
**Review of *The Dark Side of
Relationship Pursuit: From Attraction
to Obsession and Stalking* (2nd ed.)**

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Second editions of texts too often fail to offer something new, often relying on a few updated references. In contrast, Brian Spitzberg and William Cupach's recent "dark side" work is a significant contribution in its own right. Although the text focuses solely on obsessive relational intrusion (ORI) and stalking constructs, making part of the subtitle "from attraction..." somewhat misleading, it is nonetheless one of the most comprehensive *and* useful texts to be found on these constructs. In addition to extremely thorough and organized representation of all major stalking/ORI issues to date, there are several original contributions in this text worth noting, along with some caveats for the reader unfamiliar with the nuances of "dark side" research.

If for no other reason, this text is worth obtaining merely for the authors' inclusion of full measures of stalking and ORI perpetration and victimization (in varied forms and effect outcomes) modified and updated for current researchers. But there are myriad reasons to not only read it, but to add it to one's library. The authors have given particular attention to

all stalking/ORI research (although not up-to-date on other concurrent topics, a fact to be discussed subsequently) right up to the 2014 publication date, which makes it truly useful-for-researchers and advanced students of “relational dark side” literature. The authors’ many previous publications could be obtained independently for much of the background overview they present to contextualize/historicize research on these issues. But the text also contains “new” compilations for readers in the form of multiple, comprehensive typologies (e.g., victims’ symptoms, motives of stalkers, “adapted” stalker typologies, tactic summaries, threat-types, and coping). Additionally, readers are presented with an extremely detailed “descriptive meta-analysis” study forming the basis of many of these typologies. This particular text shows the authors excel – more so than many who write on these topics – in presenting almost all of the pertinent information a stalking/ORI literature-novice needs to understand the subfield, while simultaneously avoiding mere repetition of information they compile. Overall, I found this text to be an impressive contribution to the area/s of ORI/stalking.

Readers unfamiliar with the many controversies and complexities found in relational dark-side scholarship may internalize the authors’ perspectives as *the* truth (as opposed to *a* truth); as a result, some of the sections may warrant further explanation or a deeper reading into the relational dark-side arena. For example, this text both explicitly and implicitly repeatedly interchanges sex and gender. Statements like “gender, and its biological manifestation, sex” (p. 26) can be alienating (also see pp. 69, 88, 95, 97, 109, 126-7, 151, 168...) and reflect a dated viewpoint in light of clear conceptual distinctions currently made by relational scholars. Most readers may not find this problematic; but because so much of the debate around general dark-side research centers on embodied sex (e.g., victim/perpetrator-parity, as in “family-violence” or conflict-approaches versus feminist perspectives) as well as gender identity and/or performance (e.g., femininity versus masculinity in masochism in psychodynamic perspectives), equating sex and gender as done in this text may confuse the issues for the less-informed reader. Additionally, where the authors discuss women’s vulnerabilities (clearly established from past and ongoing research), they do not include the reasons (e.g., causal mechanisms and interpretations

with potential to address root problems) for these findings. Thus, this text gives little attention to the cultural dynamics that form/shape sex, gender, violence, and disparities contingent on those factors. Because they are central to discussions of stalking/ORI (and to most dark-side scholarship), these key areas – sex versus gender role/identity, nonverbal communication, intimate violence – would benefit from the otherwise-impressive inclusion of interdisciplinary, *current* studies that the authors provide for stalking/ORI.

The authors cast such a broad yet detailed net over their topic that I was able to immediately begin using the text in my own works on intimate partner violence, relationship intrusion, and former-partner stalking, both technological (a work-in-progress on their assessment measure which I am eager to follow) and in-person. I also plan to incorporate various sections of this text into my undergraduate interpersonal, abuse, gender, family, and sex courses. Spitzberg and Cupach comprehensively present ORI/stalking and then contextualize and apply their discussions in ways that victims, practitioners, scholars, and students will easily understand, and more importantly, can *use*.

Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (2014). *The dark side of relationship pursuit: From attraction to obsession and stalking* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

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JOURNALS UPDATE

Update on *Personal Relationships*

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It has now been two years since Terence Campbell’s editorial team handed over the reins to our current team, and the journal is in very good shape. The 2-year impact factor for *Personal Relationships* has risen to 1.01, with a 5-year impact factor of 1.84. Currently the journal’s impact factor ranks 10th in the