

Neoliberalism, Masculinities and Academic Knowledge Production: Towards a Theory of ‘Academic Masculinities’

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Introduction

Feminist and social geographers have long concerned themselves with critically interrogating the spatial politics of neoliberalism (Berg and Roche, 1997, Castree et al. 2006, Berg 2011; 2013) and masculinity (Zelinsky 1972, Zelinsky et al. 1982, Rose 1993, Pratt 2000, Berg 2001, Berg and Longhurst 2003, Dyck 2005, Johnson 2008) as they pertain to processes of knowledge production. Less often, however, are these systems of control brought together in an attempt to gain a broader understanding of emplaced knowledges and the spatial politics of difference. In this analysis we take these topics — the masculine and the neoliberal — into consideration while attending to their role in the co-production of and emergence with other forms of oppression. We hope to do this by elucidating the complex and contradictory relationships amongst processes of neoliberalisation of the academy, gendered subject formation, and the production of emplaced knowledges. If, as Raewynn Connell argues, masculinity is “a set of practices by which men locate themselves in gender relations, articulate with that place in gender, and produce gendered effects on others and themselves”, then masculinity surely impacts the production of knowledge (e.g., Rose, 1993; Berg, 2001; Butz and Berg 2002). At the same time, the academy is being dramatically transformed by processes of neoliberalisation, in which new forms of academic subjectivity are being produced via more hierarchical power relations that interlock with already-existing forms of exclusion including patriarchy, classism, ableism, heterosexism, and racism.

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Theories of interlocking oppression suggest that in order to understand a particular system of social control, it is essential to consider its constitution and relation with other forms of oppression. According to Sherene Razack (1997, 12), any given system of control always relies on other forms of control and oppression to give it meaning. This interlocking approach allows us to pay attention to how particular forms of difference evolve in relation to other forms of oppression (see Holmes 2012; Razack 1997, 2002; Min-ha, 1997; Ruddick, 1996; Jiwani, 2006; Valentine, 2007). Our objective in this chapter is thus to bring together discussions of academic practice, social difference and control, and attempt to elucidate the complex and contradictory relationships between processes of neoliberalisation of the academy, the production of emplaced knowledges, and gendered academic subject formation.

Motivated by similar concerns, Rosaline Gill (2009: 230) questions how we might “make links between macro-organisation and institutional practices on the one hand, and experiences and affective states on the other, and open up an exploration of the ways in which these may be gendered, racialised and classed”. Such concerns characterise our efforts to explore deeper the way that a key form of systemic oppression and control — namely gendered academic social relations — can be linked to other systemic forms of hierarchical social relations in the academy.

We begin this analysis by first discussing the ways that masculinity can be understood in academic knowledge production, then consider the ways that other forms of social relations (particularly those that are neoliberal and neoliberalising) can be understood in a complex, mutually constitutive manner that is fraught with contradictions and paradox.

Masculinity and Knowledge

How best, then, approach masculinity in the context of knowledge production? Since the 1970s feminist geographers and their supporters have made important contributions to rethinking the way that masculinity operates in academic knowledge creation (e.g. Zelinsky *et al.*, 1982; Rose, 1993; Berg, 2001; Moss 2002) by exploring

the fluid, performative, discursive and material aspects of the quotidian, and connecting these details to broader questions of intersecting difference and hegemonic masculine control (Dyck, 2005).

In the opening statement of her foundational work, *Feminism and Geography*, Gillian Rose (1993: 1) argues: “The academic discipline of geography has historically been dominated by men, perhaps more so than any other human science.” For over four decades, feminist scholars and their supporters have been attuned to the ways in which knowledge production is gendered, particularly through processes of male privilege (e.g., Browne, 2008; Hanson, 2004; Kobayashi, 2002; McDowell, 1979, 1990; Monk & Hanson, 1982; Rose, 1993; Zelinsky *et al.*, 1973). For example, the “Women in Geography” special focus section of *The Canadian Geographer* (46(3): 2002) makes a convincing case that, among Canadian universities, the discipline of geography has had one of the worst gender equity records (Berg, 2002; Kobayashi, 2002; Yasmeen, 2002). Historically, geography departments in Canadian universities have lagged far behind the national ratios of female to male full professors in other disciplines (Berg, 2002; for similar arguments about UK geography, see McDowell, 1979, 1990).

Feminist geographers have noted that the gendered character of geography has had significant consequences for the nature of knowledge that is produced (Monk & Hanson, 1982; Rose 1993). Kobayashi (2002) explains that it is normatively defined masculine values and deeply embedded cultural practices that limit significant change in the culture of the discipline. Hall *et al.* (2002) argue that often women are not perceived as ‘serious’ academics due to choices in research topics, gaps in career trajectories, social and ‘caring’ service, or involvement in community politics. Berg suggests (2002: 253) that the so-called meritocracy that defines academic promotion and status in Geography is actually the result of a system constituted by ‘masculine norms of academic behaviour’. Studies such as these have been important as they confirm claims of male dominance (and unearned privilege that goes with that dominance) in the discipline made by geographers decades prior (e.g. McDowell, 1979; Zelinsky, 1973; Zelinsky *et al.*, 1982), and thus they contribute to the feminist project of contesting normative gendered ideals that reproduce male privilege in the discipline.

Others have written about the relationship between masculinity and science in human geography, arguing that the 'trope of discovery' is deeply infused in geographical ways of coming to know the world (Rose, 1993; Berg, 1994). This work has illustrated the way that geography, much like many of the social sciences, has been constructed on a mind/body distinction that is deeply implicated in the way that many geographers come to see themselves as knowing subjects that seek to obtain 'objective' knowledge of the world that they study (Rose, 1993; Berg, 1994; Mansvelt and Berg, 2005). This is both a spatialised and a gendered ontology that constitutes 'the Geographer' as a knowing masculine subject that is able to transcend lived space in order to maintain an objective view of the world (Berg, 1994, 2001). Donna Haraway (1988: 581) has famously referred to this way of constituting objectivity (and the gendered subject that knows) as "the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere".

Given that this type of objectivity is not possible, its maintenance as a dominant mode of knowing in Geography (until very recently) must surely have something to do with power relations. Accordingly, the relationship between power, knowledge and the production of truth has been a central point of interest for geographers who have sought to explore the character of masculine privilege in academic knowledge production (McDowell, 1990; Rose, 1993; Moss 2002). For these and other critics, normative knowledge has been established by those who dominate the research process, with their power validated through processes like citations (Browne, 2008), peer review (Berg, 2001) and other key aspects of knowledge production in the academy. While not always poststructuralist itself, work that points out the imbrication of power and knowledge certainly runs parallel with that of poststructuralist theorists (e.g. Derrida 1976; Foucault 1984; Irigaray 1985a, 1985b; Gregory 1994; Rose 1995a), and we align ourselves with that tradition as well. In this regard, and drawing on work by feminist geographers (e.g. Rose, 1993; McDowell & Sharp, 1999), we argue that the hegemonic idea of knowledge in Geography is implicated in the (re)production of forms of normativity that privilege the masculine and devalue the feminine. Of course, these academic norms are also implicated in the reproduction of racism, colonialism, ableism, ageism and various other forms of marginalisation (see Nocella, *et al.*, 2010; Smith, 1999). As Gillian Rose (1993, 1997) argues, masculinist

knowledge in the academy is relational — discursively formed through intersections between power and academic knowledge — existing in our relationships with each other, and manifest through the subject positions we adopt as scholars. This intersection between power and knowledge, then, is a useful point of departure to examine the ways in which institutions produce masculinity, and therefore manufacture other forms of privilege and authority that evolve through processes of knowledge production.

Hegemonic Masculinities

As researchers who engage with questions of masculinity in many contexts, we are keenly aware of the way that exploring masculinity in institutions of knowledge production can be generative of a whole host of insights about neoliberal (and other) hierarchies of social control. In an attempt to gain a hold on the way that masculinity as a gendered system operates, we continue this discussion by theorising the concept of hegemonic masculinity, considering its relationship and emergence with other systems of oppression and marginalisation.

Raewyn Connell's well-cited definition of hegemonic masculinity is a useful starting point. For Connell (2005: 77), hegemonic masculinity can be defined as:

The configuration of gender practice, which embodies the currently accepted answer to the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.

Hegemonic masculinity is a dominant feature in most societies, most men are privileged by hegemonic masculinity, and mostly men have historically been, and continue to be, the leading figures in control of the most highly valued or most powerful institutions in society: the military, the police, business, trades, education, and sport. With that in mind, it is not surprising that such framings of masculinity come to be seen in a simple dualism of “men versus women”. However, the key point underpinning the concept of hegemonic masculinities is that gendered identities work in more complex and often contradictory ways (e.g. Butz and Berg 2002; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Pacholok, 2009; Nunn 2013). More specifically, masculinities

take different forms and are inscribed with different kinds of social power that are then placed in hierarchical relation to each other (and to various forms of femininity). As we argue in this study, much can be gained from a broader framing of masculinity. Gendered social relations, and relations of power more generally, operate in complex manners: social control is fluid and emergent and can operate in and through a wide spectrum of temporalities, subjectivities and materialities. With that in mind, Connell (2005: 44) describes hegemonic masculinities as “configurations of practice structured by gendered relations”, recognising that such practices are situated in places significantly influenced by “bodily experience, personality, and culture” (2005: 71), suggesting that masculinities are mutually and relationally constituted by subjects seeking to embody their various forms. Most importantly for us as geographers, masculinities are also constituted by (and constitutive of) the spaces and spatialities within which they operate (Berg, 2006; Berg and Longhurst, 2003).

In order to best understand the dynamics at play in these social relationships it is key to recognise that a plurality of masculinities exists. In addition, these relationships, replete with contrasting power dynamics, inherently give rise to processes of domination and subordination through an array of interactions that occur between and amongst non-normative identities (Ashe, 2007; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn, 2004). The normative hegemonic figure — male, heterosexual, able-bodied, white, citizen — is framed in comparison to what it is not, its ‘Other’. This Other is often constructed as inferior, lacking and deficient (Anderson, 2009; Ashe, 2007; Hopkins, 2007). The practical elements of such social relations are readily apparent in neoliberal capitalist societies in the arenas of production, labour, domesticity and interpersonal relationships, where men are typically framed as rational, decisive, assertive, knowledgeable, ruggedly individualistic and better fit to occupy positions of leadership (Kimmel, Hearn and Connell, 2005; Demetriou, 2001).

Notwithstanding these dominant framings of what it means to be a man, it is important to keep in mind Gillian Rose’s (1993) important arguments about the complexities of multiple masculine and feminine subject positions. In this regard, Rose (1993) argues that different men become masculine in different ways, thus only certain men will be attracted to the academy generally (and to Geography more

specifically). Academic men will also react in different ways to the masculinism of the academy and to that of their specific academic discipline. As a discursive practice, disciplines like Geography encode certain disciplinary actions that enact specific masculinities. Rose cogently summarises this aspect of the relationship between Geography and the politics of identity:

I am not suggesting that no man can escape the masculinities that I identify as central to geography; nor that women cannot occupy a masculine position; nor that women are incapable of producing geographical knowledge. Rather, I argue that both men and women are caught in a complex series of (historically and geographically specific) discursive positions, relations and practices. The relationship of individual men to the masculinism of geography may be highly problematic and unstable (Rose 1993: 10; also see Berg, 1994).

Building on this, we wish to explore further the concept of hegemonic masculinities, considering how it might be a useful conceptual tool to understand masculinities in knowledge production and their interlocking relationships with other forms of domination and subordination in the academy. Developed through the work of Antonio Gramsci and emerging through concerns regarding the cultural influence that capitalism has on society, the concept of hegemony suggests that members of the dominant faction in society come to dominate not by physical coercion, but rather by gaining the consent of those who are dominated (Gramsci, 1971; see also Joll, 1977; Connell, 1995, 2005; Hearn, 2004). Writers like Connell (1995, 2005) and Hearn (2004) have used the concept of hegemony to better understand the relationship between dominant forms of masculinity and femininity and subordinate forms of masculinity. In a similar way, we think that the concept of hegemony can also be used to aid in understanding other forms of oppression in academia by offering insights about the ways that individuals within the academy unwittingly grant privilege to oppressive structures, even while it may not be in their long term interest to do so (Francese, 2009; Connell, 1995; Gramsci, 1992).

In many instances, it is not through extraordinary means that such structures are created and maintained, but rather it is through banal and prosaic everyday *practices*

that normative gender identities are (re)produced and maintained. Hegemonic systems (ableism, racism, classism, heterosexism, speciesism) that operate through landscapes of knowledge production work by gaining the willing acquiescence — and in many cases full support — of those subjects often most oppressed by these systems. We argue that hegemonic systems of domination define the academic landscape, and in turn, analyses of these systems offer an important lens through which to consider the interlocking nature of academic oppression (after Nocella *et al.*, 2010; also see Berg, 2002; Kobayashi, 2002; McDowell, 1979, 1990; Moss and McMahan, 2000; Rose, 1993). Moreover, we suggest that such practices are instantiated in the academy through banal practices that would, on first analysis, seem relatively harmless.

Returning to the idea that there is no single, uniform or standardised masculinity, we are reminded of masculinity's amorphous character; it occurs in multiple forms, is constantly shifting, and is temporally and spatially fluid (see Ashe, 2007; Connell, 2009). Connell (2005) suggests that this continual flux is what allows masculinity to maintain a hegemonic position in gender. Masculinities, along with other hegemonic projects like neoliberalism, ableism and classism, are continually in the process of adapting to new cultural norms, technologies and forms of counter-hegemonic resistance. Jamie Peck's description of the adaptive power of neoliberalism provides a useful model for understanding hegemonic masculinity. In this regard, Peck (2010: 109) has coined the term "zombie neoliberalism" as a way of reminding us that there is really no longer any specific intention and design behind neoliberalism "but the limbs are still moving, and many of the 'defensive reflexes' carry on". The same could be said about dominant systems of control like hegemonic masculinity. Ontologically, many hegemonic processes that operate in the discipline of Geography are constructed through adaptive, ephemeral and persistent systems of (re)production. This is the strength and character of hegemonic systems, but it is also their weakness. For example, the very fluid and ephemeral character of hegemonic masculinity means it is also always in danger of coming undone. Much work goes into preventing this undoing.

The interlocking character of neoliberalism in the academy

“To study the implementation of neoliberalism does not involve that we only study the ‘application’ of policies. It also requires us to consider the process of their production, the historicity of places and institutions where neoliberalism is deployed and the historicity of dispositions that embody it.” (Hilgers 2013: 78)

While neoliberalism as a system characterises much of the social world, its nebulous character is shaped and continues to be reshaped by “compromise, calculation, and contradiction” (Peck 2010: 106). Or as Wendy Larner (2003) argues, neoliberal spaces are hybrid, multiple and emergent through performance and contestation. All of this suggests that we need to attend to the everyday banal practices through which spaces, institutions and subjects emerge in order to gain a deeper understanding of neoliberalism as “policy, ideology and governmentality” (Larner, 2000) in the academy.

Geographers have done an exemplary job of mapping the large scale historical geographies of neoliberalism in the academy (e.g., Berg and Roche, 1997; Castree and Sparke, 2000; Castree et al. 2006), and the world more generally (e.g., Brenner, et al, 2010; Larner, 2000, 2003; Peck, 2010; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Springer, 2010). Given its global pervasiveness, it is not surprising that discussions have turned to the social relations that are produced through neoliberal systems and how these social relations (re)shape and (re)produce geographies (Dowling, 2008; Dyck, 2005). Similarly, our discussion turns to the ways in which neoliberalisms are felt through academic experiences and the paradoxical and violent ways that they are sustained in relation to other systems of control. Attempting to explore the emergent relationship between neoliberalism and masculinity, we highlight some key aspects of neoliberalism in the academy and further hint at some of its interlocking relationships with other forms of domination and subordination. Interlocking analyses go beyond simply analysing the way that systems of oppression operate together. As Razack argues, “interlocking systems need one another” and, in fact, in such systems, one form of oppression always exists “symbiotically” with other forms of oppression (Razack, 1998: 13). She goes on to argue (Razack, 2008) that interlocking forms of

oppression *are* each other and *give content to* one another. With this approach in mind, we can begin to see not only the pervasiveness and normalised influence of masculine traditions of knowledge production and neoliberal academic systems, but the inseparability of masculinism and neoliberalism.

What, then, are some of the ways we observe and experience neoliberalism interlocking with other forms of oppression in the academy? Generally speaking, in academia, as with other spaces and scales more broadly, there has been a shift from Keynesian welfare-based government to policies that support private enterprises and initiatives (Hubbard, 2004). We live in a time of increasing corporatisation and privatisation of the university, that are manifested in structural transformations of higher education, including the instrumentalisation, commodification and marketisation of education, the ‘entrepreneurialisation’ of faculty, and the transformation of students into consumers. A number of scholars have argued that this has significantly compromised the academy’s capacity to serve as a “space of critical intellectual citizenship” (Castree & Sparke 2000: 223; also see Berg and Roche, 1997; Strathern, 2000). Philip Morowski (2012) has gone so far as to refer to these processes as academic ponzi schemes.

Neoliberalism produces disciplined academic subjects who come to accept forms of surveillance and assessment as the norm. This can be seen through the increasingly normative nature of audit systems like the “Research Assessment Exercise” (now “Research Excellence Framework”) in the UK, the “Research Assessment Exercise” in the Netherlands, “Excellence in Research” in Australia, the “Performance-Based Research Funding” scheme in New Zealand, and a wide variety of similar schemes being developed in places like Denmark, Iceland, Finland and Germany. This is all part of turning the academy into a space of calculation that can then be made into an educational ‘marketplace’ with attendant winners and losers. Part of this includes the process of rendering individual and institutional (department, faculty, university) performance knowable and quantifiable through a series of measures of so-called ‘outputs’. These kinds of processes have become increasingly common in academia today, and they are a central part of disciplining the neoliberal academic subject. Gill (2010: 231) describes this as “technologies of selfhood that bring into being endless self-monitoring, planning, prioritising ‘responsibilised’ subjects required by the

contemporary university". This is a model of hyper-competition that produces academics as particular kinds of 'individuals', and then rewards those who are willing to produce the outputs required to make the cut (and punishes those who are unwilling to do so). Those academics who occupy feminine, raced, working-class and/or disabled subject positions are all disadvantaged in this system, often because under the so-called 'merit' system that guides much of neoliberalised academic assessments and audits, their work is rarely accorded the same value as that of academics positioned as white, middle-class, able-bodied, masculine subjects (Kierstead, D'Agostino and Dill, 1988; McDowell, 1990; Bagilhole, 1993; Nast and Pulido, 2000; Winkler, 2000; Bagilhole and Goode, 2001; Berg, 2002; Kobayashi, 2002; Ben-Moshe and Colligan, 2010; Cotera, 2010).

The current division of labour also ensures that feminine and racialized subjects bear a majority of the responsibility for work related to both social reproduction (pregnancy, childcare, paid and unpaid domestic work) and university reproduction (student guidance, student counselling, collegial counselling, etc.), and both of these interfere with what is deemed to be the far more important work of academics: obtaining external grant funding, publishing in peer-reviewed journals and books, and travelling to present conference papers and invited lectures at other universities and international conferences. Neoliberal audit systems rarely even count the intangibles of social and university reproduction, whilst they usually over-value funding and publishing activities in the university. Troublingly, women who are able to negotiate these problematic distinctions in the academy often find that they have to adopt a masculine subject position in order to be taken seriously (as an academic), but in so doing, they then fail to fit the masculinist ideal of academic femininity. The penalty for such transgressions, as Moss and McMahon (2000) so aptly put it, is that they are often viewed as occupying a position "somewhere between a flake and a strident bitch".

Neoliberalisation of the academy produces a space of competition that creates the conditions of possibility for the rise of a particular form of atomistic individualism that leads to secrecy and silence among colleagues. Academics are systematically pit against each other through funding audits, competitions and peer-reviews, and often required to serve as auditors themselves. Serving on funding and promotional review

committees provides banal and prosaic processes through which normative forms of neoliberal control are exercised in academic lives. Cronin (2000: 274) labels this as “compulsory individuality” and speaks to its relationship with broader systems of oppression. She argues that the ideal of individuality is:

an exclusive and politically privileged category, access to which is restricted for the overlapping groups of women, lesbians and gay men, black people, [members of] working classes, children, and the disabled” because the “very exclusion of these intra-categorical ‘differences’ forms the boundaries for the interiority of ‘the individual’.”

Precarity too is a defining feature of contemporary academic life, and perhaps is most felt by younger, early career academics. Statistical data about the employment patterns of academics point to a systematic casualisation of the workforce, an increasing casualisation of employment, and the degradation of pay and working conditions for academics with only recently a rise in organised resistance from trade unions or other bodies (Bauder, 2006; Brown, *et al.*, 2010; Bryson, 2004; Dobbie and Robinson, 2008; Dominelli and Hoogvelt, 1996; Rossi, 2005). All of this leads us to question what the costs of a transition away from secure work to poorly paid and casualised contract employment might be? It is perhaps the same 'sacrificial' ethos, in which academics and graduate students are expected to sacrifice their time to the institution, that silences accounts of the personal costs of insecure and precarious work within universities (see Meyerhoff, *et al.*, 2011 for a deeper discussion of time and the university). A system in which, truly, only the 'strong' — or those with flexible personal situations and hidden systems of support — survive. This is a particularly powerful example of how oppression interlocks. Clearly those less 'flexible and adaptive' (i.e., those with children, those with particular health needs, those who have to deal with racism in their workplace and communities) find themselves at a clear disadvantage. Despite their profound impact upon academic lives, these things are rarely spoken of within the academy, and if they are, they tend to be treated as individual, personal experiences rather than systemic, structural failures of the contemporary university.

Towards a Theory of Neoliberal Academic Masculinities?

For geographers, space is implicated in, and intimately tied to, the contradictions that arise in the practices of scholars who are complicit in the neoliberalisation of the academy (Cronin 2000). More specifically, we suggest that theories of neoliberal academic masculinity might take into consideration the necessarily paradoxical and interlocking character of social domination, as well as both the material and discursive spaces where academic masculinities are produced. Discursively, the academy is granted prominence as one of the most respected social and cultural institutions in Western societies, due in part to the pressure that is placed on members of those same societies to obtain a university degree (Giroux, 2002). Of course, there are widespread differences in the social and cultural capital wielded by universities in different national contexts. University professors in Canada and the USA, for example, have much higher status than university lecturers in Australia and New Zealand — spaces where practical knowledge is given much more prominence than the merely ‘theoretical’ ideas produced by academics (see Berg, 1994). Nonetheless, at the wider abstract level of the ‘Western academy’, such regimes of truth afford cultural capital to academics who ‘produce knowledge’, and participate in the reproduction of dominant (liberal and neoliberal) social norms. The naïve yet widespread belief that entering academia is a path towards ‘expanding intellectual horizons’ as well as more instrumental outcomes like obtaining a ‘good job’, are precisely what grants power to academic masculinities.

The authoritative academic masculine ideal is typically formed through the achievement of positions of prestige (full professorships, endowed professorships, headships, etc.), external grant funds, and publications in highly ranked (usually by ‘impact factor’) journals. Such legitimisation is significant because it provides academics with the benefits, dividends and prestige that becoming an academic affords. A significant question arises in such contexts: what gendered, raced, classed and (en)abled subject positions have full access to this privilege? In the case of the gendered academy, the elite positions in the university are disproportionately reserved for white, heterosexual, middle-class, (en)abled masculine subjects. This means that both men and women can occupy these positions in the university, but women must do so as (academically) masculine subjects. Of course, it also means

that men are much more likely than women to occupy the key positions of authority in the university (see Berg, 2002; McDowell, 1979, 1990).

While these hierarchical relationships (and physical structures) certainly do not go unnoticed, largely, they are often unchallenged at the level of practice, and when they are challenged the challenges come from within neoliberalism. Such neoliberal contestations are evident in the ways in which academics regularly point to individual acts of 'excellence' in their research, their publications, and their teaching — all in order to situate themselves as scholars who are willing to confront and challenge the neoliberal academy. But given the virulent forms of individualism produced by and encouraged in the neoliberal academy, such assertions are typically made at the individual level. Acting individually allows scholars to disaffiliate themselves from the neoliberalism of the institution, all the while posing little (if any) threat to the academy, the masculinism it supports, or the neoliberal repression and violence reproduced within it. In fact, *individuals* are precisely what the neoliberal academy wants.

Paradoxically, whilst neoliberalism is theorised, critiqued and problematised by a host of differing perspectives that attest to the harmful individualising capacities of such a system, it nonetheless remains a powerful status quo. The permeation of masculinist traditions in the academy is largely due in part to the atomising demands that result from the pursuit of personal merit and individual accomplishment. The splintering effects that result from obedience to neoliberal ideology produces subject positions that are disconnected and atomised. In this way, academics are encouraged to think and act as 'individuals' by way of engagement in hyper-competitive academic rituals. In order to be successful in the academy it is vital to consent to the hierarchies of rank, status and reputation, despite any critical opposition one may have to such constructs. The demand is to perform, and exist, as a highly successful individual. In light of this, academic masculinity remains intimately tied to neoliberal ideology and we cannot understand one without understanding the other. Neoliberalised academic practices employ the rhetoric of rugged individualism and personal work ethic whilst also diluting conversations of systemic oppression through the suggestion that equitable meritocracies exist within universities. As a result, radical collective praxis that could potentially bring about widespread transformation of the academy

becomes less likely, and in many cases even vigorously disciplined. What results is a systematic reproduction of hierarchical academic masculinities that produce subjects who (re)produce the punitive demands of the neoliberal academy.

Academic Masculinities

So far we have outlined the context within which we might think relationally about the production of academic masculinities, but with the exceptions of some very broad brush strokes, we have yet to paint a specific picture of what these academic masculinities might look like. A useful place to start specifying how academic masculinities might be defined is with Raewynn Connell's (1995: 71) working definition of masculinity more generally:

Masculinity ...is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture.

In a later iteration, as quoted earlier, Connell (2005: 77) argued that hegemonic masculinity should be understood as “the currently accepted answer to the legitimacy of patriarchy”, the “configuration of gender practice” that is taken to guarantee “the dominant position of men and the subordination of women”.

Drawing on both of these definitions, we argue that *academic masculinity should be understood as simultaneously a place in gendered academic relations that embodies the currently accepted answer to the legitimacy of patriarchy in the academy, the practices through which academics engage with that place in gendered academia, and the gendered effects of these practices that operate to maintain the dominant position of men and the subordination of women in the academy.*

The above definition allows us to think academic masculinities relationally, and to connect them to the wider systems of gender relations within which they arise (after Berg and Longhurst, 2003; also see Hopkins, 2007). In so doing, we can come to understand that there is no single hegemonic academic masculinity, but rather, there are geographically, culturally and temporally contingent academic masculinities. Although processes of academic capitalism, globalising neoliberalism and the so-called ‘internationalisation’ of the academy are leading to more ubiquitous forms of

academic masculinity, it is important to remember that time and space still matter to the constitution of academic masculinities. Academic masculinities are highly contingent, unstable, contested spaces within gender relations, and it is this contingency and instability that makes both the process and spaces of academic subject formation so important in the construction of academic masculinities (Berg and Longhurst, 2003).

Attempting to make sense of these complex and contradictory social spaces, perhaps it might be useful to understand the neoliberal academy as a space characterised by “slow violence”, a form of violence that is neither “spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive” (Nixon, 2011: 2). The concept of slow violence disrupts common ideas of violence being both acute and highly visible and offers a way to account for the seeming complacency and contradictions that exist within the neoliberal academy (also see Holmes, 2012).

Universities in the space now known as Canada are situated on land stolen from indigenous peoples, they are populated by over-employed tenured professors and under-employed sessional lecturers, service workers and labourers, as well as students from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds. These people all work in buildings named after powerful white men, many of whom gained their social power through various forms of capitalist structural violence and accumulation by dispossession. These universities are the embodiment in both practices and in actual bricks and mortar of the materialities of gendered social relations as they interlock with, for example, colonialism, racism, ableism and neoliberal capitalism.

Academic masculinities are, in part at least, both the product of these repressive university systems and implicated in their reproduction. These facts are important for academic men to keep in mind, and particularly for critical and progressive male scholars who wish to support women and other marginalized colleagues as they contest academic and other forms of repression (Nocella *et al*, 2010). One of neoliberalism’s many dangers for academics is that it can fool us into confusing our unearned privileges with advantages that we might have somehow earned through our hard work. Neoliberalised forms of academic audit and assessment especially operate to fool those of us male academics who are privileged by our unearned

privilege into thinking that our position in the academy is actually the result of our own individual meritorious actions as 'excellent' scholars. As we have illustrated here, however, that kind of thinking needs to be problematized, especially the virulent (and violent) form of individualism that underpins such neoliberal thinking.

We end this discussion with no cut-and-dry descriptions of specific academic masculinities. Rather, our goal has been to argue for the need to understand academic masculinities as relational and processual, as complex and contradictory, and to provide a better understanding of the need for an interlocking analysis of their conditions of possibility under neoliberalised academic relations. We wish to open up wider discussions about the mutual constitution of academic masculinities in particular places, and how they interlock with the neoliberalising academy and the different forms of domination and subordination found in particular places. In short, we are calling for the analysis of the geographies of actually-existing academic masculinities as they are (re)produced through the quotidian and the banal, and how these processes are always already geographical.

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