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## **RESUME.**

Prof. Dr. Albert Ferrer (Ph.D.) was educated in the French School of Barcelona and trained in some of the oldest universities of Europe: Barcelona, Paris-Sorbonne and Cambridge. Later, he visited schools of integral education of India, and did post-doctoral research in Vedantic ashrams of India and in Buddhist monasteries of Myanmar under the guidance of Prof. Raimon Panikkar.

After being a Lecturer at the University of Barcelona, Asia House (Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ Government of Spain) and several Departments of the Government of Catalonia (Religious Affairs, etc), he became Visiting Professor in Sri Sathya Sai University (South India), where he elaborated a project for integral value-based education from an international perspective, blending the best from the West and the East towards the unity of mankind and a paradigm shift. In his home town, he has been appointed as Consultant for Education to the Government of Catalonia.

## **ABSTRACT.**

In this paper the author briefly explores the world crisis of boys' education, that started decades back in Western/ industrialized countries and manifests already in Asian countries like India. More interestingly, the author deepens into the psychological and also the anthropological dimension of this boys' crisis that is related not only to mere pedagogic issues but also in depth to developmental psychology and anthropology, hence opening avenues that had been totally overlooked till now but are already rising in countries like the USA, Sweden, Germany or Australia. Today in many contexts boys not girls are being left behind. Today, boys are in trouble, and this global fact has been acknowledged by Parliaments and Governments all around the world together with international organizations like the OECD. And yet, the social response is insufficient and many biased minds refuse to acknowledge it and care about it, which only perpetuates the problem. The crisis of boyhood is inseparable from general issues concerning masculinity and initiation in anthropological terms, and also negative images and patterns concerning the male gender in the culture of the last decades. Boys do not have positive role models of their own gender in mainstream culture and they are not properly nurtured and guided.

## **KEY WORDS.**

Crisis of boys' education/ Boy crisis  
Educational psychology  
Anthropology  
Initiation  
Coeducation

**In this and other essays we bring enough evidence to open eyes and operate a turnabout in education and civilization. It is not a matter to provide more details within the present academic obsession for minuscule formalities within a blind imitation of prevailing scientism and technocracy.**

**The evidence is astounding. Now political agents, educational authorities and the whole society are free to realize it or to stick to all the mistakes and evils from the last decades and perpetuate or still worsen all the problems.**

**Women's movements did not demonstrate anything with petty scholarly formalities; it has been a political force that has imposed itself –as all predominating social forces-.**

**All the fundamental issues put forward in this and other essays are strongly grounded and supported. The evidence is striking; the philosophical reflection is appealing.**

**It is not a matter of personal opinion. It is a claim about the reality dramatically denied; hence all the errors artificially imposed and all the problems that have been produced.**

**From here there must be a social and political awareness that redresses the direction of education and human civilization. The future of humanity and a paradigm shift are here at stake. A better world cannot be done with women only; what about males?**

**With a world boy crisis –and hence a crisis of masculinity- “emancipated” women claiming about them exclusively will never have peace on Earth and will have to learn the lesson of the interdependence of everything and the harmony of the whole, whereas the present boy crisis together with all the male troubles that are ignored will create sooner or later a male revolt that has in fact already started in the US and in Europe.**

## **The world crisis of boys' education.**

The forgotten gender.<sup>1</sup>

Scholarly research has been produced in the whole of the industrialized world amongst OECD countries, **showing common basic tendencies all around the so-called “developed” world:**

- Three-quarters of the students who are diagnosed with behavioural problems are boys.
- Three-quarters of the students who create discipline problems are boys.
- Three-quarters of the students who are diagnosed with learning disabilities are boys.
- Boys are twice as likely to have a language/ reading problem as compared to girls.
- Three-quarters of the children with hyperactivity disorders are boys.
- In a total of 35 industrialized countries, girls outperformed boys in special tests.
- In the UK girls have outperformed boys at GCSE and A level for 25 years.
- In general, boys score much lower than girls in reading and writing tests.
- Boys earn as much as 80% of Ds and Fs -in the Anglo-Saxon systems-.
- Around three-quarters of drop outs in higher secondary school are boys.
- Boys constitute only around 40 % of college students –girls 60%-.
- In the U.S.A., the percentage of male undergraduate students dropped 14 % from 1970 to 2000 –from 58% to 44%-, and the widening gap continues.
- In industrialized countries, women constitute up to two thirds of the new generations in many professions such as doctors or magistrates –men may reach one third-.

At the same time see school and university web-sites all around the world; there is a massive and striking visual discrimination of boys and over-emphasis of girls –whereas this constituted precisely a stronghold of women's movements; now it is happening in reverse terms-.

When US sociologists ask many boys why they do not like schools, a common answer is that schools are places for girls, not for them. Even major public figures such as Senator Hillary Clinton have raised the alarm, but the social response is still insufficient.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf - HOFF-SOMMERS Ch., “The War against Boys. How Misguided Feminism Is Harming our Young Men”, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2001

- KEHLER, MARTINO, WEAVER-HIGHTOWER, ed., “The Problem with Boys' Education. Beyond the Back-lash”, Routledge, London, 2009

- LOPEZ N. , “Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys”, Routledge, London, 2002

- SAX L., “Boys Adrift. The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men”, Basic Books, New York, 2009

- TYRE P., “The Trouble with Boys. A Surprising Report Card on our Sons, their Problems at School, and What Parents and Educators Must Do”, Three Rivers Press, NY, 2009

- WHITMIRE R., “Why Boys Fail. Saving our Sons from an Educational System that's Leaving them Behind”, Amacom, New York, 2010

In general terms: academic failure, learning difficulties, alienation, anti-social behaviour and violence affect boys much more than girls, while girls behave better and get more seats in higher education in comparison with boys and better marks in general terms. WHY? In the last years these tendencies already manifest in Asia and all around the world.

Boys will deserve attention? After so many decades focusing exclusively on girls. Today in many contexts boys not girls are being left behind. Today, boys are in trouble, and this global fact has been acknowledged by Parliaments and Governments all around the world together with international organizations like the OECD.

And yet, the social response is insufficient and many biased minds refuse to acknowledge it and care about it, which only perpetuates the problem. The crisis of boyhood is inseparable from general issues concerning masculinity in anthropological terms, and also negative images and patterns concerning the male gender in the culture of the last decades. Boys do not have positive role models of their own gender in mainstream culture and they are not properly nurtured and guided.

As Dr. Michael Thompson, renowned U.S. psychologist and educational consultant specialized in the boy crisis and boys' growing process, has stressed many times: today girl behaviour becomes the gold standard whereas boys are treated like defective girls.

Another author from the U.S., M. Gurian, therapist, educator and expert on the boy crisis, has observed that the deeper drives of boyhood present in human history for thousands of years or even longer have been totally overlooked and neglected by the culture and society of the last decades with its unilateral focus on girls exclusively; hence the world crisis of boys' education.

In this paper, we briefly explore the world crisis of boys' education that started decades back in Western/ industrialized countries and manifests already in Asian countries like India. More interestingly, we may deepen into the anthropological dimension of the boys' crisis that is related to developmental psychology and anthropology, opening avenues that had been totally overlooked till now but are already rising in countries like the USA, Sweden, Germany or Australia.

## **An objective look at the facts.**

### **The facts about girls:**

- Girls surpass boys in reading.
- Girls surpass boys in writing.
- Girls surpass boys in the arts.
- Girls get better grades and more honours than boys.
- Girls are more engaged in school.
- Girls are more engaged in extra-curricular activities outside school.
- Girls have higher aspirations than boys.
- Girls are more likely to graduate from higher secondary school and from college.
- Today there are more girls than boys in college and university.

### **The facts about boys:**

- More boys repeat a grade.
- 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.

The marginal advantage of boys in maths and science looks rather pale in front of a general dull scenario for the male gender as compared to girls.

Can anybody deny that there is a real crisis of boyhood today?

The facts are acknowledged by official reports from virtually all Governments and Parliaments of the Western/ industrialized world. What started in the OECD countries many years back is already happening and increasing in Asian countries like India.

Some awareness has been arising in Western countries in the last years, but it is still limited. When the figures were already showing a crisis of boys' education, governments were still funding programmes for girls as they did decades back; but now, it is boys not girls that are left behind. The pendulum has gone from one extreme to the other –as usual in human history-. When will we realize it? When will we do something about it?

Anybody with common sense may seriously ask what will come out from all this. In the human condition and in human history nothing can be deprived of consequences. Human blindness and bias can deny the problems but the denial will only worsen the problems themselves –as it has always happened-. In the USA many adult men amongst the new generations refuse to get married to women; as usual, what started in the USA is already coming to Europe, and from Europe it will come to Asia and the rest of the world. In parallel to that, an increasing number of boys in the USA and in Europe rebel against their mothers and finally leave them and settle with their fathers –who were often discriminated in separation/ divorce-. If humanity does not tackle the world boy crisis nothing good will come out from this oblivion, and we will all suffer from it –women too-.

In February 2012, a 15-year-old boy stabbed his teacher to death in St Mary's Anglo Indian Higher Secondary School in Chennai. **What became so common in the USA first, and later developed in Europe, is now coming to India and Asia.**

Two years before, in July 2010, a 9<sup>th</sup> standard boy killed his classmate in Saket, South Delhi.

In February 2012 again, threatened by his economics teacher, a 16-year-old boy committed suicide by hanging himself at his own school campus in Udumalpet, Tirupur District.

We could fill several pages with innumerable cases of all sorts of boys' alienation and violence increasing in the modern world. Everybody knows that, in spite of a certain imitation of male patterns, girls do not show this kind of alienation and violence to such an extent.

Someday, mankind will address this crucial issue and ask WHY? In order to implement adequate strategies towards a recovery of boyhood in a vision of human/ spiritual values and harmony of the whole while obviously taking care of girls too.

**William Pollack**, well-known psychologist at **Harvard Medical School, in the USA**, has summarized this new concern in a few words: Boys are suffering; boys are failing irrespective of ethnic or economic strata because schools are boy-uncentred –they are girl-centred after decades of focusing exclusively on girls and women-.

Crossing the Atlantic, **in the United Kingdom**, the principal of one of the most prestigious schools in the world, Eton, has similarly warned that: Boys are being failed by the British education system because it has become too focused on girls; we do not support and nurture boys. The UK Government has acknowledged the same.

**In Spain** also, recent reports –even at the governmental level- are concluding that coeducation has largely favoured girls to the detriment of boys, who are massively performing much lower than girls, to such an extent that nobody can deny it anymore.

**In France**, sociologists such as **J.-L. Auduc, Ch. Baudelot, R. Establet and M. Fize** warn the society and the government about the heavy problems concerning boys, who manifest around 75%/ 80% of all pedagogic and social troubles.

At the antipodes of the planet, both **the Government and the Parliament of Australia** have conducted inquiries, research and programmes to tackle the problems of boys' education. The Australian Government's Parliamentary Inquiry Report has been seen as a first attempt of "recuperative masculinity politics".

**This is only a brief sample of all the materials that could be quoted.** After postmodern society has brought the pendulum to the other extreme with visible consequences, awareness is slowly increasing in the whole of the industrialized world. Still, when the figures of boys' trouble were already glaring, government funds were still provided for girls equity, when the only inequity girls experienced was to do better than boys on most indicators of academic excellence. Still, some deeply-rooted bias refused to acknowledge the reality and objective startling figures all around the world, which ultimately expresses despise towards the male gender.

Several initiatives have been started, like the IBSC (International Boys' Schools Coalition), and other settings for boys' schools and boys' education, which furnish all the needed information on the topic. In parallel to that, the world famous Gates Foundation provides the needed attention to the troubles of boyhood that cannot be ignored anymore, and the Gurian Institute in Colorado, U.S., trains professionals and parents about boys' and girls' different needs and learning styles.

THE WORLD CRISIS OF BOYS' EDUCATION:  
A SOCIOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.

**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."**

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From 2001 on, **Senator Hillary Clinton**, a woman and one of the major figures of the Democrat Party in the U.S.,

Warned about **the crisis of boys' education**

And 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.

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**In Australia**, documents such as "*Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools*" (1997) still argued in favour of positive discrimination for girls, the assumption being that society was male-dominated and that women were oppressed and disadvantaged.

**But from 2000 onwards**, what has increasingly manifested in Australia and all around the world with startling data is

**a crisis of boys' education;**

the figures are striking in all industrialized countries and already start indicating the same boy crisis in developing countries.

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 2013/ 2014 were showing 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-.

British experts have admitted that the present flaws will persist if we continue to do more of the same; a new approach is required –which this educational Project tries to offer-.

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**In September 2013, the Education Minister of Germany, MS Annette Schavan,** again a woman, warned about **the crisis of boys' education** in Germany –as well as around the world-, and called for schools to separate boys and girls with new formulae. Her request was based on the real anthropological differences in growing up that psychology and neuroscience have confirmed in the last years.

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**On December 9<sup>th</sup> 2013, the prestigious newspaper from Barcelona, La Vanguardia,** published an article with a meaningful title: **“Boys: the subject left behind”**, below which this renowned newspaper evidenced the serious crisis of boys' education in Catalonia/ Spain within the global boy crisis all around the world, in all OECD countries first and later in developing countries too. La Vanguardia warned that the boy crisis is not only a pedagogic problem but also a cultural or anthropological issue, since the culture of the last decades is not providing positive models for boys and manifests a deeper crisis of masculinity in anthropological and cultural terms.



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

**Prof. R.W. Connell, University of Sydney.**

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**The boy crisis in education and society.**

A gender gap exists in education all around the world. A higher proportion of girls than boys go on to higher education, girls receive higher grades than boys, amongst whom there is a greater risk of being diagnosed with behavioural problems requiring remedial intervention.

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.**

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The New Gender Gap. Exploring the Boy Crisis in Education.

Facing the Boy Crisis in Education.

**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).**

The purpose of this event was to bring together a select group of international experts in the field of education and gender.

At this third International Dialogue, 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”.**

Recently the issue of the boy gap in education or boy crisis in general has been the subject of increasing attention across a number of OECD countries.

The boy gap or crisis starts manifesting in Asian countries like India.

International findings suggest that boys, as a group, are falling behind girls from many academic indicators, and are more likely to have behavioural difficulties or drop out of school completely together with various forms of alienation, hooliganism and violence.

In light of this, during the two-day event, participating researchers, practitioners and policy-makers from Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Australia, discussed practical approaches to facilitating improvements in the education and general behaviour of boys.

“There was a company a few years ago that made millions and millions by selling tee shirts to little girls that had anti-boy slogans on them like, "boys are stupid, throw rocks at them." Having raised three little boys I can just tell you they're as sensitive as girls. It hurts their feelings, they don't know what they did wrong but they've been born into this environment where being male is bad.

On television and in other media, men are portrayed as buffoons and idiots or violent criminals far more often than they're portrayed as role models.

The culture at large is extremely anti-male these days. This has been building for twenty or thirty years. And it's finally reached a point where guys can't do anything right.

If you look at the statistics, boys are falling way behind girls in education, women get more college degrees than men, etc., etc. So if you follow these trends out and project - you don't see a very positive picture in the long run.”

**Kathleen Parker**, author of the book “Save the Males. Why Men Matter, Why Women Should Care.”

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

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

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**“Addressing the Educational Needs of Boys. Research Report”.**  
**(11/ 2002).**

**For the Australian Government/ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.**

Authors: Profs. B. Lingard, W. Martino, M. Mills and M. Bahr.  
The University of Queensland/ Murdoch University.

The Research Report investigates the factors affecting the educational performance of boys and how boys’ needs can be addressed in the school context towards recuperative masculinity politics.

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

**All PISA Reports of the last decades have been dealing with the startling figures of the world boy crisis.**

There must be something common to these 70 nations, something global, that explains this international boy crisis:

A feminized co-educated school that never existed before in human history, that has been created in the last decades for the first time, and that obviously does not respond to the anthropology of boyhood. This, the anthropology of boyhood, must have been devastated all around the globe by postmodern civilization; that is why the boy crisis is deep and global. Moreover, unilateral claims for women have established a structural oblivion and neglect of boys –and males- and even a new anti-male culture never seen before the advent of these unilateral claims with all its bias –the bias of the ego-.

**The simple fact that the boy crisis is largely ignored –like men’s troubles- already constitutes a disdain against boyhood and masculinity in ethical terms, and an unconstitutional discrimination in legal terms –by using the language of women’s movements-. To ignore all this has a cost of billions of euros due to boys’ and men’s anti-social and self-destructive behaviour, failure and alienation –and a huge human cost too-.**

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

**One women in jail for 15 men. And the ratio increases.**

**Still, these 70 most developed nations and the entire human civilization persist to ignore the global boy crisis and the serious male troubles all around the globe.**

**Till when will human civilization be blind?**

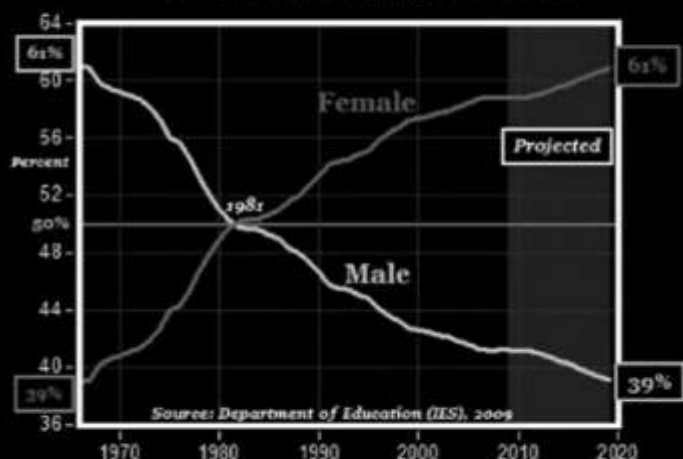
**Is there somebody interested in all this alienation and violence?**

Down: source: “The importances 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.

**Percent of All College Degrees\*  
Female vs. Male, 1966–2019**



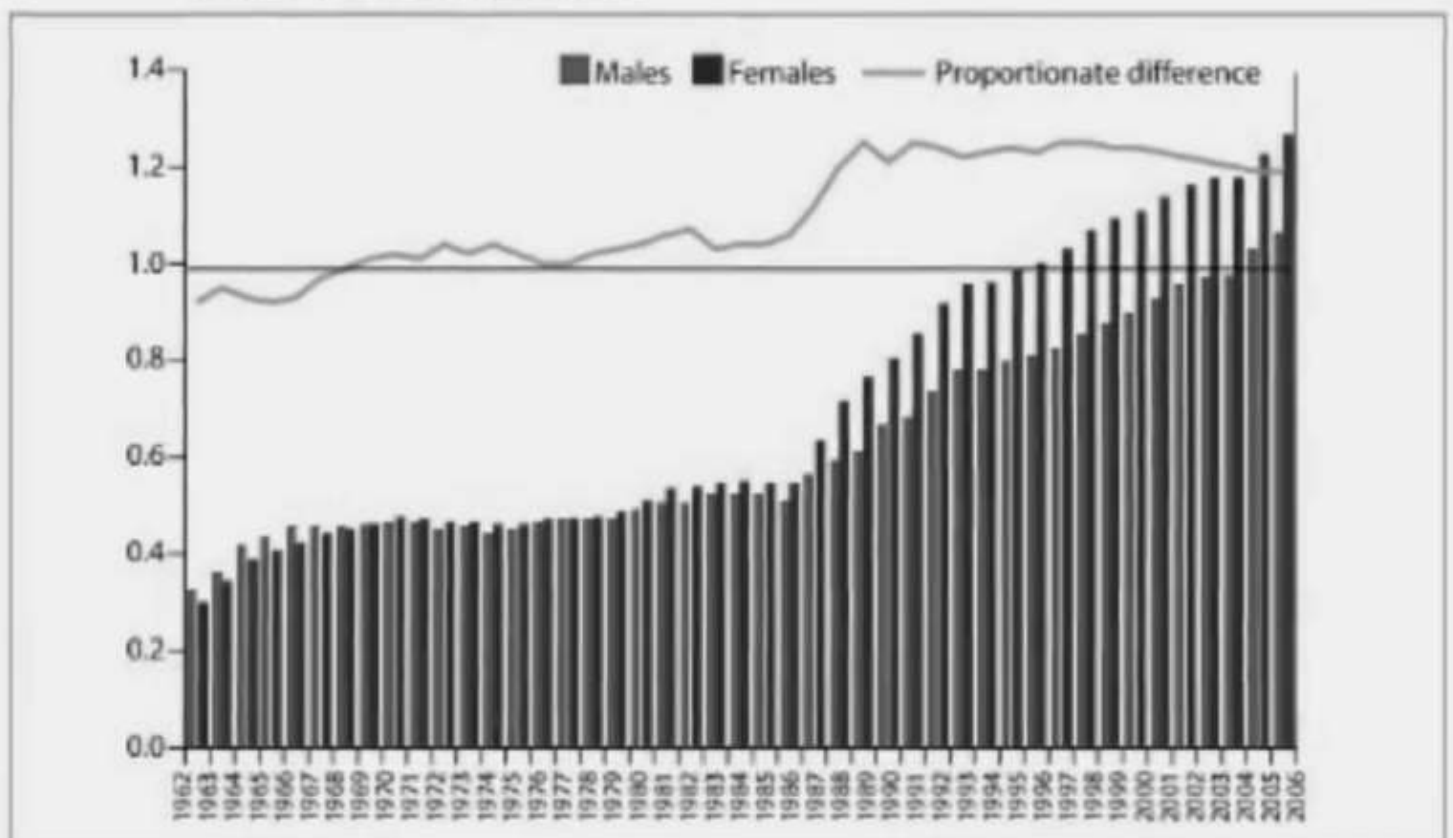
\*Includes Associate's, Bachelor's, Masters', First-professional and Doctor's degrees

**Many experts in the USA and all around the world agree on the main causes for a global boy crisis all around the world as never seen before in human history: (the boys' crisis becoming a men's crisis in one generation)**

- 1. 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.**
  
- 2. 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.**
  
- 3. The dramatic lack of positive patterns of masculinity in the society and mainstream culture, with new trends establishing an openly and astounding anti-male culture within a society unilaterally and vehemently centred on women and girls only.**

Down: source: "Examining Male Underachievement in Education."

**Figure 7-1 Gender Difference at O-level/GCSE and Proportionate Differences in Female/Male Achievement**



➤ **Why has there been a request for the President of the USA to create a White House Council on Boys and Men?**

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

After several decades of gender discourses and policies completely unilateral, exclusively centred on girls and women while completely neglecting boys and males –the forgotten gender-, a new reality has been created that never existed before in human history:

**A world crisis of boyhood –educational and general- amidst profound troubles of masculinity.**

- For the first time in the history of the USA, we have now the first generation of boys who will have less education than their fathers. The same phenomenon is manifesting in all industrialized countries, and it even starts to manifest in developing countries such as India, China, etc.
- Female college students and graduates now far outnumber boys in the whole world; we are reaching 40% of men in university versus 60% of women.
- In the school system, boys lag behind girls on all academic measures. **Though the figures slightly vary according to nations, the USA becomes paradigmatic.**
- Boys massively receive lower grades than girls.
- Boys receive 70% of Ds and Fs on report cards.
- Boys massively score lower than girls on all measures of writing skills.
- Boys massively outnumber girls in all remedial classes.
- Boys are 2 to 3 times more likely to be placed in special education classes.
- 75% of children diagnosed with learning disabilities are boys.
- Two boys are held back in grade for each girl held back.
- Boys make up 80% of behavioural disorders diagnoses.
- 80% of children diagnosed with emotional disturbance are boys.
- 80% of school children on Ritalin are boys.
- Boys make up 80% of school disciplinary referrals.
- 80% of students expelled from school are boys.

In front of this dismal scenario, women demonstrate for their rights on the international day for women, and schools close down to celebrate women’s day: whereas it is boys who are massively underachieving and manifesting all problems. **For how long will civilization be blind to this dramatic reality?** **Sociologically**, a world ignoring this boyhood-and male- catastrophe will be a hell –see already the state of the world around-.

**Ethically**, it is enough to recall the great philosopher, Kant: ethics is universal – not unilateral, not only for women, but for males too-. Boys –and men- also deserve attention some day. Egoism is not emancipation –which is universal, not unilateral-.

As Dr N. Johnson has underlined (“Literacy and the Male Brain”), the school system is obviously favouring girls to the detriment of boys, who massively underachieve across all social sectors in all industrialized and also developing nations all around the globe.

**The boy crisis is deep and global; it strikingly manifests that something has gone wrong in relation to the male gender in the last decades all around the world.**

- Many boys spend their boyhood in female-run homes and feminized schools with few male teachers: without fathers, without male mentors, without male role models, which is tantamount to **denying their male identity**, which in its turn can only feed frustration, alienation and all the rampant evils of the male gender in this world in terms of anti-social and self-destructive behaviour.
- In many industrialized countries, a third of boys are raised in father-absent homes –whereas boys crucially need the father and male mentors for basic anthropological reasons of gender identity.
- As anthropologists recall: unlike girls, **boys are males that come from a women –mother- which makes the building of boys’ own identity more difficult and hazardous –it is enough to observe all the troubles of boyhood and manhood-**.
- Many experts have been repeating in the last decades that **jails are places for father-deprived boys**: deprived from fathers, mentors, male role models and ultimately their own identity, deprived from positive patterns and love within their own gender, which can only engender alienation and all the evils we face and deplore.
- On the other hand, anthropologists warn that **boyhood is essentially initiatory**, the history of humanity makes it crystal clear, which means that boys crucially need from 8 and even more from 10 onwards the role model –positive and loving- of the father and mentors. **Can we ban the most fundamental human value, love, from the growing process of boys within their own gender and identity? To deny the fundamental anthropological drives of boyhood is equal to devastate boyhood**, which then manifests through all the dramatic troubles and evils of boyhood and manhood in this world. Anthropologists and historians have realized that all this anti-social and self-destructive behaviour does not exist or is marginal in ancient and indigenous societies that recognized these deeper drives of boyhood.
- In parallel to that, USA psychiatrists claim for the return of mentors for boys.
- 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 “beyond profound” in the words of David C. Banks, Principal. All the African American boys of this area have improved when accompanied by an elder male mentor.
- In general terms, boys with father involvement do better in all areas, and boys with good mentors –apart from the father- also show positive changes for better, more self-confidence and self-esteem. **Human societies knew this for thousands of years, only our postmodern societies are dramatically overlooking basic anthropology.**

“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”.)

- In the USA and other industrialized countries **the boy crisis is already manifesting as a male crisis at the adult stage** -in terms of unemployment for instance-.
- In parallel to that, in many industrialized countries two thirds in the new generations of academic professions such as magistrates or physicians are women, men only one third.
- This is obviously a direct translation of women visibly outnumbering men in college/ university for the last 40 years; **inevitably, some day this outnumbering at the educational level should be translated into an outnumbering at the professional level.**
- 92% of workplace deaths are men. But there are no special policies for this.
- In the 1920s US males lived 1 year less than women; now they live 5 years less. And still governmental offices for boys’ and men’s health are non-existent.
  
- Furthermore, we should not forget **all the social evils manifested by men much more than women such as:** hooliganism, violence, rape, delinquency and crime, alcoholism, drug-addiction, suicide, etc-.
- There is one woman in jail for 12 to 15 men! But governments, societies and the whole postmodern civilization are still incapable of realizing that there is a world boy crisis and profound troubles of the male gender.
- 90% of adolescents in correctional facilities are boys.
- 80% of children and adolescents who commit suicide are boys.
  
- Postmodern societies integrated women into the workplace but totally forgot to integrate men into the family, the school and even all sectors dealing with human care.
  
- A society so concerned to have police-women –even as military personnel- that does not care at all to have only 25% of males in the schools system can only be regarded as a deeply sick society. We are paying a high price for it with all the troubles of boyhood and manhood that are still not addressed.
  
- **Postmodern societies are paying a huge bill for completely forgetting boyhood and the male gender.** The antisocial and self-destructive behaviour rampant in our societies due to this oblivion of boyhood and masculinity costs billions of euros to all developed nations –and also to developing countries now-, apart from the human cost that cannot be calculated in monetary terms.
- **Before women’s demonstrations for the international day of women, the postmodern world must ask itself if it can carry on with this dramatic oblivion of boyhood and masculinity.**

- **Reality is interdependent**, and women will have to learn through suffering the lesson of interdependence and the harmony of the whole: “emancipated” women shouting at their rights amidst a mass of troubled boys left behind and a catastrophic masculinity will never have peace on Earth. Meanwhile, all evils are rampant.
- **Moreover, ethical arguments** will remind us that ethical principles are universal, not unilateral; if they apply to women they must also apply to men and boys.
- **In postmodern societies**, the streets and malls massively show images of women only, voices on the phone or apps are female voices only, all books have special chapters on women only, cultural life thrives with lectures on women only, advertisements and programmes enhance the value of women only.
- Meanwhile, **mainstream newspapers** write that the future is in the hands of women, which is telling boys that their gender has nothing to contribute to humanity. Meanwhile, **official textbooks in India** write that women are better than men.
- In which world are boys growing up today? Where is the value of the male gender in the postmodern world for the new generations of boys?
- Again, let us remember:
  - 80% of children and adolescents who commit suicide are boys.
  - Boys make up 80% of behavioural disorders diagnoses.
  - 80% of children diagnosed with emotional disturbance are boys.
  - 80% of school children on Ritalin are boys.
  - Boys make up 80% of school disciplinary referrals.
  - 80% of students expelled from school are boys.
- Meanwhile, these are the trends in countries like India: -Educate the girl. (Boys are even not mentioned); or they still say: -Girl = to boy. (But not: Boy = to girl).
- Whereas the global boy crisis already manifests in India and all developing countries amidst profound and dramatic troubles of manhood in general terms.
- **But India, the developing world and the developed nations, the whole human civilization, is still ignoring the global boy crisis amidst all the rampant evils of the male gender in terms of alienation, antisocial and self-destructive behaviour.**
- Meanwhile, the world boy crisis persists and worsens amidst all the dramatic troubles of manhood; **which shows how deep is the male alienation inherent to modernity** –as European philosophy has studied in depth-. Why males cannot react in relation to the boy crisis and their own gender troubles? Who is interested in all this alienation?
- As the British Government acknowledged in the “2020 Vision” Report, there is something that societies do not see yet, and hence do not address. **For how long will human civilization continue to be blind?**



Apart from anthropological issues such as the fundamental role of the Gurukula and its underlying initiation for boys, there has been increasing research and publication about the differences between boys and girls in the educational process (divulged by organizations such as **IBSC**, authors such as **M. Gurian**, and a number of academic papers and governmental reports such as the Australian report “Boys. Getting it Right”).

In this horizon, it has been proved that **there are noticeable differences between boys and girls even at the biological/ neurological levels, which obviously has a direct translation in the field of education.**<sup>2</sup>

- It is not possible to deny anymore that there are important brain and physiological differences between the two genders that affect the pedagogic practice.
- For instance, in relation to what is known as navigational tasks: in the female brain, these tasks are assigned to the cerebral cortex (the section of the brain that also processes language); while in men, the hippocampus handles this kind of tasks (the hippocampus is one of the oldest parts of the brain, responsible for long-term memories, but with few connections with the cortex).
- This basic brain difference has important consequences in the teaching of maths – especially, geometry, algebra and number theory-. Boys can easily focus on the properties of numbers, while girls require a real-world application.
- Emotional activity is processed differently in boys’ and girls’ brains. In the female gender, through adolescence, the brain activity related to emotion shifts to be processed in the same area of the brain involved with reasoning (the cerebral cortex); while in the male gender, brain emotional activity has no connection with the area of the brain dealing with reasoning, since elder boys continue to process emotional activity in the amygdala –like young boys-. (The amygdala is one of the oldest parts of the brain, with no direct connection to the cerebral cortex). That is why girls will be more easily interested by the characters’ feelings in literature, while boys will be more attracted by action, real-life events and adventures.
- Boys develop gross motor skills faster than girls do –like running or jumping-.
- However, boys develop fine motor skills later than girls do –like gripping a pencil, hence writing, or cutting with scissors-; this constitutes a basic biological factor that must be considered by the educational system in kindergarten and primary school.
- Boys also develop language skills later than girls do, which means that reading and writing may be more delicate in the early stages of schooling for boys.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf - BARBER, THOMPSON, “It’s a Boy. Your Son’s Development from Birth to Age Eighteen”, Ballantine Books, New York, 2009

- BIDDULPH S., “Raising Boys. Why Boys are Different, and How to Help Them Become Happy and Well-Balanced Men”, Celestial Arts, Berkeley (CA), 2008

- KINDLON, THOMPSON, “Raising Cain. Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys”, Ballantine Books, New York, 2000

- MARTINO, PALLOTTA-CHIAROLLI, “So What’s a Boy. Addressing Issues of Masculinity and Schooling”, Open University Press, 2003

- NEWKIRK Th., “Misreading Masculinity. Boys, Literacy, and Popular Culture”, Heinemann, Portsmouth (NH), 2002

- Boys develop spatial skills earlier than girls do, which means that boys can more easily record information about the environment and the position of things, for which boys may be encouraged to build, explore and manipulate things.
- According to these brain differences, books with stories involving emotions and psychological insights will not be so suitable for boys, who will prefer to read about real events, how things work, or, in fiction, enthralling figures and wondrous adventures.
- Neuroscience has observed that the pleasure centre of the brain lights up more for boys when they take risks as compared to girls.
- Boys are kinaesthetic learners, which means that they learn very well by manipulating, building and making things move; for this, all the educational toys involving construction and movement are specially appropriate for boys.
- A more energetic and mobile teaching style is more suitable for boys, keeping them focused; unlike girls, boys respond better when they are kept on their toes.
- Boys tend to overestimate their abilities and performances—unlike girls—, for which boys need to be challenged externally in order to improve.
- Boys do not hear as well as girls do, which means that the pedagogic space must take into account this biological difference -instead of piling up so many boys at the back of the class-room with a female teacher speaking softly-.
- Since the advent of quantum physics and the development of new physics and other disciplines like sophrology, it is scientifically acknowledged that matter is but a form of energy—inseparable from consciousness-. In parallel to that, medical colleges and hospitals have officially recognized the validity of energetic therapies, like acupuncture, Reiki, etc. On the other hand, when collective meditation is performed seriously, men must sit on one side and women on the other. The reason is that we are not only matter and mind, but also this energetic structure and dynamism that is now scientifically apprehended. From the energetic point of view, just as the male and the female brain work in different ways, the female and the male energies are also different enough, which suggests separate spaces of meditation for both genders.
- The wisdom of the East and the millenary traditions of energetic work in countries like India or China, today officially approved in the West, manifest even deeper dimensions when facing the anthropological differences between the two genders. How could education ignore these real differences, until the deepest levels, and force an artificial coeducation that only responds to ideological principles? (While it becomes empirically evident that this artificial coeducation, politically imposed, has not worked, especially for boys.)

### **Supplementary differences in learning styles.**

- Boys require a more physical and active style of learning.
- An increased verbal element in the academic syllabi has favoured girls over boys. In general terms, the syllabi now are more suited for girls.
- In co-educated schools the endorsement of artistic activities by boys has clearly fallen down, whereas in all-male schools the artistic disciplines are more likely to flourish amongst boys.
- In boys' schools, male teachers can more easily act as role models for boys, something crucial in the development of boys and dramatically dismissed in co-educated schools. The anthropological evidence –which is massive- has been totally overlooked. Even common sense makes people realize that boys need male role models to grow up, which has been largely forgotten.
- At the same time, boys' schools or settings better develop genuine male bonding than co-educated schools or settings, something again crucial in the development of boys as gender identity but totally neglected by coeducation. Once more, the anthropological evidence has been ignored; we are paying for it with the crisis of boys' education and the alienation of boyhood with so many forms of violence and antisocial or self-destructive behaviour.

Educational policies should try **to answer to this crucial question: WHY are boys massively failing and misbehaving?**

They should also try **to offer a sound solution for this major problem of our time in a vision of harmony of the whole.**

According to many educators, a major reason why boys are disadvantaged and left behind is due to the feminisation of the curriculum within a feminised school that visually overemphasizes girls and neglects boys –see school webs- with much more female than male teachers –whereas boys need male role models apart from the father and complementary to him in order to grow up in a balanced way-.

During the 80s and 90s the status quo in schools was attacked as patriarchal and male-dominated. Even the greatest works of human culture were questioned. Although some patterns of past “male domination” had to be certainly revised, the reaction went too far to the other extreme –as usual in human history, as it happened with the French Revolution or the Chinese Cultural Revolution-. In this pendulum of human condition going from one extreme to another, the highest culture was discarded and the male gender as such became suspicious through an unconscious confusion between masculinity and male domination. Boys could only feel unconsciously lost in this anti-male culture developed in the 80s and 90s till today.

This extreme reaction and the biases of this new anti-male culture must be revised in the near future; no harmony will evolve from this, only more disharmony. There was certainly some kind of male domination, but not only that; at the same time, there were other forms of social injustice and profound problems related to the male gender too –like violence and alienation- that must be faced one day. Moreover, the reaction has brought the pendulum to the other extreme –as usual- and this requires a reorientation for the future –knowing that the common ego shouts at the bias of others without observing its own bias-.

Even the way teachers taught changed to favour girls to the disadvantage of boys in a general policy of positive discrimination of girls –against boys-. Quite often, teachers no longer stood at the front of the class and taught, preferring instead to have students work in groups on open-ended tasks, learning relying more and more on verbal skills and self-directed learning.

While there may have been some justification for the above changes, an unintended consequence has been the crisis of boys’ education, since boys tend to respond better to structured activity, defined objectives and instructions, short-term challenging tasks and visual, logical analytical approaches to learning. They do not respond as well as girls to merely verbal linguistic approaches.

The typical pedagogy of large mixed classrooms –sitting quietly- is more suitable for girls’ psychology than for boys’, for which girls become the gold standard in mixed classrooms and boys “defective girls” –gathering most of Ds and Fs-. In all-male settings, boys cannot be –negatively- compared to girls and can more easily be themselves and enhance their self-esteem.

Renowned child psychologists such as M. Thompson conclude that the current co-educated set up is better suited for the neurological and psychological development of girls, which has been to the detriment of boys -hence manifesting all the forms of boys’ failure and disruptive behaviour-.

**Researchers have long agreed that girls show better performance than boys in terms of language abilities whereas boys have better spatial skills.**

Now, scientific research from different institutions such as North Western University, the University of Haifa, Virginia Tech., the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, US, etc, provides a biological/ neurological basis that accounts for these differences, and that has been summarized by scholars such as Dr L. Sax.

However, everything cannot be reduced to neuroscience; its last findings are consistent with much older evidence produced by cultural anthropology through human history –without forgetting a deeper philosophical perspective-.

The most significant difference between boys and girls at the neurological level is not in brain structure, which is the same, but rather in the sequence of development and in the functioning of the various brain regions. As Dr. Natalya Kuindzhi from the Russian Academy of Medicine has concluded, the need for segregate education stems from real different rates of mental and emotional development between girls and boys.

**These findings do have major implications for teaching children, and hence provide scientific support for single sex classrooms or schools.**

- Average intelligence is the same for both sexes.
- However, there are more boys or men at the highest and lowest extremes (which counterbalance each other giving the same average than for girls or women).
- There are no basic differences in what boys and girls can learn;
- But there are big differences in how they can learn and how they can be taught.

Since boys' and girls' brains develop and function differently, it is empirically observable that boys mature faster in some areas while girls mature faster in other areas.

A sensible pedagogic system cannot just mix boys and girls without taking into account these real and significant differences. If we teach the same subjects and contents in the same chronological sequence and in the same pedagogic way, it is inevitable to create unnecessary problems to both girls and boys, though the historical experience of coeducation has affected boys much more than girls: the crisis of boys' education that cannot be denied anymore and that must be faced with a reorientation of the educational process.

- Neuroscience or physiology do not explain the present disparity between girls and boys in academic achievement. The biological differences observed by the last scientific findings confirm the existence of anthropological idiosyncrasies that were well known before this recent scientific observation.
- What causes the dramatic present disparity is obviously the educational system itself – with its massive unquestioned coeducation that has not worked for boys-.
- The new experiments segregating the two genders again in a new spirit show positive results everywhere, and suggest for the future of humanity a new separation that does not want the past girls' inequity but wants to redress the present boys' inequity.

**Regarding language, the neurological differences between boys and girls cannot be overlooked and do have pedagogic implications.**

- Boys and girls rely on different parts of the brain when performing language tasks.
- Areas of the brain associated with language work harder in girls than in boys during language tasks; girls show greater activation in these areas than boys.
- Language processing is more sensory in boys and more abstract in girls –implying brain areas associated with abstract thinking-.
- For boys, accurate performance depends when reading words on how hard visual areas of the brain work. In hearing words boys' performance depends on how hard auditory areas of the brain work.

**These biological differences should inform teaching methods, which means that boys and girls cannot be mixed since they must be taught differently.**

- Given boys' sensory approach, boys should be evaluated on knowledge gained from lectures via oral tests;
- And on knowledge gained by reading via written tests.
- For girls, whose language processing appears to be more abstract, these different testing methods could be less necessary.

**In terms of left and right hemispheres development, noticeable differences have also been observed between the two genders.**

Right-hemisphere brain development dominates in pre-schoolers. By the time children first go to school, first-graders manifest differences according to gender:

- While girls display significant left-brain development –logical thinking-,
- Boys continue to be dominated by right-brain activity –creativity and imagination-.
- In general, the patterns of brain activity mature faster in girls than in boys.

**How can coeducation still ignore it?** To do so will only reinforce boys' trouble and failure in language skills as it has been massively happening in the last decades, since boys have been expected to behave as girls in the co-educated context. Young boys see information holistically rather than in detail –as girls do-. Boys can more easily do creative work, while girls can do better in detailed work. For boys, the idea is more important than petty norms, freedom more important than established rules. Boys' brains are more suited to pictures, symbols, abstractions and spatial-mechanical thought. So, boys perform better in maths, physics or philosophy. Instead, girls work better within a system and follow guidelines more easily; they can also work with detailed issues more happily. For this, girls have better met the expectations of traditional schooling in the coeducational world, while boys more strongly require a more holistic pedagogy –adapted to their anthropology-.

Let us see in more detail **the major neurological differences between the boys and the girls' brain** that will help us understand the differences in growing up between both genders and the deepest drives of boyhood ignored in the culture of the last decades.

(This constitutes a sample among the hundred neurological differences tracked over by neuroscience between the male and the female brains).

- Boys' brains have more grey matter while girls' brains have more white matter. Grey matter is a kind of neurotransmitter that localizes and compartmentalizes, keeping brain activity in a single place rather than spreading activity to other parts of the brain. White matter, on the contrary, networks brain activity to different parts of the brain.
- Therefore, the boy's and man's brain tends to compartmentalize its brain activity into fewer brain centres than the female brain does.
- In opposition, different parts of the female brain may easily work simultaneously in ways that the male brain does not.
  
- There is 15/ 20 % more neural activity in a girl's brain than a boy's at a given time.
- Girls and women have a higher number of nerve fibres in their skin as boys and men. This means that pressure receptors on the skin and pain receptors in the brain are less sensitive in the male brain than in the female.
- The boy's brain shuts off, that is, enters a rest state, more times per day than a girl's brain does. This has clear implications in terms of paying attention in the classroom, completing tasks, becoming bored, and even having a conversation.
- In the male brain, especially in the right hemisphere, there are more neural centres than in the female studying the movement of objects and the physical space.
- Hence, boys' education must allow them to use cubes, balls, stones and all sorts of objects, and also to manipulate and build things, something that appears to be less crucial for girls.
  
- For thousands or maybe millions of years humanity knew that the boy's and the girl's energies are different. Only the last decades of coeducation have dogmatically denied it on pure ideological grounds. Today neuroscience has proved that there is a deep neurological reason for it.
- As we have seen above, emotional activity is processed differently in boys' and girls' brains. Through adolescence, the girl's brain activity related to emotion shifts to be processed in the same area dealing with reasoning (the cerebral cortex); while boys' emotional activity has no connection with the area of the brain involving reasoning, since elder boys continue to process emotional activity in the amygdala.
- As we said above, this explains why girls will be interested by the characters' feelings in literature, while boys will be more attracted by action and adventures –the deep drives underlined by M. Gurian-

- This neurological basis also explains why boys need hitting of each other as a bonding mechanism to express affection and nurture affectionate relationships, either with friends or adults –father, uncle, teacher, scout leader or other men-. That is why jabbing at one another, bantering, etc, are typical male ways of creating bonds and expressing love, ways that are so different from girl’s patterns and the female world.
- It is obvious enough that co-educated spaces –especially in areas such as scouting- tend to repress these male ways of bonding, which can only nurture alienation on the long-term as it has already happened, which in turn fosters all the forms of boys’ violence and anti-social behaviour that we must face in all industrialized societies. The post-modern age has gone too far in eliminating all intra-generic spaces and bonds, dramatically replaced by an overwhelming abuse of mixing everywhere, never allowing the growing human being to interact in depth within the same gender – something crucially needed in the growing process-.
- Another neurological difference accounts for something fundamental in the pedagogic treatment of boys. The boy’s hippocampus (a major memory centre in the brain) is less active than that of the girl, especially during emotional and relational experiences. This implies that boys may not recall parts of their developmental journey that girls will more easily bring back. This means that boys can feel insecure and lost more easily than girls, which may nurture alienated behaviour more easily too –as we can see in our world today-.
- For this fundamental reason, boys need much more than girls the guidance of the adult –especially in the same gender-. That is why all the educational traditions of mankind emphasized the importance of the Gurukula and the role of the Guru or mentor for boys –as stressed in this Project-. The denial of this basic fact, today better apprehended through neuroscience, has only promoted all sorts of alienated and antisocial behaviour in boys through a crisis of boys’ upbringing that is unique in human history.

It is obvious that there are biological factors that may encourage within certain socio-cultural contexts aggressiveness and violence –this is what has been too often done till now-. Millions of years of hunting and thousands of years of wars have created some undeniable inertia. But as mystical philosophy would remind, the Light of lights shines in all, girls and boys, men and women, and there are biological factors that incline the male gender towards positive tendencies such as creativity and freedom.

The bias of XXth century coeducation and its inherent neglect of boys and men’s troubles have only nurtured the lowest tendencies of the male gender. A new holistic pedagogy in a new holistic paradigm must encourage the highest nature of boys and men – and obviously girls and women too-. The XXth century bias forgot boys, whereas a new world will not be made by girls or women only, but by all, with the male gender too in its highest and purest potential –not the lowest as it has been too often till now-.



Furthermore, the last scientific findings have evidenced **biochemical differences between the two genders, that enhance the already visible neurological differences accounting for anthropological idiosyncrasies.**

- Boys have between ten and twenty times more testosterone than girls. Being testosterone a risk-taking chemical, we find here further scientific confirmation of the deep drives outlined by specialists such as M. Gurian.
- This explains why boys have massively practised much more than girls activities such as scouting, mountaineering, and all sorts of outdoor activities that imply risk-taking and the sense of adventure.
- The educational world must understand these biological differences hardwired into boys for millions rather than thousands of years, and allow them to be expressed in controlled or pedagogic ways instead of denying or suppressing, as it has been too often done in the last decades, nurturing as a reaction all the alienation and antisocial behaviour that we know well enough.
- Another biochemical factor accounts for further differences between boys and girls' energies, while enhancing the neurological disparities that already explain the anthropological idiosyncrasies. Oxytocin is known as the bonding chemical. Not surprisingly, boys have less of this bonding chemical than girls do.
- This means that girls can bond easily with many people, while boys find it more difficult to create bonds, especially of a stable or deep sort. Hence, boys need more help and guidance in bonding, and they also need more opportunities such as team games or mentoring systems. That is why scouting or similar movements like the Boys' Brigade or the German Wandervogel have been so successful and so well appreciated at a pedagogic level.
- Boys have less serotonin than girls do, a chemical that calms us down.
- This explains why boys are more impulsive than girls, and have more trouble to control themselves, something that a sensible pedagogic process must take into account.

## **The differences between the male and the female brains in terms of neurological connections.**

Repercussions in the educational field: the need for separate educational spaces and special attention to be given to boys.

We have quoted above in the section devoted to Psychology and Neuroscience the neurological research recently directed by **R. Verma** within the frame of the **University of Pennsylvania in the USA**.<sup>3</sup> According to empirical results:

- The male brain shows more connections within each brain hemisphere; only in the cerebellum, responsible for psychomotor tasks, men manifest more connections between the two hemispheres.
- In general terms, the female brain shows more connections between the two brain hemispheres.

The differences are still not visible in early childhood, but they gradually manifest from puberty on –in spite of the still predominating school system based on coeducation-.

The ideology prevailing in the last decades has tended to overlook any anthropological difference between the two genders, and has therefore imposed a standardized pedagogy for both irrespective of any real differences, while it has overstressed the fate of girls and openly neglected that of boys for many years. This new unbalance that has brought the pendulum from one extreme to another one has produced a profound crisis of boys' education never seen before.

A more humanistic kind of education will not deny the real anthropological differences anymore, and will not continue to neglect boys either.

In the horizon of a needed Hemisphere Synchronization, boys and girls will require separate complementary spaces of education that can take into account and adequately work out the real anthropological differences till now so openly overlooked.

Regarding the male gender, the educational process will have to be especially vigilant and offer boys the needed tools so that they can build more neurological connections between the two hemispheres, which does not happen so easily in the male brain according to empirical research.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf “Penn Medicine News” and “Science Daily”, December 2, 2013.

Cf Ingalhalikar M., Verma R., and others, “Sex Differences in the Structural Connectome of the Human Brain”, 2014.

## Conclusion.

“Boy psychology is not just socialized but also hardwired into our sons.”

“Every boy is driven from deep within to try to become (in our metaphorical language) a magical boy, an adolescent seeker, and an adult hero.”

**M. Gurian**, a renowned U.S. therapist and educator, concludes: “I believe these drives (which we can under-nurture if we don’t understand them) to be central to human development: basic drives towards purpose that have been building in male genetics and the male psyche for almost a million years”.

The traditions of spiritual philosophy go even further by suggesting metaphysical differences between the two genders: the male being an embodiment of the Light of Consciousness, and the female Vibration/ Energy, knowing that the yin also contains the yang, and the yang the yin: Shiva/ Shakti in the Indian tradition.

**Mainstream co-education in the last century has totally ignored these deeper drives of the male growing process**, hence producing an alienation of boyhood and a crisis of boys’ education without precedent in human history, whereas the superb educational tradition of India, the Gurukula, recognized these deeper drives of boyhood and knew how to work them out; the same would apply to Buddhist education and the major cultural traditions of mankind, including the oldest peoples, the Indigenous cultures. Only the modern world and in particular the last trends of post-modern societies have produced the most profound alienation in human history by overlooking reality and establishing a kind of society and culture based on artificial, political ideologies.

The time has come to dare to say that **coeducation has been a political ideology** without any scientific, anthropological or philosophical ground. The deep drives that M. Gurian identifies can easily be traced back through social and cultural history, and they become quite evident in anthropology. Now, neuroscience has provided scientific confirmation.

For how much time the ideology of coeducation will continue to ignore massive evidence showing that the growing process of boys and girls are different enough to require separate educational spaces? (Which can obviously be compatible with some time for meeting and sharing and some common activities.) For how much time the present civilization will continue to ignore the troubles and issues of boys –or the male gender- and exclusively focus on the female?

**In the last years, the number of single-gender classrooms or schools has increased in the U.S.A.**, and legislative amendments have allowed government schools to offer separate education for girls and boys. In this new context, some of the most successful all-boys classrooms in the U.S. have been those that allow boys to move around, with desks that can be raised or lowered for instance, hence permitting boys to lie on the floor, sit or stand up, which clearly corresponds to the boy’s energy as evidenced through cultural anthropology and recently corroborated by scientific studies, especially in the field of neuroscience. In some pioneering schools in **Russia**, similar experiments in the classroom structure have proved to be very successful too.

It is evident that children suffer from stress and physical problems when they are deprived of the opportunity to move. Sitting for long periods in artificial postures behind uncomfortable desks has been one of the structural flaws of modern schooling, and this is even more harmful for boys than girls due to the specific energy and brain functioning of boys.

## **Facing the crisis of boys' education in Australia.<sup>4</sup>**

- **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 in two stages over 2003-2005. The programme provided funding to over 550 schools to help improve boys' educational outcomes.
  - The Final Report of Boys' Education Lighthouse Schools (BELS)/ Stage Two provided a detailed analysis and discussion of the key findings and experiences of the 550 schools.
  - Success for boys based upon BELS was continued throughout successive years.
- **The Australian Government has sponsored various research projects concerning boys' education.**
  - To start with, the Australian Government/ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations requested the research report quoted above addressing the educational crisis and needs of boys.
  - The Australian Government was also the major sponsor of the 5<sup>th</sup> Biennial "Working with Boys. Building Fine Men", held on July, 4-6<sup>th</sup> 2007 at the University of Newcastle.

**Educational Consultants Bret Burkholder and Ed. Leitner, founders of Boys' Hearts and Boys' Minds (U.S.A./ California)** conclude that we must make schools more boy-friendly instead of giving boys more and more Ritalin to make them behave in a system that is not suited to them -while Ritalin has serious long-term side-effects stunting physical and mental growth.

Till now teachers and administrators did not pay enough attention to the boys' educational crisis and needs. It is time to face the challenge.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf in general: - BARBER, THOMPSON, "Speaking of Boys", Ballantine Books, New York, 2000  
- BIDDULPH S., "Raising Boys. Why Boys are Different, and How to Help Them Become Happy and Well-Balanced Men", Celestial Arts, Berkeley (CA), 2008  
- GURIAN M., "The Minds of Boys. Saving our Sons from Falling Behind in School and Life", Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2007  
- GURIAN M., "The Wonder of Boys", Tarcher, New York, 2006  
- HAWLEY, REICHERT, TYRE, "Reaching Boys. Teaching Boys", John Wiley and Sons, Hoboken (NJ), 2010  
- JAMES, THOMAS, "Wild Things. The Art of Nurturing Boys", Tyndale House, Carol Stream (IL), 2009  
- LINGARD, MARTINO, MILLS, "Boys and Schooling. Beyond Structural Reform", Routledge, London, 2010  
- SPIELHAGEN F.R., "Debating Single-Sex Education", Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham (Maryland), 2007  
- WEAVER-HIGHTOWER M.B., "The Politics of Policy in Boys' Education. Getting Boys Right", Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2008

**More and more voices request a new separation of girls and boys**, not in the state of mind of the past but in a new awareness and with a new pedagogic spirit, which means acknowledging the anthropological differences in learning and caring about all –boys too, not only girls, within the harmony of the whole-.

Denying the anthropological differences in learning through universally imposed an unquestioned co-education can be seen as another example of the artificial character of modernity, inseparable from denying the holistic multidimensional nature of the Cosmos through the reductionistic materialism of the Newtonian world view. In all the cases, modernity has operated a tabula rasa in relation to reality.

The time has come to dare to propose **a new pedagogic formula beyond the crisis of boys' education, that instead of yearning for the past aspires to a better future and harmony in the frame of the new paradigm.**

- From 2001 on, **Senator Hillary Clinton**, a woman and one of the major figures of the Democrat Party in the U.S., defended the right for government schools to offer single-sex classrooms as private schools can do.
- From then, the number of government schools in the U.S. offering single-sex education has rapidly increased under the auspices of the **National Association for Single-Sex Public Education** chaired by **Dr. L. Sax**.
- **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-.
- British experts have admitted that the present flaws will persist if we continue to do more of the same; a new approach is required –which this educational Project tries to offer-.
- In September 2013, **the Education Minister of Germany, MS Annette Schavan**, again a woman, called for schools to separate boys and girls with new formulae. Her request was precisely based on the real anthropological differences in growing up that science and neuroscience have confirmed in the last years.
- **In Russia**, several experts such as **Prof. Vladimir Bazarny** or **Dr Natalya Kuindzhi** have highly recommended that girls and boys should be taught and study separately since they perceive the same information and learn in different ways.
- In some pioneering schools such as the **Harmonia Lyceum in Zheleznogorsk**, Siberia, and in 2000 schools following Prof. Bazarny, the separation of boys and girls has proved to be one of the keys for a new pedagogic success.

In virtually all the cases where new segregated class-rooms have been implemented, either in the U.S., the U.K., Germany, Russia or anywhere in the world, **the academic and general performance of boys has clearly improved**, the crisis and alienation of boyhood hence showing a tendency towards a net recovery.

Successful single-sex classrooms or schools have **a positive effect on student achievement for both boys and girls.**

- Girls classrooms or schools can overcome old stereotypes and help them attain higher achievement in maths and science.
- Boys' classrooms or schools can overcome the present crisis of boyhood, enhance their self-esteem, and help them attain higher achievement in language (reading and writing) and also in arts or civics.

For a clear and impressive review of the research on single-sex classrooms or schools, we can see: **Peterek Emily**, "Sex in the Middle School.", "Florida League of Middle Schools Journal", vol. 9. For instance:

- 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.
- In 2000, Mr. Benjamin Wright, the Principal of **The Thurgood Marshall Elementary School in Seattle, U.S.**, separated the school into all-boy and all-girl classes. Before these changes, only 10% of boys met the minimum standards in reading. After the new separation, 66% achieved the standards, while girls also improved. The new separation also ameliorated discipline and enhanced a more positive relationship between boys in terms of camaraderie.
- **The Brighter Choice Charter School in Albany, New York**, was the first charter school in the U.S. to adopt single-sex classrooms under the same roof. With the new separation, all standards have improved, especially for boys –who were doing very badly- but also for girls –who were already doing better-. Only after the separation the school has achieved Adequate Yearly Progress and has been considered in good standing according to the New York Department of Education.

There are hundreds and even thousands of similar examples all around the world. For how much time do we want to deny the facts and stick to the inertia and bias from the past? How much more evidence at all levels do we need to acknowledge the facts and redress the present scenario towards a recovery of boyhood in harmony with girls' achievement?

## THE DEPER ANTRHOPOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF INITIATION –ESPECIALLY FOR BOYS-.

It has been recently acknowledged by educational research that boys –especially after 8/ 10- learn best with other boys and a male teacher in a master/ pupil relationship (the Gurukula in India), rather than with mixed groups in one big class-room.

Although we may provide scientific/ neurobiological evidence about the differences between boys' and girls' learning styles, we should not forget the inputs of anthropology through human history, and we should not dismiss the philosophical perspective; neuroscience or the brain cannot tell the whole story.

**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 23% of those qualifying to become teachers in 2006/ 2007 were men, manifesting, therefore, a widening gulf between the numbers of men and women gaining teaching qualifications and being ready to teach in schools. In conclusion, there is a dramatic contradiction in industrialized countries between the need of male teachers and role models for boys and the absence of male teachers in the school system within a general crisis of positive models of masculinity. This is the result of several decades without addressing the drives of boyhood and the troubles of masculinity.

Even in Asian countries like India we can find this pedagogic and anthropological bias. Quite visibly, modern India has forgotten its own admirable tradition, where the Gurukula played a major role, and it has just imitated the last trends followed by the West without being aware of the problems manifested there. Both the role of the father and that of mentors –equally important- have been diminished in post-modern societies, which means that boys have been denied their right to have role models of their own gender and get love and attention within their own gender, which has nurtured more violence, alienation and conflict than ever in human history.

Many experts in Western countries have repeatedly warned that male jails –much more numerous than female jails- constitute the destiny of father-deprived boys or boys totally lost without positive role models of their own gender within a blind civilization that has still not wondered why masculinity has produced so much violence and alienation till now –whereas India could tell the world that Shiva is as good as Parvati, the God is as Divine as the Goddess-.

It is necessary to underline today the deepest significance of the Indian Gurukula –not only in India but virtually in all former civilizations-; remembering that this community of the master with a small group of disciples was founded on mutual respect, love and communion, and free inquiry with eagerness to learn. Even in European Renaissance, the Jesuits perfectly understood this anthropological and pedagogic fact; by implementing an intelligent system of tutors with small groups of boys, they run some of the best schools of Europe, where many among the greatest minds were shaped, such as Descartes or Voltaire.

**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 “beyond profound” in the words of David C. Banks, Principal. All the African American boys of this area of New York have improved academically and in general terms when accompanied by an elder male mentor. The positive male mentor is obviously complementary to a positive fatherhood –after the mother’s role, which will always continue but cannot suppress the need for the growing boy of the father and the male mentor together with peers-.

Our civilization overlooks the fundamental right of boys to have male role models in their process of growing up and to experience love, the most essential human value, within their own gender. Overruling mothers ultimately deny the male identity of their sons when the father’s role is diminished –especially in case of separation/ divorce- while real mentors do not exist. It is well-known in clinical psychology and psychiatry that the overruling mother with absent father -and non-existing mentor- constitutes one of the deepest roots of mental disorders and behavioural problems within the male gender.

In general terms boys grow up with a dramatic lack of positive role models within their own gender in society and culture, while in personal biographies many boys grow up with a lack of loving guidance from father and mentors in their personal process of growing up. All this ultimately nurtures alienation and violence within the male gender, which we have massively had till now. How many more jails for men do we want to build in “developed” societies? (Anybody knows that male jails strikingly outnumber female jails.) Many psychologists/ anthropologists have said that male jails are places for father-deprived boys –father meaning in more general terms positive role models within the male gender, not only the blood father but also mentors-.

The wisdom of India –unfortunately forgotten in India itself- may recall an extraordinary statement that contains an anthropological depth: **mata/ pitar/ guru/ deva;** through the growing process of boys there is a crucial succession of needed role models that naturally come up in that particular order: mother, father, mentor and finally God. More than ever post-modern societies have forgotten this fundamental anthropology; the role of fathers - in general and towards their sons in particular- has been downgraded –see separation/ divorce- whereas mentors have disappeared from society and education –regarding God, He was dead long time back as Nietzsche said in pathologically materialistic societies like the modern Western world-. The outcome of this historical alienation is there around us. Just observe how boys are failing and misbehaving all around the world. What about massive adult male violence and alienation?

“Boys can be especially tribal as they enter adolescence, and their physical development cries out for male mentors and guides. To have an all-male school work, the school needs to be rich in tradition and ritual. The school needs to be a sacred place. Wabash College, for example, is full of traditions promoting male bonding while channelling male energy into spirited and constructive purposes. Separation also creates and encourages a special bonding between members of the same sex. This is especially important today, when males are often not encouraged to articulate and express the full range of their human emotions and needs.”

Prof. S.H. Webb (Wabash College, Indiana, U.S.A.).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “Defending All-Male Education. A New Cultural Moment for a Renewed Debate.” (Fordham Urban Law Journal, vol.<sup>5</sup> 29, Issue 2, 2001.)



From the beginning of human history, it has been evident that boys after 8 learn best in small groups of boys with a male teacher; the whole history of civilization has been built upon this basic reality, in all cultures of humanity before the modern age. This kind of Gurukula pedagogy with an initiation atmosphere has not thousands of years –from Ancient civilizations- but millions –with the initiation culture built around hunting through human evolution-. Only the final stage of modernity has denied it, ending up in a unique crisis of boys’ education and alienation of boyhood in today’s world.

**India** is one of the few countries in the world to still keep alive a genuine tradition of **initiation for boys**: the ancient and celebrated **Upanayana**. In fact, there has been in the last years a certain revival of the Upanayana, that prominent spiritual masters such as Sathya Sai Baba have encouraged, together with illustrious institutions such as the Ramakrishna Mission.

**The Buddhist countries of Indo-China** also preserve a beautiful tradition of initiation for boys, called **Shinpyu in Myanmar**. The Buddhist initiation involves two parts clearly differentiated:

- the lay ceremony, when the boy is treated like a prince –reminding that all men can be kings, a surprisingly democratic principle in a traditional society-;
- and the strictly spiritual component, when the boy becomes a novice in the monastery for a while –apart from the boys who are permanently novices together with the monks-.

The Buddhist initiation for boys is paradigmatic. **In general, initiation has always presented two complementary facets in the history of mankind:**

- The anthropological initiation, both for boys and girls, but clearly more important for boys than for girls, through which the child acquires a new status that will bring him under proper guidance and care towards full adulthood; it is essentially a formative and educational process, during which the boy is accompanied by men towards a mature manhood; here, the Gurukula proves to be the most suitable pedagogy for boys.
  - And the spiritual initiation, both for children and adults, even though it is usually more elaborated for adults, either to enter a specific spiritual fellowship, or just to help the person to undertake a step forward in his or her spiritual evolution; here, there can be many different kinds of ceremonies and practices, especially in traditions such as Tantric Hinduism or Tibetan Buddhism.
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But anthropology, like common sense, have been thrown overboard by the last developments of modernity. By doing so, the post-modern world has neglected both the forms and the contents of something as crucial as initiation. We are convinced that the typically modern juvenile alienation –affecting boys more than girls- is inseparable from the dismantling of initiation. Youths without any kind of initiation, without constructive relationships with their peers of the same sex, without positive adult figures of the same sex guiding them, can only get lost, and in the vacuum generated by a false and misunderstood discourse on freedom, they escape from the void through all kinds of alienated and anti-social behaviour.

We do not defend certain out-dated ceremonies of initiation related to past societies.

What we defend is the profound meaning involved in initiation, which can be built today or in the future through new social and cultural patterns. This is precisely what Lord Baden-Powell did when he created the Boy Scouts –and his wife later the Girl Guides-. Similar endeavours were based on the same observation and conclusion: the Boys’ Brigade in the United Kingdom or the Wandervogel in Germany. The success of all these initiatives puts forward the crucial issue of the initiation and the importance of mentors and positive role models within the same gender –as manifested in the New York experiment-.

But the arrogance of modernity has often confused form and content, and in an immoderate will to change everything, it has destroyed everything –like the madness of the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution with Robespierre, or the delirium of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and Maoism-.

The time has probably come to read again those classics of anthropology and cultural history that the dominant trends in society have totally ignored, such as: Ph. Aries, E. Badinter, A. Cardin, G. Corneau, M. Eliade, V. Elwin, M. Foucault, A. van Gennep, L. Gernet, G.R. Gillis, D.D. Gilmore, R. Guenon, G.H. Herdt, H. Jeanmaire, L. Jung, Levi and Schmitt, L. de Mause, S. Moscovici, A. Muhr, R. Pandey, R.C. Prasad, Rabotteau and Soltan, Rajbali Pandey, G. Roheim, Satyasangananda, S. Stevenson, K. Thomson, V.W.F. Turner, Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, etc.

If we observe with anthropological insight archaic and ancient cultures, we can notice some fundamental common patterns, like the treatment of friendship as a social institution – as important as marriage or family-, or the capital role of initiation –especially for boys-; obviously, both facets have been brushed off by modern civilization. It is interesting to note that in many human societies the initiation of boys was for adult men no less than a social duty –as the military service would be in modern nations-.

The comparison between virtually all archaic/ ancient cultures and modern civilization draws a conclusion that until now has not been faced seriously enough, but will have to be addressed some day –in fact, it is already starting-: the historical/ anthropological neglect of boys by men, producing the alienation of boyhood and all the forms of anti-social behaviour that we know so well. The competitiveness inherent to modernity could only aggravate things. Recent experiments like New York’s endeavour manifest this new concern.

It is anthropologically and psychologically aberrant to pretend that boys can only be educated by mothers; many evils in our societies stem from this dramatic reductionism that by the way constitutes an unconstitutional discrimination of fathers and men. The wisdom of India stated it in concise terms: **Mata/ Pitar/ Guru/ Deva** –the role of the mother, father, mentor till the spiritual awakening-. Even India must recover its treasures of wisdom today.

**The anthropology of boyhood; dramatically denied by the modern world, and even more by postmodern societies. Hence the alienation of boyhood and the boy crisis.**

In the words of the anthropologist E. Badinter:<sup>6</sup>

"The virile 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. (...) Since the difficulties of masculine identity have been made evident, no one holds that man is the strong sex anymore. On the contrary, it is defined as the weaker sex, victim of numerous weaknesses, both psychic and physical. (...)

The difficulties of masculinity are evident, especially now in our countries (...)"

Modern culture, however, has destroyed the initiatory process and pedagogic love, replacing them with the dichotomy between minority and majority of age within a global alienation; anthropologically, this is a nonsense, which, in its infantilization and overprotection of the growing boy that is being formed, produces the profound disorientation and the rebellious and even violent character of the current "adolescents" – and this is more acute in boys than girls, although it affects everyone-. The breakdown of initiation - in its deep anthropological sense - has had two consequences in modern society: first, the alienation and violence of boys, with a whole range of diverse manifestations; secondly, the dualist segregation and mutual incomprehension between youths and adults.

The French indologist, Alain Daniélou, said bluntly:<sup>7</sup>

"Juvenile delinquency does not exist there where pedagogic love is the norm."

"Deprived of its rights and responsibilities in gerontophile societies, adolescence can lead to dangerous frustrations that will manifest throughout life with an antisocial, insensitive and inhuman behavior."<sup>8</sup>

Human civilization will have to seriously consider these issues again, which have been recognized not by some but by the vast majority of cultures in human history - albeit with the normal limits of each culture-. The dogmatic denial that characterizes the modern world has produced extreme violence and alienation.

The most important thing is not the concrete cultural forms of each society, but the anthropological signification of all this. The recognition of these realities should not make us forget the limits and conditioning inherent to the human condition that occurred in all societies.

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<sup>6</sup> Badinter, E., "XY. La identidad masculina »/ "XY, The Masculine Identity", p. 50-53.

<sup>7</sup> Daniélou A., "Shiva et Dionysos", p. 205.

<sup>8</sup> Daniélou A., "La sculpture érotique hindoue", p. 44.

**It can be stated that the initiatory rites of transition from childhood to adulthood always have some common characteristics:**

**in the first place**, the young boy's segregation from his habitual social space and the social role he had exercised until then;

**second**, the catharsis, that is, the purification, the closing of a previous cycle and the opening towards a new stage, in order to live more fully;

**third**, reintegration into the community, but with a new role, and therefore with different and expanded rights and duties. Through the symbolic death of the child, the boy is reborn to a new and fuller life, acquiring a new being: the Man in the full sense of the word - biological, psychological, social and even spiritual-.

In all the initiatory cultures of humanity, it is clear that for the construction of one's identity the initiation must always be practised in intra-generic terms; only then can the relationship with the other gender be conveniently addressed. This also helps to reduce tensions between members of the same gender -especially important in the male gender-, and to foster affective bonds instead of conflicts.

In the words of the anthropologist E. Badinter:<sup>9</sup>

"We now know that the male sex, which is characterized by the Y chromosome, is transmitted by the father, who is the genitor or any other man (even a group of men) embodying the image of the father, who must complete the process of male differentiation (...) men have used different methods to get boys to become men, "real" men, whether they are initiation rites, pedagogic love or confrontation with their peers (...)

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. He has chosen for a long time to abstain and keep distance. "

E. Badinter concludes that:<sup>10</sup>

"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. "

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<sup>9</sup> Badinter E., op cit, p. 91-93.

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