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BOOK REVIEW

Listening to Fathers of Sons with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

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Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) affects the entire family, however, most studies concern maternal adjustment with fathers' adjustment largely overlooked. To investigate experiences of fathers of sons with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) interviews were held with 15 fathers of a son with DMD, from across the UK. 55 fathers from an associated study also provided written accounts. Grounded theory methodology was used to evaluate the data. Four key themes emerged: 1) loss and acceptance; 2) support versus isolation; 3) fight for resources and 4) race against time. Fathers de-

scribed the impact of emotional/behavioural factors, which were not routinely addressed by professionals. Findings emphasise importance of person-centred care, indicating how needs could be met, from fathers' perspectives.

Keywords: Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy; experiences of fathers; qualitative research

Following ongoing campaigns by families and professionals, muscular dystrophy services have been the focus of ongoing developments at UK Government level. The All Party Group on Muscular Dystrophy (APGMD) was introduced in 2008, to raise the profile of the condition. However, it is evident from parent-led efforts (e.g. Action Duchenne), that families believe DMD is overlooked in Government health-care policy and service delivery. This neglect extends to the research literature where few studies have addressed the psychological consequences for parents who are caring for a child with DMD (Puxley & Buchanan, 2009), with most studies focusing on mothers.

Authors have suggested that studies based on coping of parents of disabled children, add valuable information to the research base (e.g. Webb, 2005). This is relevant in the context of DMD, where stress is heightened due to the high dependence of the child, associated learning difficulties, and continual deterioration (Nereo, Fee & Hinton, 2003).

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

The muscular dystrophies are genetic conditions that are inherited or may arise without prior symptoms (Muscular Dystrophy Campaign). They have been described as 'chronic diseases manifesting with progressive muscle weakness' (Grootenhuis et al, 2007). Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) is the most severe form, usually diagnosed between 2-5 years. More than 30,000 people within the UK have muscular dystrophy or related conditions and 120,000 individuals are indirectly affected as relatives/carers (Muscular Dystrophy Campaign).

Males are affected via transmission by an altered gene on the x chromosome, in a sex linked (recessive) inheritance pattern, with approximately 50% likelihood of a carrier's son being born with DMD (Dubowitz, 1982). The overall impact is a defect in dystrophin, the protein required for healthy growth of muscle fibres, resulting in severe disability, deterioration over time, and terminal prognosis. In addition to physical problems, DMD is associated with behavioural characteristics, with studies identifying high levels of behaviour problems, including limited social skills, attention deficits and depression (Leibowitz & Dubowitz, 1981; Thompson et al; 1992 Nereo et al, 2003).

Although ongoing medical developments are encouraging (Griffin & Des Rosier, 2009), research is at an exploratory stage, there remains no cure and boys have an average life span of 25 years.

Understanding Parental Adjustment

Parents of boys with DMD report higher levels of psychological distress than controls (Thompson, 1992; Chen et al, 2002 & 2007; Holyroyd & Guthrie, 1986; Abi Doud et al, 2004). Notably, the child's behavioural problems, not the condition itself in terms of severity and care demands, leads to a detri-

mental impact on child adjustment (Nereo et al, 2003; Reid & Renwick, 2001). Parental adjustment is affected by witnessing indicators of deterioration in the child, social isolation (Firth et al, 1983) and negative parental attitude towards the child (Bothwell, 2002). A tendency to adopt unhelpful coping strategies such as withdrawal, isolation and overprotection, have also been reported (Gagliardi, 1991; Kornfeld & Siegal, 1979; Witte, 1985).

Where reported separately to mothers, fathers are found to display more difficulties coping with diagnosis (Firth et al, 1983) and may avoid contact with the child (Gagliardi, 1991). Unmet needs included support with child's communication and behaviour problems (Darke et al, 2006; Chen, 2008), and emotional problems (Firth et al, 1983). However, little information is available to describe the processes involved and fathers' perspectives.

Significance of Paternal Involvement

Findings that child coping behaviour is promoted when family members are proactive in caring roles, (e.g. Lamb, 2004; Thompson et al, 1992) attests to the importance of paternal involvement in their care. Wysocki and Gavin (2006) suggest that paternal involvement may provide a 'coping resource that supports both mothers' and childrens' adaptive capacity'.

Evidence from both cross-sectional and longitudinal research indicates that paternal, more than maternal, involvement, protects against psychological distress in adolescents and young adults (Bogels & Phares, 2008) and improves quality of life in chronically ill adolescents (Wysocki & Gavin, 2006). The authors suggest that both quality and quantity of involvement have a direct impact on areas such as treatment adherence and frequency of reinforcement for condition self-management (Gavin & Wysocki, 2004; Wysocki & Gavin, 2006).

Summary

Researchers have questioned the lack of psychosocial investigation into DMD, given the practical and psychological consequences on families (Puxley & Buchanan, 2009). Investigation of fathers in paediatric psychology literature is neglected (Phares et al, 2005), with available studies addressing maternal adjustment. Addressing calls for both, research within the area of DMD and inclusion of fathers, the aim of the study was to explore fathers' perspectives on caring for a son with DMD.

Method

Participants

Fifteen fathers aged 34-60 (mean 48.4) of a son aged 8-32 (mean 16.1) with DMD, were recruited from across the UK. There was no restriction on the age of the child as exploration of a range of experiences was sought. Interviewees represented a broad range of experiences, covering early childhood prior to deterioration, adolescence, early adulthood and losing a son. The cohort of interviewees included a father as the sole carer, a father who had lost a child to DMD and a father of two boys with DMD. Fifty five fathers (from a related mixed methods study) also completed written 'comments sheets', comprising a summarised version of the interview guide. This technique allowed fathers to

respond to sensitive issues at their own pace, with the rationale that it might be easier for some to write about their experiences (Handy & Ross, 2005).

Table 1. Summary of Interviewees

Inter-view No	Region	Domestic situation	Age of father	Son's age at diagnosis	Age of Son	Years since diagnosis	Mode of interview
1	Scotland	With partner	46	2	12	10	Face to face
2	Scotland	With partner	60	10	25	15	Face to face
3	Scotland	With partner	57	In utero	21	20	Face to face
4	Scotland	With partner	51	3	13	10	Face to face
5	Scotland	With partner	46	At birth	15	15	Face to face
6	England	With partner	51	6	8	2	Face to face
7	Scotland	Single father- sole carer	34	5	15	10	Face to face
8	Scotland	With partner	missing	3	15	12	Face to face
9	England	With partner (full time carer, whilst wife works)	52	6	13	7	Telephone
10	England	With partner	60	6	32	26	Telephone
11	England	With partner (own son: 13 and step son: 2 both with DMD)	39	1 month	13 (based experiences on 13 year old)	1	Telephone
12	England	With partner	46	4	8	4	Telephone
13	Wales	With partner	missing	N/a	Deceased	N/a	Telephone
14	England	With partner	50	4.5	4.5	21	Telephone

15	Wales	With part-ner	38	4	4	5	Telephone
Mean			48.4 (34-60)	4.8	4.8	11 (1-26)	

Recruitment

Fathers were recruited through national charity organisations: Muscular Dystrophy Campaign; Scottish Muscle Network; Parent Project UK, and the Duchenne Family Support Group.

Table 2. Process of contacting participants via charities

	Muscular Dystrophy Campaign	Scottish Muscle Network	Contact a Family	Duchenne Family Support Group	Parent Project U.K.	Snowball technique
Method of contacting participant	Initial promotion of the study via an advocate at a national meeting Distribution of packs via care advisors Advertising in 'DMD News' Distribution of flyers at Scottish muscle network meetings	Leaflet distribution/ word of mouth at meetings	Advertising of project in e-newsletter	Personal request from Chairman of DFSG, distributed via email network and DSFG newsletter	Distribution of packs to participants with cover letter from PPUK	Contacts made via suggestions of people recruited
Number recruited	N=26	N=5	N=0	N=12	N=4	N=3

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted between May and September 2007. Eight interviews were conducted face-to-face (average 1.4 hours), and the remaining seven by telephone (average 45 minutes). Semi-structured interviews concerned experiences and perceptions of specific areas including diagnosis, coping/adjustment, involvement, support, needs and services. To meet study aims, Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006) was considered the most appropriate analytic approach allowing a bottom-up method to make meaning of fathers' experiences, whilst promoting theory development. Grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006), therefore, facilitated the development of a framework from which to understand participants' perspectives.

Using a Constructivist interpretation of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), text was coded to form core categories, in order to generate key themes. As themes were identified, a coding frame was developed and expanded, leading to categories that illustrated key findings. This method of continual comparison allowed evaluation of themes as they arose, and consideration of developing themes in light of new data (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997). Attempts were made to address 'verification strategies' as outlined by Morse et al (2002), including methodological coherence and development of a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection and analysis, theoretical thinking and theory development. A reflective diary also allowed identification of initial thoughts, considered as the initial stage of data processing and providing context for analysis (Etherington, 2007).

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Psychology Ethics Panel at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, Scotland,, in February 2007.

Findings

Four key themes were identified: 1) loss and acceptance; 2) support versus isolation; 3) the fight for resources and 4) race against time. The following symbols are used: Interview: I and Written Account: W.

Table 3. Themes and sub-themes

Main theme	*Sub-themes*
Loss and acceptance	Loss Expectations Guilt Adaptive coping and acceptance versus mal-adaptive coping
Support versus isolation	Identity issues Strained friendships Family/marital stress Barriers to involvement

The fight for resources	Frustration
	Spare part/exclusion
	Needs and suggestions
Race against time	Images of next stages: transition to adulthood: comparison with other children
	Deterioration and making the most of life
	Decisions
	Talking about death

Loss and Acceptance

This theme concerned fathers' reactions to their son's condition, where several losses were experienced. Impact of diagnosis was often framed within the context of previous hopes and expectations for their son's future and the difficulties in realising these would not be achieved. "You have all these aspirations for your son, and you don't know until he is actually diagnosed, that he would never really kick a ball. You know, eh, and that hurts because you feel they're losing out on something and the father's losing out on something as well" (I: 3).

Transition periods, such as teenage years, were a major challenge for most, as it seemed to represent their son being 'left behind', adding to further perceived loss as increasing disability was highlighted in light of increasing independence of other teenagers. Issues of guilt underpinned some participants' reports of the impact of DMD on family life. This was apparent within various contexts, including diagnosis and restrictions on boys' and siblings' quality of life. Also, through genetic issues that affected the wider family, for example, in relation to grown-up daughters' relationships and mothers' guilt due to their carrier status. Acknowledging guilt and removing blame, was necessary to move forward as a family in dealing with the condition: "Because it doesn't come from men... she feels it's all her fault...because it's her genes that's damaged" (I: 6).

Adjustment involved altering expectations held prior to diagnosis, being realistic and accepting no one was to blame, allowing fathers to adopt a positive attitude. "I got the advice from a colleague to say 'no one's to blame'. When he said that it was freeing" (I: 4). Those who grew to accept the situation described attempts to focus on the positive and to give their child the best experiences of life. In time, fathers described a need to deal with the deteriorating condition. The degenerative nature of DMD served as a constant reminder, with fathers reporting adjustment in light of this as an ongoing, or impossible, process. One father described a phenomenon he termed 'issue fatigue'. This captures many of the views of fathers in relation to facing ongoing challenges: "Issue fatigue is more a sapping mental state, that I believe others recognise as being simply a perpetual stream of things to deal with...the shifting sands of DMD" (W: 18). Frequently expressed was a need to appear to be coping, whereby fathers concealed their distress, in contrast to how they actually felt.

Support versus Isolation

A continuous sub-theme of identity issues, both as a person and as a father, appeared to underpin fathers' experiences of readjusting expectations in light of diagnosis, to reappraisals of their

'father/friend/partner role' and the need to adopt a protective attitude on behalf of the family. One father felt the diagnosis had changed his perception of others, and his own character, whilst others commented on general loss of friendships. "I've found now that I have the whole world on my back, there's not many [friends] around anymore....That's what this condition has done, it's made me so protective of my family that people who I can't rely on, I've dropped them because they've done the same to me" (I: 6).

A sense of isolation linked to a lack of opportunity for fathers to seek support and talk about issues affecting them. With friends, most fathers did not generally talk about their son's condition, and their social networks generally appeared not to encourage this. "Fathers tend not to interact or seek out other fathers. There doesn't seem a need to interact with other DMD dads. You can do it via the internet" (W: 13). One father described a general avoidance, on a par with that of bereavement, on the part of his friends to discuss the condition, and the difference between his friends' reactions compared to his wife's friends: "It tends to revolve around mothers. I mean friends, the first thing they said when they found out is 'how is [wife] taking it?', no-one ever says 'how's [father] taking it'?. They tend not to talk about it at all, my friends don't. I mean, the girls do [wife] and her friends. I suppose girls are more open and used to discussing things. But nobody speaks about it, nobody mentions it. I certainly don't....I suppose it's a bit like somebody dies in the family and you just don't mention it" (I: 9).

Although fathers shared mothers' concerns, their responses and coping strategies differed in some ways. A number of fathers talked about differences in coping within the context of gender, and many knew of families who had split as a result. Often, one partner would want to talk about DMD, resulting in conflict when their partner avoided, or discouraged this. "If one wants to let it out and the other wants to bottle it up, then you've got a bit of a mix up" (I: 13).

Although the majority described being involved with their son, an issue for some was a sense of detachment from certain aspects of the child's life. Most fathers commented that being involved was important, but also said they felt there were barriers to becoming more involved. A sub-theme of exclusion underpinned this theme. Fathers tried to be involved but did not do enough; although they were willing, they were unable, due to work commitments.

The Fight for Resources

There was a roughly even split between those who said they were satisfied and unhappy with social and general medical provision. Often, it was felt that support was patchy, due to DMD being relatively uncommon in general practice. As most doctors see only a couple of DMD cases in a lifetime, fathers said they often felt they were teaching the professional and frustrated at having to do this with new staff. For instance: "What we've had to do is to educate people we're talking to" (I: 1).

Fathers repeatedly reported fighting for their sons, often as part of their 'duty' to ensure the best possible care. Constant chasing and delays reportedly led to feelings of lack of control. The importance of having a good relationship with professionals was reported by a number of fathers. "If any parent involves themselves, professionals tend to welcome that. You have to be approachable for the relationship to work" (W: 38). In terms of suggestions for improvements, fathers preferred profes-

sionals to be honest and clear about what they could achieve. In this context, the need for others to acknowledge the time limitations of their sons' life-span was important. "It's alright for them saying 'we can get that in six months', but six months is a long time in a boy's...we have to have it now" (I: 3).

Dealing with re-evaluating expectations and knowing how to move forward, was also mentioned in terms of support needs. Specific times where fathers felt extra support was required were diagnosis, times of change and coping with associated feelings of helplessness/loss of expectations. A key factor included wanting to know what they would be able to do with their sons, instead of limitations associated with DMD. "Fathers need to know what they will be able to do with the son, not just left to think on what he'll never do" (W: 26).

Many referred to the strain on relationships, and how support would benefit this impact. Others reported a need to know how to practically care for, and talk to, their sons about DMD. Knowing what to expect, and provision of a schedule of needs/contacts corresponding to each 'stage' was felt to be beneficial. Fathers of older boys felt support needs included the option to talk to someone independently; a need to address boys' frustration at being physically restricted, and somewhere appropriate for boys to mix socially. Fathers of older boys also reported it proved hard to seek guidance. "Our son is 33, Consultants say he's rewriting the test books. We are guiding pathfinders, so it's hard to get help" (W: 1).

A majority of fathers felt services would benefit from a more cohesive system, which would remove the stress of contacting a range of organisations. "A team that works hand in hand to support the family, rather than a collection of individuals pulling in different directions" (W: 2).

Table 4 below summarises a number of key challenges described by fathers, illustrating needs and suggestions for support.

Table 4. **Key challenges: needs and fathers' suggestions for support**

Key challenges	Fathers' suggestions for addressing needs/good practice	
Early stage of diagnosis	Emotional support and confidential discussions one to one At the early stages of diagnosis, help with fathers' perceived inability to help their sons	Father only support groups Provide an element of hope Key person to support and explain what will happen
Acknowledging fathers perceptions of being excluded and encouraging involvement	Ask fathers' opinions Acknowledge fathers' role and involvement, as well as mothers'	Speak to parents as a whole and don't 'avoid' fathers by speaking through them at appointments Appointments outside of 9-5pm hours

Social activities and support for older sons	Address lack of social provision for boys	Improved access to respite care
		Provision of clubs where boys can mix with other boys with DMD and those without any health problems
	Suitable organisations where boys can go and mix with other people their own, with physical rather than mental disabilities.	For older boys, assistance in finding out about the level of support/financial assistance from authorities
Integrated system and profes-sional training	Reduce the amount of chasing people up	Streamline and review processes, to remove stress and facilitate preparation for when deteriora-tion begins
	Reduce the need to 'fight' for services	More information about processes, planning for mid to long term future
	A schedule that outlines needs at each stage	Encouragement of young doctors into DMD related fields, to de-velop understanding and expert-ise
		Workshops for the GPs and im-proved training of professionals
		Co-ordinated care packages, to promote greater awareness across multidisciplinary teams

Race Against Time

Some fathers described the challenge of DMD confronting their previous concept of an ongoing family line. The limited life span of their son was an underlying theme throughout, with fathers con-veying a sense of urgency. This included obtaining best medical treatment and ensuring their son lived as full a life as possible. The need for speed also related to delays with medical procedures, es-pecially when the son's condition was declining. "It took us nearly a year to get an appointment. In that whole year his spinal curvature increased dramatically. He was on the verge of not getting (the operation)" (I: 7). The desire for speed also involved exposing the child to life experiences, often 'cramming in' as many of these as possible, before time ran out. "I get them up at 4am and take them to the airport and don't even tell them. I let them try and guess where they're going. It's like "Disney-land". It's just special little things like that" (I: 6). In relation to accepting their son would die before

them, a reported fear was that of seeing the child in later stages of decline, and concern their son would be rejected when he began to deteriorate. A key challenge was when the child stopped walking, and started wheelchair use. Ongoing deterioration resulted in a continual process of emotional parental stress. "Due to the nature of the condition, it remains continuously the 'most challenging time' as the disease progressively steals your child's physical abilities" (W: 55).

The move from childhood to adulthood was reported to be a challenging milestone, both due to deterioration and also in relation to gaps on services. As their son's condition declined, watching other children grow up was often described as difficult. Related to the progressive nature of DMD and transition to adulthood, a sub-theme included decision making. This was in light of deterioration, in terms of who led decisions involving treatment, and the process of decision making. Rapid decisions were often required, in the face of time restrictions of the child's life. Joint decision making with the child in relation to operations such as spinal fusion and Achillies tendon release, was important for fathers. Making treatment decisions was often described as challenging, as there were many factors to consider, including child's quality of life.

The final sub-theme concerned death issues. A number of fathers reported finding it difficult to talk about death with the child, sometimes expressing relief that this was avoided or dealt with by the mother. It was also difficult wondering how much the child knew already, and fearing having to face the topic where fathers did not feel equipped or ready to discuss. "The other problem I avoid basically is...dying. I just wouldn't know what to say. I'd be like 'uh-oh, it's that time" (I: 5). A number reported dealing with death related queries directly. In these cases, the importance of being honest, and dealing directly with questions, was emphasised.

For some, there were issues in knowing how and when to tell their son the prognosis. Often, this was led by the child initiating the discussion. "He said, 'am I going to die young?'...I went 'everybody is going to die, anyone might die tomorrow or be here in 100 years" (I: 6). Accepting the fact he would lose his son, and viewing any time with him as enriching, was described by one father of a young son. "The bottom line is if [son] dies, my life will be richer for knowing [son] the way he is" (I: 4).

Discussion

This is the first known identifiable study to investigate the experiences of fathers of sons with DMD. The qualitative analysis illustrated the emotional impact of parenting a son with DMD. All experienced the progression of the condition at different stages, with a range of reactions from those who coped well to those who found most days challenging. Fathers described an array of perspectives, however, a number of common themes linked their experiences. The first major challenge was dealing with diagnosis, particularly revising previous expectations held. This involved acknowledging loss of father-son activities hoped for and parenting ideals held. At this time, anger, frustration guilt and shock, similar to previous findings (Webb, 2005; Buchanan et al, 1979) were reported, along with a perception, for many, of having received poor information or not being able to understand information received. This finding supports Firth et al's (1983) study of DMD parent's experiences of diagnosis, where one third were not satisfied with how diagnosis was disclosed. Around this time, professionals' attention may be focused on mothers and children, and fathers may feel a sense of expectation to be strong for others.

As with Kornfeld & Siegel's (1979) reported 'cycle of loss', an underlying theme of loss, due to limited life-span, was obvious throughout descriptions. In addition to areas previously described, as with Lee et al (2006), this extended to re-evaluation of previous expectations for continuing the family name.

Some lived in 'anticipation' of next stages and felt unable to become too close to their sons as a possible means of self-protection. In keeping with Kornfeld & Siegal, (1979), a key factor may be that boys look normal in their younger years, and loss of function is slow. Absence of boys' friendships also contributed, with fathers often feeling helpless at sons missing out. Adaptive coping was achieved through proactive attempts to make the most of life, whilst not looking too far ahead. Many coped well, maintaining hope for a cure and using charity work or fundraising as both a distraction and a coping mechanism. As also identified by Erby et al (2006) in discussions of advanced care planning with DMD parents, maintaining hope was important and it helped when professionals provided this, whilst remaining realistic. Decision making surrounding treatments was a cause of stress, worsened by conflicting advice, unpredictable gain and a perception of time running out and therefore pressure to decide between options.

Many moved forward after an initial mourning period and coped through practical efforts with DMD campaigns. Fathers sometimes felt isolated, both from routines and in relation to interactions with professionals. Complete adjustment was often described as impossible due to constant changes associated with DMD, leaving no time to 'recover'. In contrast to Buchanan et al (1979), and Chen et al (2002), coping strategies including self-blame, wish-fulfilling fantasy and 'magical thinking' were not described.

However, defensive coping mechanisms reported as attempts to cope, included withdrawing, or working overtime to avoid family contact. Most were realistic, however, often made attempts to over-compensate through providing 'amazing' experiences their son would remember. This appeared to be a form of over protection, also found by Kornfeld and Siegel, (1979). Coping was generally described in terms of being less emotional and more practical than the mothers' care role. There may be a perceived expectation for fathers to attempt to counteract mothers' more emotionally focused approach, as previously described (McNeill, 2004).

Friendships were described as an important support, and in a number of cases these had been affected by fathers' reactions to the diagnosis. Fathers described the whole family as affected, including maternal guilt, testing daughters for the gene and problem behaviour from siblings due to attention placed on the child with DMD. Consistent with findings of Firth et al (1983) and Fitzpatrick and Barry (1986), communication difficulties emerged as an important area for fathers, also leading to challenges within relationships, where lack of agreement occurred, or where there was no desire to discuss issues on behalf of one partner. In line with previous work (e.g. Pelchat & Perreault, 2003) interviews identified that coping dissimilarities often exacerbated problems within the family.

Similar to Erby et al (2006), avoidance of emotionally sensitive issues was reported. The present study highlighted communication issues with sons, in particular discussing issues surrounding death, and lack of awareness of how much the child already knew, were causes of distress. Witte

(1985) previously identified problems regarding discussing death issues in DMD families. Knowing how to approach the topic and how best to deal with it, emerged as an important need. The significance of the sex of parents and awareness of the dying child is understudied, with authors suggesting research may guide care efforts to promote well-being (Hinds, 2007).

Although cases of excellent practice were reported, some felt services did not account for families' let alone fathers' needs. Two key issues arose: fathers felt isolated from involvement, and partnerships and communication with professionals could lead to frustration. The need to protect and fight was repeatedly referred to, and without understanding this reactive expectation, professionals may view some fathers as aggressive or difficult. As with Fitzpatrick and Barry (1986), communication with both professionals and within the family was a key issue. Similar to research investigating the impact of a genetic x-linked condition Allport Syndrome, (Paljari & Sinkkonen, 2000), having to constantly explain DMD specifics was stressful. Research has previously indicated that health workers may not acknowledge parents' need for information about the implications of the condition (Perrin et al, 2000). As this study demonstrates, acknowledgement of the impact of treatment delays and time scale was important, in light of fathers' heightened awareness of their sons' limited life span. Research in the field of childhood cancer has shown that at later stages, more detailed information is required to steer parents through treatment procedures (Earle et al, 2007).

Negative experiences included a feeling of being viewed as surplus to requirements by staff, perceived as having less involvement than mothers and perception of receiving a lower quality of service without a fight. Dissatisfaction with support and interactions with multiple agencies had an impact on levels of distress. Consistent with findings here, previous work has demonstrated such a lack of awareness amongst providers, surrounding the impact of emotional issues on parents (McKay and Hensey, 1990).

There was frustration at the lack of father-related service awareness. Specific times where this was deemed relevant included post-diagnosis, when decision making, and as boys reached adolescence. Additional needs included provision of optional emotional support to deal with diagnosis, inability to 'mend' the situation and advice about talking to sons about DMD. As with Firth et al, (1983), a number of fathers felt they had not understood or processed information given by professionals. This was often due to heightened emotions surrounding interactions with medics. This is consistent with Chen et al's (2002) finding that fathers needed more help from resources and information.

Fathers also worried about transition from child to adult services and lack of opportunity for sons to attend social activities where they could be actively involved. Frequently they expressed need for a more cohesive service with one contact point. Previous work (Heller & Soloman, 2005) found that consistent staff and co-ordinated continuity of care results in less anxiety in parents and a belief the child is receiving quality care. Such continuity was lacking in the current study, resulting in increased levels of frustration and 'chasing' services. A further need was to know they were not alone in their situation. Father only support groups were suggested as a way of meeting needs. Fathers have previously demonstrated high stress in relation to perceived incompetence (Dellve, 2006). As with McNeill (2004), fathers in this study often demonstrated strength for others and often relied on self-support strategies. Many described losing supportive networks, sometimes due to their need to spend time with family.

 Fathers' reluctance to seek emotional support has previously been described (e.g. Pelchat and Per-reauolt, 2003). Researchers have suggested fathers are at risk of isolation due to lack of social support and a need to be in control (Sabbeth, 1984). It has been suggested that the social network is potentially a source of emotional burden (e.g. McNeill, 2004), for some, perhaps leading some fathers to isolate themselves to prevent this. In the current study, isolation and loss of friendships were key issues. Similarly, Firth et al, (1983) found that social isolation for both parents and son was a main concern. Further, this was also associated with an increase in child's emotional problems. These findings echo previous work with parents of a child with cancer, where support variables accounted for increased levels of father but not mothers' distress (Hoekstra-Webers, 2001). In terms of personal support, most stated their partner and immediate family provided support with needs met often within the family. Sometimes this caused problems, for example, when reluctance of one partner to discuss ongoing issues, led to lack of opportunity to acknowledge the impact of DMD.

Similar communication problems were identified by Fitzpatrick and Barry (1990), and highlighted as a key stressor within families. Results show that perceived availability of social support in accordance with relevant needs is an important issue for fathers. Carers with more support are more able to use adaptive coping strategies and meet psychological needs (Love et al, 2005). Although social networks provide emotional support (McGarry and Arthur, 2001), demands of caring for a son with DMD may impact on these relationships.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of redressing the neglect of DMD in the psychological research literature and the need to promote inclusion of fathers in particular. Consistent with previous work (Raina et al, 2004 & 2005; Hinton et al, 2006; Chen, 2008) results suggest efforts aimed at supporting parents to cope with boys' adjustment at key stages, alongside provision of support integrating practical strategies for fathers to promote adjustment. As DMD is one of the most common childhood neuromuscular disorders, it has been suggested that attention be placed on the implications for all who are affected (Morrow, 2004), as boys are now living longer.

A need is identified for bio-psychosocial interventions, acknowledging fathers' needs, role, and involvement in their child's condition. Alongside consideration of the family, the psychosocial impact for fathers should be acknowledged as being equally important to dealing with physical issues surrounding DMD. Professional awareness is needed of the emotional implications, and issues fathers face.

Contribution

This study has identified issues for fathers in caring for a son with DMD. Barriers have been uncovered, along with indication of stages of greatest support needs. By providing a person-centred approach to understanding fathers' perceptions and experiences, professionals might anticipate possible reactions, specifically issues surrounding loss/expectations; involvement and withdrawal from social support. Family interventions (e.g. Fiese, 2005) could encourage mothers' understanding of the importance of paternal involvement. Due to the progressive nature of DMD, anticipatory guidance could be available, with support at critical periods. In relation to coping resources (e.g. Lazarus,

2000) maintaining hope may be essential. Fathers echoed this need for hope, often in light of professionals not wishing to be overly optimistic. Findings emphasise a gap for person-centred interventions, acknowledging psychosocial impact alongside medical intervention with the child.

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The "Campus Rape Culture"
Consequences of *Meaningless Words*

K.C. GLOVER

College campuses in North America are claimed to have a rape culture. The term has made its way into common parlance and some have gone as far as to say that Western culture as a whole is a rape culture. The fact that "one-in-four" women will be raped or sexually assaulted in their lifetime is now oft-repeated in political as well as common discourse. However, analysis of how this number was arrived at reveals the ideological underpinnings of these studies and to which the authors of these studies subscribe. The following paper is concerned with the ideological background of these studies as well as the political and psychological motivations of those who believe in a rape culture.

In December of 1945, George Orwell's seminal essay *Politics and the English Language* was first published. It remains one of the finest essays written about the use or abuse of language in politics. Now, in 2015 (or is it 1984?), we find ourselves constantly exposed to political language via our mass media. Certain recent cases stand out in the media, as when Dick Cheney recently defended the CIA's "enhanced interrogation techniques" during his time as Vice President, which to my good sense sounded an awful lot like torture. Cheney's political motive is to avoid an international war crimes trial and it is accomplished by this twisting of language. However, he will not be the one on trial in the present discussion. My analysis is aimed at the definition of rape and how it has been used politically by certain activists and politicians.

Since this is a sensitive subject, it bears clarifying a few points from the beginning. Rape is a wretched, violent crime and in no way does this essay intend to show that it is not. It does intend to show that when the definitions of words are inflated or redefined by a certain person or groups of people, it is proper and ethical to take a look at why that might be happening and its consequences. More expressly this will be done with the term "rape" as I have come to understand its political application in the United States of America, most expressly when used in the phrase "rape culture." The term "feminist" will also be used in this paper quite a bit and this also needs some clarification. If the reader of this paper considers themselves a feminist, you may be nonplussed by the present essay. I assure you my aim is not to disparage the fine women and men of Feminism who desire equality between the sexes, but most assuredly I am writing about those who may be defined as radical or ideological feminists. As ideological feminist ideas have made their way into the mainstream it is important to clarify which feminist ideas have egalitarian merit and which are sexist.

For the purpose of this essay I am interested in one specimen of the English language that Orwell points out as being one of our "mental vices." He refers to this particular vice as *meaningless words*. By this he means words that completely lack meaning for some reason or another, such as when movie advertisements tell us that films are "spectacular" or "awesome." When every movie from the past five years has been called "spectacular" or "awesome" the words cease to have meaning. As Orwell pointed out in his time, "Many political words are similarly abused. The word *Fascism* has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable.'"[1] When no longer used in a definitive way to describe a political regime such as in Mussolini's Italy, the word began to be used politically to denigrate political opponents or undesirable forms of government. Contemporarily we may look to those who call President Obama a "Socialist" or "Communist." Judging by the general level of education in America it is doubtful that most who levy those claims against him know what those words mean in their greater historical context, but it signifies that he is undesirable, as he is an enemy of "Democracy" or "Capitalism", words that may be as vague to these same people as the aforementioned, but they are important insofar as they signify being desirable.

What is important in this example is that it is not a mistake, but may be part of political manoeuvring. As Orwell points out at the beginning of his essay:

> [I]t is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and pro-

ducing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely... It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.[2]

The cycle begins, I believe, with the intention of the user of the *meaningless words*: "Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different."[3] The Tea Party candidate may tell his potential voters that Obama is a "Socialist", but this only signifies his being undesirable, not that he actually subscribes to Socialist political beliefs. The candidate knows he can gather support for election by portraying his opponent as undesirable.

In most cases it benefits the user of these *meaningless words* to conceal their intentions, even from themselves. In showing the connection between politics and the debasement of language Orwell states:

> A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect? And he will probably ask himself two more: Could I put it more shortly? Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly? But you are not obliged to go to all this trouble. You can shirk it simply by throwing your mind open and letting the ready-made phrases come crowding in. They will construct your sentences for you – even think your thoughts for you, to a certain extent – and at need they will perform the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself. It is at this point that the special connection between politics and the debasement of language becomes clear.[4]

Thus the politician who rattles off political slogans to his constituency is not so different from the writer who uses jargon at the expense of constructing his own way of writing, much like postmodern academics. Without reflection he repeats slogans or talking points about "important issues" that rile the crowd, who are unable to discern the gruel they are being fed from caviar, due to their debased understanding of language and inability to think. For my generation, the Obama campaigns were masterworks in this kind of thoughtless sloganeering (Yes We Can [still wait for that change]). All the while the politician commits the bad faith of concealing his own intentions, portraying himself to himself and others as the Hero of Change or the Keeper of Democracy, while concealing the grasp for power, the winning of the election that was the original intention.

This whirlwind diversion into contemporary politics was to set the stage for our understanding of what is going on with the term "rape" in our country, for the term is the minefield in which the gender warriors have invested quite a bit of their efforts. This paper must address a few major points in order to adequately elaborate on the topic: (1) What are the current controversies in the country that make this an issue? (2) What is the history of these controversies? (3) How are these political issues related to the debasement of language? (4) Why might this debasement be politically

motivated? (5) What is the psychology and motivation of the people who have created this issue? As Orwell pointed out about the connection between language and politics, it is hoped that in addressing each issue the interconnection between all of these points will become clear.

The most pressing issue in the national spotlight in regards to rape is the oft quoted statistic that one-in-four or one-in-five college women will be sexually assaulted during her time on campus.[5] This is coupled with the 2012 study on *Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence* by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in which it was claimed that 1.3 million women were raped in America in 2010 alone, putting America on par with the Congo. Both of these studies are the intellectual descendants of the *Ms.* "study" from 1988 which begat the belief that one-in-four American women will be raped in their lifetime. We will look at that study later on. These statistics are the backbone of the ideological feminist claim that America is a "rape culture." By this it is meant that America is a patriarchal culture where men use their sexuality in order to oppress women. In effect male sexuality is characterized as a form of terrorism. They see sex as about power, not psychologically or biologically established motivations such as pleasure or procreation. These studies are supposed to confirm that there indeed is a "rape culture" and one cannot pass through an American university or surf the Internet without hearing about this idea.[6] However, it may be truer that these studies assumed a rape culture and then got creative with their criteria in order to confirm their own biases.

College rape and sexual assault entered the national stage as a political issue with the establishment of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault in January of 2014 and with the subsequent report in April of that year entitled *Not Alone*. Press conferences surrounding the creation of the task force made wide use of the one-in-five statistic. The report called for college campuses to establish kangaroo courts in order to prosecute those accused of rape or sexual assault. Lest we think that these courts will be run fairly with a blind eye to the sex of the offenders and complainants, we need look no further than a very large-fonted quote from Joe Biden at the beginning of the *Not Alone* report:

> Freedom from sexual assault is a basic human right... a nation's decency is in large part measured by how it responds to violence against women... our daughters, our sisters, our wives, our mothers, our grandmothers have every single right to expect to be free from violence and sexual abuse.

Freedom from sexual assault is a basic human right, if you happen to be a woman. (Violence against men, well, America has industries dedicated to that.) It is clear that when we see the word "students" used in regards to this issue, the speaker or writer means female students, indicating that it is already assumed who will be the offender and who the victim.[7]

However, as *Rolling Stone Magazine*[8] recently found out, not everyone is telling the truth about the issue. The lie begins with the actual statistic itself.[9] The statistic is based on the Campus Sexual Assault Study, commissioned by the National Institute of Justice and carried out from 2005 to 2007. The study is poor, even by advocacy research standards. James Alan Fox, the Lipman Professor of Criminology, Law, and Public Policy at Northeastern University, and Richard Moran, professor of sociology at Mount Holyoke College, investigated the study. In their breakdown of the study

they found it was conducted at two large four-year American universities, which should immediately raise concerns due to the small sample size. It gets better, as Fox and Moran indicate: "In addition, the survey had a large non-response rate, with the clear possibility that those who had been victimized were more apt to have completed the questionnaire, resulting in an inflated prevalence figure."[10] What will be a recurring theme in dissecting these statistics is brought forth in the following:

> Moreover, the definition of sexual assault used in this and other studies was too broad, including unwanted touching and sexual encounters while intoxicated. A small percentage actually rose to the level of forcible rape. By lumping uninvited advances and alcohol/drug-influenced encounters together with forcible rape, the problem can appear more severe than it really is, creating alarm when cool heads are required.[11]

 The language used to define rape and sexual assault in the study was too broad, our first hint that the debasement of language for political purposes is occurring with this issue. Suddenly unwanted touching is equated with forcible and unwanted penetration. Much like currency becoming inflated, the word rape begins to become meaningless.

Far from being a harmless word-game, we have already seen a White House task force established while American colleges and universities are coming under State pressure to accept their recommendations for dealing with rape on campus. As we have seen with the Duke Lacrosse case and more recent events at the University of Virginia, guilty until proven innocent is the way it goes for the young men accused of rape on the college campus. It is a perversion of justice and indicative of the hostile attitude - the misandry - that is being shown towards young men on college campuses in the United States.[12]

Next we must look at the CDC report to see if something similar is happening as occurred in the National Institute of Justice study. Sure enough, as Christina Hoff Sommers found out by looking at the report, we see the same thing as before: an inflated definition of rape and sexual assault. In 2010 the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey reported 188,380 rapes or sexual assaults on males and females in the United States. The same year the CDC claimed that 13.7 million rapes and sexual assaults had occurred against males and females in the United States. This is not a small discrepancy. Even accounting for rape being an underreported crime, is it possible that it is so egregiously underreported as that? Or is the language in the report more indicative of what is going on? Sommers shows in the study:

> [S]urveyors, rather than subjects, determine what counted as an assault. Consider: In a telephone survey with a 30 percent response rate, interviewers did not ask participants whether they had been raped. Instead of such straightforward questions, the CDC researchers described a series of sexual encounters and then they determined whether the responses indicated sexual violation. A sample of 9,086 women was asked, for example, "When you were drunk, high, drugged, or passed out and unable to consent, how many people ever had vaginal sex with you?" A majority of the 1.3 million women (61.5 percent) the CDC projected as rape victims

in 2010 experienced this sort of "alcohol or drug facilitated penetration."[13]

Here we see that being drugged or passed out is equated with being drunk or high. In each case the surveyor determined the respondent to be raped if sex occurred, the former being lamentable, the latter meaning just about every woman I know has been raped at some point![14] The study passes into lunacy at this point, but it does not end there:

> Other survey questions were equally ambiguous. Participants were asked if they had ever had sex because someone pressured them by "telling you lies, making promises about the future they knew were untrue?" All affirmative answers were counted as "sexual violence." Anyone who consented to sex because a suitor wore her or him down by "repeatedly asking" or "showing they were unhappy" was similarly classified as a victim of violence. The CDC effectively set a stage where each step of physical intimacy required a notarized testament of sober consent.[15]

Sex without express written consent has become rape.

Sommers later surmises that the report appears to be done in part under pressure of the women's lobby (feminist lobbyists) who had already pressured the FBI into expanding the definition of rape and had pushed Vice President Biden and Attorney General Eric Holder towards a focus on women's issues, which more than likely resulted in the focus on campus sexual assault. It is probable that the White House Council on Women and Girls, which developed the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, is replete with ideological feminist ideas, if not with ideological feminists themselves. As with the bogus statistics used in the campus sexual assault report, with an expanded definition of rape and sexual assault by the CDC, the United States finds itself in exalted company with the Congo. The political intention will become clearer as we examine the history of feminist advocacy research.

The mother of all advocacy researchers among feminists is Mary Koss. Her 1985 report in *Ms.* magazine was the starting point of the "one-in-four" statistic that still persists in public consciousness today. Before being asked to undertake the study, she was a professor of psychology at Kent State University where she gained some notoriety for publishing a paper in which she claimed that "rape represents an extreme behavior but one that is on a continuum with normal male behavior within the culture."[16] If we look between the lines of this statement we see what she is really saying, in essence: "All men are potential rapists." She was then invited by Gloria Steinem, she of fish and bicycle fame, to undertake a national rape survey on college campuses. Before we turn to Christina Hoff Sommers' expert dismantling of this study, an important point needs to be made. Koss' ideological feminist leanings, which can also be found in the CDC and National Institute of Justice reports, are such that men are assumed to be rapists or that it is "on a continuum with *normal* (emphasis mine) male behavior" to rape women. This is the ideological undercurrent of the studies we have examined so far and will be seen again in Koss' study. My contention is that the expanded definition of rape found in these studies is meant to put forth an extremist position disguised with an air of scientific validity for political gain.

Sommers writes about the study:

> Koss and her associates interviewed slightly more than three thousand college women, randomly selected nationwide. The young women were asked ten questions about sexual violation. These were followed by several questions about the precise nature of the violation. Had they been drinking? What were their emotions during and after the event? What forms of resistance did they use? How would they label the event?

> ...Koss and her colleagues concluded that 15.4 percent of respondent had been raped, and that 12.1 percent had been victims of attempted rape. Thus a total of 27.5 percent of the respondents were determined to have been victims of rape or attempted rape because they have answers that fit Koss's criteria for rape (penetration by penis, finger, or other object under coercive influence such as physical force, alcohol, or threats). However, that is not how the so called rape victims saw it. Only about a quarter of the women that Koss calls rape victims labelled what happened to them as rape. According to Koss, the answers to the follow-up questions revealed that "only 27 percent" of the women she counted as having been raped labelled themselves as rape victims. Of the remainder, 49 percent said it was "miscommunication," 14 percent said it was a "crime but not rape," and 11 percent said they "don't feel victimized."[17]

Already the vaunted number begins to fall apart.[18] In the next example we see that acts without intercourse can be rape according to Koss:

> In line with her view of rape as existing on a continuum of male sexual aggression, Koss also asked: "Have you given in to sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure?" To this question 53.7 percent responded affirmatively, and they were counted as having been sexually victimized.[19]

A familiar question from the CDC report also appears in the *Ms.* study, "Have you had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because a man gave you alcohol and drugs?"[20] Sommers objects to the validity of the question. She questions,

> If your date mixes a pitcher of margaritas and encourages you to drink with him and you accept a drink, have you been "administered" an intoxicant, and has your judgement been impaired? Certainly, if you pass out and are molested, one would call it rape. But if you drink and, while intoxicated, engage in sex that you later come to regret, have you been raped? Koss does not address these questions specifically, she merely counts your date as a rapist and you as a rape statistic if you drank with your date and regret having had sex with him.[21]

Clearly the opinion of the women interviewed did not matter. We also encounter a dangerous thread of thought within ideological feminism, that of the infantilized and helpless woman. It is truly a

marvellous example of "doublethink" to watch an ideological feminist try and blame men and the patriarchy for women's subordination and infantilization while at the same time absolving women of all responsibility for their actions. In this case, the majority of those interviewed took responsibility for themselves, but their responsible actions did not matter to the interviewers.

Removing the alcohol question and the respondents who did not think they were raped from the study, the infamous "one-in-four" number drops to between one-in-twenty-two and one-in-thirty-three. However, this rather reasoned investigation into the study did not have the same impact that the glaring "one-in-four" headline had on America. Sommers speaks to the impact of the study:

> "One in four" has since become the official figure on women's rape victimization cited in women's study departments, rape crisis centers, women's magazines, and on protest buttons and posters. Susan Faludi defended it in a *Newsweek* story on sexual correctness. Naomi Wolf refers to it in *The Beauty Myth*, calculating that acquaintance rape is "more common than lefthandedness, alcoholism, and heart attacks." "One in four" is chanted in "Take Back the Night" processions, and it is the number given in the date rape brochures handed out at freshmen orientation at colleges and universities around the country. Politicians, from *Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware, a Democrat*, to Republican Congressman Jim Ramstad of Minnesota, cite it regularly, and it is the primary reason for the Title IV, "Safe Campuses for Women" provision of the Violence Against Women Act of 1993, which provides twenty million dollars to combat rape on college campuses.[22]

Clearly Joe Biden's association with the White House Council on Women and Girls and the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault is not solely a PR move. It seems that the championing of ideological feminist ideas has been part of Biden's long term political strategy. His status as a "useful idiot" has helped propel him to the Vice Presidency and he is doubtless involved in the constant pandering and fear-mongering geared towards women that are common in the Democratic Party.[23] Campaign strategists must be aware that women made up more than half of all voters during the last election. Whoever wins the female vote most likely wins the election. Conveniently these issues have been thrust into the national spotlight again in time for a presidential run by Hillary Clinton and to help bolster the careers of Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Claire McCaskill. Ideological feminism has parlayed its coveted victim status into influence in the offices of the most powerful men and women in America.

The three studies examined above are examples of poor social science. However, their results are now accepted as common knowledge. The common thread between them is the expanded definition of rape apparent in the questions used to obtain outlandish numbers. Here we return to Orwell's *meaningless words*. The definition of rape is stretched to such an extent as to become semantically meaningless. It is not meaningless in that the word is politically useful for stirring the passions of voters or college students, but meaningless in defining what the crime is and when it has actually happened. However, the debasement of the word has achieved its desired effect: It has made masses of people incapable of being critical of the numbers put forth by the studies, leaving them able only to interpret sex relations through the ideology that has co-opted the word, ideological fem-

inism.

Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge have an analogous term to *meaningless words* in their book *Professing Feminism*[24], an exploration of the field of Women's Studies. They use the term "Accordion Concepts" which refers to cases when "concepts are stretched so widely that crucial distinctions are obliterated."[25] When analysing the ideological feminist idea that all men are potential rapists, we see the political machinations involved in making these concepts fungible:

> Mystification begins as feminist alchemists go to work on it. Here's the trick. First they capitalize on the ambiguity of *potential rapist*. What might this possibly be construed to mean? On one reasonable interpretation, *potential rapist* could be used to describe a man who says he would enjoy forced penetration if he thought he could get away with it, and there is indeed a substantial minority of male undergraduates who have checked this response on surveys of campus attitudes. But most men, contrary to the apparent meaning of the claim that they are all rapists, do not in fact express a desire to rape. When confronted with this objection, feminist theorists quickly deny that they think all men have such a yearning. Instead, they say, they are thinking of the masculine *zeitgeist*, which supposedly determines our cultural milieu so extensively that it makes every man a prospective rapist.[26]

One feels compelled to add to the last sentence, "and so much the better if our audience confuse the two." Here we see ideological feminist theorists using fluid definitions with direct application to politics. The first statement is made to define all men as potential rapists, but when called out, ideological feminists will shift to a definition which merely states that men grow up in a patriarchal culture in which rape is normal. Either of these definitions is politically useful, both for making men a scapegoat, the latter for appeasing the "good" men (male feminists) who don't rape, and either for scaring women. Scapegoated men will drop out of participating in society, "good" men will fall in line ideologically and elect popular candidates who support women's issues or risk losing sexual and emotional access to women, and women will flock to candidates who make them feel protected from all the potential rapists. I leave it to the personal observations of the reader to determine if these outcomes are idle speculation.

At this point I would hope that the political motivation behind the debasement of the word "rape" has become clear. Politically it has helped to garner national attention for politicians and has given them the illusion of appearing progressive instead of fear-mongering. It also keeps the Women's Movement relevant during a time in America where studies from across the sciences and social sciences show many women are equal to or better off than men, unless someone told them they were not or are harboring psychological reasons for envying or hating men. And who might be telling young women that they are suffering under the yoke of a patriarchal culture in which every man wants to rape them?[27] As a wise man once said, "follow the money." Millions of state and federal dollars are poured into college campuses, which have become the focal point of the debate, to establish programs such as outlined in *Not Alone* to combat rape. Who will most likely advise and run these programs? More than likely the Women's Studies and feminist professors who continue to propagate

the myth of rape culture. Cui bono? The rape hysteria bolsters the careers and bank accounts of campus ideological feminists and the administrators who support them.

However, I am rarely satisfied with monetary explanations of cultural phenomena. While important, I think analysing certain players in this political drama is equally pertinent. Susan Brownmiller's 1975 book *Against Our Wills* introduced the idea that America has a rape culture and begat the idea among radical feminists. However, for insight into its political application here we turn to Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, the ideological architects of the Violence Against Women Act or VAWA. They typify the ideological feminist mindset in both similar and unique ways. One can trace the idea that all sex between men and women is the rape of women back to their thinking. Their initial expansion of the definition of rape - that all heterosexual sex is rape of women - can be seen in the questions of the three studies looked at above. Male sexuality is an original sin in the ideological feminist dogma and, as a sentiment, has infiltrated the thinking of college campuses and society at large.

What would make these women vilify male sexuality? In an article for *Playboy*, and anthologized in *Vamps and Tramps*[28], Camille Paglia turned her glare on MacKinnon and Dworkin, giving us insight into the kind of woman who demonizes male sexuality. She juxtaposes MacKinnon's positive contribution of having sexual harassment established as a legal category with the negative one of creating the sexual hysteria within American feminism. She attributes it directly to MacKinnon's character:

> MacKinnon is a classic WASP who painstakingly builds huge rigid structures of words in complete obliviousness to the organic, sensual, and visual. She is a twentieth-century puritan whose upbringing – a stern Minnesota judge as a father, Episcopalian and conservative Republican – seems straight out of Hawthorne.[29]

She embodies the puritanical and sex-averse heritage of American culture. Paglia also exposes her political tendencies:

> MacKinnon is a totalitarian. She wants a risk-free, state-controlled world. She believes rules and regulations will solve every ill and straighten out all those irksome problems between the sexes that have been going on for five thousand years. As a lawyer, MacKinnon is deft and pragmatic. But as a political thinker, cultural historian, or commentator on sex, she is incompetent. For a woman of her obvious intelligence, her frame of reference is shockingly small. She has the dull instincts and tastes of a bureaucrat. It's all work and no play in MacKinnon Land. Literature, art, music, film, television – nothing intrudes on MacKinnon's consciousness unless it has been filtered through feminism, which has taught her, she likes to say, "everything I know." There's the rub. She is someone who, because of her own private emotional turmoil, locked on to Seventies-era feminism and never let go.
>
> MacKinnon has a cold, inflexible, and fundamentally unscholarly mind. She is a propagandist and casuist, good at constructing ad hoc arguments from expedience

for specific political aims. But her knowledge of intellectual or world history is limited, and as a researcher she has remarkably poor judgement in evaluating sources. She wildly overpraises weak feminist writers and has no feeling whatever for psychology, a defect that makes her conclusions about sex ridiculous. She is a Stalinist who believes that art must serve a political agenda and that all opposing voices are enemies of humanity who must be silenced. MacKinnon and Dworkin are fanatics, zealots, fundamentalists of the new feminist religion. Their alliance with the reactionary, antiporn far right is no coincidence.[30]

MacKinnon's desire for control and order, most notably sexual order, led her to use the State as the means of controlling sexuality, most notably male sexuality. We can judge her success by the successes of VAWA and the political attention to women's issues today. She was seeking to establish control over sexuality in line with her Puritan ancestors. She is the godmother of the Women's Studies student, uneducated save for indoctrination into ideological feminist beliefs, able to silence dissenting voices; she was the prototype for the ideological feminist activist of today. In her eyes, State power, much like a cold, domineering father,[31] must have control over male sexuality as it attempts to surge through puritan propriety.

We then meet Andrea Dworkin:

Dworkin, like Kate Millet, has turned a garish history of mental instability into feminist grand opera. Dworkin publicly boasts of her bizarre multiple rapes, assaults, beatings, breakdowns and tacky traumas, as if her inability to cope with life were the patriarchy's fault rather than her own. She pretends to be a daring truth-teller but never mentions her most obvious problem: food. Hence she is a hypocrite. Dworkin's shrill, *kvetching*, solipsistic prose has a sloppy, squalling infantilism. This attracted MacKinnon, with her dour background of Protestant high seriousness, which treats children like miniature adults. MacKinnon's impersonal prose is dry, bleached, parched. Her hereditary north-country, anal-retentive style, stingy and nit-picking, was counterbalanced by Dworkin's raging undifferentiated orality, her buckets of chicken soup spiked with spite.

Dworkin, wallowing in misery, is a "type" that I recognize after twenty-two years of teaching. I call her The Girl with the Eternal Cold. This was the pudgy, clumsy, whiny child at summer camp who was always spilling her milk, dropping her lollipop in the dirt, getting a cramp on the hike, a stone in her shoe, a bee in her hair. In college, this type – pasty, bilious, and frumpy – is constantly sick from fall to spring. She coughs and sneezes on everyone, is never prepared with tissue and sits sniffling in class with a roll of toilet paper on her lap. She is the ultimate teacher's pest, the morose, unlovable child who never got her mama's approval and therefore demands attention at any price. Dworkin seized on feminism as a mask to conceal her bitterness at this tedious, banal family drama.[32]

Dworkin is the "confessional" feminist. No stage is too big for her to declare all of her physical and

existential misfortunes. She represents the other half of the psychological birth of rape hysteria, the attention-seeking ever-victim. She is the perfect complement to MacKinnon's puritanical hatred of sexuality in that she helps to disguise that hatred as a righteous crusade against rape. However, we know better than this. Both women characterize male sexuality itself as rape. Dworkin was the loudest voice in the room, making her own personal issues the political issues of the day, she enacted the psychodrama of her past on a grand stage.

Think of the girl whom Paglia describes in the second paragraph. I went to a college with a few of these "Girls with Eternal Colds." They are ripe for the picking for ideological feminist thinking. No responsibility need be taken for their melancholia. The stock bogeyman of patriarchy now exists to explain all manner of depression, panic disorder, eating disorder, self-esteem issue, problems with boyfriends, etc. That most of these young women are white and from the suburbs is no coincidence. Growing up in the crucible of the isolated and now desiccated nuclear family, their family dramas incubate until they get away from home for the first time at college. Workaholic Mom and Dad were never around to provide the love and attention needed in childhood and now everyone needs to know.

Paglia identifies MacKinnon and Dworkin's hatred of pornography with their hatred of sexuality in general. It also speaks to the plight of the suburban girl, divorced from nature and her body, who easily falls for this kind of radical feminist ideology:

> MacKinnon and Dworkin detest pornography because it symbolizes everything they don't understand and can't control about their own bodies. Current feminism, with its antiscience and social constructionist bias, never thinks about nature. Hence it cannot deal with sex, which begins in the body and is energized by instinctual drives. MacKinnon and Dworkin's basic error is in identifying pornography and society, which they then simplistically define as patriarchal and oppressive. In fact, pornography, which erupts during times of personal freedom, shows the dark truth about nature, concealed by the artifices of civilization. Pornography is about lust, our animal reality that will never be fully tamed by love. Lust is elemental, aggressive, asocial. Pornography allows us to explore our deepest, most forbidden selves.[33]

I see male sexuality fitting into this description as well. Everything they can't understand about male sexuality is considered rape. Only when it plays by the rules and conforms to soporific television and movie scenarios is male sexuality acceptable. Everything chthonic about it, which makes both man and woman reckon with primordial force, must be controlled, preferably by the State if people like Catharine MacKinnon have their way. But now we do not seem far off from that time.

MacKinnon and Dworkin are embodiments of certain American, perhaps white American, cultural attitudes towards sexuality and males. Their hatred of sex, symbolized by the penetrating aspect of male sexuality, assertive and overwhelming, led them to characterize all male sexuality as rape, and was neatly disguised in rationalizations about patriarchy and misogyny. Their attitude was not introduced by feminism, but can be traced back to the Puritan founders of the American

colonies. After a time of sexual freedom, adventure, and misadventure in the 20th century, the reactionary push towards more sexual control has become apparent.

In order to begin concluding it behoves me to summarize my five points and ask whether they have been adequately addressed:

(1) *What are the current controversies in the country that make this an issue?* The current political climate surrounding college campuses and rape was discussed and shown to be the result of political rhetoric based on faulty research methods. This leads to: (2) *What is the history of these controversies?* It was shown that Mary Koss' infamous *Ms.* magazine study was based on similar faulty research methods and was responsible for introducing the "one-in-four" rape number into public discourse. (3) *How are these political issues related to the debasement of language?* It was shown that rape had been defined in such a way in all of the studies as to immediately define all gray-areas and awkward sexual situations as rape, especially in regards to alcohol, leading to the word becoming meaningless. Thus people have difficulty thinking of the word apart from its political usage. We then questioned: (4) *Why might this debasement be politically motivated?* It seemed the issue was not more complicated than matters of political prestige and monetary benefit. However, we also asked: (5) *What is the psychology and motivation of the people who have created this issue?* It was hypothesized that the characters of ideological feminist figures Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin are indicative of certain psychological "types" who have different, but over-lapping, motivations for vilifying male sexuality. It is hoped that I was able to show in a coherent manner that MacKinnon and Dworkin's original debasement and expansion of the word rape for political reasons has had the consequence of bringing forth the current rape hysteria in the United States.

Sensationalizing rape statistics will achieve nothing for humanity in the long term. It has thus far furthered the careers of a few politicians, activists, and academics, while frightening women and vilifying men. Insofar as feminists helped to achieve this, ideological or not, they have done terrible damage to the relationships between men and women in our country. As Paglia realizes, "When it defines men as the enemy, feminism is alienating women from their own bodies."[34] The oppression or vilification of one sex harms the other; we exist in a fundamental state of interrelation and interdependence. In the interest of harmony between the sexes I make this humble request to free ourselves from the political brainwashing of ideological feminism. Paglia once again:

> An enlightened feminism of the twenty-first century will embrace all sexuality and will turn away from the delusionalism, sanctimony, prudery, and male-bashing of the MacKinnon-Dworkin brigade. Women will never know who they are until they let men be men. Let's get rid of Infirmary Feminism, with its bedlam of bellyachers, anorexics, bulimics, depressives, rape victims, and incest survivors. Feminism has become a catch-all vegetable drawer where bunches of clingy sob sisters can store their mouldy neuroses.[35]

It is only when both sexes have the strength to let one another become who they are that we are really going to see change. Allowing young men and women freedom to explore their sexuality, with its tragedies and triumphs, and without interference from abstractly parental structures such as the

State and university administration is a necessary part of moving from prolonged childhood to adulthood. Authoritarian control of sexuality recapitulates the infantilizing psychic space of the family.

We need to separate the wheat from the chaff of what political figures and the media are feeding us in an age of twenty-four-hour news cycles and anarchic, but unrefined, access to information via the Internet. Not only do the politicians lie to us, but a seemingly endless stream of websites and bloggers can regurgitate it back to us, obfuscating, in the virtuality, our ability to trust our own senses and experience life. I think it all starts with our being cognizant of language and how it is being used, especially in a political context. As Orwell warned us:

> Political language – and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists – is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase – some *jackboot*, *Achilles' heel*, *hotbed*, *melting pot*, *acid test*, *veritable inferno*, or other lump of verbal refuse – into the dustbin where it belongs.[36]

So I nominate the political usage of the phrase "rape culture" to be tossed into the dustbin. It will serve both sexes better in the long run to be able to talk openly and honestly about sexuality and will be a starting point for the dialogue between the sexes we so desperately need.

Footnotes

[1] Orwell, G. "Politics and the English Language." *Essays*. Selected by John Carey. New York: Everyman's Library, 2002. 959.
[2] Ibid. 954.
[3] Ibid. 959.
[4] Ibid. 962.
[5] Sometimes this is said to be not just on college campuses, but the United States as a whole.
[6] On a personal note I can't have sex with a girl who went to college (especially if they took one or two gender studies courses) without getting some sort of spiel about dominating her. It's like Michel Foucault is haunting my sex life.
[7] The implication being that only men are rapists.
[8] http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/a-rape-on-campus-what-went-wrong-20150405
[9] Mark Twain once remarked something along the lines of there being "lies, damned lies, and statistics." I inaugurate ideological feminist statistics as the fourth head of that deceitful Mt. Rushmore.
[10] Fox, J.A. & Moran, R. (2014, August 10). Sex assault surveys not the answer. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Often young men on campus will laugh off the idea they are being discriminated against. Unfortunately, this is where manly bravado and not voicing their feelings comes to do them a disservice.
[13] Sommers, C.H. (2012, January 27). CDC study on sexual violence in the U.S. overstates the problem. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from www.washingtonpost.com.

[14] As will be elaborated on later in the paper, this may be one of the desired effects of these studies, to show that all heterosexual men are rapists and all heterosexual women victims.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Koss, M. & Oros, C. (1982). "Sexual Experiences Survey: A Research Instrument Investigating Sexual Aggression and Victimization." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 50*(3), 455.

[17] Sommers, C.H. (1994). *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 210-11.

[18] In one heated argument with a feminist young woman I was told that I had to accept every individual woman's definition of rape. What about these women who told Koss they were not raped? Apparently acceptance only counts when it helps the cause.

[19] Sommers, C.H. (1994). *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 211.

[20] Ibid. 211.

[21] Ibid. 212.

[22] Ibid. 212. Emphasis mine.

[23] One could argue that both parties do this with the women in their respective constituencies, but for this particular matter it seems more common among Democrats.

[24] Patai, D., & Koertge, N. (1994). *Professing feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies*. New York: BasicBooks.

[25] Ibid. 126.

[26] Ibid. 128.

[27] I put no stock in psychopathology, but that sounds an awful lot like paranoia or narcissism.

[28] Paglia, C. (1994). "The Return of Carry Nation: Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin" *Vamps & Tramps: New Essays*. New York: Vintage Books.

[29] Ibid. 108-109.

[30] Ibid. 108.

[31] Sylvia Plath's *Daddy*, perhaps? The absence of the Father in American society looms in the background.

[32] Paglia, C. (1994). "The Return of Carry Nation: Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin" *Vamps & Tramps: New Essays*. New York: Vintage Books. 109.

[33] Ibid. 110.

[34] Ibid. 111.

[35] Ibid. 111.

[36] Orwell, G. "Politics and the English Language." *Essays*. Selected by John Carey. New York: Everyman's Library, 2002. 966.

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Competitiveness Is Profoundly Sex-differential

STEVE MOXON

The confirmation in major reviews of behavioural economics studies that competitiveness is a male (or far more a male than a female) trait is not challenged by efforts to find conditions in which there is apparent failure or partial failure to replicate, because this is mistaken interpretation in not recognising confounds. The error is through basing modelling on simple economics augmented only by internally-inconsistent and tautological 'gender'-sociological constructs. The pertinent major biological / evolutionary factors that should have been foundational are utilised in the framework here outlined. Biological theory on several ever deeper levels provides a key principle that competition is within- and not between-sex. Where there is ostensible inter-sexual competitiveness it is explicable as being instead implicit sexual display (and, given priming to make opposite-sex salient; an artefactual shadow of

male deference or female co-operation). This analysis cuts through the confusion in the behavioural economics literature to yield albeit more complicated but more ecologically valid understanding to better inform hypothesis formation and testing.

Keywords: Human sex differences, males, females, competitiveness

Competitiveness and its sex-differentiality are researched especially in the field of behavioural economics, where the overall conclusion is that men favour competition whereas women back away from it [for an up-to-date review, see Niederle 2015]. Yet this heavily understates real-world manifestation (the experiments have little ecological validity) in that data from these experiments essentially of one-off instances of competition do not reflect the accumulated impact of repeat competitive interactions over time, which is the experience of human males, just as it is of males of most other species, in forming dominance hierarchies. The first ever set of experiments featuring such iteration reveal a far greater sex-differential in competitiveness: win or lose, males are spurred to be substantially even more competitive, whereas females still further reduce effort [Gill & Prowse 2012]. In other words, whilst even winning discourages females, winning is its own reward for males, who are also driven to convert losing into winning. Evidently, males are quintessentially competitive, but for females competition appears to be problematic. The only feed-back seemingly undermining male competitiveness is heavy losing when the stakes are high, but this too serves to further drive male competitiveness in prompting men to 'cut their losses' and transfer all effort to some other competitive arena to which they are better suited. This is what is found in the well-attested very different character of the normal distribution curve according to sex of any measurable effort, ability or achievement. Males overwhelmingly predominate at both the top and the bottom tails, in contrast to female predominance at the median. Consequently, even in a case where average competitiveness is not sex-differential — or even if females out-perform males (as in some female-sex-typical tasks) — there is, nonetheless, far greater male competitiveness towards the apex of performance where sex-differentials are at their most conspicuous.

In reaction to the findings of behavioural economics experiments of sex differentials, researchers have sought to discover conditions in which studies fail to replicate, in the hope of identifying some factor(s) to provide an alternative explanation for women being the less competitive sex. In consequence, the field has become somewhat confused, with in some cases indeed a failure to replicate the usual results; but this has not led to the identification of salient factors. In their absence there is no model that can inform experimental design to test hypotheses and establish whether the sometimes contradictory data from behavioural economics is the result of the complications in the nature and manifestation of competitiveness or that the conclusion of a sex difference in competitiveness instead is attributable to something else. Rather than elucidating the topic, the literature to not a small extent reflects a focus less on the scientific quest to find the basis of the sex difference than in what is really an ideological effort to try to show that the phenomenon is somehow artefactual.

The field being set within a usual framework of 'the standard social science model' thereby concerns itself not with biological but 'cultural' factors, which represents a failure to understand the

need to look for a biological basis, in that culture is itself a biological manifestation, necessarily evolving to have the function of feeding back to fine-tune and reinforce the biology from which it arose [Moxon 2010]. Consideration of culture is restricted to what are essentially sociological constructs – based on the false notion that social phenomena cannot be analysed at a lower level, but must be analysed in their own terms — in an attempt at explanation which tends to be at best descriptive and at worst a circular relationship between data and the premise on which the experiment is designed, supposedly, to provide some evidence: a tautological loop. More than is anyway often the case within social science, premises are liable to be notably in essence ideological rather than scientific, given that questions re men / women and their similarity / dissimilarity are core current political concerns. A key issue is disentangling the factors pertaining to within- (intra-) as opposed to between- (inter-) sexual interaction, and how these may differ according to sex (see below). Too often these very different scenarios are considered in effect interchangeable, notwithstanding that experiment easily reveals that they yield distinctly different results.

The standard explanatory refuge has been and continues to be the internally inconsistent (and externally invalid) ideologically derived notion of a simultaneously identical nature of the sexes and a presumed male-to-female major antipathy through supposed stereotyping, pejoratively envisaged as inaccurate prejudice internalised into implicit cognition by the female recipient, to the extent of seriously impairing her performance. [It is never questioned how two supposedly identical types could systematically show a unidirectional effect unless the two types are *non*-identical. The feminist understanding of the sexes, which has been assimilated as an assumption in social science, is a constantly oscillating irresolvable contradiction.] Given this supposed implicit cognition, then the female performance impairment is presumed to be evident in all contexts, irrespective of whether or not any males are present, or if a male is the competitor. Thus is explained the failure of experimenters to focus on the difference between the intra- and inter-sexual condition.

Formulated as 'stereotype threat' theory, it's most recently been invoked to explain sex differences in competitiveness by Iriberri & Rey-Biel (2013), even though recent attempts to test it produced entirely contrary findings [Geraldes, Riedl & Strobel (2011); Fryer, Levitt & List (2008)]. But to be considered a scientific theory, 'stereotype threat' has to be a falsifiable concept and not an hypothesis for which any and every evidence – even that which is mutually antagonistic – can be interpreted as invariably supportive. The 'theory' has been comprehensively refuted by the first ever full review of all studies to investigate the supposed phenomenon [Stoet & Geary 2012] – there is a prior review paper by Kit, Tuokko and Mateer (2008), but far from an investigation of the phenomenon, the paper was predicated on the assumption that 'stereotype threat' is real, and merely looked at "progression" and "relevance" of research within the field.

Stoet & Geary reveal generic deeply flawed methodology; notably a usual complete absence of a male control group. The authors conclude that there is little if any evidence at all for the supposed phenomenon. In any case, 'stereotyping' is a usual social-conditioning argument failing to appreciate that there is an infinite regress to biology in the absence of explanation beyond description. A stereotype can be an inaccurate generic representation through political prejudice or in-grouping psychology, but perennial stereotypes are likely to be not merely accurate as rule-of-thumb distillation of repeated parallel observation over time, but the result of observation over evolutionary time leading to an implicit understanding deeply embedded as part of human psychology.

The other leading contender as explanation for sex differences in competitiveness is still more transparently descriptive: a supposed female egalitarian attitude with no correspondence in the male. Most recently, this supposed phenomenon has been ascribed to a female 'aheadness'-aversion – an antipathy to winning — in a seeming re-labelling of an egalitarian attitude; but the finding in the same study [Bartling, Fehr, Marechal & Schunk (2009)] that there is not also 'behindness'-aversion – a fear of losing – reveals this conceptualisation to be chimerical. An egalitarian attitude usually would be thought of as if anything the opposite: an aversion to losing, not to winning. A non-aversion to losing reveals a profound antipathy to competitiveness: the very conclusion researchers have been so exercised to avoid. Indeed, it's merely a re-statement of sex-differential competitiveness. This is not an informative deconstruction that can obviate the conclusion of sex-differential competitiveness.

An explanation in terms of a supposed female egalitarian attitude implies greater female co-operativeness, but the evidence is contrary. Whereas males readily identify themselves as being part of any symbolic group – such as their work-group or university year cohort – to include all other individuals, both male and female, without exception; females instead have an idiosyncratic, exclusionary and overwhelmingly same-sex feeling of belongingness [Goodwin & Rudman 2004; Maddox & Brewer 2005]. In consequence, even in a minimal grouping condition of newly formed same-sex dyads, males are more co-operative; and, unlike for females, this is irrespective of any expectation of reciprocity [Yamagishi & Mifune (2009)]. Introducing an inter-sexual inter-group condition changes this picture profoundly, because of the implicit threat a male out-group poses in female psychology. Whereas a female's performance in an inter-sexual dyad is still further reduced, if the inter-sexual dimension is one of opposite-sex same-sex grouping, then the performance of the females in the female same-sex dyads is markedly increased, through greater co-operativeness when there is a salient male out-group [Ivanova-Stenzel & Kübler (2005)]. Not only is this performance increase not due to competitiveness; neither is it due to co-operation of a positive kind. It appears to be an exercise in threat reduction akin to the behaviour of herd animals minimising the risk of individual predation by corralling.

Another 'cultural' explanation of sex-difference in competitiveness put forward by one group of researchers is in terms of an impact of the higher education of parents – with girls of well-educated parents being markedly non-competitive – only to contradict themselves in stating that this facilitated the manifestation of 'innate' sex differences which then explained their results [Almas, Cappelen, Salvanes, Sørensen & Tungodden (2012)].

Common to all of these lame attempts at explanation is a self-deception to a ruse to re-state the premise as the findings, through a putative explanation in some way sufficiently – which, it turns out, is but mildly — convoluted or mysterious as to hide that it's a mere tautology.

The most comprehensive attempt to date to test which putative component factors or facets of competitiveness are key to the sex-differentiality [Cotton, McIntyre & Price (2015)] rules out male over-confidence and/or female under-confidence, mis-perceptions about male or female ability, and sex-differential preferences. The review confirms that males are competitive in comparison to females because they enjoy competition or have a higher intrinsic value of winning, can better cope with the

pressure of competition, and are less concerned with the possibility of any negative aspects of competition. This is a cluster of what are proxies for or facets of competitiveness, or the lack thereof. The research clearly shows that males are much more competitive than are females because they possess inherent competitiveness far more than do females. The sex-differential is in competitiveness per se.

In trying to support a 'cultural' explanation – that is, in attempting to dismiss the sex difference as real – a slew of recent research has focused on discovering conditions in which a sex difference in competitiveness does not hold; but in each case interpretation is forced and flawed.

The classic ruse here is to use tasks that are not 'gender'-neutral but male-sex-*a*typical or female-specific, so that either male performance decreases – through, possibly, relatively poor ability or unfamiliarity with the task, or because males feel it's inappropriate for them – and/or female performance increases; neither change being the result of differing degrees of competitiveness per se. For example, Wieland & Sarin (2012) measure across several different tasks to claim that there is no sex-differential in competitiveness overall but only greater competitiveness by either males or females according to the domain (meaning the sex-typicality) of the task: but they use fashion as one of their four competition domains, with no corresponding domain which is male-specific, thereby heavily skewing the task type to female domains, rendering their interpretation of their data invalid.

A most recent short review of 'cultural' explanation (see Section 2, 'Related Literature', within Gupta, Poulsen & Villeval, 2013) reveals a usual uncritical attitude. The mini review begins with a claim that "the recent literature has provided pieces of evidence mainly in favor of a cultural origin of these gender differences in competitiveness", yet none of the studies cited withstand examination in this regard.

The first is by Gneezy et al (2009), purporting to show that the sex differential in competitiveness can be reversed in a matrilineal society; but as with Wieland & Sarin's study, this relies on a sleight of hand in respect of the nature of the set tasks. Here there is only the one, which is characterised as supposedly male-sex-typical, when by its nature and context it is anything but – not male-sex-typical or 'gender'-neutral', but female-sex-typical. The task was directly related to an ingrained female routine action, conducted within a domestic setting, using a domestic utensil. The setting was a 'traditional' undeveloped third-world community within a house, making use of a household bucket, with the task of very gently tossing a tennis ball for an extremely short distance into a bucket. This effectively reproduced in abstract the gathering work women in traditional forager societies perform daily; an activity that has been so clearly female through evolutionary time that it is likely to have resulted in specific psychological adaptations. Yet the authors of the study deem it male-sex-typical in that there is a throwing component, even though a male-sex-typical throwing task would entail a very muscular, high-velocity, long-range, accurate use of a projectile in the context of hunting. Taking together the nature of the action and its context within a traditional society, this would be considered by participants as being profoundly within a female domain and sphere of control. To consider any aspect of this to be male-sex-typical or even merely 'gender-neutral' is hardly credible. Women naturally would be expected to perform well in a female-sex-typical task within an environment that is definitively within female control, and it would be anticipated that this would be still more the case in the context of a matrilineal society, because female spheres of control would

be more extensive and more explicitly demarcated, thereby further dissuading male involvement. Even with no depression but merely no elevation of male performance, this scenario likely would produce the results as obtained. On the evidence here, it seems that the only way to claim that female competitiveness is equivalent to that by the male is by a special combination of factors to encourage females and discourage males, and to avoid not only the inverse but also a level playing field. This is to distort the phenomenon under study; and, therefore, the experiments do not show what they purport.

Second cited is the paper by Dreber et al (2009), in which there is reported a failure to replicate with Swedish children the gender [*sic*] gap in competitiveness (because, it is suggested, Swedish society is more egalitarian than others). But this study features cross-sex pairings with explicit indication to the children that the one-on-one encounters are and should be considered to be competitive. Very strong priming making salient both the cross-sexual *and* competitive nature of the interaction is likely to evoke in boys deference to girls. Deference is a signalling of non-engagement of dominance-submission interaction: a feeling of inappropriateness of competing other than intra-sexually; against fellow boys (see below). [In the text of the study, on page six, it is stated that the facilitator "presented the tasks as competitive activities. The dance competition was presented as a 'battle'".] Again, the experiments do not warrant the interpretation and conclusion by the authors, but a wholly different interpretation according to a factor the experimenters had not considered.

Next is marshalled the finding by Booth & Nolan (2009) that girls educated in single-sex schools are more competitive than girls from mixed-sex schools. Yet it is hardly a surprise that being steeped in an institutional same-sex environment might improve female performance, as this may be through freer rein to the well-attested notably female quality of conscientious [eg, Kling, Noftle & Robins (2013)] in the absence of the atmosphere created by the boisterous behaviour of boys, and the diverting of attention by the teachers away from them and towards the boys – not least through the different teaching style boys require. Even if the improved performance indeed were down to facilitating female intra-sexual competitiveness, there is anyway no comparison in the study with male intra-sexual competitiveness – boys in single-sex schools. That is, no results are included to compare boys' and girls' single-sex school performance: no control; presumably for the inadmissible reason that they would (or would be anticipated to) contradict the other findings. Neither is there ecological validity, in that the usual context of competition, in the workplace and in mainstream education, is where both sexes are present. Therefore, there is here neither evidence against a biological underlying basis of competitiveness nor in favour of a 'cultural' explanation of any sex-differential.

Finally, is the citing of Sutter & Rutzler (2010), supposedly to show that sex-differential competitiveness is not 'innate' and instead acquired; but the study reveals if anything the opposite in its being present already by the very early age of four years. Much necessarily genetically-based behaviour first manifests not at birth but at some age-appropriate stage of development, until when it remains un-triggered. Age four is only just past toddler age, when the genetically based most elementary social behaviours of male dominance and hierarchy formation and corresponding female 'personal-networking' emerge. In any case, there is a minimum age below which testing children in respect of socially interactive behaviours becomes severely problematic, so there is little possibility of providing a control with a younger cohort.

Contrary to the implicit assumptions of behavioural economics, there is no shortage of lines

of evidence indicating a biological basis of sex-differential competitiveness. That male competitiveness in contrast to female backing-away is very deep-seated and not a cultural phenomenon is shown in its not merely cross-cultural but ancient occurrence: the same pattern is found even in extant hunter-gatherer (forager) societies [Apicella CL & Dreber A (2014)], which are thought to closely resemble human ancestral populations generally. Here, males are more competitive in gender-neutral as well as male-sex-typical tasks, and only in female-sex-typical tasks are females as willing to compete as are the males; just as is generally found in sampling of men/women, boys/girls across behavioural economics study of competitiveness.

A key hormonal basis of this has been discovered in the sex-dichotomous effects of oxytocin: boosting co-operation in women, whereas in men the boosting is not of co-operation but of competitiveness [Fischer-Shofty, Levkovitz & Shamay-Tsoory (2013)]. This sex-dichotomy is more broadly underpinned by the contrasting – in major respects completely non-overlapping – features of neuro-hormonal pathways of stress response according to sex, whereby stress appears to be in effect manufactured in males in order to drive competitiveness, in contrast to females, for whom stress is something to be ameliorated [Wang et al (2007); Juster & Lupien (2010); Bangasser et al (2010); Lee & Harley (2012); Strerrenburg (2012) – based on Kozicz, Sterrenburg & Xu (2011); Lighthall et al (2012); see Moxon (2015 forthcoming) for a review].

Underlying these mechanisms in turn is the biology of sexual selection theory, which is the most comprehensively well-established of almost any in biology: that the comparatively very low potential reproductive output of the female against the potentially extremely high male output leads to male intra-sexual competition for sexual access to females, but not vice-versa. Very many outlines, discussions and reviews are available [eg, Puts (2010)], with abundant evidence of how this impacts on competitiveness cross-sex. For example, Buunk & Massar (2012) find that "as predicted on the basis of theorizing on sexual selection, males behaved more competitively towards another man than towards a woman, whereas women did not distinguish between men and women in their degree of competitiveness. At the same time, men behaved more pro-socially towards women than women did towards men".

At a level of explanation below even this, is the basis of why there evolved separate mating types, with one of two types designated the female sex specialising in reproduction per se. This is the need to deal with the key problem for all biological systems of accumulated gene replication error, which is most efficiently by allocating such function to half of all reproducing individuals and in effect quarantining this activity away from the other half of the reproductive group, so that their reproduction is unimpeded [Moxon 2012]. The key mechanisms of this 'genetic filter' [Atmar 1991] or 'mutational cleansing' [West-Eberhard 2005] function are careful female mate-choice in favour only of males with high genetic quality, and male-male competition to display relative genetic quality and then to form a clear rank order accordingly, thus facilitating female mate-choice according to female criteria.

From this, it is self-evident that the male is competitive in a way, to a degree, and for ends not corresponding in the female (for whom it would have little obvious function), and that this is *intra* and not inter-sexual (because, not only, again, would inter-sexual contest serve no function, but it would be severely counter-productive), as is seen in all biological dominance [Moxon 2009,

2012].

Inter-sexually, though there is not competitive interaction, continuing from basic biological principles it would be anticipated that there would be interaction in terms of *sexual display*, and this would seem to be apparent in the additional overall finding in the above-cited most recent review [Niederle 2015] that *inter*-sexually boys and men may actually *increase* their performance and/or choose a more competitive form of contest in comparison to girls and women. For males, effective sexual display is to indicate their dominance or potential dominance over other males, and therefore, performance per se – in effect competitiveness against *own* or imagined other males' past or expected performance levels – is likely to be evoked in an inter-sexual context.

It is a commonplace observation that in many species actual male dominance signalling (though then divorced from male dominance behaviour per se) has been co-opted in evolution for courtship function; with the female, in sexually selecting males according to their dominance over other males, responding to male dominance signalling by coyness to try to evoke more of it in a call-and-response loop of courtship development, leading up to the possibility of mating. This male-female courtship routine is likely to be a non-conscious (implicitly cognitive) feature of male-female interaction generically, whether or not there is any context construable as courtship. Self-evidently, this is not unlikely to be misconstrued as male competitiveness and female non-competitiveness, leading to a false conclusion that in some circumstances males are inter-sexually competitive, and more so in this regard than are females.

Conversely, a factor in cross-sexual scenarios that might be anticipated when competition is strongly primed (made salient) – or in competition scenarios if opposite-sex is primed — would produce instead a *decrease* in ostensible male inter-sexual competitiveness: male indication of non-engagement in dominance-submission interaction by behaving deferentially. Male deference to females is well recognised in humans and is a biological phenomenon exhibited in many species, notably now recognised in the various species previously thought to be 'female dominant', but now known actually to feature female feeding priority through males having evolved simply to stand aside to allow it [Kappeler 1993; Moxon 2009, 2012]. This may be misinterpreted as low male inter-sexual competitiveness, and with no such deference expected in the other direction, there could be misinterpreted female relative competitiveness, and hence a false conclusion that in some circumstances females are more inter-sexually competitive than are males. [For females – as pointed out above — priming (making salient) the opposite-sex composition of an out-group fosters female intra-sexual co-operation, leading to increased performance; and this is the case whether or not competition is salient.]

These are principles to which the 'standard social science model' for the most part is blind, if not in some respects in ideological opposition; so it is not surprising that the behavioural economics literature has struggled to come to terms with the topic of competitiveness and the sexes.

There are further factors at play which are recognised in the literature, though, of course, not understood in respect of how it interacts with biological factors: sex-typicality of task and priming; which have already been alluded to and discussed in the context of flawed studies. To perhaps more clearly state, summarise, and extend: both actual and ostensible competitiveness would be an-

ticipated to be modifiable in intensity according to the sex-typicality of task (somewhat reduced though not eliminated when the task is female-sex-typical, because males are neither as able nor can be as attractive to females as with a male-sex-typical task) and as to whether or not competitiveness is primed (made salient to participants). Correspondingly for females, if the task is sufficiently female-sex-typical, then performing it may not be compromising to the indication and signalling of female qualities, and therefore it might be anticipated that competitiveness would not decrease. An increase would seem less likely given that competitiveness itself is not female sex-typical, other than when it is intra-sexual and over physical appearance and/or reliability as a prospective pair-bond partner. Task-related competitiveness can have little utility for females as a means of sexual display. Behavioural economists see the importance of sex-typicality of task, and have incorporated this as a factor in experimental design; but they have considered this mainly in terms of eliciting different levels of confidence in performance according to 'stereotype' – on the lines of the now discredited hypothesis of 'stereotype threat'.

When a biologically-based framework is used to interpret the results of behavioural economics studies of competitiveness, the complex confusion of the literature in the sometimes only partial replicability of studies (or failure to replicate) appears to be an artefact of the variety, internal inconsistency, ecological invalidity and tautological emptiness of 'gender'-sociological theorising. Through a biological understanding, the priming or otherwise of competition, sex, and the male- or female-sex-typicality of the task have a clear contrasting impact on whether there is produced competitiveness and/or sexual display (or, in some circumstances, male deference or female co-operativeness), as a function of whether subjects are paired inter- or intra-sexually. Results of studies now can all be interpreted in terms of this model of competitiveness and/or sexual display, and possibly male deference or female co-operation. For example, the data in the above-cited study the authors claim is consistent with 'stereotype threat' [Iriberri & Rey-Biel (2013)] is neatly accounted for within the biological framework, completely dispensing with the tautological sociological/ ideological postulate.

To list and more precisely state and slightly expand major factors and their impact that should be expected in inter-sexual ostensibly competition scenarios:

● Competition that is psychologically salient as such (both implicitly and explicitly) is not inter-, but only intra-sexual, in line with dominance behaviour across the animal kingdom. Boys/men readily compete with other boys/men; girls/women (though less so, and more restrictedly) other girls/women. If the sexes are placed obligatorily against each other in a competitive scenario, then, in this de facto competition, any element of competitiveness per se would be expected to be weak, owing to the absence of a salient opponent per se. Any apparent competition would be comprised of other phenomena.

● For males, competition per se is highly sex-appropriate, in that males compete with each other to establish dominance rank (status) as a principal mechanism to reveal the extent to which each individual male possesses 'good genes', which is the criterion of mate-value by which males are sexually selected by females. There is nothing corresponding for females, whose mate-value is in terms of their fertility (indicated by youthfulness and 'beauty'), over which there is far less scope for competition. Indeed, competitiveness per se is inimical to female sexual display, unless of a certain narrow form. Consequently, in an intra-sexual competition scenario, males are likely to perform well and/or to choose a 'competition' option, whereas females are likely to back off

from performing well and/or from choosing a 'competition' option.

●When the sex of an obligatory-competition opponent is salient, and the opponent is opposite-sex, then instead of competition there is more likely to be sexual display, and this is likely to be mutual. In other words, there is ostensible continuation of competitiveness when actually it is male sexual display with female reciprocation to facilitate it.

●By way of sexual display, males are likely to utilise the male-appropriateness of competitive behaviour (just as across the animal kingdom dominance signalling has been co-opted for a courtship function), and therefore may well *increase* their performance and/or more frequently choose a 'competition' option (in comparison to an intra-sexual scenario) – at least if the competition scenario is male sex-typical – even though the behaviour is not competitiveness with the female per se.

●Females in a cross-sex competition scenario correspondingly are likely to *reduce* performance and/or avoid a 'competition' option in favour of adopting body poses and demeanour that effectively display their femininity better than does the physical activity or pugnaciousness involved in competition.

●Rendering salient not just the sex ('gender') but competition per se – to a large degree, perhaps so that it becomes explicit rather than just implicit cognition – is likely to undermine male utilisation of competition performance as sexual display (an intuitive 'chivalry' stemming from evolved deference – signalled non-engagement in dominance behaviour); and in consequence males are then likely to *reduce* performance and/or avoid choosing a competition option. No such phenomenon is likely to be evident in female behaviour. On the contrary, females in same-sex grouping – especially if membership is freely chosen (as in the formation naturally of female 'personal network') – are likely to respond to being primed with a male out-group to up their performance through within-group co-operation. These effects are likely to be misconstrued as female inter-sexual competitiveness, despite being merely ostensible and not real.

●The sex-appropriateness or typicality of a competition task and/or context may be crucial; possibly even to the extent of males backing away from competition and reducing their performance in an extreme female-appropriate/typical task/context; whilst being more eager to engage in competition and increasing their performance in a male-appropriate/typical task/context. Backing-away is the standard female behaviour here and even in female sex-appropriate/ sex-typical tasks/contexts females usually do not improve in performance; merely not performing worse.

●In some forms of competition settings, female conscientiousness – a trait that research reveals to be more typically female than male – is not unlikely to be mistaken for competitiveness. This would make the sex difference in competitiveness considerably wider than what may be apparent.

These biologically-based factors foundational to social structure and dynamics, from a 'gender'-sociological perspective pose very considerable problems in interpreting data from behavioural economics experiments on competitiveness and 'gender' [*sic*]. Some of these factors had been partially identified – notably the importance of whether or not competition is primed and sex-appropriateness of task – but not understood. Jettisoning the usual orientation in behavioural economics of 'gender'-sociology and competition only in respect of goods, in favour of taking on board biological principles, offers clearly better interpretation of studies. Yet there seems not to be even an elementary awareness amongst behavioural economists (and work psychologists) not only of biological factors but also any philosophical or scientific understanding of the general relationship whereby biology

subsumes culture.

This impasse renders the experimental design of studies hitherto published often of limited use in uncovering what actually is going on regarding competitiveness and the sexes. Behavioural economists would be well advised to collaborate across disciplines: to work with evolutionary biologists/ psychologists/ anthropologists, thereby escaping the confines of 'the standard social science model' to constructively seek scientific answers to questions of competitiveness and the sexes.

This is challenging, in that the promise of greater parsimony depends on providing effective controls in experimental design, given the possibility of multiple interacting dimensions (competitiveness, display and deference). The advance, though, is that now there is clarity regarding what needs to be controlled for, and therefore we are able to see what is likely to be a successful experimental design.

The attempt at a 'gender'-sociological critique of the overall finding of profound sex-difference in competitiveness has backfired, with studies intended to refute it instead being interpretable with more internal consistency and external validity within a biological framework, thereby further revealing competitiveness to be not only sex-differential but intra- and *not inter*-sexual, in line with the other levels of analysis and lines of evidence briefly outlined here. This completely undermines the attempted critique in that it removes the inter-sexual dynamic necessary even to allow the possibility of male-to-female prejudice and 'bullying', as hypothesised in the discredited hypothesis of 'stereotype threat'. The very basis of the ideological supposition of a male-on-female 'oppressive' dynamic to explain supposed female disadvantage is exposed as empty and false.

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Book Reviews

Michael Kimmel, Christine Milrod, and Amanda Kennedy's (Eds.), *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Penis* **(New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).**

Cultural Encyclopedia of the Penis (CEP) should be an intriguing read for both the general public and scholars dedicated to the study of men and men's issues. The CEP attempts to explain the fundamental elements of many cultural phenomena involving the penis from both contemporary and historical perspectives. It addresses the complexity of exploring and describing the male experience in various cultures as well as the impact of the penis and its associated cultural mythology on political and social policy. The CEP provides only a brief ($^1/_2$ to 2 page) introduction to each topic. This seems appropriate for a print format, though an electronic edition may have allowed for more extensive review of each topic.

For the lay reader, the sheer entertainment value of reading about lesser-known cultural practices involving the penis in various African, Hispanic/Latino, western, and eastern cultures will be worth the time spent. Seldom will the reader come across such an expansive resource that may introduce new customs or alternative viewpoints on those already known. For those less interested in entertainment and more concerned with scholarly pursuits involving male anatomy and related socio-cultural behaviors and beliefs the CEP can be a valuable resource. The CEP has the potential to expose scholars to new areas for study and encourage those set in their ways to reconsider beliefs about traditions and cultural practices involving the penis, men, and masculinities. Cautionary thoughts for those seeking scholarly inspiration follow below, but the CEP can be thought of as largely useful.

The CEP attempts to address not only the penis, but all things male. The title of the book is a bit of a misnomer in this regard, but it certainly may garner more attention than "Cultural Encyclopedia of Men's Issues." In this manner the editors capitalize on (and reinforce) some of the stereotypes and cultural mystique surrounding the male sex organ. The editors state that the purpose of the CEP "lies less in understanding the workings of an anatomical organ than in the *interpretation* [emphasis added] of the various meanings attributed to the penis over the centuries and across cultures" (p.3). To that end they invited contributions from scholars, researchers, clinicians and activists. The reader should bear in mind the stress placed on the "interpretation" of these meanings as described by the contributing authors. Not because the authors necessarily attempted to push a personal agenda through their entries, but rather because purely scientific exploration of the contents was not the essential pursuit of the CEP.

I encourage the reader to not mistake the CEP for a purely academic, empirically-based work that simply defines and describes various cultural phenomena. The goal for any informational source directed at the general public should be to provide unbiased, well-researched information that is useful to a broad audience with broad applications in mind. I believe this was largely what the editors had in mind for the CEP, and they have generally succeeded in this endeavor in many ways. An area of concern in this regard is that the editors admittedly invited "activists" to contribute articles. Activists, by definition, have a specific cause for which they act. They have dedicated their energies toward a specific outcome or social or political change. While certainly possible, it may be difficult for an activist to speak in a genuinely neutral manner to multiple perspectives on an issue. That said, no single philosophical thread has been blatantly weaved throughout the text. It is primarily the risk of being ideologically or politically influenced by singular entries and authors that the reader should remain aware. The great majority of the entries manage to remain informative and relatively free of propaganda. Thus the reader can view the volume as the editors reportedly intended: an informational starting point from which more detailed and thorough research might be conducted.

The CEP attempts to remain unbiased and research-driven as a whole. Some individual authors, however, weave in hints of their own biases and beliefs regarding their topics. These biases are often subtle and do not tend to detract from the generally useful information contained in the entries. Yet, at times, these personal perspectives disguised as facts—typically not distinctly supported within the CEP's references and suggestions for further reading—may catch the reader unaware and lead him/her to place undue faith in the claims made in an entry. Due to their controversial or taboo nature some entries naturally carry a higher risk of being represented in this biased manner. The reader would thus be wise to minimize such influence by differentiating entries that consist primarily of historical or medical descriptions (i.e. codpiece, sperm, urology) from those that address controversial contemporary issues (i.e. feminism, circumcision, rape). A reader interested in any such controversial topic would do well to further investigate the specific claims in a given entry before fully accepting them as impartial. Additionally, several cultural practices discussed in the CEP are likely not particularly well-known outside the "Western" audience that presumably is the principal target of the volume (i.e. Qi Gong, Sambia turnim, *hijra*, lingam, *koteka)*. There may simply be fewer published research studies available regarding these topics, perhaps the very reason they were included in the CEP. The editors hope to inspire further understanding of and research into these uncultivated areas.

To be fair, the practice of only minimally referencing entries seems to be common when publishing encyclopedias (see Britannica.com, encyclopedia.com). Authors of encyclopedia entries frequently reference a few select nonfiction books (secondary sources typically flooded with personal biases

that in turn cite several primary and secondary sources) rather than citing the multitude of individual empirical articles that would potentially substantiate their claims. Editors typically rely on authors' generally accepted status as experts in their fields to support entries.

Length did not seem to be a prohibitive factor for most CEP entries. The entries are collectively succinct and informative with few exceptions. Occasionally an author would attempt to cover a broad topic with too much depth and end up losing the intended introductory focus of the entry. One such example is the entry, "Bible" (Shore-Gross, pp. 24-26). In one paragraph the author discusses the tension for Hebrew men in defining the sex of God relative to their own, then shifts to coverage of a related incest taboo, then to associated ancestral linkage with Africans, finally concluding the paragraph with relationships of the previous story to slavery in America and Colonial Europe. In fairness to the author, a single two-page entry devoted to the broad religious associations of the penis and masculinity within Judeo Christian beliefs was probably shortsighted given the abundance of related material warranting discussion. Given the extensive global influence of these traditions the primary consumers of this text are likely to have been raised with some exposure to these faith traditions and their resultant social prescriptions. The problem is partially rectified by several other entries that briefly address select religious and cultural dimensions (i.e. circumcision, Holy Prepuce, foreskin, religion, intactivism).

The greatest strength of the CEP lies in its breadth. A reader unfamiliar with the surge in literature relating to men's issues and masculinity in recent decades may be surprised by the many relevant references to the penis across disciplines. Easily anticipated penile subjects receive their due (i.e. jokes, foreskin, orgasm, penis envy) while a wide range of nuanced and culture-specific subjects receive similar attention (i.e. papal testicles, *koro*, *shunga*). Covered categories include art (i.e. plaster casters, fiction), scientific associations (i.e. anti-androgens, aversion therapy), mythology/cultural rites (i.e. religion, Bhutan phallus), forensic and legal associations (i.e. barebacking, castration, penile plethysmograph), and ethical considerations (i.e. artificial insemination, intactivism).

A majority of the contributors approached their entries by considering multiple viewpoints and introducing potentially controversial subjects dispassionately. An example of this is the entry, "Feminism" (Kaufman, pp. 65-67). Feminism is defined as, among other things, a "diverse movement." The equality-oriented origin of feminism in the late 1960s is presented as being distinct in focus from second wave feminism. Discussion includes the tendency of many second wave feminists to emphasize attacking men and traditional masculinity rather than seeking gender equality. Elements of feminism that have the potential to be both beneficial and detrimental to men and expressions of masculinity are introduced. Those holding extreme positions on either side of the sociopolitical gender debate spectrum will likely find reasons to be unhappy with the contents of the entry. However, those who have not been inculcated in a particular gender movement will find themselves the beneficiaries of moderate, minimally biased language pertaining to multiple perspectives on a complex issue. This seems a positive outcome for an encyclopedia entry regarding such a divisive topic.

Considering these conclusions, which readers might find the CEP a useful resource? Certainly the lay reader will likely find it a "page-turner" for amusement purposes. Given the brief, introductory format for entries and dearth of citations, researchers looking to continue a project involving an already familiar topic will likely find little immediate value in the CEP. They may not encounter much new information about their topic of interest, but may receive an introduction to issues peripherally associated with their field of specialty. Each entry concludes with suggestions for further reading both within and beyond the CEP itself, thus leading the well-informed consumer to potentially unexplored topics. Students and researchers may find value in the CEP as a starting point for projects

regarding cultural phenomena involving the penis, masculinity, and related issues. They will find sufficient fundamental information in most entries to glean inspiration during the incipient stages of a research project. Like most encyclopedias, the CEP does not seem to be intended for cover-to-cover reading in numerical page order. Its approach is topical, and readers will likely approach specific topics separately and directly. The CEP would thus likely be useful mainly as a supplemental text in gender studies courses and men's studies courses, and would make a worthwhile addition to most university libraries.

All told, I found the CEP to be a largely interesting, informative, and at times provocative resource. I am pleased to have read it and, with appropriate expectations, would encourage others interested in gender studies to do the same.

Robert Pate

Book Reviews

Glen Poole, *Equality for Men*, Illustrated by Jacqui Clark, Equality4Men, 2013.

A cursory internet search of the phrase *equality for men* provides predictably mixed results: most either defensively state a case for men's rights or dismissively ridicule the idea. One prominent exception is the eponymous web page, equality4men.com. This site is described as "the global campaign to transform the way the world works for men and boys," and it offers a locus for accessing male-relevant information and resources. Central to this admirable effort is Glen Poole, the author of the book reviewed here. Available for purchase as a paperback or for download as an e-book from the above-mentioned web page, *Equality for Men* offers the general reader a useful introduction to male issues, presented in clearly written prose without any inflammatory rhetoric.

The work is presented in five parts, an introduction and four chapters, respectively treating discrete male-relevant topics ("Understanding Equality," "The Facts about Equality for Men," "Why are Men and Boys Unequal?" and "How Do We End Men's Inequality?"); each part offers concise, incisive information referenced from scholarly and popular sources. The book's greatest strength lies in its polite, reasonable tone and approach: for example, the discussion of male disadvantage and women's agency in violence against men is evidence based and presented with neither rage nor apology. The cause and effect relationship between the neglect and abuse of males and their subsequent negative outcomes—their marginalization from the education system, from prosperity, from family life, for example—and their disposability (evident in males' disproportionately high mortality rates and their

involvement with crime) is effectively argued and persuasively supported.

In addition, the material reality of men's important economic impact on society and the unfortunate gambit that results from the circumstances in which they contribute is convincingly described and questioned. Poole notes that "male workers" pay "72% of income tax" and that fathers contribute "two thirds of family earnings"; however, this contribution comes at a significant cost in terms of male workplace fatalities—"96% of the people who die at work are men as are the majority of the people who die from work-related causes each year" (85). These fatalities, along with disproportionate male unemployment and exclusion from family life result from tacit male disposability. Poole astutely frames the pervasive neglect of male disadvantage as a question of tolerance, asserting, "We are, it seems, collectively more tolerant of men and boys experiencing harm" (86), and one of the triumphs of this book is how convincingly the author demonstrates that male disadvantage results from "sexism against men" evident in normalized, gynocentric "lazy assumptions" about men (92).

Some readers might be put off by the abundant-white-space format of the book, conventionally more appropriate to technical writing rather than scholarly argument. The format, however, is well suited to a general audience who might lose patience with academic protocols and prose. Along with the cute graphics, the sparse formatting belies the careful research and clear thinking that informs this book: the extensive footnoting offers useful reference to the reader who wishes to read more deeply.

In sum, *Equality for Men* offers the general reader an accessible, reasonable, researched introduction to male issues with neither apology nor negativity. In writing this book, Glen Poole has contributed most effectively to the momentous twenty-first-century conversation about males and their important issues.

Dennis Gouws