

Contextualizing Gender
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Lecture - 43
“Feminism and Men/Masculinities Scholarship: Connections, Disjunctions and Possibilities” by Chris Beasley

Good morning, dear friends and welcome to this module. In the previous modules, we had discussed the genealogical configurations of the term ‘hegemonic masculinities’ and established the embedded multiplicity of the term masculinity.

Today’s module focuses on the much-debated relationship between Feminism and Men’s and Masculinities studies. In this context today, we would look at the work of Chris Beasley.

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Chris Beasley

- Emerita Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Adelaide, Australia.
 - She is an elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences. Was the founder and inaugural co-Director of the Fay Gale Centre for Research on Gender from 2009 to 2013.
- Her research is in social/ political theory, gender/sexuality studies and cultural politics. She explores the relationships between feminist and gender & sexuality studies and the possibilities for dialogue and engagement between them. She identifies Masculinity studies as characterized by post-modernist perspectives.
 - Also known for her critical, yet supportive, engagement with the work of R.W.Connell.



Chris Beasley



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Chris Beasley is the Emerita professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Adelaide, Australia. Her research is in the areas of social and political theory, gender and sexuality studies and cultural politics. She tries to explore the relationships between feminism, gender and sexuality studies and the possibilities for dialogue and engagement between them. She identifies masculinity studies as characterized by post- modernist perspectives.

Chris Beasley is also known for her critical, yet supportive engagement with the work of R.W. Connell whom we have discussed in the previous modules.

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Her books include:

- Internet Dating : Intimacy and Social Change (with Mary Holmes, 2021, Routledge)
- The Cultural Politics of Contemporary Hollywood Film (with Heather Brook, 2019, Manchester University Press),
- Heterosexuality in Theory and Practice (with Heather Brook and Mary Holmes, 2012, Routledge),
- Gender & Sexuality (2005, Sage)
- What is Feminism? (1999, Sage).

Her research interest is also reflected in the title of her books, moving from what is feminism to gender and sexuality, heterosexuality, she has moved to the cultural politics of contemporary Hollywood films as well as to the issue of internet dating in her 2021 Routledge Publication.

Chris Beasley is a new voice in men's and masculinities studies, and why do we have to introduce a new voice? It was not until the 1970s, when feminist and gay researchers started to theorize the role of men and masculinity in society that an explicit inquiry into men as men and masculinities on a broader scale.

Masculinity studies is today a well-established part of interdisciplinary gender research. In early 2000s, we saw a growing number of masculinity scholars who integrated theoretical insights from contemporary third wave feminism and its post structuralist and postcolonial and also postmodern influences.

Developments in queer and sexuality studies, intersection between social categories such as gender, class, ethnicity, race, embodiment, virtuality, technology, streaming services, media, sexuality and age have emerged lately. Therefore, there is an urgent need to

welcome new voices who are researching in these emerging fields and also in the field of masculinity and men's studies to promote a sense of equality.

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- This module focuses on an essay by Chris Beasley, "Feminism and Men/Masculinities Scholarship: Connections, Disjunctions, and Possibilities."
- Appeared in *Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies* (2019), edited by Lucas Gottzén, Ulf Mellström, Tamara Shefer, Marinette Grimbeek.
- Beasley's chapter focuses on the creative possibilities of the dis/junctures between feminist and "critical" masculinities studies, which are clearly embedded in a long historical pedagogy of philosophical engagement with feminist studies, gender & sexuality studies and now Men/Masculinities (MM) studies.


This module focuses on an essay by Chris Beasley. The title of the essay is 'Feminism and Men/Masculinities Scholarship: Connections, Disjunctions and Possibilities'. This article has appeared in the 2019, *Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies* edited by Lucas Gottzen, Ulf Mellstrom, Tamara Shefer and Grimbeek.

Beasley's chapter focuses on the creative possibilities of the disjunctures between feminist and "critical" masculinities studies, which are clearly embedded in a long historical pedagogy of philosophical engagement with feminist studies, gender and sexuality studies, and now men and masculinity studies which is popularly known as MM studies.

Chris Beasley argues that the research on masculinity derives its theoretical developments from feminist theory. Gender occupies a contested position between the material and the symbolic, the natural and the human mate, and the nature verses culture debate.

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- Beasley's essay works and reflects upon the relationship between contemporary feminist scholarship and critical men and masculinities scholarship within the discourse of gender and sexualities studies.
- Though men/masculinities studies is indebted to feminist thinking, it is essential to review possible conjectures and potential disjunctions between feminist scholarship and Men's and Masculinity studies for the present positioning and future directions of men/masculinities studies.
- The author examines the relationship between men/masculinities studies and feminist scholarship to further the course of men/masculinities studies as a distinct field of inquiry for future research and practices.



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Beasley examines the relationship between men in masculinities studies and feminist scholarship to further the course of these studies as a distinct field of inquiry for future research and practices.

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- This overarching framework of understanding involves ontological and epistemological considerations.
- In the first section, Beasley locates MM studies as one of three main subfields in the overall Gender/Sexuality field to indicate connections between MM, Feminist and Sexuality studies.
- She focuses on the field's potential discontents—indicating possible barriers to dialogue and coalition.
- It outlines the differential uptake of postmodernist/poststructuralist theoretical paradigms. MM theorising continues to demonstrate proximity with feminist (or sexuality) thinking.



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Her overarching framework of understanding involves ontological and epistemological considerations. In the first section of her essay, Beasley locates MM studies as one of the three main subfields in the overall gender and sexuality field to indicate connections between men's and masculinity, feminist and sexuality studies.


She focuses on the field's potential discontents indicating possible barriers to dialogue and coalition. It also outlines the differential uptake of postmodernist or poststructuralist theoretical paradigms. MM theorising continues to demonstrate proximity with feminist also with sexuality thinking.

For Beasley masculinity studies and feminism are not contradictory fields of inquiry. Rather they are intersectional discourses in the 21st century. In its initial emergence, masculinity and men's scholarship is inspired by feminism and it continues to define itself in relation to a feminist sympathetic or more usually an explicitly pro-feminist perspective.

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**Connections and Disjunctions:
The Gender/Sexuality field and its Theoretical Discontents.**

- Feminist Studies has inspired MM scholarship. (Connell, *Masculinities*; Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions*; Kimmel, *Against the Tide: Pro- Feminist men in the U.S.*)
- In this context, the author has endeavoured to view modernism and postmodernism as broad theoretical trajectories located on a continuum, rather than binary oppositions.
- The sub- fields are not spread entirely equally across this continuum of main theoretical directions. Rather, they tend to clump differently in certain locations across the continuum and, more specifically, evince a differential uptake of modernist and postmodern paradigms.




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In the context of feminist studies having inspired the masculinity scholarship, Beasley has endeavoured to view modernism and postmodernism as broad theoretical trajectories located on a continuum rather than binary oppositions.

The sub-fields are not spread entirely equally across this continuum of main theoretical directions. Rather, they tend to clump differently in certain locations across the continuum and more specifically evince a differential uptake of modernist and postmodernist paradigms.

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- Debate about the advantages and limits of postmodern inflected theories like Queer Theory continues to occupy feminist and sexuality studies, along with emerging associated debates about 'new materialism' -- linking them in terms of theoretical terrain, shared key theorists (such as Judith Butler) and theoretical debates regarding gender categories/identities.
- MM scholarship is variously described as 'post- structuralist', 'discursive', 'material-discursive', 'Foucauldian', 'postmodern' or 'third wave' in orientation which have developed more postmodern lines of enquiry.
 - (Berggren, 2014; Edley & Wetherell, 2014; Hearn, 2014; Petersen, 2003; Whitehead, 2002; Pease, 2000; Martino, 2000).



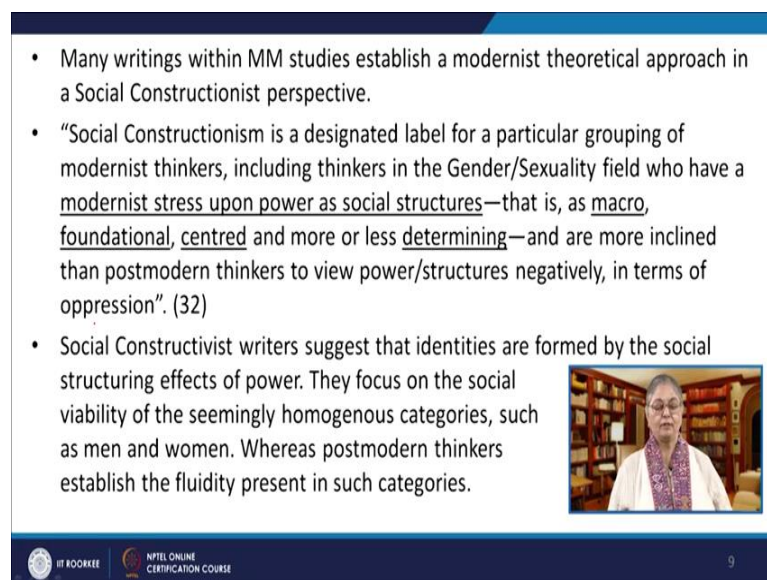
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Debate about the advantages and limits of postmodern inflicted theories like Queer Theory continues to occupy feminist and sexuality studies, along with emerging associated debates about ‘new materialism’ linking them in terms of theoretical terrain, shared key theorists such as Judith Butler and theoretical debates regarding gender categories and identities.

Men’s and masculinities scholarship is variously described as being ‘post-structuralist’, ‘discursive’, ‘material-discursive’, Foucauldian’, ‘postmodern’ or ‘third wave’ in orientation which have developed more postmodernist lines of enquiry.

For Beasley, men’s and masculinities scholarship follows the postmodern line of inquiry which addresses the dynamic gender spectrum and the altered position of men on this spectrum. The masculine subject can no longer hold the dominant position, the modernist thinkers emphasize on the rule of power hegemonic control and dominance in gender relations. They construct men and women as distinct categories. Whereas, we find that the post narrative focuses on the fluidity of gender performance.

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- Many writings within MM studies establish a modernist theoretical approach in a Social Constructionist perspective.
- “Social Constructionism is a designated label for a particular grouping of modernist thinkers, including thinkers in the Gender/Sexuality field who have a modernist stress upon power as social structures—that is, as macro, foundational, centred and more or less determining—and are more inclined than postmodern thinkers to view power/structures negatively, in terms of oppression”. (32)
- Social Constructivist writers suggest that identities are formed by the social structuring effects of power. They focus on the social viability of the seemingly homogenous categories, such as men and women. Whereas postmodern thinkers establish the fluidity present in such categories.

Many writings within masculinity studies establish a modernist theoretical approach in a social constructionist perspective.

“Social constructionism is designated label for particular groupings of modernist thinkers including thinkers in the gender- sexuality field who have a modernist stress upon power

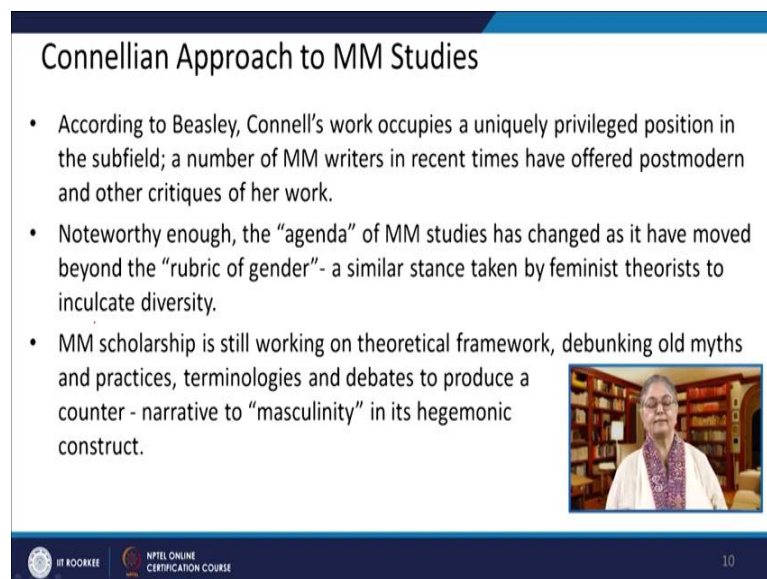
as social structures; and what do we mean by a modernist stress upon power as social structures. That is as macro, foundational, centred and more or less determining and these philosophers are more inclined than postmodern thinkers to view power structures negatively, in terms of oppression”.

Social constructivist writers suggest that identities are formed by the social structuring effects of power. They focus on the social viability of the seemingly homogeneous categories, such as men and women. Whereas postmodern thinkers establish the fluidity present in such categories.

Beasley does not intend to suggest that it is impossible to draw upon both modernist and postmodernist frames of references. However, this is by no means a straightforward exercise since they are based upon different theoretical assumptions and hence cannot be simply stuck together without explanations.

Beasley refers to Connell’s theorization and draws a line of comparison between the feminist and the men’s and masculinities scholarship agenda. The two discourses encourage diversity, intersectionality and inclusion of all genders.

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The slide is titled "Connellian Approach to MM Studies". It contains three bullet points:

- According to Beasley, Connell’s work occupies a uniquely privileged position in the subfield; a number of MM writers in recent times have offered postmodern and other critiques of her work.
- Noteworthy enough, the “agenda” of MM studies has changed as it have moved beyond the “rubric of gender”- a similar stance taken by feminist theorists to inculcate diversity.
- MM scholarship is still working on theoretical framework, debunking old myths and practices, terminologies and debates to produce a counter - narrative to “masculinity” in its hegemonic construct.

There is a small video inset on the right side of the slide showing a woman with glasses and a purple patterned scarf speaking in front of a bookshelf.

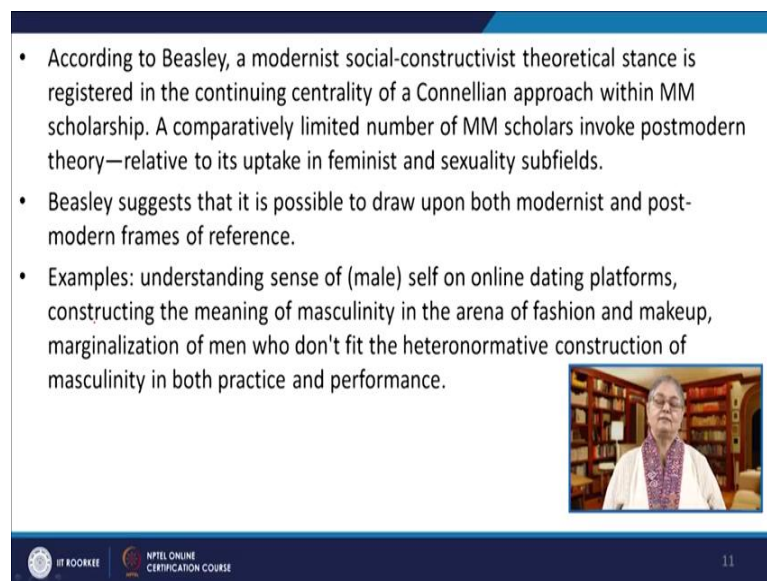
At the bottom of the slide, there are logos for IIT ROORKEE and NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE, and the number 10.

In the opinion of Beasley, Connell’s work occupies a uniquely privileged position in the subfield. A number of writers in the field of men’s and masculinities studies in recent times have offered postmodern and other similar critiques of her work.

Noteworthy enough, the “agenda” of MM studies has changed as it has moved beyond the “rubric of gender” - a similar stance taken by feminist theorists to inculcate diversity. MM scholarship is still working on theoretical framework, debunking old myths and practices, terminologies and debates to produce a counter narrative to masculinity in its hegemonic construct.

Beasley suggests that the process of becoming a man in the 21st century should be understood by both practice and performance while contextualizing the modernist approaches and the postmodernist approaches to MM studies. The “I” is important and men as a discursive category is equally important to theorize.

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- According to Beasley, a modernist social-constructivist theoretical stance is registered in the continuing centrality of a Connellian approach within MM scholarship. A comparatively limited number of MM scholars invoke postmodern theory—relative to its uptake in feminist and sexuality subfields.
- Beasley suggests that it is possible to draw upon both modernist and post-modern frames of reference.
- Examples: understanding sense of (male) self on online dating platforms, constructing the meaning of masculinity in the arena of fashion and makeup, marginalization of men who don't fit the heteronormative construction of masculinity in both practice and performance.

A modernist, social constructivist theoretical stance in the opinion of Beasley is registered in the continuing centrality of a Connellian approach within the scholarship of men’s and masculinities studies. A comparatively limited number of masculinity scholars invoke postmodern theory relative to its uptake in feminist and sexuality subfields. Beasley suggests that it is possible to draw upon both modernist and postmodern frames of references.

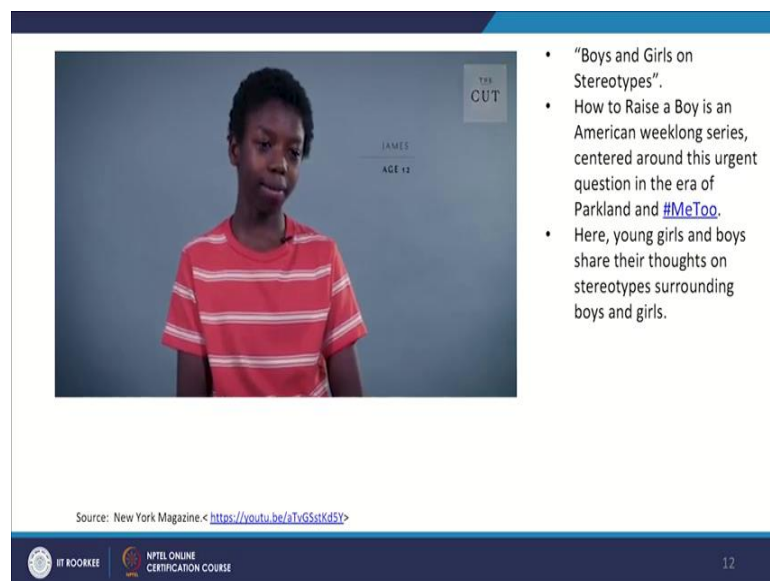
We can look at certain examples also. For example: understanding a sense of male self on online dating platforms or constructing the meaning of masculinity in the arena of

fashion and makeup, marginalization of men who do not fit the heteronormative construction of masculinity in both practice and performance.

According to Beasley, the construction of the masculine “I” and the feminine “I”, takes place during adolescence and the stereotypes associated with the masculine and feminine self, rigidify the practice and performance of both masculinity and femininity, categorically.

To further this argument, we would look at a video which underscores such stereotypes.

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- “Boys and Girls on Stereotypes”.
- How to Raise a Boy is an American weeklong series, centered around this urgent question in the era of Parkland and #MeToo.
- Here, young girls and boys share their thoughts on stereotypes surrounding boys and girls.

Source: New York Magazine <<https://youtu.be/aTVG5stKd5Y>>

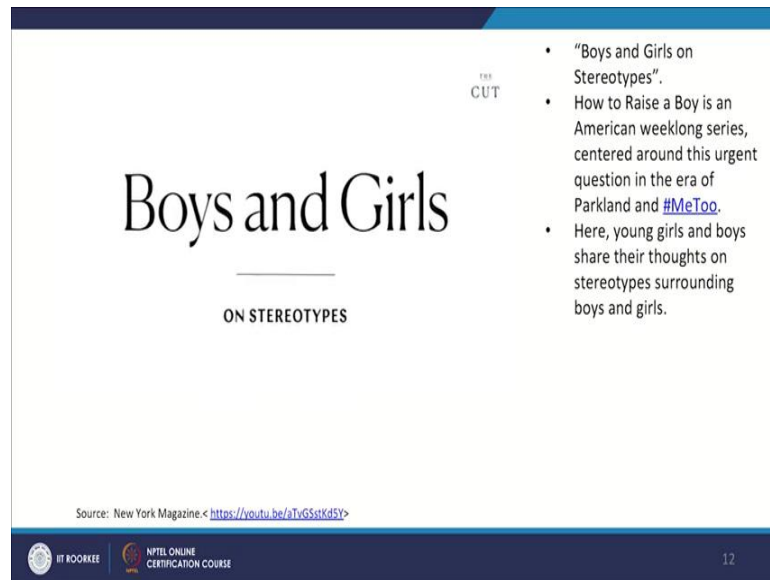
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How to raise a boy is an American week-long series centred around the urgent question of the stereotypes which young boys and girls have to face in an era of Parkland and MeToo movement.

In this video, young girls and boys share their thoughts on stereotypes surrounding them.

“To be a boy.

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THE CUT

Boys and Girls

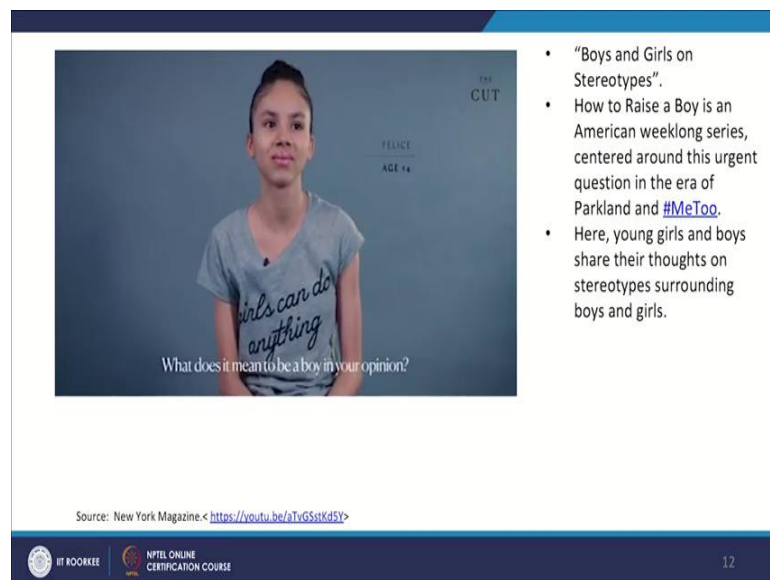
ON STEREOTYPES

- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVGSstKd5Y> >

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(Refer Slide Time: 14:25)



THE CUT

FELICE AGE 14

Girls can do anything

What does it mean to be a boy in your opinion?


- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVGSstKd5Y> >

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What does it mean to be a boy in your opinion? To be strong. do not cry.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:33)




- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVG5stKd5Y> >

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To be tough, athletic.

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- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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- Here, young girls and boys share their thoughts on stereotypes surrounding boys and girls.

Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVG5stKd5Y> >

IT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 12

To be confident and to always keep your head up and be optimistic.

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MILES
AGE 10


THE
GUT

- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
- How to Raise a Boy is an American weeklong series, centered around this urgent question in the era of Parkland and [#MeToo](#).
- Here, young girls and boys share their thoughts on stereotypes surrounding boys and girls.

Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVGStKd5Y> >

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SCARLET
AGE 7

THE
GUT


- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
- How to Raise a Boy is an American weeklong series, centered around this urgent question in the era of Parkland and [#MeToo](#).
- Here, young girls and boys share their thoughts on stereotypes surrounding boys and girls.

Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVGStKd5Y> >

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It does not just mean like you are born a boy, you are a boy you kin switch genders and go to a girl it if you are a boy.

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- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTvGSstKd5Y> >

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(Refer Slide Time: 14:56)



- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
- How to Raise a Boy is an American weeklong series, centered around this urgent question in the era of Parkland and [#MeToo](#).
- Here, young girls and boys share their thoughts on stereotypes surrounding boys and girls.


Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTvGSstKd5Y> >

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Being a boy is a lot harder than some people may think.

Boys are told to like play sports and be tough. So, that is what a lot of people think it means, but I just think it means that you look different than girls do.

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- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVGStKd5Y> >

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(Refer Slide Time: 15:08)



- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVGStKd5Y> >

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You may have different hair or different body parts.

I do not really know what it means to be a boy besides physical attributes that is pretty much it.

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- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTvGSstKd5Y> >

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- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
- How to Raise a Boy is an American weeklong series, centered around this urgent question in the era of Parkland and [#MeToo](#).
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTvGSstKd5Y> >

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(Refer Slide Time: 15:26)



- "Boys and Girls on Stereotypes".
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Source: New York Magazine < <https://youtu.be/aTVG5stKd5Y> >

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You do not think there is anything else?

Like hormones girls have different things on their bodies and have the advantage of different things like being pregnant.

Besides anatomy what is the number one thing that makes boys and girls different in your mind? I just think that the way that people think they are supposed to be.

Whatever like the stereotype is you watch sports, you are rough and aggressive and whatever.

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IT ROOKIE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 12

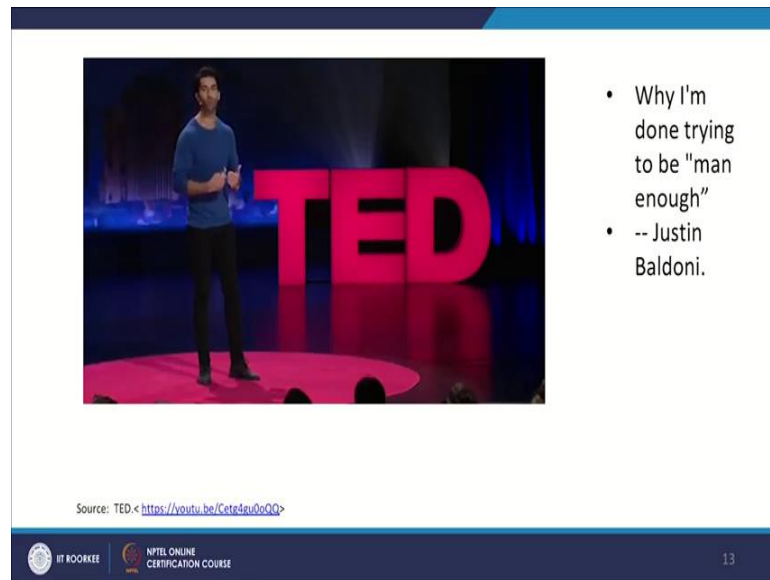
Girls they play with dollies and boys they play rough.

A lot of my friends that are girls do not even like dolls. In fact, they are scared of them and they would rather like play in the dirt.

Most boys think girls are all about makeup dresses and like sleepover parties and stuff. Some people think girls are just baby making machines that stay at home and are just housewives. Like I have seen pictures on the internet of cleaning kits for girls that are they do not are not sold for boys like a pink mop that girls can push around it is very, I do not like it”.

According to Beasley, gender equivalence advises men and women to help each other in understanding gender on this spectrum and the toxic stereotypes associated with the sociocultural construction of heteronormative masculinity and femininity. We would also play a video talk by Justin Baldoni. Justin Baldoni is an actor, a humanitarian an activist, where he wants to start a dialogue about redefining masculinity. He wants women to help men in redefining the masculine subject.

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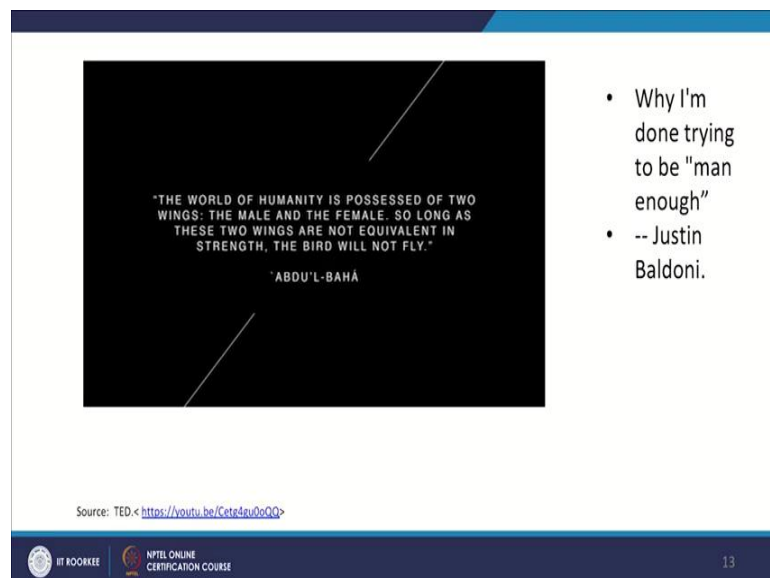


- Why I'm done trying to be "man enough"
- -- Justin Baldoni.

Source: TED <<https://youtu.be/Ce4dv0z0Q0>>

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"THE WORLD OF HUMANITY IS POSSESSED OF TWO WINGS: THE MALE AND THE FEMALE. SO LONG AS THESE TWO WINGS ARE NOT EQUIVALENT IN STRENGTH, THE BIRD WILL NOT FLY."

ABDU'L-BAHÁ

- Why I'm done trying to be "man enough"
- -- Justin Baldoni.

Source: TED <<https://youtu.be/Ce4dv0z0Q0>>

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 13

“Be a part of the solution then words are no longer enough. There is a quote that I love that I grew up with from the Baha writings says that, “The world of humanity is possessed of two wings, the male and the female. So, long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength. The bird will not fly”.

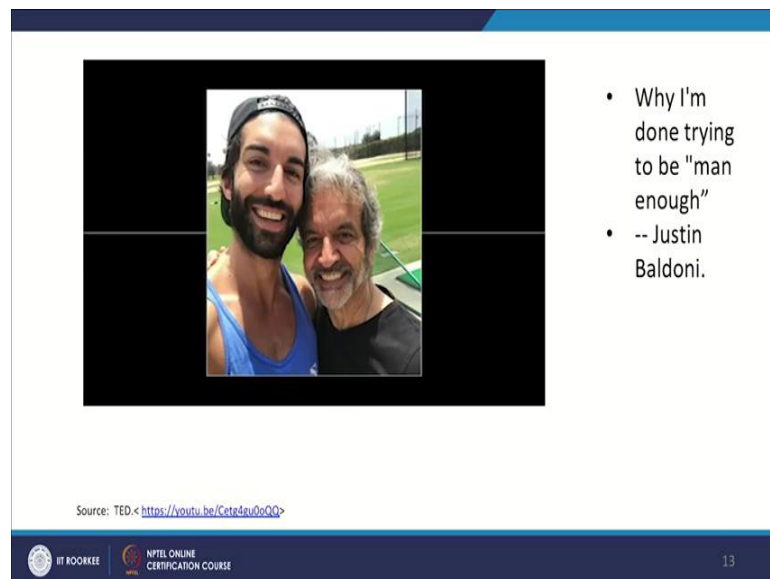
So, women on behalf of men all over the world who feels similar to me, please forgive us for all the ways that we have not relied on your strength. And now I would like to ask you to formally help us because we cannot do this alone. We are men, we are going to

mess up. We are going to say the wrong thing, we are going to be toned up we are more than likely probably going to offend you, but do not lose hope. We are only here because of you.

And like you, as men we need to stand up and become your allies as you fight against pretty much everything. We need your help in celebrating our vulnerability and being patient with us as we make this very very long journey from our heads to our hearts and finally, the parents.

Instead of teaching our children to be brave boys or pretty girls, can we maybe just teach them how to be good humans?

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- Why I'm done trying to be "man enough"
- -- Justin Baldoni.

Source: TED.<<https://youtu.be/Cete4rv0eQQ>>

IIT POOREE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 13

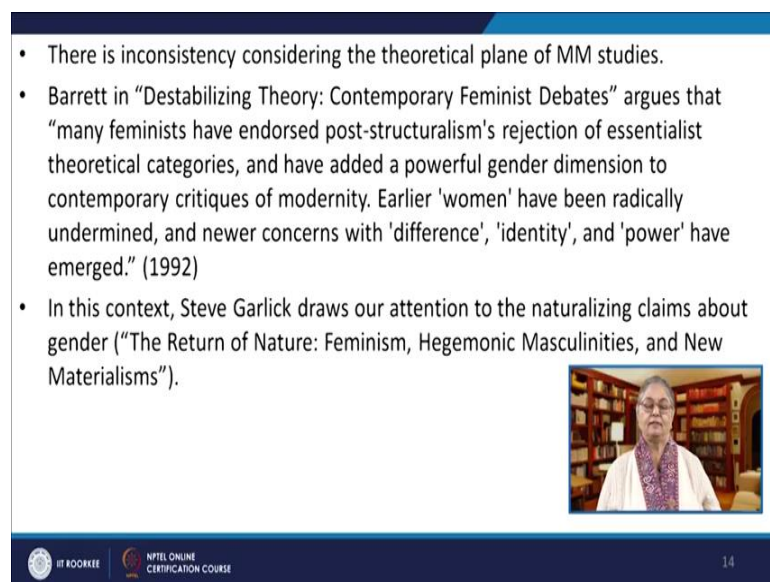
So, back to my dad. Grown up, yeah, like every boy I had my fair share of issues. But now I realize that it was even thanks to his sensitivity and emotional intelligence that I am able to stand here right now talking to you in the first place. The resentment I had for my dad, I now realize had nothing to do with him. It had everything to do with me and my longing to be accepted and to play a role that was never meant for me.

So, while my dad may have not taught me how to use my hands, he did teach me how to use my heart. And to me that makes him more of a man than anything. Thank you”.

These two videos mark the shifts in feminist studies as well as in the area of men's and masculinity studies. They show the coexistence and theoretical exchange of feminist studies and masculinities studies in the domain of gender studies.

Beasley alludes to Barrett's theorization of the destabilized nature of feminist theories. For Beasley men's and masculinity theories and studies have to face similar theoretical inconsistencies. However, both reject the self-naturalized status given to gender and to gender performance.

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- There is inconsistency considering the theoretical plane of MM studies.
- Barrett in “Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates” argues that “many feminists have endorsed post-structuralism's rejection of essentialist theoretical categories, and have added a powerful gender dimension to contemporary critiques of modernity. Earlier 'women' have been radically undermined, and newer concerns with 'difference', 'identity', and 'power' have emerged.” (1992)
- In this context, Steve Garlick draws our attention to the naturalizing claims about gender (“The Return of Nature: Feminism, Hegemonic Masculinities, and New Materialisms”).

To refer to the inconsistency considering the theoretical plane of men's and masculinity studies Beasley refers to Barrett.


Barrett has remarked in, “Destabilizing Theory, Contemporary Feminist Debates” that many feminists have endorsed posts-structuralism's rejection of essentialist theoretical categories, and have added a powerful gender dimension to contemporary critiques of modernity. Earlier, women have been radically undermined and newer concerns with ‘difference’, ‘identity’, and ‘power’ have emerged.

In this context, Steve Garlick draws our attention to the naturalizing claims about gender. Beasley has referred to Steve Garlick as he exposes the interdependency of the men's and masculinity studies and new materialist ideals. New materialism complicates and

expands the discourse of men's in masculinities studies, as it denounces the simple categorization of gendered beings and the process of gendering.

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- As a postmodern theorist within the discourse of MM studies, Garlick argues that the theory of hegemonic masculinity needs to be expanded beyond the framework of patriarchy and recast in relation to the place of nature in the complex ecology of human social relations.
- Beasley notes that the issue here is that the different theoretical trajectories of Feminist, Sexuality and MM studies have shifted in relation to their differential uptake of postmodern perspectives.
- It has implications for the subfield's account of itself as strongly linked with Feminism and implications for dialogue and coalition between the MM and feminist subfields".(34)



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Beasley notes that the issue here is that the different theoretical trajectories of feminist, sexuality and men's and masculinity studies have shifted in relation to their differential uptake of postmodern perspectives.

It has implications for the subfield's account of itself as is strongly linked with feminism and implications for dialogue and coalition between the feminist and MM studies.

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Disjunctions in theory: gender categories/identities

- Beasley posits that the 'second wave' women's movement was constituted around gender identity. It relied upon the shared experience of oppression.
- This identity or category politics was initially challenged by those who drew attention to differences within gender categories such as 'woman' or 'women'.
- By the mid-1990s the associated emphasis on plurality within gender categories had shifted towards a critique of these identity categories under the banner of postmodern inflected analyses.
 - According to Beasley, "In relation to gender categories/identities, the well-established antagonism to the presumed limits of gender categories found in sexuality studies is also these days relatively wide-spread in feminist work but comparatively is not a marked feature of the MM subfield". (35)



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Beasley posits that the 'second wave' of feminist movement was constituted around gender identity. It relied upon the shared experience of oppression. This identity or category politics was initially challenged by those who drew attention to differences within gender categories such as woman or women.


By the mid-1990s the associated emphasis on plurality within gender categories had shifted towards a critique of these identity categories under the banner of postmodern inflicted analysis.

And I quote from Beasley, "In relation to gender categories or identities, the well-established antagonism to the presumed limits of gender categories found in sexuality studies is also these days relatively wide-spread in feminist work, but comparatively is not a marked feature of the MM subfield".

So, Beasley suggests that gender identities are largely categorized as flat unidirectional and unexpressive in considering the discourse of men's and masculinities studies. This critique was centred around the second wave of feminist movement. However, men's and masculinity studies are yet to address this flaw and develop a deeper understanding of men as a more fluid conceptualization.

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- The notions of postmodern fluidity challenged adherence to gender categories. (Beasley, 1999).
- Theoretical writings in MM studies commonly retain a relatively unqualified and central investment in gender identities.
- The instance of gender categories/identities can be employed as a concrete means to illustrate what Beasley has described as a disjunction between feminist and MM theorising.
- In this context, Connell's theorization is indicative. "Connell conceives power as structural, as macro oppression ('patriarchy'), imposing upon subjects to produce a hierarchical pyramid of masculine identity groupings". (36)



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In this context, Connell's theorization is indicative. "Connell conceives power as structural, as macro-operation, imposing upon subjects to produce a hierarchical pyramid of masculine identity groupings".

For Beasley, the process of gendering men should incorporate microlevel assessment, daily patterns of performance, the embedded plurality of the masculine subject and not just the macro understanding of the naturalized category men as heterosocial concept.

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- “These masculine group identities (such as ‘hegemonic’, ‘marginalised’ and ‘subordinated’ masculinities) are construed in largely homogeneous terms and are typically further homogenised by a reduction to actual groups of men” (Connell, 1995/2005).
- “Connell’s account of gendered power as oppression—that is, patriarchy—imposes upon the micro-level of subjects to produce gendered identities/beings, which in turn respond to, resist and reconstitute structure” (Connell, 2000; Holmes, 2007).
- The gendered identities Connell constructs, formulate the modernist theorising on particular modes of ‘being’.



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“Connell’s account of gendered power is oppression that is, patriarchy imposes upon the micro-level of subjects to produce gendered identities and beings which in turn respond to, resist and reconstitute structure”.

The gendered identities Connell constructs, formulate the modernist theorizing on particular modes of being.

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- Postmodern approaches to subjectivity/identity do not focus on 'being', but rather upon 'subject positions'— that is, placement of subjects in multiple contesting discourses (e.g. Foucault, 1980; Mouffe, 1988; Skrzypiec, 2011).
- “This refusal of any inner unity to gender identities/subjects, a refusal of notions of 'being' in favour of fluid inchoate practices, is associated in postmodern thinking with a focus on 'undoing' or 'troubling' gender” (Butler, 2004). (37)
- Postmodern approaches thus offer substantial challenge to Connell's modernist adherence to structural power and gender categories/identities.



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Postmodern approaches to subjectivity or identity do not focus on 'being', but rather upon 'subject positions' that is, placement of subjects in multiple contesting discourses. “This refusal of any inner unity to gender identities or subjects, a refusal of notions of 'being' in favour of fluid inchoate practices, is associated in postmodern thinking with a focus on 'undoing' or 'troubling' gender”.

Postmodern approaches thus offer substantial challenge to Connell's modernist adherence to his structural power and gender categories or identities.

For a still deeper understanding Beasley quotes Bob Pease, Pease suggest that “not all men are the same”. Similarly, no distinct gender category can exhibit same characteristics. No two women are the same, no two individuals from the LGBTQIA plus community can be the same.

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- Further, Bob Pease in (2000) suggests a 'postmodern masculinity politics'. (*Recreating men: Postmodern masculinity politics*, 2000).
- Pease observes that not all men are the same and that 'men' is not a homogeneous grouping.
- Such an emphasis upon the diversity of men does not represent a challenge to gender categories that would be in keeping with postmodern thinking.
- Rather, simply pluralising of the category 'men' is associated with the modernist Social Constructionism and is in keeping with the modernist pluralisation of the gender identities; such as the concept of woman found in feminist theorising during the late 1980s/90s.(36)



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Pease suggest a postmodern masculinity politics. It observes that not all men are the same and that men is not a homogeneous grouping. Such an emphasis upon the diversity of men does not represent a challenge to gender categories that would be in keeping with postmodern thinking.

Rather, simply pluralizing of the category 'men' is associated with the modernist 'Social Constructionism' and is in keeping with the modernist pluralization of the gender identities; such as the concept of women found in feminist theorizing during the late 1980s and 90s.

In reading Beasley's assessment, we may assert that Feminism and Men's and Masculinity scholarship share our close sense of affinity in the 21st century which was frowned upon in the past. Inter or intra reading is the key to further the men's and masculinity discourse and find new areas of inquiry.

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- According to Beasley, Pease's work offers a thoughtful engagement with postmodernism. However, Beasley also mentions that much of MM scholarship which attends to postmodern theorising seems more theoretically underdeveloped.
- Beasley's concern here is not to suggest that modernist and postmodern theoretical trajectories can never be articulated, or that MM should necessarily adopt the robust critique of gender categories/identities that is familiar in much contemporary feminist theorising.
- Rather, Beasley aims to "raise the issue of dissonance as a matter requiring closer consideration with regard to alliance between the two subfields."(37)



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Beasley's concern here is not to suggest that modernist and postmodern theoretical trajectories can never be articulated, or that men's and masculinities should necessarily adopt the robust critique of gender categories or identities that is familiar in much contemporary or feminist theorising.

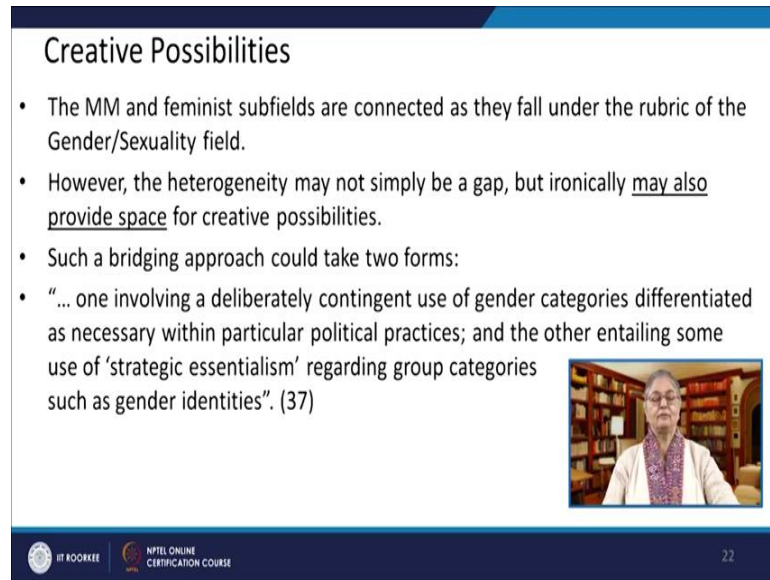
Rather, Beasley aims to raise the issue of dissonance as a matter requiring closer consideration with regard to alliance between the two subfields.

In this attempt to bridge the gap between gender and sexuality discourse, feminism and men's and masculinities studies, Beasley's arguments produce some new creative possibilities and insights.

Firstly, empathy for the other that is the masculine other, the queer other and the feminine other. Secondly, initiating a movement towards gender equality and space for each other in the discourse and the gender spectrum. And thirdly, enlarging the scope of inter sexuality between gender and sexuality studies between men's and masculinities scholarship and feminist studies as there are no watertight compartments.


Lastly, removing the idea of privilege from the masculine subject and reload its essentialist subjectivities in all fields including education, healthcare, sports, cinema, media etcetera.

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Creative Possibilities

- The MM and feminist subfields are connected as they fall under the rubric of the Gender/Sexuality field.
- However, the heterogeneity may not simply be a gap, but ironically may also provide space for creative possibilities.
- Such a bridging approach could take two forms:
- "... one involving a deliberately contingent use of gender categories differentiated as necessary within particular political practices; and the other entailing some use of 'strategic essentialism' regarding group categories such as gender identities". (37)




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Men's and masculinity and feminist subfields are connected as they fall under the rubric of the gender or sexuality field. However, the heterogeneity may not simply be a gap, but ironically may also provide space for creative possibilities.

Such a bridging approach could take two forms. "One involving a deliberately contingent use of gender categories differentiated as necessary within particular political practices; and the other entailing some use of 'strategic essentialism' regarding group categories such as gender identities".

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- For feminist scholars, theoretically, gender identity categories must be unsettled and challenged, in practice.
- The “strategic essentialism” perspective is seemingly incoherent refusal, and simultaneous adoption of gender categories.
- Beasley suggests that “varying use of gender categories becomes more coherent and capable of being considered consistent when strategic essentialism is interpreted as pursuing a view of both theory and practice as bound together through an emphasis on praxis in relation to power”. (37)



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For feminist scholars, theoretically, gender identity categories must be unsettled and challenged, in practice. The “strategic essentialism” perspective is seemingly incoherent refusal, and simultaneous adoption of gender categories.

Beasley suggests that “varying use of gender categories become more coherent and capable of being considered consistent when strategic essentialism is interpreted as pursuing a view of both theory and practice as bound together through an emphasis on praxis in relation to power”.

Beasley also notes that while feminist and sexuality studies provide examples of political thinking which advocate on behalf of the marginalized categories that is women and non-heterosexual sexualities, men’s and masculinity scholarship does not and should not treat masculinity or men as a privileged category.

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- In a nutshell, paying attention to, and rejection of, gender categories—in theory and practice—can express different positionings in relation to power.
- This perspective, according to Beasley involves a bridging approach to postmodernist/modernist theoretical paradigms and to the relationship between feminist and MM subfields, an approach organised around power and political praxis. (37)




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In a nutshell, paying attention to, and rejection of, gender categories in theory and practice can express different positionings in relation to power. This perspective, according to Beasley involves a bridging approach to postmodernist or modernist theoretical paradigms and to the relationship between feminist and masculinist subfields, an approach organized around power and political praxis.

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- It can be said that men and masculinities scholarship has self-identified as a pro-feminist approach and may also be located along with feminist and sexuality studies under the auspices of an over-arching Gender/Sexuality field on the basis of many shared features.
- Yet these two sub-fields have increasingly displayed certain tensions, even divergences, signalled by their differential theoretical engagement with postmodernism. Such divergences are evident in their use of gender identities/categories.
- Beasley notes that disjunctions between the differential use of gender categories/identities encourage dialogue and coalition to further the course of feminist and MM scholarship.



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It can be said thus, that men in masculinities scholarship is self-identified as a pro-feminist approach and may also be located along with feminist and sexuality studies

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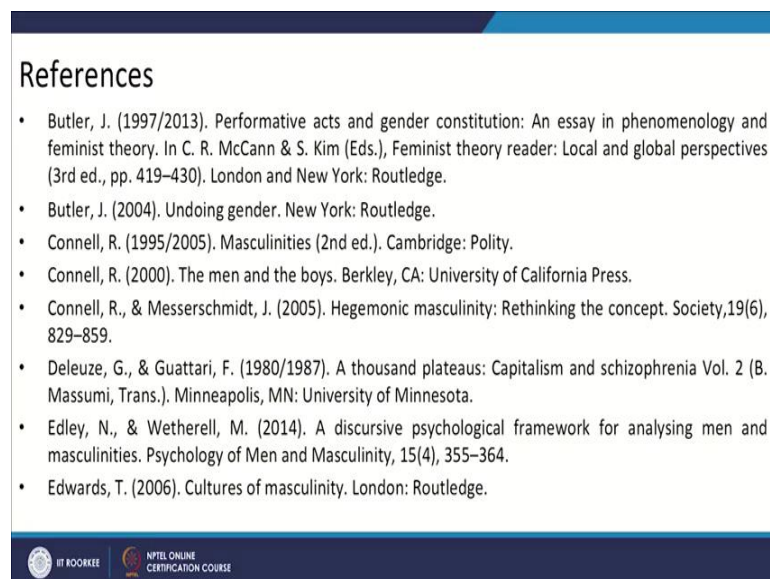
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Beasley notes that disjunctions between the differential use of gender categories and identities encourage dialogue and coalition to further the course of feminist and men's and masculinist scholarship.

To conclude Beasley's engagement with feminism and men's and masculinities scholarship, we can say that though men's and masculinities studies have a pro-gender approach, a project in constructing theory towards rigorous critical analysis of men and masculinities. It still requires more interdisciplinary actions to delegitimize the universal essential and humanistic dominance of men as a subject and as a category.



Thank you.

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