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PREFACE

Volume eight, issue one of ***New Male Studies - An International Journal*** publishes articles on topics as various as genome integrity and sexuality in twentieth-century film—all intended to better our understanding of maleness, of boys' and men's embodied experience.

The refereed articles in this issue differ markedly in subject matter. Aqualus M. Gordon's "Male sexual shame, masculinity and mental health" investigates "the relationship between male sexual shame, traditional masculine ideology, and psychological symptomology." His study suggests that a "greater endorsement of traditionally masculine values was associated with increased sexual shame, and that male sexual shame was predicative of symptomology associated with depression but not anxiety." In the second refereed article, Steve Moxon argues, "There has been a failure to recognise that the male contribution to reproduction is as effortful and vital as is that by the female – hardly mere insemination." In addition, "Male effort has been mis-read and dismissed as mere bidding for power." He concludes, "The underlying biological reality of the male being the vehicle for the heightened expression and exposure of deleterious mutation (so as to eliminate it through selection) appears to have been translated into negative attitudes towards males generically."

The founding editor of ***New Male Studies***, Miles Groth, examines "the effects on boys' well-being of changing family dynamics" in his contribution to our current issue. Asserting that, "mentoring remains crucial to raising healthy males," he urges those who raise or work with young males to support and listen to their efforts at expressing themselves. John Davis's "Men committing suicide: A response to Louise Perry," addresses a controversial essay published in *Quillette* that "implies that men are at fault for the gender suicide gap and men committing suicide." His article refutes those parts of the *Quillette* piece "premised on fiction

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and myth about male suicide currently in fashion among intersectional feminists." Paul Nathanson's "From sex to sexual harassment in the movie industry" maintains that current public scrutiny of sexual mores "actually turned back the cultural clock by endorsing the sexual prudery that had characterized the 1900s, denying equality that movies had promoted as an ideal during the 1930s and 1940s." Alaric Naudé's contribution to ***New Male Studies***, "A biological approach to understanding true masculinity and femininity," argues that "sexual dimorphism is a highly advantageous strategy that allows for specialization and increases the efficiency of the family unit in their attempts at survival." His paper "discusses how following the parameters of biology allows for happier individuals, both male and female, who are more supportive of their mates and better at rearing socially and emotionally stable children."

The issue concludes with a photographic feature by Danish photographer, Jan Andersen.

The opinions expressed by the authors herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Team. The papers published here are offered in a spirit of open, evidence-based dialogue regarding gender, relationships and issues related to male experience. The Editorial Team thanks the article reviewers for generously contributing their time and their insights.

Dennis Gouws

Editor in Chief

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MALE SEXUAL SHAME, MASCULINITY, AND MENTAL HEALTH

Aqualus M. Gordon

ABSTRACT

Clinical experts suggest that sexual shame can lead to depression, addiction, violence, and sexual dysfunction in men. Shame may be associated with traditional masculinity – suggesting that men with this gender ideology may be particularly vulnerable. The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between male sexual shame, traditional masculine ideology, and psychological symptomology. Data came from a large, international sample of 1082 men. Analyses revealed that greater endorsement of traditionally masculine values was associated with increased sexual shame, and that male sexual shame was predictive of symptomology associated with depression but not anxiety. Subscales were examined to determine which factors were predicative of the noted relationships. Results are discussed as relevant to research, clinical practice, and social implications.

Keywords: Sexuality, Shame, Depression, Anxiety, Traditional Masculinity, Violence

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INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the problems associated with traditional (hegemonic) masculinity within an evolving culture (e.g., Connell, 2005). Many of the noted concerns have to do with traditional masculinity's regard for and impact on women (e.g., Jenney & Exner-Cortens, 2018; McDermott, et al., 2015), its sociological impacts on men (e.g. Whitehead, 2005; Courtenay, 2000), and the society at large (e.g., Haider, 2016; Mabrouk, 2017). However, fewer of these works have been concerned with the effects of traditional masculinity on the individual psychologies of men within an evolving culture. Given the challenges that men face in a society with waning tolerance for traditional gender roles (Henderson, 2014; Hu, 2015), especially masculine ones (Gordon, 2014; Harris, 2012; Keller, 2018), it is concerning that more attention has not been paid to the potential problems and solutions that arise for men in the midst of this cultural juncture. This is especially surprising given the effects that poor mental health can have on the suffering individuals and their loved ones, communities, and (collectively) the societies to which the individual is connected. In particular, clinical depression in men has been linked to increased anger, aggression, violence, addiction, and suicidality (Dumais, et al., 2005; Wålinder & Rutz, 2001; Winkler, Pjrek, & Kasper, 2005). Importantly, the association between depression and hostility has been noted in boys and adolescent males as well as in adult men (Treuting & Hinshaw, 2001). Given the current interest in male violence and the stakes associated with its perpetuation, it is important to consider what issues may be contributing to poor mental health among men. This knowledge may serve as a step towards reducing these types of violence.

BACKGROUND

Within the current social context, men experience a number of barriers to seeking treatment for or for even acknowledging their own mental health concerns. This is despite their increased risk for suicide deaths, violence, psychosis, substance abuse, educational and learning issues, and incarceration (Gordon, 2013; Mental Health for Men, n.d.). Several studies have noted traditional masculinity's role in hindering men from seeking help, particularly when related to psychological issues (e.g., Möller-Leimkühler, 2002). Men may believe that admitting psychological concerns makes them appear weak, that seeking help is emasculating, or that (mental) health providers won't understand or be effective in addressing their concerns (Gordon,

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2013). These barriers and others tend to be even more pronounced for low-working-class men, queer men, and men of color (Barber, Bridges, Jackson, & Flores, 2018; Galdas, Cheater, & Marshall, 2005).

However, barriers to help seeking aren't the only reasons why men's mental health issues require directed attention. For example, research on the effects of men's gender role conflict (GRC) has consistently demonstrated its relationship to psychological distress and mental illnesses, including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, negative attitudes towards help-seeking, and shame (Blazina & Watkins, 1996; Good & Mintz, 1990; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Thompkins & Rando, 2003; Zamarripa, Wampold, & Gregory, 2003). Most GRC research has primarily been concerned with the pressures men face to fit into traditionally masculine roles (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991), but have been less concerned with mounting pressures for men to eschew those same traditional roles. Even for those men who are capable of code-switching between modern and traditionally masculine styles, it can be difficult to predict when/where each code (or some combination thereof) is expected (Rosin, 2010). That all types of men may be affected by the noted cultural shifts underway highlights the importance of understanding their impact on men.

The facets of masculinity affected by these cultural changes are extensive and dynamic, most of which are beyond the scope of this paper. However, one important area where men may face particular tension between traditional and modern, gendered ideals is sexuality. Traditional masculine ideals promote a sexuality that is assertive, skilled, promiscuous, receptive to all advances from women, and exclusively heterosexual (Anderson, 2007, Crawford & Popp, 2003; Gordon, 2013; Jackson & Cram, 2003; Masters et al., 2013). However, this version of male sexuality faces increasing scrutiny due to its noted impacts on women, trans individuals and communities, and on men whose sexualities have been constrained by or are out of line with traditional ideals (Connell, 2005; McDermott, et al., 2015). For some men, such cultural shifts may bring welcomed relief from the limited types of sexual expression that had been exclusively promoted in the past. For other men, however, the shifts around gender and sexuality may be a source of frustration, confusion, and distress. This may be especially true for those men whose gender and sexual expressions are more traditional or otherwise less suited to modern ideals, and who have internalized the described modern ideals.

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The emergence of groups like the Involuntary Celibates (Incels), Red Pillers, Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), Pick-Up Artists, and the Proud Boys – all men's groups concerned with some aspect of male sexuality – suggests that many men are searching for ways to reconcile sex and gender expectations within the current cultural framework (Coulling, 2018; Ward, 2018). The collective theme of these groups is a belief among their members that their gender and sexual expression is not in line with masculine ideals. What is interesting is that some of these groups base this premise on feeling out of line with traditional masculine ideals (e.g. Incels, Pick-Up Artists); whereas other groups feel out of line with modern masculine ideals (e.g. Red Pillers, MGTOW). That some self-identified members of these groups have been accused of perpetrating and perpetuating misogynistic acts, racism, and violence against women (and some men) (Ward, 2018) suggests that more directed and informed guidance is needed on these issues, and also hints at a connection between gender & sexuality, mental health, and violence.

As with gender-role conflict, men may experience perceived failures to live up internalized sexual ideals as shame. Understanding this relationship is important because of shame's noted association to depression, anxiety, and other mental health concerns (Gilbert, 2000; Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013). Osherson & Krugman (1990) suggest that men may be particularly vulnerable to shame and its negative effects on mental health, since it plays such a large role in masculine identity development. Clinical experts suggest that sexual shame in particular can lead to depression, anxiety, and sexual dysfunction in men (Hastings, 1998; McClintock, 2001). However, the relationship between sexual shame in men (or male sexual shame [MSS]) has yet to be demonstrated empirically and is the primary focus of this research.

Shame is a distressing emotional state that arises out of a negative evaluation of oneself when compared to a personal or societal ideal (Cohen, et al, 2011; Lewis, 1992). That the negative evaluation is directed towards the *self* is what distinguishes shame from similar emotions. For instance, guilt is experienced when the negative evaluation is directed towards the offending *action* or *non-action* rather than the self; while embarrassment is experienced when one feels in danger of having their self-image or social status undermined—with or without a negative evaluation of the self or action (Brown, 2006; Burton, 2015; Lewis, 1971). A study by Gordon (2017) highlighted a set of male sexual concerns associated with shame. The results of that research suggested that things like masturbation and pornography use, sexual experience, sexual

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inexperience, body dissatisfaction, sexual performance concerns, and even sexual libidos can be can be sources of shame for some men. These concerns were the basis for the development of the Male Sexual Shame Scale (MSSS). The MSSS was found to be predictive of shame-proneness but not guilt-proneness – demonstrating its ability to discriminate between these two related emotional constructs. The availability of this scale presents the opportunity to better understand the effects of male sexual shame on mental health and how traditionally masculine gender roles influence this form of shame in men.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The purpose of the study described below was to assess the relationship between traditionally masculine ideals, male sexual shame, depression symptomology, and anxiety symptomology. It was hypothesized that (1) increases in traditionally masculine ideals would be associated with increases in male sexual shame; that (2) increases in male sexual shame would be predictive of increases in depression and (3) anxiety symptomologies; that (4) the degree of traditionally masculine ideology would influence (moderate) the relationship between male sexual shame and depression and anxiety symptomologies.

METHOD

Participants

Participants for the study were primarily recruited online, via a variety of social media outlets (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.), men's health message boards, and this writer's professional webpage.

A total of 1,082 participants responded to the survey battery, which also included surveys for an earlier study published by this author (see Gordon, 2017). One-hundred and ninety-five response sets were removed before analyses for incompleteness or failing to meet the demographic parameters set forth in this study (i.e., being cisgender male and eighteen years old or older).

Procedures and Materials

All portions of the survey battery were completed via the online research software Qualtrics. All participants completed the Male Sexual Shame Scale (MSSS) (Gordon, 2017) with its associated independent scales and a demographic questionnaire. Items on the MSSS were

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randomized for each participant to diminish response bias. As a part of a split-ballot design, participants also completed some combination of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory – 46 (CMNI-46) (Parent & Moradi, 2009), the Zung Depression Scale (ZDS) (Zung, 1965), and the Zung Anxiety Scale (ZAS) (Zung, 1971) (other data was collected for a different study). These measures and their items were also randomized. At the end of the survey battery participants were given the opportunity to provide comments.

The Male Sexual Shame Scale.

The MSSS is a thirty-item survey, which asks participants to rate the degree to which they experience shame related to aspects of their sexuality and sex-lives. Higher scores indicate more sexual shame. It includes six subscales: Sexual Inexperience Distress, Masturbation/Pornography Remorse, Libido Distain, Body Dissatisfaction, Dystonic Sexual-Actualization, and Sexual Performance Insecurity. The MSSS evidenced good reliability and validity during its development. Three independent scales (Perceived High Libido, Homoerotic Guardedness, and Sexual Harassment Stereotype Threat), which ask about other aspects of male sexuality, were also given to participants. These scales are not included in the MSSS's composite score. These scales also evidenced good reliability and validity during development (Gordon, 2017).

The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory – 46.

The CMNI-46 (CMNI) is a forty-six-item Likert-style survey that assesses traditionally masculine gender roles. Higher scores indicate a more traditionally masculine ideology. The CMNI includes nine subscales: Winning, Emotional Control, Risk Taking, Violence, Power over Women, Playboy, Self-Reliance, Primacy of Work, and Heterosexual Self-Presentation. The CMNI evidenced good reliability and validity during its development (Parent & Moradi, 2009).

The Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale.

The ZDS is a thirty-item self-administered survey that assesses affective, psychological, and somatic symptoms associated with depression. Research using this scale has evidenced good reliability and validity. Higher scores indicate more endorsed depression symptomology (Zung, 1965).

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The Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale.

The ZAS is a twenty-item self-administered survey that assesses the cognitive, autonomic, motor, and CNS symptoms associated with anxiety. Research using this scale has evidenced good reliability and validity. Higher scores indicate more endorsed anxiety symptomology (Zung, 1971).

RESULTS

Demographic Results

The 887 respondents to the survey included a broad demographic of men. Their ages ranged from 18 to 77 years old, with a mean age of 29.3 years (SD = 11.2). Ethnically, 83.3% were of European descent; 4.2% were of African descent; 7.0% were of Latin/Hispanic descent; 4.5% were of Asian descent; and the remaining 9.0% identified as Native, Middle-Eastern, or selected "other" as their ethnicity. More than a third of respondents (35.9%) grew up outside of the United States. Those within the U.S. (63.1%) grew up in the Northeast (15.0%), Mid-Atlantic (4.6%), Southeast (8.7%), Midwest (15.4%), Plains (1.8%), Southwest (4.6%), Northwest (3.7%), and West Coast (9.9%) regions. Twenty-six percent were from rural arears; 54.9% were from small cities or suburbs; and 25.8% were from medium to large urban areas. In general, the respondents were a relatively educated group. Doctoral degrees were held by 4.6%, Master's degrees by 14.1%, Bachelor's degrees by 31.5%, and Associate's degrees by 5.4%. Twenty-nine percent had incomplete or in-progress college degrees, 9.6% had a high school diploma, and 1.5% had less than a high school education. Forty-nine percent of participants identified as single/never married; 21.3% were in a relationship with a woman; 18.6% were married to a woman; 2.7% were divorced or separated from a woman; 5.1% were in a relationship or married to a man; and 1.8% reported that they were in more than one relationship. Sixty-five percent of the respondents identified themselves as "straight (heterosexual)," 15.9% were "mostly straight," 7.0% were "bisexual," 2.8% were "mostly gay," 7.1% were "gay (homosexual)," and 1.8% selected "other."

Descriptive Statistics & Reliability Analyses

Descriptive statistics, item frequencies, and scale reliabilities were calculated for the measures used in this study. Means, standard deviations, and reliabilities were examined to detect the presence of outliers. There were no noted outliers and all remaining response sets

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were retained. The means and standard deviations for each measure are reported in Table 1.

The internal consistencies of the MSSS (and its Independent Scales), the CMNI, the ZDS, and the ZAS were examined using tau-equivalent reliability analyses (Cronbach's alpha). The results indicated moderate to strong reliability for all measures (Table 1).

Table 1 Measure Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analyses

Scale	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Male Sexual Shame Scale	2.62	0.44	0.93
• Perceived High Libido*	2.86	0.90	0.82
• Sexual Harassment Stereotype Threat*	2.62	0.91	0.76
• Homoerotic Guardedness*	2.95	1.04	0.80
Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory-46	41.38	5.06	0.69
Zung Depression Scale	41.64	9.87	0.87
Zung Anxiety Scale	36.53	8.05	0.84
* = MSSS Independent Scales, not included in full scale α			

Demographic Predictors

Multiple regression and correlation analyses was computed to determine if any demographic characteristics were predictive of sexual shame, traditional masculine ideology, depression symptoms, and anxiety symptoms in men. For the regression analyses, age, ethnicity, relationships status (recoded to single=1 or not single=0), number of children, sexual identity, hometown political leanings during childhood, hometown population density during childhood, importance of religion during childhood, and education level were regressed onto the composite outcome variable averages using a stepwise method. Preliminary zero-order correlations between demographic variables and the outcome variables are presented in Table 2. The MSSS multiple regression analysis results were significant ($F(3, 790) = 24.75$, $p < 0.001$). The indicated that being single, growing up in a less populated/more rural areas, and growing up in a more religious or spiritual household were predictive of male sexual shame (Table 3).

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Table 2 MSSS & Demographic Zero-Order Correlations

Demographic Variable	MSSS	CMNI	ZDS	ZAS
	r	R	r	r
Age	-0.16**	-0.09*	-0.20**	-0.18**
Ethnicity: European Descent	-0.07	0.05	-0.05	0.04
Ethnicity: African Descent	0.03	0.03	0.04	-0.03
Ethnicity: Latino/a	0.04	0.00	-0.02	-0.05
Ethnicity: Native American	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	-0.04
Ethnicity: Asian Descent	0.04	-0.04	0.06	0.05
Ethnicity: Middle-Eastern Descent	-0.02	-0.04	0.09	0.16**
Ethnicity: "Other"	0.03	-0.02	0.06	0.00
Education Level	-0.12**	0.01	-0.16**	-0.14**
Relationships Status: Single	0.26**	0.13**	0.32**	0.21**
Number of Children	-0.05	-0.00	-0.23**	-0.24
Childhood Population Density	-0.09*	-0.08	-0.02	-0.04
Childhood Political/Cultural Environment	-0.04	-0.05	-0.07	0.00
Childhood Religious/Spiritual Importance	-0.08*	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00
Sexual Identity	0.03	0.25**	-0.07	-0.15
** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis of MSSS Demographic Predictors

	B	SEB	β	t	p	ΔR2
Step 1					**< 0.001**	
Being Single – Never Married	0.226	0.030	0.259	7.54	< 0.001	0.067
Step 2					**< 0.001**	
Being Single – Never Married	0.229	0.030	0.263	7.68	< 0.001	0.067
Hometown Population Density during Childhood	-0.024	0.008	-0.098	-2.87	0.004	0.010
Step 3					**< 0.001**	
Being Single – Never Married	0.232	0.030	0.267	7.82	< 0.001	0.067
Hometown Population Density during Childhood	-0.025	0.008	-0.105	-3.07	0.002	0.010
Religious or Spiritual Importance during Childhood	-0.032	0.011	-0.097	-2.85	0.004	0.009
Total R2 = 0.086						
Non-significant Variables: Age, Ethnicity, Sexual Identity, Education Level, Hometown Political Leanings						

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The CMNI multiple regression analysis results were significant ($F (3, 455) = 13.77$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that being single, identifying as more heterosexual, and growing up in a less populated area were predictive of more traditionally masculine ideals as measured by the CMNI (Table 4).

Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis of CMNI Demographic Predictors

	B	SEB	β	t	p	ΔR^2
Step 1					**< 0.001**	**0.060**
Sexual Identity	0.487	0.090	0.246	5.40	< 0.001	
Step 2					**< 0.001**	**0.014**
Sexual Identity	0.483	0.089	0.244	5.40	< 0.001	
Being Single – Never Married	0.619	0.226	0.124	2.74	0.006	
Step 3					**< 0.001**	**0.009**
Sexual Identity	0.495	0.089	0.250	5.54	< 0.001	
Being Single – Never Married	0.622	0.225	0.124	2.77	0.006	
Hometown Population Density during Childhood	-0.134	0.062	-0.097	-2.15	0.032	
Total $R^2 = 0.083$						
Non-significant Variables: Age, Ethnicity, Education, Hometown Political Leanings, Religious Importance, Number of Children						

The ZDS multiple regression analysis results were significant ($F (2, 442) = 28.31$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that being single and having fewer children were predictive of more depression symptomology (Table 5).

Table 5 Multiple Regression Analysis of Zung Depression Scale Demographic Predictors

	B	SEB	β	t	p	ΔR^2
Step 1					**< 0.001**	**0.102**
Being Single- Never Married	6.26	0.882	0.319	7.09	< 0.001	
Step 2					**< 0.001**	**0.012**
Being Single – Never Married	5.33	0.959	0.272	5.55	< 0.001	
Number of Children	-1.21	0.504	-0.118	-2.41	0.016	
Total $R^2 = 0.114$						
Non-significant Variables: Age, Ethnicity, Education, Hometown Political Leanings, Religious Importance, Population Density, Sexual Identity						

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The ZAS multiple regression analysis results were significant ($F(3, 445) = 14.83$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that having fewer children, being more homosexual, and being single were predictive of more anxiety symptomology. See Table 6.

Table 6 Multiple Regression Analysis of Zung Anxiety Scale Demographic Predictors

	B	SEB	β	t	p	ΔR2
Step 1					**< 0.001**	**0.057**
Number of Children	-2.02	0.389	-0.238	-5.19	< 0.001	
Step 2					**< 0.001**	**0.019**
Number of Children	-1.92	0.387	-0.227	-4.97	< 0.001	
Sexual Identity	-0.96	0.315	-0.140	-3.06	0.002	
Step 3					**< 0.001**	**0.015**
Number of Children	-1.44	0.425	-0.169	-3.382	0.001	
Sexual Identity	-1.00	0.313	-0.145	-3.185	0.002	
Being Single – Never Married	2.14	0.797	0.134	2.684	0.008	
Total $R^2 = 0.091$						
Non-significant Variables: Age, Ethnicity, Education, Hometown Political Leanings, Religious Importance, Population Density						

Regression & Correlation Analyses

To examine the relationships between traditional masculine ideology, depression symptomology, anxiety symptomology, and male sexual shame a series of correlation and regression analyses were performed.

Initial Correlations

First, a set of correlations were computed to examine the relationships between traditional masculine ideology, depression symptomology, and anxiety symptomology. The results indicated a weak but significant correlation between traditional masculine ideology (as CMNI) and depression symptomology (as ZDS), $r = 0.15$, $n = 292$, $p = 0.013$; a strong, significant correlation between depression symptomology and anxiety symptomology (as ZAS), $r = 0.781$, $n = 284$, $p < 0.001$; and no significant correlation between traditional masculine ideology and anxiety symptomology, $r = 0.09$, $n = 296$, $p = 0.124$. The results indicated that male sexual shame (as MSSS) was significantly correlated with all other variables. Male sexual shame was moderately correlated with traditionally masculine ideology ($r = 0.28$, $n = 463$, $p < 0.001$), moderately correlated with depression symptomology ($r = 0.49$, $n = 449$, $p < 0.001$), and

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moderately correlated with anxiety symptomology (r = 0.42, n = 455, p < 0.001). See Table 7.

Table 7 Variable Correlation Matrix

Factor	1	2	3	4
1. Male Sexual Shame Scale				
2. Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory	0.28**			
3. Zung Depression Scale	0.49**	0.15*		
4. Zung Anxiety Scale	0.42**	0.09	0.78**	
** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Regression Analyses

To better understand what factors of traditional masculine ideology were predictive of depression symptomology, a hieratical multiple regression analysis was conducted by regressing the CMNI subscales on the ZDS. The results were significant (F (4, 287) = 12.41, p < 0.001), and suggested that increases in self-reliance, violence, and emotional control were predictive of increased depression symptomology, while an increase in risk taking was predictive of decreased depression symptomology (Table 8).

A multiple regression analysis was computed to determine if depression and anxiety symptomology were predictive of male sexual shame, while accounting for one another. To do this the ZDS and ZAS were regressed onto the MSSS. The results were significant (F (2, 281) = 51.30, p < 0.001), and indicated that depression symptomology was predictive of male sexual shame, but not anxiety symptomology (Table 9).

Next, the CMNI subscales were regressed onto MSSS composite scores in a stepwise method to help determine what aspects of traditional masculinity may be predictive of male sexual shame. The results were significant (F (2, 460) = 38.06, p < 0.001), and indicated that increases in heterosexual self-presentation and self-reliance were associated with increases in male sexual shame (Table 10).

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Table 8 Multiple Regression Analysis – CMNI Subscale Predictors of Depression Symptomology

	B	SEB	β	t	p	ΔR^2
Step 1					**< 0.001**	**0.080**
CMNI: Self-Reliance	4.53	00.900	0.283	5.03	< 0.001	
Step 2					**< 0.001**	**0.033**
CMNI: Self-Reliance	4.26	00.889	0.266	4.78	< 0.001	
CMNI: Risk-Taking	-3.08	00.934	-0.183	-3.30	0.001	
Step 3					**< 0.001**	**0.022**
CMNI: Self-Reliance	3.05	00.987	0.191	3.09	0.002	
CMNI: Risk-Taking	-2.95	00.926	-0.175	-3.18	0.002	
CMNI: Emotional Control	2.22	00.825	0.166	2.69	0.007	
Step 4					**< 0.001**	**0.012**
CMNI: Self-Reliance	2.94	00.983	0.184	2.99	0.003	
CMNI: Risk-Taking	-3.44	00.952	-0.205	-3.61	< 0.001	
CMNI: Emotional Control	2.10	00.823	0.157	2.55	0.011	
CMNI: Violence	2.64	1.304	0.115	2.02	0.044	
Total $R^2 = 0.147$						
Non-significant CMNI Subscale Variables: Winning, Power over Women, Playboy, Primacy of Work, Heterosexual Self-Presentation						

Table 9 Multiple Regression Analysis - ZDS & ZAS as Predictors of MSSS

	B	SEB	β	t	p
Zung Depression Scale	0.020	0.003	0.469	5.73	< 0.001
Zung Anxiety Scale	0.003	0.004	0.060	0.74	0.463
Total $R^2 = 0.267$					

Table 10 Multiple Regression Analysis – CMNI Subscale Predictors of Male Sexual Shame

	B	SEB	B	t	p	ΔR^2
Step 1					**< 0.001**	**0.112**
CMNI: Heterosexual Self-Presentation	0.206	0.027	0.335	7.63	< 0.001	
Step 2					**< 0.001**	**0.030**
CMNI: Heterosexual Self-Presentation	0.190	0.027	0.308	7.05	< 0.001	
CMNI: Self-Reliance	0.113	0.028	0.175	4.00	< 0.001	
Total $R^2 = 0.142$						
Non-significant Subscale Variables: Winning, Emotional Control, Risk-Taking, Power over Women, Playboy, Primacy of Work, Violence						

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The MSSS subscales and independent scales were regressed onto the CMNI composite scores in a stepwise method to help determine what aspects of male sexual shame were predictive of traditionally masculine ideology. The results were significant ($F(4, 458) = 34.98$, $p < 0.001$), and indicated that increases in homoerotic guardedness, a perceived high libido, self-disparagement of sexual inexperience, and dystonic sexual actualization were associated with increases in traditionally masculine ideals (CMNI) (Table 11).

Table 11 Multiple Regression Analysis – MSSS Subscale Predictors of Depression Symptomology

	B	SEB	B	t	p	ΔR^2
Step 1					**< 0.001**	**0.174**
Homoerotic Guardedness	1.02	0.104	0.417	9.86	< 0.001	
Step 2					**< 0.001**	**0.029**
Homoerotic Guardedness	1.000	0.102	0.408	9.78	< 0.001	
Perceived High Libido	0.50	0.122	0.172	4.12	0.001	
Step 3					**< 0.001**	**0.019**
Homoerotic Guardedness	0.90	0.105	0.367	8.56	< 0.001	
Perceived High Libido	0.50	0.121	0.173	4.20	< 0.001	
Self-Disparagement of Sexual Inexperience	0.34	0.100	0.145	3.38	0.001	
Step 4					**< 0.001**	**0.011**
Homoerotic Guardedness	0.85	0.106	0.348	8.05	< 0.001	
Perceived High Libido	0.46	0.121	0.157	3.79	< 0.001	
Self-Disparagement of Sexual Inexperience	0.36	0.099	0.153	3.58	< 0.001	
Dystonic Sexual Actualization	0.38	0.145	0.109	2.60	0.010	
Total $R^2 = 0.234$						
Non-significant MSSS Subscale Variables: Masturbation/Pornography Remorse, Libido Distain, Body Dissatisfaction, Sexual Performance Fears, Sexual Harassment Stereotype Threat						

The MSSS subscales and independent scales were regressed onto ZDS composite scores in a stepwise method to determine what aspects of male sexual shame were predictive of depression symptomology. The results were significant ($F(4, 444) = 90.47$, $p < 0.001$), and indicated that increases in body dissatisfaction, sexual performance fears, libido distain, and sexual harassment stereotype threat were associated with increases in depression symptomology (Table 12).

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Table 12 Multiple Regression Analysis – MSSS Subscale Predictors of Depression Symptomology

	B	SEB	B	t	p	ΔR^2
Step 1					**< 0.001**	**.350**
Body Dissatisfaction	5.59	0.360	0.592	15.52	< 0.001	
Step 2					**< 0.001**	**0.060**
Body Dissatisfaction	3.75	0.440	0.396	8.51	< 0.001	
Sexual Performance Fears	2.79	0.416	0.313	6.71	< 0.001	
Step 3					**< 0.001**	**0.030**
Body Dissatisfaction	3.26	0.443	0.341	7.29	< 0.001	
Sexual Performance Fears	2.36	0.416	0.264	5.67	< 0.001	
Libido Distain	2.30	0.472	0.196	4.86	< 0.001	
Step 4					**< 0.001**	**0.009**
Body Dissatisfaction	3.05	0.444	0.323	6.87	< 0.001	
Sexual Performance Fears	2.20	0.416	0.246	5.28	< 0.001	
Libido Distain	2.17	0.471	0.186	4.61	< 0.001	
Sexual Harassment Stereotype Threat	1.18	0.428	0.105	2.76	0.006	
Total $R^2 = 0.449$						
Non-significant MSSS Subscale Variables: Self-Disparagement of Sexual Inexperience, Masturbation and Pornography Remorse, Dystonic Sexual Actualization, Perceived High Libido, Homoerotic Guardedness						

Mediation & Moderation Analyses

Moderation Analysis

To test if traditional masculine ideology moderated the relationship between male sexual shame and depression symptomology, a set of analyses were conducted to determine if the observed correlation between the MSSS and the ZDS (Table 7) would be modified when CMNI scores were included. To do so centered variables (residuals) were calculated for CMNI composite scores and MSSS composite scores by subtracting individual composite scores from their respective composite mean scores. The two centered CMNI and MSSS scores were then multiplied by one another, creating a centered product score. This centering technique, as described by Aiken & West (1991), minimizes the effects of multicollinearity on the moderation analysis.

The centered product scores along with CMNI and MSSS composite scores were regressed (stepwise) onto ZDS scores to detect the presence of an interaction (moderation) effect. If a

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moderating affect was present, the centered product score would significantly predict the outcome (ZDS) in the multiple regression analysis. It did not. While the overall regression analysis was significant ($F(3, 288) = 30.12$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.489$), the centered product score (moderation) did not significantly predict the outcome ($t = 1.47$, $p = 0.142$). These results suggest that traditional masculine ideology does not significantly moderate the relationship between male sexual shame and depression symptomology. However, given the significant results of the overall regression analysis, it was suspected that an un-hypothesized mediating effect was present.

Mediation Analysis

Given the significant correlations between MSSS and CMNI, between MSSS and ZDS, and between CMNI and ZDS described above (Table 7), the final step in the mediation analysis was conducted by regressing MSSS composite scores and CMNI composite scores on ZDS scores. A significant mediation would be evidenced by a significant reduction of covariance in one of the independent variables (CMNI or MSSS) when compared to the above correlation results. The results indicated that CMNI was no longer a significant predictor of ZDS, after controlling for MSSS (mediator). These results suggest that the association between traditional masculine ideology and depression symptomology was fully meditated by male sexual shame in this sample (Figure 1, Figure 2).

Figure 1 CMNI-46 and ZDS Correlations

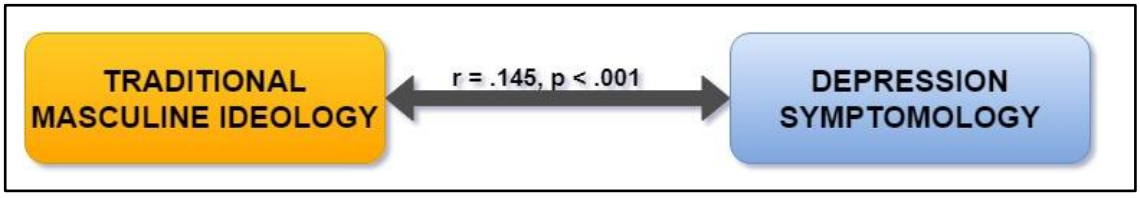

Figure 2 MSSS' Mediation of CMNI-46 and ZDS

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DISCUSSION

The effect of sexual shame on mental health has primarily been regarded as a women's issue (Ringrose & Harvey, 2015) and has not been well researched as it relates to men. This is despite suggestions that shame is especially impactful on the psychologies of men (Osherson & Krugman, 1991) and that unmanaged shame is associated with a broad array of psychological concerns (Gilbert, 2000; Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013). Yet, academic and popular media have not given much attention to the current crisis of men and mental health even with the noted cultural shifts that are directly affecting them. What is ironic, is that in the midst of what is seemingly a renegotiation of gender norms in many western societies, old (traditional) norms persist in contextualizing *how* we have these conversations and whose concerns are important to attend to. The absence of mainstream discussion on the effects of emerging gender and sexual norms on men could be viewed as an artifact of traditional gender norms. Norms that suppose that men are (or should be) psychologically impervious, emotionless, and have a regard for sexuality that is generally flippant, and therefore are (or should be) unaffected by the changing tides. Yet, this is could not possibly be true, and the results of this research offer some evidence to rebut these outdated notions. Importantly, these gender and sexual concerns may well be linked to the increases in violence perpetrated by and towards young men. Unfortunately, this research only represents a very small part of these large and dynamic issues, which is why it is important to pursue more research in this area in order to discover potential solutions.

LIMITATIONS

While the results of this study illuminate some important associations related to men's mental health, sexual shame, and traditional masculine ideology, it is important to note some limitations of this research. First, this research was conducted using self-reported surveys, which are more susceptible to deception and response bias than some other methodologies. However, research suggests that self-administered surveys (Catania, Gibson, Chitwood, & Coates, 1990), anonymous surveys, and online surveys (Joinson, 1999), like this one, are less likely to produce social desirability bias than in-person, paper-and-pencil surveys. Also, research on response trends suggests participants are no more biased when responding to sex/uality surveys than to surveys of other types (Johnson & Delamater, 1976).

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Second, because the sample for this research was primarily made up of self-selected participants, it is difficult to say how generalizable the results are. While this method of sampling did result in a large, relatively diverse, international sample, most of the participants were of European descent (83%) and may have been distinctive from the general population in other, undetected ways. Further, because of the diversity of regions and cultures among the men in this sample, perceptions and expectations of gender/masculinity were likely broadly varied. It will be important for researchers and clinicians to consider these limitations when attempting to generalize these results to the broader population.

Lastly, this research assessed depression and anxiety symptomology using a non-clinical population. It also did not diagnose or distinguish diagnosable levels of symptomology. Therefore, it may be difficult to discern how/if these results can be applied directly to clinical populations.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the relationship between male sexual shame (as measured by the MSSS), traditional masculine ideology (as measured by the CMNI-46), and depression and anxiety symptomologies (as measured by the ZDS and ZAS, respectively). The initial results indicated that traditional masculine ideology, male sexual shame, and depression symptomology were all correlated with one another. Anxiety symptomology was also correlated with male sexual shame; however, subsequent regression analyses revealed that when depression symptomology was taken into account, anxiety symptomology was no longer significantly predictive of male sexual shame. These results confirm the first three hypotheses described in the Introduction. (The results of the fourth hypothesis are discussed later in this section.)

Because the instruments used to measure male sexual shame and traditional masculine ideology were made up of several factors, it was of interest to consider how those factors (i.e. subscales) contributed to the associations described above. The following paragraphs describe the relationships between these (sub-)factors and the larger constructs.

The correlation between traditional masculine ideology and depression symptomology was weak ($r = 0.15$). Subsequent analysis revealed that some aspects of traditional masculinity (i.e., self-reliance, emotional control, and risk taking) were particularly associated with depression

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symptomology. Reported depression symptoms were found to increase with increases in self-reliance and emotional control; whereas, depression symptoms were found to decreases with an increase in risk-taking. This negative correlation was unexpected. These results suggest that while some aspects of traditional masculinity are associated with depression symptoms, other aspects of this gender role may be innocuous or even be preventive to developing depression symptoms. Of course, causation cannot be inferred from these findings, and more research is needed to verify these potentialities.

There was also a weak-moderate correlation between traditional masculine ideology and male sexual shame (r = 0.28). Subsequent regression analysis revealed that two aspects of traditional masculinity were predictive of male sexual shame on their own – these were heterosexual self-presentation and self-reliance. Increases in these factors was predictive of increases in male sexual shame. From the other perspective, the components of male sexual shame that were significant predictors of traditional masculine ideology were homoerotic guardedness, perceived high libido, self-disparagement of sexual inexperience, and dystonic sexual actualization. Increases in these aspects of male sexual shame were associated with increases in traditional masculine ideology.

Male sexual shame was moderately correlated with both depression (r = .49) and anxiety (r = 0.42) symptomology. However, when accounting for both symptomologies in a subsequent regression analysis, only depression symptomology was found to be predictive of male sexual shame. Further analysis revealed that body dissatisfaction, sexual performance fears, libido distain, and sexual harassment stereotype threat were the components of male sexual shame that were found to be predictive of depression symptomology. Increases in these aspects of male sexual shame were associated with increases in depression symptomology.

The final hypothesis of this study predicted that the relationship between male sexual shame and depression symptomology would be moderated by traditional masculine ideology. However, the moderation analysis indicated that the relationship between male sexual shame and depression symptomology was not significantly influenced by traditional masculine ideology. Although the results of that analysis suggested that another relationship was at work regarding these three variables. A subsequent mediation analysis revealed that the relationship between traditional masculine ideology and depression symptomology was fully mediated by

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male sexual shame. This suggests that in the absence of sexual shame (as measured here), traditional masculinity has no significant association to depression symptomology. It is important to note that this finding was surprising and warrants additional research before being widely generalized.

IMPLICATIONS & DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this research suggest that sexual shame and masculine ideology are relevant factors in understanding men's mental health issues. The relationship between sexual shame and depression may be of particular importance given the strength of the findings here. This may also be relevant to the ongoing conversations on men's violence, given some men's proneness toward anger, aggression, and suicide when clinically depressed (Wålinder & Rutz, 2001; Winkler, Pjrek, & Kasper, 2005; Dumais, et al., 2005).

Given these relationships, it may be important for clinicians, educators, and researchers interested in men's mental health to inquire about sex, sexuality, and gender issues to determine if such issues are contributors to or manifestations of presented problems. It also may be important for these professionals to be attentive to indications of shame related to sex, sexuality, and gender – particularly those aspects of sexual shame and traditional masculinity that were found to be associated with depression symptomology (i.e., self-reliance, emotional control, and risk taking, body dissatisfaction, sexual performance fears, libido distain, sexual harassment stereotype threat).

These findings are important because they elucidate areas that are often not viewed as relevant to men's mental health concerns and may be overlooked in assessing what factors contribute to psychological symptomology. Additionally, they suggest two, related areas of exploration (i.e, gender and sexuality) in addressing modern concerns about men's mental health, (and potentially) suicide, and violence.

Future research on this topic should assess the found associations among a clinical population of men. Given these findings, it may also be important to assess the relationship between sexual shame, traditional masculine ideology, and other mental health concerns not measured here. It may be that sexual shame and traditional masculine ideology contribute to psychological symptomologies beyond depression and anxiety. Finally, it will be important to

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consider what type of interventions could be helpful in addressing the distress and harmful outcomes related to these issues.

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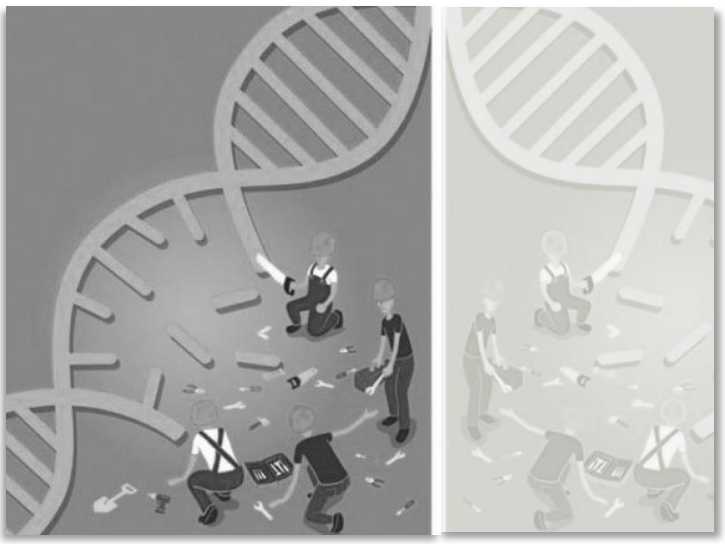

THE SEXES FUNCTION TO PURGE MUTATIONS VIA SELECTION ON MALES, BOOSTING THE ABILITY OF SEX TO MAINTAIN GENOME INTEGRITY

Steve Moxon

ABSTRACT:

The function of the sexes is revealed within the context of new understanding that sex maintains genome integrity. Whereas originally evolved features of sex, conserved in early stages of meiosis, repair gross DNA damage, later phases repair fine-scale DNA damage (mutations) via ploidy and the sexes effecting purifying selection. Rather than in anisogamy, the (proto-)male arises in mating-types, revealing that greater selection on the male is the male's defining characteristic; this is confirmed in experiment and modelling. The variation theory ignores all evidence from many fields that it's asexual reproduction that produces variation. Recent tests unwittingly support the genome-integrity model. The profundity of male/female distinction in differential selection prompts new understanding of sociality and psychology in sex-specific terms.

Key words: function of the sexes, selection on the male, purging mutation, genome integrity, DNA repair

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INTRODUCTION

The question of what is the function of the sexes (males and females) is a subsidiary one to that of the function of sex (sexual reproduction), but of course the sexes would be expected to support the overall function of sex, and, indeed, to be very much part of it. Sex occurs in lowly species with no male/female distinction, and sex without sexes is the ancestral state. With the sexes evolving in the wake of the emergence of sex, it would be instructive first to look at the evolutionary origins of sex, yet this is an endeavour mostly eschewed by investigators as supposedly not open to study. Experimental work on sex has focused on trying to understand its maintenance, leaving its initial function an entirely separate supposedly unfathomable question, but such work is liable to ignore -- although being based on -- the very assumptions about the function of sex at issue. Instead of this artificial divide, a good starting point for investigation would seem to be a dissection of meiosis into its component parts, right from its initial phase, to delineate functions, both overall and in its subsidiary aspects. Fortunately, analysis of sex into separable, successive stages is now quite advanced. Albeit that the sequence of phases of meiosis does not necessarily reflect the order in which they evolved, the general direction of any shifts in function should indicate or at least give clues to the reason why the sexes then emerge.

THE PHASES OF MEIOSIS REVEAL THE REPAIR FUNCTION OF SEX

It is well established that oxygen -- 'reactive oxygen species' (RAS) within the cell -- damages DNA (eg, Hemnani & Parihar, 1998). That it is this problem that the evolution of sex solved is shown by Nedelcu & Michod (2003) and, most recently, by Hörandl & Speijer (2018). RAS, produced by metabolism, rise to ever more increasingly problematic levels as metabolic rates speed up with organismal complexity, and notably with the energy demands of predation. This issue was addressed very early in evolutionary history when very primitive species evolved through symbiotic capture of another organism, which thereby became an endosymbiont -- a new organelle within what remained a unicellular species (this being the origin of the cell's energy-producing organelle, the mitochondrion: from a precursor proto-mitochondrion, once free-living bacterium).

The damage sex addresses is either grossly to the overall structure of DNA (such as breakages of strands or contortions of the topography of such a complex molecule as to constrain its protein chemistry), or more finely to the sequencing of bases comprising genes

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(mutations); the former making the latter more likely. DNA structure has to be repaired, otherwise the damage would prove lethal. Mutations, by contrast, are very small, discrete elements that may possibly accumulate to the point of lethality or sterility, though more usually a mutational load leads to reduced reproductive output (in quality/quantity). To varying degrees, deleterious genetic material is eliminated through not being inherited by offspring: by purging or purifying selection (both terms being used in biology, more or less inter-changeably).

It would be expected, then, that the more indispensable and earlier evolving aspects of sex would be concerned with macro-level DNA repair, and this indeed turns out to be the case. Mirzaghaderi & Hörandl (2016) find that the stages within the initial part of meiosis known as Prophase I (homologue pairing, double-strand break formation and strand exchange) are all concerned with accurate copying of properly (re)constituted whole chromosomes. These mechanisms reveal themselves to be vital in being invariably conserved throughout evolution, whereas other elements of meiosis (crossing-over formation and recombination) are not.

The next most indispensable element, as would be expected, deals with micro repair: by ploidy – chromosomes carrying the same genes being paired (diploidy) – whereby the expression of deleterious mutations can be reduced in their having to be paired up with a different version of the same gene (an allele) in the diploid form. Unless the mutant allele is dominant, it won't be expressed. Unlike the former stages, this one can be skipped for several generations (as in species that thereby are dubbed facultative rather than obligate in their sexual reproduction).

Bringing up the rear, as the process that is under least selective pressure, indicating that it's the most dispensable element, actually is what is usually most associated with sex – out-crossing recombination. Indeed, as Mirzaghaderi & Hörandl point out, variability in offspring *actually works against* the other, far more important mechanisms in sex.

SEX DID NOT EVOLVE TO PRODUCE VARIATION, BUT TO MAINTAIN GENOME INTEGRITY

This DNA repair primary function of sex, with the variation produced by out-crossing recombination an incidental by-product, is not a brand-new insight. It was outlined by Bernstein, Bernstein & Michod (2012), and in several papers after originally being formulated as long ago as 1977 (Bernstein). In a review, Gorelick & Heng (2011) build on extensive earlier work

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by Heng to spell out the profound implications of sex being concerned essentially with DNA repair: that sex functions to maintain the integrity of the genome (the genome and not the gene being the true information unit on which selection acts -- as is outlined here in later sections). It's only at the micro-evolutionary level where is allowed variation, that, therefore, is but minor, being just an unselected by-product of sex. A relatively insignificant mere hitch-hiker (an epiphenomenon) that occasionally may possibly allow new adaptation through a rare beneficial mutation arising and being disentangled from other genes on the same chromosome – what has been dubbed the ruby-in-the-rubbish argument (Peck, 1994).

Further elaborating this perspective, Gorelick & Villablanca (2018) explain that crossing-over recombination, rather than being the hallmark of sex, is instead the result of imperfect error correction – collateral damage caused by breaking up co-adapted gene complexes, which is known as recombination load. Though this does occur in meiosis, it is a far greater problem in mitosis (asexual division), and, therefore, there is vastly more variation produced in *a*sexual compared to sexual reproduction. This completely contradicts the claim of the variation theory of the function of sex.

The hitherto long-standing predominant view that sex serves to produce variation, Gorelick & Heng explain, stems from a major misunderstanding from over a century ago by Weismann (1891), that meiosis increases not only variation at the level of the gene (which it does) but also at the level of the chromosome (which it does not); Weismann failing to see that in meiosis one copy of each homologous chromosome is passed on to each daughter cell. The upshot of this misunderstanding is that the amount of variation produced by sex has long been hugely over-estimated: quantified by Gorelick & Villablanca (2018) as out by a factor of the order of 100,000. That there has been such a ready, enduring, uncorrected acceptance of this mistake is because major theory by Darwin (1859), as built upon by Fisher (1930), required a recurring reservoir of genetic variation. This profound mis-reading has persisted despite there being not only no convincing evidence in favour, but – as Gorelick & Heng stress – *all* of the evidence from many scientific fields (ecology, paleontology, population genetics, molecular biology and cancer biology), that sex overall actually *decreases* genetic variation in acting to conservatively filter out any major changes so as to preserve the integrity of the genome. This is a very large set of converging lines of evidence that no scientific investigation of the origin of sex should ever

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ignore, yet ignored it has been.

That the role of recombination is only to effect minor changes at the genic level shows up in sexual populations not adapting or doing so at a much slower rate than expected (Futuyma 2010), such that sex never would have arisen at all if its function were to produce variation, given that asexuality produces much more of it. This is as previously confirmed by Heng in his review of data in the literature, strongly supporting a reinterpretation that "the principal consequence of sexual reproduction is the reduction of drastic genetic diversity at the genome or chromosome level, resulting in the preservation of species identity rather than the provision of evolutionary diversity for future environmental challenges" (Heng, 2007, abstract). Sex actually "slows (constrains and restrains) evolution, enabling lineages to conservatively defer extinction. … sex is a brake, not an engine, of evolution. … (or) like a clutch, most of the time sex causes almost no change and, in fact, limits the speed of evolution to some narrow band" (Gorelick & Heng, 2011, p1096).

The genome-integrity hypothesis, however, albeit gaining ground, has not overtaken the generally accepted explanation of the origin of sex. With the perceived need for a reservoir of random genetic mutation upon which selection can act to bring about evolutionary change being undiminished, papers continue to be published purporting to uphold the variation theory.

THE MOST RECENT SUPPOSED EVIDENCE FOR THE VARIATION THEORY IS ANYTHING BUT

These actually undermine what they purport to bolster. It would appear that the heavy investment by some researchers in the status quo prompts interpretation of results from experiments as supportive of the variation theory when instead it is the 'genome integrity' hypothesis the data fits. Indeed, the rival hypothesis is not even considered as an alternative. Research is concerned simply with endorsing the variation theory vis-a-vis the null. This profound bias appears very much to be the case in the most important recent work on the origin of sex: McDonald, Rice & Desai's (2016) pioneering genomic sequencing study of how sex may work at the molecular level, and in Sharp & Otto's (2016) analytical review of it. Yet the key empirical finding of the study actually is re purging:

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> *Recent theory has argued that the fixation of strongly deleterious mutations can be common in adapting asexual populations. Our results provide the first direct experimental support for this hypothesis. In contrast, recombination decouples hitch-hiking mutations from their initial background, and we identify no deleterious mutations that fix in sexual populations. (McDonald et al p. 234).*

Instead of this being the main conclusion in the abstract, it is downplayed as a subsidiary finding; McDonald et al preferring instead to state in the final sentence that: "Our results demonstrate that sex both speeds adaptation and alters its molecular signature by allowing natural selection to more efficiently sort beneficial from deleterious mutations".

In the previous sentence, they relegate their principal empirical result to the status of a mere additional finding: "We *also show* that substantially deleterious mutations hitch-hike to fixation in adapting asexual populations. In contrast, recombination prevents such mutations from fixing" (my italics).

The paper is titled *Sex speeds adaptation by altering the dynamics of molecular evolution*, but more accurately would be titled *Sex slows maladaptation*.

The principal empirical finding is picked up by Sharp & Otto, who, furthermore, anchor the remarkable quantitative difference between sexual and asexual reproduction with respect to deleterious mutation:

McDonald et al were able to establish that selective interference was substantial in the absence of sex: several deleterious mutations rose to high frequency in the asexual populations through hitch-hiking with beneficial mutations, as seen previously. By contrast, in sexual populations, deleterious mutations that began to spread were uncoupled from beneficial mutations during subsequent rounds of recombination and then declined in frequency. As a consequence, less than a quarter as many mutations reached high frequency and fitness rose almost twice as much in the sexual populations. (p. 754)

In the following sentence, furthermore, Sharp & Otto make it clear that any benefit conferred by sex in respect of beneficial mutation is merely a *subsidiary* issue: "*In addition*, McDonald et al observed that sex allowed new beneficial mutations to combine with alternative alleles maintained by frequency-dependent selection, allowing for selective sweeps without disrupting a stable polymorphism" (my italics). Yet Sharp & Otto go on to mislead in their review

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after the manner of the authors of the original study. Despite the principal finding of McDonald et al pointedly elucidated by Sharp & Otto as being that *deleterious mutations are more than four times less likely to reach high frequency in sexual compared to asexual populations*; they concern themselves instead with the recruiting of beneficial ones. Rather than focusing on the striking conservation conferred by sex in purging deleterious mutation, Sharp & Otto categorically state as their conclusion: "we can say definitively that sex reduced selective interference, uncoupling beneficial alleles from the deleterious alleles in their genetic background" (p.758). So just as did McDonald et al, the authors fail to properly summarise the findings and go so far as to make an unwarranted claim in highlighting the merely additional whilst ignoring the principal result. This is misleading by major omission. If "uncoupling beneficial alleles" is seen merely as an ambiguous phrase, in that the corollary is likewise uncoupling of deleterious alleles; there is no mistaking the intended message. Sharp & Otto appear to be concerned only with trying to support the failing ruby-in-the-rubbish theory of sex, pointedly contradicting the claim of the title of their paper, *Evolution of sex: using experimental genomics to select among competing theories*.

Jaffe (2018) not dissimilarly appears to succumb to confirmation bias and views sex in this heavily distorted fashion: as primarily to "conserve alleles that might be useful in the future". This is to fail to point out even as a possibility that his "test" that alleles undergo in sex, is to weed out the vast bulk of mutation as the deleterious material it is. In common with some others of the 'variation' camp aware of the deficiencies of the theory, Jaffe backtracks to call for a pluralistic model. Most recently in defensive retreat there has been invoked severe ecological interactive complexity (Good et al, 2017), which a commentary in the same journal issue has dubbed (in reference to Darwin's famous phrase), *the tangled bank* (Plotkin, 2017). In the same vein, Luijckx et al (2017), in their paper, *Higher rates of sex evolve during adaptation to more complex environments*, seem merely to assume that variation and selection to fixation of novel beneficial alleles underpins their findings, as if there were an absence of a competing hypothesis, never mind that the hypothesis that sex maintains genomic integrity would not merely explain their findings just as well, but better. With asexuality actually more able – far more able – to give rise to variation than sex, then, on the variation hypothesis, sex ought to evolve *less* in the face of complex environments, not more.

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These papers present no effective defence of the variation theory. It is not just that in trying to rescue an ailing theory it is anyway compromised in the lack of parsimony. Complexity serves to hide from scrutiny, and data then becomes much more ambiguous as to interpretation at the very juncture when testing to exclude an alternative hypothesis has become especially necessary.

THE-RUBY-IN-THE-RUBBISH POSITION WAS ALWAYS FLAWED

These authors entirely ignore, first, that the "genetic background" is hardly the relatively tiny total number of new mutations they cite (even including their gene neighbours from which they have to be disentanged). Rather, it's the long-evolved well-functioning whole genome, whereby the inter-connectivity of all genes means that selection acts on the organism as a whole; on overall condition (the now fully confirmed notion of genic capture: see the section below on sexual selection). They ignore, second, that with the vast majority of mutations being deleterious, the main supporting function of sex is purifying selection (purging). It is perverse to be concerned instead merely with the shadow possibility that the small amount of residual, potentially non-deleterious mutation, may then have a better chance of being in a context to be beneficial and thereby to fix. In eschewing, in the face of evidence and argument, any cognisance of sex as conservation in favour of considering it as a means of facilitating new adaptation, there would appear to be confirmation bias in the extreme.

Adherents of the ruby-in-the-rubbish position appear to fail to appreciate that populations facing environmental change threatening local extinction would be expected to have only an extraordinarily low chance that a recent mutation or novel genetic recombination (even assuming it could be disentangled from its chromosomal cohorts) might accidentally confer on an individual some protection sufficient to engender changes in just the right way as to weather the storm. Instead, it would be anticipated that, with the reproductive group maintained at an optimum or near maximum fitness through purifying selection, there might be some chance of a few either statistically outlying or particularly optimised individuals managing to hang-on, even as the rest of the population succumbs. We know that the highly competitive nature of males combined with the highly choosy nature of females can weed out from reproduction even high-functioning (in not being the high*est* functioning) individuals in a zero-sum game that tends to (though doesn't fully) become a runaway phenomenon, with males indicating their fitness via

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what has been termed costly signalling. In this way, the male is constantly pushed to maximise all of his qualities in conjunction (that is, not to the detriment of, if not synergistically) with each other; just as is needed, in readiness for threats to local extinction, whether recurring and thereby anticipated or hitherto unseen, to perennially hone the gene pool. [Note that there is no introduction here of inappropriate notions of group selection; the stale debate on that topic having resolved into several empirically equivalent theoretical positions, and not just multi-level selection, satisfactorily explaining mutualism: see referenced discussions in several of the present author's papers.] This fundamental and highly robust mechanism of evolution surely dwarfs the minuscule chance of random beneficial mutation in its potential for avoiding local extinction.

Also clouding matters is the mistaken notion that for the variation theory to be challenged it needs to be demonstrated that there is some other, single benefit to fully offset the two-fold cost of sex (from considering that the asexual mode achieves double the rate of reproduction, in that both parties give birth, not just one of them). On this basis, purging has been deemed to be inadequate, but through failing to acknowledge that purging is only a subset of DNA repair mechanism, and is the function not of sex per se but specifically of the sexes. The cost of the sexes is offset not just by the benefit of purging (micro-level DNA repair) but also by the benefit of macro-level DNA repair, given that the latter already is apparent in sex before the sexes emerge. The test for purging, therefore, is only to explain the additional cost of the sexes, not the additional cost of sex per se: the cost of the sexes minus the benefit of sex. Thus is left far less to account for than a two-fold cost differential. Consequently, data falling short of showing that sex is twice as efficient as asexual reproduction cannot be dismissed as failing to challenge the variation theory. In any case, that purging *even on its own* renders sex more than twice as efficient as asexual reproduction is shown by Lumley (2015).

Notwithstanding attempts to uphold and defend the variation hypothesis, then, this hitherto predominant view appears set to change towards a new consensus on sex as assuring genome integrity, in the manner of a paradigm shift. The next question, is how do the sexes serve the overall function of sex of assuring genome integrity? Arising as they do in the wake of the later phases of meiosis that address the problem of repairing not macro-level but micro-level DNA damage, the expectation is that the sexes would further contribute to this, by dealing with deleterious mutations.

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ANISOGAMY IS NOT THE ORIGIN OR INITIAL MANIFESTATION OF THE SEXES

In any account of the origin of the sexes, it is necessary to specify what the sexes are at root, instead of simply assuming that they are distinguished by size (and/or number) disparity of sex cells (gametes), as the sexes usually are defined. As has long been recognised, evolutionarily prior to any male / female distinction, and before germ-line sequestration (the separation of gametes from somatic cells, instead of the individual and the gamete being one and the same), individuals / gametes are indistinguishable morphologically or in any way phenotypically. This is the case for some extant species, very many extinct, and, it is presumed, ultimately for the common ancestry of all species. It's a condition dubbed *isogamy*, meaning literally *equal marriage*, but with the more specific meaning in biology of equal-*sized gametes*; as opposed to *anisogamy*. It might be thought that the sexes arose through polarisation in size of formerly same-sized gametes / individuals, but the question is begged: what drives this? It must have a genetic basis, so how did this arise? A dominant theoretical position has been that anisogamy is the result of intra-genomic conflict, but, again, such conflict ensues from a genetic difference that indicates or is in itself some prototypical form of the sexes, so can hardly account for their emergence. The same applies, self-evidently, to a similar hypothesis of parasitism of one gamete form on another. However, far from one gamete form being advantaged at the expense of the other, models reveal that anisogamy produces increased fitness for both.

Roughgarden & Iyer (2011) show that anisogamy evolves if large zygotes are favoured and the difference in gamete sizes maximises the rate at which gametes encounter each other, and hence the number of zygotes produced. This is also the conclusion of Lehtonen, Kokko & Parker (2016) in the most recent review of the topic. They point out that isogamy becomes evolutionarily unstable if gametes have difficulty finding each other (as when they are at a distance). Here, by reason of the need for greater efficiency, populations evolve into two specialised complementary subsets of majority small motile searcher gametes (microgametes) and minority larger, sedentary gametes (macrogametes). The far lower investment required in microgametes means that the wastage cost of their being in surplus is insignificant in comparison to the benefit of the additional search capacity (reducing the time to and uncertainty of gamete fusion – syngamy) through their much greater number. The alternative -- a uniform set of medium-sized, merely semi-motile gametes – would entail all of them being average-to-poor in search ability, leading to a lower total number of syngamous sex cells (sex

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cells fused with another in a zygote) and a longer time taken for all pairing-up in syngamy to be completed. Note that size disparity between subsets of gametes also makes sense in the evolution from unicellular to multicellular species, and more generally with increasing adult mass. The problem of the vulnerability and dependence of the sub-adult in the prolonged period of growth of the zygote, to an extent can be ameliorated by its possessing a sizeable complement of nutritional resources contributed by the macrogamete, and thereby already being large at the outset of development.

Lehtonen, Kokko & Parker neatly explain that anisogamy becomes in effect an evolutionary valve, with even low levels of (what we might call) sperm competition usually preventing any reversion to isogamy:

> *As soon as gamete sizes have diverged and one gamete type outnumbers the other, many gametes of the more numerous type (sperm) are destined to remain unfertilized. Because it is not known in advance which male gametes will be successful, a relatively small increase in the reserves of the few successful sperm would require wasting the same amount of extra provisioning on a large number of unsuccessful sperm. On the other hand, even a relatively large change in the size of a tiny sperm can still be very small in relation to the size of the egg, therefore contributing little to the survival of the zygote. The result is that increasing zygote provisioning by a significant amount requires a large decrease in micro-gamete numbers, with a corresponding decrease in sperm competition ability. (p. 1165)*

Conversely, anisogamy drives competition between sperm (that is, male individuals: there is no distinction at this phylogenetic level between somatic and sex cells; there being just a single cell), in that the more numerous form of gamete has far more scope to increase fertilisation probability. Therefore, it becomes adaptive to evolve mechanisms to compete – in more evolutionarily advanced organisms, between somatic individuals as well as between their sex cells (and both before and after ejaculation). The question, though, is whether or not a size divergence begins spontaneously – by a chance initial distinction, or through some incidental process – or if there is already a distinction between two forms that in turn provides the basis of an ensuing morphological split. It turns out that it is the latter. *Isogamy* is a misnomer. That is, *isogamy* defined in terms of not just size but any sort of apparent (phenotypic) difference is a misnomer.

This is the issue for any and every hypothesis proffered for the origin of the sexes if it is

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presumed that it is entailed in the change from isogamy to anisogamy. Da Silva (2017) puts forward a game-theoretic conceptualisation of competition among gamete-size alleles within mating-types, which model he classes with others in the category of disruptive selection, contrasting (as da Silva sees it) with those in terms of gamete limitation (or intra-cellular conflict). Lehtonen, Kokko & Parker's paper isn't cited – presumably, at the time of writing it was still to be published. Although da Silva may have a viable rival explanation for the onset of anisogamy, it hardly befits his title, *The evolution of the sexes*. The mistaken assumption that "gamete dimorphism … defines sexes" is stated in the first sentence of the introduction. As da Silva himself outlines, prior to the sexes there are mating-types. And like sexes, mating-types, as the very term for them denotes, are different, with all individuals being either of one or of the other of two complementary forms. Mating-types appear to be sexes in all but name.

THE SEXES BEGIN AS MATING-TYPES, DISTINGUISHED NOT PHENOTYPICALLY BUT GENETICALLY

The seemingly all-identical isogamous gametes, albeit morphologically (re form or structure) and in any other respect phenotypically (re observable characteristic) indeed indistinguishable, nevertheless differ genetically. Invariably, isogamous gametes are actually of at least (and usually) two contrasting, complementary mating-types, denoted + and -, which can mate only between and not within type. Note that these are not gamete size alleles as proposed by da Silva, which would be derivative. Consequently, discussion of the locus of the emergence of the sexes has to shift from anisogamy to mating-type. With the presence of different mating-types, isogamy plays host to what can be termed sexual or proto-sexual selection *before* there is any anisogamy. So it is not the transition from isogamy to anisogamy that is key to understanding the basis of the sexes, but in how mating-type arises.

That the emergence of anisogamy from isogamy is of no import to the origin of sex is now evident in molecular research. Hamaji et al (2018) show that the shift from mating-type to sexes is effected by a tiny initial change in just one of the two small genes determining mating-type, confirming the finding by Geng, De Hoff & Umen (2014) of a very simple genetic continuity between mating-type determination and sex determination. The two sexes emerge before any phenotypic sexual dimorphism. Males and females begin as isogamous. Anisogamy truly is derivative: the product of differentiation by sex rather than its cause.

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The phenomenon of mating-type most recently is comprehensively reviewed by Hadjivasiliou & Pomiankowski (2016), who conclude that it cannot have arisen through any hypothesis hitherto proposed. Those concerning in-breeding avoidance and uni-parental inheritance of cytoplasm functioning to purge mitochondrial DNA mutation (see below) or (so-called) selfish elements both fall, since instances of in-breeding and bi-parental inheritance can occur notwithstanding the presence of a mating-type system. Instead, the authors follow up the work by Hoekstra (1982) on mating-type as signalling between gametes (which they find to be universally asymmetric and necessarily so) for prospective partner recognition and pairing. Otherwise, with all gametes issuing the same molecular signature, then given the nature of chemical diffusion, a gamete's receptors would be swamped by its own secretions of identifying / advertising proteins, rendering it incapable of detecting those emitted by a potential partner gamete. Gametes would never be able to attract and locate each other. The authors have now gone on themselves to fully model the emergence of gamete signalling (Hadjivasiliou & Pomiankowski, forthcoming).

With (usually) an initial disparity in number between different mating-types, those of the less numerous type will more easily successfully mate (fuse with those of the other, *more* numerous type in syngamy) than those of the more numerous type. Hence, the rare gametes still available for mating decline disproportionately, and therefore the task gets progressively harder to identify, locate and approach them. Consequently, the probability of any one individual of the more numerous mating-type remaining un-mated increases. This sets up a selection pressure on the more numerous mating-type to mate early. From what may be initially an almost negligible difference that arises by chance or for some incidental reason, a polarisation naturally ensues whereby one of the mating-types is then obliged to make more effort than the other, which, over time, becomes ever increasingly the case – a runaway phenomenon of increasing competitiveness.

In this it might be thought there is the very beginnings of competitiveness being a quintessentially male trait (Moxon, 2015), and that herein is the defining male characteristic. However, competitiveness is the corollary of greater selection, and with selection pressure being the underlying driver, then it seems that the male (or proto-male) is best defined in terms of selection rather than competition. The mating-type subject to the greater selection therefore in

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principle would be the one deemed *male* or *proto-male*.

A model based on this simple logic of inevitable skewing, Hadjivasiliou & Pomiankowski claim, is superior to previous hypotheses, in being applicable to all of the various mating-type systems seen in nature. It's a model of parsimony, requiring nothing antecedent, being, as it were, a pure first cause.

HYPOTHESES IN TERMS OF MITOCHONDRIAL DNA ARE LEFT WANTING

One (or a more specific version of one) of these previous hypotheses has been put forward by Radzvilavicius (2017) as a unified theory to explain the origin of sex and its developments (notably a separate germ-line): that this is the result of the need to deal with mutation in mitochondrial DNA. [Mt DNA, unusually for DNA, is not in the cell nucleus but the cytoplasm: within the mitochondria themselves – see further discussion below.] This again goes against the simple model of the asymmetry of mating-type arising by chance, but the claim is anyway a weak one: "… mitochondria *could* have represented *one* of the driving forces behind the origin of sexual life cycles" (Radzvilavicius, 2017 p37 – my italics). In other words, in order to account for the origin of sex, the proposed need to deal with Mt DNA mutation is neither necessary nor sufficient.

The question had already been settled by Hadjivasiliou, Lane, Seymour & Pomiankowski (2013), who conclude in their abstract that "*only when two mating-types exist beforehand* can associated UPI (uni-parental inheritance) mutants spread to fixation under the pressure of high mitochondrial mutation rate, large mitochondrial population size and selfish mutants" (my italics). This finding is not new: as the authors themselves point out, it echoes that of Hastings (1992), and serves to undermine all of the Mt DNA hypotheses – including the original one by Nick Lane (Hadjivasiliou, Pomiankowski, Seymour & Lane, 2012), about a supposed need to co-ordinate between the different complements of mitochondria-controlling DNA in the cell cytoplasm (ie, within the mitochondria themselves) and in the cell nucleus.

Furthermore, new thinking from the Nick Lane camp is that purging Mt DNA mutation does not, after all, drive the emergence of the two sexes in the wake of the sequestration of a dedicated separate germ-line (tissue with the sole function of producing gametes, distinct from normal, somatic cells). It is now realised that it is the other way round: the emergence of the

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sexes is a prerequisite for a separate germ-line to evolve. Radzvilavicius et al (2016) conclude (p 3) that: "germ-line sequestration is plainly a secondary adaptation — uni-parental inheritance and oogamy arose before oocyte sequestration in early development, and the evolution of two sexes cannot simply be a matter of protecting template mitochondria" (oogamy being the phenomenon of very large oocytes – eggs).

The upshot is that the various previous Mt DNA mutation hypotheses and the new, mating-type (what might be termed) chance-change hypothesis of the origin of the sexes are neither in competition nor account for overlapping phenomena (or different aspects of the same phenomenon), but describe two different successive parts of a *sequence*. The chance-change phenomenon arises first, inevitably providing scope for differential selection, and thereby the evolution of the second phenomenon, a mechanism to deal with Mt DNA mutation, perhaps initially in the form of a / the major aspect of mating-types / the sexes. In other words, the natural occurrence of a small degree of asymmetry is recruited by the evolutionary process to serve the function of dealing with an emerging problem; namely, the accumulation of Mt DNA mutations. Mating-types / sexes came first, with mechanism to deal with Mt DNA mutation a subsequent development. But this is not to say that this latter development is unique in dealing with mutation, nor even necessarily the first such mechanism. It may be a sub-set of much wider purging. If the sexes can be shown to serve to purge mutations of one particular part of the genome, then the suspicion must be that this is a more general principle, and that the sexes serve to deal with the mutational load of the genome as a whole. As this anyway is what is emerging from mounting evidence as set to overturn the variation theory, then the hypothesising about Mt DNA becomes an additional line of evidence in that regard.

SELECTION IS THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE

To reiterate and expand: from the onset of differential selection according to mating-type, the corollary of competition manifests as the generic male characteristics of motility and search, and then wider forms of male intra-sexual contest. So the origin of the male-female distinction is not the size difference in anisogamy (the notion of the female always being the larger gamete), nor the related supposed basis of distinguishing the sexes in terms of investment – that females always invest more in offspring than do males. [In any case, there is doubt as to whether or not this invariably holds. There are apparent exceptions whereby the male may be the overall greater

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investor in offspring. In ground-nesting birds there is far greater predation on the parenting bird, who is already exposed on the ground and even more so in trying to defend its highly vulnerable offspring. This makes it impossible for the female, as the limiting factor in reproduction, to perform this function. It is not a case of males taking on the female role per se, but of males being obliged to extend their intra-sexual competitiveness into what usually would be a female domain, because females have defaulted to their core reproductive function. The female still invests heavily in offspring (in gestation), but it may be that by some measures this investment is outweighed by the need for that which is loaded on to the male.]

Both greater size and greater investment by the female are derivative; just as are male motility, the facility to search, and competitiveness itself. All are derived from a natural concomitant of assortment: a random or incidentally caused disparity in numbers inherently entailing differential selection. The basis of the origin of the sexes is, simply, *selection*; selection acting disproportionately on what thereby would be deemed the (proto-)male.

The significance of this is that from this unimportant slight difference, the opportunity then arises for the evolutionary process to recruit this male-biased selection as a vehicle for off-loading accumulating mutations (almost all of which, it has long been recognised, will be deleterious – synergistically so: at best mildly deleterious rather than neutral). This is purging or purifying, through selection acting predominantly on the male. Thus, the female is spared to focus on and invest in reproduction, and thereby to become increasingly the limiting factor in reproduction. In turn, the male is required to be ever more subject to sex-differential selection, in a ratcheting-up to polarise the sexes. This would be expected then to drive the evolution of mechanisms in effect to quarantine deleterious mutation on the male side of the lineage in readiness to be purged, by such mutation being more expressed and/or more exposed in a male context.

There are several mechanisms at work here. It is now known that there is far greater inheritance of male genetic material that actually is expressed, through a process as yet not understood together with so-called 'imprinting' (an allele is 'tagged' as being from the male parent and when it's transcribed in offspring the tag renders it dominant to other alleles), creating a large skew in favour of male-derived alleles (Crowley et al, 2015). Competitiveness in males is in itself the key mode of both expression and exposure, which drives the male sociality

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of hierarchy (dominance and/or prestige), ranking males in terms of genetic quality, to then be subject to female choice. Another mechanism would be the male being the heterogametic sex: the one with different (X & Y) rather than identical (X & X) sex chromosomes, so that sex-linked alleles are exposed singly instead of being masked by its opposite number on the parallel chromosome. Yet another is evident in respect of the afore-mentioned Mt DNA, which, with its DNA unlike any other in being contained within the organelle itself, can be purged of accumulated deleterious mutation by excluding male mitochondria from the zygote, leaving all Mt DNA replication to be from mitochondria within female gametes. This is a simple, extreme mechanism whereby *all* Mt DNA mutation within males is eliminated. The necessity of this is because Mt DNA is much more susceptible than other DNA to error (structural damage and mutation) through the products of respiration (energy production) such as free radicals -- mitochondria being the organelles responsible for respiration -- and there are a very large number of cell divisions in spermatogenesis compared to oogenesis.

Replication in the course of human spermatogonial stem cells begin (mitotic) division from the onset of puberty at the rate of one every sixteen days, so that the sperm of men by their 64th birthday are the product of 1,152 divisions. By complete contrast, ova (oocytes, eggs) are produced pre-natally almost complete, having undergone not even a single meiotic round – just part of the first of a mere two meiotic divisions required for the final production of the egg. This first is held in abeyance as the ovum is simply stored until ovulation, upon which meiosis is resumed, to complete meiosis I and then meiosis II. Nevertheless, with necessarily still some iterated replication (as with sperm, over 30 mitotic divisions before meiosis begins), then inevitably is entailed significant accumulation of mutation, albeit a very small amount in comparison to what would occur in male gametes. Consequently, in a process known as atresia, ova are subject to attrition during maturation, such that any eggs with a significant Mt DNA mutational load are discarded, in the human case leaving only 10% to achieve viability. (eg, May-Panloup et al, 2016). So here the female takes on what is normally the male role of 'genetic filter', though the 100% elimination in the male in effect trumps the 90% purging in the female. It could be considered that the rule of more selection acting on the male is invariable, or that the case of Mt DNA is the exception that proves the rule. Either way, overall, with the vast bulk of purging occurring in the male, the principle holds that differential selection according to sex defines *male*.

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EVIDENCE OF DELETERIOUS MUTATION REQUIRING EXTRA SELECTION ON THE MALE

The generality that overall selection acts much more on males than on females has long been regarded as obvious and not an empirical question. Yet when the notion of purging via the male being the very function of the male and why the male arose was put forward by Wirt Atmar (1991) in his concept of the male genetic filter, it was ignored. Despite publication in the leading journal, *Animal Behaviour*, there are just two citing authors other than the present one. It seems to have been an innovative hypothesis too far, against the grain of contemporary theorising about sex. West-Eberhard (2005) entirely independently (and seemingly in ignorance of Atmar) originated the very same analysis of the male functioning as what she termed the mutational-cleanser. This was or should have been harder to ignore, given, by then, Siller's (2001) modelling that the far greater differential in reproductive output among males through competition over mating serves to purge deleterious mutation, even whether or not there is epistasis (synergistic interaction between genes); and similarly Agrawal (2001) showed that if mutations are more deleterious in males then the extra selection on males could eliminate the cost of sex (and, again, irrespective of epistasis). On top of this modelling had come evidence that selection acting on males removed experimentally induced mutations to the extent that it indicated the likelihood that purging could offset the two-fold cost of sex (Radwan, 2004). That there is always more selection on the male half of the lineage across all loci was found in indirect evidence by Whitlock & Agrawal (2009), then a review of comparative genomics projects revealed in direct evidence that selection was always stronger on males (Singh & Artieri, 2010); this being confirmed across the animal kingdom by Janicke et al, 2016 -- Janicke et al (2018) most recently finding that this prevents species extinction (though the authors remain open-minded as to the mechanism). That greater selection specifically on males results in reduced mutational load has been demonstrated experimentally by, for example, Mallet et al (2011: *Experimental mutation accumulation on the X chromosome of Drosophila melanogaster reveals stronger selection on males than females*), McGuigan, Petfield & Blows (2011: *Reducing mutation load through sexual selection on males*), Harrison et al (2015: *Sexual selection drives evolution and rapid turnover of male gene expression*); most recently, Noël et al (2019: *Sexual selection and inbreeding: Two efficient ways to limit the accumulation of deleterious mutations*).

There is abundant evidence, then, from both experiment and modelling, that invariably selection acts more on males than on females, clearly showing that this is a defining basis of the

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distinction between the sexes. Confidence in this conclusion is increased still further with the significance of sexual selection to the emergence of sex as an improvement on asexual reproduction.

SEXUAL SELECTION IS CORE TO WHY SEXUAL ECLIPSED ASEXUAL REPRODUCTION

Roze & Otto (2012), in a simulation of an analytical model to precisely quantify effects, find that sexual reproduction evolves in preference to *a*sexual if deleterious mutations are purged more through males, *irrespective of any purgation through females*, including if there is *no selection through females at all*. This makes sense in that females overall are fitter than males and gain further in fitness from selection on males producing their (what have been dubbed) sexy sons (who provide their mothers with more and higher-genetic-quality grandsons).

It is sexual selection that cements sex to evolve to be more than occasional among cycles of asexual reproduction (facultative sex), instead becoming obligate (invariable, with no asexual interludes) (Kleiman & Hadany, 2015). The seminal finding here is that obligate sex displaces facultative sex even if the average fitness of offspring is reduced. This is because of the far greater reproductive success of obligately-sexual males: the large reproductive skew among males that sexual selection achieves – even to the point where a single very-high-genetic-quality male could impregnate all females within the local reproductive group.

That sexual selection is key to sexual reproduction is experimentally demonstrated and explained by Lumley et al (2015), who find that lineages previously featuring sexual selection are twice as resistant to extinction – they survive for twice as many generations – compared to those which had been absent sexual selection. This is the result of *genic capture*: the understanding that with genes providing mutual context to one another, competition between males leading to success in being sexually chosen depends on all aspects of an individual's condition. In this way, sexual selection acts on all the genes of the genome, driving considerable variance in male reproductive success, with even the average father carrying a much-reduced mutational load compared to the mean across all males. Hitherto it had been assumed that purging takes place only at certain loci where there is synergy (greater than merely additive combined effect) between deleterious mutations, and that unless this purging is particularly strong (to make up for the absence of such synergy over the great bulk of the genome) the conclusion would be that there is insufficient purging for sexual selection to be of significant benefit. Studies focusing only

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on such a restricted understanding of genetic synergy are bound to lead to under-representation of the impact of sexual selection. Lumley et al show that through genic capture sexual selection across the whole genome is so powerful that it is more than enough to compensate for the so-called two-fold cost of sex – though see above why this anyway is not necessary. The reality of genic capture at the molecular level finally has been established (Dugand, Tomkins & Kenington, 2019), fully confirming the phenomenon.

Interestingly, this in itself has adverse implications for the variation theory. Without cognisance of genic capture, its proponents envisaged a problem dubbed the lek paradox, whereby female choice seemingly would progressively reduce variation and undermine evolution. Consequently, it was assumed that much variation comes from outside the local gene pool: from another population in a very different environment, such that genes that are adaptive in one are maladaptive in the other. However, that's an implausible conjecture. It would be a very unusual gene that has utility in one sub-population of a species but not in another, when they would have to be neighbours for the gene admixture to take place, and, therefore, are hardly likely to have environments sufficiently different to prompt contrasting adaptation. Furthermore, adaptation to changing environment is anyway entrenched in the local gene pool, in that genes (and epigenetic mechanisms) conferring tolerance of any recurring changes are conserved in their anticipation -- these being overwhelmingly the sort of changes locally experienced. Inasmuch as the variation theory was bolstered in being employed to explain the lek paradox, it was undermined when the lek paradox became a paradox no more with the appreciation of genic capture; given genic capture likewise underpins the genome-integrity hypothesis and the related understanding of the function of the sexes as purging mutation.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The present hypothesis that the sexes function to purge deleterious mutation is fully congruent with the gathering profound shift in thinking about the origin and nature of sex: the prospect of the variation theory being overturned in favour of the new hypothesis of maintenance of genome integrity, through repairing DNA. The view of the male being the sex upon which most selection acts is the obvious one that can be integrated into the wider analysis of the function of sex; the only one that would make sense. As would be expected from the sexes evolving after the later stages of meiosis, their function is part of micro-level rather than macro-

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level DNA repair mechanism. That the overall function of sex to ensure the integrity of the genome subsumes the function of the male as genetic filter / mutational cleanser (complementing the female reproductive function, which is thereby unencumbered), provides the latter notion with an important additional line of supporting evidence.

It's a striking finding that purging is overwhelmingly or effectively wholly via the male, but this in no way means that no part is played by the female. The male may be the vehicle or conduit of selection, but the female plays an equally crucial, perfectly complementary part in being the *agent* of selection. Males usually are considered the agentic sex, and here indeed this is the case and conspicuously so, in their response to being driven to mutually compete – though note that male competitiveness is here revealed as instrumental rather than primary. Females, however, are agentic in the actual process of selection, in being the active choosers after assessing male genetic quality. The female is far from the passive reproducer. The purging function of the sexes is very much a system across both sexes; not a function of just one sex with the other in its shadow. The picture that emerges of the sexes usurps a simple one of competitive males and reproducing females. It's the more nuanced one of males and females working together to deal with the ongoing mutational threat to future generations inherent in life.

This is foundational, given that with their importance to genome integrity the sexes hardly would be lost or exapted through the course of evolution. On the contrary, they would be evolutionarily very highly conserved. Organismal complexity (the facility to exhibit cultural development not excluded) does not change this, in that it cannot have evolved other than to function to feed back to fine-tune and reinforce its own biological basis (Moxon, 2010). The upshot is that evolved sophistication is ever better manifestation and efficient expression of biological drives: the antithesis of an assumption that what is sex-typical is merely derivative and functionally divergent. Albeit there has to be care in any interpretation tracing far back through evolution, this is not the problem it might appear. Of course, there may be second-order effects that evolve to be no longer apparently sex-typical, and, conversely, there may be the seemingly sex-typical but which arise through convergence, not originating as a male/female manifestation. However, against the continual renewal and honing of what is more directly male/female expression, all else by comparison likely tends to be lost, leaving foundational biology ever shining through.

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To very well illustrate: as a mix of these different trajectories, and what, therefore, might be expected thereby to obscure a basis in the male/female divide, are human personality traits. Yet the separation of male and female is so robust in terms of personality that analysis at the level of 10 to 20 traits shows a 90% separation between the sexes (Del Giudice, Booth & Irwing, 2012). That's tantamount to 100% given the error margins in psychology. So at a resolution more refined than the big five, personality variables crystallise out to be not just sex-typical but effectively sex-specific. This extraordinary finding is beyond even what might be anticipated from an understanding of the male/female divide being at the root of sociality and psychology, underscoring its profundity, and allaying any concern that the basis of sex and the sexes as found using simulation or lower animal models somehow would not be applicable to humans. [It is standard in biology to use simple model species and simulation for study to better understand or establish a general principle, being as it's easier to tease out what is going on. It doesn't invalidate the application of findings of a general principle across species. It would be more of an issue to use complex model species, in that there are more likely to be aspects peculiar to the species clouding the principle under investigation.]

The conclusion herein about the sexes has endless implications for the necessarily bottom-up elucidation of human sex differences from what now can be seen to be an underlying and persisting sex *dichotomy*. This facilitates (and augments an already substantial body of) explanation of all aspects of social structure/dynamics, behaviour and cognition, as being in many or most respects sex-specific. It confirms the need for and heralds a revolution in the understanding of human sociality and psychology in terms of radical distinction between the sexes going far beyond mere role – *role* denotes social construction, of course; which notion is now an anachronism in the face of the voluminous evidence of biological basis accruing over several decades.

For so long, male function has not been understood. There has been a failure to recognise that the male contribution to reproduction is as effortful and vital as is that by the female – hardly mere insemination. Male effort has been mis-read and dismissed as mere bidding for individual power: a radically false analysis when it is not appreciated that this is instrumental to what in effect is co-operative differential allocation of reproduction. Whereas the female invests heavily in the wake of conception, the male invests heavily *prior* to conception. Hitherto, the

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male has been regarded as the mere foil to the heavy investment in reproduction that renders the female the logjam (the limiting factor) in reproduction – reproduction overall is expandable by increasing the number of females, not by increasing the number of males. In this sense, males are relatively expendable, and hence the default of the female being held in high regard. With greater understanding of the male contribution, it becomes apparent that males collectively make a huge effort in their mutual fierce competition so as to hone what becomes the filtered genetic input to the next generation. The failure to appreciate the male's function appears to be an ultimate instance of the fallacy of guilt by association. The underlying biological reality of the male being the vehicle for the heightened expression and exposure of deleterious mutation (so as to eliminate it through selection) appears to have translated into negative attitudes towards males generically.

With the contrasting respective standard impressions of the sexes revealed to be natural deep-seated prejudices, accounting for our denigrating the male whilst lauding the female, sense can be made of the overall scientific conclusion that instead of the expected misogyny there is philogyny, and in place of anticipated philandry there is misandry (Moxon, 2018). The apotheosis of this truth inversion is contemporary (radical) feminism, which now can be seen as in essence or underpinned by a paleo-conservatism, as it were. A proper understanding of the origin and nature of the sexes exposes much if not all current supposedly progressive wisdom about men and women to be ideological nonsense, reinforced by, if not actually based in much apparent common-sense that in reality is profound anti-male (and pro-female) bias.

All this has a significance for the future of science in that the life sciences are now at risk of contagion from what has infected much of social science -- bugs more pervasive than any already contracted. Feminism and the rest of identity politics has been adopted to the extent that much social science consists of extreme-ideological non- or anti-scientific constructs driving research in a tautological loop of what thereby can appear to have internal consistency yet may have no external validity at all. Biology is viewed a threat in that it can reveal the absence of external validity and bring baseless politicised social science constructs crashing down, so there is and will be far more effort similarly to co-opt biology. In the face of this, proper scientific investigation must be upheld in respect of research into the function of the sexes and its ramifications. Simply ignoring the extreme ideological milieu will not work. Either through an

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ideological truth-inversion prism or in the light of science, a choice will have to be made as to which prevails in our culture of two starkly contrasting views: a complete fiction or the full truth about the sexes.

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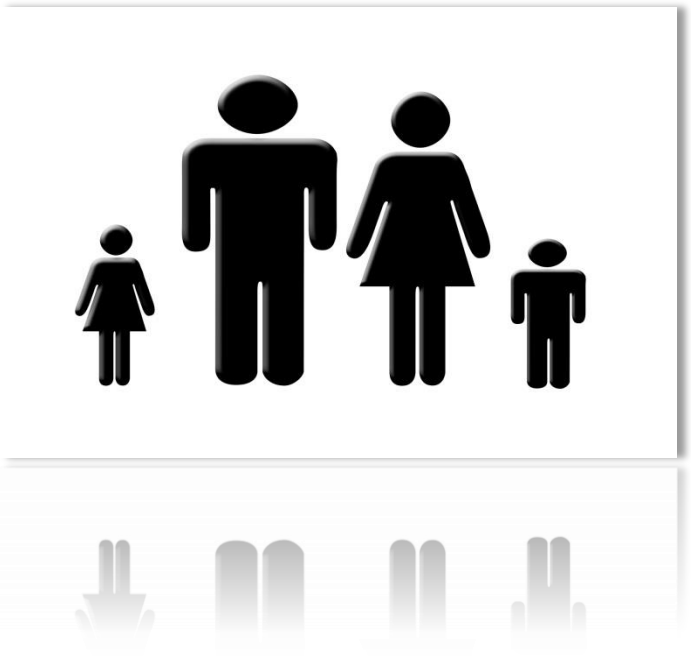

INTRODUCTION TO MAMMALIAN AND HUMAN DIMORPHISM: A BIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING TRUE MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Alaric Naudé

ABSTRACT

Sexual dimorphism is highly observable throughout the animal kingdom; however, it is especially emphasized in mammalian physiology and biomechanics. Sexual dimorphism is a highly advantageous strategy that allows for specialization and increases the efficiency of the family unit in their attempts at survival. Several sexually dimorphic features in Homo Sapiens are discussed, spanning from innate ability to the biomechanical features that limit behavioral expression and form stable sociobiological hierarchies that are mutually beneficial to individual survival as well as that of offspring. This paper discusses how following the biological parameters of biology allows for happier individuals, both male and female, who are more supportive of their mates and better at rearing socially and emotionally stable children.

Key words: female, male, reproduction, sexual dimorphism, sociobiology

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INTRODUCTION

Why are men and women often found in different roles and in different occupations? Why is it that men dominate in occupations where physical power are necessary as well as the competitive high end of business? Is this a result of a patriarchal system that has designated men and women to certain roles? While some cultures have historically had systems that favour one sex/gender over the other, it can be argued that a majority of social roles arise, not from social constructs, but from biology. Numerous species inhabit this planet. One group of animals is of special interest, the mammals. This group contains the most intelligent, complex and successful species that have ever walked our planet. When considering mammals as a group, it is easily observable that most mammals are sexually dimorphic with sex differences among highly social species being more pronounced.

Social mammals are designed to live within a particular hierarchy that allows each member of the group to fulfill his or her role in assisting the group in surviving. Sexual dimorphism names the physical differences between the two sexes that extend beyond the sex organs. In humans this means that the family unit is organized in a hierarchy of roles and tasks that optimize the unique skills of men and women which produces higher survival rates of children. The general rule for social mammals is that males tend to be larger and more powerful due to the reliance of many species on the males as the primary defense against predators, members of the same species, as well as in settling territorial disputes, a feature that can also be observed in humans. Sexual dimorphism is a key to survival as it creates a single familial or kinship-based unit that draws on the strengths or skills of each member of the group in order to secure the existence of the group as a whole. Sexual dimorphism in mammals acts to create a more efficient system for obtaining food, rearing young and maintaining healthy relationships with other members of the group.

Far from being a social construct, the core behavioral patterns of either gender depend on sex and are encoded in the deoxyribonucleic acid along with the biological features of the gender. Sex and gender should logically be viewed as synonyms with ample biological evidence across the plethora of mammalian species justifying doing so. The attempt to separate sex and gender into two unrelated fields is therefore not only erroneous and pseudoscientific but potentially dangerous to the physical safety of family members as well as the stability of the family unit.

Highly stable family units produce offspring that are more emotionally sound and have higher levels of happiness. Male and female familial roles in humans ensure the long-term mental health and wellbeing of children as they form a counterbalance to negative qualities that may be more pronounced

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in one sex, as both sexes tend to have strengths and weaknesses in relation to biology as well as behavioral patterns. Throughout nature, truly powerful and successful familial unit depends on the biological parameters of the species. African Buffalo (Syncerus Caffer) and African Elephants (Loxodonta Africana) usually live in groups comprised mostly of females along with some young bulls, with bulls eventually moving to form bachelor herds as they mature (Sinclair). In gorillas, a powerful Silverback male will have several females and young in a troop while other males will be tolerated if they remain submissive. Gorillas show a striking degree of sexual dimorphism with the male being the primary protector against predators such as leopards, maintaining the social order of the group by intervening in disagreements (fights), and while female gorillas take the role of primary caregiver to the young, the Silverback male is important in the process of socializing his offspring and often spends time playing with his young (Robbins).

Humans have yet another more simplified group structure with the most stable groups consisting of a single female and single male and their offspring which may or may not be joined to a larger extended family unit. From this biological axiom, heterosexual family units have been shown to be superior to all other artificial structures in providing emotionally stable environments for children (Schumm). Social roles of males and females therefore extend from the biological constraints as per the design of the anatomical features of each sex. Understanding the differences and constraints of the two genders can therefore be of assistance to the individual in ascertaining their own physical, emotional and relationship roles within the familial unit as well as comprehending the limitations and strengths of their mate. Consider just some of the biological differences.

THE HUMAN BRAIN

Males and females have brains of different sizes due to the differences in the size of the cranium. Males have an average brain mass of 1,370 grams and females have the average brain mass of 1,200 grams. While brain mass is an important factor in computational power and cognitive power (i.e. Intelligence Quotient) it cannot be said that females are less intelligent than males due to the unique neural structure in females that provides a type of compact model of the brain. It has been found that in females there was "…relative to cerebrum size, greater cortical grey matter volume, larger volumes of regions associated with language functions (e.g. Broca's area) (...) and white matter involved in interhemispheric connectivity. The number of neurons per unit volume, in the planum temporal, was also greater in women than men" (Goldstein 2001, 490-497). This difference in brain structure leads to differences in basic behaviours which depend on or are influenced by biological constraints which determine social roles.

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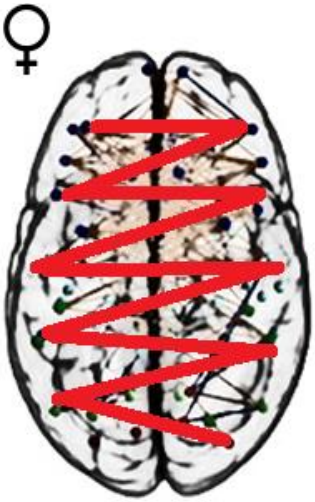

Figure 1. Illustration showing the stronger interhemispheric connection in the female brain.

The Corpus Callosum which is responsible for interhemispheric connection of the brain has been found to be 25% larger in females which is one reason that females have in general, a greater skill in general linguistic acquisition. Feminine thinking habits extend in a web formation with strong interhemispheric communication. Females have a tendency to be interested in people and this is reflected in more of the frontal lobe which is associated with emotions being active in women. Linguistic aptitude is an important requisite for the formation of relationships; hence women are found at higher percentages in fields such as education and healthcare where there is a strong need for interpersonal communication. This is illustrated by the 2003 Women's Board report showing that 92.1% of registered nurses in the United States were female (United States Department of Labor, 2003). It can be inferred that this underlying instinct may create an unconscious bias in women that is favorable to employment requiring social interaction. This predisposition in females toward social interaction is derived from the necessity to build kinship thus expanding the accessible social unit and ensure offspring survive. Females therefore display a pluralistic thinking pattern that formulates in accord with potential needs that may arise in the process of child rearing, a trigger for being more sensitive and emotional in response to stimuli which could be of potential benefit or harm to their offspring.

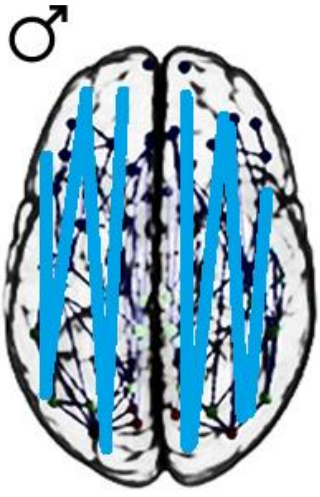

Figure 2. Illustration showing greater connection within the same hemispheres of the male brain.

In males, there is significantly stronger connection in the brain within the same hemispheres. Whereas females have a webbed thinking pattern, males have a linear pattern. In humans, a primary role of males is threat detection and protection as can be noted from the larger amygdala. The male brain has a tendency towards being logic driven, an essential protocol, as an overly emotional male brain is likely to regulate poorly the initial threat reflex triggered by the amygdala as the orbitofrontal cortex plays an important part in buffering this reaction (Öhman). Neuropsychiatric studies have found that frontal lobe dysfunction can lead to aggressive dysfunction and violent behavior while deficits in frontal executive function result in difficulties in controlling aggressive behavior (Brower & Price). It can be inferred that some of what can be termed as aloofness or disinterest in males is actually a buffer to promote emotional and mental stability in males.

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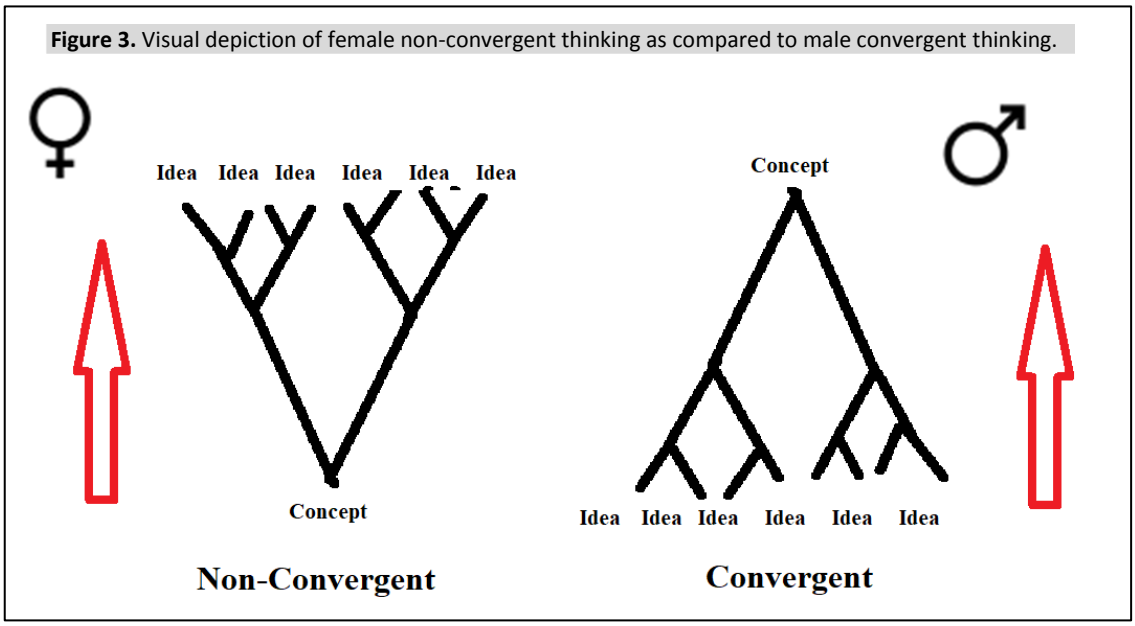
Males display a linear thinking pattern which enables them to focus on a single target and eliminate potential threats. The problem-solving mentality arising from the linear thinking causes males to become less interested in social interaction (compared to females) and more interesting in things or abstract potentials especially in relation to the survival of the familial unit. It also (in balanced males) makes them less emotional than females and more prone to blanking or ignoring extemporaneous stimuli. Defining the general thinking pattern of both genders/sexes allows for a clearer understanding of how to harness those differences for the greater good of the family. Female thinking patterns can be described as non-convergent: A single concept gives rise to multiple ideas. Male thinking patterns can be described as convergent: A multiple ideas gives rise to a single concept.

Figure 3. Visual depiction of female non-convergent thinking as compared to male convergent thinking.



The male and female cognitive and behavioral predispositions provide a useful counterbalance for offspring and produce stability within the familial unit. The image above illustrates the linear and convergent thinking of males compared to the expanding and web like thinking of females. In a social application, the male and female are not merely individuals but also complimentary halves of a binary whole (when not including children). The image below also displays thinking patterns which at first appear to be counterproductive or in distinct opposition. However, such a conclusion would be erroneous. Consider the way that this difference in thinking pattern can be used to compliment both male and female thinking styles; for names sake, the following model below will be referred to as "Naudé's Dimorphic Relational Symbiosis Model".

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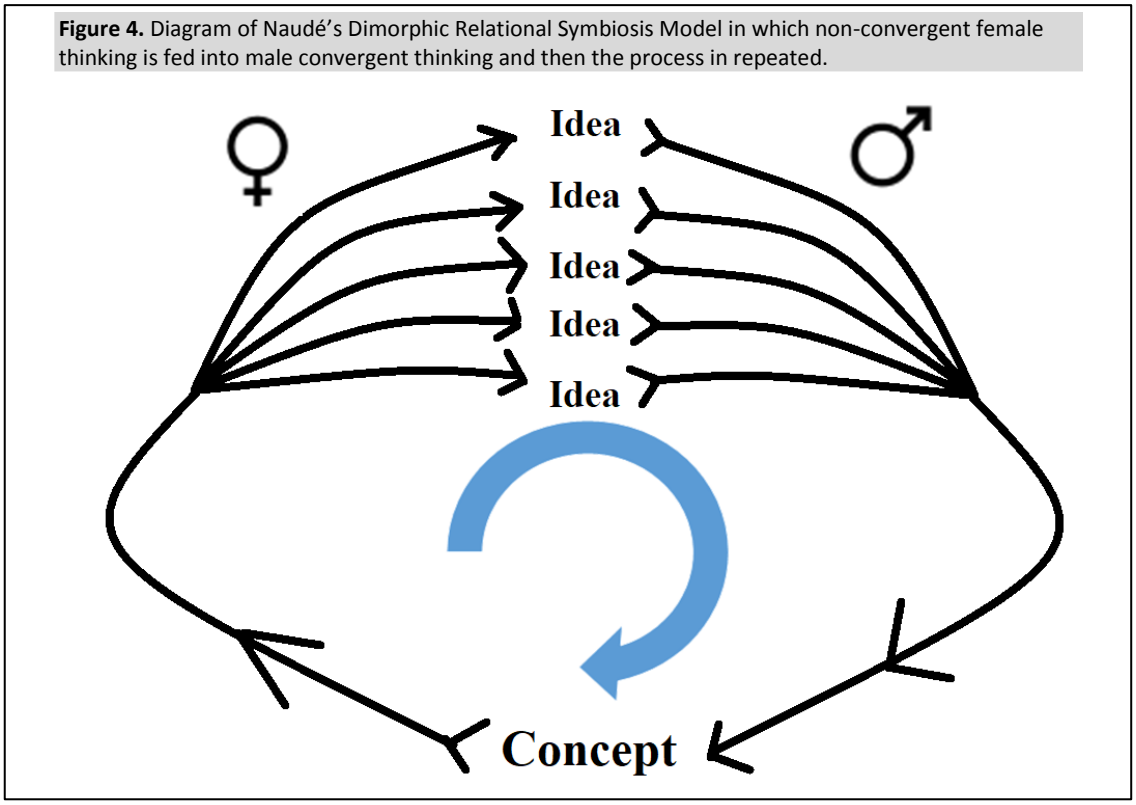
Figure 4. Diagram of Naudé's Dimorphic Relational Symbiosis Model in which non-convergent female thinking is fed into male convergent thinking and then the process in repeated.



In "Naudé's Dimorphic Relational Symbiosis Model" the female non-convergent thinking is funneled into the male convergent thinking which is fed back into the non-convergent thinking in a continuous cycle. Through positive interaction, both mates provide a perspective that their mate may not readily observe. This positive interaction creates a positive environment wherein issues can be resolved and friction is minimized, leading to a stable unit and an environment that allows children to flourish. The brain is however not an isolated area of sexual dimorphism rather, this dimorphism extends to the physiological level.

THE SKELETAL SYSTEM

Built for defense and speed, the male skeletal system is elongated with narrower hips. Females have been shown to have a greater anterior pelvis tilt leading to more pressure on the lower spine (Cho et al). The wider female hips are necessary to facilitate childbirth; however, this also results in the biomechanics of the legs being impacted upon. The Q-Angle is the name given to describe the angle of the femur in relation to the hip socket and knee. Males have a Q-Angle of 13° and females 18°, a difference arising from the wider pelvis and need to maintain the general center of gravity during normal movement. In comparisons of male and female weight bearing athletes, it was found that females had a 13.2% greater shear force applied to the anterior of the tibia, a clear advantage for males (Nunley). The biomechanics of the Q-Angle illustrates the need for segregation in all fields of sport but especially

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where the athletes are required to bear weight or land with force as well as fields where muscle mass provide advantages such as athletics, cycling and so forth. This scientific axiom trumps any attempt to argue that gender can in any way be changed.

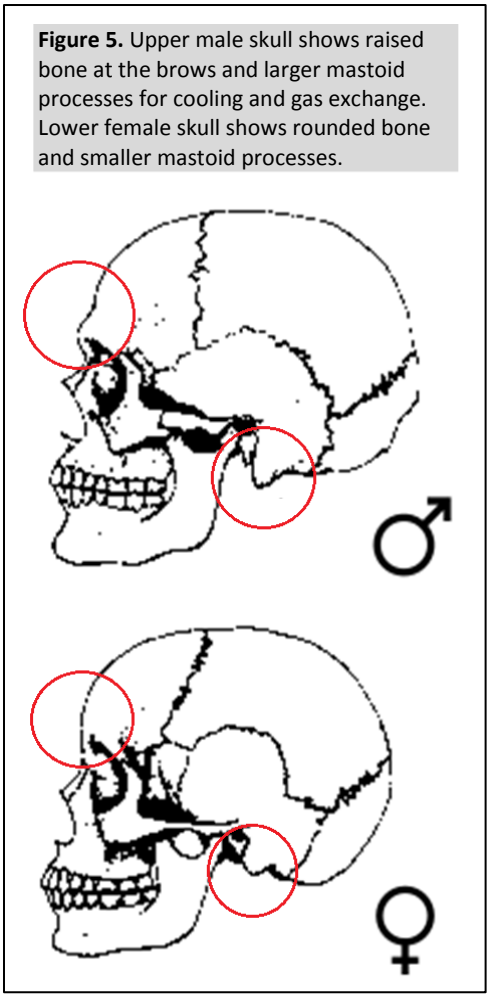

Figure 5. Upper male skull shows raised bone at the brows and larger mastoid processes for cooling and gas exchange. Lower female skull shows rounded bone and smaller mastoid processes.

The mandible of males and females also differ significantly. The male mandible is thicker with on average larger teeth and follows straight angles resulting in a square appearance. Females have a greater indent in the mandibular ramus flexure and generally rounded bones leading to an oval or *v* shape frontal jaw line thereby giving a delicate or refined appearance (Loth & Henneberg).

When considering the rest of the skull, males have square eye sockets and the bone is raised at the brow (extra protection for the eye). Females have a smoother structure and no (or very little although this varies as per race) raised bone at the brow with rounder eye sockets ending with a sharper edge and the extra bone is absent due to the low need for physical combat. Geometric morphometric studies have demonstrated that women identify masculinity and strength of a male by the shape and prominence of the jawbone and the general attractiveness of a male by height as well as length of the jaw (Windhager et al).

The mastoid processes which assist in gas exchange and heat regulation are also larger in males, a logical finding considering the larger surface area and a need to cool the brain during strenuous physical activity (Patnaik).

It should be noted that many of the skeletal differences especially those of the skull only become evident after the onset of puberty, the prefrontal cortex develops at a greater speed in females for the necessity of developing the needed feminine instincts before the onsets of the limitations of the natural fertility window. Males do not have a fertility window and hence have less biological pressure quickly to develop the frontal cortex. The rate of bone growth is equal to the natural growth rate of the body as well as brain growth hence the lack of cranial dimorphic structures before puberty do not affect children's cognitive development.

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MUSCULAR SYSTEM AND FAT DISTRIBUTION

Skeletal differences also naturally cause differences in muscle to arise along with fat distribution. The pear-shaped fat deposit pattern that is common to women (Gluteal-femoral adipose tissue) is thought to provide a safe and readily accessible lipid reservoir in females (Karastergiou). These fat deposits serve as a protection against metabolic diseases such as atherosclerosis and type 2 diabetes (Manolopoulos). When comparing individuals of the same body mass index it has been found that women on average have ~10% greater body fat than men and that this is a normal healthy range for females. The lipid reservoirs within the female body means that they are able to carry on physical exercise with greater stamina than men, however, males having greater muscle mass are able to give a far greater output of energy and power within a limited period. The same level of pressure applied to a male knee during exercise for example would cause serious risk of injury for a woman at the same energy output level.

In essence, the overall power of men is significantly higher than that of women. In most forms of sport women are simply unable to compete against men and risk long-term health damage if they do (due to bone, ligament or muscle injury).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Denying the basic biological axioms of dimorphism and the resulting limitations and parameters are not only harmful but blatantly pseudoscientific. As can be clearly seen by the provided evidence, the sexual dimorphism in Homo Sapiens Sapiens guarantees a balanced sociobiological hierarchy that perpetuates the existence of the most basic building block of the species, the family, and therefore the entirety of the species itself. The human social hierarchy as demonstrated by "Naudé's Dimorphic Relational Symbiosis Model" is (and should be for stability and happiness) mutually beneficial, with male and female halves combining to form one whole by performing extended social roles within their respective biological constraints.

The two genders serve as a behavior counter balance to each other and are binaries of a whole. Knowing one's own general instinctive tendency (whether male or female) allows one to harness innate abilities to a fuller extent and to eliminate some of the negative behaviors that arise as a result of differences in biomechanical and physiological design. Yet, ideological assertions that run contrary to the well demonstrated biological parameters run contrary to the design of the species and hence cannot be expected to produce any positive result as they will undermine the stability of sociobiological roles.

This should not be misconstrued as meaning that males and females fit strict social stereotypes

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but rather that there are sociobiological limitations as to the roles that an individual of said gender is physically, mentally and emotionally able to undertake. Whether male or female, both mates should understand their limitations and support their mate in areas of weakness while deferring to their mate in areas of strength. Positive communication habits will mean that the familial unit is able to analyze a problem from multiple perspectives to find the most satisfactory solution and avoid friction. Positive and balanced hierarchies in humans therefore lead to overall happiness and familial satisfaction resulting in balanced offspring.

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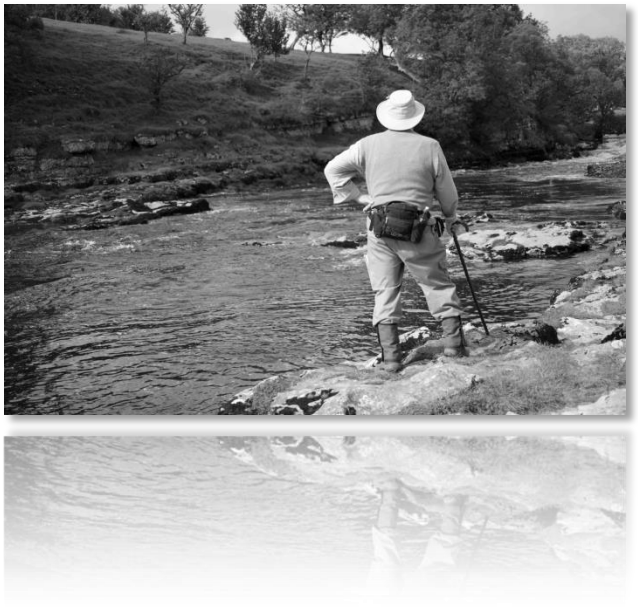

MEN COMMITTING SUICIDE: A RESPONSE TO LOISE PERRY

John Davis

ABSTRACT

My article responds to Louise Perry's "Time to Stop Using Suicide for Political Point-Scoring." Ms. Perry writes about men committing suicide. Her conclusion is that men, and men's Rights Activists (MRAs), are using the gender suicide gap as a means of scoring political points against feminists and feminism (as opposed to being a genuine effort solve the problem of the gender suicide gap). Ms. Perry implies that men are at fault for the gender suicide gap and men committing suicide. Her article is premised on fiction and myth about male suicide currently in fashion among intersectional feminists. My article addresses some of those misconceptions, providing information about the realities of the gender suicide gap and realities about men committing suicide.

Keywords: gender suicide gap, intersectional feminism, men's health, misandry, suicide

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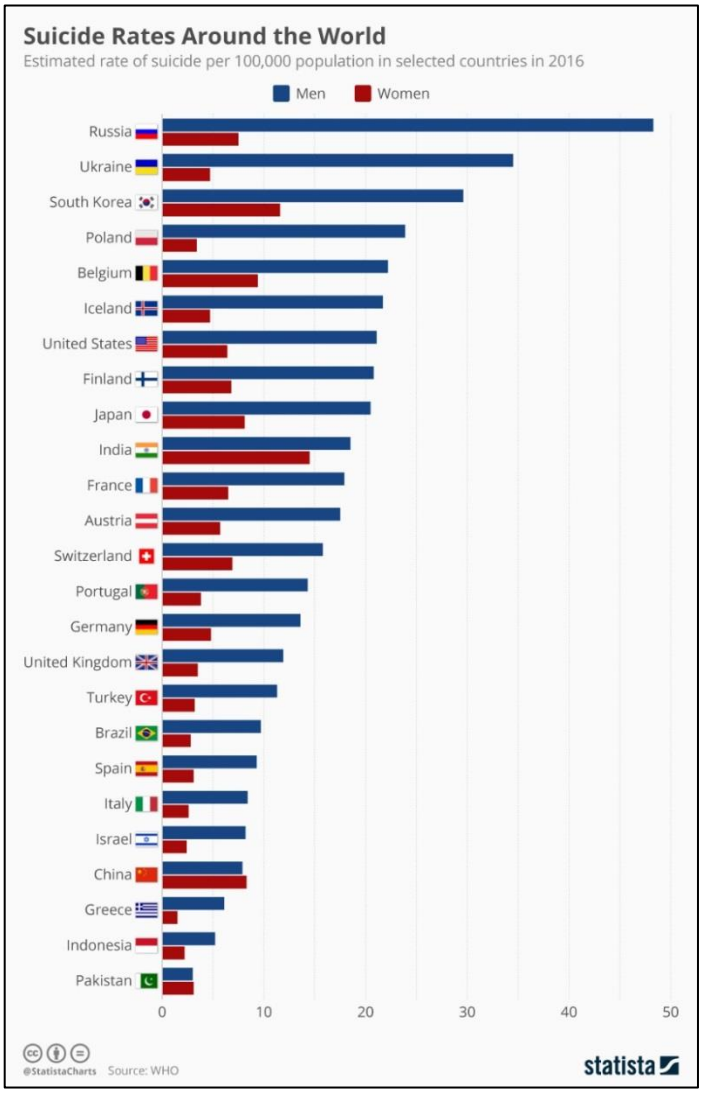
Louise Perry has written a controversial article for *Quillette* titled, "Time to Stop Using Suicide for Political Point-Scoring." Ms. Perry's article is about *men* committing suicide. Her conclusion is that men, and men's Rights Activists (MRAs), are using the gender suicide gap as a means of scoring political points against feminists and feminism (as opposed to being a genuine effort solve the problem of the gender suicide gap). Ms. Perry implies that men are at fault for the gender suicide gap and men committing suicide. Her article is premised on almost every fiction and myth about male suicide that is currently in fashion among intersectional feminists (for example, gynocentric readings of data, the attribution of toxic masculinity, dismissals of misandrist affect). My article addresses some of those myths with some information about the realities of the gender suicide gap and realities about men committing suicide.

Let's start with Ms. Perry's assertion that men commit suicide at about twice the rate of women worldwide. That statistic understates the problem. The worldwide gender suicide gap is about 3.2 to 1, with men committing suicide more than women. In some developed countries (such as the U.S. and India) the gap is closer to 4:1. In younger groups, such as in the U.S. in the age group 15-24, the gender suicide gap is over 6:1. Young men committing suicide worsens the problem because when a young man commits suicide, it exacerbates the gender suicide gap. Young men committing suicide means that many more years of men's lives are lost in the gender suicide gap than if older men commit suicide.



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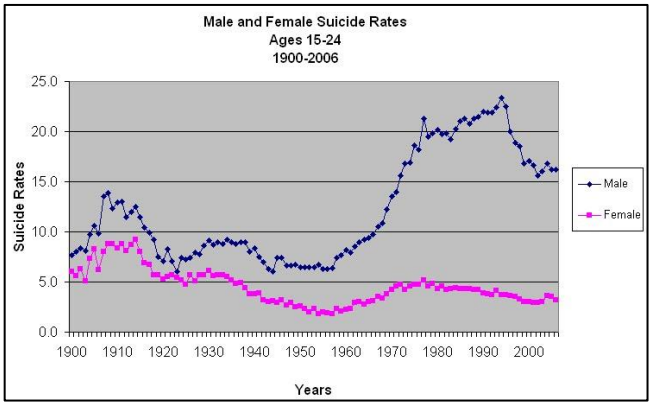
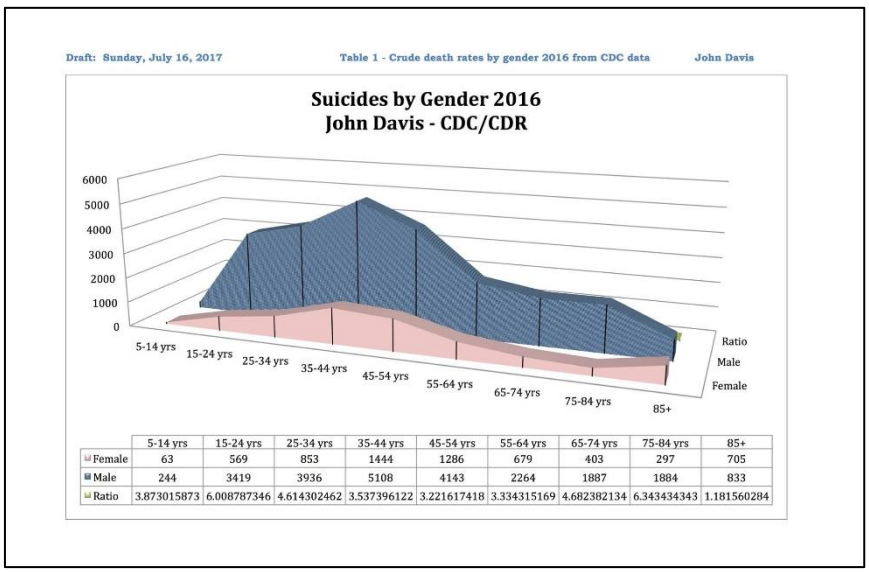


The complete toll on men, as a gender, from young men committing suicide, is incalculable.

Ms. Perry presents a myth that the gender suicide gap is caused by men's toxic masculinity keeping them from discussing their feelings. This is a thinly disguised victim-blaming tactic. Ms. Perry suggests that if men engage in "cuddling groups" with other men, then, they will overcome their toxic masculinity, become less-defective men, and cure their depression and suicide by "talking about their emotions." Science presents us with a different reality. We know from extensive studies, that men's biological DNA markers respond in the exact opposite manner as women to major depressive disorder. Men do not respond to talk therapy as women respond to it. Men require a special kind of intervention known as situational distress therapy. Notwithstanding massive amounts of money expended for women's health, not one penny has been allocated by any governments, or institutions, to study the special types of therapy necessary for men with clinical depression.

Ms. Perry then goes on the accuse MRAs of being extreme by suggesting that the gender suicide gap is due to "persecution of men by feminists and their allies." This belief by MRAs is hardly extreme. It is well grounded in analysis of Western laws, and, Western institutions. If we analyze raw data regarding male suicides, we can infer some general conclusions from the data.



	5-14 yrs	15-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	65-74 yrs	75-84 yrs	85+
Female	63	569	853	1444	1286	679	403	297	705
Male	244	3419	3936	5108	4143	2264	1887	1884	833
Ratio	3.873015873	6.008787346	4.614302462	3.537396122	3.221617418	3.334315169	4.682382134	6.343434343	1.181560284

These data show that the gender gap in suicide is constant throughout men's lives, and that men are more at risk for suicide than women throughout their entire lifetimes. What this graph also

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demonstrates is that the gender suicide gap widens when men are forced into contact with our misandrist and male-oppressive institutions (such as education, the workplace, the military and, in old age especially, our medical institutions).

The next myth Ms. Perry advances is that women attempt suicide more often than men. In Ms. Perry's words: "This isn't intended as a 'gotcha' to the anti-feminists. Well, it is a bit I suppose—I am tired of hearing people bang on about suicide statistics when they're ignorant of the facts." Ms. Perry's accusation that MRAs are ignorant is ironic. Her information comes from one study in Germany in which the authors (with amazing confirmation bias) concluded that women reporting to physicians in emergency rooms that they had suicidal ideation meant that women attempted suicide more often than men. The source of this myth appears to be a study (Hegerl et al., 2009) completed in Europe, and, analyzed by the Psychiatry Department of the University of Leipzig.

The data collection on the study was very good to excellent. Consequently, the data is sound. However, like much of feminist advocacy research, the article draws some specious and spurious conclusions regarding the rate at which women as a gender, attempt suicide. It is clear from the analysis in the report that the authors intended, when they set out to write the article, to conclude that although men are more likely to engage fatal suicide methods, women (as a gender) are three times more likely to attempt suicide, therefore, women represent the most victims of clinical depression and suicidal ideation. The actual data do not support those conclusions.

First, the data counted suicide attempts by the same woman more than once. If a woman attempted suicide 6 times, unsuccessfully, the researchers counted that as 6 suicide attempts by women. Women tend to use equally lethal means of killing themselves, such as drug overdoses, the same as men. There is, however, a high probability that a person who ingests a drug overdose will be discovered before they die, and, given treatment, or, that they will change their minds and seek treatment. Men tend to use less tentative means. In the U.S. they use firearms (which may be an indication that men suffer much more seriously than women when they form suicidal ideation). In Europe men are most likely to hang themselves which is almost as irrevocable as the use of a firearm. (The studies prove that the means of committing suicide being available have no effect on the rate of suicide.) Since women choose revocable methods of suicide, it

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should be obvious that they will survive suicide attempts. If they survive suicide attempts, then, the same women are making the suicide attempts over time, instead of more women attempting suicide than men.

Second, the data are confused and non-homogenous. In some cases, the data collected were not how many actual suicide attempts were made (the data from emergency rooms accurately shows actual number of suicide attempts when the victim seeks treatment). Some of the data sources for women, however, were not SSAs (Serious Suicide Attempts); they were merely reports to physicians that the woman had attempted suicide, rather than an actual documented event of suicide (such as we would receive from emergency rooms).

Having recited stereotyped myths about men committing suicide, Ms. Perry concludes her article with a litany of gender stereotypes, about men, that firmly affixes the blame for male suicide on the victims. Addressing all of Ms. Perry's false stereotypes about men is beyond the scope of this response. However, we can point out some important considerations that Ms. Perry carefully avoided in her article.

Recent conclusive studies (Stemple, Flores, & Meyer, 2017, for example) show that men are victims of women's sexual assault at about the same rate as the other way around. Intersectional feminists, such as Ms. Perry, vehemently deny these realities. Feminist researchers (Dario & O'Neal, 2018; Elliott, 1994), however, have conclusively demonstrated that men suffer from sexual victimization from female perpetrators as much, or more, than women suffer from male perpetrators. We live in a "culture of denial regarding the prevalence of women perpetrating sex crimes against men," in the words of feminist researcher Dr. Miriam S. Denov (2004). This denial covers up one of the most serious factors pushing men to suicide, and which drives the gender suicide gap. Men are very vulnerable (especially as boys and young men) to sexual crimes perpetrated against them by women and girls. The sexual assault of boys and men has a delayed effect. As the male victim matures, the sexual assault has interfered with his neurological development and the development of his psycho-sexual skills. This interference results in the boy, as a man, being socially isolated and subject to major depressive disorder. It is also important to note that research (Seney et al., 2018) proves that clinical depression in men biologically compels them to sexual dysfunction and substance abuse.

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Putting all political points aside, if we are going to address seriously and professionally the gender suicide gap (instead of blaming men as the victims), then we need to use reliable, unbiased measures to assess data, such examining what comprises one's "overall life satisfaction" (Stoet & Geary, 2019). In addition, we should take the following seven steps to curtail male suicide:

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THE EFFECTS ON BOYS' WELL-BEING OF CHANGING FAMILY DYNAMICS

Miles Groth

ABSTRACT

Children have been affected by recent changes in the fundamental childrearing institution, the nuclear family. Boys are in a precarious position as a result of these changes. This paper first assesses the current condition of the nuclear family. Next, some of the features of the new boyhood in Western culture are discussed. Finally, the impact of the missing father on the well-being of boys' lives is examined; father hunger is a critical consequence of the destabilization of the nuclear family. Mentoring remains crucial to raising healthy males. Those who have sons or who work with boys and young men must let them speak; doing so does not preclude standing up for them, something we must do without any further delay.

Keywords: boys, family, males, men, the new boyhood

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, all children have been affected by changes in the structure, dynamics and status of the fundamental childrearing institution, the nuclear family. Boys are in a more precarious position than girls as a result of these changes. I will explain why. First, I will assess the current condition of the nuclear family. Next, I will sketch some of the features of what I term the new boyhood in Western culture, a phenomenon that has come into prominence during the past 20-25 years alongside related trends in third-wave feminism. Finally, I will discuss the impact of the missing father on the well-being of boys' lives, since this is the most onerous consequence of the destabilization of the nuclear family. Most of what I have to say is based on first-hand familiarity with the American scene, but as I have learned, the situation both for the nuclear family and for boys is in every essential the same wherever westernization has reached.

THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

The nuclear family may only be transmuting, as some claim, but I believe it is in its last days and soon will be an anachronism. In only a few years—perhaps two generations—the criteria for casting its *dramatis personae* have been radically revised, and the rules of parenting have been rewritten as the roles of mother and father have been dramatically redefined to adapt to the need for both parents to work full-time. The notions of wife, husband, mother, father, and child are now contested and, for some, are even politically incorrect constructs. Many in positions of authoritative influence speak the language of "partner" and "civil union"; "mothering figure," "surrogate mother," "sperm donor" and "fathering figure"; and the dreadful locution "childcare provider." We hear of two moms or two dads responsible for a household and the nurturing of infants and children. Formal and informal liaisons, legal and religious unions are as easily dissolved as they were formed. Chemical contraception has taken away from the natural father parity in the "say" of whether a fertilized ovum shall move on through the stages of mammalian maturation in the womb. Other technologies modify the sequence of sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and parturition.

Much has changed for the parent. He or she now works outside of the home the better part of most days of the week. In the States, two of three families are now of the single-parent sort. The parent is usually the natural mother, who is usually employed full-time. A parent is

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often seen talking to other family members or business associates on mobile phones while the child begs for conversation. Given the demands of work, some parenting is routinely turned over to a changing cast of daycare workers, who are strangers to the children they are paid to oversee. This is a form of child neglect *in loco parentis*. Beginning with day care, schools have been called upon to serve as second homes for children through the late teen years, a task for which they were not designed. Schools are legally charged to act in the place of the parent, but teachers working in their classrooms are now positioned not only temporarily *in the place of* the parent but often serve *instead of* parents. Insofar as we have become what Robert Bly termed a "sibling society," actively parenting adults often lack the confidence in their own authority that parents traditionally have had and that children (although they might not admit it) need and desire. Some parents themselves remain in a state of interminable adolescence alongside their teenage offspring. It's a strange sight of would-be parents in the world of the vanishing adult.

And what of the children? Boys and girls have television and internet access to representations of adults and adult situations that are *irreal* with respect to what real-life people do. Designed as entertainment after all, what children see on the tube and online is often mistakenly understood as equivalent to what grown-up human beings may be expected to do at home.

Given these changes in parenting, many children must now try to raise themselves and each other (and sometimes even a parent or two), something they are not capable of doing. They are also maturing physically much earlier than even three generations ago, while recognition of them as being competent human beings and full citizens is deferred ever longer. Our children are awash in an endless flow of information and novelty is brought to them with the click of a mouse, but they lack the skills to read and judge the meaning and quality of what they see and hear in the faces of others; they lack the skills to relate it to the public reality of their household and to their own private psychological reality. The recent confusion about gender identity children hear about is further disorienting.

The nuclear family is passing away. Something different—another living social institution—will and must soon replace it. The problem is, we haven't yet invented it. Perhaps it will turn out to be like Dr. Frankenstein's creature, alive but dangerous, humanoid in appearance and body parts but lacking a soul. With any luck, it will be a beneficent institution, but I am

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doubtful. As we all know, cultural changes now occur with great rapidity. The predecessors of the nuclear family—the village and the extended family—were slow to develop, however, and were gradually replaced by the nuclear family as the fundamental institution of parenting. By contrast, whatever is to replace the nuclear family will have to be hastily devised and ready for occupancy before it is habitable. Each of the earlier institutions worked well for a period and under certain circumstances. A major problem for us is that the time of the nuclear family has nearly ended and the circumstances of the era after it are far from clear to us.

I suspect that the new parenting institution will resemble nothing that we are now familiar with. It will not be the village again or an elaborate kinship system such as anthropologists have found in pre-Western cultures. Such groupings are small. The nuclear family worked in the context of large social groups such as densely populated urban centers and sprawling networks of small cities and towns. So must the new parenting institution, but like the nuclear family it must work on the small scale of a few people—mother, father and several children.

What will be its features? What is to succeed the nuclear family, I believe, will have to be intergenerational. Experience still counts for a great deal, especially when the period of a young person's relative social helplessness and economic dependency is longer now than at any other time in history. I believe its fundamental relational model will be *mentorship*. Relationships between the young and the older will be similar in some respects to what goes on between a student and his teacher, a young athlete and his coach, or even a client and her therapist. These relationships will preserve certain elements of traditional father-child and mother-child relationships, but the mentor will likely combine features of both the traditional Mom and Dad.

Is the nuclear family merely in ailing, but not about to expire and instead only in need of shoring up and repair in order to adjust to changing times? While we wait to find out the answer to the question, there are consequences of its undeniable weakening as a social institution that we must attend to without delay.

Children who dwell in the household of the fundamental childrearing institution of our time are experiencing significant levels of unease. It is no longer an emotionally and psychologically safe place to be for many of them, even if it is equipped with five bedrooms, six

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bathrooms, and an in-house fitness room and entertainment center. Boys are more dramatically affected by the ongoing transformation. Why?

BOYHOOD

Children come in two basic flavors: boys and girls. And how different they are—in anatomy and physiology, initial sensitivities and tendencies, inclinations and tastes, ways of using space, and styles of relating and playing. Males have evolved to be distinctive, as unmistakable in their basic way of self-presentation as females are. Their unique way of being implies a very different *experience* of the world. That they will *behave* differently follows. This predicts that young males—boys—will react differently than girls to the enervation of the nuclear family.

The picture of boys that follows is a bit of a caricature and playful, but as such, I hope, it will be evocative in showing that boys are more vulnerable to the changes in the dynamics of the family.

Boys are like cats. Let's call one of them Felix. Felix is never fully socialized by the time he is driven into manhood, something he resists but is taught to vaunt and pretend to want. As cats have done with human beings in general, Felix domesticates us, seducing us to participate in his somewhat feral world on his terms. We have never quite found a place for the boy in civilized society. His marginal status is legendary in the States, from Huck Finn to Holden Caulfield. Felix likes to play—a lot. His games always seem to have something of the chase-and-capture theme about them. He prefers jumping from place to place to walking about. This is a consequence of his innate hyperkineticism. Felix is inclined to seek high perches from which to observe us. He thereby gives the impression of wanting to dominate the scene, but, in fact, he moves to higher ground because it's a safer place to be for a creature of his temperament and vulnerabilities.

Some of his anatomical peculiarities are assertive, others prompt defensiveness in him. Felix has a caudal-like appendage—his penis—which he often enough forgets is part of his body much as a cat forgets it has a tail. He senses it will have an important part to play in his life later on, since he is taught to overvalue it early in life. But he is also told early on, to hide it. To Felix, this means it is something to be ashamed of. Felix is discouraged from displaying his penis. Sometimes it seems to have a life of its own. He often plays with it. Sometimes it seems to

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trouble him, but it rarely fails to get him into trouble. That seems to be the extent of what is reliable and predictable about it.

Another part of his anatomy prompts defensiveness. Like his eyes, his testes are really internal organs exposed to the outside world and susceptible to painful injury. Being so equipped, Felix becomes a master of what psychologists call compensation and reaction formation. This consequence of his anatomical distinctiveness has been vastly underappreciated. Felix tries to appear that nothing can hurt him.

Felix has claws tucked under soft paws. Which feature better symbolizes his true nature? Neither, really. When threatened—which seems to happen often—he displays his claws, but much of the time it is only for bluff and show, and they are withdrawn as quickly as they were displayed and deployed. Like a cat, Felix sleeps a lot when he is understimulated, yet he is hypervigilant. He feigns boredom, but is always alert. He comes alive at night just when everyone else is ready to go to bed. Research has demonstrated that a boy's inner alarm clock is set to go off about an hour later in the morning than the one found in girls. In those evening hours, Felix often has what owners of real felines know as nocturnal "cat attacks," during which, without warning, he runs about as if inspired by hallucinations of danger. He makes noisy adventure where there is no need for it, but this is because his imagination is overactive. As a result, he is, one might say, compulsively creative, perhaps compensating for the inability to create new life in his body, a capability that his sisters sense in their bodies. This is often mistakenly read as lack of focus on the real.

Felix does not seem to take anything seriously, except his play. He works at things playfully. We see this in his fondness for sports, skateboarding, making music, and heatedly fiddling at video games. You usually cannot interest Felix in anything toward which his curiosity is not already inclined. Learning and squirming, however, are not mutually exclusive for him. This is not much appreciated in the formal classroom setting.

Clearly, being Felix is a mixed blessing. Clinicians and social psychologists have confirmed the presence of these features in real boys and you may read the developmental psychology research that has been published on the topic.

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To move now from caricature to character and personality, I remind you that cross-cultural studies confirm that boys are different in disposition and vulnerabilities from girls from the start of life. Their unique way of being in the world—their experience—causes them to behave differently than girls. Boyhood is a stage discontinuous with infancy and in need of a leap in order to land anywhere near manhood. More emotionally volatile and physically active than girls from the start, developmentally boys undergo a series of challenging separations—from the womb, the breast, the mother of infancy, and the mother as female. While there is an essential continuity for girls from the female as mother to the female as woman, a boy must be separated from his mother and taken up by his father, adopted by him for purposes of identifying with him as a male and as a man. While the girl is integrated into the woman, the boy must be jettisoned as a young male and catapulted—always reluctantly—toward manhood.

A post-pubescent male must again and again convince those around him that he has put away the boy, even as the boy continues to live on in him. Here he is then: intensely active, centrifugal, chronically disoriented, marginally social, hard to tame, defensive in a compensatory way, acquainted more with disconnects than continuities, ludic, prone to the imaginary, fond of reverie, and allergic to manhood—what the American Fox Indians call "the big impossible."

In the absence of clear *rites de passage* now, male adolescence has faded into a lingering, somewhat indeterminate period of protracted boyhood. The new boy of the last few decades is as young as four and as old as twenty-four. The familiar boy-man on college campuses is iconic of such extended boyhood. But let us recall that most young males still do not attend college. Do we see the same phenomena in them—the lads, the blokes, the ordinary guys? Yes. They include the shockingly increasing numbers of young males in the criminal justice system, which is for many of them a more stable household than they have ever known. Those who stay in their parents' house (if not in the household) sometimes into their 30s, the home in which they were supposed to have grown up, and those who increasingly pass years laboring in meaningless part-time jobs (if there are any to be found) are now common. Sometimes, it seems, the music they share in common is all that unites them in spirit with other young males, even as classifications of race, class, ethnicity or sexual orientation still seem to work to divide them. When they go out, they meet at the same venues: rock concerts and team sports events where they are spectators. When they stay at home, we find them in the basement or garage or a small untidy

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room. They now also meet in the pseudo-communal virtual reality of the internet, texting, twittering, floating in Myspace, posting to YouTube, and randomly commenting on each other on Facebook. Finally, whether in college (though fewer are there than ever before—only 35% of college attendees are male) waiting to be employable or looking for employment, with or without a post-secondary degree, older boys meet in a world of stereotypes about what it is to be a man.

HOW BOYS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY CHANGES IN THE DYNAMICS OF THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

As a psychologist, I am interested in the effects of the social changes just described on young males at the level of their experience. Without understanding what motivates behavior, that is, without understanding experience, talk about behavior lacks context and we learn nothing about what the behavior means.

Here I will point out only one area of concern to me as a clinician and teacher who has spent more than forty years working with boys and young men. Against the backdrop of three myths—the myth of gender non-difference, the myth of male emotional inexpressiveness, and the myth of male power—myths that prevail in society in general and have special impact on parenting in the collapsing nuclear family, I will look at what I believe is the single most important change in the nuclear family that has especially affected boys. That is the disappearance of the father. If you have guessed that the disappearance of the father and of the nuclear family seem to entail each other, you understand me well.

For generations leading up to and including the baby boomers, a father was on the scene unless he had died in war, on the job, or from illness. Absence following divorce was rare. He rarely abandoned the household. As a consequence of easier opportunities for divorce, two-thirds of our boys are now being parented without a man—the same man—in their household for the first two decades of life. This means a boy will miss the presence of a consistent model for manhood and masculinity. Recall that, like cats, Felix likes sameness and routine. He thrives on the expectable voice and smell. He becomes ill at ease when there are too many surprises. He is wary of strangers and when he feels threatened may hide inside, in his room or in the virtuality of a video game. I attribute this response in great part to lacking a father to turn to as a predictable, stabilizing presence.

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A missing father is of great consequence to a boy, especially when he is learning how to love, that is, to take the initiative for the first time to form a deep relationship with another human being. This, I believe, occurs in his relationship with his father. Here we have an overlooked developmental milestone in male psychology. A boy learns he is lovable from his mother and, so, he learns how to be loved in his experience with her, but he learns how to love someone—to be loving—in the relationship with his father. A boy must first love someone in order to like and to want to be like, that is, in order to identify with that person. And in human societies this has been the father. The boy's much discussed rivalry with his dad is, I am convinced, a secondary phenomenon.

What a boy returns to his mother in the closeness of their relationship is at first not love but gratitude. He will eventually enter a phase of loving her, too, but this relationship will be modeled on the son-father relationship.

Two fundamental aspects of a boy's life as a male human being, then, are at stake here: his identification with one of the sexes and his capacity to initiate a loving relationship in another human being. Both, I suggest, depend on the presence in his life of a man—the same man—during boyhood. This is what a father provides.

If a boy's love for his father is returned, the process of identification proceeds more or less smoothly. He likes what he sees himself to be much as he likes the model for himself he has in his father. If a father's response is sensed as lukewarm or the father does not love his son in return, there can be no real sonhood. If a boy's father is there physically but not emotionally, however, the boy still has a better chance of learning how to love another human being than if the father is missing. The tragic situation of a vicious father presents a special problem for us to consider, since children usually remain attached to even abusive parents during the first five years of life.

The consequences of not having a father on the scene are also serious for little girls, but they are more extensive for a boy than for his sister. This follows from other features of his development outlined earlier, including especially his need to identify with one of the sexes.

Consider in more detail the series of a boy's experiences of separation that the presence of a father helps buffer. The most important of these is the rift that occurs when his mother

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releases him from the dyadic bond in which the pair have been enmeshed since birth (and before, if she is the natural mother). No boy welcomes this psychological weaning, of course, and the break is never really complete, yet it must occur if he is to move on developmentally. For a brief but crucial time the boy is psychologically homeless as he tries to understand why his mother no longer encourages him to cling to her. Detachment, separation and individuation are liberating and necessary for a boy's independent existence, but cutting the threads of continuity with his mother, which are as tough and durable as the umbilical connection was, is experienced as rejection. The boy temporarily feels at sea and alone. But it is precisely at this moment that the father must be prepared to move toward his son and claim him as his own. The sense of abandonment a boy experiences, then, seems to be inevitable, but in the nuclear family the father steps into the breach and is perceived as prepared and willing to claim a mother's boy as the father's son. Luigi Zoja has described this beautifully as "Hector's gesture," in which the father elevates the boy and says: "He is mine. I will look after him—even if I am not the biological father!"

If the father is not there, a boy must improvise. Will he turn back to his mother and resume a quasi-symbiotic relationship with her? He will feel secure again if he does, but at the price of having lost some of his autonomy. A woman will also then be the object of his first act of loving, but his own identity in the relationship will not be clear to him. He may also identify with aspects of his mother's role as a female, woman or mother. He may adopt some of the features of her habitus as a female. He will learn styles of relating to males that are like his mother's. Most boys, however, find such a relationship to be emotionally conflicted and they will look around for someone else to turn to. That individual may be another female (a grandmother or older sister) or, more often, it is another male. He might approach a grandfather, an uncle, older brother, or a male outside of the household—a male teacher, a coach, or even a stranger—to be a father surrogate.

There are also many choices among virtual fathering figures to be found on television. Sports heroes, the very popular hypermasculine males of cartoon superheroes and rock stars are popular options. The surrogate father is no longer likely to be a mythic figure, leader, or spiritual leader of the kind found in the great world religions.

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Or he may be sent to a counselor or psychotherapist who has been assigned to the boy by his mother. The common "symptoms" of disturbed boyhood are anxiety, hyperactivity, depression, inability to concentrate. In nearly all cases of the missing father, they are signs of father hunger. Depression (often disguised as irritability) is certainly the most prominent sign, but father hunger is also well known to manifest as problems with impulse control, generalized lack of engagement in social life, difficulty in forming new relationships, wariness about intimacy with another person, aversion to being touched, an overall sense of fearfulness and resulting absence of initiative, lack of assertiveness (perhaps compensated for by bullying, aggressive behavior), lack of a sense of competence, difficulty cooperating with authority figures, and a lack of a sense of the numinous. Today the counselor is most likely to be a woman since the profession has trained fewer and fewer men in recent years. A male counselor is usually better for a boy.

Boys are eager to tell us about their experience of father hunger, but they require a special kind of listener. They want to tell anyone—but especially another, older male—about their disappointment in not having had a father to love and be loved by in return in order to like, emulate, and identify with him. Here an age-mate won't do. Nor will a so-called "female father." Boys also want to tell of their anger about the silence of men. So far, few have spoken up on behalf of boys loudly enough or long enough to get the attention of society. Boys are enraged by this, but with no one real to be angry with (again, the missing father), the rage is diffuse. It may be vaguely directed at society as a whole (that is, anyone they encounter), or occasionally with deadly accuracy at individuals perceived as complicit in having abandoned them—or at themselves. The suicides of boys now occur at a rate four to six times greater than among girls. The killing of others in school shootings are fortunately a rare occurrence but are exemplary of unexpected, seemingly unpredictable acts by otherwise quiet but "normal" boys ("He was such a nice boy!"). I have the impression that the real psychological target of homicidal acts in young males is the boy in himself. Most young male suicides occur in the teen years, when boyhood is supposed to be left behind and put to death psychologically. It is also possible that the target of such shootings is masculinity itself.

If learning to love is a son-father transaction that in fact defines the males involved as son and father, respectively, and if this experience serves as the template for a male's way of

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loving in general (and this will include loving women and not merely desiring them sexually), when a boy has missed having a father, he will want to tell us about how he is unable to feel anything at all for anyone. This carries over to love for ideas, work, and even causes. It is more than curiosity that draws a boy to "love" to do things. To passionately love doing something and to be committed to working at it includes relating to it as though it were a person. Consider some boys' loving relationship with their skateboard, guitar, or electronic device. Observe the panic of some boys when they have misplaced or lost their mobile phone or gaming gadget.

Boys are dying to tell us about their insecurity in not having been welcomed by someone whom they want to love and be like, and be loved by in return. This is an ancient practice that has been carried out by fathers with their sons (even when the boys were not their biological offspring) since time immemorial, but it is one that cannot take place when there is no father. It is an easily understood truth that just as parents do not choose the children born to them, we do not choose our natural parents. But what if there is no father to choose?

Boys feel safer when they know there is someone present to moderate their excesses of emotion and movement. In the nuclear family, this is another job of the father. Of course, a boy may rebel at any attempt to contain his behavior, but later in life he will let us know that he felt better and more secure in knowing that someone was supporting his efforts at self-control. This, too, is one of the functions of fathering.

In times like ours in the Euro-American West when the genders are reportedly losing their distinctiveness, a boy is nevertheless expected to act as a male with intimate female partners—at least for now, until technology may make something else possible and advertising makes it desirable. For now, however, reproduction still works the way it has since before we graduated from being only animals to life in culture with animal needs and desires.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

I have painted a grim picture of the situation of boys in a time of the collapse of the nuclear family. I have looked at the situation from the perspective of the missing father. There are, of course, other angles from which to view the topic that we must leave for another time.

Is my picture overdrawn? I strongly believe it is not. The precarious situation so many boys and young men find themselves in is reflected in it exactly. These young males are found in all

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races and ethnic groups. I have not spoken of a crisis because that implies a turning point. We have yet to bring the situation of boys' lives to such a pass where things might change direction. But why the delay among psychologists, sociologists, and public policy makers in addressing the problem ? That, too, requires another time for careful consideration.

Those of us who have sons or work with boys and young men in the classroom, consulting room, or a social service agency must let them speak. We should not presume to speak for them. Rather than standing in for them and speaking for them, we must make way for them to say what they are experiencing—thoughts and feelings and impulses. This is the form of concernful looking after boys that I recommend. It does not preclude standing up for them, something we must do without any further delay, but we should recall that these two stances reflect two very different sorts of caring for our boys. Making way is liberating. Standing in for someone is merely custodial and effectively proscribes boys' freedom to tell us about their experience without having to worry about our expectations for them. This is especially important during a time such as ours when boys so often have been deprived of an opportunity to learn how to love and, in the process, discern what they like and whom they want to be like. That is, as I have argued, the current era of the missing father.

Part of bringing matters to a crisis and turning point will be admitting the imminent collapse of the nuclear family as a viable institution, even if its legal structure is preserved and its pastimes continue to be observed in a mechanical way. Envisioning what will replace it and who will have parts to play in the new institution will be a labor of love. Recently elsewhere (2011), I wrote that boys are all men's sons. This suggests that men will be the protagonists in the tragedy of the missing father. What will we have to say? Our silence must be broken if we expect our boys to speak.

Men must have speaking parts once again. The not-so-great male silence must end. Before men can talk to their sons and other boys, they must speak to each other again. Men used to talk to each other and still do in many cultures, without the benefit of large amounts of alcohol or the background noise of a crowd at a baseball game. Men must also talk to the women in their lives, especially the mothers of their sons. Men must be willing to take the time to sit and wait with boys, and listen to them when they are ready to speak.

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Encourage boys to seek you out. Usually, they will do this only when they need you, so you must be ready to drop things to give them some of your time. Eventually, they will tell you of their appreciation for your understanding—*that* you stood by them during long periods of their monosyllabic replies and feigned disinterest in your concern. When they do feel at home with you, however, expect to see a voracious appetite for the father. Mentors are surrogate fathers in a time of the missing father in the nuclear family.

Boys are all men's sons. The companion idea is that every man is a boy's father, if the boy needs him to be. This would be in the spirit of the first Mentor, who was charged by Odysseus to care for his son, Telemachus, when Odysseus had to leave Ithaca to fight in the Trojan War. Men now leave home for different reasons, but boys remain behind alone all the same.

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FROM SEX TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE MOVIE INDUSTRY[1]

Paul Nathanson

ABSTRACT

The advent of #MeToo exposed to public scrutiny something about sexual mores that newcomers in the entertainment industry, notably young actresses (and gay actors), had always known about but not always condemned even privately. Public shock actually turned back the cultural clock by endorsing the sexual prudery that had characterized the 1900s, denying the sexual equality that movies had promoted as an ideal during the 1930s and 1940s and refusing to acknowledge the "agency" that women had come to expect since the 1960s.

Keywords: casting-couch, #MeToo, feminism, entertainment industry, Hollywood, movies, sexual harassment

Beginning on 5 October 2017, a long series of sex scandals shook the entertainment industry and other industries that allowed immensely powerful men to access to immensely beautiful young women (or immensely beautiful young men). By now, the "casting-couch" has become a dirty secret, better known as sexual harassment. But it was not always a secret, let alone a dirty one. The recent scandals reveal a change in standards of sexual behavior, one that would have surprised or even dismayed the men and women of an earlier generation—notably the hedonistic one that began during the 1960s and came to a sudden end (after a decade of dissatisfaction) this very year. My goal here is not to justify sexual harassment, which I define as coercive and intimidating sexual behavior, but to examine some non-coercive and non-intimidating forms of behavior that people now consider sexual harassment but did not always do so.

In this essay, I discuss (1) what has always gone on in front of the cameras and (2) what has always gone on behind the cameras.

[1] This article was compiled from notes in Paul Nathanson, "If Not Now, When? Acknowledging Sexual Harassment and Identity Harassment," *New Male Studies* 6.2 (2017): 1-56.

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During the Great Depression, Warner Brothers produced several backstage musicals, in fact, which referred by innuendo to casting couches in New York's theater industry. By far the most famous and successful of its kind was *42nd. Street* (Lloyd Bacon, 1933).

Viewers learn very quickly that the ambitious show-girls will do *anything* to leave the chorus line and become stars. Peggy (Ruby Keeler), for example who is not merely ambitious but *hungry*. Illicit sex might be a fate worse than death back home, she learns from her new friends, but it is better than starving to death in the big city. And yet she refrains from a romantic involvement with Julian (Warner Baxter), the producer. This is because she has found true love with Billy (Dick Powell), the show's young tenor. Viewers never find out if he has the same *coveted opportunity* as Peggy does to become a star. In the original novel by Bradford Ropes, however, Billy does indeed sleep with Julian and reaps the reward for doing so.

Hollywood movies depicted casting couches not only in the entertainment industry but also in much more respectable industries. In *Baby Face* (Alfred E. Green, 1933), Lily (Barbara Stanwyck) is an ambitious and self-confident woman. She sleeps her way up, socially and economically, from a bank's clerical offices on the ground floor to its managerial ones on the top floor.

There was a time, within living memory, when sophisticated people, men and women alike, actually enjoyed "risqué" jokes and "double entendre." They enjoyed cleverness and wittiness. Mae West became famous precisely for her risqué jokes, which she wrote for herself. West wrote, directed and starred in her first play, called *Sex*, in 1926. It did well at the box office but not at City Hall, which raided the theater. In the early 1930s, even after the Production Code introduced self-censorship at every studio, West was Hollywood's top star at the box office. In *She Done Him Wrong* (Lowell Sherman, 1933), West relied on many of her own characteristic quips. When Lady Lou, a rich prostitute looks hungrily at Cary Grant, a leader of the temperance movement, she says in a way that strongly suggests more than a business transaction, "Come on up, some time, and see me." On another occasion in the same movie, an elderly and perhaps naïve woman says that Lou must be "a fine woman" to have so many jewels. "One of the finest women," replies Lou, "ever walked the streets."

And consider the famously delicious scene in *To Have and Have Not* (Howard Hawks, 1944). Slim (Lauren Bacall) is approximately twenty years old. Steve (Humphrey Bogart) at least twenty years older. But the two clearly have an erotic interest in each other. The whole script sizzles with

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sexual banter. The climax, as it were, of this element in the movie, comes when the cheerfully and effortlessly seductive Slim says to Steve. "You know how to whistle, don't you, Steve? You just put your lips together and blow." That would not qualify as sexual harassment today, because the aggressor is a woman, and a much younger one at that. Even so, her lines rely on the kind of *double entendre* that would now be way too risky for anyone to utter in real life. But I have never heard or read about female viewers in those days walking out of theaters or complaining that the script had "humiliated" them or any other women.

Much of that cinematic world is no more. Today, people expect a much closer match between the ideal and the real; they want art to imitate life, not for life to imitate art. But some things have obviously not changed. Show business remains what it was in the 1920s. And sexuality remains what it has been since the dawn of human history.

In *Swimming with Sharks* (George Huang, 1985), Buddy (Kevin Spacey) is the studio boss from hell. (Ironically, Spacey himself now faces allegations of sexually harassing—that is, groping—young men, including those who were not actors and therefore not under his authority.) He brutally harasses his *male* employees, especially Guy (Frank Whaley), in every way except the specifically sexual one. Guy, however, turns out to be far worse than Buddy once he attains power of his own.

In *Hollywoodland* (Allen Coulter, 2006), George (Ben Affleck) is an ambitious young actor. Soon after arriving in Hollywood, he has an affair with Toni (Diane Lane), the middle-aged wife of a movie mogul. She claims that her marriage is "open," so George becomes a "kept man." Toni does use her influence to get jobs for George but not ones that are good enough to reward his talent.

As recently as 2016, before countless women began making tearful allegations to journalists about men making lewd jokes or unwanted touches, many people had assumed that women could enjoy sexual adventures with men, even dangerously exotic ones, and walk away if necessary.

Both the original novel, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, by *female* author E.L. James (London, Vintage, 2011), and its filmed version (Sam Taylor-Johnson, 2015) have been massively popular among *women*. Christian (Jamie Dornan) is a fabulously wealthy young man, Anastasia (Dakota Johnson) a naïve young student—the classic power differential of sexual harassment (above). But the story soon takes a turn away from the expected one.

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Here is the author's own description of the story: "When literature student Anastasia Steele goes to interview young entrepreneur Christian Grey, she encounters a man who is beautiful, brilliant, and intimidating. The unworldly, innocent Ana is startled to realize she wants this man and, despite his enigmatic reserve, finds she is desperate to get close to him. Unable to resist Ana's quiet beauty, wit, and independent spirit, Grey admits he wants her, too—but on his own terms. Shocked yet thrilled by Grey's singular erotic tastes, Ana hesitates. For all the trappings of success—his multinational businesses, his vast wealth, his loving family—Grey is a man tormented by demons and consumed by the need to control. When the couple embarks on a daring, passionately physical affair, Ana discovers Christian Grey's secrets and explores her own dark desires. Erotic, amusing, and deeply moving, the Fifty Shades Trilogy is a tale that will obsess you, possess you, and stay with you forever." [2]And if the exciting danger of this "dark" premise was not self-evident to potential viewers, the advertisement with its suggestively phallic necktie (and the release date of Valentine's Day), must have cleared up any confusion.

Clearly, not all women are prissy enough to fit the stereotype of our Puritan world (or of the Victorian one). Feminists would have to work very diligently indeed at any attempt to explain away all these women as hapless dupes of "the patriarchy."

Now, consider what has always gone on *behind* the cameras. Scandals of one kind or another, usually involving extra-marital affairs, divorces or "love children" but sometimes even murder, had shaken Hollywood over and over again from the very beginning. The studios always tried to hide these scandals. But the "casting couch" was an "open secret" as early as the 1920s—and therefore long before the 1960s, when hedonism, exemplified by both Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* and Helen Gurley Brown's *Cosmopolitan*, came to prevail in society as a whole (a topic that I will discuss more fully). It now seems hard to imagine any potentate in Hollywood who refrains from sexual relations with other members of the community. Why would anyone be surprised at the accusation that these sexual relations often amount to sexual harassment? And straight men are not the only ones to face that accusation. Although very many gay people have contributed to the movie industry, they remained in the "closet" until recently. Now, even gay men "come forward"

[2] http://wwweljamesauthor.com/books/fifty-shades-of-grey/

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with allegations against producers, directors, musical performers and actors. Among the more infamous accusations have been those against Michael Jackson and, more recently, Kevin Spacey; in both cases, the alleged victims were teenage boys. This development is very important for a reason that I will discuss later, a reason that has nothing to do, however, with sexual orientation. The casting couch was a feature of life not only behind the camera but also in front of the camera; many movies were actually about ambitious and beautiful or talented women who used whatever advantages they had to get ahead. And these movies did not necessarily condemn them for doing so.

It is true that what caused most public outrage against old Hollywood was due to what went on in front of the camera, but the close link between debauchery in front of the camera and debauchery *behind* it was obvious to everyone—and not only within the entertainment industry. Moviegoers in "Peoria" clearly knew or at least suspected what was going on. This is why they routinely denounced Hollywood (and often New York), for decadence and sinfulness, which eventually forced the entertainment industry to clean up its act (if not on in the studios then at least in the movies that they produced there). Increasingly, therefore, conservative and religious leaders attacked Hollywood's decadence. By 1933, studios found it necessary to cooperate with the National Legion of Decency, rating and censoring movies in connection with the level of debauchery that viewers would see but doing nothing about the infamous casting couch that viewers could not see. Hiding reality, of course, was something that could be left to the dream factories.

The casting couch had never been a sign of professional morality. Professionalism had never had anything to do with Hollywood, although it should have with the passage of time and the rise of unions, film schools and so on. The casting couch was not only a cynical sign of power for those with power, however, but also an opportunistic sign of ambition for those who had wanted power. The Hollywood moguls and many of their equivalents in other industries were not "professionals" at all. They were not refined gentlemen. They did not learn their trade at film school or take Professional Ethics 101. To put it bluntly, they were ruthless and even brutal businessmen in an industry that rewarded physical beauty, whether female or male, more highly than anything else—even more than acting ability (although the most successful moguls understood that some acting talent and the ability to dance or carry a tune could be helpful). The actresses, too, were not professionals (except, perhaps, for a few stars from the Broadway stage or even the London

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stage). They did not go to film school or take Feminist Ethics 101. They were not, for the most part, refined ladies who fainted at the sight of someone's genitals or the sound of a lewd joke (although they sometimes played characters that did). They were talented, by and large, but also tough and ambitious businesswomen. And, as I say, the same applied to young actors. All of these people, both female and male, learned very quickly what the price of a breakout part in a new movie could be and saw that price in the context of opportunity. On the whole, they paid it willingly. Some rose almost overnight from the lower ranks.

Not all perpetrators have been straight men. Neither, of course, have all their victims. "Women aren't the exclusive victims of the casting couch" writes Thelma Adams about the 1950's and 1960's. "The notorious agent Henry Willson, the subject of Robert Hofler's book *The Man Who Invented Rock Hudson: The Pretty Boys and Dirty Deals of Henry Willson*, played the same power game with generations of boys and young men seeking Hollywood recognition. Counting Hudson, Troy Donahue and Tab Hunter among his clients as well as Lana Turner and Natalie Wood, the predatory Willson had a reputation as a "casting couch agent," trading liaisons for opportunity in the '40s, '50s and '60s" (Adams, "Casting-Couch Tactics"). Until very recently, gay victims were even more desperate to avoid "coming forward" than female victims were, because being gay or even suspected of being gay was in itself more than enough to destroy their careers.

To conclude, there is a reason for my cover illustration of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. How very far we have come from their time. Today, men are afraid (with good reason) of openly admiring the beauty of women. In those days, both men and women enjoyed sex. They certainly enjoyed risqué humor. The Depression notwithstanding, viewers smiled at their balletic scenes as graceful metaphors of the process that begins with attraction (first his and then hers), continues with rejection (her rejection of his perseverance, due most often to mistaken identity) and concludes with reunion. These movies presented life as a beautiful and joyful dance between men and women as equals. (And, contrary to popular opinion, Rogers did not do everything that Astaire did only backwards and in high heels. She danced side by side with Astaire, not following his "lead." And he alone did the choreography. I make this minor point only to indicate that Astaire and Rogers represented a paradigm of sexual equality, not "patriarchy.") This was an ideal, of course, and not everyone attained it. Some men were cads, not gentlemen. Some women were gold-diggers, not ladies. But every society must have an ideal of personal behavior in daily life. Do we have a better one?

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Paul Nathanson has a BA (art history), a BTh (Christian theology), an MLS (library service), an MA (religious studies) and a PhD (religious studies). Of particular interest to him is the surprisingly blurry relation between religion and secularity: how religion underlies seemingly secular phenomena such as popular movies and political ideologies. With Katherine Young, he is writing a series on the problem of masculine identity in an age of identity politics and sexual polarization. Four volumes are already in print: *Spreading Misandry: The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture*; *Legalizing Misandry: From Public Shame to Systemic Discrimination against Men*; *Sanctifying Misandry: Goddess Ideology and the Fall of Man;* and *Replacing Misandry: A Revolutionary History of the Male Body*.

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MOMENTS FROM THE MORGUE

A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Jan H. Andersen

I can neither lie about nor ignore that I am fascinated by death.
Probably like many of my Y-chromosome peers, most of whom won't admit the fact.
For sure, I am not the only one as over my career I have sold very many photographs of people posing as dead, for all sorts of purposes.
Thereupon the morbid curiosity of others is laid bare.
My collection is large and continues to grow.
Herein, are a few from my assemblage.

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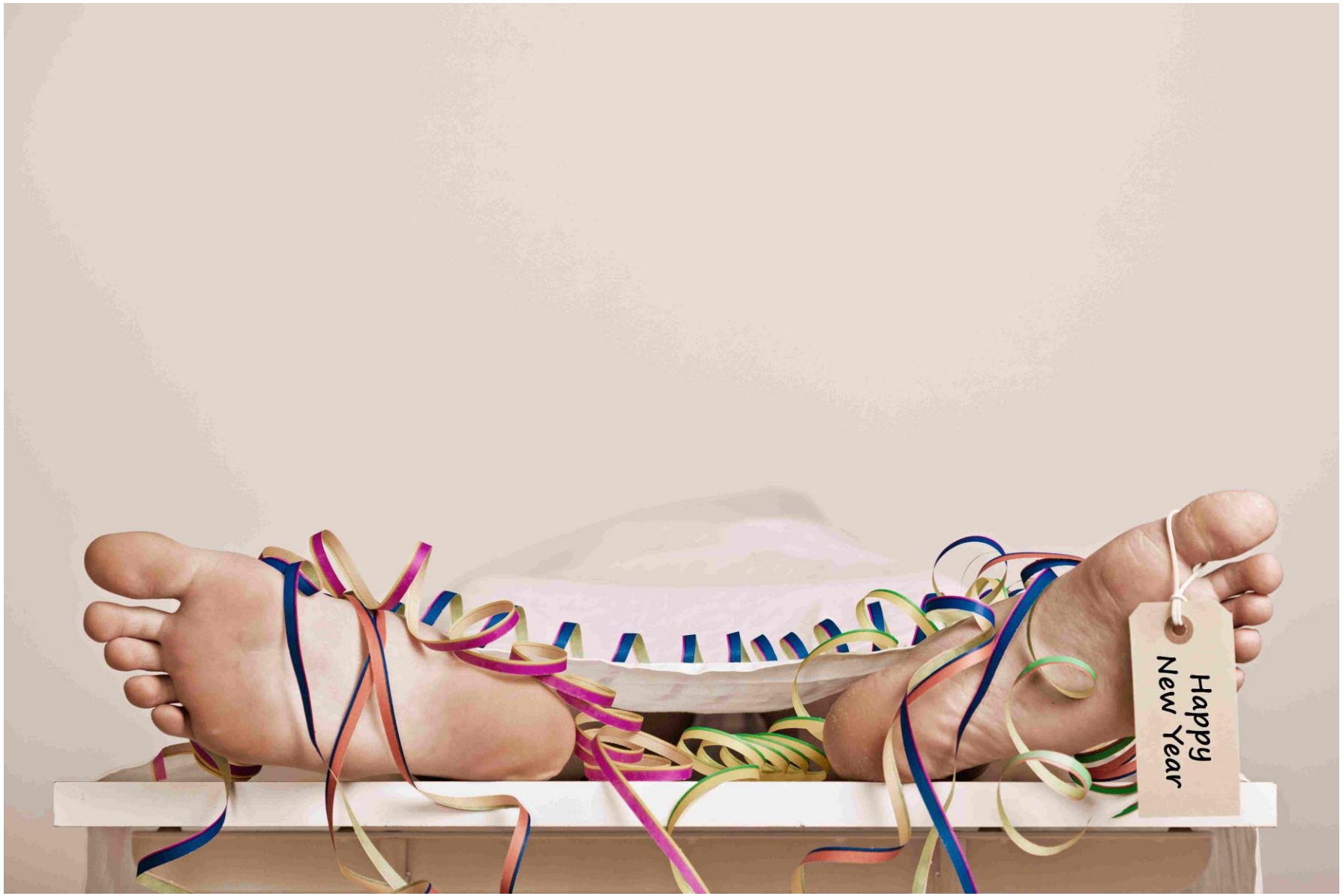

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