

From the world boy crisis to a recovery of boyhood within a new paradigm

Prof. Dr. Albert Ferrer

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There is a profound crisis of boys' education and boyhood in general all around the world.



Benjamin Ross

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Parliamentary and governmental reports in all the major nations in all the continents show the startling figures.

The United Nations finds that boys have fallen behind girls in every one of the largest 70 developed nations.

From 2001 on, Senator Hillary Clinton warned about the boy crisis in the USA.

In the United Kingdom, government reports such as “2020 Vision” realize that the boy crisis persists and worsens.

In September 2013, the Education Minister of Germany, MS Annette Schavan, asked for new policies to solve the boy crisis.

Why equity and parity do not work in relation to boys (and the male gender)?

Which philosophy can support ethical and legal principles in strictly unilateral terms?

- **The boy crisis manifests not only structural problems within the present school system but also negative cultural patterns affecting boyhood and the male gender in the culture of the last decades.**
- **These are some of the findings of various reports such as "Boys and School: A Background Paper on the Boy Crisis" (July 2010) authored by Professor Michael Kimmel for the Government of Sweden/ Ministry of Education and Research/ Delegation for Gender Equality in Schools.**
- **On January 28–29, 2011, a two-day event was held in Berlin, hosted by the Robert Bosch Foundation in partnership with the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL).**
- **At this third International Dialogue, the CCL presented its new report that was also the focus of this year's discussion: "The New Gender Gap. Exploring the Boy Crisis in Education".**

The boy crisis started five decades back in the Western world in parallel to the extension of coeducation and the rise of unilateral women's claims (at the antipodes of an integral vision).

In the last years the boy crisis begins to manifest in India, China and all developing countries.

What is wrong with the postmodern world that is massively harming boys worldwide? What is common to all nations worldwide in the last years?



The postmodern world's unilateral, biased and exclusive focus on girls and women (instead of a deeper integral vision) has produced a profound neglect of boyhood and an oblivion of the male gender.

- **The U.S. Department of Education released a comprehensive report in July 2000 called "Trends in Educational Equity of Girls and Women",**
- that radically questioned the conventional belief that girls were short-changed in the nation's schools. With all the overemphasis in the previous decades about girls' discrimination, even the statisticians who put the data together were surprised by what they showed.
- As the study's director, Thomas Snyder, recognized:
- **"We did not realize women were doing so well. And boys so badly."**

- When some biased minds were still denying the obvious and worrying reality of the crisis of boys' education,
- **the official marks in British public exams in the last years showed a further decrease in boys' performance,**
- **and therefore an aggravation of the already startling gap between boys and girls.**

- **In the United Kingdom, government reports such as “2020 Vision”**
- **have warned that the poor standards achieved by boys remain extremely persistent and alarming,**
- **for which boys should be taught separately to stop them falling further behind girls –as part of an overall reappraisal of the educational system and a global recovery of boyhood-.**

- **British experts have admitted that the present flaws will persist if we continue to do more of the same; a new approach is required.**

Boys' troubles.

80% of children and adolescents who commit suicide are boys.



Most of all behavioural, psychological and pedagogic troubles are carried out by boys.

The alarming figures in the US and worldwide:

I.

- Boys make up 80% of behavioural disorders diagnoses.
- 90% of adolescents in correctional facilities are boys.

II.

- 80% of children diagnosed with emotional disturbance are boys.
- 80% of school children on Ritalin are boys.

III.

- Boys make up 80% of school disciplinary referrals.
- 80% of students expelled from school are boys.

“Boys get unfairly labelled as morally defective, hyperactive, undisciplined, or “problem children”, when quite often the problem is not with the boys, but with the families, extended families, or social environments, which do not understand their specific needs as human beings and as boys.”

Dr M. Gurian (“The Good Son”.)



**Why are boys and men causing so much violence?
What is wrong with the socialization of males in contemporary
civilization all around the globe?**

**The male alienation and violence costs billions of Euros all
around the world.**

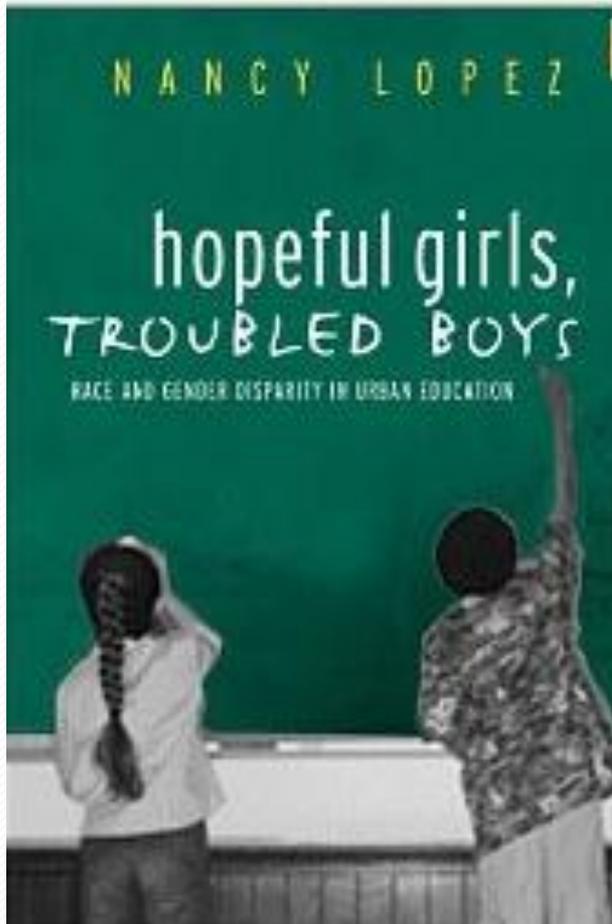
One women in jail for 15 men.

In the USA: 700% increase in prison
population –MALE- in the last 30 years.

Males cause most of all anti-social,
destructive and self-destructive troubles in
this world: hooliganism, all forms of
violence, road accidents, drug-addiction,
alcoholism, suicide, etc.

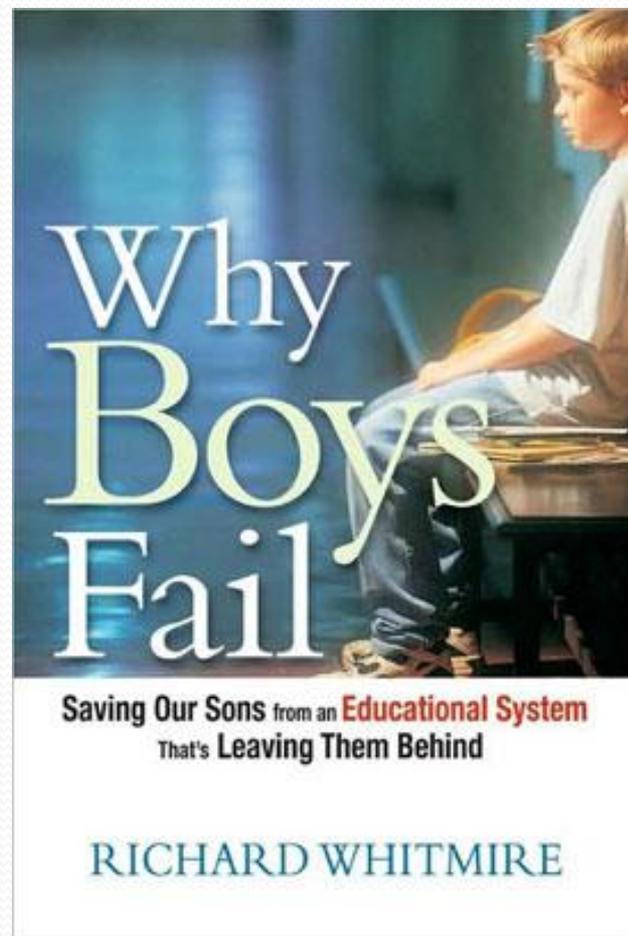
Instead of being redressed the problems
persist and worsen worldwide. Why?

The boy crisis in education all around the world.

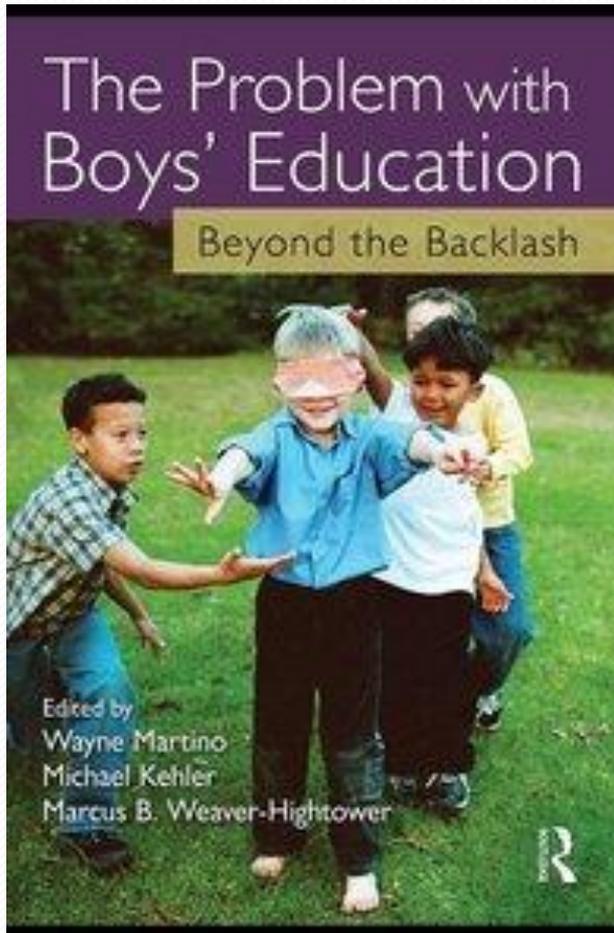


“In schools it is boys who are in trouble, and special programmes for boys are needed.”

The Boy Crisis in Education, University of Sydney



“By almost every benchmark, boys across the nation and in every demographic group are falling behind.”
Newsweek, “The Trouble with Boys”.



The figures are astonishing all around the world;
the reality persists and worsens after five decades.
Still the postmodern world ignores the global boy crisis. Why?

Are We Losing Our Boys?

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"Passionate, powerful, and persuasive . . .
[for] any mother who is confused or worried by her son's struggles."
—MICHAEL THOMPSON,
author of the New York Times bestseller *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*

THE TROUBLE WITH BOYS

A SURPRISING REPORT CARD
on Our Sons, Their Problems at School,
and What Parents and Educators Must Do

PEG TYRE



All around the globe boys are left behind in school and higher education.

40% of men in university versus 60% of women.

Boys receive 70% of Ds and Fs on report cards.

75% of children diagnosed with learning disabilities are boys.

Boys massively score lower than girls on all measures of writing and reading skills.

Boys are 2 to 3 times more likely to be placed in special education classes.

“The statistics about boys’ education are startling.”

A Harvard Psychologist weighs in.

In a total of 35 industrialized countries, girls outperformed boys in special tests.

Boys massively receive lower grades than girls.

Two boys or more are held back in grade for each girl held back.

Three-quarters of students who create discipline problems are boys.

Three-quarters of children with hyperactivity disorders are boys.

The dramatic facts about boys:

- More boys repeat a grade, fail and get lower marks.
- Boys are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school.
- More boys leave school at an earlier stage or drop out of school.
- More boys need special education.
- More boys smoke, drink and take drugs.
- More boys suffer from low esteem and emotional problems.
- More boys commit suicide and acts of violence or hooliganism.
- More boys perform all sorts of antisocial or violent behaviour.
- More boys become incarcerated.

**Still, the postmodern world does not care for boys –nor men-.
Which kind of ethics can support equity on strictly unilateral
terms –for girls and women only-?**

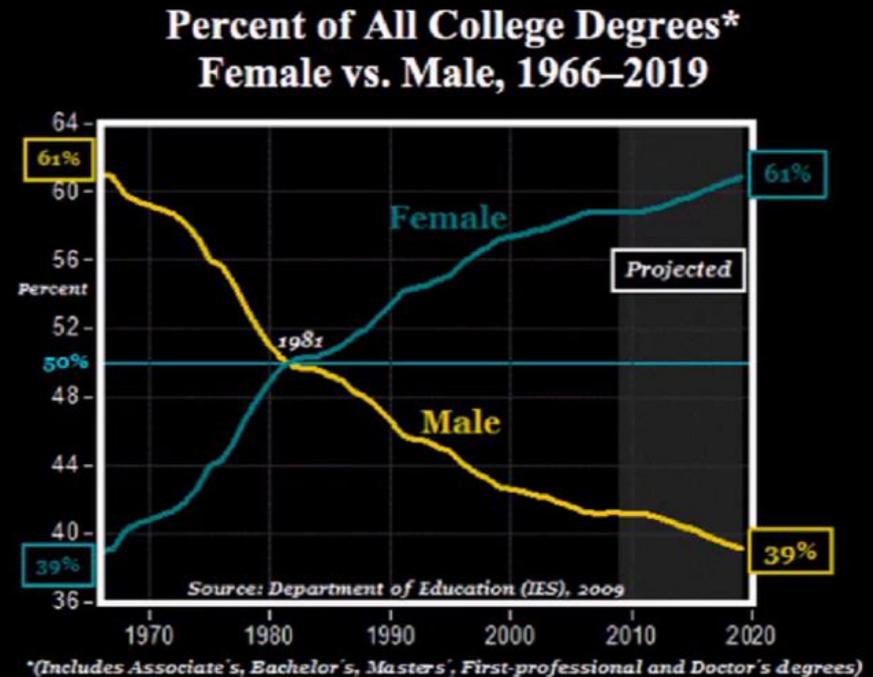
Astounding data still ignored by the postmodern world.

Source:

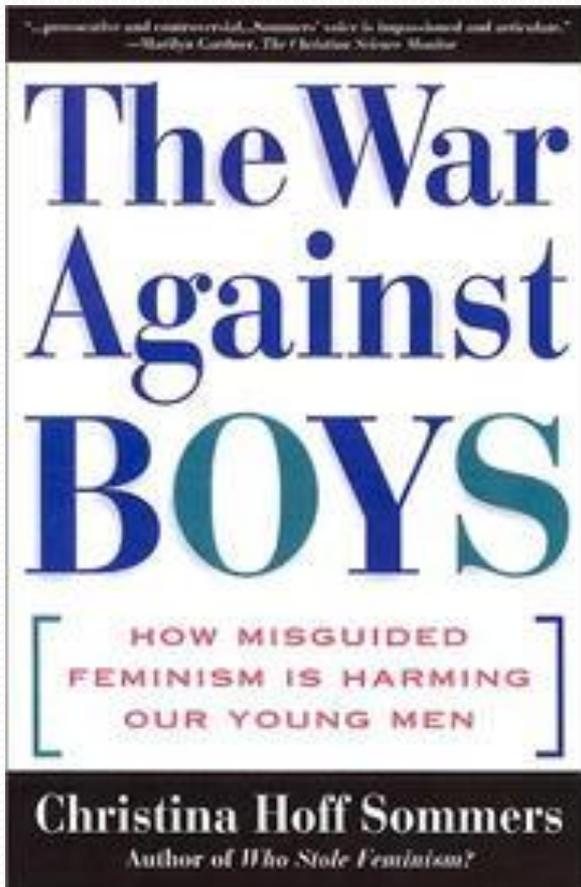
“The importance of having a White House Council on Boys and Men.”

1. EDUCATION

Female college students and female college graduates now far outnumber their male counterparts, a trend that shows no sign of leveling off.



The War on Boys: Boys punished for being boys in postmodern societies.



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Boy suspended after using finger as pretend gun

Mother fighting for removal of suspension from son's record

Author: Amaka Ubaka, Reporter, aubaka@wkmg.com

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From the crisis of boys' education to the professional, social and economic domain.

I.

- In one/ two generations the boy crisis is inevitably reflected at the professional, social and economic levels.
- In the new generations of professionals such as doctors, magistrates or advocates women already outnumber men.

II.

- In the new generations, males begin to manifest unemployment problems that did not manifest some years back.
- In addition to all the anti-social, destructive and self-destructive troubles that persist and worsen all around the world.

III.

- The persistence of the boy crisis and manhood troubles has a huge financial cost for all countries.
- Do we want a world of “radiant women” (as some programmes pretend) amongst underachieving boys left behind and troubled males?

The causes for the world crisis of boys' education and boyhood in general.



“Clearly, boys’ needs are not being met.”

Barbara Sprung, co-director of the Education Equity Center at the Academy for Educational Development. (U.S.A.)



The three major causes for the world boy crisis in the postmodern world:

- **Father-deprived boyhood: deprived of father, male mentors, positive male role models, love within their own gender, and the initiatory dimension of boyhood in anthropological terms; ultimately deprived of their own identity, which feeds frustration, alienation and antisocial/ self-destructive behaviour.**
- **The feminized co-educated school with few male teachers that does not acknowledge boys' anthropology and psychology, does not understand them and does not nurture them.**
- **The dramatic lack of positive patterns of masculinity in the society and mainstream culture, with new trends establishing a new anti-male culture within a society unilaterally and dogmatically centred on women and girls only: the postmodern neglect of boyhood and oblivion of masculinity.**

The feminized co-educated school with few male teachers at the very core of the world boy crisis.

- **A survey commissioned by the Training and Development Agency for Schools in the United Kingdom concluded that:**
- male teachers are crucial role models for boys;
- boys find male school teachers more approachable and an inspiration to work harder;
- boys are also more likely to approach male teachers for personal problems, issues concerning puberty, or problems about bullying.
- **But according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, only around 23% of those qualifying to become teachers are men.**
- **In New York City, the Eagle Academy for Young Men has implemented a mentoring programme through which every boy takes a male mentor in the area. The impact of the mentoring programme has been extraordinary. **Boys need male role models.****

The ideological/ political nature of co-education and modern “emancipation”.

From the boy crisis to the ecological/ climatic catastrophe.

Co-education has been a (dogmatic) political ideology (without any anthropological grounds);

Just like communism and all modern “emancipation” movements and revolutions,

That have ultimately nurtured a unique alienation in history instead of emancipation.

Both the boy crisis and the ecological/ climatic catastrophe

Are the direct consequences of the denial of reality (anthropology or ecology).

Together with the social focus exclusively centred on women's unilateral claims (instead of an integral vision), the male self-alienation also explains why neither the society nor men are capable of addressing the boy crisis all around the world. Males do not care about their own gender.

There must be something universal in postmodern civilization all around the world that produces a global boy crisis unique in history.

There must be something that collectively humanity does not want to see if the boy crisis persists and worsens after five decades.

The simple fact that the boy crisis is not addressed constitutes by itself a form of disdain and discrimination in ethical and legal terms: no equity for boys (or males).

In the Western world and in Europe in particular, anthropology, psychiatry and psychology have analyzed the father/ son wound in modern and even more in postmodern civilization, that is in depth a man/ boy wound at the antipodes of the initiatory boyhood and masculinity in all indigenous and ancient cultures: from initiation to alienation.

In parallel to that, boys' bonding has also suffered a deep alienation.



v. alienation.

Anthropology



The destruction of boys' initiation by men –in its deep anthropological meaning- together with the banning of the most fundamental human value, love, from the male society to nurture competitiveness and toughness, has produced a mutilated masculinity feeding all the evils of this world and also boys completely lost indulging in all forms of misbehaviour and academic failure.

The cultural image of masculinity has been darkened; boys massively get negative patterns of manhood.

Where are the positive role models of their own gender?



“Domination exists because of inward poverty.

It is the sense of affection, that warmth of love, which alone can bring about new state, a new culture.”

J. Krishnamurti.

Together with the destruction of initiation, the social neglect of fatherhood –especially dramatic for boys- lies at the very core of the modern alienation, with its intrinsic dehumanization and individualism, which has been analyzed in depth by European philosophy from the Romantics on: Marx, M. Weber, the Frankfurt School, E. Fromm, W. Reich, M. Foucault, P.P. Pasolini, C. Castoriadis, P. Barcellona, A. Touraine, Z. Bauman, R. Panikkar, etc, until the metaphors of “1984”, “Brave New World” and “Fahrenheit 451”.

In the words of the anthropologist E. Badinter: (“XY, The Masculine Identity.”, representative of consolidated anthropology.)

“The male evolution is truly the “via difficilior” –the more difficult way-. From the conception of an XY to the attainment of adult masculinity there is a path planted with obstacles. Almost always elder boys or other adult men are responsible for the masculinization of the youngest. Initiated by a mentor or by a group of older men, the young boy enters the world of men thanks to others who are not his father.“ (The boy is a male coming from a woman/ mother.)

“As our industrial societies move away more and more from African solutions or rituals (...) certain American psychoanalysts claim for the return of the old institution of the male mentor, the wise counsellor who guides the boy and allows him to benefit from his own experience. ”

The initiation and the master/ disciple ethos –the Gurukula of India- are inseparable.
Both are especially crucial for boys.

The master/ disciple pedagogy is the deepest form of education in human history.

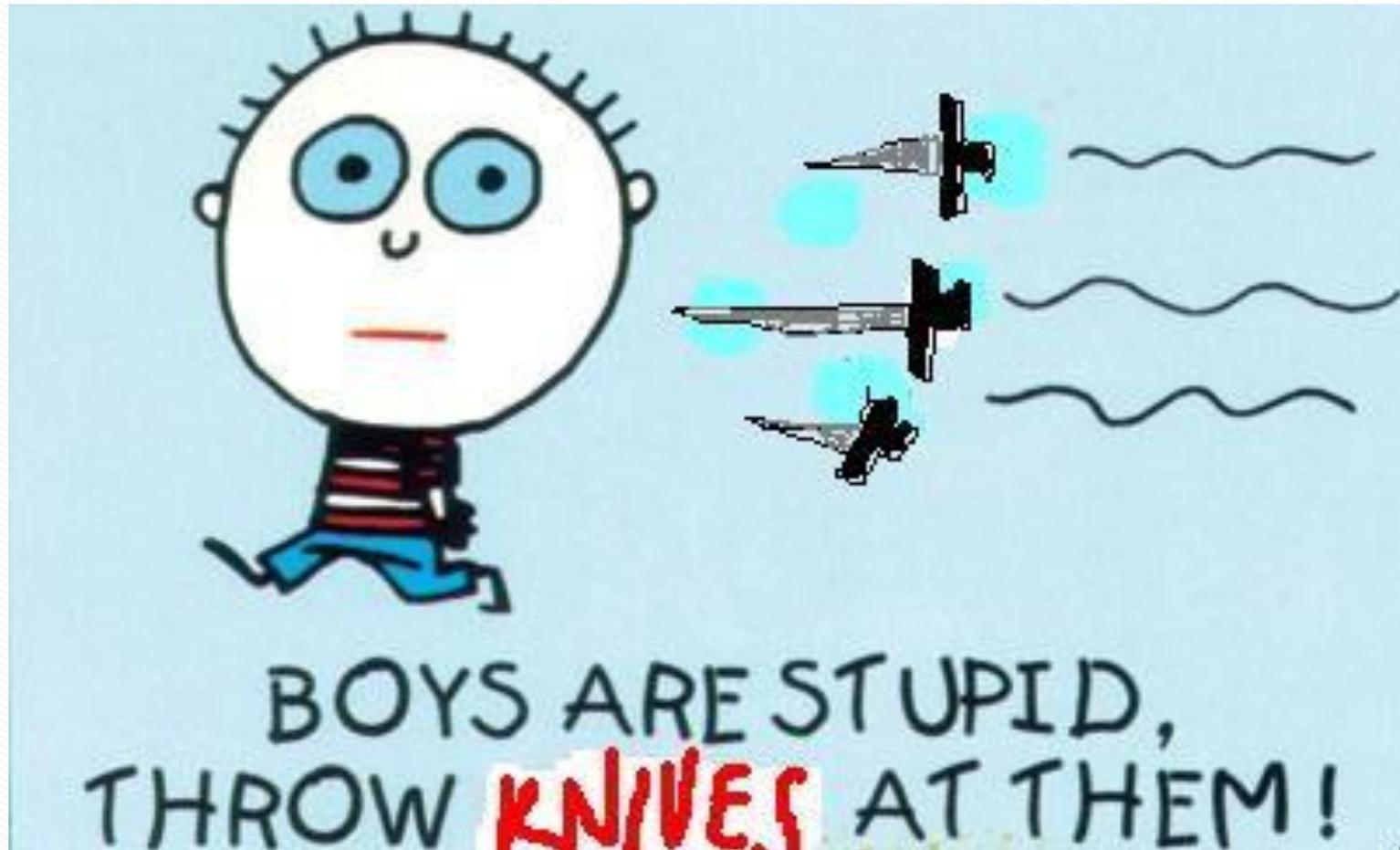
It has produced the highest culture from Vedas/ Upanishads or Socrates/ Plato till Leonardo da Vinci and Italian Renaissance.

It is the only way to educate pupils in classical music or in the fine arts.

It was deeply integrated in the monitor system of Jesuit Schools or British Public Schools, and also in Oxford/ Cambridge tutorials/ supervisions.

Lord Baden-Powell created the Boy Scouts as a modern form of initiation to redress the alienation of boys -like the Boys' Brigade, etc-.

The astounding anti-male culture becoming mainstream.



A few instances only manifesting a new anti-male culture established by the media and the society.

What's going on? (Just a few paradigmatic instances.)

I.

- Schools do strike for women's day;
- Whereas the school system manifests a profound crisis of boys –not a crisis of girls who are doing very well-.

II.

- New NGOs are launched to care for needy girls ONLY. What about their brothers? Let them die?
- NGOs give new houses to wives ONLY. Husbands are discriminated?
- NGOS give micro-loans to women ONLY. No man can do anything good?

III.

- Major newspapers proclaim that the future of humanity lies in the hands of women;
- Hence telling boys that their gender has nothing to contribute!

Neglected boyhood.

The forgotten gender: the male.



In school/ university web sites the images of girls are massively overwhelming with few boys only.



In public events girls are commonly used for symbolical tasks, boys being completely forgotten.



In parallel to this visual/ cultural discrimination of boys



(issues to which women's movements attached so much importance, only for them),



Boys dramatically underachieve and manifest all troubles: the interdependence of everything.

The new anti-male culture that has become socially predominant has built up a whole discourse that is like the worst male disdain against women in opposite terms: it finds now biological/ anthropological evidence “proving” all the bad tendencies of the male gender in front of all the –obviously- good tendencies of the female gender.

Apart from the immoral nature of this anti-male culture,

it is unscientific and groundless,

because the negative tendencies of the male gender are not biological/ anthropological but sociological;

it is the culture and the society that are devastating the anthropology of boyhood and masculinity while feeding all the negative patterns and behaviours,

instead of positively nurturing boys and men and positively channelling male energies.

History blindly repeats itself with the same mistakes, without any change yet.

There has been a dramatic confusion between
masculinity and male domination;

Just as communism made the confusion between
market economy and exploitation.

The consequences of all these confusions have
always been catastrophic.

Which manifests that the common ego and
mindset have not changed at all.

Humanity crucially needs a shift in
consciousness and paradigm.

“Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for better. And the catastrophe which this world is heading for will be inevitable.”

V. Havel, President of Czechoslovakia before the US Congress.

As the sage, J. Krishnamurti, warned, humanity needs a deep psychological transformation.

As the master, Sathya Sai, Baba said: this world is in a sorry mess for the absence of human values.

The modern dehumanization and alienation have still worsened with technological misuse.

Humanity continues to be incapable of reacting in front of the same mistakes being repeated.

The function of the philosopher (Socrates) is to question the prevailing blindness to open eyes.

A civilization so concerned about having police-women or ministers while not caring at all for not having male teachers (nor for the boy crisis) can only be regarded as a sick valueless society; where neither males nor education (at a deeper level) matter, but only women and power (and money).

The greatest philosophers have defined contemporary civilization:

As materialistic, selfish and soulless.

The way how gender has been addressed brings a dramatic confirmation:

The whole civilization has been unilaterally focused on woman power ,

While completely forgetting boyhood, the male gender and humaneness;

Technocracy and alienation at the antipodes of humanism and human values.

Solutions to the global boy crisis.



**In spite of mainstream neglect and oblivion,
some parliaments and governments begin to implement new
policies towards a recovery of boyhood.**

- **Facing the crisis of boys' education in Australia.**
- **The House of Representatives/ Standing Committee on Education and Training (Parliament of Australia) conducted an inquiry in 2002 into the education of boys in Australian schools.**
- **The Inquiry resulted in several initiatives.**
- **As a response to the Inquiry's findings, the Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools (BELS) Programme was implemented.**
- **The Final Report of Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools (BELS)/ Stage Two provided a detailed analysis of the implementation.**
- **The Australian Government has sponsored various research projects concerning boys' education.**

New policies and a new culture towards a recovery of boyhood.

I.

- To question and to transform the postmodern feminized co-educated school with few male teachers;
- While addressing the anthropology of boyhood.

II.

- To come back to the deeper anthropological meaning of boyhood's initiation;
- From 7/ 10 on boys crucially need fathers, male mentors and positive, loving role models of their own gender.

III.

- To question the new anti-male culture with the structural neglect of boyhood and oblivion of masculinity;
- With new policies and a new culture towards a recovery of boyhood (and masculinity) in parallel to the needed attention to the female gender: an integral vision.

After decades of unilateral girl/ woman empowerment the postmodern world needs boy empowerment now to solve the global boy crisis.

Will humanity be capable of an integral vision someday?

For the first time in modern history:

The present generations of sons have got less education than their fathers;

Male unemployment has surpassed women's in the youngest generations;

Women have outnumbered men in fundamental careers such as doctors or magistrates.

Whereas boys constitute even 20% of students in some arts colleges. Boys away from culture!

Where are all the great male artists, writers and philosophers of the past history?

Reports from the British Government have suggested to teach boys separately to stop them falling further behind girls and redress their underachievement.

The Education Minister of Germany, A. Schavan, called for schools to separate boys and girls with new formulae to solve the boy crisis.

Senator Hillary Clinton defended the right for government schools to offer single-sex classrooms as private schools can do to offer sound remedies to the boy crisis and an alternative to the problems generated by co-education.

- In a three-year study in the mid-2000s, **researchers at Florida's Stetson University compared the performance of single-sex and co-educated classes at an elementary school.** When the children took the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, the results were striking: only 59% of girls in co-educated classes were scored as proficient, while 75% of girls in single-sex ones achieved proficiency. **Even more striking results for boys: 37% of boys in coeducational classes scored proficient, compared with 86% of boys in the all-boys classes.**

From the crisis of boys' education to boys' schools: a new separation of boys and girls that acknowledges reality (anthropology and neuroscience) and nurtures boys again.

Neuroscience has evidenced the differences between boys and girls in the growing process .

That can only be integrated through a new separation of boys' and girls' schools

Taking into account the deeper anthropological drives of boys and girls respectively.

The discoveries of neuroscience are convergent with the timeless anthropology of boys:

addressed through the whole human history except contemporary civilization.

For a recovery of boyhood, boy scouts and boys' choirs offer a huge potential.

**The value and the role of boyhood/ masculinity again
within a new integral humanistic paradigm
in harmony with the female gender and oneness.**

