

## Surplus Theory by Rod Keays

One contemporary viewer might ask, men's issues? Aren't men the problem, I mean don't they cause all the wars and capitalism and that? Well, yeah, maybe.

However in the real world it's a bit more complicated than that. Traditional men's roles have been around for at least ten thousand years, maybe more. They were formed as a reaction to humanity settling down onto the land after the vast majority of wild game had been killed for food. Humans found they could domesticate some of the wild animals that were left and also grow their own grains and fruits. They no longer had to be constant wanderers-they could live in a home.

Somebody had to decide who got what land. Was it good farmland; was it near water or by the sea? Usually the strong or the talented got the best land and their families came along to enjoy it too. Some people did not like the way it was divided up because they were left with poor dry soils, far from roads or rivers-basically poor quality. They began to complain.

The privileged few with the best land and resources began to produce a surplus and then sold it to the poor farmers or the untalented at high prices or in trade for labor. Eventually rebellions started and armies were created to protect the surplus and the wealth of the elite grew.

World history has not changed much from this human created society. It could have been different by acting collaboratively, but that is not what the clever elite did. They made everyone fight against everyone else and called it masculinity. Women in general and gentler men did not stand a chance. Any man who could not fight his way to wealth was not a man. As you can imagine the pressure on men to win was enormous. The elites still control the purse strings and nothing seems likely to change in the short-term. Humanity's struggle against hoarded wealth will continue, but with new information, hope for the future may be rekindled. New forms of masculine identity incorporating collaborative strategies are coming into vogue. I do worry that women, who are now entering the top levels of the workforce and in great numbers, will take on this same struggle against everyone else and call it independence.

It is my hope the reader can begin to view men, masculinity and independence in a different light. The vast majority of men and women do not intentionally want to fight; there was just no other choice-until now. It was a created and enforced struggle. The question is, are we ready to share the surplus yet?

This is the real struggle, so let's not allow the surplus to divide us any longer.

Many aboriginal societies have beaten paths to collaborative wealth sharing traditions. The Potlatch is one of those.