Looking at Male Violence

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Abstract

This article examines the three classes of theories traditionally used to explain the causes of male violence: physiological, psychological, and sociological. It argues that the search for such causes may in the long run be counterproductive, not only for the person who has been violated, but for the man who has committed the violence. A treatment approach is then suggested that helps the violent man to become both accountable and responsible for his violence. This involves inviting the man to consider not what appears to be causing his violent behaviour—something in himself, his background, or in his culture—but rather how these very forces might somehow be restraining him from acting respectfully towards the people in his life.

Résumé

Cet article examine les trois principales théories qui sont traditionnellement employées dans l'explication des causes de la violence chez les hommes: physiologique, psychologique, et sociologique. Cet article affirme que la recherche de ces causes peut à long terme nuire non seulement à l'individu qui fut violenter, mais aussi à l'homme qui a fait violence. Un traitement est proposé qui aide l'homme violent à répondre de ses actes et devenir responsable de sa violence. Ce traitement nécessite que l'homme soit invité à examiner non pas ce qui paraît être la cause de ses actes violents—provenant de quelque chose en lui, de son milieu, ou de sa culture—mais plutôt comment ces influences pourraient d'une façon ou d'une autre l'empêcher d'agir avec respect envers les gens dans sa vie.

It is generally acknowledged that the world is not a very safe place for women (Avis, 1992; Miles, 1991; Thorne-Finch, 1992). Indeed, judging from much of the recent literature on male violence against women (e.g., Guberman & Wolfe, 1985; Miles, 1991; O'Neill, 1992; Thorne-Finch, 1992), it is as if the threat of danger stalks them virtually everywhere they go. According to Bart, Miller, Moran and Stanko (1989), for example, violence permeates women's lives, "yet it is so interwoven into our identities as women that we hardly notice it" (p. 432). As Guberman and Wolfe (1985) put it, women live in the shadow of terror, and whether in the workplace, on the street, or inside the home, the spectre of violence seems always to loom near.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, much of the literature on violence against women provokes debate. Whatever the perspective, however, empirical evidence of both the incidence and severity of male violence against women gives cause for serious concern. According to MacLeod (1989), for example, 56% of urban Canadian females are afraid to walk alone in their own neighbourhoods after dark. Given what has been happening to women, this fear is understandable. As data from Health and Welfare Canada (1990) indicate, one in every 10 women in Canada is beaten in

her home each year. Further, Badgely (1984) points out that fully half the women in Canada may have been victims of unwanted sexual acts, including penetration, fondling, threats, and exposure. In fact, according to Jaffe, Wolfe and Wilson (1990), in terms of physical injury, violence against women by their partners occurs more often in Canada (and in the United States) than all incidents of car accidents, muggings, and rape combined.

Typically, male violence against women is categorized as physical, sexual, and emotional—divisions that generally have been found to respect the way women see their abuse (Thorne-Finch, 1992). A circumscribed listing of violent acts falling within each of these divisions might include battering of women, children, and the elderly; ritualized beatings, mutilations, and murder; threats, put-downs, and coercive acts; sexual assault, ranging from unwanted touching to date rape, acquaintance rape, and marital rape; and harassment in its many guises, be it sexual, emotional, or physical (Thorne-Finch, 1992). Unfortunately, each of these forms of violence will be touched on only briefly here. At the risk of lending more weight to a discussion of how we might look at male violence rather than the nature of the actual violence itself, the intent here is to provide a framework for seeing the issue that is helpful for violators and the persons they violate. Given space limitations, this means examining "the larger picture" at the expense of some of the details that go to making it up.

In looking at male violence against women, the author first examines some of the more traditional theories used to explain its causes. Generally, such explanations fall into three main categories: physiological, psychological, and sociological. As argued by the author, however, seeing violence in this way may in the long run be counterproductive not only for the person who has been violated, but for the man who has committed the violence. As an alternative to these theories, a way of looking at violence is presented that is designed to help men to become responsible for their actions. This involves seeing perpetrators of violence in terms of how these various physiological, psychological, or sociological factors are operating on them not as causes of their behaviour, but as restraints. Seen in this light, the question then becomes not so much how these forces can be used to understand or explain men's violence against women—be it something in the man himself, his background, or in his culture—but rather how these very forces are restraining him from acting respectfully towards the people in his life.

THE "CAUSES" OF MALE VIOLENCE

It is an understandable mystery why some men choose to become violent towards the very women they profess to love so much. The question we ask ourselves is "Why?" Is it something in their upbringing, for example,

the social pressures brought to bear on them, or some tragic defect in their character? Further, we might wonder why so many other men also choose to be violent towards other women in their lives. What, in other words, are the causes of their violence? As Jenkins (1990) and Thorne-Finch (1992) imply, the answer depends on how we choose to conceptualize the issue. Indeed, a whole host of reasons might be forwarded. Generally, however, these would fall into one of three theoretical camps, with those having a physiological view of male violence offering one set of explanations (e.g., Barash, 1982; Elliott, 1988; Ellis, 1991), those with a more psychological perspective forwarding another (e.g., Barnett & Hamberger, 1992; Toch, 1980), while a third alternative would come from those who place the causes of male violence in its broader social context (e.g., Avis, 1992; Bograd, 1990, 1992).

Given that there are alternatives, it is important to note that how we choose to conceptualize male violence should not be seen as yet another academic exercise. As Einstein noted, our theory not only determines what we see, but what we do. From a clinical perspective, then—in keeping with the constructivist views of White and Epston (1990), for example (see also McNamee & Gergen, 1992)—whatever understanding of the issue we might favour is probably best assessed on the basis of its usefulness rather than its truthfulness. It may be, for example, that hormones are the key variable in explaining male violence, and that violent behaviour must ultimately be seen as rooted in men's biological make-up. Assuming this, indeed, to be the case, what counts, however, is whether or not we can translate this explanation into an approach to counselling that is helpful for those who behave violently towards others, and for those who are victimized. If that is not possible, then the biological explanation is of little use in helping counsellors in their work with violent men, no matter how "correct" it might be. As Jenkins (1990) suggests, in the end, a model of explanation—in a counselling sense, at least—becomes more useful if it points to solutions that can be harnessed in an effective approach to intervention.

PHYSIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

Physiological explanations of male violence tend to convey it in terms of brain functioning and hormones, often placing these in a broader social/evolutionary context (e.g., Ellis, 1991). Historically, studies in this domain refer to violent behaviour as aggression, linking it with how it is expressed in the animal kingdom. This aggression is then tied to certain brain structures and the endocrine system of males, thus indicating where such behaviour originates, as well as the types of hormones and the levels that trigger it. Using these kinds of investigations, researchers have traced violent behaviour to the limbic system of the human brain, including the hippocampus and the amygdala (Groves & Rebec, 1988).

Similarly, neurological factors are also given as possible causes of male violence. Elliott (1988), for example, theorizes that many batterers experience explosive rage due to neurological and metabolic diseases. The role of testosterone is also emphasized, with numerous studies tying this so-called male hormone to increased levels of sexual aggressive behaviour in men (Ellis, 1991).

Growing out of these physiological explanations of male violence is the sociobiological view, which uses an evolutionary framework to cast "sexually aggressive activities" in men as an example of adaptive behaviour intended to increase their reproductive fitness (e.g., Barash, 1982). Men rape, in other words, to disseminate their sperm in a fashion that will ensure the production of offspring, some of whom will be fit enough to survive and rape as well. Ellis's (1991) formulations of a "synthesized (biosocial) theory of rape" (p. 631) is a recent variation on this model.

As Thorne-Finch (1992) argues, however, although affected by their biology, men are not simply slaves to their physiology or genetic materials. Their behaviours are mediated by choice. A sexual offender, for example, may be in a heightened state of arousal, but ultimately it is a decision *he* makes whether to attack or not. In addition, men are social beings who live in the context of a culture. As a result, their behaviours are strongly shaped by a multitude of social and environmental influences. Thus, while elevated testosterone levels may be associated with aggression and increased sexual activity, the expression of these is nonetheless mediated by social factors that cannot be ignored (Miles, 1991). As Miles (1991, p. 268) has put it, "Aggression is an attitude, not a biological imperative." Further, if activated brain centres and peaks in hormonal levels caused male violence, then such acts would tend to occur at random. Yet most violent males do not act indiscriminately, and are far less likely to assault their boss, for example, than their wife (Thorne-Finch, 1992). Indeed, most sexual violence is against those the perpetrator knows. As Thorne-Finch (1992, p. 50) notes: "If offenders had no control, it seems unlikely that they would be so selective." Unfortunately, however, such ideas persist, thus serving to reinforce the notion that men have little or no control over what they do, and thus are neither responsible nor accountable for their violent acts.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS

Psychological explanations of male violence grow out of and extend Freudian theories of human behaviour, the idea here being that there is something inherently wrong with men who are violent—a notion that then generates research to discover what this something might be (Sorenson & White, 1992). Understandably, the population of males who are most often the subjects of these studies are "offenders" convicted of violent attacks on females and other males (e.g., Barnett & Hamberger,

1992; Hillbrand, Foster & Hirt, 1988; Serin, 1991; Toch, 1980). The aim behind this kind of research is to identify the characteristics that distinguish violent males so that we can better predict and control violent behaviour, as well as understand its cause.

Characteristics found to be typical of violent males have included immaturity, poor impulse control, fear of intimacy or abandonment, jealousy, low frustration tolerance, dependency, depression, addiction, and various psychiatric illnesses (Thorne-Finch, 1992). Psychoticism, a thirst for power and domination, high levels of anger and possessiveness, sociopathic tendencies, amoral delinquency, and explosiveness have also been used as primary descriptors of these individuals (Prentky & Knight, 1991). In addition, such men have been described as moody and self-centred, are said to have serious developmental difficulties, and manifest symptoms of maladjustment and disturbance that are often cited as strong causal factors in violent incidents (Thorne-Finch, 1992).

As Serin (1991) notes, however, based on research indicating a fairly broad heterogeneity in the personalities of violent offenders, there are serious doubts that a personality model alone can adequately predict or explain violent behaviour. Nor have models of explanation for male violence based solely on psychopathology in offenders received much support (Sorenson & White, 1992; Thorne-Finch, 1992). Taking issue with what they see as narrowly defined psychological explanations of male violence, Stordeur and Stille (1989), for example, point to the limitations of generalizing on the basis of research conducted with psychiatric patients and prison inmates. In the area of rape research, for instance, convicted rapists have tended to make up the bulk of the study subjects, although recent investigations of more "normal" populations show these are by no means the bulk of those who rape (Sorenson & White, 1992). In addition, as Prentky and Knight (1991) imply, there is no consistent pattern to the psychopathological profiles of these men, if indeed there is any significant pathology there at all (Ammerman & Hersen, 1991). Rather, as researchers and clinicians working with offenders have noted, many of these individuals seem to be about as "normal" as the next guy in many respects. A comment by Kaufman (1992, p. 236) is typical: "When we began [Men Stopping Violence Inc.], we expected to see some real monsters. However, we found we were meeting with what seemed like nice guys."

SOCIAL EXPLANATIONS

Perceived limitations in both the physiological and psychological explanations of male violence have led to a broader examination of its possible social causes. Advocates of this approach point to the inherent weakness in accounting for violence from a physiological perspective without considering the important societal forces that shape the behaviours of

violent males. Similarly, they also take issue with what they consider narrowly defined psychological explanations of male violence. As they see it, violence must be analyzed as a function of "social forces, not as exceptional and quasi-random events at the margins of polite society" (O'Neill, 1992, p. 121). Society, in other words, somehow plays a key role in shaping the behaviours of violent men.

Although explanations within this perspective have been generated by those with interests ranging from family therapy and social work to criminology and feminist thought, common among them is the view that violence is learned behaviour, part of the everyday fabric of individuals, couples, and families, and condoned implicitly by the societies and cultures that permit and foster its occurrence (Throne-Finch, 1992). Among the most influential contributors to this perspective, however, have been the feminists who place violence in the sociopolitical context of male power and control. Within this framework, violence against women is seen as rooted in an historical tradition that continues to be perpetuated in patriarchal beliefs of male dominance and privilege. These grow out of notions of women as property, to be possessed and controlled both physically and economically (Donat & D'Emilio, 1992).

Borrowing largely from the feminists, then, proponents of a social understanding of male violence agree that it is rooted primarily in the male socialization process. According to Scher and Stevens (1987), for example, men are socialized to act in violent ways, with aggressiveness constituting their milieu. "The encouragement to be violent emerges from the complex socialization process of males" (Scher & Stevens, 1987, p. 351). As Pittman (1991) observes, males undergo "a careful and deliberate process of gender training, sometimes brutal, always dehumanizing, cutting away large chunks of . . . [themselves]" (p. 17). Ironically, Pittman suggests that rather than some kind of severe pathology, men suffer from a phenomenon he calls "masculinity . . . most guys don't even know that we do what we do because we're male—we think we do it because we're right" (p. 17). The implication here is that a generous range of violent actions could fit the behavioural repertoire of most so-called normal males. Contrary to the belief that violent men are "deviant, uncommon, or 'sick,' their behaviour is, in fact, normative, common, and all too normal" (Avis, 1992, p. 228).

In keeping with the social explanation of male violence, Tolman and Bennet (1992) point out that no incident of violent behaviour is solely the action of one individual against another. As they add, however, to dismiss the physiological and psychological perspectives outlined above would be to limit our view. As they see it, such approaches are perhaps most useful if they also manage to connect individual behaviour with social variables such as "the patriarchal social context, unequal power distribution, and culturally supported patterns of gender relations" (Tol-

man & Bennet, 1992, p. 88). Similarly, they also argue that male violence cannot be seen as strictly the expression of a social problem, be it male socialization, the structure of the family, or the society of which it is a part. Rather, violence is also action undertaken by unique individuals who must be held both accountable and responsible for what they do.

LOOKING AT AN ALTERNATIVE

Keeping in mind that various theories and explanations of male violence are always possible, Sorenson and White (1992) emphasize the need to move beyond unidimensional accounts of violence and to develop what Hall, Hirschman and Beutler (1991) refer to as "unified models that incorporate reliable elements of what is already known" (p. 619). To this end, then, we might look to the work of Barbaree and Marshall (1991), who offer a more unifying view of six different theoretical models to explain a possible trait/state approach to rape, for example. Or we could focus on a model proposed by Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss and Tanaka (1991), who in their explanation of sexual aggression against women consider variables such as abusive home environments, sexual acting out, hostility towards women, and a diversity of manipulative tactics. We might also refer to Dutton (1988) and his ecologically nested theory of male violence, which also tends to build on the three principal theoretical perspectives outlined above.

As an intriguing alternative to these essentially interactional, causal explanations of male violence, however, Jenkins (1990) offers a distinctly different perspective based on a theory of restraint (see also White, 1986a). In keeping with other contemporary approaches to counselling violent men (e.g., Almeida & Bograd, 1991; Kaufman, 1992; Marshall & Eccles, 1991; Meth, 1992; Neal & Slobodnik, 1991), Jenkins' model is founded on the notion that perpetrators of abuse must be held accountable for their actions. This is accomplished through interventions designed to help these men cease their abusive behaviours and to relate respectfully to others—goals that Jenkins believes can only be achieved if perpetrators are somehow led to accept full responsibility for what they have done. Traditionally, this has been no easy task, as most abusive men are seen to either resist, minimize, or otherwise shift the blame for their behaviour (Kaufman, 1992), engage in power struggles with their counsellors (Fish, 1991), or deny needing treatment at all (Wormith & Hanson, 1992).

As Jenkins (1990) sees it, at the heart of the problem is our search for causal explanations of male violence, which he maintains serves to hinder the perpetrator from accepting culpability for his actions. The underlying assumption here is that once these supposedly true and correct causes are found, they can help us decide who or what is to blame for the problem, where to attribute responsibility, and what we should do to

resolve it. According to Jenkins, however, these are often of very little help to either perpetrators of violence or their victims, and can in fact be "misguided and often harmful" (1990, p. 13). In many instances, for example, victims are either blamed for the abuse, or somehow end up blaming themselves for it. As Jenkins explains, external factors are also used to try to "understand" the violence. Ultimately, however, it is the perpetrator himself who benefits, as many of these explanations usually end up merely relieving, pacifying, and excusing him of his responsibility. Even just the quest for a cause can be soothing for the perpetrator, becoming an end in itself and conveniently bogging him down in "naval gazing." Notes Jenkins, "When abuse perpetrators become extensively preoccupied with the search for a cause, they generally do little to take responsibility for and cease their abusive behaviour" (p. 13). Seeking causal explanations can tie up counsellors as well.

According to Jenkins (1990), engaging violent men to become "willingly involved" in the counselling process initially entails recognizing the patterns they use in attributing responsibility for their violence. With slight variation, he has found these causal patterns falling into three broad categories of explanations outlined so far: (a) Individual theories, including psychological and biological reasons, which locate the cause somewhere within the individual; (b) Interactional theories, which point to dysfunctional and family causes located within the perpetrator's interactions with others; (c) Developmental theories, usually meaning childhood experiences with abuse, thus locating the causes in the person's history; and (d) Sociocultural theories, including feminist notions of power, dominance and privilege, and the male socialization process, which locate the blame within an individual's culture and society.

For Jenkins (1990), implied by each of these causal attributions is some perceived limitation, either in the person, his family, or the society in which he lives. At the personal level, the perpetrator might see himself as lacking a certain quality he should have—impulse control, for example. Or he may claim to have an excess of something bad, such as aggression, hormones, or deviance of some sort. He may claim an inability to contain or inhibit himself, calling himself "explosive" or "addictive." In addition, he may also present himself as being inhibited or blocked, and unable to assert or express himself. At the interactional level, meanwhile, the perpetrator may point to limitations in his relationship with his coworkers, partner, children, in-laws, or members of his family of origin. These may be described as "dysfunctional," "addictive," or "codependent." In talking about his violence or abuse, the perpetrator may claim to have been seduced or provoked into it. Resorting to limitations falling within the developmental sphere, violent males tend to reason that they came from violent families in which they were either abused or witnessed abuse to someone else. The typical line of thinking here is "I was abused

and that's why I abuse." Finally, sociocultural limitations offered by perpetrators can include limitations of class, colour, power, privilege, and status. For those aware of feminist theories, the limitations imposed on them by their faulty male socialization process can, paradoxically, also be an avenue of resort to avoid responsibility for their actions. As Jenkins notes, some theorists even go so far as to exonerate individual responsibility on this basis.

According to Jenkins (1990), each of these "theories of limitation" allows perpetrators to see themselves as passive victims of circumstance, driven by internal or external forces towards violence, ultimately leaving them to absolve themselves of any responsibility for what they have done. Being able to attribute, or with the help of a counsellor, actually "discovering" a cause for his violence, the perpetrator not only gains a sense of relief, but also absolution from guilt, entitlement to forgiveness, and permission to make a new start where everyone will forgive and forget. Having a cause to point the finger at, he is also conveniently relieved of experiencing the shame and guilt that go along with facing up to and accepting responsibility for his abuse.

To counter this kind of causal reasoning, Jenkins (1990) employs his theory of restraint. Based on notions of negative explanation forwarded by White (1986, 1986a; see also Neal & Slobodnik, 1991), this works by inviting the perpetrator to theorize in the opposite direction regarding his behaviour, prompting him to look for explanations of what might be restraining or holding him back from acting respectfully, sensitively, responsibly, and non-abusively with the people in his life. As Neal and Slobodnik (1991) explain, the idea here is to explore how the man's explanation *prevents* him from noticing information (some personal strength, skill, or quality, for example) that might lead him to take an alternative course of action rather than a path to violence. Instead of wondering what might be causing Jack to act so violently, in other words, the idea here is that we ask him to speculate what might be stopping him from taking responsibility for his abusive behaviour. From here we might invite Jack to wonder what personal strength or quality he might draw on to possibly do something about it.

The theory here, as Jenkins (1990) uses it in his work with abusive men, is based on the notion that males generally will act respectfully and responsibly towards others unless they allow themselves to be restrained by something from doing so. Restraints may be habits, traditions, or beliefs that have a hold on them, leading them to entertain restricted views of the world. These might take the form of certain messages about masculinity handed down to them by society or by their family—notions of patriarchy and what it means to be a man, for example, or the related idea that women are the property of men. Other restraining influences mentioned by Jenkins include an exaggerated sense of entitlement to the

services of others, especially women; avoidance of social-emotional responsibilities in relationships; a distorted approach to sexuality; and failure to own up to a sense of responsibility for one's actions.

As Jenkins (1990) sees it, inviting men who have been abusive to actively consider alternatives to their abuse—and what has been restraining or preventing them from acting on these alternatives—leads to a more positive consideration of their abilities, rather than a less helpful focus on their limitations. Jenkins encourages this in his clients by first preventing them from seeing factors in their lives as "causes" or explanations of their behaviour, thus eliminating the notion that these somehow excuse what they have done. Rather, he turns this around by helping the men to see how these factors work against them in the form of restraints that they can actually do something about. By then delivering what Jenkins calls "irresistible invitations to challenge restraints" (p. 63), he invites his clients to consider what they might do to defeat these restraining notions, how they might plan for such action, and actually carry it out. Such invitations are framed in a language that emphasizes the man's abilities to stand up to the restraining habits and ideas he has identified —although Jenkins notes that he finds it helpful not to praise the man for his achievements. Rather, he is invited to notice them himself and to give them meaning in terms of his own personal goals.

In laying out his model, Jenkins (1990) delineates a number of carefully conceived strategies designed to engage abusive men in the counselling process. Although he offers no empirical evidence to back up the effectiveness of these strategies, or of his approach in general, Jenkins claims that they have been used successfully to involve men—those who have abused their partners, as well as those who have sexually abused children—in individual and couples counselling formats. Jenkins notes that he also works with other family members inviting them to challenge restraining relational patterns and habits of accepting responsibility for the abusive male's behaviour. His mode of engagement has also been used to involve men in group settings, and more recently has been modified for work specifically with adolescent sex abusers and their caregivers. Finally, Jenkins notes that although his model is designed to generate strategies and ideas of its own, it leaves room to incorporate other strategies derived for other models. As he points out, these can even include the use of drugs designed to reduce sexual interest and arousal, provided the man is "invited to take responsibility for the management of his medication" (Jenkins, 1990, p. 206).

CONCLUSION

Given the incredible devastation the various forms of male violence have been shown to have in the lives of innocent victims—from anger, depression, and loss of sexual interest, to severe physical impairment, a range of

dissociative and other psychological disorders, as well as suicidal and homicidal thoughts or acts (Thorne-Finch, 1992)—it is understandable how one might feel a sense of rage towards the perpetrators. Not surprisingly, the response in a number of quarters has been to urge society to lock them up and throw away the key (e.g., Stockland, 1992). Though perhaps overstating the case, there is in fact evidence to support the notion that legal action can serve as a deterrent to abusive behaviours (e.g., Russell, 1988). Keeping in mind the ever-increasing incidence of male violence, however, such action would fall short of providing us with a viable solution to the problem. On a purely practical level, there simply would not be enough jails to go around. Beyond that, however, such an approach would merely serve to reinforce the traditional view of male violators as somehow being pathologically different from so-called "normal" males.

As it happens, recent efforts at trying to understand why males are violent have helped to demythologize many of the traditional notions that have been held regarding male violence. At the same time, they have opened up areas of research that have changed how we conceptualize both those who victimize and those who are their victims. Slowly but surely, the result has been a shift in the burden of responsibilty for violent behaviour to where it rightfully belongs—the persons who are doing the violating. Thanks in large part to the strength of the feminist vision, for example, women are now beginning to shed the notion that they are to blame for the consequences of the oppression they have been living under, no longer pointing the finger at themselves and instead turning to those they might now see as being the oppressors: the men in their lives (Avis, 1992; Bograd, 1992).

As Doherty (1991) warns, however, there is a danger inherent in embracing too zealously many of the tenets of feminism, moving manhood, as he puts it, "from the pedestal to the mud, from an idealized model to a deficit model, [which] sees primarily the dark side of manhood and masculinity: our egotism, our propensity for aggression, our emotional distancing, our overcompetitiveness" (p. 30). Not to exonerate males from being responsible for their violent behaviour—nor to detract from the terrible reality of those who are victimized by it—Doherty calls for a more balanced portrayal of manhood, a celebration of the positive qualities of men as well. Agreeing that there is a need to analyze "the tragic dimensions of manhood in America" (p. 30) he points out that in the long run people are not motivated to change from feelings of personal or gender inadequacy. He notes, for example, that feminists have learned to challenge the deficit model of themselves at every turn, to "deconstruct" the stereotypes of womanhood, and suggests that "we need to do the same for manhood" (p. 30).

In keeping with Doherty's (1991) suggestion, then, the Jenkins (1990) model of restraint comes closest to offering a conceptualization of male violators that both emphasizes and reflects their assets rather than focusing solely on their deficits. In perhaps naïvely assuming that men are naturally motivated to act respectfully and responsibly towards others unless there is something restraining them from doing so, his model challenges, or "deconstructs," as Doherty advocates, the traditional stereotypes. At the same time, it offers a key to dealing with male violators that is not to be used simply to lock them behind bars and then be thrown away. Rather, it provides a way to encourage them to take responsibility for their behaviours, and in the process to discover the strengths and resources they will need to defeat the forces of restraint in their lives. As Neal and Slobodnik (1991) explain it, the idea here is not to ask violent men to give up or devalue their masculinity in favour of a feminist perspective towards themselves. Instead, they are invited to wonder about the notions of masculinity that they might find helpful to them, and others that might be sources of trouble and despair. Their maleness, in other words, is not something to be suppressed or avoided. The challenge, rather, is for violent men to think about what they might want to keep of traditional male gender, and what they might want to discard and escape.

As Doherty (1991) points out, male violence leads us into what he calls the dark dungeons that we must explore in order to transform the experience of manhood in today's world. As we have seen, it is a fearful search. But there are rays of light, male virtues that Doherty warns we should not lose sight of, otherwise we are left with a deficit model that paints men as ineffectual, disempowered individuals without the confidence to "share power, to nurture, and to be full partners in the human journey" (p. 31). As it happens, Jenkins' (1990) vision of male violence gives us a way to explore the dungeons, if you like, while at the same time pointing us also in the direction of the rays of light.

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