Kimmel’s “Masculinity as Homophobia”

The “great secret of American manhood” is that “we are afraid of other men. Homophobia is a central organizing principle of our cultural definition of manhood.”

“The fear of being seen as a sissy dominates the cultural definitions of manhood.” Violence is central marker of manhood and men have to be ready to fight in order to prove their manhood. Men also have to watch everything they do to make sure it is manly: talking, walking, eating, etc. Our peers act as gender police.

“We take enormous risks to prove our manhood, exposing ourselves to disproportionately to health risks, workplace hazards, and stress-related illnesses.”

Men’s fear of other men “exacts a tremendous price on those deemed less than fully manly: women, gay men, nonnative-born men, men of color.”

“Manhood is equated with power,” men are raised to believe they are entitled to power, and men have power (they run our institutions. Women experience masculinity as a drive for power. However, most men don’t feel powerful.

“We’ve constructed the rules of manhood so that only the tiniest fraction of men come to believe that they are the biggest of wheels, the sturdiest of oaks, the most virulent repudiators of femininity, the most daring and aggressive. We’ve managed to disempower the overwhelming majority of American men by other means—such as discriminating on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, age, or sexual preference.”

Men believe they need more power rather than “supporting feminists’ efforts to rearrange power relationships along more equitable lines.”