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# NEW MALE STUDIES – AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

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### PREFACE

Volume nine, issue one of **New Male Studies - An International Journal** offers its readers five articles and two groups of photographs intended to enhance our understanding of maleness, of boys' and men's embodied experience.

The two refereed articles in this issue respectively explore the impact of intimate partner violence and pathological gynocentrism on males. Steve Moxon's "How and why partner violence is normal female behaviour but aberrational male behaviour," suggests a "new theory" of intimate partner violence (IPV) to "address the failure of current theory to fit the data." He argues that the indicators of IPV "point not just to the predominance of female perpetration but its distinct functionality and aetiology, none of which applies to male IPV." Furthermore, he concludes that "in having no apparent function, being the result of dysfunction, and more by displacement than targeting, male perpetration is better considered the aberrational minority de facto counterpart to female perpetration of IPV per se."

Peter Wright's "Gynocentrism as a narcissistic pathology," examines "gynocentric behaviors" using "clinical descriptions of narcissism to discover how closely, and in what ways, the two concepts align." He "concludes that narcissistic behavior is significantly correlated with behaviors of gynocentrically oriented women, and that gynocentrism is a gendered expression of narcissism operating within the limiting context of heterosexual relationships and exchanges." Wright's table, comparing nine DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder with characteristics of gynocentric behaviors, offers a sound point of departure for more research on this topic.



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The first of the three shorter pieces, John Davis's "Campus sex courts: Beyond a reasonable doubt," publishes the commentary he "drafted for the U. S. Department of Education on the subject with complete citations to U. S. Supreme Court rulings," along with an introduction to the topic. His introductory comments explain the nature and use of the beyond-a-reasonable-doubt standard; the commentary he submitted to the U. S. Department of Education justifies the use of this standard in campus sexual-misconduct hearings. In his first contribution to *New Male Studies*, "Male disadvantage in art and life," Diego Morales "undertakes a text-to-world analysis of two plays and a film (Seneca's *Phaedra*, August Strindberg's *The Father*, and Sam Wood's *Casanova Brown*), offering fresh insights into the consequences for men when people overvalue female sexuality and unquestioningly believe all women, dramatizing the disturbing experience for men of female-perpetrated domestic abuse, and exploring the frustrating limitations of fathers' rights." Of particular interest is his evaluation of Strindberg's Laura using Robert Hare's "twenty characteristics indicative of psychopathy." The final short article, Jerome Teelucksingh's "Confronting the dinosaur in the room: The international day for the elimination of violence against men and boys," observes that "Violence against men and boys is under-reported, ridiculed and often ignored," despite its urgency making it the proverbial elephant in the room. He informs us that "in response to this obvious-but-often-ignored problem, the inaugural observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Men and Boys was commemorated on 31 January, 2020. This observance will continue annually because men and boys need a special day that draws our attention to their experience of violence." The author is best known in male-issues circles for reviving International Men's Day (19 November), an event now celebrated in more than seventy countries.

Jan Andersen has contributed two arrangements of photographs to this issue: each contains four images of figures responding to their claustrophobic enclosure. The viewer sees them through an opaque membrane that highlights his or her separation from them. The photographs' titles have in common the phrase *ecce homo*, behold the man; this phrase reminds the viewer of Pontius Pilate's words on seeing the scourged Christ. These photos represent man's wounds as internal, the suffering as solitary.



It should be noted that 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 sex, gender, relationships, and issues related to male experience. Thank you to the article reviewers for their contribution to this issue.



Dennis Gouws  
**Editor in Chief**

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## HOW AND WHY PARTNER VIOLENCE IS NORMAL FEMALE BEHAVIOUR BUT ABERRATIONAL MALE BEHAVIOUR

*Steve Moxon*



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### ABSTRACT

*That intimate partner violence (IPV) essentially is female-perpetrated is explained bottom-up from the biological principle that the female is the limiting factor in reproduction, through genetic and neuro-hormonal levels. Female-specific aetiology stems from greater female need for pair-bonding, spurring greater mate-retention behaviours to assuage attachment anxiety, and avoiding implantation failure by restricting (channelling) partner sexual attention in evolved cyclical hostility (PMS). IPV is violence in which females specialise: uninhibited preferred physical aggression modes in couple context. Unless part of minority mental-pathological general violence, males are self-inhibited. The reality of IPV, captured holistically at its inception in dyadic study of adolescents & young adults, shows much greater female perpetration, initiation and escalation, uni- and bilaterally; males usually non-responsive or mildly reciprocating.*

**Keywords:** (intimate) partner violence, female-perpetrated, anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, PMS

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## THE COMPLETE INADEQUACY OF CURRENT IPV THEORY

Current theory of intimate partner violence (IPV) according to all new review is wholly inadequate; at best a contribution to a partial understanding of the topic (Ali, McGarry & Bradbury-Jones, 2020; Chester & DeWall, 2018; Rothman, 2018); likewise typologies (Ali & McGarry, 2020, Burelomova, Gulina & Tikhomandritskaya 2018) take issue with conceptual frameworks and even basic definitions, echoing others that: "... existing theories are limited in their ability to explain contradictory findings or the heterogeneity of the IPV phenomenon ... their empirical viability is yet to be determined". Even what should be central to study of a *partner* phenomenon, a thoroughgoing dyadic perspective, has been lacking. It's complained of by several research teams: Lantagne & Furman (2019) in their paper, *More than the sum of two partners*; Dokkedahl & Elklit in their 2019 review, *Understanding the mutual partner dynamic in IPV*; and (specially regarding adolescents) by Capaldi, Shortt, Tiberio & Low (2018). It looks symptomatic of hitherto an eschewal of methodology yielding undesired findings, to seek data to fit a rigidly held model instead of scientific testing. However, there *are* some recent dyadic studies proper, that bolstered by brand new ones address the deficiency. All show far greater *female* perpetration, in whatever pattern, and are reviewed below (after new original theory is outlined, to show its fit).

There is little or no fit of data with current IPV theory. An overall finding of greater *female* than male IPV perpetration has been comprehensively evidenced for several decades, as confirmed for example and notably in the exhaustive literature reviews across all sample types by Desmarais Reeves, Nicholls, Telford & Fiebert, (2012), of worldwide and even clinical samples (Esquivel-Santoveña, Lambert & Hamel, 2013), and, ironically, in data from the USA National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The findings here render untenable the feminist perspective of a main or exclusive focus on *the male batterer*. The now longstanding IPV paradigm among scientific aggression researchers, *gender symmetry*, is dubbed thus to contrast with the feminist notion, characterised *gender asymmetry*. A succinct distinction, certainly. However, it prises sex-differential data -- greater female perpetration and male victimhood -- into a *non-gendered* category of supposed zero skew by sex. This funnels consideration of IPV in whichever direction to be intra-couple dynamics as if males and females are interchangeable parties. So it is that the general conclusion is often understated as that women are perpetrators merely *at least as much* as are men, akin to the expression *as good as*

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any coyly denoting *the best*. A forlorn attempt to not worsen the divide in the research community with feminist researcher-activists? Or to avoid censure from the feminist hegemony across academia? Whatever the reason, the *gender symmetry* tag is profoundly misleading.

The reverse *asymmetry*, as it were, may well be very great indeed, considering order-of-magnitude-plus disparity between anticipated and actual sex-differential IPV injury rates. Far greater male upper-body strength and weaker female body-frame together would yield a twenty-fold preponderance of female injury (as calculated by forensic psychologist Linda Dixon; personal communication), even assuming no excess male over female perpetration. Yet actual IPV injuries show a small or zero sex differential overall, a (much) greater male serious injury rate, and (after multiple corrections) likely a large majority of male spousal murder victims (see Moxon, 2014, pp. 26–27 for a discussion and citations). Even the partners of males in IPV therapy admit inflicting greater injury (Bélanger et al., 2015), as Cook (1997) found from analysing a US National Family Violence Survey. The disparity may be still greater given specifically male IPV injury will be missed in hospital and police protocols of enquiring about injuries not being applied as either policy or in practice as for women.

### **DATA QUALITY IS LOW BECAUSE MALES UNDER-REPORT THEIR VICTIMHOOD**

Particularly in the absence of proper dyadic study to fully cross-check, there will be a major confound in most data of male (relative to female) under-reporting of victimhood. Deriving from the male imperative to maintain status (the overall outcome of male intra-sexual competition indicating genetic quality, which is male mate value, determining access to sex), males individually are silent regarding any weakness, especially of sustaining violence -- the ultimate indication of low status. There is evidence in all contexts, whenever investigated, of male failure in reporting victimhood and in help-seeking (for a mini-review, see Moxon, 2019, p25). This would be expected particularly for violence sustained from those with whom males never contest rank: females. (Contest inter-sexually for such as job promotion is de facto rank rivalry, but biologically meaningless, and experienced likewise). Even anonymous survey designed to exclude the *demand characteristics* known to evoke male under-reporting, nevertheless still results in male under-reporting (Archer, 1999). It's a deep-seated phenomenon. The sex differential in reporting IPV victimhood yet further widens as a result of female vulnerability being sexually attractive (Goetz, Easton, Lewis & Buss, 2012; Rainville & Gallagher,

1990). ‘Damsel in distress’ proceptive behaviour generally or selectively to draw male attention by evoking natural male protectiveness (see below) likely drives female *over*-reporting. Yet rarely in the literature is this mentioned even as a possibility, and neither is false reporting of victimhood, despite being a well-attested extremely common cover for and form of female perpetration, or the typical mischaracterisation of male attempt to restrain female IPV. A sex differential in reporting victimhood produced by male relative under-reporting in researched estimate of tenfold (Stets & Straus, 1990), or even, conservatively, only threefold (ONS, 2014), if taken into account would transform any raw data not showing greater female perpetration. Understanding of IPV would revert to the *status quo ante*, as depicted in the until very recently highly popular English *saucy* seaside postcards of angry wives wielding heavy household objects chasing their husbands, and not dissimilar imaging in medieval English church misericords (back-rests for choristers; a photograph of one of many examples on the theme of husband-beating by wives is the graphic at the head of this paper).

### **BUILDING THEORY BOTTOM-UP FROM BIOLOGY: AVOIDING FEMALE INJURY**

Any theoretical consideration of IPV has to begin with the imperative of avoiding injury to female sexual partners, stemming from the biological principle that the female is the limiting factor in reproduction. All females can function to convey to the next generation genes of chosen males, who are but a subset of all males: only those of sufficiently high genetic-quality (the male functioning in reproduction as the *genetic filter*: Moxon, 2016), leaving all other males surplus. Whereas a single (alpha) male potentially may suffice, females are never in surplus in that their maximum individual total reproductive output is necessarily low. Avoiding physical damage potentially compromising reproduction of any and every female therefore must be not only important to their male partners but a feature foundational to social system, expected to have produced profound adaptation.

Evident from very earliest ages is the human seemingly implicit cognition in an *unspoken rule* that the male must protect the female (Euverman, 2009), paralleled in chimpanzee males’ protectiveness towards females: readily risking their own lives to defend them (Sagan & Druyan, 1993) as do human males. Boys and girls play games about boys *protecting* girls (Best, 1983; Kinney, 1999). Boys as young as four frequently say boys protect girls (Kagan, 2001). In mixed adult focus groups discussing violence, “the single most frequent (> 30%) type of comment

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involved men's protecting women. In contrast, women were never discussed as protectors of men" (Hollander, 2001, p 92). An evolved origin appears well-evidenced.

Ubiquitous profound male protectiveness explains ready misperception of IPV as only male-perpetrated. In thus rendering male IPV unusual, it's seen to be aberrant and unjustifiable. The opprobrium this evokes prompts over-anticipation in error-management mode (false positives being an acceptable cost given the importance of preventing the behaviour). Uncommon behaviour comes to be imagined instead as default and requiring special efforts to thwart. Formerly, *folk wisdom* that men hold back (whereas women may let fly) would correct such truth inversion, but currently hegemonic feminist ideology instead compounds the evolved cognitive bias. The corollary of hyper-visible male perpetration and female victimhood is rendering *hypo-visible* -- effectively *invisible* -- female perpetration and male victimhood. So it is that there is both more concern for female victims and greater denigration of male perpetrators (Hammock, Richardson & Lamm, 2017), and only when victims are female do adolescent bystanders intervene in dating violence (Debnam & Mauer, 2019). Both boys and girls view girls' dating aggression as less serious and much the more acceptable (even controlling for level of aggression) (Ramsey, 2017), and justifiable (O'Keefe, 1997). Physical violence towards males is well tolerated (Mumford, Taylor & Giordano, 2020). Almost all (96%) women expect no disapproval for striking a partner (Bartholomew, Schmitt, Yang & Regan, 2013). Many studies old and new show males are viewed as culpable, irrespective of circumstances, even when exclusively the victims.

Male-specific self-inhibition preventing physical aggression towards women was first demonstrated by Felson, Ackerman & Yeon (2003), and then in an important series of vignette experiments (Cross, Tee & Campbell, 2011; Cross & Campbell, 2012), revealing the effect is not just within-couple but in *any context where the target would be female*. In a hypothetical provocation scenario, men have a threefold lesser propensity to strike a partner than do women (Bartholomew et al., 2013). Male self-inhibition extends to hesitating to reciprocate women's hostile actions (Szell & Thurner, 2013), commonly so strongly as to be *self-silencing* (Driscoll, 2011), even in the case of otherwise particularly aggressive men (Felson, Savolainan, Hughes & Ellonen, 2015).

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## NEURAL, HORMONAL AND GENETIC BASES OF MALE NON-AGGRESSION TO FEMALES

With an adaptation to avoid injuring females being well-evidenced, we should expect phylogenetically ancient highly-conserved male-specific profound neural, hormonal and genetic mechanism. Just such has been sought and found in *primitive* species: a double-layered inhibitory switch activating mutually exclusive aggression- and courtship-triggering neural clusters (Koganezawa, Kimura & Yamamoto, 2016). This would ensure males encountering females engage in courtship terms, not in dominance-submission mode (as if encountering another male), obviating risk of displacement from male-male aggression. Violence *from* a female would be experienced as seemingly highly incongruous male-type intra-sexual behaviour, evoking evolved deference (so much so in some species, like ring-tailed lemurs, as formerly to have been mistaken for female dominance). This is congruent with the discovery through experimental gene (TRP2) manipulation of likely the same or related mechanism: a sexing algorithm, whereby an encountered individual is first sexed and if opposite-sex engaged with sexually, or, if same-sex, then engaged in dominance-submission terms (Kimchi, Xu & Dulac, 2009; Stowers et al., 2002).

What specifically prompts male self-inhibition is close physical contact with a female, which triggers a male-specific three-tier neural pathway serving to nearly eliminate aggression towards females (Yuan, Song & Yuan., 2014). As this does not make use of other learning-memory circuitry, it's clearly a dedicated mechanism for this function. The genetic underpinning of this or the aforesaid mechanisms (that are surely inter-related) is down-regulation of the doublesex (*dsx*) gene, causing reduced aggression by males towards females -- yet elevated aggression towards other males (Beckers, Kijimoto & Moczek, 2017). Moving instead up a mechanistic level to the hormonal, and specifically in humans, oxytocin, the hormone associated with pair-bonding, reduces reactive aggression in men -- but not in women -- by lowering their sensitivity to provocation (Zhu et al., 2019); congruent with men needing much more provocation to perpetrate IPV than do women (Felson et al., 2015).

## NEURAL, HORMONAL AND GENETIC BASES OF FEMALE RAISED AGGRESSION TO MALES

The experimental work of Cross, Tee & Campbell (2011) and Cross & Campbell (2012) further and even more interestingly revealed that females not only are *uninhibited* in cross-sex aggression, but *actively prefer physical modes of aggression specifically in a couple context*. The

neuro-hormonal and genetic underpinning of this too has been found. The above-cited Beckers, Kijimoto & Moczek (2017) additionally find the doublesex gene has sex-dichotomous functionality in conversely producing *increased* aggression by females towards males (leaving their aggressiveness towards other females unaffected), all with no collateral impact on courtship or mating. The fine-scale neural mechanism for this appears to be in one mode of expression of the doublesex gene in activating a small subset of neurons with no equivalent in the male, that incites high amounts of aggression (Charles, 2019). This same or related circuitry has been found independently by Palavicino-Maggio, Chan, McKeller & Kravitz, (2019). Again moving up another mechanistic level to oxytocin, females are prompted to aggress against sexual partners (whereas males are prompted to aggress towards male strangers) (DeWall et al., 2014). In a primate model, both oxytocin and vasopressin have robustly very different effects according to sex, most notably driving female threatening behaviors towards males yet affiliative behaviour to other females (Jiang & Platt, 2018).

### **A FEMALE SPECIALISATION AND A SUBSET OF MALE ABERRATIONAL GENERAL VIOLENCE**

An evolved male-specific profound mechanism inhibiting male-to-female physical aggression is not at all inconsistent with minority male IPV. Adaptations for various reasons may not be universally exhibited, and in requiring no more than a statistical advantage to become fixed may have in-built incomplete efficacy. Given the profundity of the adaptation here, a failure of male inhibition is unlikely to be caused by counter motivation but instead dysfunction owing to a mental health issue. The latter hardly would specifically compromise inhibition of aggressing against females, instead effecting disinhibition generically. Male IPV thereby would be a subset of an individual male's unusual general violence and offending. Women's violence conversely would be expected to be normal but couple-confined.

The criminal data supports this sex dichotomy. Women IPV perpetrators specialise (the term used in the literature) in that form of offending, whereas their male counterparts are generalists (Wolbers & Ackerman, 2020; Bouffard & Zedaker, 2016; Bouffard, Wright, Muftić & Bouffard, 2008; and Feder & Henning, 2005). Thornton, Graham-Kevan & Archer (2016) conclude: "Men perpetrated higher levels of general violence and non-violent offenses than women, whereas women perpetrated significantly more IPV than men". A history of general

physical fighting predicts IPV for men but not for women (Riggs, O’Leary & Breslin, 1990). Comparing male within-couple-only and extra-couple-only violent offenders, there are no statistical differences in their characteristics (Juarros-Basterretxea et al., 2018). A study by Theobald, Farrington, Coid & Piquero (2016) comparing males convicted of violence both outside and inside the home, or either only outside or only inside the home, shows males belonging to all three categories are similarly aberrant.

### **FEMALE IPV STEMS FROM FEARING PARTNER DEFECTION, MALE FROM MENTAL DISORDER**

Men in all the categories exhibited marked psychopathology (mental, particularly anti-social disorder, conceived from a behavioural perspective). Feder & Henning (2005) find much greater anti-social behaviour by male compared to female partner-violent arrestees. A unique predictor of male IPV perpetration is psychopathy (Kiire, 2017). More specifically, the unique predictor may be primary (factor one) psychopathy (Bates, Archer & Graham-Kevan, 2017), or factor one especially and additionally secondary (factor two) psychopathy (Mager, Bresin & Verona, 2014). Alternatively conceiving mental disorder in personality terms, meta-analysis reveals male IPV is due to anti-social personality disorder (PD) (Spencer et al., 2019). Yu et al. (2019) find all forms of mental disorder, notably PD, together account for up to an eight-fold greater risk of male IPV perpetration, especially as manifest in or co-morbid with substance abuse. This is as for male criminals generally: PD is heavily over-represented in the male prison population (Howard, 2016). Note that with the full range of psychiatric disorder being under consideration in Yu et al.’s study (including autism, which shows no association), the correlation with IPV would be much larger still if the range were narrowed. So it is that Thornton, Graham-Kevan & Archer (2010) find that specifically Cluster A PD (paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal) traits predict male IPV; Cluster B (emotionality, essentially), female. The authors claim “this provides some support for the view that men’s IPV has different causes from women’s, and possibly the function of the violence is different for the two sexes” (p 7). Thornton (2012) points out “A is the cluster that is closest to mental illness. It is possible that men need to be more disordered than women before they perpetrate IPV” (p 214). By contrast, “it appears as though women’s IPV may have an element of instrumentality. Previous research has found that instrumental beliefs are related to women’s IPV (e.g. Archer & Graham-Kevan, 2003; Archer & Haigh, 1999; Moffitt et al., 2000)” (p 256). Thornton concludes that whereas male IPV is due to psychopathy, that by

females is through anger and the male partner's attachment avoidance. This has been more recently formulated by Thornton with Graham-Kevan & Archer, (2016), likewise Guay, Sader, Boisvert & Beaudry, (2016), as being for males a lack of self-control, and, for females, anger. IPV for males seems to be aberrant disinhibition; for females, IPV appears to be aggression given a normal free reign.

Researchers attribute the endogenous basis of female anger driving IPV to female concern for the possibility of partner defection, indicated by different but interchangeable terms: *relationship anxiety* ("not being able to reinforce levels of positivity") (Ha, Kim & McGill, 2019), *anxious attachment* (Magelky, 2013), *fearful attachment* (Bonneville, 2016), or *inter-personal dependency* (Sharifi et al., 2018). Thornton dubbed it *fear of abandonment*, as a characterisation of cluster B PD traits, evoked by more normal expression of cluster A PD traits in the male as simply attachment avoidance -- a preference for solitude and a dislike of close relationships. This spiral, dubbed the female's *insecure attachment*, produces great relationship distress (Muetzelfeld, Megale & Friedlander, 2020), mutually escalating female anger and IPV (Rodriguez, 2000), with only male IPV victimhood (Karakurt, Keiley & Posada, 2013), or mainly male, even for males themselves in treatment for IPV perpetration (Bélanger et al., 2015).

A pattern develops where the female makes some demand to test the male, who declines to respond, instead disengaging and becoming avoidant (Eldridge et al., 2007; Christensen et al., 2006, following earlier work by several others). *Demand-withdrawal* is a couple dynamic long known to be female-initiated. Christensen et al. confirm its cross-cultural reality, and that "evidence suggested women wanted greater closeness versus independence in their relationships than did men. Differences between partners in desire for closeness versus independence were associated with greater demand/withdraw communication". Eldredge et al. show this is the basis of relationship distress, or, as Schrodt, Witt & Shimkowski (2014) and Christensen put it, reduced relationship satisfaction. Accordingly, it is women who start and escalate relationship conflict, want more than men *to put the partner in their place*, and are less motivated to avoid confrontation (Winstok & Smadar-Dror, 2018).

Overall, male IPV seems not due to something pertaining to typical men, being mental disorder; and therefore, is exhibited by a male small minority only. Telling specific deficits of male IPV offenders include unusual difficulty recognising fear in female faces, mistaking them as

happy (Seinfeld, Arroyo-Palacios & Iruretagoyena, 2018). By contrast, the particular origin of female IPV as normal behaviour is apparent, motivated by the need to retain the partner. Women's especial fear of a threat to the integrity of the pair-bond is revealed by their far more complex neural correlates to cues of relationship conflict (Flanagan et al., 2019).

### **WOMEN'S GREATER MATE-RETENTION BEHAVIORS**

That partner retention is more a female than a male imperative is apparent from mate-retention tactics being mainly either female-specific and/or used mostly by women: vigilance, concealment of mate, monopolisation of time, jealousy induction, punishing threatened infidelity, emotional manipulation, love & care, derogation of competitors, verbal possession signals, derogation of mate, and appearance enhancement (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Men instead employ resource display, possessive ornamentation (giving such as rings), commitment manipulation (eg, proposing marriage), submission, and self-debasement (giving in all the time) and -- to other men envisaged as rivals, *not* to partners -- threats and sometimes violence. The male forms conspicuously are rather more indirect. The findings replicate and build on those of Buss (1988), and accord with Kardum, Hudek-Knežević & Gračanin's (2016), who stress direct guarding, manipulation, negative inducements and public possession signalling as particularly female ploys. Findings are robust in extending beyond face-to-face to on-line contact (Lopes et al., 2017). Male tactics tackle (potential) rivals rather than the partner, so IPV requires displacement, which would be de facto rather than IPV per se.

### **WOMEN'S SPECIAL NEED FOR PAIR-BONDING AS AN ULTIMATE ROOT OF FEMALE IPV**

The greater range, number and use of female mate-retention behaviours accords with the pair-bond context necessarily being central to the aetiology of female-predominant IPV. Human pair-bonding evolved not to serve male paternity confidence but to maximise female fertility. This is achieved in effect by projecting forward in time female peak fertility through offspring being repeatedly sired by the same high-genetic-quality male acquired when the female is at her attractive peak, together with the presence of the male partner denying social/sexual access by low mate-value males (thereby allowing, even facilitating extra-pair sex with males still higher in mate-value than the partner) (Moxon, 2013). Males benefit in acquiring more fertile females than could be obtained promiscuously, but given variation in female fertility is much less than that in male gene quality, it's a far weaker fertility enhancement than for the female. Consequently,

women value the pair-bond far more than do men. Hence the extraordinary lengths traditionally women go to acquire a high mate-value pair-bond partner in vying with each other to honestly signal future fidelity, by face-body veiling or FGM (Moxon, 2017); also the intense focus women have on their pair-bond in their everyday communications, revealed in major sex differences in phone usage patterns (Palchykov et al., 2012), and in women's far greater worry about infidelity (Shattuck et al., 2012), notwithstanding the male being the only partner at risk of raising another's offspring. (For further citations and discussion, see Moxon, 2013, p8.)

### **FURTHER AETIOLOGY IN DISSUADING SEX: HORMONAL PARTNER-DIRECTED HOSTILITY IN PMS**

Further female IPV aetiology is surely apparent in premenstrual syndrome, with PMS being partner-directed hostility: irritability, moodiness and temporary relationship dissatisfaction (Fehlner, 2018), expressed by a large or overwhelming majority of women (many studies), and often used in mitigation of violent crime. That symptoms follow shortly after the female fertile window, and are partner-directed, is hitherto unexplained. Ziomkiewicz-Wichar (2017) reviewed but found wanting all hypotheses of PMS function. Reiber's (2009) claim that it is the relative low mood in the shadow of hormonal mood uplift would explain neutral but hardly the evident highly negative mood; and Gillings' (2014), that it serves to dissolve "infertile" pair-bonds, fails to account for the timing of negative mood within the cycle. There is abrupt decline in sexual intercourse after the fertile window (Wilcox et al., 2004), but its basis is that sex would severely disrupt implantation of any fertilised egg (Steiner, Pritchard, Young & Herring., 2014; in line with old work by others). Dissuading the male partner from initiating counter-productive sex would provide an important evolved function for PMS, and Gillings' evidence can be marshalled in support of this hypothesis. This is the first presentation of an implantation-failure avoidance hypothesis of PMS.

The hormonal basis of PMS would be expected to involve estradiol, given its fluctuating levels through the female cycle peak during the luteal (non-fertile) phase, coinciding with PMS; also that levels directly relate to symptom severity (Seippel & Bäckström, 1998), and are negatively associated with women's relationship evaluation and sexual desire towards their partners (Righetti et al., 2020). PMS may be the extreme of a spectrum of less obvious behaviour, in that estradiol levels rise not just through the luteal but also the follicular phase, falling only at

ovulation -- also rising steadily after pregnancy until term. It's generally thought estradiol lowers serotonin, creating the irritability and anger keeping partners at bay when sex would not (or is less likely to) lead to conception, or sex would be damaging. Estradiol is high or rising at all times other than at ovulation (when sex *would* lead to conception) and menstruation (which itself deters both parties from sex). The consequent hostility through much of the female cycle to dissuade sex, though seemingly an opposite motivation to partner retention, is likewise grounded in the ultimate goal of increasing female fertility. The female needs *both* to keep the partner pair-bonded *and* to channel his sexual attentions away from when it might be damaging (or useless) and into the fertile window. Conflict between these motivations may yet further drive female IPV. (Note that mixed data about estradiol and aggression is re *trait* aggression (general predilection to aggression), not specifically aggression in a pair-bond context.)

### **A FIT WITH THE NEW THEORY: DYADIC STUDY OF YOUNG COUPLES REVEALS THE REALITY OF IPV**

To see the fit with data of the new original theory herein outlined, a review follows of new and recent thoroughgoing dyadic studies, which usefully entail cross-checking data in holistic, dynamic overview, exposing the direction, initiation, non-reciprocation and skew in mutuality of IPV. The new theory would predict far greater, even overwhelmingly greater female vis-a-vis male IPV perpetration, both unilaterally and in skewed bilateral IPV. However, notwithstanding better methodology, confounding with male victimhood under-reporting bias surely persists, and likely also a degree of anti-male discriminatory recording bias, together masking data to leave apparent substantially greater female perpetration rather than overwhelmingly so; but the latter is what would be indicated.

Most recently, Hines, Straus & Douglas (2020), in their paper, *Using dyadic concordance types to understand frequency of intimate partner violence*, find “for physical IPV, severe psychological IPV, and controlling behaviors, bidirectional IPV was the most common, followed by female-only perpetration. Within bidirectionally aggressive relationships, women committed significantly more physical IPV and controlling behavior”. With a marked imbalance of perpetration in bidirectional couples, overall the pattern would appear to be essentially female-unilateral, albeit in some couples the male responds to a lesser degree in kind. Similar emerged investigating young married couples (Leonard et al., 2014), even though this was not

hypothesised. After first finding that *wife-only* violent couples were five times as prevalent as their *husband-only* counterparts, further (cluster) analysis revealed not only that supposed *both-aggressive* couples feature predominantly female violence, but a wholly unexpected type emerged: "... a cluster with a very high frequency of aggression in which the woman engages in substantially more aggression than the man is of considerable interest. This finding is consistent with a number of studies (e.g. Robertson & Murachver, 2007; Whitaker et al., 2007; Williams & Frieze, 2005). Similar to these other studies, this cluster was more prevalent than the cluster of high frequency aggression in which the man engages in more aggression" (Leonard et al., 2014).

Reviewing a decade ago the then limited number of thoroughgoing dyadic studies, Bartholomew & Cobb (2011) came to three inter-related conclusions: "Women are more likely than men: (a) to initiate violence in heterosexual relationships (eg, Archer, 2000; Ferguson et al., 2005), (b) to report that they would be violent in response to unacceptable partner behavior (eg, Winstok, 2006a), and (c) to perpetrate IPV when only one partner is violent (eg, Whitaker, 2007)" (Bartholomew & Cobb, 2011). Strong evidence of female unilaterality comes from a review by Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Misra, Selwyn & Rohling (2012) of all post-1990 studies investigating bi- and unidirectionality in adolescents and young adults. Of the roughly half of IPV that was unidirectional, twice as many couples were female-only, and this was the case across four out of the five sample types they reviewed: all bar those from police reports (which obviously would be very heavily biased by male under-reporting of victimhood).

Dyadic investigation of adolescents and young adults should be particularly instructive, as IPV when initially emerging likely is in least-complicated form. Combining an holistic view and earliest manifestation is important in establishing aetiology. Most recently, Reyes, Foshee, Chen & Ennett (2019) find 12% of girls are perpetrators but only 5% of boys, with a male sub-group exclusively victimised (not returning aggression); the authors citing Gonyea et al., (2016) as discovering the same pattern. Johnson, Giordano, Manning & Longmore (2015) found that the *perpetrator-only* group is overwhelmingly female (90%), with, again, a twofold sex differential overall in perpetration; for 21-24-year-olds, 29% female, 15% male. A study of late adolescents by Testa, Hoffman & Leonard (2010) showed just 1% of couples featured male-only violence, as against 14% female-only; and of the 20% mutually violent, 69% were predominantly female-

violent, with a mere 7% mostly male. The authors note this is consistent with studies over the previous decade. For example, O’Leary & Slep (2003) found just 8% of boys but 15% of girls engaged in physical violence, and girls were considerably more likely than boys to persist with it. Another though rare study mode here is simply to observe interactions; the first ever being of adolescents (Capaldi & Crosby, 1997): 6% of males and 16% of females perpetrated physical IPV considered by the coders to be not playful; in only 4% of couples was it male-only, whereas in 17% it was female-only. A particular use of observation studies is establishing who initiates, as was the focus of Capaldi, Kim & Shortt (2007) in finding 18-24-year-old females three to four times more likely to initiate than males.

Specifically regarding adolescents, an at least twofold overall sex differential of excess female over male perpetration is a very robust conclusion. Meta-analytic review by Wincentak, Connolly & Card (2017) showed overall prevalence rates for perpetration of 13% for boys and, for girls, 25%. A similar twofold sex differential, likewise looking at adolescents, is found by Taquette & Monteiro (2016), Calvete, Orue, Gamez-Guadix & López de Arroyabe (2016) and Taylor & Mumford (2016). That this is not culture-specific is shown, for example, by a study of Latino youth by Reyes, Foshee, Chen & Ennett (2017): 22% of boys reported victimhood as against only 9% of girls, whereas perpetration was reported by 17% of girls and a mere 2% of boys -- sex differentials of twofold-plus and eightfold-plus respectively. Examination of teenage couples over a decade revealed no change in the considerably higher rates of victimisation of boys over that of girls (Shaffer et al., 2018). The pattern is also confirmed in a study using multiple focus groups: “both males and females explained that dating violence is more often perpetrated by females” (Taylor, Calkins, Xia & Dalla, 2017). Self-report by adolescent females of greater perpetration than males was previously found by Foshee et al. (2009) and La Greca & Harrison (2005).

Perhaps the most comprehensive dyadic research on adolescent couples is by Burk & Seiffge-Krenke (2015) and Seiffge-Krenke & Burk (2015). The breakdown of their dyad types is instructive. The most common (20%), *physical female*, are of unilaterally violent females receiving little if any male aggressive response. Next most numerous is the *aggressive female* type (18%), where females are both psychologically and physically aggressive. Only third in prevalence is the corresponding *aggressive male* type (14%). Mutually aggressive couples are a mere 6%, with the remainder (42%) being non-aggressive. The preponderance here of unilaterally and

more-or-less unilaterally violent females over males is almost threefold, with more than half of females being violent. Most tellingly, Burk & Seiffge-Krenke conclude: “In *all of the dyads with aggressive females, irrespective of whether they were both psychologically and physically aggressive or only psychologically aggressive*, male partners did not respond with *aggression*. This points to gender-specific functions and interpretations of aggression.” Seiffge-Krenke & Burk (2015) elaborate:

*A large proportion in our sample consisted of dyads with one-sided aggressive profiles in which females were more aggressive than their male partners. The lack of aggressive responses of their male partners suggests a gender-specific pattern in the evaluation and application of aggression as a way of resolving relationship conflicts. ... Male self-silencing as a pattern of dealing with female aggression has been consistently found among married and cohabiting adult couples (Page, Stevens & Galvin, 1996), and according to our findings, seems to have an early onset.*

The data across these studies is consistent in showing substantially greater female IPV perpetration in whatever pattern, congruent with the new original theory here outlined, providing independent support.

## CONCLUSION

A comprehensive *bottom-up* multi-level new theory of IPV is available to address the failure of current theory to fit the data. From fundamental biological principle through genetic, neural and hormonal mechanisms underpinning greater female mate-retention behaviour to assuage attachment anxiety, it is shown that female special reliance on pair-bonding is the basis of understanding IPV. The strength and number of lines of evidence point not just to the predominance of female perpetration but its distinct functionality and aetiology, none of which applies to male IPV. In having no apparent function, being the result of *dysfunction*, and more by displacement than targetting, male perpetration is better considered the aberrational minority *de facto* counterpart to female perpetration of IPV *per se*.

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## AUTHOR PROFILE



**Steve Moxon** is an English independent (non-affiliated) cross-disciplinary researcher/writer of science review papers and books outlining original theory on the biological roots of human sociality, behaviour and psychology, with a special interest in the sexes—sex-difference/dichotomy. Regularly journal-published for the past decade, his topics include dominance hierarchy (and associated reproductive suppression), pair-bonding, partner violence, competitiveness, stress response mechanism, the origin of the sexual divide, and why culture is biology. Throughout is a necessary bottom-up approach, excluding all ideology: an avowed stance against ‘PC’ (‘identity politics’), specially its core of feminism; all being non-, indeed anti-science. Steve also researches/writes about mythologies (ancient and contemporary), these being another window on understanding humanity; and is a songwriter, singer & guitarist. He resides in the Pennine hills north of Sheffield, Yorkshire, where he grew up, feels at home, and can walk or cycle through the stunning countryside of steep-sided wooded valleys and gritstone edges.

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## GYNOCENTRISM AS A NARCISSISTIC PATHOLOGY

*Peter Wright*



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### ABSTRACT

*Gynocentrism is defined as the practice of prioritizing the needs, wants and desires of women. Examples of gynocentrism are found in the culture of social institutions, and within heterosexual relationships where men are invited to show deference to the needs, wants and desires of women, a practice otherwise referred to as chivalry or benevolent sexism. This study compares gynocentric behaviors with clinical descriptions of narcissism to discover how closely, and in what ways, the two concepts align. The investigation concludes that narcissistic behavior is significantly correlated with behaviors of gynocentrically oriented women, and that gynocentrism is a gendered expression of narcissism operating within the limiting context of heterosexual relationships and exchanges.*

**Keywords:** Gynocentrism, chivalry, benevolent sexism, narcissism, narcissistic personality inventory, gender

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## INTRODUCTION

*Gynocentrism* has been described as a practice of prioritizing the needs, wants and desires of women over those of men. It operates within a moral hierarchy that emphasizes the innate *virtues* and *vulnerabilities* of women and the innate *vices* of men, thus providing a rationale for placing women's concerns and perspectives 'on top', and men's at the bottom (Nathanson & Young, 2006; 2010).

The same moral hierarchy has been institutionalized in social conventions, laws and interpretations of them, in constitutional amendments and their interpretive guidelines, and bureaucracies at every level of government, making gynocentrism *de rigueur* behind the scenes in law courts and government bureaucracies that result in systemic discrimination against men (Nathanson & Young, 2006; Wright, 2018a; Wallace et al., 2019; Naurin, 2019).

While gynocentric practices operate within most social institutions, they are equally observable within intimate heterosexual relationships in which men are expected to show deference to the needs, wants and desires of women, a practice referred to as chivalry or benevolent sexism (Wright, 2018b; Hammond et al., 2014; Naurin, et al., 2019).

In this article I set out to show that gynocentrism represents a gendered expression of narcissism, one that operates in the limited context of heterosexual relationships and exchanges.

To make a case that gynocentrism *is* narcissism we need first to define what narcissism is, which will be done by recounting the original Greek myth of Narcissus, followed by an overview of how the concept was taken up by the field of psychology and elaborated into a diagnostic entity. Next, this essay will take the diagnostic entity of narcissism and compare its formal criteria with those typically applied to the notion of gynocentrism to discover how closely, and in what ways, the two concepts align. Lastly the case will be made that narcissism, expressed as *gynocentricity*, is a delimited phenomenon depending on a gendered environment for its existence, and it thus qualifies as a form of 'situational narcissism' (Sherrill, 2001).

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## THE NARCISSUS MYTH

One day the handsome youth Narcissus became thirsty after a day hunting in the mountains with his companions. After discovering a pool of water he leaned upon its edge to drink and saw his face reflected in the water. Narcissus did not realize it was merely his own reflection and fell deeply in love with it, as if it was somebody else. Here is the account of his ordeal as told by Ovid:

*While he seeks to slake his thirst another thirst springs up, and while he drinks he is smitten by the sight of the beautiful form he sees. He loves an unsubstantial hope and thinks that has substance which is only shadow. He looks in speechless wonder at himself and hangs there motionless in the same expression, like a statue carved from Parian marble. Prone on the ground, he gazes at his eyes, twin stars, and his locks, worthy of Bacchus, worthy of Apollo; on his smooth cheeks, his ivory neck, the glorious beauty of his face, the blush mingled with snowy white: all things, in short, he admires for which he is himself admired. Unwittingly he desires himself; he praises, and is himself what he praises; and while he seeks, is sought; equally he kindles love and burns with love. How often did he offer vain kisses on the elusive pool. How often did he plunge his arms into the water seeking to clasp the neck he sees there, but did not clasp himself in them!*

*What he sees he knows not; but that which he sees he burns for, and the same delusion mocks and allures his eyes. O fondly foolish boy, why vainly seek to clasp a fleeting image? What you seek is nowhere; but turn yourself away, and the object of your love will be no more. That which you behold is but the shadow of a reflected form and has no substance of its own. With you it comes, with you it stays, and it will go with you — if you can go.*

*No thought of food or rest can draw him from the spot; but, stretched on the shaded grass, he gazes on that false image with eyes that cannot look their fill and through his own eyes perishes. Raising himself a little, and stretching his arms to the trees, he cries:*

*“Did anyone, O ye woods, ever love more cruelly than I? You know, for you have been the convenient haunts of many lovers. Do you in the ages past, for your life is one of centuries, remember anyone who has pined away like this.” I am charmed, and I see; but what I see and what charms me I cannot find — so great a delusion holds my love. And, to make me grieve the more, no mighty ocean separates us, no long road, no mountain ranges, no city walls with close-shut gates; by a thin barrier of water we are kept apart. He himself is eager to be embraced. For, often as I stretch my lips towards the lucent wave, so often with upturned face he strives to lift his lips to mine. You would think he could be touched — so small a thing it is that separates our loving hearts. Whoever you are, come forth hither! Why, O peerless youth, do you elude me? or whither do you go when I strive to reach you? Surely my form and age are not such that you should shun them, and me*

*too the nymphs have loved.*

*Some ground for hope you offer with your friendly looks, and when I have stretched out my arms to you, you stretch yours too. When I have smiled, you smile back; and I have often seen tears, when I weep, on your cheeks. My becks you answer with your nod; and, as I suspect from the movement of your sweet lips, you answer my words as well, but words which do not reach my ears. — Oh, I am he! I have felt it, I know now my own image, I burn with love of my own self; I both kindle the flames and suffer them. What shall I do. Shall I be wooed or woo. Why woo at all? What I desire, I have; the very abundance of my riches beggars me. Oh, that I might be parted from my own body! and, strange prayer for a lover, I would that what I love were absent from me! And now grief is sapping my strength; but a brief space of life remains to me and I am cut off in my life's prime. Death is nothing to me, for in death I shall leave my troubles; I would he that is loved might live longer; but as it is, we two shall die together in one breath.”*

*He spoke and, half distraught, turned again to the same image. His tears ruffled the water, and dimly the image came back from the troubled pool. As he saw it thus depart, he cried: “Oh, whither do you flee? Stay here, and desert not him who loves thee, cruel one! Still may it be mine to gaze on what I may not touch, and by that gaze feed my unhappy passion.” While he thus grieves, he plucks away his tunic at its upper fold and beats his bare breast with pallid hands. His breast when it is struck takes on a delicate glow; just as apples sometimes, though white in part, flush red in other part, or as grapes hanging in clusters take on a purple hue when not yet ripe. As soon as he sees this, when the water has become clear again, he can bear no more; but, as the yellow wax melts before a gentle heat, as hoar frost melts before the warm morning sun, so does he, wasted with love, pine away, and is slowly consumed by its hidden fire. (Ovid, 1916)*

Unable to leave the allure of his own image, he came to realize that his love could not be reciprocated. Unable to eat, his body slowly wasted away from the fire of passion burning inside him, eventually disappearing entirely and transforming into a golden narcissus flower that still grows along the water's edge today.

## **NARCISSISM AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL DESIGNATION**

Twentieth century psychiatrists recognized the Narcissus myth as a useful metaphor for behaviors they were documenting in some of their patients, and so chose to refer to those behaviors as *narcissism*. As the primary symbol for representing narcissism was a male character, it may have helped to birth an assumption that narcissism is a mostly male pathology, which is misleading as both men and women can suffer from narcissistic excess.

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Early psychiatrists could equally have chosen a female character to symbolize the self-absorbed personality, such as the fairy-tale character Little Princess Cottongrass who, like Narcissus, became ‘fixated with her own heart’ while staring into a pool of water (Schwartz-Salant, 1982). ‘*Little Princess Cottongrass Personality Disorder*,’ however, doesn’t afford quite the same clinical gravitas.

The development of narcissism as a psychological concept has a long and complex history, covering ideas like *primary narcissism* (Freud, 1914) which is viewed as a healthy ingredient of childhood development, through to pathological manifestations that cause personal and interpersonal suffering, such as *narcissistic neurosis* (Freud, 1991) or *narcissistic personality disorder* (Campbell & Miller, 2011). For the purpose of this study we will turn to the DSM-5 manual of psychological disorders which summarises narcissistic personality disorder as, “*a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), a constant need for admiration, and a lack of empathy.*” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 670). The DSM’s nine diagnostic criteria for narcissistic personality disorder will be detailed later, and compared point-by-point with gynocentric behaviors as described by relevant writers and scholars on the topic.

To begin with, we will touch on the concept of *acquired situational narcissism* as a qualifier of how gynocentric narcissism arises, contrasting it in this respect from narcissism that arises from developmental vicissitudes which result in intractable personality disorder. While the diagnostic criteria for these narcissistic phenomena converge, their genesis is considerably different.

## **ACQUIRED SITUATIONAL NARCISSIM**

Robert B Millman, Professor of Psychiatry at Cornell University, coined the phrase “acquired situational narcissism” (Plante, 2006). It refers to narcissistic behavior that is brought about or “triggered” by an experience of celebrity status, and manifests symptoms comparable to those listed for narcissistic personality disorder (Sherrill, 2001). Millman suggests that it is triggered by an experience of power that comes with any privileged occupational position or favoured social status. In this sense it is the environment that promotes the exaggeration of narcissistic traits in an individual which may have only existed

previously as a mild trait or as latent potential. Examples of acquired situational narcissism include *cultural narcissism* (Lasch, 2018; Twenge, 2006, 2009); *ingroup narcissism* (De Zavala, et.al., 2009); *medical narcissism* (Banja, 2005); *celebrity narcissism* (Sherrill, 2001); and *leadership narcissism* (McSweeney, 2018). In this category we will include extreme gynocentricity displayed by women & girls as it manifests in the gendered context or 'situation' of interacting with men & boys (Wright, 2018b).

## **GYNOCENTRISM**

Before comparing gynocentric behaviours with the DSM-5 criteria for narcissistic personality disorder, we will need to isolate a consensual understanding of gynocentric behaviors from historical texts and modern theory. To that end we will start with three key historical texts, the first two from Lester F. Ward (1888, 1903) who was the first person to propose a general scientific theory of gynocentrism, and the second from Irish author George A. Birmingham;

### Lester F. Ward:

*"The female sex is primary in point both of origin and of importance in the history and economy of organic life. And as life is the highest product of nature, and human life the highest type of life, it follows that the grandest fact in nature is woman... Woman is the unchanging trunk of the great genealogical tree; while man, with all his vaunted superiority, is but a branch, a grafted scion, as it were, whose acquired qualities die with the individual, while those of woman are handed on to futurity. Woman is the race, and the race can be raised up only as she is raised up."* (Ward, 1888)

*"The gynæocentric theory is the view that the female sex is primary and the male secondary in the organic scheme, that originally and normally all things center, as it were, about the female."* (Ward, 1903)

### George A. Birmingham:

*"American social life seems to me — the word is one to apologize for — gynocentric. It is arranged with a view to the convenience and delight of women. Men come in where and how they can."* (Birmingham, 1914)

In these pithy descriptions, gynocentrism defines women as both biological and social superiors in their relation to men who are positioned to support women's 'convenience and delight' where and how they can.

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First wave feminist Charlotte Perkins-Gilman (1860 – 1935) claimed that the theory of gynocentrism was the most important contribution to ‘the woman question’ ever made (Gilman, 1911a; Davis, 2010). Commenting on Ward’s gynæocentric theory to doubters, she wrote “You’ll have to swallow it. The female is the race type; the male is her assistant. It is established beyond peradventure.” (Gilman, 1911b, p.53). Perkins-Gilman’s adherence to gynocentrism theory predated her introduction to Ward’s theories, given in such poems as ‘The Brood Mare’ (Gillman, 1898) and others which she had written years before she met Ward. While continuing to laud Ward’s gynocentrism theory as a brilliant contribution, she expanded on it by suggesting that women were more evolutionarily advanced than men, and that women were continuing to advance at a faster rate than men (Davis, 2010, p. 191).

More recently, American feminist Iris M. Young (1985) elaborated her gynocentric belief in a “superiority” of female values over male values, with the superiority thesis continuing to rest on a biological rationale as it did for Lester F. Ward and Perkins-Gilman above. Young states;

*“Gynocentric feminism... argues for the superiority of the values embodied in traditionally female experience and rejects the values it finds in traditionally male dominated institutions... Gynocentric feminism finds in women’s bodies and traditionally feminine activity the source of positive values. Women’s reproductive processes keep us linked with nature and the promotion of life to a greater degree than men’s. Female eroticism is more fluid, diffuse, and loving than violence-prone male sexuality. Our feminine socialization and traditional roles as mothers give us the capacity to nurture and a sense of social cooperation that may be the only salvation of the planet... within traditional femininity lie the values that we should promote for a better society.” (Young, 1985).*

Note the biological essentialism appearing from Lester Ward through to Young who further states that “Gynocentrism’s most important contribution is its affirmation of difference” (Young, 1985, p.184). Young clarifies that the superiority of “women’s bodies” and the associated values of women’s bodies are central tenets of both gynocentrism and third wave feminism, pointing to a biological essentialism that critics of feminism appear to have overlooked in their rush to denounce the social constructivism of some second-wave feminists (Wright, 2018c).

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Since the 1970s most explorations of gynocentrism have been carried out by feminists from the perspective of what gynocentricity means to, or feels like, for women who embrace such behavior. They ask, for example, how does the practice of gynocentrism serve to strengthen women's ego-identity and improve their sense of dignity and wellbeing. Notably no equivalent discussion with men and boys has taken place to discover *their* experience of gynocentrism, thus the female-centric examination of the topic is an imbalanced one deserving of expansion by the inclusion of male, and also humanist perspectives in order to give a more complete overview of the topic.

Since the turn of the millennium new investigations into the nature and dynamics of gynocentrism – from male-inclusive, and humanist points of view – have appeared and provided a more detailed understanding of gynocentrism. The following examples present a synopsis of eight of these contributors: Alison Tieman, Paul Elam, Paul Nathanson & Katherine Young, Adam Kostakis, Peter wright, Dennis Gouws, and Peter Ryan.

*Alison Tieman*

*“In my opinion – and this is just from observing the social systems as they play out – I would say that gynocentrism prioritizes women’s protection and provision.” (Elam & Tieman, 2018)*

*Paul Elam*

*“As gynocentrism manifests itself in the realm of sexual politics I do call it the tendency in human beings to prioritize the needs and wants of women over the needs and wants of men... The reason I like to frame it in terms of needs and wants is because in this gynocentric milieu, the gynocentric landscape in which we live, it’s not just protection and provision that women demand of the culture around them, it is everything. Its protection, its provision, its privilege, its power, its ‘believe the woman,’ its, you know, if I say something I don’t want to be questioned; this goes way beyond protection and provision. (Elam & Tieman, 2018)*

*“How did chivalry go from being a military code to being a codified standard for men to meet in their protective treatment of women? The answer to that is a matter of historical record; it was through manipulation of the gynocentric instinct. In the twelfth century Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter Marie de Champagne engaged in an intensive campaign to popularize the idea of courtly or romantic love... Eleanor, a woman of serious means and influence, sort of like a supersized Betty Friedan of the high Middle Ages, saw an opportunity in this to promote a connection between men and women inspired by*



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*passion and infatuation and driven by a model of service – particularly of service to women. She and her daughter commissioned troubadours who borrowed from the ethics of military chivalry to write books and songs that carried this message to all the European courts. Even though the message was meant primarily for the aristocracy it eventually filtered down into the general population and quickly grew in popularity... The advent of romantic chivalrous love took the naturally occurring tendency in men to take care of women and made the first great leap toward a gynocentric society that would tolerate and indeed encourage all manner of insanity in the name of putting women first.” (Elam, 2016)*

### **Paul Nathanson & Katherine Young**

*“In ‘egalitarian’ societies imagined by this branch of feminism, men were free to exist as “equals” of women as long as they acknowledged the supremacy of women. This worldview – as distinct from the one that produces objective scholarship on women – is explicitly gynocentric and therefore ignores the needs and problems of men.*

*Gynocentrism is a form of essentialism – as distinct from scholarship or political activity on behalf of women – to the extent that it focuses on the innate virtues of women. But this worldview is explicitly misandric too, because it not only ignores the needs and problems of men but also attacks men. Misandry is a form of dualism that focuses on the innate vices of men. In this moral or even ontological hierarchy, women are at the top and men are at the bottom.” (Nathanson & Young, 2010, p.58)*

### **Adam Kostakis**

*“The traditional idea under discussion is male sacrifice for the benefit of women, which we term Gynocentrism. This is the historical norm, and it was the way of the world long before anything called ‘feminism’ made itself known. There is an enormous amount of continuity between the chivalric class code which arose in the Middle Ages and modern feminism, for instance. That the two are distinguishable is clear enough, but the latter is simply a progressive extension of the former over several centuries, having retained its essence over a long period of transition. One could say that they are the same entity, which now exists in a more mature form – certainly, we are not dealing with two separate creatures. (Kostakis, 2011a).*

*“And what is the logical outcome – say, if tomorrow, feminists got everything they are advocating for today? We would be plunged immediately into a two-tier system of rights and obligations, where men and women form distinct castes of citizen, the former weighed down by the obligations that enable the latter to luxuriate in their total autonomy. Life for women would be a literal lawlessness, while men’s every move would be dictated from above, geared to the purpose of providing for all female needs and wants. It would not be inappropriate to call such a system sexual feudalism, and every time I read a feminist article, this is the impression that I get: that they aim to construct a new aristocracy,*

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comprised only of women, while men stand at the gate, till in the fields, fight in their armies, and grovel at their feet for starvation wages. All feminist innovation and legislation creates new rights for women and new duties for men; thus it tends towards the creation of a male underclass. (Kostakis, 2011b).

“So, here is the definition I offer up: feminism is the most recent, and presently the most culturally dominant form of Gynocentrism. It is a victim ideology which explicitly advocates female supremacy, at every facet of life in which men and women meet; it does so in accordance with its universalizing tendency, and so it does so in each sphere of life, including but extending beyond the political, social, cultural, personal, emotional, sexual, spiritual, economic, governmental and legal. By female supremacy, I refer to the notion that women should possess superiority of status, power and protection relative to men. It is the dominant cultural paradigm in the Western world and beyond. It is morally indefensible, although its adherents ensure that their hegemony goes unchallenged through the domination of societal institutions and the use of state violence.” (Kostakis, 2011c).

### Peter Wright

“Gynocentric chivalry is alluded to by alternative terms such as benevolent sexism, romantic love, gentlemanliness, courtesy, gallantry, heroism, or simply chivalry. The practice has roots in what some scholars have referred to as chivalric ‘love service,’ (Bennett, 2013) a ritualized form of devotion by men toward women popularized by troubadours in the Middle Ages. The earliest conceptualization of love service borrowed from the vocabulary of medieval feudalism, mimicking ties between a liegeman and his overlord; i.e., the male lover is referred to as *homo ligius* (the woman’s liegeman, or ‘my man’) who pledged honor, and *servitium* (service) to the lady via a posture of feudal homage. The lady was addressed as *midons* (literally ‘my lord’), and also by *dominus* (denoting the feudal Lady) (Alfonsi, 1986). These practices form the ideological taproot of modern romantic chivalry.

The conventions and indeed the lived practices of romantic chivalry celebrated first among the upper classes made their way by degrees eventually to the middle classes and finally to the lower classes – or rather they broke class structure altogether in the sense that all Western peoples became inheritors of the customs regardless of their social station. Today chivalry is a norm observed across the majority of global cultures, an explicitly gynocentric norm aimed to increase the comfort, safety and power of women, while affording men a sense of purpose and occasional heroism in addressing that same task.

C.S. Lewis referred to the growth of romantic chivalry as “the feudalisation of love,” (Lewis, 2013, p. 2) making the observation that it has left no corner of our ethics, our

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imagination, or our daily life untouched. He observed that European society has moved essentially from a social feudalism, involving a contractual arrangement between a feudal lord and his vassal, to a sexual feudalism involving a comparable contract between men and women as symbolized in the act of a man going down on one knee to propose marriage. (Wright, 2018a)

“The dominant features of gender relations today come from old Europe in the forms of damseling, chivalry and courtly-love. Together they form the customs, in fact the essence, of modern gynocentric culture.” (Wright, 2016)

### Dennis Gouws

“This conservative approach to chivalry, one whose paternalism has surely outlived its usefulness in the twenty-first century, offers men little and confines them to a life of gynocentric pleasing and male disposability in the service of gynocentric chivalry. What this approach has in common with gender feminism is the way it suggests gynocentrism is essential and congruent with society—its natural and normal protocol—rather than being one philosophy among many. The second approach placed the onus on changing chivalry on women and their expectations. Ashley suggested that “It is women who need to figure out what roles they would have men perpetuate, and encourage those over the less-preferred actions.” This approach completely objectifies men and empowers women to dictate what they want men to do to please women. It is gynocentric, strategic, and impersonal; it is a gender-feminist approach. As much of this chapter has suggested, it is harmful to men and women who seek gender equity.

“Michael Kimmel (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010) popularized the concept of aggrieved entitlement which can succinctly be defined as “a gendered emotion, a fusion of that humiliating loss of manhood and the moral obligation and entitlement to get it back” (p. 454). Because Kimmel’s sympathies lie with gender feminism, he is uninterested in how this concept might apply to women’s behavior. Women might express aggrieved entitlement when they experience what they perceive to be a humiliating loss of the gynocentric privilege to which gynocentric chivalry, gender feminism, and hegemonic gynarchy have entitled them. Self-righteous, angry expressions of personal offense and even violent acts might result from their perceived moral obligation to regain their sense of gynocentric privilege. A cursory internet search of gender-feminist responses to men’s-issues speakers on campus and to the establishing men’s groups or other male-positive spaces on campus will provide examples of this aggrieved entitlement.” (Gouws, 2018)

### Peter Ryan

I define gynocentrism as the following: The set of elements of society and relationships that are directed by the intent to prioritise female well-being over male well-being, based solely or partly on the sex of the intended beneficiary(ies) being female and for which there

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are no equivalent efforts made to provide corresponding commensurate benefits to males.

*I define well-being as the quality of the overall condition of the life of an individual or group, that is based on taking their mental and physical health and life satisfaction into consideration.*

*The diagnostic criteria that must be met for an element of society or relationships to be considered gynocentric are the following: 1. The element must be driven by the intent to prioritise female well-being over male well-being. 2. This intent must be solely or partly based on the sex of the intended beneficiary(ies) being female. 3. There must be no equivalent efforts made to provide commensurate benefits to males for instances where female well-being is prioritised over male well-being.” (Ryan, 2018)*

### Online reference definitions

*“Gynocentrism: Is a radical feminist discourse that champions woman-centered beliefs, identities, and social organization.” (Encyclopedia R., 2005)*

*“Gynocentric: Centered on or concerned exclusively with women; taking a female (or specifically a feminist) point of view.” (Dictionary, O. E., 2008)*

*“Gynocentrism: The tendency to place the female or feminine viewpoint and experience at the center of a society or culture.” (Dictionary S. D., 2016)*

*“Gynocentrism: An ideological focus on females, and issues affecting them, possibly to the detriment of non-females.” (Dictionary, Y., 2018)*

*“Gynocentrism: Dominated by or emphasizing feminine interests or a feminine point of view.” (Dictionary, M. W., 2020)*

### **CONDENSATION AND SUMMARY OF DESCRIPTIONS OF GYNOCENTRISM:**

By definition males and females in gynocentric relationships are both ideologically and behaviourally ‘woman-centered’ as per the suffix *-centrism*. In this respect gynocentrism is differentiated from relationships that are *relationship-centered*, involving reciprocity between men and women, relationship partners, and other family members.

Gynocentric relationships assume strict gender roles: men are expected to pedestalize and extend chivalric (benevolently sexist) behavior toward women; and women are to assume the status of biological and moral superiority deserving of pedestalization and entitlement to special benefits. These roles have roots in the tradition of courtly and romantic love.

Gynocentrism is focused on maximizing the benefits of convenience, comfort, pleasure, needs, wants, protections, provision, power and self-esteem of women.

It takes place in heterosexual relationships, or by extension in relationships where stereotypical heterosexual roles can be mimicked. In this sense it is situational (heterosexual relationships) rather than universal and general.

It obliterates the variety of potential masculinities, and replaces them with the singular masculinity of chivalric servant. Masculine variety of every non-gynocentric kind is viewed as a failure and affront to the gynocentric mandate.

### DSM CRITERIA FOR NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER

The DSM-5 states that narcissistic personality disorder is indicated by the presence of at least 5 of 9 criteria (See table-1 below). For the purpose of this study, the DSM criteria are compared below with behaviors typically inferred of the ‘gynocentric woman’ [GW].

**TABLE 1.** A Comparison of DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder Compared to Gynocentric Behaviors

DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder	Traits and behaviors of the gynocentrism-oriented woman
[DSM] 1. A grandiose sense of self-importance (eg, the individual exaggerates achievements and talents and expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements)	[GW] Views self as ‘superior’ to males (e.g. genetically, physically, morally, creatively, aesthetically, or in terms of emotional intelligence) based on the fact of being born female (Ward,1903; Young, 1985)
[DSM] 2. A preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love	[GW] Preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love, appearing especially in the gendered context of the romantic love tradition (Wright, 2014)
[DSM] 3. A belief that he or she is special and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people or institutions	[GW] Gynocentric feminists have long celebrated women’s special and unique “ways of knowing,” along with the mystical association women share through these paths (Belenky, et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1993)
[DSM] 4. A need for excessive admiration	[GW] Expects men to pedestalize herself and/or women generally. Pedestalization is defined by some authors as a central defining feature of gynocentrism. (Galbi, 2015; Jarosek, 2017)
[DSM] 5. A sense of entitlement (ie, unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations)	[GW] Feels entitled to receive gestures of benevolent sexism/chivalry, and deferential behavior from intimate and familial males (Hammond, et al., 2014; Wright, 2018b)



DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder	Traits and behaviors of the gynocentrism-oriented woman
[DSM] 6. Interpersonally exploitive behavior (ie, the individual takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends)	[GW] Pressures, manipulates or demands to receive benevolently sexist gestures from men in order to secure comforts, pleasures, needs, wants, protections, provision, power and self-esteem. Employs intimidating or punishing gestures for failures and non-compliance (Wright, 2018b; 2019)
[DSM] 7. A lack of empathy (unwillingness to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others)	[GW] Suppresses, ignores or actively censures empathic responses to men's issues. This approach is promoted by gynocentric feminists who treat dispensation of empathy as a zero-sum activity and scarce resource that must be reserved exclusively for women (Collins, 2016; Fiamengo, 2015)
[DSM] 8. Envy of others or a belief that others are envious of him or her	[GW] Envious of other women's beauty, or assumes others envious of her beauty; viewed as a competitive edge for securing male resources and admiration. (Friday, 1996) Also demonstrates envy and concomitant resentment of male potency and provision (Schoenewolf, 2017; Reich, 1953)
[DSM] 9. A demonstration of arrogant and haughty behaviors or attitudes	[GW] Displays an attitude and behavior of superiority over, and concomitant contempt for, men and boys. (Kostakis, 2011c; Nathanson & Young, 2001; Schoenewolf, 2017)

## RELATED THEORIES OF NARCISSISM

The lexicon of narcissism-related terms provides further items that can be explored to determine the degree to which gynocentrism reflects narcissistic behaviors. Three topics are surveyed below to help to inform the current study.

'*Narcissistic supply*' is a concept introduced into psychoanalytic theory by Otto Fenichel (1938) to describe a type of admiration, interpersonal support or sustenance drawn by an individual from his or her environment that is essential to the formation of self-esteem. The individual employs two main strategies for eliciting narcissistic supplies from others; ingratiation and aggression. While Fenichel referred to the need for narcissistic supply as a human universal, he underlined its potential to develop into exaggerated and pathological forms (Fenichel, 1938). The phrase is typically employed in the pathological sense, describing an excessive need for attention or admiration and operating as a form of interpersonal exploitation in which the narcissist fails to take into account the wider feelings, opinions, or needs of other people.

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Self-psychologist Heinz Kohut believed individuals with narcissistic personality disorder experience a mental disintegration when cut off from a regular source of narcissistic supply. Those providing supplies are sometimes treated as if they are a part of the narcissist in an eclipse of all personal boundaries (Kohut & Tolpin, 1996). The same motivations and behaviors are readily seen in the gynocentrically-oriented women's search for, and expectation of receiving, chivalric supplies from men (Hammond et al., 2014; Wright, 2018b).

*'Narcissistic injury'* refers is a psychological wounding of the self through lack of narcissistic supplies. It can arise from absence of a supplying audience, or alternatively by their refusal or failure to offer adequate ego support. Such a blow typically lowers the narcissist's self-esteem and produces feelings of humiliation, shame and rage (Reber, 1995).

In the marketplace of potential narcissistic supplies, women are frequently afforded priority over men, culturally speaking, such as we witness in phrases like "The wedding is *her* special day," "Ladies before gentlemen," "Aint nobody happy if mamma ain't happy," "Women and girls first," "Whatever she wants, she gets," "Men must pay the bill for dinner," etc. When denied the experience of gynocentric entitlements women may experience narcissistic injury, and may express a sense of aggrieved entitlement (Gouws, 2018; Wright, 2019).

*'Narcissistic rage'* refers to an aggressive reaction arising from the experience of a narcissistic injury that has threatened the narcissist's self-esteem or self-worth. The intensity of the reaction occurs on a continuum, which may range from instances of aloofness and expressions of mild irritation or annoyance, to serious outbursts including, at the extremes, violent attacks or homicide (Lambe, et al., 2018).

For Heinz Kohut, narcissistic rage is related to narcissists' need for total control of their environment, including "the need for revenge, for righting a wrong, for undoing a hurt by whatever means." (Ronningstam, 2005, pp. 86–87). It is an attempt by the narcissist to turn a passive experience of victimization into an active role via giving pain to others, while at the same time attempting to rebuild some sense of self-worth. It may also involve self-preservation, with rage serving to restore a sense of safety and power by destroying that which had threatened the narcissist. (Ronningstam, 2005). Edmund Bergler states that the rage

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follows any blow to the narcissist's sense of omnipotence (Levin, 1995).

Viewed within the context of gynocentric relationships, narcissistic rage, or what we might loosely term *gynocentric rage*, is captured in the phrase “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned,” which indicates that a woman who cannot make someone love her can become extremely angry and vindictive (Gouws, 2018; Wright, 2019).

## DISCUSSION

Benevolent sexism (chivalry) plays a significant role in the operation and maintenance of gynocentric relationships, and warrants further analysis in the context of this study.

In their paper titled *The Allure of Sexism*, Matthew D Hammond *et.al.* studied whether women’s feeling of entitlement to special treatment, which they emphasize is “a central facet of narcissism based on feelings of superiority and deservingness” (2014, p.422), was linked with endorsement of benevolent sexism by women across time. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the study found that a psychological sense of entitlement by women *does* mediate endorsement of benevolent sexism. Moreover, the researchers theorized that characteristics of narcissistic entitlement, those which drive resource-attainment and self-enhancement strategies, are the same qualities that promote women’s adoption of benevolent sexism:

*“First, benevolent sexism facilitates the capacity to gain material resources and complements feelings of deservingness by promoting a structure of intimate relationships in which men use their access to social power and status to provide for women (Chen et al., 2009). Second, benevolent sexism reinforces beliefs of superiority by expressing praise and reverence of women, emphasizing qualities of purity, morality, and culture which make women the “fairer sex.” Indeed, identifying with these kinds of gender-related beliefs (e.g., women are warm) fosters a more positive self-concept (Rudman, Greenwald, & McGhee, 2001).*

*Moreover, for women higher in psychological entitlement, benevolent sexism legitimizes a self-centric approach to relationships by emphasizing women’s special status within the intimate domain and men’s responsibilities of providing and caring for women. Such care involves everyday chivalrous behaviors, such as paying on a first date and opening doors for women (Sarlet et al., 2012; Viki et al., 2003), to more overarching prescriptions for men’s behavior toward women, such as being “willing to sacrifice their own well-being” to provide for women and to ensure women’s happiness by placing her “on a pedestal” (Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Thus, women higher in*

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*psychological entitlement should be particularly enticed by benevolent sexism because it justifies provision and praise from men as expected behavior and does not require women to reciprocate the reverence or material gains, which men provide.’ (Hammond, et al., 2014, pp. 3-4).*

Recognition of narcissism as prevalent among feminist women has a long history. In her paper *Who Put The “Me” in Feminism*, Imogen Tyler (2005) admits to the widespread recognition of narcissism in the feminist movement by wider society. Tyler attempts to put a positive spin on the behavior, reframing the predilection among feminists as a result of downtrodden women’s attempt to develop an independent, healthy narcissistic identity not tied to oppressive patriarchal demands. Tyler further advocates what she views as the hidden benefits of female narcissism:

*“Feminism exposes and challenges the sexual politics of narcissism both by making prevailing forms of narcissism visible (the homo-social bond) and by encouraging new self-conscious forms of narcissism amongst women to emerge.”*

*“In this article I have examined what is at stake in the attribution of narcissism to femininity and feminism, and the routes through which arguments about ‘feminist narcissism’ became central to the popular abjection of feminism... Despite the ways in which narcissism has been consistently employed as a rhetorical means of denigrating women and delegitimizing feminist politics, I have also demonstrated the central role of narcissistic theories of identity in enabling feminist theorists to prise open the mechanisms of feminine identity and critique the sexual politics of identity practices.”* (Tyler, 2005)

The narcissistic individual’s sense of entitlement, combined with an unwillingness to identify with the feelings and needs of relationship partners, renders their relationships decidedly narcissist-centered. The relationship partner is objectified as a “thing,” a resource provider who is pressured to follow the narcissist’s lead, or alternatively to suffer punishment, rejection or dissolution of the relationship.

Likewise, highly gynocentric relationships center around needs and wants of women, with the male partner expected to assist in serving those aims in place of his own. Writer C.S. Lewis captured this dynamic in his description of courtly love, where he elaborated male lover’s posture in relation to his lady; *“The lover is always abject. Obedience to his lady’s lightest wish, however whimsical, and silent acquiescence in her rebukes, however unjust, are the*

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*only virtues he dares to claim.*" (Lewis, 2013, p. 2). These findings are suggested in the term gynocentrism itself whose suffix *-centrism-* emphasizes dominance of the female position over inclusivity, compromise, and power-sharing relationships. Said alternatively, couple-centeredness and gyno-centeredness (woman centeredness) are antithetical concepts.

A note on terminology needs to be made at this juncture. The phrase "Gynocentric relationships," as used throughout this study, is differentiated by the author from all isolated gynocentric acts, such as an annual celebration of Mother's Day. Or for a more dramatic illustration of an isolated gynocentric act, we might picture a man taking on a knife-wielding maniac who is threatening to hurt his pregnant wife, while the wife, understandably, retreats and does not help the husband during the fight: the actions of both husband (protecting his wife) and wife (protecting herself) are rightly defined as gynocentric acts. However, if we consider the *overall* relationship between the same husband and wife, we might ask a different question – *is the entire relationship a gyno-centric one?*

If a husband and wife take turns indulging each other across the duration of their relationship in a spirit of ongoing, commensurate reciprocity, then the relationship can be referred to as "couple centered." Conversely, a *gyno-centric* relationship centres predominately or exclusively around the female partner and her wishes. This leads to the conclusion that when there is genuine reciprocity operating within a relationship, a balanced couple-centric dynamic in which the needs, wants and desires of both partners are afforded equal value, it can not be considered a gynocentric relationship (Wright, 2018d).

Much like the power dynamic between a narcissistic and non-narcissistic partner, gynocentric relationships are based on unbalanced roles that are in some ways comparable to master-slave, or BDSM-style relationships (Duits, 2015).

### **WHAT HAS BEEN MEN'S ROLE IN PROMOTING GYNOCENTRIC NARCISSISM?**

Firstly we can say that men have played a principle role in aiding and abetting the growth of gynocentrism among women, motivated in large part by a desire to form relationships with them. Secondly, as Paul Elam recently pointed out in an article *Daddy's Little Nightmare*, men encourage narcissism in their daughters:

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*It's quite ironic, listening to a man complain about how his wife has crazy unreal expectations. He bemoans the fact that she cannot be satisfied, no matter what he does. He claims that he pulls his hair out trying to figure out how to satisfy her endless demands only to be met with more disapproval and, of course, more demands. He wonders aloud how she ever learned to be such a bottomless pit, and such a bitch about it.*

*Then you go watch him interact with his four-year old daughter, whom he will endlessly coddle and for whom he will go to any measure to make sure she never lacks anything, no matter how trivial.*

*And it doesn't stop when she turns five. Or fifteen, or twenty-five. When it comes to turning human females into paragons of pissy entitlement, the western father has few rivals. (Elam, 2019)*

Suffice to say that many men are complicit in maintaining the status quo, creating a culture of exaggerated benevolent sexism in order to gain romantic access to women. The subsequent relationship dynamic is one they may come to find destructive to their emotional and physical wellbeing and thus unsustainable in the long term. Some men adjust to the gynocentric dynamic by resigning their dreams and emotional needs and playing the role of what is disparagingly referred to as a 'simp' or overly servile partner, perhaps rationalizing that gynocentrism is encoded into our genome and is thus 'the way of nature.'

Gynocentrism is further upheld by men at the institutional level, relying for example on a chivalric compact between women and male politicians who wish to hold office (Farrell, 1996; Frasure-Yokley, 2018; Lodders & Weldon, 2019; Naurin, et al., 2019; Wright, 2017), or male court judges who are eager to demonstrate their chivalric credentials by providing lighter sentences for female offenders (Visher, 1983; Hood, 1992; Curry, et al., 2004; Embry, et al., 2012; Starr, 2015). Such displays by men in positions of power have the effect of normalizing gynocentrism, with the gender imbalance it entails, as an acceptable standard of behavior for heterosexual exchanges.

In cultures perceived as encouraging gynocentrism, an emerging male demographic is seeking female partners who eschew the gynocentric blueprint in favor of alternative relationship models; for example traditional gender roles based on division of responsibility and labor (Wright, 2020), or alternatively a 'multi-option' model for both male and female partners based on the libertarian principles of individual choice, self-determination, and negotiated labor-sharing arrangements (Wright, 2020).

Further, increasing numbers of ‘no gynocentrism’ men are choosing to avoid long-term relationships with women, adopting instead the lifestyle of confirmed bachelors while engaging in meaningful relationships and activities that can fill the breach (Smith, 2013, Yiannopoulos, 2014). In Western societies these men are sometimes referred to as ‘Zeta Males’ who reject the gynocentrism-dependent male categories of *alpha* and *beta* (Tayo, 2017), or alternatively they are called ‘Men Going Their Own Way,’ (Wright & Elam, 2013), and in Japanese society they are given the title of *sôshoku danshi* or ‘herbivore men’ to denote their refusal to seek traditional ‘carnivorous’ pursuits of career and women (Smith, 2013, Morioka, 2013, Yiannopoulos, 2014).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Most academic studies find that males as a group score higher on narcissism scales than do females (Grijalva, et al., 2015). However, these findings may be misleading because the instruments used, their factor structures, and the wording of questionnaires may be more effective at tapping male expressions of narcissism over female expressions within the alternative context of intimate relationships.

Men’s typical commitment to work and to learning new skills provides a sense of mastery and competence that is often backed by ‘commensurate achievements,’ thus men’s display of agentic confidence in the area of skill-acquisition may serve as a misleading marker for narcissistic inflation. Conversely, the male social role may encourage a façade of ego-strength in order for men to gain acceptance as reliable laborers, leaders, parents or husbands (Carroll, 1989; Wood & Eagly, 2012; Grijalva, et.al., 2015). In this respect male displays of confidence are aimed substantively toward service roles, and to the generating of resources that can be shared with others. On the downside, a persona of strength may belie an inner feeling of impotence that is considered taboo for public exposure – as men are expected to appear agentic and confident. The fragility of this position is summarized in Dr. Warren Farrell’s statement that ‘*Men’s greatest weakness is their facade of strength, and women’s greatest strength is their facade of weakness.*’ (Farrell, 1996, p. 27).

A finding of gender bias in descriptions and assessment criteria for narcissism have been raised in studies by Akhtar (1982), Philipson (1985), and again in a paper by Carroll (1989)

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which concluded that the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) pays more attention to behaviors typifying male expressions of narcissism than female. Carroll states, “*women may exhibit both adaptive and maladaptive narcissism in subtler, more oblique ways than men... [and] may be more likely to express narcissism in an interpersonal style which involves greater enmeshment and dependency upon relationships.*” (Carroll, 1989, p.1005). Following Carroll, the main instrument under examination for generating gender bias is the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) which remains the most popular measure of narcissism, employed in over three-quarters of empirical studies (Cain et al., 2008).

The problem of bias in the NPI was recently confirmed by Gebauer et.al (2012), and Nehrlich et.al (2019) who suggest the need to employ a ‘two spheres’ approach characterized by ‘agentic narcissism’ and ‘communal narcissism,’ which tend to be correlated with typical expressions of masculine and feminine gender roles respectively. According to Gebauer et.al, “*acknowledging the existence of a communal facet of narcissism broadens the scope of narcissistic self-affirmation, self-promotion, and self-enhancement. In other words, the agency-communion model supports the existence of... situation-behavior patterns among narcissists that extend into the communal domain.*” (2012, p.871)

These studies lend support to the contention that women’s expression of narcissism can be more relational in nature, requiring alternative constructs and scales to assess. Furthermore, women’s narcissism may be highly targeted in its communal expression because women might not feel entitled, for example, to special treatment by all non-intimate males nor by other women, whereas they may feel highly entitled to special treatment by men and boys in platonic and intimate relationships, as detailed above. To effectively measure female narcissism, otherwise referred to in this essay as *gynocentrism*, new scales need to be developed to target the specific behaviors outlined and the contexts in which they typically occur.

This essay demonstrates that the DSM-5 criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder is significantly correlated with behaviors and expectations of gynocentric women, which leads to the conclusion that gynocentrism is a gendered expression of narcissism operating in the limiting context of heterosexual relations.

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## AUTHOR PROFILE



**Peter Wright**, creator of the blog *Gynocentrism And Its Cultural Origins*, is a gender-relations historian and advocate for men's issues. He has published numerous essays at *A Voice for Men*, edited a three-book series of writings by Ernest Belfort Bax, and published 14 books including *Red Pill Psychology: Psychology for Men in a Gynocentric World*, *Gynocentrism: From Feudalism to the Modern Disney Princess*, and *Surviving The Disability Sector: A Guide for Men* (co-authored with Hanna

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## CAMPUS SEX COURTS: BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT

*John Davis*



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### ABSTRACT

*Many experts mistakenly believe that proving culpability beyond a reasonable doubt is only necessary in criminal-court trials. However, the United States Supreme Court has ruled otherwise (as have many courts in many jurisdictions). There is no other determination made in our culture that has more grave social consequences on a person than an accusation of sexual misconduct. These severe consequences, impairment of liberty and property, as well as a lifelong stigma as a sex offender, compel high standards of due process, according to Supreme Court rulings, in making such a determination against accused persons. This article comments on the Department of Education's proposed rulemaking on campus adjudications of Title IX proceedings, especially those pertaining to sexual misconduct or sexual harassment.*

**Keywords:** males, men, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, title ix

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## INTRODUCTION

The legal concept of *beyond a reasonable doubt* is a source of misconceptions among the public and among many judges and lawyers. Finding someone is guilty of committing a wrong beyond a reasonable doubt means that we are certain the person actually did something wrong and with a state of mind that a reasonable person would consider evil.

The legal requirement that someone be found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt arises from thousands of years of laws in civilization that prohibit the government (or anyone else) from harming a person unless we are certain that there is a justifiable reason to harm him or her. Before the government punishes a person, we require a judgment, arising from *due process of law*, and before we allow someone other than the government to punish someone (known as *extra-judicial punishment*) we require certainty that the person deserves the punishment.

The United States Supreme Court describes “beyond a reasonable doubt” as follows:

*[T]he government has the burden of proving the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Some of you may have served as jurors in civil cases, where you were told that it is only necessary to prove that a fact is more likely true than not true. In criminal cases, the government’s proof must be more powerful than that. It must be beyond a reasonable doubt.*

*Proof beyond a reasonable doubt is proof that leaves you firmly convinced of the defendant’s guilt. There are very few things in this world that we know with absolute certainty, and in criminal cases the law does not require proof that overcomes every possible doubt. If, based on your consideration of the evidence, you are firmly convinced that the defendant is guilty of the crime charged, you must find him guilty. If on the other hand, you think there is a real possibility that he is not guilty, you must give him the benefit of the doubt and find him not guilty.”* *Victor v. Nebraska*, 511 U.S. 1, 27, 114 S.Ct. 1239, 1253 (1994) (Justice Ginsberg concurring).

There are many misunderstandings regarding the burden of proving something “beyond a reasonable doubt.” These misunderstandings occur not only in the public, but also among lawyers and judges. Many experts mistakenly believe that it is only necessary to prove things “beyond a reasonable doubt” in criminal courts, during a trial of a crime. However, the United States Supreme Court has ruled otherwise (as have many courts in many jurisdictions).

What the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled is that anytime an official or a quasi-official institution seeks to punish someone, and that punishment requires the adjudication or quasi-

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judicial determination of some conduct that will impair the liberty or property interest of an individual, then that quasi-official institution must apply a higher standard of proof than a mere preponderance of evidence in the determination of the accused's culpability. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled in various cases that if anyone is determining that an individual committed a crime and if that determination imposes serious social consequences on the accused, then the determiner must employ criminal due process protections to make certain that it does not make a mistake in its determination. This is especially true when institutions are making determinations that would ordinarily only be made by the government (in its criminal courts).

There is no other determination made in our culture that has more social consequences on an accused person than an accusation of sexual misconduct. In the context of campus sex tribunals, a determination that an accused committed a criminal act of sexual assault, with permanent notations on his records and resulting expulsion or suspension from the school, leaves a student in a position in which his reputation is severely impaired for life. It also severely impairs his ability to get into other schools and may prohibit him from going to any school as no school wants to risk the attendance, on campus, of someone who is determined to be a sex offender. The notation of sexual offender on his school transcripts also severely impairs his ability to find employment in his educational field, and it may lead to a lifetime of social ostracism.

These severe consequences, impairment of liberty and property, as well as a lifelong stigma as a sex offender, compel high standards of due process, according to Supreme Court rulings, in making such a determination against an accused. What the Supreme Court has ruled is that school officials cannot adjudicate culpability in disciplinary proceedings that involve a sex crime with the same level of due process that must be applied in determining culpability in disciplinary matters such as a food fight. School officials must impose higher standards of due process on determinations of criminal sex conduct than they use in adjudicating campus food fight (or minor) offenses. School officials determining criminal sexual conduct of a student must apply an evidentiary standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt" in order to be certain of the determination before imposing such severe consequences (by way of stigma) on a student.

The Court has made this the law in a many of its rulings.

Below is the public comment I drafted for the U. S. Department of Education on the subject with complete citations to U. S. Supreme Court rulings.

## REFERENCE

Victor v. Nebraska, 511 U.S. 1, 27, 114 U. S. 1239, 1253 (1994)

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January 23, 2019

Hon. Betsy DeVos  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Room 6E310  
Washington, DC 20202

Public Comment

**Re: 83 Fed. Reg. 61,462 (November 29, 2018)**  
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking  
ID: ED-2018-OCR-0064-0001

**Portal Dispatch: 1k3-97uk-uy5y**

Dear Secretary Devos:

The Perses Institute is a global NGO that fosters gender balance and equality in institutions worldwide.

The author of this submission is a former federal and state prosecutor with 35 years of trial experience, and, former appointments as a public official in state and federal positions. His legal education includes a Juris Doctor (J.D.) from the University of Seattle School of Law, and, a post-doctoral Legis Magister (LL.M.) from New York University School of Law.

We respectfully submit comment on the agency's proposed rulemaking on Campus adjudications of Title IX proceedings, especially those pertaining to sexual misconduct or sexual harassment.

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## EXECUTIVE ABSTRACT

In response to the Secretary's directed question No. 6, we assert that Supreme Court cases expressly hold that one standard of evidence in any civil proceedings is neither appropriate, nor in compliance with constitutional due process requirements.

We also assert, that given the punitive nature of campus adjudications of sexual misconduct, the certainty of extra-judicial punishment against an accused, the serious impairment of an accused's liberty and property interests, and, the ready availability of other civil and criminal remedies to address campus safety, Supreme Court cases compel a standard of evidence of "beyond a reasonable doubt" in campus adjudications of sexual misconduct.

This comment addresses the Department's Directed Question No. 6:<sup>1</sup>

*6. Standard of Evidence. In § 106.45(b)(4)(i), we are proposing that the determination regarding responsibility be reached by applying either a preponderance of the evidence standard or the clear and convincing standard, and that the preponderance standard be used only if it is also used for conduct code violations that do not involve sexual harassment but carry the same maximum disciplinary sanction. We seek comment on (1) whether it is desirable to require a uniform standard of evidence for all Title IX cases rather than leave the option to schools to choose a standard, and if so then what standard is most appropriate; and*

*(2) if schools retain the option to select the standard they wish to apply, whether it is appropriate to require schools to use the same standard in Title IX cases that they apply to other cases in which a similar disciplinary sanction may be imposed.*

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## COMMENT ANALYSIS:

We believe that it is neither desirable, nor constitutional, to require a uniform standard of evidence for all Title IX cases. We believe that current case law on due process requires the regulations to impose a higher standard of evidence ("clear and convincing" or "beyond a reasonable doubt") in cases that involve accusations of sexual conduct against an individual.

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<sup>1</sup> Whether it is desirable to require a uniform standard of evidence for all Title IX cases rather than leave the option to schools to choose a standard? <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2018-25314/p-212>

The proposed regulation allows a college or university to adopt one standard of evidence, including the lowest standard of evidence (“preponderance of evidence”) in all disciplinary proceedings. Existing Supreme Court opinions, however, hold that there is no single standard of evidence that fulfills the requirements of due process. In *Goss v. Lopez*,<sup>2</sup> the Supreme Court instructs us that:

*"[T]he interpretation and application of the Due Process Clause are intensely practical matters and ... 'the very nature of due process negates any concept of inflexible procedures universally applicable to every imaginable situation.' "* *Goss*, 419 U.S. at 578, 95 S.Ct. 729 (alteration omitted) (quoting *Cafeteria Workers v. McElroy*, 367 U.S. 886, 895, 81 S.Ct. 1743, 6 L.Ed.2d 1230 (1961)).

The *Goss* opinion answers the first part of the agency’s directed question. There is no single standard of evidence that will satisfy due process requirements in all civil proceedings, including civil proceedings that adjudicate student misconduct and student sexual misconduct.

*Goss* was the first U.S. Supreme Court opinion to directly address the issue of due process in the context of school disciplinary proceedings. Among other seminal holdings, the Court expressly held that a student has both a property interest in school disciplinary proceedings (in the form of the right to attend school), and a liberty interest in school disciplinary proceedings since disciplinary proceedings, and records of them, impair the student’s reputation (and therefore his future liberty within our society of laws).

*The Due Process Clause also forbids arbitrary deprivations of liberty. 'Where a person's good name, reputation, honor, or integrity is at stake because of what the government is doing to him,' the minimal requirements of the Clause must be satisfied. Wisconsin v. Constantineau*, 400 U.S. 433, 437, 91 S.Ct. 507, 510, 27 L.Ed.2d 515 (1971); *Board of Regents v. Roth*, supra, 408 U.S. at 573, 92 S.Ct. at 2707. *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565, 574, 95 S.Ct. 729, 42 L.Ed.2d 725 (1975).

A few years after the *Goss* decision, the Supreme Court explained that some civil proceedings require heavier burdens of proof, to ensure the integrity of fact finding, than civil cases involving mere lawsuits for money (or, by implication, campus adjudications of cafeteria

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<sup>2</sup> 419 U.S. 565, 574, 95 S.Ct. 729, 42 L.Ed.2d 725 (1975).

food fights).

### **WHAT STANDARD IS MOST APPROPRIATE?**

In *Addington v. Texas*, 441 U.S. 418, 99 S.Ct. 1804, 60 L.Ed.2d 323 (1979), the Court court decided that civil cases, when they involve a liberty interest, require a standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt,” to ensure the integrity of the proceedings.

*... adopting a "standard of proof is more than an empty semantic exercise." Tippett v. Maryland, 436 F.2d 1153, 1166 (CA4 1971) (Sobeloff, J., concurring in part and dissenting in part), cert. dismissed sub nom. Murel v. Baltimore City Criminal Court, 407 U.S. 355, 92 S.Ct. 2091, 32 L.Ed.2d 791 (1972). In cases involving individual rights, whether criminal or civil, "[t]he standard of proof[at a minimum] reflects the value society places on individual liberty." 436 F.2d, at 1166.*

Id. at 425. The Court went on to discuss the nature of a civil commitment proceeding. It reasoned that since a commitment to an institution was a severe infringement on liberty, then, a normal civil standard of “preponderance of the evidence” did not satisfy due process of law. The court discussed, in *dicta*, that ordinarily, such a deprivation of liberty required a standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

The Court continued, however, to reason that in the case of civil commitment to an institution, since the purpose of the proceeding was to provide treatment and assistance to the defendant, and, because such a proceeding was non-punitive in nature, then, the standard of evidence required for due process could be lowered to “clear and convincing” evidence, rather than a standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

In reaching this conclusion, the Court discussed its holding in its prominent 1970 case: “*In re Winship*, 397 U.S. 358, 90 S.Ct. 1068, 25 L.Ed.2d 368 (1970).”

The *Winship* case is relevant to Title IX proceedings for a number of reasons. First, the case involved proceedings against young persons subject to being stigmatized, and, subject to extra-judicial punishment from a finding of culpability. Second, the proceeding involved quasi-criminal adjudication that would stigmatize the defendant, with a label of criminal or quasi-criminal misconduct, upon a finding of culpability. Third, the case involved possible deprivation of a liberty interest. Fourth, the case in *Winship* was a punitive proceeding. Fifth, the proceedings in *Winship* (juvenile delinquency proceedings) were designated by the state as

“civil” proceedings (even though they adjudicated criminal misconduct). In the *Winship* case, because of these factors, the Court had held that there must be a standard of evidence of “beyond a reasonable doubt” in those proceedings, in order to provide due process of law (even though the proceedings were designated as “civil proceedings”).

If we apply the analysis from the *Winship*, *Goss* and *Addington* cases to the Department’s current question, then, we believe the Supreme Court’s trilogy compels an evidentiary standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt” in university proceedings adjudicating sexual misconduct issues.

The adjudication of sexual misconduct is highly likely to impair an accused’s property interests and liberty interests. Sexual misconduct is a very emotional issue in our culture. Sexual misconduct accusations, alone, often produce violence,<sup>3</sup> calumny and scorn against an accused. Attaching a label of sexual misconduct to a student or employee heavily increases the probability that he/she will be subject to extra-judicial punishment for the remainder of their lives. This impairs their freedom to interact socially, economically and professionally for a long period of time after any adjudication. It also deeply affects the accused’s property interests in their reputation. Impairment of an accused’s reputation severely limits their freedom within our culture and within the education system. *See generally*, James M. Piccozi, Note, University Disciplinary Process: What’s Fair, What’s Due, and What You Don’t Get , 96 YALE L.J. 2132, 2138 (1987) (“[t]he most significant alteration of an expelled student’s status, though, is his inability to re-enroll at another university. A subsequent university to which a student may apply always knows of the reasons for his prior dismissal. If he leaves without having earned his degree, the student must make an affirmative showing to any subsequent university to which he applies that he left the original university in good standing”). *Marshall v. Ind. Univ.*, 170 F.Supp.3d 1201 (S.D. Ind., 2016).

The Court has recognized that proceedings, which impair an accused’s reputation, are proceedings which severely impair both his liberty, and property interests, to an extent much

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<sup>3</sup>The Senate has recently passed a Bill making it a federal felony to “cause” [incite] “lynching” in the form of any injury that results to someone based on their gender [lynching is a *de facto* gendered crime, with 99% of lynchings having been perpetrated against men]. *See*, [S.3178 - 115th Congress \(2017-2018\): Justice for Victims of Lynching Act of 2018](#).

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greater than simple civil proceedings in which payment of money is the sole relief. The entire purpose of campus adjudications in sexual misconduct cases is to punish the accused and harm his reputation. They have no other purpose. Arguably, the campus authorities have a safety interest in adjudicating sexual misconduct. Nevertheless, this safety interest does not obviate the need to provide adequate due process protections. To quote a distinguished federal jurist, Justice Edith H. Jones, of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals (in a dissenting opinion):

*What drives my concern is the close association between the charges leveled against them and actual criminal charges. Sexual assault is not plagiarism, cheating, or vandalism of university property. Its ramifications are more long lasting and stigmatizing in today's society. The University wants to have it both ways, degrading the integrity of its fact-finding procedures, while congratulating itself for vigorously attacking campus sexual misconduct. Over-prosecution is nothing to boast about. Plummer v. Univ. of Hous., 860 F.3d 767 (5th Cir., 2017).*

Justice Jones was objecting to a university implementing a standard of preponderance of evidence in a campus adjudication in which the University was adjudicating quasi-criminal misconduct against the<sup>5</sup> accused persons (both a man and a woman). She stated that an accused was not automatically entitled to the same due process protections in such a proceeding as a criminal proceeding, but was nevertheless entitled to more due process protections than an accused in a simple civil lawsuit in which money was the only consequence of a finding of culpability.

When government action, such as finding culpability for an accusation of misconduct, that is as serious as sexual misconduct, occurs, then the Courts must examine the extra-judicial punishment that may be imposed on the accused in order to determine the proper level of due process required.

A distinguished federal jurist, Hon. Richard Matsch (Oklahoma City bombing trial judge) has recently held that misuse of sexual misconduct stigmas, such as using a finding of culpability for sexual misconduct to impair someone's property and liberty interests, is punitive in nature and unconstitutional state action unless it directly results from due process of law afforded to the accused. *Millard v. Rankin*, 265 F.Supp.3d 1211 (D. Col. 2017) (citing the "intent-effect" analysis in *Kennedy v. Mendoza-Martinez*, 372 U.S. 144 (1963)). "The factors most relevant to our analysis are whether, in its necessary operation, the regulatory scheme: [1] has been regarded in our

history and traditions as a punishment; [2] imposes an affirmative disability or restraint; [3] promotes the traditional aims of punishment; [4] has a rational connection to a non-punitive purpose; or [5] is excessive with respect to this purpose.”).

All of these five factors apply to a campus adjudication of sexual misconduct. Notwithstanding the pretense of adjudicating campus sexual misconduct for “safety” reasons, the sole purpose of a campus adjudication of sexual misconduct is to punish the accused. Any person, including the campus administration and police, has more than adequate recourse to the civil or criminal justice system to protect people on campus from sexual offenders. Any person can readily report sexual misconduct to the local police, campus police, state police or other local law enforcement in order to receive the exact same level of protection afforded to any other person in the U.S. In addition, any accuser has immediate, open and low-cost or free access to civil restraining orders in virtually every state, from local courts, to address safety issues. Campus adjudications of sexual misconduct, for safety reasons, are unnecessary.

We assert that the adjudication of sexual misconduct, as compelled by Title IX and the regulations and cases construing it, renders those adjudications as government action. When the government compels a private party, with coercive action (such as threatening to withdraw Billions of dollars in federal funding), to perform a specified activity, then, state action results from the private party’s compliance. *Blum v. Yaretsky*, 457 U.S.991, 1004 (1982).<sup>4</sup>

As government/state action, these adjudications require constitutional scrutiny, and, the application of due process requirements that fulfill the constitutional mandates of federal cases on due process. We therefore assert that the Agency is required in its regulations to impose a regulatory standard of evidence, in sexual misconduct proceedings, of “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

Arguably, the *Winship* trilogy of cases on the standard of evidence, in quasi-criminal civil

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<sup>4</sup> State action also results from the actions of a private party when the private party is conducting activity that is exclusively and traditionally reserved to the state (such as the adjudication of sexual misconduct). *Jackson v. Metropolitan Edison Co.*, 419 U.S. 345, 350, 42 L.Ed.2d 477, 482, 95 S.Ct. 449, 456 (1974). (“[S]tate action [is] present in the exercise by a private entity of powers traditionally exclusively reserved to the State.”)

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proceedings, is older law from the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, they have never been overruled or attenuated. They are still “The Law” standing in the United States.

More than one recent trial court has entertained the issue that the adjudication of sexual misconduct is a “quasi-criminal” proceeding, and, even though conducted under the storefront of a “civil proceeding” is subject to a higher standard of proof than preponderance of the evidence. These cases, however, have dismissed the claim on other grounds (qualified immunity for example) and avoided the constitutional issues.<sup>5</sup>

The implementation of low standards of evidence, in Title IX proceedings, was originally compelled (arguably as state action) by Vice President Joseph Biden in 2011 in what is commonly known as “*The Dear Colleague Letter*.”<sup>6</sup>

Since the *Dear Colleague Letter*, however, federal courts have taken a closer look at the nature of college tribunals adjudicating sexual misconduct, and, have found that those tribunals are imposing extra-judicial punishment on accused students, as well as impairing important liberty and property interests of an accused. Since the tribunals are affecting the accused’s students’ liberty and property interests, by imposing extra-judicial punishment, federal courts are considering imposing appropriate due process standards on those tribunals in the form of requiring a higher standard of proof than “a preponderance of evidence.”

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<sup>5</sup> See e.g., *Marshall v. Ind. Univ.*, 170 F.Supp.3d 1203 (S.D. Ind., 2016). (Plaintiff raised the issue of the university employing a standard of “preponderance of the evidence” in the quasi criminal adjudication of sexual misconduct. The trial court dismissed the claim on the basis of qualified immunity of the defendants, but, noting in dicta: “Although Marshall’s argument that more process was potentially warranted in his case is compelling, particularly with regard to the seemingly deficient evidentiary standard applied by the Defendants at the hearing, his arguments do not find support under either Indiana or Seventh Circuit law.” *Marshall v. Ind. Univ.*, 170 F.Supp.3d 1201,1208 (S.D. Ind., 2016)). Notably, the trial court did not examine the binding Supreme Court law enunciated in the *Winship, Goss, Addington* trilogy.

<sup>6</sup> OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, DEP’T OF EDUC., DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER (2011) at 11. Hereafter: “*Dear Colleague Letter*.” “[I]n order for a school’s grievance procedures to be consistent with Title IX standards, the school must use a preponderance of the evidence standard (i.e., it is more likely than not that sexual harassment or violence occurred). The “clear and convincing” standard (i.e., it is highly probable or reasonably certain that the sexual harassment or violence occurred), currently used by some schools, is a higher standard of proof. Grievance procedures that use this higher standard are inconsistent with the standard of proof established for violations of the civil rights laws, and are thus not equitable under Title IX. Therefore, preponderance of the evidence is the appropriate standard for investigating allegations of sexual harassment or violence. *Id.* 7

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

The “Dear Colleague Letter” was promulgated without regulatory compliance, and, has no force of law. The *Winship* trilogy, however, on the issue of the burden of proof in quasi criminal civil cases, mandates imposing a higher standard in college administrators adjudicating sexual misconduct than the standards administrators use to adjudicate “cafeteria food fights.” Those cases compel the proposed regulations to impose a higher standard of evidence in campus tribunals that seek to banish, shame and punish students accused of sexual misconduct. We submit that current case law compels the Department’s proposed regulation to read similar to the following:

*Determination regarding responsibility. (i) The decision-maker(s), who cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s), must issue a written determination regarding responsibility. To reach this determination, the recipient must apply the clear and convincing evidence standard to any allegation that charges an accused with sexual misconduct, although the recipient may employ the preponderance of the evidence standard on allegations that do not express or imply that the accused has committed sexual misconduct. The recipient must also apply the same standard of evidence for complaints against students as it does for complaints against employees, including faculty.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
/s/  
Perses Institute  
John Davis  
Chief Counsel

JEP/bh  
cc: Various

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**John Davis** is a retired public official and international lawyer who writes on current gender issues. He was educated at Case Western Reserve University (BA), Seattle University School of Law (JD), and New York University School of Law (LL.M post-doctoral). John is fluent in seven languages (including ancient Latin and Greek). He has held positions such as Assistant Attorney General, United States Speaker, and Assistant District Attorney, Chief Wing JAG, U. S. Air Force Auxiliary, and Supreme Court Law Clerk. The author of eight books, John currently edits *Gender Studies for Men*, which publishes “balanced discussions of contemporary gender issues” on medium.com.

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## MALE DISADVANTAGE IN ART AND LIFE

*Diego Morales*



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### **Abstract**

*Because it draws parallels between art and life and exposes the relevance of both to the lived experience of males, a text-to-world analysis is an excellent teaching-and-learning tool for men's rights activists. This paper undertakes a text-to-world analysis of two plays and a film (Seneca's Phaedra, August Strindberg's The Father, and Sam Wood's Casanova Brown), offering fresh insights into the consequences for men when people overvalue female sexuality and unquestioningly believe all women, dramatizing the disturbing experience for men of female-perpetrated domestic abuse, and exploring the frustrating limitations of fathers' rights.*

**Keywords:** advocacy, discrimination, literary criticism, gender studies, men and boys

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The Men's Rights Movement has produced some excellent and informative content: *The Legal Subjection of Men* by Ernest Belfort Bax and *The Red Pill* by Cassie Jaye are among the best-known works that have raised awareness of the problems facing boys and men in Western society. Advocates for male issues should also apply a male-positive critical framework to preexisting texts because doing so provides additional opportunities for promoting an awareness of male issues and balances those now-pervasive schools of thought that are unconcerned with men's experience. A text-to-world analysis, which encourages readers to see connections between fictional and real events (Kardash, 2004), is a useful literary-criticism teaching-and-learning tool for this purpose as it allows men's rights activist to highlight and discuss real examples of the issues. The two plays and a film examined in this paper provide useful insights into contemporary issues that impact males: Seneca's *Phaedra* shows what happens when people overvalue female sexuality and unquestioningly believe what women say; August Strindberg's *The Father* unveils disturbing realities of female-perpetrated domestic abuse; and Sam Wood's *Casanova Brown* offers a frank assessment of fathers' limited familial rights.

## Phaedra

Seneca's *Phaedra* is a cautionary tale for those who would believe all women. After her husband, Theseus, goes on an adventure to help his friend bed the goddess of the underworld, the queen is left alone with his son, Hippolytus. She and her nurse conspire to seduce the prince, but he's disgusted by her incestuous desires. With Phaedra's secret revealed and her marriage and reputation threatened, she and her nurse spread a rumor that Hippolytus tried to rape her. The king returns a little later. On his return Theseus hears this rumor; he becomes furious, and prays for the gods to kill his son. Guilt-ridden by her part in her stepson's death, Phaedra confesses the truth before killing herself.

This is a two-thousand-year-old play about a false rape accusation. Its mere existence suggests the phenomenon was well-known. But Seneca was in a better position than most to understand how a woman's word could upend a man's life because Messalina, third wife of Emperor Nero, had him tried for sexual impropriety with Princess Julia Lavilla, resulting in his banishment to Corsica. He returned after the emperor's fourth wife, Agrippina, recalled him so he could tutor her son. Seneca was one of many well-known victims of female perfidy throughout history.

Emmet Till, an African-American teenager was murdered following an accusation of sexual impropriety by Carolyn Bryant, a Caucasian woman. People believed her rather than the teenager; Bryant admitted decades later that she lied about the boy's lecherousness (Weller, 2017). Harvey Weinstein's case offers a more complicated but no less compelling example of how believing all women can adversely impact men's ability to present their position. He was accused of sexually exploiting actresses, and the court found him guilty despite no evidence and even "evidence to the contrary," by the affectionate message sent to him by some of the allegedly traumatized women. His lawyer, Donna Rotunno, pointed out men's lack of power in a society where believing women is the default, calling the situation "dangerous and scary" (Sky News, 2020).

## The Father

Strindberg's play is an examination of an abusive relationship, including its potential causes and its adverse consequences for the victims. Captain Adolf Lassen, the protagonist of the play, wants his daughter, Bertha, to live in town and become a teacher. His wife, Laura, wants the girl to stay home and become a painter. Captain Lassen learns his wife has been conspiring against him. She has intercepted his letters to booksellers, so he couldn't do his research, and she has convinced his friends and family he's insane. In addition, she has cast doubt on whether or not his daughter is biologically his. These stressors contribute to the stroke Lassen suffers. This bleak portrayal of marriage perhaps comes from August Strindberg's childhood. He once described his mother as "the official accuser" because she often used his father as a tool to punish the children, when she wasn't being violent herself (Meyer, 1986). This dynamic worsened when his mother died and his father remarried. Strindberg believed his stepmother turned his father against him in spite of his academic success. Tellingly, Strindberg also described the role of father as thankless and secondary to the mother. Besides that, Strindberg and his wife may have struggled with one of the main problems Adolf and Laura have: coverture, an English common law that came with some hefty drawbacks for both sexes. For men, it meant taking full responsibility for their wives, even requiring them to bear debts the woman incurred or the crimes she committed (Fisher, 2015).

Those experiences of abuse and subjection explain the constant images of men who placate women. To wit, Pastor Jonas goes home earlier than he wants because his wife will be angry if he's late. Adolf admits he's afraid of Laura due to her terrible fits, and he believes the women of his home will raise Bertha their way, instead of his way, if he doesn't send her off. Then there's Nöjd, a cavalryman, who defies the captain's orders to subdue the nurse, Margaret, with the justification that there's "something special" about women that prevents men from harming them. That something is gynocentrism: the tendency to prioritize females. An ABC News segment from the early 2000s, where their camera operator secretly recorded bystander's reactions first, to a man accosting a woman, then to a woman accosting a man, also confirmed this gynocentrism (Yorke, 2019). The results were unsurprising, though sickening nonetheless, particularly the off-duty policeman who didn't intervene and used chivalry to excuse his inaction. The experiment was replicated as part of the #ViolenceIsViolence campaign by The Mankind Initiative (2014). This behavior has traditionally been justified by women's reproductive role: because only females can gestate and birth children, and it takes nearly a year to do that, they are more integral to the continuation of humanity. Even so, the harmful effects to men deserve recognition and amelioration.

But there are other, subtler impediments to male wellness depicted here. Laura's defamatory statements about her husband's mental health – which become fact due to her machinations – are a representation of relational aggression. It's a form of abuse that targets the victim's relationships and social standing and is often difficult to detect because of its indirectness. Laura's actions represent something more sinister though. To understand the severity, a psychoanalytic approach is necessary. Canadian psychologist, Robert Hare, identified twenty characteristics indicative of psychopathy. Laura exhibits nine (Skeem et al, 2011):

- Early behavioral problems: Her brother says she would lie still as a corpse when she was a child, until people gave her what she wanted.
- Shallow affect: Laura can cry on command, as shown when she meets Dr. Östermark and tries to convince him of her husband's alleged mental-health problems.
- Grandiose sense of self-worth: She claims she's never been able to look at a man without feeling stronger than him.

- Pathological lying: Dr. Östermark catches her fibbing twice. She claimed her husband used a microscope to study planets, and when he confronts her about it, she tells him she never said that. He counters both falsehoods by revealing he took notes of their conversations.
- Conning/Manipulativeness: Laura spread rumors about her husband being mentally ill until most of his fellow soldiers believe it.
- Parasitic Lifestyle: Laura's been a housewife for twenty years and she plans to live off Adolf's pension once she has him institutionalized.
- Failure to accept responsibility for own action: Laura tells her husband his downfall is his own fault despite her abuse contributing to it.
- Lack of remorse or guilt: Laura swears she feels innocent of wrongdoing even if her actions make her culpable.
- Criminal versatility: By the play's end, Laura is guilty of parental neglect; mail fraud; and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The true cause of Adolf's destruction is paternity fraud. A woman's ability to be certain of her parentage, while the father cannot, is a fundamental power imbalance between the sexes (although physical resemblance to the father can mitigate this) even with the advent of DNA testing. The existence of television programs like *Lauren Lake's Paternity Court* or the paternity testing segments on *The Maury Show* can attest to that (Armour, 2013). Part of the reason why this issue continues to be so prevalent, causing emotional and financial harm to men and children alike, is because government officials, through varying levels of indifference or malice, allow it to occur (Smith, 2014).

Finally, female-perpetrated child abuse adversely impacts several characters in the play. Adolf may have endangered Bertha, but Laura is the most culpable for her suffering. Not only does her own daughter say she is inattentive, but her psychological torment of her husband spurs his traumatizing actions. Moreover, Laura allows her emotionally abusive mother live in the home, and the spiritualist crone forces her granddaughter to participate in seances and write down what the ghosts say. One evening Bertha unconsciously remembers a poem and records it; her grandmother recognizes it and considers it proof that Bertha's been deceiving her. Thinking

her grandmother wants to hurt her, Bertha runs away, screaming for help and when her father asks why she never told him about this, she says her grandmother told her not to, lest the spirits take revenge. The sequel (*The Comrades*), shows that Bertha, under the influence of her mother, has a lower quality of life and character than she might have had if she followed her father. She makes poor health decisions like smoking, has a combative view of relationships, equating marriage with slavery, and is crueler than in the original play, in that she tries to undermine her own husband. Laura being the ultimate cause of her family's destruction and her daughter's growth into a maladjusted adult is grounded in statistical reality. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2018), mothers are majority of child abusers. Additionally, Bertha's dysfunctional behavior following the loss of her father accurately reflects the increased risk of socio-emotional problems among children in fatherless homes (McLanahan, Tach and Schneider, 2013).

### **Casanova Brown**

The film champions fathers' rights and openly condemns the legal and social limitations imposed on men and their relationships with their children. Literature professor Casanova Brown learns days before his wedding that his ex-wife, Isabel Drury, has given birth. He travels to a maternity hospital in Chicago to make sure, and finds a daughter whom Isabel plans to give up for adoption. With no legal recourse, Cass disguises himself as a doctor and kidnaps his daughter, taking her to a nearby motel. Isabel eventually locates him and they reconcile, agreeing to raise their daughter jointly. (The almost-entirely positive depiction of fathers in the film can possibly be attributed to the fact that the screenwriter, Nunnally Johnson, already had two daughters prior to working on this movie.) Had he been able to maintain regular contact with the mother, he would have undergone sympathetic biological changes after they got pregnant (Smith, 2009), and he would have recognized the profound and instinctive love he had for the girls. It's not the same with Cass and Isabel, as they were separated from conception until birth, but his unconditional love is there. He bombards the head of the hospital, Dr. Zerkeke, with questions about his newborn, monitors the infant's growth hourly, dons a medical uniform when he makes contact with her, and gathers a stack of parenting books for advice – especially concerning baby formula.

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The other fathers are just as invested in their children as the protagonist. Cass meets a waiting room full of expectant dads, and when a nurse comes in, nearly every man in the room jumps to his feet. Soon after, Cass visits the nursery and sees a bunch of new dads standing there, looking through the glass, and smiling, cooing, or gushing at their babies. Besides them, there's Mr. Drury. As a parent, he handles Isabel's marriage more rationally than her mother, who bases her approval (and most life decisions) on astrology. And while he says "mother knows best," he still gives her a wide-eyed look when she decides to consult "the stars." On top of that, he's there for all the major events (the birth of her first child, the investigation of his granddaughter's abduction, and the confrontation with his ex-son-in-law) while Isabel's mother is busy with "politics."

In addition to the emphasis on fatherly love, the movie explores the marginalization of fathers. When Cass first arrives at the hospital, he tries asking the nurses at the front desk for Dr. Zernerke but they keep telling him to ask a different staff member. After questioning all of them without getting any help, an expectant father comes around and says, "This is a maternity hospital, brother. If they had nine watches, they wouldn't tell a father what time it was. You might as well do what she says." The other expectant fathers he sits with are also the only people in the hospital who care to ask him about his personal circumstances (is it his firstborn, how long has he been married, etc.) Later, when Cass learns about the adoption plans and questions the negation of his rights, Dr. Zernerke just tells him the whole situation is legal. Unfortunately, she's right. The Tender Years Doctrine (an outgrowth of the Infants Act of 1839), has been used to justify giving mothers default custody (Bookspan, 1993). While Caroline Norton, the English social reformer who originated these policies, had the best intentions (i.e., protecting her right to see her children after her ex-husband denied her access), it nonetheless harmed father rights in England and America. It might have strengthened preexisting biases too, as author Philip Wylie condemned the U.S. for the uncritical adulation mothers ("momism") in his book, *Generation of Vipers* published in 1942, two years before this film's release.

The secondary status of fathers is something Cass is fully aware of. When he realizes that the hospital staff knows his location, he laments the upcoming separation between himself and his child. A woman assisting him asks how they could take his daughter away when he's the father. Her question prompts this speech: "A man's not capable of taking care of a child, not

according to the courts. He can build bridges, he can fly around the world, he can be president and run the whole United States, but taking care of a child's too much for him! For that you've got to be a woman. Any woman." Cass's ordeal parallels a real-life case. Peter Stanley was an unwed American father who wanted custody of his kids after their mother died, but higher powers disregarded his parental fitness, declared his children wards of the state, and appointed them other guardians. This led to the Stanley vs. Illinois case in 1972 (Justia, no date).

## Themes & Characterization

Despite the significant cultural, temporal, and geographical differences among these texts and their creators, similarities can be found. Intersexual competition (i.e., battle of the sexes) forms a through-line between the works and the women are depicted as having the advantage socially and legally. This contradicts the accepted viewpoint that women live powerless lives in male-dominated systems, but corresponds with reliable sources that discuss gender. The Declaration of Sentiments, the document that legitimized the idea of Western women as oppressed, admitted that females were considered morally superior to males and used that as an argument for why women should be given a platform within the church (National Women's History Museum). Furthermore, research into peasant cultures finds that women hold considerable influence within the home and community (Rogers, 1975). That influence is reflected by the female-centered family dynamics depicted in the texts. Hippolytus never interacts with his father or younger half-brothers before he dies, and the latter two were born to his stepmother; Adolf lives with his wife, daughter, and mother-in-law, and his greatest confidant is his brother-in-law; Cass ends his engagement to his fiancée Madge, so he can remarry his ex-wife and raise their daughter together, which is what his ex-wife wanted from the beginning.

Another place female advantage can be seen is in their same-sex relationships. Phaedra convinces her nurse to help her entrap her stepson, despite the latter's initial disapproval, and when their plan fails, the nurse is the one who suggests falsely accusing Hippolytus of rape, all to protect her queen. Laura treats the family nurse, Margaret, so amicably that the older woman is unaware of her abuse towards her husband, and it's the reason why she helps with Laura's plan to incarcerate Adolf. Isabel lies to Dr. Zerneke about wanting to give her daughter up for adoption, thus wasting time and resources, yet the head of the hospital forgives the girl and

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rationalizes her actions by saying nobody was hurt. The affinity these female characters have for each other corresponds with research showing women have more in-group bias than men do (Goodwin and Rudman, 2004).

Contrast that with the relationships between men. Theseus does not hesitate to have his own son killed on heresy, even when he knows Hippolytus has a reputation for disliking women. Similarly, Pastor Jonas forces Adolf to have his mother-in-law live in his home and passively enables his sister to abuse him. Lastly, Mr. Ferris ignores Cass's call for help and forces him to support his daughter and avoid the law by himself, with the implied reason being that he disapproves of Cass's upcoming marriage to his daughter. The stark differences relate to a different aspect of gender relations: that men have proven willing to support female-focused initiatives, even at their own expense. The quintessential example in real life is Harry T. Burn. With his favor, American women gained universal suffrage (Bomboy, 2019); they received the right to vote without obligation to the state (i.e., eligibility for conscription).

## **Academic Decay**

Using male-affirmative approaches to reading texts will also help undermine the unfortunate racism evident in contemporary academic environments: institutions of higher learning have become openly bigoted against white men (Greer, 2017). A recent incident at the Society for Classical Studies offers a good example of the misandry and racism people feel comfortable expressing in public. At a panel titled "The Future of Classics," speakers like Sarah Bond and Dan-el Padilla Peralta lambasted their field; their screeds included defamatory statements about influential men in Classics, insistence that Caucasian males "surrender the privilege" of having their research published so ethnic and gender minorities could be represented more, and publicly humiliating an attendee who voiced her dissent. And as Ms. Bond felt it necessary to mention, the dissenter gave an all-male list of authors she considers foundational to Classics (SCS Annual Meeting, 2019). This sexism and racism might explain why the texts examined in my essay, which deal with discrimination and injustice experienced by white males, receive almost no scholarly or mainstream attention compared to those works, like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, that deal with men who are ethnic minorities. The texts I discuss have sufficient literary merit to warrant attention and encourage sympathy for their characters.

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## Conclusion

Whenever possible men's rights activists should model how one analyzes texts from a male-affirmative perspective. Not only would they be increasing the number of methods available for showcasing men's issues, but they would also be increasing the viewpoint diversity in literary criticism. Text-to-world connection is an effective critical approach because it illustrates how art relates to life – making both more relevant to the discussion of male experience.

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**CONFRONTING THE DINOSAUR IN THE ROOM:  
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF  
VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN AND BOYS**

*Jerome Teelucksingh*



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**ABSTRACT**

*Violence against men and boys is under-reported, ridiculed and often ignored. The phrase the elephant in the room effectively describes what's obvious but difficult to acknowledge. Violence against males is, however, a crisis that is much larger and older than the proverbial elephant: one might rightly call violence against males the dinosaur in the room. In response to this obvious-but-often-ignored problem, the inaugural observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Men and Boys was commemorated on 31 January, 2020. This observance will continue annually because men and boys need a special day that draws our attention to their experience of violence.*

**Keywords:** boys, violence, males, masculinity men

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...physical violence in particular is predominantly more socially acceptable as a practice for men or boys rather than for women or girls while, conversely, men or boys are often acutely embarrassed if they become victims of violence and particularly if that violence comes from girls or women.... (Cultures of Masculinity, Tim Edwards, p. 45).

It seems unusual to write that violent acts are perpetrated against boys and men. Boys and men are overwhelmingly portrayed in the media as violent and aggressive perpetrators, not victims. Males are frequently depicted as offenders who are capable of causing pain and suffering. Undoubtedly, some would want to trivialize or ridicule the fact that men and boys are on the receiving end as victims of violence. This is not fiction but it is an unfortunate reality. Violence against men and boys is under-reported, ridiculed and often ignored. Furthermore, there are few or no resources such as safe houses and hotlines to call, for men and boys who are victims of domestic violence.

The phrase *the elephant in the room* effectively describes what's obvious but difficult to acknowledge. Violence against males is, however, a crisis that is much larger and older than the proverbial elephant: one might rightly call violence against males the dinosaur in the room. It is the dangerous dinosaur that we are afraid to discuss; it is the dinosaur that we presently cannot move; it is the dinosaur that is not extinct but still survives in today's society. Men and boys have historically been forced (or expected) to protect tribes, villages and empires. Many were injured and died in this role. Popular culture perpetuates our acceptance of this violence against males. For example, in the 2016 movie *The Lost City of Z*, the husband, a British explorer, is arguing with his wife and pleads with her to stay safely at home: "Men and women have performed their roles since the beginning of time! It is the cornerstone of our civilization" he insists. Men are the ones who should be exposed to danger and violence.

The spread of civilization, colonialism and imperialism all have an inseparable link to violence against males. Indeed, the associated labour schemes as slavery and indentureship, were inherently violent, so was the medium for controlling the minds and bodies of innocent souls. Consider the patriotic and nationalistic men and boys who lost their lives in wars and conflicts in the 20th century. Many men lost their lives believing they were rightly defending their country, an ideology, land boundaries or fighting for justice and peace. Men are traditionally side-lined and considered disposable (*as Warren Farrell convincingly argues in The Boy Crisis and The Myth of Male Power*). Was the patriotism and nationalism worth the

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cost? Many men and boys had to suffer, to be injured and to die due to conflicts and wars. These dead boys and men could not proudly wear their medals; they could not proudly see their names on memorials, statues or tombstones honouring them. We comfort ourselves and calm our conscience by labelling these men and boys as patriots, heroes and martyrs. Brave soldiers have certainly liberated countries from tyrants and dictators, too often at the cost of many male lives. Males are taught that peacekeepers or mediators are not as heroic as soldiers. Indeed, the dinosaur of violence remains.

Obviously, the owners of companies who manufacture military weapons and guns for civilians would not want total peace. Our governments with budgets for military spending or military aid are also not primarily promoting peace. It's unfortunate that violence against males is linked to militarism and money, big money. The owners of these companies and many governments do not care enough about the mainly male child soldiers who should be in school or at home. Any industry, government or company whose violent agenda is being threatened would become defensive to avoid a loss of profits, reduced public support and bad publicity. Many of us have become accustomed to living with the male-disposable military industrial dinosaur in the room.

Research by Miedzian and Messner and Sabo contribute to the ongoing debate about the origins of masculine violence: is it instinct or aggression? Some have questioned the genetic links to violence. Undoubtedly, to blame the Y chromosome or testosterone is to make a dangerous generalization. The supporters of the sex-role theory contend that sex role learning or socialization helps explain violence among men. This would mean that factors such as the role of the media in promoting violence, glorifying violence, use of toy guns, participation in competitive sports (as boxing or wrestling) influence violence among boys. The media willingly depict males as violent, masculinity as toxic. Some persons believe that effeminate men are less violent or non-violent, that heterosexual men are more violent than gay men. The abovementioned research demonstrates that these observations and conclusions are inaccurate.

Concerning males' experience of violence, it is often difficult to distinguish among violence, punishment and discipline. Many boys experience parental alienation and are physically and emotionally abused at homes and schools. Parents and teachers often use

violence to enforce laws and demand obedience. Many parents are ignorant or unaware of their role in perpetuating anti-male violence, hence the need for the intervention of family-court judges and social workers to protect the child or children. Violence only creates temporary obedience and stability; it does not instil respect. Violence is regularly used to intimidate, to control and to destroy males.

The cycles of violence can be broken. It is foolish to believe that violence can be used to permanently end violence. The boy who is whipped, beaten or bullied to be studious, disciplined or well-mannered will most likely mature into a dysfunctional adult who will have a propensity to violence because he sees it as normal and natural. In *The Decline of Males* Lionel Tiger contends that, “Children beaten when young are more likely than usual to become beaters if they have children” (p. 112). Unfortunately, it is these dysfunctional adults who are later prone to mental health issues. The solution is not simply purging violence from masculinity. Our boys and men must not be emasculated and are entitled to their freedom. Masculinity must not be muzzled, and our males cannot be placed on a leash. The solution is the respectful treatment of males and their wellbeing.

Show me a peaceful nation, and I will show you a progressive and visionary nation. Some of the foundation blocks in building such a country are proper policy-making and educational programmes which would feed accurate and balanced information and promote an ideology of equity and equality to its citizens. For instance, Women’s Studies programs that are masked as Gender Studies and stereotype all men as violent are not helpful. Those in academia and activists cannot continue hiding behind confirmation-bias methodology and teaching outdated ideologies to impressionable minds. Such flawed learning environments preserve the status quo and continue their propaganda of fear, mistrust and hate. Not surprisingly, there are no male-friendly Men’s Studies programs at tertiary institutions. This gynocentrism is not confined to academia. An illustration is in Houston, Texas (in the United States) where there are hospitals catering for the needs of women and children. However, there are no similar hospitals for men. Such a specialized hospital for males would be an essential safe space that could deal with health issues as prostate cancer, depression, suicide or erectile dysfunction.

We can improve male wellbeing by acknowledging the violence done to males and to suggest strategies for ending it. The inaugural observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Men and Boys was on 31 January 2020. Men and boys need a special day that draws our attention to their experience of violence. Regardless of the threatening and ferocious dinosaurs in the room, supporters will continue to promote peace and ensure this day will be annually observed on the last day of January. Indeed, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Men and Boys is long overdue and it is badly needed in our world.

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*A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY*

*Jan H. Andersen*





**ECCE HOMO I**





## ECCE HOMO II



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