

beaten or killed for violations of these orders. Some widows, who no longer have husbands to give them permission to leave the house, are starving.

36. The issues of exclusion addressed here have been mostly ones of epistemology and conceptual coherence. However, there is another argument for excluding even admittedly feminist men from feminist activities. It is a pragmatic sociological argument which says: Women have been trained to respond in detrimental ways around men—overtrusting, deferential, nurturing, and self-sacrificing. As such, men should not be allowed in some female groups—such as women's studies classes or support groups, because their mere presence by itself will be disruptive. While this argument is an important one, it deserves a lengthy treatment I do not have room for here. So let me just make five preliminary points:

a) If the strong version of these empirical claim are true, then it would no doubt count as a reason for excluding men from certain contexts. If men unavoidably prevent women from learning or some other beneficial activity, they should be excluded.

b) However, this argument would not only apply to women's studies classes or women's support groups. If accurate, it might apply to all settings. If women are damaged by men's sheer presence in a class, for example, they are damaged whether the class is Intro. to Women's Studies, Calculus, or the History of Jazz. This is in fact, an argument now being used for separate girls' math and science classes in public high schools.

c) It is not clear, even if such empirical claims are true (and they may very well be overgeneralizations) that the best course of action is to accede to statistical tendencies. Perhaps having men in classes or other groups who were sensitive to such issues would be more beneficial, because they could help train women out of such deleterious behavioral patterns.

d) Sometimes part of this argument says that women and girls tend to accept claims from men much more readily than from women, having been trained to defer to men. If that is true (though it seems overgeneralized) then it might be a reason for having *more men than women teaching feminist classes* because it would imply that students would take feminist claims from men's mouths more seriously.

e) Arguments about sociological and psychological facts must be taken seriously. However, it should not be assumed that these arguments for exclusion are only those of morally sensitive progressives. The very same arguments used to exclude male feminists from teaching Women's Studies, or white antiracists from teaching African American Studies, or Christians from teaching Jewish Studies, are used to exclude gays and lesbian from the military and women from military colleges—among other cases. In both of these latter cases, the argument is not that gays, lesbians, and women cannot be good soldiers, but only that straight and male soldiers will not function well around them because of negative attitudes. Since the only question is one of efficiency, gays, lesbians, and women must be excluded from military contexts—even though the fault lies entirely with some heterosexual men's dispositions. Now, this comparison proves nothing about the former cases (they all may be good arguments), but it does illustrate that issues of just treatment are often in conflict with issues of efficacy whether decorated lesbian officers are being kicked out of the army or good male feminists are being excluded from teaching.

37. May, Strikwerda and Hopkins, *Rethinking Masculinity*, back cover.

from Men Doing Feminism

Chapter 3

Who's Afraid of Men Doing Feminism?

Michael S. Kimmel

Can men *do* feminism? Ought men to do it? What happens when they do? These are questions with which I am constantly confronted, in my pedagogy, and in both my public and private lives.

Each year, I'm invited to give about twenty or more lectures at colleges and universities all over the country. Usually, the invitation comes from a coalition of women's studies faculty, sociologists, and the occasional student organization that has actually heard of NOMAS (The National Organization for Men Against Sexism, of which I am National Spokesperson) or my work. (On rare occasions, the funding comes from both the Women's Studies and the Intrafraternity Council—often the first time those organizations have collaborated on anything!) The motives for the invitation are similar. In each case, the Women's Studies faculty tell me that they feel frustrated by the fact that their courses have roughly the same gender composition today as they had twenty years ago. Today, they tell me, they typically have only one or two men in a class, and they spend much of their time cringing defensively in the corner, feeling blamed for the collective sins of two millennia of patriarchal oppression. Colleagues who teach more general courses on gender issues like Sociology of Gender or Psychology of Gender report only slightly less skewed gender composition of their classes. These colleagues believe, as I do, that it is imperative to find ways to bring men into the conversation about gender issues that women have been having for more than two decades.

That, then, is the starting point for my lecture. I try to explain why virtually every month there is a new name added to that growing list of men who have come to symbolize the gender issues currently in play. I began to work on that lecture the day after Clarence Thomas had been confirmed to his appointment to the Supreme Court. I sat down to write a

