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## Review of the book: *Deleuze and Masculinity* (Hickey-Moody, 2019)

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*Deleuze and Masculinity* is a book that works as an assemblage of significant knowledges for masculinity studies (Butler, 1988; Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; Horroks, 1994). Revising the work already generated in this field and contributing with new visions, Hickey-Moody writes six chapters examining how masculinity is valued, produced, performed and consumed. It is to say, “what its affects are” (p.11). Deleuze work operates as a machine creating affective relations through the book contributions. In doing it, Hickey-Moody is able to reimagine masculinities from a critical and feminist point of view, showing the urgency to challenge patterns of hegemonic performances as a way to enable social change and gender justice.

In the first chapter, Hickey-Moody underlines the relation between the production of hegemonic masculinities and cultural politics: “Masculinity is largely taught and learnt through embodied and symbolic sets of practices that take place in a range of places and are distributed across often quite complex networks” (p.1). Masculinity is “learnt as something that can be achieved” (Connell in p.18) and it configures a fantasy of an essentialist idealized masculinity which generates anxiety about failure. Although masculinity is culturally produced in myriad ways, toxic masculinities performances are affecting not only those who perform gendered identities far from hegemonic ideal of man but also natural resources, economic power, human rights or knowledge. Thus, gendered dynamics of contemporary culture are a problem working from global structures, as the State power, to invisible practices. Hickey-Moody underlines that

negative cultures of masculinity need to be disputed: “the hegemonic form needs not be the most common form of masculinity” (Connell in p.20). More efforts should be made in removing fixed representations of masculinity valuing “ways of doing masculinity ‘differently’” (p.11). Being pioneer in blurring Deleuzian thought and methods with masculinity studies, the author shows how Deleuze work can operate as a set of theoretical tools enabling rethinking critically pedagogies of gender.

In the second chapter, Hickey-Moody analyses what performativity, assemblage and affect “do”. The Deleuzian concepts configure a theoretical framework that allows reconstituting masculinity. Butler’s work on gender performativity is underlined as it understands masculinity not an individual agency but as “an embodied practice of citation” (p.13). It is a contextual and dynamic construction performed as a powerful and complex social fiction which humans and materials reproduce. In thinking critically gender performativity, masculinity norms such as power, domination and privilege can be transformed.

Understanding assemblage as a set of factors coming together being “itself performativity” (p.36), masculinity can be thought as an assemblage of affective economies connecting machines such as global structures, human agencies, matter, ideas, contexts and acts identified as masculine. Masculinity is more than human: “Matter and thought exist in relation to each other” (p.39). Affects produced in the assemblage also challenge the rigid and unachievable ideal of masculinity. Affect is a powerful concept which understands body as a changeable assemblage responsive to a particular context and it emerges within material and expressive forces. Hence, “masculinities are a creative, non-human force with no allegiance to the male body other than its capacity to affect it or be affected by it” (p.50).

As empirical thought should be developed through experience, Chapter 3 is dedicated to examine contemporary performances of young masculinity. The frontiers between materialist and psychoanalytic readings are blurred in the first part of the chapter, contributing to understand the connections and divergences of Freud and Deleuze and Guattari thoughts about boyhood. Examining the Little Hans text as a key piece for sexuality in childhood studies, Hickey-Moody points out the

problematic Freud theory of child-subject and its impact on the boy construction theories. The Freudian boy-subjectivity is a sexed and gendered subject: a model for “heterosexual psychological development” (p.73) which limits the boy into a unified social organism. Moreover, the text is characterised by “interpretosis” (Deleuze and Guattari in p.65) which ‘overcodes’ empirical experiences to affirm theoretical ideas. Although Deleuze and Guattari writings can be also characterised by “interpretosis” and they have not explored young masculinity broadly, their thought contributions offer possibilities for research.

In the second part of the chapter, Hickey-Moody engages with an ethnography in order to “think about empirical worlds of masculine youth” (p.14). Focusing in the sociology of education which “maps the lived experience of gender” (p.97), Deleuze work and Feminist New Materialism are intersected in order to pay attention the negotiation of masculinity in those young sexed as ‘male’. Ethically, the author shows how the construction of gender masculinity is related to “space, time, language, the body, curriculum” (p.97). The Deleuzoguattarian concept of ‘smooth space’ opens the possibility to rethink the gendered curriculum. Hickey-Moody claims for the importance of learning as “a process of becoming in relation to experience” (p.83) uncrumpling rigid gendered discourses. Focusing on protest masculinity which characterises some children acts, Hickey-Moody shows how anger is a learned performance of masculinity intersected by race, class and gender identity. The author goes beyond the psychoanalytic boy to examine how Deleuze thought can reconstruct how gender identity is learned questioning critically the striated space of dominant masculinity subjectivity.

Sociology of disability is introduced in the fourth chapter in exploring the affective and political relation of disability and masculinity in public culture discussions. Considering that media operates as public pedagogy, Hickey-Moody analyses media representations to put in question how disability is seen as something to overcome to success as a man. Popular discourses of “normality” (p.104) perpetuate 'what a man should be' narratives impacting on the self-esteem of disabled man. Gendered hierarchies between feminized invisible disabilities and the visible ones are an issue

which also affects. Nonetheless, media should be a struggle tool overcoming the unachievable ideal of masculinity due to “limited representations of disability encourage impoverished models for understanding the cultural value of people with a disability” (p.131).

Hickey-Moody also points the need of transforming the extended medical discourses of disability to a more "comprehensive model" (p.126). The imagined 'normal' body is a model limiting the capacity of disabled men: it creates sad affects in forgetting the complexity of the subject formation in disability cultures, reproducing gender and sexuality in stereotypically heterosexual ways. Hence, discourses about masculinity absence in disabled man can generate 'Hypermasculinity' (p.120). It is to say, "extremely hegemonic, homosocial masculinity" (p.112). Nonetheless, Deleuze understands body as “always in becoming in/around assemblages” (p.124) and related for its capacity to affect, not for its embodied limits. This conception distances the discourse of “wholeness” (p.119) and opens how disabled man bodies can be experienced.

The author calls for making visible “the gendered politics of the lives of men with a disability” (p.101) providing knowledge about the relation between disability, gender and sexuality. Pedagogical efforts should be made in generate critical thinking about sexuality and gender equality, specifically with people with intellectual disability. In set aside infantilizing, surveilling and regulating, it is possible to blur sexuality and disability as a transgressive reconfiguration of modes of sex from a posthuman position. Activating “understandings of the agency of embodied connections” (p.127) and supporting narratives of ‘what bodies can do’ are ethical ways to reconfigure masculinity and disability.

Last chapter before the book conclusion provides a deep insight about gendered economies of matter and knowledge. Linking Deleuze critique of capitalism, feminism and masculinity studies, Hickey-Moody analyses how toxic masculinities performances are affecting the environment in reproducing patriarchal domination through capitalism. In focusing on the gendered ways in which matter works as an

agent of globalization, she underlines that masculine economies and cultures of carbon are generating a global sad affect.

Through the chapter, the author explains how the carbon financial fiction operates. Its politics are mapping spaces of the global masculine narratives of capitalism. Carbon production and its energy cultures intensify masculine performativity perpetuating domination and appropriation of knowledge, power and “feminized natural resources” (p.177). Feminists have already pointed that climatic change is broadly related to masculinity cultures. Hence, in challenging gendered performances we can transform masculinist politics and economies of the capitalism. Gender equality can improve environment care enabling social change. Hence, “we must explore how we can do masculinity differently, think masculinity in new ways and invent new, sustainable, gendered futures” (p.188).

In conclusion, *Deleuze and Masculinity* is a book that shows the importance of reconfiguring how to ‘do’ masculinity and how to think masculinity studies. The different chapters of the book show the urgency to challenge the fix and hegemonic masculine performativity as it is affecting molar and molecular structures. Deleuze’s thought and methods are useful tools for praxis: they help to understand and affect the world. In thinking thought it, Hickey-Moody demonstrates how masculinity cultures can be reconfigured from a Feminist New Materialist point of view. In transforming the question about what gender “is” to understand what it ‘does’, new paths are opened to comprehend masculinity economies in an accessible way. Hence, this book is a point of departure for reconfiguring alternative masculinities through new modes of thought, contributing to the masculinity studies field in proposing new ways to ‘do’ masculinity and new ways to understand research.

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