Abstract

**Purpose**: This paper is about alcoholism as suicide in slow motion, which sets alcohol as a subset of each non-fatal self-harm and suicide. It is an examination of the root of gender insidious thinking that supports a person's use of harmful substances, generically, substance abuse, with suicidal oriented thinking included in stream.

**Design/Methodology/Approach**: The position in this paper is three terse points – (1) girls have it easy, they know that they are not boys; (2) boys have it hard, they are clueless; (3) girls pay the price. Resolution of these points must occur in reverse order.

**Research limitations/implications**: Medical research is and has been for many years bent on discovery of a genetic and neurobiological basis for substance abuse with the same true for suicide. This paper takes the position that the likely answer is yes but not in an absolute sense. Ischemic heart disease is the basis.

**Findings**: At issue in this paper is how focus on alcohol distorts, even diminishes, gender insidious self-harm that is not uniform across life, as evidenced by percent of events per five-year age bands.

**Social implications**: Alcohol alone is commonly associated with the male while discounting (even ignoring) an association with the female – “…When the number of health and social consequences is considered for a given level of alcohol use or drinking pattern, sex differences for social outcomes reduce significantly or even reverse” (WHO, 2014, p. 8).

**Originality/value**: In 1900 maleness and psychology were literally synonyms leaving femaleness an after-thought at best. “To become accepted, most women psychologists chose to emulate the approaches to psychology that were championed by their male peers” (Minton, 2000). In line is – “He [Abraham Maslow] was convinced that psychology had become too masculine for its own good, yet he struggled to find a way to ‘soften’ psychology without completely undermining its ‘rigorous’ foundation” (Nicholson, 2001).

**Keywords**: affect, ambivalence, decisiveness, economics, education, gender, object relations, public policy, self-harm, social policy, splitting, suicide

**Paper type**: Original writing.