

book stand. Although Dr. Lieberman says that “terror management theory has come of age,” this volume is unconvincing that it clearly has. I question how relevant the experiences of psychology students in a laboratory situation are to today’s reality and whether this book is a useful volume for psychiatrists and others in helping individuals deal with terrorism and the abuse of fear of it by politicians and others in our society today. The book is redundant in many parts, not clearly written for psychiatrists, and does not help those specifically familiar with this field of work. Nor do I think it will help the victims of these attacks.

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### Violence Against Women

TO THE EDITOR: The review of my book by Gail Erlick Robinson, M.D., F.R.C.P.C. (1), *Violence and Gender Reexamined* (2), was an ideological attack that completely misrepresented its content. Yes, I criticize the feminist approach (still legal here in Pennsylvania), but I do not blame nagging wives for violent husbands nor excuse rapists for their uncontrollable sexual urges. Dr. Robinson imagined that.

My book examines how violence against women is different from other forms of violence. Are men who assault their wives more likely to be motivated by a desire for control than women who assault their husbands or men who assault other men? Is violence against women less likely to be reported to the police than violence against men, and are female victims more likely to be assigned blame? Is violence involving couples different from other violence, regardless of gender? These comparisons are odious from an ideological perspective but necessary from a scientific perspective.

The central conclusion of my book is that violence against women should be understood as violence, *not* sexism. Misogyny plays at most a trivial role in violence toward women. Typically, men who commit rape or assault their wives commit other crimes as well and have no more negative attitudes toward women than do other criminals. Male dominance and control may play some role in spousal violence, but that role is trivial, at least in Western countries. Evidence suggests that American wives are just as controlling as their husbands, although husbands use violence more often for that purpose.

We do have higher rates of violence against women than many other countries, but we have higher rates of violence against men as well. If offenders attacked people randomly, wouldn’t half their victims be women? In fact, women are *less* likely to be the victim of violence than men (here and everywhere). If we are interested in gender differences in victimization, we need to explain men’s greater victimization, not women’s. Ask not why men hit women; ask why they don’t do it more often. Evidence suggests that the chivalry norm is at least part of the answer. That norm leads to the protection of women and more police intervention on their behalf.

Dr. Robinson completely ignored the extensive statistical evidence presented in the book, giving the excuse that there was not enough methodological detail to evaluate it. In fact, I used standard data sources and provide plenty of detail. I encourage readers who are interested in violence and gender from a scientific perspective to look at my book.

### References

1. Robinson GE: Bk rev, RB Felson: Violence and Gender Reexamined. *Am J Psychiatry* 2003; 160:1711–1712
2. Felson RB: Violence and Gender Reexamined. Washington, DC, American Psychological Association, 2002

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### Dr. Robinson Replies

TO THE EDITOR: It is predictable that Dr. Felson would be unhappy with my review of his book. In terms of Dr. Felson’s criticisms, I feel that the quotes from his book that I used in my review justify my claims. He also misunderstands my point. Violence against women is different from violence experienced by men. Violence against men is most often committed by other men (1), whereas North American women are more likely to be killed, beaten, or sexually assaulted by a male partner or former partner than by a stranger (1, 2). It is not that men hate women. Many partners and ex-partners who abuse women maintain that they love them. They physically abuse them because they can. When some men feel angry, frustrated, threatened, jealous, fearful, or demeaned by others, they can take out their feelings on their female partners. Why can they? It is because men more often have the greater physical strength, financial clout, and societal power to control their partners. Women, for a variety of psychological and practical reasons, hesitate to report such crimes, and, even if they do, courts are poor at protecting them.

As to the scientific merit of his book, one may look to Dr. Felson’s preface, in which he notes that he wrote his book because he has had a difficult time getting his articles published and his views accepted. He, of course, blames this on feminists objecting to his attack on political correctness. I wish that feminists were as powerful as he alleges. However, I believe that his difficulties, both with those articles and this book, have more to do with his selective use of statistics. The facts remain that 22.1% of women versus 7.4% of men in the United States have been physically abused by a partner (1). Of women reporting being raped or physically assaulted since age 16, 64% were victimized by a current or former husband, cohabiting partner, boyfriend, or date (1). This is in contrast to 16.2% of men victimized by current or former partners (1). Four out of five people murdered by their spouses are women murdered by men (3). Men cause more serious injuries, are more likely to engage in multiple acts, and more often use weapons (4). I stand by the comments I made in my review.

### References

1. Tjaden P, Thoennes N: Extent, Nature and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey: Research Report NC5 181867. Washington, DC, US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2000
2. Hotton T: Spousal Violence After Marital Separation: Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 85-002-XPE 21(7). Ottawa, Juristat Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2001
3. Statistics Canada: Homicide Statistics 1998. Ottawa, Ministry of Industry, 1999
4. Tjaden P, Thoennes N: Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women. Wash-