

**Stefan Horlacher, Bettina Jansen, and Wieland Schwanebeck (eds.)
Männlichkeit. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch.**

Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2016, 382 pp.
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This is an impressive, informative handbook on masculinity research with an interdisciplinary and international perspective. The editors are a well-known and respected team at the Technical University of Dresden, Germany, active in the interdisciplinary GenderConceptGroup in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The main editor Stefan Horlacher who holds a professorship (*Lehrstuhl*) in English Literature at the TU is a distinguished, prolific scholar who has pioneered masculinity studies in Germany with, among other publications, *Conceptions of Masculinity in Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence* (in German, 2006) and the edited volumes *Constructions of Masculinity in British Literature* (Palgrave 2011) and *Taboo and Transgressions in British Literature* (Palgrave, 2010). It is much to the credit of Stefan Horlacher that this handbook on masculinity is a readable, accessible, and reliable research tool to which some thirty German scholars - all gender specialists in their respective fields - contributed (all articles are in German).

The handbook aims to present the “most important scientific, sociological, and humanistic perspectives including the arts together in a non-hierarchical way and to offer and to extend the specific knowledge about masculinity as produced in each respective discipline” (p. 4). While there is clearly a focus on German-language and European research, this focus comes with a critical interplay with US-masculinity studies. The handbook furnishes a survey of research and at the same time a review of the state of the art, its different methodologies, concepts, and results in three major sections after a theoretical preface: 1. Introduction, pp. 1-10. 2. Masculinity research in major national publications, pp. 11-72

(German-language; Anglo-American; Russian and East European; French, Italian, Spanish; Latin American); 3. Disciplines and methodologies, pp. 73-236 (archeology; bio-medicine and human biology; ethnology; history; linguistics; education-pedagogy; philosophy; psychology; legal studies; religion and theology; sociology); 4. Artistic and media representations and theoretical aspects, pp. 237-370 (film; photography; art and art history; literature: German, English, Russian and East European, French-Italian-Spanish, Latin American; music, dance). Last but not least, an index of topics and one of names provides a handy tool for using the handbook, and the appendix also acknowledges all contributors. Kudos to the venerable Metzler Verlag (founded in 1682) for the production of this handsome volume in its prolific, eminently useful and distinguished series of handbooks.

The present volume documents the impressive breadth of knowledge and innovative research on masculinity in Germany; its strictly scholarly foundation helps to showcase this research and with it the significance of gender studies in German academia (where 'gender' is often cavalierly regarded as for/by 'women' only). This reviewer appreciates especially chapters on the artistic and media presentation of masculinity and the inclusion of Latin America and the arts. Stefan Horlacher's handbook on masculinity speaks especially to and for the Humanities. The handbook's focus is on imagined, fantastic, historical and performative masculinity in the Humanities and the arts and on multiple sexual identities, while 'natural men' are marginalized in comparison to such standard works as *Handbook of Studies on Men & Masculinities* (eds. Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2004). This seems to reflect a shift in gender studies in Germany from high (deconstructionist) theory of the 1990s to performative, multiple sexual identities. - Will this shift away from the 'natural body, from biology to performativity make 'men's studies' irrelevant the same way it has denigrated 'women's studies' and 'feminism' in recent decades in the eyes of millennials and much of the public? Will this shift to performativity and away from social reality further deepen the divide in German academia between the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) subjects and the 'soft'

arts and Humanities, when in the literary fields about eighty percent of all students are female and two-thirds of all women students opt for careers in the Humanities and social sciences? Will this shift to performativity of gender further alienate academic gender studies from the new reality of massive immigration into Germany (and Europe) from countries with very distinct concepts and hegemonic role expectation for men and traditional subordination for women? For good reason, this handbook on masculinity leaves out Islamic, Asian, and African countries. Surely, the new wave of migration will challenge the theory-heavy discourse on sexual identity in Gender Studies in German academia and its disregard for the 'natural' and social world.

Stefan Horlacher's handbook on masculinity does provide succinct and informative snapshots in section 3 into disciplines that recognize and integrate biological aspects of gender. Markus Schubert's very readable piece on "Biomedicine and Human Biology" addresses the biological development of masculinity, andrology (parallel to gynecology), neurobiology research, gender identification and sports, and transsexuality, but leaves out significant medical research on sexual difference (like Baron-Cohen's "Does biology play a role in sex differences in the mind?" in *The Future of Gender*, 2007) and the controversial history of traditional medical research with only or mostly male subjects before the advent of feminist / gender studies. Masculinity, if it is not simply a study into 'habitus' (Bourdieu) or 'intersectionality', needs a foil of 'man' and 'woman' lest it becomes endlessly mired in 'gender trouble' and/or sexual identities. Björn Krondorfer in his thoughtful section "Religion and Theology" comes to the conclusion: "Critical masculinity research does not attempt an affirmative and heteronormative interpretation of male presence in religious traditions, but focusses critically on the privileges of certain men and the marginalization of others as well as gender relations within religious groups" (p. 216). The theorist Michael Groneberg in his section on "Philosophy" leaves us with a provocative thought:

Different from man, woman has separated herself from the nature-culture-dichotomy und conquered ["erobert" –note

the military terminology, BBC] more self-determination and freedom of movement. The vectorially constructed male sex must first deconstruct itself and the question is into which direction. This dissolution is met with deeply ingrained resistance in conceptualizations, images, discourses and practices that articulate the different elements of masculinity and domination and the foundational order of male and female (p. 166).

Certainly, Stefan Horlacher's handbook on masculinity has provided us with an inspiring step in this direction.

References

- Kimmel, M. S., Hearn, J. & Connell, R. W. (2005). *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. Sage Publications.
- Baron-Cohen, S. (2007). Does biology play a role in sex differences in the mind? In J. Brown (Ed.) *The Future of Gender*, 1st ed. Cambridge University Press.

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