

Feminist Response to the Social Construction of Gender

Goal: Challenge Heteronormativity

Competing Theories/Movements: G = Biological? Cultural? **[disagreement]**

- **ESSENTIALISM: S = G = SY**

- **Problems:**

- Does not allow sex to be a utility of pleasure [only reproduction]
 - Does not allow for G = Socially Constructed [or G-roles = artificial]
 - Instead, these are all fixed & determined
 - Does not allow for resistance of oppressions [state of being = natural]

- **PHENOMENOLOGY: Embodiment + S-diff**

- **Problems:**

- Does not allow for the BODY = Socially Constructed
 - Alienates Transsexuals = reinforcing S/G-binary
 - Should be viewed as an intersection of oppression (G & SY)
 - Reduces G-diff to power relations – No subject, just structure

- **MASCULINITIES: Multiple**

- **Problem:** Hierarchy of masculinity is not just about M & F, but also Gays/Lesbians

*How can we account for **MULTIPLICITY** & **SUBJECTIVITY** w/out falling into **RELATIVISM**?*

Phil Petrie 'Real Men Don't Cry... And Other "Uncool" Myths'

- **M = Cultural Roles & Expectations**

- Rational/Objective & Devoid of strong emotions
 - Assumption: the later will interfere with the former
 - Result: "Man" = "Cool" [emotionless]
 - **Problem:** Asking M to share emotion = asking them to redefine their ID
 - Communication = key to healthy life & relationships
 - Being "cool" = persona [NOT a person]
 - **Why so difficult?**
 - If M don't know/won't admit how they feel, they cannot talk about them
 - SC has created a **fear** of sharing = vulnerability
 - Racial issue: already lack of power/control
 - Giving up cool = losing survival mechanism
 - **Paradox:** Teach M to be strong, ask them to show emotion, & then cast-off as weak
 - **Result:** Internalization & Unhealthy expressions of emotion
 - Ex: using sex as an outlet

- **Conclusion: Normative** – we ought not expect/encourage M to go through life in silence