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MALE SEXUALITIES/
QUEERYING HEGEMONIC MALE SEXUALITY?

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I want to fuck. I need to fuck. I’ve always needed and wanted to fuck. From my teenage years I’ve always longed after fucking…

A male friend speaking to social psychologist Wendy Hollway, 1984.

Men have an overwhelming desire to relieve themselves upon a woman’s body…

Roger Scruton, Sexual Desire, 1986

I just like screwing. I can remember going back when I was six, seven, eight, nine, ten, we had a pub in [country town]. Saturday, Sunday morning, I’d lay in bed and flip myself ten or twelve times, and get the thrill of not being able to ejaculate. I’ve always been highly sexed…

Barney, a gay man, speaking to Gary Dowsett, 1996.

For a man, sex instinctively is a testosterone drive towards the ultimate release of climax. When he becomes aroused, he automatically seeks release. His fulfillment in sex is mainly associated with the release of tension leading to and including the orgasm…


I have started this article with these quite provocative quotes because they capture the very common and very simple story that is most frequently told of male sexuality. It is powerful, natural, driven; it is uncontrollable; it is penis centered; it seeks to orgasm whenever it can. And in truth this is often not very nice. After all, as we have seen depicted and been told many times, it is
overwhelmingly men who rape, who buy pornography, who develop sexual fetishes, who engage in sexual violence of all kinds, and who become the serial killers. It is men who are driven to seek sex in all its diversities. They are the assertors, the insertors and the predators. Of course some women – and perhaps a growing number - do these things. But overall sex is seen to have a much more driven quality for men. They are pressurized to have sex as some intense inner need and in turn they may well pressurize others into it[1].

Thus, men are much more likely than women to become sexual consumers; they will pay for sex in all its varieties – prostitution, pornography, striptease, sex tourism, massage, lap dancing, telephone sex, fetish sales. They are much more likely to feel that they can assert themselves to ‘take sex’ when they want it: not just in obvious ‘rape’ situations, but more routinely with their wives (wife rape), girl friends (date rape), their children (son-daughter rape) and other men (homosexual rape). They are much more likely than women to feel they have a specific turn on – a little out of the ordinary – which must be met: where are all the women who must steal male underwear, who ‘must’ expose their genitals to men passing by in the street, who must make ‘obscene phone calls’ to unknown men? ‘Perversion’ says Robert Stoller – a leading psychiatrist of sexual diversity - is far more common in men than in women; women practice almost none of the official diagnoses”. (Stoller, 1976:34). Men are much more likely than women to be driven to break the sex laws and become sex offenders: male sex offenders overwhelmingly outnumber female sex offenders in all areas except one – prostitution; and whilst women may commit crimes of passion, they are not the same as the so-called lust murders of men. And most recently, with the creation of the new so called diseases of ‘sexual addiction and sexual compulsion’, it is again overwhelmingly men who identify with this category and seek help through compulsive anonymous groups. Patrick Carnes – the guru of Sexual Addiction theory has described the seemingly extraordinary lengths some men will go in order to get their sex (Carnes, 1984). Again: only a minority of men may be involved in all the above; but it seems many, many fewer women are.

Hegemonic Sexuality: The Penis Centered Model of Sex

Therapist Bernie Zilbergeld (1999) has called this the Fantasy Model of Sex. ‘Its Two feet Long, Hard as Steel, and Will Knock Your Socks Off.’. At the center of this image of male sexuality – both physically and symbolically -lies the penis. As feminists so clearly know, this is a phallocentric culture. Not only is the penis the source of the male’s erotic pleasures – a feature that even young boys can learn and one that can make masturbation such a prominent feature of male sexuality – but it is also an enormously potent symbol. Engorged and erect it is a sign of male power, assertion, achievement – a gun to conquer the world. But flaccid, it is also a sign. It has become “weak, soft (or semi-soft), less active; it has no stamina, no control. It cannot perform ‘like a man’”. (Potts, 2003: 142). At its worst, it is a sign of impotency; and as Paul Hoch once remarked, “absolutely the worst thing a man can be is impotent”. In the microcosm of an erotic encounter, a man seems always to have to worry over the performance of his penis; and this – combined with the pleasure goal – gives a significance to the penis that is hard to ignore.(Hoch, xx).[2]

All this connects to another version of male sexuality which is a seemingly rather sadder story- the flip side of the coin, but a maybe more tragic vision. Male sexualities are also signs of weakness and vulnerability. Many accounts of male sexualities start from a sense of man’s insecurity and fear. Most commonly the issues of the penis is raised. The penis in itself is a rather poor appendage of the male body. It is ‘fragile, squishy, delicate.. even when erect the penis is spongy, seldom straight, and rounded at the tip, while the testicles are imperfect spheres, always vulnerable, never still’ (Metcalfe, 1985:30), though the phallus (the erect penis) is a different story. As Richard Dyer once said – ‘The fact is the penis isn’t a patch on the phallus’ (Metcalfe, 1985 :62). The point is though the penis communicates messages of sexualities; it is immensely symbolic as well as physical. Thus, the need to conceal an erection at certain times, or to have and maintain an erection at others are crucial. The penis can betray the man, and it has to become socialized and able to perform in the right ways at the right moments. (Tieffer, 1995). As Reynaud has argued ‘Man’s misfortune is that his penis, the symbol of power, is in fact one of the most fragile and vulnerable organs of his body ’ (Reynaud, 1981:36)

Men’s sexuality so frequently seems to come to focus upon the penis (physical) and the phallus (symbolic): both can bring problems. Thus, there are worries of size when it is flaccid, worries of it
not getting erect quickly enough, worries of it being too erect too often, worries of it not staying erect long enough, and severe worries of it not getting erect at all. Then there are problems of ejaculation – of coming too soon, too late or not at all. And often all of this is significant because men let it – or make it – come to define their masculinity. Sexuality it has been argued is also ‘the mainstay of male identity’. As the psycho-analytic theorist Ethel Person once famously argued. ‘There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that in this culture, genital sexual activity is a prominent feature in the maintenance of masculine gender, while it is a variable feature in feminine gender… In men, gender appears to lean on sexuality’. (Person, 1984).

All this may seem obvious to many students of male sexualities. But will it really do? True, this is the common sense story – and it is mirrored a thousand times by more scientific stories. Indeed, whilst writing this article I was persistently drawn to it. Yet, obvious as it may seem to many, I kept thinking that sexuality is not really like this at all for all men at all times – to argue so would be to fall into the trap of essentialism, and worse, to see male sexuality as over determined. If male sexuality was really just like this, we surely would find even more problems around it than we do? But we can indeed find enough problems around it to make some feminists argue this is precisely their point: sexuality is male and it is indeed trouble.

Yet in the face of a wave of research and writing that I have come to call the ‘new sexualities studies’ [3] we can now see that men change (just like women) across time, space and contexts. Sexualities are never simple biological facts, however much some people protest that they are. Indeed, for some commentators, ‘Sexuality is so diverse, confusing and culturally informed that perhaps it is beyond any real understanding’ (Whitehead 2002: 162).

In this view, human sexualities, then, come to be seen as complex historical relations lodged in metaphor and language, shaped by social divisions and always open to change. Recent work shows very definitely that sexualities are patterned by cultures; they are shaped by class, gender, age; they are negotiated through institutions of family, religion, education, economy; they shift across the life space and cycle; and they are enmeshed in all manner of power relations. As Lynn Segal says:

Male sexuality is most certainly not any single shared experience for men. It is not any single or simple thing at all – but the site of any number of emotions of weakness and strength, pleasure and pain, anxiety, conflict, tension and struggle, none of them mapped out in such a way as to make the obliteration of the agency of women in heterosexual engagements inevitable…. (Segal, 1997: 215).

I think Lynn Segal is correct, but you would not really know this from the spate of studies that support the view I have outlined above. Indeed what we may have here is a case of male hegemonic sexuality [4] buttressed by a series of scientific and cultural props pointing in the same direction and telling us what men are really like. Hegemony expresses the privileged positions of dominant groups and establishes ‘the fund of self evident descriptions of social reality that normally go without saying’ (Fraser, 1992:179). Hegemonic male sexuality works to essentialize the male sexualities of some men into the sexualities of all whilst reinforcing assumptions about a bipolar feminine essential sexuality too.

In this chapter I look a little at these hegemonic stories: there is no doubt that they are very common, but they are not definitive. I will look at the persistent reinforcement of this hegemonic model in nearly all directions then turn to changes that suggest that the sexualities of men may well not be as unified or as simple as that commonly outlined. This will take me into in what may be called ‘the new sexualities studies’ and to contemporary social changes that some identify as queer / postmodernism. A sense of new male sexualities in the making will be highlighted.

STORIES OF HEGEMONIC MALE SEXUALITY

Whether critical or supportive of the view of hegemonic male sexuality, most writings and studies
to date take as their starting point the simple image of a penis centered, orgasm driven, heterosexual male sexuality. In what follows, I plan to quickly raid a sample of stories that point to this. They come from a range of (mainly academic) sources and others could be added. But they all point towards a major narrative of an essential male sexuality which mirrors what I have located above and which can in various ways help to assemble the ways in which male sexualities are seen as given and normal. Any one account on its own would not stand: but I hope to show the reader that there is a massive convergence into a particular version of what it is to have a male sexuality.

Evolution and The Biological Story: Perhaps the major contemporary account of male sexuality to display this storyline has grown from biology and evolutionary theory. For many it so mirrors common sense so perfectly that its validity seems almost irrefutable and inevitable. Although there are many variations on a theme, the core position is that gender differences around sexuality are striking and given ‘in nature’. In one version, the presence of testosterone in the male is seen as a prime driver of sexuality (eg. Goldberg, 1973). In another, the biological significance of a single sperm and a single egg are seen to differ dramatically. Thus, a man releases hundreds of millions of sperm in a single ejaculation whereas a newborn female’s ovaries contain her entire lifetime allotment of follicles or immature eggs: a woman commonly releases a single mature egg cell from her ovaries each month. Thus, whilst a man is biologically capable of fathering thousands of offspring, a woman is able to bear only a relatively small number of children. And it is but a short step from this biologically based difference to argue that each sex is well served in long term evolutionary adaptations by distinctively different ‘reproductive strategies’. From a strictly biological perspective, a man reproduces his genes most efficiently by being promiscuous – that is, readily engaging in sex and with many partners. This scheme, however, opposes the reproductive interests of a woman, whose relatively few pregnancies demand that she carry the child for nine months, give birth, and care for the infant for some time afterwards. Thus, efficient reproduction on the part of the woman depends on carefully selecting a mate whose qualities (beginning with the likelihood that he will simply stay around) will contribute to their child’s survival and successful reproduction. For reproductive potentials to be fulfilled and humans to satisfactorily reproduce themselves, there is an evolutionary necessity for men to have sexual intercourse with as many women as they can; whilst for women the task is on to find the best man and the best seed.

This popular argument of evolutionary psychology hence argues that men are much more sexual and that this serves evolutionary adaptive needs. The male is seen as more sexual and more likely than the female to desire sex with a variety of partners. But of course this theory may also be seen as a major device to legitimize these behavioral patterns in men and women: they are natural, adaptive and hence necessary. In more extreme versions, they can even come to legitimize some phenomenon as rape and sexual violence. One example of this new evolutionary thinking is the controversial study of rape by socio biologists Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer. Drawing on the evolutionary theory of sex, they claim that rape is a necessary part of the evolutionary process. They see it as completely congruent and compatible with the development of sex differences. In this view, rape becomes a device in which men can have sex no matter what. Men rape ‘arises from men’s evolved machinery for obtaining a high number of mates in an environment where females choose mates’ (Thornhill and Palmer, 2000:190). Sociobiology suggests that cultural patterns of reproduction, promiscuity, the double standard and indeed rape, like many others, has an underlying bio-logic. Simply put, male sexualities have developed around the world because women and men everywhere tend toward distinctive reproductive strategies which reinforce hegemonic sexuality.

Conventional sociological stories. A quick version of hegemonic masculinity may also be found in one of the earliest statements of men’s studies (published in 1976 by David and Brannon: see p11-35)). This study is organized around four key dimensions of the male sex role; and although these are stereotypes, and knowledge has moved beyond them as indeed the world of their existence has changed, they may well serve as a useful starting point when applied to sexuality. They suggest that men in general are bound in to the following expectations (and here they can also be seen to embody their sexualities more particularly).:

1. No sissy stuff – the stigma of anything vaguely feminine. The implication here is that sexuality for men must not involve anything remotely feminine (emotional, passive etc). It hints at the way in which homophobia (the fear of homosexuality) may serve to partially structure male sexuality; and it also suggest that men’s sexuality must indeed be different to
that of women.

2. The big wheel – success, status and the need to be looked up to. The implication here is that sexuality for men must involve being seen to be successful – being looked up at for their sexual competence. And, as suggested above, for men sexual competence may well have a lot to do with the effective working of their well socialized penises: getting it up and getting to ejaculate.

3. The sturdy oak – a manly air of toughness, confidence and self reliance. The implication here is that sexuality for men must be assertive. Men should not have any self doubt about their sexuality.

4. Give ’em hell- the aura of aggression, violence and daring. The implication here is that sexuality for men must conform to that most worrying of expectations – rough and violent sex. For some this may mean that coercive sex – from rape to harassment- may be felt as a central feature of good sex.

Each of these broad themes then can be seen to characterize aspects of hegemonic male sexuality. In the first place they are defined through a binary opposition: they must not be like women in any way. In the second place, they have to succeed in sex – in winning over the women and maintaining penile competence. In the third place, they have to exude a manly sexuality which has asserts their self and identity. And finally, to prove themselves their sexuality may be forceful, assertive and aggressive: there is a potential linkage with rape. Although Brannon and David’s listing is old, has become more nuanced, and links to a rather old fashioned role theory- it still serves well as an opening set of images of hegemonic male sexuality.

**Feminist stories.** Although it is well recognized that there are many contrasting feminist positions, at the heart of many accounts of male sexuality – of whatever persuasion – lies a description of men which is hardly flattering, one which is likely to arouse considerable discomfort if not outright anger in men. In the 1970’s, for example, Phyllis Chessler almost groans with pity for us:

> What demon do men run from? What enemy hovers behind them, what enemy waits to envelop them from within, if they pause a bit in the taking – if not the giving- of sexual pleasure? Is this style the inevitable conclusion of a childhood in which boys spend years trying to hide their erection, years of trying to masturbate in the dark – as quickly , as silently as they can, in order to avoid discovery? Is it such prolonged childhood silence that leads men into valuing loud noises, yelling out ‘dirty words’, or into a dependency on repetitious, visually exaggerated, closely detailed pornographic displays?... (Chessler, 1978 : p224-5)

Certain themes consistently reappear in feminist discussions of male sexuality, and accounts of male sexuality as prone to violence, pressurization, coercion, and objectification abound.[5] For some, sexuality is almost defined as male; for others it is seen as a major device through which men maintain their positions of power and keep women under a constant state of threat. One group of English feminists, writing in the 1980’s, captured such themes succinctly under seven headings. Asking themselves what male sexuality was like, they concluded it was about **power, aggression, penis orientation, the separation of sex from loving emotion, objectification, fetishism and uncontrollability** (Coveney et al, 1984). There is no doubt from their discussions that each of these features was not only ‘male’ but also very damaging and destructive to women, creating the composite stereotype of the traditional macho man; an emotionally crippled, sex obsessed, aggressive dominator. Taken together many could highlight a whole structure of fear and violence imposed upon them by men – of sexual slavery, sexual exploitation and sexual terrorism. The theoretical analyses and the empirical evidence brought to focus on male sexuality led to an inexorable logic: **Sexuality is Male.** Once women recognized this, they had only a few options: attack sexuality with all one’s might for “we are fighting for our lives; we are dealing with a life and death situation” (Dworkin, p. 26); retreat entirely from it leaving men to their sexuality whilst women establish alternative worlds; or both. In any event, a woman identified world – without men – became the goal. As Andrea Dworkin remarks: man’ fetishizes [the woman’s} body as a whole and in its parts. He exiles her from every realm of expression outside the strictly male-defined sexual or male-defined maternal. He forces her to become that thing that causes erection, then holds himself helpless and powerless when he is aroused by her. His fury when she is not that thing, when she is either more or less than that thing, is intense and punishing. (Dworkin, 1981: 1; cf. Vance, 1985; Leidholdt & Raymond, 1990))
More nuanced readings still agree that men are the problem, but also highlight the linked problems of women’s sexuality and sometimes the role of women in mothering men. In a gentler form, Dorothy Dinnerstein has put it that ‘a central rule under a strikingly widespread set of conditions is, first, that men act sexually more possessive than women, and second that women act less free than men to seek ’selfish sexual pleasure’ (cited in Williams and Stein, 2002:5). Even here, ion this weaker form, male sexuality is more possessive and selfish.

**Research Stories: The Clinical/Therapy Tradition.** Another tradition for looking at sexuality takes it increasingly into the realm of the clinical and therapeutic. This is a deeply normative and prescriptive view of the world. It establishes broad, normative models of what human sexuality is really like, identifies problems people experience because they do not fit the model, and then proceeds to assist people to follow that model. In the early days, much of therapy was around issues of object choice (the clinical disorder of homosexuality, for example); but since the 1960’s a major ‘sex therapy industry’ has grown up which maps out the proper routes for male and female sexualities. The work of Masters and Johnson was most famous for its ‘discovery’ of a sexual response cycle: excitement, plateau, orgasm and resolution. This model is almost entirely focused upon a sequencing of arousal and orgasm – establishing in effect that whenever a firm erection is not possible, or orgasms do not take place, that there is a sexual dysfunction. Although on an individual level, therapy may be able to provide support and change, on a wider public level it has the consequence of reinforcing what male and female sexualities should be like. It is highly normative and prescriptive.

The ideological functions of sex research have been much discussed. Janice Irvine’s study of *Disorders of Desire* (1990) is a fine account of just how coercive much sexology and sex research has been over the past century. [6] Indeed, much contemporary therapy and sexology continues in the same vein today with the help of new technologies, all usually bringing potential reinforcement to the hegemonic model. Viagra is a clear case of this. Hitting the headlines during the 1990’s, it sign posted what was a hitherto unknown sexual problem, but one that now appeared on a massive scale. The problem was impotency. If sales of Viagra are any indication – nearly 200,000 prescriptions are filed each week, and some 17 million American use the drug (Hitt,2000:34), then it could flag a new (even global!) social problem from men and women too! Erectile dysfunction or ED now becomes the issue. This also suggests a model for the aging male with Viaga and medicalization as the solution.[7]

Both Leonore Treifer and Barbara Marshall suggests that the story of viagra and indeed medical interventionism over the ‘science’ of sexual dysfunction is a wholly mechanical way of looking at sexual issues and one that most of the world had not even dreamt of before its arrival in the mid 1990’s. At its heart, it deflects attention from all the political and cultural concerns around sexuality and works to make cultural expectations of gender become more rigid. (Marshall, 2002)

**Research Stories: The Empirical Tradition.** Much research during the twentieth century has also catalogued the differences between male and female sexuality. The mammoth volumes of Kinsey et al provide a mound of data based upon some 12,000 (non random) North American living in the 1930’s and 1940’s and in *The sexual Behavior of the Human Female* (1953) some key contrasts are brought out. (See Kinsey, 1953: page xxx). Table 1 below outlines a number of subsequent studies and some of the more commonly accepted findings.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 around here

Another major example can be found in the studies of Shere Hite conducted in the 1970’s and early 1980’s, providing one of the largest surveys of male sexuality ever produced. Though it is very detailed – 7,239 men returned a 13 page questionnaire and this is turned into a 1,000 paged book composed of their comments – it has been much criticized on ‘scientific’ (and political) grounds. But it does contain a wealth of detail from men willing to write about their sex lives. At the heart of the study once again is the idea that sex is indeed very important to men. They liked intercourse because of the physical pleasure, because of psychological and emotional support, and because in
part too it was validation of their masculinity (333). They had a fear of impotency or loss of erection (340). She claims that a traditional model of sex – foreplay, intercourse, male orgasm in the vagina – is ‘far and away the most usual type of sex’ (414) and indeed suggests that for men the male orgasm is ‘the point of sex and intercourse’ (454). (Though they have strongest orgasms in masturbation (431) and nearly everyone in the study masturbated (a mere 1% did not). Often it was accompanied by guilt (486) ‘Love’ was important but often painful; marriage even when difficult was liked (p206) because there was someone to care for them and because stability, domestic warmth and regularity of home life (209). It was common to have sex outside of marriages unknown to their wives, many had little guilt about it, and even felt it had enhanced their marriage (142) (Hite, 1981)

In a slightly different vein, research stories from young people suggest these differences appear at an early age. James Messerschmidt, in a review of many contemporary studies of young men across class and ethnicity, suggests that ‘normative heterosexuality is constructed as a practice that helps to reproduce the subordination of young women and to produce age specific heterosexual styles of masculinity, a masculinity centering on an uncontrollable and unlimited sexual appetite’ (Messerschmidt, 1993:90). ‘Natural sex’ serves as a routine resource in accomplishing and reinforcing their emerging manliness.

It seems this may also be international. In a major UK study, Janet Holland and her colleagues found that ‘many of the young men implicitly concur with the absence of subordination of female desire in the very commonly expressed view that while men want sex, women want love and relationships (Holland et al 1998:124). Again, some boy’s voices make this clear:

Most boys can have sex without any feelings, whereas a girl has to have feelings. It’s totally different. It’s much deeper for a girl than it is for a boy (young male, middle class, AC, 18)

Sometimes I just want to have sex, and I am going to have sex, but it is only going to be for me.. ym, wc.ESW, 19)

The interviewer asks one young man: ‘and did the girls enjoy it?’ and the response comes:

I don’t know. I didn’t really ask. As long as I enjoyed it I weren’t bothered. I am now, but then I didn’t know, I just thought it was their duty. I was a bit sexist… (ym, wc. A, 17). Holland et al : 124

Likewise, in New Zealand, Louisa Allen – studying some 500 young people – finds that the major discourses amongst the young replicated classic positions. Her paper is even called : “Girls want sex, boys want love” and in one focus group, we hear:

Michael Guys are basically always ready.

Anabella I heard some statistics.. and guys supposedly think of sex six times an hour on average.

Darren Oh it’s heaps more than that (all laugh)

Tim If I wanted to ejaculate, I could probably do so in less than a minute…

Chris .. a guy is sort of almost guaranteed to feel good (having sex you know, feel the same in anyway so…

Darren Guys have got a lot to prove. There’s a lot/// there’s a lot for guys to live up to like uhm gotta be all macho and gotta be cool and at this sort of stuff, gotta score nice chicks or if you have got one chick, you have got to score often….
But they do go on to suggest a change in the making…. 

Peter Sex is good. It’s nice but its not essential. I’d still love her//I’d still want to be with her. So you know it’s nice but I mean if it had to stop the it would, and I would still go out with her…. 

Likewise, world wide research in AIDS has suggested just how driven male sexualities are more or less across the world. Whether this drivenness is biological or cultural is largely beside the point In AIDS prevention work; over and over again men talk of how it is their right to have sex, to have unprotected sex which is more natural, that they have the need for outlets, that if their partners will not hive them sex then they have to take it. As a global Panos report indicates::

Thais of both sexes say men’ have strong sexual desire and need some outlet‘; South African miners claim that regular intercourse is essential for a man’s good health; and in Indian society ‘ it is considered natural for men to be ‘lustful’. This viewpoint appears universal (Panos, 1999: 17)

‘Pop Narratives’. Then there are the immensely popular cultural texts such as John Gray’s Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus (1995). Here men and women are seen as being so very different that they might as well come from different planets: their lives are lives of inevitable conflicts. Thus, John Gray’s task is to act as an omniscient interpreter of all this, and to help show what the differences are and what can be done about them

Great sex – men are intellectual but this transports them into emotional worlds- and great sex connects core selves of men and women….‘he is trying to empty out while she is trying to be filled up’ (p27) ‘he is force and active — she wants it…. Women are told that ‘sex is the direct line to a man’s heart’ (p18) men have a need for ‘quickies’ or ‘fast food sex’ (p77, 82etc) and women should be patient; men become aroused very quickly (indeed it is ‘as easy as shaking a can of beer and then letting it pop’ p63)

Bernie Zilbergeld’s best seller also provides a guide to the ‘New Male Sexuality‘(1999). He is indeed much more cautious than Gray. Although in this book, he starts by suggesting that most men are engulfed within a fantasy model of sex [9], the main message of the book is that this fantasy model is breaking down and a new openness is starting to appear. But at the start of the book he is at pains to suggest some of the myths that surround men’s sexuality. In a sense they do constitute some elements of the main male story line of sex and so they are worth repeating here – not so much as myths, but as key plots that often shape the workings of male sexuality. Abridging them slightly, they include:

- A real man isn’t into sissy stuff like feelings and communicating
- All touching is sexual or should lead to sex
- A man is always interested in and always ready for sex
- A real man performs in sex
- Sex is centered on a hard penis and what’s done with it
- If your penis isn’t up to snuff, we have a pill that will take care of everything
- Sex equals intercourse
- A Man should make the earth move for his partner or at the very least knock her socks off
- Good sex is spontaneous with no planning and no talking (cf. Chapter 2).

We have been here before. The list rehearses most of the futures we have already encountered. [10]
Gay Male Sexual Stories. Gay male sexuality poses a curious series of questions for the hegemonic model. By definition, hegemonic male sexuality is defined through heterosexuality and gay relations are ostensibly excluded. And yet there is one major strand of ‘gay’ analysis in the gay male community which suggests that gay male sexuality takes us closer to what true male sexuality is all about. In the 1980’s, for instance, there was a notorious debate with some feminists over whether gay men may well have been more phallic centered, and more male in their sexualities, than heterosexual men – who at least have their sexualities (partially) regulated by (some) women. Liz Stanley, an English lesbian sociologist, could remark that:

Gay men, perhaps more than any other men ally themselves with the activities and products of sexism. More than any other men they choose to act and construe themselves and each other in ways dominated by phallocentric ideologies and activities.” (210-211).

But there are also those within the gay movement itself who see that sex itself is the core of the gay male experience and is too often sanitised and demeaned. Gay sex is revolutionary sex. Repeatedly, gay men rehearse the idea that:

Gay sensibility is truly subversive because it insists on the primacy of sexuality beneath its adoration of the civilized. While ostensibly it is concerned with disseminating new ideas about culture, its real concern is the dissemination of sexual knowledge, with which it is obsessed… Gay sensibility sexualizes the world… (Kleinberg, 1980: p. 62-3).

In a recent and very engaging history of gay culture, Michael Bronski suggests that it is male sexuality which heralds a gay radicalism. For him, gays signpost a very positive but very threatening pleasure class who embody ‘the possibility of freedom of pleasure for its own sake’ (p. 214). And since, he says, “our most fundamental experience of pleasure is essentially sexual in nature” (p. 213), gay men provide the means for us to reconnect our bodies to our minds, to experience wholeness, to avoid splitting. It is a lot to ask from ‘sexuality’ – and gay men.

Much research on the sexualities of gay men documents the sheer quantity and range of sexual experiences that many gay men have and how they have built sexualized communities and institutions to embody them, Car parks, woods and parks, toilets and beaches, parties, bath houses and clubs become colonized for male desires (Delph). One recent study finds the centrality …

I was just thinking how incredibly hot it was to have this stud sort of fucking me… That he was inside me and giving himself to me and so on. And in that sense he represented all the, you know, … all the masculinity and that strength and so on that I, you know, wanted it up inside me…

And its like .. it’s almost like this man in injecting some of his masculinity into me.. giving me some of that. And so I find it (receptive anal sex) a very augmenting experience as opposed to a diminishing experience.. In a sense it’s like me sort of taking something from him…

It was quite a sexual thrill to do something dangerous. It is going beyond the boundaries, that is what sex is all about.. about breaking the taboos.. It was an incredible thrill….Ridge, 2003

For some gay men, then (but by no means all or even most) this meant the creation of a macho culture of sleaze and leather, where the notion of desire or lust took precedent over other concerns. Male pleasure is closely linked to male fetishism and male power. The pleasure of the penis takes over – a gay phallocentric culture is invented. The gay male culture of sleaze and leather can be seen as a model of truly liberated lust – sex for pleasure’s sake, uncontaminated by bourgeois notions of intimacy and relationships. One example of political pornography – meat– put it like this:

Meat may be the most moral book ever assembled; a morality of participants in which being “good” is giving a good blow or rim job, being “good” is being hot and hard, being good is letting it all come out: sweat, shit, piss, spit, scum; being good is being able to take it all, take it all the way…. Story after story in Meat expresses the sheer joy and exhuberance – the wild pleasure in licking assholes, eating shit, drinking piss – taking it all… The truth is the biggest turn on … (Gay
So here is a curious paradox. Gay male sexuality may be the key to heterosexual male sexuality – it may suggest the roots that most men would take if they were not shaped by relations with women. Gay men become the champions of the pleasure principle. And yet, once again, whilst this may be a feature of some parts of the gay world, I would worry if this was presumed to characterize it all. Once again, we are on the verge of a sexualized essentialism which will need challenging. [11]

**Stories from around the world.** Although the diversity of men across cultures and history is widely recognized, there is an eerie similarity in the ways in which they are depicted as being sexual. Most boys soon learn that being sexually active is part of being a man. They are often guided by norms about conquests; over and over again, masculinity it seems is defined in and through various acts of sexuality, but especially the ability to penetrate regularly. Men can be effeminate but as long as they penetrate, and ultimately have children. They may be ridiculed if they are not part of this….Much of it may be seen as machismo and it is deeply bound with homophobia and heterosexism……..

To prove their sexual prowess (Iranian men) feel the pressure to have sexual relations at all cost, but to gain respect as a ‘good man’ they ought to retain their chastity. To be a man, they should prove virility and sexual appetites; to be a good man that is a desirable husband for somebody’s daughter, they should prove ‘innocence’, aversion to sexual temptations outside of marriage’. (Shahidian, 1999:197)

Another interesting case here is that of Sambia boys from New Guinea (studied by Herdt) who are taken from their mothers around the age of 7 to a special place outside of the village. Part of the ritual of growing up now becomes daily acts of homosexual fellatio. For a number of years, they daily fellate, for some years as fellator and then later as fellated. Elders teach that semen is absolutely vital; that it should be consumed daily since it is the basis of biological maleness; and that their very masculinity depends on it! At the same time, they must avoid women who are seen to be contaminating.Here the penis and its product – semen- almost become worshipped and are seen to be bestowing a masculinity on the boys and young men. When they are young men and are returned to society, they settle down and marry women. With fatherhood, their homosexuality ceases. But then the cycle starts all over again when the men steer their own young sons into this erotic pattern. As Herdt says, ‘Homoeroticism is the royal road to Sambia manliness’. For the Sambia it is absolutely essential that men engage in these fellating activities in order to establish both their masculinity and, ultimately, their heterosexuality. Masculinity, here, is the outcome of a regime of ritualized homosexuality. And sexuality lies at its core. (Herdt, 1981).

As Lori Heise has suggested, ‘Many societies have evolved elaborate rituals and rites of passage to help induct young men into manhood. Some involve brutal hazings and tests of courage while others require endurance, aptitude and skill. They all share the underlying premise that real men are made, not born. This feeds into men’s gender insecurity. …Men in many cultures [then] wage daily battle to prove to themselves that they qualify for inclusion in the esteemed category male. To be not male, is to be reduced to the status of woman or worse to be queer (Heise, 1995:129) [12]…

**Dismantling the Hegemony? Transforming Western Men’s Sexualities**

From the snapshots above, there would almost seem to be a universal convergence on the nature of male sexuality from many different perspectives. There would seem to be a hegemonic male sexuality. And yet, this is far too generalized a picture, an essentializing narrative has taken grip which portrays men as driven by sex, focused on their penises, in persistent need of their orgasms
and often as borderline, if not actual, rapists. This may be the hegemony, but I for one am not really happy with this. True, I can see many signs of all this in many men in many contexts, including myself, as I move through my daily round. And yet it is a very dark picture indeed and there is something worryingly inaccurate about it.

What then is to be made of all this? Certainly not that all men are like this and no women are: the first key thing to notice is that there are significant overlaps between male and female sexualities, overlaps which may even be increasing for some. Indeed, sociologists Pepper Schwartz and Virginia Rutter have made a surprising claim – based largely on research evidence. They suggest that there is a Bell Curve Continuum of Women’s and Men’s Sexuality. As they say:

a large proportion of both females and male populations share much of the middle ground… sexual experience isn’t all that different for men and women, but perhaps like us you wonder what causes men and women at one end of the continuum to be so different from other men and women..... (Schwartz and Rutter, 1998: p37-8).

It is these differences at the end of the continuums that seem to be highlighted in research. Given the evidences from above, there is surely a general contrast which is unmistakable at the ends of this Bell Curve; but to focus exclusively on this is to miss out vast areas of overlap.

Another key thing to notice is that the sexualities of men are decidedly not all cut from the same cloth. Indeed many of the studies cited above, whilst giving prominence to what we call the hegemonic model, also show that male sexualities do vary according to class backgrounds, positions in the age cycle, ethnicities, relationships with peers, wider cultures and personalities. Men are manifestly not all the same! Some men, then, are decidedly not like the above portrait. Just as Connell recognizes that this is not the full story for men (there are many ‘masculinities’), so too we may also be sure that there are many male sexualities. We need only look around to see that many of the men we know do not (at least on the surface) seem to follow this model. Despite the popular adages, all men are not rapists; all men are not demons. Following Connell’s line of arguing, there may be many different responses to hegemonic male sexualities. Some may be complicit (different from hegemonic but in support of them e.g. in marriage); some may be subordinated (practices which expel some men like gays from a ‘circle of legitimacy’ (p79)); some can be very different – emphasizing femininity, or homosexuality, or being highly resistant to gender; and others may be marginalized (e.g. those patterns outside of authorization)...

**The New Theories of Sexualities**

To get a way into this, we need to take much more seriously the developments that have been taking place in understanding sexuality in recent years. Sex is not a straightforward (male) drive pressing for release; it is not a simple property of people (or men); it does not exist in a social vacuum, but instead is flooded with the social. Human sexualities are interactive, relational, structural, embodied and organized within a broad template of power relations. They connect to identities, interactions and institutions. They are fashioned by patriarchal relations, sex negativism, homophobia and heterosexism, as well as continuums of sexual violence. As such they are far from biologically fixed.

Thus, when sociologists, historians, feminists and anthropologists started to study human sexuality, they soon realized that it was often profoundly unlike that found in other animals. Of course there is a biological substrata which connects us to all animal life, but what is distinctive about human sexuality is that it is both (a) symbolic and meaningful and (b) linked to power. In all of this we see that the simple study of sex as sex, of sex as genres, has gone from the agenda. Human sexuality is always conducted at an angle: it is never just sex. As the late Bill Simon said:

- all discourses of sexuality are inherently discourses about something else; sexuality rather than
serving as a constant thread that unifies the totality of human experience, is the ultimate dependent variable, requiring explanation more often than it provides explanation. (Simon, 1996)

Human sexualities are always more than ‘just human sexuality’. They overlap with, and are omnipresent in, all of social life. A key feature of much of this new theoretical work is to locate sexualities within frameworks of scripts, discourses and narratives. [13]

In general, these new social accounts offer up more modest accounts of sexuality’s than those found in the serological world. They throw into doubt any Grand Narratives of Sexuality – like that of an Essential Male Sexuality – that has haunted much of the modern world’s analysis of sexuality. They can see that the modern discourses of ‘autonomous sexuality as a separate sphere of existence’ (Halperin, 1993:418) are deeply flawed. ‘Sex’ is no longer the source of a truth, as it was for the moderns with their strong belief in science. Instead, human sexualities have become destabilized, decentered and de-essentialised: the sexual life is no longer seen as harboring an essential unitary core locatable within a clear framework (like the nuclear family) with an essential truth waiting to be discovered: there are only fragments. It is, as Simon says again, “accompanied by the problematic at every stage” (1996: 20).

Simon’s account is strongly associated with postmodernism, and can be linked to the growing interest in queer theory. One of the key tenets of a postmodern approach to the world is to highlight the dissolution of any one grand account, narrative or story of the world. In effect this means that much of what has been presumed about sexuality, or gender, or intimacy in the past no longer simply holds. The ‘Grand Story of Male Sexuality’ – hegemonic male sexuality located in the opening sections of this chapter, does of course continue. But it is now challenged from many sides. The idea of any ‘fixed’, ‘essential’ or ‘dominant’ version of men and their sexualities becomes weakened, fragmented, deconstructed and we are left with multiple telling and more fluid patterns. Of course, this also means that what it is to do sexualities at the start of the twenty-first century is altogether less clear; and this brings anxieties with it. This is also what Queer theory aims to do: it seeks to persistently subvert and deconstruct commonly held polarities, categories and ideas about sexuality and gender. Postmodern / queer thinking seeks both to find new ways of thinking about sexual categories (and hence male sexuality) alongside recognizing that a new kind of society may be in the making where new patterns of sexuality may be starting to emerge (and hence changing forms of male sexualities).

Some researchers have already suggested an array of discourses or scripts which help fashion our sexualities. Michelle Fine (1988) suggests four main discourses: those of ‘silence, danger, desire, and victimization’. Much of this is fully supportive however of what I am calling the hegemonic male sexuality and does not anticipate radical changes. Writing at much the same time, Wendy Hollway (1984) saw three gendered sexualities discourses. Apart from the hegemonic male sexual drive discourse, she also saw a ‘have/hold’ discourse (linked to monogamy, partnership and family life’, where women are more likely to experience sex as a lack and move on to mothering and emotional bonding more quickly); and the permissive discourse (where women are more likely to be co-opted into the male drive model). Although, there is a clear recognition that ‘the male sex drive discourse’ is dominant and hegemonic (Hollway, 1984:230), there is also space for other patterns of sexualities to emerge for women. In contrast, Matt Mutchler, in his study of young gay men (Mutchler:2000), sees a wider range of scripting for men. Four dominant gendered sexual scripts amongst young gay men are highlighted: romantic love, erotic adventure, safer sex and sexual coercion. These are hybrid models as traditionally romantic love is seen as the main script for women and erotic adventure as the main script for men; but young gay men navigate their way through a mix of both.

Although recently there has been a great deal of talk about ‘New Men’ and ‘Masculinity in Crisis’ much of this can be seen as backlash against women in general and feminism in particular, and much of it is not even new (cf. Whitehead, 2002:54-59). Much of it sees women and feminism as a threat and proceeds to assert some kind of new essential man as a response to it. My view, however, is that simultaneously (maybe more slowly than some suggest) we are moving into a new set of relationships in what might be called postmodern times (for some at least) where certain worlds are becoming less sure of themselves, more fragmented and shifting, pluralistic etc. It is a world I have described elsewhere of postmodern intimacies which brings a whole array of new conflicts and
problems (Plummer, 2000; Plummer, 2003). It touches upon shifts in gender, bodies, relationships, eroticism, identities, families. In its wake it brings massive anxieties: as a forty four year old client of therapist Zibergeld puts it:

The one sure thing I know about life right now is that it’s bewildering. It’s not clear what it means to be a man or a woman, how to have a relationship, or even how to act in bed. I see lots of people trying to get clear by reading John Grays’ books, but I don’t think it helps. Things are in flux; there are no answers. While I know that’s the truth, I wish it were otherwise. It’s so much hassle the way it is. (Z: 1999 px)

For Z, the traditional or fantasy model of sex is being replaced by a ‘new model of sex’ (cf. pxiv) which is no longer focused on a pressurized male performance but instead focuses on ‘pleasure, closeness, and self and partner enhancement rather than performance and scoring’. He suggests there are now ‘whole menus of choices’. I think he is right: what we are seeing is a progressive post-modernization of sex which brings an array of options and a series of continuing debates - all of which are likely to change the workings of male sexualities in the future, possibly rendering it more diverse and less open to hegemonic male sexuality. To briefly conclude, let me just suggests a few of these dialogues that are now opening up.

New Sources for Rethinking Male Sexualities

The Family / Heterosexuality Dialogue. The traditional order of family life is changing as we enter a period of postmodern families and ‘families of choice’ (Weston, 1990). In the recent past, families have been predominantly heterosexual and so have child rearers. But now, even as many elect to stay with traditional patterns, there are large numbers exploring many newer forms of living together and child raising: assisted conception, cohabitation, living alone, single parenting, same sex partnerships, divorce, step-parenting, serial relationships, polyarmory - and all the new patterns of relationships that these bring. Words have not even yet even been invented for some of these new ‘familial roles’ and they pose challenges for conventional ways of thinking about sexualities and gender.

The Deconstructive/Re-Narrating Dialogue. One of the ways in which radical dialogues over the nature of sexualities have been proceeding in recent years can be found in the theory of deconstruction which pits itself against the idea of language as a natural reflection of sexual life and of sexuality as a given, unchanging essence. In his telling study of male sexual language, for example, Tim Murphy can show that male sexuality is often trapped in a discourse of machines, sports, and bodies etc that work to make sexuality for men appear more driven (Murphy, 2000). Once we become aware of these linguistic strategies that ‘assemble’ male sexualities, the possibilities of changing them and creating new ones can become more possible. Another study, by Annie Potts, draws together much of this deconstructive work to show how male -female heterosexualities are drenched in a which gives priority to orgasm and the penis, an outer world of men and an inner world of women. She argues the case for ‘deprioritizing coital sex’ as the cornerstone of sexuality and suggests this may have positive impacts:

A cultural deprioritization of penile vaginal sex would profoundly alter the relevance of contemporary constructions of male and female so-called sexual problems…. Men may no longer have to conform to a phallic ideal, and women’s bodies may no longer be the targets of their penetration’ (Potts, 2002:261)

She also argues (as many recently have) for a challenging of the masculine (active)/ feminine (passive) dichotomy, and for a search for alternative versions of sexuality form women (which by implication will start to re-write the scripts of male sexualities too). Likewise, Philaretou and Allen (2001) have shown how an essentialist/masculine scripting is at work which ‘signifies the beginning of the heterosexual act with male erection and its end with ejaculation’ (2001: 303). As I have suggested above, much research and thinking re-inforces this masculinist model of a natural sexuality. What is required is a concern with the building of new narratives of sexuality that are
One way of sensing this change and working with it is to listen to what may be called the ‘deep/thick stories’ of sexualities. Elsewhere, I have made a number of claims about the importance of story-work in both understanding sexualities and in bringing about political change (Plummer, 1995; 2001). I see ‘deep stories’ as a little like Geerz’s ‘thick description’ – they are the very rich, deep, extended stories people tell of their sexual lives. They contrast with shallow, brief, quick, linear ones. Deep story telling is encouraged in a postmodem/queer world and enables us to see more clearly that lives are not simply straightforward in their genders, bodies, sexualities or relationships. We may dwell in simple polar categorizations, but lives are usually much messier than this. To get at a person’s sexual story requires burrowing deep down. The stories men tell of their sexualities may look straightforwardly hegemonic, but they may also negotiate with them, resist them, or even transgress them in multiple ways (cf. Geertz, 1973).[14]

The Women’s Sexuality Dialogue. There has been a striking attempt to break down the representations of what it means to be a woman, and under this guise now many women appear to be at least as sexual as men. Watch any ‘reality show’ that has anything to do with relationships (usually youthful) and you will see women behaving in ways that mirror the male hegemonic model: they are assertive, objectificatory, lustful – not only do they want to have fun, they also want to fuck. Read and watch any media to see the new woman parading her self. Likewise, the whole issue of women’s agency – of her acting sexually in the world and of having rights to sexuality – has been placed on the agenda in ways it was not before the latter part of the twentieth century. Of course, it is always true that some women (often on the margins) have ‘liked to fuck’ (Vance), but the idea that women have gone actively in pursuit of their men without stigma or shame seems somewhat recent. It is part of what Barbara Ehrenreich dubbed ‘the feminization of sex’ in her account of this change during the mid 1980s. In all, women are re-positioning themselves in relation to power and being under control; and this in turn pushes the definitions of male sexualities (often rendering them less sure and stable).

The Sexual Violence Dialogue. Whilst it is true that there are few signs of any decrease in violent male sexualities across the world, it is likely that there has been a growing awareness of it and of what needs to be done. Not only have laws and polices changed that have given credence to the need for hegemonic male sexualities to change (debates over rape in marriage, sexual harassment, the so-called date rape issue, child abuse and hate crimes – linked to the rise in women’s shelter’s, rape hot lines and the like), so too has there been a heightened awareness of the role of media representations of masculinities of this kind. It has made some men very aware of the problematic nature of their sexualities vis a vis women, setting up men’s groups that work to challenge the hegemony. Thus we have Men against Pornography, Men against Rape, and the broader men’s Anti-Sexism Movement. At its most extreme, perhaps, are the men like John Stoltenberg who argue the case for a sexuality that is consensual, mutual and respectful – one not shaped by the images of pornography, not molded by drugs, and not ‘fixated on fucking’ (1990:36-39).

The Gay Dialogue: Gay men also raise issues about sexualities and men. At one extreme is the situation whereby gay men have friendships and relate to each other in non-sexual ways. [15] At the other, as we have seen above, gay men parade the importance of sex: and not just sex but a wide ranging kind of sexualities that might range from anal sex to what might best be called ‘sleazy sex’. For many there is a pure delight in unconstrained bodily lust. One of Dowsett’s respondents has 10,000 partners and many have a parade of partners each night. Often they lose themselves to kinds of sex that take over their whole body: men here may want to turn themselves into sex objects, gear themselves into being desired rather than simply desiring. Indeed, Bersani accuses gay male sexuality and writing about it of being too frequently merely conventional, whereas Bersani seeks for the ‘redemptive reinvention of sex’ (p215/208-Dowsett). Here he seeks the radical potential which actually comes from being fucked (with the loss of a presumed manhood/ the loss of self, the engulfment. Dowsett, 1996: p209). Gay male sexualities have potential for transgressing the male hegemony in major ways.[16]

The Identity Dialogue: Social Identities designate the ways we define ourselves, and change a lot over time (both historically and biographically). In the past, identities were often just given and taken for granted – they were unproblematic. In the modern world, they become more self...
conscious and worked – less taken for granted than invented. In the postmodern / late modern world, identities proliferate and become much less stable and coherent. Identities mark out a past, create boundaries in the contemporary world – of who we are and who are not, and anticipate a future, laying guidelines down of how we should behave in line with our self created identities.

The model of ‘male hegemonic sexuality’ tends to presume the idea of a male heterosexual identity. This in turn implies some sense of sameness, commonality, continuity: if not actually present, the search is nevertheless at least on for an identity – a project of knowing who one is as a Man. The category behind the identity is presumed and is often stridently clear. Being a man often means adopting the hegemonic identity: a man’s identity may be defined though his sexuality. Postmodern/queer theory suggests that this world of presumed and clear sexual identities (invented during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Foucault, 1976) is being challenged and is starting to break down. The categories and narratives of the modernist era are under threat in postmodern times. As grand stories of sexual lives break down, identities now become unsettled, destabilized and open to flux and change. Indeed, queer theorists often suggest that sexual identities become are becoming permanently unsettled, destabilized, under provisional construction, very much a project and never a thing. This renders the whole idea of male sexualities much less clear and sure. (Though even in this most extreme form it may well have to continue to recognize the need for and the power of categories and boundaries in the organization of the social: it is just that these continuities and sameness are some much more pluralised, shifting and fragmented than they were previously thought to be).

Past thinking on sexual identities has depended on a rather crude binary system. But this is starting to change. At the very least, in the modern western world, new identities may be starting to appear: the ‘s-m’, the fetishist (and maybe a foot fetishist, an underwear fetishist, or an armpit fetishist), the macho gay, the passive gay, the chubby gay, the ‘buff gay’, the queer, the vanilla gay, the hypersexual, the man who is not really interested in sex, the sex crazed, the paedophile, the ‘bear’, the jock, the good husband, the voyeur, the heavy pornography user, the masturbator, sugar daddies, rent boys, the polyarmorous – to name only a few. Start to put adjectives in front – sexy, unsexy, attractive, unattractive, rough, tender, insatiable, dysfunctional, impotent, normal, abnormal, assertive, expressive, caring, single, philandering, serial killers, ageing, married etc – and a further world of proliferating sexual identities opens up. Use the word ‘sexual’ to identify the kind of body you have – beautiful, macho, thin, sick, fragile- and a whole new embodied sexual identities appear. Put them along side other categories – man, woman, Asian, Chicano, African American, Japanese- and another world of ‘hyphenated sexual identities’ start to appear.

In Conclusion: An Agenda for Queering Male Sexualities.

Hegemonic male sexuality is, by definition, pervasive and dominant. It has a long history and wide support. Some new developments – from Viagra to evolutionary psychology- may well reinforce the immutability of male desires. At the same time, we are also entering a (post-modern) era where a plethora of new possibilities are opening up.

Hegemonic sexuality may continue to dominate or be negotiated (as it often has in the past), but it may also be increasingly resisted and even transgressed.

Thus we have seen, inter alia, attempts to make male sexualities less penis centered and to weaken the link between sex and orgasms. We have seen analyses of the connection between masculinities and sexual violence and how possibly the enhanced understanding of this may lead to changes. We have sensed the growing awareness of the diversities of male sexualities across cultures, classes, ages, ethnicities etc. We have seen how queer theory and feminism works to challenge the polarities and dualities of men-women, gay-straight etc. We can increasingly appreciate how male insecurities, especially in adolescence and early manhood, can harden hegemonic male sexuality. And most of all, we have seen how it is in the creation of new stories, narratives and dialogs around men’s different sexual lives that we can start to glimpse the potential for changing the hegemony.


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POSSIBLE CHARTS /TABLES – UNDER CONSTRUCTION
these were not included in the final article

Table 1: Some Core Empirical Researches on Male Sexualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfred Kinsey et al</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM Johnson, J Wadsworth, Kaye Wellings et al</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The National Survey of sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coxon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Between the Sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blumstein, Phil and Schwartz, Pepper (1983)</td>
<td>American Couples: (12.000 plus mixed couples in US)</td>
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Table 2: Some general differences in sexualities between men and women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences</th>
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Table 3: Common sense conceptions of Gendered Sexualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine traits</th>
<th>Masculine traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner space</td>
<td>Outer space -external</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Rational</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receptive</td>
<td>Assertive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>Insensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex object</td>
<td>Sexually aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive because of</td>
<td>Attractive because of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical appearance</td>
<td>of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The Other’</td>
<td>‘The Subject’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: An Ideal Type Binary Heterosexual Model.

This highlights and exaggerates some of the key features in order to provide a comparative baseline
with reality.

Structures: Men’s dominance, control  Women lack of power, controlled
Biology: Sex as powerful drive  Sex as feeling (or non existent!)
Behavioural: Penile penetration, active  Vaginal submission, passivity
Relational: Natural object of desire is woman  Natural object of desire is man
Spatial: External  Inner Space / inside
Emotions: Emotionally inarticulate  Emotional

Natural goal of intercourse which provides symmetrical model for both

Ultimate concern with childrearing

Binary opposition

Scripts
Identities
Behaviours
Relations
Cultural Meanings
Practices

Practices: just what is this thing called male sexuality that men are supposed to get up to?
Narratives: what are the stories that are told about it?
Identities: what senses of selves come with it?
Politics: how is it embroiled in social change and power
Futures: where may we be heading?
The nature of studies on sexualities and masculinities
The hegemonic narrative of male sexualities
And their almost universal nature
And the explanations of this that lie behind them
And the social role they play
And who says them and why
The counter narratives that are existing and / in the making
The political debates generated across these narratives

**Ten Male Sexual Stories**

David Jackson  Unmasking Masculinity  Ch 6
Paul Monette  Becoming a Man
There are a number of studies on male sexuality, but many of them, such as Larry Morris’s *The Male Heterosexual*, have a tendency to depict the sexuality of men as unproblematic and to see it passing through various key stages—from early acts of penetrative sex through marriage, fatherhood, divorce (Morris, 1997). My article treats the whole idea as deeply problematic.

There have been a number of histories of the power of the penis and the phallus across society. See for example Klaus Theweleit (1987, 1989). It poses for me the interesting question: could male sexuality exist without the penis.

There is not space to review all this new writing usually associated with names such as Foucault, Butler, Weeks, etc. For some overviews and samples see: Lancaster and Di Leonardo 1997; Jackson and Scott, 1996; Parker and Aggleton, 1999; Williams and Stein, 2002; Plummer, 2002.

This term was first introduced through the work of Connell (1995) to capture the most common modes of masculinity in a society, and is discussed in detail elsewhere in this volume. (EDITORS TO CHECK AND MAYBE PUT PAGE REFERENCES ?????)

The literature on male sexuality by feminists is very extensive. For Kathleen Barry, the problem was sexual slavery; for Diane Russell it was initially crimes against women and later exploitation; for Adrienne Rich it was “compulsory heterosexuality”; for Andrea Dworkin it was pornography – “propaganda for and a tool of sexual suppression of women that is unbelievably powerful in its effects” (p. 26), for Carole Sheffield it was ‘sexual terrorism’ – a ‘system by which males frighten, and by frightening, control and dominate females.’ (Sheffield, 1984: p. 3). Whatever concepts were used, there was no doubt what was the problem: sexual violence against women. According to the United Nations, ‘At least one in five of the world’s female population has been physically or sexually abused by a man or men at some time in their life’. Figures vary across countries and for differing kinds of abuse; but that such abuse is both widespread and frequently condoned makes it a crucial area for understanding patriarchy.

This important study is soon to appear in a second edition.

In an already classic study, Feldman et al (1994) report on 1,290 men aged 40-70, 17% found themselves ‘minimally impotent, 25’2% ‘moderately impotent’ and 9.6 were ‘completely impotent’. At the same time, it should be noted that the men in their sixties reported levels of satisfaction with their sex life and partners at about the same level as younger men in their forties’ (McKinlay and Feldman, 1994: 272

A good ethnography to look partially at this is Elijah Anderson’s *Code of the Street* (1999). Ch 4.

Zilbergeld’s model is entirely heterosexual - he does not discuss gay sex, gay relations or the homophobia that underpins much male sexuality. Missing out on this is a serious weakness for a book called *The New Male Sexuality*!

Even though the work of Duncombe and Marsden (1996) suggest that many women find it unfulfilling

It was a Sadean challenge to the domain of conventional sexuality and it hinted at how far the world of desire may travel. Gay male sexuality often sees itself as lying at the vanguard of the sexual revolution and at its extreme edge it is inspired by De Sade. During the 1970’s at least one pronounced sector of gay culture came to organise itself around ‘lust’ and ‘desire’; it has been graphically portrayed in novels like Larry Kramer’s *Faggots*, documentaries like Rechy’s *The Sexual Outlaw* and White’s *States of Desire*, in films like *Taxi Zum Klo* and in more ‘academic’ texts like Lee’s *Getting Sex* or Delph’s *The Silent Community*. A set of locales and spaces emerged where sex became the central rationale and in these locales thousands of men would gather for millions of sexual excitements. It was – as many commentators have suggested – neither a particularly scary place (as the film *Cruising* wanted to imply) nor a particularly decadent place – there were clear rules of etiquette and decorum that had to be strictly observed. It may have looked
to an outsider like a random orgiastic world of threatening male violent sex: it was not usually seen so by the practitioners. In the bathhouse, the backroom, the club or the cruising ground, a large bunch of men had organised themselves around their desires.


[13] William Simon and John Gagnon were the founders of what has now become commonly known as scripting theory, human sexualities are best seen as drama. An elaborate set of stagecraft rules and performance guides our sexualities and brings them into action. Sex, for human beings, is not a matter of automatic sexual release; instead sexuality must have life breathed into it through drama. Sexual scripts then are guidelines that help define the ‘who, what, where, when and even why we have sex’ (Gagnon and Simon, 1973). Gagnon and Simon suggest that sexual scripts are crucial to human sexualities and they outline three major forms they can take. Personal scripts are those within out heads – telling us, for instance, what turns us on. They help to define what it means to be sexual men – and give us usually heterosexual identities. Interactive scripts are those which emerge in relationships, telling what each person is expected to do, and usually within a framework of power. Historical-cultural scripts are those scripts which exist in the wider culture and which tell us what is expected of us sexually. This is the world of metaphor, language, codies of meaning and the like around what it means to be a man.

Closely linked is the ‘discourse’ approach to sexuality. Following on from the work of Michel Foucault, many sociologists see sexuality as being located within an elaborate language structure that organizes power relations. They are concerned with seeing the ways in which language shapes the way we see sex. A language approach to sex might, for instance, look at the ways in which books like John Gray’s best selling book, Men are from Mars, Women and from Venus’ far from simply discovering what se is may actually serve to constitute it, and provide propos through which people come to assemble their sexual lives…Foucault’s study The History of Sexuality (1976, 1984) provides a major entrance to this way of thinking about sex which has been very influential. He suggests that the nineteenth century was not a time when sex was silenced and repressed, as was once commonly thought. On the contrary, he argues that it was a time when people were encouraged to talk more and more about it – usually in very negative ways. There was what he called ‘an incitement to discourse’ – people were encouraged to talk. Thus it was a time when scientists started to study sex (the psychiatrists and the sexologists); a time when new categories of sexuality came into being (like ‘the hysterical woman’, the ‘masturbating child’, ‘the pervert’ and the Malthussian Couple); and a time when sexualities got reorganised through all this talk into new forms of power relationships. (Foucault, 1976)

[14] A small sample of 55 stories by men of their different sexualities can be found in Kay, Nagle and Gould (2000).

[15] Gay Friendships: Peter Nardi has provided the most comprehensive discussion of ‘gay men’s friendships’ and how they usually do not intersect with sex. He discusses many possible permutations (as figure 4:1 suggests Nardi, 1999:80). While for many sex is off the agenda, for those who do have sex with a close friend, it seems to be a quick sexual fling that then gets defined into a friendship. It is widely perceived that Sex complicates things too much – even if there little actual evidence for this!

[16] John Alan Lee suggests that in general ‘sex is an artificially scarce resource in our society’ but that one group of people – modern male homosexuals – have been able to develop gay connections through an urban gay community that enable them to enjoy ‘considerable sexual opportunities at any hour of the day or night’. They are usually ‘inexpensive or free’, ‘convenient and accessible’. (Lee, 1979:175) In modern western times, however, gay male sexualities have become more organized and might be seen to exist on three levels:

(a) The organized / institutional matrix of the gay world /community- where a number of institutions exists for the provision of sex.

(b) The world of relationships – partners, friends and most recently even ‘marriages’

(c) The more informal worlds of brief encounters

Of course these worlds overlap.

[17] A useful bibliography on male sexuality can be found on the web at: The Men’s Bibliography: A comprehensive bibliography of writing on men, masculinities and sexualities, compiled by Michael Flood. 9th edition, 2001, Canberra, Australia. ISBN 0 646 18088 6 Contact: PO Box 26, Ainslie ACT, 2602, AUSTRALIA. E-mail: michael.flood@anu.edu.au
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Ken Plummer interview 2017 with Charlotte Morris

Ken’s other web sites

Why Ken’s Web-Blog?

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Introductions, interviews and minor articles

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Rights Work: Constructing Lesbian, Gay and Sexual Rights in Late Modern Times

Studying Sexualities for a Better World

Subterranean Traditions Rising: The Year that Enid Blyton Died

Symbolic Interactionism and Humanism

Symbolic Interactionism in the Twentieth Century

The Ethnographic Society (1999)

The Social Reality of Sexual Rights

Tranplants and Health

Transplant Hallucinations

Trashy Textbooks?

Some Reviews

Fairies, Bears and Leathermen

How To Be Gay – David Halperin

Queer Attachments by Sally Munt

The Marrying Kind by Mary Bernstein and Verta Taylor

Unlimited Intimacy by Tim Dean

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Bibliographies

Cosmopolitan Sexualities: Basic Reading List

Critical Humanism and Narrative
Presentations

1968: Subterranean Worlds

Before 'Spanner': A Sociologist Struggles to Make Sense of 'Sadomasochism' in the 1970s

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY GURU: RECALLING JOHN GAGNON OVER 45 YEARS

Cosmopolitan Sexualities (Oxford Talk)

Cosmopolitan Sexualities, Amsterdam, May 2014

Cosmopolitanism and the Sociological Imagination

Documents of Life: Narrative and Humanistic Research (Dublin 2011)

DURHAM SUMMER SCHOOL: CSGS: JULY 2015

Generations, Time and Sexualities (2012)

I will never ever drink again, ever! (BSA Talk, 2011)

Lecture on The Critical Humanist in Sociology (VI Congreso Andaluz de Sociologíá, Cadiz)

Lectures in Madrid, November 2016

Madrid 2016: Narrative Humanities Seminar

Narrative Powers: Edinburgh April 2017

On Narrative

Six Stories in Search of a Better World: Handout


Stories of Health and Illness (2011)

Symbolic Interactionism, Narrative and the Sick Body: Personal Reflections

Symbolic Interactionist Conference

Tales of a Critical Humanist: BSA Presidential Lecture 2011

Telling Sexual Stories Twenty Years On: Fragments Towards A Humanist Politics Of Storytelling

The Pragmatic Imagination in Everyday Life

Towards a Cosmopolitan Common Ground (March 2013)
2014: Narrative Research and Documents of Life

2014: Narrative Research on Sickness and Illness

2017: Social Psychology Course (Essex)

Introductory graduate power point

October 2014

Short Course: Documents of Life 2013

Short Course: Stories of Health and Illness 2013

Symbolic Interactionism, The Self and Its Troubles 4 lectures ESSEX 2017

Web Links

Cosmopolitan Sexualities Web: Key Public Debates

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Epigrammatic Sociology

Filmography: A Short Guide to Sociology and Film

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Transplants

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according to a recent study published in the British Journal of Urology International. The study involved a total of 15,521 male participants from different countries and races. If you are a chubby chap you can "enlarge" your dong by losing weight. Shedding 35 pounds of body fat can make you appear about an inch longer down there (depends on your body shape and how much fat you've got padded around your penis). Sexualities and genders existing In this text I will use words such as male and female to indicate both gender and body type (sex). To avoid confusion, gender will be written in italics and sex in bold. Sexualities This is a general LGBT flag that unites all sexualities and genders. Sometimes it is used as a specifically homosexual (female + female or male + male attraction) flag. Start by marking “Male Rape, Masculinities, and Sexualities: