention away from women figures through his focus on pharaoh’s masculinity in Exod 1–4 and credits feminist forerunners in general terms, but displays limited engagement with their work. Creangă (2010b, 83) sets up a contrast with feminist scholarship, in the “homogenous picture of masculinity,” as a point of departure for his explorations of Joshua’s “gender in/stability.”⁴⁶

Biblical Masculinities Foregrounded features more direct interaction with feminist scholarship. For Marcel Măcelaru (2014, 54), Athalya Brenner and Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes’ claim (1993) that gender-free texts do not exist is axiomatic. Macwilliam (2014, 69–72) identifies a neglect in feminist scholarship when it comes to the figure of Athalya



⁴⁵ Wilson (2019, 19) argues against a reclaiming effected by “reinforcing male-dominated gender hierarchies.” In a different context, Wilson (2020, 35, 41–42) restates the indebtedness of masculinity studies to feminist gender criticism, while also identifying this genealogy as an explanation for the failure of masculinity studies to connect to childhood studies.

⁴⁶ Creangă 2010b, 83.

to justify his study of this regent's illicit masculinity (using Butler).⁴⁷ Susanna Asikainen (2014, 157 n. 3) goes back to Gayle Rubin's sex-gender distinction (1975) to argue for her definition of masculinity as gender ideology.

Hebrew Masculinities Anew displays yet further exchange with feminist research. Rosenberg (2019, 55) demonstrates why non-normative masculinity (Abraham), just as well as "strong women" (Sarah), can bolster hegemonic masculinity. Graybill (2019) considers the implications of homosociality for women, also in a text without women (Jonah). Nissinen (2019) offers the furthest-reaching dialogue with feminist forerunners like Exum and Brenner, in his exploration of toxic and ideal masculinities in the Song of Songs, whereas others merely point to a lack of feminist research as their point of departure.⁴⁸ Kelly Murphy (2019b) and Hilary Lipka (2019) explore the interdependence of masculinity and femininity, in the ideal household of Proverbs as well as in the character of Jezebel. Although interaction between masculinity studies and feminist studies certainly is increasing in these three volumes, I find little evidence of the symbiosis that Moore laments (with regard to the first volume), nor of masculinity scholars' alleged attachment to a pre-intersectional feminist theory. The contributors engage with a range of feminist scholars from the 1970s, '80s and '90s. Emphasis lies on critique of masculinities, with differing degrees of explicit activism, including tentative attempts at reconstructing alternatives.



Queer critique of masculinity studies

Guest's recommendations for masculinity studies are part of her ambitious assessment of research on gender and sexuality in *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies*.⁴⁹ Tracing the history of scholarship from

⁴⁷ With regard to Butler, see also Hans-Ulrich Weidemann (2014, 146 n. 203), who juxtaposes performance with performativity, and Glessner 2014, 192 n. 18.

⁴⁸ E.g. Clines 2019, 62; and DiPalma 2019, 229.

⁴⁹ Guest 2012, 125–35. Note that Guest 2012 succeeded Creangă 2010a, but preceded Creangă 2014.

Women's studies to Gender studies, she weighs the strategic risks and benefits of past developments, and proposes a new theoretical platform for the field, "genderqueer criticism."⁵⁰ While recognizing the crucial role of feminist studies, she argues that feminism is not a broad enough theoretical framework to serve as host.⁵¹ Guest's vision for genderqueer criticism is to be a space for far-reaching theoretical interactions between feminist studies, masculinity studies, queer studies, trans studies, intersex studies, and lesbian and gay studies.⁵² She considers work on "biblical construction of heterosexuality as an institution" a main contribution of this new approach, for which queer theory plays a central role, and masculinity studies feature as one among many contributors (Guest 2012, 162).

Guest criticizes masculinity studies on different levels. A general request is that masculinity studies take ethical responsibility for its interpretations and state its ideological positions more clearly, particularly in relation to feminist studies (Guest 2012, 137, 141). Such prescription is in line with Clines's call for more passion and Krondorfer's demand for self-reflection and transparency.⁵³ Guest substantiates her request through a close reading of *Men and Masculinity*, where she for example criticizes some contributors for not considering the implications (of their masculinity readings) for women or for stopping short of interrogating the ideology of the text.⁵⁴ More particularly, Guest questions a focus too narrowly limited to the "male" characters and critiques the heavier emphasis on text, compared to history.⁵⁵ On a more positive note, Guest sees the strongest potential for masculinity



⁵⁰ Guest 2012, 31–41, 150–64.

⁵¹ I find Guest's position somewhat conflicted. Guest (2012, 150–51) charges that feminist biblical studies is "not up to the... task," but envisions genderqueer criticism to operate "in a similar way to feminism"; she avows not to privilege feminism, but calls the subfields into negotiation with feminist theory in particular.

⁵² Guest (2012, 42–43, 75–76, 150–51) imagines genderqueer criticism as a bridge in the study of gender and sexuality, not a loose "umbrella."

⁵³ Guest 2012, 141; Clines 2010b, 238; Krondorfer 2014, 289.

⁵⁴ E.g. George 2010; DiPalma 2010; Guest 2012, 137–38.

⁵⁵ Guest 2012, 123–25. Creangă (2014, 4) identifies the first point as a misconception.

studies in scrutinizing hegemony, including how it is subject to resistance and contestation.⁵⁶

For me, the challenge of demanding ethical accountability lies in demonstrating what it means in practice.⁵⁷ According to Guest (2012, 140–41), responsibility has to do with identifying political implications and stating one's commitments. These are important, if also daunting and difficult, tasks. Stating ideological commitments needs to go beyond merely describing one's social position, a rightfully criticized and fading practice.⁵⁸ The fact that full accessibility is not possible (Butler 2005) does not forfeit the effort to be transparent, but could serve as a corrective against postures that present themselves as too certain.

In her reconsideration of the pornoprophetic debate, Guest (2012, 77–117) shows how difficult it can be for scholars to identify the implications of their own work. She argues that Setel's reliance on theorists like Dworkin and Griffin meant injustice to the diversity of feminist views on pornography (such as anti-censorship) and had a disciplining impact on the studies that followed (Guest 2012, 89, 100–103, 116–17). In my view, Guest hereby demonstrates the problem of commitments that are too rigid rather than too vague. The task of deconstructing complex relationships of power is likely to yield ambiguous political implications, which only seem obvious in retrospect. Anticipating future developments (such as queer re-evaluations of violence in the context of S/M) is doubtlessly a challenge. Such difficulties, however, should not keep us from attempting to imagine the new abject spaces that we do create, however unwillingly, or from interrogating how our positions shape our critique.⁵⁹ That kind of self-critical reflection invites dialogue, in line with Guest's call to masculinity scholars to look for feminist and queer implications in their work (Guest 2012, 140).



⁵⁶ Guest 2012, 133, 135. Both Creangă and Smit 2014 and Creangă 2019a cater to such demands.

⁵⁷ Krister Stendahl (1984) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2000) made similar calls. See Sjöberg (Larsson), 2006, 223–24.

⁵⁸ Such practice may hide more than it reveals, despite good intentions, see, e.g., Sjöberg 2006, 15–17. Thomas (2001, 161) problematizes the practice, along with Guest 2012, 161.

⁵⁹ I am indebted to Valérie Nicolet for seeing this point.

The need for more profound and committed interactions between these subfields constitutes the rationale for uniting under one banner, as I understand Guest. Her critique of the subfields, furthermore, provides evidence that the practice of guarding each other's turfs is detrimental to scholarship. The challenge is how to organize the alternative. Whoever volunteers as host will be open to accusations of authoritarianism or of seeking to establish a new center. To be successful, one must find ways of cooperation that do not conceal conflict or harmonize difference.⁶⁰ At the same time, the need for further exchange is too important to let initiatives falter on issues of christening. Whatever model of coexistence one adopts should be open to renegotiation.

My reservations towards the genderqueer approach specifically concern its potential to improve co-operation between feminists and masculinity scholars. A first problem concerns Guest's definition of the parties and diagnostics of the issue. According to Guest, "feminists have concerns about dilution and loss of political edge," whereas "male scholars have queries about being free to criticize feminist positions."⁶¹ Setting up feminists against "male scholars" rather than masculinity scholars appears like a slippage into an essentialist logic no longer valid for the field.⁶² Guest's initial association of masculinity studies (CSM) with extra-academic men's movements is likewise unfortunate, although her concluding consideration of profeminist and queer straight positionality offers clarification.⁶³ Guest's framing of the problem is strikingly asymmetrical. Fear of dilution relates to compromising a painfully acquired political sharpness, whereas anxiety at



⁶⁰ Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 175, 177) problematizes the use of family relations to conceptualize the transmission of feminism. Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 176) and Guest (2012, 148) both express concern about "appropriation" of feminism by queer and masculinity studies.

⁶¹ Guest 2012, 149. See also Hearn 2004, 50; Low 2016, 51; Connell 2005, 41, 133.

⁶² Guest (2012, 148) argues against the notion of masculinity studies as a preserve for men. If women were in minority in Creangă 2010a, and Creangă and Smit 2014 (8 of 25 contributors), this is no longer the case in Creangă 2019a (8 of 15).

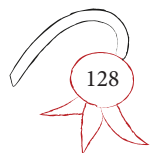
⁶³ Guest (2012, 118, 157–62) thereby blurs their different relationships with feminism. Cf. Moore 2010, 242–43.

voicing critique rather connects to yielding a position of privilege. The scope of these two problems seems very different and it is not obvious to me who these fretful “males” are (certainly not the contributors to Creangă’s anthologies).⁶⁴

Feminist studies 4.0

Claudia Camp and Rhiannon Graybill provide evidence of feminist critique of masculinity, thereby refuting the idea of fixed boundaries between feminist studies, masculinity studies and queer theory. In *Ben Sira and the Men Who Handle Books* (2013), Camp investigates the gendering of canon formation. Connecting Sira’s anxieties over masculine identity and honor with his infamous misogyny/idealization of abstract femininity, Camp (2013, 54–99) identifies these poles as expressions of a similar logic. Rather than delineating the representations of women or the staging of masculinity *per se*, Camp (2013, 122–56) explores how gender integrates with central theological concepts. One remarkable conclusion is that salvation for Sira consists in shifting desire from women to books, thus securing an exclusively male form of reproduction (Camp 2013, 153–54 nn. 39 and 40). Although homosociality may function to strengthen men’s hegemony, taking it so far as to make women redundant in procreation challenges heteronormativity.

Several elements in Camp’s work are relevant for our discussion of the relationship between feminist studies and masculinity studies. First, she demonstrates the potential of keeping together the analysis of femininity and masculinity.⁶⁵ Considering these aspects of gender jointly reveals interdependence, overlapping and contrast. Secondly, Camp shows the relevance of feminist analysis for allegedly gender-neutral



⁶⁴ Robert Carroll (1993, 276) offers one example of “male” anxiety to criticize feminists. In the discussed anthologies, only Moore (2010, 241) and Creangă (2010b, 83) directly criticize feminist scholars. Advocates of the men’s movements rather appear as militantly anti-feminist, see, e.g., Melissa Blais and Francis Dupuis-Deri 2012.

⁶⁵ Cf. Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985; Connell 1987.

phenomena like dogma or tradition. Thirdly, her study counters the standard queer critique of feminists as insensitive to sexuality.⁶⁶ Camp incorporates central issues in masculinity studies and queer theory, without explicitly positioning herself in relation to these fields. Her study of Ben Sira merits the label of “amplified feminism,” while also making the idea of labels seem irrelevant.⁶⁷

Graybill (2016a, 5) sets out on the double quest of tracing and queering the prophetic body in *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets*. Considering prophecy as an embodied practice, she investigates the masculinity of figures like Moses and Hosea. She demonstrates how these male bodies (or reading practices) can be understood as leaky, wounded or volatile, and thus fall short of expectations of hyper masculinity.⁶⁸ For Graybill (2016a, 12), the study of masculinity is a “deeply feminist one”; she argues with Irigaray for the necessity of sexing the masculine and thereby exposing its non-neutrality. While recognizing certain historical tensions between queer theory and feminist studies, Graybill (2016a, 13) identifies her point of departure in both traditions. Graybill’s positioning towards masculinity studies is mostly implicit. Connell features briefly, as a counter-figure, but his definition of hegemonic masculinity informs Graybill’s interest in the failure and reconfiguration of masculinity.⁶⁹ In contrast to Guest and Creangă, Graybill displays no need to discuss the “relationship” between feminist studies and masculinity studies *per se* (neither between feminist theory and queer theory).⁷⁰

Graybill (2016a, 49–69) most clearly criticizes feminist forerunners in her case study of Hosea and horror movies. Revisiting the “pornoprophetic” debate, she contends that the reading strategy of “witnessing” (naming violence) no longer counts as original and charges that simple reiteration runs the risk of blunting the critical edge of feminist critique (Graybill 2016a, 50). For the road ahead,



⁶⁶ E.g. by Guest 2012.

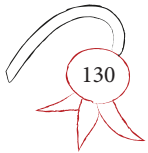
⁶⁷ Guest (2012, 141) cites Moore (2003, 3), who cites Sedgwick (1985).

⁶⁸ Graybill 2016a, 13, *contra* Clines 2002.

⁶⁹ Graybill 2016a, 14, 25–26.

⁷⁰ See further Graybill 2016b.

Graybill (2016a, 59–67) proposes to articulate “a crisis of masculinity,” a call that invites engagement with both feminist studies and masculinity studies. The idea that violence had implication for the male subject was not alien to feminist scholarship in the 1980s and early 1990s.⁷¹ Whereas Setel (and others) anticipated a rather solid male abusive subject, however, Graybill reads the violent acts in terms of fluidity and openness, disturbance and displacement.⁷² One way of nuancing the masculinity in crisis trope would be to speak rather, with Connell, of a crisis of the gender order as a whole (with competing masculinities as one aspect).⁷³ Closer dialogue with the feminist predecessors would be another, clarifying how the (new?) unstable masculinity that Graybill appreciates for its interpretative potential differs from the volatile masculinity that the proponents of the pornographic debate criticized.⁷⁴



Two particularly valuable contributions emerge from Graybill’s conclusion on the prophetic body as a queer body (with Jonah and Miriam as “test cases”).⁷⁵ Whereas Jonah hardly excels in embodiment, Graybill shows how the book stages the “unhappy queer” through Jonah’s refusal to pursue someone else’s happiness.⁷⁶ Like Camp, she thereby demonstrates how a queer and/or feminist perspective contribute(s) to understanding theological concepts like judgment and forgiveness, also when gender and sexuality only remain implied. Through the figure of Miriam, Graybill (2016a, 136) problematizes the extent to which the prophetic body remains connected to masculine bodies. The idea that queerness offers no protection against misogyny

⁷¹ Drorah Setel (1993, originally 1985) initiated the “pornographic” debate. See further Guest 2012, 86–105; Gravett 2016; Haddox 2016a.

⁷² Setel, 1993, 151–54. Graybill 2016a, 124–31.

⁷³ Connell (2005, 84) argues that we can speak of a crisis of a system (the gender order), but not of a configuration (masculinity) within that system. Koosed (2017, 224–26) relates the crisis of masculinity (as always lost) with the crisis of feminism (as never attained).

⁷⁴ Graybill 2016a, 146. E.g. Ruth Törnkvist (1998, 23–34) rejects the recourse to individual pathology for abusive behavior.

⁷⁵ Graybill 2016a, 121–41.

⁷⁶ Ahmed 2010, 88–120.

bears repetition.⁷⁷ Graybill's call for "feminist vigilance" in the task of queering men's bodies corresponds to the feminist concern that gender somehow will slip out of sight.⁷⁸ In sum, Graybill demonstrates the advantages of a multi-perspective approach.

Cooperation or cannibalism?

Concluding these readings, I find that masculinity studies aligns with feminist studies in the task of exposing oppressive power structures. Its biggest potential, in my view, lies in exploring how marginalized, subordinate and complicit masculinities interact with hegemonic ones, or when contesting hegemony, demonstrate its adaptability as well as its fragility.⁷⁹ Masculinity studies thereby contributes to breaking the illusion of masculinity as a monolith. It points to the responsibility and vulnerability of those who stage hegemonic as well as non-hegemonic masculinity, opening up the possibility of change. Such a task accords with Connell and Messerschmidt's emphasis of the plurality and hierarchy of masculinities as core elements of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, to be retained.⁸⁰ The task also corresponds to their recommendation for future research to more carefully consider the dynamics of masculinities, including conflicts and contradictions.⁸¹

Mapping toxic "biblical" masculinity (in order to bring it down) or proposing "positive" alternatives (however well intended) may paradoxically end up reifying dominant models and obscuring this dynamic. Whereas a few contributions in Creangă's first volume ventured in this direction, many more point to the variety and evolution of



⁷⁷ Graybill 2016a, 128. Cf. Rosenberg, 2019, 55. Connell (2005, 159) attests to hostility to and/or ignorance about feminism in his case study of gay men (Chapter 6).

⁷⁸ Graybill 2016a, 128.

⁷⁹ Defining hegemonic masculinity as that "which embodies *the currently accepted answer* to the problem of the legitimation of patriarchy" (my emphasis), Connell (2005) points to adaptability as a central feature. See n. 4.

⁸⁰ Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 846.

⁸¹ Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 852–53.

masculinities, for example, with regard to ethnicity, class, disability and life cycle, in line with the intersectional turn in feminist theory. To explore further the tensions and clashes between masculinities, namely to focus on the dynamics rather than tracing the individual variants, would be a logical next step. Biblical scholars here stand before a world of opportunities in terms of material, for example by delineating how masculinities from different times and regions interact in the mosaic that (many) biblical texts constitute.⁸²

Masculinity studies occasionally manifests disengagement from feminist studies. One problem, in my view, lies in the limited or uneven interaction with feminist theory and feminist scholarship. By not considering earlier findings or developments, masculinity scholars miss valuable resources and potentially run the risk of reinventing the wheel, for example using dated, less refined analytical tools or spending time on old news. The feminist concern that women again will become invisible has some bearing in Creangă's first anthology. In subsequent works, feminists and masculinity scholars show that there are many benefits in uniting analyses of masculinity and femininity, and in addressing implications for both men and women.⁸³ Such studies also accord with Connell and Messerschmidt's recommendation of a "more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy," rather than keeping the study of femininity and masculinity apart.⁸⁴ Furthermore, to investigate the masculinity of women and deities is helpful in deconstructing binaries. With these qualifications, I find masculinity a vital topic for feminist enquiry and that masculinity studies do carry on the feminist legacy. If the gap between theoretical roots and interpretative practice diminishes, the impact of masculinity studies (for feminist studies) would potentially be even greater.



⁸² Creangă 2010a, Lipka 2014, and DiPalma 2019 exemplify such approaches. These in turn accord with Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, 849–51) recommendation to consider the "geography of masculinities," i.e., how the local, regional and global interact.

⁸³ For example Camp 2013; Graybill 2016a; Rosenberg 2019; Lipka 2019; Murphy 2019b.

⁸⁴ Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 847–48. Cf. Exum 1998, 223–25.

Why then do cooperation and respect seem so difficult to embody? Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 175–77) points to a historical pattern of forgetfulness and trivialization of feminist ideas, which blocks learning, and to the impact of neoliberalism, which threatens a culture of sharing. Connecting these tendencies, she claims that commercialization of the academy fuels inter-generational strife among feminists. Schüssler Fiorenza thereby widens the political and historical contexts for the issue of the relationship between feminist studies and masculinity studies. Her response to this state of affairs is to call on feminist scholars to encourage a culture of communication, which for example challenges the use of dysfunctional family language (“matricide”) to conceptualize the transfer of tradition.⁸⁵ Guest writes from a different position, while also advocating cooperation (across subfields). I hear both Schüssler Fiorenza and Guest as invitations to reflect self-critically on our practices. In that spirit, I conclude by playfully considering a few behavioral guidelines that have surfaced through my readings and that can make academic co-habitation a more pleasurable space. Imagining collaboration as a form of resistance, I believe in the power of the small alterations.



First, be generous.⁸⁶ Feminism is historically speaking the original context, which makes the current scene of overlapping or contesting fields of gender studies intelligible. Masculinity scholars need to credit the feminist pioneers.⁸⁷ Correlatively, feminist scholars can benefit from listening to the (no longer so new) “newcomers.” Masculinity studies and queer theory offer possibilities of revitalization for feminist enquiry, which already are happening, but could be put into practice more systematically.

⁸⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 176–77) argues (with Faludi 2010) that feminists, after having problematized notions of sisterhood, need to do the same with motherhood. Cf. Reger 2017, 208–209.

⁸⁶ See Fuchs 2008, 205.

⁸⁷ Several contributors to these volumes already do, e.g., Clines (2010b, 234), Creangă (2014, 5–6; 2019b, 11–12), Wilson (2019, 19), Rosenberg (2019, 43–44) and Nissinen (2019, 251). Schüssler Fiorenza (2017, 176) points to a general tendency to not credit feminist scholars.

Second, recognize difference (without defending one's territory).⁸⁸ Calls to unite or to display the proper attitude run the risk of erasing differences and may lead to attempts at disciplining the field. Rather, we should encourage efforts to benefit from each other's differences through concrete engagement (about theory, scope, tone etc.). Camp, Graybill and Rosenberg embody such dialogue, while testifying to the irrelevance of upholding boundaries.⁸⁹

Third, tackle conflicts (but do not kill). Recognizing difference exposes diverging interests, which in turn necessitates further dialogue.⁹⁰ As Graybill cautions, feminists do well to identify tendencies in academia that push women to the margins. Such suspicion should not deter feminists from interrogating masculinity. Masculinity scholars need to overcome any residual inferiority/superiority complex in relation to feminist studies, whether it manifests as self-effacement or attempted matricide.⁹¹ Maintaining a separate field as a way of avoiding conflict amounts to disengagement from the feminist heritage.⁹²

Fourth, work (hard) together. By overstating difference and conflict, we run the risk of learning less from each other. If we instead aim for mutual engagement (also but not always through conflict), we create conditions for the accumulation of knowledge. I perceive Guest's call as an invitation to expand our interpretive communities through viable coalitions without compromising difference.⁹³ Such an effort is labor intensive and requires us to step out of our professional comfort zones, possibly to the point of embodying Said's figure of the "amateur."⁹⁴



⁸⁸ See Fuchs 2008, 219–21.

⁸⁹ Marchal (2014, 273) finds the boundaries "so blurry that policing [them]... seems unnecessary and counterproductive."

⁹⁰ See Fuchs (2008, 221–22), who calls for the need to theorize difference.

⁹¹ Connell (2005, 128–34) identifies "renunciation" as a key strategy in relation to feminism, for the pro-feminist environmental activists in his second case study (Chapter 5).

⁹² See Guest 2012, 149.

⁹³ Connell (2005, 238) and Butler (2015) also make calls for alliance politics.

⁹⁴ Edward Said (1996, 65–83) contrasts the "amateur" to the isolated, hyper-specialized scholar.

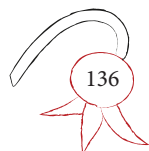
I believe it is a risk worth taking. Lasting change will not happen without far-reaching co-operation, regardless of how we identify as scholars or as gendered beings.

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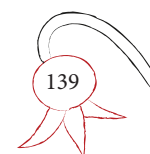
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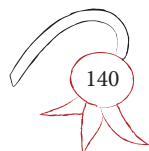
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