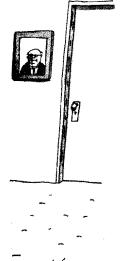
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rising panic. The euro zone is already in the room with that elephant; unless some decisive steps are quickly taken, the rest of the world will soon be joining it.

—John Lanchester

GENDER STUDIES THE END?



Intelligence Squared U.S., the five-year- ■ old debate-as-entertainment series that takes place at N.Y.U.'s Skirball Center, recently offered as a topic for discussion the proposition "Men Are Finished." One of the proponents of the motion was Dan Abrams, the legal analyst for ABC News and the author of "Man Down: Proof Beyond a Reasonable Doubt That Women Are Better Cops, Drivers, Gamblers, Spies, World Leaders, Beer Tasters, Hedge Fund Managers, and Just About Everything Else." Abrams, who is fortyfive, affluent, good-looking, and unmarried, would not say, in the greenroom before the debate, that he, personally, felt finished on account of his gender. "But writing the book got me worried about the future of men," he claimed.

David Zinczenko, the senior vice-president and editor-in-chief of *Men's Health*, was speaking against the motion. "Men aren't finished," he scoffed. "Dan may be finished." Zinczenko wore a dark suit and was impeccably groomed, and, like Abrams, looked well finished rather than finished-finished. The two men are close friends—last year the Style section of the *Times* chronicled their loungehopping habits and mentioned their Hamptons share—and Abrams joked that they had been to a bar for shots before showing up for the debate. "Dan had a smoothie with wheatgrass in it," Zinczenko said.

"I turned in my man card when I wrote this book," Abrams conceded.

"And your job as a columnist for *Men's Health* is on the line," Zinczenko joshed.

Perhaps as evidence of the veracity of the proposition, the lead debaters on both sides were women. Hanna Rosin, the *Slate* columnist and the author of the forthcoming book "The End of Men," spoke persuasively in favor. "Women have something—some sociologists call it grit, some call it engagement, some call it focus, some call it social intelligence," Rosin said. She was challenged by Christina Hoff Sommers, the author of "The War Against Boys," who disputed the suggestion that, just because women's lot had improved, men were in decline. "We are not separate teams competing for a trophy," Sommers argued. "We're dance partners. We're Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers."

As the women debated, the men lobbed competing one-liners across the divide. Abrams: "Heck, God has decided men are finished. Between 1995 and 2008, eighty-two per cent of lightning strikes were on men." Zinczenko: "Men can't possibly be finished. When men are finished, they roll over immediately and go to sleep. That's not happening. Clearly, men are not rolling over." Zinczenko pointed out that men did not seem troubled by any burgeoning of women's power. "I don't think anybody came through a gauntlet of men, protesting the topic of this debate out there, burning their jockstraps," he said. Abrams countered that the absence of jockstrap protests was part of the problem. Men seem to "think it's cool to be a slacker," he replied.

With the debate's results tallied— Rosin and Abrams won decisively—the participants retired to Thalassa, a restaurant in Tribeca, for a dinner hosted by Robert Rosenkranz, the financier and philanthropist, who is the major funder of the series. At the bar, Zinczenko was gracious in defeat. "They were a dynamic duo-I'd have voted for them," he said. As is customary at Intelligence Squared dinners, Rosenkranz insisted on keeping the debate going at least until the appetizers arrived, and he invited questions from guests. Kate White, the editor-in-chief of Cosmopolitan, suggested that men are greater risk-takers, and asked whether, if men had been finished in the fifteenth century, Europeans would ever have crossed the Atlantic. Would explorers have trekked to the South Pole?

Abrams stood to respond. "There would have been slightly less exploration, and fewer wars," he said. "I will say that risk-taking can be incredibly valuable. Now that the debate is over, and we have won, I will concede that men are not totally finished."

—Rebecca Mead

FIELD TRIP NEW JERSEYSA



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