

NEW MALE STUDIES – AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

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The contributions to our second, tenth-anniversary issue of *New Male Studies: An International Journal* show how vital our field of study has become: not only is valuable male-oriented research being conducted, but thoughtful male-affirmative critiques of current gender issues impacting boys and men are being written.

The two refereed articles in this issue respectively examine men’s social negotiation of reproduction and self-image. Steve Moxon’s studies “male heterogeneity and female choice in human mating,” arguing that “objectively, the human mating system is just that; a system, in which all individuals are engaged to play a part in what is a group-level phenomenon, with the goal of maximising overall reproductive output/efficiency.” Moxon suggests, “this is rather too obvious understanding to have been lacking—though still there are those hidebound by the outdated *group selection* debate, unaware of the now multiple complementary theoretical perspectives on how/why mutualism works.”

Katherine M. Pagano, Ryan D. Burns, and Nick A. Galli methodically examine men’s perceptions of their body image in “The influence of social comparisons on body image in men: A scoping review.” The authors investigate the efficacy of using Social Comparison Theory to “explain male body image outcomes.” Despite it being “clear that men experience body image and conduct social comparisons differently than women,” the authors “support the continued application of theoretical frameworks in body image inquiry as they enhance the rigor of research findings.”

Tim Goldich’s brief essay, “Equalism in gender politics: Liberals vs. conservatives,” argues that “feminism’s Male Power / Female Victimization paradigm is the problem, and It All Balances Out is a solution.” Goldich reasons, “Both sexes suffer injustice. These injustices may

come out even (balanced), but they're injustices all the same. So, *It All Balances Out* is not a proclamation intended to promote complacency."

This issue's three analysis-and-opinion articles critique gendered assumptions about men and suggest male-appropriate ways of remedying them.

In "Is there anything good in the men's movement? A masculinity expert maligns the manosphere," Janice Fiamengo argues that "British writer James Innes-Smith's recent article in *The Spectator* provides a case study" in the tactics used by "feminist-compliant" authors "when discussing men's issues." Fiamengo observes, "the most typical response involves acts of concealment, misdirection, cherry-picking, and outright misrepresentation, all to avoid admitting there is anything good in the men's movement." She concludes, "Innes-Smith leaves no doubt that the *last place* any troubled young man should turn is to any branch of men's advocacy or self-help. His essay is thus a good illustration of the dead end mainstream pundits often create for men in crisis: acknowledging their problems, but warning against avenues by which they might name and overcome them." Fiamengo rightly observes that, "the men's movement at its best [...] is about focusing justified anger on men's problems in order to find creative ways to oppose, solve, lighten, or live with them."

Miles Groth proposes a new interpretation of contemporary sexual politics in "Tonic Masculinity in the Post-gender Era." Groth observes, "Following a period of much-needed interest in the lives of women, there is a resurgence of interest in male experience and masculinity." This is his argument: "tonic masculinity is an emerging new honesty about male experience at this time. The word tonic has two senses that I want to apply to masculinity. One, found in music, refers to the home key of a composition. The other denotes an invigorating substance or influence. I believe that masculinity is re-emerging of necessity to provide both a sense of harmony as well as much needed positive energy to help heal an ailing social body." In addition, Groth offers this keen observation: "Masculinity in males (essential masculinity) is qualitatively different [...]; since its principal features derive from anatomy and physiognomy [...] male masculinity is genderless." This insight succinctly exemplifies a key difference in what male studies and what gender studies assume about men. For male-studies scholars, essential masculinity expresses embodied maleness.

Peter Wright’s “Unintended effects of transgender activism on men’s issues” observes “over the last century our framing of gendered customs has become increasingly captured by a gynocentric turf war between traditional women, and progressive feminist forces, with trans activism being one of the few novel forces that are actively working to disrupt it.” This turf war is important because “men’s advocates may find some value in instances of trans women breaking down gynocentric barriers that they have proven impotent to breach during the last 200 years of men’s advocacy,” including “exclusive female privileges” such as “domestic violence services, emergency accommodation, elite female-only gym and exercise clubs, legal services.” Wright notes males have also benefitted from “some legal actions” that have caused “women’s groups being ordered to open their services to not only trans women, but also to men and boys – with the threat of de-funding or further lawsuits for failure to comply with the spirit of anti-discrimination.” This thoughtful essay suggests opportunities for male-appropriate remedies to the disadvantages boys and men currently experience when encountering gynocentric institutions.

The opinions expressed by the authors in this issue do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Team. The articles published here are offered in a spirit of open, evidence-based dialogue regarding sex, gender, relationships, and issues related to the experience of males.

We appreciate the article reviewers’ thoughtful contributions to this issue.



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