

The Comparative Sociology Of Disabled Masculinities

A Bourdieusian Analysis Of Autobiographies By Men With Spinal Cord Injuries and Autism Spectrum Conditions

Timothy Barrett

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University

March 2017

Statement of Originality

I declare that this thesis is my own work, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by any other person, nor material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree of a university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Timothy Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop for the letter 'y'.

Timothy Barrett

Acknowledgements

While academic qualifications are awarded to individuals, an invisible network of actors inevitably underpins the completion of a doctorate. Three sets of individuals, groups and institutions are especially deserving of acknowledgement for their contributions to this research:

To my supervisor Dr Helen Keane, the level of critical insight received has been pivotal to the construction of this thesis. The processes of synthesising extant knowledge, collecting and analysing data, representing results, editing, and pursuing publication would not have been possible without her feedback. Thanks are also owing to my supervisory panel, comprising Dr Rosanne Kennedy and Dr Alastair Greig, for their assistance with all elements of the research design.

To the Australian National University, the financial support provided to me in the form of an ANU University Research Scholarship has been the invaluable material basis to the production of this thesis. I acknowledge and appreciate the university's continued commitment to supporting sociological research, and in particular, for recognising the importance of academic interrogations of the socially dynamic realms of disability and gender. This research is also supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship.

To the authors of the autobiographical material employed within this research, I can only express my sincerest gratitude for making your narrated experiences and insights publicly available. I hope this thesis does them justice, and makes a small contribution towards improving awareness and understanding of the gendered experiences of Spinal Cord Injuries and Autism Spectrum Conditions.

Abstract

Sociological examinations of the intersection between disability and masculinity remain underdeveloped. While insightful analyses have considered the mechanisms through which impairments may interrupt socially valued performances of masculinity, a number of key limitations persist. Extant work within the field has not considered in sufficient depth and complexity: the *comparative diversity* of the gender/disability intersection; the role(s) of *affective embodiment*; and the *generative interaction* between distinct impairment forms and strategic enactments of masculinity. Employing forty published autobiographies from men with Spinal Cord Injuries and Autism Spectrum Conditions, this thesis uses Bourdieusian social theory to conceptualise the dynamic interaction between corporeality and overlapping experiences of privilege/exclusion. *Spinal Cord Injuries* are conceived of as radically disrupting possessed and anticipated gendered resources, alongside a relative stability of culturally normative, internalised prisms of masculine self-evaluation. Yet, narrators within this group negotiated the encompassing social environment with a knowing, gendered fluidity, through narrative practices of rugged heroism, the privileging of the cerebral, and participation within masculinising interdependencies. *Autism Spectrum Conditions* were, similarly, conceptualised as involving limited access to valued gendered resources; yet, a phenomenologically disjunctured embodiment of taken-for-granted meaning appeared to interrupt dialectics between internalised and externalised modes of self-evaluation. This group's "alien" habitus could motivate scholastic forms of learning designed to develop "social skills", often fostering gendered practices that were recognisably "masculine", but lacking in interpersonal/cultural fluidity. The thesis concludes with a comparative examination of the two groups under consideration, contending that, alongside significant points of resonance, their experiences were tremendously distinctive in terms of gendered embodiment, temporality, the habitus, social/biomedical interventions, and the "feel for the game".

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Introduction

Disability Studies, Gender and Disabled Masculinities

From its inception, disability studies has been characterised by coalescing academic and activist objectives, articulating understandings of disability as foundationally related to hierarchically organised and historically specific social arrangements, rather than emerging from the intrinsic biological/cognitive/sensory matter of particular modes of embodiment (Finkelstein, 1980, 1996b; Oliver, 1990; Linton, 1998; Longmore, 2003; Thomas, 2004a; Withers, 2012). While this insight has become passé within the specific confines of the field, the importance of its insistent repetition rests with the continuing patterns of historical, institutional and cultural inertia that normalise understandings of disability as the “problem” of a deficient corporeality, rather than the social landscape within which non-normative embodiments are embedded (Roulstone et al., 2012: 3; Davis, 2013b; Burke, 2015). This is not to underestimate significant progress in the area. Both within the realms of scholarship, and broader representational, legal and economic settings, disability studies, and interrelated activist networks/associations, has made its presence increasingly felt (Söder, 2009: 67-8; Roulstone et al., 2012: 3).

Yet, the impact of disability studies remains somewhat blunted by tendencies towards academic ghettoisation (Longmore, 2003: 5; Garland-Thomson, 2011: 13-4). While scholarship within the field is often simplistically regarded as being “about” disabled people (Opini, 2016: 67), conceptualisations of non-normative modes of embodiment/sensory perception/cognition might better be understood as pivotal to sociology’s central thematic and theoretical concerns (Shildrick, 2012: 30). Disability studies’ contributions to debates surrounding identity, community, power, ideology, social structure, subjectivity, inequality, embodiment, social interaction, progress, social justice, and aesthetics are often neglected, or acknowledged only marginally (Longmore, 2003: 5-6; Garland-Thomson, 2011: 16-7; Shuttleworth and Meekosha, 2013). Indeed, while it has become conventional to recognise (albeit often tokenistically) the relevance of “intersectional” factors relating to gender/ethnicity/class/sexuality within sociological research, disability, in most instances, remains invisible as a potentially relevant or intervening question. This tendency becomes especially problematic within the context of strong

historical forces that invisibly, but persistently, grant theoretical, representational and ontological universality to a non-disabled subject as the default representative of humankind (Shildrick, 2012; Davis, 2013b: 9). More prosaically, it should also be acknowledged that exclusionary customs continue to inform the quotidian life of academic practice, ranging from the use of inaccessible architectural structures, the pedagogical prioritisation of particular modes of communication, the development of textbooks within which disability is ignored or referred to problematically, and the unchecked use of ableist language (Taub and Fanflik, 2000; Shuttleworth and Meekosha, 2013: 355).

If the wide-reaching theoretical and empirical contributions offered by disability studies remain somewhat neglected, it is simultaneously the case that disability studies itself has been thriving through increasingly expansive engagements with multiple conceptual paradigms. The origins of the field are usually associated with historical materialist theorisations of the “social model” in the United Kingdom (UPIAS, 1975; Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1990), and functionalist, symbolic interactionist and minority group approaches in the United States (Barnes, 1996: 43-8; Oliver, 1996b: 19-25; Withers, 2012: 82-4). Yet, while these prisms form a substantial component of disability studies’ intellectual heritage, the preceding three decades have witnessed increasingly complex, nuanced and variegated engagements with major intellectual currents. Relevant works have drawn from the conceptual repertoires provided by phenomenology (Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Paterson and Hughes, 1999), queer theory (Clare, 1999; Sherry, 2004), post-modernism (Simmons et al., 2008; Shildrick, 2012), psychoanalysis (Goodley, 2011a, 2011b), post-structuralism (Samuels, 2011), feminism (Morris, 1991, 1993; Garland-Thomson, 1994, 2005, 2011), and post-colonial studies (Meekosha, 2008; Opini, 2016). These engagements with diverse theoretical traditions have emerged as a consequence both of the inevitable partiality of each, as well as the inherent complexity of a concept as ambiguous, multifaceted and ill-defined as “disability” (Corker, 1999: 628-9; Roulstone et al., 2012: 3-4; Shildrick, 2012: 30-1).

The thematic breadth and scope of disability studies has also become apparent. The field is increasingly interdisciplinary in nature, with contributions developing from sociological, historical, anthropological, economic, psychological, philosophical and literary perspectives, and also, importantly, at the intersection between these distinct scholarly traditions (Olkin and Pledger, 2003; Bhaskar and

Danermark, 2006; Goodley, 2011a). Given the corporeal, sensory and cognitive diversity subsumed under the category of “disability”, it is arguably the case that a disability studies perspective can enrich considerations of almost any social domain. To provide a very partial survey of relevant work within the area, the field has offered productive contributions to understandings of mass media (Barnes, 1992; Thomas and Smith, 2003), literary representation (Mitchell, 2002; Esmail, 2011), sport (Hardin and Hardin, 2004; Ohrberg, 2013), globalisation (Holden and Beresford, 2002; Davidson, 2006), charitable organisations (Drake, 1996), education (Connor et al., 2008; Baglieri et al., 2011), welfare policy (Borsary, 2005; Mor, 2006), caring labour (Kröger, 2009), the family (Ferguson, 2002; Meltzer and Kramer, 2016), the workplace (Brazenor, 2002; Burns et al., 2010; Baldwin et al., 2014) and sexuality (Cole and Cole, 1993; Gougeon, 2010; Wilson et al., 2013). There has, equally, been an increasingly complex and theoretically informed consideration of “disability” as a basis for social movement activism, that attempts to negotiate the complex, variegated and historically specific nature of this term within the context of identity-based political interventions (Davis, 2013a; Siebers, 2013).

Of particular interest within the context of this thesis is the theoretical and empirical nexus between disability and gender. While academic considerations of this theme have a relatively extended history (e.g. Fine and Asch, 1981; Hahn, 1981, 1989; Morris, 1991, 1993), the recent emergence of “feminist disability studies” as a discrete scholarly domain (Garland-Thomson, 2005, 2011) has fostered substantial growth in examinations of the complex interactions between socially constructed renditions of femininity/masculinity and corporeal/sensory/cognitive difference. This terrain has been facilitated in particular by the emergence of third-wave and post-structuralist feminisms, and their insistence on deconstructing “womanhood” as a stable or homogenous entity. Growing considerations of the intersection between gender and disability should subsequently be interpreted as both the effect of, and as contributing to, the increasing centrality of “intersectional” analyses within feminist theory and research (Butler, 1990; Valentine, 2007; Snyder-Hall, 2010). Feminist work within this context has critiqued disability studies’ historical tendency towards modes of analysis that render the specificity of disabled women’s experiences invisible (Lloyd, 1992, 2001; Morris, 1993; Thomas, 2006: 183; Garland-Thomson, 2005, 2011; K. Hall, 2011). And, concomitantly, perspectives emerging from within disability

studies have expressed a range of critiques of the ableism of “mainstream” feminism, surrounding issues such as prenatal screening and community care (Morris, 1991; Sheldon, 1999; Sharp and Earle, 2002).

Feminist disability studies has been instrumental in elucidating the intertwining of ableist and patriarchal social relations within contemporary Western cultures. There has, equally, been an increasingly robust interrogation of the extent to which lived experiences of corporeal/sensory/cognitive difference are mediated through socially constructed notions of masculinity/femininity (Morris, 1993; Ewing, 2002; Garland-Thomson, 2005; Mays, 2006). As historian Paul Longmore (2003: 11) writes:

The deeper I delve into disability history, the more I am persuaded that issues of gender are central to the historical and contemporary experience of disability. Gender, it is clear, has been a key factor in social constructions, social prescriptions, policy definitions, cultural representations, and political advocacy regarding disability. In practical terms, in terms of lived lives, ideologies of gender combining with ideologies of disability have shaped the daily experiences of every woman and man with every sort of disability. They have lived at the intersection of gender and disability.

Disability studies has, at times, been critiqued for conflating the categories of “disabled *people*” with “disabled *men*” (marginalising the experiences of disabled *women* [Morris, 1991, 1993; Garland-Thomson, 2011; 13-8]), while failing to problematise men as *gendered subjects* (Thomas, 2006: 178). This “gender-blind” universalisation, some have contended, has meant that disabled men’s experiences have not been sufficiently situated within the context of *masculinities* (Robertson, 2004: 75). The extent to which this contention remains relevant is debateable, as a substantial amount of progress has been made in conceptualising disabled masculinities in dialogue with theorisations of gender and the sociology of men and masculinity (Gerschick, 1998, 2000, 2011; Shakespeare, 1999; Tepper, 1999; Gerschick and Miller, 2000; Loeser, 2002, 2015; Sparkes and Smith, 2002; Robertson, 2004; Shuttleworth, 2004; Wilson, 2004; Boyle, 2005; Gagen, 2007; Gibson et al., 2007; Lindemann and Cherney, 2008; Ostrander, 2008a, 2008b; Lindemann, 2010a, 2010b; Coston and Kimmel, 2012; Shuttleworth et al., 2012; Smith, 2013; Wilson et al., 2013; Barrett, 2014b, 2016). However, while this

work has been immensely productive, and has traversed substantial thematic and theoretical terrain, this thesis identifies specific limitations within previous considerations of disabled masculinities requiring further consideration.

The Significance Of Disabled Masculinities

Why is the field of disabled masculinities a valuable realm for academic enquiry? Chapter One offers an empirically/theoretically informed account of the relevant literature, and identifies the *specific* contributions to knowledge developed within this thesis. However, in defending the value of the sociology of disabled masculinities more generally, at least three points of consequence are apparent, relating to existential significance, clinical practice, and the broader “gender order” (Connell, 1995).

Firstly, interview-based, ethnographic and autobiographical material has repeatedly demonstrated the *existential significance* of gender in the lives of disabled men (e.g. Tepper, 1999; Valentine, 1999; Shakespeare, 1999, 2000; Sparkes and Smith, 2002; Lindemann, 2010a, 2010b; Shuttleworth et al., 2012). Despite medicine’s continuing (if increasingly contested) tendency to reduce the “patient body” to biomechanical/functional concerns, the medical humanities, the sociology of health and illness, and disability studies, have each articulated the need to prioritise research approaches positioning “disabled subjects” as fully immersed within encompassing webs of institutional practice, symbolic meaning and intrapsychic concerns (Grant, 2002: 47; Crawford et al., 2010; Shapiro, 2011: 68; Frank, 2013). The experience of disability is, as will be contended at greater length elsewhere in this thesis, inherently gendered within a historical context characterised by the intertwining of ableist/patriarchal social relations (Shakespeare, 1996b; Gerschick, 2000: 1265; Longmore, 2003).

Yet, secondly, and partly in response to these concerns, it should be acknowledged that insights relating to sex/gender have increasingly been embedded within elements of medical research and *clinical practice*. Gender has been noted as a significant predictor of a range of impairments (Norton, 2010: 9-10; Whiteley et al., 2010; WHO, 2013: 18; Halladay et al., 2015). Social constructions of masculinity have also been identified as affecting men’s willingness to seek medical assistance, their experience of treatment, and the psychological/mental health implications of corporeal, sensory and cognitive difference/change (Addis and Mahalik, 2003; O’Brien et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2006). Further, medical

recognition of the implications of constructions of masculinity in terms of well-being and “adjustment” has meant that certain aspects of clinical practice have directly pursued the manipulation of patients’ understandings of gender (through, for instance, clinical psychology [Cole and Cole, 1993: 201; Burns et al., 2009: 126; Burns et al., 2010: 163] or “social skills” training [Bumiller, 2008: 978-9; Brooks, 2014; McLaren, 2014]). Further interrogation of constructions of gender prevailing within medical cultures, particularly through the lens of sociological concerns relating to social stratification and disciplinary regulation, are required.

Thirdly, disabled men as a category occupy a tense position within the broader “*gender order*” (Connell, 1995), existing at the intersection between male privilege and ableist social exclusion (Fine and Asch, 1981; Morris, 1991; Jeffreys, 2008). This group arguably experiences a confluence of social processes and embodiments that necessarily engender tension, ambiguity and conflict; to use R. W. Connell’s (1995: 89-92) language, subordinated masculinities are potentially fertile terrain for “crisis tendencies” within the extant social organisation of gender relations. This *may* prompt awareness, and contestation, of gendered institutional, cultural and interpersonal exclusion. Alternatively, experiences of “marginality” with regards to hegemonic constructions of masculinity may foster exaggeratedly self-conscious and intense attempts to restore and/or secure male privilege (Gerschick and Miller, 2000; Segal, 2007: xxv; Coston and Kimmel, 2012: 102-4). Disabled men subsequently offer substantial empirical and political opportunities for considerations of the social processes that may contribute to gendered change, as well as the ideological formations, social structures and intersubjective forces constitutive of historical inertia.

Thesis Summary

Chapter One reviews the extant literature examining disabled masculinities. It articulates the scholarly context within which the ensuing thesis is situated, developing a definitional account of “disability” as a historically situated mode of social classification. The sociology of men and masculinities is introduced, with its focus on differentiated and hierarchically organised relations between different groups of men, before examining how previous work has situated disabled masculinities within this field. Three specific

critiques are offered of the existing literature, relating to *comparative diversity*, *generativity*, and *affective embodiment*.

Chapter Two introduces Bourdieusian social theory as a conceptually productive framework for the consideration of the intersecting corporeal, cultural and political thematics addressed within this thesis. Bourdieu's key terminologies are elucidated, and offered as an insightful complement to limitations previously identified in relation to the social model of disability. The concepts of "physical" (Shilling, 1991, 2004) and "bodily" (Wacquant, 1995b) capital are introduced, and placed in dialogue with Bourdieusian accounts of the gendered habitus/social space.

Chapter Three provides an account of this research's methodological framework. It begins by briefly articulating the value of life history approaches within sociology, before considering the complex terrain involved in integrating Bourdieusian social theory with autobiographical empirical material (Barrett, 2015). An interpretation of the epistemic status of self-narrative as involving uneven processes of revelation/transformation is developed through the work of Paul Ricoeur (1984), before drawing substantially on R. W. Connell's (1995) research as a methodological frame for the consideration of autobiographical data.

Chapter Four is the first empirical chapter of the thesis, offering a preliminary consideration of the gendered social position occupied by spinal cord injured men. Reflecting Michael Bury's (1982) terminology of the "biographical disruption", narrators frequently highlighted the radical, instantaneous and life-altering implications of Spinal Cord Injury (SCI). This involved a self-perceived *loss of*, or *disruption to*, the gendered resources associated with the production of legitimated masculinities within contemporary Western cultures.

Chapter Five, however, contends that this "rupture" in gendered social position coexisted alongside the *relative* "durability" (Bourdieu, 1990a: 45-6) of the habitus; narrators were often left with previously incorporated, ableist prisms of gendered self-evaluation, particularly in the aftermath of injury. This thematic is specifically addressed through the emotion of *shame*, as an "embodied knowledge" (Rosaldo, 1984: 143) signalling departure from socially privileged constructions of masculinity. The significance of this theorisation of gendered affect is articulated in relation to clinical practice.

Chapter Six develops Bourdieu's depiction of the habitus as durable, but not unchanging, and as disposed towards the strategic negotiation of historical possibilities, through the concept of generativity. Spinal cord injured narrators, on the whole, did not articulate strong commitments to gendered change; nor, over time, was there an unconflicted reliance on ableist constructions of hegemonic masculinity. Instead, the material suggested an inventive, but historically informed, reformation of gendered performance, emphasising rugged heroism, mind/body dualisms, and relational masculinities.

Chapter Seven turns towards a consideration of Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASCs) and gender. The chapter begins with a conceptualisation of "embodied capital" as an alternative to the connotatively "functionalistic" terminologies of physical/bodily capital, to signal the phenomenological conception of autistic corporeality developed within this thesis. Contradicting increasingly influential depictions of ASCs as manifestations of an "extreme" masculinity (Baron-Cohen, 2002, 2004), this chapter contends that, as with SCIs, this group experienced substantive forms of gendered exclusion.

Chapter Eight, however, problematises Bourdieusian sociology's presumption of "ontological complicity" (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 43) between external/internal forms of social value by drawing upon previous theorisations of ASCs as involving a corporeal disjuncture from the realm of taken-for-granted meaning. This (partial) tendency towards an "alien" embodiment had a range of implications within the context of masculinity: encouraging a proliferation of non-normative gendered enactments; limiting visceral investments in socially significant "games" of masculinity; and exposing narrators towards regulatory forms of homophobia.

Chapter Nine considers the emotion of anxiety as a prism designed to elucidate the existential costs of a fractured "attunement" (Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2004: 262) to the encompassing cultural environment. Deploying Bourdieusian conceptualisations of scholastic knowledge, I examine the pedagogical approach to the gendered social world evinced by narrators on the autism spectrum. Attempts to "studiously" enact normative masculinities, in lieu of the more intuitive understanding associated with the Bourdieusian habitus, are theorised as engendering practices characterised by the

absence of “authentic” incorporated investments, interpersonal rigidity, and difficulties with spontaneous balance.

The *Concluding Chapter* returns to the objective of provisionally initiating a comparative sociology of disabled masculinities. It acknowledges the presence of significant similarities between the two groups under consideration, before emphasising substantive disjunctures in the gendered corporealities/social positions associated with SCIs and ASCs (relating to embodiment, temporality, the gendered habitus, social/biomedical interventions and the “feel for the game”). This thesis’ contributions to existing knowledge are articulated, followed by a discussion of the study’s limitations and possibilities for future research.

Section One

Disabled Masculinities,
Bourdieuian Sociology and
Found Life Histories

Chapter One: Literature Review – Disabled Masculinities

(Mis)Understanding Disability

The terms “disabled” and “non-disabled” are conventionally constructed as delineating two mutually incompatible categories of humanity (Zola, 1993; Gordon and Rosenblum, 2001). This boundary is institutionalised through the logic of biomedical diagnosis, associated with the legitimated demarcation of boundaries between normality/abnormality in corporeal/cognitive/sensory functioning (Brisenden, 1986; Elliott and Dreer, 2007: 80). Binarised constructions of ability/disability normalise the “othering” of disabled individuals, offering non-disabled “selves” the opportunity to displace anxieties surrounding competence, self-control, health, mortality and beauty (Hunt, 1966; Hughes, 2012: 68-70). The intensity of social delineations between “the disabled” and “the non-disabled” could, however, be regarded as a reactive consequence of these categories’ immense instability. Irving Zola (1981: 242) notes how, with regards to disability, “we draw dividing lines and make distinctions where matters are very blurry and constantly changing. [...] In this way [...] we try to make the reality of disease, disability and death problematic, and [...] at least potentially someone else’s problem”. *Defining* disability, which has been described as the “the quintessential post-modern concept” (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001: 19), risks reifying its fluid and unstable reality. To appreciate the complexity of this term, it is necessary to consider disability’s *historical* nature, the *diversity* encompassed by it, and the *relativity* of its manifestations.

While “impairment” might be regarded, at one level, as a historically universal possibility (Barnes, 1996: 49-50), disability studies has demonstrated radical instability in the definition, social function, and management of stigmatised embodiments. Naturalised Western discourses, emphasising medicine, functional limitation and personal tragedy, reflect a temporally and spatially distinct configuration of values, institutions and ideologies (Oliver, 1990; Barnes, 1996). Disability has, historically and cross-culturally, variously been represented: as divine retribution for immorality (Rose, 1997); as offering opportunities for charitable benevolence (Drake, 1996); as presenting a transcendent connection to the “otherworldly” (Murray, 2012); as eccentric material for voyeuristic consumption (Bogdan, 1988); and as an endangering contaminant to society’s genomic future (Snyder and Mitchell, 2006: 69-99). The

significance accorded to these interpretations of disability is historically dynamic, with ostensibly competing discourses often coalescing within a specific historical context (Withers, 2012: 3-6).

The *category of disability itself* has also been recognised as a historical artefact. Lennard Davis (1995: 23-49, 2002), for instance, describes how emergent statistical techniques during the nineteenth century were used to understand and manage national populations, constructing a “normal” citizen against which disabled people were rendered deficient/deviant. A. J. Withers (2012) emphasises eugenic motivations behind delineations between “fit” and “unfit” social categories; while Deborah Stone (1984), alternatively, sees “disability’s” emergence as inextricably associated with welfare-capitalism’s material dynamics. Echoing Foucaultian (2008: 38-49) approaches to sexual identity, David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder (2006) contend that the modernist regulation and management of “the disabled” had the effect of reifying the category, according it a newfound, historically specific coherence and legitimacy (Shakespeare, 1996a).

This *apparent* coherence, however, is a social artefact concealing the radical *diversity* of impairment forms. In briefly synthesising the complexities underlying this category, G. Thomas Couser (1997: 112) notes that a disability “may affect the form or the function of the body or both; it may be invisible or manifest; it may be static, intermittent, or progressive in its manifestation; it may be acquired at birth or later in life; it may affect physical, sensory, or cognitive function; and it may be moderate or severe in degree”. Indeed, the primary factor unifying “disabled people” as an intelligible social category may be some transgression of medicalised constructions of functionality (Brisenden, 1986: 174; Garland-Thomson, 1997: 13). To claim that homogenising understandings of “the disabled” are problematic is not, however, to deny their consequentiality; rather, disabled people might be understood as “bound together, not by this list of (their) collective symptoms but by the social and political circumstances that have forged (them) as a social group” (Linton, 1998: 4).

Defining the parameters of “disability” has been a vexed issue within the context of the disability social movement. For some, the stigmatising implications of this label have motivated an emphasis on *difference*, in favour of *disability*. Members of the Deaf community, for instance, critique discourses of sensory deficiency by emphasising linguistic/cultural diversity centred upon the shared language of

signing (Padden, 1996; Solvang, 2000); the “neurodiversity” movement, similarly, regards individuals on the autism spectrum as subjected to unwarranted social exclusion and medical regulation, rather than as inherently defective (Clark and Van Amerom, 2008; O’Neil, 2008). While some seek *exemption from* the “disability” label, others pursue *inclusion within it* for the purposes of legal protection, access to social services, and cultural legitimation (Deal, 2003: 903-6). This desire for “inclusion” is often contested. For instance, the recognition of obesity as an impairment under anti-discrimination legislation (Brandon and Pritchard, 2011) has generated concerns about diluting the meaning of disability and increasing competition for scarce resources (Aphramor, 2009). The boundary between disabled/nondisabled evinces fluidity across educational, medical, welfare, charitable, and legal organisations, with individuals potentially moving between categories depending upon institutional context (Withers, 2012: 1-2).

It is, finally, necessary to recognise that binarised delineations between “disabled”/“non-disabled” are hampered by the spectral quality of many impairment forms (Swan, 2002: 292-3). For instance, while “blindness” is commonly constructed as the total absence of visual experience, most individuals classified as visually impaired experience light sensitivity and perceptions of shape/colour; conversely, the pervasiveness of visual limitation is well evidenced by the number of individuals requiring glasses or contact lenses to negotiate social life (Kleege, 1999: 14). Any disability characterised by this spectral quality (including visual impairments, growth impairments, deafness, Autism Spectrum Conditions, learning disabilities, and obesity) subsequently involve contestable processes of “line drawing” between “normal” and “abnormal” functionality (Swan, 2002; Shakespeare, 2006: 62-4). These delineations are situated within the context of historically specific norms that are influenced by demographic factors, cultural expectations, political structures, economic relations and medical practices. Changes to these norms shift understandings of impairment; it is, ultimately, difficult to separate adjudications surrounding disability from expectations prevailing within the encompassing environment (Bogin, 1999; Withers, 2012: 37-9).

The *historicity*, *diversity* and *relativity* of impairment/disability render definition profoundly difficult; rather than imposing an uncomfortable coherence, it may be necessary to accept that these terms are

characteristically nebulous. Disability could be understood as a “mongrel” (Block, 1995), or “fuzzy” (Fehr, 1996: 6), concept, lacking a static or ahistorical essential truth. To quote Jerome Bickenbach (2012: 52), “there is no reason to think that there could, or should, be a single, all-purpose definition of a complex notion like disability”. Multiple institutions and actors use this language to signify a range of distinct embodied, sensory and cognitive forms; these understandings are historically situated (as is the category of disability itself), and as such, are contested and changeable. What may be required is less a static “definition”, than particular hermeneutic lenses that allow us to “see” and “understand” disability in certain ways; this task, particularly within the UK tradition of disability studies, has commonly revolved around a central distinction between medical model/social model approaches (Thomas, 2004c).

Modelling Disability

Within contemporary Western cultures, disability is most spontaneously understood through the rubric of the medical sciences (Oliver, 1990). It would be inaccurate to regard this as ahistorical, uncontested or inevitable (Conrad and Schneider, 1992). Medicalised approaches to disability have been accorded varying degrees of influence across alternative historical and geographical contexts (E. Willis, 2006; Bury and Taylor, 2008). Yet, disability studies scholars commonly conceptualise a particular approach to disability that has dominated Western modernity using the frame of the “medical model” (Brisenden, 1986; Drake, 1996; Donoghue, 2003). This understanding of disability emerged within a distinctive historical context, involving the development of a state-sanctioned biomedical monopoly over clinical practice, the codification of knowledge and training, improvements in certain forms of treatment, and a growing belief in the potential of natural scientific endeavour (Conrad and Schneider, 1992; Samson, 1995: 246; Weiss and Lonquist, 2003: 22-3). Disability is understood, within this logic, as stemming from defects or abnormalities within the individual self, which inherently limit the capacity to fulfil normatively defined social roles. Diagnosis is constructed as a techno-scientific task, reflecting the capacity of medical practitioners to neutrally access and interpret the somatic, sensory or cognitive capabilities of patients. As disability is located within the individual self, medical responses to the presentation of corporeal “defects” pursue cure or adjustment, either repairing the body to its “normal”

state, or providing patients with skills that facilitate the management of corporeal limitation (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000: 158-9; Withers, 2012: 31-56).

A 1980 World Health Organisation (WHO) publication, *The International Classification Of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps* (ICIDH) has been interpreted as a practical instance of medical model theorising (Pfeiffer, 1998). This framework was designed to offer a comprehensive and universal set of categories enabling cross-national comparisons of medical, epidemiological and treatment outcomes with regards to disability (Bickenbach, 2012). It offered a three-fold distinction: *impairment* referred to the loss of cognitive, physiological or anatomical structure or function; *disability* referred to the incapacity, as a consequence of impairment, to reproduce the “normal” range of human capabilities; and *handicap* referred to impediments to the fulfilment of normative role expectations, given culture, sex, and age, that stemmed from impairment/disability (WHO, 1980: 27-9). This framework was critiqued for emphasising biological “impairment” in the emergence of social disadvantage (WHO, 1980: 30), or as the aetiological “seed” from which social exclusion was the inevitable by-product (Abberley, 1996; Nettleson, 2006: 88).

The disability social movement solidified within the countercultural *zeitgeist* of the 1960s and 1970s, alongside civil rights, feminist and LGBTQ movements (Roulstone et al., 2012: 3), to challenge the ableism embedded within prevailing institutional, social and economic structures (Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1990). While critiques of the medicalisation of disability certainly predate this period (Longmore, 2003: 53-102), this context provided a fertile milieu for the expression of discontent regarding patterns of institutionalisation, stigmatisation and exclusion. The “medical model” was critiqued for isolating disability from its social context (Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1990); conflating disability with “illness/disease” (Hurst, 2000; Pfeiffer, 2000); assuming strong causal relationships between impairment and quality of life (Albrecht and Devlieger, 1999); neglecting the subjective experience of disability (Couser, 1997: 18-35); privileging the interpretations and interests of nondisabled professionals (Crow, 1996); and ascribing doctors unwarranted authority in determining access to social services (Brisenden, 1986: 173).

Within Britain, activist responses to medicalisation historically developed around the “social model of disability”. The roots of this approach are usually located within a 1975 document from the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), called the ‘Fundamental Principles of Disability’. This treatise was significant in its rejection of accounts of disability as functional deficiency, and its concomitant emphasis on social oppression: “(I)t is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society” (UPIAS, 1975: 3-4). This document offered a key conceptual distinction between impairment/disability. The former term referred to the functional “reality” of “lacking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body”. “Disability”, alternatively, described patterns of isolation, segregation, opprobrium and exclusion that were socially imposed “on top of” physical impairment. Within this theoretical framework, individuals were disabled *by society*, rather than functional limitation (UPIAS, 1975).

Where medical science pathologises the deviant body, the social model requires a consideration of how prevailing social structures and cultural norms presume particular cognitive, sensory and/or physical embodiments. The “problem”, from the perspective of the social model, rests not in the deficient functioning of the individual self, but the exclusionary, disabling expectations embedded within the social environment, whether through architecture, urban planning, communicational styles, or expectations surrounding mobility (Oliver, 1996b; Barnes, 2012b). Within this logic, a woman using a wheelchair is not inherently deficient, but disabled by a built environment that requires the ability to traverse staircases, which could be redressed through the architectural use of ramps. Similarly, hearing impairments are problematic not because of the inability to hear, but the privileging of oralist communicational styles and the marginalisation of signing (Shakespeare, 2006: 29-53).

Initial incarnations of the social model were theoretically materialist, associating patterns of exclusion experienced by disabled people with the emergence of capitalist modes of production (Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1990). According to Victor Finkelstein (1980), in pre-industrial Britain, an economic system based substantially upon small-scale, cottage industries allowed the distinctive

corporealities of disabled people to be flexibly accommodated within the home. The development of industrial factory systems rendered idiosyncratic labour practices problematic; mass production principles required standardisation, and the rigid industrial regimes that emerged relating to time, space, mobility, speed, and movement were developed to reflect a particular, ableist model of the “standard” body (Finkelstein, 1980; Davis, 2002: 104-5). While Finkelstein has been critiqued for his nostalgic conception of disability within “pre-capitalist” contexts (Oliver, 1990), and his optimistic account of the liberating potential of technology (Oliver, 1990; Gleeson, 1999), the contention that capitalist societies, based upon systems of private property, competitiveness, and standardised labour, systematically exclude disabled people has been supported elsewhere (Albrecht, 1976; Stone, 1984; Gleeson, 1999).

The social model of disability is not only a critical rejoinder to medicalised approaches, but also civil rights-based assimilationism. Attempts to attain liberal “inclusion” through access to mainstream institutions (as they currently exist) have been critiqued on multiple grounds. The persistence of poverty and economic exclusion among disabled people renders formally equitable access to educational, health or community settings somewhat illusory, and reliance on state provided benefits may reinforce associations between disability and dependence (Oliver and Barnes, 2006; Finkelstein, 2007). Most importantly, civil rights-based approaches have been critiqued for failing to engage with the foundational causes of ableist exclusion, offering only the possibility of partial integration into structurally ableist institutional and cultural contexts. Rather than deconstructing fundamental contributors to inequality, approaches based upon “inclusion” legitimate the very features of society that ostracise disabled people (Russell, 2002; Finkelstein, 2007). Social model advocates, as such, articulate a desire to radically “transform” (Fraser, 1997: 23-38) the fundamental social structures underpinning institutionalised ableism.

Renovating The Social Model

The social model of disability occupies an ambiguous position within contemporary disability studies, often positioned as *the* orthodox conceptualisation within the field, while confronting increasingly pointed critique. As the “big idea” (Hasler, 1993: 280) of the disability movement, social model logic has exerted an undeniable influence over policy, intellectual and activist developments

(Linton, 1998; Barnes, 2012b). Yet, while some maintain social model approaches, their contributions are increasingly framed not only as politicised insurrections against individualism/medicalisation, but also as responses to critiques emerging from within disability studies itself (Oliver, 1996a: 42, 2004; Barnes, 2012b). Following David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder (2006: 5-18), in this section I employ the materialist social model account of disability as an “other” against which this thesis’ thematic and theoretical approach will be developed. Drawing from feminist, phenomenological and postmodern insights, I highlight three problematic binary dualisms that structure the social model’s approach to disability – biology/culture, solidarity/difference and public/private.

Before proceeding, several qualifications are necessary. Firstly, while problematising the social model’s binarism, this thesis retains its denunciation of individualism, its recognition of the social, cultural and historical elements of disability, and its critical engagement with medicine (Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1990). Secondly, as social model theorising is best understood as “a cluster of approaches” (Lang, 2001: 2; see also Tregaskis, 2002: 458-9), responding to “the” social model of disability risks addressing a simplified strawperson, and neglecting the complexity and ongoing debate subsumed within this paradigm (Priestley, 1998: 80-1; Thomas, 2004b: 579-80). I primarily respond to the materialist conception of the social model associated with Victor Finkelstein (1980, 2001) and Mike Oliver (1990, 1996b), as what might be termed the “ideal typical” (Weber, 2004: 113-4) incarnation of the framework. Finally, the following section does not offer a comprehensive review of critiques levelled against the social model (Tregaskis, 2002), instead emphasising three conceptual dualisms relevant to this research.

Public/Private

Central to social model rhetoric has been a rejection of accounts of disability as a “personal tragedy”, to be managed through individualised reformation (Oliver, 1990; Finkelstein, 1996a). Emphasising the pivotal role of disabling social structures offers the empowering opportunity to redirect attention away from individual impairment as the “cause” of social disadvantage and experiential distress; the “problem” is instead situated in the public sphere of economics, politics and culture. Reconstituting disability as a “public issue”, rather than a “private trouble” (Thomas, 1999: 124;

Mills, 2000: 3-24), is often an illuminating theoretical manoeuvre, given the routinised ascription of social exclusion to functional impairment (WHO, 1980; Brisenden, 1986).

Feminist theorists have critiqued the social model's aversion to "the private" for neglecting the lived experience of impairment/disability and privileging the (historically "masculinised") public sphere (Morris, 1993: 10). Carol Thomas (2004a: 10) suggests that the social model's hostility towards the private realm revolves around concerns surrounding the diversion of "attention away from the "really important" disabling social barriers "out there"" (Crow, 1996; Withers, 2012: 115-7). For instance, Victor Finkelstein (1996b, 2007) has contended that engagements with "lived experiences" of disability inadvertently reproduce tragically individualistic tropes. He writes, "it is only a political buffoon who believes that exploring prisoner experiences can lead to emancipation! Nothing less than dismantling the prison and replacing it with a non-competitive form of society can break down the doors which bar our emancipation" (Finkelstein, 2001: 4). The architectural paradigm of penal entrapment is here used as a metaphor for the material social structures that "imprison" disabled people. The struggle for socio-institutional change has, Finkelstein fears (1996a: 33; see also Sheldon, 1999: 648), "been progressively eroded and turned inward into contemplative and abstract concerns".

Where Finkelstein (1996b) assumes a mutually exclusive binary between "outside-in" understandings of disability emphasising socially imposed barriers, and "inside-out" approaches emphasising personal experience, sociologists operating within symbolic interactionist, phenomenological and narrative paradigms, have overwhelmingly situated "experience" within broader cultural, economic, and political contexts (Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Priestley, 1998: 80). Indeed, sociology, from its inception, has stressed inextricable relationships *between* experiences defined as "private" or "personal", and public environments (Durkheim, 1951). Attempts to define the distinction between these realms have repeatedly stressed their presence as mutually implicated, overlapping and multiple, rather than static and separable, entities (Gal, 2002; Landes, 2003).

The figurative depiction of disabled people as "imprisoned" by material social structures (Finkelstein, 2001: 4) reifies a rigid distinction between "inner" reality (prisoner experience), and "external" ableist social structures (prison). Yet, as Carol Thomas (2004c: 32-47) contends, this

inner/outer dualism limits conceptualisations of the “psycho-emotional” elements of ableism. The internalisation of prevailing cultural norms and expectations has the effect of constraining the social participation of disabled people, potentially engendering feelings of worthlessness, anxiety and inferiority that shape “what people can *be*, as well as affecting what people can *do*” (Thomas, 2004a: 10; see also Reeve, 2002). While not *originating* from “within” disabled people, it is difficult to identify and challenge the internalisation of the expectations, values and rejections embedded within ableist contexts without an interest in the “private” realm of experience (Barrett, 2016). Further, conceptualisations of a “private sphere” beyond the remit of politicised intervention render particular forms of exclusion uncontested, as forcibly articulated by feminist considerations of domestic abuse and sexual violence (Pateman, 1988; MacKinnon, 1989). The inequalities experienced by disabled people are reproduced not exclusively through public policy or market exchange, but also within the realms of home, family, friendship, and sexuality (Morris, 1993; Mairs, 2002). Anne Finger (cited in Shakespeare, 2000: 160) goes so far as to suggest that these “private” matters may be the subject of disabled people’s “deepest oppression”, precisely because they are not so readily redressed through formal policy interventions, but instead reflect culturally patterned ableist beliefs.

Biology/Culture

The body occupies an ambiguous position within social model theorising. The inclusion of the term “impairment” renders it difficult to claim that corporeality is simplistically neglected. Yet, the social model constructs material embodiment primarily in terms of its inertness, and as always threatening complicity with hegemonic narratives of disability as individual deficiency (Sheldon, 1999; Reeve, 2002). The privileging of the social over the biological (imagined as discrete entities) within causal accounts of inequality, ostensibly offers a liberating, radical re-interpretation of disability, shifting interventions away from medicalised rehabilitation, towards the politicised critique of social structures, cultural norms and institutionalised practice (Oliver, 1990; Finkelstein, 2001). The social model’s impairment/disability distinction has received critique from multiple perspectives. Three interrelated concerns are especially relevant.

Firstly, Tom Shakespeare (2006: 34) contends that severing a “causal” relationship between impairment and disability leaves the latter term indefensibly vague; if disability is separated from notions of embodiment, then, at least semantically, it becomes an ambiguous “term which describes any form of socially imposed restriction”. Shakespeare (2006: 34) subsequently argues that “(i)mpairments may not be a sufficient cause of the difficulties which disabled people face, but they are a necessary one”. Some may argue that this entails an overly simplistic representation of social model theorising. Carol Thomas (2004c), for instance, contends that the social model initially conceived of impairment/disability as intersecting and interactive components. Yet, this biology/culture dualism has exerted influence over sociological theorisations of disability (for instance, in Mike Oliver’s [1996a: 41-2] claim that “disablement has nothing to do with the body”), and is especially significant within discourses of social movement activism, seeking to definitively apportion “blame” for patterns of social exclusion to disabling social environments (Withers, 2012).

Secondly, social model theorising has been critiqued for underestimating the experiential and political implications of “impairment”. Different impairments are characterised by distinct levels of pain, visibility, chronicity and morbidity. Simon Williams (cited in Shakespeare, 2006: 43) suggests that “endorsement of disability solely as social oppression is really only an option [...] for those spared the ravages of chronic illness”; while Nancy Mairs (2002: 169) notes that, “(s)ome of my limitations stem from nothing except (multiple sclerosis)”. A number of scholars have commented on the “cult of silence” that social model understandings of disablement can foster with regards to experiences of embodied pain or limitation, discussions of which are regarded as either irrelevant, or as a stigmatised form of “false consciousness” (Crowe, 1996; see also Morris, 1993; Thomas, 1999).

Thirdly, as expressed cogently by Kevin Paterson and Bill Hughes (1997: 329), the impairment/disability dualism bears remarkable similarity to the medical model in its conceptualisation of embodiment. They write: “both treat (the body) as a pre-social, inert, physical object, as discrete, palpable and separate from the self. [...] The definition of impairment proposed by the social model of disability recapitulates the biomedical “faulty machine” model of the body”. The relegation of the physical body to a discrete, pre-social, static object: neglects the extent to which experience, identity

and agency are always, by necessity, embodied (Paterson and Hughes, 1997); discourages a consideration of the disabled body as a reservoir of cultural meaning and affective understanding (Sontag, 1978; Rosaldo, 1984); masks how embodied experiences and sensations are inflected by their social contexts (Bourdieu, 2001: 55-6; Sparkes and Smith, 2008); and elides the body's centrality to contemporary manifestations of power (Foucault, 1975).

Solidarity/Difference

Reflecting strong historical interconnections between the British disability and labour social movements, initial incarnations of the social model operated within the framework of historical materialism, identifying capitalist logics of competition, private property and individualism as the underlying determinants of ableist exclusion (Finkelstein 1980; Oliver, 1990; Gleeson, 1999). Having diagnosed the capitalist mode of production as the foremost contributor to disadvantage, it followed that addressing social exclusion required the reformation of systems of market exchange and class division; Finkelstein (2001: 5) writes: “(w)e cannot understand or deal with disability without dealing with the essential nature of society itself. [...] (D)isabled people must find ways of engaging in the class struggle”.

The social model's historically materialist foundations have led some to question its efficacy within considerations of gender, ethnicity and sexuality (Withers, 2012: 91-3). However, multiple theorists working within the social model paradigm, sometimes with significant amendments (Crow, 1996; Thomas, 1999; Oliver and Barton, 2000), have insightfully discussed how disability interacts with alternative identity markers. While the ascription of primacy (Oliver, 1990) to economic/structural relations may *tend* to discourage reflections upon alternative axes of identity/inequality, the social model does not categorically preclude these. Liz Crow (1996) and Sally French (1993) identify *impairment diversity* as a more categorical difficulty. Given the social model's ascription of analytical/political primacy to disabling social structures, operating organisationally or theoretically around medically-defined diagnostic categories may be regarded as counter-intuitive. Such approaches, it is feared, may fragment scarce resources into multiple, competing diagnostic factions, diluting the efficacy of the movement (Oliver, 1990), as well as reinforcing beliefs that the primary issue confronted is impairment,

rather than disability (Garland-Thomson, 2005: 1558; Shakespeare, 2006: 31; Shuttleworth et al., 2012: 179).

By constructing solidarity around shared experiences of ableist oppression, social model accounts of disability have been critiqued for neglecting impairment diversity (Crow, 1996; Solvang, 2000). Liz Crow (1996) critiques the social model's tendency to imply "that impairment has no part at all in determining our experiences"; while Thomas (1999: 42-4) proposes the concept of "impairment effects" to capture the socially-situated implications of distinctive corporeal, sensory and cognitive functioning. Engagements with impairment diversity facilitate recognition that "different major groupings of impairment, because of their functional and presentational impacts, have differing individual and social implications" (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001: 15). These differences may foster distinct preferences surrounding the importance of various interventions, or even motivate contradictory understandings of what constitutes a disabling social environment. For instance, where many disabled people experience social isolation as significant problems within the workplace, some on the autism spectrum may regard interactional expectations as a barrier to employment (Young, 2012); smooth architectural surfaces assist those using a wheelchair, while creating difficulties for visually impaired individuals using physical nooks and crevices to navigate space (Gleeson, 1999: 102; Shakespeare, 2006: 46).

It is important to acknowledge that, while the social model's materialism, and antagonism towards engagements with impairment, may at times limit considerations of diversity, complexity exists in its scholarly deployment. For instance, while Oliver's (1996a: 41-23) claim that "the body has nothing to do with disablement" would seemingly mitigate considerations of the social implications of impairment differences (Shakespeare, 2006), in another context, he concedes that "some [...] barriers are impairment specific" (Oliver, 2004). This thesis moves dynamically between particularistic and universalistic conceptualisations of disability, recognising both shared experiences, and points of specificity (Longmore, 2003).

This section has critically interrogated the limitations of the social model's underlying dualisms surrounding private/public, biology/culture and solidarity/difference. The significance of these themes

will become clearer as the thesis progresses, through conceptualisations of the interactive relationship between public/private spheres, the realm of lived embodiment, the intersection between masculinity/disability, and comparative impairment diversity. The approach here has been somewhat “negative”, establishing theoretical distance from the social model, without proposing an alternative approach; in the following chapter, I offer a more “positive” articulation of the way these theoretical concerns will be negotiated through engagements with the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu. The next section, however, turns toward the central thematic concern surrounding disability examined within this thesis: its nexus with constructions of masculinity.

The Sociology Of Men and Masculinity

As an exemplar of “superordinate studies” (Brod, 2013: 58-9), the sociology of men and masculinity has been directed towards the subversion of social forces that invisibly normalise hierarchically organised relations between men and women (Connell, 1995, 2008; Kimmel, 2010). Feminist scholarship over the past four decades has deconstructed the social conventions, within everyday experience and academic enquiry, that render “man” the default representative of humanity, without explicitly recognising the partiality or particularity of this gendered position (Irigaray, 1985; Nash, 1998). The tautological firmness involved in recognising “men as men”, Bryce Traister (2000: 281) contends, “speaks to (the) masculine gender’s resistance to analysis: that because masculinity has for so long stood as the transcendental anchor and guarantor of cultural authority and “truth”, demonstrating its materiality, its “constructedness”, requires an especially energetic rhetorical and critical insistence”.

In responding to persistent biologically essentialist constructions of gender (Ferber, 2000; Bartkowski, 2004; Kimmel, 2010), the sociology of men and masculinity is indebted to historical, comparative and anthropological research documenting the arbitrary nature of contemporary Western masculinities (Boretz, 2011; Al-Rasheed, 2013; Calabrò, 2016). Perhaps most radically, researchers have queried the naturalised logic that locates the sexed subject positions of “man” and “woman” as categorically distinct, reproductively determined “opposites” (Butler, 1990) through the documentation of non-dimorphic modes of sexed categorisation, such as “third sexes” within certain cultures (Kessler and McKenna, 1978; Herdt, 1981). The anxious *social* processes involved in the maintenance of

binarised sex systems are exemplified by the intense stigma experienced by individuals transgressing these categorisations – such as the transgendered and the intersexed – and medicalised interventions designed to redress perceived “anomalies” (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Butler, 2004). The sex binary, as such, might be reconfigured not as the inevitable reflection of reproductivity, but rather as profoundly historical, reflecting less a passive state of “being” a sex, than a social process of “becoming placed in” sex categories (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 127).

These categorisations are never definitively “fixed”, but rather involve ongoing interpersonal processes; “(t)o be credited as a man, what an individual male must do [...] is put on a convincing manhood act” (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009: 279). Recent sociological theorisations of gender have conceived of the norms that govern and inflect social life as being continually negotiated within interactional settings, using terminologies of “performance” (Butler, 1990), “practice” (Connell, 1995: 71-6), or “manhood acts” (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009: 279). The *particular* practices understood to affirm legitimate manhood are cross-culturally and historically variable. Within contemporary Western contexts, for instance, dominant constructions of masculinity are heterosexual (Pascoe, 2007), violent (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009: 282), and empowered (Kimmel, 1994: 24-5). Yet, Gilbert Herdt (1981) has documented the ritualisation of homosexual behaviour required for transition into manhood within certain Melanesian contexts (although, see Elliston, [1995]); Joachim Kersten (1996) notes that the gendered meaning and incidence of violence needs to be situated within distinct national contexts; while historical/anthropological researchers have documented matriarchal social formations (Farrar, 1997; Dashú, 2005).

Masculinity, as such, should not be regarded as the expression of an ahistorical essence, but rather as the interactive consequence of interminable processes of social regulation and constitution, that position particular cognitive, behavioural, affective, and corporeal styles as expressions of legitimate manhood within specific spatial/temporal boundaries (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Dowd, 2010). The rhetorical emphasis ascribed to “practice” (Connell, 1995) and “performance” (Butler, 1990), designed to elicit a sense of gender as a contextually-located, processual and iterative construct, should not be interpreted as reflecting voluntarist conceptions of the free-floating “chooser” of liberal individualism.

These practices are, rather, embedded within the context of disciplinary social, economic, legal, institutional and cultural structures and norms that exult particular manhoods, while stigmatising others (Connell, 1995; Heasley, 2005; Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009: 279).

Perhaps the most substantial interactional task associated with legitimating masculine social identities within contemporary Western contexts is the establishment of social distance from women/femininity (Chodorow, 1999; Bourdieu, 2001). The construction of women and men as complementary “opposites” (e.g. Gray, 1992) is often considered a reflection of essential difference, rather than the consequence of developments relating to modern capitalism and the emergence of socially distinguishing “separate spheres” (Laqueur, 1990; Miller, 2014). Yet, prevailing ideologies centrally associate the demonstration of manhood with a reactive rejection, abjection or transcendence of femininity. An expansive and complex constellation of distinct, but related, hierarchically gendered binary oppositions have subsequently emerged, requiring men to prove strength, rationality, courage, hardness, agency, dominance, and independence, and to reject the feminising implications of weakness, emotion, fear, softness, passivity, subservience, and dependence (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Gardiner, 2015: 39-56).

The decentring of gender produced through the employment of anthropological and historical material, scholarly interest in “intersectionality” (discussed below), and recognition of struggles and inequalities between distinct groups of men, have rendered it orthodoxy to terminologically eschew a singular “masculinity”, in favour of pluralised “masculinities” (Carrigan et al., 1985: 566; Buchbinder, 1994: 1-2; Segal, 2007: xxxiv). Hierarchically organised and culturally pervasive oppositions between men/masculinity and women/femininity, treated as mutually exclusive and categorically distinct, leave all individual men at risk of failing the various social “tests” that establish distinction from women (Millett, 1970; Hartmann, 1997: 236). While this experience of *distance* from normatively valued gender performance borders upon ubiquity (Butler, 1990; Connell, 1990, 1995; Segal, 2007: 72-8), particular groups of men are positioned as possessing especially problematised relationships with gender. Most recognisably, gay men are commonly constructed as the epitome of masculine failure (Sedgwick, 1985; Plummer, 1999; Pascoe, 2007); “(g)ayness, in patriarchal ideology”, writes R. W. Connell (1995: 78), “is

the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity, the items ranging from fastidious taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure". Yet, the symbolic male "others", against which "legitimate" masculinity is defined, extend well beyond the realm of sexual identity, establishing complex hierarchical relationships surrounding ethnicity (Han, 2000; Schmitt, 2002), sexuality (Edwards, 1994), class (Reay, 2002), sex identity (Halberstam, 1998), and ability (Shuttleworth et al., 2012).

R. W. Connell (1987, 1995) has offered a particularly influential typological conceptualisation of the permeable systems of gendered inequality characterising relationships between different groups of men. *Hegemonic masculinity* refers to the most esteemed understanding of manhood within a given social context. Drawing upon Antonio Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony, this masculine ideal provides legitimation for patriarchal inequality, not primarily through violence or coercion, but rather by influencing how gender is perceived within the implicit realm of "common-sense", rendering stratification seemingly inevitable, justified and natural (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995: 77-8). Hegemonic masculinity operates through the *symbolic expulsion* of particular groups of men who represent a "failed manhood", or what Connell (1995: 78-9) describes as *subordinate masculinities*. These "feminised" men embody what must be eschewed to successfully enact a categorical distinction from women/femininity, and to legitimate an "authentic" masculinity. The hegemonic ideal is unattainable for almost all men (Goffman, 1991: 128); yet, Connell (1995: 79-80) contends that the "patriarchal dividend" accruing to males through the perpetuation of the existing gender order encourages most to maintain some investment in hegemonic ideals, without fully approximating them, a form of *complicit masculinity*. Her final category, *marginalised masculinities*, conceptualises crosscutting structural dynamics relating to class and ethnicity that inflect social relations between men, limiting the ability of certain groups to enact the authorised hegemonic ideal (Connell, 1995: 80-1).

These concepts have been critiqued for imposing an ahistorical set of categories on gender relations (Seidler, 2006: 1-14; Moller, 2007). While these concerns may be relevant when considering occasionally contradictory deployments of her terminologies (Clatterbaugh, 1998; Hearn, 2004), the precise purpose of Connell's (1987, 1995, 2001: 14) framework is to emphasise ongoing forms of flux and contestation.

The categories of hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalisation are not static character types, but conceptualise temporally and culturally permeable systems of power and privilege (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 832-3). The precise traits, bodily comportments and styles associated with these positions alter over time and between social settings. The gender order is, further, characterised by contestations over *what counts* as hegemonic masculinity, with individual men engaging in struggles designed to legitimate their own enactment and understanding of manhood (Demetriou, 2001; Coles, 2008).

The relationship between the sociology of men and masculinity and feminism is not without complexities. Studying “men as men”, some have suggested, reinstates males as the central agents and objects of academic enquiry, and practically intensifies competition over limited academic resources available to gender studies scholars (Modleski, 1991; Nystrom, 2002: 41). Engagements with feminist scholarship can be shallow and tokenistic (McMahon, 1993), and potentially reproduce depictions of (radical) feminists as pathological “man-haters” (McCarry, 2007). There have, further, been concerns that the significance ascribed to hierarchies between men can implicitly position males as the “true” victims of the existing gender order, and problematically conflate the marginalisation of certain groups of men with inequalities experienced by women (Schacht and Ewing, 1998). Concerns have subsequently arisen that discourses of male victimhood within the sociology of men and masculinity express a partial affinity with more conservative political movements that position (white, heterosexual) men as “oppressed” by the (supposed) increasing dominance of ideologies of multiculturalism, anti-homophobia and feminism (S. Robinson, 2000: 1-19).

It is, subsequently, necessary to “keep reminding ourselves that we shouldn’t just do studies of masculinity, but specifically feminist studies of masculinity [...] that take as their project the creation of a world of gender equality” (Nystrom, 2002: 41), while, simultaneously, avoiding simplistic reifications between male-oppressors and female-victims. Experiences of gendered marginalisation experienced by some men do not necessarily generate inclinations towards feminism. Indeed, it may be that “the very men who might seem to have the most to gain by distancing themselves from masculinity’s conformist competitive strivings for dominance are the very individuals whose daily indignities make the unreliable

promises of manhood the more seductively compulsive” (Segal, 2007: xxv). The objective, then, is to recognise the broad social dominance of men within the gender order, alongside the diversity that exists within this general privileging, and to examine how the marginalisation of *particular* groups of men generates both historical opportunities for the contestation of patriarchal social formations (Connell, 1995: 89-92), as well as patterns of complicity with them (Coston and Kimmel, 2012).

The Dilemma Of Disabled Masculinity¹

The concept of the “intersection” developed within the context of African-American feminism (Collins, 1986; Crenshaw, 1991), seeking to problematise monofocal social analyses that position identity categories (such as gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and ability) as discrete entities. Each of these categories is, in practice, lived in simultaneity, and each shapes the qualitative experience of the other. This simultaneity of identities destabilises metaphors of “double-disadvantage”, and their implicit construction of the self as consisting of discrete and non-interactive components amenable to arithmetics of addition (hooks, 1981; Yuval-Davis, 1997). Theorists of intersectionality have, further, moved beyond the realm of lived experience, with Patricia Hill Collins’ (1990) terminology of the “matrix of domination” seeking to conceptualise how systems of socially structured privilege and oppression (such as capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism) mutually interact.

Scholarly references to intersectionality have, according to Jennifer Nash (2011), undergone a recent shift. The initial emphasis afforded to compounding social exclusions (Collins, 1990) has been broadened to enable considerations of the simultaneity of privilege/oppression within the individual. It is within this ethic that a contention offered in the previous section, surrounding the privileged *invisibility* accorded to men as gendered subjects (Kimmel, 1993), can be complicated: this status may limitedly reflect the experiences of white, middle-class, nondisabled, heterosexual men. It is often substantially through the “visibilisation” of a problematic gender identity that patterns of homophobia, racism, and classism are expressed (Coston and Kimmel, 2012). We may think, for instance, of the “excessive” femininity ascribed to gay men (Edwards, 1994; Connell, 1995), the passivity and diminished phallic power projected onto Asian men (Han, 2000), or the “uncivilised” and homophobic

¹ A modified version of the next three sections has been published as Barrett, T. (2014b). Disabled Masculinities: A Review and Suggestions For Further Research. *Masculinities and Social Change* 3 (1): 36-61.

hypermasculinity attached to African-American (Schmitt, 2002) and working class (Embrick et al., 2007) men.

Disabled characters within fictional narratives have characteristically been deployed as devices designed not to interrogate structural and interpersonal realities of inequality and exclusion, but rather as symbols evoking ableist cultural anxieties surrounding mortality, vulnerability and weakness (Garland-Thomson, 1997: 6; Mitchell, 2002). Within the realm of filmic representation, the relationship between disability and masculinity has often been expressed unambiguously: disability, these texts imply, is antithetical to, or mutually exclusive with, masculinity (Morris, 1991; Shakespeare, 1996b; Longmore, 2003). In the 1981 film *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*, Ken Harrison (Richard Dreyfuss), describes himself as “dead already” and “not a man anymore” when his spinal cord is injured; Ron Kovic (Tom Cruise), paralysed during the Vietnam War in *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), talks of his “dead penis”; and, in the high grossing *Avatar* (2009), Jack Sully (Sam Worthington), has his manhood “sullied” by disability, which can only be reclaimed through the virtual resumption of a normative, able-bodied selfhood.

The scholarly literature is replete with theoretical material suggesting conflict between “disability” and “masculinity” within contemporary Western contexts. Disability has been described: as a “symbolic castration” (Wilde, 2004: 360); as setting in motion a gendered “dilemma” (Shuttleworth et al., 2012: 175); as introducing a “status inconsistency” between male privilege/ableist exclusion (Gerschick, 2000: 1265); and as threatening “all the cultural values of masculinity” (Murphy, 1990: 94). Disabled men are positioned as “others” against which the norms of hegemonic masculinity are defined and legitimated, signifying what “real men” must repudiate in the quest to approximate culturally legitimated gendered enactments (Shakespeare, 1999; Gerschick and Miller, 2000: 125-6; Nolan, 2013). The scope and variety of relevant research literatures renders summation difficult; however, five interrelated arenas (identified in Gerschick, 1998) possess particular significance in understanding tensions between disability and masculinity within contemporary Western contexts.

Firstly, historical trends have problematised disabled men’s participation within the *labour market*. The early modern gendered division of labour defined masculinity within the realm of capitalist

employment, where one's ability to "provide for" a family, and compete with other men, was authenticated (Landes, 2003; Kimmel, 2010); concurrently, the advent of *public* workplaces tended to entrench standardised embodiments (regarding size, capacity, shape and mobility) that were often ableist (Finkelstein, 1980; Oliver, 1990; Gleeson, 1999). Disabled men were subsequently both required to participate in the labour market by virtue of gender, but excluded from it by disability. While recent developments – including the growing participation of women, the emergence of "post-Fordist" economic structures, neoliberal welfare reform, technological diversification, and increasingly "flexible" conditions (Beck, 1992: 139-50; Grover and Soldatic, 2013) – may have shifted this dynamic, disabled men remain marginalised within the labour market. Contemporary evidence suggests higher rates of unemployment, underemployment, precarious employment and poverty, and lower labour force participation rates and incomes, compared to nondisabled groups (Barnes, 2012a; Jammaers, 2016). Significantly, however, disabled men maintain labour market privilege in relation to disabled women (Wilkins, 2004).

Closely linked to labour market exclusion are historical dynamics between gender, disability and *independence and control*. Feminist psychoanalysts have contended that the performance of masculinity is centrally dependent upon the establishment of psychic/social boundaries around the self; to be masculine is to be a self-reliant, distinct "individual" (Gilligan, 1993; Chodorow, 1999). Social barriers that inhibit the accomplishment of daily activities may render disabled men dependent upon others for tasks of daily living. This is evident within the context of social policy, which has historically defined disability in terms of a legitimate incapacity to work, rendering disabled people's claims to welfare justifiable without the stigma of mendicancy (Stone, 1984; Longmore, 2003). Yet, this "privilege" is double-edged, defining disabled people as categorically incapable and dependent (Longmore, 2003), and, according to qualitative research, often engendering experiences of being a liability, powerlessness, and emasculation (Joseph and Lindegger, 2007; Ostrander, 2008a, 2008b; Smith, 2013).

Sexuality, particularly (hetero)sexual "conquest", remains central to legitimated gender performance (Flood, 2008; Coates, 2013). Hegemonic constructions of male sexuality emphasise the rejection of homosexuality (Butler, 1993; Pascoe, 2007), the corporeal performance of dominance over women

(Rich, 1980), and patterns of homosocial connection/competition between men (Holgersson, 2013). Recent sociological scholarship engaging with the intersection between disability and sexuality has moved beyond the medical model's contention that disabled men simply cannot do "it" (especially by destabilising narrowly heterosexist, penetrative and reproductive definitions of sex), to examine the panoply of social forces establishing barriers towards sexual empowerment (Weeks, 1998; Shakespeare, 2000; Barnett, 2014). Disabled men are commonly represented as asexual, or existing in a child-like state of sexual innocence (Shakespeare, 1999: 55-8). The barriers that inhibit participation in mainstream educational institutions, workplaces, and leisure venues, render it difficult to meet potential partners, as does the discomfort that many personal carers and medical professionals express in facilitating sexual encounters (Mairs, 2002: 157-64; Shuttleworth, 2004).

The replication of masculine norms is further problematised by disabled *embodiment*. R. W. Connell (1995: 45) suggests that, "(t)rue masculinity is always thought to proceed from men's bodies – to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body". Historical representations of masculine corporealities as strong, active, productive, invulnerable and hard (Jefferson, 1998; Meeuf, 2009) exist in opposition to negatively coded gendered norms that are commonly associated with disabled corporealities (weakness, passivity, dependence, vulnerability and softness)(Morris, 1991; Gerschick and Miller, 2000: 125-6). Dominant constructions of disability as embedded intrinsically within individual embodiments tend to legitimate these hierarchical distinctions, affording the gendered exclusion of disabled men a sense of inevitability by disguising social relationships in the seemingly "natural" materiality of the physical form (Bourdieu, 2001).

Associations between disability and embodied lack are prevalent within *sport* (Sparkes and Smith, 2002; Groven et al., 2015). Sportsmen have become exemplars of contemporary Western manhood through associations with competitiveness, corporeal skill, and physical dominance (Connell, 1995; Spencer, 2014). Sociologists have documented the function of sporting contexts as central locales for the routinised expression, regulation and normalisation of hegemonic masculinity (Carless, 2012; Spencer, 2014). Disability sports have grown in size and prominence over the past three decades, as exemplified by the emergence of the Paralympic movement (Thomas and Smith, 2003). However,

disabled sportsmen tend to be positioned in an implicit hierarchy with their nondisabled counterparts, as evidenced by limited levels of media coverage, spectatorship and sponsorship. There is a tendency to regard disabled athletes as inspirational “supercrips” designed to inspire a non-disabled audience, rather than as exemplars of athletic prowess (Hardin and Hardin, 2004; Purdue and Howe, 2012). Accessibility is also a substantial issue within this context, with local sport clubs, gyms and facilities often poorly adapted to the requirements of non-normative corporealities (Brittain, 2004; Kehn and Kroll, 2009).

Disabled Men Negotiating Masculinities

The dilemmatic relationship between disability and masculinity within contemporary Western cultures has been a consistent finding within the existing literature (Shakespeare, 1999; Marini, 2001: 38; Nolan, 2014). There has, equally, been recognition that disabled men’s *management* of this dilemma involves complex and variegated interpersonal processes implicating multiple social norms, resources, relationships and contexts (Charmaz, 1994; Shakespeare, 1999: 57; Rapala and Manderson, 2005). In a classic, widely referenced paper, Thomas Gerschick and Adam Miller (2000) conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with ten physically impaired men, to interrogate their psychosocial experience and negotiation of gender. They proposed three distinct strategies through which disabled men’s responses to hegemonic masculinity could be framed. These categories are not static labels, but rather heuristic devices designed to capture contextually grounded social logics. Individual men may shift between approaches depending upon a range of factors, including access to resources, life course position, and impairment type/severity/stage (Gerschick, 2000; Gerschick and Miller, 2000).

The first strategy, *reliance*, involves continued commitment to masculine ideals of strength, sexual virility, independence, self-sufficiency, and athleticism (Gerschick and Miller, 2000: 30-3). Researchers have documented how disabled men may pursue culturally legitimated masculine identities with recourse to sport, sexual prowess, homosocial bonding, sexism and homophobia (Jeffreys, 2008; Coston and Kimmel, 2012: 101-4). This tactic is somewhat compensatory, aiming to undermine associations between disability and emasculation (Lindemann, 2010a, 2010b); yet, by privileging existing conceptions of hegemonic masculinity, disabled men become complicit in social hierarchies

characteristic of the existing gender order, pursuing privilege through the rejection of women, homosexuality and “other” (non-masculine) disabled men (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000; Gibson et al., 2007: 510; Lindemann, 2010a). The strategy of reliance fails to challenge historical contradictions between disability and masculinity, potentially generating feelings of inadequacy when ableist conceptions of manhood become unachievable (Sparkes and Smith, 2002; Good et al., 2008).

Rejecting hegemonic masculinity is the most radical approach identified by Gerschick and Miller (2000: 133-5), involving an eschewal of the gendered expectations and practices that complicate the intersection between masculinity and disability. Michael Tepper (1999), for instance, in the aftermath of a Spinal Cord Injury, discusses the importance of “letting go” of masculine conceptions of sexuality centred around phallic penetration, spontaneity, control, and the rejection of intimacy (see also Shakespeare, 1999: 58). “Rejection” may also be implicitly evident in Paul Abberley’s (1996: 68-74) theoretical rejection of labour market participation as the ultimate determinant of human value. This strategy is the most politically progressive from a feminist standpoint, but remains difficult due to the social regulation and censure that may result from this denunciation of traditional gender norms (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000).

Reformulation, finally, involves a pragmatic negotiation of extant masculinities. Rather than uncritically relying on hegemonic masculinity, or eschewing it entirely, reformulation encompasses a tactical approach to gender consistent with the specific resources and life-course situation that an individual confronts (Gerschick and Miller, 2000: 127-30). Tony Coles (2008: 238) figuratively associates reformulation with mosaic art forms, involving individuals “drawing upon fragments or pieces of hegemonic masculinity which they have the capacity to perform and piecing them together to reformulate what masculinity means”. Daniel Wilson (2004), for instance, in his narrative analysis of the memoirs of polio survivors, notes how male authors rejected the deployment of figurative discourses of war, violence and sport to represent “battle” against disability as they grew older. These men accepted their bodies as vulnerable and fallible, while simultaneously maintaining a narrative investment in the masculinised identity of wizened male elders (see also Smith, 2013).

Developing The Sociology Of Disabled Masculinities

The structural contradictions embedded between disability and masculinity within contemporary Western societies, and the diverse and contextually specific ways disabled men negotiate these contradictions, have been the pivotal insights emerging from existing research. In this section, I critically examine three limitations characteristic of sociological representations of the intersection between disability and masculinity, highlighting the interrelated issues of *comparative diversity*, *generativity* and *affective embodiment*. The substance of each of these limitations will be demonstrated by drawing upon insights embedded at the periphery of sociological considerations of disability and gender, but each, I will contend, requires further, sustained development.

Firstly, the field of disabled masculinities could benefit from more thorough engagement with the implications of corporeal, sensory and cognitive forms of *comparative diversity*. The extant literature expresses a tendency to examine how “masculinity” interacts with “disability” as generic categories (Shuttleworth et al., 2012: 182-6). However, this approach naturalises the historically specific processes that have positioned conditions as diverse as Spinal Cord Injuries, visual impairments, Autism Spectrum Conditions, dwarfism and cerebral palsy, as inherently related phenomena (Couser, 1997: 112; Garland-Thomson, 1997: 13). Shuttleworth, Wedgwood and Wilson (2012: 179-80) specifically critique the articulation of a (seemingly) universal “disabled masculinity” on the basis of research examining men’s experiences of acquired physical disabilities, particularly Spinal Cord Injuries. They subsequently encourage future research examining the gendered experiences of men with degenerative, cognitive and early-onset impairments. Following Maeve Nolan (2013), it should be noted that men’s gendered experiences of Spinal Cord Injury remain insufficiently researched; this “over-representation” exists only relative to alternative impairment categories.

Recently, however, researchers have begun rectifying emphases on acquired, physical disabilities by situating an increasingly diverse array of impairment categories within the context of sex/gender. Research teams led by Nathan Wilson have examined masculinity within the lives of Australian men with learning disabilities. Their research has documented a problematic tendency for scholarly research to pathologise this group through associations with a “hyper-masculinised” propensity for violence,

sexual aggression and crime (Wilson et al, 2010). They argue for the importance of considering gender within the context of service provision, particular in terms of providing opportunities for homosocial camaraderie, physical activity and sexual exploration (Wilson et al., 2011, 2012, 2013). Using qualitative interviews with twelve visually impaired South African male students, Lee Joseph and Graham Lindegger (2007: 79-82) note a persistent investment in hegemonic constructions of masculinity centred on heterosexuality, homophobia, toughness, aggression and competitiveness. These investments, they contend, remained strong, despite the anxieties engendered by visual impairment in approximating masculine ideals surrounding physical violence and independence (Joseph and Lindegger, 2007: 82-5). Gibson et al. (2007), alternatively, interpreted the experiences of ten Canadian men living with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy using Bourdieusian social theory. They insightfully consider the contradictory gendered implications of medical technology, that both enabled control and agency, while simultaneously marking participants as “other” within interpersonal interactions, and signalling a form of embodied deviance (Gibson et al., 2007: 509-10).

While analyses of diverse impairment forms have become increasingly common, contributions remain somewhat fragmented, failing to elucidate how distinct corporeal, sensory, and cognitive embodiments create different, socially contextualised “pathways” with regards to masculinity. The literature would benefit, in my view, from the emergence of *comparative* sociologies of disabled masculinities. Such research might, for instance, interrogate how gendered experiences associated with an acquired injury, and a pre-existing nondisabled identity, differ from those emerging within the context of congenital/life-long disabilities (Gerschick, 2000: 1265). Are there different forms, or “levels”, of gendered “otherness” ascribed to individuals with distinct physical, sensory or cognitive embodiments (Boyle, 2005)? Do gendered hierarchies relating to disability differentially operate within the perceptions and performances of disabled people themselves (Deal, 2003)? Might some forms of impairment render the notion of “gender” itself problematic, due to particular levels of cognitive/social awareness (Gerschick, 2000: 1265; Wilson et al., 2012)? The purpose of raising these questions is not to revive crude variants of biological reductionism, whereby aspects of individual embodiment “determine” gendered performance. However, comparative engagements between different forms of

disabled masculinity offer the opportunity to more fully inspect the complex and multi-layered *interactions* between embodiment and social context, and to challenge historical reifications of “the disabled” as a homogenous group.

Secondly, while the dilemma of disabled masculinity (Shuttleworth et al., 2012) undoubtedly remains influential, stressing structural tensions between hegemonic gender identities and non-normative forms of corporeal functioning fosters certain theoretical/empirical foreclosures. The persistent iteration of the dilemma of disabled masculinity could be fruitfully supplemented by scholarship engaging with the interactional *generativity* of disability with regards to masculinity. The term “generativity” calls for a consideration of how, within particular spatial/temporal contexts, disability interacts *with* the production, or pursuit, of valorised masculinities. This reflects a “*provisional reversal*” (Frank, 2000: 360) of prevailing priorities, designed to render visible what dominant sociological conceptualisations of disabled masculinities may conceal. Previous scholarship has recognised that disabled men may respond to the dilemma of disabled masculinity by pursuing ruggedly masculine personal styles (what Gerschick and Miller [2000: 30-3] term *reliance*). However, this strategy has primarily been framed in compensatory terms: masculinity is reclaimed through practices that divert attention away from disability. The manner in which specific impairment types *interact with* the pursuit of gendered privilege tends to be neglected (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000; Sparkes and Smith, 2002; Good et al., 2008).

The potential generativity of disability has been insufficiently considered; however, both historical and anthropological researchers have offered insights demonstrating the potential fruitfulness of further enquiry. Historical work examining the aftermath of military conflicts, for instance, has documented how particular visible, physical disabilities may be interpreted as corporeal evidence of fortitude, viscerally exhibiting the heroic self-sacrifice of returned servicemen. These impairments may establish gendered hierarchies both over those who are perceived as having “shirked” their patriotic duties (Gagen, 2007), as well as those who developed mental illness during combat, which may be interpreted through prisms of personal weakness, rather than valiant heroism (Boyle, 2005). In a very different context, anthropologist James Staples (2011) conducted ethnographic research designed to explore the gendered meanings of disability within contemporary India. While recognising the

“feminising” implications of disability within this context, he notes a number of specific, countervailing possibilities. For instance, men with leprosy were commonly feared as possessing a dangerously aggressive and over-active libido (Staples, 2011: 551); physical “deformities”, alternatively, could be used to intimidate others by strategically deploying ideological connections between disability and monstrosity within interpersonal confrontations (Staples, 2011: 548). Cassandra Loeser (2002, 2015), further, in an examination of the masculinities of Australian males with hearing disabilities, has noted that the “invisibility” of this impairment category allowed interviewees to (unevenly) participate in historically masculinising “technologies of the self” relating to corporeal presence, physical self-assertion and athletic excellence.

Further complexity emerges in relation to what some have termed the “medicalisation of masculinity”, or the employment of biomedical interventions to regulate particular constructions of “excessive” maleness (Shuttleworth, et al., 2012: 187). Bioethicist Iina Singh (2002, 2005) has documented anxieties surrounding the growing prescription of Ritalin to young males diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These interventions have been interpreted by some as reflecting concerns surrounding (disproportionately male) students not conforming to ideals of middle-class pedagogical boyhood, characterised by self-discipline, composure and compliance. The prescription of ADHD medication may be regarded (particularly by fathers) as involving the suppression of boys’ essentialist, “authentic” selves, characterised by a certain rambunctiousness, defiance, and energy (Singh, 2005). Autism Spectrum Conditions, also disproportionately diagnosed in males, have been constructed as the consequence of the “extreme male brain” (Baron-Cohen, 2004). These conditions, according to Baron-Cohen (2008), reflect an excessive manifestation of male difficulties with interpersonally empathising with others, and preferences for rationalised systems. These “medicalised masculinities” sit very uneasily with dominant narrations of the “dilemma of disabled masculinity”, reflecting less the feminising implications of a disability identity, than (what some regard as) the disabling consequences of masculine excess.

Thirdly, sociological considerations of the nexus between masculinity and *affective embodiment* have historically emphasised incongruities between gender expectations and emotional

expression/experience (Conway, 2000; Bennett, 2007; Barrett and Bliss-Moreau, 2009). As implied within two of Robert Brannon's (1976) archetypal injunctions surrounding legitimated masculinities, emotions constitute dangerous gendered territory for men, associated with psychological instability and irrationality/madness (transgressing the need to "be a sturdy oak"), and positioned as signifying weakness/vulnerability and feminisation ("no sissy stuff")(Bennett, 2007). While connotative associations between cerebral, rationalised, and stoic masculinities arguably maintain a degree of cultural resonance (Hill et al., 2010), the sociology of emotion has progressively introduced more nuanced considerations of men's affective embodiments. There has been increasing movement beyond globalising, quantitative "measurements" of men's affectivity (Barrett et al., 1998; Lalama, 2004: 39-42), towards the conceptualisation of *specific* emotional states and their location within intersecting historical, institutional, cultural, biographical, interpersonal and intrapsychic contexts (Jansz, 2005; Bennett, 2007; Barrett, 2016). The gendered dimensions of emotion have been recognised as multidimensional, with some affective states (such as anger, jealousy, and competitiveness) acting as *pre-requisites for* legitimated masculine performance (Lewis, 2000; De Coster and Zito, 2010). And, further, there have been considerations of the distinction between recognisable *expressions of emotion* (which may be subject to intensely gendered "feeling rules" [Hochschild, 1979]), versus sensate *experiences of affect*, which may be less definitively organised around femininity/masculinity (Jakupcak et al., 2003; Emslie et al., 2006; Crewe, 2014).

Mark Peel, Barbara Caine and Christina Twomey (2008: 249) contend that considerations of affect within the sociology of men and masculinity may be especially illuminating within contexts characterised by gendered stress, contradiction, and change, rather than the unproblematic, naturalised reproduction of privilege. The "status inconsistency" (Gerschick, 2000) associated with disabled masculinities, as such, might be interpreted as offering an empirically and theoretically productive locale for considerations of the *nexus between* particular modes of corporeal difference, affective experience, and the patterns of social stratification within which these are embedded. Scholars within disability studies have increasingly recognised the value of considerations of affect (Hughes, 2012; Shildrick, 2012: 32); however, dialogue with the sociology of emotion remains limited, with Elizabeth Donaldson

and Catherine Prendergast (2011: 129) concluding (perhaps somewhat exaggeratedly) that, “There’s No Crying in Disability Studies!” If emotion has been under examined within sociological approaches to disability more broadly, this dearth is accentuated within the sociology of disabled masculinities. Dan Goodley and Katherine Runswick-Cole (2013: 148) note a need to move beyond public manifestations of the disability/masculinity intersection, to consider its implications within the realm of the “personal” (or “psycho-emotional” [Reeve, 2002]).

This “absence” of emotion within the disabled masculinities literature should not be exaggerated, with presented qualitative data often implicitly highlighting the significance of affective experience. Tepper (1999: 45) notes that disabled men’s difficulties enacting internalised, culturally dominant masculinities may foster “frustration”; one of Gerschick and Miller’s (2000: 131) interviewees describes feeling “angry” when receiving unrequested assistance; while a participant in Ostrander’s (2008b: 593) study recalls “self-conscious(ness)” surrounding physical appearance post-injury. Yet, while emotive experiences have occupied the border of the disabled masculinities literature, they tend to remain theoretically underdeveloped. There are at least two exceptions to this claim. Russell Shuttleworth (2000: 268-72) productively uses phenomenological concepts to interpret men with cerebral palsy’s quasi-affective experiences of being “trapped” or “freezing up” within (potentially) sexual encounters, which he associates with an embodied awareness of socio-erotic marginalisation. Lee Joseph and Graham Lindegger (2007), secondly, theorise the disabled masculinities of visually impaired adolescents through Victor Seidler’s (1992) understanding of anxiety. What could be theorised more insightfully, however, are the temporal, cultural and embodied logics that inform (and are informed by) the realm of affect, and how these intersect with the corporeal specificities encountered by distinct impairment groups.

Conclusion and Research Question

This chapter has situated this thesis within the context of growing concerns surrounding the intellectual and theoretical limitations of the social model within disability studies, and a commitment to a conceptualisation of disability that transcends dualisms between public/private, biology/culture and solidarity/difference. I have critically examined the existing literature relating to disabled

masculinities, identifying three specific limitations embedded within previous research relating to *comparative diversity*, *generativity* and *affective embodiment*. The research question(s) emerging from this engagement with previous work are expressed in Figure 1. The thematic terrain identified as needing redress is certainly expansive; this thesis, subsequently, cannot offer a comprehensive response to limitations identified, but rather attempts a substantive contribution that begins to acknowledge and redress shortcomings of existing research.

Research Question: How do disabled men negotiate gender with regards to comparative diversity, generativity and affective embodiment?

Subsidiary Research Questions:

- a. How do differential impairment categories contextualise disabled men's negotiations of gender?
- b. How does disability generatively interact with the pursuit of esteemed masculinities?
- c. How are experiences of disabled masculinity informed by, and experienced through, the realm of affect?

Figure 1: Research Question

At this point, it becomes necessary to more substantially develop the conceptual framework underpinning this study. In light of limitations confronting the social model of disability, I sought to identify and develop a theoretical approach that offered a sociologically productive understanding of both disability and masculinity, and that could dynamically negotiate tensions surrounding the dualities of culture/biology, private/public and solidarity/difference. In the following chapter, I will articulate how a critical application of Pierre Bourdieu's social theory offers the potential to negotiate these dilemmas.

Chapter Two: Bourdieusian Social Theory, The Social Model and Gender

The Logic Of Practice

Pierre Bourdieu's writings straddled an array of substantive thematic areas – incorporating considerations of matrimonial strategies, economic change, class, neoliberalism, education, academic life, art, literature, television, photography, sport, gender, language, politics, and science. His conceptual framework has, further, inspired a raft of additional scholarship, including both empirical research (Wacquant, 1995a, 1995b; Reay, 1998, 2002; Shilling, 2004; Russell, 2014) and contributions to philosophical debates (Butler, 1997; McNay, 1999; Taylor, 1999; King, 2000; Susen, 2013). The central objective underpinning Bourdieu's theoretical program was the development of a political economy of practice designed to transcend dualisms that have commonly informed sociological thought, such as objectivism/subjectivism, mind/body, macro-sociology/micro-sociology, coercion/freedom, structure/agency, culture/nature, theory/research, and materialism/idealism (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989). While often positioned as a “social theorist”, Bourdieu (1988b: 774-5) consistently contended that sociological concepts existed for the sake of research and, as contended below, he pragmatically deployed an eclectic range of methodological tactics throughout his academic career.

To begin, this section examines Bourdieu's response to what he arguably regarded as the most influential and problematic of sociological binaries, objectivism/subjectivism, and the resolution that he proposes through the concepts of “strategy” and “practical sense”. Bourdieu's objectivist/subjectivist binary needs to be approached with a degree of caution. As noted by David Swartz (1997: 52-6), there is a relatively persistent tendency within Bourdieu's sociology to vulgarise intellectual “combatants” into overly extreme and simplistic positions that they, in all likelihood, would not have accepted. Most favourably, this tendency could be understood as a hermeneutic strategy designed to clarify Bourdieu's own position (Swartz, 1997: 54); less sympathetically, it may be interpreted as involving simplistic and self-serving representations of alternative sociological paradigms, crafted solely for the purpose of Bourdieu's imminent transcendence (Throop and Murphy, 2002).

Bourdieu uses the category of “subjectivism” to incorporate an assortment of conceptual stances, spanning phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and Sartrean existentialism (Swartz, 1997: 54). While

these frameworks offer access to the negotiated complexity of interpersonal life, largely absent from objectivist abstractions (Bourdieu, 1988b: 781-2), they are, according to Bourdieu, problematic bases for sociological analysis. By emphasising “lived realities” and the interpersonal encounter, these theoretical approaches potentially neglect experience’s historical “conditions of possibility” (Bourdieu, 1973: 53). That is, according to Bourdieu, they obfuscate the dialectical relationship between self and social context, and particularly the extent to which the hierarchical social structures that organise social life are imprinted into the subject in ways agents themselves may be unaware of. At their most problematic, subjectivists may conceive of the self as a “consciousness without inertia” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 46), capable of reformulating identity through the force of will alone, rather than a subject that durably embodies prevailing social logics (Bourdieu, 1990a: 42-51).

Bourdieu’s critique of “objectivist” theoretical stances is primarily directed towards Durkheimian sociology, Saussurian linguistics and Lévi-Strauss’ anthropological structuralism, each of which posit the existence of objectively existing “structures” (social facts, *langue*, and binary oppositions respectively) beyond the consciousness of historically existing actors (Bourdieu, 1990a: 30-41). Objectivism is an important element within sociology, according to Bourdieu (1989: 15-6), allowing for a “break” with the “substantialist” position that reduces all social life to individual perception. However, he suggests that objectivist examinations of society “from above” problematically involve a detached, “intellectualist” approach to social life, reducing practice to the mechanical enactment of socially determined rules/structures (Bourdieu, 1973: 61-6; Taylor, 1999). This, according to Bourdieu (1990a: 9-21), results in the explicit formalisation and totalisation of social relationships that are characteristically left implicit within the context of habituated practice, and tends to lead analysts to expect formal rationality from a system of pragmatic social relationships. The emphasis on formal “rules”, further, neglects the flexible, strategic processes through which actors pursue their own objectives (Bourdieu, 1977b: 96-114).

Bourdieu mediates between “objectivist” conceptualisations of practice as the mechanistic expression of independent structures, and “subjectivist” conceptualisations of practice as the voluntarist domain of an autonomous, socially uninhibited ego, through the concepts of “practical

sense” (Bourdieu, 1988b: 782), the “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 66), or “practical logic” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 96). This terminology denotes a set of dialectical adjustments through which individuals tacitly internalise, and subsequently tend to reproduce, the expectations, assumptions, structures and logics embedded within the “external” social environment, not, primarily, through explicit pedagogy, but rather invisible and unstated processes of incorporation (Bourdieu, 2001: 24). Against the logic of objectivism, this “practical sense” operates not through the inculcation of formal principles, but a pragmatic, intuitive “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 80-97), lending individuals the ability to strategically pursue their interests through an implicit understanding of what opportunities are available/foreclosed within the surrounding social context (Bourdieu, 1977b: 96-158, 1990a: 52-65). Against the logic of subjectivism, Bourdieu posits the durable implications of the structured inequalities embedded within the social environment for individual agents. These, for Bourdieu, exert somewhat consistent (although never entirely predictable) social effects that individuals themselves may be unaware of, but which often work to normalise relations of inequality (Bourdieu, 1990a: 66). To attain a more concrete understanding of this “practical logic”, it is necessary to consider Bourdieu’s key concepts: *field*, *habitus*, and *capital*.

Field, Habitus and Capital

Field

The concept of *field* designates distinct realms of social life (such as religion, culture, or education) that have a “relative autonomy” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 39; see also Bourdieu, 1993: 37-40); within capitalist, differentiated societies, each field involves an idiosyncratic set of historically situated dynamics, while being contextualised by broader relationships with the state and the marketplace (Bourdieu, 1993: 37-40, 1996b; Maton, 2005). The boundaries of particular fields, which are “situated at the point(s) where the effects of the field(s) cease” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 39), are historically formulated and contested, and can subsequently only be identified empirically. Fields overlap with, and mutually influence, one another, but exert differentiated patterns of influence depending upon relevant historical dynamics. The central theoretical insight that Bourdieu attempts to formalise through his concept of field is that of *relationality*; fields are “network(s)” of “relations between positions”

(Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 38-9; Maton, 2005: 689). It is, he contends necessary to avoid examining social phenomena in isolation, but rather to situate them within the context of their interactions with other historically, institutionally, culturally and interpersonally situated referents. Social positions derive their significance, value and nature *relative to* other features of social life (Jenkins, 1992; Hanks, 2005).

Fields are defined by, and produced through, the forms of socially meaningful value (“capital”) that underpin social struggles (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 42). Bourdieu describes how overt patterns of conflict and contestation between differentially positioned agents who (seemingly) diametrically oppose one another, may render invisible shared beliefs in the value of the “game” being played (discussed below as “*illusio*” [Bourdieu, 1998: 76-7]). Two avant-garde artists operating within the “cultural field”, for instance, may define themselves oppositionally, each rejecting in the absolute what the other is taken to represent; yet, by virtue of this struggle, both reveal a shared interest in “authenticity” or “originality”, and an aversion to the conformist impositions of the state/market. Bourdieu refers to the implicit, taken-for-granted suppositions underpinning the relational, competitive orchestration of fields as *doxa* (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 42). Richard Jenkins (1992: 52) writes that: “(e)ach field, by virtue of its defining content, has a different logic and taken for granted structure of necessity and relevance which is both the product and producer of the habitus (discussed below) which is specific and appropriate to the field”.

The concept of field attempts to conceptualise the statics and dynamics of history. Fields are characterised by endemic conflict and tension, as individuals occupying distinct social positions struggle to increase prestige and resources (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 39-41; Moi, 1991: 1021). Deborah Reed-Danahay (2005: 133) instructively notes that the French expression from which the terminology of field is derived (“*champs*”) has military connotations, approximating the English concept of the “battleground”. In this sense, fields are “*fields of struggle*” characterised by competition; they are, equally, “*fields of forces*”, within which actors have differentiated capacities to exert influence (Bourdieu, 1993: 30). The strategies individuals employ toward the accumulation of various forms of capital are not developed out of a free-floating agency, but rather firmly rooted within historical processes, social

relations and the opportunities available within a particular environment (Bourdieu, 1977b: 3-9, 1993: 40-3). As such, field contestations are not egalitarian; one's social position, rather, is hierarchically associated with the resources available for mobilisation. Those with greater access to capital will *tend* to continue to dominate the field, through a series of "reproduction strategies" that work to attain and legitimate distinction from other groups (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993). Yet, while "(t)hose who dominate in a given field are in a position to make it function to their advantage [...] they must always contend with the resistance [...] of the dominated" (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 40).

Habitus

The habitus is central to Bourdieu's critique of objectivist/subjectivist conceptualisations of practice (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 42), or his "structuralist constructivism" (Reay, 2004: 432). The habitus constitutes "durable, transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu, 1990a: 53), or an implicit set of background principles, assumptions, affective structures, bodily comportments, and understandings of self/society, that have relative stability over time and between social settings. The habitus is a historical artefact: "a product of history, (that) produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history" (Bourdieu, 1990a: 54). It exists in a relationship of "ontological complicity" with the surrounding social environment (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 43). There exists, Bourdieu (1988b: 784) stresses, a dialectical affiliation between habitus and field, with each tending to reflect, and mutually reinforce, the other: "the field, as a structured space, tends to structure the habitus, while the habitus tends to structure the perception of the field" (see also McLeod, 2005: 14). The habitus, as such, requires a rejection of depictions of the individual as defined "against" society; "society", rather, "becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting *dispositions*" (Wacquant, 2005: 318).

The broadly complicitous relationship between field and habitus fosters the "practical sense" briefly described above. Through a process of incorporation, individuals acquire an *intuitive* appreciation of social "games", the opportunities available/foreclosed to them, and their relative position within social space (Bourdieu, 1990a: 54). What is "learned" surrounding these matters is not, for Bourdieu (2000b: 116-7), primarily communicated through formal pedagogy, nor consciously "known" by agents, but

rather silently engrained within the common-sense, embodied recesses of the habitus through ongoing experience. When principles incorporated within the habitus correlate closely with the historical conditions that generated them, the complicity between habitus and field renders certain features of social life seemingly natural and inevitable; social relations that are entirely historical and arbitrary come to be regarded as inherent, deeply engrained necessities (King, 2000: 49). Bourdieu states “(s)ocial reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself “as fish in water”, it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 43).

This point, however, should not be overstated (King, 2000; McLeod, 2005). The habitus is not necessarily an internally consistent, unified structure; being dialectically formed (within capitalist societies) in relation to a social order consisting of multilayered and conflicting fields, the habitus may itself be multilayered and conflicting (Bourdieu, 1973: 66, 1977b: 78, 83; Wacquant, 2005: 319). There is, as Bourdieu (1962/2004) demonstrates in early research, the possibility that historical change may leave individuals with “out-dated” dispositions, suited to earlier patterns of social organisation (“*hysteresis*” [Bourdieu, 1990a: 62]). The relationship between habitus and field, further, is not a one-way determination; the conditions dominant within a particular social context attain efficacy only through ongoing collective practice, and, as such, are always *potentially* revisable (Wacquant, 2005: 319). Yet, the habitus, as a “structured structure”, *tends* to predispose individuals, according to Bourdieu (1990a: 53), towards the reproduction of social relations, or to act as a “structuring structure”.

The habitus, a set of “generative structures” (McLeod, 2005: 13), does not *determine* practice; rather, it constitutes a background of implicit understandings, affective tendencies and bodily comportments that *predispose* individuals towards certain courses of action, without ultimately debarring alternatives. Individuals may make decisions that directly contravene embodied predispositions, although often such choices will invoke feelings of anxiety, timidity or awkwardness; habituated emotion, for Bourdieu (2001: 38-9; see also Probyn, 2004), often regulates practice by pre-emptively constituting particular regions of social space as experientially “not for the likes of” certain groups (Bourdieu, 1989: 17). While

Bourdieu (1973: 67) describes the habitus as establishing the potential for an “infinite” number of tasks, he equally asserts that “this innovative, active, “creative” faculty is not that of a transcendental subject” (Honneth et al., 1986: 42; see also Webb et al., 2002: 38). In mediating the dichotomy between freedom/coercion, Bourdieu utilises the seemingly paradoxical terminology of “regulated improvisation” (1973: 67), and “conditioned and conditional freedom” (1990a: 55), to capture the sense in which individuals possess a capacity for flexibility that is necessarily socially contextualised. He states (perhaps too categorically, as contended in Chapter Three), that “(w)e can always say that individuals make choices, as long as we do not forget that they do not choose the principle of these choices” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 45; Wacquant, 2005: 320).

Bourdieu (1990a: 46, 53) describes the habitus as *durable*, meaning that an individual cannot spontaneously transcend its implications through personal will. It is, simultaneously, an “open structure”: while childhood is identified as the habitus’ formative period, it remains pliable to ongoing flows of historical and biographical experience. These later changes, however, are theorised as piecemeal, gradual and cumulative developments relating to extended periods of habituated practice, rather than radical epiphanies (Bourdieu, 1990a: 60-1; Wacquant, 2005: 319). As the habitus emerges in relation to ongoing flows of experience, every individual possesses dispositional structures that are, to some extent, unique, reflecting their own particular social trajectories, distributions of capital, and familial backgrounds. Yet, as (existing) social space sharply differentiates between social groups, individuals who are positioned similarly will *tend* to develop certain resonances in their respective habituses. Where Bourdieu speaks, for instance, of a “working class habitus”, it is subsequently necessary to assume the existence of substantial differences alongside the seemingly homogenous “regularities” being highlighted (Bourdieu, 1990a: 58-60; Reay, 2004: 433-4).

Capital

Bourdieuian sociology expands narrowly economic understandings of social value and inequality (Bourdieu, 1977b: 177-8). The classical economic image of human beings as “naturally” rational utility maximisers, invested in the realm of market exchange, amounts, for Bourdieu (1990a: 113), to “a form of ethnocentrism”, which neglects the historical processes, inculcated dispositions and social

formations that dialectically engender subjects suited to capitalist exchange (Bourdieu, 2000a). A significant body of Bourdieu's empirical research has engaged with arenas of social life characteristically defined *against* what Marx terms the "icy waters of egoistic calculation" (cited in Bourdieu, 1990a: 113), such as religion, cultural taste and academia, but which, he contends, each involve agents engaged in self-interested attempts to attain *distinction* from others, and "clandestine" inequalities (Bourdieu, 1986; Robbins, 1991: 136). Central to Bourdieu's theorisation of the diverse social objectives pursued by agents is the term capital. "Capital", he writes, "is accumulated labour [...] which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour" (Bourdieu, 1986: 241). As capital(s) can be employed to generate prospective gains, there is a tendency for initial resource distributions to persist over time: "as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, (capital) contains a tendency to persist in its being" (Bourdieu, 1986: 241).

Bourdieu (1977b: 178) employs his "multiform" (Calhoun, 1993: 65) conceptualisation of capital to refer to "all goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as *rare* and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation". Four forms of capital are usually identified (Jenkins, 1992: 53). *Economic capital* describes forms of private property, wealth, income, and employment. *Cultural capital* refers to non-financial assets that may measure, reflect and/or improve social position. Bourdieu (1986: 243) describes cultural capital as itself consisting of three forms: *embodied* (dispositions of body and mind, physical appearance, corporeal skills), *objectified* (cultural goods such as artworks, books, high fashion), and *institutionalised* (state legitimated certificates, degrees, diplomas, licenses). *Social capital* relates to "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group". The resources that can be mobilised through social capital are subsequently influenced both by the quantitative number of contacts an individual can access, as well as how these contacts are themselves positioned in terms of access to capital (Bourdieu, 1986). *Symbolic capital*, finally, is an "aura" stemming from legitimated authority, when one's power and influence are regarded as natural and deserved (Bourdieu, 1990a: 112-

21). Symbolic capital is, as such, ultimately based upon “collective belief” and “trust”, existing primarily through patterns of perception and evaluation rather than as tangible objects (Swartz, 1997: 92). These forms of capital are, at times, *convertible* (Bourdieu, 1990a: 119; Shilling, 1991: 657-8); for instance, social capital may facilitate the exploitation of economic opportunities, while cultural capital, in the form of appropriate qualifications, may be deployed to legitimate authority (symbolic capital).

Bourdieu (1989: 17) theorises relations of “domination” in terms of the distribution of capital – both in terms of the *volume* an individual/group can access, and the *structure* of the different forms of capital possessed (Mahar et al., 1990: 13). The volume/structure of capital available will significantly influence relative position within a field and the capacity to exert patterns of influence. There are forms of struggle that emerge as individuals attempt to improve their social position, involving both contestations over *access to capital*, and *definitions of what counts as valued capital* (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 36-7). An individual’s ability to attain authority within a field is regulated both by the “cards held”, or capital possessed, as well as the ability to skilfully utilise available resources (Bourdieu, 1977b: 58).

Michael Grenfell (2013: 284) describes the concepts of habitus/field/capital as forming a mutually imbricated “*epistemological matri(x)*”; it is necessary to infer the significance of each term dynamically. Capital’s value emerges in relation to encompassing social fields and internalised habituses. An Australian fifty dollar note, for instance, effectively becomes a valueless piece of plastic within another country unless exchanged; similarly, a thorough knowledge of William Shakespeare’s plays may be appreciated during middle-class social functions, but devalued among counter-cultural Bohemians who deride the exalted “dead white males” of Western culture (Bourdieu, 1984: 113; Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 42). The value of capital does not reside inherently “within” its symbolic or material manifestations; rather, esteemed properties of rarity and prestige emerge at the intersection between surrounding social formations and habituated patterns of cognition, affect and embodiment.

The value ascribed to capital is best understood through the Bourdieusian concept of *illusio*, signifying “the shared belief in, and collectively manufactured illusion of, the value of the game” (Wacquant, 1995a: 173), or the propensity to “to admit that [...] the stakes created in and through the

game are worth pursuing” (Bourdieu, 1998: 76-7). This *illusio* is, according to Bourdieu, not freely chosen; rather, prolonged engagement with social fields tends to foster particular modes of evaluation that are imprinted into the structures of habituated embodiment. He contends that “one is born into the game” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 67), not meaning that particular forms of capital are inherently valued/valuable as a consequence of biology, but rather that *belief in these forms of value* becomes invisibly rooted in the silent structures of the habitus, rather than being consciously selected. Once deposited within agents’ habituses, *illusio* generates a sense of purpose and meaning that is not entirely conscious or rationally determined, but rather operates through the intuitive “feel for the game” that emerges through persistent interactions with encompassing social fields (Bourdieu, 1990a: 67-71).

Bourdieu’s Body and The Social Model Of Disability

Bourdieu’s social theory has been received as a substantial contribution towards the rapidly developing empirical and theoretical contemplation of embodiment within sociology (Turner, 1996; Adkins, 2005: 5; Young, 2005). The complex and multilayered nature of corporeal experience, its role in the reproduction of inequality, and the instantiation of social logics into the fabric of physical materiality are prominent Bourdieusian themes (Bourdieu, 1990a: 66-79, 2001: 5-53, 1962/2004). Understandings of corporeality have been furthered by others developing Bourdieu’s conceptual universe (Shilling, 1991, 2004; Wacquant, 1995b, 1998). In this section, I articulate how Bourdieusian approaches to the body offer the possibility to productively negotiate the social model of disability’s binarism (solidarity/difference, nature/culture, and public/private), as critiqued previously, while simultaneously avoiding biomedical reductionism, overly “discursivist” conceptions of the body, or political disengagement (Edwards and Imrie, 2003).

Within Bourdieusian sociology, the body has a weighty materiality and meaningful social implications; it is not the discursive corporeality of post-structuralism that disappears under the determining aegis of representation (Wacquant, 1995a: 173, 1995b: 63). Some scholars have expressed concern surrounding the growing intellectual influence of theoretical paradigms associated with certain variants of post-structuralism that prioritise the roles of language, discourse and culture in the reproduction of disablist social hierarchies (Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Paterson and Hughes, 1999).

Vehmas and Watson (2014), for instance, critique the emergent interdisciplinary paradigm of “critical disability studies” for introducing a set of ideas that, while often explicitly critical of the social model of disability, can similarly reproduce its “somatophobia” (Goodley, 2013: 634). They suggest that while the emphasis ascribed by this framework to the transgression of prevailing ableist discourse has often produced immensely perceptive insights (Meekosha and Shuttleworth, 2009; Shildrick, 2012; Goodley, 2017), it nevertheless tends to privilege the interrogation of regulatory discourse to the point that the moral/normative/political/experiential significance of embodiment (as it interacts with encompassing social relations) more-or-less disappears (Vehmas and Watson, 2014: 640-1).

An on-going collaborator with Bourdieu, Loïc Wacquant (1995b, 1998), has developed a sociological examination of the pugilistic field. He notes that the “somatic endowment” of boxers generates certain opportunities and limitations in the tactics developed by prize-fighters and their coaches, represented by the distinction between tall, long-limbed, tactical “boxers” versus the scrappy toughness of shorter “sluggers” (Wacquant, 1995b: 66-70). Participation in boxing, further, can erode this somatic endowment over time, with long periods of training and combat, combined with ongoing forms of damage inflicted during bouts, establishing corporeal parameters around the length and progression of a boxer’s career (Wacquant, 2001: 182-5).

Recognition of this “somatic endowment” is important within disability studies, in terms of destabilising reified constructions of “disability” as a unitary category, rather than a historically specific mode of social categorisation (solidarity/difference). The apparent homogeneity of the biomedical delineation between “the disabled” and “the nondisabled” is itself a historical product (Snyder and Mitchell, 2006; Withers, 2012), and serves to obscure important differences *within* these categories (Garland-Thomson, 1997: 13). Recognising the body as having a substantive, socially meaningful existence allows us to examine how particular corporeal, sensory and cognitive endowments generate differentiated opportunities and foreclosures (Crow, 1996; Thomas, 1999: 42-4; Shakespeare and Watson, 2002: 15). It also facilitates recognition of the diverse, and sometimes competing, nature of the social interventions needed to respond to the distinct requirements of disabled people (Shakespeare, 2006: 29-53).

As Chris Shilling (1991, 2004) demonstrates, the body is a key site for the generation and accumulation of social value. Disability, in these terms, may be regarded as a form of physical capital (Shilling, 1991, 2004; Wacquant, 1995b) that is both socially devalued in its own right (Edwards and Imrie, 2003: 245-6), and which also problematises access to economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. As has been well documented, disabled people experience disproportionate degrees of economic exclusion (Wilkins, 2004), social isolation (McLachlan et al., 2013: 137-44), difficulties accessing educational/cultural institutions (Horn and Berktold, 1999), and are subjected to a range of negative stereotypes (Swain and French, 2000: 573). Bourdieusian sociology subsequently provides a framework that can articulate and examine links between the body and forms of social inequality (Jenkins, 1992: 74-5). Levels of physical/bodily capital, however, are not entirely static, but, in some instances, can be *socially or biographically altered*, both “positively” (according to contemporary Western standards) through athletic training, diet, cosmetics, styling, clothing, medicine, surgery and meditation, and “negatively”, through disability, disease, injury, overuse, eating habits, smoking and sedentariness (Shilling, 1991, 1992).

The danger of recognising the role of embodiment in the production of social inequalities is the reversion to medical model individualism, which constructs cultural exclusion as a natural or inevitable consequence of corporeal difference (a critique often levelled at the World Health Organisation’s 1980 *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps*, discussed earlier). However, Bourdieusian sociology negates this problem by inextricably integrating the concept of *capital* with that of *field*, to the extent that the former is semantically void without the latter. Bourdieu states, “(a) capital does not exist and function but in relation to a field” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 39). What *counts* as physical capital, as such, is not determined by an ahistorical or isolated conception of the “bio-body”, but rather emerges in relation to the particular (contested and contestable) expectations that are embedded within encompassing social contexts. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the social model of disability’s distinction between the impaired body and the disabling social environment (biology/culture) becomes problematic. What renders disability a form of “negative” physical capital is precisely the interactional “fit” between particular corporeal/cognitive/sensory forms, and the fields

they encounter. To separate the corporeal from the social is to render this “interactive” process invisible, as feminist (Thomas, 2004c) and critical realist (Shakespeare, 2006: 54-67) approaches within disability studies have previously signalled.

The body is central to the Bourdieusian account of the habitus (Jenkins, 1992: 74-5): the habitus is located within the body; its logics are expressed through the body; and it involves the embedding of social knowledges *within* the body. For Bourdieu, patterns of social domination are corporeally manifested within embodied dispositions, a process captured through the concept of *bodily hexis*. He (1990a: 69-70) writes, “(b)odily hexis is political mythology realised, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking”. Significantly, the habitus tends to reflect hierarchical social logics immanent within the social environment; this investment is subsequently exploited to justify relations of domination “by embedding (them) in a biological nature that is itself a naturalised social construction” (Bourdieu, 2001: 23). For example, cultural associations between manliness and heroism, strength and forthrightness come to be signified by postural norms relating to physical stature, spinal rectitude, a lengthy gait, being forward looking, and the expansive occupation of space, bodily compartments from which women are deterred through everyday processes of habituation. Masculine embodiments subsequently appear as a natural *legitimation for* gender inequality, rather than the *effect of* gendered stratifications (Bourdieu, 2001; Young, 2005).

The social model’s positioning of public “disabling barriers” as *the* legitimated target for disability activism, and the subsequent political marginalisation of the “private” (Finkelstein, 1996a, 2001), becomes deeply problematic when interpreted through Bourdieusian social theory (Jenkins, 1992: 117-8). Habituated experiences of embodiment are central to what Bourdieu (2001: 1) terms symbolic violence, “a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims”, which inculcates and normalises categories of evaluation and perception consistent with the interests of dominant social groups (Bourdieu, 1990a: 125-34, 2000b: 169). The pernicious effects of “medical model” understandings of disability reflect not only formal institutional segregation/stigmatisation, but also the seemingly ahistorical objectivity accorded to patterns of marginalisation, and the possibility that

conceptions of the impaired body as inherently flawed and non-functional are internalised by disabled people themselves. These incorporated, ableist norms may be expressed through the “bodily self-censure, based upon embarrassment, awkwardness, or feelings of discomfort of perceived corporeal status” (Edwards and Imrie, 2003: 250) that often inflects disabled people’s lives (Reeve, 2002; Thomas, 2004a). Binarised public/private distinctions mitigate against the consideration of dynamics that Bourdieu regards as central to historical relations of domination, namely the inextricable “ontological complicity” between the “external” and the “internal” (field/habitus) (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 43).

The utilisation of the concepts of physical/bodily capital within this context does, however, warrant qualification. It arguably prioritises certain disabilities – particularly those ostensibly defined through “physicality” – and may be critiqued as having limited relevance to alternative impairment forms (relating to sensory perception and learning). Reflecting these concerns, the terminology of “physical” (Shilling, 2004) and “bodily” (Wacquant, 1995b) capital is moderated somewhat in Chapter Seven’s theorisation of Autism Spectrum Conditions, through the more phenomenologically orientated language of “embodied capital”. These conceptualisations reflect the specific thematic domains covered within this thesis, which may not be well attuned to the demands of alternative research designs and topics. There may, further, be a slight conceptual clumsiness to the concept of a “negatively valued” capital, as the term is *primarily* employed by Bourdieu to refer to distributions of esteemed resources and opportunities. Yet, there are occasions within which he refers to a “negative” capital (Bourdieu, 1998: 104) or “negative symbolic coefficient” (Bourdieu, 2001: 93), relating to the possession of tangible/intangible social properties that attract stigma and exclusion, rather than privilege.

Masculine Domination

Gender has often been regarded as residual to Bourdieu’s empirical program, which undoubtedly foregrounds class (Laberge, 1995: 137; Lovell, 2000: 27; Adkins, 2005). Yet, while Bourdieu’s reflections on gender were somewhat sporadic (Mottier, 2002: 350), they were nevertheless recurrent. His ethnographic work in Algeria (Bourdieu, 1990a: 271-83), his examination of bachelorhood among the Béarn (Bourdieu, 1962/2004), his theorisations of embodiment (Bourdieu, 1990a: 66-79), his

accounts of the hierarchical organisation of academic disciplines (Bourdieu, 2000b: 10, 2001: 105), and his discussion of the pursuit of “distinction” through cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984: 107), each reflect a degree of sensitivity to the significance of gender within social manifestations of inequality. As I will contend in the next section, this *empirical* interest in gender, however, exists alongside the somewhat opaque position of masculinity/femininity within Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus, resulting in competing operationalisations of his framework (Moi, 1991; McCall, 1992; Coles, 2008, 2009).

The publication of *Masculine Domination* can be interpreted as Bourdieu’s (2001) attempt to formalise his scholarly approach to gender. While firmly rejecting essentialist narratives that explain inequalities between women and men with reference to an originary biological substratum, he contends that the (seeming) ubiquity of male dominance across a diversity of temporal and spatial contexts renders explanation through appeal to “nature” tempting (Bourdieu, 2001: 1-4). The “doxic” sense that men are *naturally* predisposed towards, and legitimate occupiers of, positions of authority is, according to Bourdieu (2001: 82), very strong; however, this reflects not the inevitable dominance of men, but rather the consequence of ongoing, situated social practices, or “a historical labour of eternalisation”. Bourdieu (2001: 5-7) is particularly concerned with how, by virtue of occupying patriarchal social contexts, sociologists may have already incorporated the gendered dispositions they seek to deconstruct. This, he fears, may trigger the pre-emptive deployment of doxic cognitive constructs and assumptions that are themselves reflections of a social order characterised by masculine domination.

To disrupt this obfuscating epistemological circle between scholarly and common-sense knowledge, Bourdieu conducts an ethnological “quasi-experiment” by returning to his mid-century consideration of the Kabyle. This group, he suggests, represent a relatively isolated, self-contained social formation, or an “*anthropological sanctuary*”, where “ancient Mediterranean traditions and modes of thought have been preserved at a fairly high degree of practical coherence and integrity” (Bourdieu, 1996a: 192). According to Bourdieu (2001: 6), the culture of the Kabyle reflects an atavistic, purified form of the “phallorarcissistic” cognitive/social structures that continue to haunt European, North American and Antipodean social imaginaries. The paradoxical combination of both exoticism and familiarity is

understood to offer particularly insightful opportunities for a reflexive consideration of gender, with a study of the Kabyle acting for Bourdieu as an “archaeology of our unconscious” (Bourdieu, 2001: 3).

The return to the Kabyle is subsequently designed by Bourdieu (2001: 54-5) to effect an *anamnesis*, whereby taken-for-granted cognitive structures and social relations underpinning doxic modes of gendered domination within contemporary Western society can be highlighted, or “remembered”, through engagement with uneven patterns of cultural distance/familiarity. Bourdieu’s (1996a: 191-3) methodological pursuit of anamnesis underpins *Masculine Domination’s* sometimes awkward conflation of social relations witnessed within mid-twentieth century Kabylia with present day Western modernity. Whether this approach is entirely successful has been debated: he tends to selectively invoke somewhat dated and limited data to support his movements between “anthropological” and “sociological” registers (Witz, 2005); it is often unclear when he intends to limit his discussion specifically to the Kabyle (Chodos and Curtis, 2002: 400-2); and this approach perhaps systematically neglects developments within contemporary gender relations (Chambers, 2005; although cf. Bourdieu, 2001: 81-112).

Gender difference, Bourdieu (2001: 7-8) contends, is embedded within the “entire cosmology” of Kabylia, acting as a central axis of the “mythico-ritual system” underpinning the culture’s organisation of meaning and practice. The distinction between masculine/feminine is a symbolic structure implicitly connoted by a series of binary oppositions – such as “up/down, above/below, in front/behind, right/left, straight/curved (and twisted), dry/wet, spicy/bland, light/dark, (and) outside (public)/inside (private)” (Bourdieu, 2001: 7). These distinctions are somewhat arbitrary and shifting, and often transgressed; but they also attain a “semantic thickness” through familiarisation and repetition, as members of Kabylia come to develop an intuitive set of dispositions regarding how gendered processes of vision and division are to be understood and enacted within situated practice (Bourdieu, 2001: 8; see also Bourdieu, 1977b: 109-14). Anne Witz (2005) has contended that Bourdieu’s binary analysis within *Masculine Domination* reflects a “repressed” commitment to deterministic structuralism. However, applying the logic of practice articulated earlier, these gendered binaries should not be understood as

legislated “rules”, but rather incorporated, generative dispositions, that are both expressed and reproduced through practice in the form of “regulated improvisations” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 78).

The seemingly ahistorical nature of gender relations, according to Bourdieu (2001: 9), reflects a concordance between gendered cosmologies of meaning and perception incorporated within the habitus, and “objective” features of the social world. He specifically identifies four social processes among the Kabyle that elliptically reflect, inculcate and (tend to) reproduce these gendered distinctions/dispositions. Firstly, *rites of passage* separate boys from fully-fledged adult males, as well as separating those *eligible* for ritual engagement (males), from those who are not (females) (Bourdieu, 2001: 24-5). Secondly, and as previously contended, social relations are incorporated into patterns of gendered *bodily comportment*, serving to embed historical processes within the materiality of male/female corporeality (Bourdieu, 2001: 10-3). Thirdly, the characteristic arrangement of bodies within *sexual practice* serves to signify historically normalised relations of domination (for instance, with the man “on top”) (Bourdieu, 2001: 18-9). Finally, processes of *labour*, both as witnessed and as corporeally enacted, are characteristically divided along gendered lines, with women being responsible for tasks regarded as incidental, repetitive and low status, while men undertake responsibilities socially imbued with heroic, public nobility (Bourdieu, 1996a, 195-8, 2001: 30-3).

Véronique Mottier (2002: 350-1) has contended that Bourdieu’s account, rooted within a (modified) structuralist analysis of binary oppositions, has a tendency towards conceptualising gender relations in terms of *difference*, rather than *power*. He has, further, been described as offering a form of renovated “functionalism” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 844). These concerns do not seem entirely convincing: Bourdieu maintains a terminology of “masculine domination” throughout, expresses a commitment to gender equality, and highlights the need for social change (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1996a, 2001; see also Chambers, 2005: 327-9). His overriding interest is in the question of *reproduction*, conceptualising how exploitative relations of domination, inequality and symbolic violence are naturalised – concerns distant from structural functionalist sociology’s emphasis on politically neutered “difference”.

Bourdieu's approach, however, does confront ambiguities conceptualising strategies women have employed in the pursuit of social change (Lovell, 2000: 29-32; Chambers, 2005). His analysis, at times, pessimistically positions women as incarcerated by symbolic violence into accepting, becoming complicit with, and reproducing existing gender relations. The concordance of incorporated dispositions that naturalise men's power and privilege (the "androcentric principle"), combined with a corollary social order that seems to both reflect and justify gender inequality, tends, for Bourdieu, to generate a degree of complicity in the reproduction of patriarchal social relations. He does recognise the progressive historical implications of feminist social movements, which have challenged the extent to which masculine domination is "taken-for-granted" (Bourdieu, 2001: 88), but these contentions are integrated somewhat clumsily into his broader conceptual framework. As Terry Lovell suggests (2000: 36-40), Bourdieu primarily positions women as either *objects*, strategically deployed by men within the realm of inter-male competition, or as *convertors* of economic capital into cultural/symbolic/social capital within the domestic sphere; women are rarely constructed as actors engaged in public capital-*accumulating strategies*, or as contesting *what counts as capital* (Bourdieu, 2001: 101).

Bourdieu (2001: 12-26) argues that it is primarily men who bear responsibility for the accumulation of "public" forms of capital, underpinned by a sense of "honour" that highlights the duty to protect, expand upon, and reproduce the social position of kinship groups. Echoing previous work on the notion of homosociality (Sedgwick, 1985; Flood, 2008), Bourdieu contends that men within the public sphere enter into arrangements with one another that are simultaneously co-operative and agonistic. Men collude to legitimate their hierarchical privilege as a "class" over women and boys, while simultaneously competing for status and influence (see also Akpınar, 2003). The energies that men devote towards proving themselves *as men* reflects a profound form of *illusio*, an investment in socially constructed gendered values used to assess the worth of both oneself and others. The "(p)rimordial investment in the social games [...] which make a man a real man" are central to men's sense of self and social status (Bourdieu, 2001: 48).

The definition of manliness through frameworks of binary opposition (however flexibly negotiated), does, Bourdieu (2001: 69) notes, establish anxiety at the core of masculinity, a fear of being "dominated

by [...] domination”. The inculcation of the particular cosmology of meaning that he places at the centre of Kabylia (and, by implication, the contemporary West) informs a vision of masculinity that is categorical, and unfulfillable. The ethics of honour, strength, forthrightness, aggression, and leadership must be renewed *ad nauseam* to confirm distance from women/femininity; these attributes can never be ultimately *achieved*, but must be *pursued* relentlessly, often at great cost. As manhood is ultimately defined and valorised within the context of homosocial interaction, there is a foundational terror at the prospect of being excluded from the world of men, with enactments of risk-taking and aggression reflecting a profound cowardice at the possibility of “losing face” in front of male peers (Bourdieu, 2001: 50-2).

Bourdieu (2001) does not develop any account of what happens to men who *do* “lose face” within male homosocial networks. *Masculine Domination* seems somewhat impervious to the examinations of “multiple masculinities” that have preoccupied the broader sociology of men and masculinity (Connell, 1995; Mottier, 2002: 354; McLeod, 2005: 19; Segal, 2007: xxxiv), tending, ultimately, to construct women and men as binary opposites. This, I would contend, is not an *inherent* problem for Bourdieu’s theoretical framework. As suggested above, his system of sociological thought was designed to emphasise practical complexity, with the “regularities” and structures identified existing as commonly transgressed approximations of social life, rather than categorical “rules” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 96-114). He emphasises the foundational role of social struggle and contestation in the definition of legitimate forms of social value, and in *Distinction*, reflects an understanding of the implications of intersectional analysis when noting that there are “so many ways of revealing femininity as there are classes and class fractions” (Bourdieu, 1984: 107-8). I would contend, as such, that Bourdieu’s failure to examine “multiple masculinities” reflects an inconsistent or incomplete application of his own scholarly framework, rather than its logical consequence.

Engendering Bourdieu

While the depth of Bourdieu’s empirical engagements with gender has commonly been underestimated (Sayer, 2004), the position of gender within his *conceptual universe* remains ambiguous. Prior to the English language publication of *Masculine Domination*, Lisa McCall (1992: 851) wrote that

“although gender characteristics appear in descriptions of dispositions and capital, gender as an analytic category almost never appears in the construction of concepts, except when it is given secondary status” (see also Moi, 1991: 1020). Theoretical uncertainty endures, with Clare Chambers (2005: 332) noting that “(i)t is not entirely clear how gender fits in to Bourdieu’s analysis of habitus and field” (and, we might add, capital). Indeed, the existing literature offers operationalisations of gender in terms of each of capital (Anderson, 2005), habitus (Krais, 2000; Lovell, 2000) and field (Coles, 2008, 2009). This multiplicity may have heuristic value, with each approach offering distinctive conceptual/empirical opportunities; however, it is important to specify the understanding of gender developed within this thesis.

Firstly, I will critique conceptualisations of gender as a form of *capital* (Laberge, 1995; Bridges, 2009). This approach has been developed in variant forms: Leslie McCall (1992: 841-3) describes gender as a form of embodied cultural capital; Tristan Bridges (2009: 92-4) discusses the notion of “gender capital”; while Eric Anderson (2005: 24-5, 97-104) refers to “masculine capital”. This stance offers distinct advantages in terms of: conceptualising how masculinity may be converted into economic/cultural/symbolic/social value; interpreting the practices that individuals strategically deploy to develop gendered “stocks” (De Visser et al., 2009; De Visser and McDonnell, 2013); and demonstrating how, when contextualised within distinct “fields”, diverse forms of masculinity/femininity capital might be differentially valued (Bridges, 2009: 94-102). Yet, Bourdieu characteristically constructs masculinity/femininity as intervening elements related to, but distinct from, capital accumulation. For instance, he (2001: 93) describes women as “*separated from men by a negative symbolic (capital) coefficient*”, and positions the maintenance of symbolic capital involved in the protection of “male honour” as central to Kabylean masculinity (Bourdieu, 2001: 47-51). I would contend, further, that there is a tendency within deployments of gender-as-capital towards voluntarism. This is particularly at issue when Bourdieu’s (1977b) distinctive understanding of the “logic of practice” is not employed to contextualise the discussion, fostering the perception that actors’ motivations surrounding the accumulation of gendered capitals stem from conscious, rationalised forms of deliberation (De Visser et al., 2009; De Visser and McDonnell, 2013).

For Bourdieu (2001: 39-40), gender appears not as something one *possesses*, so much as what one *becomes* through the durable incorporation of social logics (Chambers, 2005: 327). This distinction, as contended in Chapter Seven, should not be over-emphasised; Bourdieu contends that the habitus itself can be a form of capital when its embodied knowledges, styles and associations are privileged within the broader culture (Bourdieu, 1996c: 9-53; Dumais, 2002: 44-5). Yet, the over-riding tendency within his theorisations of masculinity is to emphasise the collective gendered embodiment of “the historical structures of the masculine order in the form of unconscious schemes of perception and appreciation” (Bourdieu, 2001: 5). Distinctly gendered tastes, embodied habits, affective structures, linguistic resources, character traits, preferences, understandings of social life, and personal investments, could subsequently be understood as reflecting the incorporation of the patterns of social life within the habitus (Bourdieu, 1996a, 2001; Lovell, 2000: 28-33; Mickelson, 2003). Consistent with Bourdieusian social theory, the habitus exists in a circular relationship with surrounding social “fields” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 135). Gendered habituses, subsequently, reflect broader social relations that are themselves characterised by gendered patterns of division; these dispositions subsequently tend to reproduce the historical structures of which they are dialectically both cause and consequence (Bourdieu, 1977b: 96-7).

While Bourdieu seems to suggest the existence of a gendered habitus, the relevance of “field” within this context remains ambiguous. The concept is almost entirely absent from *Masculine Domination*, substituted for the terminology of “objective structures” (Bourdieu, 2001: 9); this lack of clarity, further, has motivated opposing approaches to the relationship between gender and “field” within the extant literature. Tony Coles (2008, 2009), for instance, offers a synthesis of Bourdieu’s framework with R. W. Connell’s understanding of gender, theorising the existence of a “field of masculinity”, characterised by patterns of differently situated men competing over access to “hegemonic” field position. Toril Moi (1991: 1034-6; see also Adkins, 2005: 6), alternatively, contends that gender, representing a social division that inflects every domain, cannot be sequestered to a semi-autonomous “social field”. She suggests analogously that while patterns of economic/cultural inequality are ubiquitous concerns within Bourdieu’s research, he never positions “social class as a “pure” field” (Moi,

1991: 1035); class (like gender) instead appears at a more abstract level, as a cleavage inflecting the entirety of “social space” (Mahar et al., 1990: 9) or the “whole social field” (Moi, 1991: 1035).

In fact, Bourdieu *does* sporadically refer to a “field of class relations” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 41; Bourdieu, 1993: 37-8), yet this concept is unsatisfactorily developed. From the fragments provided, this “field of class relations” seems to operate as something akin to what Moi (1991: 1035) terms the “whole social field”. Encompassed *within* this social space, are multiple, delimited fields that interact with class-related hierarchies; each field expresses a degree of specificity in the way class divisions are expressed, while simultaneously *tending* to reflect the inequalities characteristic of broader economic/cultural dynamics. Figure 2 is a simplified version of an image appearing in Bourdieu’s (1993: 38) *The Field Of Cultural Production*, which positions “the field of power” and “the literary and artistic field” as embedded within the “field of class relations”.

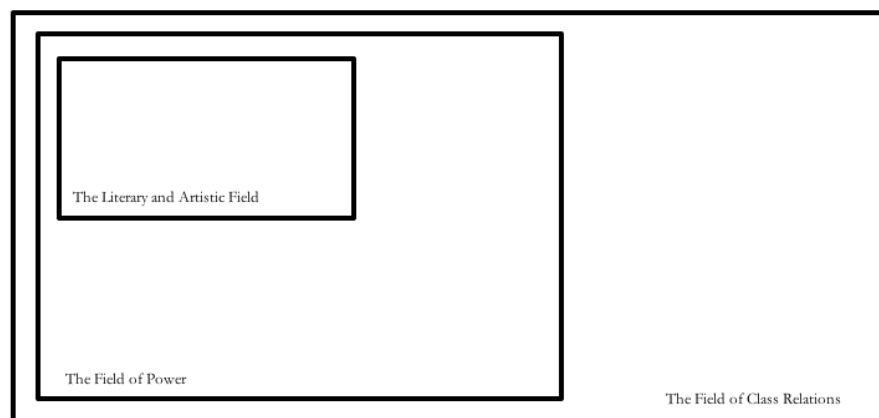


Figure 2: The Field of Class Relations

Bourdieu’s (2001: 7-8) contention surrounding the existence of gendered divisions inflecting the “entire cosmology” of social life might be interpreted as signifying a particular kind of social space analogous to this “field of class relations” (a “field of gender relations”). This term helps to conceptualise the broad, and seemingly pervasive, nature of gender inequality dispersed throughout most regions of social life within contemporary Western societies. This ubiquity, arguably, explains Bourdieu’s (2001) reluctance to theorise gender using a terminology of partially autonomous fields (Moi, 1991: 1034-6). Yet simultaneously, the subsumption of delimited fields “within” this broader “field of gender relations” remains significant. Particular fields (sport, culture, education, politics,

health) “homologously” (Bourdieu, 1993: 4-5; Naidoo, 2004) *tend* to reflect broader gendered social cleavages, while simultaneously exerting their own particular effects and requirements. For instance, within the context of sport, physical/bodily capital facilitating speed and strength may be central to the consolidation of a legitimated masculinity (Spencer, 2014); this form of embodiment, however, may be less vital for corporate leadership, where wealth, business experience and access to privileged interpersonal networks may be more significant (Donaldson, 1997, 2003).

Applying insights developed through Chapter One’s engagement with the sociology of men and masculinity, a provisional and self-consciously partial depiction of the contemporary field of gender relations can be developed. To begin with, men and women need to be situated in both *relational* and *hierarchical* terms. Following Tony Coles (2008, 2009), we can posit the existence of two broad “subdivisions” within the field of gender relations, within which men are positioned as a dominant social group, and women a dominated one. Each group has historically been defined relationally within societies characterised by dimorphic systems of sexed classification, as forming a mutually-exclusive, self/other “binary pair” (Laqueur, 1990; Schiebinger, 1993; Bourdieu, 2001). Within the field of gender relations, we can posit the existence of struggles *between men and women*, as well as *between different groups of men* (and women) endowed with particular distributions of capital in the pursuit of “hegemonic” gender privilege (Millett, 1970; Connell, 1995; Coles, 2008, 2009). These struggles ensure that the broader field of gender relations is constantly in process, involving both contestations over capital as it is currently defined, as well as the definition of what “*counts*” as positively-valued capital. Yet, pre-existing inequitable distributions of resources afford historically entrenched distributions of gendered privilege a degree of inertia.

Disabled men, within this schema, could be positioned as occupying a marginalised location within the (sub)field of masculinity by virtue of their devalued “physical/bodily capital” (Shilling, 1991, 2004; Wacquant, 1995b), and subsequent difficulties accumulating the economic/cultural/social/symbolic resources associated with prevailing conceptions of manhood. The designation of disabled men as “dominated dominators” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1993: 22-5) might be interpreted as the Bourdieusian equivalent of descriptors introduced earlier, such as “the dilemma of disabled

masculinity” (Shuttleworth et al., 2012) or disabled men’s “status inconsistency” (Gerschick, 2000: 1265). Figure 3 offers a visual representation of how this “field of gender relations”, and disabled men’s social position within these parameters, are provisionally conceptualised within this thesis. Reflecting Chapter One’s construction of disability as an ambiguous, variegated and historically situated construct, a lighter, dashed line is employed to signal the equivocal, open-ended nature of disabled men’s positioning within this interpretation.

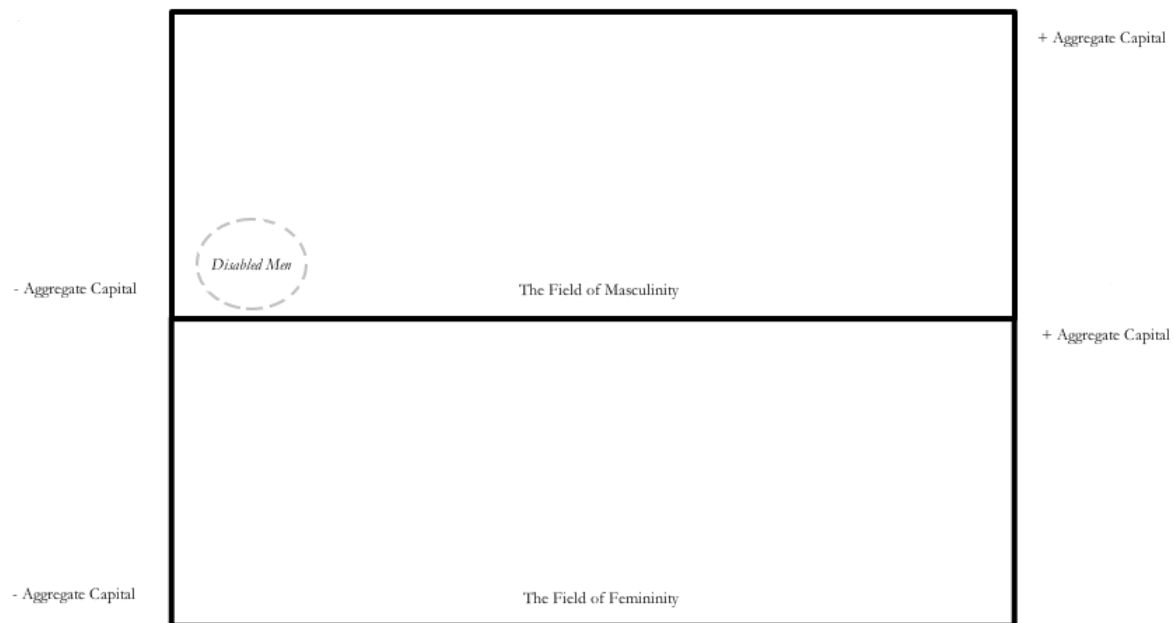


Figure 3: The Field of Gender Relations

The implications of this position within the field of gender relations can be analogously (and provisionally) developed by considering Bourdieu’s discussion of another group of “dominated dominators”, namely cultural producers (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1993: 22-5). These individuals, according to Bourdieu, belong to the “dominant class” by virtue of their access to legitimated forms of cultural capital; yet, their position within this dominant class is a marginalised one, as prevailing arrangements within the “field of power” privilege economic/political leadership (Bourdieu, 1993: 37-8). This precarious positioning fosters dual (and conflicting) forms of differentiation in the delineation of “cultural elites” as a social category. This group defines itself *against* economic/political capital, engaging in definitional struggles that seek to have the especial value of cultural capital recognised as an

alternative to ethics emphasised by the market or the state. Cultural producers might also, subsequently, express a degree of alliance with marginalised social categories out of a shared experience of economic/political marginalisation (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1993: 25-6). On the other hand, as both the position of cultural elites within the “dominant” class, and the “worth” of cultural capital itself, depends upon establishing *distance from* “dominated” class groups, cultural producers can simultaneously express intensely elitist antipathies towards “the masses” and “popular culture” (Speller, 2011: 49). A similar “dual” logic may characterise disabled men’s place within the field of gender relations, involving both potential for *alliance with feminist agendas*, as a consequence of shared marginalisation from the norms of hegemonic masculinity, *and* intense desires to *establish distinction from women/femininity*, as a consequence of their precarious position within the (sub)field of masculinity (Coston and Kimmel, 2012).

To be clear, this “field of gender relations” is offered as a pragmatic, simplified heuristic device designed for the specific purposes of this thesis, rather than a holistic or accurate depiction of the complex realm of contemporary gender relations. A number of ambiguities characterise this representation. The constitution of men and women as distinct “class groups”, with “all men” categorically represented as dominant over “all women” underestimates prevailing complexities in the distribution of gender privilege (Collins, 1990; Connell, 1995). Important questions surrounding the positioning of transgendered and intersexed people within this schema remain (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Butler, 2004); as well as issues relating to alignments between sex/gender (for instance, should women expressing a commitment to butch personal styles be placed within the [sub]field of masculinity or femininity [Halberstam, 1998]?). As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 848) suggest through the concept of “emphasised femininity”, the imagery of struggles for “hegemony” may be less applicable to women’s gendered negotiations; the particular functioning of the “(sub)field of femininity” subsequently requires further consideration in future. It is important to note that the depiction of the “field of gender relations” employs self-consciously *historical* designations – the relationships identified are not generalisable across distinct temporal/spatial domains, but rather need to be understood within the specific confines of contemporary Western dimorphic sex systems. And, finally, to reiterate, the

uncomplicated, “singular” assignment of disabled men to *one* field position may underestimate the complexity and multiplicity of gendered interactions and positions experienced.

Conclusion

This chapter has situated both disability and masculinity within the context of Bourdieu’s theoretical apparatus. Returning to the research question(s) identified in the previous chapter, it is now possible to express how Bourdieusian social theory can negotiate the three identified limitations surrounding existing knowledge of disabled masculinities. Firstly, Bourdieu (1989: 17) contends that individuals are differentially situated within social space according to both the *volume* of capital possessed, and also its *structure*, or the particular *kinds* of capital available. Drawing upon this insight, different groups of disabled men can be conceptualised as possessing distinct forms of bodily/physical capital (Shilling, 1991; Wacquant, 1995a), which have particular implications for the negotiation of surrounding (gendered) social environments. Secondly, while disabled men’s physical/bodily capital may broadly be said to act as a “negative coefficient” with regards to the ability to fulfil dominant conceptions of masculinity, Bourdieu’s (1977b: 3-15) view of actors as *strategic* – or as flexibly attempting to “play their cards” in the most efficacious manner possible – allows for a consideration of how disabled men may negotiate gender norms in ways that are not entirely related to exclusion, but are also *generative*. Thirdly, Bourdieu’s theorisation of the habitus as an embodied form of knowledge, within which affective resonances are afforded a degree of centrality (Wacquant and Deyanov, 2002: 183), offers a conceptually productive opportunity to consider *emotion* in the lives of disabled men, both in terms of lived experience and within the context of broader social hierarchies. The following chapter will consider the methodological approach underpinning this thesis, considering the value of autobiography in conceptualisations of disabled masculinities, the intersection between Bourdieusian social theory and self-narrative material, and the practical processes involved in data analysis.

Chapter Three: Found Life Histories, Social Trajectory and Analytic Procedure

This chapter begins by articulating the value of self-narrative material within scholarly conceptualisations of disabled masculinities through the thematic/methodological traditions of the medical humanities and life history research. The following sections pursue the complex task of developing a Bourdieusian understanding of narrative material. The approach developed is explicitly “collocational” (Mello, 2002), identifying characteristically Bourdieusian interpretive prisms surrounding the consideration of collective social trajectories, the strategic “use” of narrative practice, the role of the habitus, and possibilities for historical consciousness. I contend that Bourdieu’s failure to develop a sufficiently complex account of the relationship between “experience” and “narrative” can be productively negotiated through the hermeneutic phenomenology of Paul Ricoeur, who theorises self-narrative as emerging through a series of simultaneously revelatory/transformational stages. Finally, I specify the analytical procedures employed in the analysis of the autobiographical material under consideration.

The Medical Humanities and Autobiographical Found Life Histories

Recent decades have witnessed a growing critique of power relationships normalised by ostensibly benevolent medical discourses. Historically dominant incarnations of interactions between doctor and patient have involved a distinctive role relationship (Couser, 1997: 18-21): the former, the possessor of privileged specialist knowledge, must intervene to “manage” the “body-machine” of the latter (Moran, 2006: 80; Nettleson, 2006: 2). The ability of doctors to meaningfully engage with patients as socially situated, feeling and experiencing “people” (sometimes termed the “whole person” problem [Grant, 2002: 47]) has been increasingly compromised by the growing incursion of market-based cost reduction mechanisms, the preference for technological surveillance over patient testimony, and the bureaucratic fragmentation of medical services (Couser, 1997: 21-3; Coburn, 2006; Kuczewski, 2007: 411-2). The reduction of the recipient of medical interventions to a managed object has alienating implications for both doctor and patient, and has led to calls for patient-centred patterns of care capable of replacing the technocratic authority of medical practitioners with an approach sensitive to the realms of culture, experience, ethics and affect (Shapiro, 2011: 68).

The medical humanities have sought to recognise both clinical encounters, and the occurrence of corporeal illness/disability, as profoundly social experiences. Doctors are recognised not as bureaucratic administrators of impersonal diagnoses, but agents engaged in the negotiation of interpersonal relationships, ethical dilemmas, socio-cultural anxieties, and diverse patient objectives/values (Grant, 2002). The relevance of humanities disciplines within medical training has increasingly been recognised to promote the professional development of these interpersonal capacities (Evans, 2002; Pattison, 2003). Equally, the forms of knowledge developed by the humanities and the social sciences have also been increasingly recognised as potentially positive for patients. There has, for instance, been a substantial growth in therapies promoting self-expression to foster cathartic release, challenge stigma and isolation, and create opportunities to reconstruct the self (Crawford et al., 2010; Frank, 2013). The medical humanities have, further, positioned patients as “specialists”, capable of providing valuable insights into the social and corporeal experience of illness/disability, rather than epistemologically suspect “laypeople” to be managed by medical professionals (Power et al., 2012: 41).

The value of self-narrative material has also been recognised within the context of sociology. The disciplinary status of life history approaches has been turbulent, involving both periods of substantial popularity and relative neglect (Goodson, 2001; Stanley, 2010). The intellectual heritage of the life history tradition is conventionally traced back to the classic work, *The Polish Peasant*, by the Chicago School’s William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (1918-20), which famously described self-documentary evidence as the “perfect type of sociological material”. Life history research has operated within a range of theoretical paradigms, including “interactionism, [...] phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnosociology, structuralism, and cultural variants of Marxism” (Bertaux and Kohli, 1984: 218), as well as feminism (Stanley, 1993) and post-structuralism (Gonick et al., 2011). The epistemological and ontological status of this material, however, remains deeply contested (see below, Ricouer, 1984; Smith and Watson, 2001).

Sociological conceptualisations of life history methods have commonly emphasised this material’s potential to mediate between individual/society and micro-sociology/macro-sociology dualisms. R. W. Connell (1995: 89) contends that: “(l)ife histories give rich documentation of personal experience,

ideology and subjectivity. [...] But life histories also, paradoxically, document social structures, social movements and institutions". C. Wright Mills (2000: 7) describes sociology as interested in the "intersections of biography and history"; Maynes, Pierce and Laslett (2008: 69) claim that the value of this material relates to "the potential to see people and their actions as both individual and social"; while Goodson (2013: 7) describes the approach as allowing for a consideration of the "mediating membrane" between personal experience and historical structure. Ideally, life history methods avoid reducing agents to the "marionettes" of social organisation (Dollard, 1949: 5), while sufficiently contextualising data to circumvent methodologically individualist reliance upon the "choosing" ego (Goodson, 2013: 3-9).

Chapters One and Two developed a Bourdieusian critique of the social model of disability, highlighting problematic conceptual dualisms embedded within this approach. Self-narrative material has the potential to productively negotiate each posited binary. Firstly, as Arthur Frank (2013: 2) notes, self-narratives are necessarily embodied, particularly within accounts of the disabled self, within which corporeality is the narrative topic, its means of expression, and pivotal to represented experience. Autopathography, a form of "body writing" (Couser, 1997: 294), subsequently facilitates the interrogation of interconnections between the social and the somatic (biology/culture). Secondly, life narratives effectively reveal the complex and idiosyncratic ways individuals navigate social space; yet, when employed sociologically, they avoid voluntarism by highlighting "regularities" (Bourdieu, 1990a: 37-41) fostered by the institutional and cultural landscapes encountered (solidarity/difference)(Connell, 1992: 739; Maynes et al., 2008: 43-79). Finally, and relatedly, life narratives elicit interconnections between the "public" and "private", documenting the imbrication between subjectivity and structure, and revealing how the most "personal" of experiences are historically situated (Stanley, 1993; Goodson, 2013).

As an alternative to eliciting life history narratives through unstructured qualitative interviews, this research employed written autobiography as a primary data source. It draws substantially upon approaches developed by Mike Donaldson and Scott Poynting, who collaboratively employed "found life histories" (both autobiography and biography) to examine "ruling-class men", and their gendered

experiences of education (Poynting and Donaldson, 2005), work/leisure (Donaldson and Poynting, 2004), and family (Donaldson, 2003). Multiple factors motivated the employment of “found”, rather than elicited, life histories within this thesis. Firstly, traditional qualitative techniques, such as interviewing and ethnography, may interact problematically with the dispositions of individuals on the autism spectrum, who often experience difficulties with interpersonal interaction and social anxiety, and sometimes express a preference for written or mediated communication (O’Neil, 2008: 790-1; Davidson and Henderson, 2010a, 2010b; although, see Bagatell, 2007; Baines, 2012). Secondly, autobiographical works have become increasingly common in recent decades as a response to rising literacy rates, global market exchange, neoliberal ideologies of self-revelatory “authenticity”, and new media publishing technologies. This material could be more fully exploited within sociology (Plummer, 2001; Smith and Watson, 2001). Thirdly, given the insightful work that *has* been undertaken examining both masculinity (Morgan, 1990; Ellis, 1998) and disability (Couser, 1997; Brueggerman, 2005) using written autobiographical material, it seemed that a consideration of the *intersection* between these two identity markers within “found life histories” offered substantial potential (Wilson, 2004). Finally, by virtue of being historically defined as deficient/deviant subjects, disabled people have been subjected to extensive research interventions (Hunt, 1981). Academic enquiry often imposes significant burdens upon already disadvantaged social groups, in terms of time, financial outlay, energy, and stress, with Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell (2006: 201) describing textual analysis as a potential “remedy to the exhaustion of people-based research practices”.

Self-narrative material, however, simultaneously confronts multiple methodological hazards, as articulated within previous scholarship; autobiography cannot *simply* be treated as a “tranquil locus on the basis of which other questions may be posed” (Goldstein, 2003: 229). The use of “found life histories” encounters problems surrounding: the relationship between representation and reality (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003: 190); the extent to which individuals position their lives in historically, culturally and institutionally informed terms (Finkelstein, 2001; Bourdieu, 2005; Barrett, 2014a); generic, linguistic and narrative structures (Maynes et al., 2008: 70-97); memory and audience (Joyce, 1995: 81-3; Lincoln, 2000); and researcher subjectivity (Bertaux and Kohli, 1984: 218). The findings developed

within this research are subsequently offered as contributions to broader research mosaics, rather than as methodologically definitive in narrowly hypothetico-deductivist terms (Becker, 1966: viii-xiii; Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003).

Equally, it should be noted that while autobiographical life writing is commonly popularly associated with intense forms of personal experience, self-knowledge, and individual authenticity, academic work considering illness/disability narrative has consistently demonstrated that these self-accounts, far from emerging from the innate “core” of the author-ego, tend to follow a number of distinct, temporally/historically-situated discursive patterns. Arthur Frank (2013: 76) has identified the presence of three particular modes of self-presentation/narration accompanying accounts of the ill self. These “archetypal” narratives, he acknowledges, are inevitably inflected by the specificity of individual experience; they may also overlap/interact within the context of a “single” life story. Frank (2013: 75-96) identifies *restitution* narratives as the socially privileged (and disciplinarily expected) account of the ill-self within contemporary Western societies. These story structures emphasise the eventual reclamation of the corporeal parameters experienced prior to illness/disability, an objective achieved through the technocratic interventions of biomedicine (Sparkes and Smith, 2005: 82-4). *Chaos* narratives, conversely, border upon a form of “anti-narrative” (at least within the context of contemporary expectations surrounding story-telling). These tell of experiences lacking in perceived possibilities for amelioration or discernible sequences of causality (Sparkes and Smith, 2003: 310-2). The existential dread engendered by the experienced loss of bodily certainty frustrates the personal/social “distance” and time needed to reflect upon and represent the self (Frank, 2013: 97-114). *Quest* narratives, finally, express a certain affinity with autobiographical conventions that privilege narratives of overcoming. The “resolution” to illness/disability within this frame, however, is not the replication of previous modes of embodiment; it is, rather, the positive “use” of experiences of embodied change for the purposes of generating renewed personal/social/political priorities (Sparkes and Smith, 2005: 85-7; Frank, 2013: 115-36).

If these “narrative possibilities” appear to pre-emptively establish a fairly limited set of horizons against which the ill or disabled self can be storied/understood, it may be asked to what extent these

accounts offer substantial insight surrounding the realm of lived experience? This is not a question that can easily be resolved, and will be approached throughout the remainder of the chapter. However, it is this thesis' contention that the depth of autobiographical data, its ability to provoke questions surrounding the relationship between history, experience and representation, and its capacity to examine disability as a holistic social experience, ensures that substantial opportunities exist alongside these hazards. To further conceptualise the complexities of life history material, the following sections begin the task of amalgamating Bourdieusian social theory with this methodological approach.²

The Anti-Narrative Bourdieu?

The relationship between Bourdieusian sociology and self-narrative is convoluted. Bourdieu conceives of practice in “genetic structuralist” (Jenkins, 1992: 8) terms; practice, unfolding within temporally and spatially specific contexts, is understood as channelled by socially-derived, implicit “fuzzy” principles (Bourdieu, 1977b: 113) reflecting the historical conditions encountered during their formation. For Bourdieu, cultural competence necessitates that the principles underlying practice are often not inculcated through pedagogical intervention, nor formally “known” by agents; they are, instead, imperceptibly rooted in the dispositions, embodiments, perceptions/categorisations, and emotional resonances of the habitus. This conceptualisation of practice as “non-random and yet never rationally mastered” (Bourdieu, 2000b: 116-7), the significance ascribed to the implications of embodiment and affect (Bourdieu, 1962/2004), and the theorisation of actors as motivated by the agonistic pursuit of self-interested objectives (Bourdieu, 1973), have been understood by some as rendering Bourdieusian sociology contrary to self-narrative methodologies (Jenkins, 1992: 31-2).

At times, Bourdieu (1990a: 102) counsels that insider accounts, or “native theories”, are “dangerous”. Sociological deployments of these sources, he fears, may presume that actors have a thorough understanding of the historical preconditions of their experiences, and introduce an implicit philosophy of practice as driven by processes of reflective linguistic justification, rather than an intuitive “feel for the game”. The accounts provided by informants, as “*discourses of familiarity*”, often

² A fuller discussion of the intersection between Bourdieusian social theory and life history methodologies has been published as Barrett, T. (2015). Storying Bourdieu: Fragments Toward A Bourdieusian Approach To “Life Histories”. *International Journal Of Qualitative Methods* 14 (5): 1-10.

“leave unsaid all that goes without saying”, rendering the doxic and unspoken principles of practice invisible. As “*outsider-orientated discourses*”, there is also a tendency to describe experience in abstract, general terms, often employing a language of rules, rather than describing the habituated flexibilities of everyday life (Bourdieu, 1977b: 18). Individuals prompted to narrate their own experiences are subsequently lulled into the very “theoreticist” errors that Bourdieu contends are commonplace within academia, substituting the “fuzzy”, intuitive and situated nature of everyday practice, for a “quasi-scholastic” emphasis on rules, models and formal logic (Bourdieu, 1977b: 18-9, 1990a: 98-105).

Yet, these reservations exist alongside Bourdieu’s consistent methodological utilisation of narrative material (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 129-50). His early Algerian anthropology draws substantially upon interviews (Bourdieu, 1972), including the reproduction of seemingly verbatim transcripts from certain informants (Bourdieu, 2000a: 29-38); while his English language collection of research examining bachelorhood among the Béarn incorporates both dialogues and self-narratives (Bourdieu, 2008a: 111-20). In *The State Nobility*, he uses written narrative material – including published autobiographical books (Bourdieu, 1996c: 107), newsletters (Bourdieu, 1996c: 124-7), and ex-student edited collections (Bourdieu, 1996c: 404-11, 428, 442) – to elucidate the patterns of ritual “election” generated within the elite French schooling system. *Homo Academicus* uses both written academic obituaries and an autobiographical account from Claude Lévi-Strauss (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 136). *The Weight Of The World* consists substantially of narratives from individuals expressing the “suffering” experienced within neoliberalising France (Bourdieu, 1999); and, in *The Rules Of Art*, Bourdieu (1996b) extensively relies upon authors’ letters, diary entries and notebooks to underpin his analysis of the literary field. Further, Bourdieu occasionally advances optimistic claims surrounding the value of narrative material. In *The Weight Of The World*, for instance, he (1999: 511) contends that: “narratives about the most “personal” difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradictions”; while in a footnote from *The State Nobility*, Bourdieu (1996c: 408; Reed-Danahay, 2005: 137) argues that “autobiographical narratives of writers from the dominated regions of social and geographical space constitute incomparable sociological documents”.

The critiques of narrative data presented by Bourdieu need to be considered within the context of the reflexive ethic he articulated in relation to all methods. While he broadly privileged the empirical insights offered by ethnographic and statistical material, he was, simultaneously, often critical of both research traditions. He expresses wariness of the ethnocentrism that can inflect anthropological research (Bourdieu, 1972: 30-3), and somewhat scathingly describes textbook quantitative research as closer to the logic of “magic ritual(s)” than “rigorous” methodology (Bourdieu, 1988b: 774-5). As best exemplified by his methodological eclecticism, spanning ethnography, statistical analysis, interviews, documentary methods, content analysis, visual analysis, and literary readings, Bourdieu was empirically “omnivorous”, advocating the need to resist “any unilateral, unidimensional and monomaniacal definition of sociological practice” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 54). The question, then, becomes not *whether* narrative material can be used meaningfully within Bourdieusian sociology, but *how* it should be employed.

From Life Histories To Collective Social Trajectories

Bourdieu (2005, 2008b: 1) expresses strong reservations about life history methods, describing them as generically “conventional” and “illusory”, and as based upon implicit commitments to a problematic philosophy of the subject (Speller, 2008: 1). Life history accounts, he suggests, conceive of each individual life as a coherent, cumulative “project”; research participants, according to Bourdieu (2005: 299-301), are prompted to consider their lives as determined by an ahistorical sense of agency, and as directed towards the achievement of a coherent “purpose”. He contends that there is a tendency to construct the self as a totalising, narrateable entity, rather than reflecting the fragmented, partial and contradictory logics consistent with lived experience (Bourdieu, 2005). This “common-sense philosophy” (Speller, 2008: 1) of the autonomous, modernist subject, positions practice as the outcome of processes of rational deliberation and “choice”, rather than as emerging from the socially-derived and implicit logics of the embodied habitus (Bourdieu, 2005). The conceptualisation of each self as a coherent, self-contained object, Bourdieu (2005: 299-301) argues, is not unproblematic, but rather reflects an understanding of “the individual” that is buttressed by eminently historical patterns of social organisation.

Bourdieu (1996b: 258) proposes the study of *social trajectories* as an alternative to the “life history”, involving an analysis of “the series of positions successively occupied by the same agent or the same group of agents in successive spaces”. The reconstruction of social trajectories attempts to mediate between the reduction of “a life” to the acontextual expression of a “choosing” ego, without lapsing into mechanistic forms of structuralist determinism. Bourdieu (1996b: 259) recognises that “(a)ny sociological trajectory must be understood as a unique manner of travelling through social space, where the dispositions of the habitus are expressed”; individuals negotiate prevailing social environments in multiple and strategic ways, reflecting the distinctive opportunities and foreclosures they perceive and encounter. Simultaneously, these seeming idiosyncrasies are structured: certain groups are afforded opportunities, forms of capital and dispositions that *tend* to foster somewhat consistent (although not identical) outcomes (Bourdieu, 2000b: 225). The “space of possibles”, to use Bourdieu’s (1996b: 234-9) terminology, is delimited, with the existence of definite obstacles, impediments and inequalities that foster collective regularities.

The consideration of social trajectories departs from the reconstruction of individual teleologies, towards an analysis of the processes through which the “position(s)” or “post(s)” that individuals occupy within social space “become constituted” (Bourdieu, 1993: 162; Collins, 1998: 728). Analysis subsequently necessitates attention to the particular historically situated fields/social spaces an individual encounters, and “the system of positions in which the events in an agent’s life take place” (Speller, 2011: 59). The turn towards the concept of “social trajectory” subsequently involves a reprisal of Bourdieu’s often asserted maxim surrounding the need to “*think relationally*” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 39); it is not sufficient to consider a phenomenon (such as “a life”) in isolation, but rather necessary to understand it as inherently situated within, and positioned both through and against, other phenomena. The sociological conception of an individual life, Bourdieu (2008b: 4) writes, requires an understanding of “the field with which and against which ([s]he has) been formed”. As Gubrium and Holstein (2009: 3-13) note, narrative productions are not solely “about” societies; they are also embedded “within” societies. The interpretation of “self stories”, as such, can only proceed in light of their encompassing context. This includes both a consideration of the injunctions, restrictions,

and expectations embedded in the “local” situation within which narratives are orchestrated, but also the broader social structures and cultural norms that situate these texts within a larger history.

Social trajectories reflect “collective histories” (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 129), necessitating a consideration of “the collection of other agents engaged in the same field and facing the same realm of possibilities” (Bourdieu, 2005: 304). A Bourdieusian approach to social trajectory requires a consideration of the “generative structures”, embedded both within social space and the habitus, that collectively predispose groups towards certain practices, self-understandings, experiences, and social relationships (Reed-Danahay, 2005; Speller, 2011: 41). Life history data, from this perspective, subsequently necessitates interpretation in light of features of social life that may be only implicitly present within the material itself, but that are, nevertheless, integral to the shaping of biographical trajectories. Bourdieu (1996b: 258-9) writes that: “(t)rying to understand a career or a life as a unique and self-sufficient series of successive events without any other link than association with a “subject” [...] is almost as absurd as trying to make sense of a trip on the metro without taking the structure of the network into account”. It is, as such, necessary to interpret life history material in light of a “detour” through the “construction of social space”, to elucidate the weightiness of the historical structures against which individual lives are experienced (Bourdieu, 2005: 304).

It is, finally, necessary to acknowledge that Bourdieu’s critiques of life history methods are overstated. Most life history sociology does not emphasise the singularity of the “choosing” subject without recourse to historical institutions, social structures, cultural norms or interpersonal relationships (Charlesworth, 2000; Goodson, 2013; Yow, 2014). For the most part, life history research has emphasised the consideration of collectivities, rather than individuals (Bertaux-Wiame, 1979; Connell, 1995; Cowman, 2012); and where a single case has been prioritised, careful attention is generally afforded to contextualising factors (Shaw, 1966; Gagen, 2007). Rather than unproblematically valorising a free-floating voluntarism, work in the field has explicitly engaged with complex interactions between “structure” and “agency” (Stanley, 1993, 2013; Plummer, 2001: 106; Goodson, 2006). The Bourdieusian move from “life history” to “social trajectory” is strongly reminiscent of Ivor Goodson’s

(2006: 16-20) distinction between “life story” and “life history”. As noted by David Swartz (1997: 52-6), Bourdieu has a tendency to exaggerate the iconoclasm of his own insights.

Narrative As Strategy

A characteristically Bourdieusian understanding of self-narrative may emphasise *strategy*. David Swartz (1997: 56) contends that insider accounts, for Bourdieu, reflect “a practical logic of getting along in (the) social world”, being “instruments of struggle for practical accomplishments”. Bourdieu (1991: 56) states that “(t)exts are naturally the objects of strategies”, and cautions against social analysts forgetting that these have “been left by people who had an interest in letting them trail behind them” (Bourdieu, 1992: 44). For Bourdieu, discourse is saturated with pragmatic power relations and contestation: “(l)anguage is a *praxis*: it is *made for saying*, i.e. for use in strategies” (Bourdieu, 1977a: 646). Against Habermas’ desired “ideal speech situation” (Susen, 2013: 200), Bourdieu contends that language is never a neutral instrument for the progressive discernment of “truth”, but rather a medium that reflects/reproduces relations of domination (Bourdieu, 1991). Ivan Snook (1990: 161-164) contends that this stance implicitly invokes a Nietzschean conception of language, emphasising discursive “survival-value” over the epistemic desire to “mirror” the world “out there”.

In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu (1991: 107; see also Hanks, 2005: 75-6) uses economic terminology to critique linguistic paradigms that “treat language as an autonomous object”, rather than embedded within relations of symbolic and material power. Every interaction, for Bourdieu (1991: 66), involves a form of linguistic exchange, “a relation of communication between a sender and a receiver, based on enciphering and deciphering”. Communication involves an economic transaction “established within a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market)” (Bourdieu, 1991: 66). The audience for any form of communication needs to be understood as embedded within the moment of verbal or literary expression; Bourdieu (1991: 77) contends that “on the basis of a practical anticipation of the laws of the market concerned, [...] authors [...] try to maximise the symbolic profit they can obtain from practices which are, inseparably, oriented towards communication and exposed to evaluation” (see also Susen, 2013: 213-4).

This conceptualisation of language as orientated towards the pursuit of “profitable” ends ensures that encompassing economic and cultural inequalities inflect “linguistic products”. This involves, on the one hand, individuals employing various forms of capital (economic property, social relations, cultural knowledge, symbolic aura, and linguistic intuition) to advance communications in a manner designed to accrue value (Jenkins, 1994: 96-8; Susen, 2013: 214-5). On the other hand, because the “value” ascribed to linguistic products is partially determined by the broader social environment, what is said, and how it is said, will be significantly inflected by an intuitive “sense” of how an audience is likely to respond (Susen, 2013: 209). As such, “the constraint exercised by the market via the anticipation of possible profit [...] takes the form of an anticipated *censorship*, of a self-censorship which determines not only the manner of saying, that is, the choice of language [...] but also what it will be possible or not possible to say” (Bourdieu, 1991: 77; see also Bourdieu, 1977a: 653-60). Bourdieu’s theorisation of “narrative as strategy”, it should be acknowledged, does reflect substantial themes within existing conceptions of narrative. Gubrium and Holstein (2009: 14-25), for instance, note that narrators are typically aware that there is “something at stake” in the development/performance of a tale, in terms of the particular constructions of self that these facilitate, and the way these become situated within prevailing social hierarchies. These patterns of stratification are not only related to the *outcomes of* particular tales, but also inflect which (gendered/raced/classed/embodied) stories are given space to be heard, and which are pre-emptively silenced or positioned as “untellable”. Narrative departures from power-laden expectations are, certainly, a feature of social reality, but emerge within a context that is, at least to a certain extent, hostile (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009: 149-60).

The construction of self-narrative as an *interested* practice, through which actors accumulate certain material or symbolic rewards, offers several interrelated analytic possibilities within the context of this research. The presentation of the self, emphasising distinct virtues, accomplishments, and traits, may reflect individuals’ investments in historically meaningful “social games” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 66, 1996b 333-6). We may examine: how self-narrations reflect particular locations within social space, and the dilemmas that these produce; the kinds of “capital” that individuals draw upon to generate certain impressions; the values, themes and investments that underpin autobiographical representations; and

how narrativisations may relate to particular forms of “masculine *illusio*” (Wacquant, 1995a: 173). Understanding “narrative ventures” subsequently requires that discourses be interpreted within their broader historical context, examining the social relations that inflect the experiences, opportunities and understandings of narrators (Thompson, 1991: 29).

Yet, a unilateral conception of language as strategy would be extremely limiting within narrative-based research, casting substantial doubt on the “truth claims” offered by narrators. I cannot fully agree with Swartz’s (1997: 56) contention that self-narratives are methodologically employed by Bourdieu solely to examine the strategic linguistic practices of agents, or Snook’s (1990: 178) claim that Bourdieu denies “the assumption that language tries to capture the world”. These perspectives are, certainly, understandable when placed within the context of Bourdieu’s (1977a, 1991) economistic theorisation of language. Yet, as demonstrated earlier, Bourdieu has consistently employed “insider accounts” methodologically, and despite his conceptualisation of “the economics of linguistic exchange”, it is striking how *seldom* he considers these forms of data in terms of self-interested strategy (Reed-Danahay, 2005). From Bourdieu’s substantive methodological employment of narrative material, it is clear that he regards language as strategic, but not *only* strategic.

Narrative, Habitus and Symbolic Domination

Life history research is commonly vaunted for its capacity to facilitate access to the subjective experiences of narrators (Clandinin, 2006; Maynes et al., 2008). As Howard Becker (1966: vii) notes in relation to Clifford Shaw’s classic life history study *The Jack-Roller*, narrative material highlights “the actor’s point of view”: to “understand why someone behaves as he does you must understand how (the world) looked to him, what he thought he had to contend with, what alternatives he saw open to him (sic)”. In this vein, narrative material may be employed to investigate the incorporated knowledges of the habitus, to identify the implicit assumptions and taken-for-granted categories that structure the way agents construct and understand themselves, and how they perceive opportunities available to them within the broader social space. As Reed-Danahay (2005: 132) contends, “(f)or Bourdieu, the life narrative reveals the dispositions of the habitus”.

Yet, the interrogation of habituated assumptions using narrative material is far from straightforward. Agents may, Bourdieu contends, offer statements that directly contradict the impulses embedded within the habitus, either out of a conscious desire to deceive (Bourdieu, 1996d: 29-30, 1991), or because the nature and implications of the habitus are invisible, taken-for-granted and formally “unknown” (Bourdieu, 2000b: 116-7). This “invisibility” becomes especially problematic when the researcher shares a cultural universe with those being researched (Bourdieu, 1996d: 25-7). The mutual possession of deeply rooted “doxic” assumptions may naturalise common-sense realities, rather than facilitating identification of the implicit “generative structures” central to the “logic of practice” (Bourdieu, 1990a). Finally, Bourdieu (1990b) commonly expressed concerns about the “scholastic” tendency to emphasise the realm of the linguistic, to the exclusion of the affective or the corporeal. Examinations of these elements of the habitus can be facilitated through life history-style material (Couser, 1997; Frank, 2006), but the limitations of (primarily) linguistic or discursive ways of accessing these regions of social life need to be acknowledged.

Bourdieu’s (1977b, 1990a: 112-21) conceptualisation of practice emphasises the role of symbolic forms in the reproduction of social inequalities (Swartz, 1997: 82). Echoing Max Weber, he contends that relations of “domination” are rarely *solely* secured through overt physical violence or constraint, and uses the concept of “symbolic power” to refer to the capacity of privileged individuals, groups, and institutions to normalise certain methods of interpreting and categorising social life (Bourdieu, 1989: 18-9). Symbolic power is “the power to make the world by imposing instruments for the cognitive construction of the world” (Bourdieu, 2002: 170). The efficacy of symbolic power reflects the tendency for particular modes of vision and division to be so deeply rooted within both the individual habitus, and surrounding social fields, that they are no longer understood as reflecting the outcomes of historical patterns of contestation and privilege/domination. Instead, these interpretations are naturalised; their principles are rarely formally articulated, but come to reflect a “pre-verbal”, taken-for-granted understanding of the world that “flows from practical sense” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 68). The implications of symbolic power are most pernicious when they structure the embodied dispositions of

subordinated social groups, a process Bourdieu (2001: 1) captures through the concept of “symbolic violence”, introduced in Chapter Two.

Bourdieu’s critique of symbolic domination necessitates a double-sided relation to narrative material. He is emphatic that sociological analysts should not merely relay the ideas presented by informants, or, using Harold Garfinkel’s terminology, provide “accounts of the accounts” (cited in Bourdieu, 1990a: 26). Apart from the epistemological issues introduced earlier surrounding the sociological awareness of “lay actors”, Bourdieu is quite sceptical (arguably excessively so [Bohman, 1997; Adams, 2006: 514]) about the potential for patterns of historical contestation among marginalised social groups; there is, in his analysis, a consistent tendency to examine how relations of domination are naturalised, rendering profoundly historical social forces seemingly inevitable or necessary from the perspectives of both dominating and dominated groups (Bourdieu, 1984, 2001). For Bourdieu (1973, 1999), sociological considerations of life history narratives must therefore involve a critical interrogation of how symbolic power relations pervade, and are (potentially) reproduced through, this material.

Yet, despite expressing scepticism about self-narrative’s inherently progressive value, Bourdieu does ascribe methodological and ethical weight to “voice”. This is especially evident within *The Weight Of The World*, which substantially consists of interview transcripts conducted with individuals negotiating the context of neoliberal France (Bourdieu, 1999). These narratives, Bourdieu argues, allow us to understand the agent’s “point of view”, a concept that he increasingly invokes towards the conclusion of his research career (Bourdieu, 1988a, 1996d: 22-4, 2008a, 2008b). The significance ascribed to “voice” within Bourdieu’s research reflects his desire to counter the reductive impulses of social scientific knowledge, which reduce individuals to the “marionettes” (Dollard, 1949: 5) of social structure. Indeed, he contends that qualitative methods have a distinctive value in this regard, accessing the complexities rendered invisible by the “Archimedean” view of objectivist social science (Bourdieu, 1988b). There is, then, a simultaneous desire to historically situate actors and their self-understandings, without rendering them the pawns of historical processes; or, to use Reed-Danahay’s (2005: 144) phrase, “to objectify the (narrator’s) point of view, but without so distancing a gaze that they become objects”. In this ethic, where “voice” appears in a (seemingly) unmediated form within Bourdieu’s

work, it is necessarily accompanied by historical or quantitative data, designed to help identify the “generative structures” (Reed-Danahay, 2005; Speller, 2011) that have partially produced (and are often recursively reproduced by) the practices of agents.

Practical Reflexivity, The Cleft Habitus and Historical Consciousness

Perhaps the overriding implication of the above sections is the need to *contextualise* life history narratives. Bourdieu is often sceptical about the extent to which individuals understand and represent their lives in historicised terms; rather, this historicisation needs to be facilitated by sociologists (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990a). At times, Bourdieu seems to suggest that agents possess an almost categorical inability to understand themselves sociologically, reflect through language, or examine the “generative structures” that have formed them (Bohman, 1997; Adams, 2006: 514). He contends, for instance, that legitimate sociological insight must be “conquered” against everyday, spontaneous and intuitive understandings, as if these everyday knowledges, by definition, *must* amount to ideological fabrication (Speller, 2011: 40-1). Critics of Bourdieusian sociology have subsequently contended that his conceptual framework either entirely elides, or drastically underestimates, “lay” actors’ reflexive capabilities. Bruno Latour (cited in Adams 2006: 514) critiques the sense in which “generative structures” appear to manipulate individuals “behind their backs”; while James Bohman (1997: 172) notes that, at times, Bourdieu seemingly “require(s) that agents “misrecognise” their social situation”.

These are legitimate concerns, and, in my view, Bourdieu does underestimate everyday processes of historical awareness; his perspective compares starkly with theorisations of “reflexive modernity” (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). Simultaneously, however, it would be inaccurate to unambiguously contend that Bourdieu defines agents as “symbolic fools” (Bohman, 1997: 176), unable to countenance historical consciousness (Fowler, 2013: 250). For Bourdieu, reflexivity is not a transcendental cognitive capacity, but rather a *socially generated habit* that emerges through particular configurations of the habitus/field relationship (Adkins, 2004: 192-5; Adams, 2006: 515). Awareness of the specificity of the historical situation that one confronts, he contends, is especially liable to emerge within the context of crisis or social contradiction, within which habituated dispositions confront a social environment that is in some sense “alien” or “foreign”, rendering individuals “fish out of water” (Davey, 2009). This

disjuncture between habitus/field can motivate an appreciation of the doxic assumptions that underpin everyday practice by practically challenging unproblematic “common-sense”. This experience may even be relatively routine within capitalist societies: institutionalised instability encourages individuals to regularly move between distinct social fields (Couldry, 2005: 356-8); globalisation fosters contact between alternative social, economic and political systems; and capitalist technological developments necessitate continual processes of adjustment (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 45; McNay, 1999).

Deborah Reed-Danahay (2005) contends that there is a particular *kind* of informant that Bourdieu privileges as offering genuinely sociological insight. Late in his career, Bourdieu increasingly drew upon the concept of the “cleft” habitus as a potentially productive sociological resource (Fowler, 2013: 256). Bourdieu contends that “occupants of precarious positions” within social space frequently become exceptional “practical analysts”. These individuals experience social dynamics motivating the “practice (of) a kind of self-analysis, which often gives them access to the objective contradictions which have them in their grasp, and to the objective structures expressed in and by these contradictions” (Bourdieu, 1999: 511). In an analysis strongly reminiscent of Patricia Hill Collins’ (1986) “outsider within”, indeterminacy of social position is, at least potentially, a sociological resource that can be drawn upon to break doxic cycles of reproduction. It is this understanding of the “practical analysis” developed by marginal social groups that leads Bourdieu to privilege the autobiographical insights of “the dominated” (Bourdieu, 1996c: 408), and their capacity to reflect upon the “point of view of the dominant” (Bourdieu, 2001: 31).

It is not an untenable leap to suggest that the “status inconsistency” (Gershick, 2000) experienced by disabled men may motivate the socially grounded reflexivity associated with Bourdieu’s “cleft habitus”. Exclusion from dominant incarnations of masculinity may offer disabled men acute insight surrounding prevailing contemporary gender norms, as a consequence of routinised engagement with constructions of masculinity from which they are disqualified. Simultaneously, this reflexivity cannot be assumed: the invisibility of habituated assumptions (Bourdieu, 2000b: 116-7), the tendency towards the naturalisation of social relationships (Bourdieu, 2001) and patterns of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 125-34, 2000b: 169), render uncritical reliance on informants a precarious methodological tactic from a

Bourdieuian perspective. As such, it will be necessary to introduce alternative secondary source materials to assist with the historicisation of autobiographical narratives, as discussed below (Bourdieu, 1973; Maynes et al., 2008: 70-97). No individual is likely to be entirely cognisant of the historical conditions that have formed them; yet, to redeploy Craig Calhoun's (1993: 81) terminology, Bourdieu's theorisation of the "cleft" habitus suggests "certain members of modern societies (may be) so with regards to certain of their practices".

Ricoeur, Autobiographical "Truth" and Mimetic Translation

Generically, published life narratives commonly espouse a "referential intention" (Ihde, 1991); it is a component of the "autobiographical pact" (Lejeune, 1989) enacted by author and reader that the account provided is understood as "authentic". This referential intention, while remaining a persistent, although not universal (see Smith and Watson, 2001: 213-24), feature of autobiographical life writing, is rarely unproblematically accepted within sociology. Indeed, narrative researchers almost ubiquitously display defensiveness in response to the methodological limitations encountered by the approach (Norman, 1991: 122; Dhunpath, 2000: 544). Two paradigmatic frameworks are commonly employed to elucidate the limitations of self-narrative methodologies within sociology (Plummer, 2001: 3-5).

The first paradigm assesses life history research using methodological criteria derived from positivist social scientific traditions. This frame may consider the significance accorded to subjectivity, affect, language, meaning and experience as conceptually tenuous (Plummer, 2001: 110-1; Polkinghorne, 2007: 471-2), and unsuited to the generation of generalisable findings (Couser, 1997: 38; Thomson, 1998: 581-2). The "factuality" of autobiographical source material may be challenged along multiple avenues, including the fallibility of memory (Lincoln, 2000; Jedlowski, 2001), the selectivity involved in narrativising "a life's" complexity (Carr, 1986: 117-20), and the author's "strategic" desire to generate certain audience responses (Buchanan and Tollison, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991). The absence of strongly formalised methodological procedures may foster research conclusions that are biased and unrepresentative, reflecting the sociologist's own preconceptions and interests (Bertaux and Kohli, 1984: 218; Goodley, 1996: 341), and rendering conventional evaluative criteria (validity, replicability, adequacy and reliability) difficult to assess (Plummer, 2001: 109-14; Polkinghorne, 2007).

A second prism, associated with post-structuralism, facilitates sociological considerations of narrative identity, subjectivity and language (Frank, 2000; Goodson, 2001), but expresses reservations about the “epistemic” status of life history material (de Man, 1979; Bertaux, 2003: 44-6). The contention that autobiographical representations *refer to* or *describe* some “external reality” may be, from this perspective, strongly rejected (de Man, 1979; Norman, 1991: 128-31; Smith and Watson, 2001). Instead, as noted by Connell (1995: 91), post-structuralist interpretations tend to “treat any story as a fiction; to “read” it for the figures of speech, motivated silences and narrative devices by which the teller as author constructs a meaningful tale”. Self-narratives, as such, can still be studied from this perspective, but are analysed *as texts*, rather than as offering access to an external referent (Joyce, 1995: 81-3; Cary, 1999; Banner, 2009). Autobiographical narratives come to not so much *reflect* a “life history”, capturing “truths” existing prior to textualisation, but rather *performatively constitute* a set of self-knowledges that retrospectively impose coherence upon “a life” (Smith and Watson, 2001; Margadant, 2009: 7).

The persistence of reservations surrounding the epistemological status of narrative material within sociology undoubtedly stems from the persuasiveness of many concerns articulated by these paradigms. Yet, the unproblematic valorisation of either critique would have potentially problematic implications for sociology: the former pre-emptively excluding considerations of experience, subjectivity and affect (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2007), and the latter potentially fostering a discursively-focused “retreat” from the world “out there” (Bertaux, 2003; Banner, 2009). These concerns are expressed with excessive bluntness here, given the complexity embedded within both scholarly paradigms; yet, their limiting (if insightful) understandings of self-narrative require the development of an alternative approach to the methodological value of autobiographical material within this research. While Bourdieu’s (1992, 1996d, 1999) work sporadically considers the “truth value” of autobiographical accounts, he never provides an entirely coherent theoretical exposition of the “transition” between “experience” and “narrative”. In the following paragraphs, I employ Paul Ricouer’s (1984) approach, which simultaneously rejects positioning autobiographical material as simplistic “reflections” of a life, while avoiding the inclination to render them “fictional”.

Ricoeur (1984: 52) conceptualises the relationship between narrative and lived experience as a “threefold mimesis”. “Mimesis”, derived from Aristotelian philosophy, does not imply that narrative unproblematically “mimics” the external world; rather, each mimetic phase involves a *simultaneous relation of revelation/transformation*, being *both* derived, *and* differentiated, from the previous stage (Carr et al., 1991; Vandeveld, 2008). While Ricoeur (1984, 1991) primarily frames the logic of triple mimesis in terms of narrative, the progression identified might be interpreted as applicable to any research method (Erben, 1993). We never, according to Ricoeur, study “the world” itself; we can only examine the “traces” that are left to us, all of which are necessarily subject to patterns of inscription/interpretation. The “hermeneutical detour” described is, subsequently, equally as characteristic of survey data or ethnographic fieldnotes, as it is of life narratives (Erben, 1993: 19).

Mimesis 1, or “prefiguration” (Ezzy, 1998: 244), relates to the realm of action and experience. Ricoeur does not conceive of these as being entirely separate from, or prior to, narrative. Rather, practice, selfhood and interaction are implicitly “open” to the possibility of narration, and contextualised within their surrounding temporal, cultural and institutional horizons, involving “a network of action-concepts and a practical understanding concerning them” (Laitinen, 2002: 11). Narrative, then, is not (entirely) a generic imposition that artificially structures the meaningless nature of experience; there is a sense of meaningfulness, for Ricoeur, embedded within the material of history that can be (partially) articulated narratively (Carr et al., 1991). Mimesis 2, “configuration” (Ezzy, 1998: 244), involves the attempt to narrate prefiguration, to discursively capture the temporal flow of events and their meaningfulness. This is termed “emplotment” (Ricoeur, 1984: 31-51), involving, within autobiography, the selective use of the heterogeneous material provided by “a life” to construct a certain understanding of selfhood. For reasons already suggested, the relationship between prefiguration and configuration is never entirely transparent: the narrative transformation of “experience” or “action” into linguistic form is a substantial ontological shift (Bourdieu, 1996d; Plummer, 2001: 87-91); norms and expectations relating to story-telling become pertinent (Polkinghorne, 2007; Frank 2013); and the direction of the narrative “towards” real/imagined audiences bears influence (Sharkey, 2004). Finally, Ricoeur contends that the “hermeneutic circle” is

incomplete until Mimesis 3, where the narrative is “refigured” (Ezzy, 1998: 244), or interpreted. This, again, is never a neutral process, with the reader relating to the work on the basis of pre-existing assumptions and interests, the surrounding historical context, and previous experiences with the genre (Ricoeur, 1991). In this vein, Liz Stanley (1992: 158) refers to understandings of life narratives as “kaleidoscopic” rather than “microscopic”, containing the possibility for multiple (although not infinite) potential interpretations.

This thesis prioritises the realm of prefiguration as a reflection of the substantive research question(s) posed. Yet, Ricoeur’s (1984) narrative epistemology suggests that it is important to explicitly recognise that “access” to the world “out there” offered by autobiographical texts is necessarily fragmented and partial. The construction of self-narratives as involving cumulative stages of revelation/transformation reflects recognition of the significance of multiple intersecting factors in the “storying” of oneself. While not reducing these narratives to a form of “fiction”, this approach acknowledges the roles of formal narrative structure and rhetoric, the social relations through which texts are created, and researcher subjectivity. This stance, subsequently, echoes Liz Stanley’s (2013: 6, 11) call for a “fractured foundationalism” within narrative enquiry, that avoids unproblematically constructing autobiographical works in terms of immaculate authenticity, without jettisoning questions about the world “out there”.

The construction of the forms of knowledge developed within this thesis as emerging through uneven and cumulative processes of *both* revelation and transformation does, however, raise important and complex questions surrounding the criteria to be employed for the purposes of *evaluation*. At least from the emergence of Denzin and Lincoln’s (1994) conceptualisation of the “crisis of legitimation”, the standards employed to evaluate *qualitative* research have attracted increasing scrutiny, with many noting that the traditional benchmarks used to assess the value of *quantitative* enquiry (validity, reliability, generalisability, and objectivity) may be ill-equipped to handle the distinctive epistemological underpinnings associated with narrative research (Sparkes, 1995; Mays and Pope, 2000; Tracy, 2010). Deconstructions of an entirely definable, static or singular “truth”, emerging recognition of the situatedness of all perspective, the primacy afforded to language and representation, emphasis on the

historically/culturally situated nature of experience, and recognition of the role of author subjectivity in the act of interpretation, all seemingly mitigate against the deployment of the epistemological criteria used to validate the findings of hypothetico-deductivist social scientific enquiry (Plummer, 2001: 110-1; Polkinghorne, 2007: 471-2).

This question is further complicated by internal variegations “within” the arena of qualitative study, characterised by a panoply of lived experiences, methodological backgrounds, theoretical predispositions, ethical investments and research objectives (Tracy, 2010: 839). Given this diversity, and the contestations that it inevitably provokes, it would be problematic to pre-emptively impose a set of criteria on the readership in terms of how one’s own research is to be assessed. Yet, reflecting previous identifications of key considerations in the evaluation of qualitative study, a number of broadly relevant factors can be identified consistent with the “fractured foundationalism” theorised. These include (but are not limited to): the development of a *worthy topic* (reflecting ongoing patterns of socially grounded privilege/inequality); *expression of reality* (the research’s capacity to capture lived experience); *rich rigour* (the use of meaningful and insightful data to support arguments and offer insight into the experiences/social positions of narrators); *credibility* (the development of arguments that are plausible and convincing); *resonance/impact* (the research’s ability to “affect” its audience, or guide future practice and analysis); and *substantive contribution* (the way the study supplements/expands extant knowledge/theory)(Richardson, 2000; Tracy, 2010).

Research Design

Sampling

This study adopted a criterion sampling approach designed to identify a relatively small, information-rich sample that would facilitate insights into the particular themes highlighted by the research question (Patton, 2001: 238; Palys, 2008: 2). Initially, comprehensive lists of all English-language published autobiographical material that met key criteria were collated. These lists were compiled on the basis of internet web searches, the use of online bookstores, previous sociological research using relevant material, and published bibliographies identifying readings for disabled people, and their family members/partners/friends. Sources selected for potential inclusion needed to have

been composed by authors who were (a) male, were (b) over the age of eighteen at the time of publication, and (c) self-identified as having one of the “impairments” (Autism Spectrum Conditions or Spinal Cord Injuries) selected for consideration. To delimit the potentially includable material, and emphasise contemporary representations, sources listed had to have been (d) published from 2005 onwards. These autobiographies were listed numerically, and selected for consideration using an online random number generator; where a previously analysed source was chosen, a new number was generated, until twenty texts were identified.

Narrative Analytic Procedure

This thesis encounters a complex set of intersecting concerns, regarding chaotic confrontations between “reality” and “representation”, the existence of “generative structures” that foster regularities, without mechanistically determining uniformity, and the imbrication between biology/culture, public/private and solidarity/difference. These variegated and multiple interests require analytical procedures that are themselves multiple, capable of attending to the various “levels” of enquiry that have been developed over the preceding chapters. The approach to narrative analysis adopted within this research substantially draws upon R. W. Connell’s (1995) *Masculinities*, which comparatively examined the life histories of groups of men facing structural contradictions within the extant “gender order”. Connell (1992: 738-9) writes:

To decode structural effects in personal practice, the basic unit of study must be the single case. Personal trajectories reveal the interplay of constraints and possibilities, and the interaction of structures. Accordingly, the single case is the basis of this study. However, if the research problem concerns the dynamics operating in a given social location, a group of cases from that location must be examined so that the range of practical possibilities and the character of collective practice becomes clear. Further, exploring a dynamic like the reconstruction of masculinity that operates across different social locations requires comparison of a range of groups. Accordingly, the study design had three levels: the single case, a group of cases from a particular location, and comparisons between groups in different locations.

In the following sections, I provide an account of my engagements with the three “levels” of analysis identified by Connell (1992, 1995). To these, I add a fourth process, associated with the situation of narrative data within the context of secondary quantitative, historical and theoretical material. Engaging with the “found life histories” through these distinct analytic prisms facilitated the pursuit of methodological immersion and a greater complexity and depth of understanding (Ayres et al., 2003: 875). The presentation of the distinct “stages” of narrative analysis offered here should not be interpreted as unfolding according to a rigid chronology (Boeije, 2010: 20); all processes, in practice, occurred with a degree of simultaneity, with the insights derived from each stage being recursively employed to assist in the development of alternative processes (Boeije, 2002).

Process One: Case Study

A case study account was developed for each autobiographical source, documenting the temporal progression of events, practices, phases, thoughts, feelings, and themes, and how these related to intersections between disability and masculinity (Connell, 1992: 739). In keeping with the multi-dimensional conceptualisation of narrative as emerging through compounding processes of revelation/transformation (Ricoeur, 1984; see also Riessman, 1993: 8-15), case studies were undertaken with a variety of co-existing concerns. This involved considerations of *prefiguration* (“the life” as lived, the implications of structured patterns of power and inequality, the resources available to narrators, the situation of the author within broader social processes, and the implications of corporeality), *configuration* (the “strategic” motivations underpinning self-presentation, the elements of life that were narrated or elided, the possible implications of co-authorship, the utilisation of narrative and rhetorical devices, and the consideration of autobiographical conventions), and *refiguration* (my [personal and scholarly] impressions of the author, how analytical processes were structuring research conclusions, and the relevance of Bourdieusian social theory).

Within this research’s broader framework, case studies served three vital purposes. Firstly, case studies enabled a consideration of the progression of the self (Goodson, 2001; Stanley, 2013), moving beyond temporally delimited “snapshots” of beliefs, practices and attitudes. Life history documents possess limitations in this regard, as they represent post-facto reconstructions from a particular

moment (Stanley, 1993: 48-50); yet, without this data, it is difficult to “reflect on the making of social life through time” (Connell, 1995: 89). Secondly, whereas quantitative approaches characteristically operationalise a small number of manageable variables, case studies maintain a sense complexity, positioning “confounding factors”, overlapping influences, and contradiction as the norm, rather than as methodological anomalies (Cavaye, 1996; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Case studies are, for Sandelowski (1996: 526), “quintessentially about understanding an empirically real or constructed particular in the fullness of whatever contexts are relevant”. Thirdly, the emphasis that case studies placed upon the socially contextualised trajectory of individual narrators provided an important point of reference for the development of coding schemas; they were designed to ensure that “fragments” of data were not being misused as a consequence of de-contextualisation (Boeije, 2002; Ayres et al., 2003).

Process Two: Intra-Impairment Comparison

The second analytic procedure undertaken within this research involved collective engagement with the autobiographical material collected from each of the two “impairment categories” under consideration. The purpose of this process was to move beyond the idiosyncrasies of each “found life history”, towards an appreciation of the *collective* processes through which narrators dialectically negotiated social space; or, using the Bourdieusian language introduced earlier, from individual “life histories” to collective “social trajectories” (Bourdieu, 2005). This task was undertaken using qualitative coding. This was a necessary process given the complexity and quantity of data collected (Ayres et al., 2003; Richards, 2009: 93-5). The process of coding has been critiqued within the context of narrative enquiry for implicitly attempting to replicate the analytical standardisation valorised within positivist research, undermining the complex “all-togetherness” of data, and destroying the temporal “flow” of life-history narratives (Mello, 2002; Flyvbjerg, 2006: 241). These are legitimate concerns, and have been negotiated by pursuing both case study and coding procedures as a form of what might be termed “analytical triangulation”, with each process partially redressing the limitations of the other (Boeije, 2002; Ayres et al., 2003).

Initial readings involved the identification of “relevant text” (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003: 42-53). All segments of narrative data identified as significant to the thesis’ research concerns were highlighted,

and transcribed into separate word processing documents for each individual “found life history”. This avoided coding all data, as recommended by some (e.g. Burnard, 1991), but which, as Derek Layder (1998: 53-6) contends, may become unwieldy within the context of substantial quantities of narrative material, fostering the consideration of swathes of text not directly relevant to the research question. Data segments were linked to the original autobiography through the author’s initials and a page/location number; these “locating devices” were maintained throughout all coding stages (Ayres et al., 2003: 872-3). The process of identifying “relevant text” relied upon a form of “pre-coding”, drawing upon my intuitive understanding of the material and its potential relation to this thesis’ concerns (Layder, 1998; Saldaña, 2016: 20-1); texts were reconsidered in light of changing understandings of “relevance” as these intuitions shifted over time with the development of new analytic insights (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003: 42-53). Data fragments were of varying lengths, spanning from short phrases to several paragraphs depending upon the “episodic” length of the material.

The following three coding steps (adapted from Attride-Stirling, 2001; Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Richards, 2009: 93-114) involved an attempt to move from the “raw material” of the relevant text towards a theoretically informed basis for analysis. These stages, again, were undertaken dialectically rather than chronologically; the following discussion represents a simplification of what was, in practice, a messy process involving false-leads, backtracking and cyclical re-development over time (Ryan, 2009). It is, also, worth noting that “a permanent confrontation with data” (Moghaddam, 2006: 59) was maintained to ensure that the various stages of coding were not problematically altering original meanings.

Firstly, I undertook what Lyn Richards (2009: 101-2) terms *topic coding*. This phase attempted to concisely describe each “fragment” of data that had been identified as relevant text through a brief code that could conveniently convey its content. The objective here was to operate at a low level of abstraction, providing a descriptive sense of the data that formed the basis for later conceptual or comparative work (Priest et al., 2002: 33-4; Brent and Slusarz, 2003: 285). Code names often drew upon key words or phrases that emerged from the data itself (Boeijs, 2010: 101). The assigned code provided

a clear sense of *what* was particularly interesting or relevant about the data fragment in relation to broader research concerns. Segments of data were frequently identified as relevant to multiple topic codes (Richards, 2009).

Secondly, I undertook the process of *thematic coding*, which compiled related fragments of data into emergent categories. In practice, this involved the creation of word processing documents orientated around particular themes that had emerged as significant areas of concern. Fragments of data identified as pertaining to each theme at the stage of topic coding were imported into the new documents, culminating in the thematically-based collation of related data from texts under consideration (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The themes used to organise the data were developed through a combined deployment of *a priori* and *inductive* insights (Weston et al., 2001; K. Willis, 2006), or what Blaikie (2000: 25) terms an “abductive” approach. Themes relating to sport, sexuality, embodiment, labour and independence had been identified as key concerns within the literature on disabled masculinities, as had the diverse ways disabled men negotiate gendered regions of social life. Other categories were inductively generated through engagement with autobiographical material itself. These included: the thesis’ growing concern with the relationship between disabled masculinities and affective embodiments; the account of anthropological “scholasticism” emerging in Chapter Nine; and the categories employed to elucidate the notion of generative masculinities (for SCIs, heroism, rationality, and relationality, for ASCs, authenticity, rigidity and spontaneous balance).

Thematic categories underwent substantial evolution as the research progressed. At times, the categories were too specific, incorporating minimal material, and required broadening; at others, they subsumed too much data, rendering comparison unmanageable (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In this instance, the category was either divided into two or more distinct themes (with new documents being created), or a series of sub-categories were developed to help render the data more coherent for the purpose of analysis (as with Attride-Stirling’s [2001] “thematic networks”). This process was important in terms of identifying what themes were emerging from the data as substantial and consistent issues that had strong relevance to this thesis’ research question. Material that emerged as distinctive or idiosyncratic was not, however, removed from consideration; these offered insights surrounding the

diversity and complexity of social forces involved. The collation of fragments of “relevant text” into key thematic categories subsequently allowed for a consideration of both the social processes that were underpinning patterns of collective experience, as well as the distinctive forces that enabled divergent outcomes (Tesch, 1990; Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003).

The third step involved *analytic coding* (Richards, 2009: 103-4). This phase moved beyond the more “descriptive” ethic of both topic and thematic coding, by seeking to conceptualise the patterns, relationships and tendencies that had emerged throughout the previous stages. The precise means by which this occurred are difficult to formalise, involving a degree of interpretive creativity and intuition, while simultaneously being rooted within the specificities of emergent coding schemas. In particular, this stage witnessed the re-introduction of sociological concepts and theories, and the development of global core themes that could assist in the holistic interpretation of findings (Corbin and Strauss, 1990: 14-5). It involved a focussed return to the specific gaps within the literature identified within Chapter One, and an attempt to comprehend how the emerging sets of relationships identified within the data may assist understandings of these topics. It was at this stage that Bourdieusian social theory was re-introduced, attempting to position the data in relation to key conceptual elements, while recursively interrogating Bourdieusian social theory in light of data (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 50).

Finally, as noted by Richards (2009: 170-1), while coding frameworks provide an important basis for the organisation and interpretation of qualitative data, they never entirely “speak for themselves”. Within this research, the “links” between coding frameworks and research outcomes were initially developed and articulated through the use of memo writing within the form of an ongoing journal (Layder, 1998: 58-64; Plummer, 2001: 150-68). These memos played an important role in integrating the different analytic procedures being described – beginning to formally conceptualise how categories emerging through coding related to individual case studies, the broader historical context, and to insights derived from the “other” impairment category (processes one, three and four respectively). Memos, equally, provided a context within which the themes (disabled masculinities), theoretical framework (Bourdieusian sociology), and source material (found life histories) employed within this

study were integrated, or “thought through”, to maintain coherence within the research design (Punch, 2005: 201-2).

Process Three: Substantialist Break

As contended in Chapter Two, Bourdieu deployed his theoretical concepts within the context of a panoply of research methods – ranging from microethnographic qualitative research to generalisable quantitative analyses – by productively negotiating the limitations of both “macro” and “micro” approaches within empirical sociology (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1989: 15-6). Bourdieu (1973) contended that individuals were often not fully aware of the historical conditions that contextualised their experiences, and that a *lack* of formal awareness of the “fuzzy” principles that organised social life was a prerequisite for the virtuosic, intuitive “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990a: 66). Bourdieu did not discard self-narrative as a methodological approach; rather, he contended that this data needed to be sociologically interpreted through a “break” with substantialism, that would allow for the historically situated nature of social life to be rendered visible in ways that may not be explicitly acknowledged within individuals’ accounts (Bourdieu, 1973).

A range of material was subsequently employed to facilitate sociological interpretation of the autobiographical narratives. This included the use of secondary quantitative data to identify where seemingly idiosyncratic accounts may relate to broader social trends; historical works designed to temporally/culturally situate narrated experience; and previous theoretical material relating to the subject matter. Less formally, the analysis was situated within the context of a broader immersion within non-scholarly material – including internet blogs, web forums, newspaper articles, and disability-specific media. Consultation of this material did not reflect an interrogative desire to “confirm” the “facts” presented within the autobiographies under discussion, an approach antithetical to the consideration of subjective perception (“narrative truth”) as itself a legitimate topic for sociological enquiry (Lincoln, 2000; Bauman, 2002). Instead, this material was employed for the purpose of *contextualisation*, designed to reconstruct the structural, cultural and social situations confronted by narrators (Bourdieu’s [1996b: 258-9] “metro network”) that inflected the opportunities, experiences and habituated modes of perception evident within autobiographical accounts.

Process Four: Inter-Impairment Comparison

The first three methodological processes formed the basis for the discussions offered in the core data analysis chapters of this thesis. The concluding chapter moves towards a more overtly comparative focus, seeking to outline the distinctive interactions between gender and disability evident within the found life histories under consideration. Comparative research designs facilitate sociological insight by encouraging the researcher to recurrently shift between cases that are meaningfully related, but which are simultaneously sufficiently distinctive to shed light on the others' specificities (Bryman, 2001; see also Connell, 1995: 738-9). As Hugh Stretton (1969: 245-7) contends, comparative approaches offer substantial benefits in terms of "question prompting", with the movement between cases acting to "stimulate imagination" by encouraging the continual querying of whether findings within one context can be meaningfully applied in another. In practice, this amounted to a reconsideration of the outcomes of the previous three processes (case studies, coding, and historical contextualisation) with a more deliberately comparative ethic. Whereas earlier phases sought to identify the social logics emerging "within" both impairment categories, this final stage involved considerations of how, when and why findings related to one another "across" impairment categories. This facilitated reflections on both patterns of resemblance and difference, and the ways these mirrored intersecting nexuses between corporeal forms, habituated dispositions and patterns of social organisation.

Comparison With Alternative Narrative Studies Approaches

The approach(es) to data analysis deployed within this thesis can be instructively elucidated by considering how these both reflect, and depart from, comparable approaches in the field. In its utilisation of coding schemas developed using inductive *and* deductive insights (an "abductive" [Blaikie, 2000: 25] approach), the analytic tactics employed here might be understood using terminology from narrative psychology (McAdams, 2012) as relating to both the "*context of discovery*" (involving the identification and development of emergent themes) as well as the "*context of justification*" (involving the "testing" or interrogation of previously existing scholarly insights). Reflecting the ethic of "narrative network analysis" (Feldman and Almquist, 2012), it is also a study that takes the task of identifying the "implicit" seriously; autobiographical texts are not positioned as entirely "speaking for themselves", but

rather as infused by assumptions/historical contexts/embodied resonances that require deliberate sociological interrogation. It is, finally, also the case that in many instances the autobiographical material under consideration will not only be interpreted as “reflecting” aspects of experience, but also in what the broader narrative studies field conceives of as forms of “action” (Bourdieu’s [1991] “narrative as strategy”), involving experienced narrator imperatives, resources, and objectives (Holstein and Gubrium, 2012).

It should also be acknowledged that this approach to analysis departs from major currents emergent within narrative studies in important ways. Given the depth and complexity of the scholarly area, it is not possible to offer a comprehensive elucidation of these differences, however at least two significant divergences are worth articulating. This thesis prioritises the realm of prefiguration as a reflection of the substantive research question(s) posed. It is ultimately, to employ Andrew Sparkes’ (1995: 171) terminology, a study that utilises autobiographical material to construct a “realist tale” about the gendered experiences and social positions of two groups of disabled men. In this sense, the research may be critiqued for adopting a somewhat conservative stance in light of contemporary developments within qualitative/narrative methodologies. It is increasingly common, for instance, for researchers in the area to position the act of storytelling as a practice contextualised by particular generic/narrative expectations, and to interrogate the structural/linguistic/interpretive/metaphorical/interpersonal norms that render a tale meaningful/intelligible (Connell, 1995: 91; Smith and Watson, 2001; Margadant, 2009: 7). This is evident, for instance, in the “ethnography of speaking” research agenda, which focuses “on the ways in which discursive activities and their linguistic products – such as stories, arguments, greetings, interruptions, apologies, intonation patterns, and stylistic choices, to name but a few – are organised in relation to the different dimensions of their contexts of use” (Katriel, 2012: 273). Alternatively, other research trends have also witnessed an increasingly strong commitment to the ethic of reflexivity, within which the embodied researcher-self becomes an explicit topic of analysis and discussion, in a bid to undermine the generic academic conventions that venerate “author-evacuated, interpretively omnipotent, and cognitively-orientated” (Sparkes and Smith, 2012: 55) forms of intellectual representation (Haraway, 1988). In this ethic, Sparkes and Smith (2012) offer reflexive

accounts of the embodied (emotive, guttural, physical) elements involved in their qualitative analysis of life history interviews with spinal cord injured men, the way these were both shaped by broader social forces (particularly gender and disablism), and how these dialectically influenced their ensuing analyses.

Reflecting the epistemological stance associated with Ricoeur developed above, this thesis does acknowledge and engage with these alternative approaches to narrative, while primarily emphasising what Riessman (2005, 2008) terms the realm of “thematic analysis”. The focus is, in other words, on the “what” of the narratives selected for consideration, rather than the “how” of the way linguistic/generic/structural features of textuality have been purposively employed to generate meaning or coherence. Yet, this approach is not to fall into an implicit “philosophy of language” that positions narrative as “a direct and unambiguous route to meaning” (or experience) (Riessman, 2005: 2). Ricoeur’s narrative epistemology offers a way of conceiving of accounts of the self as related to “the past”, but in terms that are “refract(ed)”, rather than as straightforward reproductions (Riessman, 2005: 6).

Ethical Considerations

The utilisation of “found life histories” raises substantial ethical dilemmas. As content published in autobiographical form is freely and publically available, and has (presumably) been voluntarily created, standard ethical criteria relating to confidentiality and informed consent become less relevant. Yet, the use of autobiographical material seems both more personal, and potentially harmful, than engagements within newspaper articles, television programmes or YouTube videos. This research is employing narratives in ways that would not have been anticipated by authors; and, further, readers will be able to trace the findings back to their original context with ease (Power et al., 2012: 41). Researchers have noted in the past the possibilities for life history work to (mis)represent participants’ lives in ways that may be inaccurate or harmful; this is particularly at issue when the research question concerns social groups that are marginalised and vulnerable (Harrison and Lyon, 1993; Plummer, 2001). The desire to avoid harm raises complex ethical concerns that evade easy resolution. Broadly, I conduct this research in full recognition of the “relationship of responsibility” (Ezzy, 2002: 156) I have with both the life history narrators considered, and the social groups they belong to, attempting to balance these concerns against the desire to engage with the material consulted with critical freedom.

Conclusion

This chapter has documented the methodological approach underpinning the ensuing thesis. It has reflected upon the value (and limitations) of found life histories within sociology, examined the relationship between narrative methods and Bourdieusian sociology, and outlined the processes undertaken to assist narrative analysis. The following two sections form the substantive core of this thesis, considering the insights that the autobiographical life writing of men with Spinal Cord Injuries and Autism Spectrum Conditions offer within the frame of disabled masculinities. Before proceeding, several provisos are necessary. Firstly, it is self-evident that engagement with alternative impairment groups would have substantially shifted the analysis. This thesis is subsequently a self-consciously partial and incomplete contribution to the literature on disabled masculinities. Secondly, as evidenced throughout this chapter, multiple ambiguities characterise the deployment of “found life histories” within sociology. A reflexive awareness of these limitations has informed the entire analytic process. To re-iterate, the arguments presented are subsequently offered as contributions to a broader body of research, rather than as definitive on their own terms. Finally, the “found” quality of the material consulted has meant that, as within much historical work, pragmatic engagement with the data “as it appears” has been required. Each of the following sections has been crafted in relation to the specific strengths and opportunities afforded by the material, rather than following a rigidly defined, pre-determined structure.

Section Two

Spinal Cord Injured
Masculinities:
Physical Capital, Shame and
Gendered Generativities

Introduction

Spinal Cord Injury

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2013: 17) estimates that, globally, between 250 000 and 500 000 people sustain Spinal Cord Injuries (SCIs) annually, with men accounting for approximately 80% of traumatically acquired cases (although estimates vary, see Norton, 2010: 9-10; WHO, 2013: 18). The primary causes of SCI relate to motor vehicle incidents (as drivers, passengers and pedestrians), water-related accidents, being physically struck, falls, violence, and non-traumatic conditions such as vascular disorders, cancer, infections, and spinal disc herniation (Bryce et al., 2011; Norton, 2010: 3; WHO, 2013: 34-52). The disproportionate rate at which men experience SCIs has been associated with a range of factors, including higher levels of participation in contact sports, riskier driving practices, engagement in physical labour, and greater rates of physical violence. SCI also disproportionately affects *young* men; in Australia, those aged 15-24 account for 30% of all new cases (Norton, 2010: 9-10; see also WHO, 2013: 18-19).

The spinal cord forms part of the central nervous system that enables the brain to direct messages to, and receive messages from, distinct regions of the body, as well as controlling certain involuntary reflex responses. Motor tracts within the spinal cord enable nervous signals from the brain to be expressed through physical movement; while sensory tracts allow “external” inputs, such as pain, temperature, pressure, proprioception and pleasure, to be recognised by the brain (Mayo Clinic, 2009). The spinal cord is itself immensely fragile, but is surrounded by the bony vertebrae of the spinal column for protection. The spinal cord is divided into four sections: cervical (consisting of eight nerve segments within the neck); thoracic (twelve nerve segments spanning the upper- and mid-back); lumbar (five nerve segments within the lower back); and sacral (five nerve segments towards the tailbone, or sacrum). Different levels of the spinal cord correspond to movement/sensation in different regions of the body (WHO, 2013: 4-5).

A SCI occurs when a lesion inhibits the flow of information through the central nervous system. The higher the lesion on the spinal cord, the more parts of the body will be affected; neurological activity remains unchanged above the level of injury (Elliott and Rivera, 2003). An individual’s

neurologic level is determined by identifying the affected segments of the spinal cord; it is communicated by referring to the “section” of the spinal cord impacted, and the number of the relevant nerve segment (e.g. an injury to the fifth thoracic nerve segment is a T5 injury)(Liverman et al., 2005: 34; Mayo Clinic, 2009). Rehabilitation professionals sometimes refer to the neurologic level as the lowest *unaffected* nerve segment, but the former definition will be used in this thesis (Young, 2008). If the injury damages the spinal cord in the cervical area, an individual will become quadriplegic/tetraplegic, affecting movement/sensation in all four limbs; injuries to the thoracic/lumbar/sacral sections of the spinal column will affect use of the legs, trunk, and/or pelvic regions (paraplegia). A distinction is also made between *complete* SCIs, within which the spinal cord is completely severed and no motor or sensory function exists below the neurologic level, and *incomplete* injuries, within which the spinal cord is partially damaged, but may continue to receive and transmit messages (albeit in interrupted terms) below the “level” associated with injury (Liverman et al., 2005: 34-5; WHO, 2013: 6).

SCIs are associated with a range of symptoms, reflecting the distinct level, positioning, and completeness at which the spinal cord is affected. The most widely recognised implications of injury relate to changes in mobility through paralysis. However, multiple alternative issues may accompany this (Noreau et al., 2000; WHO, 2013: 68-72). These include: chronic pain (Defrin et al., 2001); the interruption of bowel and bladder systems (Benevento and Sipski, 2002); changes to physical sexual reactions (Monga et al. 1999; Wiwanitkit, 2008); difficulties recognising temperature and the loss of self-regulatory responses (e.g. sweating/shivering)(Attia and Engel, 1983); pressure sores (Byrne and Salzberg, 1996); circulatory issues relating to blood pressure and/or autonomic dysreflexia (Krassioukov et al., 2009); changes to respiratory capacity due to an inhibited diaphragm and/or abdominal muscles (Brown et al., 2006); and muscular spasms (Adams and Hicks, 2005).

In presenting what are conventionally constructed as the “facts” of SCI, it is important to acknowledge that the *implications* and *significance* of these traits are not biological inevitabilities, but emerge interactively at the intersection with the encompassing social world (Thomas, 2004a; Shakespeare, 2006: 54-67). This approach (in relation to gender) will be further developed over the

course of the following three chapters; however, Mike Oliver's (1993) conceptualisation of the "ideology of walking" offers an instructive exemplar of this logic. While the act of walking may largely be interpreted as a strictly functional endeavour, designed to facilitate movement from one location to another, this mode of mobility interacts with the encompassing culture in meaningful ways. In the first instance, the act of walking is positioned as normative through the development of institutional structures, social organisations, technology and housing, that are often inaccessible to alternative mobilities (e.g. wheelchairs)(UPIAS, 1975; Oliver, 1990). And, secondly, walking itself is invested with a range of highly "moral" connotations. In an analysis of pop music, Oliver (1993) notes that walking, standing, and being physically upright are commonly conflated with a range of masculinist tropes, relating to strength, forthrightness, courage, loyalty, assertiveness, agency and persistence. These associations may not be apparent to those who are ambulant, but the culturally generated and ableist nature of these discourses may be striking to "non-walkers". The "facts" of SCI are, then, at one level "real"; but the way these "facts" are interpreted, experienced, and stratified are inherently related to the particular institutional and cultural worlds within they are inserted.

Reflecting the extent to which the medical "realities" of SCI are integrated into the historical context within which they are embedded, a major change from the 1940s onwards has been significantly improved life expectancy within economically prosperous nations. This development reflects multiple intersecting forces, including: greater public awareness about the need to avoid disrupting the spinal cord following a traumatic event; the development of paramedical stabilising technologies; the growing availability of social support in terms of information, accessibility, and funding; greater attention to a pragmatic focus on "living with" SCIs; and the more effective management of secondary health conditions (particularly pressure sores, autonomic dysreflexia and urinary tract infections)(Oliver, 1978; Norton, 2010: 1; WHO, 2013: 22-6). The comparatively young age of SCI acquisition, coupled with substantial improvements in life expectancy, has meant that relevant research literatures have increasingly targeted issues surrounding quality of life, structural barriers to participation, and the social experience of SCI, as opposed to acute medical management (Noreau and Shephard, 1995; Hammell, 2004; WHO, 2013: 121-86). Within this context, academic considerations of the gendered implications

of SCI have become increasingly substantial (e.g. Tepper, 1999; Ostrander, 2008a, 2008b; Nolan, 2013), but remain, as I will contend, limited in terms of the conceptualisation of both *emotion* and the *generative* possibilities of this mode of embodiment.

Sample Characteristics

Twenty autobiographies were analysed for the section of the thesis concerning men's gendered experiences of SCI. Fifteen of the authors were identified as Caucasian, three had a Jewish background, and two were of Italian-American descent, a distribution that does not fully reflect evidence suggesting the disproportionate representation of ethnic minority populations among those with a SCI (DeVivo, 2010: 81; NSCISC, 2016). Men from the United States wrote sixteen of the narratives, two were written by Australian men, and one each by Canadian and English men. A range of economic circumstances was represented, with familial backgrounds including white collar-professionals, working class labourers, and, reflecting disproportionate rural incidence rates, agricultural workers (Young et al., 2004). Average age at the time of injury was approximately 22.6 years old, significantly younger than the mean age at which men acquire SCIs in more representative samples (WHO, 2013: 18-9). Nineteen of the narrators appeared to identify as heterosexual, and one did not clearly specify a sexual orientation. Average age at the time of publication was estimated to be 49.4 years old. A summary of this sample's key characteristics is offered in Figure 4. Not all of the relevant information was explicitly made available by narrators – especially relating to date of birth and age at injury. Where this information was not explicitly stated, a best-possible estimate was made on the basis of material presented. Sample characteristics that could not be identified with certainty have been italicised.

Narrators

*Paul Bendix*³ text, *Dance Without Steps: A Memoir*, was published in 2012. Paul became an incomplete quadriplegic at twenty-one years of age, after receiving a gunshot wound when attacked on campus at the University of California, Berkeley. His autobiography focuses primarily on the later years of his life, examining the intersection between SCI and ageing, but employs flashbacks to incorporate earlier experiences into the narrative. Despite his graduate-level qualifications in English, Paul experiences

³ To signal the distinction between the autobiographical sources under empirical examination from other texts, author names have been italicised throughout the thesis.

difficulties finding consistent employment following SCI, but engages in community work at a local high school. Paul is married twice.

Ray Burt's narrative, *Black Sheep: The Autobiography Of A Paraplegic*, was released in 2012. Ray describes himself as occupying an outsider's position within his family. Prior to injury, he worked as a plumber, a gardener and a factory labourer, and was a member of the Australian Army Reserve. Following a period characterised by frequently driving under the influence of alcohol, and numerous encounters with law enforcement, Ray sustains a SCI from a road accident while riding his motorbike. Ray's narrative examines his sexual/romantic relationships, his participation in the running of his family's small business, his difficulties managing the secondary health implications of SCI, and his eventual turn towards science fiction writing.

Stephen Byrne's autobiography, *Windows In The Clouds: A True Story About Overcoming Spinal Cord Injury*, was published in 2012. Stephen describes a childhood characterised by conflict between his parents, and experiences physical abuse from his father. While working as a labourer in rural Australia, Stephen sustains a T12 injury when crushed beneath a tree he was felling. Stephen describes the impact the injury had upon his relationships with his wife and children, culminating in a painful divorce, and his experiences training to become a certified pilot. The second half of the autobiography documents Stephen's experiences travelling through the United States.

Francesco Clark's narrative, *Walking Papers: The Accident That Changed My Life, and The Business That Got Me Back On My Feet*, was published in 2010. Francesco had been working as a fashion assistant at a magazine in the United States, and was about to begin employment at a public relations firm, when he sustained a C4 injury in a diving accident. He describes undertaking a variety of treatments designed to pursue the restoration of physical function, including non-traditional approaches to rehabilitation and the use of stem cell technology. Following injury, Francesco establishes a business involved in the development and production of skin care products, and participates in activist networks designed to improve accessibility in his local community.

Figure 4. Summary of Key Sample Characteristics For Narrators With SCIs

Author	SCI Level	Year of Birth	Age At Injury	Cause	Nationality	Ethnicity
Paul Bendix	Quadriplegic	1946	21	Gunshot wound	American	Jewish
Raymond Burt	Paraplegic	1957	24	Motorbike accident	Australian	Caucasian
Stephen Byrne	Paraplegic, T12	1962	23	Crushed under tree	Australian	Caucasian
Francesco Clark	Quadriplegic, C4-T1	1978	24	Diving accident	American	Italian-American
Robert Florio	Quadriplegic, C3-5	1982	14	Diving accident	American	Italian-American
Lee Goldstein	Quadriplegic, C5-6	1932	14	Fall from pier	American	Jewish
Rick Hansen	Paraplegic, T10-12	1957	15	Car accident	Canadian	Caucasian
David Harper	Paraplegic	1952	16	Car accident	American	Caucasian
Adam Helbling	Quadriplegic, C6-7	1986	24	Car accident	American	Caucasian
Grant Korgan	Paraplegic, L1	1978	32	Snowmobile accident	American	Caucasian
John Lambert	Quadriplegic, C5	1948	33	Motorbike accident	English	Caucasian
J. Bryant Neville	Quadriplegic, C3-5	1963	17	Car accident	American	Caucasian
Rob Oliver	Quadriplegic, C5-6	1972	21	Bodysurfing accident	American	Caucasian
Andy Phelps	Quadriplegic, C5	1982	16	Car accident	American	Caucasian
Joshua Prager	Quadriplegic, C3-4	1971	19	Motor accident	American	Jewish
Marc Richards	Paraplegic, T4	1960	38	Chemotherapy overdose	American	Jewish
Randal Rodgers	Quadriplegic, C4-7	1963	32	Fall from scaffolding	American	Caucasian
Stephen Thompson	Quadriplegic, C5	1961	20	Cycling accident	American	Caucasian
Brian Shaughnessy	Quadriplegic, C5	1959	24	Surgical mistake	American	Caucasian
David Visser	Paraplegic	1937-9	23-5	Car accident	American	Caucasian

Robert Florio's autobiography, *Life: It Must Be A Comedy*, was published in 2010. Robert describes an athletic childhood, characterised by a rebellious persona, and a marginal interest in education. Robert sustains a cervical SCI after a diving accident at the age of fourteen. Following injury, he develops his skills in the use of technology, undertaking tertiary training in computer game design and promoting accessibility in these products. He produces a range of artworks, and entertains as a comedian.

Lee Goldstein's narrative, *So Far So Good: The Saga Of A Broken Neck and The Good Life That Can Follow*, was published in 2013. Lee sustained an incomplete cervical injury at the age of fourteen, after falling from a pier while playing with friends in Chicago. Lee trains in accountancy on the advice of a career advisor; he gains employment in a range of positions, including as a manager of a technical library of government specifications at a manufacturing firm, as an engineering writer, and as a substitute teacher. Lee becomes an adoptive father with his first wife, Marilyn, who passes away from cancer. He eventually moves to Nebraska, establishing a new relationship through personal advertisements.

The revised edition of *Rick Hansen's* narrative *Man In Motion*, co-authored with Jim Taylor, was published in 2011. Rick was injured at the age of fifteen in a car accident, initially interrupting strong investments in the realm of sport, but prompting the establishment of a successful career in wheelchair racing. He completes tertiary level training in physical education at the University of British Columbia. Rick's narrative centres upon the completion of the "Man In Motion" tour, involving an around-the-world road trip designed to raise funds, increase awareness, promote accessibility, and foster the development of a cure in relation to SCI.

David Harper's text, *Wild Land: A Paraplegic's Triumph Over Tragedy*, was published in 2012. David describes himself as socially isolated during his early years, finding solace in the cultivation of the skills needed to survive in the wilderness of Oregon. Following a car accident while driving in the mountainside, David becomes paraplegic. He marries his partner, Barbi, after meeting her through a double date with a male friend. David works successfully as a cartographer, enabling continuing forays into the wilderness of both Alaska and California.

Adam Helbling's text, *Well ... I Guess I'm Not Jesus: A True Story*, was published in 2014. The first half of the narrative examines Adam's struggles with bipolar disorder while a student at Ohio State

University. He becomes a quadriplegic after a car accident at the age of twenty-four. Following a period residing in a rehabilitation institution, and then his family home, Adam returns to university and graduates with a degree in civil engineering with the assistance of an independent living organisation. Adam describes the redevelopment of his social, personal and moral priorities following SCI, and pursues a career as an author.

Grant Korgan's narrative, *Two Feet Back: A Journey Sponsored By Love*, was released in 2012. Prior to injury, Grant had co-founded a nanotechnology firm after completing a degree in mechanical engineering. He describes an intense interest in a range of "independent" sports involving the use of skill and endurance within the context of the natural world. Grant sustains an L1 SCI in an accident while snowmobiling with friends. His narrative centres upon the economic and personal struggles he experiences with his partner, Shawna, in the aftermath of injury, particularly in the adoption of a diverse set of treatments designed to promote the restoration of physical function. Grant describes his engagement in charitable fundraising activities, and his eventual return to the realm of independent sports.

John Lambert's autobiography, *Final Touchdown*, was published in 2012. Prior to injury, John had been working as a professional airline pilot, living independently in Morocco, and engaging in a range of physical leisure activities (particularly sailing). He sustained a C5 injury in a motorcycle crash at the age of thirty-three, prompting him to return to England where his family resided. John's narrative centres upon his experiences inhabiting a range of institutional settings designed for people with SCIs, and the particular difficulties he encounters within these contexts. John develops an active interest in the Hampshire independent living movement.

J. Bryant Neville's text, *How I Roll: Life, Love and Work After A Spinal Cord Injury*, co-written with Raquel Pidal, was published in 2012. Bryant was injured as a seventeen year old in a car accident after swerving to avoid hitting a deer. He studies computer information systems at college, prior to completing a second degree focusing on accounting. Bryant is eventually employed to assist in the development and maintenance of electronic recording systems at a local bank. He marries a family

friend, Tanya, while in his mid-forties, and comes to be regarded as a father by Tanya's sons from a previous relationship.

Rob Oliver's autobiography, *Still Walking: The Story Of A Life Full Of Love, Laughter and Lessons*, was published in 2011. Rob sustained a cervical SCI when body surfing at the age of twenty-one while holidaying in North Carolina. Shortly after leaving rehabilitation, Rob marries his partner, Becky, and they honeymoon together on a tropical cruise. Rob is employed as an advocate at the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania, and also engages in motivational speaking. Rob and Becky conceive triplets with the assistance of IVF treatment.

Andy Phelps' narrative, It Never Ends, was published in 2013. Andy was a sixteen-year-old school student when he became quadriplegic in the aftermath of a motor vehicle accident in which he was a passenger. Andy's autobiography documents his studies at film school, his experiences travelling, and his continued difficulties managing the secondary health implications of SCI. The text explores Andy's difficulties coming to terms with the implications of the accident that instigated his SCI, and the work he undertakes in "becoming a better person" in its aftermath.

Joshua Prager's narrative, Half-Life: Reflections From Jerusalem On A Broken Neck, was published in 2013. Written as a collage of experiences rather than a chronological narrative, Joshua describes sustaining a cervical injury at the age of nineteen in a motor accident while travelling in Israel. He develops Brown-Séquard syndrome, characterised by a neurological division within which one half of his body has substantial mobility, while the other experiences greater sensation. Joshua studies at an adjunct college to Columbia University, and works as a journalist.

Marc Richards' narrative, 6 Days: The Events That Transformed My Life, was published in 2014. Marc becomes paraplegic after overdosing on chemotherapy treatment that dissolved the myelin coating of the nerves in his spinal cord. He had been working as an information officer prior to injury, but finds it difficult to sustain employment due to the rigours involved in managing a SCI and its biological/social implications. Marc's text primarily documents what he has learned about living with a SCI that may be helpful to others, centring upon the challenges involved in health management, and the physical and emotional problems he encountered.

Randal Rodgers' autobiography, *The Test Of A Lifetime: The Story Of God's Plan In The Life Of A Quadriplegic*, was published in 2010. Prior to injury, Randal had been in the process of attaining tertiary qualifications in science, and was married with three children. He sustains a cervical injury after falling from scaffolding while painting a house. Randal's narrative draws heavily on religious themes, both in terms of the solace he receives from religious institutions in the aftermath of his injury, as well as the clarification of particular moral teachings through his experiences of impairment.

Brian Shaughnessy's text, *The Squeaky Wheel: An Unauthorised Autobiography*, was published in 2005. Brian became quadriplegic at twenty-four years of age after a surgical mistake is made when removing a cyst from his spinal canal. Brian's autobiography describes his experiences studying at theatre school, and his time working on various productions. His experiences following SCI eventually motivate a decision to study law. Brian marries a nurse, Amy, who he meets while receiving treatment for a pressure sore.

The updated edition of Stephen Thompson's autobiography, *Genesis: A Portrait Of A Spinal Cord Injury*, was released in 2011. Prior to injury, Stephen was a student at Indiana University, intending to study medicine or become chiropractor. He describes a strong investment in sport, harbouring a desire to play tennis professionally. Stephen acquired an incomplete cervical injury in a road accident while cycling at the age of twenty. His narrative centres primarily on his experiences within the context of acute care and rehabilitation.

David Visser's autobiography, *From Welfare To God's Care*, was published in 2014. David was paralysed in a car accident as a passenger in a speeding vehicle. He was married at the time of injury, and his wife, Jeanette, gave birth to their second child shortly after the crash. David's narrative centres upon his experiences in the realm of business, particularly within the contexts of property construction and management. He also documents the breakdown of his marital relationship over time, culminating in a difficult divorce.

Chapter Four: SCI, Physical Capital and Ruptured Gendered Social

Trajectories

The Volatility Of Physical Capital

Wendy Seymour (2002: 138) contends that SCIs instigate a specific relationship with *biographical time* (Corbin and Strauss, 1987: 253). The spinal cord injured body, she writes, is often figuratively interpreted as a temporally “immortalised” moment. This is not to elide the continuing adaptations or changes associated with post-SCI embodiment, but rather to highlight how the biographical and social ruptures instigated in a “split second” by this impairment form an existential “pivot” around which one’s life is experienced and interpreted (Seymour, 2002: 138; Sparkes and Smith, 2003: 305-8; although cf. Couser, 1997: 195-8). The *radical, instantaneous* and *life-altering* implications of SCI have been captured by previous researchers using a range of conceptual prisms; it has variously been referred to as a “biographical disruption” (Ostrander, 2008b: 586; see also Bury, 1982), as an “ontological assault” (Crossley, 2000: 539), as establishing a disjuncture between “external and internal” selves (Carpenter, 1994), and as instigating a “narrative wreckage” (Smith and Sparkes, 2004: 625; Frank, 2013: 68).

Within the self-narrative material under consideration, SCI was consistently represented as instigating a form of autobiographical bisection. *Joshua Prager* (2013) talks of “the cruel instantaneity of spinal cord injury” (Chap. 2, Loc. 156)⁴ that “divided” his life “like the spine of an open book” (Chap. 1, Loc. 109); *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 11, Loc. 1862-3) describes his life as “changed in the blink of an eye”; while *Grant Korgan* (2012: 88) notes his tendency to measure time in terms of “Before Injury” and “After Injury”. A variety of tropes were used to capture the radical depth of change instigated by SCI, including: the metaphorical “death” of the past self; one’s previous life being “over”; experiencing the emergence of a “new life”; becoming a physical/psychological/social “stranger” to oneself; having the pre- or post-SCI period appear in illusory or dream-like terms; and experiencing a “total turnaround” in one’s life. These representations of temporal bisection reflect the particular understanding of *trauma* articulated by Piotr Sztompka (2000: 452), marked by *sudden temporal*

⁴ Many of the autobiographical narratives under consideration were only available in electronic form. For these sources, chapter titles and location numbers are provided, instead of page numbers, within in-text citations.

shifts that instigate radical changes to one's foundational core, that are experienced as emerging from an external source, and that foster a mental frame of shock or disbelief.

Contemporary responses to Bourdieusian sociology commonly critique the conceptual framework for depicting interminable systems of social “reproduction” (Wacquant, 2004: 389-90). Concerns about Bourdieu’s capacity to theorise historical change have been forwarded with particular regularity within the context of his educational research (Kingston, 2001) and in response to *Masculine Domination* (Skeggs, 2004; Witz, 2005). These critiques highlight seemingly endless cycles of “ontological complicity” between habitus/field, the self-perpetuating inequalities associated with privileged access to capital(s), and the de-politicising implications of symbolic violence, as contributing to a sociological framework ill-equipped to theorise historically (Giroux, 1983; Calhoun, 1992; Jenkins, 1992).

How, then, can Bourdieusian social theory, commonly associated with a drearily reproductive stasis (Giroux, 1983; Jenkins, 1992; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 844), conceptualise the radical, instantaneous change in both corporeal form and social position associated with SCI? One potentially productive approach is to return to the term *capital*. Bourdieu commonly invokes this concept to theorise historical inertia in the distribution of resources and privilege. As capital is *transferable* and *convertible*, those with pre-existing, substantial economic, cultural, social and symbolic resources are favourably positioned to exploit future, profitable ends; capital begets capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000b). While both *access to* and *definitions of* capital are contested, there is a sense in which field relations tend to always already privilege the privileged; social games are “rigged” in advance to favour dominant social groups (Bourdieu, 1977b: 58, 1986; Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 36-7).

Yet, while primarily emphasising the role of capital in the reproduction of collective hierarchies, Bourdieu does acknowledge historical instabilities in the form and value of socially valued resources. This is, first of all, because the “value” of capital is understood not to lie organically within a particular (tangible/intangible) object, but rather as dialectically emerging within a nexus between extant modes of perception and social relations (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 39; Grenfell, 2013: 284). Secondly, the “matter” of capital is open to historical contingency. For instance, in *Outline Of A Theory Of Practice*, Bourdieu (1977b: 67) notes that the “aura” of symbolic capital, associated with trust and legitimated

power, is eminently fragile, potentially evaporating with a single scandal or indiscretion. While economic capital is described as less tenuous, historical situations involving the erosion of economic privilege are readily imaginable, including the destruction of savings through hyperinflation, structural changes in the labour market, or the emergence of new technologies. Interpersonal ties are fraught with the possibility of dissolution through conflict, geographical/social movement, relationships “drifting apart”, or felt patterns of non-reciprocity (Rose, 1984; Johnson et al., 2004); while culturally valued objects can be damaged, lost or stolen.

Returning to the theorisation of disability as a negatively-valued form of bodily/physical capital (Shilling, 1991, 2004; Wacquant, 1995b), the frailties inherent to human embodiment can be understood as rendering one’s corporeal status (and the social opportunities/foreclosures emerging in relation to this) as extremely fragile. Indeed, all forms of (socially situated) value stemming from particular manners of embodiment have the potential to be eroded, whether through disability, ageing, illness, “disfigurement”, injury, non-conformity to beauty standards, or, eventually, death (Bolt, 2012). Traumatic SCI can be interpreted as involving a particularly radical, instantaneous decline in one’s physical/bodily capital, accounting for the tendency towards “bisected” modes of autobiographical narration. To be clear, this notion of “decline” needs to be socially contextualised, rather than treated as automatically or innately stemming from “the body”; SCI becomes a form of negatively valued physical capital within contemporary Western societies because of the ways this corporeality interacts with the surrounding social environment, and ableist patterns of habituated perception, appreciation and categorisation (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 39; Grenfell, 2013: 284).

Ruptured Social Trajectories In The Field of Gender Relations

This acquisition of negatively valued physical capital through SCI had substantial implications within the context of the field of gender relations posited in Chapter Two. Many of the narrators under consideration experienced a radical sense of the *loss* (Sparkes and Smith, 2002: 269-71; Dickson et al., 2008) of the socially esteemed resources out of which masculine identities were previously formed. Narrations commonly replicated broader social constructions of SCI as a “symbolic castration” (Morris, 1991; Longmore, 2003). Within the texts under consideration, feelings of emasculation were

discussed with a high degree of frequency (although, as will be contended, these feelings were negotiated “strategically” over time). *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 5, Loc. 1283) talks of his “manhood” being “struck down”; *Grant Korgan* (2012: 170) rhetorically asks, “how could I *not* perceive this injury as somehow emasculating?”; *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 6, Loc. 862), at one point, hates “knowing that (he is) not a man”; *Andy Phelps* (2013: ‘20 French’, Loc. 1576) writes of the need to “become a man. Again”; and *David Harper* (2012: Chap. 2, Loc. 874) recalls viewing himself as a “half-man”.

These experiences of self-perceived “emasculatation” can be represented in Bourdieusian terms as reflecting a changed position within the field of gender relations (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97). As I will contend with greater specificity below, spinal cord injured corporealities instigated multiple departures from culturally idealised, and previously taken-for-granted, enactments of masculinity. The before-and-after temporal structure associated with bisected modes of narration could be related to what Bourdieu (1993: 43, 203) terms a “descending” or “declining” social trajectory, in this case involving a shift from able-bodied privilege, to the gendered stigma and exclusion associated with SCI. This language seems, admittedly, temporally misleading, with the incrementalist language of “descending trajectory” tending to underestimate the radical, sudden experience of this impairment form (Oliver and Hasler, 1987: 113; DeSanto-Madeya 2006: 265); I instead use the phrase “ruptured social trajectories” to capture this instantaneity more convincingly.

The period prior to injury commonly played an important narrative function within the autobiographies under consideration, being deployed to demonstrate an idyllic sense of masculine wholeness on the precipice of evisceration. This was often achieved in *nostalgic* (Padila, 2003: 417-8) terms, with narrations emphasising precisely the traits problematised by SCI. In this sense, representations of the pre-SCI period could be regarded as a form of “narrative sideshadowing”, demonstrating how one’s life *was* or *could have been* had the injury not occurred (Medved and Brockmeier, 2004). For instance, in the period leading up to his road accident, *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 1, Loc. 95-7) remembers his own corporeal strength while cycling: “I adjusted my sunglasses and was off, pushing down and pulling up very hard on the pedals as I pumped faster and faster. It felt

great because my legs were so strong! I was on top of the world and completely confident about my life". *Andy Phelps* (2013: 'The End Of That One Year', Loc. 854-5), similarly, describes "That Year" leading up to his SCI: "I had become popular. I rode a Harley. I used chainsaws. I had a girlfriend. I had a tattoo. I listened to Nine Inch Nails. I juggled knives and breathed fire. That one year, life was perfect".

As the sociology of men and masculinity has consistently attested, experiences of manhood are inevitably more conflicted, partial and tense than popular discourses of an innate, straightforward, "true" masculinity imply (Connell: 1990, 83-95; Segal: 2007, 72-8). Representations of an idyllic, pre-SCI fulfilment should subsequently be interpreted with a degree of caution; these texts are evidently reconstructions written from a particular moment of time (Pickering and Keightley, 2006: 923-4). Yet, this comparative "narrative sideshadowing" effectively represents how the rupturing of valued physical capital changed the gendered social position of narrators; it reflects the experience of the sudden and radical *loss* of gendered resources, relationships, roles and experiences that SCI instigated.

While nostalgia for life prior to SCI featured within most autobiographical texts under consideration, these representations existed alongside the processual development of what Susan DeSanto-Madeya (2006: 282-3) terms a "new normal". As will be discussed in a later chapter, many narrators described a process of (ongoing and incomplete) habituation to the corporeal parameters and social position associated with SCI, or the creative development of new ways of "being-in-the-world" (Chun and Lee, 2008). Further, nostalgia for the past was prevalent, but not totalising. *Ray Burt* (2013), for instance, while seemingly taking pleasure in memories of risk-taking homosociality and adventure, also describes in detail the alcoholism, drink-driving, bar fights, familial conflict, dyslexia, and sexual disappointment that characterised his life prior to SCI. While the "disrupted" social trajectory within the field of gender relations seemed to involve a degree of loss for all authors, this should not be interpreted as a "descent" from unproblematic privilege; rather, experiences of loss interacted unevenly with the specific, differentiated social positions occupied prior to injury. To empirically elucidate "disruptions" in the social enactment of legitimated gender performance, the remainder of this chapter

interprets the autobiographical narratives under consideration through Thomas Gerschick's (1998) typological categories associated with disabled masculinities, as introduced in Chapter One.

Sexuality

Within contemporary Western cultures, an essentialist vision of male sexuality is pervasive; the “male sex drive” is constructed as biologically-embedded, uncontrollable, and insatiable (Hollway, 1984; Vitellone, 2000). Following the biographical disruption instigated by SCI, the men under consideration confronted a radically transformed suite of sexual expectations; the presumed “inevitability” of the insatiable “male sex drive” was replaced by immense doubt and uncertainty surrounding spinal cord injured sexuality (Ostrander, 2009: 14-5). *Grant Korgan* (2012: 358) recalls being at a restaurant with his partner, Shawna, when “a server asked, out of nowhere, if we thought we’d ever be able to have kids”; *Ray Burt's* (2013: Chap. 26, Loc. 2306) father ponders whether it is possible to make love with a paraplegic, speculating “(t)he best you could do is to cuddle”; while *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 7, Loc. 2316) is asked “But can you?” by an ex-partner. Suddenly, the taken-for-granted model of socially legitimated masculine sexuality, associated with dominance, reproductivity, penetration, and control, became immensely doubted and open to public enquiry (Hahn, 1981: 223-4; Sakellariou, 2006: 104-5).

The implications of this social transition, from what *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 2, Loc. 157) describes as “the musk of the young male to the impotence of the quadriplegic”, was exacerbated by substantive shifts in genital function, which can, depending upon the neurologic level and completeness of injury, include changed patterns of physical arousal, ejaculation, fertility and sensation (Geiger, 1980; Monga et al. 1999; Wiwanitkit, 2008). The ability to achieve erection was a profound source of concern for many. *Grant Korgan* (2012: 170) describes the anxiety created through immersion in a culture “filled with references (usually admiring ones) to the wonder of male genitalia”. This language reflects broader cultural discourses that conflate both the normatively “functioning” penis, and a model of heterosexually reproductive intercourse, as the legitimate authentication of masculinity (Tepper, 1999: 43-7; Morrow, 2005: 196-9). Feelings of inadequacy, disappointment and frustration were commonly associated with difficulties reproducing hegemonic standards of sexuality (Burns et al., 2008). *Brian Shaughnesy* (2005: ‘The Rubber Stamp Room’, Loc. 393) evocatively remembers the period immediately

following his injury, “languish(ing) in the shower, pushing (his) semi-erect penis back and forth but feeling little”; while *Rob Oliver* (2011: Chap. 10, Loc. 1037) recalls feeling “inadequate and helpless” when unable to impregnate his partner. *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 6, Loc. 825-6), describing his first sexual encounter following SCI, writes:

It was a very tender moment, but physically things didn’t go as planned. I loved Amy and wanted her so much, but I couldn’t get aroused. I was frustrated and embarrassed.

When Amy ends their relationship several days later, Bryant recalls feelings of inadequacy and disappointment:

If I couldn’t have sex with a woman I’d loved, what kind of man was I? How would I ever fulfil my dream of getting married and starting a family? What if I never had the chance to be a lover, husband, and father? [...] Now I had been robbed of my manhood (2012: Chap. 6, Loc. 844-50).

In the period immediately following SCI, narrators often described attitudes of resignation and preemptive self-exclusion surrounding the possibility of future sexual/romantic relationships (Shuttleworth, 2000: 271-3). Speaking of his partner prior to injury, *David Harper* (2012: Chap. 4, Loc. 1323-4) recalls feeling “a judicious sense that she would probably have a better life marrying a man who [...] was not crippled”; *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 7, Loc. 893) rhetorically ponders, “Would I have a girlfriend and what could our relationship be?”; while *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 16, Loc. 820) describes his “(retreat) from women”. After a former partner begins dating another man, *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 12, Loc. 3720-4) writes:

I was having trouble believing that someone could still love me. The truth was, a terrible thing had happened to me and me only and that it had effectively taken me out of the action. [...] Women want a strong and vibrant man, one who can protect and do the manly things, I assumed. I no longer was any of those things.

SCI also substantially ruptured internalised “sexual scripts” (Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Simon and Gagnon, 2003) surrounding the practical organisation of erotic interactions. Contemporary Western culture’s positioning of men as the aggressive, spontaneous, controlling and insatiable initiators of sexual congress was rendered problematic by the particular corporeal expectations associated within

these traits (Tepper, 1999; Shuttleworth, 2000; Burns et al., 2008). *John Lambert* (2012: ‘One of my most ...’, Loc. 1014-5) describes the loss of masculine “dominance” associated with sexuality post-SCI:

As far as the paralysed male is concerned, obviously he would have to forego the normal dominant male role. From now on all he would be able to do is lie back and enjoy it. Gone were the days when he could pick his woman up, throw her on the bed and make passionate love to her.

SCI was often experienced as compromising sexual spontaneity (Dune and Shuttleworth, 2009). While all forms of sexuality involve processes of conscious planning and interdependencies (Dune and Shuttleworth, 2009: 102; see also Ostrander, 2008a: 80), the social construction of sexuality as including a “private”, autonomous couple overwhelmed by a shared and uncontrollable sexual energy was often disrupted by the scheduling and “third party” interventions required in the aftermath of SCI (Sakellariou, 2006: 102-3, 105). *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 12, Loc. 3763-4) describes his discomfort with needing to be physically assisted prior to intercourse by his mother:

Every situation in my life is awkward. I’m about to make out with (my partner) and make love in my bed. Not only has my girlfriend met my parents on our first date, but my mother was the last person to handle my penis to prepare me for sex. That’s the difference.

These patterns of facilitation within the realm of sexuality were deeply imbricated with recalibrations in the distribution of responsibilities within the contexts of romantic, familial and friendship relations, and gendered notions of autonomy, invulnerability and independence.

Independence and Control

The historical ascendance of free-market ideology has been accompanied by shifts within the realm of the subjective (Connell, 2008: 247). The neoliberal subject is expected to be self-managing, unencumbered by patterns of care or obligation (Rose, 1996: 50-61; Ong and Zhang, 2008: 5-8), and is intensely antagonistic towards those “failing” to approximate expectations of independent self-reliance (De Botton, 2004: 81-6). As feminist commentators have contended, this valorised subject is implicitly male, or at least masculine, existing in opposition to culturally “feminised” traits of interdependence, care and emotion (Benhabib, 1987: 161; Nash, 1998: 29-31). Reliance upon others amounts to a “failed” neoliberal masculinity (Kimmel, 2010).

As noted by Julie Mahon-Darby et al. (1988: 346), expectations surrounding “freedom, lifestyle, needs and desires” and one’s “ability to meet those needs”, structure spinal cord injured patients’ experiences within acute care and rehabilitation settings. These facilities were commonly described by the men under discussion using intensely negative metaphors, particularly highlighting the penal tropes of being “trapped” in “hell”, a “holding cell”, or “prison”. Consistent with depictions of these facilities as “total institutions” (Goffman, 1968; Kahn, 1969; Yoshida, 1994: 96-7), the spinal cord injured men found themselves placed within geographically-delimited bureaucratic systems, characterised by collectivised arrangements, and rigid commitments to institutional routine. This was often experienced as a reduction of oneself to a clinical “object” to be controlled and managed by medical staff. *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 9, Loc. 1863-4) writes, “(m)y body is always being pushed around, either strapped down or twisted to keep straight. Nothing is under my control”; *Grant Korgan* (2012: 177, 42) describes feeling like a “terrified, sweating, miserable rag doll” and a “piece of meat”; while *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 13, Loc. 659-60) remembers interactions with “some in the hospital who did not care whether patients improved. What mattered to them was that patients were numbers, and numbers obeyed rules”.

Subjected to medically institutionalised norms, the autobiographers commonly described a loss of autonomy over their bodies, and the surrounding environment. *Brian Shaughnessy* (2005: ‘That Sound’, Loc. 1973) evocatively captures mundane, routinised incursions of perceived corporeal integrity within the context of bowel and urinary management programs, describing a monotonous process of being “bathed, defiled, dressed, swallow(ing) a fist-full of pills, (being) transferred to the wheelchair and fed”. Conflicts with clinical staff over consuming alcohol, leaving rehabilitation settings, having control over television/leisure activities, determining one’s clothing, interrupting daily routines, and having access to visitors, were common (Couser, 1997: Duggan et al., 2002; Hammell, 2007: 268). This felt loss of independent self-direction is conveyed by *Ray Burt’s* (2013: Chap. 17, Loc. 1441-2) query to nursing staff, asking whether “we all have to do as we are told? We are people too. Human beings with the same rights as normal people”. Yet, the privileging of medicalised knowledge countermanded the agency of patients under the auspices of paternalistic benevolence (Hammell, 1992: 322-3, 2004: 494);

of a nurse assisting him in the process of returning home from rehabilitation, *Andy Phelps* (2013: 'Coming Home', Loc. 1293) writes, "(s)he knew that she knew what was best for me, and she was going to make sure I knew it too".

Following SCI, autobiographers experienced profound alterations to the performance of tasks associated with daily living. The precise nature of these changes reflected the level and completeness of injury, as well as the surrounding medical/architectural/economic/cultural context (Barnes and Mercer, 2001: 528-31). Yet, all described frustrations with needing assistance to complete activities previously considered incidental. Tasks requiring support included, but were not limited to, feeding oneself, sitting upright, being transferred between beds/cars/chairs/public transport/wheelchairs, urinary/bowel management, navigating inaccessible architecture, managing financial expenses, rehabilitation exercises, personal hygiene, physical repositioning to prevent pressure sores, mobility, writing, reading, home repairs and using technology. As *Paul Bendix* (2012: 'Windward', Loc. 2088-9) puts it:

The quadriplegic species does not survive because it is the fittest. In Darwinian terms, I should have succumbed long ago. I survive because I have, in the splendid words of Tennessee Williams, always relied on the kindness of strangers.

According to Mike Oliver (1989; see also Brisenden, 1986: 178), dominant conceptualisations of independence as requiring direct personal action implicitly position interpersonally-mediated modes of expressing desires, control and agency as pathological and limiting (Mahon-Darby et al., 1988: 354-5; Gignac et al., 2000: 367-8). *John Lambert* (2012: 'You've heard a lot ...', Loc. 1808-12) expresses claustrophobia at the prospect of receiving substantial patterns of care for the remainder of his life, in terms of feeling *helpless*, having one's ability to *choose* curtailed, and losing *privacy*:

(F)rom now on just about everything would have to be done for me, from getting up in the morning to most of my daily activities, and finally being put back to bed again. I would now have people forced on me, people I probably couldn't even choose myself, but they would have to be there or within earshot twenty four hours a day, seven days a week for the rest of my life. So I would have to get used to it. I would have to learn to accept having people constantly about, being paid to alleviate my helplessness and do things for me. That was going to be hard to accept.

The exchange of support, and patterns of interdependence, should be recognised as ontological foundations for being, rather than incidental or temporary departures from the norm of isolated individualism (Morris, 1991; Reindal, 1999); yet, as A. J. Withers (2012: 109) argues, non-disabled groups have their dependencies normalised, and thereby rendered invisible. Negative experiences of dependency were often exacerbated by the gendered “ego centrality” of self-reliance to many of the men under discussion (Addis and Mahalik, 2003: 10); the capacity for self-sufficiency was recognised and described as a significant component of their desired sense of self. *David Harper* (2012: Chap. 10, Loc. 3153) describes feeling “un-whole” as a man and needing to “prove” his independence from others; *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 12, Loc. 3653-4) notes how “difficult (it was) asking for help since I never had to before”; while *Rob Oliver* (2011: Chap. 7, Loc. 754) describes the “tremendous amount of joy” he experiences following opportunities to express agency within rehabilitation facilities.

The idealisation of self-management was inversely associated with intensely negative feelings about requesting assistance and the possibility of becoming a “burden” (Rintala et al., 1996: 70-1; Young, 2004: 1013). *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 10, Loc. 2173-4) states, “I am stressing my parents, making them feel so burdened. I sense it in their tired behaviour. They don’t go out anymore and only cater to me”. This was a substantial issue within sexual/romantic relationships, with ongoing patterns of support sometimes creating difficulties over time through the redistribution of unanticipated caring responsibilities (Rintala et al., 1996; DeSanto-Madeya, 2006: 277-80). *David Visser* (2014: Chap. 28, Loc. 2607-11), for instance, notes the effects that the daily routines involved in the management SCI had on his relationship after moving home:

We were both tired from the move. Jeanette became uneasy with the mobile home. She was tired of life. For forty-three years of our forty-six years of marriage, she lived with a cripple. Each year my condition was less than the year before. [...] One day, the move and taking care of me, a cripple, became more than she could handle [...] and (she) filed for divorce. [...] I was in a new place alone.

Concerns about relying on others, and the gendered stigma associated with “dependence” within contemporary Western contexts, were exacerbated by substantive patterns of exclusion experienced within the labour market.

Labour

SCI often instigated periods of *economic precariousness* (Kayess et al., 2013: 22-3, 38-40; WHO, 2013: 177-86). This reflected the emergence of a series of expenses, which, as documented in previous research, were substantially borne by individuals and their families (Access Economics, 2009: xvi; WHO, 2013: 15). These included: home renovations to ensure accessibility (e.g. mechanical lifts, levelling ledges, ramp installation, widening doors, expanding bathrooms, removal of uneven surfaces, replacing carpet); adjustments to existing vehicles/purchase of new vehicles; personal care assistants; ongoing rehabilitation treatment; using expensive transportation/accommodation/facilities due to exclusion from inaccessible cheaper alternatives; and assistive devices (e.g. wheelchairs, splints, walking supports, adapted gym equipment, beds)(Priebe et al., 2007). The period spent in rehabilitation often entailed a substantial loss of income for those previously employed, and ongoing patterns of care and support could also inhibit the earning capacity of family members/partners (Riphahn, 1999).

Several of the men under consideration experienced economic precariousness following SCI, with *Paul Bendix* (2012: ‘Riding Alone’, Loc. 313) writing that impoverishment “always seemed as close to me as the pavement under my wheelchair”. This proximity to poverty is exemplified by the experiences of *Grant Korgan* (2012), previously a business partner in a nanotechnology firm, and his partner Shawna, co-owner of a fitness centre. Grant (2012: 160) states, “the day I broke my back was the day that Shawna and I were no longer employed”. Their intense commitment to Grant’s physical recovery entailed a substantial loss of income, with Shawna relinquishing her work role to assist in Grant’s care, and Grant feeling unable to work for an extended time. This period involved reliance upon friends/relatives for economic support, the need to pawn personal belongings, and the generation of “charitable” forms of assistance. In light of this financial instability, and after being forced to vacate his residence, Grant recalls fearing that “(w)e might actually get a chance to see what living in a van really meant” (2012: 268).

The labour market offered a thoroughly different set of opportunities and foreclosures following SCI (Tomassen et al., 2000; Burns et al., 2010). Patterns of employment exclusion appeared to be endemic (Conroy and McKenna, 1999; Lidal et al., 2007: 1345-52). *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 18, Loc. 3195), for instance, describes the period after he graduated college, receiving training in business and accounting, as “one of the hardest, loneliest, most discouraging times of (his) life”. At job interviews, visible physical injury appeared to pre-emptively undermine Lee’s capacity for labour in the eyes of employers, with inaccessible, ableist architecture viscerally highlighting him as a “problematic” employment prospect:

I had a tough decision to make prior to each interview. Should I tell them on the phone I was a quadriplegic before the interview, and risk the almost certain rejection, or not tell them and try to talk my way into the firm? In the latter case, I faced the stairs and the “grand entry” into the building. Or I waited outside until the employment manager came down to the parking lot or lobby to interview me there. Fat chance of getting the job (Chap. 18, Loc. 3242-4).

J. Bryant Neville (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 9, Loc. 1196-8) describes a similar experience of seemingly instantaneous rejection:

None of these jobs required physical labour, so I was certainly qualified, but my disability seemed to hinder me. [...] At most interviews, I could tell immediately that there was a bias against me, simply because I couldn’t walk.

Reflecting an ongoing tendency for rehabilitation facilities to prioritise physical recovery/care at the expense of vocational development (Chan and Man, 2005; Fadyl and McPherson, 2010), substantial patterns of uncertainty about the availability and nature of employment opportunities were recalled. *John Lambert* (2012: ‘You’ve heard a lot ...’, Loc. 1825-36) describes having to adjust his labour market prospects in ways that belied his personal interests:

Sometime in the future I would have to start earning my living again, if it was at all possible, but where and at what I had no idea. I must learn to type properly. [...] Maybe I could teach. Teach what? I could teach the clarinet but can’t demonstrate it. Likewise I could teach flying or sailing but again not if I can’t demonstrate it. If I could type properly then maybe I could write stories or a book. [...] Maybe when my mind had adjusted to my disability it would have adjusted also to the

very limited employment prospects, and come to accept an occupation that I would never formerly have considered.

Of particular frustration was the implication that available jobs may be restricted to white-collar, technical, sedentary labour (Kruse et al., 1996; Bricourt, 2004), which has historically been feminised in relation to “blue-collar” employment (Collinson, 1988; Nixon, 2009). As noted by Daniel Rohe and Gary Athelstan (1982), SCI often instigated a disjuncture between investments in physically-defined patterns of labour, and substantively available work opportunities. *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 18, Loc. 3079), for instance, laments that the entirety of the support he received in relation to future employment involved “an administrator pointing out that wheelchair users should have a desk job”. *David Harper* (2012: Chap. 3, Loc. 987-9), similarly, recalls frustration at others propelling him towards white-collar positions, associating this with a feminised loss of the rugged physicality celebrated in his previous lifestyle:

Well-minded people seemed only to antagonise me. They intensified hopelessness toward my future. They would say, “You can become an accountant”, or “You might consider a drafting job”. They might as well have told a healthy, active thirty-year-old merchant marine to join the quilting club, chatting with the ladies over a cup of tea.

There were further concerns that, within the labour market, SCI became a liability in terms of opportunities for *participation*, possibilities for career *advancement*, and the recognition of *achievement*. Consistent with previous theorisations of the “spread” phenomenon (Longmore, 2003: 235; Sakellariou, 2006: 103-4), there was a tendency for SCI to subsume alternative identifications and desires. *Rob Oliver* (2011: Prologue, Loc. 40-1), for instance, describes his perception that SCI had curtailed the breadth of employment opportunities available to him:

There’s a certain amount of frustration in that the only place I can find a job is working with people with disabilities. I have training, education and intelligence to contribute to society at large.

Having a disability shouldn’t mean that I can only work in the disability field.

Brian Shaughnessy (2005) finds his opportunities for workplace progression inhibited by decisions to withdraw acting opportunities from him due to the visibility of his wheelchair on-stage; his contributions to the development of a disability-specific theatre program, and his capacity to contribute

to its ongoing existence, are also denied by able-bodied academics in the field of performing arts. *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 26, Loc. 1365-8), finally, expresses frustration at the tendency for others to qualify the quality of his journalism through the prism of impairment when an employer mentions his SCI upon nominating his work for an award:

I was upset. It made no sense to qualify my work in this way. It made no more sense to connect my successes to my disability than my failures. I told myself that I was good at my job because I had ideas, because I was not easily derailed, because people opened up to me, because, as I walked slowly along, I could not help but observe. Only the last I owed to a broken neck.

The replication of contemporary Western models of masculine productivity and material wealth (Kimmel, 2010; Thébaud, 2010) were problematised by these experiences of economic precariousness and labour market exclusion.

Sport

Sport has been described as a “primary masculinity-validating experience” (Dubbert, 1979: 164) within contemporary Western contexts, comprising social venues within which men can demonstrate themselves to be “competitive, successful, dominating, aggressive, stoical, goal-directed and physically strong” (Messner and Sabo, 1994: 38), while distinguishing themselves from the pathologised “others” against which hegemonic masculinity is defined (Renold, 1997; Fasting et al., 2007). Not all of the men under consideration possessed an “athletic identity” prior to injury (Brewer et al., 1993; Sparkes, 1998); however, intense investments in sporting prowess were evident for many. *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 6, Loc. 860) describes sport as providing him with the opportunity to “take control and feel free”; *Grant Korgan* (2012: 11) expresses “immense pride” in the generalised athletic ability that allowed him to excel in a variety of sporting pursuits with minimal training (“off the couch”); while *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 1, Loc. 122) recalls feeling “wondrous and invincible” while playing basketball. Athleticism was strongly related to participation in *homosocial networks* (being “one of the guys”), the development of positively valued *physical capacities* (speed, explosiveness, strength), and the cultivation of particular *aesthetic styles* (muscularity, leanness, gracefulness).

The enactment of ableist, masculinist models of athletic excellence was often substantially ruptured following injury. While public representations of SCI commonly highlight “wheelchair athletes” as exemplars of the mediagenic “supercrip” (Hardin and Hardin, 2005; Weed and Dowse, 2009), the narrated experiences of the men under consideration more closely reflected research suggesting that sporting participation is often limited after SCI (Levins et al., 2004; Kehn and Kroll, 2009). Previous research has associated declining engagement in athletic leisure activities with multiple social barriers, including the inaccessibility of sporting facilities, difficulties organising transportation, inadequate/limited personal assistance, lack of income, and the absence of relevant information (Kehn and Kroll, 2009; Stephens et al., 2012). Sport outside of rehabilitation, for instance, entirely disappears from the autobiography of *Andy Phelps* (2013: ‘Spring Of That One Year’, Loc. 622-3), who described hockey as “the most important thing in (his) life” prior to injury. When drinking, he states that he would often:

[E]nd up miserable, drowning in self-pity while mumbling to another drunk about how much I hated my life. I would talk about how awesome I thought I once was at hockey and how I had cheated myself out of the best years of my life (‘In Love and Alcohol’, Loc. 2708-9).

Robert Florio (2010), who previously emphasised his own “Olympic strength and speed” (Chap. 4, Loc. 424), describes experiences of existential doubt surrounding participation in sporting activities in his injury’s aftermath. The magnitude of this change is conveyed through his experience of being “defined” by physical capacity, and his subsequent sense of all-consuming loss:

I do not know who I am anymore. Before my existence was always defined by the physical things I’d been able to express and feel. Now all I ever do is think (of) all of those times and how losing everything has meant so much to me. I don’t know how I’ll ever cope with life now (Chap. 9, Loc. 2091-3).

As noted within previous research examining sporting retirement and/or injury (Brewer et al., 1993; Martin, 1995; Grove, 1997), exclusive or intense investments in one’s athleticism can foster severe patterns of “negative affectivity” when the capacity to replicate corporeal expectations are subverted. This may have particular implications within a culture that significantly defines men through embodied competencies defined in ableist terms, relating to strength, speed and the capacity for violence

(Messner, 1990; Connell, 1995; Spencer, 2014). This sense of physical “loss” was often accompanied by perceived devaluations of interpersonal status. The particular corporeal changes accompanying SCI, associated culturally with passivity, weakness, vulnerability, dependence, inactivity and the absence of embodied control, appeared as visceral threats to the masculinist privilege that accompanied (able-bodied) athletic excellence. *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 11, Loc. 3489-90) and *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 9, Loc. 1257-60) both describe feeling deficient in the eyes of their parents as a consequence of changes to athletic capacities:

ST: I knew it had to be very difficult for them, too, to see their once confident and athletic son reduced to an emaciated hundred pound weakling.

LG: How painful this must have been for my parents, who had often come to my baseball games or to watch my hockey team, of which I was the captain. During the year before my injury, my strength and athleticism had lifted me from a weak anaemic child to an active sports enthusiast.

Now they saw their son, almost a vegetable, waiting for the next person to assist him.

J. Bryant Neville notes how SCI interrupted anticipated engagements with his sons. The particular cultural imperatives assigned to fathers in the “making of men” (Mitchell and Wilson, 1967; Biddulph, 2004) is, for Bryant (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 11, Loc. 1641-4), undermined by difficulties engaging in athletic endeavours:

The only thing that ever saddened me was being unable to participate in the boys’ beloved sports activities. They played soccer, baseball, basketball, and football. I wished I could play catch and run around the yard with them, especially since I loved baseball so much as a child, and sometimes when it was very cold outside, I couldn’t attend their games. My body was sensitive to temperature extremes, so I had to miss some of their sporting matches to prevent possible health problems.

Engagements in sport following SCI often rested uncomfortably with ableist social norms that constructed adaptive forms of participation as lacking authenticity, as primarily relating to rehabilitation rather than competition, and as highlighting corporeal difference (Swartz and Watermeyer, 2008: 189-90; Kehn and Kroll, 2009: 172). *John Lambert* (2012: ‘You’ve heard a lot ...’, Loc. 1792-3), previously a “fit specimen”, for whom physical activities were a “raison d’être”, complains about being prompted to

participate in archery during rehabilitation, stating that the sport had no interest for him, and that the system of straps and supports used to facilitate the activity left him feeling “ridiculous” and “trussed up like a chicken” (‘Before a patient ...’, Loc. 2031). *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 20, Loc. 983-4), similarly, rejects adaptive approaches to sport – as well as music and education – altogether (at least initially):

(I)f I could not do baseball and trumpet and medicine in full, I preferred, like the dead young athlete of A. E. Housman, to not do them at all.

Grant Korgan (2012: 382) takes especial pride when paddling in Hanalei Bay, highlighting this non-modified activity as a return to authentic, or “real”, forms of sporting participation:

I was intoxicated by the experience, because, for the first time since my injury, I was not just an *adaptive* athlete doing what he could to work around his perceived abilities in order to participate in a way that approximated the original. I was simply an athlete, participating in a real way, in a real sport. I wasn’t an injured guy first. I was just a guy out paddling in the ocean.

These comments reflect a form of internalised ableism (Mitchell and Snyder, 2012), replicating the substantive devaluation of disability sports within the broader culture (Thomas and Smith, 2003; Hardin and Hardin, 2004; Purdue and Howe, 2012). While adaptive sports may express competence, power and control within an ableist society not inclined to recognise these traits in disabled people (Taylor and McGruder, 1996; Lindemann and Cherney, 2008), they may also be experienced as highlighting the specific embodied capacities and opportunities that have been problematised following SCI (Wendell, 1989; Parsons, 1999).

Embodiment

The loss of positively valued physical capital previously discussed cannot be convincingly sequestered from the realm of embodiment; all domains considered above reflect the gendered “devaluation” associated with interactions between spinal cord injured bodies and encompassing social relations. These categories, as such, should be interpreted as overlapping and interrelated, rather than distinct and separable planes of experience (Gerschick, 1998). Yet, three themes emerged relating immediately to the body in and of itself, and its problematisation of access to male privilege following SCI: *health, aesthetics* and *bodily comportment*.

Health

Previous researchers have identified a gendered set of tropes relating to “vulnerability” and “weakness” that men commonly employ to interpret health interventions (O’Brien et al., 2005); requests for clinical assistance are understood as feminising both in terms of the acknowledgement of corporeal limitation, and power dynamics between doctor and patient (Addis and Mahalik, 2003; Galdas et al., 2005). Masculinity, as such, is related both to corporeal strength and health, but also, simultaneously, not expressing *excessive* concern about the body and its management, culturally associated with hypochondria, narcissism and frailty (Smith, 2013: 113-6). SCIs are accompanied by a range of secondary health problems, including pressure ulcers, urinary tract infections, bowel/urinary issues, chronic pain, and autonomic dysreflexia, that require ongoing, routinised management and surveillance. SCI, for the men under consideration, subsequently often entailed a shift from a mode of embodiment within which health could be “taken-for-granted”, to a corporeality that required almost all-encompassing observation and management. *John Lambert* (2012: ‘Without a doubt ...’, Loc. 3049-50) writes, “I’ve lost a lot of confidence in the functioning of my body, and have to be constantly aware and careful of its general condition, much more so than the average person”. *Brian Shaughnessy* (2005: ‘White Coats’, Loc. 692-3), presented with a video relating to health management during rehabilitation, writes of confronting an existence that is worrying in both its possibilities for corporeal breakdown and its routinised tedium: “The video is boring and frightening and dictates a boring and frightening existence”.

The management of secondary health conditions associated with SCI often inhibited spontaneity. Speaking of the incessant planning required to manage urinary incontinence, *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 17, Loc. 2750-1) writes, “(y)ou don’t go anywhere, get dressed, take a trip, even go to bed unless you’ve thought out the next few hours or days of your urinary tract management”. Patterns of medicalised surveillance also weighed heavily on narrators’ felt sense of corporeal freedom. The substantive health risks associated with SCI, in concert with surrounding social expectations that associate disability with vulnerability (Brisenden, 1986: 177-8; Burns et al., 2013), coalesced to restrict opportunities for agency and risk-taking. *David Harper* (2012: Chap. 3, Loc. 1171-2) appears especially chagrined by these

expectations of corporeal weakness. He recalls denying himself opportunities to swim, water ski and travel through bushland in response to fears of over-exertion; he also notes the patronising over-protectiveness of others surrounding risk-taking behaviours, describing the “horrified reaction of onlookers who couldn’t cope with a guy in a wheelchair, plastering himself on the sidewalk”.

Aesthetics

Sociologists have documented shifts over the past forty years associated with the aesthetic commodification of male embodiment (Alexander, 2003; Norman, 2011); it is, as Susan Bordo (1999a: 21) contends, increasingly difficult to unqualifiedly accept John Berger’s dictum that “men act and women appear”. However, while the male body is increasingly regarded in aesthetic terms, it is important to recognise that the implications of objectification remain gendered (Gill, 2009). SCI contributed to substantial changes in narrators’ abilities to replicate valorised masculine aesthetics, often involving forms of muscular atrophy, the use of visible, stigmatising assistive devices, and changes in bodily posture and shape. Many narrators described a sense of visceral shock when seeing themselves following injury. *Randal Rodgers* (2010: Chap. 4, Loc. 593-602), for instance, writes:

There in the mirror was a creature that looked like the poster child for starving citizens in some third world country. I had not seen myself since the incident.

I was extremely thin, to the point of skin and bones – literally. I had a terrible shadow on my face from not being shaved. My cheek bones were protruding from my face. I had this little red button hanging from the trach hole in my throat. [...] I had no shirt on at the time, and I could see the sides of my rib cage and my shoulder bones. *All I could do was stare and wonder who I saw staring back at me in the mirror.* [...] (I) began to cry. I didn’t even recognise myself.

John Lambert (2012: ‘Now I was up ...’, Loc. 1396-1403), similarly, writes of viewing himself for the first time following injury:

Was that me? During all those weeks since my accident I’d not looked at myself in a mirror; I’d had no reason to. So I was ill prepared to meet the gaze of the person who was my reflection. For a start I looked daft sitting there in a wheelchair, lolling a bit to one side. But it was the face; was that me? I hardly recognised myself. My hair wasn’t combed the way I used to comb it, but it was the face, so thin and haggard and the colour of it. Gone was the perpetual suntan I’d had for the

last seven years, to be replaced by this anaemic looking visage. [...] Where had my muscular shoulders and chest gone? They'd wasted away and I was left with bony shoulders and a thin sunken chest.

Feelings of aesthetic loss were framed in temporal terms, with narrators often expressing antipathy towards viewing oneself following SCI. As contended by Jackie Cramp (2012: 120-1), comparative before-and-after evaluations were common in the aftermath of the autobiographical bisection instigated by SCI. Displays of physical appearance, both to oneself and to others, through mirrors, photographs, or appearing in public, could become a source of anxiety, often rupturing a pre-SCI self-image. *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 10, Loc. 3458-60), for instance, detests seeing himself in the mirror soon after his accident, as a consequence of a desire to avoid witnessing his “decimated [...] hideous appearance”: “I had always tried to stay away from mirrors in the hospital, mostly because I never wanted to look at how I had changed”. *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 10, Loc. 2123) has a similar aversion to seeing himself in the mirror; while *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 16, Loc. 808-9) recalls tearing up a photograph of himself occupying a wheelchair.

Bodily Comportment

Closely related to changes in physical appearance were alterations that SCI instigated regarding corporeal shape. *Height*, associated with power and authority within Western cultures (Bourdieu, 2001; Buunk et al., 2008; Watkins et al., 2010), was diminished following SCI when occupying a wheelchair. *Ray Burt* (2013) conveys a perceived loss of corporeal stature with others referring to him as “little man” (Chap. 36, Loc. 3645), “little guy” (Chap. 38, Loc. 4038), and as one of the “little people” (Chap. 50, Loc. 5467). *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 18, Loc. 3248), describing his experiences seeking employment, writes of “feelings of one-downsmanship (that came) from shaking hands with someone who is on his (sic) feet”. *Rob Oliver* (2011: Chap. 9, Loc. 880-2) manages this loss of corporeal status using medical technology to promote direct eye contact and establish a sense of equality in relation to stature:

I can push a button and the seat rises up about 18 inches. There are a number of reasons for this feature. The primary reason is that it allows me to look people in the eye in a social setting.

Instead of always being lower than everyone, I can raise the chair up to put myself closer to eye level.

SCI also initiated substantial changes in terms of *weight*, often instigating weight loss and muscular atrophy. Narrators commonly described feeling excessively thin and gaunt, and expressed disappointment at a loss of muscularity. *Robert Florio* (2010) describes feeling like a “skeleton” (Chap. 9, Loc. 1875), bemoaning the fact that he can no longer “flex (his) muscles that (he) miss(es) so much” (Chap. 10, Loc. 2123). *John Lambert* (2012: ‘One of my most ...’, Loc. 1107-9), similarly, writes:

I was beginning to lose a lot of weight too. My arms were getting thinner as the powerless muscles began to waste away and it was a shock to see my legs as Carol lifted them during my physiotherapy. What were once strong muscular legs were fast becoming ‘matchstick’ legs, all thin and gaunt. It upset me so much that I avoided looking at them.

Tendencies towards a sedentary lifestyle with a SCI could also, conversely, foster *weight gain* (Bell and McNaughton, 2007: 122-5). *Lee Goldstein* (2013), for instance, relied heavily on his upper body strength for mobility and independence for much of his life following SCI. Over time, these activities placed excessive strain on his shoulders, forcing him to use an electric wheelchair that required minimal physical energy to mobilise, subsequently leading to weight gain.

Finally, as previously noted through Mike Oliver’s (1993: 4) analysis of the “ideology of walking”, popular culture is permeated with associations between the *postures* of standing, walking and a perpendicular spine, and valorised masculine ideals of strength, virility, honour, trustworthiness, agency and assertiveness. In this ethic, *David Harper* (2012: Chap. 2, Loc. 873-4) writes that, “I would never again stand straight as a man should stand. I viewed myself as a half-man, and a half-man is no man”. Changes in control over abdominal muscles could create difficulties maintaining a rigid posture. *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 5, Loc. 570) recalls his father repeatedly punching his arm whenever he slouched to remind him to avoid sitting in a “crooked” manner. *Paul Bendix* (2012: ‘Dissolution’, Loc. 1284-6), finally, describing the long-term postural implications of some forms of SCI, writes:

My body is twisting into a giant S. Viewing myself as I speed by the plate glass windows of the stores, I see the truth. I am a disabled person in a wheelchair, and my body is bending, settling,

and distorting under the weight of musculoskeletal time. I am losing my looks, losing any vestige of my youth, losing in general, it seems.

Conclusion

This chapter has conceptualised SCI as involving the traumatic, radical and sudden loss of positively valued physical capital, that problematised access to forms of gendered privilege within contemporary Western cultures. The instantaneous and unexpected nature of this impairment form established SCI as an existential “pivot” around which one’s life appeared to be narrated, instigating a series of (often nostalgic) “before-and-after” comparisons that highlighted feelings of *loss*. These arguments have been framed using the themes relating to disabled masculinities (employment, independence, sexuality, sport and embodiment) developed by Thomas Gershick (1998), and introduced in Chapter One. While this experience of gendered loss appeared to be almost ubiquitous among the narrators under consideration, the “ruptured” social trajectory discussed here should not be interpreted as a movement from unproblematic privilege to totalising exclusion; individuals were, rather, differentially positioned both prior to, and following, SCI, in relation to access to economic resources, age, relationship status, and ethnicity.

In the following chapter, I attempt to qualify, or situate, these narrated experiences of temporal bisection, associated with the sudden loss of positively valued gendered resources. If, as contended, the sense of *rupture* accompanying SCI can be meaningfully understood using the conceptual device of physical capital, I will proceed to argue that the particular gendered difficulties experienced by men with SCIs resulted from the accompanying *durability* of embodied dispositions/encompassing gendered social relations. To begin articulating this argument, it will be necessary to return to Bourdieusian conceptualisations of emotion, hysteresis, symbolic violence, and the habitus.

Chapter Five: SCI, Hysteresis and Gendered Dialectics Of Pride/Shame⁵

Theorising SCI and Emotion

This chapter considers the incorporation of gendered modes of perceiving, evaluating and understanding SCI through the prism of emotion. SCIs have informed debates surrounding the biological/somatic processes associated with affective experience, presenting opportunities to examine the neurological system's role in the production of emotion. George Hohmann (1966: 153), in an early study, argued that SCI instigated “significant decreases in experienced emotional feelings associated with sexual excitement, anger, fear and an overall estimate of emotional feeling” (but increased “sentimentality”). Visible manifestations of emotion following SCI were theorised by Hohmann (1966: 153-4) as “learned reactions [...] devoid of meaning”, masking an underlying “deadening” of affective experience. This study has been methodologically challenged for examining a narrow range of emotions, failing to employ a control group, and inadequately interrogating the validity of findings (Chwalisz et al., 1988: 820-1). Research has supported the ongoing presence of affect following SCI (Chwalisz et al., 1988: 825-7), although remains primarily focused upon the biological structures associated with its production, rather than “lived experiences” of emotion (Bermond et al., 1991; Nicotra et al., 2006). A sizeable literature has also examined the relationship between SCI and mental illness. Early “stage-model” theories of adjustment to SCI asserting the “inevitability” of depression (Siller, 1969) have been moderated by more recent findings – although higher than average levels of depression and anxiety have been reported (North, 1999; Galvin and Godfrey 2001). Research has also, however, consistently suggested that subjective well-being following SCI is comparable to that of the remainder of the population (Weitzenkamp et al., 2000; Hammell, 2004).

Qualitative examinations of emotion following SCI remain uncommon, with extant literatures emphasising quantitative measurements of affective experience, or biomedical considerations of mental illness. While emotions have appeared in qualitatively-orientated research examining the experience of SCI – including uncertainty (DeSanto-Madeya, 2006: 275-6), distress (Shadish et al., 1981: 297), anger

⁵ A modified version of this chapter has been published as Barrett, T. (2016). Bourdieu, Hysteresis, and Shame: Spinal Cord Injury and The Gendered Habitus. *Men and Masculinities* Online First: doi: 10.1177/1097184X16652658.

(Yoshida, 1993: 225, 237), frustration (Kehn and Kroll, 2009), pride (Angel et al., 2009: 44), confidence (Carpenter, 1994: 621), vulnerability (Samuel et al., 2007: 760-2), and growth (Chun and Lee, 2008) – this work remains largely disengaged from sociological theorisations of emotion.

While the narrative material employed within this research cannot meaningfully “quantify” the prevalence of emotional experience in the aftermath of SCI, it is instructive that, in contrast to autobiographical norms that prioritise the rational instrumentality of men’s public lives (Smith and Watson, 2001; Mintz, 2007), intensely affective experiences featured prominently. *David Harper* (2012: Chap. 12, Loc. 3478) describes the existence of an “ever-present intangible ache” following SCI; *Andy Phelps* (2013: ‘A Better Person’, Loc. 934-5) writes of himself as “nothing more than thoughts, anger, and regret”; *Paul Bendix* (2012: ‘Shropshire Lad’, Loc. 1575) recalls “imagining what it would have been like to be not only physically intact, but emotionally so”; while *Stephen Byrne* (2012: Chap. 11, Loc. 2431-2) writes, “My emotions were crazy sometimes and one day I could feel all right and the next I was on a slippery slope sliding downwards. It was hard to stop those feelings”. Far from reporting a form of emotional “deadening”, narrators described affective experiences that seemed pervasive and overwhelming.

These intense patterns of affect sat incongruously alongside constructions of masculinity emphasising emotional restraint (Sattel, 1976; Sinden, 2012). *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 7, Loc. 2204) recalls feeling like a “wimp” when expressing pain during a medical procedure; *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 7, Loc. 992), crying on a return trip to rehabilitation after a brief period at home, describes his behaviour as “(v)ery unmanly”; *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 11, Loc. 2821) is told to “stop acting like a girl” by his father when he “break(s) down in tears”; while *John Lambert* (2012: ‘The ambulance took ...’, Loc. 595) is labelled a “baby” by nurses for not exhibiting sufficient stoicism. As contended in Chapter One, emotion itself cannot be altogether positioned as anathemic to contemporary Western constructions of masculinity; *which* emotions, *who* expresses them, and *when/why* they appear remain important in determining their gendered significance (Kopper and Epperson, 1996; Cohn et al., 2009). However, for many of the narrators under consideration, it appeared that prevailing gendered “feeling

rules” (Hochschild, 1979: 563-9) rendered expressions of doubt, sadness, pain, anxiety and fear problematic.

Hysteresis, Emotion and The Knowing Body

As the sedimented effect of ongoing individual and collective histories deposited within the corporeality of the body, the habitus is deeply *temporal* (Bourdieu, 1977b: 96-7). Habituated dispositions, emotions, values, bodily comportments and preferences are *durable*; they cannot, according to Bourdieu (1990a: 45-6), be consciously “willed” away, but are characterised by an inertia only moderated through ongoing, gradual exposure to new social environments. Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of the habitus as “acquired yet entrenched”, and “enduring but not *static or universal*” (Wacquant, 2005: 317, 319), was developed within anthropological research examining contexts characterised by turbulent social change. Bourdieu (1990a: 62) conceptualised a temporal lag – *hysteresis* – involving the persistence of habituated dispositions beyond the social context(s) of their production, that were poorly suited to the emerging social landscape. Among the Kabyle, this involved the persistence of an economic ethos centred upon honour, relationships, and gift exchange within an environment organised according to a calculating, capitalist rationality (Bourdieu, 1972: 8-29); among the Bèarn, it reflected the devaluation of the bodily mannerisms of rural bachelors being perceived through the evaluative prisms of the cosmopolitan metropole (Bourdieu, 1962/2004, 2008a). Hysteresis renders an individual a “fish out of water”, attuned to a social environment that no longer prevails (Thorn, 2006).

Where Bourdieu (1972: 8-29) primarily employs “hysteresis” to conceptualise disjunctures between habitus/field engendered by exposure to new environments (whether through historical change, geographical movement, or inter-cultural contact), this chapter slightly modifies the term to more closely reflect the definition offered by Iver Neumann and Vincent Pouliot (2011) in their historical examination of Russian-Western diplomatic relations. They describe hysteresis as “a mismatch between the dispositions agents embody and the positions they occupy *in a given social configuration*” (Neumann and Pouliot, 2011: 109, my emphasis). The term “position” is used in the traditional Bourdieusian sense, reflecting the differentiated distribution of capital(s). They write, “because positions (based on the possession of capital) change more quickly than dispositions (which are ingrained), habitus at time *t*

can be better attuned to the field's structure at time $t-1$ " (Neumann and Pouliot, 2011: 113). Their conceptualisation of hysteresis is slightly different from Bourdieu's, which emphasises *social change*, rather than *change in social position* (Neumann and Pouliot, 2011: 113; see also Thorn, 2006: 9). This distinction is not semantic, and its implications will be more thoroughly elucidated below. However, this chapter will suggest that individuals become habituated not only to the *historical context* they encounter, but also their *relative position within that context* (contra Russell, 2014: 273-4), engendering the possibility of a form of hysteresis relating to the acquisition/dissolution of privileged forms of capital (Thorn, 2006: 9; Neumann and Pouliot, 2011: 113).

Emotion is central to Bourdieu's theoretical and empirical understanding of socially-infused corporeality (Bourdieu, 2001: 38-9). Bourdieu's (1962/2004, 2008a) bachelors, for instance, feel awkward and ashamed when evaluated through cosmopolitan standards of "marriageability" at the local ball; those accustomed to traditional Algerian rural economic logics express a "revolt of emotion" directed towards local manifestations of the historical processes displacing them (Bourdieu, 1972: 57-63); while the ambivalent "suffering" of contemporary French society is related to the growing instabilities of neoliberal capitalism (Bourdieu, 1999). Yet, despite this empirical significance, and his claim that "nothing is more serious than emotion, which touches on the innermost depth of our organic dispositions" (cited in Wacquant and Deyanov, 2002: 183), it is difficult to uncover lengthy Bourdieusian excursions on affect (Probyn, 2004: 230).

Using insights from the sociology of emotion to further develop Bourdieu's conceptualisation of affect, emotion can be understood as neither the expression of an authentic "inner" self, nor as a mechanical external imposition, but rather a relational incorporation (Bandes, 2009: 4-5). Reminiscent of Bourdieu's (1973: 53) formulation of the habitus as dialectically involving the "internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality", Sara Ahmed (2004) conceives of emotion not as emerging from "within" or "without", but rather as definitive of the *mediated boundaries between self/ other*. Emotions are eminently historical, both reflecting the accumulated effects of biographical/collective experience, but also recursively contributing to the production of social life. In the theorisation of a *socially knowledgeable body*, Bourdieu (1989: 19) sees emotion as a durably installed felt sense of social

place; emotions are not mediated directly through consciousness, but rather reflect an embodied, intuitive grasp of one's position within the encompassing social environment. They are "embodied thoughts" (Rosaldo, 1984: 143), that articulate "a preconceptual grasp of the world" (Finkler, 1989: 83). Emotions, then, offer an opportunity to understand the durable shaping of corporeality. Emotions predispose individuals toward certain social environments, rendering particular contexts experientially comfortable, rewarding and safe, but others as alien, dissonant and dangerous. Yet, the connection between emotion and practice is complex: emotions may remain unresolved or frustrated (Craib, 1995; Clarke, 2003), individuals may actively "manage" their affective states to approximate social expectations (Hochschild, 1975, 1979), and practices may even suggest precisely the opposite of felt emotion (Sturdy, 2003; Hughes, 2012).

This chapter emphasises the gendered implications of a dialectical nexus between *shame* and *pride*. I outline the persistence of gendered modes of self-perception following SCI, rooted within the affective structures of corporeality, that experientially "recognised" the devaluation of physical/bodily capital outlined previously. This chapter draws upon previous empirical operationalisations of hysteresis that have referred to the role of emotion, albeit in an under-theorised manner (e.g. McDonough and Polzer, 2012; Dumenden and English, 2013). Three qualifications are worth noting before proceeding. Firstly, "emotion" is a multi-levelled, fragmented construct, challenging divisions between "layers" of experience (biological, psychological, interpersonal, cultural, and historical), and relevant to multiple disciplinary approaches (Turner, 2009). The argument offered reflects delimited thematic and theoretical concerns, and is not a holistic account of "emotion and SCI". Secondly, reflecting space constraints, and the multiplicity of emotional experience, a limited selection of emotions is considered (pride/shame). The emphasis placed in this chapter upon the "negative" (although, see Stets, 2012: 327) emotional experience of "shame" is not designed to construct SCI as a "personal tragedy" (Oliver, 1990), or to deny the existence of positive experiences within the autobiographical narratives considered (Swain and French, 2000). Instead, I interpret this layer of affective experience as reflecting incorporated, socially structured expectations surrounding the negatively valued physical capital of spinal cord injured men. Thirdly, this chapter recognises the probability of disparities between

embodied experiences of “affect”, and the labelling and autobiographical representation of “emotion” (Massumi, 2002: 28; Sturdy, 2003: 88-89). These disjunctures reflect inherent difficulties involved in examining “feelings” in an unmediated form (Craib, 1995: 151-3; Bloch, 2002: 119).

Shame and SCI

Several factors render shame an immensely difficult affective state to conceptualise. Firstly, shame is inherently *historical* (Riezler, 1943; Elias, 1982). While anthropologists have documented the existence of emotions *akin* to shame within a variety of spatial/temporal locales (Lutz and White, 1986), the *contents* of “what” precipitates shame are enormously diverse, relating to the prevailing “economies of value, morality and meaning” within a particular context (Fullagar, 2003: 292). Secondly, shame belongs to a family of “emotions that includes many cognates and variants, most notably embarrassment, guilt, humiliation, and related feelings such as shyness” (Scheff, 2003: 255). While considerable attention has been devoted towards delineating distinctions between these labels (particularly “shame” from “guilt” [Tangney, 1990; Moore, 1993: 13-4]), these discussions risk reifying linguistic categories as “affect” itself, and neglecting the bi-directional interface between language and emotion (Riezler, 1943). What I am referring to as “shame” was subsequently often connoted using slightly different terminology within the narrated experiences under consideration (for instance, being “embarrassed”, having to “swallow one’s pride” or put aside one’s “modesty”, being “mortified”, feeling like a “freak”, being “exposed”, “devastated”, or “degraded”, or needing to act with “humility” [Chase and Walker, 2013: 743]). Thirdly, the term “shame” is, itself, stigmatised within contemporary Western cultures, invoking connotations of weakness, conformity, and self-loathing; there is “shame about shame” (Kaufman, cited in Scheff, 2003: 240), resulting in a tendency towards euphemism. Shame is common, but often not explicitly labelled (Nijhof, 1995: 196).

Shame has frequently been sociologically theorised using symbolic interactionist tropes relating to the capacity for “role-playing”. It is described by Thomas Scheff (2003: 239) as “the premier social emotion”, involving recognition of the (negative) personal evaluation of the “self”, from the perspective of a (real or imagined, present or absent) “other” (Riezler, 1943; Smith and McElwee, 2011). This formulation reflects Charles Cooley’s (cited in Scheff, 2003: 242) early conceptualisation of

the “looking glass self”, involving, “the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his (sic) judgment of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification” (see also Smith and McElwee, 2011: 93).

This conceptualisation of shame can be slightly reconfigured using Bourdieusian logic. Firstly, the self/other binary can be modified by positing the literal *incorporation of the “other” into the body of the “self”*. Shame possesses its distinctive power precisely because the habitus is “primed” to *understand* particular forms of forthcoming devaluation (Bourdieu, 2000b: 169, 2001: 38; Probyn, 2000: 24). It is, as such, not only that the shamed individual is *imagining* her/himself from the perspective of another as a form of mental gymnastics, but rather that s(he) is operationalising a shared, inculcated universe of moral judgements, status hierarchies and social expectations (Zahavi, 2011). Secondly, the language of role-taking tends toward an emphasis on cognitive “imagination”. Following Bourdieu (2000b: 169, 2001: 38), we might reconceive of shame a form of *embodied sensitivity* to perceived threats to social status and/or bonds. As shame involves a global, intuitive and seemingly “automatic” assessment of the self, it can be seen as an embodied *sense* of self-judgement, rather than a set of rationalised appraisals (Moore, 1993: 10; Zahavi, 2011). Shame, as Jennifer Biddle (1997: 229) puts it, involves a “direct mimetic introversion of the other’s negation”.

Shame is a ubiquitous possibility within social life, whether through the misreading of cues, the failure to enact interactional rituals, or the revelation of disreputable features of the self (Goffman, 1967: 109). The ubiquity of shame within the gendered lives of men has been well theorised, reflecting the need to perpetually “demonstrate” masculinity, without the possibility of ultimate “confirmation” (Kimmel, 1994; Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009: 279), as well as gendered norms that articulate contradictory sets of expectations (Connell, 1998; Robertson, 2003). Spinal cord injured men’s narrated experiences of gendered shame should subsequently be understood as existing in a relationship of continuity with men more broadly. Yet, three key considerations may render experiences of shame especially frequent among this group: firstly, prevailing ableist, gendered norms had been incorporated into the habitus prior to injury (Tepper, 1999: 44-5); secondly, SCI radically disrupted socially privileged performances of masculinity (Mahon-Darby et al., 1988; Tepper, 1999); and, thirdly, the surrounding

social environment contained rewards, sanctions, foreclosures and judgements that highlighted this “disjuncture” between expectation and possibility (Gerschick, 1998; Shuttleworth et al., 2012).

Shame was associated with “breakdowns in self-presentation” (Sabini et al., cited in Scheff, 2003: 253) that established felt discrepancies between “what is” and “what ought to be” (Lundberg et al., 2009: 489). *David Harper* (2012), for instance, growing up in rural Oregon, represents his youth as revolving around the development of a rugged independence emerging through habitual forays into the surrounding wilderness, which sharpened his capacity for self-reliance in order to prepare him to “become a man one day” (Chap. 2, Loc. 401). He writes, “As I grew, I spent days hunting and wandering alone, as much from habit as from choice. I felt comfortable being alone. It expanded my confidence to cope with whatever came my way” (Chap. 2, Loc. 346-7). Several years after a SCI rendered him paraplegic, David planned a canoeing trip to confirm his continued ability to perform this rugged individualism: “I harboured a desire to conquer my sense of being un-whole as a man. I needed to prove something. Taking this trip alone held distinct power in my mind” (Chap. 10, Loc. 3153).

When his partner (Barbi) expresses persistent concerns surrounding safety, David reluctantly agrees to travel together. Encountering impenetrable rapids while canoeing, Barbi is forced to physically drag the vessel from a nearby bank while David remains seated, feeling that his “wings” had been “clipped” (Chap. 10, Loc. 3240):

Spiralling downward, my mind pulled me into that hollow place without answers. [...] This *wasn't* why I came out here. Water washed beneath the bow, as incompetence washed away my ability to reason. [...] Mired in this train of thought, all I could think to do was the very thing I couldn't accomplish: get out and pull my own load. Old irresolvable feelings began to take control (Chap. 10, Loc. 3243-8).

These feelings approach their zenith when David and Barbi encounter four other travellers. David experiences intense “embarrassment” at the prospect of being visibly physically assisted by a woman, a spectacle that undermines the masculinist, rugged individualism he seeks to exemplify:

This was really going to be embarrassing. There I sat, utterly helpless in the canoe, while Barbi pulled it through the rapids. Swept with a whole new sense of melancholy, I remembered the

wheelchair was buried in the bottom of the canoe. I tried to imagine how this looked: a small-framed woman pulling a healthy young man sitting in a freight canoe. I winced.

There are times when being crippled can make a guy feel awfully compromised (Chap. 10, Loc. 3263-6).

These narrated experiences reflect the *intersubjectivity* of shame as an affective co-construction hinging upon a relation of *difference* (Scheff, 2000: 88). As Charles Cooley (cited in Scheff, 2000: 88) puts it, “We are ashamed to seem evasive in the presence of a straightforward man (sic), cowardly in the presence of a brave one, (and) gross in the eyes of a refined one.” David’s experience of “embarrassment” seems in part to have been activated in relation to the (presumably able-bodied, ambulant) bushwalkers, as figurative representatives of the ableist, masculinist “economies of value” from which he feels excluded. This affective response was amplified by gendered expectations that define men’s independence and physical strength *against* women (Chodorow, 1999; Bourdieu, 2001), a relation of difference subverted by Barbi’s pulling of the canoe.

Shame subsequently needs to be conceptualised in *relational* terms. According to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003), shame is an affective, embodied resonance that reflects the investments, desires and beliefs that structure our lives at the moment of their transgression; as John Kekes (1988: 282) puts it, “(s)hame is a sign that we have made a serious commitment, and it is also an impetus for honouring it, since violating the commitment painfully lowers our opinion of ourselves”. As contended in Chapter One, the production of masculinities within contemporary Western contexts is centrally related to the pursuit of social distance from marginalised, non-masculine “others” (Han, 2000; Shuttleworth et al., 2012). If masculinity depends upon differentiation, *social proximity* to these abject “others” might be experienced as a form of gendered “failure” (Zahavi, 2011). Within the narratives of the spinal cord injured men under consideration, two forms of “dangerous” social proximity were especially prominent in the production of feelings of shame.

Becoming “Disabled”

The first related to the assumption and/or social prescription of a “disability identity” (Watson, 2002). As noted previously, SCIs are temporally distinctive in the radical disjuncture they instigate in

one's experiences of embodiment and social position (Seymour, 2002: 138); *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 2, Loc. 159-60) writes, "the person whose spinal cord is injured has no time to reconcile his lot, his flump immediate after the gunshot or dive or crash (sic)". For many, prior experience with SCIs was limited, reflecting social processes that isolate and segregate disabled from non-disabled people (Snyder and Mitchell, 2006). *Andy Phelps* (2013: 'A Better Person', Loc. 891), for instance, recalling a spinal cord injured American football player's life story, writes: "This was the extent of my knowledge of spinal cord injuries – soiled pants and catheters in penises". For most of the men under consideration, the movement from a "non-disabled" to "disabled" identity created substantial difficulties. In particular, with minimal prior exposure to SCI, and no expectation of becoming spinal cord injured, there was a tendency for narrators to have been personally "affected" by ableist constructions of masculinity prevailing within the surrounding environment (Gerschick, 1998; Shakespeare, 1999: 57).

The dialectically related experiences of "being seen", and "seeing oneself", as "disabled", subsequently became a substantial source of tension for the narrators under consideration, reflecting the interpretation of the self through modes of habituated "vision and division" (Bourdieu, 2001: 11) that constructed disability in intensely negative terms. *Rick Hansen* (with Taylor, 2011: Chap. 3, Loc. 765) writes, "I hated the chair. Just being in it told the world I was disabled. Worse, it told me"; *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 9, Loc. 2020-3), similarly, uses the ableist language that pervades the broader culture to describe himself following SCI:

I feel I am sitting on a throne in this cumbersome retarded chair. [...] I spent so many years fearing, never wanting to become the neighbourhood freak and always being the tough kid. Now I've become that freak.

Discomfort at identifying/being identified as a "disabled person" was evidenced through a variety of concealment strategies. Several narrators referred to quasi-agoraphobic periods of self-isolation, during which the "public sphere" became associated with feelings of negative exposure. *John Lambert* (2012: 'I'd already been ...', Loc. 1580) writes, "(t)he world at large seemed to frighten me a little"; while *Francesco Clark* (2010: Chap. 11, Loc. 1132) recalls that he was "was extremely uncomfortable being in public or in a social setting". Due to the visibly identifiable markers of SCI, "passing" (Linton, 1998:

17-22; Putnam, 2005: 191) as non-disabled was generally not possible. However, specific interactional strategies were sometimes employed to minimise associations with disability. *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 11, Loc. 577-8), for instance, writes that: “All through college, I had tucked my cane (and my chair) away. I wished to be seen without it”; *Francesco Clark* (2010: Chap. 11, Loc. 1138-45), similarly, expresses a preference for being seated in public spaces, to avoid being differentiated by his wheelchair:

I hated the idea that people might see me as a disabled person. [...] When we'd arrive at the restaurant, I'd focus on getting to the table as soon as possible [...] because at least we were all at the same level and I didn't feel like I stuck out.

A variant of shame described by the narrators emerged within contexts highlighting disjunctures between a “disability identity” and prevailing constructions of masculinity (Tepper, 1999: 44-5). An immense set of “preliminary labours” (Bourdieu, 2001: 38) had formed a gendered habitus through ongoing, invisible injunctions, establishing an evaluative foundation that tended to conceive of the changes wrought by SCI as a form of masculine devaluation. *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 6, Loc. 827), for instance, feels “embarrassed” at experiencing difficulties embodying normative practices surrounding sexuality; *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 9, Loc. 1942-4) and *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 6, Loc. 1835) report feeling shame at the loss of muscularity/embodied strength; and *Paul Bendix* (2012: ‘Slow Going’, Loc. 124) describes the dearth of job opportunities he experiences following injury as “humiliating”.

Experiences of shame were particularly common within contexts involving the receipt of *help*. These transactions frequently seemed to intensify consciousness of being a “disabled person”, constituting the self as a “spectacle” to others, and encouraging negatively valued pre-injury/post-injury comparisons surrounding independence and social status. A sizeable research literature has emerged documenting men’s reluctance to engage in help-seeking behaviours, particularly in relation to medical issues (Addis and Mahalik, 2003; O’Brien et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2006), with the aversion to appearing vulnerable being “consistent with masculine gender socialisation messages that demand fortitude and abhor weakness” (Mansfield et al., 2005: 104). Men’s experiences of negativity in relation to help provision are especially pronounced when assistance is required for issues that are non-normative, or when it is

perceived that most men do not require support within the same domain (Addis and Mahalik, 2003: 10).

Patterns of assistance were subsequently often regarded with a degree of shame, implicitly existing in a transgressive relationship to normalised expectations surrounding male embodiment and independence. *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 5, Loc. 1315-7) reflects upon his reservations entering into sexual/romantic relationships post-injury, a concern that may be especially pronounced by the historical positioning of men within heterosexual couples as agentic providers (Cole and Cole, 1993: 201; Dickson et al., 2010). Writing about one of his nurses, he states:

Here was a nice girl about my age whom I might have asked out on a date but how could I do that now that I was so dependent with everything? I needed help to eat, bathe, shave, and dress, and I had to be assisted with the most unpleasant task of evacuating my bowels and draining my bladder. How could I do that with a pretty young lady like her? I thought. But she was going to be my second shift nurse and I had no choice. How embarrassing and degrading, I sighed, thinking it could be like that for the rest of my life.

Both *John Lambert* (2012) and *Lee Goldstein* (2013) express embarrassment at being physically moved by another person, transgressing constructions of the masculine self as an independent, autonomous “subject” (Young, 2005). Former work colleagues (a predominantly female cabin crew) lift John into an aeroplane he piloted prior to injury; while Lee’s father carries him into the family home upon returning from rehabilitation, with neighbours as an audience. The discomfort experienced at depending upon another for movement emerged both in relation to a presumably “able-bodied” audience, and, arguably, the social identity of the lifter (the former transgressing social norms that vaunt masculine physicality [Messner and Sabo, 1994; Spencer, 2014], the latter undermining developmental imperatives requiring independence from parents [Riezler, 1943; Smith and McElwee, 2010]):

JL: I knew the crew and naturally felt a little *embarrassed* as I was lifted into my seat by the girls.

From Captain to Cripple is a big drop! (‘I quickly settled ...’, Loc. 2832-3).

LG: Neighbours filed out of their houses as we began unloading. I was not used to being carried in front of them, and experienced embarrassment as Dad lifted me from the car (Chap. 7, Loc. 975-6).

Negative feelings surrounding the receipt of assistance were compounded by experiences of being offered unrequested “help” within public spaces. These practices reflect historical constructions of the disabled “other” through charitable discourse, instantaneously associated with neediness, and the opportunity for the non-disabled “self” to express benevolence. Charitable practices have been critiqued within disability studies as contributing to historically dominant narratives of disability as an individualised “personal tragedy”, and for instantiating a split between the charitable “giver” (associated with agency, power and provision) and the “recipient” (associated with weakness, passivity and dependence)(Hevey, 1992; Drake, 1996: 152-3). *Andy Phelps* (2013: ‘Coming Home’, Loc. 1262-6) writes:

I came to realise that sometimes I’d have to accept unwanted charity for others to feel as though they were doing God’s work. [...] I learned that the goodness in mankind was always going to cause others to look for ways to help me and that I couldn’t be too prideful to accept that help.

Paul Bendix (2012: ‘In The Market’, Loc. 172-4), describing an encounter with a street vendor offering him a discount on produce, writes:

I’m embarrassed. The man is doing something very nice, or thinks he is doing something very nice. [...] He is giving me a break. A price break, one that I have not sought and do not need. I’m certain this has to do with my being in a wheelchair. I am Menlo Park’s Tiny Tim.

Paul’s depiction of charitable “benevolence” through the character of “Tiny Tim” reflects the second shame-inducing “proximate other” commonly referenced within the narrated experiences under consideration – the *child*.

SCI and Second Childhoods

The “boy” is central to contemporary Western productions of hegemonic masculinity; to be “A Man” involves not only differentiating oneself from women, gay men, and the disabled, but also from the realm of childhood (Bourdieu, 2001: 24-7). Becoming “A Man” is subsequently oriented around a series of developmental (although increasingly amorphous [Fine, 2000; Pollack, 2004]) “rites of passage”, involving a departure from “boyhood’s” associations with passivity, dependence, weakness, smallness, and submissiveness. Within existing social relations, boys are tied (to use Bourdieu’s [2001:

131] language) to “the world of women” through gendered inequalities in the social distribution of childcare and educational labour (Acker, 1995; Anderson, 2000). The achievement of male adulthood subsequently involves rebellion against these social positions, as connoted through the prevalence of social disgust for the “mama’s boy” (Pollack, 2004: 144), as well as the tendency for acquiescence to pedagogical authority to be conflated with femininity within schooling cultures (Martino, 1999, 2000; Renold, 2001).

The life course position of the narrators under consideration within this context is significant; SCI occurred, on average, at 22.6 years of age within this sample, reflecting the disproportionate rate at which adolescent males/young men experience SCIs. Most of the narrators were subsequently either teenagers, anticipating the assumption of a legitimated adult identity, or had very recently achieved certain “markers” associated with adulthood (for instance, leaving the familial home, marriage, and/or financial independence [Arnett, 1998; Pollack, 2004]). This *chronological* proximity could be regarded as underpinning the distinctive affective power of the periodic feelings of *developmental reversion* commonly described following SCI, involving one being thrust back into an infantilised social situation, that was either about to be escaped, or had only recently been escaped; “(a)n injury to the spinal cord is particularly devastating to this age group because of developmental needs demonstrated by pride in physical strength, sexual activity, competitiveness and striving for financial independence” (Weingarden and Graham, 1992: 828).

Andy Phelps (2013), for instance, was injured at the age of sixteen. Prior to acquiring a SCI, he describes his investment in a variety of strategies designed to move towards an adult manhood, revolving around heterosexual relations, combative power, sporting excellence, muscularity, and autonomy from his parents. Having invested in these markers of adult-masculinity, he writes following injury:

I had just spent sixteen years trying to get away from (my parents) and now I couldn’t believe I was back at square one. Had I not grown so independent prior to the wreck, perhaps having to depend on my parents wouldn’t have been so devastating (‘Craig Hospital’, Loc. 1065-6).

(M)y second journey into manhood was nothing like I had expected. I felt like an underconfident, skinny, gross, paralysed kid instead of a respected man ('20 French', Loc. 1623-4).

According to *Stephen Thompson* (2011: 'Introduction', Loc. 19-20):

A cervical spinal cord injury regresses you back to those early stages of a dependent existence and in one way or another plunges you back into viewing life through the eyes of a child, at least at times. You are forced to relive those fears, anxieties, lack of choices, and humility of dependence.

The radically altered corporeal parameters associated with the possession of a SCI were often represented using the trope of the *baby*, a social position associated with the interrelated absence of embodied knowledge, and a subsequent sense of vulnerability. *John Lambert* (2012: 'The next milestone ...', Loc. 1346) recalls feeling like a "helpless adult baby"; *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 6, Loc. 1858) talks about spinal cord injured people feeling exposed "like a baby"; and *Stephen Byrne* (2012) writes following injury that:

(M)y biggest focus was getting my strength back and becoming as independent as I could as quickly as possible. [...] I was like a baby in many ways and I had to relearn how to do virtually everything (Chap. 8, Loc. 1847-9).

Psychoanalytic theorists have noted close connections between shame and childhood, with the shamed individual feeling small, lacking in authority, objectified, and subordinated to powerful others (Lewis, 1971; Scheff, 2003: 246; see also Nijhof, 1995). Bourdieu (2000b: 169), similarly, notes that "bodily emotion" (including shame) is "often associated with the impression of *regressing* towards archaic relationships, those of childhood and the family". As contended in Gerhard Nijhof's (1995: 198-9) examination of shame in relation to Parkinson's Disease, while developmental norms of adulthood are *learned* (often arduously) throughout childhood, their incorporation into taken-for-granted and routinised practices renders them a deeply embedded (and therefore, almost invisible) component of one's habituated expectations of selfhood. Shame, for the narrators under consideration, often related to the transgression of characteristics (Thrane, 1979: 143; Fontana and Smith, 1989: 39) that defined (socially incorporated) feelings of adult manhood.

This rupturing to the enactment of norms associated with adulthood occurred across a range of domains. Several quadriplegic narrators described extreme discomfort surrounding the need for assistance with eating. As reported in earlier research, there was a preference for assisted feeding within “safe”, or private, spaces (Martinsen et al, 2008); being “seen” to require support within this context was associated with vulnerability and weakness, and was often accompanied by experiences of shame (Jacobsson et al., 2000). *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 11, Loc. 2827) feels “awkward” requesting assistance with eating from schoolmates; while *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 2, Loc. 415-6) feels that his “self-esteem” is being “destroy(ed)” by the infantilisation he undergoes while waiting to be fed. *Francesco Clark* (2010) describes every spoonful he is assisted with as a figurative “slap in the face” (Chap. 6, Loc. 596) while in rehabilitation, and, at a restaurant, writes with a degree of despondency: “I was *twenty-four years old* and getting fed by my mother” (Chap. 11, Loc. 1146).

SCI also problematised “backstage” (Goffman, 1969) labours underpinning presentations of socially legitimated adulthood. *Adam Helbling* (2014: 153) notes that the assistance he required following SCI rendered practices previously configured as “personal” open to the observations/interventions of others: “People with spinal cord injuries have little privacy because we need help with so many things. Before my accident I was a very private person, but at this point, modesty takes a back seat”. The loss of control over activities and spaces conventionally regarded as “private” related to a range of social domains, including urination, defecation, public nudity, changing one’s clothes, and control over immediate surroundings. Narrators commonly referred to periods of physical exposure to others, both within rehabilitative settings and upon returning to the community, where norms surrounding the concealment of “private” body parts were either difficult to maintain, or were not respected. *John Lambert* (2012: ‘Although I was ...’, Loc. 2797), for instance, “swallow(s) (his) pride” when expected to shower in public at a residence for young disabled people; *Grant Korgan* (2012: 171-2) recalls with anguish being exposed to his mother for the first time since childhood during catheterisation; and *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 10, Loc. 1382), describes “profound, terminal embarrassment” at being assisted in learning to control bowel movements by a female physical therapist. Lee writes:

Of course I had a crush on her. What robust young teen wouldn't? So imagine my surprise and embarrassment when she decided we were going to work on bowel movements together! [...]

There I sat, totally nude, trying to look mature and cool (Chap. 10, Loc. 1370-9).

Toileting practices commonly invoked intense connections between shame and the experience of developmental reversion. Erik Erikson (1995: 226-9) famously regarded toilet training as central to developmental dialectics between autonomy and shame, involving the child's recognition, and hatred, of adult disgust at urination/defecation, and subsequent investments in *privacy* and *control* (Honig, 1993). The regulation of these bodily processes according to environmentally inscribed temporal and spatial rhythms is central to the production of adulthood within contemporary Western contexts (Thrane, 1979: 150). Narrators often experienced difficulties replicating these investments in privacy and control, sometimes requiring assistance from outsiders, and often involving unpredictability in relation to the time/location of defecation/urination. Urinary/bowel management became an ongoing and substantial subject of consciousness following SCI, with the loss of a set of embodied practices that had been taken-for-granted since childhood. *Rick Hansen* (with Taylor, 2011: Chap. 2, Loc. 502-4) reflects on the difficulties involved in "relearning" toileting during rehabilitation:

They were teaching things that were humiliating even to discuss, like bowel and bladder control.

Later on I'd learn one of rehab's facts of life: that you check your pride in the locker room and pick it up when you leave. But there I was, a sixteen-year-old kid being taught how to go to the bathroom.

Difficulties controlling bowel/bladder systems following SCI were commonly described within the narratives under consideration as intensely invalidating, particularly when in public view (Chan and Man, 2005: 330; Fadyl and McPherson, 2010: 72). Reflecting Richard Robertiello and Terril Gagnier's (1990: 118) description of incontinence as the "quintessential shameful experience", *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 9, Loc. 2989-93) writes:

It is one heck of a humbling embarrassment for a grown man to crap in his shorts. I was completely devastated and just stood there unable to speak or move for a moment. [...] (I) knew it also happened to other people, too, on occasion. Little consolation though, for the feeling a young man has when he is not even able to get to the toilet in time.

Narrators often described the loss of perceived authority within the context of social interactions; others were implicitly configured as proxy “caregivers” responsible for decision-making in a manner reminiscent of parent-child relationships. *John Lambert* (2012: ‘One quiet afternoon ...’, Loc. 913), thirty-three years old at the time of injury, writes about feelings of “infantilisation” when his parents are consulted by a social worker without his involvement; *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 9, Loc. 1379-82) has waiters ask others about his orders, rather than him directly; and *Brian Shaughnessy* (2005: ‘Searching For The Land of Enchantment’, Loc. 2521-3) has bureaucratic workers at his social security office direct questions towards his partner. This tendency to “look over” spinal cord injured people, and the implied assumptions surrounding the incapacity for self-management, reflected a diminished set of social expectations (Isaksson et al., 2007: 1682-3; Duggan et al., 2008: 986). This is exemplified by *Francesco Clark’s* (2010: Chap. 7, Loc. 688-9) description of receiving rapturous praise from rehabilitation staff after successfully using an electric wheelchair for the first time:

I didn’t know whether I should laugh or cry or both. All I had to do was press a button and steer. A three-year-old could do this. I had injured my body, not my mind. I wasn’t an idiot. The humiliation of it all was stinging.

Pride

Outside of a literature examining the re-framing of pathologised identities through social movement activism (Britt and Heise, 2000; Probyn, 2000), pride has not been widely researched within sociology (Hopkins, 2001; Boezeman and Ellemers, 2008). Psychologists have interpreted pride as existing in a mutually constitutive dialectic with shame; both are “secondary emotions” (Tracy and Robins, 2007b: 506) involving the capacity to understand one’s self-presentation as a social artefact, and the evaluation of the self through internalised standards of value (Lewis et al., 1992: 630-1; Oveis et al., 2010: 619). Where shame could be interpreted as an embodied, intuitive sense of one’s deviation from socially (and personally) valued identifications, pride emerges when these esteemed properties are realised (Scheff, 2003: 242-4). The “inverse” relationship between shame and pride is effectively evidenced by their respective communicative bodily compartments. The desire to hide, become small, and return to the private associated with the former, can be counterposed to the embodied expansion (as in, to “swell”

or “burst” with pride [Britt and Heise, 2000; Tracy and Robins, 2007a), and the positioning of oneself as a public “display” (Kasari et al., 1993: 354; Britt and Heise, 2010), associated with the latter.

Psychologists have often interpreted pride through “functionalist” evolutionary theory, as an adaptive affect designed to both signal, and motivate the acquisition of, esteemed traits that promote status and contribute to reproduction (Tracy and Robins, 2007a: 149-50; Williams and DeSteno, 2009). Reflecting the construction of shame offered above, pride is here reinterpreted as a form of embodied knowledge about the power-laden, hierarchically defined values, traits, comportments, resources and meanings esteemed within the surrounding social environment (Stipek, 1998; Tiedens et al., 2000). If shame is triggered by “dangerous” contiguity to pathologised social categories, pride, alternatively, might be understood as the affective state associated with successful demarcation. The double-meaning of the Bourdieusian term “distinction” is relevant here, referring both to a *distinctive* form of social value, as well as the capacity to *distinguish* oneself from an “other” (Bourdieu, 1984; Schinkel, 2007: 711-2).

As contended in the previous chapter, SCIs challenge the corporeal performance of hegemonic masculinity within contemporary Western societies. Yet, two qualifications to this statement are significant. Firstly, as will be contended in the following chapter through the concept of *generativity* (Barrett, 2014b: 48-50), the narrators, while undoubtedly placed within a context that devalued their physical capital, should not be understood as the passive “objects” of gendered exclusion (Bourdieu, 1977b: 96-114), but rather as engaging “strategically” with delimited gendered opportunities embedded within the social environment. Secondly, the experience of SCI was not tantamount to a *universal* or *continuous* incapacity to enact contemporary Western masculinities. Most narrators described a piecemeal or contradictory movement between moments, relationships, contexts and practices that variously fostered/foreclosed the enactment of idealised masculinities (Gerschick and Miller, 2000). While SCI perhaps quantitatively “increased” the prevalence of gendered exclusion, this was not a ubiquitous feature of social experience.

Narrators commonly described pride when enacting prevailing constructions of masculinity. This frequently involved satisfaction being derived from one’s capacity to engage in relationships, contexts

or behaviours that *may have* been problematised by SCI, *had previously been* problems for individual narrators, or *were* problems for others with SCIs. Implicit within these feelings, then, were processes of social comparison in relation to an “other” against whom one could feel “distinguished” (Solvang, 2000; Deal, 2003; Withers, 2012). *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 18, Loc. 3114-7), for instance, writes of the pleasure he experiences in his capacity to live independently, implicitly defined against the assistance with the tasks of daily living that many with SCIs require:

But my preference was to live solitary, and for a very different reason than most people imagine. I was proud of being able to do it. I was proud of being able to dress myself, take a shower or bath, put on my incontinence bag, take in my laundry and prepare simple meals. I was proud to decorate an apartment and invite friends into it.

J. Bryant Neville (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 8, Loc. 1178-9), similarly, writes of the pride he takes in his household contributions through employment, associated with masculinist expectations of economic breadwinning and the avoidance of the stigma accompanying the receipt of welfare/charity:

I was proud of the income I brought home because I could contribute toward household expenses. My parents had taken such amazing care of me over the years that it felt good to give back and help them in return.

Robert Florio (2010: Chap. 12, Loc. 3804-6) describes being accompanied by a female partner, Candy, to the unveiling of an art exhibit, drawing upon gendered norms that ascribe value to women according to their capacity to replicate dominant conceptions of beauty. Candy’s physical appearance recursively validates Robert’s heterosexual prowess, fostering feelings of pride:

I can’t keep my eyes off of Candy. She is standing beside me in her tantalising long black, fur jacket, and miniskirt and high heels, with her hair pinned up with the long wavy ponytail. I steal glances at her all night back and forth. I’m proud she is by my side.

The experience of pride necessarily presupposes the possibility of shame; both involve a figurative “tightrope”, with incorporated standards of social value entailing opportunities for both triumph and disappointment (Owen, 2006: 142; see also Probyn, 2000). Taking pride in having an attractive partner, living independently, or earning an income pivots respectively upon investments in procreative heterosexuality, self-reliance and economistic forms of social value, gendered norms that are

structurally defined in ableist terms within contemporary Western societies. The “Janus-faced” character of pride is effectively captured by *Joshua Prager* (2013). Joshua was diagnosed with Brown-Séquard syndrome, which involves a “splitting” of the neurological system, allowing his right side to move with relative freedom, while leaving his left side with restricted mobility but greater sensitivity to touch and temperature. Joshua compares himself favourably to others he sees during rehabilitation, invoking standards of independence, competence and corporeal power:

[O]ne morning, looking down from my diagonal perch at my fellow patients, I felt strong, triumphant, superior, king of the ninth floor. Look at me! I can wash myself, wheel myself, do my own leg bag! I can almost sit up! I will stand! (Chap. 7, Loc. 404-5).

When another patient enters, with a curable condition, the converse implications of these evaluative criteria are laid bare:

He would be normal, whole, *perfect*, left again to knead the thighs of starlets.

And so I was laid low. I saw again that I had half a body (Chap. 7, Loc. 408-9).

(Extra-)Clinical Implications

While the existing literature situates the “dilemma of disabled masculinity” within a historical context characterised by the intertwining of patriarchal and ableist constructions of gender, somewhat individualistic prescriptions persist (Shuttleworth, 2004; Shuttleworth et al., 2012: 180). Recommendations surrounding the negotiation of disability/masculinity emphasise patterns of “adjustment” (Hohmann, 1972; Cole and Cole, 1993: 201; Burns et al., 2010: 163), within which “the individual” becomes the object of reformation (Oliver, 1996b). For instance, confronted with difficulties enacting dominant models of penile-vaginal heterosexual reproductivity, spinal cord injured men are encouraged to develop innovative approaches to sexuality, emphasising intimacy, communication, the eroticisation of alternative corporeal zones, and the movement away from sex as a “private”, dyadic encounter (Hohmann, 1972; Heumann, 2007; Burns et al., 2008: 200-1). Within the context of marital/romantic relationships, this group (and their partners) are encouraged to adopt a more “liberal” approach to gender roles in the distribution of earning responsibilities, domestic labour and financial control (Ludwig and Collette, 1969; Cole and Cole, 1993: 201; Tepper, 1999: 41). And, in

response to research demonstrating a propensity towards mental illness among spinal cord injured men espousing substantial investments in independence, “greater flexibility” (Burns et al., 2010: 163) in gender scripts is encouraged.

Earlier, I introduced the concept of *hysteresis* to conceptualise “mismatches” in the “ontological complicity” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 43) between habitus/field relations that emerge as a consequence of historical change or geographical/cultural movement. The logic examined within this chapter is slightly different, not reflecting exposure to an alternate set of field relations, but rather a *disrupted position* within a social context. This rapid alteration in social position established an experiential disjuncture between the particular gendered “economies of value” that narrators had incorporated, and the opportunities, resources, behaviours, relationships and contexts substantively available within the extant (ableist) environment following SCI (Mahon-Darby et al., 1988: 346). The forms of gendered value that the men experienced and/or anticipated, stemming from the durable lodgement of particular evaluative principles within the habitus, no longer “matched” the social position that narrators occupied.

Whereas historical change may render one’s *environment* experientially “alien”, the radical disruption in *social trajectory* exposed narrators to a gendered logic that, in one sense, they “knew too well”, being themselves, in part, products of that logic. The norms venerating men for heterosexual potency, independence, corporeal power, financial capacity and sporting prowess, durably installed within the habitus, formed a basis upon which negative evaluations of the self following SCI were frequent, fostering experiences of shame. Further, while SCI amounted to a radical biographical disruption, the surrounding historical environment remained *relatively* static (although gradually changing). The social formations that had durably installed gendered standards of evaluation continued to prevail, reinforcing “the dilemma of disabled masculinity” from both “without”, in the form of encompassing social relations, and “within”, in the form of the affective resonances of the habitus.

Stephen Thompson (2011: Chap. 6, Loc. 1689-91), for instance, describes receiving advice from a nurse in a group therapy session about developing new approaches to sexuality in the aftermath of SCI; her comments are responded to with minimal enthusiasm:

She explained it would not be the same, of course, but we could learn to get pleasure from close contact and intimacy rather than from the act itself. I looked at some of the other guys and they did not look too happy. As a matter of fact, they appeared extremely depressed and barely listening now.

A similar (if partial) imperviousness to pedagogical attempts to promote liberal conceptions of gender roles could also emerge within the context of informal interpersonal interactions. *Stephen Byrne* (2012: Chap. 8, Loc. 1614-7), for instance, recalls conversing with his wife, Cathy, while in hospital. He describes a feeling of diminished manhood (“find yourself a real man”), which seems to stem substantially from the possibility of being a burden – an experience related to contemporary Western (neoliberal) culture’s glorification of masculine rugged self-reliance. Stephen is partially comforted by Cathy’s protestations to these concerns, but struggles to accept them fully:

I don’t know what my future is going to be.” I started to cry. “You know you might be better off without me. You could go and find yourself a real man”.

Cathy started to cry at these words. “I don’t want to go and find anyone else. Whatever happens I will be here for you”.

Her words were comforting to me but the thought of being a burden to her was almost too hard to contemplate.

Rehabilitative interventions designed to foster progressive understandings of masculinity are likely, following Bourdieusian logic, to be limited. Firstly, the gendered difficulties associated with SCI are centrally related to extant social dynamics encountered *prior to* impairment. In a structured (although not “intentional”) way, through the intertwining of ableist and patriarchal social relations, existing constructions of gender *prepare* men to experience SCI not only as a “medical condition”, but also as a profound loss of gendered status. Individualised, post-facto interventions do nothing to pre-emptively prevent this “cultural baggage” that accompanies men’s experiences of SCI (Mahon-Darby et al., 1988: 346; Tepper, 1999: 44-5). Secondly, if the habitus is *durable* (Bourdieu, 1990a: 42-51, 53), changes to one’s gendered associations can occur, but only gradually, meaning that the initial stage following SCI (which research suggests is the most experientially difficult period [Carpenter, 1994: 615, 619; Dickson et al., 2011: 464]) will not be effectively managed by retrospective intervention. Thirdly, the habitus, as

a form of “prediscursive” social knowledge, is not directly amenable to stated pedagogical intervention; it shifts through habitual exposure. For Bourdieu, one cannot “choose” to *believe* in certain habituated associations as an “instantaneous decision of the will”, but only through “a slow process of co-option and initiation” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 68). In the absence of broader social change, the historical conditions facilitating exposure to gendered norms that do not conflate SCI with masculine diminishment are unlikely to appear (Bourdieu, 2001: 41-2). Finally, the hierarchies between disabled and non-disabled masculinities cannot be reduced to individual “perceptions” or “attitudes” – they have a relatively “objective” existence in the distribution of economic resources, cultural capital, social networks and symbolic value. While adopting more progressive “views” may foster “adaptation” for spinal cord injured men, these changes in “attitude” will do little, in and of themselves, to alter the hierarchised, gendered social relations prevailing within social space.

This argument is not intended to suggest that psychologically orientated clinical interventions have no efficacy. Other forms of personal testimony demonstrate the value associated with the development of alternative understandings of masculinity for some men with SCIs (e.g. Tepper, 1999; Heumann, 2007); and, as suggested in the following chapter, the patterns of gendered hysteresis suggested above unevenly coexisted alongside certain forms of “strategic” redevelopment within this sample. Further, it is probable that, at least in the medium term, individualised interventions are required in order to “make the best out of a bad situation”, as a consequence of engrained tensions between disability and masculinity within contemporary Western cultures. While previous recommendations surrounding the management of the “dilemma of disabled masculinity” have primarily emphasised individually-orientated interventions (Shuttleworth et al., 2012: 180), there are countervailing approaches within existing rehabilitation literatures recognising the need for integrated biological/psychological/social responses to SCI (through, for instance, sports therapy, group therapy, and raising public awareness [Kennedy et al., 2003; Daniel and Manigandan, 2005]), as well as sociological work being undertaken designed to interrogate and reform gendered cultures (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000; Sparkes and Smith, 2002).

It must further be acknowledged that contestations challenging the constructions of gender that structurally underpin the “dilemma of disabled masculinity” are underway (as theorised in research examining the emergence of “inclusive” [Anderson, 2009] and “hybrid” [Bridges and Pascoe, 2014] masculinities). Feminist interventions confronting the cultural exaltation of aggressive male physicality and gendered divisions of public/private labour (Hargreaves, 1990; Landes, 2003), the LGBTQI movement’s work to valorise non-heteromasculine forms of sexual/gender expression (Renold, 2008), and the disability social movement’s insurrections against medicalised emphases on individual lack (Morris, 1991; Shakespeare, 2006), represent but a small portion of extant efforts relevant to redressing the incorporation of the gendered modes of vision and division examined within this chapter. Yet, while these, and other, social interventions have undoubtedly shifted prevailing constructions of masculinity to some degree, their efficacy may be slightly limited within this context. To the extent that “masculinity is in fact generative of impairment” (Shakespeare, 1999: 63) for men with SCIs, associated with risk-taking, speeding, violence, alcohol consumption, warfare, sport, physical self-expression, and blue-collar work, it may be that this group remains disproportionately invested in “traditional” conceptions of masculinity (Good et al., 2008: 39; Nolan, 2013: 590). Although it is methodologically difficult to demonstrate that commitments to “orthodox” gender norms expose men to greater risk of injury, this possibility has been interpreted as potentially instigating a form of “double jeopardy” (Good et al., 2006: 166): this group may be both more likely to sustain SCIs, and more likely to be personally invested in the standards of masculinist value that are directly compromised by this impairment form.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the habituated incorporation of the gendered logics that pervade the encompassing social space within the context of *affect*. A dialectical relationship between pride and shame has been posited as emerging within the narrated experiences of spinal cord injured men. Shame, I have contended, reflects a socially-informed, embodied recognition of one’s deviation from the normative standards, values, dispositions, judgements and norms that have been deposited within the habitus. This “symbolic violence”, whereby “dominated” groups interpret their experiences through the prisms of social value that prevail within the surrounding environment, can only be redressed through

“a radical transformation of the social conditions” (Bourdieu, 2001: 41-2) that engender these modes of evaluation. This, given the pervasive and historically grounded entrenchment of the modes of “vision and division” (Bourdieu, 2001: 11) that venerate men for sexual potency, corporeal power, athletic prowess, self-reliance and economic capacity, is, admittedly, a task of enormous magnitude. Yet, this approach, which positions the historical conditions that produce the “dilemma of disabled masculinity” as the locus for change, is a necessary counterpoint to the biomedical logic of rehabilitative interventionism. It provides a foundation upon which recognition of a *collective responsibility* in the formation of the gendered social environment can be established, to the extent that we each mutually contribute to the context that is formative of, and confronted by, spinal cord injured men.

Chapter Six: SCI, Strategy and The Generative Negotiation Of Gender

Ruptured Social Trajectories, Reflexivity and Double Consciousness

The previous two chapters have examined spinal cord injured men's gendered social position, highlighting the loss of corporeal resources used to legitimate masculine privilege, and the "habituated" legacy that "recognised" these gendered (d)evaluations. This chapter considers the practices undertaken by narrators confronting the "dilemma of disabled masculinity" (Shuttleworth et al., 2012). This shift involves not a consideration of an untrammelled, ahistorical "agency", but rather the deployment of the Bourdieusian (1973: 67) concept of *strategy*, involving "regulated improvisation(s)" that creatively negotiate the "unchosen" legacies of history. Bourdieu's sociology arguably expresses a pessimistic conception of the possibilities confronted by "the dominated" in the reconstruction of social relations (Adkins, 2004; Witz, 2005), highlighting a series of vicious cycles and self-fulfilling prophecies that seemingly pre-emptively mitigate historical contestation (Bourdieu, 2001). The always-already unequal distribution of capital mitigates the efforts of marginal groups to contest inequalities (Bourdieu, 1977b: 58, 1986); the "unthought" structures of the habitus are positioned as difficult to alter (Bourdieu, 2000b: 116-7); and patterns of symbolic violence commonly render individuals "complicit" with the social processes that "dominate" them (Bourdieu, 2001). Commentators have subsequently described Bourdieu's conceptual system as predisposed towards the somewhat "gloomy" (DiMaggio, 1979: 1470) or "defeatist" (Bohman, 1997: 183) analysis of the inertia of relations of inequality.

For Bourdieu (1977b: 19), the "default" experience of social life involves "learned ignorance"; individuals act "without objectifying distance" because they are "caught up" in the world, inhabiting it "like a garment". An individual feels "at home" in the world "because the world is also in (them) in the form of the habitus" (Bourdieu, 2000b: 143). It is, according to Bourdieu, only within certain "autonomous" social fields (Schirato and Webb, 2003: 545), and during periods of crisis (Bourdieu, 1977b: 169), that "objectifying distance" from the self emerges. Drew Leder (1990) has developed a comparable line of argumentation surrounding corporeal disjunctures established through illness/disability. Building upon phenomenological conceptualisations of embodiment (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), Leder (1990: 1-23) contends that the body is ordinarily experienced as operating as an invisible

conduit for action. Incorporated skills involve minimal overt consideration of their underlying physical mechanics; they acquire automaticity through familiarisation (Zeiler, 2010: 335-7). This mind-body unity can, however, be ruptured through experiences of pain, injury, illness, or (acquired) disability, each of which foster intense corporeal self-consciousness (“dys-appearance”) by upsetting taken-for-granted expectations (Leder, 1990: 83-5; Paterson and Hughes, 1999: 602-4). As with Bourdieu’s (2008b: 100) “cleft habitus” (described in Chapter Three), it is discord, abrupt change, or unfamiliar circumstances, which render common-sense expectations discernible (Stringfellow and Maclean, 2014: 178-9). If SCI can be conceptualised as inseparably a radical disjuncture in both corporeality *and* social position, a synthesis of the insights offered by Leder and Bourdieu might imply possibilities towards a growing reflexive awareness of the *social forces* that stigmatise disabled people.

However, *awareness* of incorporated dispositions does not render them easily *altered*. When contending that marginality/crisis encourage individuals “to practice a kind of self-analysis, which often gives them access to the objective contradictions which have them in their grasp” (Bourdieu, 1999: 511), Bourdieu is not implying that the “grasp” of the social evaporates. Rather, experiential disjunctures create certain *possibilities* for a “margin of freedom” (Bourdieu, 2000b: 235) against the shaping of practice by the habitus (Reay, 1998: 128-9). What emerges, for Bourdieu (1999: 511), is not the awakening of a pristine revolutionary consciousness, or “Pauline conversion” (Schirato and Webb, 2002: 260), but rather a habitus that is “divided against itself”, a “disjointed “double consciousness”” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2000: 176), potentially involving schizophrenic conflict *within* the self (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 24).

The previous chapter examined the durable incorporation of ableist social norms through an affective nexus between pride/shame. Shame, as others have contended, is often self-defeating, amounting to a corporeal recognition of the modes of evaluation against which one is found deficient (Elias 1982: 292; Biddle, 1997). Yet, shame can also foster *reflexive intervention* if the social standards that underpin its production, rather than internalised personal deficiency, become the object of critique (Manion, 2002: 77-85). Narrators did, in various ways, contest ableist social arrangements, even as they unevenly negotiated the incorporated “symbolic violence” analysed previously. Within disability studies,

it has commonly been contended that the logic of autobiographical life writing tends towards “individualisation” (Barrett, 2014a), perpetuating the psychologised tropes of tragedy, struggle and overcoming, rather than interrogating patterns of structured oppression. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder (1997: 10), for instance, suggest that the genre “shifts attention away from institutional pathology and social attitudes toward the individual’s experience of disability”. These tendencies were not entirely absent from the autobiographical accounts under consideration; yet, in at least two distinct ways, the narratives could be construed as interventions designed to challenge the ableist structures of prevailing social conditions.

Firstly, the autobiographical texts *recounted* forms of activism, contextualised by the growing assertiveness of the disability social movement (Skotch, 1988; Stroman, 2003). *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 12, Loc. 3568-81), denied the opportunity to play videogames with his co-patients while in medical care, gains formal training in electronic design and works to promote accessible technology for disabled people; *Francesco Clark* (2010: Chap. 21, Loc. 2082-142) participates in an advisory committee, helping to establish an information centre at his local library, and working towards compliance with civil rights legislation within his community; *John Lambert* (2012: ‘Although my general ...’, Loc. 2913-37) becomes involved in the Hampshire independent living movement, facilitating community dwelling as an alternative to institutional care; *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 20, Loc. 989-91) joins the student council at his university and works to improve accessibility at the institution; *Rick Hansen* (with Taylor, 2011) engages in endeavours designed to raise funds and social awareness; and, *Brian Shaughnessy* (2005: ‘Mr. Cheat’, Loc. 7808-10), finally, writes towards the conclusion of his autobiography that after:

12 years of discrimination, degradation, injustice, ignorance and inquisition by individuals, businesses and government because of having a disability, I was driven into law school.

And now, I’m going to get even.

Secondly, the narratives could be construed, in and of themselves, as interventions contesting the devaluation of spinal cord injured lives. As Paul Longmore (2003) contends, constructions of this group as “better off dead” are prevalent, and consequential, within medical settings, particularly surrounding assisted suicide; they also inflect cultural representations, within which euthanasia is

presented as the “resolution” to impairment (Dolmage and DeGenaro, 2005). *Joshua Prager* (2013: Chap. 11, Loc. 545-610) raises this issue explicitly, referencing Peter Singer’s (2009) discussion of health care rationing, in which he hypothetically postulates that a quadriplegic life is worth half that of a non-disabled person’s. Reflecting high rates of suicide and suicidal ideation (Hartkopp et al., 1998; Kishi et al., 2001) among people with SCIs, seven autobiographical narratives explicitly referenced periods in which suicide had been considered. In this sense, seemingly “outwardly directed” arguments for the possibility of a “good life” following SCI (often addressed towards the newly injured) could also be interpreted as implicated in a struggle to assert narrators’ own sense of value against incorporated social norms constructing a disabled existence as “not worth living”. Assertions of self-value, particularly as they related to gender, are considered more substantively below.

Feminist Absence

The autobiographical narratives under consideration involved certain critical interrogations of ableist social formations within contemporary Western cultures. It may be asked whether this reflective “distancing” extended specifically to the questioning of the intertwining of ableist and patriarchal social relations (Coston and Kimmel, 2012). The “homologous” (in Bourdieusian [1985: 737] terms, referring to a relationship of “resemblance within difference”) position occupied by disabled men and women (Fine and Asch, 1981) as “others” against which hegemonic masculinity is defined, has elsewhere been identified as potentially motivating the development of “new standards of masculinity” amongst disabled men, and, more broadly, establishing instances of synergy with feminist social movement objectives (Gerschick and Miller, 2000: 133).

Engagements with feminism were primarily conspicuous through their absence. “Everyday sexism” (Swim et al., 2001), linking weakness, deceitfulness, and domesticity to femininity, was evident throughout several of the narratives. This included the rejection of alcoholic beverages regarded as “girly” (Helbling, 2014: 19); injunctions to “man up” (Helbling, 2014: 19); concerns that one could have been overpowered by a “schoolgirl” (Prager, 2013: Chap. 6, Loc. 343); and the belief that female personal assistants are “cleaner, better cooks and can do the ironing”, while men are more “practical about the place (good for fixing things and doing heavier tasks like mowing lawns)” (Lambert, 2012:

‘... 10 Years Later’, Loc. 3337-40). “Benevolent sexism” (Glick and Fiske, 1997, 2001; Jost and Kay, 2005), characterised by ostensibly positive, “chivalric” sentiments that demarcate hierarchical patterns of gendered difference, was also evident. *Rob Oliver* (2011), for instance, repeatedly positions himself as the protective guardian of women within his family, a self-designated role presuming female vulnerability. Narrators also occasionally espoused explicit commitments to male power and control. *David Visser* (2014: Chap. 6. Loc. 603-10) describes himself as “king”, “ruler” and “pope” of the household, and reacts with a degree of physical aggression when his partner does not respect his “authority” surrounding the “right” to smoke. Several narrators described engaging in behaviours that could be construed as sexual harassment towards female occupational/physical therapists, nurses, and personal assistants, both within institutional care and the community, including non-consensual touching, unwanted sexual advances, offers of payment for sex, sexualised language, and objectification (Libbus and Bowman, 1994; Guthrie, 1999: 318-20).

The “homologous” position of women and disabled men as constitutive “others” of hegemonic masculinity did not appear to be recognised as a historically specific, alterable feature of contemporary Western societies, or motivate commitments to feminist interventions. Echoing R. W. Connell’s (1992: 748) examination of gay masculinities, “there is no open challenge to the gender order here”. However, several qualifications are needed surrounding the asserted “feminist absence” within these texts. The narratives under consideration were not generated to accommodate the interests of this research (Donaldson, 1997: 97-8), and, subsequently, the dearth of explicit references cannot be interpreted as *definitively* excluding recognition of feminism’s relevance among this group of spinal cord injured men. As suggested within research examining “male feminists” (Ramazanoglu, 1992; Breeze, 2007), patterns of sexism can tensely co-exist alongside men’s feminist self-identifications. And, finally, dense interconnections between ableist/patriarchal social relations may problematise the construction of rigid boundaries around interventions designed to challenge either.

“Coming To Terms”

A central narrative arc within many of the “found life histories” under consideration was the process of “coming to terms” with the corporeal and social implications of a spinal cord injured body. Where

several narrators initially regarded life with SCI as literally “unliveable”, a number, by the conclusion of their narratives, described waning concern surrounding the possibility of returning to their pre-SCI existences. Reflecting Arthur Frank’s (2013: 75-96) critiques of restitution narratives, which valorise the restoration of a “past self” through medicalised intervention, *Rob Oliver* rejects the practice of “waiting” for cure:

The overall sense of progress was that there would be a cure for spinal cord injury in the next three to five years. A few of my roommates decided that this sounded like a good idea. What they would do was go home, get the clicker, watch TV and wait for the cure. [...] While the concept of “The Cure” was very interesting to me, I did not feel that I could wait around for it.

There was too much life to live in the meantime (Chap. 7, Loc. 692-700).

Several narrators referred to the development of a “new normal” (DeSanto-Madeya, 2006: 282-3), whereby initial experiences of alienation were supplanted by the routinisation of living with a SCI. This sense of narrative “closure” perhaps, in part, reflects autobiographical conventions requiring a “comic plot” (Couser, 1997: 183) as a condition of tellability (Frank, 2013: 97-114). Yet, these “narrative” configurations are consistent with quality of life research suggesting that, beyond the period immediately following injury, differences between the subjective well-being reported by spinal cord injured and non-spinal cord injured people are minimal (Weitzenkamp et al., 2000; Hammell, 2004). *John Lambert* (2012: ‘Without a doubt ...’, Loc. 3043-5) describes a temporal “closing” of the disjuncture between social expectations and corporeal form following injury:

Time has dimmed the memories of my former lifestyle and I miss it only occasionally. The passage of time has also allowed my mind to come to terms with my body; my paralysis is no longer a nightmare, it’s just the way my body is, and I’m used to it. What may seem a hideous, unliveable physical state to the casual unthinking observer becomes normal to the person who has to live with it.

“Coming to terms” with SCI was, however, rarely represented as a static achievement. Despite the prevalence of discourses of “things falling into place”, “life going on fairly normally”, and “getting back on track” (Carpenter, 1994: 621), the development of a “new normal” was usually described in somewhat conflicted terms. Medically influential “stage theories” of SCI (Kerr and Thompson, 1972;

Hohmann, 1975) conventionally posit psychological “adjustment” as a form of settled finality (Buckelew et al., 1991: 126), establishing a distinction between “successful overcomers” of disability, and “tragic succumbers” to disability (Oliver et al., 1988). Narrators typically portrayed a more uneven sense of “progress”, alongside ongoing struggle (Yoshida, 1993). *Andy Phelps* (2013), for instance, describes an inner tranquillity towards the conclusion of his autobiography: “For the first time in fourteen years, my life was perfect” (‘November’, Loc. 3531-2). Yet, this sense of resolution is immediately disrupted through the development of a pressure sore requiring extended bed rest, much to Andy’s frustration:

I’ll wrestle with God and I’ll beg him for mercy. But while I lie in bed, I will cherish the tiny cracks this new joy breaks into the long moments of suffering. And I will suffer. Because the suffering never ends (‘November’, Loc. 3545-6).

Rick Hansen (with Taylor, 2011: Chap. 12, Loc. 4302-5), similarly, writes of something akin to “acceptance” of SCI, alongside recognition of the permanent struggle that it instantiates:

There’s been a continual struggle since (my injury), a lot of physical and emotional adjustments, a great deal of pain. But if I had a choice right now to erase all of it, to start over again [...] and not have that accident happen; if I could just pick up my life at that point as opposed to living the life I’ve lived since, I wouldn’t take it.

The “permanent simultaneity” of ongoing struggle, alongside experiential “adjustment” to SCI, could be interpreted as reflecting a range of intersecting factors (Craig et al., 1994; Boschen et al., 2003: 158). On the one hand, the persistence of ableism, embedded both within the prevailing social environment and durably incorporated within the habitus, continued to delimit opportunities and fostered the evaluation of the self through ableist prisms of vision/division. While SCI is often culturally associated with a form of “stasis” (Couser, 1997: 183), ongoing health difficulties, coupled with embodied changes associated with ageing (Krause and Coker, 2006), meant the absence of a stable corporeal “plateau”, and the subsequent necessity of perpetual re-adjustment. On the other hand, “sheer familiarisation” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 88) with the corporeal parameters of a spinal cord injured body, and accompanying assistive devices, meant that new, taken-for-granted embodied capacities and expectations were developed (Papadimitriou, 2008: 699). The routines of corporeal management

required by SCI came to be increasingly “normalised”, and, over time, negotiated with expertise and skill (Sparkes and Smith, 2003: 307-8). One particular component of these uneven processes of “coming to terms” with SCI, the remainder of this chapter will contend, involved the emergence of new modes of “social being” in relation to gender, a process that will be interpreted through the Bourdieusian approach to “strategy”.

Strategy, Generativity and “Playing One’s Cards”

Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of *strategy* is designed as an alternative to both structuralist formulations of actors as passive bearers of social norms, and liberal narratives of limitless, historically uncontextualised “freedom”. For Bourdieu, legitimate cultural competence is defined by “regulated improvisation” (Bourdieu, 1973: 67), or “conditioned and conditional freedom” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 55). The infinite complexity of social situations, the layered distribution of resources, and the potentially contradictory expectations that may exist in simultaneity, necessitate that the enactment of formally learned “rules” would bequeath actors with an artificial rigidity, ill-equipped to “gracefully” negotiate the vagaries of social life (Jenkins, 1992: 43). Social “tact”, or “*nous*”, for Bourdieu, is comprised not of a “mechanical mental algebra of cultural rules”, but rather a “fluid symbolic gymnastics of socialised bodies” (Wacquant, 2004: 389), largely relating to the intuitive and non-conscious “practical sense” described previously (Bourdieu, 1988b: 782). Yet, this “fluid gymnastics” occurs within *limits* – both incorporated and externalised (Bourdieu, 1977b: 3-9, 1993: 40-3) – the extent and nature of which are imposed unequally across social space. These boundaries render certain strategic interventions “thinkable”, while others are pre-emptively foreclosed as inconceivable (Bourdieu, 1977b: 77-8).

For Bourdieu (1990a: 46-7), the habitus’ strategic interventions are not *primarily* defined by the “calculative”, utility-maximising ethic ascribed to agents within rational choice theory. The “practical sense” of the habitus derives, as previously noted, from ongoing and processual exposure to the surrounding social environment, imbuing agents with an implicit understanding of the *regularities* distributed across social space (Bourdieu, 2014: 141). This “sense of place” is defined according to an implicit understanding of the boundaries, foreclosures and limits that one encounters. However, Bourdieu (1990a: 63, 71) goes further to suggest that the habitus *adjusts* to these limits; agents come to

be *invested* in the particular possibilities available to them, and to reject others as “not for the likes of us” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 77). The habitus is “virtue made of necessity which continuously transforms necessity into virtue by inducing “choices” which correspond to the condition of which it is the product” (Bourdieu, 2014: 141).

Part of the process of “coming to terms” with SCI, I will contend, involved the (partial) “closing” of the gendered disjuncture between expectation and opportunity, introduced in the previous chapter, through the identification and exploitation of socially valued (gendered) resources, positions and prospects consistent with the hitherto unprecedented corporeal and social parameters encountered. From a Bourdieusian perspective, these gendered “re-evaluations” might be understood as stemming from two factors. Firstly, the brute disruption of corporeal experience/social position engendered by SCI may have facilitated the “theoretical”, or “calculating”, practices that Bourdieu tends to discount by destroying “self-evidence practically” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 169) and unsettling the “routine adjustment of subjective and objective structures” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 45). Indeed, the writing of an autobiography itself might be construed as part of the conscious attempt to “distance” oneself *from* the expectations of the pre-SCI self in order to reconfigure priorities, expectations and beliefs. And, secondly, while Bourdieu typically ascribes ontological pre-eminence to the “durability” of early experience as the formative basis of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977b: 77-8), this construct remains permanently “open” to change (Bourdieu, 1990a: 60-1; Wacquant, 2005: 319). Through a process of brute “familiarisation” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 88), with both the corporeal realities of a spinal cord injured body, and a new social position, the habitus might, in a “fragmented” manner, gradually shift through the incorporation of the logics associated with exposure to a distinct set of opportunities and foreclosures, turning “necessity into virtue” (Bourdieu, 2014: 141).

Theoretically reconciling the (potentially) simultaneous import of “conscious deliberation”, alongside the “organic” adjustments of the habitus, is not a task well handled by Bourdieusian social theory. As Greg Noble and Megan Watkins (2003) contend, despite Bourdieu’s persistent interest in the subversion of “classical” sociological dualisms, his conceptual system does tend to rigidly demarcate the “embodied” knowledges of the habitus, from the “cognitive” knowledges associated with a “detached”

intellectualism (Schirato and Webb, 2003: 545). At times, these different “modes” of knowing appear to interact; Bourdieu suggests, for instance, that while conscious deliberation may occur during crisis, “it is the habitus that commands this option” (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 45). Precisely what this entails, however, is somewhat unclear, except perhaps to say that individuals may be capable of consciously deliberating upon some, but not all, of the habitus’ “silent” injunctions.

The gendered “strategies” articulated below, as such, should not be understood as entirely “beneath” consciousness (cf. Jenkins, 1992: 51-2); SCI did appear to engender a critical “self-distancing” (McMillen and Cook, 2003). Yet, simultaneously, these “re-evaluations” themselves were creatively negotiated *through* historically prevailing understandings of both masculinity and disability, rather than unseating them as a matter of conscious “will”. Returning to Gerschick and Miller’s (2000: 127-30) typology, it could be contended that the predominant approach to gender within this sample was one of reformulation, or a practical “expansion” of the “masculine repertoire” (Shuttleworth, 2004: 171-5), to reflect the opportunities, foreclosures and constraints embedded within the surrounding social environment. Feminist critiques of the intertwining of patriarchal and ableist social relations (*rejection*) did not figure prominently within the narrated experiences under consideration; nor was there an unconditional *reliance* on hegemonic gender norms, as a consequence of the brute “inaccessibility” of contemporary Western constructions of masculinity (Gerschick and Miller, 2000: 130-5). Where Shuttleworth et al. (2012: 179-80) critique the “middle-way” category of “reformulation” as unhelpfully ambiguous, and characterised by conceptually fuzzy boundaries with rejection/reliance, this somewhat fragmented ambivalence seemed fitting within the context of this sample (Coles, 2008).

Returning to the concept of *generativity* proposed in Chapter One, the remainder of this chapter will consider how SCI was *integrated into* enactments of gendered value (Barrett, 2014b: 48-50). This involved a somewhat creative and selective negotiation of the complex and variegated constructions of masculinity and disability prevailing within contemporary Western contexts (Bourdieu, 2001: 13-4), or the ability, as Bourdieu (1977b: 8) puts it, to “play on all the resources inherent in the ambiguities and uncertainties of behaviour and situation”. Indeed, narrators often employed a characteristically “ludic” discourse, reminiscent of Bourdieu, to describe their life following SCI. These metaphors were used to

signal both the difficult “cards” that narrators felt they had been dealt, but also continuing investment and participation in the underlying “game”. *Marc Richards* (2014), for instance, writes: “overall, I’ve come to accept the cards I was dealt” (Chap. 5, Loc. 748), and advises others to “make the most of (life) whatever your situation” (‘Conclusion’, Loc. 870). *Adam Helbling* (2014: 1) expands the metaphor, stating:

(L)ife turns on a dime. If I were playing poker, I’d say that until I was 24 years old, I held a royal flush – in spades. But in one split second, I was left with a pair of twos. What I’ve discovered, however, is that if you play it right, a pair of twos can win.

The remainder of this chapter will examine how the embodied “cards” of a SCI could be integrated generatively into three particular modes of masculinity. These categories are not proposed as definitive or final, to the exclusion of alternatives, nor should they be interpreted deterministically. They might be understood through the topological metaphor of the “avenue” – signalling a set of structured pathways that could potentially be traversed, but without dictating movement along any particular route. It should be noted, equally, that the implications of structured patterns of ableism, and their relationship to gender, could not be “strategised” into non-existence. In a certain sense, the processes described below reflect what some have termed the emergence of “hybrid” masculinities, a concept used to theorise the social processes through which privileged men incorporate the styles, fashions, and practices of “othered” groups (Bridges and Pascoe, 2014). However, the persistent realities of ableist exclusion tended to mean that, within this context, the “appropriation” of elements of recognisable masculinities was partial and unstable. It will be contended that each of the social enactments noted below was rendered necessarily ambiguous by the structural intertwining of patriarchal and ableist social relations.

Rugged Heroism

The first approach, that productively used SCI as a “generative” contributor to particular renditions of masculinity, involved the performative enactment of “rugged heroism”. As Daniel Wilson (2004: 119) contends, in examining the autobiographical narratives of four male polio survivors, disabled men may narratively figure their lives as a “battle or athletic contest” in order to “actively (resist) the

limitations imposed both by a crippled (sic) body and by an unaccommodating society”. The hero constitutes one of the defining gendered mythologies employed as both a reflection of, and justification for, male privilege (Hourihan, 1997; Boon, 2005). Following Todd Thrash and Andrew Elliot’s (2003: 871, 2004: 957) conceptualisation of “inspiration”, it may be said that the figure of the “inspirational” hero directs the readership’s attention towards a *transcendent* set of social values (masculinist individualism, overcoming obstacles, perseverance, inner strength), through the *evocative* figure of the spinal cord injured person, and is designed to *motivate* particular forms of action/self-change. Susan Hutchinson and Douglas Kleiber (2000), in their examination of magazine representations of disabled athletes, suggest that “heroic masculinity” consists of three elements, each present within the narratives under consideration.

Firstly, heroic masculinity involved *committing to battle* (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000: 48-9) through the invocation of military/sporting metaphors (Smith and Sparkes, 2004: 615-9). The particular objectives to be “fought” for were multiple, including the pursuit of “cure”, the contestation of ableism, the reconstruction of the social environment in accessible terms, the management of pain, investment in rehabilitation/physical therapy, and the discovery of alternatives to cultural narratives of spinal cord injured lives as “not worth living”. *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 12, Loc. 3853-7) writes of the “arsenal” of abilities developed following SCI, stating that he will “never give up the fight”; *Grant Korgan* (2012: 27), committing to a return to his pre-SCI lifestyle, writes, “I’d pull the sword out and start swinging it at people, fight until my last breath to get back to being the man (my wife) married”; *Stephen Thompson* (2011: Chap. 4, Loc. 980) writes of a promise to himself that he “would fight, confident I would overcome everything in the end”; while *Randal Rodgers* (2010: Chap. 2, Loc. 314) tries to “fight” feelings of depression and thoughts of suicide, “with whatever strength (he) could muster”.

Secondly, narrators commonly referred to *heroic personal qualities* (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000: 48) that were developed in the “battles” encountered following SCI, including toughness, perseverance, fortitude, the relentless pursuit of life objectives, and the capacity to ignore/disregard/challenge social exclusion. Disability could become a “metaphor for the more general human struggle to overcome life’s obstacles” (Hartnett, 2000: 22). *Robert Florio* (2010: Chap. 13, Loc. 3898), for instance, describes himself

as “laugh(ing) in the face of adversity”; *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: ‘Thinking’, Loc. 72-3), quoting a Walter Wintle poem, advises that “(s)uccess begins with a fellow’s will. It’s all in the state of mind”; while *Stephen Thompson* (2011: ‘Introduction’, Loc. 15-7) contends that following a SCI:

You can choose to either give up or you can call on your survivor instincts and find the mental strength that we all possess to fight through it. You are faced with finding a great inner strength in order to overcome physical paralysis and weakness.

Thirdly, a form of agentic masculinity could be signified through *heroic action*, to exemplify “competence and control” following SCI (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000: 49-50), a set of practices well suited to the generic conventions of autobiography (Smith and Watson, 2001; Mintz 2007). *Rick Hansen* (with Taylor, 2011), for instance, becomes a prominent public figure in Canada after undertaking an around-the-world trip in his wheelchair to raise public awareness surrounding SCIs, promote accessibility, and generate research funding in the pursuit of cure. This endeavour was undoubtedly monumental, involving the negotiation of financial difficulties, physical injury, exhaustion, medical problems, illness, interpersonal conflict, administrative issues, and conflicts with the media. He writes, “I knew from the start this tour would be a mental battle as much as a physical one” (Chap. 12, Loc. 2041), recalling the aftermath of his exploits as akin to a “soldier coming back from the war” (‘On The Road Again’, Loc. 4510). *Grant Korgan* (2012: 390), alternatively, ends his narrative with the beginning of an expedition to the South Pole, as a way of signalling the continuing “openness” of his life to opportunity, and his ability to re-connect with the physical accomplishments that he valued prior to injury:

I know that this will not be a gentle glide over powder. Every stroke will be a full pull, a full push over ice like sand. The scraping of the skis across that ice will be loud – a struggling sound of grit and groan. The very first stroke will make me ask, “Are you serious?!” it will be so hard. And it won’t get easier. Every stroke will be full effort. It will require every ounce of my concentration, every ounce of my being.

These performances of “heroic masculinity” (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000: 50-2) have commonly been the object of critique within disability studies (Wendell, 1996; Clare, 1999; Silva and Howe, 2012). The construction of a figural “battle” *against* impairment in the pursuit of cure, in particular, has been

regarded by some as constituting “impaired” modes of embodiment as alien, “enemy” entities, distinct from the “self”, to be defeated through personal will (Wendell, 1989; Wilson, 2004). It could, as such, be suggested that these “heroic masculinities” are not a “generative” employment of SCI, but rather reflect the desire to “overcome”, or “compensate for”, its physical implications. Yet, in another sense, these enactments of masculinist heroism are deeply *dependent upon* SCI. To the extent that normative gender ideologies vaunt stoicism, toughness, persistence, fortitude, and the perpetual transcendence of obstacles in men (Bourdieu, 2001: 50-2), the “pathos” of these heroised narratives constitutively relies upon the difficulties encountered through SCI. The logic of “permanent struggle” introduced earlier establishes a perpetual “battlefield” within which the self can be masculinised as a heroic warrior (Joseph and Lindegger, 2007: 83-4).

Yet, SCI embodiments remained a deeply ambivalent, or “double-edged”, asset in the enactment of rugged heroism. These discourses, for instance, contribute to culturally dominant and prescriptive “narrative maps” about how individuals *should* respond to disability (Hutchinson and Kleiber, 2000: 50-1), privileging “heroic overcomers” above those who “succumb”, experience hopelessness, or express weakness (Oliver, 1990; Berger, 2008). Injunctions to respond “heroically” to disability constitutively depend upon the risk of “failing” to perform models of rugged individualism. *Grant Korgan* (2012: 116, 147), for instance, is told by a relative, in their first interaction following injury, that she is anticipating “great things” from him, and that he will “do something really great in the world”, leaving him with a weight of expectation that he describes as akin to having an “albatross around (his) neck”.

Discourses of “inspiration” potentially contribute to cultural constructions of the “regular supercrip” (Kama, 2004: 450), whereby incidental activities/achievements are interpreted by onlookers through the lens of “heroism”. This may be experienced as condescending, and as reflecting underlying ableist attitudes that expect little from disabled people (Hardin and Hardin, 2004; Clare, 1999). *Marc Richards* (2014: Chap. 3, Loc. 356), for instance, receives rapturous applause when walking the final stretches of distance races, describing the experience as “exhilarating”, but noting with irony, “I was just walking. Isn’t that something you do every day?”. If narratives of “inspiring heroism” potentially reinforce a culture of low expectations, they can, simultaneously, contribute to “functional elitism”

(Seymour, 1998: 119), by privileging physical accomplishments that may not be replicable for many with a SCI (Hardin and Hardin, 2004; Kama, 2004: 258). *Rick Hansen* (with Taylor, 2011: Chap. 11, Loc. 4078-9) seems to be responding to this possibility when he writes, “I wasn’t trying to be a physical role model for disabled persons. It would be wrong for me to be one”. SCI can, subsequently, act as a precarious asset in the performance of “heroic masculinity”, offering a model of triumph-in-adversity, that fosters the re-evaluation of possibilities for individuals within this group, while, in simultaneity, depending upon, and potentially reinforcing, culturally dominant low expectations *and* ableist prisms of evaluation (Hardin and Hardin, 2004; Berger, 2008).

Men Of Reason

A second possible approach allowing for the integration of SCI into generative, if internally divided, forms of masculinity involved a turn towards the *mental*. The prioritisation of the intellect, the imaginative, and the contemplative as sources of social value is not evenly available following SCI, but rather refracted through the existence of pre-existing educational qualifications, class-backgrounds, the accessibility of institutions, and the availability of facilitating technology (Couser, 1997: 209). Yet, the prevalence of cultural understandings that reify the spinal cord injured body as the literal incarnation of corporeality’s weighty immanence (Couser, 1997: 183-6; Seymour, 2002: 138) rendered a turn towards the “mental” a perceived necessity for many narrators. *Lee Goldstein* (2013: Chap. 14, Loc. 1966-7), for instance, recalling the homosocial camaraderie associated with participation in ice-hockey, writes that “(n)ow, because of my injury, all of that was over and I turned to books, studies, and hobbies”; *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 6, Loc. 811-2) expresses a need to “learn skills that were mental rather than physical, which meant going to college”; and, finally, *John Lambert* (2012: ‘You’ve heard a lot ...’, Loc. 1804-6) writes:

Most of what had constituted my life style before was now utterly beyond me, gone forever. I now had a huge vacuum to fill. I had a life ahead of me which was just an expanse of empty time and the use of an almost motionless body with which to fill it. Only my mind remained relatively unscathed.

Paralleling Bourdieu's (1990a: 63-71, 2001: 50) theorisation of "*amor fati*", whereby the habitus responds to the limitations embedded within the surrounding environment by converting "necessity into virtue" (Bourdieu, 2014: 141), the felt *need* to prioritise the "mental", existed alongside the vocational *privileging* of this realm as transcendently "higher than" the corporeal. *Adam Helbling* (2014), for instance, discusses his career as an author following SCI, comparing it favourably to prior achievements in waterskiing:

I realised I was in a unique position where I could help others and inspire them to do more with their lives. I got so much joy out of writing I couldn't stop (p. 143).

I still had my mind, and that was much more powerful than my physical self (p. 165).

I feel more joy in helping people overcome adversity than in teaching people how to waterski. I accomplished enough in that sport. It was time to move on (pp. 177-8).

Francesco Clark (2010: 'Prologue', Loc. 139-41), similarly, vaunts his mind's capacity to transcend corporeal frustrations experienced following SCI, using a physicalist terminology ("strong", "sheer force") to capture his continuing mental fortitude, self-belief, and imagination:

I know I'm fortunate. Although my body was injured, my mind remains my own. I still have a strong sense of myself. I can always go beyond my injury, by sheer force of imagination and will.

I can still dream, still be transported, still float in the clouds sometimes.

The privileging of the mental over the corporeal was perhaps best evidenced by the regularity with which narrators ascribed significance to the separation of SCI's "physicality" from "cognitive" impairments (particularly learning disabilities and traumatic brain injuries). An implicit "hierarchy of disability" (Deal, 2003: 898) was formed whereby "downward social comparison" (Chun and Lee, 2008: 885) rendered oneself comparatively fortunate. *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: Chap. 5, Loc. 586-8) describes his reaction after seeing a woman who had sustained a traumatic brain injury:

(F)ate had not dealt me the worst possible hand. I might not have control over my body – yet – but I had complete control of my mind. In addition to paralysis, some of these people no longer knew who or where they were. I had a much easier road ahead of me than some of these patients and their families.

Andy Phelps (2013: 'Coming Home', Loc. 1283-5), alternatively, describes a preference for the use of the term "cripple" to describe himself following injury:

I hated the sound of "disabled". It made me feel retarded. And just like the people who came to visit me, I associated the term "disabled" with a mental disability. But "cripple" had nothing to do with your mental state. It indicated a physical limitation. Oddly, this was enough to bring me some peace.

This vaunting of the mental over the corporeal could be interpreted as invoking the Cartesian privileging of the "(t)he rational, objective, detached human mind, as the seat of truth, knowledge and wisdom", and the need to intellectually free oneself "from the "shackles" of the human body and the slimy desires of the flesh" (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 1). Spinal cord injured narrators, for whom corporeality's "inertness" may be experienced with especial intensity, strategically employed historical constructions of the "active mind (as) more noble than the inert body" (O'Neill, 1992: 81). The mind is ascribed "the quality of depth, and is intimately aligned with the all-important "self", while the corporeal "occupies an inferior position on the "outside" of "personality", as a superficial, albeit necessary, shell or casing for the interior psyche" (Potts, 2001: 146; see also Shilling, 2012: 12). As a range of feminist theorists have demonstrated, this dualism is not neutral with regards to gender, with masculinised understandings of culture, cognition, universality, detachment and objectivity (Bordo, 1986; Morgan, 1996: 114), existing in a mutually constitutive relationship with the "feminised" (and embodied) logics of nature, emotion, partiality, compassion and subjectivity (Berg, 2001: 515-6; Page, 2013).

Yet, the attempt to prioritise the "fundamental importance of nonphysical values" (Carpenter, 1994: 622) occurred within a historical context that increasingly emphasises the body as central to identity, power, status, consumption and selfhood (Turner, 1996). Culturally dominant understandings of visible, bodily impairments may lead physically disabled people to be perceived as "too fully embodied" (Oliver, 2011: 94), whereby corporeality becomes *excessively pronounced* in its social implications (Longmore, 2003: 235; Sakellariou, 2006: 103-4), despite a personal desire to privilege the realm of the mental. The rejection of the physical form as the "lower", inert "other" against which the virtues of the

cognitive can be espoused may, further, involve a form of internalised “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 2001: 41-2), reflecting the implications of a culture that commonly constructs spinal cord injured bodies as incarnations of lack. Several of the autobiographical narratives under consideration suggest the continued corporal powers of the body following injury, as evidenced earlier in relation to *Rick Hansen’s* (with Taylor, 2011) accomplishments within the context of wheelchair racing, and *Grant Korgan’s* (2012) expedition to the South Pole. While not wishing to replicate cultural discourses that privilege masculinist, rugged physicality, the turn towards the “mental” may pre-emptively render achievements of this nature a perceived impossibility.

The gendering of the mind/body dualism, finally, needs to be recognised as increasingly unstable. Women continue to experience embodied forms of regulation with greater intensity than men (Baxter and Hughes, 2004; Leavy et al., 2009). However, the forces of consumer capitalism that have increasingly positioned male bodies in terms of aesthetic value (Bordo, 1999b; Patterson and Elliott, 2002), combined with the growing presence of women within educational institutions and the post-Fordist “symbolic” labour market (Buchmann and DiPrete, 2006; McRobbie, 2011), have destabilised the categorical nature of this gendered dualism to a substantial degree. It is, further, important to recognise the multi-faceted, and sometimes contradictory, positioning of “the body”, which may be “feminised” when placed in opposition to the realm of the “mental”, while remaining pivotal to the performance of dominant constructions of masculinity within other domains (Connell, 1995: 45; Potts, 2001). To the extent that the mind/body dualism continues to bear a homologous relationship with masculinity/femininity, it is an increasingly fragile, complex and unstable source of gendered privilege.

Relational Masculinities: One Of The Boys and Family Men

The autobiographical narratives under consideration commonly described the centrality of interpersonal relationships following injury. Resembling the dynamic described above regarding the growing prioritisation of the intellect, this turn towards the relational was represented in fluctuating terms, using languages of compulsion, alongside seemingly “epiphanic” (Denzin, 1989: 14-8) ascriptions of existential supremacy to family, friendships and partners. *Francesco Clark* (2010: Chap. 23, Loc. 2259-61), for instance, experiences a homogenising loss of autonomy in the aftermath of injury:

(S)uddenly your life is no longer your own. You become completely beholden to others – your family, your doctors, your therapists. Sometimes, it’s easy to forget that you’re still an individual in your own right.

John Lambert (2012: ‘You’ve heard a lot ...’, Loc. 1798-816), similarly, describes the “necessity” of “good relationships” following SCI:

(M)y life (had previously) revolved around me and my activities. [...] Relationships, good relationships were (now) going to be necessary and valuable. This was another new ball game for me to learn. Could I adjust? I would have to. From now on I would have to be less self-centred by sheer necessity. I now needed people.

Yet, reflecting previous conceptualisations of “post-traumatic growth” (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004; Chun and Lee, 2008), these narratives of an experientially “claustrophobic” dependence on others were paralleled by a countervailing re-evaluation of interpersonal relationships as the authentic metric according to which one’s life should be assessed. *Grant Korgan* (2012: 2), for instance, describes his prioritisation of the realms of employment, income and technical skill prior to injury as depriving him of the time and energy needed to build meaningful interpersonal relationships. SCI is described as instigating a substantial re-evaluation of his life ambitions:

I found there were better parts of myself to get back to. And, more importantly, better parts of other people to love. [...] My journey through recovery has been an exercise in remembering – remembering who I am, what’s important in the world, and what love is.

Rob Oliver (2011: Chap. 10, Loc. 1009-10), similarly, writes that:

The true meaning of life [...] is [...] wrapped up in the people whose lives you touch. Life is not measured by how far you can throw a football, it is measured by how deeply you love.

Contemporary Western constructions of masculinity have commonly been critiqued for valorising a self-sufficient individualism that can only exist in a tense relationship with the ontological interdependencies of social life (Rubin, 1983; Nash, 1998: 29-31), an insight well supported by the problematic experiences of “dependence” described above and in Chapter Four. Yet, to the extent that masculinities are relational constructs involving processes of identification and differentiation within the variegated contexts of social interaction (Connell, 1995: 68; Migliaccio, 2010), it is, simultaneously,

important to recognise that certain relational configurations are central to the production of culturally normative masculinities. Within the lives of the spinal cord injured men under consideration, the turn towards interpersonal relationships was subsequently (albeit in uneven and partial terms) leveraged into two particular renditions of masculine identification and community.

Firstly, *homosocial friendship* has been regarded as a central locus for young men's gendered practices (Harvey, 1999; Oransky and Marecek, 2009), and processes of collective differentiation from women (Sedgwick, 1985). These relationships commonly entail simultaneous patterns of identification with the homosocial group, alongside the "agonistic" or competitive pursuit of proximity to hegemonic gender ideals (Flood, 2008: 341). As noted by researchers examining the experiences of spinal cord injured women, and complicating narratives of masculine "loss" prevailing within the existing literature, rehabilitation facilities often implicitly position men as the "default" spinal cord injured subjects. These institutions could be construed as deeply homosocial environments, both as a consequence of the "brute" quantitative dominance of men as a group, but also through culturally masculinist emphases on physical recovery, competition, and sport (Ferreiro-Velasco et al., 2005; Samuel et al., 2007). The friendship relations that emerged within the contexts of rehabilitation institutions appeared genuine and deeply felt, underwritten by patterns of shared experience, but were often paralleled by an ethic of "competitive bonding". *Rob Oliver* (2011: Chap. 7, Loc. 662-5), for instance, describes a competitive desire to demonstrate status and skill during rehabilitation activities:

One of our therapy days was a game of "Pitching Pennies". I was competing against two other quads to see who would win. The fact is that we were all relatively young and male which meant that it was going to be a competition. Much to my chagrin, I lost miserably. [...] Needless to say, I was not real happy about the outcome.

Stephen Thompson (2011), similarly, describes the emergence of a close friendship with his roommate, Mike, while in rehabilitation; the competitive ethic of this relationship is positioned as a motivational tool:

Having someone to compete with could be just what I needed, I figured, and could be the key to turning things around for me (Chap. 5, Loc. 1421-2).

(*After regaining muscle use in one hand*) I had shown the incredible accomplishment to my family but I was keeping it from my roommate. I wanted to be able (to) make a fist before letting him know so I could *really* impress him. We had become very competitive! (Chap. 7, Loc. 2171-2).

Yet, the generative possibilities offered through homosocial community were limited. The tendency for male friends to emphasise a physically-mediated “closeness in doing” (Swain, 1989: 77; Migliaccio, 2010), rather than communicating intimacy through self-disclosure, mutual support, or expressions of affection (Nardi, 1999: 32-47; J. Hall, 2011), generated difficulties within homosocial environments beyond the context of rehabilitation. *Paul Bendix* (2012: ‘Agriculture’, Loc. 839-40), for instance, describes his exclusion from men’s “camaraderie around fixing and building” after becoming spinal cord injured, and expresses his pleasure in the eventual re-occupation of “male construction space” while gardening. *Andy Phelps* (2013: ‘A Better Person’, Loc. 1003-7), similarly, writes poignantly of his realisation of the difficulties involved in the “embodiment” of male friendship when his best friend leaves rehabilitation after a visit:

“When you get back we’ll have to go out and ...”. He stood still.

Play catch, I thought to myself. Finish building that house, go to drop in hockey, go for a motorcycle ride, go to Cedar Point, build a tree fort, spend hours shovelling off the pond only for it to be covered by snowfall before we get to skate on it.

He could have filled that blank with a million things that we grew up doing together, but it was too early to tell if we’d ever do any of those things ever again. He stood by the door and awkwardly said, “Well, we’ll go out and do something”.

Secondly, narrators generatively redeployed the realm of the relational in the construction of particular enactments of masculinity through the image of the *family man*. The legitimated adult masculinity culturally ascribed to the “married man” may be counterposed to the “immaturity” of the single bachelor, with the former associated with the virtues of responsibility, respect, stability, morality and self-sacrifice (Traister, 2002; Brabon, 2013). While both fatherhood’s (Gurwitt, 1988) and marriage’s (Ehrenreich, 1983) historically conflicted relationship with contemporary Western constructions of masculinity is recognised, these remain culturally privileged “rites of passage” used to demarcate difference from women and children, and operate as public enactments of institutionalised

heterosexuality (Crawford, 2003; Plantin et al. 2003). Several of the narrators described the period immediately following SCI as characterised by intense doubt about the possibility of marital fatherhood, related to concerns surrounding the enactment of male “sex roles” within relationships, fertility, physical appearance, and the ability to corporeally enact cultural expectations of fatherhood. *J. Bryant Neville* (with Pidal, 2012: ‘Author’s Note’, Loc. 58-9), for instance, writes following injury that:

In the blink of an eye, my lifelong dreams of a family of my own and a career to support them seemed dashed. I was confused, frightened, angry.

Bryant describes a form of “self-exclusion” from the realm of heterosexual romance as a response to experiences of rejection in the aftermath of his accident. As discussed in Chapter Four, his partner at the time of injury ends their relationship after a sexual encounter does not proceed as anticipated, and Bryant comes to conclude that his ensuing dating experiences primarily eventuated because prospective partners “felt bad saying no” (Chap. 7, Loc. 933), rather than as a consequence of genuine attraction. During college, he decides to “shelf romance” and “instead focus on [...] finding a good career” (Chap. 7, Loc. 936). Yet, simultaneously, SCI seems to have been experienced by Bryant as instigating substantial patterns of reprioritisation, involving a greater focus on long-term, committed relationships in the pursuit of marital fatherhood, and a lessened emphasis on casual dating. Speaking to a female pastor from his local church, he states:

“My life was off track. I had no direction, no purpose. I was going nowhere. And if this hadn’t happened to me, I may never have found the track. [...] So if it took the accident to get me to this point, well, I wish there had been another way, but at least I got here. [...] My dream is to have a family someday, so I hope that’s in God’s plan for me too” (Chap. 7, Loc. 976-84).

Bryant writes of his eventual marriage to a family friend, Tanya, as a “dream fulfilled” (Chap. 11, Loc. 1629), especially when her sons from a previous relationship come to view him as their father:

Our wedding represented my dearest dream [...] I was a husband and a father. My life felt complete and I knew I had realised my true purpose. I was a family man now (Chap. 10, Loc. 1614-5).

Rob Oliver (2011: Chap. 10, Loc. 1014-7), similarly, centres his autobiographical narrative on his journey into fatherhood within the context of a (pre-existing) heterosexual relationship. Experiencing

difficulties in conceiving with his partner (Becky), he compares his family situation favourably to those outside the realm of a middle-class, heterosexually-coupled home (especially single mothers and the socioeconomically disadvantaged) who seem (to him) to be having children they “didn’t really want”:

Many of these kids were born to single moms. Some of them weren’t being raised by their parents. All were coming from impoverished backgrounds, and it seemed like the only people that loved them unconditionally were their Sunday School teachers. We were married, we were responsible, we would love a child unconditionally, we would raise the child ourselves, what was wrong?

After two rounds of IVF treatment, Rob and Becky have triplets. Against a cultural backdrop that associates fathering with forms of embodied play and physical protection (Gavanas, 2004: 253-4), Rob reconfigures the meaning of fatherhood, emphasising the “relational” virtues of love, morality, support, emotional hardiness and education:

(A) dad is someone who teaches his kids right and wrong. A dad is someone who loves his kids every day regardless of what kind of mood he is in and regardless of what they have done. A dad is the rock that you turn to when your emotions are damaged or when you skin your knee. A dad is someone who teaches you what life is truly all about (Chap. 10, Loc. 1005-7).

Yet, the respectable maturity of the family man should be recognised as an ambivalent pursuit for men with SCIs. In light of factors elucidated within Chapter Four, social expectations embedded within this role of marital coupledness may be difficult to replicate, as a consequence of cultural associations with asexuality (Shakespeare, 1999: 55-8), changes to fertility (Monga et al., 1999; Wiwanitkit, 2008), lower marriage rates (DeVivo and Richards, 1996), perceptions that disabled people cannot be good parents (Sayce and Perkins, 2002), ableist constructions of attractiveness (Sheldon et al., 2010), and expectations surrounding male breadwinning (Kayess et al., 2013: 22-3, 38-40). Alongside the social expectations/exclusions that may render the “family man” inaccessible to many spinal cord injured men, it should be noted (as implied earlier) that this figure is itself not entirely unambiguous in its gendered implications. Identifying primarily through one’s familial relationships may be associated with a form of “domestication”, the historically feminised space of the home, and the loss of independence/freedom (Ehrenreich, 1983; Gurwitt, 1988).

Conclusion

This chapter has conceptualised the negotiation of gendered social landscapes by a specific group of spinal cord injured men. It has been contended that while narrators engaged in interventions designed to challenge the ableist organisation of social relations, evidenced through “descriptions” of activism and the logic of the autobiographical narratives themselves, these engagements did not clearly or consistently extend to recognition of historical inequalities surrounding gender. Indeed, narrators at times appeared to reproduce behaviours and discourses consistent with historical patterns of male privilege. Through the Bourdieusian concept of “strategy”, I have contended that the overwhelming response to the realm of gender within the narratives under consideration was neither “revolutionary”, nor an untrammelled affirmation of *hegemonic* masculinity, but rather a process of (what Gerschick and Miller [2000: 127-30] term) “reformulation”. The “cracks” between socially dominant constructions of masculinity, within the embodied context of SCI, were strategically “paved over” (Schirato and Webb, 2002: 265-6) as a matter of “practical coping” (Chia and Holt, 2006: 647).

Three (delimited and ambivalent) approaches to the “generative” employment of SCI in particular enactments of masculinity have been discussed. These are not offered as exhaustive accounts of available gendered opportunities, but rather as an initial set of insights designed to promote further consideration of how particular forms of disability might be integrated into masculinised practices, rather than *solely* destabilising them. While these “strategies” were commonly presented using a discourse of personal epiphany, the consistency with which these three themes emerged suggest that more historical, socially structured forces surrounding both masculinity and disability were involved (Pals and McAdams, 2004: 67). Through enactments of *rugged heroism*, narrators drew upon the mediagenic figure of the “supercrip”, as well as masculinist values of toughness, overcoming, physicality, and public achievement; the turn towards the *intellect* involved a historically situated construction of the spinal cord injured body as weighty immanence, to be “transcended” using gendered mind/body dualisms; and, finally, the *relational* employment of homosociality and becoming a “family man” productively employed the experienced necessity of interdependence following SCI.

Yet, the broader social arrangements that exclude spinal cord injured men through the intertwining of patriarchal and ableist relations could not be “strategised” away in their entirety. These were far from “hegemonic” masculinities; it has been contended that each of the strategic opportunities discussed involved deep-seated ambivalence, or “Janus-faced” qualities. The lack of able-bodied privilege meant that these appropriations were not “*purely*” generative, but rather characterised by internal contradictions, silences and complexities. These “generative” possibilities, as such, involved a “strategic” negotiation of the prevailing environment, or to use Paul DiMaggio’s (1979: 1470) phrase, the practice of “dart(ing) in and out between the cracks of social structure” in a manner reminiscent of Michel de Certeau’s (1984: xix) notion of “tactics”. These were *creative*, entailing inventive deployments of SCI in ways not typified by hegemonic constructions of masculinity, but also *regulated* in the sense of drawing upon the limited gendered resources, modes of vision/division and opportunities extant within the prevailing social environment. In this sense, this chapter has offered a (partial) consideration of the “space of possibles” (Bourdieu, 1996b: 234-9) confronted by spinal cord injured men as a group, reflecting the delimited ways in which social position defines “the thinkable and the unthinkable, the do-able and the impossible for agents” (Hesmondhalgh, 2006: 216).

Section Three

Autism Spectrum Conditions
and Masculinity Studies:
Embodied Capital, Alien
Corporealities and Scholastic
Knowledge

Introduction

ASCs, The Veil Of Mystery and Theoretical Pluralism

Stuart Murray (2012: 1) contends that the defining attribute of contemporary knowledge surrounding Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASCs) is *lack*: “the “central fact” about autism [...] is that we don’t know very much about it at all”. A sense of mystery, constructing people on the autism spectrum as obdurate embodiments of “otherness”, pervades contemporary Western culture (Waltz, 2003: 5-8). Oliver Sacks (1995: 190) notes that autism has long evoked an “amazed, fearful or bewildered attention” through quasi-mystical associations with “the alien, the changeling, (and) the child bewitched”. Filmic representations commonly conflate autism with savantism (Murray, 2012: 67), narratively deploying “wondrous” gifts involving the manipulation of numbers, echolalic imitation, and eidetic memory as plot devices designed to enthrall a presumably neurotypical⁶ audience (Osteen, 2008: 30; Draaisma, 2009: 1477-8).

Two Austrian researchers, operating independently in the 1940s, formed the initial foundations leading to the emergence of ASCs as nosological categories. Leo Kanner (1943), a psychiatrist who migrated to the United States in 1924, described a group of eleven children in an article entitled ‘Autistic Disturbances of Affective Contact’. Kanner’s (1943: 248, 245) analysis emphasised an “extreme aloneness” and the “anxiously obsessive desire for the maintenance of sameness”. This group is described as characterised by inhibited interest in social/emotional contact, preferences for objects over human beings, the rigid preservation of routine, delayed linguistic development, and non-normative modes of visual attention and sensory perception. Hans Asperger (1944/1991), alternatively, offered an analysis that would later underpin Asperger’s Syndrome as a diagnostic category (although initially employed the language of “autistic psychopathy”). Only becoming accessible to English-speaking audiences during the 1980s, Asperger emphasised his sample’s difficulties with interaction and interpersonal understanding, patterns of socially withdrawn and/or disruptive behaviour, physical clumsiness, rigid commitment to routines, and pedantic/idiosyncratic speech patterns (without overall

⁶ “Neurotypical” is used within this thesis to signify those not on the autism spectrum; however, it should be noted that this terminology’s prioritisation of the neurological is not unreservedly endorsed, as suggested in the following two chapters.

linguistic/intellectual delay). He suggested that this group was characterised by “disturbed instinctive affective reactions” with the interpersonal world (Asperger, 1944/1991: 74, 79), but offered an optimistic account of their social value through the focused development of specialised interests/knowledges (Asperger, 1944/1991: 87-90).

Theorisations of what ASCs *are* have remained elusive, with a series of conceptual prisms underpinning sizeable experimental research literatures, but suffering from seemingly contradictory findings, conceptual inconsistencies, and limitations holistically capturing the cluster of characteristic “symptoms” (Gallagher, 2004; Rajendran and Mitchell, 2007; Baron-Cohen, 2008: 51-84). From the 1990s, the three dominant psychological paradigms have been: *theory of mind* approaches, emphasising difficulties imputing, and responding appropriately to, the mental states of others (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985; Baron-Cohen, 2001); *central coherence* approaches, emphasising the predisposition to interpret information in terms of detail, rather than “gestalt-style” globalisations (Frith and Happè, 1994; Happè, 1999); and *executive functioning* approaches, emphasising difficulties in the planning/enactment of instrumental action (Pennington and Ozonoff, 1996). These frameworks have recently been added to by Simon Baron-Cohen’s (2002, 2004) *extreme male brain* approach, conceiving of ASCs as “essential” gendered dispositions towards rule-bound systematisation; and *intense world syndrome*, conceiving of ASCs as involving a neuropathologically determined “hyper-perception, hyper-attention, hyper-memory, and hyper-emotionality” (Markram et al., 2007; Markram and Markram, 2010).

Pervasive constructions of ASCs as “puzzles” (Waltz, 2003: 5-6) reflect their persistent elusiveness to Western biomedicine’s priorities. Ambiguity pervades *all* central “clinical” issues, in terms of: *aetiology* (with ongoing research considering genetics, cognitive style, cognitive ability, environment, and neurology [Currenti, 2010]); *diagnostic procedure* (with over thirty diagnostic tools, debate about their respective merit, and evidence suggesting that “intuition” remains central to medical determinations [Lenne and Waldby, 2011; Hollin, 2013: 122]); *prognosis* (with continued lack of certainty surrounding transitions into adulthood [Szatmari et al., 2015] and the diverse developmental trajectories of those diagnosed [Fountain et al., 2012; Murray, 2012: 51-3]); and *treatment* (involving contestations over the respective value of behaviour modification, social skills training, pharmaceutical treatments, speech

therapy, educational adaptations, and music/art therapy [Baron-Cohen, 2008: 18]). Even more fundamentally, a sizeable neurodiversity movement has challenged medicalised constructions of ASCs by repositioning the “disorder” as a potentially valuable difference, rather than a deficiency (O’Neil, 2008).

Accompanying the introduction of Asperger’s Syndrome into formal diagnostic language/practice, recent decades have witnessed a movement towards spectral conceptualisations of ASCs, recognising both the variegated assortment of individuals being diagnosed, and the extent to which distinctively autistic traits shade into the broader population (Frith, 1991: 21-4; Hollin, 2013: 153-9). The fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) operated with distinctions between autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (associated with developmental “regression”), and Pervasive Developmental Disorders – Not Otherwise Stated (a residual category for individuals not fully approximating alternative diagnoses). DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) has collapsed this terminology under the broader Autism Spectrum Disorder umbrella, reflecting debates surrounding the boundaries between subgroups, and the uneven and diverse distribution of traits among those being diagnosed (Bishop, 1989; Frith, 1991: 12-4; Frazier et al., 2012).

Terminologically, three points are significant. Firstly, changing diagnostic boundaries complicate interpretations of the autobiographical material under examination, as narrators were being labelled within terminologically distinctive historical landscapes. To capture this temporal “spread” of categorisations, the language of the “autism spectrum” is prioritised within this thesis, with more specific terminology utilised in reference to individual cases. Secondly, the implications of person-first language (e.g. “person with autism”) have prompted substantial dialogue within academic and activist contexts. Some emphasise the rhetorical significance of constructing this group as *people*, in the first instance, rather than wholly defined by ASCs (Blaska, 1993). Others signal problems entailed by seemingly constructing autism as an incidental appendage to the self, and advocate for the use of “identity-first” terminology (e.g. “autistic person”) to signify its significance (Sinclair, 2013). Person-first terminology is semantically difficult to avoid when referring to “individuals on the autism

spectrum”); while this rhetoric is foregrounded throughout this thesis, an explicit rejection of certain implications of this wording is developed in Chapter Seven. Thirdly, the terminology of Autism Spectrum Conditions (Baron-Cohen, 2008: 14), as opposed to the official DSM-5 language of Autism Spectrum Disorders, is employed to acknowledge critiques of limitedly medicalised approaches, and the emergence of analyses stressing “neurodiversity” (Currenti, 2010; Hollin, 2013: 9; Garen, 2014).

Given the presence of ongoing cultural, clinical and conceptual controversies, the development of a distinctively Bourdieusian approach to ASCs may seem inherently contentious. Yet, while ASCs are absent from Bourdieu’s texts, this thesis will contend that his conceptual framework offers unexpectedly insightful substantive arguments and hermeneutic perspectives within this domain (as suggested previously in Ochs and Solomon, 2004; Ochs et al., 2004). There remain, undoubtedly, elements of ASCs that are difficult to interrogate through this framework (a limitation, it should be acknowledged, common to more established academic paradigms [Baron-Cohen, 2008: 51-84]). It is, for instance, challenging to develop “Bourdiesian” readings of aetiology or sensory difference. This conceptual framework is, subsequently, forwarded as self-consciously limited and partial, but nevertheless fruitful.

Sample Characteristics

Twenty autobiographical narratives were analysed within this thesis’ conceptualisation of intersections between ASCs/masculinity. Summary information for each author is presented in Table 2. In some instances, narrators did not provide all relevant information; best possible estimates have been attempted, and characteristics that could not be concretely verified have been italicised. Where no estimate was possible, the field has been left blank. Seventeen of the narrators were identified as Caucasian, two as Hispanic, and one as African-American/Native American. Seven of the authors were from England, six from the United States, two from Canada, and one each from Australia, Ireland, Brazil, Wales and Scotland. (Secondary national identities are bracketed in Figure 5). On average, authors were diagnosed with an ASC at 26.8 years of age, and published their narratives aged 36.4. Sixteen narrators appeared to identify as heterosexual, two as gay, one as asexual, and one not clearly specified.

Figure 5. Summary of Key Sample Characteristics For Narrators With ASCs

Author	ASC Diagnosis	Year of Birth	Age Diagnosed	Year Diagnosed	Nationality	Ethnicity
Travis Breeding	Asperger's Syndrome	1985	22	2007	American	Caucasian
Cristiano Camargo	Asperger's Syndrome	1963	41	2004	Brazilian	Hispanic
Benjamin Collier	Asperger's Syndrome	1983	7	1990	Canadian	Caucasian
Andrew Edwards	Autism	1984	4	1989	Welsh	Caucasian
Barry Evans	Asperger's Syndrome	1991	7-8	1999	English	Caucasian
Bill Furlong	Asperger's Syndrome	1965	32	1997	English	Caucasian
Christopher Goodchild	Autism/Asperger's Syndrome	1965	Early 40s	2007	English	Caucasian
Will Hadcroft	Asperger's Syndrome	1970	33	2003	English	Caucasian
Mark Hogan	Asperger's Syndrome	1979	31	2010	Irish/ (Australian)	Caucasian
Alexander Hubbard	Asperger's Syndrome	1993	3	1996	American	African-American/Native American
Paul Isaacs	High Functioning Autism	1986	24	2010	English	Caucasian
Matthew Kryspin	Autism	1992	3	1995	American	Caucasian
Richard Lewis	Asperger's Syndrome	1950	54	2004	Australian	Caucasian
Doug Milne	Autism	1951	39	1990	Scottish	Caucasian
John Olson	Asperger's Syndrome	1963	40	2003	American	Caucasian
Marc Rivera	Asperger's Syndrome	1982	?	?	American	Hispanic
Ben Seeley	Autism	1972	41	2012	English/(New Zealander)	Caucasian
Daniel Tammet	Asperger's Syndrome	1979	25	2004	English	Caucasian
Jeremy Tolmie	PDD-NOS/ Asperger's Syndrome	1981	17	1998	Canadian	Caucasian
Scott Verbout	Asperger's Syndrome	1963	44	2007	American	Caucasian

The methodological reliance upon autobiographical narration within this thesis may be critiqued for excluding “low functioning” individuals on the autism spectrum, and exacerbating broader sampling biases towards more accessible, “higher functioning” groups (Hollin, 2013: 153-60). It is difficult to definitively determine how “high” or “low” functioning this research’s sample is, but there is arguably veracity to these concerns. Yet, a number of qualifications are significant. Firstly, these same biases are not unique to autism-specific research, but emerge within most empirical contexts involving complex communicational demands (Booth and Booth, 1996; Atkinson, 2004). Secondly, while three decades ago research consensus within English-speaking contexts stressed close relationships between ASCs and learning disabilities (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985: 38), more spectral contemporary conceptualisations have meant that both labels are increasingly *not* applied to most diagnosed as on the autism spectrum (Baron-Cohen, 2004: 175; Hollin, 2013: 7). Thirdly, the binary between “high” and “low” functioning ASCs has been critiqued. Individuals on the autism spectrum may be diagnosed differently over time, and/or develop throughout their life courses, rather than statically epitomising “high”/“low” functioning variants. This group also evinces a characteristically erratic profile of “competencies”, meaning that designations of relative levels of functioning depend as much upon the benchmarks selected for assessment as individuals themselves (Yergeau, 2010; Harris, 2015). It may, finally, be that one of the most effective means to understand the experiences of those with “classic” autism is to engage with the insights offered by individuals affected in qualitatively similar, if quantitatively distinct, ways (Cesaroni and Garber, 1991; Hacking, 2009a: 1468).

Narrators

Travis Breeding’s (2010) autobiography, *I Want To Be Like You: Life With Asperger’s Syndrome*, describes the author’s fascination with women’s sports (particularly basketball) while young, alongside a burgeoning commitment to developing a career as a trombonist. Participating actively in a range of ensembles, Travis writes of his difficulties negotiating the complex social terrains associated with both schooling and tertiary education, culminating in decisions to end his candidature as a music student and sell his instrument. Travis expresses a fervent desire for social inclusion, an aspiration frequently

exploited by others. His narrative concludes by stressing the importance of self-acceptance and friendship.

Cristiano Camargo published *Proudly Autistic: The Syndrome As Seen From The Inside!* in 2012. In the absence of strongly experienced interpersonal connections with peers, Cristiano describes the youthful development of a vibrant, escapist “fantasy” world. He depicts a fragmented employment history characterised by extended periods of financial dependence upon family, and sporadic work in retail and teaching, before becoming a successful author. Cristiano advocates for the revaluation of Asperger’s Syndrome, particularly the medicalisation of non-normative, but non-problematic, behaviours; he associates ASCs with creativity and difference, and a resistance to taken-for-granted expectations prevailing within neurotypical contexts.

My Life A.S. Is: An Inside Look At Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome, by *Benjamin Collier* (2013), describes a range of author characteristics that complicate interpersonal relationships, including sensory issues, perfectionism, resistance to change, fears about contingency, difficulties generalising from specific knowledge, barriers to reading non-explicit social cues and non-normative modes of information processing. Benjamin sees being on the autism spectrum as a component of God’s plan, allowing for the development of distinctive virtues relating to truthfulness, social insight and logic. While rejecting straightforward desires for cure, Benjamin’s narrative highlights continuing development and self-change, depicting a growing personal investment in interpersonal relationships.

Andrew Edwards’ autobiography, *I’ve Got A Stat For You: My Life With Autism*, was published in 2015. Andrew describes turbulent experiences within educational contexts, characterised by frequent bullying, patterns of expulsion, and a physical altercation with a teacher, but succeeds in achieving four G.C.S.E.s. Following school, Andrew is employed as a researcher at a television station, reflecting his fervent interests in statistics and football; he stresses the aptitude for employment for those on the autism spectrum given appropriate work environments. Andrew spends a period of time engaged as a public speaker disseminating knowledge about ASCs, and participates in charitable work at the conclusion of his narrative.

Barry Evans (2015), in *Life Is Complicated*, describes attaining a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome after his parents receive feedback from a teacher surrounding issues with communication, concentration and information processing. Barry describes a love for animals, highly valuing what he regards as their loyalty, lack of judgement, trustworthiness, understanding, and lessened social complexity. He takes on a variety of employment positions, working as a paperboy, a personal trainer, a marketing assistant, a financial advisor, and in customer service/sales. Barry is interested in professional wrestling, singing and football.

Bill Furlong's 2012 narrative, *Where There's A Bill There's A Way*, describes difficulties with social integration, involving substantial patterns of bullying at school, college, and the workplace, as well as conflicts with his father, who struggles to understand the challenges Bill is negotiating. He develops interests in psychology, history, and sociology – attaining a number of G.C.S.E.s. Bill's narrative is one of self-discovery, culminating in self-identification as being on the autism spectrum. This knowledge offers a way of comprehending his experiences within social terrains that others perceive as unproblematic.

Christopher Goodchild's (2009) *A Painful Gift: The Journey Of A Soul With Autism* describes a difficult childhood, involving a familial environment ascribing paramount importance to the public façade of normality, which prompts Christopher to develop artificially constructed “characters” to conceal autistic traits. The psycho-emotional implications of these processes are described as being substantial, in the form of depression and anxiety. He describes becoming a father, articulating both the intense bond he experiences with his son, as well as the challenges involved in maintaining order, routine and predictability within the context of parenthood.

Will Hadcroft published *The Feeling's Unmutual: Growing Up With Asperger Syndrome (Undiagnosed)* in 2005. Will is an avid consumer of Doctor Who-related paraphernalia, participating in fan community events, devouring tapes/videos/magazines, and contributing to science fiction fanzines as a writer. He expresses a strong commitment to Christianity, practicing as a Jehovah's Witness. Will marries in his early twenties. After an extended period labouring in factory settings involving low pay and

unfavourable conditions, as well four years unemployment, he secures white-collar work in a delivery service company, affording an unanticipated level of economic comfort. Will is a published novelist.

Mark Hogan's (2012) *The Key That Unlocked A Mystery: An Asperger Story* describes a range of employment positions while living in Ireland, with Mark working in agriculture, customer service, and a racing stable. Mark marries a woman he encounters while holidaying in Australia, fathering a son and daughter. He is diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome at the age of thirty-one upon recognising substantial similarities with his son, who is autistic. While regarding ASCs as a form of "brain damage", Mark asserts the liberating implications of diagnosis, engendering a legitimated experience of freedom from prevailing social expectations.

Alexander Hubbard published *Life In The Eyes Of An Autistic Person* in 2012. He describes a strong desire to participate within interpersonal networks, but experiences difficulties interpreting others' behaviours/thoughts, and tends to express frustration through physical aggression. He has interests in writing, acting, politics and hip hop/rap music. Alexander has experience working within the context of mail delivery services, and in teaching computer skills to the elderly and disabled people. He describes a desire to engage in future study at community college.

Paul Isaacs's (2012) *Living Through The Haze: Life On The Autistic Spectrum* describes endemic patterns of bullying and manipulation, with the author experiencing depression and anxiety in the aftermath of social rejection within educational contexts. Paul excels within the realm of information and communication technologies, and provides learning support to others on the autism spectrum, as well as engaging in public speaking work spreading awareness of ASCs. Paul describes a desire for solitude, and a lack of interest in sexual/romantic relationships, traits he regards as legitimate preferences rather than deficiencies.

Matthew Kryspin's narrative, *I Live My Life With Autism*, was published in 2013. Matthew possesses a strong interest in physical development, competing as a power lifter and participating in his school's wrestling team. His narrative emphasises processes of temporal development, describing the strategies used to negotiate the problems associated with ASCs in his transition into young adulthood. Matthew describes a desire to live independently and develop sexual/romantic relationships, but experiences

anxiety at the prospect of the substantial changes this would necessitate. He ends his autobiography while in training to become an electrician.

Asperger Demerger: The Autobiography Of Richard Edwin Lewis (2009) describes the author's progression towards self-identification as being on the autism spectrum, with a series of alternative problems (e.g. breathing disorders, alcoholism, and issues with co-dependency) inhibiting recognition of Asperger's Syndrome. He participates in a range of working environments, but experiences difficulties balancing possibilities for career progression, appropriate social demands and the acquisition of adaptive accommodations from employers. Richard describes some disappointment at not replicating prevailing metrics of "normality" (including economic accomplishment, property ownership and parenthood), but regards diagnosis as a way of understanding his difficulties enacting culturally dominant constructions of success.

Doug Milne's (2012) *Surviving The Hydra: A Personal Journey Through The Nature and Nurture of Autism* describes being raised by a mother excessively concerned with a familial image of middle-class respectability and an emotionally distant father. He recounts being dismissed as a mediocre student within schooling contexts, critiquing these environments for failing to offer adaptive patterns of accommodation. Doug later studies at tertiary level and achieves a Bachelor of Arts degree. He highlights anxiety as central to the existential and social difficulties associated with being on the autism spectrum.

John Olson published *Memoirs On The Blessings and Burdens Of Asperger's Syndrome* in 2006. John describes a fascination with statistics, an interest developed within the political sciences where he acquires a doctorate. He works for a period of time as an academic, but, struggling with the social demands of the occupation, takes up employment as a teacher and private tutor. John is briefly married, but the relationship experiences tension as a consequence of his partner's eating disorders, and her perception of John's lack of emotional engagement.

Marc Rivera's (2013) *Tears of Pain: My Life With Autism* centrally focuses on his schooling experiences, documenting issues surrounding sensory and information processing within high paced and chaotic educational settings. Marc writes passionately about the outcomes of bullying within these contexts,

both by classmates, and by teachers lacking autism awareness. He describes a love for classic television programs, particularly *Bewitched* and *I Dream Of Jeannie*. Upon completing his education, Marc is employed in customer service at an amusement park and participates actively in volunteer work.

Ben Seeley published *My Life With Autism* in 2014. Ben was born in New Zealand, and spent the first four years of his life living primarily in Hong Kong and South Korea before settling in England. He describes a somewhat itinerant young adulthood, experiencing periods of homelessness, participating in communes, and living on campsites. Ben expresses strong commitments to left-wing activism, engaging in political advocacy surrounding animal rights, disability issues, educational funding, the environment, and military engagements. He moves to New Zealand in his thirties.

Daniel Tammet's Born On A Blue Day: A Memoir Of Asperger's and An Extraordinary Mind was published in 2006. Daniel is a synaesthete, who experiences sensory connections between ideas/experiences (particularly numbers) and shapes/colours, traits he uses in the performance of exceptional feats of memory (including breaking the European record for memorising Pi to the most decimal places). He describes a fascination with different languages (speaking ten), and works to build Internet programs designed to disseminate knowledge in the area. Daniel lives independently, and maintains a long-term relationship with his partner Neil.

Jeremy Tolmie's (2012) *Living With Aspergers Syndrome* describes the author's sensory issues in detail, including multiple phobic associations, chronic pain, muscular tightness, and difficulties with depth perception and balance. He confronts issues having these problems recognised, being dismissed by medical practitioners as a hypochondriac prior to diagnosis. Jeremy is a trained computer technician, excelling in this area at college, and providing IT support for an organisation promoting community literacy. Jeremy works as a volunteer, and continues to be active as a writer.

Scott Verbout's autobiography, *An Asperger Journey: My Lifelong Battle With Autism*, was published in 2013. Scott works as a copyeditor, where his precision and attention to detail allow him to excel. His narrative centres upon experiences within the workplace, particularly emphasising the misunderstandings and lack of awareness that create difficulties sustaining employment. Scott is married and has a daughter, and describes distinct difficulties maintaining emotional reciprocity with

family members, despite their unparalleled importance to him. Scott is an avid sports fan and enjoys the music of female singer-songwriters.

Chapter Seven: ASCs, The Extreme Male Brain and Embodied Capital

ASCs and The Extreme Male Brain

Autism has been a distinctively gendered nosological category from its inception, with both Kanner (1943) and Asperger (1944/1991) highlighting the uneven gendered distribution of their samples. Contemporary evidence suggests approximately four males are diagnosed with ASCs for every female (Whiteley et al., 2010; Halladay et al., 2015). Recently, Simon Baron-Cohen has formalised Asperger's (1944/1991: 84-5) impressionistic description of ASCs as "extreme variant(s) of male intelligence" through the "extreme male brain" (EMB) theory, which highlights the epidemiological preponderance of diagnosed males as central to the aetiological/symptomatic characteristics of ASCs. Baron-Cohen (2002, 2004) postulates the existence of two, distinctively gendered, cognitive profiles, with women evincing a disposition towards *empathising*, and men towards *systemising*. Empathising is defined as "the drive to identify another person's emotions and thoughts, and to respond to them with an appropriate emotion" by intuiting their "inner world" (Baron-Cohen, 2004: 2; see also Baron-Cohen, 2002: 248). Systemising, alternatively, involves the construction of predictive "input-operation-output" models, a mode of cognition well positioned to understand "finite, deterministic and lawful" (Baron-Cohen, 2004: 64) domains, but problematic within human interaction (Baron-Cohen, 2004: 133-4).

While employing the categorical language of "female brains" (empathising>systematising) and "male brains" (systematising>empathising), Baron-Cohen (2004: 8-9) contends that women and men are not cognitive *opposites*; these brain types reflect average differences, coexisting alongside substantial variance within sex categories. It is, from this perspective, possible (but statistically less likely) for "biological women" to have "male brains", and "biological men" to have "female brains". Baron-Cohen (2004: 86-95) does not *entirely* disqualify social learning in the development of these distinctive cognitive styles; however, the EMB theory prioritises biological antecedents (particularly exposure to prenatal testosterone) in the gendering of empathising/systemising (Auyeung et al., 2009a). People on the autism spectrum are positioned as manifesting unusually strong preferences for systemising modes of cognition, and concomitant difficulties with empathising – "extreme" variants of the "standard" male brain.

EMB theorisations of ASCs have been subject to multiple critiques, which cannot be exhaustively elucidated here. Studies specifically correlating *prenatal testosterone* with *diagnosis* have not been published (Sample, 2013: 88); a recent study found elevated steroidogenic activity in the amniotic fluid samples of individuals later diagnosed with ASCs, but these related to *all* sex steroids, not testosterone in particular (Baron-Cohen, 2015). While some studies have correlated *autistic traits* in the general population with prenatal testosterone (Auyeung et al., 2009a), findings have been inconsistent (Voracek and Dressler, 2006; Bejerot et al., 2012). Human research in this area also remains correlational; the potential causal mechanisms connecting testosterone with ASCs/systemising remain opaque (Auyeung et al., 2009a: 16). Innate empathising/systemising gender differences have not been adequately supported. While much significance has been ascribed to a study documenting differential gendered perceptions among one-day-old babies (female visual preference for human faces, and male preference for mechanical mobiles [Connellan et al., 2000]), this research: has not been replicated; has been critiqued for methodological inadequacies (e.g. researcher awareness of the babies' genders, potentially biasing data collection/analysis); and contradicts comparable studies finding minimal gender difference (Ellis, 2005: 74; Sample, 2013). Concerns have also been raised surrounding the political implications of these contentions. EMB theorisations of ASCs contribute to the legitimisation of men's dominance over social realms associated with rationality, technology, and science, and undermine critiques of the historical antecedents to these disparities (Berg, 2001: 515-6; Levy, 2004: 319-20). Finally, autistic women may be more common than currently believed, but less visible within clinical settings due to lessened levels of aggression, hyperactivity and/or social withdrawal (Kirkovski et al., 2013; Halladay et al., 2015); this group may evince consistent differences from the masculinised, biomedically dominant, autistic "phenotype" (Gould and Ashton-Smith, 2011).

The prominence of EMB theorisations of autism has ensured that research examining the intersection between ASCs and gender has narrowly emphasised empathising/systemising dualisms. Published qualitative research examining narrated experiences of ASCs through the analytical/political prisms offered by the sociology of men and masculinity remains scarce – although previous work has considered cultural representations *of* autistic men (Bombaci, 2005; Schoene, 2008), the experiences of

women on the autism spectrum (Davidson, 2007), and the “queering” of gender within ASC communities (Bumiller, 2008; Jack, 2012). The remainder of this chapter broadens this literature by examining gendered experiences and social positions associated with being a male on the autism spectrum using the prism of embodied capital. It will be contended that ASCs, like SCIs, interrupt access to the resources, contexts and relationships associated with dominant constructions of masculinity. The relationship between this contention, and EMB theorisations of autism, is complex. Ostensibly, arguing that ASCs interrupt, rather than facilitate, dominant renditions of gender would contradict associations with an “extreme” masculinity. However, the differing disciplinary, methodological and thematic focuses of these two contentions render this comparison difficult. It is clear, for instance, that Baron-Cohen (problematically) does not contextualise EMB theory alongside the concerns with social stratification pervading Bourdieusian social theory. It should further be recognised that Baron-Cohen explicitly articulates a narrow focus on the empathising/systemising spectrum, and rejects associations with broader constructions of gender. He notes the concern that “portraying autism as hyper-male will trigger associations of people with autism as super-macho”, but argues that this “would be a misconception, as machismo does not overlap with any exactness with the dimensions of empathising and systemising” (Baron-Cohen, 2004: 184).

This attempt to distinguish EMB theorisations of ASCs from broader constructions of masculinity is problematic for at least two reasons. Firstly, it may be that, from Baron-Cohen’s perspective, it is a “misconception” to associate the EMB with an exaggerated “machismo”, but it is a misconception that is invited by the selected rhetoric. Within a context disposed to imbue the neurological realm with substantial and determining power (Restak, 2009), the terminology of the “extreme male brain” seems exaggerated when applied within the context of (problematic) research suggesting incremental difference in relation to *one* aspect of gender. The semantic decision to posit an “extreme male brain” rhetorically associates ASCs with a “toxic masculinity” (Kupers, 2005), further ostracises autistic women (Jack, 2012; Krahn and Fenton, 2012: 96), and, it will be contended, misconstrues how men on the autism spectrum are situated within distributions of gendered power.

Secondly, the asserted evolutionary-biological aetiologies underpinning EMB theorisations of ASCs implicitly draw upon the argumentative/methodological structures of a raft of empirical research asserting testosterone's masculinising implications. Previous literatures have linked male androgens to aggression (Cohen-Bendahan et al., 2005), perceived dominance (Neave et al., 2003), deep vocal tone (Evans et al., 2008), masculinised facial structure (Lefevre et al., 2013), "rough and tumble" forms of play (Auyeung et al., 2009b), and sexual voraciousness (Harman, 2003). Given the diversity of those on the autism spectrum, it is undoubtable that *some* possess these traits, but previous research does not support the contention that they are consistently pronounced at a group level (Borremans et al., 2010; Bejerot et al., 2012; Smerbeck, 2015). To be clear, this argument is not validating biologically essentialist narratives surrounding the implications of testosterone. It is, rather, contending that, in light of substantially overlapping empirical methods and lines of argumentation, it is difficult to understand how EMB theory can convincingly ascribe aetiological significance to prenatal testosterone in the emergence of a distinctively "systematising" cognitive profile, while asserting the irrelevance of ostensibly interrelated research.

ASCs As Embodied Capital

In Chapter Two, the notions of physical/bodily capital were proposed as facilitating productive conceptualisations of disability, capable of negotiating limiting dualisms that have structured (simplistic incarnations of) the social model. However, at least three ambiguities may emerge when using these concepts to depict ASCs. This terminology, firstly, potentially seems inappropriate within the context of a "condition" commonly described as neurological in origin, theorised in terms of a disembodied cognitivism, and occasionally classed as a "mental illness" (Wahl, 1995: 7; De Jaegher, 2013: 4-5). Indeed, the conceptualisation of "disability" as a negatively-valued physical/bodily capital could arguably reinforce what some have described as the theoretical and political prioritisation of physical "impairments" within disability studies (Murray, 2006: 24; Osteen, 2008: 4-6). It should be stressed, again, that this approach to disability is one designed to specifically reflect this thesis' thematic interests; it may not be applicable to every impairment category.

However, an emergent literature has signified the centrality of the ASC/corporeality nexus, reflecting the rejection of previously dominant psychoanalytic tropes (Shapiro, 2000; Zimmerman, 2008) and the emergence of phenomenological perspectives highlighting the discontinuous enculturation of the autistic body (De Jaegher, 2013; Eigsti, 2013). As more comprehensively elucidated in Chapter Eight, while the “triad” of traits used to define ASCs (social/communicational/stereotypical) are commonly interpreted in limitedly cognitivist terms, the situation of those on the autism spectrum might be elucidated through a consideration of the “embodied knowledges” emphasised by Bourdieu (1977b, 1990a). Further, as noted by Hanne De Jaegher (2013: 1), a range of “secondary” characteristics associated with ASCs are experienced through the realm of the corporeal, including “hypo- and hyper-sensitivities”, as well as evidence of “difficulties with the timing, coordination, and integration of movement and perception, painfulness of certain stimuli, muscle tone differences, rigid posture, movement, attention, and saliency problems, (and) differences in bodily coordination during social interactions”. Research also highlights links between autism and gastrointestinal problems (Horvath and Perman, 2002), and patterns of “self-stimulatory” movement (e.g. hand flapping, rocking, spinning)(Boyd et al., 2012). Recognising the distinctive nature of ASCs, which render static conceptual dualisms between mental/corporeal especially problematic, this thesis employs the terminology of “embodied capital” to reflect the legacy of sociological theorisations of “embodiment” stressing experiential and social *interconnections* between mind/body (Grosz, 1987, 1994; Csordas, 1999).

The conceptual positioning of ASCs as a negatively-valued “embodied capital” may, secondly, be problematised by the connotations of capitalist property relations that contractually separate “owner” and “owned”. The metaphorical splintering of autism from the self has an extended history, particularly through the construction of ASCs as figurative “shells”, from which “a normal (sic) individual (is) waiting to emerge” (Frith, 1993: 114). Spatialised interpretations of ASCs as an entrapment, or psychodynamic “retreat” from oppressive social conditions, have several implications: underpinning programs of biomedical normalisation; prioritising individualised interventions over the interrogation of cultural norms; and shaping community understandings of ASCs as a personal tragedy (Broderick

and Ne'eman, 2008: 465-6; Waltz, 2003: 1-4). While not replicating discourses of “entrapment” in their entirety, the logic of property ownership shares a conceptual resonance surrounding the ontological separability of “ASCs” from the “self”. “Autism”, writes Jim Sinclair (2013) “isn’t something that a person *has*, or a “shell” that the person is trapped inside. [...] Autism is a way of being. It is not possible to separate the person from the autism”.

Bourdieu’s theorisation of capital helps to clarify this ambiguity. Bourdieu (1986: 241) distinguishes “materialised” forms of capital, which replicate the owner/owned distinction, from “incorporated” or “embodied” capital, within which socially (dis)valued properties are integral to the self. This “embodied” form can be represented through Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of cultural capital’s role in the reproduction of social inequality within academic contexts. Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1996c) contends that success within educational institutions significantly depends upon the enactment of culturally learned styles that replicate expectations embedded within prevailing matrices of academic evaluation. The propensity to approximate these standards is *learned* through familial relations, but reified, or “misrecognised”, within educational contexts as natural talent through ideologies of the “gifted” student (Bourdieu, 1996c: 9-53; Dumais, 2002: 44-5). For Bourdieu, the habituated incorporation of educationally valued styles involves a particular *mode of being*; students from privileged backgrounds are not “performing” traits as an explicit ruse to manipulate pedagogical authorities, but have internalised the expectations of elite schooling systems in an experientially “naturalised” manner through familial learning. Embodied capital, subsequently, need not reproduce the owner/owned dualism, but may reflect traits that are deeply embedded within, and inseparable from, the self.

This argument raises a third ambiguity surrounding *aetiology*. Bourdieusian (1986, 2000b) sociology characteristically emphasises *social* forces underpinning inequitable distributions of positively valued capital, interrogating how extant relations of stratification are naturalised through historically specific dispersals of resources. This logic may be seen as supporting “environmental” accounts of ASCs as social in origin, which remain controversial within both academic research and the neurodiversity movement (Currenti, 2010; Garen, 2014). However, “non-social” aetiological accounts are not

inherently inconsistent with conceptualisations of ASCs as a negatively-valued form of embodied capital. ASCs might be conceived, to repeat Loïc Wacquant's (1995b: 66-70) phrase, as an "inherited somatic endowment", that is experienced through, interacts with, and needs to negotiate, historical processes, without being, in the first instance, determined by them. In light of continuing controversy, this thesis maintains a stance of self-conscious agnosticism in relation to the causal factors contributing to ASCs (Garen, 2014: 62).

Hard-Wired Difference, Self-Discovery and The Autobiographical Autistic Self

The remainder of this chapter will broaden the thematic horizons of extant literatures examining the nexus between ASCs and gender by examining how autistic embodied capital interrupted social performances constitutive of hegemonic masculinity within contemporary Western contexts. In certain respects, this resonates strongly with the gendered social position associated with SCI discussed in Chapter Four. Yet, being a lifelong developmental "condition", rather than an "acquired" impairment, the inhibited capacity to maintain socially valued renditions of masculinity generally did not manifest as radical "biographical disruptions" (Bury, 1982; Ostrander, 2008b: 586). Indeed, narrators overwhelmingly interpreted ASCs as innate and stable forms of "hard-wired" difference.

Within this sample, the average age of diagnosis (26.8 years) was significantly higher than recent data would predict (Baio, 2010; Bent et al., 2015). These late diagnoses likely reflect the generic tendency to publish autobiographies later in life, the methodological preclusion of authors under eighteen years of age, the cohort effect of growing up prior to recent increases in childhood diagnosis, and the over-representation of "higher-functioning" subjects (King and Bearman, 2009; Matson and Kozlowski, 2011). Narrators were subsequently more likely to have experienced youth within a context characterised by: a lack of emphasis on "early intervention"; underdeveloped community awareness; understandings of autism in categorical, rather than spectral, terms; and concerns surrounding the social implications of "labelling" (Mandell et al., 2005; King and Bearman, 2009). Within these historical/biographical parameters, diagnosis with an ASC was associated, among this sample, with a range of discourses emphasising self-discovery, fulfilment, and newfound "authenticity" (cf. Huws and Jones, 2008: 102-4). *Christopher Goodchild* (2009: 'Epilogue', Loc. 1000) writes that prior to diagnosis he

was “far removed” from his “deepest nature” by a “cloud of unknowing”; *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 230), upon receiving a diagnosis with Asperger’s Syndrome, writes of an “overwhelming feeling of completeness”; while *Richard Lewis* (2009: Chap. 2, Loc. 501) describes himself as moving from the “darkness of ignorance to the light of good information”, with diagnosis acting as the “portal to an authentic life”.

These representations of essential autistic selves (Davidson and Smith, 2009) might be interpreted as related to modernist paradigms of identity (Taylor, 1992), and generic features of autobiographical life writing (Honneth, 2004). Accounts of coming to self-identify with an ASC often appropriated narrative structures akin to the *Bildungsroman*, with difficult life experiences fostering positively valued forms of change and/or self-knowledge (Moretti, 2000). Viewed through the disciplinary lens of sociology, these self-representations incite multiple questions deserving further consideration, including: whether the autistic self is “innate”, constructed through social relations, or involves complex interdependencies between biology/culture (Cheslack-Postavaa and Jordan-Young, 2012); whether identification with medical categories reflects liberating authenticity, or disciplinary regulation (Foucault, 2008); and the extent to which constructions of authentic self-discovery underestimate the complexity of “self-labelling” (Huws and Jones, 2008: 102-4). Yet, in temporal terms, these narratives suggest that diagnosis, rather than acting as an “interruption” to pre-existing social positions, was experienced as cohering with a biographically entrenched set of circumstances.

The gendered implications of autistic embodied capital will be elucidated through Thomas Gerschick’s (1998) previously introduced five-fold typological discussion of disabled masculinities. The following argument is necessarily limited as a consequence of space constraints, with analyses of the intersection between ASCs and, for instance, employment or sexuality, potentially warranting entire theses. As such, the following sections offer a somewhat selective discussion of the various ways ASCs establish difficulties in the performance of hegemonically valued masculinities. To pre-empt contentions more fully developed within the following two chapters, the approach offered here specifically examines the replication of “external” standards of gendered evaluation extant within the broader culture, rather than the “internal” understandings of masculinity possessed by narrators. The

Bourdieuian (1990a: 67, 1998: 76-7) theorisation of capital is explicitly intended to reconcile dualisms between “external”/“internal” forms of value: through the incorporation of invisible knowledges (“*habitus*”), we learn to value (“*illusio*”) what is valued within encompassing social relations (“*field*”). Yet, among individuals on the autism spectrum, Bourdieu’s presumed reciprocity between habitus and field becomes vexed, with this group appearing to be characterised by a distinctive (but only partial) “imperviousness” to the internalisation of socially prevalent forms of normative evaluation. Themes relating to the more “subjective” negotiation/understanding of gender among men on the autism spectrum will be elucidated at greater depth in the following chapters.

Labour

Relative to the general population, and other disability groups (Roux et al., 2013), people on the autism spectrum characteristically possess fragmented relationships with the labour market, involving high rates of unemployment/underemployment (Hurlbutt and Chalmers, 2004: 215; Burgess, 2014), job statuses incommensurate with educational attainment (Taylor and Seltzer, 2011: 569-70), and precarious, poorly paid work (Baldwin et al., 2014: 2440). These experiences were well documented within the material under consideration. *Christopher Goodchild* (2009: ‘Postscript’, Loc. 1175) writes of having “no material security”; *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 185) describes being “reduced to an odd job man”; *Scott Verbout* (2013: Chap. 1, Loc. 76-7) discusses his experiences of “inadequacy, worthlessness and depression” after becoming unemployed; while *Doug Milne* (2012: Chap 15, Loc. 2372, 2612) refers to being relegated to “menial employment” with no “promotional future”.

While the conspicuousness associated with SCIs mitigated the long-term prospect of “passing” as non-disabled, the “invisibility” of (some variants of) ASCs engendered an ambivalent set of workplace prospects (Davidson and Henderson, 2010a: 156): revealing one’s position on the autism spectrum underpinned possibilities for discrimination, while “passing” as neurotypical limited access to accommodations facilitating long-term employment (Hurlbutt and Chalmers, 2004: 220). *Marc Rivera* (2013: Chap. 14, Loc. 592), for instance, suggests many employers rescind workplace opportunities on the basis of diagnosis, writing that “once employers learn you have autism, you are done”. The stereotypes associated with ASCs, including a lack of reliability, difficulties with emotional self-

regulation, communicational issues, underdeveloped intellect, and problems negotiating interpersonal relationships, were often perceived by others as prohibiting the possibility of employment (Davidson and Henderson, 2010a: 155-6). *Richard Lewis* (2009: Chap. 1, Loc. 121-3) writes:

(Y)ou could possess youth and tertiary qualifications as you embark on a career to gain, amongst other things, financial security. You could be foolish if you broadcast through the job application process that you have Asperger syndrome. It could hinder your chances. You don't have to mention Asperger syndrome on job applications!

These recommendations of “qualified deception” (Davidson and Henderson, 2010a: 160) are rendered meaningful within the context of prevailing neurotypical labour market expectations. Yet, “passing”, either due to the absence of diagnosis or the decision to avoid identity revelation, tended to ensure that employment difficulties were dismissed as “faults” of personal character, a dearth of assistive accommodations, and the modelling of employment responsibilities on the standard “neurotypical worker” (Nesbitt, 2000). *Doug Milne* (2012: Chap 15, Loc. 2422-5), for instance, notes that what he describes as autistic introspectiveness persists regardless of identity closure, potentially creating problems for “unsuspecting co-workers”:

Employers have the right to know that Autistics are NOT, by nature, team players.

It would be wonderful if Jobcentres and recruitment agencies were similarly aware, and willing to make accommodation for the syndrome when assessing (a) client's job suitability.

The practice of disclosure subsequently entailed an ambiguous set of prospects when placed within workplace cultures, both exposing individuals to the possibility of discrimination, while potentially underpinning interventions designed to avoid placing a figurative “square peg (the person with autism) into a round hole” (Graetz, 2010: 44).

The use of interviews to allocate employment opportunities created substantial difficulties for many narrators (Müller et al., 2003; Stankova and Trajkovski, 2010: 20-1). A repeated concern was the conflation of neurotypical modes of embodiment/sociality with workplace competence; as *Doug Milne* (2012: Chap 15, Loc. 2361) suggests, “(a)utistic body language hardly inspires confidence in a prospective employer”. Manifestations of anxiety, difficulties sustaining eye contact, misinterpreting figurative language, responding slowly to enquiries, or the lack of vocal modulation, were commonly

associated with practical ineptitude. *John Olson* (2006: Chap. X, Loc. 1168-9), for instance, seeks work in a political organisation. Despite pursuing tertiary qualifications in the political sciences, and demonstrating commitment to relevant social values, his application is rejected, with his interviewer suggesting he needed to improve his “presentation skills”, and to “show good eye contact and project confidence”. John describes the persistence of similar responses, with limited eye contact, nervousness, and a fidgety appearance consistently engendering negative perceptions. Interview contexts, further, often require abstract or hypothetical modes of expression, involving the representation of alternate realities. *Daniel Tammet* (2006: Chap. 8, Loc. 1949-51) notes that the tendency towards “literal mindedness” (Happè, 1995; Dennis et al., 2001) may render these rhetorical expectations difficult to negotiate:

Questions in an interview can [...] be hard to follow and answer adequately. Several of the questions I was asked in my interview related to hypothetical situations, which I found difficult to imagine and could only reply to briefly. It would be a lot better if questions instead focused on actual past experience.

Within emergent post-Fordist workplace cultures (Hughes, 2005), emotional/interpersonal “competence” is central to the maintenance of employment (Jack, 2014: 110-1), surrounding relationships with both work colleagues and customers/clients (Müller et al., 2003; Hurlbutt and Chalmers, 2004: 218-9). The negotiation of the interpersonal within employment situations was frequently a source of conflict for narrators. *Richard Lewis* (2009: Chap. 8, Loc. 1334-5) describes spending “an inordinate portion of (his) time and energy thinking about friction and rejection” with colleagues; *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 124) writes that his attempts “to fit in were met with ridicule, bemusement and, at times, irritation”; while *Paul Isaacs* (2012: ‘Supermarket Madness’, Loc. 852-931) is forced to leave his position at a supermarket as a consequence of workplace bullying. Conflicts with colleagues stemmed from multiple factors, including interpersonal misunderstandings, difficulties negotiating informal cultures, requesting too much (or too little) assistance, seeming lazy/careless, or perceptions of over-reaction to “incidental” problems. *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 11-3) writes of how

persistent difficulties negotiating communicative subtleties within the workplace undermined his confidence, despite the competence with which he could complete formally assigned tasks:

I can do the job they interviewed me for. But I'm now worrying that (colleagues have) noticed the things I *can't* do. [...] (E)very now and then my brain freezes and I literally cannot think. And the more anxious I get about it, the worse it goes. Sometimes I can see people puzzling over something I've said or not said. I often don't realise until I get the reaction – or non-reaction – that I've had an Asperger moment. They make me want to burst into tears and cower in a corner.

The importance of producing experientially rewarding interactions with clients/customers through “emotion work” (Hochschild, 1979; Brotheridge and Grandey, 2002) also created difficulties for narrators (Hagner and Cooney, 2005). *Mark Hogan* (2012: Chap. 14, Loc. 590-4), for instance, describes employment at a petrol station, suggesting that the work duties involved were at one level “easy”, but also a “huge challenge” for him, particularly in negotiating exchanges with customers. Mark experiences interpersonal rituals that may be automatic for neurotypical employees (eye contact, small talk, and handshaking) as instigating substantial patterns of anxiety:

I was so damn awkward with people and it was noticeable but I couldn't help it. I was constantly getting into trouble for not saying hello to the customers and how are you what a lovely day how's the wife and kids, but I honestly didn't care so why do I have to ask. [...] Then I would get into trouble for not looking at the customers in the eye and shaking their hand. God, I really hated it. It was so damn stressful (Chap. 14, Loc. 596-604).

The disjointed histories of workplace participation described by most narrators had substantial implications in terms of replicating constructions of masculinity associated with economically productive breadwinning (Kimmel, 2010; Thébaud, 2010), and fed into difficulties enacting models of “ruggedly” independent self-management.

Independence and Control

Fragmented relationships with the labour market commonly rendered narrators dependent upon the support of personal networks and/or government organisations in the pursuit of financial stability, but also for tasks of daily living, the negotiation of institutional structures, and participation within

interpersonal interactions (Howlin et al., 2005; Eaves and Ho, 2008). The moral virtue ascribed to self-reliance within the context of neoliberal, masculinist societies tended to stigmatise dependency as a personal deficiency, rather than the consequence of historically specific modes of (neurotypical) social organisation (Addis and Mahalik, 2003; Wilcock, 2014). Narrators, reflecting these values, commonly employed severely moralistic self-judgements to describe receiving help. *Cristiano Camargo* (2012: ‘Let It Be/A Mutant Father’, Loc. 1528-9, 2467-9) recalls the intense “debasement” experienced while relying upon family members for financial support in the aftermath of short-lived periods working in sales and teaching:

I was showing to be impotent and incompetent to reach my independence [...] (I) f you are financially and emotionally dependent (on your) father you are somewhat to the margins of society and life, you have no autonomy, freedom, and you feel you are living even deeper in the basements of life.

Narrators reported receiving forms of assistance from state welfare organisations, including unemployment benefits, access to job-location programs, engagement in “work for the dole”-style schemes, supervision/support within educational environments, and funding for mental health services (Taylor and Seltzer, 2011). *Doug Milne* (2012: Chap 17, Loc. 3184-6) and *Paul Isaacs* (2012: ‘Supermarket Madness’, Loc. 928-30) evince the self-perceived devaluation associated with receiving institutionalised forms of support:

DM: (S)igning on the ‘dole’ meant submitting to an underclass that was seen as every bit as disdainful now, as it would have been if applying for ‘poor relief’ 150 years ago. The only difference being that, whereas the Victorians would have shunted you off to the Workhouse, now you are just given money and treated as if you belong in one.

PI: I was put on Jobseeker’s Allowance. This was awful; they treated me with no respect and I hated going there. I was put down for my apparent lack of effort and not filling in the book properly.

Exchanges of support between family members are, in one sense, culturally normative (Spencer and Pahl, 2004); yet, the specific demands of ASCs entailed qualitatively and quantitatively distinct forms of assistance that engendered dilemmas. Narrators commonly described feeling “over-protected” by

caregivers, an experience emerging at the intersection between privileged models of masculinity esteeming the autonomous and self-reliant subject, and the cultural positioning of disability in terms of vulnerability (Valentine, 1999: 172-4; Joseph and Lindegger, 2007). Concerns surrounding the completion of practical tasks, the development of social relations, the capacity for emotional self-regulation, the sensory environment, and the potential for exploitation, were described as motivating others to act in ways that were benevolent in intent, but experienced as controlling and/or condescending. *Cristiano Camargo* (2012: ‘An Existentialist Mother/On The Appreciation Of ...’, Loc. 2793-4, 3182-4), for instance, rejects associations between ASCs and childhood, suggesting that the valorisation of a non-autistic “maturity” is a cultural fiction. These tropes strongly reflect the analysis of the gendered significance of childhood/boyhood discussed in Chapter Five:

My mother, in all my life, always saw me as if I was a kid, and always treated me childishly, denying me autonomy. [...] To the people who are prejudice(d) against Asperger individuals, treating us like children, and thinking we are childish and immature in our attitudes and behaviours, I have an answer for it, as no person alive will be ever 100% mature and emotionally balanced.

These patterns of “over-protection” could contribute to a dearth of independent life experiences, that established difficulties with confidence, considered risk-taking, and the development of social “know-how” (Koller, 2000: 129). *Mark Hogan* (2012: Chap. 8, Loc. 330-2), for instance, writes of his parents:

Not giving me a chance and shutting me down at every opportunity and not letting me learn the hard way and find out for myself made life very hard for me. They wrapped me up in too much cotton wool.

These discourses were often (implicitly or explicitly) gendered, with the individuals engaging in “caring” practices usually (although not exclusively) figured as female. The tendency to focus on women within this context perhaps reflects both the material “fact” of inequalities in the distribution of the domestic, therapeutic and caring labour undertaken within the context of ASCs (Meredith, 2003), as well as surrounding “Oedipal” imperatives requiring men to “break” from female protection (Chodorow, 1999). *Doug Milne* (2012: Chap 29, Loc. 5352-5) captures this logic with the figure of

“Daphne Doesgood”, a satirical magazine character, who expresses herself through a form of “suffocating” benevolence:

(T)he redoubtable do-gooder Doesgood is the complete opposite (of a bully); though, paradoxically, just as harmful. The personification of the adage that “the path to hell is paved with good intentions” – however well meaning the motive.

In the Doesgood world the disabled NEED to be looked after; going about the task with cringe-worthy zeal.

These experiences of “over-protection” should be interpreted as arising at the intersection between ASCs, encompassing social environments structured in ableist terms (Thomas, 2004a; Shakespeare, 2006: 54-67), and the intense neoliberal regulatory expectations requiring self-reliance as a condition of legitimate personhood. The absence of the institutional structures and cultural norms that may foster independence for individuals on the autism spectrum, combined with the persistence of moralising, masculinist discourses constructing the receipt of assistance as a form of self-degradation, tended to position this group in a social vacuum, both acknowledging the significance ascribed to “self-reliance”, but lacking the encompassing context to facilitate it.

Sexuality

Patterns of interpersonal exclusion often appeared to inhibit the development of sexual/romantic insights within peer relations (Nichols and Blakely-Smith, 2009: 73; Gougeon, 2010: 353-4). Several narrators identified difficulties acquiring knowledges needed to negotiate these contexts, including how to approach potential partners, the practicalities of intercourse, and the interpretation of sexual terminology. *Bill Furlong* (2012: Chap. 2, Loc. 156-7) writes that, as a teenager, “(m)any of the girls and many of the boys seemed sexually more aware than I was”; while *Cristiano Camargo* (2012: ‘A Traumatic Discovery ...’, Loc. 2151) recalls that, as a young adult, he did not have “any idea of the real mysteries of a female body”. This sexual naivety could be exacerbated by conceptions of male autistic sexuality primarily in terms of control, fear, and danger (Van Bourgondien et al., 1997; Wilson et al., 2010), and the “over-protective” repression of engagement in sexualised realms by parents, carers and educators (Barnett, 2014). Within this ethic, *Alexander Hubbard* (2012: Chap. 2, Loc. 352-3) receives advice from

an authority figure at school suggesting that *all* forms of interaction with females are to be avoided: “I was talking to girls at Eckstein [...] (b)ut my new aid told me that I shouldn’t talk to girls”.

These patterns of regulation reflect complexities involved in validating rights to sexual experience, while simultaneously managing the immensely problematic behaviours engaged in by some men on the autism spectrum (Sullivan and Caterino, 2008: 381-2). Research has documented the ways this group may interact with (perceived) potential romantic/sexual partners in hostile, insistent, unreciprocated, and, in some instances, aggressive manners (Hellemans et al., 2007: 260-1; Mehzabin and Stokes, 2011: 614-5). These actions may not be intentionally malevolent, but rather reflect difficulties “reading” interactional complexities (Gougeon, 2010: 340-5; Ballan, 2012: 679). To pre-empt insights developed over the following two chapters, it might further be stated that patterns of sexual violence/harassment/aggression (which are exceedingly common among *non-autistic* men) could be interpreted as emerging at the *intersection between* autistic traits and surrounding gendered cultures, rather than stemming innately from ASCs themselves. Several narrators reported difficulties artfully negotiating interactions within sexualised domains. *Scott Verbout* (2013: Chap. 11, Loc. 969-97), for instance, reports being the subject of sexual harassment complaints within the labour market, resulting in the termination of his position as a copyeditor. He writes:

Among the complaints were that I had complimented my co-worker on something she was wearing (a conversation starter, I figured) and that I hung around the production room more than she thought I should have. [...] (A)ccording to one complaint, this female co-worker didn’t like the way I “looked” at her. What does that mean? I wasn’t aware that I had “looked” at her in any certain way.

Men engaging in sexual harassment characteristically underestimate the severity of their behaviours as a way of assuaging culpability (De Judicibus and McCabe, 2001), and, as such, this account should be interpreted with caution. Yet, difficulties reading social cues and responses are consistent with “core” (Ballan, 2012: 676) symptoms associated with ASCs. Even overtly aggressive behaviours could be described in terms suggesting a lack of awareness of sexual appropriateness. *Alexander Hubbard* (2012), for instance, reports engaging in non-consensual, inappropriate, and sometimes violent manners

towards women. These include touching a female teacher's body (Chap. 2, Loc. 238) and physically assaulting an ex-girlfriend (Chap. 2, Loc. 636-45). Despite the blatantly problematic nature of these incursions, Alexander describes bewilderment at the implications of his behaviour:

I scared them away and I don't know why I did that. I think I made the girls uncomfortable.

[...] I don't like to scare people; but they say I always do. [...] I just wanted to be friendly and seem calm to others (2012: Chap. 2, Loc. 305-7).

Difficulties negotiating sexual "appropriateness" coexisted alongside distinctive vulnerabilities to manipulation (Mandell et al., 2005), transgressing expectations of control/dominance associated with privileged renditions of male sexuality (Potts, 2001; Simon and Gagnon, 2003). A dearth of sexual knowledge could result in the limited reinforcement of legitimate expectations surrounding the appropriateness of others' actions. The consequences of this are potentially compounded by the tendency for (some) individuals on the autism spectrum to internalise constructions of their own interpretations of social life as inaccurate and/or inappropriate, undermining possibilities for self-assertion (Nichols and Blakely-Smith, 2009: 79; Kalyva, 2010: 436). Socio-communicational barriers may obstruct sexualised incursions from being reported, or, in some instances, believed (Mandell et al., 2005: 1360; Morton, 2009; Gougeon, 2010: 352-3). Finally, individuals on the autism spectrum may occupy hierarchically organised and sequestered environments that generate opportunities for abuse (within relationships with medical professionals/care workers, institutions, and/or group homes [Mandell et al., 2005: 1360]). *Christopher Goodchild* (2009: 'Station Four Mother', Loc. 362-98) describes his relationship with a doctor while mistakenly receiving treatment for schizophrenia:

He paid me great compliments [...] although most of them centred on my looks. [...] Over the following two years, the camera would become a major feature in our sessions, and would eventually lead to me having to take all my clothes off and watch pornographic videos with him. This led in turn to sexual contact between us. I felt outraged and bitterly let down and yet powerless to stop him, because I felt that if I were to say no, he would condemn me as mad and send me back to the hospital.

Paul Isaacs (2012: 'The Child Minder', Loc. 411-2), similarly, describes being bullied while under the supervision of a child minder. He writes elsewhere of his difficulties interpreting behavioural

appropriateness, and his tendency to comply with the demands of others, traits that are, in this instance, exploited in a sexualised manner:

They told me to pull down my trousers with which I complied (and) they started laughing at my genitals (I had recently been circumcised). This confused me because all I could hear was this wall of noise which upset me.

Finally, several narrators described difficulties maintaining long-term relationships. The historical development of companionate models of love (Giddens, 1992; Amato, 2004), characterised by an ideal of egalitarian emotional/social reciprocity, and “intimate” practices of self-revelation (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Bank and Hansford, 2000), created certain problems for the men on the autism spectrum under consideration. The desire for control over one’s environment, problems identifying and expressing emotions, and histories of interpersonal conflict and exclusion, commonly rendered the performance of socially legitimated “closeness” within relationships challenging. *Christopher Goodchild* (2009: ‘Station 5 Being Helped’, Loc. 436-42), for instance, writes of his first long-term relationship. He specifically identifies how the need to develop socially appropriate facades to “pass” within neurotypical contexts undermined his sense of self within the context of relationships:

I had unconsciously always associated intimacy with feelings of outrage and violation. Trust was impossible for me to experience. [...] The anxiety I had around managing the relationship was immense. How could it not be? I had no sense of self, only a shell and a handful of personas at my disposal. Subsequently I would suffer from ongoing bouts of depression and nervous exhaustion.

Scott Verbout (2013: Chap. 7, Loc. 499-501), alternatively, describes difficulties negotiating the distribution of familial responsibilities. He explores feeling “lost” and personally inadequate as a consequence of his lack of an “automatic” understanding of the skills and expectations associated with fatherhood, and the marital difficulties this engenders:

(I)t seemed Teresa expected me to do things automatically, without having to be told. Well, I hadn’t been around babies that much before we had ours, so I really didn’t know how to take care of one. I always tried my best, but I got the impression that Teresa expected me to do more.

While the material presented within this section belies influential stereotypes associating ASCs with asexuality and/or an absence of interest in romance (Tissot, 2009; Gougeon, 2010), it simultaneously demonstrates the particular tensions confronted by men on the autism spectrum in the development of the long-term reproductive relationships and gendered sexual scripts privileged within contemporary Western contexts (Rubin, 1984).

Embodiment

The “embodied” approach to ASCs developed within this thesis renders the sequestration of “the corporeal” to a distinct domain of social life a necessarily problematic endeavour. While recognising the potential for this approach to underestimate the ubiquitously embodied nature of all social domains/experiences, three specific themes within the material under consideration related, in the first instance, to the body and its interactions with encompassing gendered cultures for men on the autism spectrum.

An Overwhelming Sensory Universe

As noted within previous examinations of autobiographical material, atypical sensory experiences appear central to the experience of social life for individuals on the autism spectrum (O’Neil and Jones, 1997: 283-7; Iarocci and McDonald, 2006: 79). Previous work has identified sensory issues relating to: “distortions in the perception of physical objects; fluctuating sensory tune-outs or blanking of sound or vision; overload of the senses; multichannel perceptions [...]; difficulties in processing stimulation of more than one of the senses at any given time, as well as difficulties in recognising the channel through which stimulation is being received” (Jones et al., 2003: 113). Sensorily overwhelming experiences were common within the narrated material under consideration. These included strong aversions to loud noises, specific sounds, images, colours, the tactile feel of certain clothes, human touch, bright lights, crowded spaces, group interactions, and social environments characterised by frenetic movement. *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 22), for instance, writes:

I was perpetually nervous, frightened of everything. I hated trains going over railway bridges whilst I was underneath, I was frightened of balloons bursting, the suddenness of party poppers

and the crack made by Christmas crackers. I was very cautious of anything that might make an unexpected loud noise.

As Will's quotation suggests, occupying an intense, unpredictable and sensorily "out of control" world commonly precipitated nervousness and/or anxiety (Jones et al., 2003: 115-7), disrupting the masterful "ease" associated with masculinity within contemporary Western cultures (Brannon, 1976: 161-2). As *Christopher Goodchild* (2009: 'Introduction/Station 1 Condemned', Loc. 101-155) stresses, sensory issues may inhibit social participation, rendering ostensibly mundane contexts "bewildering":

I felt like a bewildered stranger, often drowning in a tidal wave of sensation. People, places and things would melt and blend like a surrealist painting. Words and sounds would scream at me and then like magic somehow melt away. [...] For me it made perfect sense to remove myself from all social interaction. This way I felt safe from a world that was strange and alien to me.

Non-normative forms of sensory integration disrupted the comfort with which narrators could negotiate social locales associated with the enactment of positively valued forms of masculinity, as suggested concretely below in relation to sport.

ASCs Becoming Visible

As noted earlier, ASCs are sometimes described as "invisible", particularly for those on the "higher functioning" end of the spectrum, for whom "passing" as neurotypical becomes a substantive possibility (Davidson and Henderson, 2010a: 156). Where other physical, developmental and sensory disabilities may be incongruent with ableist male beauty standards (Shakespeare, 1999, 2000), ASCs are not *necessarily* stigmatised in relation to physical appearance. Yet, in at least three distinct ways (the last discussed in the following section), ASCs did interfere with the replication of hegemonic ideals of male beauty. Firstly, several narrators described the absence of personal investments in the routines and self-discipline required to "produce" culturally idealised appearances. *John Olson* (2006: Chap. X, Loc. 1103), for instance, writes that "(l)ike many with (Asperger's Syndrome), I cared little about how I looked and nothing of what people thought". This lack of subjective "investment" in appearance could mean that the aesthetic management of one's body was perceived as irrelevant and/or a waste of time (Tomchek

and Dunn, 2007: 196). *Paul Isaacs* (2012: ‘The Trip To Shorten Hills Lodge’, Loc. 514-6), for instance, writes of a school trip:

I didn’t understand that I had to wash or change my clothes, so for that whole week the soap and soap dish were untouched and my clothes as neatly packed as they were at the beginning of the week to the end of the week. I must have been the smelliest child on the bus.

The “visibilisation” of ASCs occurred not only through a disinclination to replicate standards of beauty and hygiene, but also, secondly, through engagement in self-stimulating behaviours (“stimming”). These are repetitive movements, vocalisations, or tics that may be used to express or externalise emotional and/or sensory experiences, or manage environments experienced as excessively or insufficiently stimulating (Nolan and McBride, 2015). While not radically distinct in function from legitimated behaviours such as pacing or fidgeting, non-normative stims (e.g. rocking, spinning, hand flapping, or echolalia) remain the target of medicalised/behavioural intervention, and can be intensely stigmatising within public spaces (Bagatell, 2010; Garen, 2014). Stimming may be interpreted by others as signalling mental illness, and result in one being treated as socially “absent” within interpersonal encounters (Sciutto et al., 2012: 181). *Jeremy Tolmie* (2012: 69), for instance, writes that, despite the possibilities for accommodation associated with being identifiably on the autism spectrum, he experiences substantial unease at being classified as “disabled”: “I get really anxious if I stim in public I do not want people to see me as disabled”. *Richard Lewis* (2009: Chap. 13, Loc. 1943-6), similarly, describes the importance of “taming” stimming behaviours in maintaining an appearance of self-control and avoiding ableism:

I noticed that I had also started to flap hands and arms to and fro in a symmetrical manner. I became aware of this and stopped doing it in public places. I tamed my behaviour so as to appear reasonably normal to all those non-autistics that heavily outnumber me. It took some awareness and willpower to do this. [...] It is a survival tactic to stop drawing attention to myself.

Bodily Comportment

Finally, several narrators described the “incorporated” implications of a life history characterised by patterns of anxiety (see Chapter Nine), and how these manifested through a distinctively “stiff” or

“rigid” mode of embodiment (Biklen and Kliever, 2006: 179). Difficulties feeling at ease with a social environment organised according to neurotypical norms appeared to inhibit corporeal “looseness”, with *Paul Isaacs* (2012: ‘Secondary School Years 7 To 9’, Loc. 680-2) describing the implications of perpetual “nerves”:

I had a stiff gait which was to do with nerves really. When I was anxious my body would stiffen up and I would subconsciously drag one of my legs. I still do that sometimes and people still comment, asking me “Do you have a bad leg?”

John Olson (2006: Chap. V, XI, Loc. 629-30, 1204), similarly, describes himself as appearing an “oddity” to others as a consequence of his “hunched” appearance:

I still looked past their faces, still spoke in a monotone, still had the awkward posture and stiff expression. [...] Hunched like Quasimodo and oblivious to my surroundings, I struck (others) as something strange and exotic.

As previously suggested in Chapter Four, these bodily comportments take on distinctively normative, or moral, connotations within contemporary Western contexts, with an upright, loose posture being associated with masculine forms of confidence, competence, strength, honour and forthrightness, and slouching/tightness signifying deceitfulness, weakness, and/or self-doubt (Bourdieu, 2001: 48).

Sport

Previous research has identified those on the autism spectrum as possessing disproportionately sedentary lifestyles (Sowa and Meulenbroek, 2012: 47; Srinivasan et al., 2014: 877, 883), and limited/fragmented histories of sporting participation (Pan and Frey, 2006; Ohrberg, 2013). Within the narratives under consideration, depictions of sporting contexts commonly employed terminologies of outright dread. *Scott Verbout* (2013: Chap. 3, Loc. 228) writes that he “almost passed out” from apprehension when confronting physical education classes; *Marc Rivera* (2013: Chap. 5, Loc. 238) describes engaging in sport at school as a “horrific ordeal”; while *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 31) writes: “I hated sport. Full stop”. ASCs have been associated with multiple corporeal traits that may be limiting within athletic contexts, including embodied awkwardness and muscular stiffness (Biklen and Kliever,

2006: 178-9), difficulties with co-ordination and planning instrumental action (Srinivasan et al., 2014: 876; Conson et al., 2015), and atypical biomechanical movement patterns (Eigsti, 2013: 5). These themes were evident within the narratives under consideration, with several authors describing difficulties replicating the complex motor co-ordination required within sporting contexts. *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 31), for instance, reports resistance to playing football with a friend as a consequence of self-described difficulties co-ordinating movement:

If he couldn't find any of his other friends to play it with him, he would nag me into it. I would always buckle and play the game, all the while hating it because of my poor coordination. I couldn't kick a ball in a straight line, couldn't catch, couldn't do anything that required precision.

Bill Furlong (2012: Chap. 11, Loc. 1499), similarly, describes difficulties with the physical manipulations required within the context of martial arts training:

I was awkward with karate for a while, partly because I was new to it and partly because I was not very well co-ordinated physically.

While troubles replicating the corporeal manoeuvres required for participation within neurotypical athletic cultures were commonly described, perhaps more substantial difficulties surrounded the maintenance of sporting interpersonal relationships. *Doug Milne* (2012: Chap 18, Loc. 3290-1), a fencer, identifies his preference (commonly expressed by those on the autism spectrum [Lamb et al., 2014: 16; Sichani et al., 2015: 319]) for sports involving the absence of a “team” dynamic:

The sword allows you to be detached, is NOT a team activity, and allows for one-to-one interaction without the need to establish a rapport.

Several narrators described being bullied within sporting contexts characterised by overt and public interpersonal and athletic hierarchies (Healy et al., 2013: 224-5). *Marc Rivera* (2013: Chap. 5, 6, Loc. 238-9, 293-96), for instance, describes his experiences participating in team sports at school:

The boys would argue over whose team would be stuck with me. The humiliation and pain brought a flood of hot, stinging tears. [...] One stellar memory was of an episode in PE class. I was supposed to be on Rob's team, but of course, Rob didn't want me. The teacher made Rob accept me as a member of his team, but Rob certainly wasn't welcoming. He growled at me. Can you imagine? Rob actually growled! [...] It was a game – a stupid PE class – not Desert Storm!

Male homosocial sporting contexts are characterised by complex dynamics surrounding the management of boundaries between competition and co-operation (Messner, 1992; Kaplan, 2005). Antagonistic relationships with opponents and intra-team rivals require aggressive corporeal self-assertion in the pursuit sporting triumph; yet, competitive limits, established both by the formal rules of game, as well as implicit expectations embedded within athletic cultures, remain immensely significant (Wacquant, 1992). Being “too” aggressive can ruin a relationship of competitive homosociality, threatening to turn the ludic experience of competition into more serious conflict; while not being aggressive “enough” risks defeat, the loss of interpersonal status, and accusations of “softness” (Pringle and Markula, 2005). Men on the autism spectrum may experience problems negotiating the boundaries between acceptable/unacceptable forms of aggression as a consequence of difficulties accessing unstated cultural expectations (Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2004; De Jaegher, 2013) and reading others’ body language and/or intentions (Hadjikhani et al., 2009). *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 31, 62) describes engaging in a practice of pre-emptive competitive non-engagement as a way of protecting himself from physical injury and avoiding misunderstandings with others:

I hated the tackling, I hated the commentary, I hated the aggression, I hated the competitive spirit. [...] I was frightened of the other boys, and this was very apparent to them. Tackling was a nightmare, and I let the ball go without much of a fight, to the fury of my fellow team members.

Successful participation within team sporting environments requires the capacity to intuitively synchronise one’s own practices with the collective objectives and intentions of the squad (Eccles, 2010). The ability to instinctively understand the unstated intentions of teammates is pivotal, with the “intersubjective” ethos of the team itself potentially becoming a substantial competitive advantage. When “on the field”, the automaticity of this shared understanding is vital, in terms of maximising the efficient pursuit of collective objectives. For many narrators, these intangible “shared knowledge(s)” (Bourbousson et al., 2011: 121) remained opaque; the cacophony of actors, sounds, movements, and relationships within sporting contexts was experienced as sensorily overwhelming (Fittipaldi-Wert and Mowling, 2009: 39-40; Obrusnikova and Dillon, 2011: 123-6), obfuscating the meaningful objectives of

teammates. *Mark Hogan* (2012: Chap. 3, Loc. 179-88), for instance, describes difficulties responding to complex interactional/sensory demands while participating in soccer:

I would get confused amongst all the shouting. Some people would shout pass the ball, pass the ball. More people would shout kick it in, kick it in. Then I would kick the ball and score a goal in the opposite side, then get the shit kicked out of me by my team mates. Always in the heat of the moment this would happen to me. [...] I didn't know the rules. I thought I was doing them a favour. It took huge courage to take part. (A teammate) then said "Just fuck off Hogan. Just go, I don't want to see you again". I would feel all choked up and have a lump in my throat.

Sporting environments, central to the distribution of symbolic and material gendered privilege within contemporary Western societies (Messner and Sabo, 1994: 38; Renold, 1997; Fasting et al., 2007), were subsequently often experienced as sensorily overwhelming and socially exclusive locales for the narrators under consideration.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a consideration of the relationship between contemporary constructions of masculinity and ASCs through the conceptual prism of "embodied capital". It has been suggested that ASCs problematise access to gendered privilege within the domains of employment, sport, independence, embodiment and sexuality. These findings seemingly challenge constructions of men on the autism spectrum as bearers of a neurologically "extreme" masculinity (Baron-Cohen, 2004: 184). Conceptualising male gender relations in terms of hierarchies of differentially distributed "embodied capital" is not undertaken with the intention of representing men on the autism spectrum as inherently "diminished" (Wilson et al., 2013: 738-9). As suggested in Chapter Two, the positioning of ASCs as a negatively valued embodied capital should be understood not as stemming from intrinsic group traits, but rather as emerging at the intersection between particular modes of embodiment and encompassing (gendered) social environments (Grenfell, 2013: 284). It should, equally, be stressed that it would be facile and problematic to suggest that unequal distributions of social value within this context (between neurotypical men and men on the autism spectrum) should be resolved by equalising access to gendered privilege in relation to women.

As intimated earlier, ASCs offer something of a challenge to key themes within Bourdieusian social theory in relation to the “ontological complicity” between internalised and externalised forms of social value (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 43). “External” patterns of social devaluation should, according to Bourdieu’s logic, be intimately felt and understood as a consequence of the internalisation of taken-for-granted norms. Yet, this “knowledge” of prevailing social logics might be somewhat disrupted for individuals on the autism spectrum. It is the “alien” embodiment of this group, and its relationship with gender, which concerns the following chapter.

Chapter Eight: ASCs, Gender Copia and Alienated Masculinities

Extra-Terrestrial Selves

Contesting conceptualisations of figurative language as supplementary ornaments to literal expression, contemporary scholarship has recognised the centrality of metaphor to communication (Bowdle and Gentner, 2005: 193), both within “everyday” settings, and academic domains characteristically understood as anathema to poetic idioms (Kuhn, 1979; Latour, 2004). Metaphorical language operates by identifying “correspondences between concepts from disparate domains of knowledge” (Bowdle and Gentner, 2005: 193), associating the “target domain” (the tangible/intangible object being described) with a “source domain” (another referent sharing certain properties) (K. Moser, 2000). Susan Sontag (1978) has most influentially developed the concept of metaphor within sociological conceptualisations of health and illness, documenting how medical experiences are not defined solely through “physical realities”, but often exacerbated by harmful, moralising figurative associations (Thomas, 2005; Hacking, 2009b).

Autistic people have commonly been described as characteristically literal minded, unable to grasp figurative language’s connotative associations. This may involve overly “rational” interpretations of metaphor, difficulties understanding implied meanings, and problems using context to decipher ambiguity (Happè, 1995; Dennis et al., 2001). Within the material under consideration, several narrators recounted problems within this realm. *Matthew Kryspin* (2013: 26) describes being formally taught associative meanings within a schooling context (“An eager beaver means someone who wants to work hard at something. It doesn’t mean that someone’s a beaver”). *Barry Evans* (2015: Chap. 12, Loc. 2342-55), similarly, interrogates the perceived inadequacies of figurative language used within riddles and idiomatic phrases. Responding to the expression “actions speak louder than words”, Barry writes, “I’ve never heard an action speak”; to the phrase “having a chip on one’s shoulder, he states: “What a ridiculous thing to say, a chip, seriously? Why don’t you add a bit of sauce to that?”.

Yet, within literary works (Roth, 2008), on-line community forums (Jones et al., 2001: 396-7), and experimental settings (Happè, 1995: 286-7), it has become clear that autistic difficulties with figurative language are by no means totalising. The metaphorical subject of the *alien* has been widely employed to

capture the distinctive social and sensory experiences of people on the autism spectrum (Jones et al., 2001: 396-7; Davidson and Smith, 2009: 902; Hacking, 2009b, 2010). These alien-autistic associations were frequently replicated within the autobiographical material under consideration (Davidson and Smith, 2009: 902). *Christopher Goodchild* (2009: 'Station 13 Lamentation', Loc. 851-2) writes that "(d)oining normal things normally is an alien concept" for him; *Mark Hogan* (2012: Chap. 9, Loc. 370) states that, at school, "(k)ids really picked on you for the smallest of things and say you are not from this planet"; *Matthew Kryspin* (2013: 12) recalls feeling "like I was on another planet where I had no clue where I was"; *Travis Breeding* (2010: 'Buying Love', Loc. 1782) suggests that "I belonged on a different planet"; while *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 37) writes, "I felt like an alien, as though I had come to earth from somewhere else". More obliquely, narrators were commonly positioned as occupying their "own world", both by themselves (*Andrew Edwards* [2015: Chap. 1, Loc. 180] writes of being "trapped in my own little world"), and by others (*Daniel Tammet* [2006: Chap. 2, Loc. 319-20] is described as "being absorbed in (his) own world"). These discourses were also characterised by a "two-sided" quality (Hacking, 2009b: 55-6); the non-autistic universe could be described as an "alien" entity to narrators. *Richard Lewis* (2009: Chap. 5, Loc. 1073), for instance, talks about the "seemingly alien world of non-autistics", while *John Olson* (2006: Chap. VI, Loc. 653) describes small talk as "something from a different world, an alien and boring world".

While Hacking (2009b) ascribes metaphorical precedence to "the alien" due to its personification of an unbreachable "otherness", it should be noted that "earthbound" discourses of cultural difference were also present within the narrated material under consideration. *Christopher Goodchild* (2009: 'Introduction', Loc. 115-6), for instance, suggests that someone on the autism spectrum is akin to an individual who comes "from a different culture"; while *Benjamin Collier* (2013: 'Introduction', Loc. 128-9), describes neurotypical expectations as a "foreign language". *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 24) is "always [...] on the outside looking in"; *Andrew Edwards* (2015: Chap. 3, Loc. 471) is a "complete outsider"; *Daniel Tammet* (2006: Chap. 4, Loc. 982-3) is an "outsider" who does "not belong"; while *Marc Rivera* (2013: Chap. 3, Loc. 196) describes himself as a "stranger".

To replicate *Barry Evans'* (2015: Chap. 12, Loc. 2330-74) previously noted interrogative attitude to figurative language, we might note the limitations of these associations. Metaphors characteristically operate through an understanding of “salience”. The “target” and “source” domains cannot be identical, or the association becomes tautological (Bowdle and Gentner, 2005: 194); the interpreter of metaphor needs to identify the specific, relevant property underpinning the presented comparison. The figures of the alien and the foreigner share a language of geographical and/or cultural displacement, implying the *absence* of the comforting “homeliness” (Somerville, 1997: 227-8) involved in experientially *belonging* to the context one occupies. We may note, however, that individuals on the autism spectrum are *not* from another planet, nor are they *inevitably* migrants (although they are in many instances [Keen et al., 2010]). The specific points of “overlap” between ASCs and metaphors of cultural/geographical displacement are theoretically elucidated within the following two sections, beginning with a critique of “theory of mind” approaches to ASCs.

Critiquing Theory Of Mind Approaches

“Theory of Mind” (ToM) conceptualisations of ASCs have offered a theoretically and empirically productive research paradigm. Developed initially within research exploring a chimpanzee’s capacity to develop inferences about others’ mental states (Premack and Woodruff, 1978), ToM-based investigations rapidly became central to developmental psychology (Russell, 1992: 485) and understandings of ASCs (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985; Baron-Cohen, 1991, 2000; Sabbagh, 2004; Mason et al., 2008). Broadly, a ToM relates to the capacity to attribute mental states, beliefs, attitudes and emotions to others, and to employ these insights to predict/understand behaviour. While experimental approaches have been varied (Wellman et al., 2001: 671), dominant operationalisations of ToM have positioned the attribution of “false beliefs” to others as a (or perhaps *the* [Saxe and Kanwisher, 2010: 1836]) key indicator of the capacity to “mentalise”. Experimental designs emphasise the ability to recognise that others may hold views the “test subject” knows to be fallacious, often through some variant of the “Sally-Anne task”:

Sally has a basket and Anne has a box. Sally puts a marble into her basket, and then she goes out for a walk. While she is outside, naughty Anne takes the marble from the basket and puts it into

her own box. Now Sally comes back from her walk and wants to play with her marble. Where will she look for the marble? (Frith, 2001: 969).

Most four year olds recognise that Sally will maintain the “false belief” that the marble remains in her basket; however, individuals on the autism spectrum are more likely to believe that the “actual” position of the marble will govern Sally’s decision, rather than her *belief* (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985: 43; Frith, 2001: 969). This finding, in conjunction with supporting evidence, has been used to contend that individuals on the autism spectrum experience difficulties attributing mental states to others, and that these underpin problems engaging in imaginative play, interpreting ambiguous meanings, and developing interpersonal relationships (Baron-Cohen, 1989; Leekam and Perner, 1991).

An emergent literature suggests ToM conceptualisations of ASCs are limited in important regards, surrounding their *cognitivism*, *developmental coherence*, and “*occasionalism*”. Firstly, ToM approaches have been critiqued for placing too much emphasis on the realm of the cognitive. These assessments have primarily targeted “theory-theory” accounts of ToM (Fodor, 1987; Botterill, 1996), that position the individual as a “lay” scientist (Baron-Cohen, 1989) developing the ability to predict other actors’ mental states through “a folk-psychological theory dealing with the structure and functioning of the mind” (Zahavi and Parnas, 2003: 54; see also Frith and Frith, 2005: 644-5). Interpersonal understanding is conceived of as dependent upon a series of deductions attributing others with mental abilities resembling one’s own, and the operationalisation of ensuing principles within face-to-face encounters (Rajendran and Mitchell, 2007). “Theory-theory” approaches, to clarify, do not imply that “folk” conceptualisations of others represent *good* theories, but that they are theoretical “in nature”, involving development through evidence, the construction of hypothetical postulates, “experimental” refinement, and the generation of prediction-orientated models/systems (Russell, 1992: 486-8).

Cognitivist “theory-theory” approaches to ToM arguably fundamentally distort the nature of interpersonal interaction. To the extent that intersubjective understanding occurs, it might be primarily understood as emerging not through a series of consciously generated postulates, but rather the shared possession of implicit, “pre-reflective” knowledges (Gallagher, 2004; Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2004). Indeed, in certain respects, the “theory-theory” conceptualisation of interpersonal understanding seems

to offer an account that *resonates* with the social negotiations undertaken by people on the autism spectrum as a *substitute* for the embodied knowledges (Fuchs, 2015: 198) explored more expansively below. This is sometimes described as “hacking out” the meaning of a social situation (Frith et al., 1994: 119), a practice explored in relation to gender in Chapter Nine.

Secondly, questions have emerged surrounding the *developmental coherence* of accounts of ASCs emphasising the absence/underdevelopment of a ToM. Many on the autism spectrum *do* pass false belief tests (Frith et al., 1994: 119), although often at later ages, which has fostered a language of “delayed” capacities in the attribution of mental states, as opposed to the categorical alternatives of “having”/“not having” a ToM (Gallagher, 2004: 200; Rajendran and Mitchell, 2007: 226). It has further encouraged the development of more complex “mindreading” tasks designed for adults on the autism spectrum (for instance, “reading” emotions from depictions of human eyes [Baron-Cohen et al., 2001]).

False belief-style experimental designs, that distinguish “typically developing” four year olds from those on the autism spectrum, confront ambiguities in interpreting differences emerging *prior to* this age. Young autistic children have been described as tending to be characterised by: differences in motor development (Provost et al., 2007; Eigsti, 2013: 2-3); limited shared attention (Kasari et al., 1990; Fuchs, 2015: 195); lessened interest in social encounters and the sharing of affective experiences (Chevallier et al., 2012; De Jaegher, 2013: 9; Fuchs, 2015: 195); high levels of “anxiety” or “emotional agitation” (Fuchs, 2015: 195-6; see also Scarpa and Reyes, 2011); and the lessened predisposition to mimic the actions (or “styles”) of others (Fujimoto et al., 2011; Eigsti, 2013: 3-5). While there are debates about *precisely when* a ToM appears among “typically developing” children (Klin et al., 1992), the existence of substantial differences between individuals on/off the autism spectrum from very young ages seems to preclude the possibility that the substantial cognitive capacities required to “pass” false-belief tasks provide an entirely convincing account of the “root” of ASCs (De Jaegher, 2013: 4; Eigsti, 2013).

Finally, ToM research emphasises the confined parameters of the interpersonal situation (what Bourdieu [1977b: 81] terms “occasionalism”). “Incorrect” understandings of others are conceptualised as stemming from the failure to solve some interactional “puzzle” – or the struggle to “read”

someone's mind, eye gaze or body language. However, the temporally preceding "environmental and contextual" factors that form the *biographical preconditions* for social understanding are neglected (Gallagher, 2004: 202). Within this vein, Ochs and Solomon (2004, 2010: 77-8) distinguish between "interpersonal" and "sociocultural" processes involved in ToM, a terminological division designed to highlight the accumulated knowledge that constitutes an important background to all interpersonal interpretation. This "background" cannot be reduced to the direct "reading" of someone's facial expressions, eyes, or body language; it rather emerges through an ongoing "learning process that is based on the accumulation of experiences in a vast number of cases that result in being able to navigate the background environment according to the relative salience of each of the multitude of elements of a situation" (Klin et al., 2003: 349). The "bedrock" of knowledge underpinning interpersonal interaction can be more effectively elucidated using conceptual tools provided by phenomenological interpretations of ASCs, which resonate substantially with Bourdieusian social theory (Marcoulatos, 2001; Throop and Murphy, 2002; Atkinson, 2010).

Phenomenology, Intercorporeality and ASC Alienation

In an essay conceptualising ensemble musical performance, phenomenological sociologist Alfred Schutz (cited in Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2004: 262) proposed the concept of "attunement" to capture "a pre-categorical and pre-linguistic relationship" between subjects, spontaneously and intuitively bonding culturally proximate actors ("consociates" [Schutz, 1953/2004: 312]). "Attunement" characterises agents who share common-sense understandings; these are both *learned*, emerging through interaction, experience and history, but also *naturalised*, existing beneath the level of conscious thought and often *seeming* axiomatically "true" (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1990a). In Bourdieusian terms, we might interpret the shared, implicit understandings embedded within the habitus as pre-reflectively attuning similarly socialised individuals, ensuring culturally proximate subjects are "on the same wavelength". Employing the musical terminology of "orchestration" and "harmonisation", rather than "attunement", Bourdieu (1977b: 80) notes that these implicit social understandings are solidified when shared and reinforced by institutionalised aspects of public culture:

One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a common sense world endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on the meaning (sens) of practices and the world, in other words the harmonisation of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression [...] of similar or identical experiences.

This conceptualisation of attunement interprets interpersonal understanding as emerging not through the implementation of cognitively expressed theoretical models, but rather the possession of shared “horizons” of meaning (Gadamer, 1975/2013: 313-8). As Zahavi and Parnas (2003: 64) put it, “by conforming to shared norms, much of the work of understanding one another doesn't really have to be done by us. The work is already accomplished”.

Bourdiesian sociology is heavily indebted to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962: 174) work on phenomenal corporeality, and its commitment to the supersession of Cartesian mind/body dualisms (Marcoulatos, 2001). Both theorists reject the reduction of the corporeal form to obdurate matter, existing in space and subject to the laws of physics, and the concomitant construction of the mind as a distinct, “higher” substance (Crossley, 1995: 44-5). The body is *meaningful*, not merely as a canvas for semiotic significance, but also as an *active, meaning-generating, and knowing* participant in the negotiation of social life. It is a bodily “being in the world” that acts as the ontological precondition of perception, knowledge, experience and communication (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 92). This argument will already be familiar from Chapter Five's conceptualisation of the emotion of “shame” as an embodied knowledge (Probyn, 2000, 2004). However, for Bourdieu, this logic extends far beyond the realm of affect, to reflect an encompassing form of bodily understanding captured through the concept of the “senses” (Crossley, 1995: 53-7). The habitus, and the ensuing capacity to negotiate social life, substantially operates through:

... the *socially informed body*, with its tastes and distastes, its compulsions and repulsions, with, in a word, all its senses, that is to say, not only the traditional five senses – which never escape the structuring action of social determinisms – but also the sense of necessity and the sense of duty, the sense of direction and the sense of reality, the sense of balance and the sense of beauty, common sense and the sense of the sacred, tactical sense and the sense of responsibility,

business sense and the sense of propriety, the sense of humour and the sense of absurdity, moral sense and the sense of practicality (Bourdieu, 1977b: 124).

The concept of attunement, then, is importantly *embodied*, reflecting less the widely employed notion of “intersubjectivity”, than Merleau-Ponty’s “intercorporeality” (1964: 173; Paterson and Hughes, 1999: 603-9). Giovanni Stanghellini and Massimo Ballerini (2004: 263) suggest that attunement cannot be described outside of corporeality: “(t)he lived-body is the instrument by which the field of experience is organised, and interaction with the world and reciprocal syntonisation with other individuals take place”. When others share the same “senses”, and when similar taken-for-granted knowledges are embedded within the non-conscious parameters of the body, a feeling of “being-at-home-with” another can emerge (Bourdieu, 1977b: 82). This sense of attunement, it should be acknowledged, is not uncommonly disrupted within interactions between individuals across social cleavages (such as during encounters across differentiated class boundaries [as in the film *My Fair Lady* {1964}] or transnational migration [captured through the concept of “culture shock” {Ward et al., 2001}]).

Merleau-Ponty (1964) contends that, rather than beginning as isolated individuals who progressively recognise the “self-ness” of others, a “basic state of self-other interconnectedness” permeates the life course (Krueger, 2013: 510; see also Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2002: 104). Through what Krueger (2013) terms the “joint ownership thesis”, Merleau-Ponty argues that caregivers engage in a whole range of behaviours (“gesture, facial expression, touch, speech, and spatial proximity” [Fuchs, 2015: 193]) to promote inter-affective “in-synch-ness” with infants (Zahavi and Parnas, 2003: 64-6); and, conversely, that children typically possess “openness” to interactional learning (Krueger, 2013: 512). These foundationally embodied early experiences of “togetherness-with-others” have been captured using the concept of “primary intersubjectivity” (Trevarthen, 1988), which emerges prior to the acquisition of verbal language, and occurs through the interactive orchestration of corporeality. From a young age, babies learn to “share pleasure, elicit attention, avoid overstimulation, and re-establish contact” (Fuchs, 2015: 193). As Bourdieu (1977b: 2) would put it, these forms of learning pass chiefly from “body to body” (rather than through language), and remain “primary” to the maintenance of interpersonal connections throughout the life course (Gallagher, 2001: 91).

Where both phenomenological theorisations of intercorporeality, as well as Bourdieusian social theory, seem to ascribe the incorporation of tacit social logics with a degree of universality, ASCs have been interpreted as involving “a decrease or lack of embodiment” (Eigsti, 2013: 7), “the phenomenon of disembodiment” (Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2004: 266), or a “fundamental disturbance of the embodied self” (Fuchs, 2015: 199). This is, of course, not to say that the physical matter of an autistic body is somehow intangible, but rather that the social processes that embed meanings, understandings, knowledges, senses and intuitions into the body, seem to be less “effective” for people on the autism spectrum. This group evinces less evidence of the characteristic markers of “primary intersubjectivity” (such as inter-affective alignment, joint attention or “mirroring” behaviours [Kasari et al., 1990; Gallagher, 2004: 209-10; Fujimoto et al., 2011]), which may form the practical root of the shared embodied “senses” (Eigsti, 2013: 3). Among individuals on the autism spectrum, there is a “fracture in social life” (Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2004: 261), which is expressed as a “disturbance of bodily being-with-others and social attunement” (Fuchs, 2015: 193).

ASCs can subsequently be understood as involving an intransigence to the incorporation of the implicit, taken-for-granted knowledges that underpin attuned negotiations of social relationships (Ochs et al., 2004; Ochs and Solomon, 2004). The metaphorical relevance of the figures of the alien and the foreigner, introduced in the first section of this chapter, can subsequently be interpreted as stemming from this tendency for individuals on the autism spectrum to not fully “embody” the communal “horizons of meaning” that “attune” individuals sharing a historical, cultural and/or geographical proximity to one another (Hacking, 2009a, 2009b: 1468). The fracturing of a pre-reflective alignment with the cultural knowledges privileged within the extant social environment tends to ensure that interpersonal life becomes bewildering for this group, seemingly intimidating, high-paced and arbitrary. This is ostensibly incongruous with the comfortable, homely, “fish-in-water” dynamic that Bourdieu (1977b: 96, 1988b: 782, 1990a: 66) tends to position as the “default” mode of social life.

There is, within Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, no immediately plausible account of *how* or *why* the incorporation of this foundational “bedrock of unquestioned certainties” (Fuchs, 2015: 205) is interrupted within the context of ASCs. At one point, Bourdieu (1977b: 123-4) refers to “successfully

socialised” agents; yet the processes involved in “unsuccessful” socialisation remain obscure (and, as suggested in the following discussion, the value-laden connotations of the term “success” should be interpreted cautiously). Problems relating to the ubiquity Bourdieu seemingly ascribes to the “incorporation” of normative social logics have been identified elsewhere (Lovell, 2000: 28-33). As articulated in Chapter Five, Bourdieu (1990a: 62) contends that individuals may experience the sensation of being a “fish out of water” (possessing a habitus not well attuned to extant field environments) as a consequence of historical change, geographical movement, or disruption to social status. Yet, in these instances, an “originary” set of social relations, that individuals *had* been attuned to, is implied. Bourdieu (1984, 2001) also contends that the embodied knowledge of the habitus may be differentially *valued*, but this occurs through hierarchies within the context of prevailing social relations, not as a consequence of a disruption to the learning process itself. The question of *why* a seeming (if partial) “imperviousness” to the corporeal implications of “common-sense” social horizons emerges within the context of ASCs is not a question this thesis is capable of resolving. It is to the specifically gendered relevance of this approach to ASCs that this chapter now turns.

Gender Copia, Ataraxia and Homophobia

The previous chapter positioned ASCs as a form of negatively-valued embodied capital disrupting enactments of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). This was described as an argument from the “outside”, examining the “fit” between constructions of masculinity prevailing within contemporary Western cultures, and the practices, social relations, and predispositions possessed by those on the autism spectrum. Following Bourdieusian social theory’s logic, the modes of gendered evaluation that dominate the surrounding environment should be incorporated; “external” and “internal” manners of perceiving and valuing the self are, colloquially speaking, “two sides of the same coin” (Bourdieu, 1973: 53). Yet, the characteristic intransigence of autistic corporealities to the realm of unstated pedagogies would seemingly mitigate the “tidiness” of this dialectic between field and habitus. Utilising the autobiographical material under consideration, this section outlines three implications of this disrupted “embodiment” of prevailing social norms, underlining a certain obduracy to sex-role expectations, disrupted attunement to homosocial illuso, and patterns of homophobic censure.

Gendered Copia, Gendered Non-Sense

In her examination of how individuals with ASCs qualitatively represent their relationship(s) with gender, Jordynn Jack (2012: 3, 2014: 184) usefully introduces the concept of the “*copia*” to capture the “proliferation” of sexed terminologies/self-identifications evident within the memoirs, blogs, scientific articles, and websites she considers. Echoing the previous section’s argument, Jack (2014: 194) contends that gendered norms are often not “fully embodied” by individuals on the autism spectrum; feminine/masculine associations, dispositions, bodily comportments, categorisations and preferences that compose the neurotypical, normatively gendered habitus may not be shared. This intransigence to implicit expectations surrounding gender can foster the “heteroglossic” (Jack, 2014: 182) transgression of dimorphic sex/gender systems, allowing for a proliferation of non-normative gender identities, styles, relationships and bodily comportments (Jack, 2014: 182). Kristin Bumiller (2008: 890) argues that “the autistic person can be taken as representative of a certain kind of cosmopolitan way of being: without fixed loyalties”, and can subsequently participate in the historical inscription of “new orders of possibility” (Hawkesworth, cited in Jack, 2012: 3). Extant empirical literatures provide some credence to these claims, suggesting that a relatively high proportion of individuals on the autism spectrum identify with the umbrella categories of transgender and androgyny, or, to use pathologising medically dominant terminology, are diagnosed with “gender dysphoria” (Mukaddes, 2002; Bumiller, 2008: 977-9; Bejerot et al., 2012).

The most iconoclastic instance of this “imperviousness” to the incorporation of gendered knowledges emerged within *Paul Isaacs’s* (2012: ‘Intersexuality and Autism’, Loc. 1203) autobiography. Paul identifies as “neurologically intersex”, a status reflecting not gonadal, chromosomal or hormonal difference (Fausto-Sterling, 1993, 2000), but rather a *felt sense of self* as “gender neutral” (Barnett, 2014: 90-1, 197-205). While not entirely rejecting the sexed subject position of “male”, this is experienced by Paul with ambivalence:

Although I wasn’t born with atypical genitals I do consider myself “neurologically intersex”, in other words despite not having any obvious physical characteristics of being intersex, it’s very much how I feel inside my brain which brings me to this conclusion. I do not consider myself

male or female but “gender neutral”. [...] I do not have a gender identity as such, but still use the name I was born with. I don’t have a problem with people referring to me as “he” or “him”; it doesn’t bother me (Isaacs, 2012: ‘Intersexuality and Autism’, Loc. 1203-9).

Paul’s self-identification as “neurologically intersex” was the most radical transgression of dimorphic sex/gender classifications within the narratives under consideration. As acknowledged within Jack’s (2012: 3; see also De Vries et al., 2010) research, while higher rates of non-normative sexed self-identifications exist among people on the autism spectrum, the majority of this group associate themselves more unproblematically with the labels “female” or “male”. However, Jack’s (2012, 2014) concept of “gender copia” might be understood as signifying issues relating not only to formally stated identity categories, but more broadly, the multiple ways the disrupted embodiment of social norms contributes to gender non-conformity. While Paul was the only narrator explicitly problematising dimorphic sex identifications, more subtle gendered transgressions were persistent (Jack, 2012, 2014; Bejerot and Eriksson, 2014).

Several narrators departed from developmentally expected capacities for normative gender classification (Matthews, 1996; Egan and Perry, 2001: 451-2; Martin and Ruble, 2010: 355). *Cristiano Camargo* (2012) for instance, recalls vacationing at his extended family’s farm when ten years of age. This trip afforded him the opportunity to interact with young females outside of his immediate family, over an extended period, and within intimate settings, for the first time. His experiences while vacationing appear to have triggered Cristiano’s recognition of dimorphic modes of sex classification, as a consequence of engaging in (problematic) practices of watching his female cousins undress without their consent, and playing games of “doctors and nurses”. Where developmental evidence suggests that non-autistic infants initially employ sex/gender categories between eighteen and twenty-four months of age (Egan and Perry, 2001: 451-2; Martin and Ruble, 2010: 355-6), Cristiano describes having been previously uninterested in and/or unaware of the cultural import of these distinctions:

(I)t was a breakthrough, since before that event I even could not distinguish between boys and girls. I used to isolate myself so much from others that it was all very indifferent to me (Camargo, 2012: ‘The Exciting Cousins’, Loc. 2112-3).

Richard Lewis (2009) describes similar difficulties attributing sex categories to other children, employing gender-neutral terminology (“it”) as an alternative, and inciting negative responses due to the objectifying connotations of this language (Butler, 2004: 57-74). Significantly, where dominant links between certain colour schemes/gender identities may become spontaneous associations for neurotypical actors, for Richard this relationship requires conscious deciphering:

When I was about ten years old, and a little baby was present that was new to me, I couldn’t tell whether it was a boy or a girl. I would refer to the baby as an “it”. [...] This resulted in an expression of scold from the mother. I learned to ask whether it was a boy or a girl, and to look for colour of baby clothes: pink for girl, blue for boy! (Lewis, 2009: Chap. 1, Loc. 287-90).

As contended above, the “senses” occupy pivotal positions within Bourdieusian sociology, which emphasise the role of “embodied” dispositions in the (re)production of social stratification (Bourdieu, 1977b: 124, 1984). Following this logic, one component of the processes involved in the incorporation of patriarchal social environments might be understood as the development of a *gendered* practical sense, that renders culturally “feminised” practices, contexts, habits, appearances, preferences and interests as “not for the likes of” men (Bourdieu, 1984, 2001). Feminised social domains come to be experienced as inciting anything ranging from disinterest, mild discomfort, distaste, disgust, to overt loathing (O’Neil, 1981; Shepard, 2002; Pascoe, 2007). These dispositions act to iteratively secure male/masculine identifications (Butler, 1990; Bourdieu, 2001: 50-2), while also contributing more broadly to the devaluation of women/femininity and the reproduction of patriarchal social relations.

The uneven embodiment of gendered social norms might be understood as offering what Bourdieu (2000b: 236) terms a “margin of liberty”, allowing for participation in practices socially construed as “inappropriate”, without the barriers imposed by “internalised” self-regulations. *Scott Verbout* (2013: Chap. 6, Loc. 432-7), for instance, writes extensively of his intense devotion to female singer-songwriters, particularly Sarah McLachlan, whose music is described as being “essential to (his) well-being”. While maintaining an interest in male vocalists, he writes, “when it comes to putting all their emotions into a song, in my opinion, female singer-songwriters simply do it better”. Scott’s wife, Teresa, writes one chapter within his autobiography (an example of “auto/biographical” [Stanley, 1993]

textuality), and describes difficulties understanding Scott's interest in these performers. She suggests that it seems "odd" for an adult male to develop fervent admiration for female musicians, a belief consistent with research suggesting that men within contemporary Western societies continue to listen to female artists minimally (Martin, 1995; Davies, 2001; Millar, 2008):

I find it interesting that he seems to relate only to female singers. [...] As the Internet grew in popularity, so did Scott's obsession. He would spend time online in a Natalie Merchant chat room. [...] It seemed odd that a grown man in his 30s would be so interested in something like that (Verbout, 2013: Chap. 8, Loc. 688-90).

Travis Breeding (2010: 'Distractions and Difficulties', Loc. 186), similarly, describes a "very strange" preference for watching women's basketball, a disposition transgressing broader cultural tendencies to construct women's sports as lesser alternatives to male equivalents, and position female athletes as either sexualised objects or as "compromising" traditional femininities (Messner, 1988; Nelson, 1994; Kay and Jeanes, 2008). Travis nevertheless recounts an "obsessive" interest in his school's women's basketball team, a focus described as reflecting genuine fascination with the technical skill of the game, and its players' characters:

As I was watching the basketball games, I began to notice something thing very strange about myself. I was enjoying watching our girls' basketball team a lot more than the boys' team. [...] Basketball – in particular girls' basketball and the individual players, who were really talented and the stars of the team – became a fascination to me. I wanted to know everything about them (Breeding, 2010: 'Distractions and Difficulties', Loc. 185-91).

Within the context of the autobiographical material under consideration, the embodied senses predisposing men towards conventionally gendered practices, contexts, beliefs and styles, and away from realms of social life culturally positioned as feminine, often appeared less rigid. *Will Hadcroft* (2005) writes of his childhood preference for styles of play associated with domestic labour, despite intellectually recognising historical constructions of these practices as "women's work" (Gardiner et al., 1975; Anderson, 2000; Noonan, 2001). The homophobic regulation evidenced within the following passage will be discussed further below:

My obsession with household appliances often got the better of me and I would end up pretending to do the ironing or vacuuming. The then traditional male role simply did not interest me. I adored hoovers and washing machines! [...] One of my earliest Christmas presents was a toy Hoover which I had specifically requested. Friends Colin and Steven, who lived in my street, found this behaviour very strange indeed. “You’re not queer, are you?” they would ask, and I would just smile and say no. Of course, I had little comprehension of what they meant by “queer” (Hadcroft, 2005: 27-31).

To presage arguments developed below, autistic “immunities” to prevailing gender norms should not be regarded as comprehensive, but rather as coexisting unevenly alongside more culturally conventional incorporated knowledges. It should further be acknowledged, recognising poststructuralist/queer conceptualisations of identity as partial, incomplete, and internally divided, that these “disjunctures” in the embodiment of common-sense might be understood as existing in a relationship of continuity with neurotypical populations, rather than entirely departing from them (Jagose, 1996; Walshaw, 2013). Yet, to the extent that ASCs are defined by qualitatively and quantitatively distinctive relationships with the realm of sociality, the “disrupted” incorporation of gendered norms had substantial implications for this group.

Homosociality, Masculinity and Illusio

Male homosocial interactions have been identified by scholars within the sociology of men and masculinity as central to the production and regulation of normative gender roles (Kimmel, 1994; Plummer, 1999; Pascoe, 2007). Women’s exclusion from male interpersonal networks (whether through formalised regulations, or the informal “gendering” of particular behaviours/contexts), combined with men’s historical dominance of privileged political, economic and cultural sectors, has been identified as a contributing factor to the persistence of gender inequality (Bird, 1996; Holgersson, 2013; Fisher and Kinsey, 2014). Within interactions between men, women play pivotal roles, operating as general “others” against which masculinity is defined, allowing for the demonstration of heterosexual “prowess” (Bird, 1996; Flood, 2008), and, it should be acknowledged, increasingly both *participating in* and *contesting* previously exclusively male domains (Moore, 1999; Kimmel, 2010). Yet, as Michael Flood

(2008: 341) contends, it might be suggested that “it is, to a significant extent, other men to whom masculinity is performed, validated and/or rejected”.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, the interest in being recognised as a “man amongst men” might be understood not primarily as emerging from “conformist” peer pressure, but rather a set of internalised beliefs about the value of culturally legitimated “manhood” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 76-79). *Illusio* emerges at the intersection between the habitus, in the form of incorporated social principles, and field, in the form of encompassing power distributions and relationships, engendering an experience of becoming viscerally “caught up” in the social world, and the opportunities, rewards, and esteems that it promises (Colley and Guéry, 2015: 117-8). This *illusio* is, at one and the same time, a *collusio*, emerging not from the psychological recesses of the individual, but rather as “a deep-rooted [...] collective fantasy” that develops from, and subsequently becomes constitutive of, socially revered objectives (Bourdieu, 2008b: 7). The “*embodiment* of a particular manhood complex” (Wacquant, 1995a: 173) might subsequently be understood as reflecting a set of incorporated evaluative principles that instigate a “primordial investment in the social games (*illusio*) which make a man a real man” (Bourdieu, 2001: 48). This emerges as a desire for the esteem of others, but also, inseparably, in the beliefs individual men hold in terms of they “must do in order to live up, in (their) own eyes, to a certain idea of manhood” (Bourdieu, 2001: 48).

Within the narratives under consideration, male homosocialities often (although not exclusively, as suggested in the following chapter) appeared in distinctively negative terms, instigating responses that ranged from confusion, suspicion, and fear to outright denunciation. The precise factors contributing to these adverse responses to male homosociality should be interpreted as multiple, including: prolonged and seemingly endemic experiences of bullying primarily perpetrated by men (Van Roekel et al., 2010; Cappadocia et al., 2012); cultural expectations for women to bear disproportionate responsibility for caring and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1975, 1979; Guy and Newman, 2004); and, as highlighted within this section, the (uneven) embodiment of a masculine *illusio* underpinning investments in shared economies of gendered meaning. *Travis Breeding* (2010), for instance, describes his attitude toward the “rowdiness” of male colleagues at school. Researchers within the sociology of

education have documented the gendering of classroom behaviour, with male students tending to engage more readily in the contestation of pedagogical hierarchies in an attempt to reproduce the masculinist “virtues” of power, self-determination, independence, competence and worldliness (Connell, 1989; Roderick, 2003). Acquiescence to, or co-operation with, educational authority (disproportionately embodied through female teachers [Acker, 1995; K. Robinson, 2000]) becomes associated with a form of “feminine softness”, signalling weakness, subservience or childishness. Travis writes:

I seemed to behave more like the girls in the class. I didn't understand the behaviour of my male counterparts. I was more soft and delicate and not wanting to bother anyone or become a distraction. It often seemed to me that boys were just looking to cause trouble or to become the centre of attention. I never understood this (Breeding, 2010: 'Distractions and Difficulties', Loc. 161-3).

Without having (fully) incorporated masculinist social norms, the particular “stakes” at play within practices orientated towards the procurement of symbolic prestige may be regarded as strange, representing an experientially “foreign” set of irrational/arbitrary objectives (Bourdieu, 2000b: 151). For Travis, the masculinist *illusio* that sensitises men to the particular value associated with educational truculence, and the experience of being “caught up”, or invested, in the performance of these traits, is lost: “I never saw a reason as to why most guys had to be so tough and macho” (Breeding, 2010: 'A Dream Discovered', Loc. 778-9). These behaviours are rendered absent of their founding *raison d'être* – namely, the set of incorporated evaluative prisms (e.g. toughness, strength, control) through which men are judged, and often judge themselves – and become a seemingly irrational, anarchical belligerence.

The fragmented embodiment of a masculinist *illusio* is perhaps most effectively represented through *Will Hadcroft's* (2005) experiences during a cross-country athletics carnival. Within Bourdieu's (2001: 56) framework, the visceral interest expressed by men in sporting endeavours, both as spectators and as participants, might be understood as reflecting the outcome of learning processes that predispose men to revere “social games in which the stake is some form of domination” motivating an “obsessive exaltation of the self” (Bourdieu, 2001: 78) within interactions construed as competitive. The socially

significant, gendered symbolic “stakes” embedded within athletic contestations (Messner and Sabo, 1994; Connell, 1995; Spencer, 2014), while *intellectually* understood by Will, are devoid of an underpinning emotional investment. Witnessing the physical exertion involved in distance running, he writes:

Rather you than me. What a waste of time and energy. Utterly pointless. Just so one person can claim he’s better than the others. What’s the point of that? It’s childish. I’ve no patience with it (Hadcroft, 2005: 116).

During a race, Will is asked to stand in a particular position to mark the route for competitors, but becomes distracted when conversing with another student, and moves. The leading runner misses a turn within the course, is forced to re-trace his steps, and subsequently misses setting a new school record by a small margin. The runner, his friends and a male teacher, invested with the social value and significance associated with sporting glory, become enraged at Will, who is derogatorily referred to using a “slang word for masturbation” (Hadcroft, 2005: 117). Will describes his response to these events:

At the time I really didn’t know what all the fuss was about. I understood that it was important to them, and that I had upset them. But that was all. Competitive sport meant nothing to me. On the scale of things, when one considered what other things were happening on the Earth, when one took on board where our puny world is in relation to the surrounding galaxy, and ultimately the vastness of the universe – whether or not some boy could run faster than another boy seemed insignificant, irrelevant even (Hadcroft, 2005: 117).

The irrelevance ascribed to the realm of sport by Will might, within a Bourdieusian framework, be interpreted as a reflection of not having fully incorporated the logics of extant gendered relations; sporting achievement becomes an “illusion” or “diversion” when interpreted from the perspective of “someone who perceives the game from the outside” (Bourdieu, 2000b: 151). The “outsider” position, in this instance, reflects a tendency for socially dominant logics to not be embedded within the “pre-thematic, spontaneous and intuitive” (Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2004: 262) structures of the habitus, rendering sport a meaningless, petty “children’s game”. The culturally embedded “*collective collusion*”

(Bourdieu, 2001: 75) that invests athletic endeavours with experiential significance loses its efficacy, replaced by what Bourdieu (1998: 77) term's "the soul's indifference", or "*ataraxia*".

ASCs, Bullying, Homophobia

Prolonged exposure to bullying was an almost ubiquitous theme within the narrated material under consideration, consistent with research documenting the disproportionate rates of verbal, physical, social and cyber victimisation experienced by individuals on the autism spectrum (Cappadocia et al., 2012; Rowley et al., 2012). Multiple factors have been identified as contributing to the high rates of bullying experienced by this group, including: perceptions of "oddness" (Hebron and Humphrey, 2014); patterns of social isolation (Humphrey and Symes, 2010); corporeal habits (e.g. stimming) that may be stigmatised (Cappadocia et al., 2012); tendencies toward being overly trusting and difficulties identifying deceptive intent (Sofronoff et al., 2011); struggles with self-assertion (Nichols and Blakely-Smith, 2009: 79; Kalyva, 2010: 436); and non-normative communicative styles, which may mean bullying remains unreported (Mandell et al., 2005: 1360; Morton, 2009). Previous research has associated long-term experiences of bullying with multiple negative health outcomes, including depression, self-harm, social anxiety and a propensity towards substance abuse (Arseneault et al., 2010; Takizawa et al., 2015).

While sizeable literatures have emerged examining the correlates/effects of, and strategies undertaken in response to, bullying against individuals on the autism spectrum (Van Roekel et al., 2010; Kloosterman et al., 2013; Schroeder et al., 2014), the implications of encompassing gendered environments within this context have not been adequately addressed. This is, admittedly, a topic deserving of greater analytical depth and complexity than this thesis can pursue. It should also be repeated that bullying experiences among this group reflect multiple mutually interacting (personal, psychological, interpersonal, cultural and institutional) factors, in no way *reducible* to gender. However, specifically reflecting themes developed within this chapter, it is instructive to note that the experiences of bullying described within the autobiographical material under consideration were commonly inflected by *homophobia*. The regulation of departures from prevailing gendered norms through the "spectre" (Butler, 1993: 1-4) of a suspect heterosexuality has been a prominent theme within previous

research (Connell, 1995; Plummer, 1999; Pascoe, 2007). The absence of privileged gendered resources described in the previous chapter, and the tendency to not fully embody culturally “appropriate” gendered dispositions discussed here, appeared to render the men on the autism spectrum under consideration distinctively vulnerable to homophobia, regardless of “actual” sexual identification.

The narratives included multiple evocative accounts of bullying. *Marc Rivera* (2013: Chap. 4, Loc. 425-7) represents the long-term implications and claustrophobia of schoolyard abuse through the religious iconography of “hell”:

I wish that Daniel, Conor, Mitch, Billy and all those other bullies could read my journal. Then they could know what kind of hell I endured at their hands. They probably don't even remember me now, but the torture their teasing and taunting inflicted will never go away. Wounds that are on the inside sometimes never heal. They need to know that. They also need to know how many panic attacks their bullying caused.

These patterns of schoolyard bullying were at times characterised by verbal homophobia. Marc describes difficulties understanding the motivations behind these practices (such as the social confirmation of a heterosexual identity, the consolidation of public performances of masculinity, and feelings of strength and/or toughness), dismissing the homophobia he experiences as irrational, or “stupid”. These practices are, however, “sensible” when contextualised within the prevailing social environment that positions male homosexuality as a foundational departure from extant constructions of privileged masculinities (Plummer, 1999; Pascoe, 2007):

The situation escalated when they started asking me if I liked boys and other questions that I am not going to mention. That's when I started saying “No”. They still asked those questions to try to get me to say yes. Over, and over, and over ... they would ask the same stupid questions. Don't ask me why. I don't know (Rivera, 2013: Chap. 10, Loc. 216-8).

Travis Breeding (2010) describes prolonged patterns of physical, social and mental abuse within the context of “friendship” relations. He develops a definition of friendship frequently rendering him vulnerable to exploitation, coming to believe that, rather than revolving around normative ideals of equality, intimacy and support (Nardi 1999: 32-47; J. Hall 2011), acceptance within peer circles depends

upon passive acquiescence to others. As one example, Travis (2010: 'Following Freshman', Loc. 624-8) writes:

High school marching band would also be a time of physical abuse from the older students. There were instances when other boys would come up to me and do something that they called a T bag. This was extremely painful. I hated having this done to me, but in order to fit in and be friends with these people, I would try to cope with it and let them do it to me over and over again. The only way to have friends was to allow myself to be treated this way.

These prolonged campaigns of bullying sometimes involved elements of homophobia. Where Marc describes confusion interpreting the logic behind "attacks" on his sexuality, Travis highlights difficulties enacting socially privileged models of heterosexual masculinity as the source of his experienced homophobia. As a consequence of his "poor social skills", Travis experiences problems maintaining relationships with female partners, creating a disjuncture between his self-identification as heterosexual, and the social legitimation of a "straight" identity:

I was often asked by people if I was gay due to the fact that I never had dates or even hung around girls.

Being asked if I was gay was the most frustrating thing in the world. No, I wasn't gay, but due to my poor social skills, it was easy for people to assume that. In fact, I was completely the opposite. I loved girls. There were more than a handful of girls whom I thought were the most beautiful and amazing people I'd ever known in my life while in high school. It wasn't that I didn't want anything to do with them at all but more that I didn't know how to have anything to do with them (Breeding, 2010: 'A Chapter Closes', Loc. 964-8).

Bill Furlong (2012: Chap. 9, Loc. 1080), finally, experiences a prolonged campaign of homophobic abuse on university campus, involving the use of epithets ("Crispi", after well-known British writer Quentin Crisp), the dissemination of rumours, and physical assault. Bill understands these patterns of "homophobia" as stemming not solely from the absence of heterosexual relations in his life, but from a broad "otherness" (captured through the figure of the "alien"), that renders him difficult to socially "place" in terms of sex/gender. Bill describes being perceived as not neatly "belonging" to the

categories of either male or female, a gendered deviance interpreted through the prism of homosexuality:

The theory about why I was rumoured to be gay was not just about showing no interest in girls, it was about showing little interest in people generally. A person who is a loner can easily be perceived as odd amongst young people, where social interaction tends to be very active, and where the odd person can be perceived as alienated from the entire social group. Since the social group falls into two parts, male and female, the “alien” may be perceived as not fitting into one group or the other, thus bringing into question the “alien’s” sexuality (Furlong, 2012: Chap. 9, Loc. 1095-9).

As Mark Sherry (2004) has previously contended, queer theory and disability studies evince multiple potential avenues for fruitful dialogue. This section suggests a logic deserving of further research, pointing to the ways in which homophobic cultural practices may inflect the lived experiences of men on the autism spectrum, not well “attuned” to privileged gender norms circulating within the broader culture. To further emphasise contentions developed in the previous chapter, this material exists very uncomfortably alongside depictions of ASCs as an “extreme” masculinity (Baron-Cohen 2002, 2004), particularly when contextualised by considerations of gender norms beyond the limited systematising/empathising dualism. What emerges is less a “hyper-macho” replication of prevailing constructions of masculinity, than a tendency to not fully (or “intuitively”) invest in dominant renditions of manhood (Jack, 2012: 3, 2014: 184), and ensuing patterns of gendered regulation. Yet, this contention should not be expressed too uncompromisingly – it may be better to invoke a “fragmented” or “partial” embodiment of gender, rather than its totalising absence.

Fragmented Gendered Knowledges

Habituated knowledge, when shared, is partially defined by its *inaccessibility* (Bourdieu, 2000b: 116-7); consociates act with an invisible stock of assumed understanding that attains its significance through silent, immersive reinforcement (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989: 43). The “disrupted” autistic incorporation of social norms offers an instructive counterpoint to the usual obscurity of tacit knowledge (Fuchs, 2015: 199). Individuals on the autism spectrum, through their intransigence to the realm of “common-sense”, engage in social transgression with unusual regularity, rendering their

behaviour profoundly *visible* and *problematised* (Milton, 2012: 884, 2013). One outcome of this propensity towards normative breaches is that “appropriate” or “common-sense” investments in widely held taken-for-granted associations, dispositions, and assumptions may remain unacknowledged. Asperger (cited in Milton, 2014: 796), for instance, comments that “(t)he autist is only himself (sic) [...] and is not an active member of a greater organism”; Kanner (cited in Solomon, 2010: 247) writes that the autistic subject “lives in a world of his own where he can’t be reached (sic)”; while Stanghellini and Ballerini (2004: 264) refer to autistic people as “detached from shared reality”.

It would, however, be inaccurate to conclude that individuals on the autism spectrum are categorically *incapable* of incorporating tacit knowledge. Although debate persists (Klinger et al., 2007), research suggests that this group’s performance on implicit pattern recognition and spatial/temporal sequencing is comparable to the broader population (Barnes et al., 2008; Brown et al., 2010); the reinforcement of implicit knowledges through habitual exposure has also been demonstrated (Nemeth et al., 2010). These studies’ employment of artificial experimental methodologies renders their relevance to the incorporation of “common-sense” within naturalistic settings indeterminate. However, they suggest that individuals on the autism spectrum are not *fundamentally* impervious to implicit learning. As Milton (2014: 798) contends, this group *does* demonstrate investments in culturally recognisable interests, values, hobbies, and lifestyles, suggesting (often idiosyncratic) connections to the tacit knowledges of the social world (Ochs and Solomon, 2004: 151-2; Milton and Bracher, 2013: 65). While literatures examining gender and ASCs have emphasised the presence of heteroglossic copia (Jack, 2012: 3, 2014: 184), conventional constructions of gender were also present within the autobiographical material under consideration (as should perhaps already be apparent from material presented in the previous chapter).

Andrew Edwards (2015: Chap. 7, Loc. 1007), for instance, acknowledges internalised sexist attitudes. He describes objectifying female colleagues by “ranking” them, consistent with historical prioritisations of the “male gaze” (Mulvey, 1975), as well as his associations between domestic labour and “women’s work” (Gardiner et al., 1975), writing “I thought it unusual for men to help out around the home” (Edwards, 2015: Chap. 7, Loc. 1019-20). *Mark Hogan* (2012) employs discursive strategies commonly

used to delegitimise women's authority (Butcher and Peters, 2014). He recalls with intense negativity the discipline meted out by female teachers; one is described as a "boring old cow" (Chap. 6, Loc. 259), another as a "nasty cranky horrible bitch" (Chap. 7, Loc. 269). When fighting with his wife, Mark asks her "if she was getting her rags", a reference to menstruation often used to dismiss women's assertiveness as reflecting emotional/biological impulses, rather than reasoned analysis (Forbes et al., 2003). *Benjamin Collier* (2013: Chap. 4, Loc. 946-947), finally, writes of women in positions of authority as engaging in the "wild ravings of illogical creatures", and the importance of having "logic" on his side, reproducing associations between masculinity-rationality/femininity-emotion (Morgan, 1996: 114).

Narrators did sporadically contribute to prevailing constructions of masculinity/femininity. Similar to "spectral" conceptualisations of Theory of Mind noted above (Gallagher, 2004: 200; Rajendran and Mitchell, 2007: 226), it may be important to highlight the existence of a phenomenologically fragmented, partial "attunement" to the encompassing social environment, rather than its wholesale absence (Barnes et al., 2008; Brown et al., 2010; Nemeth et al., 2010).

Conclusion

This chapter began by noting the prevalence of associations between autistic experience and figurative tropes of cultural and/or geographical difference – the alien and the foreigner – within the autobiographical material under consideration. Integrating Bourdieusian social theory with previous phenomenological conceptualisations of ASCs, it was contended that these metaphors of "otherness" might be interpreted as stemming from the tendency for individuals on the autism spectrum to not (fully) *embody* the dispositions, classificatory schemes, corporeal styles, values and meanings that "attune" socially proximate subjects. This "imperviousness" to the realm of intangible common-sense appeared to generate a "margin of liberty" (Bourdieu, 2000b: 236) for the men with ASCs under consideration, offering a (limited degree of) freedom from the incorporated regulations orientating men towards "appropriately" masculine practices, styles, and contexts (Bumiller, 2008: 979). Yet, any such "freedom" that emerged existed alongside gendered modes of (homophobic) social regulation. Further research may be needed to clarify whether similar logics operate within the context of the disrupted

incorporation of social dynamics surrounding age, ethnicity and class among individuals on the autism spectrum

Patterns of “uneven” attunement to extant constructions of gender tended to operate primarily as a disassociation from the “male sex role”; this has certain political implications in terms of challenging taken-for-granted or naturalised constructions of masculinity, but generally did not explicitly further feminist critiques of gender inequality (Connell, 1995: 21-7). So, while narrators engaged in gender non-normative practices, these did not appear to be undertaken with explicitly activist intent. As *Bill Furlong* (2012: Chap. 4, Loc. 473-4) puts it, “I behaved differently, not because I was aware of social norms and chose to ignore them but because I was not aware of normal social values and standards”. Further, it should be noted that difficulties *intuitively* accessing the realm of gendered practical sense did not inevitably foster the radical transgression of prevailing expectations surrounding masculinity, but could, at times, underpin programs of normalising self-reform, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Nine: Anxiety, Scholasticism and Autism Spectrum Generativities

The Age Of Anxiety

The previous chapter contended that the fragmented embodiment of social norms associated with being on the autism spectrum may promote a “margin of freedom” from habituated modes of self-regulation, allowing for a proliferating “copia” of gendered identities, practices, bodily comportments, styles and investments. Yet, it is instructive to note that the normative value of “freedom” can act as a euphemism for more problematic traits, such as instability, risk, uncertainty, lack of structure, and/or doubt (Cooper, 2004; Gershon, 2011). This chapter begins with a consideration of the affective state of *anxiety* as a way of understanding the existential costs of partial attunement to extant social dynamics, before proceeding to a discussion of the effortfully “scholastic” strategies that individuals on the autism spectrum may employ to negotiate a (gendered) world experienced as chaotic and overwhelming.

Anxiety was almost ubiquitous within the narratives under consideration. *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 22) writes of being “perpetually nervous”; *Marc Rivera* (2013: Chap. 3, Loc. 168) depicts feeling “alone, afraid and completely lost”; *Jeremy Tolmie* (2012: 77) states that pervasive anxiety is “crippling (his) life”; *Doug Milne* (2012: Chap. 6, Loc. 809) describes anxiety as the “chief protagonist” of autistic experience; and *Bill Furlong* (2012: Chap. 9, Loc. 1155) suggests that he is “afraid of everyone”. Given the affective centrality afforded to anxiety within a range of disciplinary frameworks (Freud, 1974; Ekman, 1980; Öhman, 2008), and sociological conceptualisations of (late) modernity as characterised by pervasive and unprecedented risk (Beck, 1992), deteriorating “ontological security” (Giddens, 1991: 35-69), and a “culture of fear” (Furedi, 2006), it undoubtedly would have been unusual had this emotional state not featured prominently. Yet, this section will consider the qualitatively distinctive forms of anxiety experienced by individuals on the autism spectrum stemming from fragmented attunement to extant social norms.

Barry Schlenker and Mark Leary (1982: 642) describe social anxiety as “resulting from the prospect or presence of personal evaluation” (Wooten, 2000; Öhman, 2008). The experience of threat associated with anxiety may relate to a substantive, delimited source (commonly conveyed through the terminology of “fear” [Öhman, 2008]), or persistent unease at the anticipated prospect of negative

appraisal (Schlenker and Leary, 1982: 642). The rendering of anxiety as a dispositional state-of-being has been related to patterns of exclusion; extended histories of difficulties within interpersonal interaction are internalised, with past experiences priming an individual to pre-emptively anticipate social rejection (Alden and Regambal, 2010: 428-9; Lang et al., 2010). These expectations may be exacerbated within contexts characterised by evaluative doubt (Schlenker and Leary, 1982: 650), within which one is unsure of the *content* of standards employed to appraise social performance, or one's *ability* to approximate these standards.

While Bourdieu does not conceptualise anxiety in substantial depth, in an analysis of Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, he writes of fear as emerging at the intersection between three factors. Anxiety involves habituated *investments* in certain objectives (which may prominently include self-preservation, the maintenance of symbolic/material privilege, and/or the accumulation of further capital)(Bourdieu, 1990a: 136-8), the existence (at least within social domains) of *relations of power* that threaten valued ambitions, and circumstantial *uncertainty* (Bourdieu, 2000b: 229-45; see also Bourdieu, 1977b: 13-4). Bourdieu sees *The Trial*, and its dystopic representation of a powerful, secretive and nebulous judicial authority, as an allegorical depiction of “a number of ordinary states of the ordinary social world”, involving this confluence of investment, power and uncertainty. The most extreme manifestation of this scenario ensures that there is “no subjective assurance, nothing to entrust oneself to”, and that “(a)nything can be expected; the worst is never ruled out” (Bourdieu, 2000b: 229).

This tripartite theorisation of fear can elucidate experiences conveyed by the narrators under consideration. The uneven autistic incorporation of taken-for-granted knowledges appeared to instigate profound *uncertainty* in relation to the negotiation of social life (Schlenker and Leary, 1982: 650; Leary, 2010: 479). *Travis Breeding* (2010) evokes these dynamics effectively, noting how the absence of an implicit, culturally attuned “bedrock” of social knowledge, the ubiquity of interpersonal interaction (McNeil, 2010: 3), and the prevalence of expectations assuming relational competence (defined in neurotypical terms), worked to render social interaction experientially dangerous:

Imagine if you were put into a job or profession you knew very little about and were expected to perform at an outstanding level with little or no problems at all. You would probably be scared

to death, as feeding your family and your basic survival would depend upon how well you performed. [...] People who have autism or Asperger's syndrome are put into a job or a profession with no training and no knowledge of how to perform the duties and skills necessary to succeed at that job. The profession is socialising (Breeding, 2010: 'Appendix', Loc. 3110-3).

Where shared "horizons of meaning" (Gadamer, 1975/2013: 313-8) allow interactions between consociates (Schutz: 1953/2004: 312) to proceed on the basis of a communal stock of taken-for-granted understanding, the (partial) absence of an intuitive, embodied grasp of these knowledges rendered interactive accomplishments exceedingly convoluted for narrators on the autism spectrum. *Marc Rivera* (2013: Chap. 12, Loc. 566-87), for instance, writes:

You never know what people expect from you. You are always afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing. It's a constant guessing game and when you are wrong, it can cause a lot of trouble.

Fears associated with the negotiation of interpersonal life were particularly pronounced within contexts characterised by the absence of formally stated rules determining conduct, and the subsequent need to intuit social expectations. Environments involving informal social order, contingency and/or unpredictability were often regarded with apprehension (De Jaegher, 2013: 13-4). These tendencies evidence the particular *investments* possessed by narrators relating to the desire for safety and the evasion of social censure (Alden and Regambal, 2010: 427). *Andrew Edwards* (2015: Chap. 9, Loc. 1549-51), for instance, describes generalised anxiety towards informal social events, and pre-emptive dread at a hypothetical, ominous "something" that *may* happen as a consequence of the uncertainties involved:

Quite often, when I have gone to a gig, a sporting event or somewhere socially, I have been petrified that something stressful would happen. [...] I get very nervous and anxious at times at the thought of some social events.

Daniel Tammet (2006: Chap. 4, Loc. 920-3), similarly, describes the importance of predictable schooling environments in the management of fear, and experiences of anxiety evoked by contingency:

Feelings of high anxiety were common for me throughout my time at school. I became upset if a school event in which everyone was expected to take part was announced at short notice, or

by changes in the normal routines of the class. Predictability was important to me, a way of feeling in control in a given situation, a way of keeping anxiety at bay, at least temporarily.

Experiences of anxiety commonly coincided with a pervasive sense of disempowerment (Bourke, 2003: 124-9), with other actors being ascribed the evaluative privilege to determine the appropriateness (or otherwise) of one's behaviour, and to mediate subsequent access to the culturally valued resources/relationships/contexts constitutive of *social hierarchies* (Schlenker and Leary, 1982: 674; Jones et al., 2001: 399). While narrators commonly described difficulties comprehending the specific traits/practices/styles that precipitated social exclusion, they nevertheless appeared intensely conscious of the costs potentially accompanying normative transgressions. Neurotypical "cultural hegemony" (Davidson and Henderson, 2010b: 467-8) ensured that, within the formalised structures of the school, medicine, politics, the law and the economy, as well as everyday interaction, the idiosyncratic social presence of people on the autism spectrum was commonly positioned as deficiency or deviance, rather than benign diversity (Davidson and Henderson, 2010b: 470; Milton and Moon, 2012).

Within this context, narrators commonly reported developing interpersonal styles characterised by extreme *deference*. In the Bourdieusian (2000b: 168-72, 2001: 41-2) sense, social anxiety – like shame – can be understood as a form of symbolic violence, an embodied recognition of oneself as vulnerable to the judgements of others, and as lacking in socially sanctioned forms of symbolic power (see also Reeve, 2002; Milton and Moon, 2012). Within this context, the interpersonal privileging of others' interpretations of social life becomes an act of "survival" (Jack, 2012: 15). *Barry Evans* (2015: Chap. 5, Loc. 1004-6), for instance, writes:

I always used to trust other people's judgements better than mine, especially in conversation. If they did something I knew was wrong I would still go along with it because I thought they knew better than me. I knew that my mind worked differently so always tried to take things from what other people said. I would never conflict or confront.

Doug Milne (2012: Chap. 11, Loc. 1595-8), similarly, evokes his aversion to challenging others in the aftermath of endemic bullying:

The consequence (of bullying) was inevitable, in the form of developing what was, in effect, a profound inferiority complex [...] (and) submissive disposition. I will do ANYTHING to avoid

confrontational issues, even when I know I'm right. [...] If all this sounds odd, even a bit wimpish, then you are probably right. It is!

Several affective states may have demonstrated the intrapsychic costs of social transgressions. Narrators commonly described *frustration* at difficulties negotiating environments others seemed to find unproblematic, *anger* at repeated social exclusion as a consequence of violating seemingly invisible, arbitrary and inconsistent social “rules”, or even, in the converse, experiences of *safety* associated with being alone or in a controlled, predictable environment (Jones et al., 2001; Ahmed, 2007). Anxiety was selected for consideration as a consequence of its capacity to reflect the existential challenges engendered by the embodied rift in social life associated with ASCs, and also because, in highlighting the affective nexus between *uncertainty*, *investment* and *power*, it provides an experiential grounding to the “scholastic” negotiation of (gendered) social environments discussed below.

The Anthropologist and The Scholastic Vision

While previous analyses, as suggested in the previous chapter, have foregrounded the autistic-as-alien metaphor embedded within Temple Grandin’s (in Sacks, 1995: 295) oft-repeated self-depiction as an “anthropologist on Mars” (Jones et al., 2001: 396-7; Davidson and Smith, 2009: 902), the autistic-as-anthropologist allusion is equally illuminating. The figurative positioning of individuals on the autism spectrum through discourses of academicism is not unprecedented. Asperger (cited in Volkmar and Klin, 2001: 84) famously labelled his initial case studies “little professors”; Davidson and Henderson (2010b: 467) describe their sample as employing “hard-won sociological and anthropological skills”; and this group is popularly associated with the figures of the nerd, geek, computer whiz, boffin, or, even, genius (Bombaci, 2005; Jack, 2011; Willey et al., 2015). Multiple factors underpin connotative associations between ASCs and academicism, including: the exceptional depth of knowledge fostered by fixation on delimited topics (South et al., 2005); pop cultural associations with STEM industries (Bombaci, 2005; Willey et al., 2015); and mediagenic emphases on the “wondrous” capacities of “autistic savants” (Draaisma, 2009: 1477-8). Within the context of this chapter, one particular resonance between autism and academicism is pursued, through Bourdieu’s theorisation of “scholastic” knowledge.

Bourdieu contends that the anthropological desire to understand the practices of social groups that one is not “pre-reflectively” attuned to engenders epistemic aporias. The “foreigner” relates to the practices observed not through an “immersion” in shared life worlds, which renders them as taken-for-granted, and therefore invisible, but rather as something to be interpreted, understood or explained: “the very fact of thought and discourse about practice separates us from practice” (Bourdieu, 2000b: 52). He writes:

The status of an observer who withdraws from the situation to observe implies an epistemological, but also a social break [...] leading to an implicit theory of practices that is linked to forgetfulness of the social conditions of scientific activity (Bourdieu, 1990a: 33).

The task of “participant objectivation”, which Bourdieu (2003) regards as central to sociological endeavour, involves the analysis of the particular social conditions of scholarly work, and the rendering of their implications visible, in order to “objectify the objectifying subject” (Bourdieu, 2000b: 31).

The scholastic conception of social life, for Bourdieu, is epitomised by the pursuit of the “synoptic vision” embedded within multiple academic representational techniques, including calendars to capture structured temporalities, genealogical diagrams communicating the “rules” of familial alliance, maps depicting geographical space, tables/graphs representing statistical relationships, and, more abstractly, the act of writing in and of itself (Bourdieu, 1977b: 97-109, 2000b: 50-4). Bourdieu’s contention is not that these representational methods are redundant, but rather that they introduce epistemic disjunctures systematically related to the distinctive social logics associated with *observing*, rather than *inhabiting*, a culture (Bourdieu, 1990b). The researcher risks assuming that identified models, rules or formal relationships are consciously “followed” by acting subjects, ascribing academic constructs with causal power (Bourdieu, 1990a: 382-4, 2000b: 51). The formalisation of research findings may render hermeneutically static and fixed a social reality that is, while not unstructured, characteristically “lived” in a manner that is contingent and practical, rather than rule-bound (Bourdieu, 1990a: 86, 2001: 7-8, 104).

In conceptualising the historical preconditions of scholasticism, Bourdieu highlights an aloof privilege generated through the possession of structurally valued forms of academic cultural capital

(Bourdieu, 1984). This “point of view” is “afforded by high positions in the social structure, from which the social world appears as a representation [...] and practices are no more than “executions”, stage parts, performances of scores, or the implementing of plans” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 96). He particularly stresses the tendency for academic analysis to be disconnected from the pressing realities negotiated by actors, who confront the “hurly burly” of social life in the practices of living, rather than reflective detachment (Bourdieu, 2000b: 12-4). In associating the scholastic vision with privileged aloofness, Bourdieu (2000b: 22-4) seemingly intimates the Archimedean “vision from nowhere” that has historically been monopolised by white male academics (Haraway, 1988). This image of academic life is, it should be noted, somewhat anachronistic; the intense regulation of academics’ time/practices, increasing responsibility for bureaucratic labour, the development of standardised achievement criteria, and the rising prevalence of unstable contract work, may render Bourdieu’s depiction of an almost aristocratic aloofness foreign to contemporary scholars (Davies and Bansel, 2005; Dowling, 2008).

This image of privileged withdrawal also involves an incomplete depiction of anthropological endeavour, particularly eliding the experience of *collecting ethnographic data*. Bourdieu’s experiences are themselves instructive. His early involvements “in the field” involved investigations of mid-twentieth century economic change in Algeria, examining the decline of traditional modes of social organisation, processes of commodification, and the forced relocation of rural populations. These trends coincided with ongoing military conflict contesting French colonial rule (Wacquant, 2004: 390). Bourdieu’s descriptions of these experiences are brief, but thoroughly contradict representations of a detached scholasticism. He describes Algeria as a “foreign universe” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 163) within which “nothing is ever self-evident” (Bourdieu, 2008b: 51). Bourdieu (2008b: 47-8) struggles to “measure up to experiences” to which he feels himself to be “the unworthy, disarmed witness”, by engaging in “frenzied work”:

I was truly overwhelmed, very sensitive to the suffering of all these people, and at the same time, there was a certain distance of the observer [...] I was taking notes on everything I could. [...] I was constantly telling myself: “My poor Bourdieu, with the sorry tools that you have, you won’t

be up to the task, you would need to know everything, to understand everything, psychoanalysis, economics". [...] I was submerged (Bourdieu, cited in Wacquant, 2004: 402).

These excerpts suggest that anthropological processes of *data collection*, far from involving a privileged aloofness, may be experienced as intensely chaotic, exhausting, and anxiety-provoking. The desire to “know everything” by desperately collecting data, and the “frenzied”, interminable organisation, refinement, and interpretation of findings, might be understood as reflecting the need to understand a locale within which “everything is called into question” (Bourdieu, 2008b: 51). “Objectifying” strategies (the construction of rules, laws, calendars, tables, graphs, and maps) subsequently reflect attempts to restore order to the chaotic, “overwhelming” complexity and “foreignness” of the culture under observation (Bourdieu, cited in Wacquant, 2004: 402).

At least two qualifications are important here. Bourdieu’s insider-inhabitor/outsider-observer binary is somewhat simplistic given both the globalising modes of social organisation that render cultural boundaries increasingly porous (Martell, 2010; Urry, 2012), as well as “autoethnographic” trends towards studying the researcher-self within everyday settings (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Bourdieu also, secondly, appears somewhat flippant about ongoing debates surrounding the epistemic status of anthropological endeavours, which have often emphasised the productive tensions involved in occupying a liminal space *between* insider-outsider (Jenkins, 1992; Bunzl, 2004). Yet, Bourdieu’s theorisation of the “scholastic vision” vividly resonates with the social negotiations depicted by the narrators on the autism spectrum under consideration, a resemblance more akin to the frenzied chaos of anthropological fieldwork than the aloof spectator (Bourdieu, 1977b: 171-83). By confronting the social world as “aliens” or “foreigners”, this group might be said to subvert the prominence of the intuitive “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1988b: 782, 1990a: 66) that Bourdieu constructs as the “default” mode of social life (Ochs and Solomon, 2004, 2010). Individuals on the autism spectrum must comprehend the social environment without the (reliably) attuned embodied “senses” that would render the act of understanding itself imperceptible and instinctive (Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2004: 262); they are immersed *within* a social world experienced as overwhelming, dangerous and chaotic.

Narrators commonly employed metaphorical tropes associated with academicism to depict negotiations of social life, describing quasi-methodological approaches to interpersonal understanding that might emerge more “spontaneously” for others. *Mark Hogan* (2012: Chap. 10, Loc. 392-3), for instance, writes:

It's *like you are a professor* and you interact with other kids to try to *find out how they tick* and interact with one another. *Make observations, make mental notes, remember how games are played, work out the rules.*

Cristiano Camargo (2012: ‘Meanders and Gears ...’, Loc. 3260-1), similarly, writes of the need to “train empirically” for social engagements, an approach to interpersonal interaction he regards as differing from the more intuitive interpersonal attunement possessed by neurotypical actors:

Asperger individuals instantly begin to *train empirically* for [...] social situations. And this will lead to *spontaneous self-training* overcoming social obstacles and *forcing* the brain to develop connections, circuits and neural paths that were missing. [...] (Asperger brains) are different from the brains of a neurotypical person.

Christopher Goodchild (2009: ‘Station 9 The Third Fall’, Loc. 643-6), finally, describes the centrality of the ability to “learn one’s part” in forging connections with others:

I had been *performing* to people all my life, *studying* other people, *observing* how they interacted and reacted, how they laughed, how they showed their feelings and then trying to apply what I *observed, coaching myself* for the *stage of life* on which every step needed to be painstakingly *planned, processed and executed*. Driven by a great hunger and desire *to learn to connect with other people*, it had always *taken hard work and persistence* to “*learn my part*” for any social situation.

This effortful “studying” of culture exists in almost diametrical opposition to the intuitive, immersive and implicit learning processes Bourdieu highlights. While ASCs continue to be associated with a proclivity towards STEM-related contexts (Bombaci, 2005; Willey et al., 2015), the logic offered within this chapter suggests that, in certain respects, this group’s experiences strikingly resemble the social position and practices of social scientific (particularly anthropological) researchers. Much like the endeavours of the anthropologist, narrators described deciphering experientially foreign environments by developing conscious models as substitutes for the “practical sense” of cultural “insiders”. This use

of “stored algorithms” to “decipher the encrypted logic of messages conveyed in the course of social interaction” (Ochs and Solomon, 2004: 151), had substantial implications within the context of gender.

Gender, Normalisation and “Social Skills”

Within the context of disability services, the principle of normalisation prioritises the pursuit of “conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to the regular circumstances and ways of life of society” (Nirje, 1980: 33). This philosophy challenged processes of isolation/institutionalisation, providing impetus for the development of accessible social environments, community living, and educational/occupational desegregation (Walmsley, 2001: 190-1). Yet, while the theme of normalisation has been used to promote progressive objectives, it has ambiguous implications. Ableist norms remain the invisible and uncontested standard against which clinical and community outcomes are assessed, and the historically situated and (often) exclusive nature of these benchmarks remains uncontested (I. Moser, 2000). Conceptualising “success” as the replication of socially normative roles involves the concomitant stigmatisation of the *failure* to approximate these standards as maladjusted “deviance” (I. Moser, 2000: 976-80; Bumiller, 2008; Brooks, 2014).

The relevance of debates surrounding normalisation is especially pronounced in relation to ASCs, which are foundationally associated with the “inability to understand social conventions” (Bumiller, 2008: 976). As suggested previously, the “fractured” autistic embodiment of common-sense knowledges has both political and social value, potentially historicising, and opening to interrogation, elements of cultural life frequently rendered taken-for-granted (Milton, 2013). It may promote, within the context of gender, the historical expansion of available identities, practices and styles. Yet, the potentially progressive implications of this state commonly remain unappreciated, and clinical and cultural “success” is conceptualised as the attainment of the social skills normatively valued within neurotypical-dominated environments. This logic reaches its clinical apotheosis within the contexts of Applied Behaviour Analysis and Early and Intensive Behavioural Interventions, which employ the principles of behaviourism with the explicit objective of rendering individuals on the autism spectrum “indistinguishable” from their peers (Orsini, 2012: 805-16; McLaren, 2014: 13).

The desire expressed by some on the autism spectrum to render the social world comprehensible through effortful “study” is matched by the quasi-clinical development of pedagogical resources seeking to promote interactional “competence”. This material is often *gendered*, designed to foster the internalisation of normative femininities/masculinities under the guise of “social skills” (Bumiller, 2008: 978-9; Brooks, 2014; McLaren, 2014). A sizeable self-help literature has emerged, designed to provide individuals with ASCs access to the hidden “rules” of social life, which often provides explicitly gendered instruction for cultural appropriateness (Bumiller, 2008: 978-9). We learn, for instance, that women’s/men’s physical appearance should be complimented in distinctive ways (Jackson, 2002: 176); that hand-shaking (rather than hugging/kissing) is the appropriate greeting between males (McAfee, 2002: 92); and the importance of men behaving “chivalrously” within dating relationships, demonstrating a “respectful appreciation of femininity” by holding the door, walking on the kerbside of the pavement, and offering one’s jacket in cold weather (O’Toole, 2013: 223-4). A comparable logic has been identified within social skills workshops, which may promulgate the belief that ““typical” behaviour is only obtained by following dominant gender and sexuality codes” (Brooks, 2014; see also McLaren, 2014: 42-4).

Opportunities for gendered pedagogical study emerged within multiple everyday settings within the material under consideration, usually combining the “cultural hegemony” of neurotypical social norms, with the immense existential and social promise of “normality”. *Benjamin Collier’s* (2013) text, for instance, portrays something approaching a masculinising “rite of passage”. Benjamin describes never feeling “a connection with other guys growing up” (‘Book Recommendations’, Loc. 2310) and struggling to “get along with [...] guys easily” (Chap. 4, Loc. 1030). He associates his lack of integration into male homosocial environments with living in a “female-dominated household” (Chap. 4, Loc. 1063), not being “properly initiated” (‘Book Recommendations’, Loc. 2310) into adult manhood, and failing to recognise the social significance of affiliations with other men. Benjamin progressively comprehends, and invests in, homosocial dynamics through his participation in a Bible study group:

This [...] was an all-guys group approximately my age, all jacked-up on testosterone to the point that trying to speak over the crowd was like a head-butting contest between mountain rams.

I *learned more* about male social interaction in that one year than in all my previous years. [...] At home, farts were to be hidden and covered up, or blamed on someone else. Among guys, farts were to be announced and celebrated, and occasionally preluded to “Here’s my opinion ...”. [...] I was uncomfortable with (these) ways at first because they were so *foreign* to me; they allowed guys to be guys with very little observable restraint. [...] (I)t was exactly what I needed (Collier, 2013: Chap. 4, Loc. 1060-7).

Inspired by John Eldredge’s *Wild At Heart*, written to foster a rugged, adventurous, and risk-taking masculinity among Christian men (Harper, 2012), Benjamin comes to purport a somewhat essentialist view of gender (“testosterone”, “allow[ing] guys to be guys”) associated with aggression, competition, and freedom from feminine authority. Sociologically, these experiences might be interpreted not as “releasing” an authentically gendered self, but rather as disciplinary practices (Foucault, 1975) reflecting and reproducing historically specific masculine subjectivities.

A further example of everyday “gendered instruction” emerged within *Bill Furlong’s* (2012) depiction of being verbally mocked and abused by women. As noted previously, the bullying recounted within this sample seemed to have disproportionately been perpetrated by males, and Bill describes incredulous responses to his experiences of “atypical” gendered harassment (“she’s only a woman” [Furlong, 2012: Chap. 15, Loc. 2040]). A male work colleague expounds at great length his hypothetical response to a female bully, and Bill recounts beginning to understand the distinctive “humiliation” and “ego damage” that men might experience as a consequence of being belittled by women:

Allen went on to describe how he would have insulted and humiliated the girls completely. He would have said things in an aggressive manner that *I tried to imitate*. [...] “I’ll be damned if I’m going to let a woman speak to me like that”. He seemed almost angry that I had not been more aggressive. [...] Allen Pegg seemed to resent women abusing him more than men. I had subconsciously known most women were weaker than men, and that this posed no physical threat to most men. [...] I could not connect or compare the fact of women being weaker, with how Allen Pegg and other men like him might feel about being abused by them. I had not yet worked out that it might actually damage their egos. [...] I was *gradually understanding* the

humiliation that a man might feel at being dominated by a woman (Furlong, 2012: Chap. 14, 16, Loc. 1895-1909, 2188).

Allen's construction of the "inversion" of gendered norms as an intense degradation emerges through implicit associations between men/masculinity with strength/dominance and women/femininity with weakness/submissiveness, with Bill's vulnerability to female bullying subverting culturally dominant expectations. Yet, rather than employing Bill's experiences to challenge extant understandings of gender, others collude to stress the "humiliation" of being bullied by women; given the hegemonic authority ascribed to neurotypical modes of social life, Bill comes to accept the "stigma and absurdity" (Furlong, 2012: Chap. 15, Loc. 2042) of this reversal of gendered power. The explicit transmission of prevailing "common-sense" knowledges may often proceed with the (ostensibly) benevolent intent of assisting an individual on the autism spectrum to attain social comfort and/or expertise. Yet, the process of becoming socially "competent", in relation to gender, may involve subjection to the broader culture and its socially stratifying ideologies.

Academic Misconduct, Generativity and Autism Spectrum Masculinities

While the habitus has been critiqued for a mechanistic determinism, particularly when applied to social groups (King, 2000; Lizardo, 2004), Bourdieu's predominant figuration of the concept associates its fluid, economical, and fuzzy "practical sense" with *art*, involving: an "art of inventing" (1990a: 55), "the art of anticipating the future of the game" (1998: 25), or an "art of living" (1977b: 8). "Virtuosic" social practice arises not through the development of a sufficiently complex "filing-cabinet of prefabricated representations" (Jakobson, cited in Bourdieu, 1977b: 11), but rather through the learned, intuitive, but ineffable, "tact, dexterity, or savoir-faire" that allow actors to negotiate the immense complexity of interactional life. The habitus' "creativity" is, however, not transcendentally external to history (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990); practice is tied to the social environment through available resources, interpersonal demands, and prevailing modes of normative value. Actors "create" practices *with* and *through* historical circumstance.

As contended earlier, Bourdieu (2001: 7-8, 104) regards theoreticist articulations of social life as the substitutes "outsiders" employ to approximate the intuitive cultural understanding possessed by

“insiders”, for whom formalised constructs are unneeded. However, formal models often immediately render visible the “limits of the systematicity and coherence of [...] practice” (Jenkins, 1992: 19). The “feel for the game”, needed to know *which* practices are appropriate, *how* they should be performed, *who* can perform them (and who they can be performed with), *when* they may “come off” effectively, and, even, the contexts within which expected limits *can* be transgressed, involves substantial forms of intuition (Bourdieu, 1977b: 124; Lieberman, 2000). “Rules” struggle to capture the immense complexity of social life, which operates according to dynamics that are often “practical” and “economical”, rather than *strictly* logical (Bourdieu, 1998: 82). Culturally valued practice stems not from rigid obedience to formal principles, but rather the fluidly gymnastic negotiation of opportunities, resources, expectations and sanctions embedded within variegated social environments (Wacquant, 2004: 389).

The habitus’ unconsciously intuitive generation of infinitely nuanced repertoires of practice attuned to the contingent demands of the encompassing environment can seem almost mystical (Bourdieu [2001: 38, 109] even employs the language of “magic”, at times). R. W. Connell (1983: 151) describes the habitus as a theoretical “black box”, the inner workings of which remain opaque. Yet, the social centrality of this fluid, intuitive “practical sense” is in many respects suggested by the profound difficulties involved in designing clinical interventions to teach social skills to those on the autism spectrum. While available techniques within this context are varied (Weiss and Harris, 2001), key limitations have commonly been identified. Participants may improve their ability to negotiate social skills *classes*, without these capacities generalising to naturalistic settings (Barry et al., 2003: 685-7; Rao et al., 2008: 357-8); cognitive knowledge of social norms may improve when assessed through pencil-and-paper tests, while not promoting greater “qualitative” interactive fluidity (Ozonoff and Miller, 1995: 429; Barry et al., 2003); strategies developed may be perceived as rigid and/or robotic (Cascio, 2012: 280); and learned rules may be enacted without contextual sensitivity, which is difficult to communicate pedagogically due to infinite potentially relevant environmental considerations (De Jaegher, 2013: 13-4; Milton, 2014: 798).

The remainder of this chapter considers how scholastic approaches to sociality translate into “generative” renditions of neurotypical masculinities for men on the autism spectrum. It will be

contended that the autistic “disjuncture” in social life engenders a certain clumsiness in the enactment of gendered norms, relating to *authenticity*, *rigidity* and *spontaneous balance*. To be clear, this is not straightforwardly a narrative of deficit; while more “nuanced” performances of masculinity may engender privilege, many of these practices are inherently problematic, regardless of the “skill” with which they are enacted. As Jiddu Krishnamurti (cited in Meyer, 2013: 253) writes, “(i)t is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society”. Indeed, it may be that gender inequalities are most profoundly naturalised by enactments of masculinity that appear to be spontaneous and fluid (Connell, 1998; Connell and Wood, 2005). Yet, I will suggest that the “half-learned” performance of gender norms prompts substantial problems for both individuals on the autism spectrum, and those who interact with them, rather than unproblematically translating into sanctioned forms of social “competence”. As noted previously, the experience of “partial” social attunement is not exclusive to individuals on the autism spectrum, but may emerge within the contexts of, for instance, transnational migration or class mobility. Further research may be needed to determine whether the limitations of the “scholastic” negotiation of social life discussed here are also relevant within these situations.

Authenticity

The notion of *authenticity* often invites scepticism within sociology, both within the context of critiques of biological essentialism, as well as, from post-structuralist perspectives, the rejection of a fixed, static and unchanging self (Alcoff, 1988; Devetak, 2009). A Bourdieusian approach to this concept shares the rejection of a presocial essence, constructing the contents of the habitus as thoroughly historical in nature, but tends to emphasise the presence of durable (albeit learned) components of selfhood, affording actors a relatively stable (but not *entirely* static) experience of identity (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1993: 28). The “socially skilled” actor, for Bourdieu, becomes attuned to the social world not through the conscious pursuit of conformity, but rather when the pre-reflective recesses of the habitus fit like a “glove” with injunctions embedded within the encompassing historical context (Lovell, 2000: 33). Attuned actors operate with “the illusion of innateness” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 50), acting and experiencing the self *as if* their practices *did* spring from an essentialist core, an

impression that is reinforced by the immersive presence of others sharing similar habituated predispositions.

For narrators on the autism spectrum, disrupted attunement to the extant social environment (Eigsti, 2013: 7; Fuchs, 2015: 199) often meant that culturally legitimated practices did not “express” an underlying set of habituated dispositions, but rather occurred as a consciously manufactured orchestration (Sacks, 1995: 295). This was sometimes regarded as fostering a form of inauthenticity. *Richard Lewis* (2009: Chap. 14, Loc. 1996), for instance, describes becoming “a prisoner by pretending to be normal”; *Christopher Goodchild* (2009: ‘Station 3 Falling Down’, Loc. 279-84) writes of “never” experiencing “a real sense of self”, but rather a set of “characters” designed to “protect (his) hidden self”; while *Travis Breeding* (2010: ‘Appendix’, Loc. 3187-93) describes his responses to the “desperation” of ongoing social exclusion: “You begin trying to change some things about yourself. You change what you do, how you do it, when you do it, to what extent you do it, and you change so much more. [...] (Y)ou can become confused and lose track of who you really are”.

Bourdieu (1984: 84) suggests that the “brutally foreshortened” attempt to acquire culturally privileged knowledge pedagogically, rather than through the long-term “immersion” (Bourdieu, 1984: 75) associated with an all-encompassing familiarity (Bourdieu, 1984: 91), fosters practices lacking experiential depth, or a sense of “ease or cultivated naturalness” (Bourdieu, 1984: 75). *Will Hadercroft* (2005), for instance, is encouraged by a psychologist to actively study media coverage of sporting events, and to employ this knowledge within everyday conversation. This advice takes on distinctively gendered significance given the historical positioning of sport as central to “male bonding” (Messner, 1988; Burstyn, 1999; Robertson, 2003). Will is immediately sceptical (“[i]t won’t work. I’m not remotely interested in sport” [2005: 191]), but attempts to follow the advice. While travelling in a taxi, his driver initiates a conversation about football:

This was it, my big chance. Normally I would say that I didn’t follow football and the conversation would be terminated, followed by an awkward silence. This time, however, I actually knew what he was talking about. I responded by acknowledging the particular problem, and I have to admit I did feel better than usual. Less alien, I suppose. Everything went fine until

he brought up another detail about Bolton Wanderers that I knew nothing about. “I don’t know”, I said honestly. “I don’t really follow it”.

“Oh”, replied the driver. Then after a pause he asked, “Which team do you support then?” And I had to concede that I actually didn’t follow any of them and that football was not my cup of tea. [...]

It was obvious to true fans, from my awkwardness and my lack of eye contact, that I was merely repeating what I’d heard or read. They knew I wasn’t really interested (Hadcroft, 2005: 192).

The absence (or partiality) of a spontaneous attunement to the encompassing historical environment limits the effectiveness of the “scholastic” attempt to generatively study, and imitate, masculinities idealised within neurotypical-dominated contexts. As Will suggests, the depth of knowledge needed to sustain homosocial community is difficult to mimic on the basis of a consciously devised set of tactics, without the underpinnings of an authentic (albeit socially learned) investment.

Efforts to mimic dominant masculinities through scholastic learning incited attempted “performances” in the theatrical (as opposed to Butlerian [1990]) sense of the word (Jack, 2014: 193-7). *Travis Breeding* (2010), for instance, describes the development of an intensely negative self-image as a consequence of repeated social rejection (“They thought I was weird, creepy, psycho, retarded, stupid, fat, ugly, worthless, and pathetic” [‘Following Freshman’, Loc. 561])), and comes to desire the creation of a new persona. The yearning to replicate culturally valued modes of interpersonal presentation promotes an idealisation, and attempted imitation, of a “cool” masculinity (‘Buying Love’, Loc. 1815). Travis begins to exchange financial resources with a male “friend” in return for pedagogical insights surrounding the ability to attract partners. He teaches Travis a series of intensely misogynistic lessons, which stress the importance of mistreatment, objectification and inequality within heterosexual relationships, themes further re-enforced through engagement with literatures promoting sexually manipulative “pick-up” cultures:

He [...] said I had to be cocky and arrogant and not care about what they thought. It seemed to work for him, so I was willing to give it a try. [...] He’d walk up to random girls and just grab their butts like there was nothing of it. [...] In his words, “Women respond to a man who doesn’t care about them or what they want, a man who puts himself first and takes care of

himself first and makes them feel like a piece of meat”. [...] I would continue studying books about being a bad boy and learning how to be mean to girls (Breeding, 2010: ‘Finally, An Answer’, Loc. 2557-69).

Travis writes that he lacked the “confidence or courage” (2010: ‘Finally, An Answer’, Loc. 2562) to enact these practices consistently, and that the lessons offered within this context were never entirely effective, as they conflicted with his normative values:

I knew that acting that way wasn’t in my belief system or a part of who I was. I believed that a woman should be respected and cherished and not treated like some sex object or a piece of meat. [...] I find it pretty sad that I devoted about a year or a year and a half of my life to learning how to be mean to women. [...] I had spent so much time trying to learn how to be someone that I wasn’t that I had lost who I really was (Breeding, 2010: ‘Finally, An Answer’, Loc. 2564-95).

What might be suggested, then, is that Travis lacked internalised *belief* (Bourdieu, 1990a: 66-79) in the rendition of masculinity being encouraged; the role was not “fully embodied” (Jack, 2014: 194), but proceeded as a conscious orchestration. Rather than expressing the internalised structures of the habitus, generative strategies develop a disconnected quality, lacking the incorporated investments needed to render them existentially authentic and socially convincing. Travis’ case also demonstrates the problematic ethical implications of (formally and informally) conflating *social skill* with *normality*, which potentially uncritically accepts norms and values prevailing within the extant social environment.

Rigidity

A second problem in the generative replication of valued masculinities through scholastically learned principles relates to *rigidity*. Bourdieu (1990b: 384) contends that what affords “practical logic” its “practicality” is that it follows identifiable principles, but “only up to a certain point”. It is characterised by a “relative indeterminacy”, “partial contradictions” and “fuzziness” (Bourdieu, 2000b: 55-6), allowing agents to “play on all the resources inherent in the ambiguities and uncertainties of behaviour and situation” (Bourdieu, 1977b: 8). Scholasticism substitutes “the things of logic for the logic of things” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 49), or prioritises “logic [...] over individual and collective history” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 31). Research literatures examining the effectiveness of social skills training for

individuals on the autism spectrum have identified recurrent difficulties that highlight the challenges involved in pedagogically transmitting a “practical sense”: adherence to formally studied principles may not translate into naturalistic settings with situational appropriateness; teachings may be practiced *too* consistently, with no room for contradiction or exception; and the significance of *style* in determining whether a practice “comes off” effectively may be difficult to communicate (Ozonoff and Miller, 1995: 429; De Jaegher, 2013: 13-4; Milton, 2014: 798).

The problem of rigidity in the enactment of gendered social expectations emerged within the narrative material under consideration. *Benjamin Collier* (2013), for instance, describes attempts to take on the “male role” within the context of sexual/romantic relationships. The principles that he learns are, at one level, “correct”, matching cultural standards positioning men as sexual initiators and as possessing boundless libidinal energy (Simon and Gagnon, 2003). Yet, Benjamin finds that others regard his attempts to enact this role as rigid and overbearing, lacking the nuance and sensitivity needed to develop relationships:

I [...] seem to scare women off [...] it may be that I focus on them too strongly as we talk. [...] If a woman is single, I must woo her, but I’m naturally shy when it comes to women. Yet I feel as though I must push past that in order to do the manly thing and show at least partial interest even if the interest isn’t that strong (Collier, 2013: Chap. 8, Loc. 1982-7).

The approximation of “fuzzy” knowledges using explicit principles of action limits the flexible, context-specificity of practice; traits that are expected, or even privileged, among men (e.g. sexual assertiveness and virility), may be comprehended intellectually, but enacted with an overtness that becomes socially disqualifying. *Barry Evans* (2015) writes about the expression of emotion. He identifies the “feeling rules” (Hochschild, 1979) discouraging men from conveying affect in the generation of appropriately gendered conduct (to avoid seeming “a little too camp”). Yet, as research within the sociology of emotion has increasingly attested (MacArthur and Shields, 2015), while associations between masculinity and emotional stoicism have a degree of accuracy within contemporary Western societies, affective expressions attain gendered legitimacy within multiple contexts (e.g. heterosexual romance, anger, or excitement during shared activities). Barry takes a principle that is not an *entirely*

inaccurate characteristic of hegemonic masculinity, but enacts it with a rigidity that is excessive, prohibiting himself from all forms of emotional expression:

You could tell me that someone had just died and I'd look exactly the same as if you'd just told me I'd won the lottery. Sometimes I was too afraid to show off any expression in case it wasn't appropriate or if people would laugh in case I came across a little too camp. My inside feelings were never portrayed by my outside expressions (Evans, 2015: Chap. 5, Loc. 935-7).

The prioritisation of adherence to principle, over the flexibly intuitive “feel for the game”, may engender particular difficulties identifying situations within which (usually) expected norms may be disregarded without censure. The capacity to *work with* features of the encompassing social landscape with artistry is partially defined by what Bourdieu (1977b: 124) terms the “legitimate transgression of limits”. Being “too correct”, or abiding by stated maxims with excessive rigidity, may produce a kind of over-conformity, whose “hyper-correctness betrays an imitation” (Bourdieu, 1984: 95). As Emily Brooks (2014) suggests, the scholastic transmission of social skills, coupled with both neurotypical “hegemony” (Davidson and Henderson, 2010b: 467-8) and the learned cultural disorientation experienced by many on the autism spectrum, may ensure that studied principles are enacted with an excessive exactitude. *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 160), for instance, describes being on his first date, and recalls receiving advice about the significance of male chivalry within the context of heterosexual romance. He captures a seemingly frantic attempt to act in the “right” way, a desire contradicting his partner’s lack of concern surrounding the cultural positioning of “man-as-protector”:

I felt extremely awkward and paranoid. I'd heard that the gentleman was supposed to walk on the outside of the pavement to protect his lady, and since I had only remembered to do it half way through the date, I got quite anxious. As I started to explain myself, she told me I was doing OK.

It might, as such, be said that the issues confronted by individuals on the autism spectrum in the social enactment of scholastically learned principles strikingly resemble what Bourdieu identifies as the limitations of structuralist anthropology. The development of rules or models of conduct, while not without purpose, translates into the “buzzing” (Ochs and Solomon, 2004: 150) world of social practice

with a degree of clumsiness: “mastery of the code” is not “sufficient to confer mastery of (its) appropriate usages” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 32).

Spontaneous Sense of Proportion

Enactments of masculinity commonly require nuanced awareness of situational detail, audience interpretation and relational dynamics; traits regarded with reverence when performed under certain circumstances, by certain actors, or in certain styles, may prompt stigmatisation when taken “too far”. It may be said, for instance, that men within contemporary Western contexts are expected to be assertive, dominant, and competitive; but each of these traits may result in social exclusion, or even criminalisation, rather than privilege, if enacted to excess. This insight is exemplified by misreadings of the concept of “hegemonic masculinity” as a toxic machismo (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 838-41), rather than invisibly naturalised male privilege (Connell, 1998; Connell and Wood, 2005). The performance of certain aspects of masculinities, which are potentially both socially validated *and* maligned depending upon the specificity and magnitude of their enactment, might be said to require an intuitive sense of *spontaneous proportion* – or the ability to instantaneously comprehend and negotiate the invisible boundaries separating the two responses.

The enactment of violence is an insightful site for the consideration of spontaneous proportion. Violent masculinities are, in certain senses, venerated within contemporary Western contexts (McCarry, 2007); they are associated with the maintenance/improvement of status within homosocial networks (Tomsen, 1997; Spaaij, 2008), often regarded as the morally justified response to mistreatment/threat (Kimmel and Mahler, 2003: 1440), and constructed as exemplifying a benevolent heroism when employed to defend (weaker, dependent) others (Whitehead, 2005: 412-3). This is, of course, not to straightforwardly validate normatively “privileged” enactments of violence, but rather to descriptively recognise that they may, at times, be rewarded. Yet, simultaneously, violence regarded as *illegitimate* is liable to have one perceived as unreliable, dangerous and irrational (Kimmel and Mahler, 2003). Contact sport athletes who, having spent their careers being lauded for aggression, are roundly denounced when these same manoeuvres inflict serious injury, exemplify this “doubleness” (Messner, 1990: 208-11). Responses to violence are also significantly inflected by racial/class factors, with socially

marginalised men more likely to encounter criminal punishment, where white middle-class men receive therapeutic-based interventions (Kaplan, 1995; Sampson et al., 2005). The symbolic and material attraction of violence in the demonstration of strength, control and dominance can be either venerated or despised, and the situationally relevant factors separating these reactions are often indeterminate.

The use of violence by men on the autism spectrum can contribute to patterns of corporeal harm, familial conflict, and experiences of vulnerability and fear for others (Benderix and Sivberg, 2007: 415; Lerner et al., 2012). While commonly individualised through the clinical terminology of “challenging behaviours” (Chiang, 2008; Matson and Rivet, 2008), it is important to situate autistic men’s violence in a broader context that, within specifically defined and delimited parameters, does sometimes legitimate male corporeal aggression (Anderson and Umberson, 2001; Whitehead, 2005). Several narrators described active injunctions to participate in combat sports and/or bodybuilding in response to repeated experiences of bullying. *Bill Furlong* (2012: Chap. 11, Loc. 1495) is advised to learn karate in the pursuit of self-protection; *Jeremy Tolmie’s* (2012: 85) parents suggest martial arts “to build some muscle” in order to “defend” himself; while *Will Hadcroft* (2005: 108) is enrolled in a “martial arts club” to “combat the bullies”.

When considering the *narrative structure* behind physical aggression described within the autobiographies under consideration, strong resemblances with ideologies conventionally employed to justify violence emerged. While often enacted in an overblown or clumsy manner, these practices were more closely related to the broader culture than usually acknowledged when the violence of men on the autism spectrum is narrowly medicalised (Chiang, 2008; Matson and Rivet, 2008). *Alexander Hubbard* (2012: Chap. 2, Loc. 307), for instance, while expressing a desire to “be friendly and seem calm to others”, describes physical assault within multiple contexts. These patterns of violence appeared especially common within situations involving the loss of control or (perceived) injustice. For instance, he writes:

I started getting angry when my mom and my older brother told me what to do. At age eleven, I hit my mom many times when she didn’t get something for me that I wanted (Hubbard, 2012: Chap. 1, Loc. 126-7).

Alexander describes a similar response when a classroom teacher reprimands him for misbehaviour:

When my teacher gave me a hard time, I hit and (bit) students from my class. I hated to do that, but that's what I felt. My teacher grabbed me and put me in time-out for doing the wrong things. I don't like time-outs that much. It makes me very mad and (I) wanted to yell when I take time-outs (Hubbard, 2012: Chap. 1, Loc. 205-7).

While engendering problematic outcomes for Alexander, and deeply affecting those he abuses, his employment of physical assertion to control others, resolve conflict, and as retribution for perceived mistreatment, has much in common with broader narratives used to justify men's violence (Anderson and Umberson, 2001; Kimmel and Mahler, 2003). Where these same motivations (dominance, resolving conflict, retribution) may, *at times*, be rewarded when enacted in socially normative manners and valences, men on the autism spectrum might lack the historically grounded, embodied sense of *how* to enact aggression in modes likely to incite praise, rather than institutionalised exclusion.

Several narrators recounted overt attempts to codify norms surrounding legitimated violence. *Barry Evans* (2015), for instance, describes being bullied at school. He recognises, at one level, that physical responses to this hostility may be regarded as reasonable, but recalls a lack of spontaneity in knowing how to react. Rather than proceeding through the fluid, habituated and contextually-sensitive “feel for game”, that would allow for an understanding of the situation in the “twinkling of an eye” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 82), Barry appears to experience something akin to “paralysis-through-analysis”. Where “immersive” learning promotes spontaneous “self-assurance” (Bourdieu, 1984: 91-2), this intellectualised reaction renders his reply to the attack lethargic and self-conscious in nature, lacking the knowing, embodied intuition associated with being attuned to the demands of the extant culture (Bourdieu, 1990a: 104):

I was punched in the face on the school field for no apparent reason. Another kid said I needed to fight back but I couldn't. I didn't understand why someone would do that. I knew in my head I would stand a good chance against this person, but what if I slipped and fell over? What if I missed when I punched? Why does this have to happen to me because it makes me look weak and I don't want to look weak? I could probably have been battered and still wouldn't have fought back (Evans, 2015: Chap. 3, Loc. 410-4).

What may be especially difficult for this group is spontaneously intuiting the labile boundaries separating socially legitimated from stigmatised violence (Messner, 1990: 208-11; Spaaij, 2008). *Paul Isaacs* (2012), for instance, describes his difficulties aggressively reacting to bullying. He struggles to respond with the nous needed to “get away” with these practices without institutionalised sanction: he is too easily provoked by teasing that others regard as incidental, and lacks a sense of proportion that would signal the appropriate intensity of response:

Naturally I tried to fight back, but that seemed always to make things worse. I either went too far with a joke or would hurt them more, or I would try and hit them which would draw attention to me. I was easily wound up in class and teachers and students revelled in making me blow my top. Looking back I was an anxious person but also very angry (Isaacs, 2012: ‘Teenage Years’, Loc. 683-6).

In an attempt to manage uncertainty surrounding the use of violence, *Bill Furlong* (2012) recalls receiving an injunction from a schoolteacher highlighting the universal unacceptability of aggression. This advice, affirmed by an institutionalised pedagogical authority, results in the development of a somewhat rigid rule of conduct on Bill’s part. This “principled” rejection of aggression renders it “unallowable” to respond to bullying in a physically assertive manner. Like Barry, Bill does come to recognise that violence *may* be implicitly condoned within certain contexts, but the fluid sense of when, where and how to engage in it in culturally valorised ways remains somewhat lacking “in the heat of the moment” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 82):

I knew teachers had authority and that because their authority was justified, it was always to be obeyed. I saw that as a simple rule. I did not realise that some rules can be circumnavigated in some situations. A teacher might privately condone a boy punching a bully in self-defence or under extreme provocation, but he or she may not say it openly. However, this is the only way I could have understood as I did not understand unspoken social factors (Furlong, 2012: Chap. 3, Loc. 269-72).

The thematic material considered within this section, examining the negotiation of violence and its connection to valorised *and* stigmatised masculinities within contemporary Western contexts, has been employed to demonstrate the difficulties involved in practically enacting physical aggression in lieu of

an attuned “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 66; see also Bourdieu 1977b: 96). This does not necessarily foster *either* excessive levels of aggression, or its complete absence, but might be understood as engendering difficulties practicing a culturally normative “balance” between violence constructed as legitimate/illegitimate. Attempts to intellectualise particular rules of conduct as a substitute for “practical sense” (Bourdieu, 1988a: 782) reveal the difficulties involved in scholastically replicating the more “virtuosic” (Bourdieu, 1990a: 107) social understanding needed to negotiate the utilisation of violence. This principled approach confronts problems capturing the fluid, contextually specific and intuitive understanding of how violence is likely to be interpreted by others, and the tacitly shared “ineffable” knowledges and “fuzzy” principles underpinning culturally privileged practice (Bourdieu, 1998: 53, 82).

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the distinctively academic tropes used to interpret and represent the experiences of those on the autism spectrum, figurative associations that have been specifically developed in relation to Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of scholastic forms of knowledge. It has been contended that the existential penalties (captured through the emotion of anxiety) associated with a fractured attunement to the encompassing social environment may motivate strategies of conscious learning as a substitute for the more intuitive knowledges of the Bourdieusian habitus. In a certain sense, individuals on the autism spectrum may become “anthropologists” of gender, actively studying this realm of social life to negotiate it more “appropriately” (an approach actively fostered through the pedagogical transmission of “social skills”). Yet, as with Bourdieu’s critique of the scholastic mode of knowledge, the development of rules and principles in the pursuit of legitimated social competence may translate unevenly into the realm of practice, a point developed in this chapter with reference to authenticity, rigidity, and spontaneous balance.

Three qualifications are worth noting in conclusion. Firstly, as suggested through the Bourdieusian (1993: 37-40) concept of “field”, gender dynamics have a contextual specificity that has not been fully explored in this chapter; there may be social domains within which “scholastic” (or “systematising”) modes of thought are privileged in gendered terms (particularly within STEM-related industries).

Secondly, while some on the autism spectrum may become invested in, or influenced by, biomedical/social forces promoting normalisation, this is not inevitable, with many espousing explicit rejections of cultural normativities (especially within the context of the neurodiversity movement [Cascio, 2012; Orsini, 2012]). The dynamics elucidated within this chapter should be interpreted as unevenly applying to only some on the autism spectrum, at certain times. Thirdly, as the “attunement” to the injunctions embedded within the encompassing social environment is described as “fragmented”, rather than non-existent, it should be acknowledged that more “fluid”, intuitive performances of culturally dominant masculinities among men on the autism spectrum are not categorically eliminated as a possibility.

Conclusion: The Comparative Sociology Of Disabled Masculinities, Research

Significance and Future Directions

This thesis began by arguing for a de-reification of the concept of “disability”. Rather than being neutrally embedded within the intrinsic fabric of particular corporealities, and denoting pristine distinctions between disabled/able, “disability” was positioned as a historically bounded mode of social classification. The parameters surrounding this term, this thesis contended, entail substantial complexity, being characterised by temporal/cultural change, corporeal diversity and relative gradations of “ability”. It was subsequently asserted that, within the context of gender, the term “disability” should not be treated as a homogenous or unproblematic entity, but rather required further deconstruction to reflect the corporeal and social specificities encountered by distinct impairment categories. This concluding chapter begins by returning to Chapter One’s appeal for a “comparative sociology of disabled masculinities”, both in order to reprise and clarify key themes developed throughout the course of the thesis, and to substantively demonstrate the significance and value of comparative research approaches within this context.

Gendered Similarities Between SCIs and ASCs

As previously argued, existing examinations of disabled masculinities have generally not explicitly considered the distinctive gendered dynamics encountered by particular impairment groups; this is not to elide recognition of the range of disabilities that have been insightfully considered within this context, but rather to suggest the absence of overtly *comparative* approaches. Extant research has tended to examine particular disability categories “unifocally” (Shuttleworth, 2004; Gibson, 2007; Joseph and Lindegger, 2007), or to interrogate “disabled men” as a single unit (Shuttleworth et al., 2012: 182-6). The latter tendency, which reifies “disability” as a uniform classification, has undoubtedly been enabled by certain substantive consistencies in the positions, experiences and social dynamics confronted by many disabled men, several of which have become apparent within this thesis. This section identifies four particular similarities in the gendered social positions and practices of men with SCIs and ASCs (several of which are complicated and/or qualified below).

Gender Exclusion: As contended in both Chapters Four and Seven, SCIs and ASCs tend to establish barriers to the enactment of privileged models of contemporary Western masculinity. This is a contention that has been commonly offered within academic representations of SCI (e.g. Nolan, 2013). Reflecting this previous research, spinal cord injured narrators described a range of contexts within which post-impairment embodiments interacted with encompassing social contexts to inhibit the performance of hegemonic masculinities, relating to sexuality, employment, independence, sport and the body. However, Chapter Seven's arguments surrounding the implications of ASCs in relation to gender are perhaps more provocative regarding the extant literature. Where academic discourses coalescing around the Extreme Male Brain theory (Baron-Cohen, 2002, 2004) conflate ASCs with distinctively "intense" enactments of (certain) features of masculinity, this thesis suggests that, in many respects, ASCs problematise access to the contexts, modes of embodiment, social relationships and practices associated with privileged models of manhood. As contended in Chapter Seven, there is a risk in comparing the material considered here, which has examined gender diffusely, with EMB theory's narrow emphasis on the systematising-empathising dualism. Yet, given this framework's rhetorically grandiose claim of an "extreme" masculinity, and its theoretical/methodological reliance on prisms common to evolutionary psychology, it is important to consider EMB theory within a broader gendered context.

Male Privilege and Sexism: As suggested through the introduction of the Bourdieusian term "dominated dominators" (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1993: 22-5) in Chapter Three, the particular social positions occupied by disabled men appear to be characterised by overlapping and intersecting logics of exclusion and privilege. When examining what Demetriou (2001: 341) terms the "internal hegemony" (male-male hierarchies) of able-bodied men, disabled men appear socially marginalised; yet this does not inevitably or neatly translate into alliance with feminist social objectives seeking the deconstruction of the "external" hegemonic relation between men and women. Within the autobiographical material considered, authors rarely articulated *explicit* commitments to feminism; as previously suggested, this does not definitively demonstrate the absence of dedication to the pursuit of gender equality, but it does perhaps imply that the mutual imbrication of sexism/ableism was not a paramount concern.

Further, narrators, at times, reproduced certain broader cultural narratives and associations contributing to patterns of gendered inequality, both through overt sexism (Chapters Six and Eight), as well as the pursuit of certain elements of privileged gender norms (Chapters Six and Nine).

Fish Out Of Water: Bourdieusian sociology tends to construct a relationship of reproductive “ontological complicity” between field/habitus as the “default” mode of social engagement; actors feel “at home” within the context they inhabit, as they are themselves corporeally invested with the immersive social logics characteristic of that context (Bourdieu, 1988b: 784). For the two categories of disabled men examined within this thesis, however, a distinctively “disjunctured” experience of this habitus/field dialectic emerged; narrators evinced a set of gendered dispositions that were *not* automatically attuned to the social environment and/or position occupied. For the spinal cord injured men, this tended to operate as a form of “hysteresis”, reflecting the loss of the able-bodied gendered resources privileged within contemporary Western contexts that ruptured anticipated possibilities for the enactment of dominant models of masculinity (Chapter Five). For the men on the autism spectrum, this “disjuncture” emerged as a consequence of a fundamental (if only partial) imperviousness to the incorporation of immersive cultural knowledges, meaning that their own embodied dispositions often appeared as “alien” or “foreign” in relation to dominant constructions of gender (Chapter Eight).

Symbolic Violence: Bourdieu (2001: 41-2) contends that relations of domination rarely operate solely through explicitly coercive interventions, but are often reproduced through social forces that invest the embodied self with implicit understandings of extant cultural hierarchies. This logic has, in both instances, been conceptualised through the realm of *affect*. Symbolic violence was examined within the context of SCI in relation to the emotion of *shame* (Chapter Five), theorised as emerging as a consequence of the judgement of the post-injury self utilising previously incorporated, ableist modes of gendered evaluation; ASCs, alternatively, were considered in relation to *anxiety* (Chapter Nine), with intersecting social forces surrounding uncertainty-investment-power (Bourdieu, 2000b: 229-45) fostering a form of internalised disempowerment in relation to culturally authoritative judgements and values. In both cases, to be clear, this did not render narrators entirely passive as actors, as the ableist/patriarchal logics underpinning these embodied resonances were, at times, contested (Chapters

Five and Eight); but these affective experiences nevertheless often formed a significant background to the negotiation of disability/gender.

Gendered Differences Between SCIs and ASCs

There were, however, multiple respects in which SCIs and ASCs entailed tremendously distinctive experiences, opportunities, exclusions, practices and embodiments in the negotiation of encompassing gendered environments. Several difficulties, it should be acknowledged, emerge in offering qualitative comparisons within this context. There may be a rhetorical tendency to assert binarised either/or distinctions, and to underestimate overlaps in the gendered experiences detailed by narrators; in the extreme, it should be acknowledged that there are undoubtedly individuals on the autism spectrum who are also spinal cord injured. The examination of points of contrast may have the effect of neglecting the substantial diversity that exists *within* the categories of SCIs/ASCs, using simplified “ideal type”-style (Weber, 2004: 113-4) models to provide solid and substantive bases for comparison *between* categories. From the perspective of the quantitative social sciences, it should be acknowledged that the samples examined here are not “matched” in terms of ethnicity, class, age or sexuality; there may be certain “confounding variables” (Schlesselman, 1978) affecting the integrity of comparisons centred exclusively on the disability/gender nexus. And, finally, research constructions of the autobiographical narratives under consideration may be problematised by the temporally unfolding nature of SCIs and ASCs; logics identified may apply only to particular moments, contexts and environments, without capturing the full complexity of experience as developing over time. With these reservations in mind, however, at least five distinctive gendered dynamics emerged through engagements with the material under consideration.

Physical/Embodied Capital: Norms relating to gender within contemporary Western societies are diffuse, multiple and contextually specific; there is, subsequently, not a single way to depart from hegemonic renditions of masculinity, but rather a panoply of opportunities to “fail” this evaluative standard (Goffman, 1991: 128). While this thesis has contended that both men with SCIs and men on the autism spectrum experience difficulties replicating the corporealities, styles, relationships, practices and social positions constitutive of privileged masculinities, there were significant particularities in the

ways these modes of gendered exclusion proceeded. A conceptually significant distinction emerged throughout the course of data analysis surrounding the terminology employed to interpret the intersection between ASC/SCI corporealities and the encompassing gendered social environment. The latter group was approached using the “fleshier” terminology of bodily/physical capital (Shilling, 1991, 2004; Wacquant, 1995b), to emphasise difficulties replicating the “physicalist” elements of hegemonic masculinity, such as penetrative sexuality, able-bodied sporting accomplishment, and blue-collar labour. ASCs, conversely, called for a greater focus on the “cultured embodiment” stressed by phenomenology (Stanghellini and Ballerini, 2002; Edwards and Imrie, 2003: 242-4) through the concept of “embodied capital”, and the extent to which this problematised the negotiation of interpersonal relationships and cultural understandings needed to performed privileged renditions of masculinity. While insightful in relation to the specificities of the gendered exclusion experienced by the two groups under consideration, the physical/embodied distinction is somewhat of a simplification (Hughes and Paterson, 1997). Narrators on the autism spectrum commonly described physicalities that rendered the enactment of certain aspects of masculinity problematic (e.g. bodily co-ordination, corporeal stiffness and sensory perception); and, as noted in Chapter Five, the embodied knowledges of those with SCIs created certain difficulties in terms of incorporated self-judgements (shame).

Temporal Selves: Chapter Four conceptualised SCI using Bury’s (1982) terminology of the “biographical disruption”; narrators frequently emphasised “ruptured social trajectories” arising from the “instantaneity” (Prager, 2013: Chap. 2, Loc. 156) of the corporeal/social/personal changes wrought post-injury. The implications of this bisected temporality were elucidated across Chapters Four and Five, highlighting the experience of a *loss* of culturally esteemed gendered resources, and the subsequent emergence of an existential *divide* between “external and internal” identities (Carpenter, 1994). For narrators on the autism spectrum, the temporal logic was quite different. As a lifelong, developmental condition, rather than an acquired injury, this group tended not to represent self-identification/diagnosis with an ASC as a “disruption” to expectations, but rather, as noted in Chapter Seven, through discourses of self-discovery and/or authenticity. Indeed, it was attempts to *mimic* neurotypically dominant constructions of hegemonic masculinity that were regarded as generating

incongruence between “internal” and “external” selves (Chapter Nine). While men with SCIs and ASCs were both construed as possessing a problematised access to privileged incarnations of masculinity, it is noteworthy that explicit discourses of *feeling oneself* to “not be a man” were much more strongly foregrounded within the former group. Narrators on the autism spectrum did, as acknowledged in Chapter Nine, often pursue consciously scholastic “masculinising” practices; but these tended to reflect responses to perceived external pressure, rather than “expressing” an underlying commitment to gendered norms themselves. It may be that the *temporal disruption* of internalised expectations and investments had the effect of viscerally emphasising the gendered implications of SCI, a logic that has perhaps contributed to the focus on acquired, physical impairments within the disabled masculinities literature (Shuttleworth et al., 2012: 179-80).

Gendered Habitus: As contended in Chapters Four and Five, the narrators with SCIs, as a group, arguably possessed investments in characteristically traditional constructions of gender (Good et al., 2006: 166), to the extent that masculinity (promoting participation in risk-taking, physical confrontation, warfare, sport, corporeally demanding leisure activities and blue-collar labour) is itself “generative of impairment” (Shakespeare, 1999: 63). The substance of these incorporated investments was elucidated within this thesis through a consideration of the emotion of shame, suggesting that initial habituated gendered associations and expectations were viscerally disrupted by the social/corporeal changes confronted post-injury. Narrators, evaluating themselves through internalised prisms of vision/division gradually absorbed through immersive engagement with the extant cultural environment, subsequently commonly described experiences of a disrupted or delegitimised masculinity (Chapter Four). The dynamics of the habitus were quite different for men on the autism spectrum, who were conceptualised as experiencing a phenomenologically fragmented attachment to extant gender norms. This was empirically elucidated within Chapter Eight, which examined Jack’s (2012: 3) concept of the “gendered copia”, the disrupted incorporation of a homosocial *illusio*, and the frequency of experienced “homophobia”. The contention that men with ASCs might productively participate in the heteroglossic proliferation of gender identities/embodiments/investments should not be stated too categorically; more “conventional” attachments to (often problematic) masculinities were also evident,

and narrators tended to remain at the level of “sex role” transgression rather than feminist activism (Connell, 1995). Yet, to the extent that ASCs can be understood as involving idiosyncratic disjunctures in the incorporation of culturally dominant common-sense knowledges, this group compares strikingly to the more “conventional” gendered dispositions possessed by men with SCIs.

Dialectics Of Gendered Liberalisation/Normalisation: If opportunities for gendered subversion appeared stronger among men on the autism spectrum when considering the incorporated dispositions of the two groups under consideration, the (biomedical and everyday) *interventions* experienced by narrators tended to operate in slightly perverse directions. Recognising the difficulties involved in reconciling conventional constructions of masculinity with SCI, and the historical absence of curative treatments, medical and interpersonal forces tended to stress the importance of developing “liberal” conceptions of gender consistent with the corporeal resources available post-injury for this group. This involved attempts to promote psychological “adjustment” by encouraging lessened investments in penetrative intercourse, self-reliant individualism, able-bodied sporting norms, and/or traditional gendered divisions of labour (Chapter Five). While these interventions tended to operate at the level of reforming individuals, rather than pursuing historical change, they nevertheless disrupted extant constructions of hegemonic masculinity. For the men on the autism spectrum, conversely, both quasi-clinical and everyday interventions stressed the importance of learning and enacting culturally normative understandings of gender in the pursuit of “social skills” (Chapter Nine). In part, these mediations might be interpreted as reflecting culturally pervasive constructions of ASCs as “shells”, from which “normal” individuals are waiting to be released given the appropriate remedy (Frith, 1993: 114). This logic renders social constructions of masculinity/femininity unproblematised, conflating the replication of culturally normative expectations with a form of positive functioning, and often explicitly promoting eminently traditional conceptions of gender (Bumiller, 2011: 976-80; Brooks, 2014). This argument, again, should not be expressed too strongly; it is undoubtedly the case, for instance, that men with SCIs continue receiving messages promoting the value of traditionally masculine traits. Yet, when considering medically dominant approaches to interventions regarding SCIs/ASCs and gender (and the

everyday interactions that commonly reproduced comparable logics), the respective significance ascribed to liberalisation/normalisation is striking.

Generative Feel For The Game: Chapter Six conceptualised the gendered practices pursued by narrators with SCIs, with a particular focus on the “reformulations” (Gerschick and Miller, 2000: 127-30) emerging at the intersection between habituated understandings of gender and the (delimited) opportunities available within the extant cultural environment. Within the narrative material under consideration, three particular strategic routes were identified, which involved the creative employment of the corporeal resources (or “cards”) associated with SCIs to enact certain aspects of valued masculinities (Coles, 2008: 238). These related to performances of rugged heroism, the privileging of the mental over the corporeal, and participation within homosocial relationships. While these strategies were delimited by overarching relations of ableism that could not be “strategised” away, and also contributed to certain problematic gendered discourses, they nevertheless reflected quite “knowing” negotiations of the surrounding social space. For narrators on the autism spectrum, however, this internalised “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1988b: 782), associated with an intuitive and flexible understanding of the encompassing environment, was disrupted by a fragmented cultural attunement. Generatively “masculinising” projects were underpinned less by the pragmatic and knowledgeable fluidity of an embodied “practical sense”, than the overt “scholasticism” that Bourdieu (1977b: 97-109) associates with cultural outsiders. In particular, Chapter Nine stressed the extent to which attempts to simulate neurotypically dominant masculinities were commonly problematised in relation to their enacted inauthenticity, rigidity, and lack of spontaneous balance.

Thesis Contributions To The Disabled Masculinities Literature: Theory, Research, Method

The Comparative Sociology Of Disabled Masculinities: The first contribution worth re-iterating is this research’s status as (to the author’s knowledge) the first study to explicitly consider disabled masculinities with a comparative analytical focus. Contrasting the two groups under consideration has facilitated a process of “question prompting” (Stretton, 1969: 245-7), allowing for the elucidation of elements of both cases that may have been taken-for-granted had they been examined in isolation. Foundational elements of the gendered experiences of men with SCIs and ASCs, relating to

corporeality, temporality, embodied knowledges, biomedical/social interventions, and opportunities for practice, appeared to operate in distinct, and sometimes contradictory, manners. This analytical tactic has insightfully clarified the difficulties involved in approaching “disability” as a singular entity. This is a particularly important insight within the context of a literature that arguably prioritises the gendered experiences of those with acquired, physical impairments (Shuttleworth et al., 2012: 179-80).

Bourdieu's Contribution To Disability Studies: While this research in no way represents the originary engagement between Bourdieusian social theory and disability studies (e.g. Edwards and Imrie, 2003; Simmons et al., 2008; Purdue and Howe, 2015), it does demonstrate this framework's immense potential for future contributions to the field. In particular, this thesis has contended that Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus, while not without limitations, has the capacity to negotiate the static conceptual dualisms that have, at times, characterised the social model of disability (in its simplistic incarnations). In Chapter One, the social model was critiqued for reproducing binary oppositions relating to public/private, biology/culture and solidarity/difference, in ways that obstructed significant political and existential considerations relating to disability. Bourdieusian sociology, designed as an antidote to classically modernist dualisms (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1989), has offered an immensely productive alternative to the social model, providing theoretical tools designed to highlight interconnections/overlaps/imbrications between these binary oppositions, without disavowing the social model's underlying interrogation of the ableist hierarchies that inflect historically and culturally distinctive modes of social organisation (Barrett, 2016).

Disability Studies' Contribution To Bourdieusian Sociology: Simultaneously, however, it should be acknowledged that while Bourdieusian concepts have significant potential within disability studies, this thematic domain is never (to the author's understanding) explicitly acknowledged within Bourdieu's texts as a significant form of social stratification, and continues to remain decidedly peripheral to contemporary “Bourdieusian sociology”. This, in part, reflects the continued marginalisation of disability studies within the social sciences as a whole (Longmore, 2003: 5; Garland-Thomson, 2011: 13-4). Yet, if Bourdieusian (1990a: 66-79, 2001: 5-53) sociology attempts to theoretically/empirically/politically privilege the realm of the corporeal (both in its physicality and in its

role as an instrument of socially embedded knowledge/subjectification/hierarchy), the marginalisation of disability as a legitimate scholarly domain can only be interpreted as a substantial (theoretical and empirical) problem for the framework. In a variety of ways, this thesis has demonstrated how key Bourdieusian concepts can be adapted/reworked to reflect the distinctive cultural, temporal, political, social and embodied dynamics confronted by distinct impairment groups (e.g. through the notions of physical/embodied capital, hysteresis, and autistic “scholasticism”), in ways that will ideally resonate with, and contribute to, future deployments of this theoretical apparatus.

Affective Disabled Masculinities: This thesis has suggested the value of more thorough examinations of the relationship between disabled masculinities and affective experience. This undoubtedly remains a realm replete with opportunities for further research, as only a single emotional state has been conceptualised for the two groups under consideration. It should be repeated that the analyses offered reflect the specific thematic and argumentative direction of the thesis, and that neither shame nor anxiety should be interpreted as “master” emotions for men with SCIs/ASCs. Yet, in both instances, considerations of the realm of affect offered productive insights in the articulation of the gendered social positions of narrators. For men with SCIs, the emotion of *shame* was interpreted as a form of hysteresis, reflecting an embodied disjuncture between internalised gendered expectations/values and extant corporeal/social opportunities. For men on the autism spectrum, alternatively, *anxiety* was interpreted as reflecting an embodied awareness of narrators’ lack of socially attuned knowledge, and positioned as an existential grounding to the pursuit of gendered normativity.

Generative Masculinities: Chapter One suggested that an empirically fuller conceptualisation of disabled masculinities might emerge through considerations of the intersection between particular impairment categories and strategic performances of valorised masculinities. Given the extant literature’s tendency to emphasise the extent to which disabilities impede the enactment of socially dominant, ableist constructions of masculinity (albeit with certain exceptions [e.g. Singh, 2005; Staples, 2011]), a “provisional reversal” (Frank, 2000: 360) of this logic has allowed for an insightful examination of the gendered negotiations undertaken by disabled men. In both instances, it has been contended that the corporeal specificities of SCIs and ASCs engender historically delimited opportunities for the

generative pursuit of masculinities; yet, the analyses offered in Chapters Six and Nine are of a substantially different nature. The former elucidated the particular avenues available within the context of spinal cord injured embodiment, emphasising possibilities for the performance of rugged heroism, the privileging of the “mental” over the “corporeal”, and homosocial relationality. The latter chapter, alternatively, emphasised the distinctively “scholastic” generative negotiations pursued by men on the autism spectrum, and how these fostered patterns of conscious awareness surrounding the enactment of privileged gender norms that translated somewhat maladroitly into practice.

SCI, Autobiography and Adjustment: While a relatively significant (although by no means expansive [Nolan, 2013]) literature has examined spinal cord injured masculinities, this is, to the author’s knowledge, the first piece of research to offer a sustained consideration of men’s experiences of SCI and gender using a collective pool of published autobiographical material (although Gerschick [1998] uses autobiographical texts to supplement his consideration of interview-based data using the broader category of “physical disabilities”). Previous studies have not employed Bourdieusian frameworks at length, with the concepts of physical/bodily capital, the habitus, hysteresis, and strategic generativities, offering substantial insights in relation to the gendered negotiations of spinal cord injured men. In particular, Chapter Five’s analysis of the emotion of shame allowed for a productive critique of certain limitations confronting medically dominant approaches to “adjustment” in reconciling spinal cord injured corporealities with internalised constructions of masculinity (Barrett, 2016).

ASCs, The Sociology Of Men and Masculinities, and Narrative: As suggested in Chapter Seven, a sizeable empirical and theoretical literature has emerged examining the “Extreme Male Brain’s” aetiological significance among those with ASCs (Baron-Cohen, 2002, 2004). This framework’s narrow emphasis on the empathising-systematising spectrum has tended to limit considerations of the diverse contexts within which gender may be relevant; its commitments to biomedical essentialism and evolutionary psychology have also fostered an aversion to conceptions of the relationship between ASCs and the gendered *social* world. A sparse literature has examined ASCs from more explicitly sociological perspectives; however, these have tended to emphasise representations *of* men on the autism spectrum (Bombaci, 2005), the marginalisation of women within medical/community settings (Davidson, 2007),

and/or femininity/masculinity in concert (Bumiller, 2008; Jack, 2012). As of this time, no extended, empirical examinations of the narrated, gendered experiences of men on the autism spectrum have been published within the sociology of men and masculinity.

The Five Rs: As noted in Chapter One, Thomas Gerschick and Adam Miller's (2000) research on disabled masculinities has been instrumental to conceptualisations of the diverse implications of corporeal difference within the context of gender relations. While they are careful to limit their findings to physical disability, the gendered dynamics potentially confronting disabled men can be further complicated using material developed within this thesis, particularly in relation to ASCs. To the categories of *reliance*, *reformulation* and *rejection*, we might add both *resistance* and *reading*. *Resistance*, within this context, is not intended to refer to contestations of gendered norms ("rejection"), but rather "intransigence" to their internalisation (Gerschick, 2000: 1265). *Reading*, alternatively, might be used to conceptualise the effortful "studying" of masculinity (McLaren, 2014). This differs from "reliance" in that it involves not the maintenance of pre-existing, incorporated modes of gendered perception, but rather a response to an initial "resistance" that inhibits the normatively aligned, "socially skilled" negotiation of the encompassing social environment.

Storying Bourdieu: The interpretation of autobiographical/life history material through a Bourdieusian conceptual apparatus, while not unprecedented (e.g. Wacquant 1995a), has received insufficient methodological scrutiny (Barrett, 2015). As contended in Chapter Three, Bourdieu evinces a somewhat ambivalent relationship to the use of spoken/written narrative within sociology. He articulates concerns about the limitations for these sources in identifying both habituated taken-for-granted assumptions, and the historical environments constitutive of these (Bourdieu, 1990a: 102); Bourdieu (1977a: 646, 1991: 56) also, in line with his general theorisation of language, contends these narratives might be considered as strategically orientated *practices*, rather than as unproblematically *representing* "experience". Yet, through both sporadically optimistic statements about the empirical value of narrative materials, and the substantive employment of these sources within his research, it seems apparent that certain patterns of congruence between Bourdieusian social theory and self-narrative material exist. This thesis has particularly contended that Bourdieusian approaches to autobiography

require: an analytic shift from the specificity of the individual life history, towards a consideration of collective social trajectories; the attempt to “read between the lines” for habituated assumptions and dispositions embedded within textual representations; and the contextualising analytic “re-insertion” of broader historical forces that may not be overtly present within narratives themselves (Barrett, 2015).

Limitations and Opportunities For Further Research

As this thesis has progressed, multiple theoretical, methodological and thematic limitations, and their relevance to the contentions developed, have been identified. Productive negotiations of dilemmas associated with Bourdieusian social theory have been attempted, in, for instance: the use of a conceptual framework renowned for its focus on social reproduction/inertia in encapsulating the radical biographical disjunctures associated with a SCI; Bourdieu’s problematic tendency to operate with a somewhat rigid binary between theoretical/practical knowledge; and the ubiquity ascribed to the incorporation of extant cultural dynamics through the pure weight of social immersion. The implications of autobiographical generic/literary techniques have also been a repeated concern, relating to the rhetorical significance of nostalgia, the desire for narrative closure, the construction of essentialist autobiographical “authenticities”, and the relationship between figurative language and social experience. In concluding this thesis, five particular limitations embedded with the approach developed, and the opportunities these engender for future research, will be stressed.

Autobiographical Material: The sociological analysis of published autobiographical material, despite a recent growth in popularity, remains somewhat marginal within the discipline. There are, as previously stressed in Chapter Two, multiple epistemological and analytical dilemmas associated with this methodology, and subsequent reservations surrounding this approach are not without validity. Concerns relating to: the implications of the desire for positive self-presentation; the verification of findings; the interventions of publishers/editors/co-authors; the role of narrative structures and literary styles; the generalisability of outcomes; and the specificity of the researcher’s interpretive position, are all relevant when assessing the value of this research. The conclusions presented here should be interpreted cautiously, and as a contribution to a broader research mosaic, rather than as definitive in isolation; further studies may consider whether consistent findings emerge when alternative methods

(e.g. ethnography, interviews, surveys) are employed. Further, as indicated in Chapter Three, the primary, although not exclusive, analytical interest within this thesis has been on the realm of “prefiguration” (to employ Ricouer’s [1984] terminology). Forthcoming approaches may afford greater attention to the (gendered) interrogation of disabled men’s autobiographies through the conceptual and analytical prisms of cultural studies, and/or auto-ethnographic textual engagements.

National, Cultural and Political Diversity: The samples employed within this research represent multiple national settings, but have overrepresented developed, English-speaking and Western contexts. This has enabled a consideration of factors broadly relevant across these particular environments, but has engendered certain limitations. While many have contended that the social and political landscapes surrounding both gender and disability are increasingly global in their scope (Holden and Beresford, 2002; Sweetman and Kerr, 2003; Davidson, 2006), distinctive local histories, and the way these interact with disabled masculinities, deserve further consideration. This applies to both an examination of the diversity that exists *between* Western, English-speaking nations, and, more importantly, the analysis of disabled masculinities in a broader range of cultural, linguistic, political and economic settings (Opini, 2016). Despite important exceptions (e.g. Joseph and Lindegger, 2007; Staples, 2011), the disabled masculinities literature remains geographically and culturally narrow.

Intersectionalities: This thesis is, as a whole, intersectional in design and intent, attempting to further develop sociological understandings of interactions between (various categories of) disability and gender. Yet, alternative identity markers, particularly surrounding ethnicity/class, and their implications within the context of disabled masculinities, have not been substantially approached. Particularly within the context of SCI, the samples analysed have been disproportionately white in composition; further research might consider examining both the gendered experiences of disabled people of colour in greater depth (Ostrander, 2008a, 2008b; Staples, 2011), as well as explicitly considering “whiteness” itself as a racialised subject position (Frankenberg, 2001; Guess, 2006). The class backgrounds of the samples employed have evinced greater diversity; yet, these differences have not been foregrounded, and it is likely that the literary demands involved in the production of autobiographical narratives has fostered the overrepresentation of those with a tertiary education.

Broadening The Comparative Sociology of Disabled Masculinities: This thesis has traced the particular intersecting logics between masculinity, SCIs and ASCs rendered visible by Bourdieusian social theory. It has contended that these two disability categories, while sharing certain important similarities, have distinctive gendered experiential, clinical, cultural and political implications. This is, ostensibly, an argument capable of being broadened, with findings presented within this context reflecting particularities of SCIs and ASCs that, in all likelihood, will not translate unproblematically into the experiences of alternative disability groups. Further considerations of the implications of alternative impairment categories, within *comparative* research designs, could be productively pursued in future, perhaps through the consideration of sensory, learning and/or congenital physical disabilities.

The “New Man” and Disabled Masculinities: The realm of gender (and its subsequent interactions with disability) is historically dynamic, with a range of theorists and researchers documenting substantial patterns of change and contestation surrounding constructions of masculinity within contemporary Western contexts (Bridges and Pascoe, 2014). Examinations of recently emerging features of gender have not been absent within this thesis, in, for instance, the consideration of masculine beauty standards (Shakespeare, 1999, 2000), the emergence of “post-Fordist” labour markets (McRobbie, 2011), and the increasing historical dominance of the companionate, “pure” relationship (Giddens, 1992). Yet, as a consequence of both Bourdieusian theory, which is arguably more adept at interpreting the stable and durable, rather than dynamic, elements of social life (King, 2000), and the use of autobiographical material temporally distributed over an extended period, the thesis has tended to emphasise somewhat traditional constructions of masculinity. Further research could examine interactions between disabled masculinities and more recent gendered phenomena, including the emergence of what some have termed “inclusive masculinities” (Anderson, 2009), the relevance of the culturally pervasive figure of the “new man” (Cortese and Ling, 2011), and/or the implications of the changing cultural expectations/contradictions confronting men as a consequence of economic change and activist interventions (Kimmel, 2010).

Concluding Reflections

The field of disabled masculinities encompasses tremendously complex terrain, given both the internally variegated empirical realities associated with the terms “gender” and “disability” (as situated within diverse cultural and historical contexts), and the persistent theoretical tensions that characterise sociological work within the two scholarly areas. This thesis, as such, is limited by the conceptual foreclosures of Bourdieusian social theory, the questions raised by the empirical utilisation of autobiographical material, and the consideration of only two “impairment” categories. As suggested above, much further research is needed. Yet, the very factors that render disabled masculinities immensely complicated territory are also central to the field’s value. It reflects a productive thematic avenue for considerations of increasingly pressing issues within the discipline of sociology (not all of which have been developed within this thesis), including the multifaceted nature of corporeality (Vannini, 2016), affective experience (Barrett, 2016), global/local relations (Migliaccio, 2015), “cyborg” embodiments (Norman and Moola, 2011), the historical formation and effects of medical categories (Feinstein, 2010), and the roles of intersecting relations of difference within gender politics (Snyder-Hall, 2010). These theoretical contributions are, of course, only of value to the extent that they elucidate the experiential dilemmas confronting disabled men in the negotiation of the encompassing gendered environment, as well as problematising continuing relations of inequality between men and women. This thesis has, I hope, demonstrated the personal, conceptual and institutional relevance of the disability/masculinity nexus, and the possibilities available within this context for future research.

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