**Knuttila, Murray. (2016). Paying for Masculinity: Boys, Men and the Patriarchal Dividend.
Fernwood Publishing: Halifax.**

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Murray Knuttila's book, "Paying for Masculinity", is a sociological piece of literature that centralizes on the concept of male dominance in our society. In this book, Knuttila asserts that in order to contextualize the prevalence of male superiority, one must acknowledge hegemonic masculinity. It seems that hegemonic masculinity is so evident, due to the immense pressures and standards of men that have been forced on males for countless years. Knuttila demonstrates how this type of masculinity can be problematic as it only creates issues and furthers the divide between men and women. Knuttila immaculately categorizes this book into chapters that focus on certain topics such as: childhood, the economy, violence, and media which strongly contribute to why we should step away from hegemonic masculinity. The overall theme of this book is the power that men have in society, further elaborated by Knuttila's methodology and research, he reveals how and why men are so dominant, and how this can lead to patriarchy.

When Knuttila is talking about 'hegemonic masculinity', he is referring to "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordinate position of women" (p. 27). Within this ideology it is important to realize that it begins from somewhere, in this case it starts off with early socialization, which begins at the childhood stage in life. At the beginning of this book, Knuttila stresses the relationship of early childhood and how it plays a significant role in the dominance of males. At young ages, many boys are placed to

believe that they are supposed to behave in certain ways to prove their masculinity, such as withholding emotions, and appearing tough especially to their male peers. Even though many people believe that this process is inevitable because of the “boys will be boys” complex; Knuttila disagrees and states that “this is not the case, indeed we now know that young boys are no less sensitive, emotional and considerate than girls” (p. 53). When it is engraved in the impressionable minds of young males that there is a definite way that a man should be in order to succeed, it greatly impacts how they transition into teenagers, and adults. An important thing to notice in this book is that Knuttila does not fully agree that men should blame their hegemonic masculinity on socialization and how they were brought up; he insists that they should take some responsibility:

“...Although boys do, in fact, live in a culture that poses numerous challenges to their healthy development, they are not simply passive recipients of culture or nature... They also have the capacity to resist or reject particular beliefs, values, and expectations about being a boy or man and the biological qualities commonly associated with being a male” (pp. 71-72).

Even though it is quite evident that childhood and socialization connect to the dominant positions that men have in our world, it should be addressed how they can be challenged by this power when they are faced with adversity. Knutilla uses the economy, especially during the Industrial Revolution period to signify the relevance it has in regard to hegemonic masculinity. During the Industrial Revolution, it is obvious that gender roles were very much to be followed, and at that time that meant men working and providing for their families, and women staying at home with the children. Knuttila notes how “female labor represented a threat not only to wages and jobs but also to masculinity” (p. 93). At this time, masculinity was being challenged by the economy being so poor and men felt that they needed to secure jobs and have a stable source of income, however,

it seemed that men were also trying to ensure that women could not be seen as providers since it was a man's duty; "males tried to protect their jobs during periods of technological change is understandable, but such efforts must be deemed efforts to protect an aspect of a patriarchal dividend in that excluding women was about the self-interest of males" (p. 93). In regard to economics, Knutilla also uses examples of society today to demonstrate how male dominance is still present. For instance, there are still problems within wage gaps when it comes to gender. In the book, Knutilla obtained data from a 2006 table, which depicts the commonality there is between men and higher earnings: "In the highest paid occupations, men mostly dominate, but still, where women are the highest proportion, men earn more" (p. 106).

Childhood, socialization, along with the economy and gender roles are not the only factors that impact hegemonic masculinity, violence and the portrayal of men in media should also be considered. In the book, Knutilla explores the issues there are surrounding violence, and how a lot of the time when men commit violent acts, it is due to the amount of power that they possess. Knutilla asserts that "[men] use violence to sustain their dominance" (p. 137). Men use violence and aggression to fulfill their dominant needs, and that can be seen as quite precarious; to show this, Knutilla uses the concept of school shootings. Majority of the time when a mass shooting, or school shooting occurs the perpetrator is usually a male; these men are usually insecure, emotionally unstable, and feel powerless so they resort to this type of violence to regain their power. In the book, Knutilla explains that "hegemonic masculinity contains an important element of entitlement in the male American dream, creating the tendency of privileged males to see themselves as victims when entitlement fails because of downward mobility" (p. 142). Due to this

form of belief, it creates the idea that men have to react this way when they are at a loss of control, and it does not help that the media projects these negative depictions as well.

In regard to media, Knutilla uses various television shows and movies to show how male hegemony can be problematic. Knutilla shows how in media there are usually smaller proportions of male characters that are not represented as aggressors, dominant, or as rulers in power. Knutilla uses examples of western films and war films to show that regardless of the genre of the movie, men are usually only displayed to the public eye in one way. Knutilla states that films portray men as “fearless, immune to physical pain and, when emotionally damaged, capable of truly fantastic levels of violence” (p. 150). These depictions can create issues because they send the wrong impressions out to young boys, and they make it look acceptable to conduct themselves in a patriarchal manner. Knutilla addresses that dominance is not necessarily a problem for men, however, it is what men define as dominance in relation to masculinity that creates issues, and when it is only projected in a certain way in the media, it makes it difficult for them to resort to something other than hegemonic masculinity.

Although the main intent of Knutilla’s book is to exhibit the complications that arise within the context of hegemonic masculinity, this book also has multiple functions. Not only does it educate readers on the toxicity that occurs when patriarchy and hegemony is put into place, but it also addresses that there are multiple forms of masculinity and they should be practiced and emphasized in our society as well. This book does a commendable job at explaining why men feel that they need power to be sufficient, however, one thing it does not cover is the perspective from men of other ethnicities and cultures. Knutilla generalizes men in the book but, he often refers to

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white men when he is using examples of hegemonic masculinity; it would be interesting to see the contrast in beliefs from other males. Other than the field of Sociology, I think another discipline that would find interest in this book and topic, is a gender studies course; I would also recommend this book to men as well, so they can reflect on themselves and become better men in the future.