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# NEWMMALE STUDIES JOURNAL

## Volume 3 Issue 1 2014

### CLASSICS IN MALE STUDIES

#### Gender Tribalism

Peter Schwartz

5

#### Earth Mother Is Dead

Herb Goldberg

15

### PHOTO FEATURE

#### Photo Series III

Jan Andersen

28

### ARTICLES

#### Make the Grade or Hear the Laughter

Gerhard Amendt

35



**Towards an integrated meta-theory of gender: thoughts on the potential use of Ken Wilber's AQAL model to develop an Integral Gender Theory**  
Glen Poole 42

**Caring About University Men: Why We Need Campus Men's Centers in a Time of Crisis**  
Miles Groth 67

**"If You Hit, You Sit": Implications of a Pilot Case Study of the Retired Male Primary Teacher**  
John Allison, Douglas Gosse, and Michael Parr 78

## **MEMOIR**

**Fatherhood: An Overlapping Generational Journey**  
Attila Vinczer 98

**Living With Crazy: My Experiences of an Abusive Wife (IV)**  
Michael Farris and Timothy Baghurst 107

## **REVIEW ARTICLES**

**Review Article of The War against Boys (rev. ed., 2013) by Christina Hoff Sommers**  
Miles Groth 118

**10 Stories about What Men Are Doing Well by Nick Theophilou**  
Dennis Gouws 121

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# Gender Tribalism

PETER SCHWARTZ



*Feminism has become a form of gender tribalism, a collectivism that denigrates individual agency and accomplishment in favor of the group or sisterhood. Positing women as the victims of oppressive forces beyond their control, feminism is today the leading voice in declaring women to be helpless and incapable of accomplishment without significant government aid. A mentality of entitlement and dependency has come to replace the more liberating idea of individual accomplishment; a “neo-hausfrau” movement. Feminism has degraded men and women alike. The rhetoric of liberation obscures a movement that replaces individual responsibility and achievement with a tribal mindset subservient to the group.*

**Keywords:** feminism, tribalism, collectivism, individuality, male studies

**Editor's Introduction:** This text first appeared in the collection of essays *The Return of the Primitive: The Anti-Industrial Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1999, pp. 205-218). Peter Schwartz is a Distinguished Fellow of the Ayn Rand Institute in Irvine, California. Mr. Schwartz's insights are remarkable for their prescience with respect to the fundamental meaning of feminism as it has played out in the last forty years. The editorial board of *New Male Studies* is grateful to Mr. Richard E. Ralston, Publishing Manager for the Ayn Rand Institute for permission to reprint Mr. Schwartz's text.

\* \* \*

All forms of collectivism rest on a certain metaphysics. The collectivist tenets—in economics, that production is primarily a social effort; in politics, that the group, not the individual, has rights; in ethics, that the individual must sacrifice his interests to the needs of society; in epistemology, that the judgment of an individual mind is subordinate to the collective consensus—all stem from a deeper premise: that the individual is impotent to cope with reality. The individual, on this premise, cannot sustain his life on his own, and must depend upon the group for survival.

This viewpoint, as applied to women, is what feminism essentially promulgates.

Of all the supposedly demeaning views of women for which feminists condemn our “patriarchal” society, none is remotely as denigrating as that held by feminism itself. It is, today, uniquely feminists who depict women as congenitally helpless, endlessly “victimized” creatures.

It is feminists who declare that, without government aid, women are compelled to accept only 75 percent of what men are paid—that their advancement at work is blocked by a “glass ceiling,” which only the weight of government can shatter—that women cannot be expected to hold full-time jobs unless government provides day-care services for their children—that women cannot get hired for the better jobs or admitted into the better schools, except through “affirmative-action” preferences—that women cannot attain self-esteem as long as Playboy-type material (which, a court rules, has “a negative impact on the individual's sense of self-worth and acceptance”) is legally permitted to be sold.<sup>1</sup>

The message of such feminist stands is that the individual woman cannot succeed in life by her own efforts and on her own merit. She is at the mercy of forces she cannot control, unable to obtain work, education or self-respect without the succor of a (governmental) nursemaid.

This is not merely a journalistic description of what feminists see as an unfortunate condition of women at present. This is, rather, a part of their basic philosophy—a philosophy that holds metaphysical powerlessness to be woman's normal state.

And it is a state that feminists actively foster. They want women to believe that the way to attain one's goals is to rely, not on individual merit, but on the power of the group. According to feminism, acquiring the specific abilities necessary for success in some area should be of little concern to women. In fact, they should dismiss the very need for such abilities. What they should count on,

instead, is the fact of their gender.

For example, the average woman scores lower on the Medical College Admissions Test (because of deficiencies in her knowledge of science) than the average man. Should women who want to be doctors come to the logical conclusion that they need to study harder? Should women be advised to master science, so that they can be accepted on the same basis as men, irrespective of gender? No, say the feminists; the only conclusion to be drawn is that not enough women are being admitted—so the qualifications must be changed.<sup>2</sup>

If a woman wants to be, say, a firefighter, the feminists do not encourage her to make sure she measures up to the demanding physical standards. What matters most, she is told, is that there be a representative contingent of her gender at the firehouse. And if she does not meet the standards? She should not have to, feminists retort; women are rightly due their quota of such jobs.

With all their prattle about female “empowerment,” feminists disavow the only legitimate meaning of that term: i.e., the individual woman’s self-created power to make herself into a value, the power to make an employer want to promote her or a school want to enroll her—as a mutually beneficial exchange, based on her objective ability, not as a sacrificial accommodation to her gender. But that would be too independent an approach for the feminists to sanction.

Their implicit message to women is: “You cannot succeed on your own—but you don’t have to; your collective will get you what you want.”

Ironically, when the contemporary feminist movement began, in the 1960s, people believed that its message was the exact opposite. They believed that women were being urged to abandon the traditional “hausfrau” mentality—i.e., the assumption (held by females no less than by males) that women were incapable of dealing with existence outside the confines of the kitchen and the bedroom. People believed that women were being urged to seek their own careers, to reject unchosen duties to others, to assert a moral right to the pursuit of their own happiness, to embrace the real world by becoming airline pilots, neurosurgeons, music composers and CEOs.

But the collectivism at the heart of the movement quickly surfaced, revealing feminism’s true nature. It became clear that women were expected to obtain all these new positions, not by earning them qua individuals, but by demanding them qua females. It became clear that the hausfrau image, far from being rejected, was being endorsed by feminism—in an updated, uglier form.

Whereas the old hausfrau mentality said that women could not perform the more demanding jobs as competently as men, this same mentality now says that women should not be required to. Now, the fact of gender supposedly entitles women to their “fair share” of corporate vice presidencies, irrespective of ability. Now, under this “neo-hausfrauism,” women don’t have to earn any reward—they just have to call upon Momma State to grab it for them. Now, as before, the conclusion for women is: gender determines all.

It is only the perverse influence of modern collectivism that permits such moral debilitation to be termed “liberation.”

In pushing this philosophy, feminism attracts the very worst among women. It draws all those who want to be absolved of responsibility for their lives. Every housewife who feels guilty for having forever given up her pursuit of a career—every mindless scrub nurse who regrets having abandoned her ambition for something more—every bitter woman in a dead-end job or a dead-end life—are all reassured that their plight is not their fault. The individual woman cannot succeed—feminist doctrine proclaims; so she is not to be reproached for her failures.

One type of woman, however, is to be reproached: the woman of true independence. The woman who wants to judge and be judged according to individual merit—who scorns the crutch of “affirmative action,” who succeeds on her own and who is proud of it—is chastised as a traitor to her tribe. She would never have achieved anything—feminists resentfully insist—had it not been for the collective efforts of all women.

Feminism rests upon dependency. It tenaciously recruits—and molds—dependent, self-abnegating women. It inculcates in them a belief in their metaphysical helplessness—and then waits for them to become docile members of the flock.

Feminism wants to enshrine the very mentality from which it claims to “liberate” women. It seeks to re-channel the hausfrau mentality—the desire to be provided for—by simply switching the object of dependence from husbands to the “Sisterhood.”

The leaders of feminism advocate the creed of the social worker. The social worker exists, not to help people escape from trouble, but to persuade them that life inherently is trouble—from which escape is impossible without the help of the social worker. Feminists want to instill a similar state of mind, by convincing the individual woman that she is doomed to frustration and failure—unless she hitches her wagon to the collective caravan of womanhood.

At the root of this malign conception of women lies a premise about free will. Feminists implicitly believe that women have no genuine volition and that their choices in life are not freely made.

Thus, according to feminism, a woman is never to feel guilty, no matter how low she may have sunk. Has she thrown her life away in a loveless marriage, in drug addiction, in prostitution, in violent crime? She could not help it, feminists tell her. Her choices are not the cause of her misery. Society did not allow her to do anything else. It is society, not she, that needs changing. And the only true “choice” a woman can make, therefore, is a collective one: to stand in solidarity with her female comrades.

The heroines of the feminist movement are not the women who achieve productive lives by their own efforts, but those who announce how empty and impossible their lives would have been without the maternalistic aid of a feminist-sensitive state. The woman who has no real self to assert—who pleads to be taken care of by her “sisters”—who preaches loyalty to quotas and subservience to the collective—who declares that the source of her unhappiness is not her own irrational choices in life but a tyrannical culture—it is she who is held up as a model to be emulated.

Because feminism regards volition as a myth, women are consistently portrayed as victims.

Since they are not held responsible for any failure to attain some end, every frustrated whim of theirs is taken as a sign of victimization. It is taken as evidence that women are being denied their rightful share of the goods. “Feminist consciousness”—says one author—“is consciousness of *victimization*.”<sup>3</sup> (Emphasis in original.)

The actual “victimizer” is, of course, reality itself. If a woman wants to be hired for a certain position or to gain entry into a certain school, not because she qualifies for it, but because she belongs to a class whose desires are not being fulfilled—then it is reality that is the barrier. For it is reality that demands objective qualifications. It is reality that presents us with the unbending law of causality, the law which states that a job can be done only by those who can do it. It is objectivity—the need to adhere to the requirements of reality—that is feminism’s real enemy.

But feminists dismiss the very concept of an objective reality, because the volitionless woman cannot survive in such a world. She cannot accommodate herself to a universe that makes such rigid demands upon her. She wants the “flexibility” of the non-objective. She feels ineffectual in an objective reality—so feminism repudiates it for her.

“Feminist analysis”—says a professor at the University of New Mexico Law School—“begins and ends with the principle that objective reality is a myth.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus feminists denounce the “exclusionary” means by which society evaluates doctors, lawyers, soldiers. Why, they ask, should women be judged by objective standards? And if one answers: because reality and reason mandate it—their reply is: Why should women be bound by reality and reason? Why can’t a woman be allowed to construct a more malleable world, a world she feels is more hospitable to her wishes? Why shouldn’t she be judged, for example, by her compassion for the ill, rather than her ability to perform surgery—or by her aptitude for telling stories rather than for logically analyzing legal principles—or by her capacity to bond with her fellow soldiers rather than to run an obstacle course in full military gear?

As the president of City College of New York, complaining about a lack of “diversity” in universities, writes: “Institutions of higher learning in the United States are products of Western society in which masculine values like an orientation toward achievement and objectivity are valued over cooperation, connectedness and subjectivity.”<sup>5</sup>

Why, feminists wonder, should even immutable facts stand in the way of women’s egalitarian desires? For instance, why should women pay more for annuities just because they have longer life expectancies? Why should they pay different medical insurance premiums just because they incur pregnancy-related costs?<sup>6</sup> Why should females not be members of the Dallas Cowboys and the Vienna Boys Choir? As one feminist organization claims: “There is no such thing as fair and unfair discrimination.”<sup>7</sup>

In this war between women and objectivity—between whims and reality—it is considered “discriminatory” to give priority to the latter combatant.

But since reality per se is not very responsive to political protests, feminists direct their griev-

ances against the party they blame for “inventing” such an unyielding universe: men.

It is men who push the idea of objectivity—feminism argues—as a means of keeping women subjugated. It is men who arbitrarily refuse to indulge a woman’s whims, as they insist that she be judged by merit, not gender. It is men who are to blame for every female who becomes a stewardess rather than a pilot, a cheerleader rather than a quarterback, a secretary rather than a vice president.

Feminists observe that males have somehow managed to succeed in reality. They have somehow been able to acquire the jobs, the wealth, the fame, the happiness. The way for women to do likewise—feminists maintain—is, not to master reality, but to harness its surrogate: the male. How? By acting like the children feminism believes they metaphysically are, and petulantly demanding that their desires be accommodated—by men. By insisting that they be given their “allowances,” in the form of prescribed quotas of jobs, promotions, college admissions, etc.—to be produced and financed by men. (At least, the old hausfrau method of directly latching onto a husband for financial security was a more honest form of dependence.)

This evaluation of women as non-volitional ciphers, and of men as their vile oppressors, is implicit throughout the feminist philosophy. But there is one area in which this view is made virtually explicit: sex.

Sex between a man and a woman is not what it seems, according to feminists—i.e., it is not really voluntary. Law professor Susan Estrich, for instance, writes: “Many feminists would argue that so long as women are powerless relative to men, viewing a ‘yes’ as a sign of true consent is misguided.”<sup>8</sup>

Other feminists contend that a woman cannot be held accountable for her decision to engage in sex. “There could be many reasons why a woman might not resist a man’s advances so that unwanted intercourse could occur without force. The woman ... may be confused. Her socialization may make it difficult for her to resist.”<sup>9</sup>

In other words, women—adult women—are incapable of saying no when they do not want to have sex. They are the passive, deterministic products of their “socialization.” Consequently, feminists say, women cannot be held responsible for having sex, any more than children can.

This idea of women as volitionless doormats obliterates the distinction between the voluntary and the forced. Do women have a rational faculty, by which they choose whether or not to engage in sex?

Not according to feminists, who declare that “verbal coercion” constitutes rape. And what is “verbal coercion”? It is “a woman’s consenting to unwanted sexual activity because of a man’s verbal arguments *not including verbal threats of force*.”<sup>10</sup> (Emphasis added.) So whenever the man utters anything indicating a desire for sex, any subsequent sexual activity, no matter how willing the woman is, may well make him criminally liable.

This is why, in incidents in which men are denounced (sometimes correctly) for “sexual mis-

conduct”—such as the one at the Navy’s 1991 Tailhook convention—no differentiation is made between actions in which the women willingly engage and actions in which they are forced to participate. To the feminist, it is all “coercive.”

On this view, it is not the objective facts that are legally decisive, but the woman’s subjective emotions. Says law professor Catherine MacKinnon: “I call it rape whenever a woman has sex and *feels violated*.”<sup>11</sup> (Emphasis added.)

Facts are simply brushed aside by feminists. Since women are seen as incapable of exercising volition, the crucial distinction with respect to sex is, not between the woman’s giving and withholding consent, but between her feeling and not feeling “violated” —a feeling on the basis of which men are to be indicted, tried and sentenced.

A study of college students (“Project on Campus Sexual Assault”), sponsored by Ms. magazine in 1985, is widely hailed as an authoritative, scientific survey of the prevalence of rape in American society. It found that over 25 percent of college-age women had been victims of rape or attempted rape. This reinforced the portrait of a patriarchal culture in which women are under constant attack by, and need constant protection from, their natural enemy, the male.

Yet it was only the survey’s distorted definition of rape—based on the view of women as “socialized” puppets, unable to make their own decisions—that led to such a conclusion. For example, according to the questionnaire, if a woman accepts a drink from a man and they then willingly have sex, it may be considered rape, because the man has “impair[ed] the other person’s judgment or control by administering any drug or intoxicant.”<sup>12</sup>

In fact, of those classified by the survey as having been raped, 73 percent indicated that they themselves did not believe that the sexual activity in question constituted rape. And over 40 percent of the “victims” had sex again with their “attackers.”<sup>13</sup>

This neo-hausfrau movement believes that women must be treated like children. They cannot be trusted to give “informed consent,” they cannot be relied upon to know whether they have been raped and they need continuous parental supervision to make sure their needs are being met.

When a march on Washington was organized by the National Organization for Women to publicize “violence against women,” the objects of the protest were, not just rape or battery, but reductions in welfare spending and cutbacks in affirmative action programs. As reported in the *New York Times*, the feminists “equated what they called ‘political violence’ with physical attacks.”<sup>14</sup> A parent who beats an infant and a parent who withholds meals from an infant are both guilty of physical abuse. Similarly—feminist thinking goes—adult women are “victimized” by a denial of welfare benefits as much as by a real assault.

Just as the essence of rape, according to feminists, is not the act of physically forcing a woman to have sex, so the nature of its evil is not the coercion—but the collective “discrimination” by one class against another.

This primitive, tribalist view is most openly advocated by MacKinnon, who writes: “Sexual violation is both a practice and an index of inequality between the sexes, both a symbol and an act of women’s subordinate social status to men.”<sup>15</sup> Unable to perceive a woman as an individual even with respect to her being the target of an actual rape, MacKinnon sees the crime as being committed against the tribe. It is not that a particular woman has been attacked by a particular man—or even that physical force has been used—but that one collective has been judged “inferior” to another.

Rape should be prosecuted as a “sex equality case,” MacKinnon says. In a rape trial, the central questions about the accused would include: “How does this man treat women sexually? Is he a sex bigot?” If the courts were to adopt this approach, she concludes, “At least rape would be called in law what it is in life: sex discrimination.”<sup>16</sup>

But if the essence of rape is “discrimination”—what is the difference between sex and rape? The act of sex is undeniably “discriminatory” —it discriminates by gender. Doesn’t that make it inherently evil?

Whether the claim is that “yes” equals “no,” or that rape equals “inequality”—sex is transformed by feminists into the archetypal act of aggression by men against women. Sex per se becomes rape. And all men become guilty of it.

Rape, says one “acquaintance-rape educator,” “is not some form of psychopathology that afflicts a very small number of men. In fact rape is not that different from what we see as socially acceptable or socially laudable male behavior.”<sup>17</sup> Rape, says a noted feminist author, is “a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men keep all women in a state of fear*.”<sup>18</sup> (Emphasis in original.)

What is the source of this enormous hostility toward men, and particularly toward sex between men and women? The act of sex, Ayn Rand writes, is an act of metaphysical assertion: “To a rational man, sex is an expression of self-esteem—a *celebration of himself and of existence*.... [I]t is his response to his own highest values in the person of another.”<sup>19</sup> (Emphasis in original.) Sex is an affirmation of an individual’s self-worth, of his or her capability to live successfully in reality and to experience the joy of such success.

What assessment of sex, then, follows from an opposite metaphysics? If sex is good because it celebrates the individual’s capacity to master reality and achieve values—how must feminists, who believe that a woman fundamentally lacks that capacity, perceive sex?

To them, sex is a union, not between two partners sharing their highest values, but between two antagonistic forces: a brutal despot—who wantonly denies woman her due by insisting that she earn her place in the world: and a feckless, perpetual victim—who desperately clings to others for her basic identity and for her very survival. On this view, sex for the woman is not a joyous affirmation of her sense of self-value, but an intolerable reinforcement of her sense of helplessness—and of her resentment toward the man for not being helpless.

Sex, according to feminists, is sheer oppression. The woman is being dominated. She is being “taken” by her enemy. Sex is the quintessential “victimization” of woman—the woman who lacks

the capacity even to assert her own will in the face of male “verbal coercion.”

Feminist theorist Andrea Dworkin, who depicts sex as “wartime invasion and occupation,” presents this view unabashedly: “Physically, the woman in intercourse is a space inhabited, a literal territory occupied literally: occupied even if there has been no resistance, no force; even if the occupied person said yes please, yes hurry, yes more.” The fact that women may judge sex to be good makes the act all the worse, she says. These “occupied women [are] more base in their collaboration than other collaborators have ever been: experiencing pleasure in their own inferiority, calling intercourse freedom.”<sup>20</sup>

Dworkin’s is not some “lunatic fringe” viewpoint. Her odious characterization of sex follows logically from the feminist metaphysics. If the individual woman is a powerless, volitionless nonentity, then sex is a combination of callous invasion and abject collaboration. Dworkin is merely being more consistent, and is taking feminist ideas more seriously, than many of her feminist cohorts.

The doctrine of feminism pervades today’s culture. To question and oppose its “politically correct” tenets, especially within academia, requires an independent mind. That is, it requires precisely the faculty whose existence feminism will not acknowledge—and whose force it cannot withstand.

Feminism needs to be repudiated by everyone—man or woman—who recognizes the crucial need to think, and to act, by oneself. If you understand that a human being’s basic identity is self-created, and is not the product of gender—if you grasp the fact of your capacity to achieve your own goals by your own effort—if you indignantly reject the demand that anyone live by the guidance and the power of the collective—then do not permit the ideas of feminism to go unchallenged. Expose, and condemn, the self-effacing dependency that this “liberation” movement cultivates. Above all, let people see that the ideological battle over feminism is not between the female and the male—but between tribalism and independence.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>“Canada Court Says Pornography Harms Women,” *New York Times*, February 2, 1992, p. B7

<sup>2</sup>On the Medical College Admission Test—the only standardized test available to medical schools—women attain a mean score 88 percent that of men on the physical sciences section of the test; and 90 percent on the biological sciences. Yet in recent years, according to the Association of Medical Colleges, equal proportions of male and female applicants have been accepted to medical schools. (“Women seem to communicate better in the interview,” says the associate dean of admissions at Harvard Medical School.) See Martin L. Gross, *The End of Sanity* (Avon Books, 1997) pp. 72-75.

<sup>3</sup>Sandra Lee Bartky, *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (Routledge, 1990), p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>Ann Scales of the University of New Mexico Law School, quoted by David Brock in *The Real Anita Hill* (Free Press, 1993) p. 384.

<sup>5</sup> Yolanda Moses, quoted in a *New York Post* editorial, “CUNY Does It Again,” May 26, 1993, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> The Supreme Court has endorsed this view, ruling in 1983 that sex-segregated actuarial tables violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because “under the statute, even a true generalization about a class cannot justify class-based treatment.”

<sup>7</sup> An official of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, quoted in *The Intellectual Activist*, July 29, 1983, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Katie Roiphe in “Date Rape’s Other Victim,” *New York Times Magazine*, June 13, 1993, p. 30.

<sup>9</sup> Charlene L. Muehlenhard and Jennifer L. Schrag, quoted by Norman Podhoretz in “Rape in Feminist Eyes,” *Commentary*, October 1991, p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> Roiphe, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by Carol Iannone, “Sex and the Feminists,” *Commentary*, September 1993, p. 31.

<sup>12</sup> Christina Hoff Sommers, *Who Stole Feminism?* (Simon & Schuster, 1994), pp. 212—213.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 213—214.

<sup>14</sup> “Thousands in Capital Protest Attacks on Women,” *New York Times*, April 10, 1995, p. A1.

<sup>15</sup> “The Palm Beach Hanging,” *New York Times*, December 15, 1991, Section 4, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Py Bateman, quoted by Podhoretz, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* (from Susan Brownmiller’s book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, Bantam, 1976).

<sup>19</sup> Ayn Rand, “Of Living Death,” *The Voice of Reason* (New American Library, 1998), p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted by Podhoretz, op. cit., p. 31 (from Andrea Dworkin’s book *Intercourse*, Free Press, 1988).



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# Earth Mother Is Dead

HERB GOLDBERG



*Far from being the oppressive brute of feminist lore, the human male has often doted over his female counterpart, especially in romantic relationships. The image of her as “earth mother” has come crashing down, however, as the nurturing mother figure of fantasy life has disappeared. Unlike women, who have liberated themselves, the male is enervated by his dependence on the feminine and the loss of woman as his best friend and mother figure. The idealized image of woman may be making a return as more women makes themselves into sex objects and return to a more passive way of relating to men. The hazards of the male’s idealization of earth mother are examined.*

**Keywords:** earth mother, dependency, idealization, relationships, male experience, male studies

## Introduction (2013)

“Earth Mother Is Dead” is the chapter on the male-female relationship in my book *The Hazards of Being Male*. I discussed the emerging post-feminist woman. I also spoke to the yearning in both women and men for a relationship between them that would be fulfilling and safe, satisfying and enjoyable and characterized by mutual support, a lack of objectification and the disappearance of mutual exploitation. The male would no longer have to be the success-object endlessly needing to prove himself as the provider and protector while the female would no longer be viewed as a sex object and nurturing mother-figure who needed to be the male’s “best and only friend”, thus making it possible for him not to confront his deep isolation and lack of personal connections and intimacy.

Since *The Hazards of Being Male* was published the gender dream of a level playing field without the dynamic of a controlling, responsibility and guilt driven male and an accommodating, dependent, angry and diminished female in pain, has partially been achieved. Women have come to own their power in major ways while the men who choose to can let go of the bottomless need to prove themselves as invulnerable, fearless and ever productive beings. But there are many signs of regressive outcroppings. That is, women today as much as ever, seem to strive to transform themselves into beautiful sex objects while most men pursue success and power and masculine perfection as obsessively as ever. Instead of the male-female bond having become strengthened and a source of mutual joy and support the connection between men and women has seemingly become more fragile, explosive and saturated with distrust and great caution. Finding, building and maintaining the man-woman relationship today often seems like an overwhelming, even impossible challenge characterized by skittish individuals flitting from partner to partner and finally giving up on finding and creating an enduring relationship.

In some ways, the history of the male-female relationship has been a tragedy of major proportions characterized by a deluded male unable to perceive and relate to the female as she is, and women pursuing a romantic fantasy and closeness with a male that continually eludes, frustrates and finally enrages her. The number of older men and women living alone today has skyrocketed. Too many relationships that begin with great hope, love and commitment seem to descend quickly into bottomless blaming, mutual aversion and raging encounters. Crazy-making relationship behaviors characterize both genders with men and women giving each other contradictory, exhausting and “either way you lose” messages.

At this point where it will all end is unclear. The worst case scenario is that women will give up on relating intimately to men altogether and become impregnated, if they desire to be mothers, with donated sperm while men retreat into increasingly disconnected, abstracted, workaholic and autistic like relating and fixation on technological objects, while using video games, computer porn and drugs for gratification.

Earth Mother is dead! The hazards of the man-woman relationship have shifted but an underbelly is emerging that is potentially frightening to those who have been raised to believe that authentic love between the genders is possible to achieve.

## Earth Mother Is Dead (2009)

Gary found his “earth mother” while he was still a graduate student working on his degree in hospital administration. She was already an R.N. working in the pediatric ward of the same private hospital in which he was doing his field training. “I fell in love with her when I saw how gentle she was with those kids in the ward. I was also turned on by the way she could take all those orders from the doctors and the head nurse, who happened to be a guy, without getting rebellious—if you know what I mean.”

In Gary’s mind, Nancy was one of the last of the feminine “good” women who really knew what it meant to be a woman. He made a big play for her and within three months they were living together.

She turned out to be everything he originally thought she was. While he was busy with school and had little income, she gladly helped pay some of the bills. She cooked and cleaned and even supported some of his expensive hobbies like drag racing and motorcycles. Auto parts were expensive and she was glad to buy them when he was broke. He felt powerful and secretly gloated that when he was driving with her on the freeway and would suddenly get horny, he could get her to perform fellatio. He was sure that she would never do it for any other guy. He knew she didn’t like it but was doing it because she loved him.

He had the best of all possible worlds in her—a great homemaker and an eager sex partner and a woman who was also totally loyal and faithful.

“What more could I want?” he’d ask himself.

Eight months later she became pregnant and he married her. Gary was still barely making any money and had six months until graduation, Nancy worked until two weeks before she was due to give birth. They had a baby boy.

Two years later they had their second child. She continued working at the hospital, taking off only a month after giving birth. At home she worked harder than ever—even cleaning the garage where he kept his motorcycle and racing car.

Six years into the marriage Nancy met a young doctor on her ward—a loner, somewhat of a non-conformist—who was into meditation and the occult. They began seeing each other secretly until Nancy accidentally left a note at home with her lover’s name and telephone number on it. Gary found it and confronted her. She admitted to him that she was in love with another man. Gary became enraged and violent and Nancy ran out of the house.

When Nancy’s boyfriend found out that she had told her husband about their relationship he became threatened and angry and he dropped her. Feeling confused, unsure of herself, and frightened, she went back to her husband; this time she was more servile than before and Gary became more autocratic than ever. He was able to take her back by rationalizing that she only had the affair because she had been under great stress and didn’t really know what she was doing. However, he

was going to show her that she had made the mistake of her life by fooling around. Now he really felt entitled to push her around. Back at home, Nancy developed some serious symptoms. She wouldn't eat and she was slowly beginning to waste away and had to be admitted into a hospital in order to be fed intravenously. Then when she finally was eating again and came back home she refused to do any housework at all and began to ignore the children.

She stayed on her job as a nurse and secretly went to see her lawyer and a psychotherapist. A short time later she ordered her husband out of the house. He was shocked and couldn't believe what was happening. She had turned cold, bitter, and hateful toward him.

Still, Gary tried to hold on to his earth mother illusion of her. He continued to tell himself that she was psychiatrically ill and soon would "come back to her senses." Two months went by and still she hadn't. Instead she became more resistant, more independent.

At that point, Gary started to fall apart. He would come over to the house to see the kids and suddenly explode and get violent with her. She finally had to get a restraining order to prevent him from coming over at all. In retaliation he hired a detective to find evidence that would prove her an unfit mother. When that went nowhere he became depressed and anxiety-ridden.

He managed to convince her to go to a psychotherapist with him. When the therapist asked him why he still pursued her when she was clearly not interested in him anymore he said with bravado, "She's still the best piece of ass I've ever had. No one else could love her like I did, and she knows it. She'll be coming back."

Interestingly enough, Nancy had previously revealed to the therapist that throughout the marriage she had never enjoyed sex with Gary, had faked her responses all of the time, and had never had a single orgasm.

After two months of therapy sessions, Gary gave up trying to win her back. At that point he started to improve. He saw his children on weekends and became a better father. He actually began to enjoy them, something he had never done during the marriage, because he was always so busy competing with them for Nancy's attention. Nancy became deeply involved with another man, but this time Gary accepted it and also began to date.

The phenomenon of the passive, submissive wife who suddenly and inexplicably turns around and leaves her shocked husband has become very common. Humiliating themselves by going to extremes to win back a woman who had rejected them, many successful, seemingly strong, self-contained, "independent" men have been brought to their knees. Men who appeared to have everything became seriously depressed and suicidal, experienced night terrors, and became physically abusive toward the errant spouse or her boyfriend. They undertook incredibly childish and degrading manipulations in an attempt to win back "their" woman.

A forty-nine-year-old patient who was separated from his wife was willingly supporting her and their child while she lived with the boyfriend she had run away with. By being a "nice guy" he hoped that she would return eventually. Where he once had been total master in the relationship he

now had become total slave. She told him when he could be with their child, when they could get together, and how he would have to change for her to even consider resuming the relationship with him.

It is also common for men who have been abandoned by their earth mother to continue to believe that she wouldn't dream of going to bed with another man. "I know her like a book," is what they so often say. Invariably, however, it turns out they are deluding themselves.

This abandonment by earth mother is often sudden and unexpected. It gives ample evidence of how little these men knew about their wives' or girl friends' inner feelings, believing all along that everything, including the sex, was great.

In an article published in *The New York Times* titled "I Am One Man, Hurt," the husband, a writer and public relations executive, wrote about his experience of abandonment by his wife. "I thought we were a perfectly happy family until my wife told me, without any advance warning, that she didn't love me anymore and wanted a divorce. Not a matter of infidelity or alcoholism or beating or arguments or desertion, but that it didn't mean anything to her anymore and she wanted out."<sup>1</sup>

A young man interviewed by one of my research assistants described it this way: "It happened with virtually no warning. I came home one day and she was gone. Then I got this letter from her saying, 'There's no point in talking about it. I've made up my mind.' I didn't know if it was something I said or did or did not say or do. She felt that I should know exactly why she left. But I was oblivious to all of it. She never gave me a chance to change anything. She never even pointed out any problems. It's taken me four years to free myself from the hold—the influence she had on me. I still haven't gotten over her completely."

In all of these instances the male in the relationship collapsed— as if his energy source, his reason for living had been taken away from him. And each of these men went through a period of saying, "Without her, life is not worth living."

These examples are not extraordinary or even unique. Nor were the men involved sick or atypical personalities. The phenomenon of the collapse of the male when he is suddenly abandoned by his earth mother, his supposedly "totally devoted, submissive" woman is becoming increasingly common.

The phenomenon recently was partially documented in a book that explored trends in contemporary male-female relationships. One such trend clearly emerged from the author's research "...The long suffering female is largely a thing of the past. Statistics show that it is often she, and at some stages in the marriage, more often she, who institutes proceedings for divorce."<sup>2</sup>

According to a widespread cultural myth, the female is the more dependent one in the man-woman relationship. The male is said to be emotionally shallow and unable to maintain a deeply intimate emotional relationship with a woman. Clinical experience, however, suggests that this "shallowness" is simply a self-protective device used by the male to avoid revealing his vulnerability. That is, the male resists closeness and dependency on the female because once the unconscious de-

fense is penetrated by a woman he becomes profoundly attached to the point of deep and almost total dependency. Particularly in first marriages, many males unconsciously seek a relationship of primitive dependency such as they had with their mothers, and like the baby from whom the breast is unexpectedly removed, they rage and despair when this source of comfort is withdrawn.

Recent studies on mental illness, suicide, and death seem to corroborate the theory of profound male dependency on the female and his vulnerability without her. Researchers, analyzing numerous studies on the divorced and widowed, concluded: "...When we compare single men with single women, divorced men with divorced women, and widowed men with widowed women, in each case it is the men who are much more likely to be residents of mental hospitals."<sup>3</sup>

Data from the National Vital Statistics System indicates that the divorced male has an annual death rate that is more than three times as high as the divorced female.<sup>4</sup> In one study, researchers found that death, particularly from coronary artery disease, occurred in a group of widowers at 40 per cent above their expected death rates during the six months following the deaths of their wives.<sup>5</sup> A recent study on suicide revealed that in some areas of America, bachelors have a suicide rate which is more than four times as high as spinsters.<sup>6</sup> Still another study indicated that men who had recently lost their mothers were significantly more prone to committing suicide than non-bereaved males.<sup>7</sup> And recent research on remarriage indicated that the divorced male tends to remarry sooner after his first divorce than the divorced female.<sup>8</sup>

So, it goes right down the line. The evidence strongly suggests that the man who loses his female attachment, be he divorced or widowed, and the single man who had no female attachment, are all significantly more vulnerable to mental illness, suicide, and death than the woman in a similar situation.

I have a personal pet theory, which ties in with this data, about why women in our culture live so much longer than men. I believe that unconsciously the male is afraid that he can't survive without the woman. Outside of his strong attachment to his woman, he is often an isolated, alienated being. He has few close male friends. He has suppressed his interest in other women and has been a passive, noninvolved father to his children. All his needs are invested in her. However, after a woman loses her man, she still has close relationships to nourish her, other women, and her children. Being less dependent on the male, she can make it with or without another man.

The male is deeply dependent on the female from conception on. The roots and explanations for this lie in early social and emotional conditioning. As an embryo and fetus he is placenta dependent. At birth he is breast-dependent, and throughout his early boyhood he is profoundly dependent on his mother as his primary human relationship. She is the one who holds, rocks, cleans, comforts, and clothes him. She sets his limits, teaches him right from wrong, reinforces him with praise and controls him with punishment. The female child has also been dependent on her mother, a female figure, but has no comparable deep-rooted dependency on the male for her psychic nourishment.

Despite the bravado and noises he makes about not allowing a woman to control or dominate him in order that he might maintain his fantasy of being stronger and totally in control of the relationship, the male unconsciously comes to see the female as his lifeline—his connection to survival

and his energy source.

Many adult men, once they have established a primary relationship with a woman, begin to abandon almost all of their other relationships. The dependency becomes increasingly intense and the crisis, if and when she does leave him, is often life-shattering.

The female does not develop this kind of intense dependency on the male. The male was never her lifeline; she had no deep-rooted dependency on him for psychic nourishment. As a girl she was dependent on her mother and not her father. Consequently, a divorce, widowhood, or rejection by a man may be traumatic, but the trauma is a less profound or primitive one, and she can recover more rapidly.

The earth mother fantasy was also encouraged by the male's self-hatred. As a boy, nursery rhymes told him that he was made "Snips\* 'n snails 'n puppy dog tails" while she was "sugar 'n spice 'n everything nice." (\*Snip: A person regarded as, presumptuous, impertinent, or mischievous.) He came to believe that she gave life and nourished it, while he destroyed it. Ashley Montagu put it this way: "Woman is the creator and fosterer of life; man has been the mechanizer and destroyer of life... Women love the human race; men are on the whole hostile to it."<sup>9</sup> The male identified with this negative masculine image and it was remarkable to him that she was able to love him in spite of the fact that he was brutish, lecherous, aggressive—in a word, "evil." The male fantasy of his earth mother's purity was equivalent to the child's naïve belief that his parents never have sex or do dishonest things.

What is happening to the female today? Is she becoming a different person? The answer is "no." She is simply emerging, revealing her true identity, and allowing her long-suppressed aggression to surface. Traditionally, the woman felt compelled to collude with the male fantasy of her as fragile, helpless, and dependent. The male expected little more from his woman other than that she supported his self-image of strength by living up to his expectation of her as pure, loyal, passive, unfathomable, nonsexual (except perhaps toward him)—someone who supposedly fulfilled herself simply by being devoted to him and his children. She seemed quite willing to play this role of supportive, facilitating bed-rock. She was satisfied to bask in her man's achievements. He could please her simply by becoming a success and her identification was drawn from this. She was willing to play Madonna earth mother—modest, pure, sexless, and unworldly.

Two psychologists recently writing on the subject put it this way:

The typical woman . . . in courtship . . . assumed the passive, submissive, conventional, female role; in a phrase, she bolstered his ego at the expense of her own. If she was not completely swept off her feet by physical attraction, she made a shrewd assessment of his potential as a breadwinner and a bed partner, and then set about proving to him that she was what he wanted as a housewife, help-mate, and mother of his children . . . [she] . . . pretended to be more "feminine" than she perhaps really was...<sup>10</sup>

Women are also denying that they fulfill themselves by playing the role of mother to their husband's children. One mother who had given up custody of her children to their father began to

recognize previous emotionally unauthentic attempts to be earth mother after she was out on her own. Originally, she had wanted seven children. Now, discussing visits to her children, she stated: "...I realized I was seeing them out of guilt, just like I'd been living with them all those years out of guilt. It astounded me when I discovered I wasn't all that attached to them. . . . Now I'm kind of doing what men do. The children are no longer a major part of my life, in terms of the time I spend with them."<sup>11</sup>

(As far back as 1923, Ruth Read of Columbia University published an article in which she interviewed eighty-seven pregnant women. She asked them if they were happily anticipating their babies. Seventy-five per cent of them said, "no," and gave many different reasons. Of those who answered "yes," a number did so only because their religion deemed motherhood a duty.<sup>12</sup> Over fifty years ago!)

Traditionally, men did not recognize the existence of female aggression. They needed to maintain an image of her as weak in order that they could deny their own dependency needs and see themselves as strong. Because women's aggression was largely repressed, it emerged in a different form from men's and reinforced the fantasy. A first-grade teacher discussed this difference as it appeared at an early age: "...Boys were more physically aggressive than girls, but . . . they were like 'teddy bears.' Their behavior was fairly direct and active. In contrast . . . the girls who were aggressive tended to be 'mean and devious.'"<sup>13</sup>

When long-suppressed female aggression finally emerges openly and directly it can take extreme forms. This was recently discussed by columnist Shana Alexander. Explaining why she abandoned her administrative role in the National women's Political Caucus, she wrote:

. . . the savage infighting among the feminist leadership wore me down. . . . The reason women are such crude, brutal and destructive combatants, I later decided—the reason women fighters lack pace, grace, rhythm and mercy—is certainly not because we are subject to raging hormonal impulses as some men claim . . . I think that hair-trigger female fury, the surge to leap for the jugular at the merest drop of a glove, the readiness to "drop the bomb on Luxembourg," results from the lack of a female tradition of chivalry.<sup>14</sup>

Women across the nation have begun to experience and spit out their repressed anger regarding their old role. This situation is an ego shock to many men whose façade of greater strength is collapsing. Like the nation's original reaction of disbelief to the energy crisis, the male is also having difficulty comprehending that his once seemingly endless supply of energy is drying up. He is being cut loose and pushed into an autonomy he really isn't prepared for. With all their eggs in one emotional basket some men have no wells of nourishment from which to draw. Women, however, are in a much sturdier position. They are discovering the emotional truth that they can do without men very well. They are less fearful of openness and closeness with their female peers and are able to accept and give support to one another. The male has isolated and alienated himself from other men supposedly to bring his woman the spoils of competitive victory. Now his woman also is proclaiming herself his competitor, even potentially his enemy as she harangues him with epithets of "male chauvinist pig." Not only has he lost his earth mother, but in his fear and confusion he is scrambling to

be liberated, not necessarily for his own benefit, but rather to please her.

While women have been quite free in expressing anger toward men, men are largely unable to express their anger toward women, particularly their resentment over loss of control in their relationships with women. In my work in aggression training, I frequently do a ritual we call the “gender club” in which I encourage men and women, single and/or married, to spew out in turn their innermost hostile feelings toward the opposite sex. Invariably, I’ve found that the supposedly aggression-phobic and passive female is able to do this quite readily, while the male is very blocked in his expression of anger toward women. It is “unmanly” to acknowledge openly his vulnerability or his anger. Frequently it ties in with the fear of being a bully, and consequently his anger over the situation emerges only indirectly. He becomes machine-like. He expresses anger primarily by emotional withdrawal from her, as well as from himself. He detaches himself from his rage and becomes invulnerable.

Male rage is being intensified by unconscious and conscious recognition that the old roles are no longer operative, and they may be the only roles he really knows how to play. He knows she is discovering that she is just as strong, if not stronger than he, and can survive without him much more easily than he without her. In his self-hating fantasies he may even feel that he may eventually be discarded by her completely. After all, she is now rebelling against any inference that there is such a thing as “feminine” or “maternal” behavior. Someday she may not even need him for procreation; she may even be inseminated artificially.

The male has yet to realize, however, the powerfully beneficial aspects of the female’s emergence as an openly assertive, aggressive being. The earth mother fantasy is dead. The female is getting in touch with her aggression, her rage, and her strength. As one woman stated, “what we found was that consciousness-raising clarified for us what we wanted to be—valiant, independent, creative, warm, loving, assertive people—and what we wanted to have—work that was meaningful and relationships that were mutual, nurturant, sexual and nonmasochistic.”<sup>15</sup> This is the time for his rebirth as a total person and his reentry into full emotional reality. He can let go of his fantasy image of her as fragile, dependent, and pure and his perception of himself as ever-strong, independent, and evil.

By the female rejecting her role of passive reactor the male now can release himself more readily from the chronic guilt which comes from being the person who acts while she simply reacts. Sexuality is an excellent example of this. In the past the woman had denied her sexuality. Sex was supposedly his need, not hers.

She took no responsibility for her sexuality so that he often was left feeling degraded and selfish for acknowledging his needs. She could also wait for him to lust and to cheat and then point an accusing finger. She was “clean” and he was “dirty.” Now, however, that she is owning up to her own sexual needs this picture is changing radically.

It is informative and often quite surprising to men to hear what women are really thinking and feeling about sex. It is often in stark contrast to what men believe their earth mothers are experiencing. A ritual I often use in marathon therapy groups is called the “fishbowl.” As their part of this ritual the women sit in a circle and discuss among themselves their experiences and feelings

about men in bed, speaking as if the men were not present. The men sit on the outside and listen. Here are some of the comments of the women: “I wish they wouldn’t worry so much about my damn orgasms.”—“I’m so afraid of damaging their egos by telling them what I really want.”—“Sometimes I feel like making loud noises but I’m afraid they might freak. Men are so quiet in bed.”—“If I tell them I want sex or make the first move most guys freeze up. I guess they think I’m a nymphomaniac.”—“Most guys feel they have to take a lot of time, all of the time. They don’t seem to understand that sometimes I just want to screw and not ‘make love’ too. I love quickies sometimes.”—“Most guys think that because we’ve had sex I’ll expect a relationship, so they run away. Sometimes I also just want a purely physical relationship with no emotional strings attached.”—“We’re supposed to be the ones who feel guilty the morning after but I think that more guys have bad feelings about it afterward. It’s like they don’t want to remember what they did the night before.”

Most important, the male is now being released from the feelings of having to take responsibility for the woman. She is becoming an openly assertive person rather than one who unconsciously or consciously controls and manipulates him by being “helpless,” or “fragile,” or developing psychological or psychosomatic symptoms because she cannot express her aggression or sexuality openly or directly.

In this process of rebirth of female and male he can let go of his distorted perception of her and allow her to assume equal responsibility for the problems and tragedies of life. No longer need his overt and covert competitiveness and even violence toward other men be justified as necessary for the survival of his wife and family. By investing her with fragility and helplessness he took on the dirty aspects of competition and the ugliness of war. That was always man’s business. He fought to prove his worthiness as a protector and provider. He can now abandon that self-destructive posture.

The death of the earth mother fantasy means that he now can free himself finally and totally from his macho pose. He can guiltlessly give himself and his needs priority, just as she is beginning to own up to hers. As she expressed antipathy toward many aspects of her role, he can also acknowledge his true feelings about the many self-denying aspects of being the diligent provider, faithful husband, dutiful father, and all-around strong man.

He’ll be forced to grow in order to survive in another important way. The fantasy of the woman as mind-reader had permitted him to cling to the infantile desire to be divined, to have his needs magically recognized and met by his all-knowing, all-loving woman, without his even having to ask. He will now have to learn to recognize and acknowledge his needs and then ask for and even demand satisfaction directly and openly, or else he will experience emotional starvation. Because, in the past, he was unable to ask for satisfaction directly, he lived in hidden anger when his needs were not divined.

The man who continues to hold on to or search for the few supposedly remaining earth mothers around—women willing to play the role of the old-fashioned, selfless, passive, and devoted female—are courting emotional disaster. That is, even if he believes that he has found the only “real woman” left in the world, he is probably deluding himself. Earth mother may never have existed in the first place. Rather, it may have been a female accommodation to his need to see himself as her defender and protector, born in part, out of her fear and doubt about her ability to survive as an in-

dependent being. It was an emotionally unauthentic posture that camouflaged the full extent of her strength and independence.

Therefore, the male who thinks he has found an earth mother will only get hooked into relating to her regressively—aborting his own growth and being much less of a human being than he is potentially. He will be guilt-ridden and infantile and demand nourishment and energy from “mommy” in return for playing out his self-destructive macho role. He still will get her aggression, only he’ll get it in the old indirect forms of fatigue, frigidity, depression, headaches, forgetfulness, etc. Meanwhile, he’ll destroy himself playing hero-warrior-macho while alienating himself from other men in the process.

Men who already have been able to surmount stereotyped role casting and expectations and have been able to relate to the woman as an equal partner and help-mate, a person from whom they can accept constructive support as well as give it on a mutual, authentic basis, can achieve the ultimate in the man-woman relationship. For it is with her that he can potentially experience many of the deepest forms of ecstatic and fulfilling human interaction. However, refusing to see her as she is—not fragile but strong, not dependent but autonomous, not passive but aggressive, not in need of protection but a canny fighter in her own right, and not self-denying but self-serving just like himself— will lay the foundation for experiencing the deepest levels of anguish and despair.

Earth mother is dead and now macho can die as well. The man can come alive as a full person. No longer need he play powerful, successful “big daddy.” No longer need he indulge in humiliating double standards and hide his unique maleness. No longer is he responsible for her feelings of fulfillment and wellbeing.

When she is she in her genuine, total, strong femaleness and personhood and he is he in his total maleness and personhood they can begin to revel in the realities and joys of an authentic, interdependent, and genuinely fulfilling interaction.

### **How To Recognize The Earth Mother Trap**

You feel alternately sentimental about her, then bored, suffocated or engulfed.

You feel guilty about depriving her and not giving enough of yourself.

You believe that you’re working and doing the things you do primarily for her.

You believe that she’s a more giving and more selfless person than you.

You’re sure that she has no sexual fantasies or desires toward other men.

You feel guilty whenever you’re having a good time that doesn’t include her.

You kiss her on the forehead in fatherly fashion rather than on the lips, in a more sensual way.

You are exhilarated when you see her cooking for you or smell the clean laundry.

You feel you have to hide your sexual fantasies about other women from her because she'll be "deeply hurt" and "shocked."

You're sentimental about what a "good" woman she is and how lucky you are to have her standing behind you.

You're glad that she's not one of those "women's libbers."

You're amazed at how in tune she is with you—she always wants to have sex when you do, she likes the exact same vacation places, and enjoys the same kinds of activities. Everything you like she seems to like.

You like the quiet life with her apart from other people, because with her as a friend you don't need any other people to be close to.

You need her in order to feel that you're a man.

You're amazed that she loves you in spite of your faults and the other terrible things about you.

## Footnotes

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Dissolution III



Dissolution X



Dissolution IV



Dissolution V



Dissolution VII



Dissolution IX



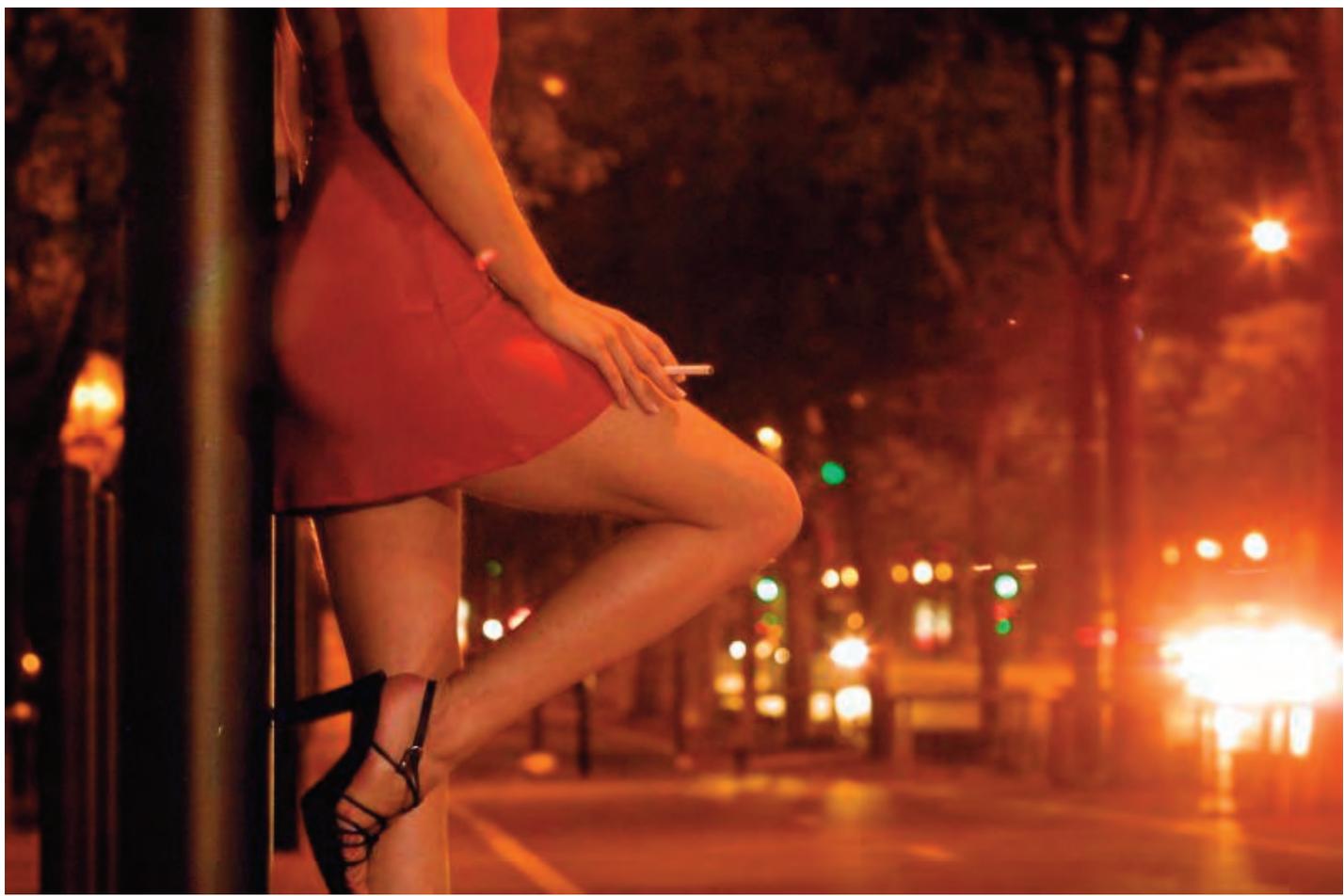
Dissolution I



Jan H. Andersen is a Danish photographer, software developer, and author specializing in topics surrounding children and teenagers. With a degree in child care and many years experience working with troubled kids and families, he writes with passion about child psychology, boys issues and parenting. You can read more at his website [www.janhandersen.com](http://www.janhandersen.com) and reach him at [jha@jhandersen.com](mailto:jha@jhandersen.com).

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# Make the Grade or Hear the Laughter

GERHARD AMENDT



*Up to the present time, female prostitution has been labelled among feminist gender relation theorists and advocates as one of the bleakest symptoms of male domination and thus violence against women in the history of mankind. It stands as one of the most striking, enduring examples of female victimhood and male perpetration. Ongoing discussions hardly ever allow for any differentiation between forms of prostitution, such as prostitution due to dire poverty, the abuse of love relations, malicious seduction, forced labour, or personal lifestyle choices. It is all the more surprising that the well-known labour market analyst and lecturer at the London School of Economics and Social Sciences, Catherine Hakim, proposes a total departure from this feminist position, which seemed to be written in stone. As a self-proclaimed feminist, she introduces a “veraciously feminist model” that proposes that women of all social classes and formal education use their erotic capital, i.e., selling sexual favours, as a basic means of primary money making, status acquisition, social advancement, and a means to finally establish a society in which equality can be achieved and women can rise to the very top. This sexualized model of professional relationships requires abandoning all cultural traditions, such as the develop-*

*ment of emotions, self-respect and privacy, submitting everything to mechanisms of the market. If men were to respond to this market approach to intimate relations, then it would follow that they could do precisely what most of them deplore: demand sex from women for privileges that men grant. It would be permissible to do what feminism traditionally blames men for practicing.*

**Keywords:** feminism, prostitution, Catherine Hakim, gender studies, male studies

This text is the slightly revised version of Chapter 5 of *Höllenhunde und Himmelswesen* [*Hell Hounds and Heavenly Creatures*], Frankfurt: Ikaru Verlag, 2013.

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It was the 1950s, and I was working as a trainee at an international firm that built chemical plants. Male employees were allowed to learn just enough typing so that they weren't helpless if their secretary called in sick or went on vacation. Consequently, the touch-typing system has always remained foreign to me, while the female trainees learned it to perfection. The more keystrokes per minute, the greater their chances of moving up into the outer office of an executive. Yet they were not allowed to learn much more than typing, nor had they any desire to do so. Additionally, the office functioned as a pulsating marriage market which determined the point at which young women bailed out for house and hearth. This explains why most of the female trainees let their fashionable bullet bras speak for themselves, thereby providing a single conspicuous focal point for everything that really mattered. This produced results: reports of in-house marriages arrived in a steady stream. If the women became pregnant they disappeared, never to be seen again. Returning to the workplace was the exception. Many things have changed since then, but much has remained the same. The majority of women, but men as well, no longer wish to return to conditions as they were. Employers have no desire whatsoever because today, even more than in the 1950s, not only every qualified employee but every *qualifiable* employee is needed.

Consequently, over the years men have gradually begun to face competition in fields where they had previously been required to prove their mettle only among themselves. The question of who achieves professional success and to what degree is nevertheless still determined on the basis of individual performance. In order to whet women's appetite for the workplace, and above all to ensure their success, new approaches are being sought that go beyond achievement and knowledge.

In 2011, Catherine Hakim, an English labor market economist, published one such modernization plan. Its noteworthy feature is that it promises women money and status for the most part irrespective of their professional performance. It is a matter, she promises, of securing plenty of money and unlimited opportunity for advancement for all women. It is not about a short-term but rather a long-term perspective that will provide ongoing enrichment for women regardless of their qualifications, self-confidence, or intelligence. A woman's maxim should be: appearance, sex appeal, and sex itself, are the ever-present elevator to the top. Or, as Coco Chanel put it, "Beauty, what a weapon!" It is not the conservatives or even cynical, offended men who are suggesting that women return to eroticism and the power of their genitals. Surprisingly, it is a feminist who seeks to gain an advantage for all women through the systematic deployment of their beauty, eroticism, and genitality by propagating *pussy power*. This is meant to finally make women the architects of their own fortune. Then there will be no more need for accommodation by men, no pro-feminist softies, or males who

reproach themselves for their own machismo and pledge improvement. And even less need for government that promotes women in an effort to deliver them from their rumored lack of independence. What women want, they can achieve on their own. Full of optimism, Catherine Hakim ascribes them the ability to capitalize on their nature-given erotic capital, with which she augments human and financial capital. Hakim believes that women's erotic capital will change the world in a revolutionary way. She has confidence in women's self-reliance, as did the quondam women's movement.

She gained no friends in mainstream feminism, however, becoming *persona non grata* for not adopting the fundamental view that women are victims and men perpetrators.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to the feminist victim mentality, Hakim views the situation of women in the labor market as an indication of a choice they themselves have expressed. For her, the status of women is not a fate imposed by men. If women want to change the circumstances in which they find themselves, they simply have to make better choices than they have until now. Hakim wants to return women's subject-ness. Feminism deprived them of this, teaching them instead to place their trust in a state modeled on feminist principles.

How would an awareness of possessing erotic capital be different from the way things were in the past? Young women would no longer go to bed with their superiors in the hope that at some point it would help them to advance in the firm. According to Hakim's model, a promotion would have to be granted *before* the executive would be allowed to consummate his desire for sexual intercourse. This opens up an entirely new world of interactions on the swap market. But such unequivocal commodification entails a disadvantage for any manager making the decision about the promotion, as well as the young woman seeking advancement. Both of them draw their particular power from their strengths, she from her attractiveness and youthfulness, he from the authority he wields in the workplace. Yet he is buying the young woman just as little as she is selling herself. Each of them makes a swap under the assumption that the other party also values and admires them as a person—quite aside from their particular attributes—and feels at least a certain degree of fondness for them. If that were not the case, then their relationship would clearly be that of whore and client as in the business of prostitution. Common parlance has it that power makes you horny. Hakim has convincingly formulated the political insight that desirability, likewise, leads to power over others. She advises young women in particular to eliminate the poorly defined ambivalence between expedient affection and advantage and convert it into a commodified exchange.

Of course, this instrumentalization of the female body for the purpose of earning money and advancement places Hakim in stark conflict with all feminist traditions, which condemn prostitution as the work of a male devil, an expression of his power and above all his violence.

Hakim therefore views the introduction of the swap principle—sex only in exchange for money and advancement—as a battleground in which women must still prove themselves. She claims that the "*patriarchal value system cannot be dissuaded that female attractiveness is by nature a part of life and not something that men should have to pay for.*"<sup>2</sup> What was once free of charge is now to become subject to fee, which will not be achieved without a fight!

This perspective presupposes a determination among women that gives them everything they haven't had at their disposal until now because they didn't want it. The innovation does not consist of a romantic construct but is based instead on the application of market economics to the most intimate relations between men and women.

## Women's Desire Isn't Passionate Enough

Nevertheless, where is this cultural rupture between men and women to derive its dormant energy? Hakim bases this new perspective on all manner of studies supposedly proving that men want sex much more frequently than women.<sup>3</sup> She claims that this represents a hidden and untapped goldmine for the emancipation of all womankind. Men always want that “one thing,” at all hours and with ever greater adulterous variety, standing fast until they reach an advanced age. Meanwhile, the somewhat vague “other thing” that women want is left unexamined. For an explanation, Israeli sociologist Eva Illouz can be enlisted. She describes the liberalization of sexuality as a great blaze from which women have emerged somewhat burned and deeply disappointed. She casts women as the great losers of the era of reform and men as the big winners. Not only because it is now easier for men to have women, but also to access them across class boundaries without difficulty. She claims that men are simply the “emotional capitalists,” in other words, the exploiters in the realm of emotional relationships. It is precisely the women of the middle class who could exercise control over their bodies and feelings and enjoy them with the utmost self-confidence, but are nevertheless dominated by privileged men who “*can choose from an enormous pool of female partners who want to have children and must therefore enter commitments at an earlier age*”<sup>4</sup> To protect oneself against risk, Illouz suggests separating romantic love from the desire to have children. The creation of offspring should no longer involve a lover, but an emotionally neutral stranger. Homosexual arrangements such as sperm donation are the recommended models. In this way, single parenthood as well is transformed into a strategy to protect oneself from narcissistic injury. Illouz does not discuss the needs of children. Thus, what's good for children is also what's good for women. Children are understood as stationary satellites in their mothers' gravitational field.

Hakim's “truly feminist manifesto,” therefore, is meant as a solution to both the difficulty of sexual emancipation *and* women's desire to have children. Women should simply play the part of suppliers to a market. They must simply grow accustomed to no longer refusing or postponing sex—which men constantly desire—but always agreeing, in exchange for a quid pro quo with monetary value. Feelings of aversion or fantasies of violence, self-degradation, or prostitution, which might creep in as relics of women's liberation or their own notions of self-respect, are merely a hindrance here. The stressful aspect of overcoming one's reluctance stands in contrast to the tantalizing benefits of granting access to the vagina, the career advancement, presents, cash, and preferential treatment by teachers, professors, and employers. This is said to be the inexhaustible capital of all women and the foundation of an approaching vaginally oriented, primitive accumulation of capital. The sporadic, unsystematic, and somewhat diffident hopes of the past that erotic concessions will be accompanied by ancillary benefits—marrying up, for example—are now to be replaced by fully conscious calculation. This would cause the old model, namely, that women marry up and men marry below their station, to lose its passive character. What formerly transpired on a preconscious level would now be elevated to a strategy women actively employ to optimize their lives. As a result, the difference between men and women in the intensity of their sexual desire would benefit women by becoming a building block for a new social order.

The second premise of Hakim's emancipation manifesto is that after the age of 30, hormones cause women to begin enjoying sex increasingly less, which automatically improves their market-dominating position as sex providers. On the other hand, stronger sexual desire in younger women favors men: as long as women want sex, they cannot sell what they themselves lustfully desire to consume. According to this model, women who are completely uninterested in sexuality and are particularly good-looking would be the strongest market participants. They can dictate their price

to sex-seeking men. “*Even if women, primarily during their younger years, enjoy having sex, as a rule men’s desire is even stronger.*” According to this calculation, women are at their most powerful if they are asexual, live the ascetic life of a nun, or suffer from a pathological libido disorder. Nevertheless, in Hakim’s view it holds true across the board that, “*The principle of least interest generally allows women to gain the upper hand in sexual barter.*”

## Men’s Sexual Cravings Give All Women Power

This is the reason why all women, irrespective of origin, education, or ethnicity, have good chances of selling their sexuality at an optimal price. Men, supposedly, always want sex; it makes no difference whether the woman is uneducated or rich. Hakim does not claim that women have a monopoly on erotic capital, however. They simply command substantially more of it than men. According to the logic governing the exchange of goods in the market, the great abundance of male sexuality renders it practically worthless. Many women do not realize this because men have understood all along how to prevent them from exploiting their unique advantage—persuaded them, in fact, that their female erotic capital has no value at all.<sup>5</sup>

To be sure, Catherine Hakim already sees gathering resistance among men. She claims that men begrudge women the utilization of their erotic resources and are therefore attempting to transform women’s strength into a weakness. With the help of pharmaceuticals, in Western societies they are supposedly trying to pathologize women’s somewhat less pronounced libido. They are said to be working on a “Viagra for women” that will increase female sexual libido and thereby ensure unlimited access to free sexual acts for men. As mentioned earlier, women can no longer sell something they themselves want to experience frequently. For this reason, the female libido deficit should be preserved so that it can be turned into an erotic/capitalist coup d’état. Hakim identifies counselors, psychotherapists, and libido stimulating pharmaceuticals as the agents of this renewed sexual repression. She makes the case that women should masochistically reject pleasure. In this way, she, too, replays feminism’s most thoroughly developed fantasy, namely, that being a victim has to pay off.

Based on other considerations as well, she recommends that women begin adopting something similar to a prostitute mentality. By selling their bodies, Hakim explains, young women with little education can earn more in one night than they would in a month behind the cash register in a department store. Hakim does not focus on money alone, however. On top of that, she includes character training and acquiring assertiveness skills. Deficits in this area are one of the many causes for the income disparity between men and women; this, too, could be reduced by capitalizing on the genitals. “*Women who have consciously used their erotic capital for some time become [. . .] more self-confident. [. . .] their social skills are well developed, so that they can easily deal with a very wide range of situations and individuals. Even women who offer only telephone sex have mentally experienced the entire spectrum of sexual activities and have become [. . .] more tolerant and open-minded in their own lives.*”<sup>6</sup> Hakim claims that this is even associated with gains in terms of tolerance and democracy.

Matters in everyday life that can only be settled through complicated conflict resolution, will be settled *en passant* in a neoliberal fashion by the market. Hakim’s interest does not lie in under-

standing power differentials and their gender-specific manifestations in partner relationships. For situations that would require people to have strenuous discussions of their conflicts, she relies on the market. The very thing that is increasingly proving to be a flawed economic regulator is supposed to help women come to power!

Catherine Hakim set out to put an end to feminism's masochistic victim mentality. Her intention was to convert women's latent potential for power into manifest power, thereby showing them the royal road to achieving financial independence. They were meant to triumph over men in the way that men, she believes, have always wanted to triumph over women. What Goethe's *Faust* promised in terms of men "curing" women by addressing "one point," Hakim delivers through inversion. The vagina becomes the new point from which all power springs—albeit women's power this time. In fact, power could even shift entirely into the hands of women because men's sexual craving could turn itself into a disadvantage in the market. Early on, feminism vehemently opposed the notion of reducing women to their anatomy because this leaves women no options in the way they conduct their lives. Biology, they said, would then determine a woman's fate. Hakim's liberation model dismisses these feminist arguments and reasserts that a woman's fate is anchored in biology. By contending that the vagina is the body part that generates meaning and power, she relegates capability and intellectuality to the background. In this manner, feminists, of all people, re-enthroned the same biologism with which the famous German neurologist Paul Julius Möbius<sup>7</sup> sought to exclude women from the modern professions more than a century ago.

### **What Men Must Learn from This, and Women Should not Overlook**

It is somewhat surprising that a market economist can disregard the fact that the other market participants, namely, men, will react to the changes in the supply/demand relationship. Entirely in accordance with the market, they will continue their attempts—as Hakim alleges from her anti-relationship viewpoint—to obtain sex "free of charge."

Apparently, she has blind trust that misandrous discourse will continue to throw men into a state of voiceless shock. She is betting on the unbroken, guilt-driven silence so prevalent among many men. This would turn men's crippling silence, telling as it may be, into the actual guarantor for women's monopoly in the sexual marketplace. However, if the paralyzing shock brought on by a culture of condemnation should subside, the targeted monopoly would be doomed. To discount this possibility is to turn a blind eye to reality, for it may be expected that men will use their social and professional position to avoid drawing the short straw in the market. According to the laws of the market, everything men were accused of in the past would then suddenly become permissible, from "structural violence, patriarchal rule, hegemonic masculinity, and dominance behavior" to "violence against women." They would be virtually forced to assume that women are using sexual acts to advance their professional careers or their success at the secondary school or university levels. Thus, according to Catherine Hakim's "truly feminist model" men find themselves in a paradoxical situation. They are supposed to be what feminists, their voices trembling in rage, have accused them of—for the last 30 years and to this day. Free of moral scruples, men are now permitted to view the vagina as a barter item in all conceivable relationships. In the future, what was traditionally an "immoral offer" is to be reclassified as capitalism-friendly sexuality. Relationships are to become the playground of prostitution, although it will no longer be allowed to bear that name.

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Catherine Hakim: *Key Issues in Women`s Work. Female Diversity and the Polarization of Women`s Employment*, 2004 (2nd edition) p. 4 ff
- <sup>2</sup> Hakim 2011, 265 Sexonomie
- <sup>3</sup> Hakim 2011, 267 Die Macht erotischen Kapitals/Sexonomie
- <sup>4</sup> Eva Illouz: Männer sind die emotionalen Kapitalisten. *Weltwoche* Nr. 9, 2012, S. 48 f
- <sup>5</sup> Hakim 2011, 90 Der zweite Bonus einer Frau
- <sup>6</sup> Hakim 2011, 221 Persönlicher Gewinn
- <sup>7</sup> Paul Julius Möbius: Der physiologische Schwachsinn des Weibes “On the Physiological Idiocy of Women” 1903



Gerhard Amendt is professor of sociology at the University of Bremen and was the founder of the Institute for Gender and Generation Research. He views relations between genders and generations as arrangements that are not by any means devoid of conflict but can ultimately be modernized. Gerhard Amendt is the author of numerous books including “*I didn’t divorce my kids!*” *How Fathers Deal with Family Break-Up*, *Vatersehnsucht* (Yearning for a Father), *Du oder delte Sie*, (“First Name or Formal”) *Wie Mütter ihre Söhne sehen* (How Mothers View Their Sons).

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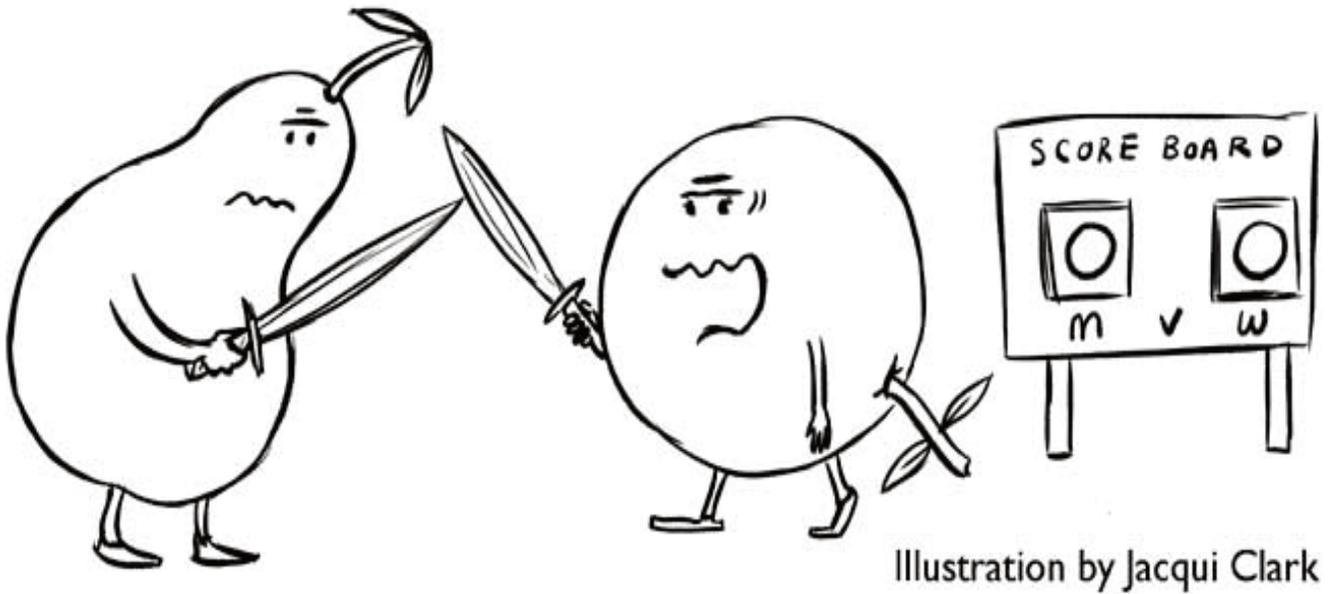


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# Towards an integrated meta-theory of gender: thoughts on the potential use of Ken Wilber's AQAL model to develop an Integral Gender Theory

GLEN POOLE



*This paper explores the potential development of a postdisciplinary framework that can be used to improve the efficacy of current approaches to studying gender and support the development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory).*

*This framework is based on Ken Wilber's Integral Theory and draws on existing work to apply Wilber's AQAL model to sex, gender and gender studies. The resulting framework allows for the integration of*

*biological, psychological, social and cultural perspectives and promotes the use of eight distinct methodological perspectives outlined in Wilber's Integral Methodological Pluralism when studying gender and gender issues.*

*The paper also examines the ways in which the male and female experience of gender in the 21st Century is different, diverse, open to adaptability and shaped by choice.*

**Keywords:** integral gender theory, Ken Wilber, Aqal model, integral theory, gender, gender theory, men and boys, masculinities, masculinity, gender equality, sex differences, gender identity, gender discourse, gender norms, gender stereotypes, gender rights, men's rights, gender roles, nature versus nurture, integral methodological pluralism, male studies

## Introduction

According to the international journal *New Male Studies* (NMS), discussions about gender are too often characterized by a polarization of the sexes; the curtailing of reasoned dialogue; the sidelining of crucial evidence and the silencing of individuals with unpopular views (NMS 2014).

NMS aims to promote a “constructive academic dialogue guided by available evidence of a range of different academic disciplines” that pursues “enquiring and dynamic multidisciplinary scholarship” (NMS 2014).

The need for such a broad focus on the issues facing men and boys is well evidenced and documented (Poole, 2013; Benatar, 2012; Farrell, 1993) and includes:

- Globally males have a higher burden of disease and lower life expectancy than females (Hawkes and Buse, 2013)
- Men and boys in 99% of countries are more likely to kill themselves than women and girls (Poole, 2013)
- Men and boys account for 4 out of 5 violent deaths in the world every year (WHO, 2008):
- Girls in most modern economies are more likely to get a better education and go to university than boys (World Economic Forum, 2013)
- Fathers all over the globe are less involved in raising their children than mothers for all sorts of personal, cultural and political reasons (Fatherhood Institute, 2010)

Despite the clear inequalities that men and boys face, there is no unifying framework to help facilitate multidisciplinary dialogue about men's issues at a significant scale.

In this paper I will explore the potential development of a postdisciplinary framework that can be used to improve the efficacy of current approaches to studying gender and support the development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory).

This framework is based on Ken Wilber's Integral Theory (Wilber, 2000) and draws on existing work to apply Wilber's AQAL model to sex, gender and gender studies (Cohen, 2009). The re-

sulting framework, I will argue, allows for the integration of biological, psychological, social and cultural perspectives of gender and gender issues.

While outlining the key elements of this framework I will also examine the ways in which the male and female experience of gender in the 21st Century is different, diverse, open to adaptability and shaped by choice.

### A Note on Diversity in Sex, Gender and Sexuality

While the focus of this paper is common male and female experiences of sex and gender, the framework outlined below can equally be applied to the study of divergent sexes, genders and sexualities.

### **What Is Integral Theory?**

Integral Theory was developed by the American philosopher Ken Wilber and is said to be “one of the foremost approaches within the larger fields of integral studies and meta-theory” (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2009). It is described by the Integral Institute in the U.S.A. as “an all-inclusive framework that draws on the key insights of the world’s greatest knowledge traditions” (Integral Institute, 2014). According to Wilber (Wilber, 2005) the integral approach uses “all known systems and models of human growth” and “distills their major components into 5 simple factors that are the essential elements or keys to unlocking and facilitating human evolution”.

These 5 factors are captured in the AQAL model which is pronounced “ah-qwul” and is an acronym for “all quadrants, all levels,” which in itself is short for “all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, and all types” (Rentschler, 2006).

In the integral community, Integral Theory and “AQAL” are often used interchangeably with other phrase such as Integral approach, the Integral map, the Integral model, and Integral Operating System (IOS) (Rentschler, 2006).

Wilber, for example, states that “the integral map makes sure you are “touching all the bases”..... ensures you are utilizing the full range of resources for any situation, with the greater likelihood of success....the integral map is just a map, but it is the most complete and accurate map we have at this time” (Wilber, 2005).

Integral theory is now being used in more than 35 academic and professional fields including healthcare, economics, psychotherapy, law and feminism (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2009). In the next section we will focus on how the integral approach is being applied to the study of gender issues.

### **Integral Approaches to Gender**

In this paper my primary aim is to outline how Integral Theory can be used to improve current approaches to studying gender and support the development of an Integral Gender Theory.

The Integral model is sometimes described as being post-disciplinary as it can be applied effectively within the context of approaches that can be considered disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary (Esbjörn-Hargens 2006).

The integral approach is also described as a supertheory or metatheory as it has been developed to enable the integration of many different theories in a coherent fashion. (Rentschler, 2006). The model itself is “content-free” and provides a framework into which people viewing a subject from any perspective can incorporate the specific content they want to study. (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006).

I am proposing it can be used as follows:

- Intradisciplinary (within a single discipline)
- Crossdisciplinary (studying one discipline from the perspective of another discipline)
- Multidisciplinary (several disciplines working together each using their own approach)
- Interdisciplinary (the integration of different disciplinary approaches)
- Transdisciplinary (creating a new framework that goes beyond disciplinary perspectives) (Stember, 1990)

To date there have been a small number of notable attempts to apply Integral Theory to the study of gender and gender issues.

In his book *The Eye of Spirit* (Wilber, 2000a), Wilber proposed the development of an Integral Feminism in which he said there are at “least a dozen major schools of feminism (liberal, socialist, spiritual, eco, womanist, radical, anarchist, lesbian, Marxist, cultural, constructivist, power)...which, ironically, have heretofore resisted being linked, integrated and connected”.

One of the barriers to integrating different feminisms, according to Wilber, is that “orthodox feminists are threatened by integral feminism because it distributes power more fairly across other disciplines (including science, which is usually demonized as patriarchal)” (Wilber, 2000a).

There have subsequently been some individual attempts to explore Integral Feminism (Mc-Carl Nielsen 2000, Barnett 2013), with perhaps the most extensive contribution being made by Dr. Sarah Nicholson, author of the book *The Evolutionary Journey of Woman: From the Goddess to Integral Feminism* (Nicholson, 2013).

While existing feminisms are sometimes seen as being a barrier to addressing men’s issues (Farrell, 1993; Benatar, 2012), Lauren Barnett argues that Integral Feminism needs to address the impact that feminism has had on men and boys and be open to tackling men’s issue and incorporating men’s experience (Barnett 2013).

It is important to note, however, that developing an Integral Gender Theory is not the same as integrating current feminist thinking. The framework outlined in this paper can be used by any individual studying gender irrespective of whether they are approaching the subject from a feminist, anti-feminist or non-feminist perspective.

Pelle Billing, for example, has already used the integral approach to take a critical view of feminist approaches to gender in *Letting Go of Feminism: The Case for Integral Gender Studies* (Billing 2010).

According to Billing “the word feminism represents a movement that simultaneously claims to be for gender equality and for the rights of women, thereby conflating gender equality with women’s issues....replacing feminism with a less biased women’s movement would be beneficial for girls and women.... women too would benefit from a more nuanced, balanced and less accusatory gender discourse--a discourse that is informed by Integral Gender Studies, and not a simple continuation of postmodern feminism” (Billing 2010).

Perhaps the most comprehensive application of Integral Theory to gender issues to date has come from Professor Jeffrey Cohen of the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Cohen observed “a fundamental weakness in our current approaches to studying the complexity of Gender as a social science construct” and used Integral Theory to construct “a more complete, and therefore inclusive, approach to studying Gender in the social sciences” of criminology, psychology, and sociology with the aim of developing “a workable trans-disciplinary model that allows for a multi-methodological, multi-perspectival approach to the study of Gender” (Cohen, 2009).

The result of Cohen’s work is probably the most thorough and detailed attempt to create an integral approach to the study of gender to date, though as his approach is firmly rooted in the social sciences it may be more accurate to label his model inter-disciplinary rather than trans-disciplinary.

Nonetheless, having examined how 3 of the 5 factors that make up the AQAL model can be applied to studying gender, Cohen has helped to lay the foundations for the construction of a post-disciplinary framework that will support the ultimate development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory).

## **The AQAL Model**

According to Ken Wilber the integral map is made up of 5 elements called quadrants, levels, lines, states and types and that gives us the AQAL model (all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states and all types) (Wilber, 2005).

The AQAL model not only provides an Integral Map that enables the user to gain a more comprehensive understanding of any issue---including gender---but using an Integral Approach can help to facilitate greater self awareness Wilber, 2005).

Wilber explains this secondary benefit of utilising the AQAL model as follows:

“All of these elements are, right now, available in your own awareness. These 5 elements are not merely theoretical concepts; they are aspects of your own experience....if you learn to spot these

5 elements in your own awareness---and because they are there in any event---then you can more easily appreciate them, exercise them, use them.....” (Wilber, 2005).

In order to help the reader develop a quick understanding of the AQAL model I will describe a scenario and then point to some of the quadrants, levels, lines, states and types that are at play in this scenario.

Imagine yourself going on a school outing of teenagers and teachers that involves rock climbing at an outdoor activity centre. As you imagine yourself in this scenario ask yourself the following five questions:

1. In this scenario are you male or female?
2. In this scenario are you a pre-pubescent teenager, a pubescent teenager or an adult?
3. How good are you at rock climbing? Are you a beginner, an improver or an expert?
4. Imagine that it’s your turn to climb the rock. What is the weather like as you climb and what emotional state are you in? Excited? Scared? Embarrassed?
5. After climbing the rock you need to go to the toilet but discover that the facility allocated to your sex is locked while the toilets for the opposite sex are open. How do you feel about using that toilet instead? What would the rest of your group think if you did that? And would you be breaking any rules or laws if you did use the toilet belonging to the opposite sex?

What you’ve just experienced in that simple scenario is an awareness of the five elements of the AQAL model---quadrants, levels, lines, states and types.

The quadrants represent the “I”, the “we” and “it/its” of human experience and were at play in the dilemma we considered about using a toilet facility that’s designated for the opposite sex. We asked about your personal feelings (“I”); what your group would think (“we”) and whether you would be breaking any laws (its).

The remaining four elements (levels, lines, states and types) are found within each of the quadrants. Levels are common stages of development such as childhood, puberty and adulthood. Types refers to items that can be found at virtually any level of development. Sex is a type, for example, so if you are a male you may pass through different levels of human development such as childhood, puberty and adulthood but your sex type (male) remains the same at each level.

Unlike types, states are generally transient. So when you imagined yourself rock climbing your emotional state (excited, fearful, embarrassed etc) was a passing emotional state and the weather conditions (sunny, windy, raining etc) were a temporary meteorological state.

Finally lines of development refer, in simple terms, to how well an individual or a group of people can do something. So when we considered how skilled you are at climbing, we were, in a

sense, asking how far along the line of development from rock-climbing novice to rock-climbing expert you have progressed.

If we wanted to study what happened on this imaginary school trip and only considered one of these five elements, we wouldn't get the whole truth about the outing, only a partial truth.

And this is a key principle of the integral approach. Rather than relying on the limited "truth" of one perspective, an integral view of the world seeks out the partial truths in all perspectives in order to come to a more complete assessment of the whole truth.

Within each of the four quadrants of the AQAL model there are many different levels, lines, states and types that make up the Integral Map of human experience. To help you remember the five basic elements of the AQAL model here's an analogy borrowed from Sean Esbjörn-Hargens of the Integral Institute (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2006).

- The quadrants are like four maps of different terrains
- The levels are found in all four quadrants and are like contour lines on a map
- The lines of development are like pathways that run across the contours on our map
- Many different types of hiker could use this map (eg male hikers)
- A hiker using the map to go for walk would experience many different states (e.g., changing weather conditions)

And the map, of course, is just a map. It isn't the territory. The five elements of the Integral Map provide us with a basic framework for understanding any issue or situation and our ability to make effective assessments of reality will depend both on the quality of information about levels, lines, states and types we include in our map and how effective we are at reading an Integral Map.

### Applying the AQAL Model to Gender

<p><b>Upper-Left quadrant</b></p> <p>Interior Individual</p> <p>Subjective Experience</p> <p>Psychology, etc.</p> <p><b>Gender Identity</b></p>	<p><b>Upper-Right quadrant</b></p> <p>Exterior Individual</p> <p>Objective Behavior</p> <p>Biology etc</p> <p><b>Sex</b></p>
<p><b>Lower-Left quadrant</b></p> <p>Interior Collective</p> <p>Inter-subjective Experience</p>	<p><b>Lower-Right quadrant</b></p> <p>Exterior Collective</p> <p>Inter-objective Behavior</p>

Cultural factors etc	Social factors etc
Gender Stereotypes/Discourse	Gender Roles/Rights

Figure 1: The four quadrants/domains (figure adapted from Cohen, 2009 and Wilber, 2000)

The primary aim of this paper is to describe how Integral Theory can be used to study gender. My assertion is that anyone who is addressing gender issues will get a much deeper understanding of the specific issues they are concerned with if they view it through the integral framework.

Starting with the four quadrants that correspond to interior/exterior and individual/collective phenomenon, in terms of developing an Integral Gender Theory, these four domains have already been defined as relating to gender-identity, gender-stereotypes, sex, and gender-roles (Cohen, 2009). According to Ken Wilber, “each of the different theories of sex and gender (orthodox as well as feminist) has tended to focus on only one quadrant (and usually one level in one quadrant)” (Wilber, 2000a). By accessing the “moments of truth” found in each of these different perspectives we can use the AQAL model to begin a more complete picture of gender.

What immediately becomes available in accepting that there are partial truths to be found in each of the four quadrants is that “gender is not determined by biological sex alone. Nor is Gender determined by psychology, culture, or social interaction alone. It is the combined influence of all of these perspective” (Cohen, 2009).

If we look at each of the four quadrants in turn we can begin to get a sense of how the integral approach can provide us with a comprehensive view of gender. I’ll start with the Upper-Right quadrant and Lower-Left quadrant as these domains play host to the long running nature versus nurture arguments about gender.

**Upper-Right Quadrant (Sex)**

According to Wilber the “upper-right quadrant is the individual viewed in an objective, empirical, “scientific” fashion” (Wilber, 2000). This is where biological views of gender---including essentialist views ---are located. Focusing only on the biological aspects of gender, to the exclusion of psychological, cultural, and social aspects provides us with a limited view (as does dismissing biological factors outright).

The beauty of the integral approach to gender is that it provides a framework that facilitates the inclusion of empirical findings from a broad range of disciplines such as biology, biochemistry, neuroscience, genetics, epigenetics and evolutionary psychology which allow us to consider the role of sex differences in our hormones, neurology, genes and physical capacities in the formation of gender roles, gender stereotype and gender identity.

In terms of providing a workable framework for studying gender issues, my intention is not

to dictate which theories should be applied when using the framework, but to simply signpost some of the thinking that could be incorporated.

The first example is the work of the Simon Baron-Cohen (Professor of Developmental Psychopathology at the University of Cambridge in England) whose studies on differences in the male and female brain seem to fit well with an integral view of gender as it is rooted in the Upper-Right quadrant while acknowledging the influence of Lower-Left cultural influences (Baron-Cohen, 2003). Baron-Cohen's own subjective experience (Upper-Left quadrant) also highlights a crucial point about how ways of thinking about gender are either facilitated or policed by the prevailing cultural discourse about gender (Lower-Left quadrant).

According to Baron-Cohen, "some people say that even looking for sex differences reveals a sexist mind" and he initially postponed finishing his book on essential differences in male and female brains as "the topic was just too politically sensitive to complete in the 1990s" (Baron-Cohen, 2003). The thrust of Baron-Cohen's Empathizing-Systemizing (E-S) Theory is that while the female brain is predominantly hard-wired for empathy, the male brain is predominantly hard-wired for understanding and building systems.

In terms of the Integral Approach, this points to different brain types (types being one of the five elements of the AQAL model). However, from an empirical Upper-Right quadrant perspective he is not making a binary, reductionist distinction between a male brain type and a female brain type.

What Baron-Cohen's research revealed is that there are three main types of brain (plus two "extreme" brain types):

- The predominantly female E>S brain type, where empathizing ability is greater than systemizing ability
- The predominantly male S>E brain type, where systemizing ability is greater than empathizing ability
- The S=E brain type found in men and women where empathizing and systemizing ability is equally balanced

In addition there is what Baron-Cohen refers to as the "extreme male brain" type, S>>E, where systemizing ability is hyper-developed and empathizing ability is hypo-developed. Baron-Cohen proposes a link here to people with autism, which is a predominantly male condition.

The fifth brain type is the "extreme female brain" type, E>>S, where empathizing ability is hyper-developed and systemizing ability is hypo-developed.

Baron-Cohen's findings highlight an important shift from the nature versus nurture debate about gender to an understanding that gender is a function of both nature and nurture. When interviewed about that nature versus nurture debate in 2010, Baron-Cohen said:

"My own position is that biology and culture interact to create this sex difference. There are some

people who would argue that its just biology or just culture but I think the moderate position is both are at work” (Baron-Cohen, 2010).

My own view (Upper-Left quadrant) of gender is that it is shaped by all four integral quadrants representing biological, cultural, psychological and social factors; that our gender is different, diverse and adaptable and that we have ever-changing choices. Baron-Cohen’s findings demonstrate that male and female brains are predominantly different and at the same time diverse with there being measurable differences not just between men and women, but also between men and men, and women and women.

The second example to consider is not specifically focused on gender but highlights the adaptability of humans while re-enforcing a key point about the way different worldviews (Lower-Left quadrant) can facilitate or police how we think about gender.

In the field of genetics, Tim Spector (Professor of Genetic Epidemiology at Kings College, London) has reported how cultural (Lower-Left quadrant) beliefs in nurture over nature in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s led to an “environmentalist backlash” against genetic studies “often linked to socialist ideals in education and equal opportunities” to the point where grant bodies and academics in the social sciences believed that “genetic research on IQ was akin to racism” (Spector, 2013).

Spector has written about his own personal (Upper-Left quadrant) shift from a “gene-centric view of the universe” to an epigenetic view where the “distinction between nature and nurture disappears” with the realization that while the genes you inherit are still “star players in the body...you can change your genes, your destiny and that of your child and grandchildren”.

The emerging field of epigenetics and the understanding that we can make choices that will change our genes demonstrates that as well as being different and diverse, human beings are adaptable and have choices.

The third example I want to look at demonstrates human choice and adaptability in relation to our hormones. Most researchers agree that hormones such as testosterone, oxytocin and oestrogen influence male and female behaviour (though they don’t strictly cause it) (Wilber, 2000a).

As with sex differences in the brain and genetic research, discussing the different impacts of hormones on men and women can be politically sensitive. Some radical feminists, for example, claim that “Estrogen is the Goddess, testosterone is the Devil” (Wilber 2000a).

Despite its bad press, the positive impacts of testosterone, such as its ability to boost self-confidence and assertiveness, have been tested by researchers at Harvard Business School. One study found that adopting a “power pose” for two minutes could not only increase testosterone by 20% and decrease the stress hormone cortisol by 25%, but also improve an individual’s chances of performing more effectively in a job interview, for both male and female subjects (Cuddy et al, 2012).

Men’s lower levels of oxytocin have also been linked to male violence (Diamon, 2013) with regular massage and exercises to increase bonds of trust proposed as an antidote as these interven-

tions have been shown to increase participants oxytocin levels by 243% (Zac, 2012).

What these so-called “life hacks” demonstrate is that at a hormonal level males and females can not only be measured as being hormonally different and diverse (ie men’s hormone levels differ from other men and women’s hormone levels differ from other women); but we are also adaptable and have some choice in whether we want to change the levels of different hormones either through medication or through specific “life hacks.”

What the above examples demonstrate is that there is a great deal to be learnt about sex and gender from integrating findings from the Upper-Right quadrant of the AQAL model into our thinking.

### **Lower-Left quadrant (Gender Stereotypes/Gender Discourse)**

Having considered the ‘nature’ of sex/gender in the Upper-Right quadrant we come to its sworn enemy in gender debates, ‘nurture’, which is located in the Lower-Left quadrant of the AQAL model that contains aspects of culture such as values, ethics, rituals, customs, worldviews, perceptions, subcultures etc. (Wilber 2000).

Cohen defines a culture’s collective belief structures around gender that are located in this quadrant as Gender Stereotypes, irrespective of whether those stereotypes are positive, negative, neither, or both (Cohen 2009).

I have added Gender Discourse to the heading for this quadrant because, as we saw in the previous section, different ways of thinking about gender tend to be either facilitated or policed by the prevailing cultural discourse around gender (Lower-Left quadrant).

For example, Ken Wilber states that feminist perspectives of gender that are rooted in the Lower-Left quadrants (eg constructivist feminism and cultural feminism), overlook the influence of the other three quadrants and instead ascribe their influence to oppression (Wilber, 2000a). As a result, a gender discourse is developed that rejects other perspectives of gender, eg biological perspectives rooted in the Upper-Right quadrant.

In terms of developing Integral Gender Theory it will be an essential to take into account the influence of the worldview of those who develop any such theory and also those who seek to apply this theory.

Returning to Gender Stereotypes, there are some clear stages or levels of development to consider---levels being one of the five elements of the Integral Map. The stages of development that cultures go through are correlated to stages of development in the other quadrants including the Lower-Right quadrant which plays home to social aspects of human development.

Wilber identifies five key levels of techno-economic development in the Lower-Right quadrant namely foraging, horticultural, agricultural, industrial and informational. According to Wilber the “techno economic base has a profound influence in selecting those factors from the male and

female value spheres that will be evolutionarily advantageous for a given society” (Wilber 2000a).

Some integral thinkers including Ken Wilber and Warren Farrell seek to “recast patriarchal structures as an unavoidable evolutionary product of techno-economic and social development structures” (Fisher and Nicholson, 2010). We will look more closely at role that techno-economic stages of development play on gender roles when we examine the Lower-Right quadrant of the AQAL model.

In terms of understanding how Gender Stereotypes have evolved through different cultural levels of development (Lower-Left quadrant), Cohen has approached this using Jean Gebser’s structures of human consciousness and notably the magic, the mythic and the rational structures of consciousness (Cohen, 2009).

While this provides a useful analysis of where we have come from, it lacks the nuance required to make sense of the many different cultural worldviews (Lower-Left quadrant) that are shaping Gender Stereotypes and Gender Discourse in the 21st Century.

Perhaps a more detailed model to consider is Edward Beck and Christopher C. Cowan’s spiral dynamics (Beck and Cowan, 1996) based on Clare W. Graves’ biopsychosocial model of human development, which has subsequently been influenced by Integral Theory resulting in the development of a branch of spiral dynamics by Beck called Spiral Dynamics Integral.

Graves asserted that human values typically occur in systems that are now called value memes (vMememes), which are coherent sets or clusters of values. These values are not fixed but a consequence of an individual’s evolving worldview, which are informed by the prevailing life conditions.

Graves identified eight different value systems that describe how humans as well as cultures evolve. Most cultures and individuals will be predominantly characterized by just one of these eight value memes, though more than one can be at play in any individual or any community at different times.

As with Gebser’s structures of consciousness, Graves’ emerging vMememes can be linked to techno-economic developments (Lower-Right quadrant) which increase in their complexity and capacity as we evolve culturally from nomadic individuals to tribal groups to egoic empires to conformist absolutism to rational individualism to pluralistic communitarianism to integral autonomy to holistic globalism and beyond.

A list of the eight key colour-coded vMememes from Beck and Cowan’s meme in the Spiral Dynamics model is shown in the table below:

<b>Meme</b>	<b>Colour</b>	<b>Characterisitcs</b>
Wholeview	Turquoise	Holistic, global concerns, collective individualism
Flexflow	Yellow	Independent, self-sufficient, functional, knowing, has personal value system
HumanBond	Green	Collaborative, community-focused, concerned for the 'have nots'
StriveDrive	Orange	Goal orientated, success driven, out to achieve
TruthForce	Blue	Absolutist, conformist, follow rules, obey higher power
PowerGods	Red	Egocentric, exploitative, dominating, seeking power, survival of the fittest
KinSpirits	Purple	Living according to tradition and ritual
SurvivalSense	Beige	Living in self survival mode

Figure 2: Stages of human development (adapted from Beck and Cowan, 1996)

To begin to get an understanding of these different vMememes it can be useful to consider how they are, or were, at play in cultures we may already be familiar with. You can probably imagine a Purple vMeme African tribe for example and understand how it differs from the Red vMeme feudal system found in Medieval Europe. You may also be able to see how a Blue vMeme absolutist state based on a single religion or political philosophy, such as an Islamic or Communist state, differs from a free market Orange vMeme Western democracy and within Western democracies you can no doubt make a distinction between Orange vMeme free market conservatives and Green vMeme liberals and social democrats.

These last three vMememes (Blue, Orange and Green) are the dominant vMememes in most Western democracies and it can be useful to consider how Gender Discourse tends to evolve through these different vMememes.

Caleb Rosado, a Professor of Urban Studies at Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon, has explored how attitudes towards race and racial inequality manifest differently at each memetic level and provides us with some useful pointers when considering evolving attitudes towards gender and gender equality (Rosado, 1999).

It is important to note, at this point, that both individuals and cultures can progress and regress along the “spiral” at different times depending on life circumstances. Attaining a “higher”

stage of development is not necessarily “better” as all stages can co-exist in both healthy and unhealthy states - states being one of the five elements that comprise the Integral Model (Beck and Cowan, 1996).

According to Rosado, “equality” as a construct does not exist at the early stages of human development. In Purple vMeme tribal communities, for example, Rosado says Gender Roles are rigid and important but there is no concept of gender equality (Rosado, 1999).

Red vMeme cultures are typified by violent, brutal, and bloody empires where Gender Roles remain rigid and an individual’s place in the social hierarchy may be a greater predictor of equality than gender---women can be Queens and Empresses and men can peasants and slaves.

Our modern concepts of equality are often traced back to notions of democracy developed during the Greek Empire where all citizens were equal but not all humans qualified as citizens. In particular, slaves, foreigners and women were excluded and so a clear gender inequality in terms of participation in the public realm emerges at this time (Poole, 2013).

This is typical of Blue vMeme thinking, according to Rosado, who states that “racism as a social construct to maintain segregation, division, and distinction enters here for the first time....polarized thinking....rigid categories.... and absolutisms, to maintain status distinctions and separations” (Rosado, 1999).

This Blue vMeme approach to citizenship and democracy was still prevalent a century ago with only a limited number of male citizens able to vote in Britain, for example, prior to 1918 (Poole, 2013).

Looking back to the beginning of the 20th Century we can see the influence of a dominant Blue vMeme, where loyalty to God, King and Country are paramount and rigid Gender Stereotypes still dictating that men belong in the public realm and women in the private realm.

At the same the Orange vMeme is also present and expanding. A key landmark in the shift towards greater equality was the French revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1793, which is considered to be an emerging Orange vMeme concept. This declaration marked equality for all men as citizens and laid the foundation for all men and women to be recognised as equal citizens. In the UK, for example, all adult men were given the vote in 1918 alongside women aged 30 and over. Ten years later in 1928, universal suffrage was extended to all adult women (Poole 2013).

This first wave of gender equality for women is generally focused on legal rights, eg voting rights, property rights, rights to divorce etc. As Orange vMeme values become more dominant, with a focus on self-expression and the pursuit of personal goals, equality of opportunity for women becomes increasingly important.

According to Rosado, Orange vMeme “eschews any appearance of racism and sexism, while being decidedly so”. Simply declaring that everyone has an equal opportunity irrespective of sex,

gender, sexuality and so on in principle, is not the same as giving everyone an equal opportunity in practice, he argues (Rosado, 1999).

However, the emergence of the Orange vMeme in Western Democracies does lead to the growing presence of women in the public sphere and a corresponding shift in terms of Gender Stereotypes about women.

One of the distinguishing features between Orange vMeme and Green vMeme, in Rosado's analysis, is that those with Orange vMeme values are often against affirmative action while those with Green vMeme values are often for affirmative action. Here we see an echo of the binary nurture versus nature argument only now the argument is equality of opportunity versus equality of outcome. As the Green vMeme rises to prominence, outcomes that are seen to define women's inequality---for example unequal pay, unequal representation in positions of power and so on---become dominant themes in the Gender Discourse and positive action and positive discrimination for women (alongside other communities of identity such as gay people and people from black and minority ethnic community groups) become the norm.

Rosado describes the Green vMeme approach to equality as "a restrictive egalitarianism based on a denial of differences" caused by "social action missionaries who use discrimination to enforce equality" and try and reverse "evolutionary process through a naive cultural relativism".

The Green vMeme approach to equality also tends to be blind to inequalities experienced by individuals belonging to groups perceived to be dominant such as men and boys. A classic example is the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2013) that ranks countries on their progress towards gender equality but only measures female disadvantage, while actively excluding male disadvantage (Billing 2010).

Billing argues that one of the reasons "men's voices are still largely absent in the gender discourse" is that men have been inaccurately cast as oppressors of women through history (Billing 2010).

In my more polemical writings I have previously described the Green vMeme view of gender equality as "Women HAVE problems, men ARE problems (Poole, 2013). Nonetheless, in terms of Gender Stereotypes, while men may get a bad press from the Green vMeme wave of human consciousness, it also coincides with a shift in Gender Stereotypes about men, most notably in terms of men's roles in the private realm (eg fatherhood) and lays foundation for the emergence of the Yellow vMeme where a more balanced Gender Discourse becomes possible.

It has estimated that around 1% of the world's population is at Yellow vMeme so there are currently few large scale examples of this vMeme for us to assess at this stage (Beck and Cowan, 1996).

What seems apparent is that Gender Stereotypes and Gender Discourse are shaped by our shared cultural values, which are constantly evolving and developing. This being a case, a truly integral approach to studying gender needs to take account of the role that different worldviews play in

shaping the way we understand and experience gender.

### **Lower-Right quadrant (Gender Roles/Gender Rights)**

In the previous section we touched upon the idea that the evolving Gender Stereotypes and Gender Discourse in the Lower-Left quadrant are correlated to changing Gender Roles in the Lower-Right quadrant which contains social systems such as techno-economic modes, geopolitical institutions, social structures and so on (Wilber, 2000).

Cohen defines Gender Roles as “those institutionalized behaviors and/or activities performed by each sex, which are informed by the specific make-up of particular social systems that exist within a given society” (Cohen 2009).

I have added Gender Rights to the heading for this quadrant particularly because areas where men have unequal rights are often not accounted for when considering gender issues.

In terms of techno-economic modes of production, Wilber highlights five key stages of development: foraging, horticultural, agrarian, industrial and informational (Wilber, 2000a).

In horticultural societies where women are thought to have produced as much as 80 percent of food, women have substantial influence in the public sphere. and it is notable that around a third of all horticultural societies have female only deities (Wilber, 2000a) which suggests a collective valuing of female qualities.

The technological shift from horticultural hoes to agrarian ploughs is believed to have brought an end the long period of generally equal gender participation in the production of food (Nicholson, 2008) as a result of biological differences (Upper Right quadrant) including men’s superior upper body strength and heavy labour causing women to miscarry (Howard, 2005).

According to Billing, in most pre-industrial societies “keeping women in the home and sending men away from the home have maximized the chances of providing the food and safety needed for a community to prosper” (Billing 2010). With the agricultural revolution this “sexual polarization and male domination of the public sphere” along with women’s role becoming focused on the private sphere, moves towards its “historical peak” (Wilber 1995, p. 158).

According to Wilber: “wherever evolution moved beyond the hoe, the patriarchy accompanied it. The patriarchy, however, is not something that needs to be reversed but rather something that needs to be outgrown” (Wilber 2000a).

This process of outgrowing male dominance of the public sphere is generally found across human cultures that develop through the industrial, post-industrial and informational ages with gender roles and stereotypes becoming progressively less rigid.

Over time women in Western democracies and elsewhere have been given an equal right to enter the public sphere in terms of voting, education and careers. Women and girls’ rights in areas

like property ownership, divorce, reproduction and bodily integrity are also addressed as gender equality issues.

At the same time, men and boys' rights and their links to gender equality are overlooked. Areas where men are treated unequally in law around the world include military conscript, corporal and capital punishment, genital integrity, bodily privacy, child custody laws and paternity laws (Benatar 2012).

Male dominance of the public sphere has been coupled with a collective dominance of the male body with many nation states asserting the right to conscript and physically punish men and boys and giving parents the right to compromise boys' genital integrity through a permissive approach to medically unnecessary male circumcision (Benatar 2012).

At the same time female dominance of the private sphere is maintained in most modern economies through laws on paternity and child custody and parental leave that favour mothers over fathers and re-enforce highly gendered parenting roles (Benatar 2012).

According to Janet Chafetz, "when gender norms gain the status of law, they take on a far more powerful role in reinforcing the gender system status quo than when they remain informal. They become part of the coercive forces that maintain the gender system" (Chafetz 1990, p69).

It is important to note that Gender Rights can apply not only to women's rights and men's rights, but also to individuals who are biologically divergent (eg the rights of intersex children to genital integrity); to individuals of different sexualities (eg gay men in countries where homosexuality is illegal but lesbian sex isn't) and individuals who wish to express a non-normative gender identity, from men who went to wear their hair long (and may be excluded from certain professions as a result) to the rights of transgender people.

With the emergence of the informational age, Gender Roles in modern economies tend to become increasingly diverse and interchangeable with more women entering the labour market and men increasing the time they spend on childcare (Pew 2013, Fatherhood Institute, 2010).

For anyone taking an integral approach to gender it is essential to understand and explore the many different systemic influences have on gender and consider how these have changed and continue to change over time.

### **Upper-Left quadrant (Gender Identity)**

The final aspect of the AQAL model we will consider is the Upper-Left quadrant which captures "interior consciousness as it appears in individuals" and includes everything from "psychoanalysis to phenomenology to introspective chronology to meditative states of consciousness" (Wilber, 2000).

This is where Gender Identity is formed. Gender Identity is defined by Cohen as "a construct that relates to the aspects of Gender experienced within an individual's psyche". According to Cohen "the process of gender-identity formation is influenced by a host of stimuli, including biological,

cultural, and social factors” (Cohen, 2009), or put another way the Upper-Right, Lower-Left and Lower-Right quadrants.

Martin Ucik’s work on personality types is interesting to consider as it maps how men’s and women’s gender identity changes at the different vMemetic stages of human development (Ucik 2010).

Ucik’s personality matrix (see figure 3) maps the different masculine and feminine personality types that emerge at the different vMemetic levels which in terms of individual development are described in Spiral Dynamics integral as the instinctive self, the magical self, the power self, the rule/role self, the rational self, the sensitive self, the integral self and the holistic self.

According to Ucik’s analysis what happens when cultures pass through the Orange vMeme, “rational self” wave of human consciousness, typified by neo-liberal capitalism, is that women develop more masculine personality types. Conversely, at the Green vMeme, “sensitive self” wave of human consciousness typified by political correctness, men develop more feminine personality types (Ucik, 2010).

As the Yellow vMeme, “integral self” wave of human consciousness emerges, both women and men appear to develop more flexible personality types that incorporate a range of masculine and feminine qualities that they can consciously draw upon in different contexts.

These apparent changes in personality type appear to coincide with social and cultural changes in the Lower Left and Lower Right quadrants with women developing more masculine traits as they enter the public sphere and men developing more feminine traits as they increase their involvement in the private sphere (eg increasing time spent caring for children).

This raises the inevitable “chicken and egg” question. Are these social and cultural changes driven by our evolving gender identities or is gender changing in response to this social and cultural evolution?

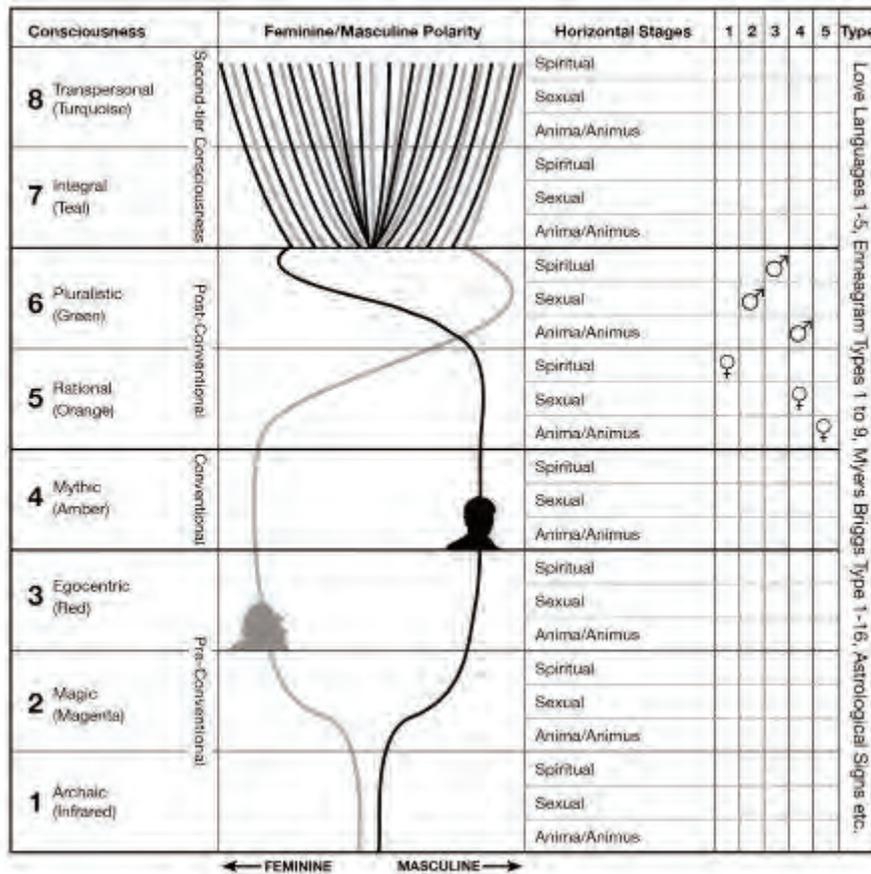


Figure 3: Personality Matrix, Masculine/Feminine Polarity (Ucik, 2012)

In terms of career choices, Catherine Hakim’s work on Preference Theory suggests that men and women have divergent preferences when it comes to balancing home life and work life, with men more likely to prefer putting career first and women more likely to prioritize home and family. Hakim predicts that men will continue to dominate politics, work and other competitive activities as they are more willing than women to prioritise the public sphere (Hakim, 2010).

Hakim believes that national and international policies designed to deliver equal gender outcomes in the workplace are misguided as they don’t reflect what men and women want. (Hakim, 2010).

So are uneven outcomes between men and women a function of personal choice or unequal opportunities?

Janet Chafetz claims that voluntary choices made at a micro level are the result of coercion at a macro level and are caused by “the processes by which males and females internalise gender-

normative ways of being and behaving”. So for example if we don’t give fathers equal rights and opportunities as parents through laws and policies at a macro level, then this will effect fathers’ preferences and choices at the micro level (Chafetz, 1990).

Some commentators like Hanna Rosin, author of *The End of Men*, predict that the changing needs of modern economies could see a rise in women’s domination of the workforce. According to Rosin: “The postindustrial economy is indifferent to men’s size and strength. The attributes that are most valuable today—social intelligence, open communication, the ability to sit still and focus—are, at a minimum, not predominantly male. In fact, the opposite may be true” (Rosin, 2010).

From an integral perspective, as with the nature versus nurture argument, it is reasonable to assume that there is truth in both perspectives.

According to Pelle Billing, equality of opportunity is not measured by equality of outcomes but by an equality of choice at a micro level that isn’t driven by external necessities at a macro level. He says:

“Knowing that the traditional male and female gender roles alike contain both advantages and disadvantages, will enable people to choose how they want to mix paid work outside the home and unpaid work in the home. Chances are that even with all cards on the table, we will still see more men than women performing dangerous activities for society, and more women than men being the primary caretakers of infants. After all, gender roles and human biology have evolved in tandem, always interacting and affecting one another” (Billing 2010).

Wilber and Farrell argue that it is essential to challenge “feminism's 'victim' status and disavowal of female power” and understand “the disempowerments inherent in men's traditional roles and the myths of male power” if we are to be effective in helping people navigate the ongoing transition from the rigid gender roles of the past to the increasingly flexible roles of the future (Fisher and Nicholson, 2010).

One aspect of helping people to navigate this transition is understanding how gender identity forms and evolves over time. Here Gilligan’s theory that females and males are speaking with “a different voice” in terms of their development aligns with integral thinking that men tend to develop through agency and women tend to develop through communion (Gilligan 1982, Wilber 2000a).

It is apparent that Gender Identity is not a fixed phenomena but something which changes within individuals and cultures over time. There are some notable differences between men and women, such as the tendency to prioritize work or home and there is also diversity to be found between men and men and women and women. Gender Identities in men and women also appear to adapt at a micro level in response to available choices, whether those choices are driven by internal preference or by other necessities that are shaped at a macro level.

## Taking an Integral Methodological Pluralistic Approach

In the previous sections I have introduced the four quadrants of the AQAL (all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types) model, with some reference to examples of levels, lines, states and types.

Using these four quadrants is an excellent starting point to begin to get an integral perspective of any gender issue. In addition, considering the relevant levels, lines, states and types in each of the quadrants will help deepen your understanding of the issue in question.

To get a truly integral view of gender, it also important to consider the perspective from which you are viewing a particular issue. Wilber proposes the use of Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) which outlines eight primary perspectives that provide inside and outside perspectives of each of the quadrants (Snow, 2007).

For example, measuring the changing levels of testosterone in boys going through puberty would provide an empirical, external perspective of the Upper-Right quadrant, whereas asking the same boys to write a diary about their experiences of puberty would provide a phenomenological, interior perspective of the Upper-Left quadrant.

It isn't possible within the scope of this paper to explore IMP in any detail, my intention here is to simply highlight that these eight methodological perspectives exist and will need to be incorporated in the development of a truly Integral Gender Theory.

<p><b>Upper-Left quadrant</b></p> <p>Individual Interior/subjective</p> <p>Interior Perspective: <b>phenomenology</b> Exterior Perspective: <b>structuralism</b></p> <p><b>Gender Identity</b></p>	<p><b>Upper-Right quadrant</b></p> <p>Individual Interior/objective</p> <p>Interior Perspective: <b>autopoiesis</b> Exterior Perspective: <b>empiricism</b></p> <p><b>Sex</b></p>
<p><b>Lower-Left quadrant</b></p> <p>Collective Interior/intersubjective</p> <p>Interior Perspective: <b>hermeneutics</b> Exterior Perspective: <b>semiotics</b></p> <p><b>Gender Stereotypes/Discourse</b></p>	<p><b>Lower-Right quadrant</b></p> <p>Collective Interior/interobjective</p> <p>Interior Perspective: <b>social autopoiesis</b> Exterior Perspective: <b>systems theory</b></p> <p><b>Gender Roles/Rights</b></p>

Figure 4: Integral Methodological Pluralism, 8 Methodologies (figure adapted from Cohen, 2009; Snow, 2007)

## Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore the potential development of a postdisciplinary framework that can be used to improve the efficacy of current approaches to studying gender and support the development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory) through the integration of biological, psychological, social and cultural perspectives of gender and gender issues. While outlining the key elements of this framework I also intended to examine the ways in which the male and female experience of gender in the 21st Century is different, diverse, open to adaptability and shaped by choice.

By focusing on the four quadrants of the AQAL model I have provided a simple framework through which anyone studying gender can gain a more integral and complete picture of the issue they are considering.

Beginning with the Upper-Right quadrant (Sex) we considered the importance of biological sex differences in shaping gender and considered Simon Baron-Cohen's work on the predominant differences in male and female brain types. Baron-Cohen's moderate view that these measurable differences between men and women are a product of biology and culture combined opens the door to an integral view of gender that takes us beyond binary debates about nature versus nurture.

Looking at the Lower-Left quadrant (Gender Stereotypes/Gender Discourse) we considered how different ways of expressing and thinking about gender are facilitated or policed by the prevailing gender discourse. This being the case, if we are to study gender from an integral perspective it will be essential to take into account the shared cultural values of both those being studied and those who are doing the studying.

A common theme of this paper is the importance of acknowledging that experiences and expressions of gender are diverse and understanding that in addition to there being differences between men and women, there are also differences between men and men and women and women. We heard from a diverse range of voices that the dominance of the post-modern, liberal, pro-feminist perspectives in the study of gender and how this can marginalize alternative views of gender issues. This emphasizes the need for a much broader diversity of views of gender to be included and incorporated into the study of gender.

In examining the Lower-Right quadrant (Gender Roles/Gender Rights) we considered how the different stages of techno-economic development help to shape Gender Roles. We also touched on the power of Gender Rights to enforce gender norms at a cultural level and highlighted how inequalities in men's rights are frequently overlooked in the study of gender. An integral approach to gender must take account of all Gender Rights and not just those rights that relate to women and those of a divergent sex, gender or sexuality.

We also considered the Upper-Right quadrant (Gender Identity) and saw how Gender Identi-

tity is continually evolving over time. We considered whether Gender Identity was a matter of preference, choice or conditioning and concluded that all of these factors are at play as we transition from rigid to flexible Gender Roles and Gender Identities. We noted the importance of understanding the different and diverse ways that men and women develop if we are to help people to navigate this transition.

By assessing the biological, psychological, social and cultural aspects of sex and gender as outlined in this paper, anyone studying gender can potentially gain a more complete and integral picture using the integral model.

The four quadrants of the AQAL also provide an excellent starting point for the development of an integrated meta-theory of gender (or an Integral Gender Theory). However, a truly Integral Gender Theory will require a much more detailed exploration than has been possible within the scope of this paper. I hope, however, that this paper will make the next step towards an Integral Gender Theory a quicker, shorter and easier step to take.

Such a theory should certainly take into account all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states and all types in examining Sex, Gender Stereotypes, Gender Discourse, Gender Roles, Gender Rights and Gender Identities from the eight perspectives outlined in Integral Methodological Pluralism and allow for the fact that gender is different, diverse, adaptable and shaped by choices that change and evolve over time.

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# Caring About University Men: Why We Need Campus Men's Centers in a Time of Crisis

MILES GROTH



*Centers for men on university and college campuses are necessary at a time when enrollments of male students in higher education are at an all-time low. The background of this trend is explored and several examples of centers for men are provided. The logistics for establishing centers are described.*

**Keywords:** college men, campus life, misandry, male studies

**Note:** This address was given September 27, 2013, at the University of Toronto as the fourth in a series of talks sponsored by the Canadian Association for Equality (CAFÉ).

\* \* \*

One week before the beginning of the new semester at Wagner College, where I teach, a young man entering his senior year arrived on campus to join other residential education staff in greeting incoming freshman. The first day of classes, August 26, he finished his last class and in the late afternoon took the campus shuttle to the Staten Island Ferry. He had not returned to his dorm room by late that night, but at 5:30 am the following morning he phoned his roommate to say he was in van Cortlandt Park, as far away from campus as he could be and still be in New York City. He only said he was groggy and confused. Later that day, his mother phoned the college to say that police had found his dead body among the huge rocks in the park. Next to him was a suicide note and an empty bottle of pills, which evidently he had taken just before calling his friend. That was one month ago to the day.

It is not known what he wrote in the note. This much we do know. He had been unable to put into words for his parents, his best friend, or anyone else what was on his mind. Evidently not even his doctor, since had gone into the city for a check-up. His name was Justin. Like so many boys his age, while he was outgoing, popular and funny, he contained within him feelings and ideas that he could not or would not share with others.

The suicide rate for boys Justin's age is four times that of girls. Over the last 15 years or so, it has increased. Moreover, younger boys—as young as 13 or 14—are now committing suicide, something unheard of in earlier generations. The numbers are probably higher, especially when we realize that so-called accidents among boys in their late teens are often disguised suicidal gestures. Driving a car recklessly and competitive drinking are common examples.

I've come to Toronto to talk about boys Justin's age, boys at university or, as we say in the States, college-age boys. My aim is to stimulate interest in their lives in order to understand a number of trends that, if not fatal, are noxious and toxic for young males. Some boys are doing well, but too many are not. For example, at a time when a university degree is essential for most well compensated work, young men are enrolling in college at the lowest rate on record. Extrapolating from the many sources of statistics on attendance at institutions of higher education, here in Canada, in the States, and elsewhere in Europe, Australia and even Asia, the most conservative estimate is 43% attendance by males. At the small liberal arts college where I teach it is officially 37%. Directors of admissions know it is even lower, now approaching 35% internationally in developed countries. Head counts reveal the obvious. Every instructor at university knows that, roughly, in most classes for every boy in a class there are two girls. As I will argue, in absolute terms, this is not good for boys. But it is also not good for girls, for universities, or for the culture as a whole. It is especially worrisome for the small liberal arts college—a unique institution in the States—where it is known that a “tipping point” of 40% attendance of males means that girls soon will not want to attend there. They like boys, and the presence of males (straight, gay or otherwise) on campus is important to them. Wanting that, they look elsewhere and the school suffers financially.

If girls want an all-female environment in the States, they may choose from among 48 all-women's colleges, overseen by the national Women's College Coalition. There is no national Men's College Coalition, since there are now only three all-men's college. (Incidentally, all-men's colleges were very common until 1970—I attended one from 1964-68. 1969, the year after I graduated, many schools went co-ed. The reasons for doing so were complex, but they included the bonanza of attendance of women at university and no school wanted to fail to profit from the largesse.) Altogether, the all-male colleges serve only about 6,400 boys.

To put this in broader context: In 1960 the current ratio of female-to-male attendance was what it is now for male-to-female attendance, two to one. By 1980, parity had been attained—50-50. Given the current trend, which has been identified since the mid-1990s by admissions directors, the last male to be awarded a bachelor's degree in the States will turn his tassel in about 50 years. Is this likely to happen? I won't be here. You will see. If the trend persists, over a hundred-year period, we will have seen the near disappearance of men at university.

The trend has made a difference already, so much so that most masters and doctorate students are now female. One of my former students, now finishing his doctorate in psychology at a major New York university reports that among his cohort of about 10 doctoral candidates, there are seven women and three men. This is typical everywhere at graduate schools.

Once on campus in the States boys will be subject to Title IX guidelines. Having passed its 40th anniversary last year, Title IX is a federal law that dictates the allocation of money and services to boys and girls in equal proportion to their rates of attendance. This momentous piece of legislation covers all areas of university management of resources but is best known in athletics where the proportion of students by sex at a given institution must be reflected in the availability of sports programs to men and women, respectively. The way this plays out is that even if there are more males than females on campus, the number of male sports teams must be reduced to reflect the ideal proportion of males to females.

Arriving on campus, boys will also see the effects of Women's Studies programs. Now usually termed Gender Studies programs, make no mistake about it, however, they are still women's studies programs. There are about 900 such programs worldwide, around 400 of them in the States. There are 45 in Canada (including one here at the University of Toronto), 35 in the UK, and 15 in Australia. There is one Men's Studies program in the States at the undergraduate level at Hobart William Smith College. Its relation to the Women's Studies program on campus is emphasized. In four years, a Center for Men and Masculinities is to be established at a State of New York university (the one at Stony Brook, on Long Island), funded by a large grant of \$300,000 from a well-known philanthropic foundation. To be headed by Professor Michael Kimmel, its advisors include the actress and fitness expert, Jane Fonda, Gloria Steinem, and Eve Ensler, the author of *The Vagina Monologues*. As part of nearly every Women's Studies program offerings on campus annually, boys will see a production of this play featured and supported by the university.

During the first-year student orientation week (the word freshman has been replaced on most campuses because it contains the word 'man'), boys will sit in on required co-ed seminars about male-on-female date rape. They will be portrayed as potentially dangerous and apprised of the poli-

cies governing accusations of unwanted sexual approaches towards girls on campus. That these policies are based on the principle "guilty until proven innocent" has been illustrated recently by high profile cases on several campuses, including one of the Ivy League schools. One case was reported a few months ago in the *New York Times* by a young man's mother, who happens to be an attorney. The mother has challenged the university on the fairness of treatment of her son, who it turned out had done nothing wrong.

Incoming freshman boys will see that most Women's Studies programs include a women's center. By contrast, there are currently only nine men's centers in the world, eight of them in the States, one in the UK. The status of fledgling centers here in Canada is according to recent information problematic and at best precarious—the word I favor to describe the situation in general for boys on campus.

While women's centers have been in existence for decades, the first men's center opened in 2006 and has now closed for want of funding. The second oldest, at Wagner College, remains open. I'll tell you more about it in a moment.

Membership in the extant centers is small, usually under a dozen. This is because currently the centers are at best tolerated and ignored, at worst mocked, making them places that are perceived to be undesirable for boys to be known to have an association with.

There you have some of the background of campus men's centers to date. Their history is brief—only about seven years—and their prospects until recently have been dim. But—and this is why I am here tonight—I am convinced that increasing their numbers is essential and that the time is ripe to do so. I would like to see a men's center on every campus of every college and university in Canada and the States.

I have described the situation for college men as precarious. Some speak of it as critical—that there is a crisis for young men and boys, if not also for most males. I agree with this assessment, but remind you what crisis means in its basic sense. A crisis is a turning point—the turning point, for example, in a disease or drama. In medicine, it refers to the moment in the natural history of a disease when, for example, a fever breaks and the organism starts to get better. In a play, it is that episode when the outcome of the story is determined. I think of the present crisis for young men as such a moment. I see the crisis young men face as that episode in the story of women and men, boys and girls, of civilized life itself, during which how things will turn out for all of us, males and females living together in community, is being determined and I see university campuses as the stage on which the action of this episode is unfolding.

Thinking of the many young men I have mentored in the last 40 years, I am impressed by the ones—especially in recent years—who show remarkable vitality in the face of an often noxious and even toxic socio-cultural and educational environment. I am optimistic, however, that given our support, the silent ones will "come to" and be reinvigorated. Like Justin, they are the majority and we will have to be generous in our support of them. It will take a great deal of our effort and care. Responsible parents, university faculty and administrators, policy-makers, mentors and, yes, advocates outside academe will have to speak out on their behalf to jump start a renewal of involvement in

campus life for young men. Centers for university men are the place where this will begin. Now mostly quiet boys will begin to talk about their experience on campus and in the wider world of other young men, if they are permitted and encouraged to do so. In turn, these young men will carry a new outlook back home to their younger brothers and male friends, and to their fathers, and forward into their lives after university as friends of men, as male partners of women, and as fathers of sons.

Let me review why such centers are necessary and then tell you how to build one. To address the first part, I will revisit some of what I have already said.

Why are university centers for men necessary?

First, as already indicated, there are fewer men on campus and so they need to have a place to talk about why they are now in the minority. I may be able to guess at why we are seeing the trends I've reported, but only the boys themselves can tell us what their experience is that has produced the trend. I like to think of a men's center on campus as a place where the silence most males have learned since childhood (and may also be part of very deep-lying tendencies related to being-male) may be lifted, at least on the matter of how they see themselves and are being seen by administrators, faculty, and other boys on campus, and by their female counterparts.

Second, a perspective on being male must be provided that contrasts with that which nearly all universities now provide. An audible and visible male-positive presence must be foregrounded. Study groups on the topic of the well-being of boys and men are places where that presence can be established. Even if there is only the plan for such a center and such a group, there will be a positive effect. It is important for a discussion to be opened that could lead to establishing a men's center. I want to stress that: In the short term, even if there is only a discussion going on among administrators and faculty and the young men themselves about the need for such a center, the atmosphere on campus will change. These discussions must begin immediately.

Third, the curriculum and co-curriculum have changed in important ways in the past thirty years. In an effort to point out that history is the legacy of a small group of males (which is true), changes have been made in courses in the social sciences and humanities (history, sociology, and psychology most of all) to add to the narrative the part women have played in history. But since history is not about most men's lives, we must also add to the official record what we know about them, too. What has been left unsaid is that the lives of most men, like the lives of most women, have not been and are not now characterized by real power. As Warren Farrell pointed out many years ago, if real power is power over one's life, most men have been and are impotent. To repeat: That a few men have been extraordinarily dominant in society misses the point that most men have been without real power. To allow the means for finding access to such power to diminish even further—especially for young men—cannot be tolerated. I am here to ask that we respond to the weakening of means for young men to achieve personal power—power over their lives—as that is related to their life at university.

As offerings by the optional extra-curriculum, university boys are asked to participate in "Take Back the Night" and "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" and wear a white ribbon. These may be worthy consciousness-raising offerings for a small group of young men. But where are there, in balance,

events that consider the high suicide rate of young men, for example, or the missing father in so many boys' lives, or the dismal performance of small boys as readers? Moreover, where is there a tribute to the positive contributions average men—the blokes—have made and are making? The building we are sitting in, the roads that got us here, the metal fabricated from mined ores that holds up the buildings and span rivers—these were and are provided almost entirely by the effort and design of men. Who hauled nearly every bit of food from farm to market to the dining halls here at the University of Toronto? And who will lift and empty the overfull trash receptacles out on this beautiful campus? A casual glance outside in the early morning hours and late at night will reveal that it was almost always a man, often a young man. Lifting boxes from truck to dolly to shelf is tough work. So is emptying trash containers onto waste removal vehicles.

Fourth, college men are known to be less involved in extracurricular life: civic engagement, volunteerism, campus government, journalism and other outlets for creative work. They are visible for the most part only on playing fields—for example, the dangerous green of American college football—but hardly anywhere else. This was confirmed by a series of studies I edited for publication in 2010, *Engaging College Men: Discovering What Works and Why*, where data are provided that show how relatively little men, by comparison with women, are involved in co-curricular programs, including all-important self-discernment exploration. The notion of self-discernment refers to reflection on one's calling in life. As studies have shown, college boys pay very little attention to this—something, by the way, that is independent of scoping out job opportunities. They seem not to care about the future. As psychologists say, their future is foreshortened. We should be very concerned about this.

Finally, as academe became a place where activism masked as research mingled with scholarship, certain ideological commitments caused many to overlook the interests and well-being of young men on campus. The university is not the place for activism by any group. It should be what it was intended to be: a forum for the reasoned exchange of ideas, temperate debate, and cautious conclusions. Otherwise, it becomes more like a seminary where a belief system operating in the background orders the curriculum.

The net result of these developments can be best summarized as an ambience—a socio-cultural and intellectual atmosphere on campus—in which college boys have come to feel unwelcome, and just at time when the press is reporting on the presumptive “end of men” and the superfluousness of males in an economy that no longer needs traditionally male qualities such as physical strength to make it run.

At a time when a college degree has come to be required for more and more entry-level positions, where are the boys going who used to go to college? Some are living with their parents for as long as they can. Others are moving from place to place, following minimum-wage employment offers. But that leaves many unaccounted for. Some economists argue that these young men are better off than the ones who have completed a bachelor's degree and head into the world with \$100,000 in loan debt and no prospects of employment. These economists judge that part of the decline in male attendance at college is a certain common sense about the realities of the job market. I have no evidence that acting on the option not to go to university is a sensible thing for young men to do, since the degree is a lifetime credential and its earning power and dollar value will change as the economy

improves. The larger picture, of course, is one of women's likely alienation from less credentialed prospective partners. A woman will be less inclined to want to pair up with a man who cannot earn as much as she can, especially if the decision is taken to start a family. No. I see only more uncertain, alienated young men who feel of less value in not having pursued and acquired that first post-secondary degree, no matter whether there is an employer ready to hire them after graduation.

In uncertain times, it is still important to have the option of attending university and making the most of the time. But what if it is a place where one feels unwelcome, unimportant, and suspect. Those boys who are there need the validation of their voice and place on campus, a campus community that is aware of the difficulties they uniquely face and is open to hearing about their experience. A university men's center can provide this.

I turn now to the components of a men's center. No two centers will be entirely alike, but the best of them will share some common features.

Above all, a university center for men should provide an opportunity for an informal study group that meets regularly—twice a month is enough. With the permission of the university, a faculty mentor arranges for a place where young men can meet. He or she may offer a short list of possible topics (in the form of questions), which usually include the following:

How are we seen on campus?

How do we see ourselves here?

What is it to be a male in contemporary society—whether he is a young man like us, a man already established in a trade or profession, or a boy entering elementary school?

What is life like for most men now—those our age who are not in college and those who are older?

What about fathers?

What was my father's life like?

What was my experience with my own father?

Do I have it in me to be a father?

What would that be like? What would that mean?

And if I did not know the presence of a father, what effect did that have on me—and perhaps on my sisters?

(In the States, the divorce rate is 50% and if there is a son custody battle, two out of three times, the mother will be awarded the joy and responsibility of raising the couple's son on her own,

but as a “single mom.” It is well known that most find this a very demanding task since single moms are usually employed, often full-time.)

How are my relationships with girls on campus?

And since there are some young men who are drawn sexually and romantically to other males, the question is sometimes raised about same-sex relationships.

A question that inevitably turns up in discussions is: How do I feel about my relationships with my male friends?

There is an intimacy in these relationships that men desire. It is not sexual, but it runs deep. In fact, some of that kind of experience is generated in the study groups I am describing. In the past, these relationships were formed only among athletes and in fraternities. Study groups for men on campus are very different in that their members are typically very diverse. A men’s group is not a fraternity, which generally selects for a kind of person. It welcomes everyone, no matter his race or ethnic background. Our groups each year have included athletes, nerds, science majors, and philosophy majors.

Wagner College was able to sponsor retreats for small groups of men who met at the center. This is a second element of an effective men’s center—the opportunity each semester to spend a weekend off campus with other young men. Talking about these experiences, which I was able to provide for four years at Wagner College, the boys who participated in such retreats reported “good times.” Provided with a place in the country—a small, private retreat center near Bard College, about three hours from campus—they traveled to it together, bought food, made music, played chess, walked in the woods—and, at my suggestion, tried to observe one or two protocols. No cell phones from 8 am to 8 pm, and an invitation to each of the boys to be responsible for an hour during the weekend—to lead a discussion, play music, demonstrate a skill. Believe me, I know there was much officially unsanctioned, unofficial silly behavior during such retreats, but trusting to the basic good sense of these boys, I’m happy to say that everyone stayed safe. They looked after each other. They lived together for a period of time and no doubt the most important conversations did not take place during organized hours. The retreats set the stage for forming deep relationships after the boys returned to campus. Many of these relationships have continued beyond graduation. A group of graduates who were part of the Men’s Center now meet regularly online.

For four years I was also able to pay for an annual dinner for the group at the close of the school year. This is an important element of a men’s center’s offerings. It was the only time each year that I met with the group as a whole. Meanwhile, I saw each of the boys individually, informally, throughout the year from time to time.

The website [www.collegemencenters.com](http://www.collegemencenters.com) and the Facebook page “College and University Centers for Men” (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/227103590741286/>) have become points of reference for some of the men following graduation. These virtual centers are hubs for men’s centers. Part of the strength of the development of such centers will be derived from the social media that will follow their activity. We have only just begun to see the prospects offered by this.

As I have suggested, a university center for men can be effective in its mere visibility, no matter how active it is at the beginning. This is important to keep in mind. At Wagner, the center is my office and one seminar room reserved four hours a month for group meetings. A sign under my name above my door—Men’s Center—tells the campus community a great deal about what should be important to everyone. I will have something to say about logistics and the response of the wider campus community shortly.

I chose the name Sodality for our center. It’s a good old word that means brotherhood and fellowship. Other schools have named their group “The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen” and “M-Pact.” The center should have an identity and a logo.

A men’s center should try whenever possible to extend its reach beyond campus. At Wagner I did this by making a connection with the University of South Australia, which went on to sponsor a graduate of the college for a three-month paid postgraduate research-in-living experience at the Whyalla campus of the university. The student must pay for transportation to and from Australia. All other expenses are carried by the university. While there, the young man is engaged in research. There is currently one alumnus of that program and a second arrangement is being made at this time. The research project of the first postgraduate was on the effects on rural men of extended employment stays away from home and family.

The center also experimented with reaching out to young middle school boys from the poorest area of Staten Island, the borough of New York City where Wagner College is located. With parental permissions in place, we brought mostly African-American middle school-age boys to campus, where our young men spent afternoons with them on the basketball courts and on the oval. Many of the boys had never been in a gymnasium. Some had not eaten in a diner or played on a spacious grassy field. Some had never handled a frisbee. This sort of civic engagement by our small group of men was not unnoticed by the college. Young men at other schools, recounted in the book *Engaging College Men*, have worked in similar ways with boys in their local communities.

Briefly, then, these are the major elements of a university men’s center. Now, what of the logistics in setting up such a program?

It is, of course, necessary to gain the support of the president or dean of the university. I was easily able to convince our president of the value of a men’s center at Wagner College, and I am sure he has never regretted giving me the OK. His foresight and our friendship carried the day. A conversation followed by an email is all that is required. Easier said than done? If this has happened at ten schools, it can happen at every college and university. I am surprised by the resistance so many universities have shown. What are they afraid of?

I suggest remaining independent of the club system. This will be good news to administrators who are always understandably concerned about costs. In any case, a men’s center is not a club for men but an organization dedicated to men. It is about men. I see it as part of a greater movement committed to addressing and ensuring the well-being of boys and men in general. It is not against anything—not anti- anything, anyone, or any group. A men’s center nicely complements a women’s center on campus

Funding should be sought from alumni/ae. Here the development office is especially important in providing access to subgroups of alumni/ae who are of an age to have college-age sons and daughters. An article in the alumni/ae magazine about the center can go a long way to raising awareness and securing funding. For two years, an alumnus and his wife designated gifts totaling \$8,000.00 to support our center. This year an anonymous donor made a gift of \$800.00 for the current semester. It helps to have the support of the news director on campus. I have been fortunate in that way. Our activity and, in several cases, speakers on boys and men I brought to campus have been covered.

It is important that the group be student-driven. The faculty mentor should turn over the management of the group to students—all the while monitoring its health. Better that it flounder at first and be secured by student effort. It belongs to them. Each year I invite one student to act as the coordinator of the group. He represents the Center during freshman orientation week, recruits potentially interested group members, and convenes group meetings.

In closing, let me summarize what I would like to see happen:

I would like to see a men's center on every private college and university campus in two years and, within 3-5 years, a men's center on every public university campus.

This is going to depend on a variety of efforts on behalf of college men, but also on behalf of boys and men in the world surrounding the university. Last year, Warren Farrell spoke in this series of talks about the situation for boys and the need for bolstering their experience in childhood, especially in school. Students in men's centers should discuss that situation. Men's centers can also be places where much-needed real intersexual dialogue begins, the sort of dialogue that Paul Nathanson and Katherine Young encouraged during their presentation at this forum earlier this year.

Centers for men will be places where a voice for college men can be heard. Only these boys can tell us what we really need to know about their experience. What we need to know will not come in the first place from sophisticated research and scholarly panels. It will come from the young men themselves. Now is the time to add that the boys I have come to know are nothing like the "guys" portrayed in a well-known book published five years ago. They do not live in a "perilous world" as the author termed it, but rather one in which they are stunned and hurt to find they are less than welcome. We need to understand what has happened and is happening to young men, not paint a picture of them that is inaccurate and punish them further. Such "research" based on questionable data is not helpful. Some would argue that it is dishonest.

Centers for men on university and college campuses will be also places where an appeal to fathers and mothers originates. When I tell parents what I have told you here tonight, the standard response is one of amazement. This is going on? There are so few boys there now? They simply didn't know. Most are also not aware of changes in the curriculum, the co-curriculum, and the extra-curriculum I have described that have taken place since they graduated.

I would like to see the beginning of a few new projects based at university centers for men, including meetings of fathers and sons. Advocating only for the importance of the father-son relationship, this was tried at St. John's University for several years and, while the funding lasted, there

were three years of hugely successful annual father-son banquets.

Twenty years ago, just about the time men started to disappear from university, the British writer, Neil Lyndon, published a book called *No More Sex Wars*. I'm convinced that university campuses can become known as places where peace tables are set up to end harmful and wasteful battles between the sexes.

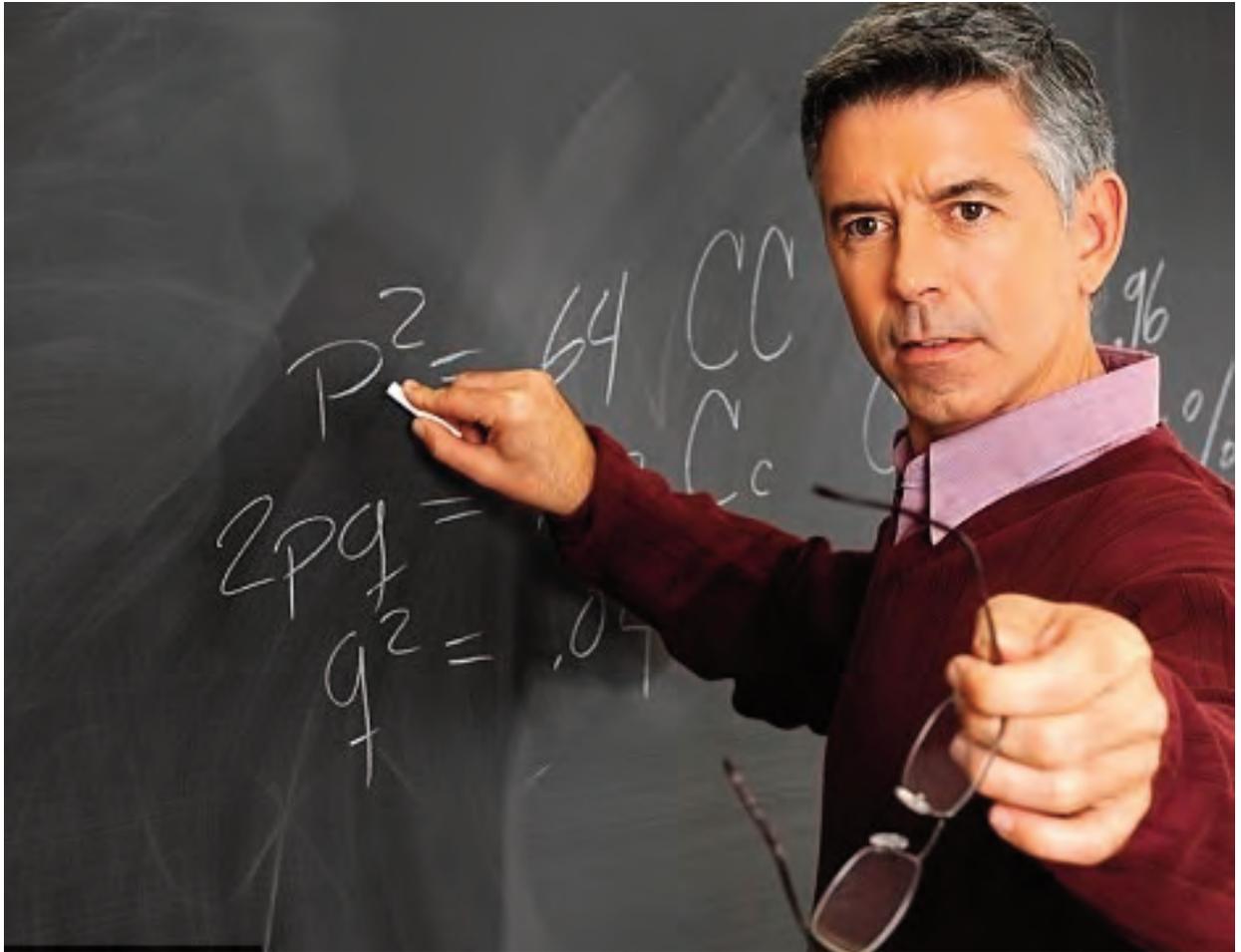
College campuses are the ideal place where an understanding of the issues challenging the well-being of young men can be gained. But to understand, we have to hear from our young men, and to hear from them they have to be there. Centers for university men are the place to welcome young men, listen to what they have to say about their experience, and care for them at this turning point in their collective life.



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# “If You Hit, You Sit”: Implications of a Pilot Case Study of the Retired Male Primary Teacher

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*During the early 2000s, the cries for male primary teachers grew louder in the Province of Ontario. The issue has many dimensions. This pilot study will examine some of these issues through the analysis of an oral history interview of a successful and retired male primary teacher. It intends to lay the groundwork and examine some of the issues that would arise in a bigger cross-generational analysis comparing retired male teachers life experiences with those of male pre-service teachers in their Fac-*

ulty of Education programs. It also builds on the authors' previous research into pre-service teachers. In particular the issues of isolation, role expectations and retention will be looked at. The paper will conclude by examining with some benefits of a future cross-generational research project.

**Keywords:** male teachers, success, oral history, teacher education, elementary school, male studies

## Introduction

In the past decade in the Province of Ontario, Canada there has been on-going concern surrounding the number of men entering into the teaching profession, particularly as primary teachers. The situation in the eyes of many remains quite grim (Bernard et al., 2004b). In 2004 the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) responded to these concerns with their report entitled, *Narrowing the Gender Gap: Attracting Men to Teaching*. Some of the reasons they cited as to why men did not become teachers included low salaries, overwork, and societal views on the appropriateness of men in the classroom and a female dominated profession (Bernard et al., 2004a). In 2013, this issue continues to fester, but in the eyes of the some, this question has taken a back-seat to the number of unemployed teachers in the province (Ontario College of Teachers, 2012, 2013). Still, the issue of men in the classroom remains compelling - there are fewer and fewer men teaching today (National Post Editorial Board, 2013; Petty, 2013). This pilot study will examine the themes of males in teaching through the analysis of an interview with a retired teacher. It intends to lay the groundwork and examine some of the issues that would arise in a bigger cross-generational analysis comparing retired male teachers life experiences with those of male pre-service teachers in their Faculty of Education program. It also builds on the authors' previous research (Parr et al., 2007; Gosse et al., 2008; Gosse et al., 2008). What explanations are possible in terms of male teachers' life histories and particularly why they join, stay, or leave the teaching profession? A broad spectrum of masculinities plays a key role in assessing the male teachers' life histories. There is simply no one way to be a male teacher. The article thus will examine the roles that 1) societal acceptability, 2) gender expectations, and 3) career durability play in male teachers' life histories.

## Literature Review

This review will focus on some principal areas: notably, the history of male teachers in Canada, secondarily, the oral histories of educators and finally, cross-generational analysis. It is by no means comprehensive. In each case, the question asked are why is this literature relevant to the study?; Where are the gaps in the literature?; What is the impetus for research?; will be asked. In the past, historians of education have addressed male teachers sparingly and rarely if ever in a cross-generational fashion. In previous historical scholarship, the connection between militarism and the teaching of boys was one of the things that characterized Victorian and Edwardian schooling in Canada and Britain as Moss notes in his work (Moss, 2001). He argues very coherently that athleticism and the creation of armies was tightly drawn together through education (Moss, 2001). Male teachers were part of this and Moss notes the concern by members of the elite over the fact that few men were becoming teachers (Moss, 2001). Secondary male teachers were required to know how to do

drill in order to obtain a First-Class Ontario teaching certificate (Moss, 2001). While Moss' work draws us as readers to the earlier period, his book deals primarily with nineteenth century Canada. He has outlined some of the themes of males as teachers in this earlier historical period, notably the curricular expectations. He also points to the concern and fear of the patriarchy if teaching were to become a female dominated field. In his work, Moss does not speak to cross-generational comparisons. What are the differences between students, for example of the cohort of 1905 to that of 1912? These comparisons would help to verify if there are similarities of experience or is context the key determinant of male teacher success?

While teaching was still seen by some as a "male task," with the turn to the twentieth century, eighty percent of the elementary teaching force was female as Delhi notes (Abbot, 1991; Dehli, 1994; Sager, 2007). Males did teach in the senior grades, but the vast majority of teachers in this era were women. Changing status and remuneration was an important development for both men and women during this time (Sager, 2007). Still, by the 1920s, in the view of MacDonald, the question of pay levels for male high school teachers was front and center. Male teachers should get more remuneration for their efforts; otherwise they would be discouraged from entering into teaching as a profession (J.F. MacDonald, 1918). As Gelman notes however, MacDonald's concern also centers on what he perceived as a decline in status of the profession as more women entered the classroom (Gelman, 1990). Clearly, these articles point to the question of remuneration, albeit from two different perspectives, one rising and the other more exclusionary. In the early twentieth century, differentials existed between men and women in Canadian schools. Pay levels and how they figure into career durability remains a pertinent question for men in this study. How do the different levels of pay between starting male teachers and their more experienced counterparts have an impact on career longevity? The answer seems obvious, but perhaps it is more nuanced and bears further investigation.

In more recent times in Canada, there has been a more extended analysis and focus on the changing role of women in the classroom as noted by several prominent historians of women and women teachers (Prentice, 1996; Prentice & Theobald, 1991; Sangster, 1995). More recent literature also includes a scrutiny of gender role models in schools through government policy documents. These works are relevant in that they set the stage for this study, but they also show the gaps in the literature because there is no examination of the question from a cross-generational perspective. What kind of world existed for graduates of the 1960s versus the world of the 2000s? The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970, did much to publicize the gap between the genders (Canada, 1970). It called for the advancement of women teachers to leadership positions and also an end to stereotypical examples of "women's work" and women's life choices (Canada, 1970). Similarly, the Hall-Dennis Report, 1970, argued for the opening of promotion opportunities for women teachers (Gidney, 1999). In the decade of the 1980s, more women were employed as principals, and supervisory officers in Canadian school boards (Gidney, 1999; Tabin & Coleman, 1993).

In more recent times as well, historians have shown growing interest in men school systems in Canada. During the late 1990s under the provincial Conservative government of Premier Mike Harris, the employment statistics for male teachers, *grosso modo*, pointed in one direction, downward. In 1999, there were 52,798 male teachers in Ontario. They made up only 31 per cent of the more than 170,000 teachers in the Ontario College of Teachers (Giguère, 1999). Recently, the situation

has grown substantially worse. For historians of education, the question of male teachers is now emerging as a topical issue. In the 1990s, historians Rebecca Coulter and Margaret McNay argued that the nature of the call for new male teachers is a political one and cannot be reduced to a series of simplified causes (Coulter & McNay, 1993). They suggest that the purpose of having more males in the elementary schools needs to be clarified (Coulter & McNay, 1993). In Britain as well, attention has been drawn to the issue of the disappearing male primary teacher and some of the causes of this phenomenon (Skelton, 1991, 2003). The issue of male teachers then is in front of historians, but much more work needs to be done to understand their decline in the school system.

Oral histories of teachers have become more prevalent in recent times. It is important to look at this key tool as it is used to understand the challenges of male teachers. Kathleen Weiler points to the issues of identity in her analysis of female retired teachers (Weiler, 1995). While Weiler discusses issues of narrative and subjectivity extensively, she also speaks to the construction of gender and profession, as well as the limitations of women's roles (Weiler, 1995). This is relevant to the current paper, in that broader notions of definition (i.e. beyond "the patriarchy" in the sense that not all males are at the apex of the decision making pyramid or in what Kimmel *et al* describe as the *structure of power*) and the definition of professionalism also provide the background wallpaper to men's and women's lives as teachers (Kimmel et al., 2005). Some of these themes will emerge in this paper. Likewise, Altenbaugh in his broad-ranging discussion of teachers and oral history's accomplishments to date points to the agenda for historians of education in the twenty-first century (Altenbaugh, 1997). He states two things; "gender resonates throughout all of their recollections," referring to women teachers of the twentieth century (Altenbaugh, 1997). Further, "we must make a greater effort to weave *all* teachers' voices into the traditional narrative of educational history, enriching it as well as giving substance to those voices" (Altenbaugh, 1997). These two points speak to this study as well; gender does resonate and all voices need to be heard and weighed. Elsewhere, Gardner examines the distinction between "oral history" and "life histories" in his discussion of teachers' lives (Gardner, 2003). His work is quite relevant to this work in the sense that the distinction between life histories and oral histories needs to be drawn (Gardner, 2003). Life histories speak to the narrative of single lives, while oral histories speak to a broader collection of interviews and resources from other sources designed to create a broader picture. Equally essential and linked to Gardner's critical analysis is the problem of memories (Gardner, 2003). The significant and intractable issue that Gardner raises, in this regard, is that of "narrative identity." Life histories can be recounted along as well constructed narrative paths where the thickets to the side of the path are less well investigated. As Gardner states; "we may wish to take this narrative as the starting point from which to probe individual memory for more precise, detailed or verifiable information about the past. Just such data reside in memory but have often been pushed to one side in the refinement of a coherent narrative identity (Gardner, 2003)." The digging along the side of the path brings us to oral histories. Gardner also speaks about, "narrative disruption," the ability to introduce elements into the conversation (i.e. a curriculum guide from the interviewee's early career) that triggers memories "off path" or outside the main narrative (Gardner, 2003). The oral history interview in this sense brings the historian closer to the documentary record, but also to the "real and explicable past" – the main object of the exercise in any event (Gardner, 2003).

Lastly, with an eye to a bigger and broader future research project of looking at both retired

teachers and pre-service candidates, the question of cross-generational analysis remains important and to it the discussion now turns. Wertsch and Lau argue that different generations remember things in different ways – hence it critical to have the voices of all (Lau, 2003; Wertsch, 2002). The challenge of this area of research is to look at the connections between generations. In this study, there are no direct familial connections (i.e. grand-father, son, grand-son, grandmother, mother, daughter). Daniel Bar-On’s analysis of Holocaust survivors looks at the impact of the Holocaust on the second and then third generations of families following the event. For many, the echos still resonate loudly (Bar-On, 2004). There is much that pre-service teachers can learn from their retired elders and the evolution and transformation that occurs through a professional career (i.e. teaching) (Bar-On, 2004). There are very few examples of this type of study. Consequently, the topic is significant, relevant and provides an impetus for the research.

## Methodology

### Who?

Oral history methodology often asks the question “who should be interviewed?” It also asks “why” and “by whom?” The “why” here is answered with - to understand better the challenges that different generations of teachers face. The “by whom” – clearly interviewers can have an impact on memory of the interviewee. This and Yow’s questioning of objectivity are significant (Thomson, 2007; Yow, 1997). The issue of the bias and the interviewer will be discussed again in a moment. The question of “who?” is answered with a retired male teacher. Why was he chosen? As a long serving practitioner he was well placed to reflect on the totality of the experience of teaching in primary through the past thirty years. As repeated by noted oral historians and very cogent, “when an old man that dies, a library burns” (Perks & Thomson, 2006). Why are the tales of retired and seniors so significant? Portelli speaks to the question of oral history interviewees’ relationship with time. If the interviewer meets the interviewee at the “right time,” (not too young to be in the thick of action, and not too old to remember nothing)” then they may get a balance of experience and analysis in the tale that is being told (Perks & Thomson, 2006). Retirees, as opposed to youth and the younger generations, have the richness of time and the depth of experience, whereas younger generations may be much quicker to make the snap judgments of youth. Rushing through time, arguably, does not give them the freedom of analysis that their elders may have in their senior years. Lack of experience may also inhibit them. Yow speaks to the question of memory and age. To put it bluntly, narrative and stories are better told by older adults. They were not only able to understand stories better, but also can summon considerable vocabularies and are able to cross-reference details in a much more sophisticated fashion (Yow, 2005). Yow also notes the work of German scholars, who consider that some of the most traumatic memories that older people have do not a greater salience than do banal daily events (Yow, 2005). Yow also notes that for men in particular, there is a “developmental need” to be more forthright with events – to set the record straight, as it were. There is also a greater openness to display emotion, which in many cases with men may not be present earlier on in their lives (Yow, 2005).

### How?

The question of “how?” can be answered with oral history methods. How was the in-depth interview conducted? How is the interview analyzed? Where do the themes come from? The exploration of the retired teacher’s view on being “a male in primary” was approached from a slightly different perspective than the younger teachers in earlier research as this clearly was to be a reflection on more distant events, rather than an analysis of life choices in an early career stage. Senior (in experience and years of service) teachers may have much to offer in this type of interview, however are still constrained by the fact that they continue to be working in the field, and are still an employee, possibly of a district school board. Retired teachers have broader latitude to delve into their memories of the classroom, the administrative structure and the subsequent politics of education. This type of interview has also been termed the *in-depth interview*. All the questions for this interview went through university ethics and were approved prior to the interview. The questions were variations on the questions posed to the pre-service candidates (or teacher candidates) in the earlier research; these spoke more clearly to an older demographic. The interview for the retired teacher was two hours in length. This type of interview used the oral narrative that is central to a historical research strategy and is the precursor to a bigger project with many interviews (Lummis, 1987; Yow, 2005).

### So What?

The analysis of the retired teacher’s interview also took cues from the earlier studies (Parr et al., 2007; Gosse et al., 2008; Gosse et al., 2008). Were the challenges of the retired *successful* teacher the same or different? The themes that emerged from the earlier study of pre-service candidates were ones of *isolation* (pre-service males, along a spectrum of sexual orientations and in different family situations (i.e. single to married with children), in all female pre-service classes), *gender role* (caring male vs. authoritative father figure, etc.) and *retention* (staying in the Faculty of Education vs. dropping out)(Parr et al., 2007). These themes were retained for this study.

The analysis also took into account the secondary literature; government publications and scholarly literature on this subject (Bernard et al., 2004b). A key question is whether there was a triangulation of results (Dougherty, 1999; Roper, 1996; Walker, 1996)? Additionally, the analysis followed the analytical directions of Yow and Yans-McLaughlin and Gutman and Brian Roberts. Yow states that the historian must “look for the plot of this life-story, the beginning, the middle, the end” (Yow, 2005). Yans-McLaughlin and Gutman argue that oral historians should critically examine the ways their subjects organize time (i.e. chronologically versus thematically), how is the past characterized, and what is the level of description of the past (Yans-McLaughlin, 1990). This work is very relevant to this case study; in the case of the retired interviewee, there was a plot to the life-story, and time was organized chronologically from the beginning of his teaching career to his retirement. As per the earlier discussion of Gardner, attempts were undertaken to “disrupt” the narrative (Gardner, 2003). Moreover, Brian Roberts also points to the role of contradictions in the analysis (Roberts, 2002). Are there spaces between what the interviewer asked, and the interviewee’s response? Lastly, as discussed earlier, what is the interaction between the biases of the interviewer (the historian) and the interviewee (Yans-McLaughlin, 1990)? Again this is very relevant to this case study as both the interviewer and the interviewee were primary teachers at different points in their careers, the interviewer subsequently became a university-based historian and is much younger than the interviewee. This presents the issue of bias, but also provides for some commonality of meaning and understanding in terms of the language of teachers – or as Ravitch has termed it “edspeak” (Ravitch, 2007).

King has addressed this issue (King, 1991). Also, Yow's questions are significant here (Yow, 1997).<sup>1</sup>

## Analysis

The central themes that the analysis addresses then are *isolation, role models, and retention*. It is to that analysis the paper now turns.

### *Societal Acceptability and Isolation*

Teacher isolation can take place inside schools and within grade divisions.<sup>2</sup> It has been noted elsewhere that male teachers in the lower grades or primary division are often very much alone in their vocation. Many of their colleagues are female teachers and increasingly their administrators are female (National Education Association, 2004a, 2004b). In earlier research, the pre-service candidates, both those who completed their studies and those who dropped out noted some isolation in the faculty of education in the pre-service classroom. Isolation is not uncommon in post-secondary settings, this acknowledges others can be alone as well. In one case this was due to other commitments – the candidate simply did not have the time to maintain his business in another city, and go to school (Parr et al., 2007). In a second case, isolation was in part due to exclusion based on sexual orientation and anti-gay bullying as well as a series of other factors (Parr et al., 2007).

When asked about isolation, the retired interviewee did not see any issues of being alone in his position as a Junior-Kindergarten teacher (Retired Teacher, 2007). Setting the context of the retired interviewee's life is also crucial. He was a long time member of a northern rural community (Retired Teacher, 2007). Clearly in the case of the retired interviewee there were a variety of factors at work. The idea of being an accepted member of a school staff, particularly in a primary classroom, in part relies on a shared set of values. When a teacher grows up in the community of his or her employment and has this shared set of values, whatever these maybe, then this facilitates the transition to employment and subsequently assignment to a primary classroom. The retired interviewee was very much a product of his northern environment. Factors that lead to male isolation were reduced by the common experience of his developing years and his own school experiences. Isolation can also be connected to race and ethnicity. Integrating staffs who do not share cultural backgrounds has been played out in particular around this issue in the United States (Frankenberg, 2006). Another discussion centers on the question of accumulating cultural and network capital. This is a struggle that is ongoing for the pre-service students of both genders. In the case of the retiree, this life skill was mastered and he had accumulated the necessary capital. The Northern Ontario community where the retired interviewee taught was relatively homogenous in terms of origin, qualifications and experiences; consequently this question did not arise. In short, the retired interviewee "fit in."

The retired interviewee addressed some of the issues surrounding isolation early in his career. He was in many ways a forerunner for the current generation of teachers with his international experience. He left his northern community for a sojourn abroad to teach and then returned. He started teaching in the Fall of 1963 and started as an elementary teacher (Retired Teacher, 2007). He

taught in a small town in 1965 and attempted to teach internationally in Holland. He taught in Jackson's Point in Simcoe County after that for several years (Retired Teacher, 2007). From 1974 onward for several years he taught at an Anglican boarding school in Jamaica. He returned to the north in 1977 and started teaching again in his Northern Ontario community of origin. He also caught up with some of his friends from his earlier teaching experience.

I phoned some principal friends in (home city) from the previous fifteen years that I taught there.....the boards were very small and very personal (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Another component that mitigated against the retired interviewee's isolation and facilitated his re-entry into the primary classroom was his familiarity with principals in junior schools. Many of these principals were women. He worked for this series of principals on a part-time basis to provide supply coverage upon his return to the (home city) Board of Education.

When I came home even when my Mom was still alive, before I was married I was home for like a couple of years and I lived in the village here and worked in (home city) and I started working for friends.... and I opted into a job working for teaching for the principal in the principal's classroom because they had to work half time depending on the size of their school" (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Isolation also cannot describe the retired interviewee's view of the classroom in terms of gender. He found his interaction with female primary teachers and administrators to be highly beneficial. He often went outside with his Junior Kindergarten class and this provided for an opportunity to work collaboratively with the Senior Kindergarten teacher. Often in Ontario schools, JK and SK classes will take their recess breaks or outdoor physical education breaks at different times than the upper grades.

....every day we were outside; everyday unless there was fear of frost. As soon as the bell rang and we took attendance in the school, the SK and the JK both of us, both classes went outside and we had a full play ground, all the climbing equipment, we could bring out tricycles, bikes, balls, the whole school was in, we had the whole yard to ourselves. We could, we didn't play with them as much as watch them. It took about twenty-eight minutes and at the twenty-eighth minute you could look down at your watch, and I don't know how many times it was twenty-eight minutes and out of my fifteen or sixteen kids and Alicia's [pseud.] twenty, there would be thirty-six kids out there. In twenty-eight minutes, over half of them would be sitting down somewhere. So then it was time to go in" (Retired Teacher, 2007).

By mid-career, well-honed time management and organization skills also served the retired interviewee well in terms of buttressing him against isolation in an environment dominated by female teachers. Being competent in these areas brought confidence and being accepted in the staff-room environment. Seeking and finding elusive "moments of tranquility" where he could interact with his colleague and peer, while at the same time supervise outdoor activities was a key strategy. He spoke of breaking down the walls between the Senior Kindergarten and Junior Kindergarten classrooms so there could be a better flow between the two rooms. When questioned about being one of

a few men on staff in a primary school, the retired interviewee underlined the fact that the Kindergarten was a unit separate from the rest of the school. The two kindergarten teachers worked as a team all throughout the day as can be seen (Retired Teacher, 2007). Clearly, communications strategies and interpersonal skills helped establish his close relationship with his colleague.

Once I got into the primary grades, once I got into that JK business, then I was not involved with the rest of the school. If I had been in Grade One or Two or Three, then I would have been involved with the rest of the school. But, the kindergarten classes lived apart. You know, we had our own primary bus in the west end. There were a couple of buses in the west end on LeDrew, MacIntyre and Pinewood West, Jane Street and Main West. They came. Once they arrived, we didn't leave them" (Retired Teacher, 2007).

The coordination with the female kindergarten teacher was also apparent in terms of schoolyard supervision. The issue of the retirement of the retired interviewee's colleague is also important in terms of isolation, but is also a question of retention. As a consequence, it will be examined in the section of retention below.

Isolation was also successfully overcome through the use of communication skills and networks. Male primary teachers who are good communicators and have good communication skills are more than likely the teachers who will have longevity in the primary classroom. Good communication skills and a high level of interaction and friendliness with female colleagues provide another structure or framework for success. This has also been noted in the literature. Eng speaks of "mutual respect, getting along with female colleagues." as key in terms of communication (Eng, 2004). The secondary part of this was the ability to establish good networks within schools and beyond their boundaries. Bainer and Didham point to the collaborative environment that is found in elementary schools. This differs from the more hierarchical and structured career path of other institutions and careers (Bainer & Didham, 1995).

In addressing the issue isolation as mitigated by communication and networks, it is clear that the retired interviewee centers his responses on his cultural belongingness, his longevity with the educational authority, his knowledge of authorities and his confidence. He also speaks of establishing a dynamic with his colleague, a Senior Kindergarten teacher across the hall.

We took our recesses, we should have had recess time like a break time, morning recess and afternoon recess and we blocked them together and we took out from 11:30 to 12 o'clock as our break-time because the program was a two and a half hour program, so we worked five hours the same as the rest of the school worked five hours. We took our two breaks between 11:30 and 12 and we went out to lunch every day...Our only school duty was we did the bus duty for the whole building at the end of the day. None of the other teachers ever had to do bus duty all year long...that was a way of double convenience, of reducing the workload, and we were both two teachers getting ready to retire, so we had worked out all the methods making life as convenient, congenial, convivial as possible between Alicia[pseud.]and me. We had a won-

derful – we did it for twelve years or so until Alicia [pseud.] retired” (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Clearly, the retired interviewee had a highly articulated plan both to address issues of isolation as a teacher, but also to construct his environment in a way that would work best for him as well.

### *Male Gender Expectations*

While this teacher successfully addressed the question of the isolation of male primary teachers, equally challenging for some male primary teachers is the issue of “gender expectations.” The notion of role is one that has changed over time and there is a well developed literature on this (Bem, 1995; Biddle, 1986). One of the main points of discussion centers around the perceptions of the necessity of males in the school system; what are their stereotypical role expectations and what they are supposed to provide in terms of a counterpoint to their female colleagues. Agreement on these issues is hard to find. Some, notably Warrington and Younger, and Martino and Blye, argue that having male role model teachers, particularly in boys’ schools, can also reinforce hegemonic masculinity, negative gender stereotypes, and the paternalism of previous decades (Martino & Frank, 2006; Warrington & Younger, 2003). Other scholars have found that male primary teachers see their role as to be a caregiver and fatherly figure in the classroom (Skelton, 1991).

The gender expectations that the retired interviewee faced in terms of Junior Kindergarten were tied up in several salient issues. Good classroom management skills were at the top of this list. Addressing the issue of physical contact was also a critical question (Retired Teacher, 2007). Touching children in any inappropriate way was grounds for immediate expulsion from the classroom and would have been the end of his teaching career. Finally, he had to come to terms with the bigger picture; just exactly what was expected of male teachers in Junior Kindergarten?

The issue of classroom management is one that all teachers have to address at all points in their careers. This is an area that is again fraught with academic debate. Skelton and Francis argue that classroom management styles are tied to gender construction and discourses of heterosexuality, which are particularly enforced by some male teachers (Francis & Skelton, 2001). Elsewhere, men have sometime been labeled as “enforcers” (Skelton, 2003). Martin Mills, *et al*, are critical of the mythopoetic nature of claims that recuperative masculinity politics whereby male teachers are the best disciplinarians of boys (Mills et al., 2004). For their part, Skelton and Read also argue that male and female teachers differentiate in terms of the style of classroom management that they use (Skelton & Read, 2006). Given the breadth of this discussion, as is apparent in this brief summary; this is but a surface sampling of this question. Despite the fact that significant issues remain, some key questions can be asked; are classroom management styles reaching boys and girls? Are they meaningful? Lastly, would this change if the demographic of teachers in the school was different (more balanced)?

How did the retired interviewee fit in in terms of what Skelton addresses in being an “enforcer” or somewhere else along this spectrum of male teachers? Does this term have the same application for JK as it might have for the intermediate grades? In terms of the classroom manager and

the harsher enforcer role, the retired interviewee spoke to the questions of classroom rules and procedures. His approach was universal in its application.

....And they have to share or that's removed from them. So, once I was clear about that, these little people had to learn that if you were going to hit someone, you were going to do time. So that's kind of the only rule I had in the classroom and they all knew it. They knew it as a chorus. When there was a problem, the rule was, if you hit you sit and I had an egg-timer, a four-minute egg timer because they were all four and so, I said what is the rule? and they would, the whole classroom would say '*if you hit, you sit*'. So I would take the malefactor over to a chair somewhere, and say, there was usually a timeout spot. I said, okay, if you hit, you sit. You have to sit here until all this time is gone from this hourglass. When it is finished call me and I will see if you know this rule. So at the end of the four minutes, I would be watching too, and at the end of four minutes I would go over and say, what's the rule? If you hit, you sit. And I would say you can go back and play now (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Having a well developed, easy to understand classroom management strategy was a sure way to lay a solid foundation under one's teaching as a male coming into a primary classroom. The retired interviewee however is clearly takes on the middle of the road role. A question that remains is whether there was a differentiation to be made between the retired interviewee's treatment of the male or female students in his class. This was not established in the interview. If students were not hitting, then they could have free reign to dispute possession of the *prized* item.

"...They could argue over materials until the greatest talker got a hold of the truck or the special paint brush. I let them do that arguing until they, one person, had convinced the other, but once the hand came out or the foot struck, I was right on them. Ninety-nine percent of the time nobody needed a time out, once they knew the rule. The three or four who might have got a time out, they only got one. But, the repeat offender was there every day and they were identifiable within the first ten days of school" (Retired Teacher, 2007).

The retired interviewee was also the one of the first male Junior Kindergarten teachers in the province of Ontario and the gender role expectations regarding physical contact were one important distinction as he embarked on this assignment (Retired Teacher, 2007). Shortly after he started teaching JK he contacted the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) (which at this point was the Ontario Public School (Male) Teachers' Federation (OPSTF or OPSMTF)) and asked them questions on how to address the issue of being a male teacher in a primary classroom (Retired Teacher, 2007). In particular the issues of touching children and pedophilia were additionally of concern. At this stage they had few answers. To his principal he stated;

....Otherwise, you just have to trust the fact that I am not a pedophile by offering this position, that's quite a gamble on your part" (Retired Teacher, 2007).

The retired interviewee felt very strongly that he was putting himself in the line of fire. The issue of

personal space and touch also became an important question. With the issue of touch,

... They (OPSTF) said we don't know other than to tell you that that's where you are kind of standing on your own. Now I don't know if that has changed since (Retired Teacher, 2007).

The issue of physical contact and teaching has been looked at by a variety of researchers (Cognard-Black, 2004). The retired interviewee also spoke to the difficult issue of touch and children in the role of a primary teacher. He argued that there were certain situations in which helping a child (i.e. toileting, helping with clothing) might necessitate touching that child. Other boards were promoting a "hand-off" approach.

You get a three year old in October that's had a lot of corn on the cob and full basket of plums, you find them in the bathroom, it's pretty hard to deal with that and not touch them...sometimes the other SK teacher, if it's a woman, may not be available to come and handle those situations and sometimes, you know, you have to do that. So that was ....there were some concerns there and because I am not a child-molester I never had any accusations of that" (Retired Teacher, 2007).

The retired interviewee also spoke of the level of acceptance of other staff members in this role and its attendant responsibilities.

Around those issues, there was no...I didn't sense that anywhere, I didn't receive it verbally from anyone....I suppose I was a known quantity in (home city) . It is a small club there... so my reputation had maybe preceded me. I was a senior teacher; I wasn't like a young person wandering" (Retired Teacher, 2007).

The question of the broader role of the Junior Kindergarten teacher also arose.

I said to Tricia R. [principal-pseud] when I first took the job, I said, Tricia, could you tell me what my primary function is in that classroom. She said, retired interviewee, you're a civilizer. Your role is to bring these children from private life into civilized living out in the community where they don't own anything (Retired Teacher, 2007).

The role of teacher as "civilizer" has a long pedigree. One can think in particular of the historian, Fernand Braudel, who as a secondary school history teacher submitted his *History of Civilizations* as a "civilizing" text for senior history students (Lai, 2004). The idea that teachers bring students into the world is also very much part of the ongoing "role" of teachers everywhere. The retired interviewee also spoke to the mechanics of "civilizing."

The wonderful part of the program was spending time with young children of that age and watching them develop those individual skills of self-management of the body, clothing as opposed to the academic stuff...so this was a great change. This was a social activity here and explore and manipulate materials. I wanted as many as they could to print their name by the end of the year, counting and doing those

things” (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Three issues have been examined here; classroom management, the question of physical contact, and lastly the issue of the bigger picture. As a male teacher in kindergarten, the interviewee faced a series of societal expectations in all these areas. Society suggests certain stereotypical male approaches to all three areas. In each case however, the retiree had a nuanced response to this; classroom management which is based on natural consequences, physical contact when necessary (i.e. helping with clothing, toileting) and finally, teaching that worked on civilizing students, bringing them from private life into “the world,” rather than teaching that indoctrinated specific role models for male and female students or teaching with a stylized “firm discipline” approach (Mills et al., 2004).

### *Career Longevity and Retention*

While issues of isolation and gender role expectations were significant, success for a male primary teacher also speaks to the question of retention. For many students at the faculty of education, obtaining primary certification is simply a means to the longer-term end; becoming a secondary teacher, or an administrator. What are the motivations to stay or to go? Looking at a successful male primary teacher who stays the course to retirement is one way to approach the answer. The other issue that arises is “what is considered a representative teacher and representative career?” Teachers do not as a rule leave faculties of education, teach for thirty years in the same grade and retire. This is unusual and unrepresentative. Careers are as complex and varied as individuals are well, individuals. As Mills, Martino, and Lingard note, there are a wide variety of issues associated with this question of retention and career; establishing what is expected of a male teacher in the primary grades, and what the presence or absence of male colleagues does to female authority in the classroom (Mills et al., 2004). Nikiforuk also has examined this question and points to some of the issues that cause male primary teachers to leave the classroom. Nikiforuk points to figures that 30% of all male primary teachers leave their position within five years because of the following factors, “accusations of sexual misconduct, the double standard of appropriate behavior (i.e. hugs), and perceptions of gender-specific work, especially in younger grades, among others. (Nikiforuk, 2004)”

The issue of retention surfaces for the retired interviewee, not in the Primary Division, but rather his characterization of the Core French program. In his view, Core French was the bottom of the ladder in terms of teaching positions.

...Because that French, that Core French program, that twenty minute program from Grade One to Grade Six is a treadmill that almost kills people. That’s the worst thing that ever happened in education, was that twenty minute French language program to primary children. That was just madness. And so I got tricked into that by the supervisor that asked me if I wanted to work full-time (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Key then was the question for the retired interviewee as to how to get out of this “treadmill” as a Core French teacher. Studies of teacher experiences of FSL reconfirm some of the difficult issues that The retired interviewee faced in the Primary FSL classroom (Lapkin et al., 2006). The issue for the retired interviewee was not retention, reinvention and survival. Instead he was looking for a

“home” when Junior Kindergarten became a possibility. His earlier career, as noted, was made up of many moves around different grades and school boards. The move to Junior Kindergarten in mid-career was strongly supported by his status as a known quantity within the board of education (Retired Teacher, 2007). He also moved out of FSL into something else to maintain his sanity (Retired Teacher, 2007). Initially, the retired interviewee applied for junior grades in 1980 in order to get out of Core French. This strategy did not work. Upon reconsideration he thought of applying for something “strange and unusual.” At this point in the broader history of the board of education, the consultants were just phasing in Junior Kindergarten. Earlier, he had also worked in Grade 6 classes directly across from a Kindergarten, and became friends with this primary colleague. Subsequently this colleague was one of his interviewers for the Junior Kindergarten position. He got the job in the early 1980s and continued at Duke of Albany Public School [pseudonym] until 1992 (Retired Teacher, 2007).

The retired interviewee also felt that the entry of men into the primary grades was in some ways blocked. The movement to bring more men into the lower grades in this era was also one that was curbed in his view.

A lot of boards at the time wanted more men in primary grades, and I thought about that, and you know that’s, they may talk that, but maybe administration has an unwritten code that we are keeping men out of those primary grades because that is where the pedophiles are and I thoroughly accept that because that is difficult to scan....to prevent, to police, once the damage is done you are into something that cannot be...the offender can be removed from the profession and isolated from the community, but the long term damage on the child” (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Once the retired interviewee became a JK teacher what were some of the factors that kept the retired interviewee in the JK classroom? Certainly one of the most important was the collaborative and supportive relationship that the retired interviewee developed with the SK teacher who taught alongside his classroom. The issue of retention comes up here as well, because the change in status, notably retirement, of the other teacher had profound implications for the retired interviewee’s retention in that school and in that classroom.

...we did it for twelve years or so until Alicia [pseud.] retired. The replacement SK teacher came from the staff and I knew by Thanksgiving that I wasn’t going to stand this until I retired. We just....you know in schools where there are two kindergarten teachers working like that, that’s an absolute....one of them has to be on the interview panel to pick that other person (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Once the retired interviewee came to the conclusion that he could not work effectively with this teacher, he then moved quickly to find another location that he could teach at until retirement.

You know and so, I took a stand that nagging and fighting with parents over things that were unimportant, you know. I started right away among I don’t know, fifteen or sixteen other SK teachers in [Northern Ontario City]. I started looking for somebody else I would like to retire with or spend my last three or four years with. So I

found Jacqueline Marshal[pseud.], a really nice lady, at Williams[pseudo] which was a French Immersion school and I thought, ah well, three years, I can do this JK en français. So then I knew the principal there really well, our kids had just finished at that school, it was a senior school then... (Retired Teacher, 2007).

Retention was a question that at the end of the retired interviewee's career was very much under his control and he made choices to maximize teaching as an enjoyable experience.

## Conclusion

This paper examined the journey of a successful male primary-junior teacher. It examined some of the issues that may arise in a future project of cross-generational analysis comparing retired male teachers life experiences with those of male pre-service teachers in their Faculty of Education program. It also builds on the authors' previous research with pre-service teachers (Parr et al., 2007; Gosse et al., 2008; Gosse et al., 2008). What are the indices of success as male primary teachers? It is apparent from this research that there is no one way to be a male teacher. A wide range of masculinities plays a key role in assessing the male teachers' life histories. *Narrowing the Gender Gap: Attracting Men to Teaching* highlighted common arguments against males teachers' success in the primary classroom (Bernard et al., 2004b). Other arguments emerged in earlier work undertaken on the reasons why pre-service male primary teachers withdraw from teaching and their preparatory program. Principal among these included the increasing feminization of school teaching staff which often resulted in the relative isolation of male teachers. Moreover, the role expectations of male teachers in the era between the 1960s and the 1990s also changed dramatically. Lastly, the question of retention always loomed large as male teachers left teaching.

For the retired interviewee, a nuanced approach that speaks to an expansive spectrum of masculine abilities and capabilities was key to his success. This success was built on having considerable social and academic capital in the community. It speaks to being an effective communicator and building networks. Accumulated capital was put to good use in removing isolation as a factor working against him. Being "a known quantity" was very different from the younger teachers who were at the beginning of their careers, in some cases freshly minted from the Faculty of Education, in others excluded from the Faculty and a career.

With regard to the question of gender role and classroom management, the retired interviewee successfully addressed the question, but not in such a way to characterize him as the proverbial "kindergarten cop." As an experienced successful teacher he had established a repertoire of effective classroom management skills. This in itself made the path towards a primary teaching position easier. In some senses this included a natural consequences form of discipline. The retired interviewee was not the stereotypical "kindergarten cop" that the now former Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, once portrayed (Reitman, 1990). Clearly, the second major role challenge focused around the issue of touching and appropriateness for a male primary teacher. In the case of the retired interviewee, experience, social and cultural capital were key elements in securing his position as a JK teacher. In his view, failing these advantages, there remained and remains an unwritten code that eliminates male primary teachers from the competition for JK/SK positions because of the jus-

tifiable concern over pedophilia. The retired interviewee underlined that it is very difficult to scan for this even with criminal records checks and knowledge of a teacher's background.

With regard to successful retention, here too, the situation was reversed as the interviewee arrived at his position as a Junior Kindergarten teacher after a much longer period of time teaching in other grades and divisions. The issue was not so much retention in terms of teaching itself, nor was it an issue of teaching in primary. Rather, the issue arose in the teaching of FSL Core French, and the interviewee's view that this was an awful treadmill for teachers to have to be on. Part of the rationale for going into JK was to get off this treadmill. Some of the choices of this male primary teacher were much more reliant on personal circumstance, instead of the broader question of teaching as a male in the primary grades. An issue also arose when the male primary teacher lost his teaching partner of many years to retirement. Her departure made him look to different schools and other teachers with whom he could be a partner up until retirement. This spoke of being in a position of a senior teacher and being able to pick and choose assignments rather than being moved around from school to school as is often the case with new teachers. The role he undertook then is very different from those of his pre-service successors.

This paper also looked at career longevity. The "local teacher" was examined. Did being from a particular community make a difference? The answer is yes. The cultural and network capital that the retired interviewee built up was as an asset. It was result of his long association with his home region and his well-developed knowledge of the local community. For new teachers searching for positions this is something to take into account. The intrinsic knowledge of a particular education community in Ontario can be an asset. Here, too, however, the perceived disadvantage can be turned in on its head with the correct approach.

Should this pilot study be expanded and should it be cross-generational? There is a good case to be made for the examination of successful male primary teachers' lives and where these teachers fit on the spectrum of masculine abilities. In seeking to understand "why there are not more males in teaching" interviewing new teachers, pre-service candidates, experienced teachers, and those who have recently left the profession and comparing their experiences illuminates the entire picture. In reviewing the methodological questions, it is clear that seniors and retired teachers, both men and women, have much to offer on the development of successful male teachers, and teachers generally. This is information that can be used by policy makers, educational administrators and school leaders, but above all new candidates in faculties of education. It is clear that there is and will be a flow of retirees. The newly retired and elders both have a wealth of experience, but how their wisdom is preserved or forgotten is up to us. The window for this knowledge is time limited and extremely important for gender balanced school staffs in the future.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> What am I feeling about this narrator? 2. What similarities and what differences impinge on this interpersonal situation? 3. How does my own ideology affect this process? What group outside of the process am I identifying with? 4. Why am I doing the project in the first place? 5. In selecting topics and questions, what alternatives might I have taken? Why didn't I choose these? 6. What other possible interpretations are there? Why did I reject them? 7. What are the effects on me as I

go about this research? How are my reactions impinging on the research?

<sup>2</sup> In the Province of Ontario, schooling starts in Junior Kindergarten (Age 4), and proceeds to matriculation in Grade 12. Schooling is divided into four divisions, Primary(P), Junior Kindergarten to Grade Three, Junior(J), Grade Four to Grade Six, Intermediate (I), Grade Seven to Grade 10, and Senior(S), Grade Eleven to Grade Twelve. At Faculties of Education two divisions are normally taught to candidates, hence, P/J, J/I, and I/S.

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# Fatherhood: An Overlapping Generational Journey

ATTILA VINCZER



*A father gives his account of the birth of his first son and subsequent birth of a second son. His wife's abusive behavior toward the sons forced him to divorce her. The author describes his natural responses to becoming aware of fatherhood. The interactions between father and sons are described against the backdrop of the author's relationship with his own father and mother.*

**Keywords:** fathering, child abuse, generational continuity, divorce, male studies

All of the great things I have accomplished in life, combined, pale in comparison to the value I place on my two boys, Steven and Ryan. Fatherhood for me has been a life-long journey, unbeknownst to me until recently as I reflected on this wondrous trail. I consider myself extremely lucky that I have had the distinct pleasure of raising my boys, fully immersed in this task, my greatest responsibility in life.

In actuality, fatherhood is a life-long affair consisting of three unique stages, the last two stages overlapping. It begins the moment you start learning in essence to be a father. Then comes being a dad and teaching my boys to be a father themselves. These are the overlapping stages. As you raise your son, you are also instilling the qualities of being a father in him. This is a serious and invaluable task of every dad.

Take a journey with me to a time decades before my boys were born. I will be 50 years old this year, but I can still recall vividly when I was a young child gravitating toward my father and grandfather. I was always curious what they were doing and relentlessly asked my dad's dad questions about how things were when he was a kid. It would not have occurred to me then, but I was absorbing everything they were doing and telling me. I was learning and preparing to be a man and potentially a father. I loved my father and grandfather. They were the world to me. My mother also played an important role in my childhood. She nurtured me. She taught me to be kind and gentle while my father showed me how to be strong and resilient. A balance resulted between strength and beauty that included wisdom and prudence. It was all very important to me, including watching my mother and father love each other and care about each other. Everything around me was molding my character, my being. One day I would realize I was copying their good examples.

I was stubborn, determined and inquisitive. I distinctly remember one day my mother telling me, "Attila, you can achieve more with your mind than brute force!" It made me angry to hear that, because I was absolutely determined, but it did sink in because to this day I remember that lesson and realize the most powerful thing in the universe is a focused mind.

We lived on the coast of the Adriatic in the former Yugoslavia. Our home was always busy with friends and relatives visiting and spending their summer holidays with us. You would often catch me milling around the kitchen where I would enjoy being allowed to lick a bowl of batter clean and got lucky with an early sampling of the cookies being baked or given a carrot to snack on. We had no junk food in our home. I was subliminally absorbing social skills as I watched and listened to the women talk and carry on their work in the home. My mother was very kind and gentle. She could soothe my deepest afflictions better than anyone else in the world. But if I stepped out of line, she could be stern! I knew when she meant business. I can still see that serious look in her eye. What I remember more than anything is that calming, beautiful smile that could put my mind at ease in a single heartbeat.

Dad moved from Szabadka, where I was born, when I was merely nine months old. Szabadka was near the Hungary-Yugoslavia border. Today it is part of Serbia after Yugoslavia was dissolved. The air quality in Szabadka was very poor due to the sulphuric acid that a local factory spewed into

the atmosphere. This seriously affected my breathing. Without hesitation Dad uprooted his family and home, moving us down to the Adriatic ocean where he was told the air was going to help with my respiratory difficulty. Dad left a very well paying job at Aurometal where about 200 people worked directly beneath him. The well being of his children was most important to him, much more important than the security of his very well paid position. The decisions my father made would eventually contribute to the decisions I make as a father with my own sons.

We lived in the foothills of a mountain. Nature abounded. I still remember the sound at nighttime abuzz with insects of the night. I also remember the howling of the wolves! Dad would open the windows in the bedrooms at night and I was sure the wolves would find their way in. Frozen in bed, terrified, I ran over to the window and closed it and ran right back to bed. Dad would come in to check on us and open the window again. He eventually realized I was closing the window. I told him I was scared of the dark! Together we walked over to the window and he said, "Look, there is nothing out there." He put my mind at ease and I calmly went back to sleep.

I always wanted to be around my dad. I wanted to do the things he was doing. I would take a ride in his Mini to a business meeting even though the meetings seemed to last an eternity. I would tag along to watch him train in Shotokan Martial Arts. Our family would go to the beach on special occasions. Dad taught me how to swim and lectured me about the dangers of the ocean. He always spoke about things as he gently passed on his wisdom in his role as a father.

It was rare, but one night I had difficulty breathing. In fact it felt like I could not breath at all. I was in shock and I thought I would die. Dad was right there to help me. He put his arm on my shoulder and we walked to the door for fresh air. He spoke to me and told me to relax and calmly take breaths of air. Dad made me feel safe. I listened to him and in fact my breathing relaxed and I was able to return back to sleep. This moment would play an important role later on in life when my father needed my help. I recalled that time that my dad literally saved my life and I in turn saved his a number of times without hesitation.

I said that fatherhood is a journey consisting of three stages. Growing up was in the first stage of learning about fatherhood, preparing to one day be a father, if I chose to have children. I was very fortunate that, unlike today, my family was intact. Next year Mom and Dad will be celebrating 60 years of marriage. I still see them love each other and treat each other with respect. This is important as I remember my great grandparents who were also together and close even when they were nearly 100 years old! What I was seeing was generationally intact families. Boys of today, sadly, do not have the very crucial involvement of their dads due to the increasing number of homes that are broken. We live in a society where dads are often merely visitors in their lives. This is very unhealthy. It saddens me that other boys and girls do not have what I had in my childhood and even in my adult life, a mother and a father together.

When I was in my early 20's I was ready to settle down, get married and start a family. It did not happen until about ten years later. I delved deep into starting a business within my father's shop. Boy did I learn about friction between a father and a son as I began to form my own wisdom and was foolish enough to not accept or admit that Dad had a lot to offer. I was becoming my own independent, unique person.

Throughout my life I dreamed of having children. It was often on my mind and I was quite ready to find the right woman and take on the responsibility of being a dad the way I saw my own father raise my two brothers and me. One day I met a very beautiful woman at a friend's birthday party. She was so stunningly gorgeous that I was utterly mesmerized by her. Her beauty was paralyzingly attractive. We began dating and I soon fell in love. We got married and our first son, Steven, was on his way.

My life dream of becoming a father was now slowly becoming a reality. I was aglow with excitement as I watched my wife's belly grow, knowing my son or daughter was developing to one day meet me. Captivated by this miracle I began wondering what my child would look like. Would it be a boy or a girl. What would my child look like? What would be the color of the hair and eyes. It was all so deeply moving to me. What began to occur to me is I was truly on the way to becoming a father and, one day, my child would learn to say "Dad." That thought, of a new human being, my own child to call me Dad was enchanting in a very special way. I couldn't wait for the day I would hear my child call me Dad. It would seal and authenticate my new position in life.

I went with my wife to all the doctor's appointments and to see our baby's heart beating during the first ultrasound was stunning to me. I could see that my child was truly there and growing. This was actually happening. I was going to be a dad!

I often put my ear to her belly in hopes of hearing a beating heart. One day, not only did I hear his beating heart, I got an elbow or a foot right in the side of my face. Wow! I actually heard his beating heart, fast and steady, and felt his moving body. This was so amazing to me. But this baby did not want to leave the comfort of his mommy. Steven was now nearly three weeks late. I was at the ready to take on the task of rushing my wife to the hospital when I got that all-important call. Earlier we took parenting classes together and had prepared everything as we were taught. Only one other father was in our group. I learned a lot about what a mom is going through and what I could do to help during the pregnancy and at birth.

The doctor decided to admit Mom to the hospital. I got everything ready. Music, snacks and a bottle of champagne. We arrived and Mom was brought into the delivery room. The doctors checked her out and the nurses were at the ready. They broke her water and induced labor. The baby was not positioned right so a doctor performed an inversion to turn the baby head down. I was nervous and pumped, wanting to see this baby born, but knowing a lot of things still needed to happen. It was clear in my mind that certain things could go wrong and I was ready to do what I could and needed to help out. I dug my heels in and was ready for the 24-hour haul if need be. Nurses kept checking Mom and the baby's vitals. She begins dilating and I was waiting excitedly. My child would be born in mere hours! The anticipation was hard to bear.

Then all of the sudden I saw a worried look on the nurse's face. The doctor was called in and they told us that the baby was in distress as it passed meconium. We were told that the baby would have to be delivered by C-Section. Mom and baby were rushed away. I was told to suit up and I hurriedly get ready. I was asked to sit in the hall before I was allowed to go into the operating room. At this time, within a short few minutes as I sat on a chair outside the OR watching nurses and doctors rushing back and forth, I realized that many babies were born here. But a chilling thought crossed

my mind that it does happen that babies and even mothers die at birth. I contemplated every scenario including ending up having to raise this baby on my own if, God forbid, something should happen to my wife. This was reality, a harsh reality, that led me to pray, asking God to ensure that both Mom and baby would be safe. I shook my head, cleared my mind and was allowed to enter the operating room. Sitting beside my wife, I held her hand, soothing her afflictions and calming her every way I could, reassuring her everything would be OK.

The bed was now jerking as the surgeon did her job extracting our child. I had my camera at the ready and was told they would let me know when I could snap a photograph of our baby. I was also going to be allowed to cut the umbilical chord. She signaled me as she lifted up our baby boy who took his first breath and let us know the full strength of his lungs. Steven was finally born! I was fully immersed in emotions of joy and concern. The surgeon literally climbed atop of the operating table. I could see beads of sweat on her forehead, clearly stressed and a very concerned look in her eyes. The room was abuzz with medical people rushing around. I saw how everything that is meant to be inside was resting on mom's open tummy. What I heard next, made me realize something was seriously wrong! She said, "Get me Doctor so and so stat!" "We are sorry; he is not answering his page," was the reply. She then bellowed out another order: "Then get me so and so immediately! I don't care if you need to drive to his house, get him here now!"

A doctor casually walked into a very intensely stressed out operating room. Relieved, the surgeon said, "Thank you for responding so quickly to your page, doctor." "In fact," he said, "I was just passing by and decided to poke my head in to see what is going on." He never even got the page. It seems my prayer was answered. This to me was a miracle, for what I did not know until later was that my wife was hemorrhaging to death and there were only two surgeons who were able to stop this kind of bleeding. One was not responding while the other one had just casually strolled in. I was told that within minutes my wife would have perished had one of the surgeons not been there to perform their surgical skill. I missed my chance to cut the umbilical chord, but most importantly, my wife and our new baby boy, Steven, were both safe. I was so grateful we were in the hands of doctors who made this double miracle of birth and saving the life of my wife happen.

I decided to get a private room so that I could stay at the side of my wife who had just undergone serious surgery. We were told baby Steven had his umbilical chord wrapped between his legs and around his neck. No wonder he was unable to descend for a natural birth. Other than the parenting classes I took for eight weeks, I had no clue about babies. I can build things, fix things, run a business and such, but I did not train to be around babies. But something inside of me changed me. Instinctively, I took on the job of picking baby Steven up when he cried. He was either hungry, needed to be changed, or was tired. So I would pass the baby over to Mom to feed and I was taught how to properly change a diaper and wrap the baby up, nice and tight. I walked the halls with him and could hear the nurses and other mothers mention what a great dad I was and how I naturally knew to sway with the baby as I walked. This action mimics the swaying of Mom when the baby was still in her womb. It comforts the baby. I had no idea what I was doing, but somehow instinctively it seemed right.

Before we left the hospital, the nurse called me over to get consent for her to take a blood sample from baby Steven. I agreed and she walked over to Steven who is barely two days old and sleeping soundly. The nurse unwrapped him and pricked his heel and blood rushed out. The screech-

ing cry that followed made me nearly jump through the glass and jump all over that nurse for hurting my son! I said, “No, no, no!” But she was just doing her job and I began to do mine, protecting my son from harm.

We got home and the emergency surgery had left my wife in a very compromised state. It was difficult for her to get out of bed. I decided to take time off work to help Mom. It turned out to be three months before my wife got well enough that I could go back to work. We worked as a team. When the baby cried, I got up, got Steven out of the crib and brought him to Mom to feed. I would burp him, change a diaper if needed, and lull him back to sleep. My son was finally home. I began to deeply bond with this baby and in many ways am thankful that I had a chance to be involved in duties that were usually reserved more exclusively for Mom. I was delighted and took every chance I could to help and be involved.



I remember whispering to my wife, “You know you are stuck with me for at least 20 years.” I was joking and serious at the same time. It was my view, now that we have a child, this child will need the both of us together for at least 20 years.

Steven grew and learned to do all the things that every parent enjoys seeing a baby experiencing. Simple things that are so important, like baby being able to roll over, sit up, smile. The big ones are when baby learns to crawl, stands up, and takes that very first step. These milestones are such a big deal to a mother and a father. I had been dreaming about this for a very long time--the day my son would say “Dad.” And there I was holding Steven, and he said “Dada.” The tears in my eyes welled up and I could not control my emotion of joy. In fact it is bringing tears to my eyes as I write about it. Finally, my son spoke to me in words. Actually, he had been speaking to me all along in a silent way, in a way that only a father and son know how to communicate—a certain look, a smile, or just a simple tap on the shoulder or arm.

Exactly two years to the day our second son, Ryan, would be born. Because of the previous serious complications, Ryan would need to be born by C-section as well. This time, everything went very well. Equally excited, I was at in awe at the second miracle of my life, the birth of my second son. I hoped for a son so Steven would have a brother to play with. My wish came true, but I would have been just as happy if it were a girl. I was allowed to walk over and cut Ryan’s umbilical chord—not an easy snip, I tell you! That is one tough chord. Ryan was a beautiful baby just like Steven. He had long fingers and gripped my index finger with firm strength that surprised me, coming from a baby that just emerged to the world.

My life dream was to have two boys and two girls. I am missing out on raising a daughter, which I am sure would have some similarities to raising my sons, but there would be difference that I just will never know. I can only contemplate them.

Our new home was under construction and my brother was good enough to allow us to move into his house I helped him buy. Rooms were very small and we got situated in a room with two couches. Because I can sleep without moving much, baby Ryan would rest on my chest as we slept. The moment he was hungry, I would wake Mom. She would feed him and again, just like with Steven, I would burp him and change his diaper as needed. The boys grew faster than I could imagine and Ryan did all the things that Steven did. I recall every first step, first tooth and the day he said Dada, just like Steven.

There was no doubt I was a father, committed for many years to come. I knew that the baby and toddler stages were a lot of work, but easier than what would come years down the road. This father was fully committed and hoped that my boys would be easier on me than I was on my parents. I began to realize and regret many of the trials and tribulations I cause my own father. I began to pray that karma would spare me. Relishing every new day and year, Steven and Ryan grew bigger and developed handsomely. To me, everything they did was important no matter how trivial. It was important to me to give them my time. I wanted them to feel they were the important thing in the world to their dad.

What was also happening is I was slowly teaching my boys to be a father. This is the important

overlap of the last two stages of fatherhood I mentioned earlier. Being a father is not only to nurture and teach a child to grow up to be a productive self-sufficient adult. It is also to teach them, by example, by my parenting, how to be a good father. This, in my view, is a crucial duty of a father. What concerns me is that the majority of boys are growing up without a dad, due to divorce and broken homes that have become far too fashionable. In my view, it is a horrible social mistake that needs to change.

The worst day of my life was when I learned that my sons were being abused and ill treated. I will not get into any details here and now about this very dark and very sad time in my life. What became known to me is that I had to do everything I could to ensure my children were safe and free of any harm. My mother had previously noticed that Mom was displaying ill behaviour with the boys, particularly with Steven. Regrettably, I did not believe her. I could not comprehend that a mother could harm a child. It just couldn't be. Sadly it was true. I made every effort to work with my wife to deal with her issues, to no avail. I was prepared to sacrifice my life and remain in a difficult and turbulent marriage to ensure my children had a mother and a father for those 20 years I mentioned.

After six months, however, it became clear to me that I would need to embark on a path I never, ever thought would happen to me. Divorce was inevitable and I served my wife with the notice of divorce. I thought I would manage this in a professional manner, like any other business transaction. Boy, was I wrong. Why? Because I began to experience what women do in divorce. Everything was hurled at me. False sexual allegations, calling CAS (Children's Aid Society) on me and employing her entire crew of female family and friends to destroy me and my need to keep our children safe from her wrath. It was a messy divorce, but eventually, I ended up with care and control of the children. Both Steven and Ryan were deeply hurt by the fact Mom and Dad were no longer together. This broke my heart, but I could see no other way to protect my children from harm.

Eight years have passed since then and both Steven and Ryan are doing very well. They are maturing into teenagers and doing all the things young boys like to do. I love them very much, unconditionally. Together we have endured a lot. All three of us have learned a lot. I never thought I would be a single father raising my boys. This thought only crossed my mind once when I sat in that hallway as Steven's mother was being prepped in the operating room. Nobody had prepared me for this stage in my life, a stage I thought would never happen to me or my children.

Being a single father from the time Ryan was three and Steven was five years old has been a life altering change. I find it interesting that I have adapted and am sensitive to qualities that only a mother can best bestow to her children. For example, I used to be able to sleep through anything, whereas now, the slightest sound from my children will awaken me. One thing is for certain, that no matter what I do, I can never be or replace a mother for my children. I also believe that a mother could never replace what a father is to his children. What I have learned with certainty is that children desperately desire to have a loving mother and a loving father. More important, they desire to see their mom and dad love and care about each other.

Regrettably, over half the children in Canada and the United States are growing up without a dad in their lives on any substantial meaningful level. This condition is one that is very unhealthy

and is causing many children to be sad and angry and distressed. My eyes have been opened up to this and that is the primary reason I advocate for the rights of children and families.

Some distinct moments that can never be effaced from the memory of this father. The moment Ryan and Steven were born and when they said Dada for the very first time. Or when one said: “Dad, I wish you could be my mother.” Or: “You are the best dad in the world.” Steven tells me he loves me throughout the day and whenever he greets me, coming or going. Ryan will say, “I love you” and will top my response with, “I love you more.” I can never win at this! One day while having lunch with the boys at the Crow’s Nest in Newmarket, a complete stranger with his son walked over to our table and said, “I can tell you deeply love your children”—and walked away. To this day I do not understand what I did or what he saw to draw that conclusion. He was right.

Fatherhood is a progressive science, a science that often defies the laws of physics. It is dynamic with unpredictable twists and turns. A father must be ready for anything and must adapt quickly, sometimes adapting long-term for whatever reason.

A friend and martial arts mentor, Leo Casetto, one day after training said to me: “Enjoy it. It will go fast.” I thought how fast could it go? Boy do I now understand what he meant. Nearly 14 years have gone by, seemingly in a heartbeat. It seemed he said that just yesterday. I love being a father and to me it is one of the most fulfilling accomplishments in my life.



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# Living With Crazy: My Experiences of an Abusive Wife (Part IV)

SAUL FARRIS  
TIMOTHY BAGHURST



*With divorce rates in the United States hovering at around 50%, there are clearly issues creating rifts between spouses, and domestic abuse accounts for some of this statistic. However, abuse in which the female is the primary instigator is less recognized even though common (Archer, 2000). The purpose of this continuing memoir (see Farris & Baghurst, 2013a,b) is to provide an account of one man's experiences of an abusive wife. In this section, details are recounted of mistrust, a near-death experience*

*during a high speed chase, physical separation, efforts to discuss the marriage with church leaders, reunification, and eventual permanent separation. The overarching aim of this section of the memoir is to better understand how one man struggled to reach a decision to divorce, while overcoming some of the stigma that accompanies males who claim abuse by their partners.*

**Keywords:** domestic abuse, violence, spouse, male victim, church

Airplanes are amazing things. They represent the accumulation of knowledge and ingenuity that sets man apart on this planet from everything else. They allow us to take a weekend, sample another culture, and be home in time for Monday morning rush hour. But, they aren't magic. They can't rewind time or unwind a twisted mind. There was definitely part of me that thought that once we landed in the U.S. our marriage would shift; from the sharp contrasts of black and white to a more pleasant and softer Technicolor like Dorothy and her house landing in Oz. This delusion did not stand very long.

Ironically, the second time she tried to kill me (for the first see Farris & Baghurst, 2013a) was because I had been out rescuing children from abusive homes. Even before we returned to the U.S. I had begun to search for work. I took the most interesting and financially generous job my BA in psychology would permit, as a Family Service Worker (FSW). FSW is bureaucratic code for child abuse investigator which is in essence someone who investigates claims of child abuse and neglect, and if necessary, removes the victims from their homes. The macabre irony of investigating abuse, while being the victim of abuse, is not lost on me. However, when it was happening, Ray Charles would've had an easier time seeing it.

There is something wholly beautiful and terrifying about our ability to compartmentalize things. It enables us to act with our minds instead of our hearts. It's at the center of a fireman's ability to run into a burning building, and it explains why I was able to learn to recognize abuse in others' lives and be so utterly blind to it in my own. That I could do this while being abused still shakes me up. It brings to light doubts about my self-awareness that I would rather leave in the dark. What else am I missing that others can obviously see?

Beyond my own lack of insight was the cultural undercurrent that sought to rob me of my right to be equally seen and treated fairly as a human being. I had been weaned on a culture where men were the default abusers and women were always the "victims" (Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). This is in no small part due to the heavy influence of feminism in society. For example, Stony Book College recently developed a men's studies program (Stony Book News, 2013), yet its founding board members have been criticized for their feminist values (National Coalition for Men, 2013).

### **Living Irony**

Being a child abuse investigator is one of the strangest jobs in the world. No one is ever happy to see

you: not the victim, the perpetrator, not even the person who reported the abuse. At best they're relieved that they're morally off the hook.

The most you can hope for in such a case is that you're accusing innocent people of harming a child, which is in itself an awful thing. At worst, you're inserting yourself into explosive situations to remove a primary witness/victim to a crime someone has committed. You break up homes, separating children from parents, and siblings. It's not a pleasant job. FSWs generally work alone and given the sensitive nature of the work, you're not supposed to discuss it with people outside DHS. It's an oddly lonely and dangerous job.

FSWs are the first responders of the child abuse world. A call comes in through the child abuse hotline and if the call meets a legal threshold of concern, a case is generated and a FSW is dispatched. After interviewing the reported victim, perpetrator, and other pertinent witnesses, the FSW determines whether the claim is founded or unfounded. A "founded case" sets the governmental juggernaut into motion. Children can be removed from homes and perpetrators prosecuted.

I worked as a FSW for 9 months waiting for medical school to start. My last week as a FSW was also the week before I started medical school. It was also my turn to be on-call, which required me to respond to any off-duty situations that were deemed too severe to wait until the next day. During that final week on-call I took 9 children into DHS custody, including a sibling group of three.

The worst day of my week on-call was Friday. First thing that night, I took into custody a four year old boy who had been raped by his HIV positive adult relative; yes, the relative knew he had HIV. Later I took into custody a child with a leg fracture that was two weeks old. The mother had finally brought the child into the emergency room because her leg had become swollen and the skin had begun to slough off. A bone survey would later show several other fractures including a skull fracture. Think about those things and remember the queasy, punched-in-the-gut feeling you had and get when you think about Jerry Sandusky or the Catholic Church cover-up. And then, try to imagine you're face-to-face with both the victim and the perpetrator, seeing the bruises and hearing a little boy complain that he can't sit down because his bottom hurts. Then, imagine you have to ask the perpetrator what happened and have him deny it to your face. Only situations like these lend to the highest degree of incredulity, and in those moments you become an apostate of the human spirit. Think of these things as you consider my simultaneous efforts to prepare for medical school and cope with a toxic, moribund marriage.

### **Only in His Own House is a Prophet Without Honor**

Alex couldn't completely wrap her head around the idea that there would need to be a FSW on-call, and that I would have to take my turn in the rotation. Her insecurities and certainty of my impending infidelity alienated her from reason. During that final week all she could see was me receiving a phone call late at night, me rushing out the door, and then returning exhausted several hours later. Of course I would explain what I was doing and relate to her some of the nauseatingly, sadistic details of what I had seen. I did so in an effort to assuage her doubts that I needed to be out there, and reinforce that these children needed someone to rescue them. To be sure this type of paranoid doubt and suspicion is pathologic (Enoch, 1991).

I had never cheated on her and I had never even hinted at it, but Alex was running off of scripts written on her heart long before I appeared in her world. These scripts witnessed as a child and later rehearsed by her mother and grandmother, served to chain her to the belief that men could not be loyal, and that they would cheat as soon as you dropped your defense. However, reason is little match for unfounded certainty, and there is a saying that one should “Trust the person who is pursuing truth; don’t trust the person who believes they have already found it.” Alex wasn’t searching for truth, she already thought I had broken her trust. She “knew” that I would cheat, and that I already probably had (see Farris & Baghurst, 2013a,b). She was convinced that I was having an affair with a coworker and that I was running off to a tryst during those late night calls.

It was dumbfounding to me that Alex could simultaneously express concern for my safety, fearing that I might potentially get hurt by a parent who just wasn’t willing to relinquish their child or lie that they weren’t the perpetrator, and yet also labor under my supposed philandering. It was a strange dichotomy; concern for my safety and then absolute certainty that I was betraying her. I look back on those times and grieve over the emotional and cognitive dissonance that must have tortured her. How can you live, loving someone, and at the same time be so utterly convinced they are betraying you? That was her lot and I was unable to assuage her fears. Like all of her other accusations I would unsuccessfully meet it with perseverations of my innocence.

The whole thing boiled over the Sunday before medical school started. Alex had woken up in a funk that carried through church. We had gone out to eat after the service and as we returned back home she started venting. The constant strife of our marriage and the soul crushing sadness of my week on-call had made my libido slow to a crawl. She interpreted this as sign that I was cheating on her with a co-worker. This was hardly the case. Although I liked most of my coworkers, they were all seriously unattractive and generally married. Yet, the true obstacle to infidelity was my resolute belief that adultery was wrong. The source of Alex’s suspicion came from within Alex, and it was something only she could fully articulate.

As we arrived home our argument followed us inside. An offhanded, cutting remark aimed at me, quickly escalated to Alex assaulting me.

“I bet you’d do it if your girlfriend at DHS wanted you to,” she spat at me.

“Yeah,.....that’s stupid,” I responded. I was tired and not willing to persist in circular arguments.

She responded to my comment by leaping at me kicking, her purse in one hand and a “To Go” box in the other. The assault was nothing new and I was forced to use the only weapon I had, escape. I grabbed her by the shoulders, moved her away from the doorway, and ran out. She pursued me, but her runner’s stride was limited by her high heels, “To Go” box, and purse. I got to my car, locked the doors, started it, and was backing up before she was able to cover the distance to my car. That didn’t stop her from leaping on the hood of the car, however. This might have been effective had she been Anvil or one of the Dukes of Hazard, but she weighed about 95 pounds. She slid off of the car and I pulled away. She continued her pursuit on foot, but when it looked like I was getting away, she launched her “To Go” box at my car. It exploded like an overflowing diaper against the rear

window. I'm sure to a bystander the scene would have appeared quite comical, but to me it wasn't.

At the time we lived in a gated community. Waiting for the gate to roll back and release me gave her time to catch up in her car. And, in fine fashion, once she caught up she made her presence known by slamming her car into the back of mine. The damage was minor, but it was the only impetus I needed to speed away as soon as I could squeeze through the gate.

We raced all over the city running red lights and dodging other cars. Thinking back, I didn't feel that my life was in peril if I stopped. My greater physical size guaranteed that I would be able to overcome her if I needed to. I simply didn't want to stand and take it anymore. I was tired of putting up with it. There are unspoken social agreements we enter into with relationships. That they should lack abuse seems completely obvious, and once those agreements are violated, the relationship must be dissolved. I think that is the way we should look at it. Whether or not you choose to reenter or repair a relationship is wholly a different matter. Once one person crosses that line in the sand, the relationship is done and both parties must choose to start anew. Alex had violated that most obvious and necessary tenet, that a relationship should be safe (Collins & Feeney, 2000).

As Alex chased me for miles and miles, the eyes I saw in my rearview mirror were murderous. At some point we wound up on the interstate. Sensing that my car could outrun hers, she pulled in front of me and slammed on her brakes. At 70 mph and with cars to my left, I was forced off of the road and onto the median. Think of this: 70 mph. Whether or not she intended to kill me, this action could have easily resulted in it. We can only take away from situations what we've experienced, and if an explanation can give us fuller context than we can reframe that experience. However, some experiences carry such gravity that even a fuller understanding doesn't change our perspective. Alex would later say during counseling, choking back the tears, that she only wanted me to stop. She had slammed on her brakes because she wanted to talk to me. If I had held a knife to her throat because she kept accusing me of cheating, and then later said it was because I had only wanted her to stop, would this diminish the crazy, recklessness of that action? Of course not.

I fished-tailed in the median, eventually righting my vehicle before pressing the accelerator so hard into the carpet that the marks still show today. I passed her and took off later finding out that she drove another 20 miles before giving up her pursuit. She returned home and called my father at around 9 p.m., who later told me that she had sounded angry and wanted to know if I had called him. She had suggested that I wouldn't be telling the truth when, or if, I called.

I drove for another 40 miles before I eventually realized that she was out of sight and that my only danger was from a state trooper. I didn't know what to do, and I found myself to be in complete poverty to action. I knew that things were broken. I knew that it was no small miracle that I was alive. I knew that things could not continue. It was about 11 p.m. when I parked my car in my parent's driveway. I sat there for hours. I debated what to do. Call the police? It would result in Alex being charged, probably losing her visa, and ruining her life. Talk to my parents? They would be worried, they were already asleep, and what could they do anyway? I realize now that these thoughts were flawed and not at all in my best interests, but in the end I decided to go home.

I got back to our apartment around 3 in the morning. Alex heard me come in and when I

didn't come upstairs she yelled at me to come up. I told her I wouldn't and that we would talk in the morning. There must have been something in my voice or some change in her because she didn't push it. The next day I called a mutual friend of ours that Alex had been staying with when we were dating and asked if she could stay with her. I told this friend that we were having problems and that it would be best if Alex came to stay with her. She was agreeable.

I don't remember how the "You need to leave, now!" conversation with Alex went. My mind was burnt out from adrenaline and lack of sleep. She packed a single bag, gave me a tearful goodbye hug, and left. I changed the locks as soon as she left and began medical school the next morning. The stress of my crumbling marriage, the realization of what I had been living with, and the pressure of outside forces (i.e., my family, her family, friends, and church) created an incredibly toxic environment. Blend that with the incredible academic stresses of medical school, and I was left in a state of constant exhaustion and stress. I didn't sleep for days, maybe weeks, but I can't be certain. Most nights I would lay in bed awake until I heard a noise, thinking she might still be able to get in. Then, I would get out of bed, check the windows, and finding them secure would stay up, too tired to study, too anxious to sleep.

### **The Quest for a Resolution**

I know that the time between when she left and when she moved back in was 9 months. I know this because of calendars, not because of memories. In fact, those months are a blur of being overwhelmed with knowledge in medical school, contemplating our relationship, and the constant pressure to work on my marriage. During this time there was a steady stream of phone calls, text messages, and emails from Alex, her family, my family, friends, and other concerned parties.

I can't remember the exact sequence of events after she left, but soon after she was gone, she began meeting with a Christian social worker/counselor and going to a Christian 12-step program. A few sessions in, her counselor invited me to one of their sessions. I remember checking in with the secretary and taking a seat. Alex came in shortly after me, signed in, and sat several chairs away from me in the waiting room. The tension and unsettled emotion filled the room; floor-to-ceiling and wall-to-wall. Our turn came and the counselor invited us back to her office.

My role was to provide perspective on Alex and what had been going on. We sat in separate chairs side-by-side facing the counselor on a couch. She began with an open-ended question.

"Saul, tell me what's been going on with Alex?" I was sunk into the chair, the anger driving the color from my knuckles, and the brim of my hat pulled low over my eyes.

"She punched me, kicked me, spit on me, tried to kill me, lied about me, and threatened to have me falsely arrested," I growled.

I don't remember looking at Alex during the sessions, but I remember sensing that she felt shamed and hurt by what I said. She didn't deny any of it, but she never took ownership of what I said either. The counselor would later pull out a copy of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV-TR (2000), turn to the personality disorder section, and do an inventory of

Alex's behavior and suggest borderline personality disorder as a possibility. By my count she had 7 out of 9 traits which was confirmed by the counselor. According to the DSM IV-TR (2000), Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is manifested by a pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five or more of the following:

1. Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment. Note: Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in (5).
2. A pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation. This is called "splitting."
3. Identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self.
4. Impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., spending, sex, substance abuse, reckless driving, binge eating). Note: Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in (5).
5. Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior.
6. Affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days).
7. Chronic feelings of emptiness.
8. Inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights).
9. Transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe dissociative symptoms. (pp. 706-711)

I believe Alex exhibited all of these traits except 4 and possibly 9. She was constantly afraid that I would leave her for another woman. Many of our arguments were the result of Alex expressing these fears and her inability to be convinced otherwise. Alex was very black and white in her thinking. For her, people fell into one of two camps; either good or bad. There were many times when someone would merely disagree with her and she would write them off forever, such as the first couple she stayed with when she moved to the United States. Likewise, people she favored could do no wrong. Alex struggled constantly with who she was. Although she was a bright, charming, and capable woman, the smallest slight or setback would send her reeling for days, even weeks. In these articles I've related some of the multiple times that she would feign suicide or hurt herself to force my submission (see Farris & Baghurst, 2013a,b). Her mood would rapidly oscillate without obvious cause. One moment she might be happy, the next angry, the next sad, all without an identifiable cause. After we were married she would relate feeling "empty" inside. I thought this was related to an understandable sadness associated with our separation, but these feelings persisted even after we were reunited. And, if you've read some of the previous articles, then you can clearly recognize the irrational anger and uncontrolled outbursts.

The way I think of BPD is that it's a disorder of mood and relationships; I think that captures what Alex was going through fairly well. Of course, Alex felt differently. She didn't see most of the traits in herself. Moreover, she had a strong aversion to any kind of label. The counselor would later tell Alex that based on my demeanor, she felt there was a less than 5% chance that I was still in the marriage, and that Alex should work on herself, for herself, and not do counseling in order to win me back.

I had not divulged the dysfunction in my marriage to my family or closest friends. After I started talking about it I found that they were supportive. They feared for my safety because of Alex's behavior and thought that divorce would be the safest route for me to take.

Even before Alex walked out she wanted to get back together. She would've been satisfied with jumping right back into our marriage without any mediation or counseling. She lacked the basic insight to see how dysfunctional our relationship was. Many people from our church, including most of the leadership, felt that the "sin" threshold necessary to grant a divorce had not been reached, which they believed to be unrepentant adultery. They felt that Alex's physical and verbal assaults were egregious, but didn't meet the criteria necessary to Biblically sanction divorce. They hoped that we could be reunited through: (a) earthly intervention such as counseling and their 12-step group, and (b) heavenly intervention including prayer and meditation on the Bible. I believe they were unreasonably certain that Alex's behavior could be overcome. I also think they were unable to fully appreciate the gravity of what she had been doing to me.

In thinking that she wouldn't change I run the razor's edge of profaning one of the core tenets of Christianity; that Jesus has the power to change people not just in a legalistic, rule following sense, but more similar to mending a broken soul. I know many people would read this and think that I'm being ridiculous. She tried to kill me and yet I'm beating myself up because I didn't give her the benefit of the doubt, but that's the strength of my convictions.

During our reunification process, most of the third parties involved were men. This is not an inconsequential matter. I believe their perceptions were partly clouded by our current cultural understanding and expectations of the social dynamics of domestic violence (Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). That is, that our default perspective of domestic abuse is that men are the abusers, women the victims. I have to admit that I was guilty of the same perspective prior to my experience with Alex. The idea that the man is the abuser and the woman the victim is insidiously ingrained in our culture (Brown, 2004). Think of all the movies that reinforce this paradigm, "Enough", "The Burning Bed", and "Sleeping with the Enemy" to name a few. Try to name one movie where that paradigm is switched; it's difficult to say the least. The few times I've seen this role reversal played out, the focus was on the pathetic weakness of the man, not the tyranny of the woman.

I think those involved in reconciling our marriage undervalued what had happened to me whereby the combination of their preconceived ideas about roles in domestic abuse and the striking differences between our physical statures allowed them devalue the abuse I dealt with. I don't believe this was a malicious or even conscious process. However, I don't think they would have had the same approach to our reconciliation had our sexes been reversed. Most of the male pastors/elders in our church had no or little exposure to the reality that women could be just as violent as men. I asked

several of them, out exasperation at their inability to see my perspective and persistent belief that we she should work it out a very simple, very direct hypothetical; “Would you feel this way if our genders were reversed? If I was abusing Alex, would you tell her to stay, at great personal risk to herself?” To their credit, most admitted that they would, in fact, counsel differently. Most would have pushed for legal action and a longer term period of counseling. There had been several instances where they had granted divorce when the perpetrating husband refused to change. After 9 months apart, Alex and I had the permission of our counselors and mediators to get back together. She moved back in March during the spring break of my first year of medical school.

### **The Final Straw**

Imagine what it was like to get hit in the leg with a piece of shrapnel or a bullet during the Civil War, to feel your leg slowly grey and die, and to have it finally amputated. I think that analogy is a fairly good metaphor for my marriage to Alex. The bullet was the first time I asked her to leave, the slowly creeping death of gangrene as the time between when she returned and I asked her to leave the second time, which was the final amputation.

Alex was just as insecure and suspicious of me as she was prior to our separation. The verbal abuse and manipulation had not improved. However, the physical abuse was absent. She had learned that violence was not acceptable. I think this had been pressed upon her in the Christian 12-step program she had attended. Other women who had been abused and were reformed abusers, chided her for its use in our past relationship and held her accountable for it in our post-reconciled marriage.

But, things had changed for me too. I was unable to let go of everything she had done to me. Likewise, Alex was resentful that I had kicked her out of our house. And so our relationship withered. The self-effacing benefit of the doubt I had extended Alex was gone. I now called her out every time she was abusive or suspicious. I no longer avoided conflict. For her part, she was cooler towards me. She was not violent, at least at first, but she was also less loving.

Our relationship slowly soured, and over time Alex became more physically confrontational. Shortly after moving back in she stopped going to both her 12-step program and counseling, saying that they weren't helping her and that it wasn't fair that I wasn't going also. At first, when we argued, she wouldn't yell, but that changed overtime. When she was not able to “win” arguments, she would turn up the volume, and so would I. Likewise, her physical posture became more aggressive, from sitting to standing, to blocking my path with her body, to physically bumping into me on purpose.

The final episode that ended our marriage came after a Friday test I had in October. I was mentally exhausted, as per the usual post-test malaise. I'd come home to an empty house and started to watch an episode of *Sons of Anarchy*, a TV show about a motorcycle club. Alex came home to find me vegged out in front of my laptop at the dining room table. She asked me what I was watching and then went to sit down on the couch. Unbeknownst to me she Googled the show and decided it was pornography.

“Saul, I don't want you watching that,” she said.

“Why?”

“Because it has naked women in it,” she replied.

“I haven’t seen any,” I retorted.

“I don’t care. You need to turn it off!” she exclaimed.

“Yeah, that’s not going to happen,” I replied.

She yelled back. “If you don’t turn it off, I’m going to email Tim and tell him you’re looking at porn!”

I replied sarcastically. “Don’t bother. I’ll do it for you and I’ll tell him you’re acting crazy again!”

And, with that she flew off of the couch at me. She yelled, “I’m not going to let you do that!” as she was trying to wrestle the computer away from me, clawing at my hands to let go.

It was in this moment, for the first time, I wanted to hit her. To be frank, it scared me. I’d never wanted to hit a woman as far as I could recall. I knew at that moment that I was going to divorce Alex. I couldn’t take the chance that I might act upon that impulse, and I knew that Alex was slowly going back to her old pattern of physical abusiveness. I was terrified that at some point she would hit me, and instead of just taking it, I would hit her back. Once I had made the decision to divorce her, that tension and the possibility that I might strike her, went away. All of this, the desire to strike back, the recognition that I needed to end our marriage to avoid that outcome, and the decision to divorce her, occurred while she was trying to wrestle the laptop away from me.

“Alex, I won’t email Tim and I won’t watch the show. We can watch something on TV together,” I said in a mild tone.

“You promise?” she asked bitterly.

“I promise.”

Near the end of November, I informed Alex that I would be divorcing her, and that nothing could change my mind. Her family was coming from Brazil in early December to visit her. I hoped having them there would help her transition into her new life away from me so I went to live with my parents until she moved out at the end of December. After her constant hyper vigilance including paranoid phone calls, emails, and text messages, when she finally left it was like a huge emotional vacuum. Our marriage ended with a whimper and not a bang, with ice and not fire. Once she was gone I enjoyed the silence for 18 months.

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# Book Reviews



**Christina Hoff Sommers, *The War Against Boys. How Misguided Policies Are Harming Our Young Men*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013.**

This is the second, “new and revised edition,” of what is now a basic book in male studies, an emerging area of scholarly research on the unique characteristics of and issues related to the experience of being a boy and a man. Originally published in 2000, *The War Against Boys* remains a revealing appraisal of the situation boys have been forced to face in recent years, above all as young students in public schools. Sommers is a philosopher by education and the mother of a young man. She speaks clearly and from experience.

On the change in the subtitle of her book—from “How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men” to “How Misguided Policies Are Harming Our Boys”—Sommers explains that she “did not intend to indict the historical feminist movement,” but to avoid having “her message lost on” those who “took the book to be an attack on feminism itself,” she has changed the subtitle “to make a clearer distinction between the humane and progressive women’s movement and today’s feminist lobby” (p. 3). But given the topic of Sommers’ first book, *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*, which is one of the most compelling critiques of third-wave, ideological feminism, one cannot but wonder whether her decision to modify the subtitle is not only about drawing a larger audience. Continuing her apologia for the change of emphasis from misguided feminism to misguided policies, the author asserts that the “current plight of boys and young men is, in fact, a women’s issue.” I would add: “Yes, but it is in the first place a men’s issue.” I do not believe Sommers is suggesting that it is not only a men’s issue, but I would not agree it is in the first place a women’s

issue because the boys and young men she writes about “are our sons; they are the people with whom our daughters will build a future.” So long as the ‘our’ refers to both the fathers and mothers of these boys, I am in agreement with Sommers. I would also note that, given men’s near silence to date on the “plight” of boys and young males, the voices of men need to be given a place of prominence in the discussion. No more than a male can experience what it is like to be a female—a girl, a woman, and a mother—no female can really know what it is like to be embodied in the world as a male—as a boy, a man, and a father. I would not like to believe that the author or her publisher submitted to pressure to avoid foregrounding Sommers’ questions about the place of feminism as the source of the policy changes regarding the way boys are treated that we have seen in the last few decades.

The book began as an essay published in *The Atlantic* (November 9, 1998). In the first edition, Sommers reported that, in 1997, full-time enrollment of men in college was 40%. Fifteen years later, it is about 37% according to most college admissions officials. The trend continues and it is projected that in another half-century, the last male to be awarded a bachelor’s degree will turn his tassel (p. 17). That is surely not going to happen, in part because of the work of people like Sommers. It is astonishing, however, that she is nearly alone in hammering at the ideological door that refuses to admit there are problems for boys in the early grades and for young men on university campuses. Most parents are unaware of a connection between the extraordinarily frequent diagnosis of ADHD among boys followed by the medication of their growing bodies with harmful drugs and their limping academic performance in primary school. Similarly, parents who now pay on average \$200,000 for a son’s education are unaware that college “campus life” and “residential education” deanlets and deanlings are so busied with advertising a rape culture that simply does not exist, that they pay little attention to the declining engagement of college men in campus life. The connection between pathologizing boyhood and the subsequent failure to flourish of young males is now well documented, yet educationists and policy-makers are unwilling to act to remedy the situation in most colleges and universities that now effectively promote the further decline of young males as scholars and human beings.

Sommers’ analysis focuses on the early school years and rightly so, since this is where young males spend most of their lives during the formative early, middle and late childhood years and adolescence, beginning for some with daycare as early as two and one-half years of age, on through the required years of high school a decade and a half later. What is refreshing about her account of the data—and the book is data-heavy, as it should be—is her candor in explaining why and how “women’s groups have invested so much effort in thwarting the cause of boys” (p. 25) and “our educational system may be punishing boys for the circumstance of being boys” (p. 38). This is not a maybe, however, as Sommers’ fellow philosopher, David Benatar has shown in *The Second Sexism* (see p. 199, where Sommers predicts that “boys will be tomorrow’s second sex”). It can be understood as a component of a well worked out system of social engineering. There is a conspiracy against boys and its motivation is the policies of ideological feminism, a pseudo-religion that is now anti-male in a way that the most egregious blocking or discouraging of women from entering the professions that is known to have happened until the 1970s never was. It must be noted that parity of attendance of females and males at university was reached in 1980. Now the ratio of female-male enrollments is edging towards what it was for male-female in 1960. As Sommers points out, women are now earning more graduate and professional degrees than men. Fewer men can be expected to be among the professional class as the decrease in undergraduate education continues to influence who will be our doctors, lawyers and university professors, to say nothing of those who lead in the business world and in politics.

Sommers’ concern is only with boys in this book, but her observations need to be extended

to take into consideration how the misguided education of boys in the past 40 years has played out in the lives of men now in their early middle age, a period that is now marked by a higher than average suicide rate. These men are the first generations of males who were disparaged as boys for being boys especially in school.

One of the high points of *The War Against Boys* is its deconstruction of the myth of girl weakness parlayed by Professor Carol Gilligan, a psychologist whose career ironically enough was formed by her collaboration with a male mentor, Lawrence Kohlberg, the psychologist who famously proposed stages of moral development that parallel those of psychosexual, psychosocial and cognitive development worked out by Freud, Erikson and Piaget. Gilligan is an academic who found her way to academic fame with the support of a male, but, as Sommers shows, failed to meet the minimal expectations of rigor that her mentor surely demanded of her in her “discovery” that girls’ “voices” had been silenced by a mean-spirited, man-powered patriarchy. As it turns out, there was nothing of the sort. The muting of girls’ voices was a fabrication of Professor Gilligan. Kohlberg himself comes in for examination in Sommers’ critique of “value-free kids” (“The Moral Lives of Boys”).

Another issue that occupies Sommers is a literature on the “crisis” of boyhood that was published during the same period. Only psychologists who, like ideological feminists, see boys as defective human beings (more strongly, as defective girls) could call for the medicalization of boyhood. Here we are again in the world of pseudo-illnesses that require treatment. Sommers’ more general claim is that boys are just fine until being a boy is marked as a disorder that requires remediation. In sum, Sommers writes: “An unacknowledged animus against boys is loose in our society” (p. 203). She locates where its influence is strongest: the schools. I am inclined to take a further step, which Sommers does not, and suggest that this animus is part of a broader attitude of misandry—contempt for males. This cannot be laid at the feet of the most angry ideological feminists, however. It is part of the structure of culture itself.

– Miles Groth, Wagner College

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# Book Reviews



**Nick Theophilou, *10 Stories about What Men Are Doing Well*,  
Amazon Digital Services, Inc. (2013)**

Chivalry has recently become a political football in popular culture. In its current manifestation as the New Chivalry it has been kicked around by those wishing to score points for agendas as various as angry gynocentrism (“Besides, shouldn’t there be a few tradeoffs, or benefits, for the crap we have to put up with as women?” demands Tracie Egan Morrissey in *Jezebel*); skeptical conservatism (“If the metaphor for chivalry was the knight in shining armor, that of the new chivalry is the hen-pecked capon of a Western man,” asserts Selwyn Duke in *The American Thinker*); and progressive Christianity (“Chivalry is about the contents of our heart affecting how we treat people on a day-to-day basis—it’s about loving people in a way that makes us courageous and assuages others’ fears of being unlovable and unaccepted” suggests Zach Hunter in *Enlightened Magazine*). Although the goals of masculine chivalric conduct declined in the early twentieth century from those traditional core traits of bravery, honesty, and courtesy to little more than pleasing and placating women (evident in Morrissey’s and Duke’s commentaries); chivalry still seems topical; moreover, as Hunter’s comment suggests, there seems to be a new interest in chivalry’s positive aspirational goals.

Nick Theophilou’s *10 Stories about what Men are Doing Well* celebrates various Australian men’s courageous attempts at opening themselves up to caring for their whole selves (psyche and soma) and for supporting the men, women, and children in their communities.

Having founded more than fifty men's groups to date, Theophilou offers astute testimony on men's experience of these attempts. One admires his determination given the often-unsympathetic responses he and other Australian male-positive activists encounter: he observes, for example, that a men's interest radio program he hosted "was seen as a strange indulgence since 'There's nothing wrong with them. They have got it all.'" His life work with men represents a refutation of such still-too-pervasive, dismissive misandric attitude concerning men's wellbeing.

The book consists of vignettes describing the personal-growth process of men of various identities and professions; among them are white-collar workers, Sam (an accountant by training), Jake (who works in IT), two Peters (a successful solicitor and a real-estate salesman) as well as blue-collar and home workers Walter (a rig contractor), David (a semi-retired business owner), stay-at-home dads Matt and Simon, and Desmond, a single dad; however, what they do for work is less important than what they do to live well. The collected stories affirm that men do not have to change to conform to the traditional expectations of others; they have the choice of celebrating their experience of themselves with others. Being a man may involve experiencing the "beautiful anguish" described by a member of one of Theophilou's groups; however, with the care and support of other men that experience can be edifying.

In the chapter, "Being there for other men," Theophilou observes that, "increasingly, men are a quiet, supportive presence," a trend deriving from the reassurance men discover they receive from one another in meetings and other contexts that enable respectful friendships. Theophilou notes that Sam, for example likes that "no one was trying to change" him, that "there was respect for one another's situations" which left the choice to change his life up to him—an attitude similar to courageous and accepting new chivalry described by Hunter.

Whether its philosophy be religious or secular, this support is central to the male-positive potential of the new chivalry for a new kind of man. Robert the therapist notes, "The new man knows that life is a journey." "He is psychologically 'held' through his trials by other men, whether it's through one-to-one coaching, a psychologist, a men's group, in specific purpose groups for cancer or anyone they trust to have a compassionate ear....He comes out the other side more peaceful, quieter." Men are once again valuing chivalric bravery, honesty, and chivalry and its scope for personal growth.

Given this brotherly support, Theophilou argues, men are learning to assert themselves in positive ways. As David discovers, "Men are finding that moments of reflection stabilize them and they can move on with life again." Robert, the veteran facilitator and mentor of men, notes that "Men are moving into a new realm of being....It's about being decisive, clear, and resolute, taking action as he needs to, and *still* wearing his heart on his sleeve." He encounters this new attitude "in the men who attend his courses, which teaches them how to speak more clearly and be assertive," in those many men who "have been affected by the call to action to be more adventurous with their inner life." This adventurousness is not recklessness. The chapter, "Realizing longevity is the name of the game," persuasively argues that "Men's lives mean more to them, so they are living better and longer." Permission to be an openly devoted father has men flocking." Men's collective encounters have enabled a masculine pursuit of wellbeing. Theophilou remarks that "It's important to give credit when it's due, and this is the case with men. Many have chosen to live well. It's being done with little

or no fanfare, with quiet resolution, and I see it on a daily basis.” These new choices that he sees men making are informed by an acute awareness of the parameters of their wellbeing—and how it positively impacts others.

Occasionally the experiences recounted in *10 Stories about What Men Are Doing Well* do register tacit complicity with traditional gynocentric pleasing—Walt’s experience with his partner, Sal, sometimes lapses into a dynamic informed by a man’s anxiety about pleasing a woman, and Matt’s support of Claudia seems one-sided— but most of what is recounted registers what might be understood as a rediscovery of male-positive chivalry and particularly its courage and care for comrades: Robert lauds men’s new willingness “not to be the tough guy 24/7 anymore. They can be up there, honest, and perform at an elite level *and* do the tough stuff.” Moreover he argues that this willingness is “also about men being mentors in the traditional sense of the word, to guide the boy along with the boy’s wishes and talents in mind rather than what the mentor believes is best for the boy.” Nick Theophilou is to be congratulated for describing the dawning of a new chivalry inherent in these men’s primary support of one another and its consequent impact on those men, women, and children whom men love and who love them.

-Dennis Gouws, Springfield College

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