



THE BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH ON AGGRESSION

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Editorial
Eric F. Dubow,
North American *Bulletin* Editor



Welcome to the June 2010 edition of the **ISRA Bulletin**. In this edition, we present a tentative schedule for our XIXth World Meeting July 27-31 at the beautiful campus of the University of Connecticut.

Thanks to Stephen Maxson for organizing the meeting. The Organizing Committee and Scientific Program Committee have planned an exciting set of invited talks, symposia, and poster sessions. In addition, there are a number of social opportunities to meet old (and young) friends and colleagues, and to maintain and begin new productive collaborations.

But first, we lead this *Bulletin* with messages from our President, Deborah Richardson, and our President-Elect, Craig Anderson.

Next, you will find the Tentative Schedule for the July 2010 ISRA World Meeting.

Then, you will find some "Important ISRA Notices." Here, we announce our **call for nominations for the ISRA officer election for three positions: President-Elect, Executive Secretary, and Archivist.** Nominations need to be sent to Craig Anderson (caa@iastate.edu), by June 15, 2010.

Next, I included a **Special Commentary** contributed by Roger Johnson that discusses the case being considered by the U. S. Supreme Court of the California law on sales of violent video games to minors;

ISRA members have made major contributions to our knowledge of the effects of violent video games on youth.

Then, I included announcements about upcoming conferences that may be of interest to our members.

A regular feature of our *Bulletin* is our "Book Reviews." Here, I included reviews of 2 books (David Buss; Raymond Flannery). We very much appreciate that individuals have taken the time to review books for our membership.

Then, I have included the titles of paper symposia on aggression from the 2010 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence that I attended in Philadelphia, PA. The papers included a nice mix of research on social, biological, cognitive, and emotional factors in adolescents' aggression.

Next, I have included our ISRA Flyer designed to describe our society, increase our exposure, and attract new members; **be sure to share this flyer with your colleagues and students.**

In closing, I want to remind everyone that our goal for the *Bulletins* is to keep our members informed of scholarship in the area of aggression and to share each other's work. As always, please email me any materials you would like us to include in future *Bulletins* (edubow@bgsu.edu). My dear colleague, Jane Ireland, will be stepping down as European Bulletin editor, and I want to thank her for her mentorship in socializing me to be the North American editor. It will be very difficult to replace Jane. I want to thank her for her excellent work, her good humor, and her many contributions to keeping ISRA members informed of aggression research and issues facing our scientific society.

I look forward to seeing you in Storrs, and I wish us all a very productive World Meeting!

Eric

A Message from Our President, Deborah Richardson



Dear Colleagues,

As the time for the ISRA World Meeting and my Presidential address approaches, I find myself reflecting on the 15 years of my involvement with the governance of ISRA. There have been some notable changes in the operation and focus of ISRA over those years. For example, in recent years ISRA Council and officers have instituted an initiative aimed at supporting the professional development of young investigators who do aggression research and attend our meetings. This support has come in the form of travel grants to a select group of young investigators, which were funded by NSF at the Budapest meeting in 2008 and by our own treasury this year. We must thank Ken Leonard and Mike Potegal for taking the lead on organizing these programs for the Budapest and Storrs meetings, and ISRA Past President Menno Kruk for insisting that we develop such programming.

We have also encouraged young investigators for many years by offering awards for outstanding presentations at the biannual world meetings. Through a vote of Council to support an amendment to our bylaws, these awards will now be designated Lagerspetz Awards, in honor of Kirsti

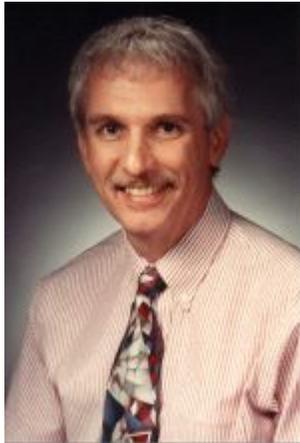
Lagerspetz, former ISRA President, mentor to many other aggression researchers, and major contributor to research on the development of aggression.

The support of young investigators has been part of an attempt to have a more active and larger ISRA membership. For example, in recent years, we have involved Council members more actively in the governance of ISRA by forming task groups and committees and scheduling Council meetings during World Meetings. The number of members of ISRA has not been increasing over the years – a situation that presents a serious challenge to the vitality of the organization. There are likely many reasons for this problem, and I want to offer one that could be resolved relatively easily.

ISRA is perceived by many as an elitist organization – as a place for a small, elite group of aggression researchers at major research universities who get big grants to support their research. I would venture to say that many people who are active aggression researchers do not see ISRA as an organization that welcomes their contributions. Those people are likely to be affiliated with smaller universities, to do research that is less attractive to granting agencies, or to work for organizations that allow them relatively little time to advance their research agenda. They may not have big grants but they are nevertheless making contributions to the literature on aggression. I challenge the governance of ISRA to face the membership challenge by considering how to make ISRA more attractive to the worker bees that may be able to bring new life to the organization. My presidential address at the upcoming meeting will present data about the contributions of those worker bees as well as reviewing my own career of contributions to research on aggression (without grant support).

Deborah Richardson, ISRA President

**A Message from Our
President-Elect,
Craig Anderson**



The ISRA World Meeting Program Committee (Steve Maxson, Barbara Krahe, me) has been working very hard to put together a fascinating and diverse array of symposia, posters, and plenary addresses for this year's meeting in Storrs, Connecticut, July 27-31, 2010. We were fortunate to receive a very large number of excellent proposals, more than we could fit into the schedule. There will be 27 symposia involving over 120 speakers. In addition, there will be over 60 posters.

We also have a stellar line-up of plenary speakers. **Dr. Deborah Richardson**, Professor of Psychology at Augusta State University, will deliver the Presidential Address on "Everyday Aggression Research." **Dr. Richard Tremblay**, Professor of Psychology at the University College Dublin and at the University of

Montreal, will give the J.P. Scott Award Address on "Developmental Origins of Aggression, Epigenetics and Prevention."

We also have three invited addresses. **Dr. Donald Pfaff**, Professor and Head of the Laboratory of Neurobiology and Behavior at the Rockefeller University, will speak on "Genomic Mechanisms Bearing on Aggressive Behaviors: Laboratory Analyses and Human Implications." **Dr. Martha Crenshaw**, Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation, will give an address titled "Can Threats Deter Nuclear Terrorism?" **Dr. Miles Hewstone**, Professor in the Department of Experimental Psychology at Oxford University will speak on "Intergroup contact and the reduction of intergroup conflict: A reply to critics."

The program is not all academic, of course. Steve Maxson and his University of Connecticut colleagues have put together a very attractive set of social events. For details about the ISRA World Meeting at Storrs, check out the web site at:

<http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/caa/csv/isra/index.html>.

While you are there, be sure to register. Save up to \$50 by registering by June 26. I look forward to seeing you in Storrs!

Craig

2010 ISRA World Meeting Tentative Schedule



Tuesday, July 27

6:00pm - 8:00pm

Welcome Reception

Wednesday, July 28

7:30am - 8:30am

Continental Breakfast

8:30am - 8:45am

Conference Welcome & Orientation

9:00am - 10:30am

Symposium/Paper Sessions

- Neural control of aggression
- Maladaptive communication of emotion among substance abusing clients with co-occurring family violence & aggression: A look at the addiction-aggression equation and treatment outcomes
- Personality and aggression

10:30am - 11:00am

Break

11:00am - noon

Donald Pfaff

- "Genomic Mechanisms Bearing on Aggressive Behaviors: Laboratory Analyses and Human Implications"

noon - 1:30pm

Lunch Break (**Council Meeting**)

1:30pm - 3:00pm

Symposium/Paper Sessions

- Violence exposure
- Bullying
- Current perspectives on aggression in schizophrenia

3:00pm - 3:30pm

Break

3:30pm - 5:00pm

Symposium/Paper Sessions

- Applying media violence research to public policy: The roles of science and the researcher
- Prevention
- Measuring aggression

5:30pm - 6:00pm

Break

6:00pm - 7:00pm

[Miles Hewstone](#)

- "Intergroup Contact and the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict: A Reply to Critics"

7:00pm

Dinner

Thursday, July 29

7:30am - 9:00am

Continental Breakfast

9:00am - 10:30am

Symposium/Paper Sessions

- The role of social cognitions in aggression among adolescents and young adults
- Violence in institutions
- A comprehensive examination of sexual aggression on college campuses: Men, women, and bystanders

10:30am - 11:00am

Break

11:00am - 12:30pm

Symposium/Paper Sessions

- Media violence usage and aggression in childhood and adolescence: Longitudinal data from North America, Europe, and Asia
- Political & cross-cultural aggression research
- Intimate violence

12:30pm - 1:30pm

Lunch (**Council Meeting, continued**)

1:30pm - 3:00pm

Symposium/Paper Sessions

- Stress and aggression: From humans to animals and back
- Vasopressin and vasotocin as regulators of aggression and other social behaviors
- Current research on the links between exclusion/ostracism and aggression

3:00pm - 3:30pm

Break

3:30pm - 5:00pm

Symposium/Paper Sessions

- The social psychology of interpreting group harm and violence
- The elephant in the "Bar" room: acknowledging the need for intervention research on alcohol-related aggression
- Childhood precursors to aggression: Neurobiological and social influences

5:00pm - 5:30pm

Break

5:30pm - 6:30pm

[Martha Crenshaw](#)

- "Can Threats Deter Nuclear Terrorism?"

6:30pm

Dinner

Friday, July 30

8:00am - 10:00am
9:00am - 10:00am
10:15am - 11:15am

11:15am - 11:45am
11:45am - 6:00pm
6:00pm - 8:00pm
8:00pm - 9:00pm

Full Breakfast Buffet
Poster Session 1
President's Address: Deborah Richardson
• "Everyday Aggression Research"
Pickup box lunches & board busses
Excursion to Southeastern CT
Dinner at Abbott's in the Rough
Coach transportation back to Storrs

Saturday, July 31

7:30am - 9:00am
9:00am - 10:30am

10:30am - 11:00am
11:00am - noon

noon - 1:30pm
1:30pm - 3:00pm

3:00pm - 3:30pm
3:30pm - 4:30pm
4:45pm - 5:45pm
6:30pm - 10:00pm

Continental Breakfast
Symposium/Paper Sessions
• Controlling aggression: Experimental advances in the brain-behavior link
• Reaching the 25th anniversary of the Seville Statement on Violence (SSV)
• Current perspectives on the role of alcohol in sexual aggression: A contextual perspective
Break
Scott Address: Richard E. Tremblay
• "Developmental Origins of Aggression, Epigenetics and Prevention"
Lunch Break
Symposium/Paper Sessions
• Aggression in males and females: GABA and serotonin revisited
• Aggression as communication
• Factors influencing emergence, timing, change, and stability of aggression during childhood and adolescence
Break
Business Meeting
Poster Session 2
Reception, Banquet, Awards, TIGER Performance

For details about the ISRA World Meeting at Storrs, CT, check out the web site at:

<http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/caa/csv/isra/index.html>.

Important ISRA Notices

ISRA ELECTION: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The following offices are up for election this summer:

President-elect
Executive Secretary
Archivist

The Nominations Committee is currently putting together a slate of nominees.

According to our Constitution, any group of five members may submit an additional nominee for any office currently up for election. If you would like to submit a nominee, please do the following:

1. Check to be sure that your nominee is willing to serve.
2. Send the nominee's name, the office for which the person is being nominated, AND a list of five ISRA members who support the nomination to Craig Anderson (caa@iastate.edu), by June 15, 2010.

The current officers are listed at:
<http://www.israsociety.com/officers.html>

ISRA WEBMASTER

Our ISRA webmaster is Yvon Delville, Dept. of Psychology, The University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712.

Please contact Yvon at Delville@psy.utexas.edu if there is information you would like to see on the website.

The website is: www.ISRASociety.com

Important ISRA Notices (continued)

Wiley Online Library to Launch on July 24, 2010



WILEY-BLACKWELL
John Wiley & Sons
111 River Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell
TEL 201-748-6000
FAX 201-748-6088

April 27, 2010

Dear Dr. Huesmann and Mr. Knutson,

We are delighted to announce that Wiley Online Library will launch on July 24th 2010.

Wiley Online Library will be the new home for *Aggressive Behavior*. This new service is built on the latest technology and designed with extensive input from the global scholarly community across the world and across the many subjects in which we publish. Featuring a clean and simple interface, this new online service will combine intuitive navigation, enhanced discoverability, expanded functionalities and a range of personalization options.

99.97% of all journal back content has already been successfully transferred to Wiley Online Library and new content is now being uploaded to both Wiley InterScience and the new platform. Customers and researchers will receive ongoing information and support up to, during, and following the July 24th 2010 launch of Wiley Online Library. Wiley Online Library will completely replace the Wiley InterScience website and all content and licenses will be transferred to the new site to enable seamless access for users and subscribers.

Journal home pages for all titles on Wiley Online Library will be improved and feature the option of customizable areas to share news, information and events. We would like to discuss details of how your journal pages can be customized ahead of the launch and going forward, and will be in touch again with specific suggestions and examples.

We will be contacting customers [and members] directly with information about the new platform, including how to ensure seamless access to your content on Wiley Online Library.

Following the initial release there will be an ongoing program of development which will include many additional features and new opportunities for users to interact with the content. More information is available now at: www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/info, including a list of features, regularly updated FAQs, screenshots, online demos and more details about the new website for all users. You can also sign up for alerts from this website to get updates on developments as they happen.

We will be in touch again with more details and, if you have any questions in the meantime or would like to discuss the online presence for *Aggressive Behavior*, please visit our information website www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/info or contact me directly.

Yours,

Joe Ingram
Vice President & Publisher, Wiley-Blackwell

A Special Commentary
Media Violence Heats Up
By Roger Johnson

When I was teaching at the University of Jyvaskyla in Finland in the 1970s, I eagerly began to examine Finnish TV to see how that country dealt with the problem of TV violence. I discovered old Russian war movies, American sitcom reruns, and endless hours of cross country skiing. Media violence was only an American problem, I was told.

Guess what? A decade later Kirsti Lagerspetz, the 8th president of ISRA, was doing research on this very topic. In addition to Kirsti, there is a long string of ISRA presidents who have made significant research contributions to the study of media violence: Len Berkowitz (5th president), Sey Feshback (7th president), Len Eron (9th president), Rowell Huesmann (13th president), and Ed Donnerstein (15th president).

Yes, there were methodological issues and it was not easy to tease out effects of violent media exposure. Nevertheless, studies kept pouring in reporting significant main effects. Everyone realized that if researchers could find significant effects from a few short exposures in laboratory settings, think what might happen to kids with a lifetime of exposure every day in their homes? In the 1980s, Eron and Huesmann came out with their impressive longitudinal studies and cross-lagged correlations to strengthen the causal link. Len was fond of saying that we finally put the last nail in the coffin about whether violent media exposure has negative consequences.

Not so fast, the coffin is still open. Scientists often assume that their job is finished when they can convince other very skeptical scientists of the significance of their research. The real test is not whether you can convince mere scientists, but whether you can persuade judges, lawyers, politicians, and the public let alone corporate interests. Think about how long the cigarette lobby delayed any action to counteract the deadly effects of smoking. For decades they argued with a straight face that correlations prove nothing, and that maybe smoking is caused by cancer.

It is not enough just to get your *p* values lined up and get your research published. It is an annoying fact of life, but sometimes it is people unqualified to make judgments who end up deciding the worth of research. You can say that bad judgments are made out of ignorance, but you can also cite the scientists for not being able to make a convincing case. Even worse, you can blame the scientists for standing aloof and not wanting their pristine work to get mixed up with anything as distasteful as “politics.”

Others see increased public understanding as one of the main goals of science. But it is not easy convincing the public, the media, and the government. Look at climate scientists who amassed data on climate change and yet continue to struggle to influence public policy. But at least they do go public with their work and are doing their best to use science for the public interest.

ISRA was founded in the shadows of the cold war, the Viet Nam War, and a period of immense social unrest in America. Concerned scientists tried to figure out a way that scientific research on aggression might benefit society. In August of 1972, a group of prominent scholars gathered at the Prince Hotel in Tokyo the result was the founding of ISRA. Our constitution states that the purpose of ISRA is both scientific and educational. It is not a political organization, but its educational mission is clearly to inform and educate the public and to encourage the exchange of scientific information.

We don't often get the chance for major public exposure to our research, but recently there has been a significant turn of events which may be a huge opportunity in disguise. I refer to

a new law in California which prohibits the sale of violent video games to minors. This law was drafted by state senator Leland Lee, PhD (a child psychologist). This law was passed by the California legislature only to be struck down by the District Court in San Jose, CA, as being unconstitutional and infringing on the 1st Amendment of the US Constitution. The case was sent up to the next level at the 9th District Court in San Francisco which affirmed the lower court decision. This court also stated that scientists failed to prove that there is a causal link between violent video game exposure and negative consequences on children. Haven't they been attending ISRA meetings for the last two decades?

Now the fun begins. This case is now going all the way to the US Supreme Court. It is *Docket # 08-1448 Arnold Schwarzenegger and Edmund Brown v. Video Software Dealers Association and the Entertainment Software Association*. ISRA may wish to debate whether to take a position on this case; however, the deadline for filing of an Amicus brief is early July, well before the Storrs meeting. The California Psychological Association and the California Psychiatric Association have already given their support, and Craig Anderson has mentioned that the American Psychological Association has been asked to lend its support. By the way, if you have not read his very impressive *Psych. Bulletin* meta-analysis (March 2010), write to him and get a copy (caa@iastate.edu). Craig has published much valuable research on video game violence and he has also participated in numerous media interviews.

This court case is going to get a lot of public attention. Scientific research on aggression will also receive (maybe for the first time) a lot of media attention. There will be articles about media violence in every newspaper in the country (and probably the world). You can be sure that media attention will range from critical to outright mockery of the efforts of scientists. Even the vaunted *NYTimes* has a long history of ridiculing research on media violence. The media tend to close ranks when big money is involved. Central to the case will be whether the Supreme Court is persuaded that society has a legitimate concern and video game violence deserves to be regulated. Can the weight of scientific evidence stand up to the weight of lobbying and commercial interests? You can bet that there will be enormous pressure and money thrown about to discredit scientific research on aggression.

Since this is a very significant case both for aggression researchers and for society, I wrote to ISRA Council members in May to ask for suggestions on how we might respond. Below (with permission) is a thoughtful response from Rowell Huesmann. Please have a look.

But before I close, I would like to invite anyone interested to write to me (rjohnson@ramapo.edu) if you are interested in this court case. I have contact information with the people filing the brief for the State of California and with those filing an Amicus brief. Perhaps you would like to read the brief and offer comments, or maybe you might like to critically read the remarks of those who claim that violent videos have no consequences. When I get a list of interested people, I would like to circulate a statement that you may or may not wish to sign. Hopefully, it will become part of the record for the Supreme Court to examine as they weigh this case. If you want to be heard, what could be more challenging than trying to influence the Supreme Court?

Roger Johnson, Professor Emeritus, San Clemente, CA

Below is the letter from Rowell to me and other ISRA Council members:

Many of us have been concerned for a long time about the lack of regulation of the sale of violent media materials to minors. Every time a state in the US has tried to pass such a law (or passed it), the Electronic Game Association and others have instituted court proceedings supported by large sums of money to hire the best lawyers. The California case is unusual only in that the law got passed, the state defending it in court, and the Supreme Court has actually agreed to hear an appeal on the ruling that the law was unconstitutional. I am somewhat pessimistic about the outcome, but you never know – the politics of violence and pornography makes for some strange bedfellows across normal liberal-conservative lines.

The research literature has advanced a lot since the early studies that Len Eron and I did with greatly improved methodologies both for laboratory studies and longitudinal studies. One good review of the material up to 2003 is the piece that Craig Anderson, I, and others published in “Psychological Science in the Public Interest” in 2003. There have also been a number of great meta-analyses published from the 1990s to today by Paik & Comstock, Craig Anderson, and Brad Bushman. A more recent one by Craig and colleagues was just published in *Psychological Bulletin* this year. The best single longitudinal study that I have published was in *Developmental Psychology* in 2003. All of this research literature leads to the inescapable conclusions that for children and adults even brief exposures to scenes of violence (in video games, in visual media, or in real life) cause short-term increases in risk for aggression and repeated exposures over time, at least for youth, cause long-term (perhaps life long) increases in the propensity to behave aggressively.

Nevertheless, doubters that there are significant effects remain – in the violence industries, in journalism, among lawyers, and even among psychologists. I think the reasons for this are many. Briefly, some people have their identities connected to media violence either because they make money off it or because they have used it extensively. Others believe that accepting that media violence causes violence immediately leads to censorship, and they oppose censorship so strongly that they cannot accept what the scientific evidence shows particularly as there are others scientists who say “it doesn’t show that at all.”

So it will be very interesting to see the arguments made before the court and how they rule. I only hope that they give considerable weight to the good research that abounds.

Rowell Huesmann, Director, Research Center for Group Dynamics, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan; Editor, *Aggressive Behavior*

Conference Announcements

Announcement of the XXX CICA meeting

1) CENTRAL EUROPEAN CICA 2010 on Conflict and Aggression in a Society in Transition, to be held on 26-29 August 2010 in Dunaújváros (Hungary).

The web site of the conference is:
<http://cica.duf.hu>

Transition and change became a dominant feature of international life at the fin de siècle. New political, economic, and social realities became part of societal life around the world. Central and East Europe were the first sites of major changes. Accordingly, the C.I.C.A. will hold its 30th conference in the very Center of Europe (**Dunaújváros (Hungary), 2010 August 26 - 29**). It will address conflicts and violence which had accompanied the transition processes. The Dunaújváros C.I.C.A. conference will provide opportunities for truly international, intercultural, and interdisciplinary exchange. The conference program will provide opportunities for presenting oral papers, posters, audio-visual materials, and organization of symposia. One may also attend the conference without submitting any paper.

Deadlines:

Submission of symposia organization proposals: March 30, 2010

Submission of papers and posters abstracts: May 30, 2010

Early Registration: May 30, 2010

Further information: <cica@mail.duf.hu>, with Cc to <aggressionresearch@med.ucm.es>

2) 4th CICA-STR International Conference on Aggression, Political Violence and Terrorism, to be held on 18-20 November 2010 in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia)

The web site of the conference is:
<http://www.4thconferenceviolenceaggression.com>

Addressing political violence and terrorism from analytical categories belonging to psychobiology, neuroscience, criminology, sociology, among others, and not exclusively from the economics and politics, allows us to broaden the horizon of knowledge about one of the greatest impact phenomena in today's societies. In Colombia, especially, it emerges as a great need to lead us to overcome the reductionism in the interpretation of this problem and to enable us to build true paths of peaceful solution for Colombia's war.

The deadline for submission of Abstracts and early registration is: **31 July 2010**

Further information: <info@iepsiv.org>, with Cc to <aggressionresearch@med.ucm.es> and <TR@societyforterrorismresearch.org>

Book Reviews

Buss, D. M. (2005). *The Murderer Next Door: Why the Mind is Designed to Kill*. Penguin Press.

Reviewed by: Tracey Ryan, PhD; Assistant Professor of Psychology; University of Bridgeport

The Murderer Next Door: Why the Mind is Designed to Kill, by David Buss, Penguin Press, 2005, is a chilling look at the biological propensity for murder that is part of our genetic heritage, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or geography. The book's intended audience is the general, educated public, but it is especially relevant for academic social psychologists and anyone teaching psychology, sociology, or anthropology at the university level. David Buss, PhD is Professor of Psychology at the University of Texas and has published close to 200 articles dealing with social and evolutionary psychology.

We have heard the familiar sociological, economic, and physiological theories of murder and violence that were fed to us as students and that we in turn, confidently espouse to our own students. The trouble with these theories, according to Buss, is that they account for few of the actual murders committed in the real world. In his provocative book, Buss takes the reader on an intricate journey designed to present evidence for his evolutionary theory of murder.

Buss argues convincingly of the survival advantage of murdering one's rival, members of a rival group, or even one's own former partner as a means for this malevolent propensity to become a part of us. This is particularly true in the "often dangerous" game of mating, where men and women seek mates of the highest status that will ensure the survival of their own kin. While he argues that those of us whose ancestors made their living through herding rather than farming may have more of this genetic propensity, the trait for murder lies within all of us. Buss provides solid evidence to support his theory.

First, he points to the detailed anecdotes of his college students. Buss asks directly if they have ever thought about murder, along with follow up questions, including what prevented them from doing so. In account after account, the reader recognizes the familiar themes of lust, rage, jealousy, greed, and revenge, played out in autobiographical fantasy by this mostly young adult population. Many of these young adults indicated that the only restraining factors were fears of getting caught and imprisonment.

Perhaps even more convincing than his largely convenience sample of young adults, Buss points to his detailed cross-cultural evidence. He and his research team surveyed thousands of people of all ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status around the globe. Once again, Buss finds the too common theme of cold-blooded murder played out in the fantasies of men and women in a multiplicity of languages from the remote villages of Latin America to the teeming streets of urban India. However, this evidence alone only points to the human propensity for *fantasy* about murder, not the actual behavior. What prevents the fantasy from becoming a reality?

Certainly the rules, values, and consequences handed down to us through the generations and through our legal systems play a role in taming this primitive impulse as described by the respondents in the research. Also, our own internal mechanisms of emotional regulation, logic, moral and spiritual values seem to play a role. The pre-frontal cortex fortunately does seem to provide a regulatory screen for violent impulses as described in the accounts of Buss' respondents. While Buss does not emphasize this in his book, it is clearly seen in his evidence.

Surely, those who do actually commit murder must have actual physical damage to their brains or suffered indirect emotional harm through trauma, abuse, neglect, social, or emotional deprivation. Not so, according to Buss' research. In his reviews of actual murders committed in Michigan and other locations through several databases, the crime, whether committed by a man or a woman, was usually a logical, premeditated solution to a troubling situation. The murderer and victim were ordinary people, caught up in a dangerous web of rage fueled by the intense stress of jealousy or greed. While murderers are more

likely to be men from lower socio-economic groups, the evidence points to ordinary men and women of all ages often viewing murder as a logical solution to a problem, including the problem of one's own life being in danger. This actual analysis of the men and women who commit murder along with the often interesting verdicts in their trials, provides yet another piece of evidence for the evolutionary perspective.

In his book, Buss anticipates much of the criticism directed at an evolutionary theory where violent, murderous impulses are seen as a part of human nature. He also deals with criticism from the feminist perspective that would reject the role of women as cold, calculating creatures seeking mates only to provide resources and security. Likewise, the criticism that men are portrayed as novelty seeking, lustful animals out to get the youngest, most nubile women to increase their status and esteem is likely to be raised. These negative views of human nature certainly conflict with the "positive" psychology movement of late that seeks out the positive elements of human nature, especially altruism, cooperation, optimism, and love.

The positive psychology movement has been so seductive and popular partially because it protects us from looking deeper into human nature. However, in order for us to be credible as social scientists, we have to be willing to recognize, describe, and accept both perspectives, when there is convincing evidence to do so. The positive psychology movement has value in seeking to promote positive traits, which are also present in our current behaviors and evolutionary history. However, coming to terms with the negative traits can eventually have positive outcomes for society, as Buss explains. In order to actually prevent murder and violence, we must deeply accept and appreciate the root causes, even when those causes are not politically popular or when they make us uncomfortable.

Buss himself points to the value of deeply understanding the intentions of women who murder their partners in cold blood, often while their partners are sleeping. Most of these women are victims of emotional and physical abuse who see the action as the only way to protect themselves or their children. Yet, they often cannot successfully argue self-defense in court, due to the highly premeditated nature of their crime. We need to understand this research, in order to create a system of justice that better takes into account the motives of these defendants. Our human service systems also need to provide better economic and physical protection for women in these situations, so that alternatives to murder are more viable.

Furthermore, this research is useful in understanding the particular difficulties that many men face in a hyper competitive world where status and materialism are seen as the only way to obtain a mate. Those who experience cold, cruel, verbal rejection by the women they approach often experience painful blows that may have a permanent impact on their self esteem. Perhaps our society should include "anti-harsh rejection" training in the same manner as we have incorporated "anti-bullying training" in our public and private schools systems. We could also present more positive, realistic male role models in the media, emphasizing sensitivity and kindness over status and materialism. Just as there has been a call for more realistic female images in the media, we should cry out for more realistic male images as well. While media images will not ultimately change human nature, they may have a more positive impact on the way that ordinary men and women view themselves and their value in the world.

Buss deserves praise for this provocative book, the *Murderer Next Door*. While it is often shocking and disturbing, it is likely to lead to important debate about the particular characteristics that compose human nature itself and how we provide evidence for the presence of these traits. We can only advance the social sciences if we have the courage and will to accept the tenets of a theory that may not be popular or positive. This is sometimes difficult during a time when we are expected to be politically correct in the classroom and in the courtroom. In turn, recognizing and accepting the traits that are not so flattering in our nature may lead to changes that ultimately improve society as a whole. At the very least, *The Murderer Next Door* has certainly changed the way that I personally lay the conceptual groundwork for understanding aggression and violence in my own psychology classes.

Flannery, R. B. (2009). *The Violent Person: Professional Risk Management, Strategies for Safety and Care*. American Mental Health Foundation Books.

Reviewed by: Jane L. Ireland; Professor; School of Psychology, University of Central Lancashire and Violence Treatment Lead, Mersey Care NHS Trust

This is a very accessible book whose audience is perhaps more likely to represent practitioners than academics. Academics may find the limited referencing within the text and simplistic models, a drawback. Some of the statements made were simply not supported by empirical study. For example, why is an ‘inappropriate use’ of dark glasses, a warning sign of a ‘loss of control’ (p. 39)?

If like myself however you are *also* a practitioner (or both practitioner and academic) you can see its value for a ground-staff audience. By this I mean that it has appeal for the uneducated or new staff member who is trying to manage and/or coordinate responses to actual and potentially threatening situations, which may or may not lead to displays of aggression. It also covers a very broad remit with a useful inclusion of anecdotes, which increases the accessibility of the text.

You also formed a view that whereas in parts it was rather up-to-date, such as the discussions focusing on the role of mental illness and aggression, in other sections it required updating. The ‘theories of human violence’, as one example, focused more on the *correlates* of aggression as opposed to what academics understand as theories.

This though is a likely product of an attempt to write in an accessible manner to a non-academic audience, and to cover a considerable amount of rather weighty academic content in an abbreviated text. In fact as I read the book I could see that it could work equally well as a series of handouts or ‘help-guides’.

Thus I would conclude by stating that if this book is read with the mindset that it is written for the lay-practitioner/staff-member who requires an accessible text that can give them some valuable pointers, then it is to be highly commended. Core academics or the highly specialised practitioner will not find it adds to their repertoire of knowledge but then I do not feel that this is the real aim of the book. In fact I would go as far as to say that there is a market for more lay-accessible texts, such as this, that do make an attempt to educate on core relevant literature as opposed to pontificating on the authors’ chosen (often single) preference. The text certainly achieves this.

Highlights of the 2010 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Philadelphia, PA, USA, March 11-13, 2010

The 2010 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) was held from March 11-13 in Philadelphia, PA. Below, I have included listings of the paper symposia linked to the keyword “aggression.” For space considerations, I did not include the listings of the numerous posters on this topic, but you can access those from the SRA website that includes the 2010 Online Program (<http://www.s-r-a.org/meeting/schedule/2010/>). If you wish to obtain more information about these papers, you can find the email addresses of the authors of those papers using the SRA website’s search engine: <http://www.s-r-a.org/meeting/schedule/2010/search.cfm>. I hope you find these listings helpful!

Physiological Predictors of Antisocial Behavior in Adolescence

Chair: Jelle Jurrit Sijtsema

1. Testosterone and Antisocial Behavior During Puberty: A Longitudinal Test of Cortisol as a Moderator of Antisocial Behavior
Elizabeth J. Susman, Melissa K. Peckins, Samantha Dockray, Jodi Heaton, Lorah D. Dorn
[Hormones, Antisocial behavior]
2. Blunted Physiological Reactivity Predicts Relational Aggression in Women With a History of Sexual Abuse
Dianna K. Murray-Close, Alessandra H. Rellini [Physiology, Aggression]
3. Mediating Role of Personality on the Longitudinal Relationship Between Heart Rate and Antisocial Behavior
Jelle Jurrit Sijtsema, Rene Veenstra, Siegwart Lindenbergh, Arie M. Van Roon, Frank Verhulst, Johan Ormel, Harriëtte Riese [Antisocial behavior, Physiology]

Moral Development and Adolescent's Aggressive and Prosocial Behaviour

Chairs: Dagmar Strohmeier, Simona C. S. Caravita

Discussant: Shelley C. Hymel

1. Sympathy, Moral Motivation, and Adolescent's Prosocial and Aggressive Behaviors
Tina Malti, Luciano Gasser, Irene Susanna Kriesi, Marlis C. Buchmann [Moral development, Aggression]
2. Rule Perception or Moral Disengagement? Associations of Moral Cognition With Bullying and Defending in Adolescence
Simona C. S. Caravita, Gianluca Gini [Moral development, Bullying]
3. Prospective Links Between Moral Disengagement, Reactive, Instrumental and Overt Aggression in Preadolescence
Dagmar Strohmeier [Aggression, Moral development]

Social-Ecological Contexts of Early Adolescent Aggression, Bullying, and Peer Victimization

Chair: Philip C. Rodkin

1. Friendship and Social Network Dynamics in Bully-Victim Dyads
Deborah A. Temkin, Scott D. Gest [Victimization, Friendship]
2. Prospective and Attractive Peer Group Influences on Early Adolescent Aggression
Christian Berger [Aggression, Peer influence]
3. Classroom-Level Status Hierarchies, Academic Levels, and the Social Status of Aggressive Behavior
Claire F. Garandeau, Philip C. Rodkin [Aggression, Classroom behavior]
4. Individual-, Classroom- and School-Level Risk Factors for Victimization
Silja Saarento, Antti Kärnä, Marinus Voeten, Ernest Van Every Hodges, Christina Salmivalli [Classroom behavior, Victimization]

Biosocial Bases of Adolescent Antisocial Behavior

Chair: Adrian Raine

1. Autonomic Underarousal in Callous-Unemotional Boys From Benign Home Environments
Yu Gao, Adrian Raine, Annis L C Fung [Antisocial behavior, Biological factors]
2. PTSD Moderates the Relationship Between Cortisol Reactivity and Aggression in Adolescent Males
Melissa Peskin, Adrian Raine [Aggression, Hormones]
3. Electroencephalography as a Marker for Delinquency in Sons of Criminals and Non-Criminals
Anna Rudo-Hutt, Adrian Raine [Delinquency, EEG/ERP]
4. Child Abuse and Gender Mediate the Violence - Schizotypal Personality Relationship
Keri K. Wong, Adrian Raine [Violence, Personality]

Aggression and Peer Victimization: Form, Function, and Gender

Chairs: Catherine P. Bradshaw, Tracy Evian Waasdorp

Discussant: Albert D. Farrell

1. Examining Gender Differences in the Forms of Peer Victimization: An Application of Item Response Theory
Catherine P. Bradshaw, Katherine Bevans, Tracy Evian Waasdorp, Anne Sawyer [Measurement, Aggression]
2. Examining Adolescents' Responses to Peer Victimization: A Latent Class Approach
Tracy Evian Waasdorp, Catherine P. Bradshaw [Aggression, Coping]
3. The Association Between Forms of Aggression and Social Status Among Urban Youth
Stephen S. Leff, Tracy Evian Waasdorp, Beth Necowitz Hoffman, Brooke S. Paskewich [Aggression, Social status]

Relational Aggression in Friendships: The Roles of Jealousy, Anger, Popularity and Friendship Features

Chair: Tina Daniels

1. Behind the Hurt: Children's Underlying Emotions and Desires and Their Reported Use of Relational and Physical Aggression
Danielle Quigley, Tina Daniels [Aggression, Social relationships]
2. "If You Are My Friend, Why Are You Being Mean to Me?" Popularity and Aggression in Early Adolescent Female Friendships
Susan Lollis, Vanessa Da Silva, Trudy Willis [Aggression, Social relationships]
3. The Role of Friendships and Group Processes in the Use of Relational/Indirect/Social Aggression: A Mixed Methods Investigation
Jennifer L. Mazur, Patricia A. McDougall [Aggression, Social relationships]
4. Assessing the Contribution of Relational Aggression to Friendship Quality Using an Actor-Partner Interdependence Model
Carol-Anne Hendry [Aggression, Social relationships]

Heterogeneity in Aggressive and Externalizing Behavior in Adolescence: Individual Characteristics and Social Contexts

Chair: Kathryn Monahan

1. Changes in Prosocial, Asocial, and Aggressive Interactions With Peers in Early Adolescence
Kathryn Monahan, Cathryn Booth-LaForce [Aggression, Peers]
2. Popular and Non-Popular Physically Aggressive Preadolescents: Differences in Peer Affiliation and Continuity of Aggression
Hongling Xie, Bing Shi [Aggression, Popularity]
3. Adolescents' Resistance to Peer Influence: Does It Modulate Family-Based Effects on Externalizing Behavior?
Elizabeth Shulman, Elizabeth Cauffman [Antisocial behavior, Psychosocial maturity]
4. Romantic Relationships and Adolescent Externalizing Behavior: The Role of Psychosocial Maturity
Julia Dmitrieva, Kathryn Monahan, Elizabeth Cauffman [Romantic relationships, Psychosocial maturity]

The Interpersonal Legacy of Abuse: Exploring How Violence and Maltreatment Increase Risk for Adolescent Dating Aggression

Chair: John H. Grych

1. Sexual and Physical (Re)victimization of Sexually Abused Females: The Plausible Role of Global Dysregulation
Jennie Noll, Jaclyn Barnes, Penelope K. Trickett [Sexual abuse, Romantic relationships]
2. Pathways to Dating Aggression Among Sexually Abused Youth
Candice Feiring, Valerie A. Simon, Ellen Barrett [Sexual abuse, Romantic relationships]
3. Implicit and Explicit Cognitive Processes in the Transmission of Aggression From Family to Dating Relationships
Ernest N. Jouriles, John H. Grych, Renee McDonald [Romantic relationships, Aggression]
4. Emotional Processes as Mediators of the Impact of Family and Community Violence on Romantic Relationships in Adolescence
John H. Grych, Ernest N. Jouriles, Renee McDonald [Romantic relationships, Aggression]

Aggression in the Peer Context: Innovative Social Network Designs to Clarify Influence and Selection Processes

Chairs: Jan Kornelis Dijkstra, Christian Berger

Discussant: Thomas J. Dishion

1. Peer Social Networks, Influence and Aggression: Who Is Influential for Whom?
Kelly L. Rulison, Scott D. Gest [Aggression, Peer influence]
2. Does Aggression Explain Friendship Selection? The Mediating Role of Network Characteristics, Gender and Social Status
Christian Berger, Jan Kornelis Dijkstra [Aggression, Friendship]
3. The Role of Aggression and Victimization in the Development of Weapon Carrying in the Peer Context
Jan Kornelis Dijkstra, Scott D. Gest, Siegwart Lindenberg, Rene Veenstra, Antonius H. N. Cillessen [Aggression, Weapons, possession/carrying]



THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH ON AGGRESSION

Founded in 1972

ISRA: an Interdisciplinary Society

ISRA, the International Society for Research on Aggression, founded in 1972, is an international interdisciplinary, organization dedicated to the study and dissemination of information on the causes and consequences of aggressive behavior and violence in all of its forms and contexts.

The Social Burden of Violence

The human capacity for aggressiveness and violence inflicts a considerable burden on society. Obviously, it can lead to death and immediate physical injury, but it also creates long-term physical and emotional disabilities. In addition, violence has a profound effect on those who witness it, such as the families and communities of the victims. Moreover, it impairs the ability of communities to address important public health issues, such as infectious diseases, malnutrition, urban decay, and environmental hazards. Violence and aggression often prevents the delivery of critical public services, such as emergency management and education. Such effects on society tend to exacerbate the very adverse social conditions that promote aggression, facilitating a vicious circle, with violence as a crucial factor.

home page: www.israsociety.com

ISRA's Core Mission

Effectively addressing violence and aggression, whether it be child abuse, domestic violence, homicide, terrorism, sexual violence, or civil wars, requires a sustained focus by international scientists. *ISRA's principal mission* since 1972 is to show that aggression and violence, as well as alternative ways to resolve conflicts, can be successfully studied using scientific methods.

Members, Meetings and Media

- *ISRA* members gather for *World Meetings* every other year on alternating continents.
- All members receive *Aggressive Behavior* the official journal of ISRA at a discount.
- Members receive the *ISRA E-Bulletin*.

From Understanding to Solutions

Finding solutions to the pervasive consequences of aggression, requires a multidisciplinary approach. To understand the complex causes, our research addresses brain and other physical processes that underlie the human capacity for violence and the psychological processes that facilitate violent actions. Strategies providing alternatives to violence are studied together with the social factors that serve to promote or prevent violent behavior. Importantly, students of aggression studies are increasingly moving beyond the simple awareness of new results in other disciplines, to develop important research approaches that span multiple disciplines. As a result, novel areas of synergy and convergence between different disciplines and methodologies emerge. *ISRA meetings* and media provide the forum and the multidisciplinary audience.

Join ISRA & Turn page! ►

A Multidisciplinary Society

ISRA is home to virtually all scientific disciplines interested in aggression and violence, such as psychology, neuroscience, anthropology, animal behavior, endocrinology, primatology, psychiatry, genetics, pharmacology, sociology, and criminology. Joining **ISRA** will help you to reach the right audience for your own research. Its meetings provide an optimal forum to learn about novel concepts and advances in other fields. Members enjoy reduced registration fees at **ISRA meetings**.

Awards

- Each World Meeting the **John Paul Scott Award** is presented to a scientist with a distinguished lifetime contribution to aggression research.
- **Presentation Awards** are granted to young scientists for excellence in presentation of original research to a multidisciplinary audience.

The ISRA Logo

The ISRA logo reflects our intention to advance the understanding of a deeply rooted behavior. The humanoid figure in the logo was modified from a petrograph called "the warrior" on the Minnesota-Ontario border¹⁾. The figure seems to express the ambivalent human attitude towards aggression. The figure faces us, a spear in its left hand, reflecting potential to kill. The tip of the spear points downwards, so the weapon is not about to be thrown. The right hand is up and open, a stop-signal in many cultures, and often a signal of peaceful intent. The heart-shaped body expresses force and human's emotional nature.

¹⁾ M Furtman, *Magic on the rocks* (2000) ISBN: 0-916691-02-0

Home page: www.israsociety.com

Membership

ISRA has four kinds of members:

- **Fellows** are scientists working in any biological, psychological or social science on problems of aggression.
- **Associates** are scientists or professionals supportive of the Society's goals but who are not actively engaged in aggression research.
- **Student members** are graduate students nominated by a Fellow of the Society.
- **Life Fellows** are chosen on a significant lifetime record in aggression research.

Joining ISRA

In order to join the society, please send a CV to:

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