

H60 Patriarchies of the Past: Masculinities for the Future

Lesson 1

Boys growing up; girls growing up

Opening ritual: How did watching a drumming circle of men and women affect you? Would it be helpful for you to repeat this ritual at the beginning of each session and to silently acknowledge, "I am not alone. I have a community of co-learners (name each of them slowly, visualizing them as you do so) who support me and each other as we learn together. I anticipate interacting with them as I go forward."

Feel free to embellish this ritual and make it your own. If after a few sessions, the ritual seems empty, feel free to drop it. If the impact grows on you, continue it and allow the mysterious presence of your co-learners to diffuse your studies.

The learning circle is now open. Write down your starting time.

Notice to user: The pdf version of lesson 1 and 2 are removed from the Moodle software; hence, the links are broken such that one cannot hear the sounds or recordings, one cannot see the pictures and one cannot post responses to the chatroom and to see what other participants have posted.

Nonetheless, one can still learn much about the process and mood surrounding interactive learning and one can imagine the growing “sense of presence” that surrounds the learners who are using the “live version” of these case studies. After each lesson, there is a live chat room experience or a face-to-face classroom experience of 90 minutes. The rituals and procedures used here expand upon the social interactions and the discoveries that have been made during the time of doing the lesson. Different viewpoints are expanded using impromptu role playing and fastspeaks. Oral readback lines enable the group to enter into a partial or full consensus as to what are the key discoveries that have emerged. This is a lively and playful experience. It cannot be imagined; it has to be experienced!
Aaron

Opening thoughts

In this first lesson we will examine how it is that boys grow up and what kind of men they turn out to be. As we go forward, we will discover that boys learn what it is to be a "man" by imitating their role models. In different cultures, there are different role models. Each has been carefully cultivated in order to protect male power, male courage, male enterprise. Even within the same culture, different families will be seen to exemplify and cultivate different role models.

In Lesson One, we will be considering growing up in North America. You, therefore, will have the chance to learn more about this environment. On the other hand, you will be reflecting and posting about what your experience has been where you grew up. This diversity of stories will enliven our posting and our chatroom discussions.

Let's start with this video ()--one designed to explore how unsettling it can be to grow up in a society where boys bring their guns to school and where the drug dealer on the corner may be a significant role

model for the boys hanging out on the streets. [Note: If you have trouble, copy and paste this into your browser-- If this fails, skip it.]

In this course, the men will be reflecting upon how it is that they and the men around them grew up. Women, meanwhile, will be reflecting upon how their fathers and brothers and boy friends exemplified their "maleness"--its attraction and its threat. Everyone, in effect, will have many stories to tell, and many of these stories are multi-layered and can only be understood by being spoken and received in a trusting circle wherein different ears hear different cords in the narrative.

Your authentic voice and creating a safe circle for learning

This learning circle is a place where you can use your authentic voice. By speaking honestly and respectfully together, we change ourselves and, in turn, we change the world.

For this to take place, however, we need to create a safe place for every member of this learning circle. Each of us needs to know that we are in a safe place where we can freely tell our own stories (both good and bad), share our confusion, explore our hunches, and reveal our own deepest questions (without fear of ridicule). Given my own classroom experience in helping "strangers" create a safe place together, I would put forward the following guidelines:

1. The most important gift that we can give to each other is to create a safe place where every member of our learning circle can find her true voice and to express herself freely.
2. The gift we can offer each other is to nurture a sense of respect and mystery in the presence of co-learners struggling to adequately express and make sense out of a spiritual path to which they may or may not feel personally called.
3. Any personal stories posted in these forums, accordingly, are honored as "confidential" and should not be shared with those outside the classroom.

What is our starting point?

Each of us has a unique story to tell. Hence, you are invited to reflect upon and to post your response to the following prompts:

[Reflective Questions 1.1](#) <--[Click here when ready to post.]

1.1a Where did you grown up? What was your native language and culture? When you were 5-8 years old, did you identify yourself as a boy or as a girl? What were your special interests? What were your special joys? What were your most difficult challenges? What was your greatest fear?

1.1b Were you a "typical boy" or "typical girl" according to the particular cultural norms exemplified by your family? Explain this so that someone who may not share your cultural upbringing might understand it.

1.1c If you were of born of the opposite sex, would this have made any difference relative to your interests/joys/challenges? If so, why so? If not, why not? [Once again, explain this so that someone who may not share your cultural upbringing might understand it.]

How do you share your thoughts with your learning circle?

1. Begin by clicking on the “Reflective Questions 1.1” that will always be found just prior to any questions. (You can also find Reflective Questions 1.1 listed as “1.1” in a table at the very bottom of this page. You can, as an alternate, click on this as well.)
2. Step 1 opens a new window in which you will find the questions repeated. Click on "Reply" found in the lower right corner. This opens a blank text box awaiting your response.
3. Type your reflections into this blank message box. Don’t think that you have to do research so that your responses are “perfect.” Rather, risk writing spontaneously and rapidly about the issues at hand.

4. Feel free to experiment with the various features of the textbox editor. Be daring! You won't be able to break anything. Feel free to add a JPG picture to embellish your response.
5. Click on "Post to Forum" when finished. You are free to change the subject line if you wish and to provide, in its place, an apt title of your own choosing.

You can always go back and edit your former posts. This is not encouraged, however. Better to let your raw self-expression stand. If you are annoyed by what you wrote, add a few lines indicating why you are annoyed. Even if your mind has changed, it's better to add a few lines saying how your mind has changed and why. Each of us is "a wonderful work in progress."

To what degree are "male" behaviors inborn?

"Boys may be biologically programmed to behave in certain ways that we define as masculine," says Dr. Michael Thompson, Ph.D. For example, boys in all cultures around the world like to wrestle and like to play rough games--they do a lot more of it than girls do. And when boys wrestle and roughhouse, their parents typically say, 'Boys will be boys.' In this way, they condone this type of behavior in their "boys" and, at the same time, they generally discourage this same sort of things in their "girls." (www)

In effect, however, [it is notoriously difficult to distinguish what ways of acting arrive by virtue of nature and what arrives by virtue of nurture](#). Right from the beginning of life, fathers instinctively handle their infant boys more roughly than they do with their infant girls. No one tells them to do this. When asked, these fathers remark that "their boys seemed stronger right from the very start" and that "they were getting them ready for the rough and tumble of life." Clinical studies, meanwhile, demonstrate just the opposite:

Female babies are hardier, more regular in their sleeping and eating patterns, more socially responsive, mature faster and are more

sensitive to pain. For boys the differences are that they tend to sleep less, cry more, be more active, along with being more irritable and harder to pacify. ([www](#))

By the time that children enter into preschool, the difference between boys and girls is now quite evident. [Girls tend to play more quietly and to stay within close proximity to their teachers. Boys, in contrast, tend to be noisy \(e.g., they knock over towers of blocks and make engine noises when they slam their toy trucks into each other\) and seldom look to the teacher for approval while they are absorbed in free play.](#)

A boy who splashes in a pond chasing after a tadpole is much more likely to develop a real interest in tadpoles and frogs than is a boy who merely sees a photo of a tadpole in a book or online. [Richard Louv](#), in his book *[Last Child in the Woods](#)*, presents evidence that preschoolers today spend much less time outdoors compared with 20 or 30 years ago. The result, according to Mr. Louv, is that when these kids start school, they are much less likely to CARE about tadpoles or frogs. Seeing a photo of a tadpole won't inspire a young boy the way chasing after a tadpole in a pond will. ([www](#))

While boys commonly enjoy catching tadpoles, frogs, snakes, and the like; girls of the same age are generally discouraged by both their mothers (and sometimes even their fathers) from doing so.

Consider the case of my two grandchildren who are growing up together on their parents' farm. When we were outdoors filling the bird feeders together, my granddaughter (age 6) was visibly alarmed and moved away from the pill bugs (shown in the pic above; also known as roly poly, wood louse, armadillo bugs, potato bugs) that roamed in my garden. My grandson (age 4), meanwhile, was interested in their movement and enjoyed seeing how they curled up into balls and, after a short period, uncurled and moved about when I held them in the palm of my hand. He touched them without any hesitation. I was unsuccessful when I encouraged my granddaughter to do so.

At this point in their little lives, it is impossible to distinguish clearly between nature and nurture because what has been ingrained due to nurture has hardened into "second nature" (i.e., instinctive responses).

Pill bugs have no threatening behavior. They do not bite, sting, or emit a foul odor. As such, one can suspect that male genes have no innate attraction or aversion to them. Nor, for that matter, do female genes. Hence, in this instance, I would be inclined to say (knowing their history) that their mother had successfully instilled a general fear of all bugs into her daughter while her son, being two years younger, had either not yet been socialized to share her fear or was immune to such warnings because "boys will be boys."

Exploratory Question 1.2

1.2a Are you comfortable with catching and picking up ants? . . . spiders? . . . pill bugs? . . . tadpoles? . . . garden snakes? If so, when and how did you learn to do this? If not, when and how did you learn to avoid doing this?

1.2b If you were of the opposite sex, would this have made any difference? If so, why so? If not, why not? [If you have sisters, do they all respond to ants, pill bugs, and snakes as you do? How about your brothers?]

1.2c Is it the case that "boys are by nature more curious and more aggressive" when it comes to ants, pill bugs, and snakes? Or do boys do this because they acquired this by nurture--namely, adults who care for them encouraged/allowed this form of play while, for the girls, they discouraged/prohibited it?

Boys pay attention to what society expects of them and act accordingly.

Even the youngest of boys pick up expectations as to what is expected of them as "boys" and by what others say to them. They wind up thinking, "I am a boy; I like boy's toys and boy's games." The same experience, of course, is true of the girls as well. The expectations for them, however, are significantly different.

In this picture one can see a toy-train set. Notice that a boy of four is shown enjoying it. The ads for this toy never show a girl enjoying a train set. Why so?

The first divide is between boys and girls. As soon as kids enter preschool (4 years old), boys and girls (once friends) begin to play and socialize separately. By the time they reach elementary school (5 years old) this divide becomes permanent.

The manufacturer of the train set says this: "Here's everything you need to re-create the scene from the

beginning of the Toy Story 3 movie! Will the train make it safely over the bridge—or EXPLODE? That's up to you when you set the switch on the bridge." ([www](#)) [Click here to see a demonstration](#). You can easily discover why this toy appeals to four-year-old boys.

"At age five, a boy often discovers that the rules are unyielding," says kindergarten teacher Jane Katch, author of *Under Deadman's Skin: Discovering the Meaning of Children's Violent Play*. "[If girls enjoy a game of cross-hand clapping or skipping rope, then this is forbidden for boys. If girls play mothers and babies in the house area, boys put the dolls in the oven and pretend to cook them.](#)"

In this picture one can see a doll-house. Notice that a girl of four is shown enjoying it. The ads for this toy never show a boy playing house. Why so?

At four years old, boys want to climb up higher. They begin by climbing up their dad and sitting on his shoulders. Ladders are irresistible. Finally, they discover trees--all sorts of trees.

Where I grew up in Euclid, Ohio, there was an empty lot across the street with two giant maples soaring 35 feet (10 meters) into the air. When I was ten, I finally was able to climb to the very top. I can still remember the whine of the wind cutting through the leaves just before a storm. I held on as the

tree swayed back and forth in the wind. I imagined myself in the crow's nest of a Skipper Ship racing across the ocean. *I felt powerful. I felt invincible. I felt like I had totally conquered all my fears.*

Exploratory Question 1.3

1.3a Tell the story of your tree-climbing adventures (or the lack thereof). Ever get hurt?

1.3b How can you account for the need of young boys to take risks by climbing higher and faster (up trees, up cliffs, up mountains)? How does this climbing function to form character? What happens to those boys who are never allowed to take risks?

1.3c How about the girls? In my case, some of the pre-teen girls in my neighborhood would climb up to the first level of branches, just to know what it was like. But then they swung out on a branch and jumped down to the earth and seemingly never felt the need to climb another tree again or, more importantly, to climb higher. Why was this, do you suppose? How does your story of girls differ?

A mother describes her unusual daughter

And then there's my daughter. No matter how hard I [her mother] try, I can't get her interested in dolls in the least. But she's eight now and still plays with her Thomas trains and toy swords. She doesn't care what clothes she's wearing as long as they are comfortable (t-shirt dresses are her favorite; but then, my son would like to wear them as well. He adores his sister's outgrown fleece nightgowns!).

Try styling her hair and she'll scream like a banshee. She runs away from lip gloss and nail polish. She loves bugs and snakes and animals of all kinds. On the other hand, she hates violent or scary movies of any sort, loves the garden canopy in her bedroom, thinks any sport but basketball is boring (unless it's Olympic level ice skating--that MUST be hard wired in the female brain!), and thinks superheroes are ugly and stupid. (www)

Exploratory Field Work 1.4

Much can be accomplished by doing some easy Field

Work. Your mission here is to go out and find a boy or girl, four to six years old, who is willing to talk to you about picking up bugs and about climbing trees. Maybe you can begin with something like this: "Have you ever picked up a snake?" or "Where can I find a big tree to climb?"

Essentially, you want to invite them to tell you a story that enables you to discover how and why they are attracted or repulsed by the two activities just mentioned. After the 5-10 minute interview, write down some quick notes for yourself. [You can bypass this now and do the interview later.]

1.4a Then, when returning to your computer, (a) describe who you interviewed and (b) reproduce here the significant part of your exchange. [The trick here is to try to capture something of the actual words and emotions of the one speaking. Use a Q and A format.]

1.4b Reflect on your interview. What were you able to discover?

Boys imitate and emulate their fathers and brothers

Boys want to grow up to be like their fathers. "The human brain is wired for imitation. Every boy loves his father and wants to be able to do what he does, both to honor him, to earn his praise, and to compete with him," notes Dr. Michael Thompson. "[Men are extremely important in giving boys messages about being a man](#)," adds Dr. Canada. "Boys want to grow up to be like their male role models. And boys who grow up in homes with absent fathers search the hardest to figure out what it means to be male."

Figuring out the rules of masculinity and trying to live up to them is part of every boy's childhood. Most boys find the "tests of" masculinity scary and hard to pass. And some boys find this process especially painful because they feel they don't have the right skills and interests to be successful at being a boy.

"Parents are often baffled by why boys work so hard at being boys," says Michael Thompson, Ph.D. "Sometimes they [parents] wish their boys could just be themselves and not constantly measure themselves against the societal standard of masculinity. But boys do this, whether you like it or not (as girls do with femininity). Only in time do children develop a sufficiently independent identity so they can say with confidence and pride, 'That's not me. This is who I am.'"

Children come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and abilities. They grow up to develop very different passions and talents. But according to Thompson, they all share one thing: "Every child has to come to grips with society's image of what is masculine and what is feminine. These expectations begin to influence them the moment a child is born, when parents pick up their baby girl and say, 'Isn't she sweet, isn't she beautiful?' They pick up their sons and they say, 'Isn't he handsome? He's going to be a big, strong boy.' These messages continue when boys and girls start to play separately at around age three, and both the boys' group and the girls' group begin to define what boys do and what girls do. And these gender expectations can be tough on boys who don't fit society's model." ([www](#))

A boy's view of what is masculine

Boys who subscribe to a very narrow definition of masculinity, who empathize only with [toughness, stoicism, and physical and sexual prowess](#) may hide those parts of themselves that they perceive as too tender and even too smart.

#1 Many boys hide their feelings. Boys often think it's OK for girls to get upset and be sensitive, but not for strong boys. As a result, boys may act less empathetic, less supportive, and less close than they actually feel or want to be. "Crying is a roadblock to being accepted and identified as a strong male. So one of the first things people do is teach boys not to cry," comments Geoffrey Canada.

#2 Some boys hide their intelligence. "Boys may also choose to do less well in school, because they think that learning and homework are something that girls do," notes Thompson. "For some boys (and this depends a lot on social class and context), doing well at school is incompatible with being perceived as adequately masculine," adds Joseph Tobin. "If a boy gets praised for good academic performance in

front of classmates, he may then misbehave to earn back their respect for his masculinity."

#3 Boys hide their compassion as well. "Boys live in fear of being identified as soft so they self-correct," says Canada. "A nice girl comes up to you and compliments you for helping her little brother, but other boys say, 'You did what?' So, as leaders, we try to get boys away from this group, so they explore what they feel and care about — but they won't do this in front of other boys." ([www](#))

Exploratory Question 1.5

For the men. . . .	For the women. . . .
1.5a To what degree did you grow up striving for toughness, stoicism, and physical and sexual prowess? Explore this freely.	1.5a To what degree were you attracted by boys that exemplified toughness, stoicism, and physical and sexual prowess? Explore this freely.
1.5b To what degree did you grow up hiding your feelings, refusing to cry? Tell a story about yourself that proves or disproves this.	1.5b To what degree did you find boys were hiding their feelings, refusing to cry. Tell a story that proves or disproves this.
1.5c To what degree did you grow up hiding your intelligence? Why or why not did you fall prey to this?	1.5c To what degree did you grow up hiding your intelligence? Why or why not did you fall prey to this?

Aaron's Story--Growing up male in an American-Slovenian culture of the 1940s

"To live is to change; to grow perfect is to have changed often." --John Henry Newman

My life without a mother

Thinking back on my life, I would say that the pivotal event was the death of my mother when I was eight years old. This event was pivotal, not because of the inherent tragedy of the event in itself. It was pivotal in so far as I was initiated into the emotional isolation that my father exemplified in the interpretation and aftermath of this event.

My mother was the heart and soul of our family. When she fell ill, a hospital bed was moved into my parents' room and she had a nurse staying with her every day while my dad was at work.

As my mother became increasingly ill, she withdrew more and more from our lives. I missed the regular reading that I would do in the kitchen as my mother washed the dishes. I missed having my mother meet me as I arrived home from school, her hug, and her listening to the stories of my day. I remember sitting on the floor holding my teddy bear and wishing that I could visit my mother in her room. I could not understand why my mother was sleeping so much and why it is that she didn't have time to receive the visits of her own children. When I got ill, I would go to bed and then, in a few days, I was back on my feet again. I couldn't figure out why my mother was taking so long to get back "on her feet."

Then the unthinkable happened. The voices of strange men whispering in the hallway woke me up from my deep sleep. I peeked out from my room and saw a large wicker basket being carried from out of my parent's bedroom. I spotted my dad and asked him, "What's happening, dad?"

I remember, as if it were yesterday, his reply: "It's nothing, son. Close your door and go back to sleep."

Well, "this was a big lie"--it was very much more than "nothing." I learned later that my dead mother was in that wicker basket and that she was being taken away and that I would never again see her alive. This was a catastrophic shock that would shape the rest of my life. As

a boy of eight, I lost my mother and my father. I say, “my father,” because, following the death of my mother, my dad slipped into a deep depression. Beyond the essentials, my dad hardly spoke to me at all. He lost all interest in me. I used to beg him to go to activities at school or to drive me and my friends to a campout. He always complained that he was unable to do so because he was “too tired.” That same evening, however, he would go bowling and, on weekends, he would go golfing—the two sports in which he excelled. Hence, the message became clear—he was “too tired” to take an interest in me. After the “big lie,” we drifted apart.

Being a man meant burying my grief and choking back my tears

I never saw my dad cry, even at my mother’s funeral. For all the years of his life, even when I was an adult, my dad was totally unable to even talk to his own children about the sickness and death of our mother. When we brought the topic up, he could tell us about mom’s interest in rose bushes, her working in a hat store, her courtship with my dad, but, then, the moment that our questions turned toward mom’s sickness, my dad would literally become silent and walk away.

I learned from this that being a man meant burying my grief and choking back my tears. My dad explained my mother’s death as follows: “We couldn’t do anything to prevent it. So now all we can do is to accept it and to go on with our lives.” Just as my dad buried his grief, I slowly learned to bury mine as well.

“Boys don’t cry,” was a truth in my Slovenian-American culture. Tears were a sign of weakness—even at funerals. It was O.K. for girls to cry—but more was expected of boys. They had to be strong—like their fathers and their uncles! So I learned to hold back my tears, and I felt a deep sense of failure whenever I did cry. I was confused, therefore, when my Uncle Louie returned from the war in Europe in 1946 and, upon first hearing that my mother had died, he cried openly. In my mind, Uncle Louis was a brave soldier who fought the Germans. How could such a man who witnessed the blood and guts of the battlefield break down and cry for my mother?

Exploratory Question 1.6

1.6a What stands out for you in Aaron's story? How is this

important for you?

1.6b How could my Uncle Louie, who witnessed the blood and guts of the battlefield, break down and be the only man who openly cried for my mother? And how do you account for the fact that, even as an adult, my dad would literally become silent and walk away from me when the conversation got close to my mother's death? What happens to all the tears that get suppressed in both father and son?

1.6c Was your own father more like my dad, Tony, or like my Uncle Louie? Explain. What difference did this make in your life history?

You have done well! Take a short break and then return to offer feedback.

Feedback 1.7 Then, coming back refreshed, quickly review your entire experience.

1.7a How many minutes did you use to complete Lesson One? Was this more/less time than you had expected? Did you find yourself in a good place (both physically and mentally) to be able to work uninterrupted? Offer a few words of explanation. What changes can you make on your side to increase the satisfaction that you find in this learning circle?

1.7b Were there any processes, instructions, or phrases in our text that were difficult or annoying for you? How about the "readback lines"? Are these working for you? How many readback lines did you offer your learning partners? Name any technical difficulties encountered. How did you solve them? What help do you require?

1.7c Overall (on a scale of +1 to +10), what is your satisfaction with Lesson One. Is there anything that the Instructional Team should do to improve this lesson?



Congratulations!

With this, you have finished your first session. If only a few have posted their writings as of yet, return in a few days, [meet new members](#) and post your responses to their writing. For those who want an even richer learning experience here, click on Finding and Enjoying a Particular Learning Partner.

The learning circle is now officially closed.

Take out 10 minutes during the next few days to do some housekeeping matters found in [Getting Started #3](#).

Lesson Two

Discovering how the games of boys shape their masculinity

Opening ritual: Try . Repeat this ritual at the beginning of each session and to silently acknowledge, "I am not alone. I have a community of co-learners (name each of them slowly, visualizing them as you do so) who support me and each other as we learn together. I anticipate interacting with them as I go forward."

Feel free to embellish this ritual and make it your own. If after a few sessions, the ritual seems empty, feel free to drop it. If the impact grows on you, continue it and allow the presence of your co-learners to diffuse your studies. This is the kind of drumming used in men's circles in the 80s and 90s. By using this ritual ourselves, we are getting ready to understand the power of these circles in a later

lesson.

The learning circle is now open. Write down your starting time.

Introduction

In the last lesson, we explored how boys explore frogs, snakes, and pill bugs and often use their familiarity with such creatures to scare girls. We also noted that boys take to climbing and the risk-taking that this involves. They deliberately push themselves and their friends into daring feats (e.g., the climbing of trees); and, in so doing, unconsciously develop for themselves a mastery of their fear. Notice that their fear does not go away, but they are not paralyzed by fear into inaction (as would be the case for those girls/boys who were sheltered from danger).

In Lesson Two, we are going to focus on the games that boys play and how they develop life skills that are distinguished from those girls who limit themselves to games for girls. In this lesson there will be many surprises for you and for us.

Opening reflection:

Before we start focusing on the particulars, I ask you to examine and share more of your life from age 8 to 12:

Reflective Question 2.1

2.1a What school did you attend? What were the three favorite games played by boys in the school yard? . . . three favorite games played by girls? What games did some boys and girls play together? Rate your choices using a +1 (non-existent) to +10 (extreme) roughness scale. [If you suspect that the games would be unfamiliar due to cultural differences, please supply a short description.]

2.1b What was the roughest boys' game? How was this game appealing to the boys but not to the girls? Did this result in injuries? Why or why not? What was the gentlest boys' game? How was this game appealing to the boys but

not to the girls?

2.1c What qualities did the girls' games have that distinguished them from the games played by boys alone?

This is something new. Come to understand it and put it into practice.

How to respond to what others have posted by offering readback lines?

In our first chatroom, we used readback lines. Now you will begin to use readback lines for those who have posted ahead of you. Here's how:

1. Once you post your own reflections, the reflections of one or more of your learning partners will appear. Click on them and read them quickly.
2. **If your confused by a post, leave a clarifying question. If you resonate with someone's story, link your story to theirs.** To do this, click on the "Reply" button found at the bottom right of each post.
3. **The best and the easiest kind of feedback is to offer readback lines.** To do this, click on the "Reply" button at the bottom right. Then pick out a phrase or sentence in what your co-learner wrote that strikes a resonate cord in you. Highlight it with your mouse and copy it (Ctrl-C). Then move your cursor into your reply box and paste it (Ctrl-V). In a few words, say why these lines have a special meaning for you.

Offering "readback lines" is both the easiest and the most demanding form of feedback. In so doing, the reader reveals how her/his internal depths have been mysteriously kissed awake by the evocative words of the person who posted

them.

Please make it a practice to offer readback lines for one or two of the postings in 2.1. Continue this practice for all future postings.

4. Come back in a few days and see whether anyone has offered feedback or readback to your posts. If so, responding to feedback received with a sincere “thank you” or “that was helpful” note is always rewarding for the one who honored your work enough to puzzle over it. Clarifications or expansions can also be asked for when needed. To respond to a feedback, click the “Reply” at the bottom right of the feedback box.

The games boys played in Euclid, Ohio

I would have to admit that my experience only covers a small spectrum of males growing up in Euclid, Ohio, during the latter part of the 1940s. Your experience would be different. This is only natural and good. This will enable you to discover where there are parallels and differences between cultures and within the same culture in a different time-frame.

Here are my responses in the order of their importance with the roughness factor in parentheses:

Games boys enjoyed	Games girls enjoyed	Games together
leapfrog (+8)	skipping rope (+2)	never
marbles (+1)	hopscotch (+1)	never
red rover (+5)	tag (+3)	sometimes

trading baseball cards (+1)	nosey books (+1)	never
(some) bullying (+6)	jacks (+1)	never

Leapfrog described--Our variation on leapfrog began with one boy leaning over and embracing a tree. The next boy grasped him around the waist and held him tight. This continued until seven boys were bound together tightly with each boy bent over at the waist with their heads off to the left side of the boy being held in front of him.

Then boys from the opposing team lined up. The strongest jumper came first. He would run hard at the butt of the last boy and use his hands on the boy's butt to push himself up into the air in order to fling himself forward (as shown in the pick) as far as he could go with his legs open and ready to grip the backs of the seven so that he would not fall off. The band of seven were expected to sustain the force of his weight falling upon them. Then the second boy followed. Then the third. The object of the runners was to load so much weight on the backs of the seven such that they would crumple to the ground under the intolerable pressure. If the seven collapsed, the jumpers won. If the jumpers had no more room to load on another jumper and the seven held the load, then the supporting team won.

This game sometimes inflicted bruises, cuts, bloodied ears (when a leather shoe accidentally caught a boy's ear), and some torn trowsers. No boys ever complained or started a fight due to the roughness of this game, as far as I can remember. To play the game was to accept the consequences. No playground supervisor ever discouraged this game either. I have not seen this game played elsewhere (although I learn it is [played in India and in Italy](#)). The boys passed it down from year to

year, initiating the younger boys as they went. No girl ever played this game with the boys.

Skipping rope--The girls enjoyed skipping rope. Two girls at each end of a three-meter piece of rope turned the rope in large circles with the down stroke just hitting the ground. Then one girl would run in and begin jumping in rhythm to avoid making contact with the rope as it swung near the ground. The girls would chant a rhyme to the rhythm of the jumper.

**I once as a girl, put worms in my pockets.
No dolls for me, or even gold locket.
Just think what my mother would say
every week come laundry day;
into each pocket her hand would go
just to make sure they were empty you know.
But lo and behold to her great surprise,
handfuls of worms! It's hard to surmise.
What would happen if into the wash they fell,
to wiggle and whirl into a mushy brown gel.
Worms galore amid the soap and suds,
can you imagine this, on your taste buds?
Then into the dryer to get baked dry,
like a wriggling, jiggling, mincemeat pie.
So if you know a girl with fondness for worm
Please check her pockets to see if they squirm.**

The jumper was successful if she successfully continued jumping without getting caught by the rope before the rhyme was finished. Sometimes, as a variation, two jumpers would jump side-by-side, or two ropes (called "Double Dutch") were used going in different directions. In this game, there weren't any winners or losers. Each one was competing against herself and was supported by the chant of her comrades. I remember hearing four or five chants that were endlessly repeated. (without a chant). .

This game did sometimes result in a girl tripping on the rope, losing balance, and falling down, and skinning a knee, but this was rare.

What I notice is that the top three games for boys have a clear winner and loser. The boys played the game motivated by the desire "to win." As for the top three games for girls, there were no clear winner and losers. Girls played the game as a form of bonding and companionship.

Exploratory Questions 2.2

2.2a Look back upon the three schoolyard games played by boys and girls that you posted above (2.1a above). Does the observation that I made in blue type above ("What I notice. . .") prove to be true in your case? If so, what can you conclude? If not, why not?

2.2b Look at the game that you identified as having the highest roughness quotient (2.1a). How does this compare with the form of leapfrog practiced in Euclid, Ohio? Can you conclude that boys in your culture prefer rough games while girls do not? If so, why is this so? If not, how do you explain why the girls in your culture also like rough games?

2.2c Examine the research conducted in the box below. Would you say that this research would find the same result if conducted by members of your local culture? If so, why so? If not, why not? How do you explain this?

"The appeal of rough-and-tumble play in televised professional football"

Authors: Jennings Bryant^a; Paul Comisky^b; Dolf Zillmann^c

Our research was designed to explore whether college males and females respond differently when presented with a wide selection of televised football plays in which various degrees of roughness/violence (low,

intermediate, and high) was portrayed. The plays were taken from a large pool of plays drawn from numerous games and involving numerous teams. . . . We discovered that the enjoyment of viewing football plays increased with the degree of their apparent roughness/violence. However, this relationship was significant for male viewers only. It was not reliable for females. There were no appreciable sex differences in the enjoyment of plays featuring low and intermediate levels of roughness. Highly violent plays, in contrast, were significantly more enjoyed by males than by females. ([www](#))

The hidden logic behind rough games for boys

The picture that has emerged from modern research has differed significantly from older ideas of the male sex role (e.g., as tough and unemotional) and even more from conceptions of "natural" masculinity (e.g., "men true to their nature prefer rough games").

One of the key achievements of this research has been to [document](#) the diversity of masculinities. There is not just one pattern of masculinity, good in all times and places. Different cultures vary, some being much more peaceable than others. Within a single society—even within a single community or institution—there will be different patterns of masculinity, different recognizable ways of "being a man." ([www](#))

We now understand that femininity and masculinity are not innate but are based upon social and cultural conditions. Anthropologist Margaret Mead was a pioneer in this exploration with her research in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935). This early study led to the conclusion that there are no necessary differences in traits or temperaments between the sexes. Observed differences in temperament between men and women were not a function of their biological differences. Rather, they resulted from differences in socialization and the cultural expectations held for each sex.

One is led to this conclusion because the three societies studied by Mead showed patterns of temperament which were quite varied compared with our own.

- 1. Among the Arapesh, both males and females displayed what we would consider a "feminine" temperament (passive, cooperative and expressive).**
- 2. Among the Mundugamor, both males and females displayed what we would consider a "masculine" temperament (active, competitive and instrumental).**
- 3. Finally, among the Tchambuli, men and women displayed temperaments that were different from each other, but opposite to our own pattern. In that society, men were emotional, and expressive while women were active and instrumental. ([www](http://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1093/ajph/74.10.1911))**

Exploratory Questions 2.3

2.3a Do you know of any society wherein men are expected to be "emotional" and "expressive" (as in the case of the Tchambuli)? If so, please explain. If not, does it seem impossible that there could be such a society anywhere? Explain.

2.3b Do some of the men in your society gain recognition precisely because they are "emotional" and "expressive"? Name a few. Show their pics. Copy and paste a short bio for them from the internet.

2.3c In the society of Euclid, Ohio, in the 40s, any boy who showed traits of being "emotional" and "expressive" was

branded as a "sissy" or a "[faggot](#)." Any girl who showed traits of being "tough" and "competitive" was called a "tomboy." Parents and teachers were routinely invested in "toughening up their sons" and in "feminizing their girls." Any boy acting "out of line with the prevailing notion of masculinity" was punished "for his own good." Today, however, parents and teachers are (on the whole) willing to tolerate (even to promote) a diversity of ways of being male and female. Is this the shift that you have noted in your own society? Illustrate it by providing a few examples.

One American Teenager Speaks Out

Throughout centuries girls have been brought up to be dainty, but during the 1940s and up women began to wear slacks (like a man) and sometimes even neck ties. In the 30's Marlene Deitrich was the first woman to boldly wear men's slacks; a neck tie and sometimes a top hat and had been seen in a man's full suit. However, because she was a celebrity [an actress] she got away with it.

Some girls were classified as tom boys (such as the actress Debbie Reynolds) who always seemed to have roles as a tom boy, but, in fact, is quite the dainty little woman. Girls were and sometimes still

are reprimanded by their parents for not acting like a young lady should.

From the time a male child can first understand, they are taught to be strong; not cry; play with trucks; get into sports because it's a structured male role play. Some male children [myself included?] are simply not interested in any of those things. . . . ([www](#))

One Mother Supports her Daughter's Choice to be a Wrestler

My daughter was on the boys' wrestling team for four years in high school. She has several trophies and medals, and she was one of the [team] captains for her senior year when she received a shoulder injury. She was treated like one of the guys . . . and she made 2nd place in the North Carolina girls' state wrestling match. ([www](#))

Appendix: [How the prejudice against women in all sports was gradually overcome](#)

The hidden logic behind rough games for boys

Do rough competitive games promote violence in boys? Do gentle games promote gentleness in girls? Some may be inclined to suggest this; yet, when examined more closely, it may be the case that "boys play more often in large and age-heterogeneous groups; they play competitive games more often, and their games last longer than girls' games." And what is so important here? Well, just maybe, boys are learning to "play by the rules" in the game of life that requires that a man be able to "include both friends and enemies" without resorting to continuous warfare and the destruction of society.

Here is what Carol Gilligan finds:

By way of contrast, if a dispute arose when girls played, most often they end up in quitting the game itself since they never seem to have enough "adherence to shared rules" that would allow them to settle disputes amiably. Gilligan thus continues as follows:

Exploratory Question 2.4

2.4a What do you make of the observation that boys' games have more complex rules that allows them to negotiate a refined moral sense of "playing by the rules." And because they cultivate a shared sense of "fairness," they can decide together whether someone can or cannot do something. Thus, their games continue and, in contrast to girls, their games last longer. For example, "Can boys on top use tickling to weaken the resolve of those holding them up in leapfrog? The response would come: "No way! That's cheating." What do you make of this?

2.4b Does your experience show that "girls are more tolerant in their attitude toward rules, more willing to make exceptions, and more easily reconciled to exceptions" so as to maintain the relationship? If so, can you tell of an experience to demonstrate this?

2.4c Gilligan (in the paragraph below) makes the point that girls games "are turn-taking games where competition is indirect" since the objective of such games is to cultivate and strengthen relationships. Boys' games, in contrast, embrace open and fierce competition but within the boundaries of shared rules that make the competition "fair" since the objective is to enable a boy to develop his individuality while "playing with his enemies and competing with his friends" (cited below).

Could it be said therefore that boys' games get them ready

for life outside the home where life is filled with commercial and political competition following the rules of fair play that bind friends and enemies alike? Could it also be said that girls' games get them ready to promote life inside the home where "bending the rules" is the key ingredient that allows "insiders" to cultivate and strengthen non-competitive and mutual supportive relationships? Explore this in the best way that you know how.

friends.

Computer games that boys play

Over 90% of American children between 8 and 11 years of age now play video games. That information from [M2 Research](#) makes you sit up and take notice. Ya gotta like statistics to enjoy the report, but there is some significant information to be had. We are told that children turn from traditional toys to video games at age eight.

Below you will find the most popular video games--Mario is preferred by the girls; Call of Duty is preferred by boys. From what we have seen above, this should not come as a surprise. You mission, if you

choose to accept it, is to take 10 minutes to explore three games and then to share your conclusions in Exploratory Question 2.5 below.

Video game franchises really differentiate the youngster's marketplace. A fourth of the girls lean towards the [Mario Series](#), featuring a little Italian plumber with a moustache created by [videogame](#) designer Shigeru Miyamoto. The theme of the Mario series has been described as bad Bowser kidnaps Princess who is then saved by Mario. Since the early 1980's, the simple plot has survived through more than 200 games and by selling [over 200 million copies](#), it has become the best selling video game series ever. .

On the other hand, one third of the boys surveyed preferred [Call of Duty: Modern Warfare](#). As the name suggests, warring strife between nations is the subject. The series has covered the Battle of Stalingrad in World War II, with Russians, Germans, British, and American soldiers showing up throughout the various *Call of Duty* titles. ([www](#))

To get some first-hand experience, . In this instance, you are randomly assigned the role of a Soviet rifleman assigned to head off a German offensive. The entire video is shown based on what you see (with your rifle pointed forward). Should you play the game again, you could be assigned a role in the German army and you would play out the offensive from the vantage point of the Germans. Click here if you wish to hear some players giving .

Sherwood Dungeon is a free-to-play fantasy [MMORPG](#) created by [Maid Marian](#) Entertainment Inc in 2002. Sherwood Dungeon is a groundbreaking game in so far as it is a completely free 3D video game, with it's profits coming entirely from advertisements. With over

1.5 million unique visitors a month, it is one of the largest and fastest growing browser-based games on the net. This game promotes verbal and physical interaction between the players (who are boys and girls from all over the world) and the moves are not heavily scripted as in the two games above.

Welcome to the Sherwood Dungeon MMORPG, a massive multiplayer online role playing game where you defend your honour in combat with players from around the world. No retail box to purchase, no cumbersome software to install and no registration required. . [Note: While it may appear that the girl is hopelessly outflanked by the double-hammers, it must be remembered that when she is hit in her defensive posture, it does not count as a hit against her. Hits are shown in blasts of red and blue color. Total hits are shown in the red bar graph above each player.]

To get some first-hand experience in this game, [click here to play Sherwood Dungeon](#).

After you log in using a name you create for yourself, you will be sent to a game room. The room you enter is based on two things, the first is your country of origin. For example, if you are from a mostly English-speaking country, you will be sent to a room with English speakers. The second thing that determines your room is your experience level in playing the game (Your computer keeps track of your experience level).

Whenever you wish, you can change the way your character looks. There are five different general options for your [character's](#) appearance: medieval knight (male and female), Viking (male and female), [skeleton](#) (genderless), and gladiator (presumably male). You can also choose from a variety of different colors for your character. The female characters have the further option of changing hair-styles. The controls are relatively simple, making the game easy to play and fun. You can speak to the other characters at any time.

Do war games glorify war and/or make "killing" fun?

Some observers are critical of the combat-gaming trend, saying the games can mislead players into viewing war as fun, particularly among the target audience of young men. (**Related story:** [War games launch all-out sales assault](#))

Mary Spio, 31, who served in the U.S. Air Force during the first Gulf War, thinks video games can create a bloodlust. "What we saw in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal was the tip of the iceberg — it was a glimpse of a generation of war gamers coming of age," says Spio, now the pop culture editor for One2One Magazine.

"Video games that allow players to kill real human beings are desensitizing generations of American society," she says.

Research into the long-term effects of video games remains foggy, although findings have long shown that watching violent TV and movies and playing violent games increases aggressive thoughts, feelings and, to a lesser extent, behaviors. ([www](#))

While [the U.S. military has created realistic war games as a key part of their long-term recruitment strategy](#), there is strong evidence that [success in attracting young boys to video games helps create obesity](#). Hence, the military has had to [reject 12% of their volunteers precisely because they are grossly overweight](#). The long-term effects of military games may thus backfire and end up depleting the numbers fit for military service.

One of the most popular video games of all time, [America's Army](#) has been played by more than 9 million individuals. But it was actually developed to aid

U.S. Army recruiting and has become one of the most successful military recruiting tools. A 2008 study found that 30 percent of all Americans age 16 to 24 had a more positive impression of the Army because of the game and that the game had more impact on recruits than all other forms of Army advertising combined.
([www](#))

Exploratory Question 2.5

2.5 Recall the interview that you did in Lesson One. Now your mission is to meet a boy or a girl (age 8 to 11) that enjoys video games. Ask your interviewee about the game they play most. See if they can actually demonstrate for you how to play. Your purpose is to figure out (a) why this game shows itself to be interesting/fun, (b) what mood it creates in the players, and (b) whether it attracts boys and girls for different reasons. Click on 2.5 and reproduce the key aspects of the interview as you did in Lesson One.

If you have a special interest in the American video games described above, then, as an alternative, you can play each game and decide how and why each appeals to boys and to girls using the suggested questions shown below:

2.5a What is your mood evoked when playing Mario? Would you want boys and girls in your culture to be prepared for their life roles by playing this game? What deep lessons does this game promote? Explain.

2.5b What is your mood evoked when playing Call of Duty? Would you want boys in your culture to be prepared for their life roles by playing this game? What deep lessons does this game promote? Explain.

2.5c What is your mood evoked when playing Sherwood Dungeon? Would you want boys and girls in your culture to be prepared for their life roles by playing this game? What deep lessons does this game promote? Explain.

The learning circle is now officially closed.

When finished, take a break. Make some tea for yourself or take a five-minute walk or dance to your favorite music.

When finished, take a break. Make some tea for yourself or take a five-minute walk or dance to your favorite music.

Feedback 2.6: Then, coming back refreshed, quickly review your entire experience. Share your experience in three parts:

2.6a How many minutes did you use to complete Lesson Two?

Was this more/less time than you had expected? Did you find yourself in a good place (both physically and mentally) to be able to work uninterrupted? Offer a few words of explanation. What changes can you make on your side to increase the satisfaction that you find in this learning circle?

2.6b How many participants received readback lines or other feedback from you during this Lesson? Did you enjoy doing so? Explain.

2.6c Overall (on a scale of +1 to +10), what is your satisfaction with Lesson Two.

Further Readings

[Game Studies](#)--Game Studies is a crossdisciplinary journal dedicated to games research, primarily focusing on aesthetic, cultural and communicative aspects of computer games.

[Loading](#)--The primary objective of Loading is to publish Canadian scholarship, research and art in the interdisciplinary field of digital games studies.

The book [Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat](#) is a good book on games and gender. [Henry Jenkins interviews the authors](#) in their updated book.

Gender Differences in Cooperation and Competition--The Male-Warrior Hypothesis

by [Mark Van Vugt](#) (UK), [David De Cremer](#) (Netherlands) and [Dirk P. Janssen](#)(UK)

Abstract

Evolutionary scientists argue that human cooperation is the product of a long history of competition among rival groups. There are various reasons to believe that this logic applies particularly to men. In three experiments, using a step-level public-goods task, we found that men contributed more to their group if their group was competing with other groups than if there was no intergroup competition. Female cooperation was relatively unaffected by intergroup competition. These findings suggest that men respond more strongly than women to intergroup threats. We speculate about the evolutionary origins of this gender difference and note some implications. ([www](#))

[Homo Ludens](#)by [Johan Huizinga](#)(1971 reprint)

Review:

I am surprised that this book has garnered mixed reviews. I consider it the most important book about play, and I write that as the author of a number of books on game design.

Why is this book so important? First, it clearly differentiates between play and games; there is a great deal of play-activity that does not constitute game-playing. That differentiation is lost on many people. . .

Huizinga offers many other brilliant insights into the nature of play in the human species. His observations on the idea of demarcating territory in which certain rules of play apply -- a royal court, a court of law, or a basketball court -- are eye-opening. We humans have a subjunctive sense that we explore with variations on play.

Play is also immensely valuable as an educational process. The fact that all carnivorous mammals engage in play communicates the value of play in the upbringing of the young. . . .

I consider this book a must-read for anybody with serious interest in games and play. It is the classic work in the field, still more informative than any of the modern books on the subject -- including my own!

Children's Games in Street and Playground: Hunting, Racing, Duelling, Exerting, Daring, Guessing, Acting, Pretending by [Iona Archibald Opie](#) and [Peter Opie](#) (2009 reprint)

Review:

This book will help you regain your faith in children and respect for their games. It has been the cornerstone of my work for twenty years. It should not be out of print. Accurate, honest, direct observations of children at play, without the constraints of adult supervision, outside the boundaries of their playgrounds.

Game=[Sniper](#)-girl [Does this game appeal to girls? Or was it made to add a sex appeal to the art of killing? This is troubling, especially in view of the fact that boys normally lie about their age and play teen and adult games online whereas girls normally tell the truth and play online games in their age category.]