Epic Glory: Nerd Identity, Manhood Acts, & Dagorhir at a Northeastern College Campus

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EPIC GLORY:
NERD IDENTITY, MANHOOD ACTS, & DAGORHIR
AT A NORTHEASTERN COLLEGE CAMPUS

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts

James Steven Martin
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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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The purpose of this study is to understand if and how dominant notions of masculinity are constructed within social groups stigmatized for their interests and typically consisting of low status, subordinate men (nerds). The focus of this particular study is on a nearly all male campus group of “Live Action Role Players” called “Dagorhir.” I explore how sub-cultural processes in the construction of group identity are gendered through their relation to the manhood acts perspective (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). I focus on how the meanings of actions by (mostly male) participants referred to as “epic glory” relate to the elicitation of deference, resistance of exploitation, and assertion of control key in signifying manhood. I then relate these group processes to the unintended consequences of perpetuating gender inequality within the group and elsewhere.