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Myself, man and manager

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MYSELF, MAN AND MANAGER

submitted by

Willm Mistral

for the degree of PhD

University of Bath

2001

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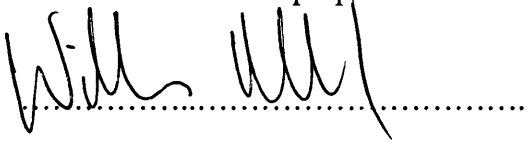

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MYSELF, MAN and MANAGER

An inquiry into the person within the profession

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MYSELF, MAN and MANAGER

An inquiry into the person within the profession

Summary

The primary focus of the thesis is myself, as a man and as a manager. It represents an inquiry into the significance of my management, my gender, my sense of identity and, crucially, my values, in interaction with my world. This is linked for me with an understanding of the phrase *the personal is the political* and, in the context of my inquiry, *the person is the professional.* My research represents a search for some level of accordance amongst realms unhelpfully differentiated and separated.

The methodological underpinnings and research practices of my inquiry derive from those of Qualitative Research and of Action Research. This thesis also displays the influence of Post-modernism on my thought and action. Post-modern is used here in two senses: that adopted by Gergen (1991) of a plurality of voices vying for the right to be reality, and by Reason (1999) of accepting links between ways of knowing and social power structures.

My research practices may be broadly termed *first-person self-reflective inquiry* (Reason & Marshall, 2001:413). Central to my research has been my active engagement in self-reflective inquiry practices (Marshall, 2001; Torbert, 2001); in writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson, 1994); in inquiring dialogue; and in my observation of myself in action in my world.

This approach is informed primarily by my acceptance of the importance of reflecting on my own behaviour - mental and physical, emotional and spiritual - in the midst of action; secondly, of overtly recognising and valuing the subjective element of research; and thirdly, of ensuring that my research methodology is actively dialogical, in order that I 'know, live, explore and articulate the inner tensions and contradictions' of my own culture and position (Eikeland, 2001).

MYSELF, MAN and MANAGER

An inquiry into the person within the profession

Chapter 1 The 'Beginning' of this Inquiry

Always-beginning, this thesis has evolved, modified, transmogrified even, over the passage of time, and within a process of repeated cycles of inquiry into its meaning as an active component of my research. My research has been an iterative process, from which a very personal focus has emerged. It is about myself as a man and as a manager, reported from a number of different viewpoints, each of which is my own.

My text has been revisited, reflected upon, added to and subtracted from, in many different time-frames, in different frames of understanding, in different frames of being. Each time I re-view my work, my life, and this text, I do so from a different position in a new cycle of inquiry. This new position is not necessarily radically different from previous positions, but inevitably, ineluctably, my view has altered. And so, I begin again. To re-search, to re-inquire.

I have attempted to make the principles of this iterative process, if not every instance of it, evident throughout my text by the insertion text-boxes, varying fonts, and some dates. I remain uncertain as to how many reflective voices I can insert without totally confusing or alienating the reader. I well remember my attempts to make any sense from the famously and idiosyncratically over-written Finnegans Wake (Joyce, 1992).

At the time of first beginning my research I set out with an instrumental, professionally-oriented purpose. I was at that time moving into a management role, and I wanted to become a good, effective, manager. As most people working with me were (and continue to be) female, I believed that a good manager (male in my case) would need an understanding of, and an ability to deal with, issues arising from gender differences. This research originated, therefore, in my concerns about differing gender behaviours, expectations and needs with regard to management in my workplace. More precisely it began by focusing upon a problematic issue that I interpreted as arising from men managing women. I set out to investigate whether behaviours and expectations associated with male managers could be, or were, causing problems for female staff.

As my inquiry progressed I began to realise that I too was having difficulties. My difficulties, initially, were experienced as deriving from an increasing workload. Then I saw them as arising from a lack of appropriate support. And then I began to realise that my own beliefs, attitudes, and values could be responsible for, or at least associated with, the perseverance of behaviours (my own and those of others) which were not conducive to effective professional or personal practice. And then I began to re-consider myself as contextualised, situated, *identified*, as a man and as a manager.

I, Me, Myself

I came to see, slowly, over a period of three and a half years, that My Self, as embedded, and moulded, in a gendered social context, was something that I could *inquire into* and say something about, as part of an attempt to *do* something about any perceived problems with Men or Management.

> The best way is to understand yourself, and then you will understand everything...
> Before you make your own way you cannot help anyone, and no one can help you
>
> (Suzuki, 1970:111)

'My self', however, is whirled in a maelstrom, a 'malestream', of my own experience of being a man and a manager. I act, and am acted upon, in a world that is gendered, and hierarchically-ordered. All the gender issues, all the management issues of the world I occupy, however constructed, however construed, run through me, *are* me. My main purpose here is *not* to write *about* myself as a manager; it is *not* to write *about* gender issues in the workplace; and it is *not* to write *about* any specific philosophy of management practice.

My main purpose here is to write *from where I am now* as a practising, gendered, manager.

That I claim the right to speak from and for myself, should not be read to imply that I know, or that it is possible to know, my self. I am not claiming, necessarily, that there is a real, a true, identifiable *me*. I do not wish to fall into either a psychological reductionism, treating identity as a relatively fixed and stable internal characteristic; or into a sociological reductionism, treating identity as a somewhat less fixed characteristic acquired through internalisation of socially constructed roles or labels (Petersen, 1998:13).

I do lay claim, however, to a *present* me. A *me in use* in any given time and context. This present me cannot be divorced from past or future me, but *I now*, am not what *I was*, or *I will be*. I am always beginning. Re-membering my past, re-storying my life, re-constructing my self.

I am aware that I can be seen to be constructing my own identity, my *self*, who *I am*, what *I do*, by a process of 'othering'. That is to say, I define myself in terms of what I am not. This reflects the ontological and epistemological perspective in which my life has been steeped, and discussion of these issues forms an integral part of my thesis. At the same time I claim to speak only for myself. The effect of speaking for oneself, and leaving others to speak for themselves is an issue that has been much discussed in feminist texts (*e.g.* bell hooks, 1990; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). Not everyone has equal access to speaking or being heard. In my own situation as a white, middle-aged, male manager I am aware that my voice could easily drown or misrepresent – through force of ethnicity, age, gender, and professional seniority – the experiences of differently positioned women *and* men. I recognise, also, that others have been too much spoken about and for, and however well-intentioned such speech may be, it can act to reinforce rather than undermine 'otherness' (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996:10).

I admit to a more prosaic reason for speaking only for myself – it is all I that I feel capable of doing. The complexity of speaking for others defeats me, in this context. I can map my interchanges with others (*i.e.* all who are not 'me'), I can say where I see (from my perspective) what others are doing, and whether I think these behaviours are right or wrong (*i.e.* according to my beliefs and values they have helpful or less helpful consequences). In that respect I do speak about them – and in so doing I once again speak about myself, as the views I express probably tell the reader more about me than about those others, who will of course have their own version of events.

Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

The reader must not expect ontological, epistemological or methodological consistency throughout this thesis. This text is a reflection of my personal and professional process and is, therefore, evolutionary. I have borrowed from a number of conceptual approaches because that is what I do, in practice.

I wish my thesis to reflect who I am and where I am. Although this thesis represents the outcome of my inquiry, *my text also reflects the process of my inquiry.* I do not want to present a text that has been carefully reworked to give a 'tidy' image of myself and my research. Such a text would be a lie. And so for this reason my text is 'messy'. It incorporates different aspects of myself, different levels of scholarship, and different styles of writing. Although this might prove disconcerting for those who prefer a greater academic purity, my thesis needs to reflect me as I am, in action, in the world. And, while possibly problematic in terms of aesthetics, clarity, and conceptual coherence, I believe that 'blurred genres' may also produce something that is both rhetorically powerful and catalytic in outcome (Gergen, 1992: 168).

This said, my approach to this thesis has been influenced by two broad perspectives or paradigms. The first influence (in the chronological sense) is my past and present engagement with 'mainstream' educational, academic, and professional activities: further and higher education in 'mainstream' Psychology; training in 'mainstream' social research; and professional life as a 'mainstream' University-based researcher and research-manager. The second influence (and most important in terms of sense-making and presentation) is the broad 'alternative' approach encompassed by the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP), in the School of Management at the University of Bath, within which my PhD process has been supervised.

A brief exposition of the contrasting demands of each of the above influences may aid comprehension of my text. Professionally I work as a manager within a mental health research unit, and to earn my living I need to compete, and help others to compete, for research funding from a variety of sources related to health and social care. In my experience, the great majority of funders demand, or are best satisfied by, particular kinds of research questions being asked, particular types of data being collected, and reports being produced in particular formats. These 'particulars' can be seen to emerge directly from the epistemology and methodology adopted within modern scientific and academic circles.

Another important aspect of my professional life is the production of papers for publication in peer-reviewed bio-medical or social science journals. Anyone familiar with these journals, and especially anyone who has attempted to publish in these journals will recognise that they, also, have a strong tendency only to accept papers which are written in a specific style, and recognised as fulfilling criteria established by, and accepted as representative of, the modern scientific approach. I have learnt how to work within the confines demanded by my professional context, and this learning has had an influence on both the content and structure of the present text. Not to include aspects of my professional working life as a research tool, as well as a source of data, would be to deny a substantial part of my professional and personal be-ing, and do-ing. Thus, parts of this thesis re-present, in methodology as well as content, elements of modern scientific method.

Now to the second influence. My initial reactions to the CARPP programme are discussed below (Chapter 8) as part of my reflections on the whole process of my PhD research. At present I wish simply to state that CARPP has provided me with the foundations upon which I began to build a different approach to conducting and reporting research. The most important lessons I carry forward from this are, firstly, the necessity of reflecting on my own behaviour - mental and physical, emotional and spiritual - in the midst of action; secondly, of overtly recognising and valuing research as a process of living inquiry; and thirdly of ensuring that my research methodology is actively dialogical in order that I 'know, live, explore and articulate the inner tensions and contradictions' of my own culture and position (Eikeland, 2001). This reflexive-subjective-dialogic approach to research is linked for me with the beginning of an understanding of the phrase *the personal is the political* and, in the context of my present inquiry, *the person is the professional.* Much of this thesis displays the influence of post-modernism on my thought and action. Post-modern is used here in two senses: that adopted by Gergen (1991:7) of a plurality of voices vying for the right to be reality, and by Reason (1999) of accepting links between ways of knowing and social power structures.

Upon weighing-up the two major influences on this thesis I believe it is most predominately informed by an Action Research approach. I recognise, however, from my experience of hearing this term used in a variety of research contexts and from the argument put by Reason (1999) and Reason & Bradbury (2001), that 'Action Research' now means so many different things to so many people, that it is useless as a means of distinguishing one methodological strategy from another. Within this broad array of strategies, nevertheless, I locate my own preferred option as evolving from those which aim at the development of an inquiring consciousness and mindful behaviour in the individual. I believe the basic principles underlying the methodology adopted in my research to be: *an extended epistemology; critical subjectivity; and cycles of action and reflection (*e.g. Heron & Reason, 1997; Reason, 1999).

My application of these principles is discussed in the following chapter, and detailed further examples may be found in Argyris *et al* (1987), and amply illustrated by Marshall (1999, 2001).

This thesis, therefore, sets out to be a report of my personal engagement in Action Research. Action Research, for me, implies 'action' and 'a systematic enquiry made public' (McNiff, 1988: 3-7). This requires more than simply action in an everyday sense (which can, at times, be more-or-less intentional movement comparable to a tic, or automatism, or habit). 'Action' in Action Research must in-corporate (bring into the body) observation and reflection *in the midst* of action. The action researcher must be both mind-ful and body-ful, ideally simultaneously but at least cyclically. This reflection in the midst of action means consciously considering what I and others *do* in particular contexts with relation to preferred personal and societal values.

Another important point has to be made here about my interpretation of 'action' in Action Research: 'action' for me has to include other than obvious, perceivable enactment, doing, in the external socio-political world. 'Action', for me, has to include, incorporate, my own sense of 'be-ing'. An inquiry into my be-ing has to consider *how I am* as much as *what I do*. The crucial importance of this (non)distinction will become obvious, I believe, in the content and format of my text.

This thesis attempts to integrate both critical subjectivity and objectivity (and here I am using the term 'objectivity' as a surrogate for the demands of the paradigm informing modern scientific method). The structure and content of the following chapters will serve, however, as an illustration of my personal difficulties in achieving this integration: even a brief perusal of several chapters will show not so much 'integration' as 'juxtaposition'. One chapter may reflect an acceptance (or embracing) of critical subjectivity, while the next reflects an attempt at objectivity (or at least an *appearance* of objectivity as required by my mainstream occupation). Methodologies might appear to have been adopted and adapted, *ad hoc*, rather than in the systematic manner that so many texts promulgate as good practice (*e.g.* McNiff, 1988; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). McNiff (1988) tells us that

> The method itself of action research is elegant. It involves a self-reflective spiral of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning.

I must confess that I see little elegance in my method. I have a tendency to act before I plan, to reflect without acting, and to observe without reflection. In the search for the holy grail of ideal action research, my behaviours tend to resemble the metaphorical bull in a china shop.

I console myself with the thought that I am engaged in a learning process which extends beyond the submission of this thesis. I do not yet know what I will know. I do not yet know how to manifest that which I already know in some inchoate form. In fairness to my process, therefore, my final copy of this thesis remains a 'draft'. This 'finished' document purports simply to be an academically acceptable version of 'work in progress'. In time perhaps, I will be better placed to engage in more systematic research strategies and present my understandings in a more elegant form.

I believe that this situation mirrors a fair representation of 'me' in the world: my 'whole' comprises many 'parts' occupying common ground but not altogether assimilated to a common theme. I am essentially (if indeed I dare use this word so closely following my avowal of a post-modern approach), 'unfinished business'.

Form and Content

This thesis, like many others before it, can be read in a linear fashion, starting at the first word on the first page and continuing, for those with the required staying power, to the last word at the end of the last page. As already indicated, however, this thesis did not develop in such a linear fashion. It developed via sudden as well as gradual shifts of perspectives and direction, by new learning accreting on old, and by new learning sweeping away old. This thesis developed, and is presented, in the way my mind, my being, develops. This text is a reflection of my inquiry into my development over a period of four years. This development has not been a calm evolution through the processes of time from some primeval, stooped, thick-browed and be-nighted sub-human, to a superior, tall, straight, intelligent, and enlightened 'modern man' – some readers may recall this popular image of 'human' evolution from such books as 'The Ascent of Man', by Bronowski (1973), and (used more ironically, I assume) from the cover of 'Men as Managers, Managers as Men' (Collinson & Hearn, 1996a).

No, my evolution has not been that, but rather a haphazard affair guided by impulse, and taken in new directions by surges of energy and by obstacles encountered en route. Like a toy car wound up by clockwork – surging off into a wall and bouncing back to try another route, encountering a chair or foot, and pivoting once again – sometimes flipping onto its back and, like some demonic tortoise, whirring furiously until spring or battery depleted, it subsides to await reactivation at the will of some uncomprehended master.

I believe this thesis faithfully reflects the inquiry processes of one man: me. It is, as far as possible, a reflection of myself being and doing in the world. It reflects my passage through and encounters with, the demands of my life, both personal and professional, and the demands of the academy in terms of meeting the requirements of a doctoral dissertation. It reflects my struggle to maintain some sense of self – of who I am at any given time or place.

I have no wish to capitulate to the perceived demands of a professional career in terms of certain management styles, or career-enhancing behaviours. Nor do I wish to be or to appear to be, unprofessional or unproductive in my chosen field of work. I have no wish to capitulate to the demands for a certain approach to research and research presentation, be it from the traditional academy or from those academics espousing a new paradigm, new orthodoxy. Nor do I wish to totally dismiss or denigrate either of these approaches – I still have a lot to learn about and from both. Neither a slave to, nor master of either approach, I consider myself an *amateur* in relation to each. As the present research is, ultimately, my research I am in one sense an *autodidacte* who is able to acknowledge the contributions of many schools of thought. I do not want to be in or of any stereotype. But then I must face the quandary of knowing the nature or whereabouts of my own authentic ground and of knowing if and when I am occupying it.

> *I find myself suddenly reminded of an incident, many years ago when I was 17 or 18, and I refused, in youthful rebellion, to stand up for the British/Australian national anthem. I was berated by another young man, who accused me of being a 'communist'. How often does anyone stand for the national anthem now? How often does one even hear the national anthem now (other than for major national events)? Does anyone use the term 'communist' as an insult and a threat now? Times and orthodoxies alter.*

I do not wish this thesis to be seen as an act of rebellion, although I resist being seduced by any particular ontology, epistemology, or methodology. My determination to inquire and, beginning again, to re-inquire into my own being in the world underpins my claim to have produced a thesis of PhD standard. Further and more detailed supporting evidence for this claim may be found in the following chapter on methodology, and throughout this thesis.

CARRP Supervision

This thesis was completed under the supervision of the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP), at the University of Bath. CARPP has a particular ethos which I believe is reflected in the PhD supervision process. A brief description of that process (or my own experience thereof) is relevant and necessary here because, throughout my text, I make mention of, and quote participants from this supervision. This process of supervision reflects the CARRP ethos in that it models a form of dialogic action research via interactive peer group discussion of the state, status, process, progress, of each participant's ongoing research inquiry. A supervision session, therefore, does not serve simply as a 'progress report' to a senior academic: as an explanation of work done or an expiation for work not done. Each participant is given the opportunity to expand upon their research inquiry and to further that inquiry by engaging in dialogue with other members of the group. At times, depending upon participants' interests, a more formalised collaborative or co-operative group-research strategy may emerge. In my own case I experienced each of my supervision sessions as a forum for discussion of my inquiry process; for a critical appraisal of this process and my understanding of it; and for an exploration of my emotional, mental, physical, spiritual actions and reactions in relation to it. Each session was audio-recorded and transcribed, and I utilised both these media in order to revisit and re-inquire into my research process from a later, and different, perspective. My engagement in supervision sessions, therefore, served as one of the disciplines of my inquiry. My text includes excerpts from supervision groups in order to comment upon, to illustrate, to demonstrate my research process.

This thesis is discordant. It contains contradictions. The reader will hear different voices, as if the text has been compiled by different people. It has. But, all of these voices, these people, are 'me'. The voices derive from forces which have acted upon, and continue to act upon, the point in space and time I know as my self. They have been brought together, unified, in *my voices,* and *my choices*. The different voices reflect different modes of being. I argue that different modes of being are useful for doing different things. Each mode of being is limited. All modes of being, together, are limited. I work with what I have, and with who I am at any given moment.

I am immanent within my own life-universe. I am the light of my own life-universe. What I illuminate, I re-cognise.

There are however, times and places of which I have but the haziest of perceptions, and can but vaguely recognise or make little or no reconstruction. These are the 'black holes' or 'dark matter' of my life-universe that defeat the light, or most it. And so, there are gaps in my text: blanks, voids, empty spaces.

From where I am now, I perceive or believe I came from or via there and then, but I have little or no knowledge of how the movement, evolution, transformation, transfiguration took place (or is taking place as I move towards where I will be in time to come). My life can be described in the form of a wave wherein there is a certain level of probability that 'I' as a particle will be at some specific place at some specific time. When 'I' am precisely located in time and space, however, it is impossible to say how fast, or to where, I am moving. At once a particle and a wave, I appear to be subject to an *uncertainty principle* (Heisenberg, 1901-1976).

If people don't get the message, then there is no message.

(Willm Mistral, CARPP: March 2000)

Chapter 2 Methodology and Research Practices

The unexamined life is not worth living

(Socrates 469-399 BC)

The present version of this chapter (for I have reconsidered and reconstructed it over time as my methodology and research practices evolved) sets out to fulfil at least three purposes. The first is to clearly present the methodological foundations of my research. This will, I hope, allow the reader to approach my thesis with an understanding, appreciation or, at least, an acceptance of its format and content. The second purpose is to establish my *bona fides* as a researcher. This chapter, therefore, details the research practices I have utilised, and sets out criteria by which I judge the validity of my inquiry. The third purpose will not be obvious to the reader because it has already been accomplished. Writing and rewriting this chapter has allowed me the opportunity to engage in the iterative inquiry process referred to in Chapter 1. In reconsidering and rewriting this chapter I have engaged in an interactive inquiry, a dialogue, with my own text. This has allowed me to reflect upon what I have done, and to further develop my knowledge, skills and understanding of my own process.

The first and second purposes above indicate that I make a differentiation between *methodology* and *research practices*. This differentiation is based upon my belief that my *methodology* is a reflection of my ontological and epistemological understanding of the world. My *research practices* derive from my methodology, and are those actions in which I engage in order to further the process of my inquiry. My methodological foundations, I believe, derive from the *paradigm*, or perspective, via which I view, understand, explain the world (Guba, 1990:17) and my research practices derive from my *values*, the basic set of beliefs that guide my actions (Laszlo, 1996:78). These issues will be addressed later in this thesis, particularly in Chapter 5 and Chapter 9.

Methodological foundations

I wish to locate my research within two broad fields of research methodology, the first of these being Qualitative Research, and the second, Action Research. The following brief overview of these locating fields draws heavily on the Handbook of Qualitative Research, (Denzin & Lincoln, 1st edition 1994; 2nd edition 2000), and the Handbook of Action Research (Reason & Bradbury, 2001) as I consider these texts to be sound representations of both the breadth and depth (via a complex interconnection of diverse practices, concepts, and assumptions) of these approaches to research. Although these two fields of inquiry share many principles and practices, one difference I see between them is that, while an action researcher always uses elements of a qualitative approach, a qualitative researcher does not necessarily engage in action research. I wish, also, to position my approach to research within a Postmodern perspective. This broad, complex, and ever-mutating perspective is also outlined below.

Qualitative Research

The field of qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm which is distinctly its own; it does not belong to a single discipline; nor does it have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own. Qualitative research has been said to contain, however, a two-fold essence: a commitment to a naturalistic, interpretive approach, and an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:4). A positivist approach to research embraces the methodological principles of (supposedly) impartial, value-free observation, with a preference for the experimental method and the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data. Qualitative researchers, to the contrary, stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between researcher and researched, the situational constraints that shape inquiry, and its value-laden nature. Nevertheless, qualitative research developed within the positivist paradigm and this contributes to a number of central tensions and contradictions within this field (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:5). I will now briefly describe one representation of the evolutionary process of qualitative research as I believe the tensions and contradictions described in it are also evident in this thesis, as I am far from immune to the effects of my own historical situation. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) envisage seven overlapping historical 'moments' in the evolution of qualitative research. These moments are not seen as chronologically discrete nor necessarily complete.

The first, the 'traditional period', from about 1900 to 1950, reflected the positivist, scientific paradigm, and predominately comprised anthropologists and sociologists writing accounts that they believed to be valid, reliable, objective descriptions of 'others' considered to be alien, foreign or strange. The second, 'modernist' period, 1950-1970, saw the development of explicit, rigorous criteria for conducting and analysing qualitative research based upon those of the natural sciences. Although there was a growing recognition that qualitative research was an interactive process between the researcher and the researched, the researcher remained absent from the written text, an authoritative 'voice from nowhere'. The third moment, from about 1970 to 1986, was a time of blurred genres, as boundaries between the social sciences and the humanities began to disintegrate and qualitative researchers employed a wide range of practices in their research. The notion of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) emerged during this period, with the use of more pluralistic, interpretive, perspectives and strategies to adduce the meaning of behaviours from those enacting them. Geertz (1988) brought to the fore the issue of the author's presence in an interpretive text, and questioned how any researcher could speak with authority about and for the subjects of research.

The fourth moment of qualitative research emerged during the 1980s, and was characterised by twin crises of *representation* and of *legitimation.* These both derived from calls to make research and writing more reflexive, and more self-conscious, and from a recognition of the effects of issues such as gender, class, and race on the interpretation and representation of different social worlds. The fifth moment is seen as a period of enormous ferment and of highly productive dialogues within and across disciplines. It is here that issues identified with the framing of a text find expression. These issues derive from a *postmodern* sensibility which takes as given that the researcher is not a politically neutral observer standing outside of the text, and which questions the legitimacy of any, or all, bases of truth (see below). The fifth moment experienced a crisis related to *power* and *vocality*: Who decides whose voices are included in a text, and how? This fifth moment also saw the exploration of the possibility of 'messy texts' which do not purport to be scientifically objective, which are not tidied-up to give the impression of perfectly-pre-formed research strategies, and which speak to our emotive, social, experiential selves.

The sixth moment continues to deal with issues from the past while facing new crises related to politics, ethics, spirituality, democracy, collaboration, trust and validity in qualitative research. Lincoln & Guba look forward to a seventh moment where many of these crises might be resolved and research could become

> ... inquiry involving intense reflexivity regarding how our inquiries are shaped by our own historical and gendered locations, and inquiry into 'human flourishing'...
>
> (Lincoln & Guba, 2000:185)

I believe I continue to carry all the above 'moments' of qualitative research with me in my present inquiry. Via the above literature, and the use of a first-person self-reflective action research strategy I have been able to recognise the effects of these moments, or their underpinning paradigms, within my life, and to consider how I might engage in the 'seventh moment' within my own ongoing inquiry.

Action Research

The term 'action research', similarly to qualitative research, has been used with reference to a wide range of approaches and practices, developing from varying philosophical, psychological and political understandings and commitments (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:xxiv). In the Handbook of Action Research, which contains contributions from a wide range of action research perspectives, Reason and Bradbury assert that good action research is fundamentally different from traditional academic research in that

> ... it has different purposes, is based in different relationships and has different ways of conceiving knowledge and its relation to practice.
>
> (Reason & Bradbury 2001:1)

Action research, as defined by Reason and Bradbury (2001:2), strives to develop *practical knowledge* which is useful in everyday life; it seeks to contribute to *human emancipation and flourishing*; it is *participatory* and supports research *with* and *by*, rather than 'on' people; and it is *emergent*, in that it is an evolutionary, developmental process which cannot be defined in terms of fixed methods and outcomes. I perceive the core criterion underpinning this understanding of action research to be that of a participative worldview which draws our attention to the congruence between the qualities of participation which we espouse and the actual work we accomplish (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:448).

Reason (1998) argues that participation is not merely a 'methodological nicety', about engaging the people who are being researched in the research process, but involves at least four imperatives.

The *political imperative* states that people have the ability and right to be included in decisions which affect them; the *epistemological imperative* derives from a rejection of the modernist, positivist, reductionist view which objectifies the world, separates us from our environment, and tells us there is but one way of knowing it; the *ecological imperative* derives from a belief that if we fail to understand our interdependence with our fellow creatures, our planet and our cosmos, we will destroy both our environment and ourselves; and the *spiritual imperative* leads us to recognise the essential community of all humanity within the natural environment and the creative spirit that sustains the Whole.

The imperatives inherent in a participative worldview influence the choices that action researchers need to make with regard to their research practices, and which in turn have implications for the quality and validity of their inquiries (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:2). My own research practices (further discussed below), influenced by the above imperatives, can be situated within a first person self-reflective approach involving dialogue with my CARPP peer group, members of a 'men's book group', my wife and, through the medium of my writing, myself.

Postmodernism

Both action research and qualitative research have contributed to, and been affected by, the emergence of a *postmodern* perspective. This is not a unified perspective, as postmodernism evokes 'an incredulity towards meta-narratives' (Lyotard, 1979), and from a qualitative research viewpoint, Richardson tells us that

> The core of postmodernism is the *doubt* that any method or theory ... has a universal or general claim as the 'right' or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge. (Richardson, 1994: 517)

Postmodernism rejects the claim to authoritative knowledge associated with the empirical, positivist worldview central to the modernist scientific paradigm that has been the basis of inquiry within the Western world since the Enlightenment.

> Central to the modernist view was a robust commitment to an objective and knowable world, and to the promise of truth about this world.
>
> (Gergen, 1991:83)

Reason and Bradbury (2001:4) assert that, in undercutting the above commitment, action research is part of the current shift from a modern to a postmodern world. I believe this shift is reflected throughout this thesis in my refusal to accept the 'truths' prescribed to me by different aspects of my upbringing, my education, and my professional and personal life. On the other hand, the influence of postmodernism on my thinking is demonstrated in my acceptance of a multiplicity of truths and a multiplicity of possible selves.

There is another aspect of the postmodern world which may be called the *postmodern condition* (Gergen, 1991). Gergen argues that, in the Western world, technological development of the media of communication (radio, television, internet, mobile telephones, for example), and the increasing ease with which we are able to travel the globe encountering different people in different ways in different places, means that we are constantly and increasingly flooded with a surfeit of ever-changing information. As the individual becomes saturated with new things to do, new ways of being, and new ways of seeing, old 'romanticist' or 'rational' views of the self become seen as 'ways of talking' rather than reflections of the actual nature of persons. This is leading, Gergen believes, to a profound change in the way we characterise the self.

> Social saturation furnishes us with a multiplicity of incoherent and unrelated languages of the self. (Gergen, 1991:6)

Gergen believes that, although social saturation is leading to the loss of an assumption of a true self, or belief in any definitive truth (Gergen, 1991:16), it has the capability to transform our being in a very positive way. As the postmodern world leads to a deterioration of belief in clear and separable things-in-themselves (Gergen, 1991:138) then the modernist view of the individual as the centre of human action and meaning may be replaced with that of the *relationship*.

> In effect, when postmodern arguments are extended, we find it possible to replace an individualistic worldview – in which individual minds are critical to human functioning – with a relational reality. We can replace *cogito ergo sum* with *communicamus ergo sum*, for without co-ordinated acts of communication, there is simply no "I" to be articulated. (Gergen, 1991:243)

Gergen ends his analysis on the hopeful note that social saturation could lead to an increased sense of relational embeddedness and meaningful communication, which might engender solutions to mutual problems via a shift from abstract, transcendental principles (deriving, for example, from religion, science, or constitutional law) to that of the immediacy of participatory, interactive, integration of disparate lifestyles.

> Attention may usefully shift then from the linguistic negotiation of reality to the coordination of actions in everyday life. (Gergen, 1991:243)

Exposure to an increasing variety of 'truths' does not necessarily lead, however, to the end of conflict or to any particular hoped-for outcomes. If any good is to come of social saturation, I believe it will have to be coupled with a profound sense of humility and interdependence, which do not necessarily derive from simply increasing the variety and volume of available information. Information has to be *selected* on the basis of *usefulness*, and what we select, what we find useful, is a reflection of our underlying *values*. Unless and until we value relationality above individuality, many of our relationships will remain simply instrumental means to servicing our own individual wants and needs. These issues of a *multiplicity of truths*, of *relationality*, and of the importance of our *values* in decisions as to what we find *useful*, are addressed in my thesis.

My Research Practices

I now turn from discussing the methodological perspectives underpinning my inquiry, to the actual practices involved in my inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) view the qualitative researcher as a *bricoleur*. This term may be translated from the French to indicate a kind of professional handy-man or woman, a do-it-yourself, work-it-out-as-you-go-along, inventive, practical solution-finder. The researcher-*bricoleur* works within and between competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms, and 'choice of practice ... is pragmatic, strategic and self-reflexive' (Nelson *et al*, 1992:2).

This approach, however, is not haphazard or lacking in rigour, and the researcher-*bricoleur* produces 'a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:4). The researcher-*bricoleur* is intimately involved in an emergent, interactive inquiry,

> an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting
>
> (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:3)

In many ways, I believe, the above description of the researcher-*bricoleur* may also be applied to myself in my practice of action-research. My research practices have been informed by several related methods used within qualitative and action research which may be broadly termed *first-person self-reflective inquiry* (Reason & Marshall, 2001:413). Central to my inquiry has been my active engagement in self-reflective inquiry practices (Marshall, 2001; Torbert, 2001); in writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson, 1994); in inquiring dialogue with members of my PhD supervision group, my wife, and members of a 'men's book group'; and in my observation of myself in action in my world.

My dialogic engagement in my PhD group-supervision sessions, within the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP), has been a critically important aspect of my inquiry practice. I chose to use supervision sessions as a forum for discussion of my inquiry; for a critical appraisal of this process; and for an exploration of my emotional, mental, physical, spiritual actions and reactions in relation to it. Each session was audio-recorded and transcribed, and I utilised these recordings and transcriptions, as well as my 'real time' experience of the supervision session, as sources of data during my inquiry. Re-listening to the audiotapes, and re-reading the transcriptions, I was able to revisit and re-inquire into my research process from later, and different, perspectives.

My engagement with supervision thereby became one of my research practices. The verb 'became' in the previous sentence is important because my use of the supervision session as an integral part of my inquiry was a *process of becoming*, rather than a clear-cut choice made prior to commencing my inquiry. Although I utilised these sessions from the beginning of my inquiry, their importance emerged over time, and it took more than three years before I came to realise the full extent of the usefulness of the supervision process as one of my self-reflective inquiry practices.

This thesis includes excerpts from supervision groups, especially in Chapter 8, in order to comment upon, to illustrate, to demonstrate the process of my inquiry. Peter Reason and Judi Marshall, senior academics and engaged participants in CARPP supervision sessions, state

> ... it is important to work with the emerging *process* of inquiry as much as with the content ... we believe that developing the *personal process* of inquiry, the first-person research process, is the basis from which our students reach out to create a wider influence. (Reason & Marshall, 2001:413)

My own personal process of inquiry has also been influenced by an *existential perspective*, as expressed by Reason and Marshall.

> From the existential perspective individuals are 'thrown' into the world, confronted with a set of issues – problems or life opportunities – with which they have to deal, and creating their life through the choices they make in the face of these issues. (Reason & Marshall, 2001:413)

I am writing this thesis, therefore, from the viewpoint and experiences of a *situated identity*. 'I' *self-identify* as a man, a male, a white, heterosexual, middle-aged, manager. No obvious disabilities. From an Australian labouring class. English University educated. And more. My identity, my opportunities, my problems, are formed within these influences, but to what extent any or all have been causal to who I am, or to what I do, is a moot point. This thesis speaks from where I am, about where I am. It does not provide an answer to questions of cause and effect. From where I am, I make choices, and the choices I make define my doing and being in the world.

First, second, and third-person research

My inquiry forms part of the personal process of my life. It is at once 'for me, for us and for them' (Reason & Marshall, 1987:112). It is for *me* in that the subject resonates for me personally, and the pursuance of its complexities has served to excite me emotionally as well as intellectually and practically. It is for *us* in that it informs my personal and professional praxis, and thereby has practical implications in the social world in which I am but one participant.

It is for *them* in that I believe that much of the learning demonstrated within this text is generalisable and able to provide food for thought and action for those engaged in a similar or related field of inquiry. 'For me, for us and for them' also relates to first-, second-, and third-person research strategies (Reason & Bradbury 2001; Torbert, 2001). First-person research fosters a self-reflective, inquiring approach to my own life, to the choices I make, and the effects they engender in the world. Second-person research starts with interpersonal dialogue about matters of mutual concern and seeks to improve our personal and professional practice. Third-person strategies seek to encourage a wider community of inquiry with people who may be geographically dispersed but seeking opportunities to work together for mutual benefit. I see myself as primarily engaged in first-person research and second-person research, while remaining as yet an apprentice in both.

Self-Reflective Inquiry

A primary practice in my research has been self-reflective inquiry. This practice comprises certain disciplines of paying attention to myself in action in my professional life, at home, and in my CARPP supervision sessions; and, also, to myself as revealed through my writings, and in the tapes and transcripts of my CARPP supervision sessions. This is not simply self-obsessive 'navel-gazing', it is an active process of reflection on my life over time. The principles I have applied to reflection are very similar, I believe, to those used by Marshall (2001) in describing her approach to self-reflective inquiry practices.

> I pay attention for assumptions I use, repetitions, patterns, themes, dilemmas, key phrases which are charged with energy or that seem to hold multiple meanings ...
>
> (Marshall, 2001:433)

I strive to remain consciously aware that I am inquiring with or via my discussions, my writings, and my reconsideration of supervision transcripts. This involves a sense of purpose or intent (Marshall, 2001). I set out with an hypothesis, a question, or a frame through which I look. A simple hypothesis might be that my words will indicate a suspicion of, or resistance to 'received truths', and so I reconsider what I say in terms of examples or metaphors of questioning, resistance, autonomy, or independence. Another hypothesis might be that my suspicion, or resistance, might lead to consequences both generative and degenerative, and so I observe myself or read my texts in terms of these effects.

As well as reflecting upon, and actively engaging with my texts, I also observe myself in the world, 'being' and 'doing' a manager, a man, myself. I try to notice how the nature of my being and doing changes or remains the same at different times and in different contexts. I take particular notice of people's reactions to me at different times and in different contexts, and of my reactions to them. This increases my conscious awareness that 'I' am not always the same, and neither are 'they'. We mould or shape ourselves, amoeba-like, to each other and the situation. That I, we, change is not evidence of inauthenticity, but of reality. It is evidence of a dynamic, interactive system evolving multiple and ever-changing truths.

Writing as Research

As a parallel activity to observing my action in the presence of others, I am claiming the *process of writing* this thesis as an extremely important first-person self-reflective research practice. I am very much in agreement with Richardson (1994), in that

> I consider writing as a *method of inquiry*, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic. (Richardson, 1994: 516; 2000: 923).

Some people, I conjecture, might see writing as a reporting of action which has taken place *previously* in the world *out there*, but I would argue that my writing is an integral part of my action *here* and *now*. This thesis is not simply a written report of what I have done, *it is what I am doing.*

Writing this thesis is the enactment of my life, the enactment of my inquiry, at this time. It is not, in Richardson's words 'a mopping-up exercise at the end of a research project' (1994:516), but has been an integral and necessary part of the research itself. I have found, in line with Richardson's assertion, that

> I write in order to learn something that I didn't know before I wrote it.
>
> (Richardson, 1994:517)

Richardson argues that by writing in different ways we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it, and the form and content of writing-as-research are inseparable. My writing throughout this thesis takes different forms. One of these, illustrated particularly throughout Chapter 3, 'Becoming a Man', is what Richardson (1994:521) calls *evocative representation.*

Chapter 3 is autobiographical and, upon reconsidering this chapter, I see that I have created a text that very much resembles one of Richardson's examples of evocative representation, the *narrative of the self.* The bulk of Chapter 3 was written over a period of about four months during the early stages of this PhD process and, true to one of the defining criteria of action research, its importance to the process of my inquiry emerged over time. Chapter 3 presents a highly partial, personal, subjective account of my life. During the writing of this account I relived my experiences of the past and began to attend to the ambiguities inherent in my remembered history. Having actively re-engaged with my past, I reflected and I continue to reflect upon it and my re-presentation of my life. I reflect upon what my stories tell me about my past, about my present, and about my future. Who do I see myself as being, then and now? To what extent did my child create my adult? To what extent does my adult create my child? In this narrative of the self I do not attempt to explain myself, but invite the reader to engage with the text and discover what my words evoke.

> Using dramatic recall, strong metaphors, images, characters, unusual phrasings, puns, subtexts, and allusions, the writer constructs a sequence of events, a 'plot', holding back on interpretation, asking the reader to 'relive' the events emotionally with the writer. (Richardson, 1994:521)

My autobiographical writings were also read by members of my CARPP peer group, by members of a 'Men's Book Group' in which I am involved, and by my wife. At different times with these different people I engaged in active dialogue regarding my and their upbringing, what mine meant to me, what theirs meant to them. These I see as opportunities to reflect-in-action as well as to reflect-on-action (Baldwin, 2001: 290). In-action, because these dialogues were me, us, reflecting on our lives while, at the same time, enacting my-our lives in interaction with each other. On-action, because we were taking the opportunity to re-consider what and why we, and others, did certain things at certain times.

And then, I began again to write – not in order to report these dialogues, or my own reflections, but *as part of* my own conscious, reflective, enactment of my life. Whether my recollections, my stories of the past, are 'objectively' accurate is not at issue. There is no point in striving to get these remembrances of the past 'right', as different people from that time would, no doubt, remember different events, or the same events from different perspectives.

The type of evocative narrative of the self that I have written in Chapter 3, is not simply a history of where I was and what I did. It is an active process of my self-creation, in time present, via the re-membering (putting back together, re-constructing) of time past.

> Postmodernism claims that writing is always partial, local and situational, and that our Self is always present, no matter how much we try to suppress it – but only partially present, for in our writing we repress parts of ourselves, too
>
> (Richardson, 1994:520)

If all texts, viewed from a postmodern perspective, are partial, local and situated (and I am sure that my own has been influenced, for example, by the effects of my history, culture, race, gender, and present professional status), then no text can tell the 'whole truth, and nothing but the truth' about its chosen subject matter. Therefore, as my chosen subject matter is primarily my self, I cannot expect to express, nor can the reader expect to receive, the whole truth about me. As a researcher, nevertheless, I need to be aware that the truths that have been suppressed rank equally with truths that have been revealed.

> We do not, however, have one 'true self' that we can choose to either hide or authentically share with others. Rather, we have multiple potentials and possibilities that different situations will evoke or suppress, make more or less likely, and assign more or less positive values to. (Lerner, 1993:206)

Throughout my thesis I believe the reader will hear some of my different voices, and encounter some of my multiple selves. In different chapters the voices of these selves emerge, and merge, in mixed or 'blurred' genres of writing. While at times, as in Chapter 3, I have used evocative representation, at other times I may be seen attempting to remove myself from the text and becoming an apparently neutral 'voice from nowhere'. This latter approach to writing is in line with the conventions more favoured by mainstream social science or bio-medical journals, and is the style I use in the day-to-day activities of my professional life. I cannot claim that, at the time of writing, I was always conscious of the frame in which I expressed myself (the self present at one or other time often brooked no questioning of its eternal validity). The iterative nature of my inquiry, however, my regular revisiting and interaction with my text, allowed me the opportunity to note where and when different selves were speaking.

Nevertheless, I found it very difficult, even with numerous retrospective considerations of my text, to see what frame I was speaking within at any given time. I believe that this is because, despite my cognitive, intellectual, acceptance of the multiplicity of my selves, I hold (am held by) an emotional attachment to the unity of myself as a distinctive, unchanging, individual, 'personality'.

The experimental representation of my autobiographical chapter in juxtaposition with somewhat different approaches taken in other chapters, has emerged through the process of writing. I want this thesis to reflect my inquiry process. Therefore, although it should be 'readable', I have no desire to present a text that has been so re-worked, so tidied-up, that it gives a completely false impression of who, what, where I am. My being and doing in the world is not a rational, linear, logical progression governed by my emergence from ignorance to knowledge or from wrong to right. My messy life process is reflected in my messy text.

Validity

Given the admitted partiality of my account, and of my belief in multiple truths, how is the reader to judge the validity, the 'truth quality', of what I report in this thesis? A reader is entitled to wonder if I have simply 'made it all up'.

Many different forms of validity, and difficulties in establishing validity, have been brought to my attention during my formal studies (BSc in Psychology and Sociology; MSc in Social Research); within my professional role as a researcher; as part of my cultural heritage; and, more recently, in my involvement in action research. Validity also has an importance for me personally. One of the reasons why I chose to enter academia was my concern regarding criteria of validation in my work, at that time, as a practitioner in the field of alternative/complementary therapy (more on this in Chapter 5). Briefly, I felt that mainstream, orthodox, medical science tended to invalidate complementary therapies by the application of unsuitable, reductionist, scientific criteria to judge their effectiveness. On the other hand, many complementary therapists attempted to use the very same criteria to 'prove' their therapies 'worked' in order to gain acceptance by the medical profession.

Many alternative, complementary, therapists seemed to be caught in a cleft between the modern scientific paradigm, which governed the world into which they had been born, and a new emergent paradigm as yet ill-defined, upon which acceptance of the validity of their therapies depended. It is only very recently, as my own knowledge and understanding has developed that I have come to see that I, too, am caught in that cleft, and that there are many more ways of considering validity than those I had hitherto considered.

The emergence of a postmodern perspective has brought into question the very notion of the usefulness of criteria of validity (*e.g.* Kvale, 1995; Lyotard, 1979; Schwandt, 1996; Wolcott, 1990) especially as so many of the accepted criteria can be seen to derive from modernist, positivist, scientific method. Validity remains, nevertheless, a 'fertile obsession' that can be neither avoided nor resolved, but which can be positioned as an 'incitement to discourse' (Lather, 1993:674). This continuing discourse has produced the concept of an *extended epistemology* within which we might reconsider different ways of knowing and different notions of validity (Heron, 1981; Heron, 1992; Reason & Heron, 1986; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). It is my belief that this thesis demonstrates different ways of knowing, and matches a range of validity criteria developed and explored in the context of postpostivist, postmodern, new paradigm, research.

Experiential Knowing is my direct experience of the world. That experiential knowledge is mine and mine alone, no one else has or can know that experience. It is, by its very nature, ineffable. Our experiential knowledge, however, is based in a familiarity acquired through sustained perception and interaction (Heron, 1981:28). Grounding this approach to validity in recognisable experience, Heron (1992:164) uses the familiar phrase 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'.

Presentational knowledge may be best demonstrated by poets or artists who are highly sensitised to this form of knowing and able to depict the 'utterance' of things (Heron, 1981:29). Nevertheless, all of us strive to, and do represent our experience of the world, in order to illustrate to others what it is to us. This may take form in personal interaction, in speaking, writing, drawing, dancing or through many other interactions in life. For me, effective presentational knowing is an enactment that is *meaningful* for myself and others. I believe that Chapter 3 in the present thesis, where I engage in what Richardson (1994:521) calls *evocative representation*, demonstrates this type of validity.

Propositional knowing, according to Heron (1981:28) is when we know something in terms of certain describable qualities, or in certain describable relations with other things. With this knowledge I can form propositions *about* my experience. I can theorise as to its nature and provenance, the likelihood of its recurrence, and my ability to control it. While propositional knowing is clearly recognisable as the foundation of modern scientific empirical research, theory-making and testing is also a function of action research.

Practical knowing, knowing how to do something, is an important aspect of an extended epistemology. Strong arguments have been made for the primacy of this practical, or *useful*, form of knowledge (*e.g.* Heron, 1996ab; Kvale, 1995; Mitroff, 1998; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Reason & Torbert, 2001; Wittgenstein, 1953).

> ... all other ways of knowing support our skilful being-in-the-world, our ability to act intelligently in the pursuit of worthwhile purposes .
>
> (Reason & Torbert, 2001:5)

The practical aspect of validity fits well with what has been called *validity of purpose* (Francis, 1998; Reason & Heron, 1986:5), and with pragmatism (Kvale, 1995; Mitroff, 1998). Mitroff tells us that Pragmatism is the philosophical school which posits that 'truth is that which makes a significant difference in the lives of humans'. He argues that, contrary to the beliefs of many academics,

> ...truth is not solely a property of formal propositions, theorems, research findings and so forth, but of ethical actions (*i.e.* actions that eliminate, or make significant headway in eliminating, some important human problem).
>
> (Mitroff,1998:70)

Following this logic, something only becomes valid once it has made a difference. This, for me, follows from Wittgenstein's (1953) concept of *meaning in use*. To speak of some fact, in abstract, as being *true* is ultimately a nonsense. A fact is only true and valid when it is used, actioned – and actioned, in the terms of Mitroff (1998) and Kvale (1995), for an ethical purpose. Consideration of this type of validity leads me to pose other questions of my research: Does it contribute towards the greater good? Will it be useful? For my research findings to be valid they must contribute towards the enactment of changes in my, our, their behaviour, in such a way as to make a positive contribution to the world (what counts as 'positive' here will be very much dependant on my, our, their values).

It is my experience that my research inquiry has been *useful to me.* It has extended my knowledge, and my understanding, of a range of concepts related to new paradigm research. It has facilitated my participation in discussions of issues related to myself, as a man and as a manager. It has facilitated my personal growth as a man and as a manager. I further believe that my inquiry has been useful to others in that, especially in recent months, I have observed the growing team of people that I manage acting in a mutually co-operative and supportive way – both professionally and personally. While I do not claim that my self-reflective inquiry in my professional setting has 'caused' this positive process, I believe it has facilitated it or, at the very least, not created a barrier to it.

In 'The Social Construction of Validity' Kvale (1995) argues for a concept of validity wherein justification of the basis of knowledge is replaced by the ability to perform effective action. In Kvale's view, values and ethics are crucially important agents in decisions related to the validity of findings. Seeking to extend the frame of reference for discussing the validity of knowledge, Kvale posits three forms of validity: quality of *craftmanship*; *communication*; *and pragmatism.*

Kvale argues that the craftsmanship of research, including the ethical integrity of the researcher, is critical for the quality of the knowledge produced. This requires a researcher to be '...continually checking, questioning, and theoretically interpreting ...' (Kvale, 1995:27) his or her experience, ideas, behaviours, and presentation of research. For Kvale (see also Francis, 1998:102), *communicative* validity involves testing the validity of any knowledge claims via dialogue about the nature of social reality.

I believe that the iterative process of my own inquiry is evidence of both craftsmanship and communicative validity. I have engaged, over a period of four years, in cycles of action and reflection with regard to my writing; my PhD supervision sessions (the actual discussions, as well as with the tapes and transcripts); my 'men's book group'; and with my reading of relevant literature. I have regularly re-checked, re-questioned, re-interpreted my work, and my present re-writing of this chapter is evidence of the continuation of that process, as I reconsider my earlier text and my thoughts and feelings about it, in the light of comments from my supervisor, from reading several newly discovered theoretical texts, and from re-reading older ones.

Another form of dialogue which supports the communicative validity of my inquiry has been my 'internal' dialogue with my self (or my selves), when I directly question my own beliefs, behaviours, reactions as I observe my behaviour with others, or theirs with me, in my professional and personal world. I also engage in dialogue with other people's presentation of the world in the form of literature (both professional and 'lay'), art, film, theatre, or music. I notice what moves me, inspires, disappoints or repulses me. I compare my reactions with that of others, especially those of my friends or colleagues whom I might expect to be on a similar 'wavelength' to myself.

I must be careful, nevertheless, of two traps associated with dialogue. The first trap is the belief that this will result in the establishment of some final truth about the matter in question. The postmodern perspective demonstrates the problems inherent in positing any single truth about anything in a world subject to constant and increasing change. The second trap is that of conducting 'dialogues' with those who occupy socially dominant, or subordinate, positions. Both powerful and populist, as well as less powerful and unpopular opinions have to be engaged with as part of inquiry, but the inquirer must beware of being dominated by or dominating the views expressed. Dialogue therefore has to be multi-faceted, allowing many voices to be heard. Sex, gender, ethnicity, and other signifiers of differential social status impinge upon the effectiveness, the validity, of any dialogue. I have to keep an awareness that as a white, heterosexual, middle-aged, male, manager my side of a 'dialogue' might easily carry much more weight than that of a person who is of another colour, sexual-orientation, age, sex, gender, or professional status. I have to be particularly aware when the status differentials are not so extreme, or stereotypic, such that I might be fooled into thinking that my interlocutor and I have equal voice.

Critical Subjectivity

Ultimately the validity of this inquiry rests upon my own practices of *critical subjectivity* (Reason & Heron, 1986). By this I mean that while I privilege my own subjective experience, my own doing and being in the world, I ensure that this is given critical consideration by a number of reflective and inquiring practices. Examples of what this means for me in practice are found in the text-box below.

A research inquiry based upon critical subjectivity is underpinned by a number of key principles. One is that we live in an interactive and participatory universe (Reason, 1998; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Skolimowski, 1994). A second is that reality is both one and many, in the sense that even if we believe in an 'objective' reality, each individual has unique life experiences. And a third is that we create or choose, to some degree, a 'reality' which influences both our actions and our report of our actions,

> ... and truth is multiple and transient, always emerging and changing, and holistic.
>
> (Reason & Marshall, 1987:113)

The present thesis is derived from observation of the actions of myself and others in the world, followed by critical reflection on those actions in order to uncover my own, at times previously hidden, presumptions and expectations. Mezirow (1990:xvi) describes critical reflection as 'assessment of the validity of the presuppositions of one's meaning perspectives, and examinations of their sources and consequences'. I use critical reflection within a process of reframing, reformulation, and transformation in order to go beyond my own underlying assumptions and life norms (Marsick & Watkins, 1992; Pedler, 1996; Weinstein, 1995). I have been made aware, I discussion with CARPP colleagues, of the enormity of the tasks so casually referred to in the previous sentence. Simplistically, nonetheless, for me this means constantly working at not being 'stuck' in *any* one view or belief, and regularly querying the association between my actions and my values.

I trust that throughout this thesis the reader will find that I have been able to demonstrate these processes in action. Some of the changes that have taken place in my personal and professional life are illustrated and analysed in the present text, but no analysis will be final or complete because my inquiry is about the process of questioning rather than the outcome of points of argument 'proved' beyond reasonable doubt.

I am regularly concerned that my practices of critical subjectivity are insufficiently extended or deep. Because I am aware of the fillip provided by 'external' critical analyses of my thoughts, beliefs, writings, to the production of more complex, or deeply-layered, ideas, I question my own slowness at organising systematic 'outside' consideration of my inquiry.

Is it because I lack confidence in the worth of my thoughts on these matters? Is my behaviour in this regard terribly 'masculine' (in one sense which is popularly held up to criticism in certain feminist texts) in that I attempt to act autonomously, to do it 'my way'; to protect myself from such critical scrutiny? Whatever the reason, I do feel a need to protect myself, and the ideas that flow from or through me. The foetal or new-born inquiry cannot fend for itself. Ideas, or explorations, need to be nurtured. They take a while to grow in strength, to mature to the stage where they can be exposed to the world and stand or fall as equals with those which precede them in time and place (status) in the world. I need at times to take a protective, parenting, role both with my ideas and with my self. (cf. Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982; Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992).

I do, however, at present engage in several practices which expose myself and my ideas to critical consideration, and these are illustrated in the text box following.

My practices of critical subjectivity

My first practice is self-reflection. I attempt to listen to myself. To observe myself. To be aware of myself in action. To reconsider, at regular but not fixed intervals, what I feel, believe, observe, write (Marshall, 2001; Torbert, 2001). I am aware that my thoughts, beliefs, observations slide effortlessly from one 'framing' to another, depending upon my company, my motivation, my sense of social acceptance or threat. I observe, for example, that my behaviour, my responses, are different 'at work' to 'at home' to 'in supervision'. The frame which I place around any event influences my interpretation, understanding, and reaction to it.

A second practice of critical reflexivity has been to discuss my inquiry process within my CARPP supervision peer group. This mixed-gender group has given me invaluable feedback on my verbal and written accounts of my inquiry, and of my behaviour within the supervision process itself. The group has also provided me with different viewpoints, and difficult questions, on my personal experience at home, at work, and within the group itself. As well as my primary experience within the group, I have used both the audiotapes and transcriptions of these tapes to reconsider what I and other group-members said, and with what frequency, intensity of emotion, and extensiveness certain topics were discussed (Kreuger, 1998).

A third practice has been to initiate discussion with a small (3-5 participants) 'Men's Book Group' of which I am a member. After long hesitation I informed group members that I was writing on men in management and the effect of particular management styles on both men and women, and would be interested in their views. I hesitated even longer before attempting to initiate any related discussion because I thought they would not be interested in such discussion (being men!). My own expectations of my own gender had a powerful influence on my behaviour. I can see here the process of the self-fulfilling prophesy – I expect that men will not be interested in discussing men, therefore I do not initiate any discussion, and the expectation appears to be justified when no discussion takes place.

A fourth practice has been to increase the breadth of my own reading on issues related to sex and gender, to doing and being, and to reconsider my life and behaviours in the light of these texts. I have also greatly extended my reading across a range of texts on philosophy, 'alternative' research methodologies, as well as post-modern psychology and sociology. The majority of these texts are referenced in this thesis.

A fifth practice has been conscious observation of others. I observe others' behaviour as a useful template for my own, or as a model to be avoided. I also observe their behaviour in reaction to my own – what particular people, in particular situation, say or do when I act in specific ways. I then give consideration as to whether specific behaviours of mine are reacted to as appropriate or inappropriate, and whether this is a function of my behaviour, the other person, or the context in which we interact.

A sixth, and very important, practice of critical subjectivity is to write, reconsider, and rewrite. Writing brings my present thoughts, beliefs, understandings, out into the world. Having written, I then reconsider my representations. Sometimes, I find a text I have written several weeks or months before, and I struggle to recognise it as part of myself. I then enter into dialogue with this other self. My thesis develops, evolves, through the intromission of questions, criticism and comments from myself and others. These are keystones in the arches of viaducts that have carried my research over many an *impasse* or impenetrable morass. My writing tells me who I am, *presently*, in words at least. That which was hidden is discovered.

Action and Reflection

The text-box above gives some examples of my practices of self-reflective inquiry. My practice cannot be described in terms of adherence to pre-ordained patterns of behaviour, however. I have had to identify and develop my own cycles of action and reflection based upon my own qualities and the form of my life. I am faced, however, with the necessity of engaging in these cycles with sufficient rigour to satisfy my own demands as well as those of the academy. This thesis is an important part of the process of finding a way to articulate my practice so that it makes sense to myself and to the reader (Marshall, 2001).

My cycles of action and reflection in terms of this PhD thesis have taken place over a period of four years, and believe they will continue long after completion of this thesis. Both action and reflection are part of my way of living my life. I have already indicated in the first chapter of this thesis, however, that 'action' for me has to include my own sense of 'being', as well as my obvious, perceivable 'doing', in the world.

This thesis does not set out to provide explanations as to why certain things are the way they are, or to provide solutions to problematic situations. In making this statement I might be seen to have 'failed' as a researcher, but I have a tendency to be suspicious of explanations and solutions. I see more value in questions. Winter (1996:19) argues that the process of questioning is another dimension of validity, and the process of questioning, to me, provides greater hope of validity than any answers that may emerge. By recognising that my opinions, views and understandings are grounded in reflexive, interpretive, questionable judgements rather than based on any solid, external, immutable facts, I make it possible to review other interpretations of a situation and to modify my own if necessary. The validity of the present thesis is supported, therefore, by the validity of my questioning, of my inquiring, more than by the irrefutability of my knowledge-base. In terms of the validity of this thesis, therefore, the reader will need to be willing and able to accept

> ... shifting the dialogue about validity from a concern with idealist questions in search of 'Truth', to concern for engagement, dialogue, pragmatic outcomes and an emergent, reflexive sense of what is important.
>
> (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:447)

A final few words about validity

On re-reading this chapter once-again I now see that my exploration of validity can be also read as the desperate casting about of a man drowning in self-doubt, and grasping at floating straws of intellectual justification. Any exploration of validity, though, is in many ways a form of self-justification: Is what I am doing or being valid? Am I a valid person?

How can you not be a valid person? - asks my wife on reading the above.
Does that mean it is a stupid question? An intellectual, mind-game?- I ask myself
No! – I respond – *There is something intuitively important about recognising when I am not being true to myself, to my core values, in a world where it is very easy to accept that everything is relative.*

Finally, having spent quite a few pages discussing validity, I think it is important that I, and other readers of this text, do not become too exercised about it. Kvale (1995:39) suggests that we might do better to live in ways that go beyond pervasive distrust, and create communities where validity is not a primary question in social relations.

I allow myself the right, at times, to be wrong, to be in-valid, to make mistakes, and be mis-taken. I believe that I, we, they might learn as much, and find even more use, from my mistakes as from my precision.

Know Thyself

(Temple of Apollo, Delphi)

> The folly of that impossible precept, 'Know Thyself', until it be translated into this partially possible one, 'Know what thou canst work at'
>
> (Carlyle, 1795-1881)

The above quotation from Carlyle captures the centrality of *action* in our *knowing*.

Chapter 3 Becoming a Man

> The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.
>
> (Hartley, 2000)

> Our previous experiences act as metaphorical frameworks within which we understand the new. (Mangham & Overington, 1987:13)

The reader will find the present chapter very different from Chapter 2, which attempted to deal with research methodology and practice in a theoretical, academic manner. Chapter 3 follows a more meandering route, down 'memory lane'. The CARPP approach to action research more or less insists upon some form of personal exploration (Reason & Marshall, 2001:413), and I began to write the autobiographical vignettes that follow simply because I understood it was expected of me. I had, at the beginning, no grasp of how my subjective re-membering (putting back together different parts) of my life could inform my research, which I saw (at that time) as focused upon problems of gender and management.

This chapter comprises mainly a collection of brief anecdotes, vignettes, representing my memories of becoming a man. Initially, over a period of approximately four months, I wrote simply what came to mind, whenever it came to mind, without guile and, for the most part, without editing or correcting the text which flowed haphazardly from my fingertips. Following this first stage of 'innocent' recollection, I began to see that these anecdotes fitted with themes in the published literature relating to the 'making' of a man. Keen's 'Fire in the Belly' (1992) is a good example of what I think of as poetic-realist writing on being a man, although the trials and tribulations suffered and caused in the making of men have been well-documented in numerous texts illustrating a range of perspectives in recent years (*e.g.* Brod & Kaufman, 1994; David & Brannon, 1976; Dench, 1994; Gilmore, 1990; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Segal, 1990). My writing then became a more conscious process of inquiry. As I began to assemble an ordered text with more structured sections, so were my memories channelled, or focused. Recollections from my childhood then became mingled with accounts of recent events and an account began to emerge of my life as a 'man-child' becoming, and being, a man.

Although the chapter may be read as background, as historical information, relating to the development of myself as a man, I want it to be seen as *inquiry* into the precedents and concomitants of myself, as man and as manager. The stories do, of course, provide some background – both to me as a person (the reader can see where 'I' am coming from in terms of personal history); and to me as a man (the reader might make some connections between my memories, and the raft of recent literature on the cultural construction of gender roles). But, predominately, it is an inquiry into how I *am*: my child, my youth, my man.

Why is it inquiry? Primarily because of the first-person, self-reflective attention that I have focused by writing, re-reading, discussing, and reconsidering these stories. This chapter represents what Richardson (1994:521) calls a *narrative of the self* in the form of an *evocative representation*. In writing it I found out things I did not know about myself and I now invite the reader to participate by using my representations as a springboard from which to dive into their own experiences.

As a way of furthering my inquiry, and as part of a process of validation, I circulated these autobiographical extracts to my 'men's book group', to a group of CARPP colleagues, and to my wife. I found the decision to expose my stories to the 'men's book group' most difficult. From my wife I would expect support, from CARPP colleagues, men and women, I would expect critical understanding, but from a group of other men not steeped in self-reflective research I expected, perhaps, embarrassment and some unwelcome 'joking' comments on my 'masculinity'. Although this group of men meet to discuss books, and this has often led the conversation towards our own personal experiences, I was fearful of their reactions to these non-literal, somewhat poetic, snippets of my life. I was, however, more than gratified by the men's enthusiastic response to my writings. Not only did my experiences touch chords with them, but they were willing and eager to talk about their own experiences of becoming a man. The four of us engaged in a frank discussion, and excerpts from this are appended to relevant sections below. Of much more importance than the few citations selected from this discussion, however, is the fact that the discussion took place at all, and that it inspired the other men to consider sharing their own his-story within the group. This type of unforced inquiry has proved beneficial to the members of the group in terms of mutual understanding, opening the way to further discussion which, I believe, is part of a transformative process in our lives.

Given that men have been increasingly pored over with a problematising gaze in recent years, how is the reader to gauge the authenticity of my own writing? Perhaps I have written simply what a 'new' man is supposed to write, these days. Perhaps I have. The similarity, or not, of my writing to that of others cannot be made a criterion of its authenticity or validity. My validity claims are made on the basis of the extended epistemology discussed in the previous chapter. What is important here are both my experience, and my evocative re-presentation of this experience to the reader and to others with whom I have engaged in dialogue about becoming a man. I believe, in line with Kvale (1995), that my writing of this chapter demonstrates quality of craftsmanship, communication, and pragmatism.

The contents of 'Becoming a Man' are not to be understood as representations of initiating, or historically formative, influences that 'cause' a 'man'. I do not wish to make simple cause and effect relationships. I was, as a child, presented with certain models of behaviour for a man and I experimented with these models. I adopted some, adapted some, rejected some and, quite possibly, created new ways of being and behaving. Why I adopted, adapted, rejected or created specific behaviours, beliefs, ways of being, I do not know. I might rehearse here a combination, or confrontation, of arguments deriving from the fields of genetics, psychology, and sociology, to account for how my past has structured my present. I might then draw inferences with regard to men in general, and demonstrate how the past, their past, the cultural pot in which they stewed, has made them into specific types of beings. But I will not.

What is on offer here is an inquiry *from* a man in *the present*. A man, not as an outcome of the past but as a process in the present. My past influences my present via my memories and so my memories are an important part of my inquiry. But, memories are not the past – memories are <u>now</u>. Memories are not what happened, but what is happening. My memories are not an outcome of the past, they are a process in the present. The present is always process. How I re-member (put back together, re-construct, re-story) my life is an action in the present, informed by and informing my present social context.

> Memories act not only as special clues to the past, but equally as windows on the making and remaking of individual and collective consciousness
>
> (Roper, 1994:22)

So, this chapter represents a series of present-time inquiries. Inquiries into the process of my experience of my life – at the time these remembered events were taking place; and over a period of some months in the year 1998 as I wrote down these remembrances; and now, as I re-inquire into the meaning of these memories for me within the context of this thesis. At any given moment and place a man, this man, *is what he is doing and being.*

What is the use of these stories in the context of Myself, Man and Manager? Perhaps there is a child, a younger person, part of many (all?) men, managers and managed (and women, too, managers and managed) that needs to be recalled. Not for sentimentality, not for escape, not for praise or blame, but for purposes of re-consideration. Above my desk are two photographs of a child, 18 months and four years of age. A smiling, soft, friendly and gentle-looking child. Not knowing that he has a future. Not knowing that around 50 years hence a man, 'his' man, will look back, tentatively, almost ashamed to meet those trusting eyes.

I have re-read the previous four sentences on several occasions since they were written and, on each reading, tears spring to my eyes. Loss? Sentimentality? My child touches my emotions.

I found that as I wrote these pieces, these memories of my life, I often became emotional. These images seemed to emerge from a hidden (often to myself, and certainly to most other people) part of me. A secret part of me. A part of me that is not a middle-aged research manager. The part of me that remains a younger man, a youth, a child.

I do not wish to regret, or glorify my past, but I feel I have to remember it. Try to remember, without shame or blame, my formative years: my vulnerability, my fears, my foolishness, and also my willing desire to embrace the world in its multiplicity; and the treading of the path, the many paths, that have led me to where I am this moment. I want to look back (not seeing what I then saw, for I am looking now from a different viewpoint) and get some present sense of the pleasures, the pressures, the submissions, the choices which preceded, and in some sense brought me to, this day and this place.

This chapter could have contained more stories of my past, of my becoming a man. The reason it does not, is because I stopped writing them. What is contained here is what flowed easily, naturally from myself. Little has been edited out, and that little because it seemed to me to ring untrue, or to others to be unclear. I did not seek to strive for more, for stories hidden or lost through shame or sloth. This thesis does not set out to be a chronicle, fifty-plus years of autobiography, or a therapeutic unearthing of a buried secret self. This thesis is an inquiry into myself as man and manager, in action, in the world, in the present. The stories following suffice to that inquiry, at this time.

The chapter that follows is presented in varying textual formats representing differing sources: italic font for my autobiographical excerpts; the present font for added commentary or quotations from the literature; text-boxes for comments from my wife, and the men's book group; referenced italics for quotations from CARPP colleagues. Consent has been given by all of the above for the inclusion of these extracts from our dialogues.

My Father, My Self?

My father. I see him in the mirror - our faces intermingled. I feel him when I limp from pain in the bad knee he had for years. At times I don't hear what people say to me, his inefficient ears grafted into mine.

My father was a working man, a manual labourer, an angry man, an (apparently) simple beast, uneducated, no conversation, although he talked a lot. He was deaf in one ear, maybe two, and I had to speak up to him, which didn't help. I must have talked with him about something, or he to me. I can remember being with him but little of what he said. In myths the old man, the hard man, the rough diamond, always comes with a pearl of wisdom. If my father cast pearls then they fell unrecognised at my swine-ish feet.

When I was 10 years old he bought me a young horse, at a cost of £10 which was a considerable sum from a labourer's wages. When I was 17 years old he taught me to drive. Both offerings surprised me. I suppose these gifts came from caring. I suppose because I didn't feel his caring. Perhaps I would have had to be more than the man I was becoming to recognise caring.

I seem to have forgotten, very young, to care. I put aside my caring with my rag doll, and hardened my face to the world. Perhaps I felt too soft to allow myself to care in an angry world.

Men's Book Group

CR: There are areas of our lives we can't express. I know I have denied huge areas of my feelings.

CH: (As a young man) you don't get excited about anything. You don't get interested in anything. Or, you don't show it.

Models of Manhood

> Nobody was born a man; you earned manhood provided you were good enough, bold enough (Mailer, 1968:25)

> In every age, not just our own, manhood was something that had to be won (Kriegel, 1979: 14)

In October 1998 a tentative discussion took place, in my Men's Book Group, between myself and two others (two of us 52 years old, the other early 40s) on what or who had been a male role-model for us. I say 'tentative discussion' because we had a lot of difficulty coping with the concept of a model. We had a lot of difficulty coping with the concept of discussing the concept of a model. Tentatively, the other 52 year old volunteered that US president Kennedy had been; that the urbane roles played by actor Kenneth More had been.

I had no person in mind other than Clint Eastwood, the film star noted for portraying laconic loners wielding large guns. Intellectually, I reject the 'Eastwood model' but I suspect a part of me aspires to it – the apparent ability to live in solitude, the silence, the stoicism, the law unto himself, the ability to deal with an aggressively chaotic world simply by use of violent pre-emptive strikes. His world contains no moral qualms, no namby-pamby wishy-washy liberal 'on the one-hand, and then, on the other', 'it's because of their childhood experiences', or 'blame society' – No. Clint deals with any threat of invasion of his independent rights by simply disposing of the transgressor – simple, efficient, no problem.

This desire to be like Clint, on my part, comes from fear of others – their aggression, their violence, the incomprehensibility of their demands. When I was very young I dreamed of war, soldiers surging to attack me and mine – but when, in extremis, I attempted to shoot back, the people on my own side turned against me. What confusion for a boy-child here:

> Be a man! Stand up for yourself. Don't let others push you around!
>
> Take it like a man! Don't get too big for your boots! Control yourself!

Men's Book Group discussion on male models and heros:

DR: Having a hero who is an ideal representation of the kind of thing you're aiming at, is a kind of reassuring thing ... I am sure it was the 'pure' vision of right and wrong that really appealed to me ... no equivocation about morality ...a simple set of rules..

CH: Maybe one of the really worrying things about our society is that we have very clear simple models and they are shown in a very seductive way on the screen ... you've got simple straightforward pictures of what a man is and, in fact, it's no bloody use to us because we don't live lives like that, not at all, we can't do anything like that - and would be locked up if we did .... You're not being asked to look at things in a subtle way. We're not being asked to look at a film, most of the time, in a way which would help us think about our own lives. Instead you've got what's-his-name halfway up a building with a gun in every hand ... and he's a hero! No good to us!!

The Educated Man

And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel, and shining morning face, creeping like a snail unwillingly to school (Shakespeare: As You Like It)

I don't recall whining, maybe because (in the beginning at least) I didn't have satchel or a school to which to trail it. In Australia, living ten miles out of town, with no school-bus, I had packages of lessons through the post - 'Correspondence School'. My mother served as school-mistress, to me and my siblings, in addition to her other responsibilities.

And I also read books: children discovered magic wishing chairs which sprouted small wings and flew them off to adventures; hollow trees at the bottom of the garden were doorways to hidden worlds; children talked to the animals, to the elves, to the fairies - until one day a letter came from my 'Correspondence School' library refusing my request for some such story: I had become too old for all that. I was instructed to move on.

Briefly, aged 8 or 9 years, I went to 'real' school and then again from age 13 to 17. What did I learn from these excursions into the halls of learning? I learnt that (some) other boys were bullies, that (some) teachers were bullies, that some little boys (me) were caned for consorting (as if I had a choice!) with other boys who made noise, or pushed and poked and pitted their innocence against a sophisticated world.

But, later, I also remember the mocking by me among others, of Shakespeare (The Tempest; Julius Caesar) in my Australian country secondary school, in the heat, and a million miles from magic on Mediterranean isles or tortuous political intrigue in ancient Rome. Whatever happened there, in iambic pentameter land, was not the hot and dusty reality that pervaded outside the school-window in the little Australian 'out-back' town (pop.1500 'town and district'). The (female) English teacher wept at the end of one lesson - what else could she do? She was pursuing a curriculum that meant nothing to me her (male) pupil. In my reality, the men went to work, some in the few shops and offices although I only knew the ones who worked with animals, and herded and saved and slaughtered them that we might live.

I read other books, many of those my father and grandfather read: cowboy books, westerns. The hero, wide at the shoulders and narrow at the hips, rode tall in the saddle. His steely-grey eyes, narrowed against the sun beneath the broad brim of his sweat-stained hat, were hawk-like in their hooded intensity as they ceaselessly scanned the horizon for any hint of danger. Against his hip nestled a well-used six-shooter, and his horse looked like it had travelled far. (Clint Eastwood was, no doubt, growing up on the same heros). And, I suppose, that was a man. The men I knew wore cowboy hats, rode horses, and carried guns - not six-shooters, but rifles - and were men. And they did not talk much, or perhaps when they drank they talked much but said little.

Coming to the end of my school-career I had done relatively well - good at English in despite of Shakespeare, good in geography, history; not good in woodwork, technical drawing, or the sciences (what kind of man was I!!). A careers advisor came, from who-knows-where, and asked us, one-by-one, what we wanted to do (a strange way to advise I thought at the time, but maybe he was wiser than I thought). The boy in front of me said he wanted to be a teacher, and so did I - because I had to say something. Did I not know what I wanted to do? I can't remember it ever exercising me, and it never entered my mind to enter the work-world where my father laboured. Nevertheless, it took me many years to overcome one barrier to my personal advancement that seemed to derive from my upbringing: useful work equals hard physical labour – real men might be blacksmiths, but not wordsmiths. School ended, and I had stayed on to 17 (despite my father's opposition?) and what was I going to do now? Many years passed before I found the kind of education that began to satisfy because it seemed useful to <u>me</u>.

Fighting to be a Man

> As men we learn to 'take it' and often this means that we learn to *minimise* the hurts and indignities that, say, we have suffered as children ... we tell ourselves that it could have been a lot worse and we recoup a sense of male identity by showing that we are not whinging or complaining (Seidler, 1994:201).

When I was at school I experienced aggression and bullying. The bullied is always alone – everyone else seems to wait, to watch: how will you respond?

Eventually, I took up a physical challenge and fought – after school, a piece of waste-land, a circle of school-boys, with two of us in the middle hitting each other. I don't know how many 'rounds' we went, I was hit and I hit back, until someone (an older boy? or one or two who commanded respect?) decided that we had gone the distance, done enough, proved ourselves. And so we stopped hitting each other. My face was swollen for a few days, nothing serious, and no school bully-boy pushed me to fight again.

My opponent, several years later, had a foot amputated jumping from a train in an attempt to escape police custody. Poor sod. What model of manhood did he aspire to: what social forces; what chromosomal interlocking; what psychosomatic struggles led him to where he lost forever his ability to run away?

(I weep as I think of it – I identify with this young man battling his way through the world, this unknown soldier, my erstwhile enemy – I project my feelings onto him: fighting against, but not knowing what he is fighting for! The thought of the waste brings tears to my eyes.) There, but for the grace of god, go I.

Men's Book Group

My school experiences seem as nothing beside those members of my male Book Group seemingly abandoned by their parents to the not so tender mercies of boarding schools. The terrified and tearful upbringing of little boys being made into men by being subjected to regular psychological, physical, and sexual assaults, with the aim of acquiring 'leadership skills' and 'independence'.

DR: You actually learn to be dependent, because it's all prescribed for you – you don't even have to decide when it's tea-time: a bell rings to tell you – you end up like Pavlov's dog.

CR: It's losing your individuality as well. You forfeit the bits of your male psyche that are not acceptable to the institution ... the crying, the emotional bit, the sharing, the non-competitive bit – I learned to be immensely competitive … it was all about trampling on the bed-wetters …

CH: There were no girls there, not even female teachers. We did not have a female teacher. I think the whole time I was there, there was one, who came in to teach elocution!

Comments from my wife

My wife wonders that I have not made more of the fact that I had quite a lot of time and education, at home, with my mother – 'Being kept in your mother's bosom: How did this shape you in a positive way?' I have no answer to this but, considering the school life of the men in my book group, I am sure that I would not want to exchange my experience for theirs. Kept in my mother's bosom? It certainly did not feel like that – I have absolutely no recollection of being held, cuddled or caressed at any time in my childhood. Nevertheless, as a child, my mother was always there – I never had to regret her absence.

The Working Man

> Manhood ideologies are adaptations to social environments, not simply autonomous mental projections or psychic fantasies writ large. The harsher the environment and the scarcer the resources, the more manhood is stressed as inspiration and goal ... and although it does not prove anything about causal relations, it does indicate a systemic relationship in which gender ideology reflects the material conditions of life. (Gilmore, 1990: 224)

I grew up in the Australian 'bush'. My father was a working man on what the English would call a sheep farm, and 'we' in Australia would call a sheep-station. I put 'we' in inverted commas because I no longer live in Australia, have not lived there for over twenty-five years and, although I know that 'they' all are a part of me, I have difficulty in feeling myself a part of 'them'. (This feeling of being 'apart' rather than 'a part' is one to which I will have to return). The significance of where I grew up is the model for being a man with which it presented me.

What was a man? In my experience, a man went to work – a man went <u>out</u> to work, he left the house, the home, and went <u>out</u> to work. He worked with his hands, with his horse and his dogs and his whip and, often, his gun - a man sweated and swore, a man drank beer when he got the opportunity and when he did it didn't always improve his temper.

My father brought home meat, milk, money and, occasionally, honey. All got with his hands. Meat he had slaughtered and quartered; milk his hands had squeezed from the teat of a complaining cow; honey he had stolen from the tree-hives of (even more complaining) wild bees (all this sounds terribly exciting and anthropologic: research on some primitive tribe). These basic foodstuffs were allowed to us in part-payment for my father's labour (but for which he had to further labour to procure).

My mother did not go <u>out</u> to work. My mother stayed at home – in a four-room clapboard bungalow, under a sun-fried corrugated iron roof, stoking with hand-cut wood a hot cast-iron cooker, with mutton and potatoes always on the bake or boil - cooking and cleaning and keeping us all together, <u>and</u> teaching me my correspondence lessons - while my father went out to <u>work</u>.

My mother also cleaned the house (much sweeping with a straw-brush and sluicing water with a string mop). My mother also washed our 'linen' (a wood-fired 'copper' on the boil, two deep tubs for soaping and sluicing, a bag of 'blue' serving some mysterious purpose – perhaps as a whitener or brightener?), a hand-turned mangle for wringing out the water, an arms-width basket for carrying wet-heavy thick-twilled work shirts and trousers, bed-sheets, towels, children's clothes (hand-me-down and perhaps somewhat worn, but clean, at least they are clean!), and finally perhaps one or two floral dresses, faded flags of her femininity flying on a long, fencing-wire line propped up by a forked branch, to flap in a dry wind under a dry sun.

Our clothes were ironed – heavy cast-irons heating on the hot top of the cast-iron stove, wood-fired and hot. Did my father ever go to work – to sweat and strain, to herd cattle, dig post-holes, trap rabbits, slaughter sheep for our table - in an un-ironed shirt? I doubt it.

My mother also kept a garden (when water was available in a drought-struck land). Potatoes, pumpkins, a few pastel Icelandic poppies far from their native tundra, and a few bunches of phlox carefully nurtured to be sold in town on Saturday for a few extra shillings. And working-dogs, and leisured-cats, and productive chickens were fed, as was my father, and me, and my five siblings (one sister, an infant then, was taken away never to return from some unknown Hospital - buried in some barely marked grave, and so an infant ever since).

My grandfather also went out to work, shearing sheep, digging wells - and after work he went to the pub. My grandmother stayed at home, she kept the house and cooked the meals – I have no recollection of my grandmother in any other environment but her home. Did she never leave her home? If not, why not? She certainly wasn't physically disabled, and did not appear psychologically disabled. But, Grandma was always at home.

My mother was only almost always at home. My mother went to town on Saturday, my mother went to the shops – she chose our shop-food – flour, sugar, jam, chocolate biscuits (special Saturday treat), our clothes, other things which a home needs to function, of which I knew nothing then and truth-be-told know little now (I have a wife, and she makes shopping lists, no doubt as did my mother, while I am out at work).

So, it would seem, separately but together my parents laboured to provide for the home and family they had, separately but together produced. Did I learn my separation, my apart from such a separation of labour?

Comments from my wife

JM: I love this section about your mother's role – it's so evocative, so beautifully written, but also fascinating because it's real. But when I read the line about me making lists while you're out at work I thought it sounded as though you were being a little quaint or winsome for effect - because, although I make lists, that sentence did not ring true in how I see my life overall. You do go out to work, but I have a professional life too, and also take on, and enjoy mostly, running our home. However, I'm sure you'd be perfectly capable of making those lists – I'm not willing to believe that's essentially women's work! I might claim that role but you choose not to make it yours.

Men's Book Group

CH: I don't think it's as clear cut as it used to be: Father goes out to work, Mother stays home, that's certainly what I remember … He went out to work because that's what men did, she stayed at home because that's what women did – now, we haven't got that, have we – not to the same degree.

DR: Society has shifted significantly

CH: If you went back 40-50 years there would have been much less a problem in identifying what it was to be male – your community would teach you that … now we have had a long attack, barrage, whatever, which has changed, improved, the way women see themselves and they've risen in the scales and nothing has been done with the male side … Nothing has come to replace the old male image.

The Solitary Man

> Historical accounts and popular folklore have elevated our belief in the redemptive powers of solitary, courageous men who triumph through endurance, stamina and self-reliance (Sinclair, 1998:177)

My memories of childhood are more of separation than togetherness. But this is not true - my visual memories are of beings together, while my emotional memories are of beings apart. I was, and no doubt still am, part of a family. But what bound us together I don't know. I know nothing of how together, or how separate, my parents felt, or were. They never spoke of it, I never asked. Indeed it never occurred to me to ask. Too late now to ask my father (he died in 1989), even if I could or would bring myself to find the words. My mother is still living (on the other side of the world) but I don't imagine finding the words to ask her. And would it be right to ask? To pry? Their union took place, then, under a distant sun, and I am, now, a too distant son, to usefully and non-pruriently illuminate it.

I experience my family (those who remain) as a group of people within whose ambit I passed my childhood, and began to separate in early adulthood. Natural behaviour one might say, a man must go off into the wilderness, seek adventure, conquer new territory, find a wife, found a new family. And if he wills not, he must be forced to, for the good of his country, his genes. The power of language is interesting, and somewhat frightening. To be of is very different than to be from. To be a part is very different than to be apart. I consider myself to be more <u>from</u> rather than <u>of</u>. Because I find it quite difficult to write 'my family', I believe I feel more apart from than a part of that family. Much more separated than integrated. I have chosen to live on the opposite side of the geographic world; in another part of the social world.

> Then man faces the existential crisis of being a solitary and mortal conscious ego thrown into an ultimately meaningless and unknowable universe. And he faces the psychological and biological crisis of living in a world that has come to be shaped in such a way that it precisely matches his world view – i.e. a man-made environment that is increasingly mechanistic, atomized, soulless and self-destructive. (Tarnas, 1991:442)

I have recently (November 1999) returned from a trip to Australia. What love and respect my mother, sisters, and brothers show towards me. They shower me with little gifts, they refer regularly to our shared past, they look forward to a shared future. Yet they accept that I live where I live, that I do what I want to do. They are a family – and consider 'we' are a family. I find this situation difficult. I say little. I am polite. I hope I am respectful. But ..... I am somewhere else.

> The 'cowboy' upbringing I had ... I am carrying with me still ... being the silent loner, doing my own thing, being competent in my own way without reference to other people or to society. (Willm Mistral, CARPP: 1999)

Personally, I find 'society' very stressful. Grouped with my fellows, in organised spontaneity, I find I have very little to say to them. Oh, there's some chat of course. The weather. Thank god for weather. Whither conversation without weather?

Hell is other people (Sartre, In Camera?). All around me. A colony of gull-people on a crag of rock, a tiny island of earth, surrounded by sea and populated, over-populated, with this flock, this mob, this multitude, of squawking, squabbling, chattering, picking and pecking, grooming, grooming, grooming, gull-people. How I want to be alone! A rock, a room of my own – in camera. I am a camera. Camera obscura. A moving movie camera registering what passes before me. What passes before me are other movie cameras registering what passes, including me. Each camera making movies for itself, telling the world to itself and others, seeking reassurance that it is not alone. And beneath it all a sussuration of unease.

We group together – we cram ourselves together! We do not like to be in open places. We like the cramming, safety in numbers, those nearest the edge in danger of being swooped-upon, snapped-up, swallowed by raptors, god-demons of too much space. Hordes of people forcing themselves into tiny places. Rooms of deliberately limited dimensions, full, and people still pushing up against the open door-space looking-in, longing-to-be-in, to be choicefully forced to meet. To speak – phrases glance off each other, smooth-worn stones skipping, ploughing, sinking, in a sea of noise. To see - just a glimpse. Don't look too closely now. To touch. Hear me! See me! Touch me! Feel me! Ils sont, vous etes, nous sommes, donc je suis!

Very few enjoy to be on the edge. Fewer still venture out into the dark and, because the darkness swallows them up, how would we know if they did? If spoken of, they are spoken of in diffident and almost hushed tones – the way one speaks of something glimpsed – something not quite there, someone not quite all-there. Someone who has ventured beyond the Pale. Someone swallowed by, gobbled-up by, things of the Dark. The horror! The Horror! (Remembering Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness').
The Shaman. The Magus. To go, to know, the edge – and beyond.

Le silence eternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie

(Pascal 1623-1662)

The Silent Man

What is the use of talking, and there is no end of talking,
There is no end of things in the heart.
I call in the boy,
Have him sit on his knees here
To seal this
And send it a thousand miles, thinking (Ezra Pound, *Exile's Letter*)

Who talked with me as a child? I have no memory of talk with adults, except perhaps my mother who I remember as encouraging me (once? twice?) to write little stories (where did that idea come from?). Or perhaps my grandmother with whom I did the little jumbled-word puzzle in the weekly newspaper, but whom I best remember sitting, at home, afternoons, on the verandah, watching a little world go by, in the street of a small town in a very big country. My upbringing was silence - I can't remember anyone talking of anything. Perhaps they did and I wasn't listening - but as a child one does listen, one is unable not to listen to the whispered messages of the world. Perhaps I was too much of a little man, the man I was to become - slightly apart from the world, not really involved in what was happening.

Why was my life like that? I could not find a way to think about it, to talk about it, to abstract something from it. My life was who I was and that was inexpressible. A silence surrounded me, engulfed me, a silence of ignorance, and sometimes of pain - and then, like a whipped dog, I hurt and knew not why.

A week after my 52nd birthday. Reflecting on the extent to which I feel I have to control the flow (or lack of flow!) of information about my life. Make no disclosures. Information is divulged on a need to know basis only. Knowledge is power. What I let slip about myself may disclose a weakness which will allow someone to gain the upper hand, to use it to have power over me.

To have power over me – to do what? To somehow betray me? To unman me?

In many gatherings of men that I have experienced, we talk about work, we talk about sport, we josh we joke we impugn each others' manhood - i.e. the ability to manage our work, our sport, our women! But when we talk seriously, we talk about material things, and the manipulation, the fixing, the mastering of them.

Men's Book Group

In the (men only) Book Group of which I am a part, when I first attempted to begin a dialogue about male role models, the suggestion was met with a somewhat strained silence. We men did not know what to say. There was a lot of silence, some half-finished sentences, and more silence, coupled with a few seemingly semi-interested comments in pursuing the matter. Several weeks later I circulated short excerpts from books (on roles and behaviours associated with masculinity[ies]), with the idea that they could be used as a basis for brief discussions at times of regular meetings. To my surprise, having done this a couple of times and then neglected to do so, members of the group queried the lack. I say 'to my surprise' because of their/our hesitancy during earlier discussions and my previous beliefs about their level of interest. This more positive response encouraged me to circulate extracts from my own autobiographical writings. The response to this was overwhelming:

CH: I thought it was really brave of you ... it's probably something to do with the male thing here, but it's quite difficult to talk about your early life, or it would be for me.

DR: It's profound in parts … I would like to read it again and again … a lot of things in here struck chords with me.

These writings led to very animated discussion of many aspects of growing up as a male child, and led the other members of the group to consider whether they too could write, and share, something of their lives. I see here the possibility of future cycles of action and reflection in a collaborative effort to understand ourselves as men. The opening up of discussion in later meetings is evidence that some things can change, and that men can take the risk of talking about themselves, their fears, their hopes, their pains. The quotations below derive from the men attending these later meetings:

DR: ... this is a fact, this is absolutely about being a man: that you're not really articulate, or you don't explore verbally.

CR: Very few men ever say to women 'We never talk about anything'. That's what women do: 'You're not talking about it!' 'Don't go quiet on me!'

CH: It's also a refusal to explain yourself. You're damned if you're going to explain yourself at someone else's behest. You perhaps haven't got the right frame of mind. You don't have the words at that moment. So you'd rather just leave it ....

CH: I can remember occasions when I have said 'Let's not talk about this anymore' and what I'm implying is 'I'm in such a rage that if we carry on talking about it I'm going to break something' ... When I was a youngster, 15-17, the red rage was not unknown, the absolute total berserk - I'm scared of that and have been ever since – just uncontrolled, so I tend to back away from that...

CR: But women don't have to do that do they ...It doesn't seem to bother them as much .... Is this a part of our male oppression? We can never really express our anger - because we can really hurt someone - in a way that women can get out their deepest feelings.

Among men attempting to discuss themselves, the early experiences of my book group are not uncommon. Tolson recounts of an incipient 'men's group':

> Our first meetings were charged with a reticence we could not comprehend... As men we had no language to formulate our uncertainties; no way of showing to others our responsiveness or concern. (Tolson, 1977:10)

Men may experience difficulty in getting to the *heart* of the matter of their role, position, and power in society.

> Whereas feminist women are able to theorize *from* their own experience, preserving its nuances and sensations, men, even at their most perceptive, seem to theorize *about* themselves, analysing it from the outside.
>
> (Tolson, 1977: 19)

Morgan offers a partial explanation for the silence from men.

> ..the powerful have little reason to reflect on their position in society, for the most part tending to treat their position as normal, just, or inevitable. This is true whether we are thinking of class, race, ethnicity or gender.
>
> (Morgan, 1992: 29)

Morgan also points out the problems inherent in such a task, one of which appears to be associated with validity:

> .. such an activity on the part of men is full of difficulties of all kinds. If men have been involved in the construction of a world that is simultaneously a world of and for men and a world which allows men to disappear into undifferentiated humanity, how can these self-same men subject this world to critical enquiry?
>
> (Morgan, 1992: 2)

It is, of course, this element of 'critical enquiry' which is crucially important here. Men have, in fact, been talking about themselves for a very long time. Has not the world's public discourse been largely a discourse by men about men, throughout literature, art, politics, history and economics?

I am also aware that in my personal relationship I easily slip into silence, being the silent man, and my wife is left to carry the conversational load. And that makes her uncomfortable. And I have been thinking: how do I benefit from this? Is it not having to take responsibility? I just sit there and let it flow by or absorb it. My own, and men's, retreat into silence when confronted by 'personal' issues was discussed at my CARPP supervision group:

WM: ... the problem my wife encounters with me is when she wants some kind of personal interaction on certain levels I just can't. Nothing comes, my mind goes into a fog and I have to back off – she says I disappear - because I haven't got the words.

MG: But isn't it also about finding ways of communicating with other people.

JM: I think there are also things about timing. Being asked to give an emotional, an immediate response with a form of integrity and be very fluent, is actually an extremely demanding thing.

KK: I'm curious about to what extent do women sometimes silence their partners by expecting that immediacy and making out that if it's not immediate it's not genuine or something, or not spontaneous.

MG: John Gray's original book is actually very good in terms of how men take a dash towards the cave and the women follow him to the cave and the man can't cope.

JM: ... actually I do think that often women talk too much about emotions or too fluently, almost with a fluency that becomes empty...taking the moral high ground about I can talk endlessly and authentically about emotions is crap, basically, I think.

MP: Lots of women disappear as well. My partner, for example. So I think the bit about all women are able to do that is nonsense. (CARPP, mid 1998)

Comments from my wife

JM: As far as talking about ourselves and our relationships I don't know if women do talk more easily than men – I know for me it's often been very hard to express myself. When I can, or do, it means exposing myself in a way that I need to feel safe – and I think this is interesting in relation, for example, to situations where I have complained of your apartness. Is it because you're not talking about yourself, or is it because your silence exposes me more? So that what I need is to be heard, or received, so that I know that what I have put out there has safely landed. If there are gender differences I think it's that women have a stronger sense that talking is important. And I think we are better listeners very often – perhaps because we are more practised listeners traditionally. This reminds me of the situation in professional supervision, or in the therapeutic relationship, where as I speak, the other creates a space in which I am heard. And the role of the supervisor or therapist is reflective, to enable the person to see him or her self more clearly. If I speak and am truly heard then I can move forward, create a new reality, let go of the old one. In our relationship we have to work more carefully to create that kind of space because we have history that can get in the way, and because it's a different kind of contracting.

The Risk-taking Man

> Manhood is a test in most societies ... It is clear that manhood cults are directly related to the degree of hardiness and self-discipline required for the male role.
>
> (Gilmore, 1990: 220)

My brother, working deep in a mine, recounted with pride and amusement how the men there played catch with primed explosives. Some already had fingers, or other bits of body, missing – not necessarily from that particular game, but that, and similar high-jinx, set the standard: to be a man means to be ever aware of clear and present danger; to confront it without blinking those steely-grey eyes; to be quick on the draw (like Clint). And if you are not fast enough, not good enough, then you've got to die like a man (or at least not complain about your wounds).

It's not anybody's fault, that is just the way it is.

My own experience tells me that many men – those miners above, but also others whose working world would seem a less dangerous environment – would rather dice with death than take the greater risk of exposing themselves, their feelings, theirs fears and hopes, in conversation with their peers. Men's upbringing encourages them to ignore illness and to endure pain (Sinclair, 1998). If masculinity were written genetically into male bodies, it would not, surely, be necessary for parents to tell tearful little boys that "big boys don't cry". Nor would it be necessary, when boys are somewhat older, to require them to perform difficult, often physically and emotionally painful tasks in order that these "make men" of them (Buchbinder, 1994; Morgan, 1992: 47). A wide range of cultures globally have established tests and rituals, often of a barbarous cruelty, which have the sole purpose of 'making a man' of boys, by trials of skill and feats of endurance (Gilmore, 1990). And, lest we forget, this range of cultures includes our own. In institutions apparently as far removed from each other as public schools and street gangs, 'men' are being made (Segal, 1990).

And what are little men made of? Blood and sweat (and hidden tears).

Comments from the Men's Book Group, and my wife

As one of my Book Group recalled some months, and more talk, after my original suggestion that we speak of ourselves as men: 'We were really unhelpful I remember when you were asking us about heros and role models: we sat around dumb as snails and couldn't think of anything'.

My wife suggests that men have created mythical super-heroes able to conquer in the face of the overwhelming danger, as a compensation for all that we fear when facing the world.

The Military Man

Then a soldier, Full of strange oaths...
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth (Shakespeare, As You Like It).

Many young men have some form of military training, and I can recall as a young man hearing how National Service 'made a man of you'. Stand forward that man! What man is that? What sort of man is made by that? Segal (1990:18) argues that military training relies upon intensifying the opposition between male and female – 'woman' is a term of abuse for incompetent performance – and this serves to strengthen the links between men, virility, and aggressivity. Many popular films hold testament to this, whether on young men being brutalised in USA army 'boot camps', or on the playing fields of Eton.

Men's Book Group

The men at my Book Group also had views on male aggressivity:

DR: (Young boys) come up with tough sounding language. ..competing with each other ... they're competing with trying to be tough – and have we taught them that? You, presumably, don't think you've taught your children that – but they're picking it up ... or it's in there! Which is it? But it's about being a boy.

CR: For sport, read war, and if you're good at war, you have status.... Part of our oppression is that we are rivalrous and violent towards each other – for no other reason than "Oie! What are you looking at! In that way we are oppressed as men....If there were feminists here they would be falling off their chairs, laughing at that!

One example of cultural mythology concerning aggressive behaviour in boys was also mentioned during this discussion: Part of our traditional male behaviour is: You never hit a girl!

At 17 years of age I went into the Air Force - my father's suggestion, and I didn't have a better one. Although I did have two other offers - a scholarship to teacher training and something about 'surveying' in the public service - the Air Force paid better and seemed more natural (my father had served in World War II).

The Air Force was a drunken rout. A young man (a boy) of seventeen, with money in his pocket, a culture that encouraged serious drinking, and a licence to drive (a licence to kill). By pure chance or the grace of god, I survived 30 or 40 car crashes in two years, and didn't kill or maim anyone.

Why did that young man drink so much? Drive so dangerously?

Ignorance? Lack of guidance? Lack of discipline? Lack of knowing, wanting, being able to do something worthwhile.

I walked, drunken, away from the wrecks of cars. No one stopped me, no one censored me, no one counselled me, no one punished me, no one took away my licence – no one. Where were they? What were they thinking? Didn't someone know better than I, and care to instruct me?

No. Because I was doing what a young man did (and I hadn't actually killed anyone, or damaged private property). I shudder, now, at the waste of youth, and dangerous drunken stupidity - and the number of my peers who self-destructed.

What kind of man was I be-coming? Or trying to un-become?

One night, on a ferry taking me across the Tasman Sea, I dreamed. Runaway cars, sexual imagery, a monster I must destroy. I shout to people around me. No-one will listen. No-one will see the danger of this mis-shapen monster, which increases as the creature itself becomes smaller and smaller until, soft and flabby - a baby-monster with great watery saucer-sized eyes – it is at my Mother's breast, her nipple forming a pearl of milk, ready to drop into its disgusting maw.

My monster. My self.

The Travelling Man

> The "man" of the Western tradition has been a questing masculine hero, a Promethean biological and metaphysical rebel who has constantly sought freedom and progress for himself, and who has thus constantly striven to differentiate himself from, and control the matrix out of which he emerged.
>
> (Tarnas, 1991: 441)

I rebelled. I was a working class hero, unkempt uncaring unqualified. In the Air Force, after 2 years 9 months and sundry days of getting into trouble, I was discharged 'services no longer required'.

My present and future was now in my own (unqualified) hands. Some months passed, I drifted to the city. I worked, intermittently, and the work I did was the work of a man - I drove a truck.

I also read books from dusty public libraries - 'Zen and the Art of Archery', Jack Kerouac pre-hippy 'beat' mysticism - all mixed-up, inside-outside – an ethereal wishing world where one was in-touch, one was <u>here</u> and <u>now</u>. And yet I did not want to be here and now in my slum-like, drinking, drifting into drugs, see-no-future, pay-no-rent reality.

The Hippies were happening, and I became one. A young man un-used, mis-used, ab-used, ref-used, on the road running on empty and going no where at all. But here was an identity. I painted flowers on my shirt, my hair was long, I wore no shoes, I wandered. I was not happy.

Eventually, I came to Europe - young people had recently started to do that from Australia, the six-month tour, and perhaps they still do - and I came, 27, still empty, nowhere to go but no reason to go back, so I didn't.
Going nowhere.

> *Was this the wandering hero of the wild west? I had no gun;*
> *Was this the Odyssean adventure? No Penelope patiently weaving and unweaving till I got home;*
> *Was this the self-imposed exile of artist or the writer? No pen.*

What is a man to do who has no weapon, no mission, no words in which to believe? Wander.

I did meet other people, people in other places. In France I was offered the opportunity to teach English. A brief training, and I was earning a reasonable salary and becoming another sort of man - not a manual worker, not a hippie-drop-out, but a teacher among people who read books (and also drank a lot, but in the cafes of Paris, not the pubs of my previous life).

I had not yet found my feet but the ground had shifted under them.

Teaching business people to speak in a foreign tongue eventually palled, along with my life which seemed only or mostly to repeat itself in frustration, depression, anger.
Many people I came to know had been to University - they had been and they had graduated. I hadn't, and carried this as a resentment (among others). Resentment because it didn't seem as if it were possible for me to do so many things.

A few months in Australia and I return to England. A pleasure to see February dirty dampness of early eighties London. A friend has a job in the Theatre, pulling ropes to hoist the scenery, and takes me along. The pay is abysmal, the atmosphere is interesting. The men who make the theatre work are carpenters and technicians. The actors come and go, they have their exits and their entrances, but the carpenters and technicians and humpers of heavy loads stay, often night and day, and when they aren't actually working like men they are drinking like men - pints in the corner pub and conversation that isn't really saying anything.

The Loving Man

And then the lover
Sighing like a furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow (Shakespeare: As You Like It)

A Council flat in South London, and I'm claiming the dole.

I write a play - Love on the Dole – but that is not its name: 'A Slow Country' becomes its name, and much imagery was stolen from Through the Looking–Glass (Carroll, 1947):

> *The Queen takes Alice by the hand and begins to run:*
> *- Faster she says Faster! Don't try to talk! ...Faster! Faster!*
> *and just as Alice is getting quite exhausted they stop...*
> *- Why, says Alice, Everything's just as it was!*
> *- What would you have it? says the Queen.*
> *- Well, in our country, says Alice, you'd generally get to somewhere else – if you ran very fast for a long time, as we've been doing.*
> *- A slow sort of country! retorts the Queen, Now here you see it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!*

And so it seemed to me. The play was about me, the play was about a man and his apprehension and misapprehension of the sexual other - fear and miscommunication, feeling without a conduit other than self-pity. I think it worked on stage, because the monologues rang true. A man talking to himself, because he could not talk to others.

Men's Book Group

CH: Part of the male growing-up oppression was that you were never allowed to admit – never – that you didn't know everything about sex, women, relationships. You knew it all – whatever your age. You couldn't learn very much - which you could have done it if you'd been frankly and openly discussing the situation, which you weren't.

The Not-woMan

Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd (Shakespeare,Macbeth)

> .. psychologically as well as biologically, contrary to Freud's contention, femininity is the natural condition of which masculinity is a modification ... The infant has to become masculine by proving that he is not feminine...
>
> (Stoller, 1979:33)

The very word 'man' may be read as a truncated form of 'woman' but, as Comer (1974:13) points out, a boy's socialisation prevents his exploration of gender alternatives. During the age of 7-11 years a girl may climb trees, play football, and generally emulate 'male' behaviour, *on condition that she grow out of it*, but no such tolerance is extended to a boy, who can never, even temporarily, abdicate his role.

I remember my young nephew, 7 maybe 8 years old, running about the garden in some flimsy dress-like garment – briefly running about, because his father soon put a stop to that unmanly behaviour.

Being a man, it has been argued, is actively not being a woman, or escaping the feminine. For Haste (1993:6) women and the feminine exist as *that-by-which-men-define-themselves-as-not-being*, and this view finds support in a number of academic texts.

> Masculinity defined through difference with femininity will always be insecure and in danger of being 'lost', since a 'collapse' into femininity is always possible.
>
> (Edley &Wetherell, 1995:53)

I dream. It is dark. I become increasingly frightened. The recognition of Fear seems to increase the fear. Every unknown shape, movement, noise, frightens me. I don't want to be alone. I want my Mother. I try to cry out – in my dream I do cry out: Mu-um!! Mu..u..um! A part of me is awake, and knows I am crying for my Mother, but the cry remains in my dream, it does not really come out to my Mother. I want my Mother!! I want My Mother! I struggle to get the cry out in the world. It is such an effort. I call for my Mother – Make the dark and fear go away! Comfort me.

I hear my wife, voice drugged by sleep: You're moaning! It's a dream!
Reassured by someone there, I turn again to quieter rest. I have lost my mother but I am not alone in the dark.
I am 52 years old.

Men's Book Group

Two men speak of their anger towards their mothers for sending them away to boarding school. Of their mother's lack of understanding of them, inability to communicate with them, lack of intimacy with them. Another compares his mother's eternal optimism with his own negativity towards life.

The Real Man? The New Man?

> Again and again we find that "real" men are those who give more than they take: they serve others ... It is true that this male giving is different from, and less demonstrative and more obscure than, the female. It is less direct, less immediate, more involved with externals; the "other" involved may be society in general rather than specific persons. (Gilmore 1990: 229)

Gilmore argues (above) that underneath their undemonstrative exterior, 'real' men really care, and are prepared to do their duty for society. I do not doubt for one moment that many men really do care about people and issues, and that they find it equally difficult to express this caring verbally. Noddings (1987) argues, however, that one does not simply 'care' in the abstract, but 'cares-for': the caring activity is only meaningful when it includes the one who is 'cared-for'. Giving in some grand and distant way in the service of some 'higher' cause or crusade is tough, but it is also a good excuse not to wash floors or wipe arse. Times have changed, however, the demands of society have changed, and other ways of looking at men and symbols of masculinity are emerging.

> Masculinity, in its psychologic and cultural manifestations and implications, is assumed to be the homologue of the phallic genitality of the male ... in part aggressive, violent, penetrating, goal-directed, linear, (but) if the testicles are entered into the equation ... an entirely different metaphorality emerges...: passive, receptive, enclosing, stable, cyclic, among others – qualities that are lost when male equals penis. (Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994: 239)

Men's Book Group

WM: What about New Man? I know it's a much derided term , but....

CH: You have to work out how many people that actually applies to – not too many. What about Laddism? As far as I can tell it's about getting pissed, falling down stairs, and breaking your head open.

CR: And feeling oppressed?

CH: They don't seem very different to old lads...

DR: Shall we have a cup of tea? How do you like your tea?

CR: Very strong, with a drop of milk – just a drop, mind - three sugars... No – just the opposite: loads of milk, really weak..

CH: I think one of the important things, and it's actually hard to do, is to be brave enough to do what you want to do. You know, if you like your tea in that disgusting way you described, then you have it that way and not worry that anyone else thinks it's weak!!

O, I know things change. I know that 'new' men don't need to demonstrate their dominatory prowess. New men talk of feelings and philosophy while sharing and caring.

I do not know very many 'new men'. And those I do know, I know in 'new man gatherings' – CARPP is but one example – and we know the rules of conversation in new man gatherings, we know the thought-police in new man gatherings. But, I don't know these men (nor do they know me) in their workplace, in their family, in their love-life, sex-life, their obscure secret-selves, Freud's Id, where who-knows-what may lurk – a ravening beast unapprehended? A frightened, crying, child? Mu-um! Mu..u..um!!

I used to teach Social Psychology to young people who had not done well in school and had returned a few years later to have another try. They came, mostly from what once would have easily been defined as 'working-class' families, to gain some form of certification of their intellectual existence. A certificate in Social Care in a society where the dark satanic mills producing pure-white Manchester-ware now exist in too few numbers to swallow them body and soul.

How quickly they learnt – these issue of a (former) labouring class, who brought The Sun to lessons with their psychology books – how quickly they learnt to mouth the ideology of their intellectual (school) masters and mistresses, to rattle off appropriate responses to, what must have seemed to them, inappropriate questions.

How proud we could be of their progress - open and inquiring minds, no racism, no sexism, no hint of resentment - until, by dint of luck (good or ill?) as much as teaching skill, I tapped in free debate the wellsprings of another reality, informed by fear and loathing of those different, apart, beyond the Pale - he, she, black, asian, gay, lesbian – a threat to self, an 'other'.

And often I think how well I have learned <u>my</u> lessons, and how seldom does anyone seek to engage me in frank debate on the subject of my 'others'. Quite the contrary, in fact. As social animals we most often seek to disregard those little faux pas, those Freudian slips which may, if acknowledged, reveal a hidden and far less palatable world. No sex or politics in polite circles: 'More tea, Vicar?'

The Ageing Man

> **And then the justice, in fair round belly with good capon lined... full of wise saws and modern instances** (Shakespeare, As You Like It)
>
> To grow old without accumulating wisdom and becoming a mentor is to strip the last half of life of its *raison d'etre* (Keen, 1992:163).

I embraced the ethos of the 'sixties'. I was of the 'flower-power' epoch which obeyed the injunction to 'tune-in, turn-on, drop-out'. I refused to take up opportunities to enter the soul-less bureaucratic world of grey suits and offices, and went barefoot in the world. I went 'On the Road' (Jack Kerouac's book of 'beatnik' wanderings - although he did his slightly earlier than the 60s); I dabbled in the religions of Asia (which offered alternative paths and gurus): I meditated, chanting my mantra night and morn; I attended 'encounter groups' where the extracted essences of all the USA 'West Coast' alternative life-style, and self-exploration activities of that time were promoted to almost cult status.

My own conversion to a 'conventional' career took some considerable time, and it was not until I was approaching 40 that I grasped the nettle and decided to 'drop in'. By that time, however, the social construct of a 'conventional career' had changed, and my more recent move into the arena of management has been when many managers of my age have seen their positions and livelihoods under attack. Although, as I have got older, I have become more accepting of my need for a certain level of security (financial as well as relational) I still carry some of the 'sixties' within me. And, perhaps because I preached it in the 60s, I regard the recent, 90s, 'New Age' philosophies and mantras with a somewhat wry eye. We did not live our values well, then, with our used-tyre sandals, our flower-power (who made or grew these powerful tyres and flowers? – not we who symbolised them!) and I look around, now, with a certain cynicism, at this save-the-world via mobile phone and internet generation which sets itself against greedy corporate capitalists, but is very happy to use the products of their activities, thank you very much.

Microsoft rules! OK?

I have now reached an age where I need to become, and have become to some extent, a mentor to others. Although, as both my age and experience have increased, so has my self-doubt (or I am able, now, to recognise and admit my self-doubt). I often feel I don't have a lot that could be of use to anyone else – except to the very inexperienced – as I see numerous people around me who have much greater technical expertise than I. Then I have to remember that, while technical expertise is useful, because it seems to 'fix' things and situations, it is ultimately not the most important attribute of a manager. This is not to fix, but to facilitate: to create the conditions for something rather than creating the thing in itself. To create the conditions for people in a problematic situation to behave in a different way. To create the conditions where people and their work can flourish, aspire and inspire.

Recently (February 2000) I watched a television series exploring the power of hormones to regulate our experience and behaviour over time. I am no neurochemist, but I have no need of that expertise to observe, as have many others (including Shakespeare – quotations above), that age brings change. Young men will be driven, as have I, by their hormones as well as the social environment ('nature' and 'nurture' in the traditional social science texts) in which they enact their lives. I, with increasing age and experience, approach the world with a different and somewhat more measured pace. This, depending once again on where one is in the nature-nurture cycle, can seem more sensible and sensitive, or simply more slow and boring. I suspect that as a middle-aged manager I am probably at the peak of my period of respect in the world. I was tempted to write 'or in the Institutional world at least', but my interaction with others in my social world leads me to believe that being seen as a success in the professional world engenders respect in personal and social settings. Perhaps this is as it should be: if I can conquer in one sphere, then why not in another?

(I am very conscious of having written 'conquer' – is this a reflection of both the professional and personal being experienced as battles to be won? Might not there be another way of commanding respect? 'Commanding' - here, again, a word resonant of power and control. I am sure there are other ways or reasons for gaining, receiving, giving, creating respect.)

Conquering heroes! These Men! Once world-tamers, nation-shapers, rulers with electroded rods of iron, these take-no-nonsense warriors of a new world-order who would root out the subversion fermented by lesser-men, and cast them into pits of lime. The torturer whose rod of terror now serves only to support his own failing frame. How often have we seen them brought before the Halls of Justice: feeble old men!

Is there any use in an 'old' male manager – one over fifty in my case – preaching to the young? I can think of two good reasons why not. My metaphors are those of my life and times, as theirs are of their life and times. My images and imaginings of the world, now, are very different to what they were twenty-five years ago.

> *I can see how, over the years in the wider sense of being a man, being "supposed to manage" is a very ageing process...And also, as I age, being a man has of course altered for me. The man I was trying to be as a child or as a teenager or in my 20s or 30s... there's all those elements there which pop up from time to time - but I think about being a man in a very different way now and I don't have the same demands upon me as a man. I'm also moving into a different stage where I can hopefully be the "elder statesman" rather than the young buck trying to prove himself.* (Willm Mistral, CARPP: Sept. 1998)

No, there is no use in me, as an 'old' man, *preaching* to the young in order to bring about some outcome in the sense of convincing them to see it my (better?) way. The point of elder-younger dialogue is that I chart my own, and they chart their own, process: how I and they are *being and doing, now*. This certainly serves to benefit me, as it is through hearing myself speak that I know what I think (meaning in use); and it is through seeing myself act that I know who I am (values in action).

> *I was thinking about the whole thing of saying to people: I have something to offer, but I'm not selling anything. Which I think is sometimes very freeing – that people can take it if they want to, and they don't have to.*
>
> (MG, CARPP: July 2000)

After Words

What do my biographical excerpts tell me? They remind me that tomorrow will be as different from today as today is from yesterday. They remind me I had and still have dreams and nightmares, a need for love, a need for guidance. What can be learned about becoming a man? Well, several men I know personally identify with my experiences, and the sharing of experiences leads to more sharing of experiences. My own experiences also correlate with many of those of which I read in other literature by men on men. Men can perhaps learn that they do not have to be alone with their feelings – although we may need some practical help on how to be with them.

Does the upbringing of the child make the adult? I draw no conclusions from my own experience. I, my brothers and sisters, sprang from the same loins and had a similar upbringing – but we are very different people with different beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. I accept that our past experience, taken as a whole, is the frame within which we encounter the present (Mangham & Overington, 1987:13), but I believe that we can learn, not to unmake the past, but to reframe it, to recast the present, and to set a path towards a fairer future. Although the outcome of a child's upbringing (the adult) is important, perhaps in the light of much conflicting evidence of a cause and effect relationship, we would do best to concentrate on the process.

I have no children of my own. I do not miss them. I fear what misapprehension of life I would have inflicted upon them. And yet they would, as adults, have had to take responsibility for their own understanding and actions. I see my friends bringing up their children, boys and girls, with love and respect (and difficulties), in ways they wish to be very different from their own, and my own, experience.

The world has changed. But not equally for all sectors of society. I also see harassed mothers and fathers too poor in resources (be they financial, educational, psychological, or spiritual) to be able to afford their children the respect they deserve. And respect is the launch platform for opportunity. I say nothing of love – I am in no position to plumb the inner heart of another whose outward behaviours might appal me. Perhaps we cannot always hold these two, Love and Respect, together. But, hopefully, at times when we do not love we can at least respect; and when respect fails we might at least rely on love.

Writing, reading, discussing, re-writing, re-reading this chapter has brought to my attention, now, the different men I have been and am. I cannot, and do not want to escape being a man. I cannot tell, however, what a man is, other than what I am. Fifty-four years 'boy' and 'man'. I write about my self 'knowing' that I am a 'man'. I see, however, no essential elements in myself that predispose that calling, despite the fact that I have arranged this chapter to reflect some of the behaviours which are supposed to characterise 'men'. And, it is perhaps ironic that the attribute to which I have devoted most pages is the 'silent loner'. Perhaps I simply need to find an appropriate space to speak – a space where I can 'be' myself, where I feel no need to 'do' certain aspects of masculinity that saturates me.

In my own growing up and growing older, I have certainly struggled to be a 'man'. I have wanted to have all the attributes of a man as advertised to me within my cultural milieu: strength, courage, mastery, knowledge, independence, power – 'masculinity' in a word. And I have constantly seen myself failing. And the more I have failed the more I have struggled to conform – it is very difficult to call into question the markers which define one's very being.

I can claim to want to be a better man. A better person. I am not sure in what way – perhaps more overtly a part of, rather than apart from (as long as you do not get too close – I can at present be no other than the man I am!). But, in re-calling the man I was or wanted to be, and comparing him with the man I am and want to be, I come close to deconstructing the stereotype of a fixed form of man and masculinity. I deconstruct my past and present self, and am open (while maintaining a healthy wariness) to being *another* man. Gergen (1992) argues that a person with a social constructionist world-view will recognise the possibility of self-deconstruction and that

> ..it is this very recognition that prepares the way for self-reflexive transformation
>
> (Gergen, 1992:178)

Things change. Men change. I change.

Chapter 4 Management, Sex and Gender

> Most managers in most organisations in most countries are men
>
> (Collinson & Hearn, 1996a:1)

This chapter is very different to the previous one. It is written in a very different style and serves a very different purpose. In writing the present chapter I have sought to engage in a personal inquiry into the professional context within which I operate as a white, heterosexual, middle-aged, middle-class, man and manager. This chapter is not a history of the philosophy and practice of professional management - for those who are interested, academic libraries and many bookshops are replete with these. The primary focus of this chapter is on sex and gender issues within management. In so doing I draw heavily on a range of (mostly quite recent) literature which deals with these issues. This chapter is not, however, a comprehensive review of the literature on sex or gender as an issue within management structures or organisational systems, nor does it set out to engage in a comprehensive critique of this literature or to present a series of counter or complementary arguments. Many of the authors cited below have already done this and will no doubt continue to do so. I have used the literature referred to in this chapter as part of my inquiry into my own situation. It has allowed me to begin to understand, and to develop a perspective on, the historical evolution of gendered management structures and management behaviours within my lifetime.

Reading this literature has been useful to me, as part of my consideration of the extent to which gendered power structures may have brought me to my managerial position, and in what way these same structures impinge on my own behaviour and that of those around me. Although this chapter focuses on professional managers and management I believe now (although this was not always my belief), that it would be foolish to think that the behaviours that make up our lives can be separated into discrete 'professional' and 'personal' boxes. Each impinges upon, influences, reflects the other and, if we believe that they do not, I would argue that we would do well, for the greater benefit of ourselves and others, to make an effort to comprehend the integration of the two.

A (Very) Brief History of Modern Management

This section reflects my wish to situate my own experience of management, and the themes of this thesis, within the broader context of management within my lifetime. Over the last fifty years, professional work has been increasingly focused within large-scale organisations, within which human, technical and financial resources have to be co-ordinated and controlled. Within these organisations, work tasks need to be defined and allocated to individuals, and job performance is expected to be supervised and measured. In short, these organisations must be *managed* (Scase & Goffee, 1989:2). Scase & Goffee point out, however, that styles of management which are considered effective at one point in time may cease to be seen as such when prevailing values and assumptions change during a subsequent era (Scase & Goffee, 1989:3). Even within my own lifetime (I was born in 1946) many varying styles and metaphors of management have been seen. One factor has remained constant, however – the dominance of men as professional managers. Collinson and Hearn (1994) point out that, despite this fact, the study of management throughout the 20th century tended to neglect gender issues, and to treat the managerial function in a neutered, asexual way.

> Similarly, the way in which particular work-place cultures appeal to highly masculine values of individualism, aggression, competition, sport and drinking is often neglected even by more critical studies of corporate culture.
>
> (Collinson & Hearn, 1994:4)

Meritocracy

Following World War II, burgeoning economic growth facilitated the expansion of both private corporations and state-owned institutions. The consequent rise of a managerial class was seen as evidence of a 'new' more 'open' society where an academic, technical and professional meritocracy was gaining ascendancy over traditional forms of hereditary class privilege (*e.g.* Young, 1961). Some argued that these changes were proclaiming that capitalist society would be replaced by a different 'post-capitalist', 'class-less' social order (*e.g.* Bell, 1974) and the new professional class was expected to be committed to values which emphasised the 'common good' (Galbraith, 1967). In effect this meant that managers were expected to subscribe to work values which gave priority to corporate demands over personal life. Aspiring managers were tutored to

> Be calm, judicious, rational: groom your personality and control your appearance; make business a profession. (Mills, 1951: 81)

The public representation of managers during this period followed the 'ideal type' constructed by Max Weber, of a classless, genderless, rational bureaucrat operating within a precisely defined hierarchy of non-subjective authority and accountability (Gerth & Wright Mills, 1968). In practice, however, managers were drawn from a pool of certain kinds of *men*: single-minded in pursuit of their career, loyal servants of the organisation, and responsible bread-winners for wife and family. Personal satisfaction for these 'organisation men' of the 1950s and 1960s (women managers, at that time, were extremely rare) was presumed to derive from occupational accomplishment (Glaser & Strauss, 1971), and their personal financial security to derive from corporate profit-making. As Tolson (1977:45) makes clear, masculinity was (and continues to be) institutionalised – learned, regulated, enforced, and exploited through major social institutions.

The (false?) dawning of the Age of Aquarius

During the 1960's, the children of the 'organisation men' began to interpret their fathers' standards as representative of false values that had led to the degradation of human relationships and the global environment. Paradoxically, the ethos of the previous decade had resulted in a society where increased material wealth afforded young people a level of education to be able to question, and the leisure time to rebel against, the work ethic of their fathers. There was also a growing awareness of the problems experienced by the wives of professional men (Stepford Wives?), whose financial and psychological dependence on their husbands was reinforced by social pressures which inhibited aspirations for independent careers. Friedan (1963, 1982) describes how, at that time, the idealisation of a particular construction of femininity, as naturally passive and subservient, legitimised the role of home-maker as appropriate for women. Nevertheless, despite an increased questioning of certain aspects of management work- and life-styles, middle-class male managers and many of their wives remained predominately satisfied with their opportunities and rewards. Their teenage children also, having enacted their 'rebellion' and even briefly 'dropped-out', soon proceeded to pursue relatively conventional careers (Scase & Goffee, 1989:6).

Over the last 30 years, however, a large degree of ambiguity and uncertainty has entered the economic arena. The Western world has experienced restructured national economies, a decline in manufacturing, an increase in new technologies and the service sector, and a greater demand for 'flexible' labour. All of these led to an increasing insecurity of employment for managers, as their previous orderly career progression began to be replaced by performance related promotion and pay (Peters, 1988). Within corporations the search for more flexible management structures led to tiers of middle-management being replaced by an open-network, 'high-trust' situation where fewer, more senior managers related more directly with staff. Managers were therefore expected to cope with more operational uncertainties, to develop more interpersonal skills, and to become more adaptive. During the 1980s, an increasing focus on the 'drive' and 'enterprise' of younger managers also meant that many older managers either felt, or were made, redundant, and thus begun to question the ethos upon which their (working) lives had been built. Challenges have also arisen from the changing expectations of women about employment and marital relationships, and the recognition that 'the organization man's extreme devotion to company and career was, after all, facilitated by the servicing work of secretaries and wives' (Roper, 1994). The systematic exclusion of women from positions of public power came under attack by the feminist movement, as representing a particular 'malestream' approach to management and to social organisation generally.

The work status of women

Although around one-third of the employed labour force has been female since at least 1850 (Marshall, 1984), economic instability and employment insecurity, as well as increasing opportunities in certain sectors, coupled with greater legislation and litigation around issues of equal rights and sexual discrimination, has meant more opportunities, and demands, for women (and especially, *married* women) to have paid employment. This shift over the past thirty years has been characterised by a large increase in 'dual-career', or at least 'dual-income', families and there has also been a large increase in the number of women managers (albeit from a very small baseline). It is now rarer, although arguably still commonplace, that wives or female partners sacrifice their own careers or chosen life-styles to further that of their spouse (*e.g.* Marshall, 1984). This, coupled with a dramatic increase in the rate of divorce, has meant that a man can no longer depend upon having a wife to support him as he attempts to clamber up the slippery pole of success.

Despite a steady increase in the number of women in more junior levels of management, however, the evidence for the continued, immense, preponderance of men in the top positions of corporate management remains indisputable (Collinson & Hearn, 1996a:1). Data from widely dispersed countries in the 'developed world' suggest that the number of women in positions of top management remains not only relatively minute, but is actually declining. The statistics which follow have been selected by a number of authors to demonstrate this situation.

Sweden appears to have the highest proportion (9%) of women in top management positions (Statistics Sweden, 1992) while, in Australia, a study of 124 of Australia's 'Top 1000' companies demonstrated that the proportion of women senior managers declined from 2.5% in 1984, to 1.3% in 1992 (Still, 1992). In Britain, Marshall (1995) and Collinson and Hearn (1996a) cite evidence showing female managers are paid substantially less than men, are more likely to resign their positions and, consequently, are decreasing in number. A National Management Survey (Institute of Management, 1995) found a fall in the number of women managers in the UK from 10.2% in 1993 to 9.8% in 1994.

Are we to assume from the fact that men comprise the vast majority of top managers, that a/ they are most highly qualified; and/or b/ they do it better than women? This seems far from the truth.

In Australia, women comprise nearly 50% of graduates in business, law and related disciplines and consistently perform better academically (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1997). Sinclair (1998:7) reports that, in Australia, women start approximately 70% of new businesses, currently create about half the private-sector jobs, and were predicted to own 50% of small businesses by the year 2000. In the USA women own over one-third of all private firms, with a growth rate almost double that of other firms. Hunter & Reid (1996, cited by Sinclair 1998:7) found, from a study of 22,000 French firms, that those run by women were twice as profitable and growing twice as fast as those run by men. Sarney (1997, cited by Sinclair 1998) found in New Zealand, that small businesses run by women had an 85% success rate after one year, while those run by men had a 50% success rate.

So, the evidence indicates that women do manage, manage very well and, in a number of cases, better than men – but within specific types of enterprises, or only up to a certain level within large well-established corporations. In the UK Further Education (FE) system in 1990, while 42% of all main grade lecturers were women, they made up only 3% of principals (DoE, 1993). Whitehead (2001) reports that, while 20% more women than men were recruited to management positions between 1993 and 1997, FE managers are still predominately men. Linked with government directives regarding expansion of Further Education, Whitehead (1999) suggests there is evidence of a substantive shift from a previous paternalistic management style towards more aggressive entrepreneurial and competitive behaviours that tend to marginalise women. On this latter point another example can be taken from the legal profession. Spencer & Podmore (1987:113), in a collection of essays on women in male-dominated organisations, claim that the legal profession in Britain is 'both male-dominated and male-oriented', and women have been diverted into areas such as conveyancing property sales, while being denied access to criminal law which is deemed to be more appropriately 'masculine'. While the Solicitors Roll in Scotland has shown a steady increase in the percentage of women in recent years (from 8.5% in 1971, to 24% in 1986, to 33.4% in 1995), these women tend to be concentrated at the most junior levels of the profession (Hansard Society, 1990; Pascall, 1995).

In the USA, women who have reached senior management positions are less likely to receive training (Tharenou *et al*, 1994), or less likely to be given tasks requiring a high level of responsibility, opportunity, or visibility (Ohlott *et al*, 1994), all of which would affect the likelihood of future advancement. Collinson & Hearn (1996a) also note that women who reach senior positions in management often get channelled into committees peripheral to central corporate governance. Within the Police across Europe, women's roles are often restricted to domestic spheres, administrative and support services (Brown, 1995). Mead (1999) reports that when he joined the UK Police in the early 1970s that there was 'a separate specialist policewomen's department for dealing with sexual offences, children and young persons'. In his 'Police Stories' Mead (1999) tells how, on a special course for accelerated promotion, the two women of a total intake of forty were 'generally treated as a bit of a joke'. And so, one barrier constructed by a culture of hegemonic masculinity, effortlessly metamorphoses into another.

The culture of management and the nature of hegemonic masculinity

> Most organisations are saturated with masculine values
>
> (Burton, 1991:3)

While it may not be difficult to remove a particular man from management, it may be more difficult to remove particular aspects of *masculinity* from management. The normalisation of hegemonic masculinity in business institutions can be seen in the popularity of anecdotes wherein male executives, referred to as 'captains of industry', exhibit macho characteristics such as a single-minded ruthlessness in shaping corporations to their will. The metaphors used in the corporation context 'significantly shape managerial interactions and indeed career progress' (Collinson & Hearn, 1996a:4), and 'in them are lionised attributes traditionally valued in our culture – a frontier toughness and an emotional stoicism' (Sinclair 1998:32).

If an organisation is seen as an *arena of conflict* (Mangham & Overington, 1987:20) then this metaphor offers very different examples of behaviour to a situation where the dominant metaphor is that of a *community of stakeholders.* The former suggests that, in a struggle for scarce resources, aggressive competition is natural, and conflict, resulting in winners and losers, is inevitable. The latter suggests peaceful co-operation and sharing for mutual benefit.

Recently (January 2000) I received a sample issue of a journal advertising itself as 'for the thinking manager'. The journal was titled BulletP**O**INT (with the centre of the **O** filled-in to resemble a target), and a front page subtitle brought my attention to 'the enemies within' my organisation. These titular metaphors left little to the imagination as to the appropriate way of dealing with management issues and with people who appear problematic. The journal article went on to give examples of the way some employees can stand in the way of organisational change. The 'change' referred to in this context meant 'mega-mergers' between large corporations, and the journal illustrates how these changes lead to 'growing gains'. A moment of thought, however, might cause one to ask: gains for who? The recent 'hostile take-over' of the National Westminster Bank, following a 'battle' between rival Banks in the UK, is set to result in the loss of 18,000 jobs.

Nevertheless, BulletPOINT argues that mega-mergers increase the value of (some) managers' stock-options and pay-packets. The article ends with a final inducement to managers to embrace such changes: 'So what it comes down to is: mergers are macho' (BulletPOINT, 1999). The metaphor could not be more clearly expressed, or the message more loudly proclaimed:

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY MANAGES, OK!!

This approach to management would seem to be a far cry from the 'stakeholder' metaphor which became very much the vogue in the UK following the election victory of New Labour in 1997. The 'stakeholder' metaphor publicly espouses an effort to create opportunity within a spirit of consensus and co-operation for mutual benefit. A cynical viewpoint might be, however, that its hidden function within the British context has been to set a context within which wage-dependent workers temper their demands for more pay and better conditions, while the 'macho men' who control corporations continue to 'call the shots'.

Walk the Walk, Talk the Talk

One thing that many groups, organisations and social systems have in common is that the people within them are largely unconscious of many of the major processes operating within these structures. Members may perform functions in pursuit of goals of which they, and many observers, remain unaware. Not only that, but a language may develop that actually proclaims the opposite of what is going on (Wolfensberger, 1989). As instanced above, the language of 'stakeholders' may be an example of this.

Jackall reports that in large American corporations it is crucial that a manager be seen as a team player. This multifaceted concept has a metaphorical basis in the language of team sports, principally American football - the visible image of which is teams of heavily armoured men engaged in a distinctively rough and aggressive battle. Women in this context are confined to the sidelines and expected to be 'cheerleaders': to look pretty, twirl batons, and chant enthusiastic support for the heroic actions of the men-folk.

Depending on the vocabulary of specific organisations, a team player is characterised as someone who 'fits in', 'gets along with others', is 'not a prima donna', and who is able to make 'the sacrifice of one's individual feelings for the sake of the unified effort' (Jackall, 1988). Ironically, while 'teamwork' is a publicly espoused corporate value, senior managerial posts are filled on the basis of competition between individuals, and the behaviour most rewarded is that of a single-minded instrumental approach to success (Jackall, 1988; Morgan, 1996:50; Mulholland, 1996:139).

Of course, none of the above totally precludes women getting into senior management positions. It simply makes it much more difficult. Sheppard (1989) points out that in an organisational structure where male dominance is taken for granted, the notion of a genderless, or gender-blind, management is itself a gendered ideological position. If one wishes to inculcate gender equity within this corporate culture it is not simply a matter of empowering women to compete on equal terms with men in the public sphere. A challenge to this idea is necessary once we realise that 'equal terms' are often 'men's terms' (Marshall, 1984, 1995; Seidler, 1994). If women want to be 'equal' in the context of many male-dominated corporate management structures, they find they must be 'one of the guys' (Jackall, 1988; Sheppard, 1989; Davidson & Cooper, 1992), and accept the predominant culture, work the same hours, and 'tolerate, join in, enjoy, and retaliate in kind when sexual innuendo and jokes, the stock in trade of modern management, are deployed around them' (Cockburn, 1989:222). Cockburn argues that 'women may be good at their jobs, but socially they are continually wrong-footed by such a sexualised culture' (1989:222).

Maddock & Parkin (1993), illustrate a number of different masculine gender cultures operating in the workplace, and argue that women have to manage these gender cultures as well as their work. One of these cultures is the 'Gentleman's Club', in which male managers 'patronize in the nicest way', 'protecting' and 'benefiting' women, while ensuring without overt hostility that they remain in firmly established roles. By way of contrast, the 'Barrack Yard' culture rejects consultation and dialogue, and exercises control by bullying, and the creation of a climate of fear amongst all subordinates, especially women and those men who hold little institutional status or power. In a 'Locker Room' culture men build relationships based on common assumptions about, and regular references to, sport and overt (or rather, blatant) heterosexuality.

The 'Gender-Blind' culture treats everyone as if they were white, able-bodied males, and ignores the different reality of many women's lives, while the 'Feminist Pretender', to the contrary, presumes particular individuals to be representatives of an oppressed class, gender or ethnic group, and foists liberationist or assertiveness expectations upon them. In the 'Smart Macho' culture there is continual pressure to meet performance or budget targets, and this favours the manager who is driven by extreme competitiveness, and is capable of working hard and fast to accomplish narrowly-defined targets.

Collinson and Hearn (1994) put forward a complementary analysis comprising five 'ideal-typical' masculinities which appear to remain pervasive and dominant in organisations: paternalism, authoritarianism, informalism, entrepreneuralism, and careerism. One aspect of this analysis which is particularly interesting in the context of my own thesis, is that it indicates how a specific culture within an organisation may privilege certain men and impact negatively upon others. Some organisations may also contain differing cultures at the same time, and the 'paternal' practices of some older managers might be seen to conflict with the more 'hard-nosed' style of younger men who are more 'entrepreneurial' or 'careerist'. Although men, therefore, as a single-gender group can be seen to dominate corporate management, this 'group' is often riven with tensions and conflict.

> In consequence, these unities between men should not be overstated since they are often precarious, shifting and instrumental. (Collinson & Hearn, 1994:16)

Collinson and Hearn also indicate how masculine management behaviours tend to distance paid work from domestic work, and this is expected, applauded and rewarded by organisations. Maddock and Parkin (1993:8) argue, however, that the masculine-dominated corporate cultures they describe are 'firmly rooted in people's sense of the naturally ordained' and a lack of management career opportunities for women derives not just from male managers' resistance, but also from women's own sense of place. Sinclair (1998:57) also points out that the enactment of largely heterosexual masculine dominance not only serves the interests of powerful men, but 'remains uncontested and admired, by other men and by women'. The ideas of Foucault (1980, 1988) with regard to sexual self-constitution, self-discipline and self-regulation within specific socio-cultural contexts of power are apposite with regard to these latter points. I believe the text-box below illustrates just one small example of this process.

'The connection of myself to leadership is not one I make easily, as I suspect is the case for many women' *(Sinclair, 1998:2)*

I attended a workshop (University of Bath 1998) at which Professor Sinclair, visiting from Australia, expounded on her recent academic work and publications. While introducing the visitor, Professor Judi Marshall recounted that they had met at a conference where 'Amanda was among the most forthright speakers'. Amanda Sinclair immediately responded (in rueful tone): 'Oh Dear'. General sympathetic laughter ensued.

Had I not been present, and simply read a report of this exchange, with obvious gender markers removed, I believe I would have known instantly that Professor Sinclair was a woman:

a/ because her response indicated a degree of embarrassment at being characterised as 'forthright';

b/ because the audience laughed with her in explicit joint recognition that a woman should not be perceived to be 'forthright'.

I have never experienced a situation where a male public speaker, or his audience, has responded in such a way. I doubt that a male public speaker, or any audience in our society, would react in such a way to what he and his audience would perceive as a compliment and/or his taken-for-granted due. I imagine, given a similar introduction, I or another man would respond with a simple 'thank-you' smile; at most a slight movement indicating not-to-be-believed self-derogation: 'You are too kind'; or most likely, no response at all would be given to what was an obvious statement of fact.

Amanda Sinclair was 'living proof' of her own account.

Women's own sense of *values* would seem to affect their willingness to remain within the ranks of senior management once they have overcome all the obstacles to attaining such a position. Marshall (1995) found that some women managers decide to 'move on' because they no longer wished to be subjected to male-dominated organisational cultures characterised by hostile relationships, total commitment to work, toughness, stress, and isolation. The subtleties and complexities that the process of suppression and repression may demonstrate, however, do not dilute the effects or pattern of domination and control exercised by the hegemonic culture of masculinity.

> On the contrary, it is difficult to over-estimate the depth and complexity of the ways in which dominant forms of sexuality are produced and reproduced
>
> Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff & Burrell (1993: 179)

Times and cultural icons change, nevertheless, and individual male managers, at the beginning of the Third Millenium, may adopt a variety of styles – macho, authoritarian, entrepreneurial, democratic, pro-feminist. Or they may even be beginning to develop ways of leading that seek to undermine dominant forms of masculinities (Hearn, 1989, cited in Brod and Kaufman, 1994:113). Most institutions, nevertheless, continue to be organised in a way that privileges full-time continuous employment, and requires the employee to be primarily focused on a single career path. These structures are unsuited to people who assume most domestic responsibilities *i.e.* women (Riley, 1998), but also those men who take on a domestic or caring role.

> The openness, sensitivity and the capacity to give - and keep on giving – integral to successful caring in the home, remains completely at odds with the focused instrumentality required for most types of successful working lives.
>
> (Segal, 1990:311)

Riley (1998), in a study of men's constructions of changes in gender relations in the context of anti-discriminatory legislation, argues that individuals who question the need for 'focused instrumentality' tend to be perceived as failing in their job rather than as challenging inequitable standards. So, although the public face of management often indicates a commitment to change and equal opportunity, covert rules of control operate to maintain the status quo (Mills, 1993:42). This means that it is mostly men, or *particular kinds of men*, who are able to, and do, go out to climb the career ladder and who, consequently, more frequently work their way into management situations.

During a conversation with a man and woman occupying management positions in the education system in south-west England, I was told that one reason why there are relatively few women occupying head-teacher positions is because very few women teachers actually apply for advertised head-teacher posts. As a result, it was suggested, 'second-rate' men are sometimes appointed simply because they have the necessary paper qualifications, believe they can do the job and, crucially, *are willing to put themselves forward.* For better or for worse.

And many men feel a pressure to show they can 'do it'. Neither male employees nor their managers are encouraged to think of their careers as interruptible (Cockburn, 1990). Pleck (1993:231) reports that fathers in the USA who take paternity leave are perceived as 'uncommitted to their jobs' or 'unmasculine', and Sinclair (1998) focusing primarily on Australia, reports that a man trying to limit the hours he works is often ridiculed by other men as being 'not up to it', or 'under the thumb' of his wife. In Britain, an example of the primacy of the male job can be seen at present (March 2000) at the very top of the career ladder: the Prime Minister has publicly voiced his indecision about taking paternity leave in the near future. One presumes that his wife, a highly successful Barrister, will take some time out. The fact that her husband is voicing this situation as a dilemma, however, could be read as a positive indication that it is, at the very least, an issue of contention. Not all work cultures are the same, however, and in Sweden, which has a history of interventionist equal opportunity policies, 86% of fathers take a statutory two-week paternity leave. Nevertheless, with regard to mothers, Cockburn (1989:221) argues that 'however generous the maternity conditions, women will still compete one hand tied behind them, with men both of whose hands are free to keep hold of power at work'. Although children are not the only issue, they are a powerful reminder of a presumed separation of the personal and the professional, and of how an association with one can act as barrier to participation in the other.

Is the future of management female?

While the evidence brought forward above suggests that most women are blocked from attaining senior management positions, during the 1980s arguments arose which stressed the benefits that organisations could reap from promoting women into management. As a result of rapidly growing competition, the globalisation of many industries, and a perception that an uncertain economic climate required a new approach to management, some feminists and management theorists began promoting the 'feminisation' of management (*e.g.* Grant, 1988; Loden, 1985; Peters, 1990). A recent (2000) newspaper article cited the (male) head of a 'leading global executive search firm' as saying that 'female chief executives will become more common due to the tendency for them to be less confrontational, better communicators and better facilitators of teams'.

The support for women's 'difference', and supposed unique 'feminine skills', may be seen to derive from research during the 1970s and 1980s which demonstrated that, compared to men, women are more able to access and feel comfortable with a range of emotions (Chodorow, 1978), and are more likely to operate within an ethic of mutual responsibility and connectedness (Gilligan, 1982). These views would seem to contradict the earlier findings of Maccoby and Jacklin (1974), from a wide review of the literature, that the only consistent, empirically-confirmed, difference between men and women was a tendency for men to be more aggressive. Nieva and Gutek (1981), also following a review of the literature, concluded that there were no differences between men and women in leadership behaviour. Chodorow, in her later work (1994), stressed the need for appreciation of the psychological variety within each sex. Other researchers argue, nevertheless, that women managers use different styles to their male counterparts in order to arrive at the same ends (*e.g.* Statham, 1987), and this finds support in the work of Fletcher (1999), who finds women consciously using supportive 'relational' practices which lead to effective teamwork and high quality outputs.

While feminist theorists and political activists agree that women have been historically placed as 'different' or 'other' with reference to men or masculinity (*e.g.* Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996:3), they have engaged in debate about the *value* of understanding women as 'different to' or the 'same as' men (*e.g* Bacchi, 1990). Other feminist writers have suggested that if women *are* 'different' to men, it might be *because* they have been 'othered'. Segal suggests that,

> Perhaps (their) moral sensibility would disappear ... if women were as socially valued and privileged as men. It is well known that those with less social power and confidence are more likely to develop a greater attentiveness, watchfulness and desire to please in their relations with others. (Segal, 1987:148)

And Haste (1993: 88) also asks whether women's putative capacity to take the point of view of the many, as opposed to privileging the individual, arises from being constantly placed at the margins. Haste argues that positive change will only arise from

> ... a different way of doing things arising out of a different way of thinking about things: a change of metaphor from the presumption of conflict to the presumption of co-operation and negotiation ... To assert that this is 'female' approach is simply to recognise it as a challenge to the dominant masculine paradigm, rather than an assertion that women have exclusive access to or ownership of this world-view.
>
> (Haste, 1993:218)

Calas and Smircich (1993) query whether calls for the introduction of the 'feminine' into management, indicate a growing receptivity to qualities previously undervalued, or signal only more of the same, or worse. They see the appropriation of the 'women's difference', or 'female advantage' discourse by management theorists as a recurrent episode within economic reasoning that preaches the value of employing women only when this is seen to be an economic necessity, but which obscures the need for any fundamental change which would alter the balance of power. They argue that,

> although these positions are presented as a call for change in organisational thinking, they in fact do little more than restate existing management approaches under a different name (Calas and Smircich, 1993:72)

Calas and Smircich have traced an historical pattern over the 20th century where, as corporations became larger, more complex, or faced changing economic circumstances, they 'discovered' the usefulness of the 'special skills' of women. The 'feminine-in-management' rhetoric supports, and may even strengthen, traditional management ideology, because the 'feminine' being welcomed is a concept constructed by and within the existing patriarchal culture. In this way more women, or 'feminised' men *i.e.* those men either unable or unwilling to adopt the behaviours of hegemonic masculinity (Hollway, 1996:30), are brought in to occupy positions which are already beginning to be devalued, while those who presently occupy the positions of most power move up the hierarchy (Calas and Smircich, 1993).

Calas & Smircich (1993) argue that a truly different approach to organisational management would set about changing the whole current context. They argue for a notion of a management such that it contributes to an increase in people's abilities and endowments, to good health, good education, and to decent living conditions. Organisational growth would then be considered important only insofar as it is needed to sustain the global family. Otherwise, we will simply engage in an argument about whether achieving the same end in the same system – selling the most cars, insurance, stockmarket shares, or healthcare, at least cost and for greatest profit – is accomplished more effectively by using either a 'masculine' or a 'feminine' management style.

Not all masculinity is hegemonic

Petersen (1998), in an exploration of the frameworks of knowledge shaping conceptions of 'masculinity', argues that within the modern western world a particular 'ideal' of masculinity has been constructed, based on biological discourses which 'normalise' the bodies of white, heterosexual, European men, and associate 'real masculinity' with assertiveness, competitiveness, rationality, and high (hetero-) sexual drive. This masculine ideal constructs 'real men' as naturally different to 'women', as well as to 'homosexuals', and 'non-Europeans'. Each of these has been seen as a discretely identifiable and differentially-valued group, and men aspiring to the masculine ideal devote a great deal of effort into 'proving' they are 'real men'.

Even being the type of man that is socially valued and privileged, however, may not always provide the power and security it promises. Roper reports that, although the post-war generation of male British managers presented an image of powerful masculinity,

> Acting the hard man was just as often born of the fear of being oppressed themselves as from a conscious desire to dominate women and other men.
>
> (Roper, 1994: 216)

The 'ideal type' masculinity has been and continues to be threatened by the emergence of new ways of doing and being, and new ways of theorising which focus on the politics of language and representation. Feminist, and 'Queer' theorists, in particular, have exposed the role of an essentialist, universalist, evolutionary discourse in reinforcing hetero-sexist, racist, colonialist prejudices (Petersen, 1998). A number of writers in recent years have indicated that masculinity is in 'crisis' (*e.g.* Badinter, 1995; Horrocks, 1994; Kimmell, 1987; Rutherford, 1992) and have documented, in different ways, the threat 'men' experience from the removal of old certainties. We must not forget, however, that all men are not equal and, even within a society characterised as patriarchal, some men may experience subordination, stigmatisation, or marginalisation as a consequence of their sexuality, ethnicity, class, religion, or marital status (Hearn & Morgan, 1990:11; Sinclair 1998:57). Petersen (1998) sets the 'crisis of masculinity' within a broader 'crisis of modernity' wherein the grand narratives of science, rationality, and immutable objective truth are being questioned, and people are beginning to look for new behaviours appropriate to a changing context.

The modern period may have created particular 'ideals' of masculinity and femininity, but it has also produced oppositional discourses. Many people look forward to the emergence of a new concept of identity which will permit a wide range of personal and professional subjectivities to be taken up, unfettered by reductionist, sexually-differentiated dualism. A complete change from the 'old' ways of seeing and being cannot be expected to occur in the short term, however, nor can any change be expected to be uniform or absolute. In any context there exist competing and potentially contradictory discourses on gender and sexuality, and different degrees of freedom for individuals to act in particular ways. But there is always scope for resistance or subversion of prevailing norms (Petersen, 1998:130).

What is this chapter all about?

For me this chapter illustrates a selective, partial, view of the broader context of management and gender issues within which my own inquiry into Myself, Man and Manager is located. It is partial in that it reflects that which has 'spoken' to me, which has seemed relevant to me, in the context of my inquiry. I have not critiqued these ideas, merely signalled them as influences upon my thinking at this time. The purpose of this chapter is not to illustrate the depth, or lack of depth, in my understanding of these issues. I am willing to admit that the complexity of much theorising defeats me at present - but I have read the texts, struggled with the concepts, and dialogued with them, in an endeavour to see how they apply to my own subjective experience of myself as man and manager.

In my lifetime the concept of management, and of who has the 'right' to manage, has gone through considerable change. But not in a linear or highly predictable way. The demolition of the old aristocratic class structures, and the subsequent more 'open' society, has done little or nothing to lessen the gap between those who have and those who have not. Nor has it - nor the 60s 'drop-out' culture, nor its New Age revival in the 90s - destroyed or apparently even modified the onward march of corporate capitalism. A recognition of the unacceptable restrictions placed on women as wives, and their subsequent 'liberation', seems to have produced more dual-income but not necessarily dual-career relationships. There has been an increase in women managers, but only up to a certain level, and during the 1990s the percentage of women in top management positions was seen to decline. Equal-rights, and sex-discrimination legislation has yet to result in equal pay or equal opportunity. Although a debate continues about the 'best' way to manage in the current system, macho images continue to fascinate a substantial number of both men and women.

One thing we might see from this brief resume is that publicly espoused policies have very little effect on very different, privately accepted, meanings and metaphors. Rather than actively reconsidering and restructuring the values inherent in our professional and personal lives, many people (I do not presume <u>all</u> of the people) seem content, or are only able to tinker at the edges. Although I consider that I am actively reflecting upon the values that direct my purposes in the world, I do not set myself apart from the phenomenon of 'tinkering at the edges'.

I am, as already stated, a white, heterosexual, middle-aged, middle-class, man and manager. I am not about to denounce or renounce any of these epithets. What I am able to do, and will continue to do, however, is to self-consciously reflect upon how the cultural values associated with these terms might *lead me to behave*. I can, am, and will continue to re-consider *my own values and behaviours*, in the light of critical self-reflection.

Chapter 5 My Self as Manager, Manager as My Self

This chapter, I believe, comprises the core of my thesis. This is because it situates myself, as a man and as a manager, and it exemplifies my inquiry into myself, as a man and as a manager, as a process, over time.

The early part of this chapter describes, discusses and comments upon a situation which developed in my workplace during the first year of my PhD research. My experience of, and immersion in this situation became a major influence on my emerging inquiry. Much of this chapter was written throughout the years 1997 and 1998, at the time or shortly after the events described. This was early in the process of developing this thesis, and some of the literature I have referenced was selected because it seemed to me, at that time, to reflect or explain how or why the situation in my workplace could have arisen. In retrospect, I see this early writing contains many simplistic, somewhat naïve statements, which I have included, unaltered, not only to illustrate the background to this thesis but, more importantly, to demonstrate the emergent process of my inquiry at that time. The earlier writings in this chapter also demonstrate a certain 'voice-from-nowhere' quality which derives, I believe, from the modernist, scientific, positivist paradigm which, to a large degree, informed my education in Psychology and continues to be expected in the academic writing which is an important part of my present professional life. Interspersed with this professional 'objective' style of writing the reader will find personal 'subjective' interpolations which reflect the influence of action research methodology and practice in the development of this thesis.

Throughout this chapter I use the terms man, male, and masculinity interchangeably and I also refer to feminism in an equally unproblematic manner. At the time of my earliest writing I had little sense of the contested status of the concept of 'identity', or of the range and variety of feminist-inspired literature on 'sameness' and 'difference'. I now recognise that these terms contain a lot of disputed issues, and I address some of these in Chapter 6, 'My Self'. I believe the early writing contained in this present chapter continues to have a validity, a usefulness, in demonstrating myself as an inquiring subject, striving to reflect upon and to act upon my values. For this reason this chapter should be read as an example of self-reflective inquiry in action over time and, as such, is written in the present tense.

Taking examples from my professional and personal life, I place the issues addressed in this chapter in the following contexts:

1/ The management situation I am in (*at the time of writing*);

2/ The manager it is possible for me to be;

3/ The manager I want to be.

These three contexts reflect the three domains of Schofield (1993) with reference to the generalisability of qualitative research *i.e.* that it should refer to:

- what is
- what may be
- what could be

What is

The first of the above contexts demands a representation of my experience of the context in which I am being managed and being a manager. It requires some description of my past, present and changing situation, how I came to be in it, and how I experience it.

What may be

In response to the second context I need to consider the forces that may control the extent to which I am able to follow my inclinations and exercise free choice to be the manager I wish. This demands consideration of how social forces impact, not only upon my behaviour, but upon how my behaviour is perceived and experienced by others, as well as others' expectations regarding my behaviour. A full and valid consideration of this issue should include representations of the experience of the people with whom I work and whom I manage.

What could be

The third context elicits the immediate response that I want to be a manager who fulfils my professional role in a way that is congruent with my personal values. This demands an exploration of my personal values, as the statement contains the presumption that my *personal* values have some intrinsic value in my *professional* context. One hoped for outcome of this inquiry is the discovery of a personal touchstone for testing the worth and validity of my values when applied in both personal and professional contexts.

Ways of Knowing

The following sections should be read with reference to the concept of an 'extended epistemology' in the Methodology chapter of the present text. This concept accepts (at least) four different ways of knowing: Experiential; Representational; Propositional; and Practical. Acceptance of an extended epistemology in the present context leads to an acknowledgement that, in the first instance, every individual person has a unique and un-reproducable direct Experience of the world of work, of being managed, and of managing. This experience can be Re-presented in some form accessible to others, it may be described in words, images, movement, so that others may know about it. Propositions or theories may be formulated with reference to the experience – which also can be represented to others. Finally, there can be a Practical knowledge in that one can *do* something with the power that derives from the other ways of knowing. In my own situation, with Practical knowledge, I can act more effectively as a manager. Criteria for judging the level of effectiveness would derive from interaction between the different ways of knowing.

Comments from one CARPP reader of the present text, has alerted me that I am once again slipping into a mode of presentation which is more categoric and analytical, as opposed to reflective and inquiring. So be it. As previously stated I wish my text to reflect the analytic, reductionist side of my self as well to illustrate my more holistic aspects. I recognise, nevertheless, that it would be helpful in the present situation if I do not alienate my readers, and in my work situation that I might be a better manager, both of and for myself and other people, if I were able to spot my behavioural tendencies more quickly myself – not necessarily to alter them, but in order to assess their appropriateness in the context.

The management situation I am in

Implications of working in a positivist paradigm

Some of the forces which impact on the manager it is possible for me to be, and that I want to be, may originate in the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of my past and present work context. This context, for the purposes of inquiry at this time, I will designate as Positivist.

I remain aware, however, that fixing such a label of my work-context can and may have negative consequences in that a/ it can serve as a very abstract target upon which to mount a savage, and unresisted, attack; and b/ it may be difficult for the readers of this text, or me, to see beyond the label into the complex reality of the practices, and people, with which I work. Nevertheless I will (for the sake of the argument) for the moment rest with the designation Positivist.

One feminist argument against the modern positivist scientific research paradigm is that it is associated with, or derives from, a male-centred model of reality (Callaway, 1981), and results in 'machismo' research (Bernard, 1973; Callaway, 1981). Using particularly emotive language, Reinharz (1979) uses a rape analogy to argue that positivist researchers

> ..intrude into their subject's privacy, disrupt their perceptions, utilize false pretences, manipulate the relationship, and give little or nothing in return. When the needs of the researchers are satisfied, they break off contact with the subject.
>
> (Reinharz, 1979:95)

Other writers taking a feminist perspective (*e.g.* Bakan, 1966; Bernard, 1973; Callaway, 1981) distinguish between 'agentic' (identified with the masculine), and 'communal' (identified with the feminine) approaches to inquiry.

> Agency tends to see variables, communion to see human beings ... Agency has to do with separation, repression, conquest, and contract; communion with fusion, expression, acceptance, non-contractual co-operation.
>
> (Bernard, 1973:784-5)

We must also be careful not to simply give an individualistic rendition of the research relationship. Focusing on the behaviour of researchers at the level of interpersonal interaction runs the risk of overlooking the institutional forces which shape the way research questions are constructed, what purposes these serve and their material effects in the world. An individual research context in which similarities are emphasised or differences are given a positive value will not in itself be sufficient to overcome institutionalised power structures (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996:27).

Assuming the validity of the above representations for the present, I pose a question of myself, as a man and as a manager: If I choose to work in a field of research based upon positivist ontology, epistemology and methodology, what implications does this have for my personal ontology, epistemology, values, and behaviour? This question will be explored in the context of my professional environment.

Researching my professional practice

Over recent years my role in the world has been modifying, and each new context has introduced me to, and encouraged my acceptance of, a particular epistemology and methodology. From teacher, to therapist, to BSc/MSc student, to research worker, to research manager, to PhD student, these have ranged back and forth through holistic / heuristic and reductionist / positivistic. I am now researching myself and my professional practice via an holistic and subjective perspective of myself being managed, as well as becoming a manager.

I work in a small research unit whose staff levels rise and fall dependent on available funding. The gender mix varies, but there has been, over the past few years, a preponderance of women researchers. For one period over a year (1997) the unit comprised the unit director (male), five researchers (myself and 4 females) and 4 female students on work placement. All staff and research projects at that time were managed directly by the director of the unit. The situation has now altered in that I have become manager of the unit, with the responsibility for employing and managing other researchers, while continuing myself to be managed by the unit director.

I want to briefly explore the effect of a particular approach to management in my workplace, on women in the first instance but also on at least one man - myself. The purpose of this exploration is to inquire into styles of management which may be gender-associated *i.e.* influenced by the gender of both manager and managed, and to consider the advantages or disadvantages of different management styles. (This will lead on, in later sections, to a consideration of whether, as a man and manager, I am able to opt for one or other style, or combine elements of both in order to manage in a way which is congruent with my personal values.)

A series of resignations and difficulties experienced within the group of women researchers in the year prior to my taking management responsibilities, signalled to me the possibility of a clash of male and female culture in the work-place. (It was this series of events that led me to begin the present inquiry for my PhD). This inquiry became a more pressing consideration as I began to move into management.

One female researcher had resigned only 6 months into a 30 month contract, saying that she felt unable to cope; another left 3 months into a 6 month contract with the reason that her boyfriend had found employment elsewhere (2 hours away); another presented what had been seen (by the director and myself) as a relatively simple literature review in an incomplete muddle. These unsettling failures to complete work could have been attributed to purely personal difficulties on the part of these individual researchers, until the remaining and replacement female research staff drafted a letter to the unit director listing a number of points of dissatisfaction and requesting a meeting at which these could be discussed.

The female researchers suggested that the head of the research unit should have 'less competing time commitments' and 'spend more time with his staff'. It was underlined that the unit head should 'be part of a team', as 'thinking time together is vital', although 'it was not only time, but the "right" attitude' as 'too much charm sometimes can feel disempowering: it encourages a compliant response'. Other comments included the need to demonstrate 'willingness to listen to difficulties without a tendency to minimise or avoid them', and stressed that it was 'important to avoid feeling rushed' during supervision sessions. The researchers also wanted some social space that provided an opportunity to chat with colleagues over coffee.

My role in this situation needs consideration. I was not included by the women either in their informal discussions or as a signatory to their letter of complaint. This letter refers to the fact that I was not included 'because we felt it might be awkward on both sides'. I have never asked why this was so, but two possible reasons come to mind: I am man; and I was in the process of becoming a manager.

In a situation where alienation was being experienced, my loyalties could be seen to be, and were to a large degree, split. The female researchers did talk with me, individually, soon after these events, and although I could accept, at that time, that they felt overwhelmed and unsupported, I felt their experience was not my own. While I understood that they felt aggrieved, I did not feel that way myself, and sympathised rather than empathised. That my own physiological, as opposed to psychological, experience may have been closer to theirs than I realised, will be demonstrated below. At that stage, however, I felt I was happy working autonomously and did not suffer from a lack of either support or chat.

Although I felt I was not personally suffering under the present system, I noted that, as I took on management responsibilities, I would have to address the needs of others in a different way. But, what needed to be changed? The present unit director had scheduled regular meetings with all staff; had participated in team meetings where everyone was encouraged, indeed expected, to share information about their projects; and had invited all staff to a number of social events where people could chat informally. The director had an in-depth understanding of the tasks from having previously defined them in successful research proposals; he appeared to listen to all problems that staff raised and, because of his many years experience in the research field, to be able to suggest possible solutions. The director was also generally well-liked and respected. But, something was going badly wrong.

Once I had taken on management responsibilities, one women researcher recounted to me, with regard to the support system previously operating in my unit, that she

> 'couldn't complain about the structure, but the content. I didn't feel I was being understood ... There are not always straight-forward solutions ... The value is in the discussion'.

I hear, in the comments of this researcher, support for my own preferred values. It seemed to me that a useful support structure had been put in place, but that it was being used and experienced in different ways by the male manager and the female researchers. This raised the issue for me as to how, as I took over management responsibilities, I could supervise and support staff in 'better' manner.

Different Worlds of Experience

I recognise that we are all influenced by factors in our personal and professional lives which impact upon our decisions or capabilities at a given time. There could be numerous and varied reasons for anyone of us, research worker or manager, not completing a task for which we are qualified and have originally expressed great enthusiasm. Nevertheless, conversations with my female research colleagues, the contents of the letter of complaint from the female researchers to the unit director, and a consideration of feminist literature lead me to believe that the women in my work-place experienced difficulties arising from two different communication styles within two different work-place cultures.

That men and women have different work-place experiences would appear to be a truism, evidenced by a multiplicity of literature deriving from feminist, non-feminist, and 'popular' viewpoints. Another argument may be made, however, that men and women have broadly similar experiences in the professional sphere but that these are represented or theorised in very different ways. At present I will not seek to explore the diverse ramifications of writings on male-female relationships in the workplace but will rest with an understanding expressed concisely by Fischer and Gleijm (1992), when they argue for the usefulness of 'a cross-cultural perspective, assuming that men and women live in two different worlds.' Although Fischer and Gleijm are referring more particularly to the issue of women entering into management roles, the pro-feminist literature which addresses male-female relationships in the workplace and related social situations is replete with similar conclusions (*e.g.* Cockburn, 1989; Collinson & Hearn, 1994; Eisler, 1991; Hearn *et al*, 1993; Maddock & Parkin, 1993; Marshall, 1984, 1995; Martin, 1996; Sinclair, 1998; Statham, 1987). The conclusions of these writers are important for me as a male manager of researchers who are, for the most part, female. If the majority of people I manage live in a different world to me, I fear my ability to fulfil my management role (unless defined as totally laissez-faire), will be severely limited.

Male v Female Management Expectations

I will now consider some accounts of alternative approaches to management styles which I have selected because they seem to reflect my own experience of the situation in my work-place.

Fischer and Gleijm (1992) designed a number of 'working-conferences', one element of which comprised single sex groups observing groups of the opposite sex working together. The experience of these conferences led Fischer and Gleijm to describe two 'ideal type' male and female group behaviours, which they recognised as being approximated more in groups with members from a variety of organisations, as groups populated by members of a single organisation were seen to be influenced by that specific company culture. This caveat may be seen as annulling the value of these findings with reference to my own workplace situation, as I believe that a strong local culture exists there. Nevertheless, I believe these example serve as illustrations of how differing, gender-associated, workplace expectations may lead to discontent.

In Fischer and Gleijm's conferences, male group behaviour was seen to exhibit a primary focus on achieving a well-defined hierarchy. Once a 'pecking-order' was established the group became very goal-oriented and demonstrated an appreciation of operational excellence, but with much rivalry, little creativity, and little room for personal contact or feelings. In female organisational behaviour, in contrast, hierarchy was less of an issue. This contributed to space for individual differences, an open climate, spontaneity, variety of content, and creativity. Female group behaviour demonstrated, however, much ambiguity, a weak task orientation, and did not encourage individual excellence. Theoretically, a mixed male-female group should form a complementary team, but Fischer and Gleijm (1992) found that in practice the two, gender-dependent, styles of relating in the workplace often led to deeply felt misunderstandings and frustrations. These observations support the findings of Statham (1987) who argues (following analysis of qualitative data from 22 women and 18 men managers and their secretaries) that

> 'the person-invested style of women stands in opposition to men's autonomy-invested style. Men value autonomy in their jobs and women value structure.'

According to Statham, women in a professional context,

> '...preferred and so expected bosses to invest time and energy in helping them develop',

while male managers, working on the assumption that

> '... the job is getting done unless I get complaints',

preferred to

> '...give people responsibility and let them be responsible for their actions.'
>
> (Statham, 1987)

Further investigation of gender preferences in management styles found that males and females

> 'reported a strong preference for their gender appropriate model, and misunderstanding and even exasperation with those using an alternative approach.'
>
> (Statham, 1987)

For many women the effect of a gender-based differences in the work-place is not simply a feeling of exasperation. The previous chapter (Chapter 4, Management, Sex and Gender) indicates that many women find that it is very difficult to have a career in senior management because the exclusionary culture of organisations controlled by a hegemonic masculinity. And many women have decided to opt-out of particular jobs or organisations rather than suffer the effects of male-models of management. Marshall (1995) reports

> Dissatisfaction with 'male-dominated' characteristics of organisational cultures is now frequently identified as a key reason that women managers leave their jobs.
>
> (See also Brett and Stroh, 1994; Rosin and Korabik, 1991).

Although the women in my workplace are not managers, I believe the rationale expressed by Marshall in the above quotation may still apply. I need also to inquire into whether a 'male management' culture in my workplace has been having a deleterious effect, not only on the women researchers, but also on myself.

My own experience of taking a job as a researcher, managed by a man, tends to support the findings of Statham as well as Fischer and Gleijm. I was assessed, by my male manager, as to my ability and enthusiasm, set certain tasks with specific deadlines, and then given the freedom to organise my project and the responsibility for seeing it completed on time.

Regular meetings were scheduled with my manager for feedback on progress and discussion of any problems. In theory, this situation was organised in such a way as to respect my abilities and needs, with clearly delineated responsibilities for myself and my manager. In practice, however, things are not always what, in theory, they purport to be. Fischer and Gleijm (1992:12) comment that

> 'In the business world women often complain of not being listened to, while men complain that women are given equal opportunity but fail to use it.'

The focus of the research of Fischer and Gleijm was the experience of women. Perhaps men have never been asked, or never complain about 'not being listened to', but this does not mean that men do not suffer from it. The following example of a 'typical' manager-researcher supervision meeting, although fictional, has been compiled from my own experience, and its validity in the experience of others has been corroborated by conversations with female colleagues.

A supervision meeting has been scheduled for 2 p.m. This time comes and goes, as the manager is still in another meeting that started 20 minutes late because the previous meeting over-ran. I, the researcher, go into the meeting at 3p.m. and am asked to sit down while the manager finishes a telephone call. The meeting then commences and I begin to outline particular concerns, only to be interrupted by the telephone. The manager is apologetic, but has to take the call because it is 'important', and the person has been trying to get him for 3 weeks. The call finishes, the manager returns, listens intently for five minutes, and when I falter to a halt, defines (usually as 3 main points) the 'problem', and seeks corroboration as to the accuracy (and astuteness?) of his understanding. Unsure of my own understanding of the problem and awed by the manager's apparent ability to sum-up in such a succinct manner the source of the vague but rapidly growing sense of unease and inadequacy which has come to dominate my working (if not waking) hours over the past weeks, I agree. The meeting is once again interrupted by a knock on the door - a student with 'just a quick question'. Five minutes later, having dealt with the student's question, the manager proceeds to outline three possible solutions to my 'research problem'. I agree to try these, and the meeting comes to an end because someone else has been waiting for 45 minutes. The manager believes the problem has been, or will now be, dealt with. I go back to my desk harbouring a vague feeling of being incompetent, unheard and unsatisfied.

Relating the above to my experience as a therapist (see below, under **The manager I want to be**) I see the solutions being offered by my manager as akin to the 'magic bullet' approach to disease used in orthodox medicine: diagnose a discrete problem (disease); define a single cause (bacterium); prescribe the appropriate bullet (antibiotic) – Disease defeated! Health reinstated!

I believe, however, that such an approach to treatment often provides only temporary relief, and has a tendency to store up problems for the long term. The medical profession itself has begun to realise that over-enthusiastic use of antibiotics has resulted in the evolution of 'super' bacteria (staphyloccocus aureus for example) which are resistant to all known antibiotics. Just as this reductionist approach to problem solving within medical management has led to a situation with the potential for a catastrophic impact on healthcare, so in people management a similar approach can lead, I believe, to the collapse of learning, enthusiasm, social relationships and communication within the work environment.

I believe that, personally and professionally, problems and diseases can only take hold where the environment encourages, or supports, them. My preferred treatment for both these examples of dis-ease is to attempt to rectify any underlying imbalance, weakness, or aggravation (*i.e.* the real problem) which maintains the perceived, surface problem.

I have no intention, in the present text, of addressing how this principle might be applied in the treatment of medically recognised diseases, other than to signal the presence of literature on the effects of poverty, and lack of social networks, on rates of morbidity and mortality, and the savage attack by Illich (1975) on the reductionist medical approach which, he argues, 'is but a device to convince those that are sick and tired of society that it is they who are ill, impotent and in need of repair'. The presence of the putative 'placebo response' in the remission of a wide variety of illness is also evidence that dis-ease responds to social-psychological influences (*e.g.* Peters, 2000). I will confine the present text, however, to the social or practical problems encountered in the context of management of research.

My preferred approach to removing dis-ease in this context is via engaging in high quality discourse. This discourse comprises a process of listening, empathising, reflecting, and challenging, while seeking to agree an account of the problem and a possible solution. This process is that of engaging in real dialogue. This quality of conversation is not simply talking *about* the situation, it a process which, interactively, creates a different situation.

Conversation, in this sense, 'doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards' (Zeldin, 1998). To agree in this circumstance, what those 'new cards' are, must transcend the 'agreement' that subordinates generally accept in the presence of superordinates. Power differentials will almost always make this process difficult, and all parties need to be constantly aware of this. I know that, as unit manager, I can easily have 'the last word' on what the problem is and what the solution is – even if it isn't!

For Gilligan (1982) a key aspect of a sense of connectedness is listening. This means not simply 'hearing', but accepting the perspective of the other rather than analysing or interpreting what is being said. The listener is receptive rather than combative in the presence of the other (Haste 1993:213).

A range of pro-feminist literature suggests that many male managers might not be ready, or able, to adopt such an approach as outlined in the text-box above (*e.g.* Bacchi, 1999; Collinson & Hearn, 1996a; Fletcher, 1999). I am concerned about the extent to which I personally, as a male manager, am able to engage with this approach given that I may be not only encultured to expect and respect particular (male) behaviours, but also biologically 'hard-wired' for certain behaviours (Tiger and Fox, 1972).

The second point made by Fischer and Gleijm (1992:12, quotation above) is that men complain that women are given equal opportunity but fail to use it. In my unit, at the time of the problems described above, the director expressed some difficulty seeing why the researchers were demanding more support in order to do their jobs, and was tempted to ascribe it to 'lack of professionalism'. Following from the findings of Statham (1987, above) 'professionalism' in this context might be understood to mean *the way men (should?) behave in a professional environment.*

Having accepted responsibility for managing the research staff at my unit I attempted to listen to their concerns. I attempted to be friendly, open, aware, helpful, facilitative. Nevertheless, within a few months of my taking on this role, another female member of staff had given notice with only six months to run on her contract. This researcher had replaced another woman who had left after only six months in the job, and she (the second) had expressed awareness of stepping into someone else's place and the importance of completing this piece of work.

As this researcher's manager I had tried to encourage her as she often seemed unsure of her own abilities, and somewhat nervous before the two male leaders of the research. Her leaving was personally disappointing for me despite her assurances that she was not dissatisfied with my management style. Her unwillingness to commit herself to finishing the research led me to think: Did I push her too much? Did I set up unrealistic expectations? Not long before her resignation I had encouraged her to begin to write-up from the data she had collected, had pointed out that she would be first author on any published paper where she did the bulk of preparatory work. After giving notice she told me that one of the (male) project leaders seemed to know what answers were required from the data, and what papers he wanted from the research. I interpreted this as a suggestion that her further input was unnecessary, that she would not be missed.

Am I dealing here with personal psychology or a political, gender/management situation? Is it possible, or helpful, to distinguish between the two? How tempting it is to focus on personal psychology! It has been argued that the personal is the political - but if the influence of the historical distribution of power is so pervasive (Ardener, 1975; Callaway, 1981; Lukes 1974; Radke & Stam, 1994) where does that leave me as a male manager of women? And where does that leave me as a male researcher, in a research world still dominated by a particular kind of male/positivist paradigm?

Power

> ..one issue that an increasing number of social scientists appear to agree upon is the feminist argument that any adequate theory of men and masculinity has to have the concept of power at its centre. (Edley & Wetherell 1996:97)

If there is a gender-associated problem in the workplace, does it derive from men's behaviour, or women's behaviour, or does it derive from Power? Taking for granted (for the moment) that men hold (or are held by – in thrall to) the most powerful positions in professional management, would the world be a better place if these men were replaced by women? Would the world be a better place were we humans to (re?)embrace the facilitative Goddess in place of the determinative male God? Or is it true that, no matter whether God or Goddess,

> Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.
>
> (Acton, 1834-1902)

Of course, I have no way of answering these questions. And, equally, no wish to pursue such a pointless argument. There is no 'either-or' option for the state of the world – we must start where we are, and manage as best we can. We might benefit however, from thinking about the relationship of individuality to power, and the way we come to a sense of ourselves within particular relationships of power.

> The possibility of a challenge to men's taken-for-granted dominant masculinities could facilitate the emergence of less coercive and less divisive organisational structures, cultures and practices, a fundamental rethinking of the social organisation of the domestic division of labour and a transformation of 'men' at 'work'. (Collinson & Hearn 1996b:73)

Upon re-reading the above quotation (Collinson & Hearn, 1996b:73) some weeks after typing it, I discovered I had inadvertently written, in the last line, 'me' instead of 'men'. A simple typographical error? Or an even more simple Freudian slip?

Power and Communication

Communication is a crucially important factor in the success of any enterprise or organisation. Haste (1993:224) tells us that

> ..communication is not the transfer of information bits from one mind to another, but the negotiation of meaning between people who share common frameworks of understanding.

The combined effects of a male / positivist management paradigm may be particularly potent with regard to communication between men and women.

> Men have dominated over women, by and large, because they have managed to gain a stranglehold on *meaning*. (Edley & Wetherell 1996:107)

In my own workplace, following the period of discontent about support and communication, a team meeting had been called, at the behest of female staff, where it was agreed that in the interest of helpful discussion and more fruitful communication, regular team meetings would be used as an opportunity for researchers to talk about their work successes and difficulties. This was decision taken by women, apparently for women. Nevertheless, over the following months, only one of these researchers utilised this opportunity, and eventually expressed frustration that no-one else had followed her lead. This would appear to be a glaring example of (most) women not taking up opportunities that they had themselves decided upon as potentially beneficial to themselves and others.

As a manager, I have to ask myself why these meetings were not utilised as decided. One reason may be that they were no longer necessary to fulfil a particular communication need - the researchers reported to me individually that communication within the office was generally experienced as having improved. It is also possible that the initial desire for communication about their work may have diminished at the thought of doing so in the context of a professional meeting which had been, until recently, dominated by the presence of the male director. Feminist, and pro-feminist, writing has indicated the ways that a long-standing experience of subordination can undermine women, make them feel worthless, and reduce them to silence (*e.g.* Ardener, 1975; Seidler, 1994:214).

> ... a society may be dominated or over-determined by the model (or models) generated by one dominant group within the system. This dominant model may impede the free expression of alternative models of their world which sub-dominant groups may possess, and perhaps even inhibit the very generation of such models. (Ardener, 1975:xii)

Callaway (1981) suggests that male dominance has rendered females relatively 'inarticulate' at the level of *public* discourse, and that matters of particular concern to women may find expression in forms other than direct expository speech. It should be recalled that one complaint of the women in my unit was the lack of facilities for 'coffee and chat'. Such facilities could not be provided in the available office space, and the option of a relatively more formal and public forum may have been seen as the only available, but far from satisfactory, substitute.

Thus, communication between men and women in a professional context may suffer because of the historical distribution of power, and its covert yet pervasive influence. Lukes (1974) argues that power could be seen to operate across three dimensions - direct influence; control of the agenda; and colonisation of the psyche.

In my work context the women researchers would seem to have been able to directly influence events by initiating the meetings (first-dimension power); to have set the agenda for discussion (second-dimension power); yet they had failed to follow-through on their decision to initiate better communication via these meetings. Lukes' third-dimension power operates similarly to the process described by Ardener (1975) and Callaway (1981) (both cited above): people occupying a subordinate social position can have their personal psychology influenced to the extent that they tacitly accept the power structure which oppresses them and see themselves at fault for failing to occupy a different role or engage in different social behaviours. Following Lukes (1974), in the above situation the acts of initiating a meeting (direct influence), and setting an agenda of issues to be addressed (control of the agenda), could both be subordinated to the third dimension of power (colonisation of the psyche). This third-dimension power tends to ensure that existing power relationships remain static, and (crucially important, this, for my own inquiry) *the evidence of domination remains invisible to both parties, dominant as well as subordinate.*

Every Man a Winner?

The effects of the power structure discussed above need not only apply to women. There are a number of issues that come up for men with this conception of the hierarchy of power. If men, generically, are placed at the top of this hierarchy, what are we to say to individual men who experience themselves as powerless, passive, or unable to articulate their needs (*e.g.* Petersen, 1998; Roper 1994)? Seidler (1994:107) asks if this is to be dismissed as a 'form of false consciousness'? Does it reflect a lack of recognition, by men, of the power they hold in relationship to women in the larger society? Or, does it simply illuminate the complexities of interpersonal relationships? For feminists it has always been crucial to validate the experience of women but there is also an issue of whether we can accept different men's various accounts of their own experience (Petersen 1998; Seidler, 1994:107). Gramsci, also, recognises the ways we come to know ourselves within relationships of power.

> As we develop what Gramsci calls a 'critical consciousness' we question ourselves as a product of those relationships ... and we begin to discern tension and contradictions between who we want to be and how we aspire to live our lives and the way of thinking and relating that we have passively adopted from our background and culture. (Seidler, 1994:200)

Normality and Invisibility

Many feminist writers, including those already cited above, have argued that there are approaches to work and management (often *consciously* practised, or at least preferred, by women) which run counter to the socially normal, male-derived and male-centred approach. This 'female-derived' or 'feminine' approach to work has been characterised by Fletcher (1999) as 'relational practice'. Its primary mode is one of 'smoothing the way', facilitating the work process by supportive and collaborative interprofessional actions.

Fletcher argues that this relational practice is allowed, indeed encouraged, within 'normal' masculine-dominated organisations *as long as it remains invisible.* That is, as long as no recognition is given to the necessity of relational practice for the continued hegemony of 'non-relational' masculine behaviours. I will now begin to consider how this impacts upon my own present professional situation.

Spot the Difference

In order to improve collaboration between men and women, Fisher and Gleijm (1992:13) exhort us to

> 'Stop thinking there are no differences, or that differences can be neglected'.

As far as I have been able to judge from my position as male colleague and manager, the women in my workplace, at the time of their written complaint, had been given equal opportunity to the extent that in all aspects of their work roles they were treated no differently than if they were men. This, however may have been a root cause of the problem! They are *not* men, and may not necessarily wish to accept man / male cultural norms regarding work-behaviours or personal relations in the workplace.

Via observation at work, informal communications with my (female) colleagues, (male) manager, (male) discussion group, (female) wife, as well as self-reflection, I recognise that male-female communications and management relationships may fail because we are differently sexed, differently gendered, victims of an historical distribution of power; or because we are simply different people with different personalities and different strengths and weaknesses. While it is important to recognise the impact of sex/gender differences in the work-place, as well as the wider world, it is equally important in my view not to continue to reduce human relations to the differing psychometrics of sex/gender variables. A more holistic view of our social ecology might begin to focus on the way that interlocking, interactive systems support, maintain, influence and change each other. This view might begin to lead us towards a greater sense of integration, rather than separation.

I have indicated above that, in my work situation, I could not empathise with the women's experience at the time of their joint complaint. With hindsight of my experience over a two-year period (to mid 1998), I realise that I was (and may still be) suffering from the effects of third-dimensional power, that of 'colonisation of the psyche' (Lukes, 1974).

> Men are also constrained by hegemonic masculinities that require them to act and speak in narrowly drawn ways, a fact that most men fail to recognise. Men take their masculinity enactments of/with each other 'for granted' and fail to see them as 'gendered' unless someone draws their attention to the point.
>
> (Martin, 1996:208)

Being a man, I may have simply accepted, 'taken for granted', the system in operation in my workplace - it seemed to have a rational structure, it allowed autonomy and encouraged personal responsibility. Nevertheless, I gradually began to feel the weight of an endless series of increasingly complex tasks having to be completed to meet ever-shortening deadlines. I also began to realise that, although I may have lacked particular skills, the solution to the problem I was experiencing was not a technical 'fix' but the re-visioning of a social system.

I came to recognise that many of the professional difficulties experienced between males and females, are also experienced between males and males. Not all men necessarily benefit from being treated as a prototype male at ease in the hegemonic culture. Increasingly over the period of a year (1997-98) I came to realise that I was suffering in a way perhaps similar to my female colleagues. I became more convinced that there is a culture, a life-style, a set of behaviours associated with the professional life for which I have opted, which may be failing to effectively tap my abilities, and at worst may be counter-productive as well as injurious to my health and well-being. I began to suffer from a sensation of being overwhelmed by demands to complete a never-ending number of tasks, and by a growing sense of incompetence at not being able to produce what was demanded within the time required (the sense of incompetence growing even, or perhaps especially, when deadlines were extended). Part of me (one set of values?) believed (continues to believe?) that I should 'get organised and get on with it', while another part (other values?) could (and can) see that this 'machismo element of research' (Bernard 1973:784) was wearing me down towards illness or exit.

The manager it is possible for me to be

Things change. I change. I no longer feel myself to be burdened down, or overwhelmed to the extent that my work is killing me. Either the work has changed or I have become a better manager. I think both. I know that I want to continue in my present managerial role, and that I want to see that role evolve and develop – but into what? Chapter 4 of the present text indicates that, despite an increase in the number and percentage of women engaged in management activities, there remains a close association between certain characteristics of masculinity and a successful career in professional management, especially towards the top of the income and kudos scales. Do I have those characteristics?

If not, does this illustrate disability, incompetence, inadequacy? Or is there, for me, the option to do it another way? My way. The best way for me. Whatever I discover about myself, or decide for myself, I am not context-free. As already illustrated, I find myself in a situation where other people, other cultures, press me.

Masculinity and Positivism Rule, OK?

Within my research work, while methodology is flexible (within limits), the epistemology is taken for granted. Although my research involves consideration of qualitative material about people's experience in the world, it was (and is) still firmly based in an approach which demands that I totally control the agenda, ask the questions, interpret the responses, aggregate the results, and develop generalisable conclusions. As long as my methods are demonstrably ethical, in that I have not blatantly abused trust or totally invented information, my data go unquestioned as valid representations of the world. Conversations with a number of research 'participants' (as all subjects of scientific study are now called) have suggested that researchers have been before, asked similar questions, gone away, written their reports (presumably, as the participants received no copies!), and that was the last heard of the whole process. The recognition that my research is not new, that very few people read my reports, and even fewer are able to assess the correctness of my statistical analyses or the validity of my conclusions, causes me to question the value of this research for those who commission it, for those who are subjected to it, or for the wider society. Research which tends to reduce people to cyphers will be not only severely limited in its usefulness, but interventions based on its conclusions could prove disastrous for complex living beings operating in complicated social situations.

Nevertheless, although I am now employed as a full-time research manager within the National Health Service and University, half of my salary is dependent on externally-funded research contracts *i.e.* dependent upon research monies that I must win from funders. In this circumstance I have to face the fact that while obtaining funding for any research is extremely difficult, getting funding for research which is not anchored upon statistically-based sampling techniques, demonstrably 'objective' methodologies, quantified results, and conclusions which are generalisable across a wide population, is often virtually impossible. In other words (although there are some recent indications of change), the only research which pays is research firmly founded within the positivist paradigm.

The Right Stuff

> Models of leadership and responsibility emphasize individual charisma and long-term, abstract thinking. Appraisal systems use the time span of responsibility to assess the importance of one's job to the organization by distinguishing high-level thinkers from low-level doers. (Fletcher, 1999:25)

Am I made of the 'right stuff' to fit into the managerial world? I have felt the depressive influence of the situation illustrated by Fletcher (1999:25, above) when considering my own role at work, and the felt expectations on me as a male and as a manager. Although I am willing to accept a high degree of responsibility I lack the desire to be involved in decision-making at a level seemingly abstracted from that of the people these decisions affect. I do not see myself fulfilling a major role at the 'high politics' level of management. Perhaps it could be argued that what I lack is political vision, a managerial vision, in the sense of seeing the 'bigger picture'. I have come to see myself (in Fletcher's terms) as a 'low-level doer' manager. I take responsibility for managing staff and supervising students, let them talk their way through challenging situations, attempt to assist them to reduce their difficulties and increase their successes. I get the job done. What I lack is the will (perhaps the ability?) to impose *my* solutions to problems in complex situations.

In recent years feminists have focused attention on the way the attributes of organisational management mirror those most closely associated with males rather than females. It has been argued that the privileging, in the Western mind, of particular 'leadership' qualities over others rests on an unquestioned assumption of certain gendered dualities such as mind-body, reason-emotion, objectivity-subjectivity, and of the greater value of the former over the latter in each pair (Fletcher, 1999: 26).

As part of a management training course (1997) I completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a personality inventory used to indicate individual tendencies and preferences. My scores indicated a tendency to

- *Introversion (a preference for the inner world of ideas and impressions);*
- *Intuition (looking to future patterns and possibilities);*
- *Feeling (a tendency to base decisions on values and subjective evaluation of person-centred concerns); and*
- *Perceiving (a preference for a flexible and spontaneous approach to life).*

The combination of these factors (according to the associated explanations) indicates a character tending to quiet observation, idealism, a desire to see human potential fulfilled, and a demand for congruency between outer life and inner values - none of which I disagree with. This particular combination of characteristics, however, was found in only 2% of a sample of 2799 managers. The traits most commonly shown by over 60% of this sample were those of logic, objective analysis, organisation and decisiveness

(London Centre for Leadership)

My feelings on this matter were illustrated at one CARPP supervision group:

> *In this meeting I had with my manager a few weeks ago, an appraisal of me - he was quite ill for several months early last year and I was totally overloaded with work - he was surprised that I hadn't taken the opportunity to 'take over' his job. I'm his deputy, and therefore understudy, and what the understudy is waiting for is the day the star is ill. I found that quite interesting in a couple of ways – one, because I don't feel competent to take over his job because he does a very different job to mine (and) it didn't enter my consciousness to try to take over his job - climbing the corporate success ladder – I don't feel I'm into that. I'm perfectly happy to move and take on more responsibility and different levels of management etc. but what I'm bringing up is a contrast of lifestyles or expectations of what one does: 'This is the way you live, you look for the break and you go zoom!' But I don't react like that, I'm much more laid back about it. I don't want to climb that ladder.* (WM, CARPP: mid 1998)

My supervisor responded with a story of her experience of managers:

> *I have conversations with (x) because he doesn't want the scene at work to be an "I have power, I have authority" hierarchy kind of scene, nor does he want anyone to work it on him in that kind of way. He has a notion of people being co-workers, but it doesn't fit with everybody's style ... But if we're going to transform the world then a revisioning of hierarchy and equality are actually fundamental bedrock issues about how we deal with each other ...* (JM, CARPP: mid 1998)

My management situation, and my self, have altered since I began to write the text which makes up the majority of the present chapter. Even though I feel subjected to quite a number of pressures and constraints I also accept my own agency in terms of the degree to which I allow these to pressure and constrain me, with regard to what I want, and what I feel is right to do. I am not a 'pushy' person, a person who tries to control events either by brute force or subtle machinations. To use a gardening metaphor, my preference is to till the soil, plant a few seeds, and let things grow. Sometimes, of course, this is not enough. Even the best gardens (or perhaps <u>all</u> the best gardens) require interventions from time to time: addition of water or fertiliser, removal of weeds or overgrowth, a new design overlay. But, interventions can take the form of conversation, rather than coercion; of dialogue rather than demands. And, from dialogic conversation new ideas arise. In a garden or in an organisation, every situation is bounded, every person limited. What I might want to accomplish alone may not be worth accomplishing. I prefer a shared effort and a shared reward.

When each person is committed to sharing what he or she knows, awareness, concentration, and energy flow throughout the organisation in the same way that blood flows through the body. (Tulku, 1994:138)

A Way Forward?

The present chapter and Chapter 4 have provided examples from a sample of literature, and from my own experience, which suggest that many of the woes of our working world can be seen to derive from the hegemony of a positivist, hierarchical, dominator, male-centred social system. The reader might want to reject the preceding causal interpretation of the heinous state of the world. I am not at all sure that I accept it. Although, of course, it might be true. As a grand narrative it can be made to hold together, but I am greatly suspicious of simple cause and effect explanations of situations within complex social environments. I am also greatly suspicious of any one description of such a situation. What you see depends on where you are looking from, and so (as anyone who casts their eyes and ears around can tell) there are a multitude of competing stories of the way of the world, each staking a claim on truth.

And things change. Lewin (1951) tells us that behaviour is a function of the Person and the Environment (B=f[PE]), and both P and E are in a constant state of interactive transformation. If this is so then we can perhaps both hope and act for change towards something better. The existence of a growing body of 'new paradigm' literature may be evidence that this transformation is already underway (*e.g.* Capra, 1982; Eisler, 1991, 1995; Laszlo *et al*, 1996).

Eisler sees an 'enormous forward movement' in terms of an emerging ecological balanced social system. Eisler finds experiential proof in her own personal history, and objective proof in observation of the social transformations of the previous two decades 'that fundamental change is possible' towards 'a partnership model of social organisation, in which the primary principle .. is linking rather than ranking' (Eisler, 1991:48). For Eisler's model to be consolidated in a new, improved paradigm for human relations there has to be recognition and acceptance of a new kind of power. Hierarchical power *over* others has to be replaced by the networked power *of* others (Capra, 1996). Flattened networked management structures may provide a way in which both male and female, feminine and masculine, attributes can be brought to bear, to create personal and professional contexts which tend to the benefit of all.

I have recently returned [October 2000] from a few days break at an activity-based holiday centre. There I saw men involved with young children in what, a few short years ago, would have been seen as a woman's or mother's role. Two examples particularly struck me. I saw one young man in the male changing rooms at the swimming pool, drying and dressing a very young baby. Another man in a restaurant, alone but for a small toddler, was encouraging the child to eat with language once known as 'motherese'. Both men seemed totally oblivious to the fact that what they were doing might have been formerly considered 'abnormal'. When I was growing up, and even 10 or 15 years ago, one would not have seen a man engaged with a young child in such a way, and especially not in public. Neither men nor women would have expected or even tolerated it (*e.g.* Segal, 1990:5). Change happens. Women are now able to leave their babies. Men are now able to care for their babies. These instances do not constitute 'proof' of the changed state or status of parenting behaviour, but they are evidence of a change *process*. And, if personal roles can modify, so then can professional roles.

The manager I want to be

As a man working in the context of a male-centred paradigm I recognise that I have too easily accepted the 'normality' of behaviours which may be detrimental to myself and others, both personally and professionally. I am now seeking ways of transforming, or re-visioning, my perceptions, my 'taken-for-granted' beliefs, my values and behaviours. One outcome of this search may be to discover a way of validating the worth of my values-in-action. Meanwhile the process and I continue. I indicated at the beginning of this chapter that I want to be a manager who acts in accordance with my personal values. I must therefore undertake an exploration of these values. Especially, I need to inquire into the presumption that my personal values have some intrinsic worth in my professional context.

Values

What are values? Care needs to be taken here to avoid reification. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary speaks of value as 'the relative status of a thing, or the estimate in which it is held according to its real or supposed worth, usefulness or importance'. I take values, therefore, not as fixed entities or constructs, but as a description of a person's (my) relationship with something else. The use of a dictionary definition may appear at odds with my espousal of the centrality of 'meaning in use' (see below). This use of the dictionary may also appear a derogation of academic duty that should lead me to seek more subtle definitions, perhaps via intellectual debate or dialogue with published literature, and I have been warned to beware of dictionary definitions at PhD level! Nevertheless, people (including myself) consult dictionaries, and I believe that the act of engaging with such baseline definitions can be an act of inquiry and dialogue. An interesting construct may, I trust, be built from many narrowly defined bricks as long as the underlying concept is broad enough to provide a firm foundation.

What are my values? I find these difficult to represent. When I attempt to think of values I generate a list of 'big' abstract concepts:

I value life,
I value truth,
I value freedom,
I value democracy,
I value opportunity,
I value quality,
I value equity.

On consideration, however, this is not necessarily a list of my values, but a list of 'hooray, hurrah' statements - those which any astute politician in our society would use to generate an ovation. I am also forced to consider whether this list, or any other such list I might devise, reflects my values, or is simply a reflection of my attitudes: I have a positive attitude towards equity, quality, opportunity, and so on. I am reminded that in the field of Psychology many researchers, over most of the 20th century, pursued a fruitless search for a positive correlation between expressed attitudes and enacted behaviours. Perhaps I face a similar situation with regard to values - I may be able to list 'my values', but if these are not reflected in my life, what then is their 'worth, usefulness, or importance'?

I am minded to argue that *my values* are an integral constituent of, and can only be validly represented in what *I do*, in how *I am*. They must, can only, have *meaning in use* (Wittgenstein, 1953). If it is possible for me to list, albeit tentatively, my values, I should be able to test their validity against my actions and experience in the world - in what I say and in what I do. I, and others, should also be able to discover my values by consideration of what I say and what I do. Laszlo tells us that

> Nothing that pursues an end is value free.
>
> (Laszlo, 1996:79)

As part of another management training course (November 1999), I completed a forced-choice questionnaire to discover my 'personal career drivers'. This exercise indicated that, of nine possible outcomes, 'Meaning: seeking to do things that are believed to be valuable for their own sake' was the core motivation for my work. Perhaps this is an indication of one value which underpins who I am, my being-in-the-world, my doing-in-the-world.

I believe, however, that my behaviour is influenced and at times dominated by conflicting forces both outside and inside my self, so that my values (my do-ing and be-ing) take on a complexity that defies simple expression, and my individual actions may appear to run counter to some of my values. If I, or someone else, become aware that my actions and my stated values are failing to coincide, then it must be clear that, at the very least, my values are reflected in my aspirations. If this were not so, I surely could not speak of values with reference to particular aspects of my life. Again, on a large abstract plane:

I value life, and will kill to protect my own life or that of significant others;

I value truth, and will lie to conserve a greater truth against a lesser (and to protect myself or others);

I value freedom (both from and to) and will try to curtail it if it impacts inappropriately on myself or others;

I value democracy, and yet believe that popular opinion leads to bad government;

I value opportunity, and often am impatient with people who fail to make their own;

I value quality, but quality is not an abstract ideal and has to be negotiated in specific circumstances with specific people;

I value equity, and have seen myself sacrifice in a desire to have my own way.

My values in action, therefore, can be seen in the interface between 'me' and 'the world' at any given moment.

A search for balance

In the context of values, Capra speaks of

> two tendencies - the self-assertive and the integrative (which) are both essential aspects of all living systems. Neither of them is intrinsically good or bad. What is good, or healthy, is a dynamic balance; what is bad, or unhealthy, is imbalance - over-emphasis of one tendency and neglect of the other. (Capra, 1996: 9)

I see myself, at any given moment, as the pivot point between the probability (the outcome of a multiplicity of forces) and the possibility (the value to which I aspire) of be-ing a particular way. I proceed as if along a tightrope, engaged in a search for congruity, harmony, or balance. Sometimes, serendipitously, my values and the multiplicity of forces seem to coincide, and I feel perfectly poised in space and time. Sometimes I struggle to maintain my footing in confusion and despair. On occasions, a lack of congruence between the personal epistemological understandings which support my being, and the representation of the world according to another being, has generated such confusion as to render me almost incapable of action (or, cause me to engage in non-action). This confusion appears most prevalent where I have presumed a relationship predicated upon similarity rather than radical difference of world views. I will illustrate this with an example from my involvement in health care.

Background or Inquiry?

Much of the following text about my engagement with Homeopathy and Psychology could be read simply as biographical background. Interesting addenda, were I otherwise famous, not so interesting as I am not. However, I wish this text to be read as a representation of present-time inquiry on my part: How am I, how are my behaviours, situated with reference to my values? The act of writing for me in this context, is an act of self-reflective inquiry, of looking at what I have done in the past, and at what I do, how I am now, remembering. How I was, then, is a reference point for how I am now. Whether my behaviours, at that time, reflected my values at that time, might be an unanswerable question but, as I actively re-member my past, reconstructing my actions and motivations, what I say about my values in use at that time, reflects my understanding of my values in use, now. How can I represent this understanding? I cannot be trusted in what I say and must be known by what I do. Nevertheless, for those not with me, I must write what I believe about what I do.

Holistic approach to health

Almost twenty years ago I began to study Homeopathy, a system of medicine which is usually defined as either alternative or complementary (depending on whether one prefers confrontation or co-operation) to the orthodox medicine most widely practised in Western society. One of the attractions of Homeopathy for me is its holistic approach to health and illness, and one of the cornerstones of holistic Homeopathic practice is that the therapist should treat the person who is suffering dis-ease, rather than focus on the disease as an entity (Blackie, 1981). This runs counter to the approach of orthodox medicine which, traditionally, seeks to diagnose and cure disease independently of the suffering person - as demonstrated in the use of 'magic bullets' – drugs devised to destroy disease agents seen as waging war upon the body.

After four years studying the principles and practice of Homeopathy I sat for a final qualifying examination. This examination comprised a 'paper case' - a written description of a person and their presenting symptoms from which I was to decide the appropriate remedy. From my reading of the specific characterisation and symptoms given, the choice of remedy was obvious. All I had to do was name this remedy, explain with sufficient clarity my rationale for choosing it, and my success was assured. The more I stared at the list of signs and symptoms, however, the more I felt unable to write the prescription and justify it. The quantity and quality of the given information was not sufficiently rich. The picture before me did not reflect the complexity of human health and illness as I believed it to be. To make a decision with this level of data was not congruent with the whole-person (holistic) approach I believed was necessary in order to work with a person coming to me for help. The data I saw myself being asked to accept as supporting any particular conclusion were, for me, insufficiently valid.

I found myself incapable of drawing the 'obvious' conclusion from the evidence before me, not because of examination nerves, or because of some intellectual hubris, but because I experienced an epistemological clash. For the whole examination period I wrestled with a psychological knot, failed to untie or cut through it, returned a blank paper, and went home in a state of despair.

Over the next month I decided that it was pointless to have spent several years in study and then fail my qualifying examination. I resat the examination, received a similar type of paper, made the 'correct' responses, passed, and went home feeling I had participated in a sham, but had at least obtained my qualification. With the benefit of hindsight, I can now say I successfully reframed the situation as a simple test of memory rather than an examination of my therapeutic skills or my epistemological integrity.

As I practised Homeopathy over the following four years I came increasingly to believe that the real task of a therapist is not the prescription of a remedy, but the management of a life process. The treatment of dis-ease, either physical or psychological, involves a complex *social* transformation. To 'treat' derives from the Latin *tractare,* to manage or to handle, and may be defined as to deal, discourse, or negotiate with another (Shorter Oxford, 1992). The search for the remedy or 'cure' is a process of social engagement, and the most potent treatment is listening, empathising, reflecting, challenging, and ultimately agreeing upon an account of a person's life. Reaching agreement in this situation has to be done in the context of a considerable power differential (similar to that of managers and managed in a work situation). It has to be remembered that a person goes to a therapist when they are unwell, not at ease in the world, and they expect the therapist to have some power (in the form of skill or knowledge) to alter their situation. 'I am entirely in your hands' is a phrase I heard more than once from people during consultations, and on each occasion I attempted to point out as tactfully as possible that I saw this situation as a joint venture, as a partnership, seeking to re-establish their health and that I could not accept full responsibility for their well-being.

To say that illness is defined in a social context is not to deny its objective existence, but to argue that its form (diagnosis), its provenance, its impact, and its cure, are negotiated in human discourse. In a therapeutic situation, once a feasible process of illness and of health is successfully negotiated with all concerned, a pill or potion may be prescribed. Although this medicine might act upon the body, in many cases I would argue that its main role is that of communion wine or wafer; promising magical transformational power.

Despite my growing belief as to the value of the above approach to 'shared-care', in the face of a perceived demand for 'quick fixes' (from myself as well as others), I found myself dispensing pills for ills. I began to doubt the validity of my prior training and my present practice, and became increasingly unhappy with the dogma I heard myself, and others, repeating. It seemed to me that I and other alternative/complementary therapists subscribed to theories which we made no attempt to validate, other than by reference to arcane texts and our own interpretation of the experience of our patients. My values had become attached to a particular ideology, and although my experience as a therapist tended to support the tenets of the texts, I began to realise that I was not looking for, and was perhaps incapable of seeing, evidence to the contrary or other explanations for perceived success. I began increasingly to ask myself whether the reported transformations in (some) people's lives following treatment could be ascribed to causes other than the application of holistic or homeopathic principles.

Throughout the 1980s public acceptance of, and rapidly growing interest in, 'alternative medicine' encouraged the proliferation of a wide range of therapies, many of whose practitioners would fail, by my standards, to qualify as holistic in their approach. My personal experience of being brought back from the point of death by orthodox medicine also convincingly demonstrated to me that interventions derived from a reductionist approach have their value. Could I then continue to unquestioningly accept doctrines that contravened other forms of knowing, including all of modern science? I needed to find some level of accord between holistic and reductionist epistemologies in the treatment of dis-ease. I felt the lack of a scientifically rigorous grounding to my understanding of people and the world, and registered for a Psychology degree.

Psychology

At University most of the psychological theory and research with which I was presented sought to reduce human mind, behaviour and experience to sets of dependent and independent variables which could be manipulated in a controlled environment (preferably a laboratory). The conclusions drawn from such carefully controlled and supposedly value-free experimentation, supported by impressively complicated statistical analyses, were then generalised to the wider human population in the infinitely more complex real world. This approach was taken in emulation of the positivist paradigm seen as successfully applied in bio-physical science.

Psychology, in its most prevalent academic form, seemed to have as much or as little validity, in my real world, as did the theoretical signs and symptoms with which I had struggled in my final homeopathy examination. Nevertheless, I felt I could not abandon this scientific approach and simply return to an epistemology with which I had become uncomfortable.

Psychological approaches other than strictly positivist were brought to my attention. Qualitative approaches to psychological inquiry claim that we can only understand the behaviour of an individual when we grasp the meanings that inform that person's activity. These meanings are imbedded in sets of informal, but socially normative, rules and regularities. Behaviour is not reducible to explanations that fail to reveal the structure of meanings within the group to which the person belongs. A person's behaviour can only be correctly understood in accordance with their self-positioning within the complex structure of rules and practices within which the behaviour has taken shape (Gillett, 1995). This qualitative approach, fusing the individual with society, the inner with the outer, seemed much closer to my own world view, and emphasised the importance of human interaction, communication, and interpretation. Within this paradigm it is vitally important to understand not only the forces acting upon people but their conceptualisation of those forces. Concepts are seen as deriving from discourse and, therefore, discourse between persons and within socio-cultural groups forms an important part of a framework of interpretation, as well as the exercise of power (Foucault, 1988). This qualitative approach rejects the idea of an objective social situation, with a quite separate representation of that situation, which may be considered objectively by a social scientist.

Much qualitative research, however, seems to be used as a 'bolt-on' to fundamentally positivistic approaches. A population will be sampled and surveyed, questioned and quantified, with quotations from a sample of often quite structured interviews inserted into reports and journal papers in order to 'contextualise' the statistical analyses. Other branches of Psychology, however, do not fit at all comfortably within the positivist paradigm. These approaches can be grouped under the heading of Humanistic, and seem to offer a thought-out stance towards human beings, their experience and their actions, their origins and their potential (Rowan & Reason, 1981).

The academic curriculum allowed little space for discussions of these, presumably because Humanism seemed very much linked with therapy and personal development while the degree was based on 'science'. When it came to examinations, however, having learnt a lesson from my earlier difficulties in Homeopathy, I responded appropriately to the demands of the Academy, and was awarded a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree (at 47 years of age). During the following year I completed a Masters of Science (MSc) in Social Research while working as a social researcher in the National Health Service (NHS).

The study of scientific Psychology and Social Research had enlarged my understanding of the world, in that I now knew more of what others knew and, importantly, how they knew it. Both the BSc and MSc work demanded I consider the relative merits of a range of research practices but posed no searching questions about working within the accepted research paradigm. In the words of Kuhn (1970)

> normal science ... is predicated on the assumption that the scientific community knows what the world is like.

Modernist Academia has been built upon the rock of 'normal science' and it requires great courage or fool-hardiness to risk one's career by arguing that the world may not be as it appears to all around us. This applies equally well outside of academia in any context, professional or personal, where one has the temerity to confront 'normal' belief systems or values.

Myself as Manager

At the beginning of this chapter I stated that it should be read with reference to the concept of an extended epistemology: experiential, representational, propositional, practical ways of knowing. Thus far I have attempted to represent my experience, and have also put forward a number of propositions, theories or hypotheses, about the why's and wherefore's of certain aspects of my professional situation. In the following section I continue in the propositional mode, in attempting to represent how I have thought-through or inquired into my situation. I then move into a description of myself in practice attempting to live my values within the constraints imposed upon me by a world organising itself to many and varied agendas.

It seems to me that one practical task which has emerged during in the writing of this thesis has been that I discover a useful path, or connection, if not an accord, between the poles, the oppositions, the 'others' within me. The following section demonstrates, I believe, my efforts to do so. As a part of that process I can be seen to be advocating a particular approach to management. This turn towards advocacy is not because I believe I have discovered the 'secret of successful management'. I advocate as part of my inquiry. I need to 'speak my mind' in this text in order to engage in dialogue with myself and with others.

Tasks, Problems, and Solutions

In my research world I, and others, have to accomplish a series of tasks. In my experience (although I cannot say whether this is a particularly 'man' or 'management' experience), a task is often seen as something discrete, defined, sui generis. Consequently, any problem arising with regard to a task is often seen as a defect inherent in a particular methodology or practice, or in a particular person who seems to lack the ability to apply the appropriate methodology to complete the task. A solution to such a problem can be visualised as a type of mechanical adjustment, either to the research methodology, or to researcher competence.

I would argue, however, that a task does not exist independently of human discourse. It is conceived and given definition in a social context and, perhaps especially with regard to social research, a task continually develops and mutates. An event which arises in the context of this discourse-generated task becomes defined as a problem if it is experienced as creating dissonance in the social situation in which the task has been defined. That is, no research event is a problem in itself, it is only when difficulty is experienced within a set of social relations that an event becomes problematic. I would further argue that a solution to a problem created in social discourse may only be found in social discourse. Discourse may bring about generative effects in the sharing of information; in the nurturing of a new approach; in reframing the situation as an opportunity for learning and positive change on the part of the people involved. Discourse may also have a degenerative effect when it tends to reinforce experiences of failure, blame, and subordination.

Human discourse is continuous, whether it takes the form of external verbalisation between two or more individual persons, or internally between 'virtual' social actors in our psychological world. It would be easy to make the assumption that men and women ethnographically matched and operating within a specific work context, will use the 'same' words in the same way and define their meaning in the same way. In practice, however, men and women might be seen as 'two nations divided by a common tongue' (Tannen, 1990). A similar argument may be made with regard to men, divided amongst themselves by different class, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, and more.

The difficulty experienced by the researchers in my unit, including myself (as outlined earlier in this chapter) can then be seen to have arisen not from the lack of technical solutions to problems defined as technical; not from the lack of 'magic bullets'; but from a lack of appropriate 'treatment' - good management in terms of facilitation of effective discourse. If inappropriate discourse is one root cause of problems in the workplace what, if anything, as a man and manager can and should I do about it?

Appropriate discourse

If, as I suggest, tasks, problems and solutions arise in discourse, the responsibility of a manager might be to facilitate appropriate discourse. This facilitation will need to take into consideration which type of discourse is appropriate in different contexts. I have attended a number of management training days and been provided with a great deal of literature, liberally littered with aphorisms and axioms on how to work with, get the best from, motivate, people. The principles set out below are taken from notes provided at a training day I attended in December 1999. As analytic, categorical, and instrumental as this table may appear, I find it provides a useful, if commonsensical, checklist when applied in a sensitive and sensible manner.

Staff Competency level	Management Skill required
Willing and Able	Enabling
Willing, Able but Lacks Confidence	Supporting
Willing but Unable	Coaching
Unwilling but Able	Directing

Using the above list there are key ways we can improve our effectiveness:

- Increase our repertoire of approaches;
- Become better at analysing which approach is most appropriate in a given situation;
- Plan when and how to change our approach in order to help staff develop their ability or willingness (UCoSDA, 1999).

In my own management activity I attempt to exercise a range of approaches. With staff who are willing and able to carry out their present work as well as actively engage in acquiring new skills, my management task is to agree with them the direction of their efforts and allow them the time and space to get on with it. With those people who are willing but lack confidence I suggest they begin with tasks more easily accomplished and supervise their efforts as they move into more complex areas. With new members of staff who are willing but who lack experience to carry out all of the tasks required, I provide time, training, advice, and encourage dialogue with other researchers, in order to support them until till they increase their skill level. I have not experienced a situation where I have had to direct (order) someone to do something they were totally unwilling to do – that seems to me a sure way to not only alienate people but also to end up with inadequately completed task – but, sometimes, I might attempt to bolster confidence by directing a person to do a task which I believe is well within their capabilities although they seem to believe it requires some esoteric skills or abilities.

Power and responsibility

For me the job of management implies the use of power and responsibility. Chambers (1997:216) promulgates a number of precepts of empowerment, which he argues to be the most effective way to manage positive change in under-developed countries, but which might be equally useful in any management situation. He argues that the people who are 'first', *i.e.* those in positions of power and privilege, need to put themselves 'last' – backing others to be responsible for developing their own resources to meet their own needs. Chambers says: sit down, listen, watch and learn; be open to unlearning old beliefs; hand over the stick, chalk or pen; assume that people can do something until proved otherwise; and follow three rules:

Rule no. 1 – Be nice to people;

Rule no. 2 – Repeat rule no. 1;

Rule no. 3 – Repeat rule no. 2.

Responsibility may be exercised in a number of different ways. Our language has different ways of expressing this, and different people may take different meanings from the 'same' words. The following interpretation is completely my own.

Taking responsibility may be seen to imply some form of aggression or theft, in this situation facilitation takes the form of enforcement, which would lead to a discourse of commands and compliance.

Holding responsibility implies a protective quality (paternalistic or maternalistic), which might also engender a certain passivity. Facilitation in this situation would be the provision of a protected open space (a cradle) which would allow discourse free rein with perhaps a risk that it might remain for some time inchoate and immature.

Being responsible implies activity. Be-ing in a social world is an act of communion, of interaction. Facilitation in this context is not enforcing, not simply allowing, but interactively setting up opportunities. Discourse here is participation. Being responsible enables transformational exchange.

Action of Manager	Action of facilitation	Action of discourse
Taking responsibility	enforce	command / compliance
Holding responsibility	allow	inchoate / immature
Being responsible	enable	collaborative /transformative

Good Management

For me, 'good' implies two things: Values and Pleasure. Both of these incorporate and are influenced by multiple dynamics in different contexts. A good manager might fulfil the job remit in a task-oriented sense, being technically knowledgeable, efficient and effective; in a personnel-oriented sense: ensuring people are happy, healthy, safe, efficient and effective; in a organisation-oriented sense: furthering the organisational aims and meet organisational objectives; in a client-oriented sense: doing the best possible job to meet the range of client needs; in a 'general good' sense: making conscious, aware, personal and political choices which enhance positive values, ethics, morality. I am sure that I, to varying degrees at varying times, attempt to be a good manager in all the above ways.

'Good' management also implies pleasure for manager and managed. A number of things bring me pleasure as a manager: the simple pleasure of being the boss, the one in charge, the one who supervises; the pleasure of relative freedom to come and go, to set my own agenda (constrained by the demands of others and by my own conscious values about doing a 'good' job); the pleasure of helping, facilitating, being someone to whom others feel justified in turning for support, encouragement or advice; the pleasure of seeing people develop and grow.

Values in Action

What do I do as a manager in an attempt to act upon my values in my professional context? The values to which I refer here are those which I believe are present in my be-ing, and presented in my do-ing. I believe one value in action here is that of the importance of Personal Integrity - I attempt to be responsible for myself (my selves), and act in a way as to allow others to be responsible for themselves. How do I do this in my professional, managerial setting?

When things are going well I do not have to do anything other than follow Chamber's (1997) first, second and third rules, and 'be nice to people'. When a problem is perceived, however, I attempt to follow the following steps.

The first thing I do is listen; the second thing I do is question; the third thing I do is attempt ***not*** to offer a solution (very difficult); the fourth thing is to explore what the other person would like, wants, or believes should happen; and the fifth thing is to inquire as to how the situation might be moved forward (and this involves consideration or conceptualisation of the whole situation: what the other person needs/wants, what I need/want, what I believe the professional situation needs/wants).

> Even though we start with no solutions to offer, listening and questioning may uncover new perspectives and possibilities. (Tulku, 1994:133)

My experience, and feedback from research staff, shows me the value of listening and exploring. One of the researchers with whom I have regularly scheduled meetings is extremely competent, as well as conscientious, and generally needs no practical help from me with work problems. Much of the time I have only a very superficial knowledge of the details of what she is involved with, gleaned from a brief monthly report she submits to me. When we meet, this brief report (a list of activities in fact) serves as a cue-sheet for me to ask open questions along the lines of 'I see that you've being working on X ... How is it coming along?' or 'How was your meeting with Y?' Her responses show me that everything is, normally, completely under control, although she takes this opportunity to tell me of ongoing successes or difficulties. It is through asking open questions that I try to get a sense if all is well, or whether or what help or support is needed. One thing I have learnt from my own experience in many professional and personal situations is how frustrated I feel when someone asks me an appropriate question but fails to listen to my response. Knowing how competent this researcher is, and as both of us are busy people, I once asked her did she think it was worthwhile our continuing these meetings and received an emphatic 'Yes!' And, once again I was reminded of how important it is simply to be prepared to listen, to give another person the opportunity to voice their work, their concerns, their life – their Story. Allow them to be heard. The trick, the skill, is to Listen!

But listening is not simply a matter of using one's ears. It also includes observing, empathising, with how a person is, with their being. I know how often I say 'fine!' when I mean 'foul...', and recognise that other people do the same.

The facilitator of one management training day I attended used a 'words', 'music', 'dance' metaphor to illustrate how we receive and convey messages. She believed that only 6% of a message is taken from the words we use, 36% is taken from how we say it (the music), while 58% is taken from the demeanour, stance, body-language (the dance) we enact (Helps, 1999).

> ...while we may think we are communicating something necessary and thus positive, we may actually be passing on our impatience, anger, anxiety, dislike, or desire. (Tulku, 1994:130)

More evidence of the value of living my values in my professional context

As part of a management developmental programme (1997-1998) I had to develop a profile of my relationships with others in the work environment. I asked four members of my Unit (my manager, and three staff managed by me) to complete brief questionnaires and comments about my behaviour as a manager. Ample evidence of the value of my 'listening' approach was returned to me:

'Willm is a good listener ... He has a knack of teasing out issues for discussion, and asking questions that the other party had not thought of. Willm adopts a diplomatic approach to sorting out problems, for example involving other staff members' (Researcher)

'He listens. He is willing to consider different ways of doing things. Very approachable. Welcomes ideas and opinions' (Researcher).

'Really listens to what you say and appears concerned. Whenever possible acts on suggestions put forward by others' (Administrator).

'Gives staff a lot of time. Listens (and hears) very well. Provides structure to and for people's work' (Manager).

In December 1999 a researcher brought an ethical problem to me (regarding the use of an organisation's name just prior to official permission being granted). During a brief, maybe 3 minute, conversation we explored several possible ramifications of this action and, suddenly: 'I know what I'm going to do! Thank you so much', my colleague exclaimed; 'I haven't actually done anything' I said; 'No, but thank you for being there', came the response.

Although I espouse the ideal of listening, I am not a great one for inquiring into people's personal lives. This is probably because I do not expect many people to inquire into mine, and I do not feel a great need to regularly, if at all, inform people about what I consider 'personal'. I do not believe I am secretive, I simply keep 'myself' to myself. In my personal and professional life, however, I do try to be open in such a way that others, if they feel the need, can confide in me – and I am pleased when they feel able to do so.

I was gratified, early in the year 2000, when one researcher felt willing and able to tell me she was pregnant, two months before other members of the team were informed. I read this as a mark of professional respect and trust: we are not personal friends but she obviously wanted to inform me, as her manager, of important changes about to take place in her life. In this situation I simply enquired if everything was all right, was told she was very happy about it, and after that, apart from some reports of extended morning sickness which occasionally caused alterations to her work timetable, nothing more was said until she felt ready to let everyone else in the office know.

I believe the important point here is to be, and to be seen as, someone who is willing to listen! Actually listen, without leaping to judgements, without looking for problems or solutions. Simply listen!

> When you listen to someone you should give up all your preconceived ideas and subjective opinions; you should just listen. (Suzuki, 1970: 87)

But ... I cannot listen to everyone (at least not for very long)

A part of my ongoing inquiry has focused on the practicalities of applying my espoused values in my workplace. Listening is fine, in principle and in practice, but I cannot listen for very long to everyone who wants listening to. There are too many people, and too many other things to do. A balance has to be struck between 'my door is always open' and 'my door is now shut, because I am otherwise occupied – but I can be available another time'.

One way I cope with this is to try not to be seen as God, or the arch-puppeteer by whom all action is initiated and all problems solved. I believe that most of us are perfectly capable of dealing with most things in our professional context, but at times we lack the confidence to be responsible for our own actions. When I am busy and a member of staff approaches me with a question such as 'What should I do about *x*?', and *x* is not something that is a high priority nor clearly part of my personal responsibilities, sometimes their question is met with what I intend to be a light rebuff, 'I don't know, and that is why you are employed here'. I am aware, however, that such 'jokes' while expressing a certain degree of the truth as I see it, can misfire and be experienced as condescending and dismissive. I then tend to suggest they give the problem some thought, consult a colleague who might help, and come back to me if needs be, with some suggested solutions or a detailed description of the problem, at a time when I will be free. Share the bounty, share the burden.

> So it is with people: first let them do what they want, and watch them. This is the best policy. To ignore them is not good; that is the worst policy. The second worst is to try to control them. (Suzuki, 1970: 32)

As part of my ongoing inquiry, however, I have discovered that I have great difficulty in applying the 'listening' principles that I espouse in my professional life, to my personal life when my wife begins to recount some concern. In these circumstances, despite my theoretical understandings of appropriate behaviour, I often begin immediately offering solutions to the perceived problem.

> Automatically he puts on his Mr Fix-it hat ...and begins giving advice (Gray, 1993:17)

My wife then gets angry and says I never listen to her. I, then, feel aggrieved because I am only trying to help. Even when I remember what I should do, I find it very difficult just to listen, because I am consciously exercising self-control, and wondering how I should respond. Although I begin to recognise that the personal and the professional are tightly intertwined, there is for me a totally different and much more complex emotional content and history in the situation 'at home' compared with 'at work'.

Mistakes I make as manager and as myself

> A panoramic awareness of our own states of mind gives us the clarity we need to improve our communication (Tulku, 1994: 131)

A simple mistake I am prone to make is not being aware of the effect of my own self-absorbed and self-protective behaviours on other people. Recently (December 1999) I arrived at my office en route to a meeting elsewhere and wanting to prepare some papers. I hurried in, quickly said hello, and went to my desk. Later I heard that a (newly-employed, female) member of the unit had gone to another staff member wondering what she had done wrong as, from my brusqueness, she thought I was annoyed with her. My own manager also has pointed out the effects of this 'other' side of me as part of a professional appraisal (February 1999):

> 'You can come across as less caring and colder to some, and as abrupt sometimes. We have talked about your "public persona" in the past, and I think you are making active strides to improve ... There are one or two people who you possibly rub up the wrong way. Occasionally you need to mount a "charm offensive". This is as important in the unit as outside it.'

I am actively working on improving my professional persona, and believe that feedback from staff and other colleagues over the last eighteen months bears witness that I am generally perceived as approachable and helpful. At work, however, contrary to at home, I find I can analyse and attempt to solve this problem in an 'instrumental' fashion *viz.* if I am perceived as unfriendly and unapproachable this will have negative consequences for the functioning of my Unit in that: 1/ staff will be unhappy and not work well; 2/ externally the image of the Unit will suffer and this will result in fewer offers of funding; 3/ this will damage my reputation, and consequent rewards, as a manager. It is, therefore, imperative that I go out of my way to be seen in a 'good light'.

I have, therefore, reminded myself to smile, to listen, to act in a facilitative manner, and after only a few months of these reminders I now find that this happens automatically – the person doing this has become 'me'.

Truth be told, however, I am not a great 'conversationalist'. It has taken some time for me to learn to engage in any easy-going talk with my colleagues – and I notice that most people (women?) around me seem to converse much more freely and easily than I. I am not a great talker at all (except in close, long-standing personal relationships where I feel I can express and explore my own ideas). Generally I feel much more comfortable sitting back and letting the talk of the world go by. Is this simply me? Or is this me as man? Or is this me as a man manager? Kerfoot (1999) argues that the 'masculine subject' (who *could* be a woman, but is most likely to be a man) feels 'his' sense of identity threatened by spontaneous behaviour and, therefore, opts out of any social interaction which cannot be controlled, managed, towards some purposive end.

> In the desire for order, security of identity and stability, those for whom masculinity resonates most loudly appear to be so preoccupied with 'fixing' the world around them and others in it as to detract from the possibilities of other forms of engagement. (Kerfoot, 1999:185)

While, I disagree with what seems to me an essentialist, universalist condemnation of masculinity (see Chapter 6 'My Self') I can recognise certain aspects of my own feelings and behaviours in Kerfoot's description. My wife has had occasion to complain to me for not more actively engaging in conversation in social situations - for appearing 'distant', 'uninterested' or, most recently, 'embarrassed' during a chance meeting with an acquaintance. And yet, at work, I deal with a variety of encounters every day without awkwardness and with a high degree of engagement. In terms of the argument of Kerfoot (1999) this would be because, at work, I am *instrumentally* engaged – my social interactions are directed towards some organisational outcome.

I have pondered this and other differences between my professional and personal behaviours, and have as yet come up with no workable merging of the best of both worlds. I can no more be 'professional' with my wife, or in social situations, than I can be 'personal' with my colleagues at work. These seem to me to be different realms, with different rules.

This brings to my consciousness the fact that my wife, on other occasions, has complained that my self-absorbed, or ill-tempered behaviours impinge upon her feelings and behaviours. Even if I am not angry with her (the most likely target is my inability to accomplish something quickly enough on the computer), or do not wish to 'cut myself off' from her (while feeling a need to be inwardly focused, and recognising that that this is not always healthy or helpful), my behaviours make her feel anxious and alone. Behaviour which I consider personal, or inwardly directed, can lower the quality of *her* life.

Another managerial mistake I make is to remain unaware of some of my 'taken for granted' expectations. At one meeting, for example, I asked a recently employed (male) administrator would he mind taking minutes, and was quickly wrong-footed when he responded, in the nicest possible way, 'Who usually takes them?' I instantly realised that a female administrator (absent on that day) 'usually' performed this task, and that – despite this being in the context of a 'team' meeting where I believed everyone to be 'equal' – I had a taken-for-granted expectation that the 'administrator' should take minutes. In an attempt to immediately rectify this situation I suggested that, in future, we should take turns at minute-taking, and began by doing so myself. What this small incident pointed up for me was how power may be blindly abused by, simply, never questioning the taken-for-granted. But, I am also aware that I went on to use my own position of power to offer an immediate solution to a problematic situation in which I found myself.

Another possible mistake I make was pointed out to me during discussions in my 'Men's Book Group'. We were discussing the sense of pressure to put in longer hours, to work harder, to produce more. One of the group recounted his feelings of guilt if he sat down for lunch in the work canteen while other senior managers rushed in, quickly grabbed any available sandwich and rushed out again – apparently too busy to stop. I responded that I almost always ate my sandwiches in front of my computer and also felt uneasy if I 'stopped' for lunch, or went home before other people. It was pointed out to me the kind of example I was setting before the staff I manage: do they then feel obliged to work through lunch, or stay later in the evening? Although I was happy to report that a number of researchers in my office regularly take a swimming, skittles or tennis break around lunch-time, I experienced a sense of unease at my lack of awareness of the possible ramifications of my own behaviours.

The practice of management

So, having realised that my attitudes and behaviours may impinge upon the doing and being of others (which seems a somewhat pathetically small realisation after all these years of life!), what should I do about it? How should I act?

In order to have an influence in any context, one has to get in, and stay in, the game. And, the game for me, at present, comprises at least two contexts: i/ my professional, managerial, workplace and ii/ my PhD (Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice, CARPP) workplace. Within, and between, these two and myself I can experience a clash of discourse, methodology, epistemology, ontology.

If I were not perceived, by others and myself, to 'fit' in one or other environment it would be very difficult to remain within it. I would be affected by similar types of social and psychological forces to those which have been shown, for example by Jackall (1988), Cockburn (1989), or Marshall (1995), to effectively cause women to remove themselves from male dominated organisational structures. If I do not keep in the game there is no way for me to get 'my' things done; or to influence *how* things are done by modelling and encouraging what I believe are more effective behaviours.

And, in each environment I strive, up to a point, to match the language and behaviours of my peers and superiors. This means, at times, that I act with a 'split personality'. For example, I can find myself among managers talking *as if* I (and they) get things done by 'commanding the troops'. I can find myself talking in the CARPP community *as if* I (and they) get things done by 'collaboration'. In fact, both are correct – at times I command, at times I collaborate. But how the decision is taken to apply one rather than the other approach is difficult to capture.

When considering my role as a manager I must avoid simply 'psychologising' the situation *i.e.* thinking that I will be a better manager by addressing my own 'internal' foibles or fortes. However I am 'internally', I still have to manage in an 'external' world where I am faced with practical difficulties imposed by existing structures, systems, situations.

One problem now being experienced in the unit I manage is lack of space – fourteen people working from an area which would comfortably accommodate six. I cannot simply conjure up more room. Although space is available within the University it 'belongs' to other Departments. For my unit to have more, someone has to give up some space they currently control. Intramural politics ensures that negotiations are tortuous and protracted. Meanwhile, as unit manager I need to satisfy the health, safety, professional and social demands of the research staff for whom I have responsibility. In this situation, how do I act? How do I, at the same time, inquire into the worth or value of my actions?

Firstly I attempt to register the full extent of the problem. In the first instance I do this by observation: how often, at the same time, are people there? To what extent does the space seem crowded, noisy. Secondly I talk with the researchers, both individually and as a group. In these conversations I attempt to listen to their interpretation of the situation, and to share with them my understandings. The difficulties expressed must not be minimised, but neither must they be allowed to 'grow in the telling'. There are some practical steps which can be taken to minimise disturbance in the short term - 'hot-desking', home-working, time-tabling when people will be in or out. None of these provide a satisfactory *outcome*, they are management *process*. I am, in other ways, working towards a desired outcome (*i.e.* more space) but, meanwhile, I / we manage the process. These are simple applications of practical approaches to getting the job done without too much aggravation for myself or others, but I have to accept that managing the situation does not necessarily result in everyone always being happy.

In my personal life, however, I see that I leave most management to my wife. She manages the house and home. She deals with the bills, the accounts, the people who come to wash the windows, fix the roof. She organises the shopping lists for our food and cleaning materials - even many of my clothes come in the form of presents, and I am reminded when I should be thinking of new shoes or trousers. I am brought in as a consultant, or a member of the financial executive, who can okay procedures and costs.

I also provide support, muscle when serious moving is entailed, a male presence when it appears that a male presence is needed to provide a 'credible' dialogue with, or resistance to, outside male forces (perhaps in the form of car mechanics, plumbers, builders) – although, increasingly, as the distance between my self and those men engaged in the physical or technical labour force widens, I leave this management also to my wife who, it seems to me, is eminently practical.

Afterwords

This chapter has been a long one. What it has attempted to do is illustrate my inquiry into 'myself', as a 'man' in 'management', to connect the personal and the professional. I have indicated the path of my inquiry into the management situation which triggered this thesis, and offered some possible reasons why or how this situation came about. I have considered some factors which might impinge upon my ability to be a particular kind of manager. I have also illustrated how I attempt to enact my own values in management. In doing so I have offered a simplistic, and over-simplified, example of my practice of management. I speak of the management of 'personnel', of people, of myself, rather than management of institutions or events. I have presented examples, as part of my inquiry, of interactions between myself and others, and some indications of other people's reactions to my 'style' of management, and myself.

What this chapter has illustrated is myself-in-my-world. Although the text contains some examples of what I consider good practice, it is not a treatise on management or a collection of handy hints on how to be a better manager. It is an example of me speaking *from* being a manager. I am talking from my own situated identity within my own life and in the world of 'others'. This chapter *demonstrates* me inquiring into myself, as man and manager.

And, although I have searched, I feel that I have not really found a connection, an accord, a path between my 'professional' and my 'personal' life, or between my reductionist and my holistic aspects. I continue to operate within and between two realms, two 'nation-states', engaged in an uneasy alliance. Perhaps this is not a problematic situation in which to be. Perhaps I am more comfortable and can act more effectively in a situation where friendly neighbours each recognise the limits of their influence and responsibility, benefit from each others' strengths and offer support for each others' weaknesses.

Chapter 6 My Self

Thus far this thesis has included many references to myself, to man, to managers. And thus far this thesis has, more or less, presented these terms as representative of something 'we' all recognise, understand, agree upon. The thinking reader, however, may have long since begun to query my unproblematic presumption of a shared meaning of these concepts. It is, therefore, time to unpack what I understand by myself, man and manager. I have no intention, however, of clearly defining what I mean by these terms but, rather, of demonstrating my inquiry into what they can or could mean for me.

Over the period of the development of this thesis my understanding of the concept of my self has modified, even radically altered. In order to illustrate the development or springing forth of new thought this chapter is split into two distinct halves. The first half is a reflection of my thoughts of two, three, four years ago, and focuses on sex/gender differences. It was written originally because I perceived difference as the central issue in sex/gender relations. It reflects a certain mind-set, and was never completed because it was never satisfactory. As I came to the last six months of writing up this thesis my discontent with this chapter grew, and this was supported by feedback from my supervisor regarding the depth of understanding it reflected.

Once I had *firmly* decided, or recognised, that the central focus of this thesis was 'myself', and had altered the title to include Myself, the need for a chapter on who or what *my self* might be became clear to me. Delving into the literature on identity revealed a range of new and, for me, extremely complex ideas on the constitution of the self. I then began to perceive my early thoughts on 'difference' as part of my struggle for self-definition and, while somewhat naive, worthy of inclusion in my final text. After numerous redrafts, where I attempted to coalesce two chronologically and conceptually separate sets of writing, one on difference and the other on identity, I have decided that they are best seen as what in fact they are - two separate and different constructions which are, nevertheless, related. I have also included in this chapter a brief illustration of what I find problematic about academic discussion of gender-related issues. Thus, immediately below, is my inquiry into difference. This is followed by a brief argument about defining masculinity and femininity. And this is followed by my inquiry into identity.

Part 1: Difference

We humans inhabit a differentiated universe (see text-box below). This is fundamental to our continued existence in anything like our present form. People imagine a non-differentiated universe, and I am thinking here of Buddhist, and particularly Zen-Buddhist texts. Even in these philosophies, however, the sense or be-ing of One-ness has to be attained, and it is differentiated from an illusionary world of distinctions inhabited by the vast majority of human beings.

If we did not live in a differentiated universe, it would be impossible for me to say 'we humans', clearly drawing a distinction between human and non-human. If we did not live in a differentiated universe, it would be impossible for *me* to *type* these *words* on this *page*, via this *keyboard* – all would be an undifferentiated un-remark-able onething (because there would be no *other* to remark).

A point made by a CARPP colleague that 'there are differences and sameness'. I agree with this, and I am more than willing to inquire as to whether 'sameness' is somehow preferable to 'difference'. I also agree with Haste, however, (1993:3) that for better or for worse, '*We have a deep predilection for making sense of the world in terms of either/or, in terms of polarities*', and this predilection needs to be named and problematised (if indeed it is seen to be a problem).

Difference *per se* is not problematic and is not difficult to map. Bateson (1972) points out that the only thing that we are able to represent in the world is difference. However,

> ...if we start to ask questions about the localisations of these differences, we get into trouble. (Bateson, 1972:458)

Difference, therefore, becomes an issue. Sameness is also an issue (*e.g.* Bacchi, 1990). But difference seems, to me, to be a more problematic issue. That which we see as the same as 'us' is often (not always) associated with 'good'; while that which is different is often (not always) associated with 'bad'.

Much of this section focuses on manifestations of differences associated within human sex and gender and the problems this differentiation is perceived to incur. The primary focus of my discourse is men, males, and masculinities although this section contains (indeed must contain) many references to, and input from, those 'other' 50% of the genus 'Man': women, females, and femininities. The differences and divisions within sex and gender, however, should be taken as an illustration or indication of the overwhelming tendency that people have to differentiate, to distinguish one thing, one grouping, from another. While I believe this is very necessary for our continued existence, it also has extensions, ramifications, and generalisations which cause us, I believe, more harm than good.

The Division of Sex

> ...the whole enterprise of sex difference research effectively hangs upon the assumption that there is a fundamental, irreducible difference between men and women. Without it such studies become meaningless.
>
> (Edley & Wetherell, 1995:20)

Leaving aside similarity or sameness for a while: are there fundamental differences between male and female? Every known culture in the world makes a distinction between males and females (Ortner & Whitehead, 1981), *ipso facto* males and females are distinguishable from each other. This, surely, cannot be disputed.

It has been pointed out to me by a CARPP colleague, in reaction to the above statements, that some cultures (*e.g.* some native American cultures) have multiple classifications. I recognise that a number of writers flag up this information (*e.g.* Gilmore, 1990). These categories nevertheless, are additions to, and not replacements for, those of 'male' and 'female'; and might be argued to be categories of gender rather than of sex. Gender differentiation is discussed later in this chapter. With reference to sex, however, I doubt that at any human birth within any human culture, no notice is taken or indication looked for, as to whether the child is 'male' or 'female'. Even should such a case be brought to my attention, I would be very surprised to discover that this was anything other than an exception to a firmly entrenched rule.

Thus, I argue, 'Every known culture in the world makes a distinction between males and females, *ipso facto* males and females are distinguishable from each other. This, surely, cannot be disputed.'

A CARPP colleague has commented, with regard to the previous statement, that my style 'seems to be seeking more sureness than is warranted and (is) therefore not into portraying the nature of debates and issues raised, more seeking to find firm ground to stand on'. This is very true. With regard to differentiation of people in terms of sex and gender, I wish to begin with what I perceive to <u>be</u> in the wider context, rather than what should or could be.

Is this because I am being a 'positivistic scientist'? I have no doubt that when I operate in this mode, I want a clear cut 'baseline' on which to measure change in observable variables. I recognise however that clear baselines are not always, or perhaps never, available in an 'objective' sense. Even in my 'positivistic scientific researcher' mode I recognise that the lack of an objective measure does not mean that we cannot observe a cultural *status quo*.

In particular types of scientific inquiry these 'informal' observations are what lead to hypotheses about the nature of the world. These hypotheses are then tested via the methods and instruments deemed appropriate within that paradigm.

Many researchers who would not wish to be characterised as positivist still begin (and complete) their inquiries with 'sure' statements and 'firm ground'. Many feminist writers have observed, for example, that in the majority of human cultures, women have a different (and inferior) social status to men. This could be taken as a disputable 'fact' to which many exceptions could be found but, from the viewpoint of these researchers, this has been well-observed and well-argued to be true.

Anatomical and Biological Division

> Sexual anatomy and physiology can provide a rich frame indeed and has provided a starting point for many women writers and theorists to explore femininity.
>
> (Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994:240)

I want my inquiry to take note, as far as is possible and practicable, of the breadth of available evidence for illustrating, explaining, or interpreting human behaviour. Some of this evidence is experiential and subjective, other evidence derives from the biological sciences (which strive to be experimental and objective). This section will simply signal the arguments for a biological, sexual, basis for gender differences, without dealing in greater depth with the possibility of biological imperatives which may drive, or form the foundations of, social or gendered differences and inequalities.

We can, in certain ways perhaps, quite easily differentiate between the male and the female - only the female has internal reproductive organs and can gestate a foetus. Out of the infinitude of differences between individual human beings, the bearing of young is one that (in the world we inhabit, and for whatever reason) has proved impossible to ignore, and according to some authors this basic difference is sufficient to account for all societal difference.

Shulamith Firestone (1972) argues that this fundamental biological difference made women more physically vulnerable, which led to their dependence on men and the consequent development of a 'power psychology' in men which formed the basis of all future social stratification systems. For Firestone women will only achieve true freedom when they are no longer enslaved to their biology *i.e.* when babies can be conceived and developed outside of the womb. Firestone sees this as the necessary first step (followed by the destruction of the economic class structure and the cultural superstructure) towards true liberation and equality for both women and men. Of course, numerous persons we call woman or female do not or cannot gestate an embryo, and are not directly dependent on men, or apparently more vulnerable than males. We still keep the same appellation because they appear to share more similarities with those humans who can, than with those who cannot. What are these similarities? They may be anatomical/biological: a chromosomal configuration which resembles 23 pairs of double x, and/or secondary sexual characteristics which conform more to one stereotype than another.

Numerous persons we call man or male are equally, or more, vulnerable and dependent than many women or females. These males are statistically significantly more likely, however, to have external sexual organs, other 'male' secondary sexual characteristics and a chromosomal configuration resembling 22 pairs of double x and one xy, and the concomitant inability to gestate an embryo. Approximately 50 per cent of humans have one or other of these chromosomal configurations and, although exceptions exist, this is a difference which makes a clearly discernible, large-scale, difference. No taxonomic system is infallible, and the world contains many anomalies which need not detract from general rules: it is possible, in the vast majority of cases to distinguish between human beings on a purely biological/ anatomical level, and human beings have so done.

This in itself is not problematic, but what flows from this differentiation has proved to be so. From this one fundamental difference many other differences have been mapped, or socially-constructed, and had their effects on social structures and processes. Haste (1993: 61) argues that throughout human history the division of labour and power according to sex has been taken for granted as self-evident and 'natural'. This division has been supported by an appeal to the 'essential' qualities of maleness and femaleness – an appeal to innate physical or psychological abilities. The 'essential' nature of these qualities, however, has been seriously called into question. Edley and Wetherell (1995:11) quote Helen Thompson Woolley (1910) from an early review of sex-difference research:

> There is perhaps no field aspiring to be scientific where flagrant bias, logic martyred in the cause of supporting prejudice, unfounded assertions, and even sentimental rot and drivel have run riot to such an extent as here.

Rose, Kamin and Lewontin (1984) note how many nineteenth-century anthropologists were "obsessed" with the relationship between intelligence, sex and brain size. Women's brains were found to be, on average, 142g (5oz) lighter than those of men, leading one anthropologist, McGrigor Allan, in 1869, to declare that '...the female skull approaches in many respects that of the infant, and still more that of the lower races'. Later research, however, demonstrated that this difference was explicable purely in terms of the overall size difference between the sexes (Edley & Wetherell, 1995:11).

It has also been argued that

> ...the existence of sex differences had been systematically exaggerated, and similarities minimalised ... [There being] no consistent sex differences in traits like achievement motivation, sociability, suggestibility, self-esteem and cognitive styles ...[and only]...small but fairly well established differences in verbal and spatial ability, mathematical reasoning and aggressiveness
>
> (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974:62).

I am personally convinced that one basis for human behaviour is human biology. We are born with reflexes that encourage us to cry, kick, and suck and this might account for our tendency to cry, kick, and suck (in a modified form in relation to our environment) throughout life. That these inbuilt behaviour patterns are susceptible to modification would be difficult to dispute, but (at least) two interesting questions remain in the present context:

Do humans have inbuilt behaviour patterns which are differentiated on the basis of biological sex?

To what extent is modification possible, both within and across this sexual differentiation?

(Readers who would like clear-cut answers to these questions are advised to seek them via their own research. No such answers will be provided here. I will, however, continue to hold these questions as relevant to my present text and inquiry.)

The Division of Gender

This is where *gender-differences* as opposed to *sex-differences* become an issue. Gender has been defined as the individual, cultural and institutional ways in which biological sex is given social existence in any particular context and period (Segal, 1990:92).

> ...masculinity, like femininity, has a biologic component; although neither is dependent on biologic forces, they are not purely social constructs with no physiologic component. (Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994: 242)

While discrete concepts of masculinity and femininity, based on secondary sex characteristics, exist in all known societies, they are not all constructed or interpreted in the same way.

Within many cultures there exists a tendency to exaggerate biological potential, to polarise sex roles and to define the proper behaviour of men and women as opposite or complementary (Gilmore, 1990:23). Haste argues that we inhabit an en-gendered world, that gender is the primary category of our social relationships, and children become aware of it early in the second year of life (1993:60). Beliefs about gender are given extra power by entwining masculinity and femininity with other dualities such as active-passive, public-private, rational-intuitive. These both enrich and contaminate the meaning of masculinity and femininity, and the whole operates as a continual feedback loop, reinforcing and reproducing itself (Haste, 1993:11). Something which is socially constructed within the culture's theory of gender may then become reality (Haste 1993:23). If we disagree with societal definitions and wish to influence, modify, or manage expectations about human behaviours,

> ...we must try to understand why culture uses or exaggerates biological potentials in specific ways. (Gilmore, 1990:23)

Can a useful distinction be drawn between the 'male' and the 'man'? I will attempt to differentiate between these two in the same way as the distinction often made between 'sex' and 'gender': the male is the biological entity; the man is the cultural creation. I say 'attempt to differentiate' because I have found that much of the relevant literature conflates these terms in such a way that citation of such texts becomes difficult if I insist on a strict delineation between the meaning of 'man' and 'male'.

This is, perhaps, only to be expected. One of the main premises running through much of the literature on this issue is that of the customary confusion of gender and sex, such that many characteristics and behaviours, which may have been culturally constructed within the context of a specific society or time-frame, are seen as sexually determined by a universal evolutionary biology. The terms 'masculine' or 'masculinities' as applied in my text should be read as attributes of the 'man' rather than the 'male'. What emerges from a range of recent literature on this subject (*e.g.* Brod & Kaufman, 1994; Connell, 1995; Petersen, 1998), and in my own text, is a range of masculinities. The 'experiences of masculinity and of being a man are not uniform' (Hearn & Morgan, 1990:11), although specific forms of 'hegemonic masculinity' as practised by particular men or particular groups of men tend to dominate under certain socio-cultural and economic regimes.

These culturally-acquired stereotypes of masculinity often 'remain uncontested and admired by other men, and by women' (Sinclair, 1998:57). Not by all men, nor by all women, however. Numerous texts (from feminist writers originally, then increasingly from men) have argued that uncritical acceptance of particular forms of masculinity has resulted not only in much damage to women but also 'emotional autism, emptiness and despair' for men (Horrocks, 1994). Because of this, Segal (1990:x) argues that men and accepted masculine stereotypes have to change, and that an understanding of the differences between men is essential to the struggle for change.

One of the barriers to this is that the Western world, through its language structure and historical narrative, has 'tended to personify the human species with words that are masculine in gender' (Tarnas, 1991:441). Much feminist literature has indicated that we operate within and via a system of semantics in which 'man', 'mankind', and 'humanity', are interchangeable. To be a man under this system is to be seen to represent the genus. This allows men to both dominate and to disappear – in the sense that their behaviour is seen as 'normal'. The state of being experienced by men (or believed to be experienced by men in the situation where masculinity, as a noun used only in the singular form, remains unquestioned) has been accepted, for a long time in Western society at least, as the norm from which women are seen to deviate (Morgan, 1992:29). In an essay on the 'riddle' of the nature of femininity, Freud addresses his audience thus:

> Nor will you have escaped worrying over this problem – those of you who are men; to those of you who are women, this will not apply – you are yourself the problem
>
> (Freud, 1936)

Woman, in this context, have been the object of much scrutiny (Segal, 1990:ix) to discover why and how they are different from men, and what can be done about this 'problem'. This raises three related questions:

Why is it women, rather than men, who are perceived to be different?

What is the basis for the differentiation?

What use is made of this differentiation? (*i.e.* Who or what purpose does this gender-distinction serve?).

These questions require consideration of the politics of gender-difference research, of sex-difference research, and of research more generally – for what purpose does most research serve but to note differentiation and to explain, illustrate or interpret the concomitants of differentiation?

The point is made to me by a CARPP colleague that 'Some research is about the dynamics of differences'. I agree that this is so. And, ultimately, the political and personal outcomes from such research may be very different to that which focuses on the taxonomy of difference. Nevertheless I suggest that, although different research paradigms do influence the focus, the findings, and (importantly) the *use* of research, even research which is primarily about dynamics as opposed to distinctions still makes and relies upon being able to make distinctions between different forces involved in dynamic interaction.

What is clear is that observed difference (*i.e.* that which is mapped – the *only* thing that is mapped if we accept the arguments of Bateson, 1972) brings about effects. Once we have mapped a particular difference between humans, and ascribe it to 'men' and to 'women', our thinking and acting about men and women is affected. Once we map a difference it tends to become reified, to become a fact that implies other differences. This fact becomes '*a difference which makes a difference*' (Bateson, 1972:459).

The challenge for those among us who maintain a value of *equality* - and this opens a whole new can of worms (see Bacchi, 1990) - is whether, in despite of these differences, men and women can be equal representatives of our kind. As long as 'man' is both the title for one individual sex/gender grouping *and* the generic title embodying both sex/gender groups, that which is perceived as characteristic of a hegemonic 'masculinity' may be perceived as an 'ideal type' characteristic for humanity in general. Such a situation may prove, has proved, difficult to alter. Numerous texts cited throughout the present thesis indicate even more numerous reasons why (some) men's behaviour and masculine stereotypes should change. Will this happen?

> Gender is a symbolic category. As such, it has strong moral overtones, and therefore is ascriptive and culturally relative – potentially changeful
>
> (Gilmore, 1990: 22).

After words

I find the above text very unsatisfying. It is filled, and could be massively extended with, examples and discussion of various attributes of differentiation. It also contains a raft of unanswered questions which, I fear, are not going to be addressed elsewhere in the present thesis. The point of the text is to indicate that differentiation is a normal, necessary and useful process, while remaining exceedingly problematic in terms of outcomes. More examples, I believe, would accomplish nothing. Perhaps I am dissatisfied because I feel that the section as it is has accomplished nothing other than point out the somewhat obvious. But I remain convinced that before the problems associated with difference can be dealt with, the fact and fallacies of difference have to be recognised. I will leave it. Perhaps, at a later date I will modify it. Perhaps it will remain as unsatisfactory. But it is relevant to the theme of this thesis.

Part 2: Masculinity v Femininity

Masculinity

Much feminist literature engages in battle with 'hegemonic masculinity', and over the years pro-feminist writers have found it necessary to more closely define what is meant by this. This process of definition has resulted in the recognition that, as women are not all the same, all men are not the same. Some feminists, and males (who are debarred from being 'feminist', but who dare not be called 'masculinist') have realised that if men are to be identified with the 'solution' as well as the 'problem' of gendered relationships then it becomes necessary to speak of 'masculinities'. This somewhat awkward formulation while reminding us that there are different ways of being a man, also has the effect of diffusing what had become an easy target: stereotypic man, male, or masculine behaviour.

Collinson and Hearn (1994), however, while recognising the value of the deconstruction of the concept of 'man' as a single category, have put forward four main areas of analytic difficulty in working with 'masculinities'. One is that a focus on theorising multiple masculinities may become another means of ignoring women as participants in, or subjects of, discourse.

Another possible problem is that simply pluralising a category could be seen as nothing but a preoccupation with a descriptive 'typology' of difference, or another *man*-agerial exercise of control by categorisation, rather than an investigation of the processes and practice which constitute the categories (Connell, 1985). Both of these points are also reflected in another difficulty, which is that of the lived realities of power relations. In terms of organisational power, men dominate women and Cockburn argues that a focus on multiple masculinities should not deflect attention '...from the continuation of material, structured inequalities and power imbalances between the sexes' (1991: 225). On the other hand this perceived unity among men is also problematic because there are also clearly perceivable hierarchical differences between men and between masculinities. Although white, heterosexual, middle class, able-bodied men may appear to be dominant as a group, social relations between men are dynamic, shifting and often contradictory. The plural form of 'masculine' also suffers from the same imprecision of meaning as the singular. When we speak of masculinities are we referring behaviours, identities, experiences, appearances, discourses or practices? (Collinson & Hearn, 1994).

One solution to this challenge of the moving target has been to continue to see masculinity as problematic, but to redefine it as 'a way of being, most often but not exclusively for men' (Kerfoot, 1999:186; also Kerfoot and Knights, 1996); another is 'an aspect of institutions (that) is produced in institutional life' (Connell, 1993:602).

> Rather than see masculinity as a "fixed" outcome of biological or other configurations, this is to understand masculinity as actively produced in given settings and in given moments.
>
> (Kerfoot, 1999:186; also Kerfoot & Knights, 1996:86).

Kerfoot (1999) provides clear examples of the 'masculine subject' in organisations. This person is argued to be forever concerned with their own and others' judgement of their competence at being "on top of" situations; controlling; lacking spontaneity; hostile to emotional intimacy; instrumental; goal-driven; and engaged in distasteful corporate management activities such as those euphemistically referred to as 'rationalisation' and 'downsizing'.

Kerfoot argues the necessity of overcoming the hegemony of 'the masculine subject' within organisational life, and yet seems to preclude the very possibility of such change:

> Masculine subjectivity *requires*, for its continuance, the repression of the other in social relations ... (and) ... is equally unreflexive and unreflective in its willingness, or sheer inability, to challenge the conditions of its own perpetuation, however self-destructive or impoverishing the consequence. (Kerfoot, 1999: 197)

This argument sees masculinity - no matter how often it is reiterated to be 'multi-layered, fluid, and always in process' (Kerfoot & Knights, 1996:84) - as *essentially* preoccupied with control, detached from the world, and bad. In fact, these theorists appear so convinced of the *essential* nature of 'masculinity' that they argue although masculine behaviour might display 'quite the opposite of a preoccupation with control', or 'a more mature and apparently laid-back style of behaviour', or even 'learned dependence', these 'can be a subtle form of control' (Kerfoot & Knights, 1996:85).

This seems (to me) to exhibit the *grand narrative* approach to theory maintenance: whatever the behaviour exhibited, it is interpreted to fit the theory. I believe such arguments are erroneously formulated in that they strive to maintain a definition of masculinity that is only and forever associated with 'unacceptable behaviour'. Once labelled as 'masculine', I, you, they (and this includes some women) are simply described with a string of 'off-the-shelf' pejorative adjectives.

Femininity

> Femininities, like masculinities, cannot be regarded as 'fixed features' identified exclusively with women. (Kerfoot & Knights, 1996:87)

Kerfoot & Knights argue that people 'whose identities are discursively constituted as feminine are invariably vulnerable to the demands of "others", especially masculine subjects' (1996:87). In keeping with, demonstrating, the social construction of the meaning of these labels, femininity is described as different from, 'other' than, and subject to, masculinity. Femininity, however manifested, is seen as more engaged with the world in an embodied way, less goal-oriented, less instrumental, and frequently associated with a passivity lacking purpose and direction.

Kerfoot and Knights argue they 'are not seeking to elevate femininity over masculinity' but to contrast different modes of engagement 'and their implications for changes in management practices and organizational life' (1996:87). Another approach to femininity is taken by Fletcher (1999), who argues that a failure to clearly define what is meant by 'feminine' leads to this term being used to describe stereotypic visions of women as 'morally superior, innately more caring, giving, or selfless'. While superficially appealing, this can simply 'reinforce the view that it is women's natural role to clean up after others, emotionally as well as in other ways' (1999:14). Fletcher defines the feminine in a more positive way,

> ..not as a set of attributes but as a belief system about how growth and effectiveness occur ... a feminine logic of effectiveness to challenge the very assumptions and foundations on which organisations are built.
>
> (Fletcher, 1999:14).

Fletcher shows, within the context of a study of gendered styles of behaviour in a male-dominated organisation, that women tend to *consciously* engage in a variety of relational practices which have the effect of increasing the effectiveness of the work-force and the quality of its output. These relational practices are: Preserving a work project by taking on tasks outside of their technical job-description; Mutual Empowering by facilitating the development of others; Self-Achieving by using relational skills to enhance personal professional effectiveness; and Creating Teamwork via improving personal relationships.

Fletcher begins by using relational practice as a definition of femininity, although she does recognise that it 'was useful for this study to articulate a model of effectiveness based on *stereotypically* feminine characteristics' (Fletcher, 1999:140 emphasis added). She goes on to suggest that

> Power differences and gender segregation would be further reduced if competence in relational or support work were recognised regardless of the sex of the person who exhibits it. (Fletcher, 1999:140)

Fletcher argues that the relational behaviours she describes 'get disappeared – not because they are ineffective but because they are associated with the feminine' (1999:3). My only argument with this otherwise excellent study (which is clearly stated to be *women's voice* research) is that the examples continue to firmly link relational behaviour to women and the 'feminine', rather than to non-gendered or non-sexist 'good practice'.

Beyond the Gender Difference

I find the way 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are defined and *used* by Kerfoot (1999), and Kerfoot & Knights (1996) fundamentally unsatisfying. These authors use these terms to describe sets of values or ways of being or doing, but, although they stress these are not fixed to individuals of either sex, *in effect* these gender definitions remain over-identified with either the male or female sex. Kerfoot and Knights, with regard to masculinity, say they are 'invoking a definition that pertains to the socially generated consensus of what it means to be a man' (1996:86). That it is socially-generated and maintained is irrelevant because the net effect is the association of 'man' and 'masculinity' and, from the viewpoint of these authors, that masculinity is seen as fundamentally *bad.*

Kerfoot (1999), and Kerfoot and Knights (1996) argue against a particular form of managerialism which many see as inhumane and counterproductive and which is exercised, in the main, by men (it would be, as most managers *are* men). These bad behaviours are then described as derivatives of 'masculinity' (a term traditionally, intimately associated with men) but redefined as aspects of organisational life which *may be taken up by women*, especially in the context of the present organisational climate where 'all persons, regardless of their sex, must "become" masculine, if only in order to succeed as a manager or to achieve any seniority or credibility' (Kerfoot, 1999:189). These women then, rather than becoming 'bad women managers' are said to have embraced a 'masculine subjectivity'.

This argument, in my view, is not *useful* in improving relationships in a gendered world. It does absolutely nothing to break down gender stereotypes; neither does it usefully refocus our concept of gender; nor does it help to 'transcend the opposition between these spheres by reformulating the relationship between them' (Benjamin, 1986:78). To the contrary, it reinforces opposition and serves to insult both sexes, by implying that men (who are, in the main, associated with 'masculine subjectivity') are 'bad' and that women who choose to be 'bad' become, not 'bad women', but 'masculine'.

Maybe the gender tags 'masculine' and 'feminine' have been over-extended in academic argumentation and are no longer useful in the context of discussion of personal and professional relationships between the sexes. A more useful distinction in this context may be the use of terms such as 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable', or 'positive' and 'negative', or 'useful' and 'not useful' *human* behaviour.

Arguments could be put, theses developed, as to why certain behaviour is either acceptable or unacceptable – a process in which we all already engage from our different vantage points and positions of relative power and influence. I see that little is to be gained, however, from continuing this argument in *gender*-related terms. While I recognise the necessity of making visible the negative implications of the immanent nature of male / man power, the central importance of this exercise may be as an illustration of the destructiveness of <u>any</u> oligarchic system of thought, belief, or behaviour.

Let us respect that men and women are in many ways different, and in many ways the same. Mutuality is not accomplished by either decrying or denying difference or sameness. Haste (1993:217) believes that the real attack on the current hegemonic masculine model comes not only from a re-evaluation of differences between the genders, but from an affirmation that there can be an alternative *per se*. This challenges the concept that there is only one way of doing things. It may be that a more useful approach would be to ask positive questions, to engage in a more appreciative inquiry, to indicate the value, the effectiveness of different ways of doing and being (Ludema, Cooperrider, & Barrett, 2001).

Continually pointing out who is wrong does little other than invoke a confrontational, defensive reaction, and does nothing to change a situation. Making visible what is better, a more effective alternative, may be more likely to bring about a more generative, rather than degenerative process. It is not the case of choosing, or privileging, either masculine or feminine, reductionist or holistic, instrumental or relational, approaches to being and doing. It is a case of deciding what is most appropriate or most useful in any specific context. (Which forever begs the questions: Most useful for who? Or for what? And these question must continue to form the basis of inquiry.)

Part 3: Identity

> 'Explain yourself!' said the caterpillar.
>
> 'I can't explain myself... said Alice, 'because I'm not myself, you see.'
>
> (Carroll, 1947:48)
>
> Because each existence is in constant change, there is no abiding self. In fact, the self-nature of each existence is nothing but change itself, the self-nature of all existence (Suzuki, 1970: 102).

To begin with the first word of the title of this thesis, 'MYSELF': What do I understand by this? In the chapter 2, 'I' self-identified as *'a man, a male, a white, heterosexual, middle-aged, manager'*. In so doing, however, I have identified one signifier by reference to a series of other signifiers and, if I attempt to define each of these I find myself in a spiral of infinite regression. What is a 'man', a 'male', 'middle-aged'? What is 'white'? What is 'heterosexual'? What is a 'manager'? What is it to be each and all of these, and more?

In relation to the focus of this thesis, can I separate my 'self' from what I do as a 'man' or as a 'manager'? Is being a man, or a manager, an activity that I 'do', or are these part of the description of what I 'am' (West & Zimmerman, 1991)? To what extent does being a man and a manager form, or deform, 'my self'. To what extent does the discussion of my self in terms of 'man' or 'manager' actually *create* myself? If, for the purposes of this thesis, I cannot define Myself, one might question how I am to speak as Man or Manager. I do not, however, seek *definition* in any sense of a precise statement of the limits, nature, or essence of my self. It is this essentialist and positivist underpinning to 'the self' with which I wish to take issue. I do lay claim, however, to an action in time and space, a 'doing', a 'being' which I know as *myself.*

'I' am what I am doing and being in any given context at any given time. And, to the extent that this present 'doing' and 'being' does not appear to me to be radically different from the doing and being I experience on other occasions, *my self* has continuity through time and space.

> ..part of the resilience of the concept of the self derives from our need to articulate the idea of a focal point of the life and thought of an individual, and to do so in a way which captures the intimate, subjective space of personal being.
>
> (Bakhurst & Sypnowych 1995:7)

But this is not an essay on ontology. My inquiry here is more epistemological: *How* do I know my self? How am I am constituted now, and how might I be otherwise, *now*? (Game, 1991:36; Kerfoot & Knight, 1994:68). I wish to concentrate on two approaches to this issue. One approach is that of understanding my self as 'apart from', and this implies differentiation. The other approach is to understand my self as 'a part of', and this implies relation.

The Differentiated Self

The concept of the individuated person has been argued to have emerged, in Europe at least, at the time of the Renaissance or Enlightenment, most notably in the writings of Rene Descartes. For Descartes the 'self' is above all else 'a thing that thinks' (Cottingham, 1986:18), *essentially* independent of, differentiated from, and transcending the 'external' world, including the personal body.

> ..I thereby concluded that I was a substance, of which the whole essence or nature consists in thinking ... so that this 'I', that is to say, the mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body...
>
> (Descartes, 1637, cited by Burkitt, 1991:5)

Although the Cartesian model has been challenged many times in the last 350 years, it set the agenda for epistemological inquiry in the modern world:

> Henceforth philosophers were intent on discovering how, in the maelstrom that is our engagement with the world and others, the individual can come to have knowledge. (Bakhurst & Sypnowich, 1995:4)

Since the time of the 'enlightenment' there has been an increasing scientific focus on biological differences within the body and, as ascribed to 'males' and 'females' or 'men' and 'women', these biological differences have come to be seen as 'the epistemological basis for social prescriptions' (Badinter, 1995:6). That is, this belief in a fundamental biological reality from which, or in interaction with which, social and cultural phenomena develop, has formed the basis of much, perhaps all, of our understanding of the configuration of our social lives. Nevertheless, in recent years, the physiological basis for differentiating between men and women has been very much called into question, and there has been an increasing argument that the sexed body is 'discursively constructed' (Petersen, 1998:31), especially from feminist scholars inspired by the writings of Foucault (1980, 1988) and Laqueur (1990). Laqueur argues that, prior to the development of modern science during the Enlightenment period, there was a 'one-sex' model of humanity whereby women were perceived more as an inferior derivative of 'man', rather than as an *essentially* different (albeit related) species.

We, I, have been born into an age where modernist scientific discourse is the prism through which much of our, my, thinking is refracted. Concepts surrounding a 'natural' two-sex, male-female differentiation, if not beliefs about the 'natural' social consequences of this differentiation, have become taken-for-granted 'facts'. In this environment, arguments for the discursive construction of the differentially-sexed body are not particularly easy to grasp, to accept, to engage with, or to apply consistently. Petersen (1998) argues that many theorists who have disassociated themselves from any form of reductionist biological determinism in order to advance the status of women, fall into this very same line of essentialist thinking when it comes to explaining the behaviour of men.

> The idea that there exists a pre-discursive natural or biological realm, separate from and unaffected by a cultural realm, or relations of power, is one that is deeply inscribed in modern Western thought, and has offered a powerful constraint on thinking about the masculine and the possibilities for social change.
>
> (Petersen, 1998:121)

Petersen's reference to 'the masculine' moves us from sex to the equally-disputed ground of gender. Gender difference is important in my own search for self because I have self-identified as a 'man' (with the implied acceptance of a form of 'masculinity').

Gender has been defined as

> ..the individual, cultural and institutional ways in which biological sex is given social existence in any particular context and period.
>
> (McIntosh, cited by Segal, 1990:92).

A number of other feminist theorists have challenged the presumption, inherent in the above definition as in many others, that biological sex precedes, and implicitly causes or explains gender, and have argued that gender precedes sex (Butler, 1990; Delphy, 1993; Laqueur, 1990). This approach has been taken, largely, as a form of resistance to the 'biology equals destiny' argument, and links the social use of gender directly to the use and abuse of power. Gender becomes, therefore, not only context dependent but generated and maintained within particular social structures and situations. West and Zimmerman (1991) agree that the enactment, or 'doing', of gender is the activity of managing conduct in specific situations. They stress the omni-relevance of our *sex-category* - the visible manifestation by which we *presume* an essential, biologically-assigned sex – in the doing of gender. The interactive performance of gender is that process by which we are held, or hold ourselves, *accountable* for our selves as a *man* or as a *woman*, in the light of normative conceptions regarding appropriate attitudes and activities appropriate for our perceived sex.

Foucault (1980, 1988) argues that the exercise of power through dominant forms of gendered discourse makes us all increasingly dependent on some form of *self*-discipline in conforming to and, at the same time, revealing the truth of (*i.e.* constructing) our own sexual identities. This routine and voluntary self-discipline by large numbers of the population involves individuals in an ongoing struggle to achieve self-identity by differentiating themselves from, and negating the threat of, the 'other' (Kerfoot & Knights, 1994:83). Although feminist theorists and political activists have engaged in tightly argued debates about whether women *should* be understood as 'different to' or the 'same as' men (*e.g* Bacchi, 1990), they tend to agree that man and masculinity continue to be the reference points from which women are perceived to be 'different' or 'other' (de Beauvoir, 1949; Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996:3).

But, who is this mythic 'man'? What is this 'masculinity'? Connell (1995) has identified, and exposed weaknesses in, four widely-used strategies used to define masculinity: essentialist, positivist, normative and semiotic. The pervasiveness of these four strategies may be seen in the content of Chapter 3 of this thesis. The headings and examples I have chosen to illustrate my process of Becoming a Man can be seen to indicate that man is essentially prone to be (among other things) silent, solitary, hard-working, and violent. Connell points out, however, that any choice of 'essences' can be seen to be entirely arbitrary and, in my own his-story in Chapter 3, I have failed to recall, or disregarded, illustrations of 'man' engaging in communal activities, peace-making, nurturing, or any of a multitude of other behaviours.

My account in Chapter 3 can also be seen to be positivistic in that it is recounted entirely from a single viewpoint. I have, also, made report of the environment of my upbringing in similar terms to certain ethnographic studies, wherein the pattern of life in a given culture is described in terms of taken-for-granted sex/gender categories. In so doing, my stories might be seen to exaggerate sex/gender differences, and fail to consider contradictory behaviours within or between individuals. (See, for example, the ethnographic writings of Mead in the 1920s: Mead, 1973ab). My account is also normative in that it illustrates a social context in which sex / gender roles can be clearly seen to be socially modelled and charged with the expectation that a man 'is' or 'does' certain things. From another viewpoint, however, one might see that most men are not, or do not do, those things considered to set the standard for masculinity. Are we, then, saying that the majority of men are unmasculine? Connell (1995:70) points out the anomaly of continuing to hold certain criteria as 'normative' of masculinity although scarcely anyone ever attains them.

The semiotic strategy is evident in my use of contrasting symbols of masculinity and femininity. Men are symbolised by work-out-in-the-world, horses, guns; women by the home, children, caring and cleaning. Masculinity is, in effect, that which is not-femininity. Connell (1995:50) argues, however, that the semiotic strategy for describing gender puts 'so much emphasis on the signifier, the signified tends to vanish'. The embodied self then becomes simply 'a field on which social determination runs riot'. Sex and gender, however, are not simply 'endless plays of signification', we all act and are acted-upon in the world and 'the social has its own reality' (Connell, 1995:65).

In rejecting the above four strategies for defining gender, Connell concludes that masculinity and femininity are 'inherently relational concepts' (1995:44) and rather than attempting to define them as objects, we need to focus on the processes and relationships by which men and women conduct gendered lives. Gender does not connote a fixed set of behaviours, but 'is a way in which social practice is ordered' (1995:71). Connell stresses that it is important to recognise that *gender is a general means of structuring social practice*, and not any specific form of practice. While specific features of 'masculinity' or 'femininity' change according to historical context, the enactment, the process, of gendered relations continues. Gender, therefore, is not a 'status' but a 'project', a way of configuring relational practice through time, undertaken individually and collectively, requiring continual accomplishment, and forever unfinished (Connell, 1995; Giddens, 1991; Kerfoot & Knight 1994:71; Watson, 2000:37; West & Zimmerman, 1991).

> Masculinity as an object of knowledge is always masculinity-in-relation.
>
> (Connell, 1995:44).

There is no use attempting to discuss 'masculinity' or 'masculinities' as discrete objects. Masculinities and feminities are configurations of practice within social relationships which are formed and re-formed as part of ongoing, historical, political *process*. Once we begin to look at the practice of relationships we quickly become aware of the exercise of power, between men and women as pre-ordained sex/gender blocs, as well as between dominant, subordinate and marginalised masculinities (Connell, 1995; Petersen, 1998; Radke & Stam, 1994; Segal, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1991). Certain expressions of masculinity have been, and remain, the dominant power in society and this is what has come to be known as 'patriarchy' or 'hegemonic masculinity'.

Connell (1995:73) among others, makes the point that all key societal institutions are substantively, not simply metaphorically, masculine. The overwhelming majority of top office-holders in all fields are men, and this is simply because there is a gender configuration in the ordering of policy, recruitment, organisation of work practices, promotion, and pleasure, that privileges particular aspects of masculinity. The very signifiers by which I self-identify are those associated with this dominant form of masculinity – white, heterosexual, middle-aged, middle-class, manager. The great mass of literature on sex and gender politics tell me that what I 'am' or 'do' *is* hegemonic masculinity (and, therefore, by implication, *the problem is me*).

So, who, what, or where is *my* self?

Coole (1995), from her viewpoint as a political theorist, argues that the self can be located along a descriptive continuum ranging from liberal-individualist, through dialectical-communitarian to poststructuralist-postmodern. In using this continuum to locate my own self, I quickly dismiss the liberal-individualist position which typically evokes an decontextualised, essentialised self, struggling to make rational self-interested choices in a fundamentally inhibitory external social environment. (I will admit, however, that my dismissal of this label might be substantially influenced by wish-fulfilment, *i.e.* I prefer to think of myself as having transcended the limitations of this paradigm which informs modernist, positivist, scientific discourse.)

The extent to which I have been influenced by this modernist discourse is obvious, nevertheless, in the 'Difference' section of this chapter, and the extent to which I continue to be influenced is open to debate. Having read the critique by Petersen [1998] of essentialist and universalist errors committed (in his opinion) by a range of recent gender-theorists, I would suspect that by his standards I am quite mired in fundamentalist false-consciousness.

On Coole's continuum I position myself, nevertheless, between the dialectical-communitarian and postmodernist positions. Within the former the notion of a truly social 'self' is articulated. Although the dialectical-communitarian position accepts an element of opposition between society and the self, it looks towards a reconciliation of opposing social dichotomies. The world from this viewpoint comprises dialectical relationships wherein interpersonal exchanges influence the developmental process of a personal self, while this evolving self exerts influence on its social environs. The self, in other words, is both autonomous and a re-active constituent of an emergent ecology.

> [The dialectical-communitarian self] is irrevocably situated and its identity inseparable from its values and beliefs, which in turn arise less from acts of pure choice than from shared cultural horizons and habitual practices.
>
> (Coole, 1995:124)

Coole believes that the dialectical-communitarian viewpoint has a strongly normative dimension wherein the social self is expected to adhere to 'an ethical commitment to more sociable, communal subjects' (1995:125). I have felt the pressure of this particular normative dimension in my relationship with the CARPP community within which this thesis has developed.

The postmodern paradigm (although teeming with diversity, as might be expected) positions the self as an artefact of discourse, formulated under conditions of social surveillance and self-discipline. In other words, although I might hold a sense of an autonomous self, this emerges from being

> ..the nexus point of criss-crossing threads of meaning, or as an effect of the micro-conduits of power. (Coole, 1995:125)

Theorising from within this paradigm, Butler (1990:140) insists that external behaviour does not indicate the existence of a discrete inner self. 'Masculine' or 'feminine' behaviour does not reflect an identity, but a performance, although the ritualised repetition of this performance has resulted in a 'tacit collective agreement' with the idea of a binary sex and gender dichotomy that is acted-out in the world.

Nevertheless, for me (and supported by a raft of literature not resolutely postmodern) this 'illusion of an inner, autonomous self', this 'special effect' (Coole, 1995:127) also experiences, and has an effect in, the world. My self has an 'everyday individuality' (Burkitt, 1991:109) that resists, refuses, to be reduced to a discursively-constructed signifier. Foucault's concept of the self suggests that identity is never simply imposed, but involves a process of self-constitution.

> ..the subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way through practices of liberation.
>
> (Foucault, 1980:50)

Within different social contexts there exists competing and contradictory discourses on gender identities, and on gender-appropriate behaviours, which individuals or groups may or may not choose to embrace. And, both conformity and resistance are elemental processes of the self.

The Resistant Self

I believe I can position myself in relation to a set of social values, 'dialectical-communitarian' being one and 'postmodern' being the other, even though both these epistemological standpoints require, to a lesser or greater degree, the abnegation of my personal sense of 'self'. Different contexts interactively provide different degrees of freedom for the individual, and there is always scope for some form of resistance, subversion, or renegotiation of the imperatives of gender relationships (Petersen, 1998:130). And, in terms of myself, man and manager, my self is *gendered.* Whether of not gender derives from, precedes, or describes social practice,

> Gender is a primary feature of the constitution of the Self, and the basic choices are either to accommodate the culturally specific and historically situated assignments for members of one's sex, or to resist. (Faith, 1994:61).

Specific power-relationships, within which my sense of self is formed, are not inevitable, unchanging, or unalterable (Faith, 1994:45) but, rather, 'diverse in form, heterogeneous, mobile and transitory' (Cousins & Hussain, 1984:242). My self, therefore, is modifiable, although as Coole (1995:135) cautions, we should not underestimate the 'sheer weight of sedimented rituals' pressing us into certain patterns of belief and behaviour.

My own sense of self is founded on acts of quiet resistance (as, I suspect, so is everyone's). Although I do not see myself as an agent of 'political' resistance in the public world, I engage in 'personal' resistance which may influence my personal, political, private and public world. Throughout my life I have engaged in resistance against social forces which dictated the acceptable behaviours of a 'man'. And this resistance has regularly brought into action the powerful forces of others. My refusal to accept the ethos which pressured me, most pointedly at age 16, to take advantage of a 'good job' brought me into conflict with my father. His wish to see me 'set up for life' (in the banking industry – which is somewhat ironic considering its massive 'downsizing' of recent years), I am sure stemmed from a desire to do the 'right' thing by me. We need to remember that the exercise of power is not always with bad intent.

Having opted for employment in the seemingly more exciting Air Force, my refusal (nay, inability!) to accept the pointless disciplines of the armed services regularly led to punishments being imposed by 'superior' officers. My resistance (or a stubborn refusal to 'play the game') continued, nevertheless, until quite suddenly I was discharged – the service and I were divorced on grounds of mutual incompatibility. In search of my self, I then embraced the 1960s 'hippy' movement, whose insignia of long hair and flowers meant confronting further pressures to conform to the model of a man dominant at that time. These pressures ranged from disparaging remarks and insults in the language of hegemonic masculinity (notably referring to me in terms of being a 'girl' or a 'homo') to verbal threats and actual physical violence.

My little resistances continued. Having decided to become a therapist I opted for Homeopathy, an alternative far less commonplace twenty years ago than now, and the resistances I enacted within the field of Homeopathy are documented in Chapter 5. My change of direction into psychology, research and management, and my desire to do management differently are all 'shot-through' with small acts of resistance. And finally, this document, this approach to a PhD thesis, is an act of resistance against the standard approach promulgated within the academic faculty of my earlier degrees, and my present professional situation. Having chosen an action research approach to this PhD, I have found myself resisting certain action research theories of action and choosing, instead, to do it 'my' way.

I resist, in short, grand narratives. If some one, or some social grouping, tells me the way the world is, I immediately begin to conjecture that this is the way it is not.

Pathology!! I hear a host of analysts cry: this man is enraptured by the fantasy of hegemonic masculinity. Listen to him trumpet his own rebellion, his autonomy, courage and self-reliance. He cannot commit, cannot express why he cannot commit, cannot express what he feels about this, and can only recount what he has done. And I can be pathologised by some world-views, including at times my own – the discourse of pathology has proved a particularly effective method of exercising power throughout the 20th century.

I see myself, however, not in terms of pathology but as an integral part of an extremely complex system, wherein small acts, small resistances, by myself and others coalesce to form great effects. I cannot trace the intricacies of the systemic connections 'within' myself or 'outside' myself, nor do I know the boundaries of effects initiated by my self or other selves – I am just a very small part of a very big event which is to me ultimately unknowable and untellable:

> ...the whole of the mind could not be reported in a part of the mind.
>
> (Bateson, 1972:438)

To see myself as a part of a system does not, in any way, deny my subjective sense of individuality, or even my objective reality. 'My self', however defined, exists – this I know – but precisely who, what or where this self is, I do not know. As previously stated (Chapter 2): *At once particle and wave I appear to be subject to an uncertainty principle.* I only know that I am by my action and reaction within my environment. My actions indicate my values. My values are what I am.

This is my self.

Chapter 7 Doing and Being

Waiting for the end, boys, waiting for the end.
What is there to be or do?
What's become of me or you?
Are we kind or are we true?
Sitting two and two, boys, waiting for the end.

(William Empson, 1906-1984)

This chapter derives from my concern that every Spring I miss the Snowdrops. Each year I notice that they are up and out, but before I have time to enjoy them, they are gone. I am always too busy doing something else. Doing fills my days. Even when sitting, I am never simply sitting – my mind is busy doing something, somewhere else.

There are lots of ways that I feel pressured to do – to act to get things done, to influence or control situations, to accomplish. Whether the pressure I experience comes from 'outside' (social; professional) or 'inside' (psychological; personal) could be debated (albeit fruitlessly, in my opinion). However, and from where-ever, I experience pressure to perform, and to be seen to perform, in the public arena. Contrariwise, the only pressure I feel to be, is almost a 'negative' pressure, *i.e.* the desire to stop doing. To stop striving, to stop climbing the ladder, to stop 'talking the talk and walking the walk', to stop thinking 'I ought to ..'. For me this carries an implication of 'giving up' or 'surrendering', and this is not manly: a man is supposed to fight the 'good' fight (as defined by self or society - if these can be distinguished the one from the other). To come home brandishing his shield, or carried upon it. To find another way to 'be' a man is not simple.

Doing Action Research

My major concern about *doing* my PhD research and this thesis, is the lack of obvious action in my action research. My initial aim (or so it now seems to me) when I began this research process was to discover how to be a 'better' male manager, particularly of female staff. What has emerged from it is a process of me sorting out my own sense of being, of who I am and what I do; coming to terms with that, and negotiating changes of my self where necessary. And, for me alone, that is fine.

But, nothing is simply that simple. Attached to this research and development *process* is an aspiration, expectation, of a specific *outcome*: the awarding of a PhD. And I have to convince other people that this research thesis is of PhD standard under the auspices of an Action Research approach. The Action Research approach, or approaches (for they are legion) could be argued to subscribe to one core tenet: the primacy of the practical, of action in the world (*e.g.* Heron, 1996ab; Kvale, 1995; Mitroff, 1998; Reason & Torbert, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). And, therein rests my worry.

As part of my MPhil to PhD transfer process, sections of this thesis in draft form were read by members of the CARPP community. These sections reviewed a range of literature relating to action research; gave consideration to issues of methodology and of validity; provided some memories of my growing-up; and some thoughts about gendered difference. As these sections of texts were meant to be a representation of my involvement in action research, a number of CARPP readers, with some justification, wanted to know: Where is the evidence of action? As one member of the CARPP staff opined:

I am increasingly clear of the primacy of the practical – the point of action research is in the end to do things better. Yes, informed by knowledge, but there is a practical side of that ... and I wondered if you were actually trapped in the 'we're producing knowledge' kind of perspective.. (PR, CARPP: December 1999)

So, where is the Action in my Research? If the reader seeks much evidence of it taking place 'out there', disappointment will follow. I am <u>not</u> going to go <u>out there</u> and rearrange the world. To my own satisfaction, I have solved this problem by equating my self and my research. I have decided that this research is by and about <u>me</u>, that I am the person I am, and this research must reflect who I am. I claim that action is taking place, and being researched, but in the main it is happening 'in here', or better 'at this moment'. *My action* is *my being* in the world and I have to capture myself being in the world in this text. So, one thing I am *now* doing as part of my research is *writing from* my difficulty, and using this as a mode of inquiry to find out how I am in my environment and how I manage the interaction between myself and my environment.

Action

Interestingly, for a long time, I have had something of an aversion to action. At least in the form that I experience it in the world about me. Action strikes me as a peculiarly man-attribute. One of the stereotypic aspects of masculinity in our society is visible action. Men 'do' action – build tower-blocks, towns and by-passes around them; fight to win games and wars; re-organise the world and all who live in it. Action Man.

I have to say that all this action is not convenient for me – it is not congruent with my character - I do not find it biologically stimulating; I do not find it morally uplifting. I am, if anything, somewhat more than suspicious of '..the frenetic and seemingly highly labour-intensive character of much activity with which the behaviours and practices of masculinity are "acted out".. (Kerfoot, 1999:185).

For the purposes of exploration I wish to characterise myself as a reticent person. Not in every situation, nor at every time, am I reticent, but I believe that one central, modal, aspect of my being is reticence. While I have, no doubt, both a need and desire to engage with my fellow human beings, by and large it is in a tentative, restrained, manner.

I have a tendency - quite strong - to retire, to stand back, to observe, to come to my own conclusions, and to act … at a later date.

How does such a reticent man engage in action research which much of the literature characterises as (and here I cite but one example) 'a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes…' (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:1).

If such a reticent man is to <u>be</u> himself, while engaging in research, he can only engage in a reticent manner. I have, and am, determined to research myself and my situation as and where I <u>am</u>, testing my boundaries as I do so, but in <u>my</u> way. I do not wish to do what others expect, I want only to do what I am willing (although the extent to which I exercise 'free' will can be debated, I have no wish to abnegate my sense of self, or selves).

Nevertheless, I am writing about this because I, also, am worried that my research does not contain enough action. What does this mean to me? I have the feeling that what is required is more, bigger, obvious, exciting, action-packed action. Part of me believes that I should be (am expected to be) the Arnold Schwarznegger of action research - rearranging the known universe, and capturing it all on a pump-action personal computer. The Last Action-Hero.

But, I am not like that. I believe that the world, my world, is saved or destroyed by the grace of the God of Small Things (Roy, 1997). An accumulation of small understandings, minimal shifts, slight gestures make and break a, my, life.

So, how do I capture this? Let us consider my action research with regard to my professional management situation. I have not initiated, and have no plans to initiate, a strikingly New! Improved! management style to see the effect it has on myself, my colleagues, my work environment. In my work context I find it equally difficult – impossible – to initiate a project of collaborative or co-operative inquiry, as for example in Reason (1999), in the sense of formally engaging with my colleagues in a research project which would be 'ours'. To the contrary, I am very aware that this research project is 'mine': it is I who set out to explore this path; it is I who am writing this journal of my journey; it is I who seek to be accredited with a PhD. I do, nevertheless, engage with and include my colleagues. They know that I am researching 'male managers', and I have discussed with people in my office, individually, on several occasions, the broad themes of my interest. I listen to what they say; I modify my management practice; I observe people's reactions to my behaviour; I seek feedback within team meetings, within the ongoing work-situation, and by yearly formal appraisals by my own manager.

This, for me, is myself-in-action. And this, for me, is myself inquiring about myself-in-action. And this, at this moment, is myself writing my inquiry about myself in action.

You never walk alone

The above text-box, plus some additional writings, was circulated within the CARPP community prior to a one-day workshop discussing 'Validity'. In response I received an email from a (male) member of the CARPP group who I have never met:

I do want to say how much I empathise...As I read your piece I felt "this could be me". The way you say you feel about the requirement for "action-packed action" is exactly mine too (you missed out a bit, though: it also has to diminish global warming and save as many whales as possible)... I too am a manager, negotiating the kind of tasks and problems you describe, also learning about, and trying to apply better management processes of listening, not-offering-solutions, facilitating, and so on... I have felt that action research is not the right 'home' unless one is engaged in soul-baring participative action sequences, preferably involving under-privileged people (as opposed to managers who are assumed to be inflexible/controlling/the reason why it's all such a mess in the first place...).

This person's response corroborated my sense that a paradigm extolling the virtues of a 'participatory' and 'co-operative' approach to life and research can be experienced as controlling and as exclusive as any positivist, dualist, reductionist world-view. Every form of social organisation has its rules and regulatory forces, its 'thought-police' which pressure the individual to do it 'our' way. This is recognised, to some extent, in the preface of the Handbook of Action Research:

> We see this as a 'family' of action research approaches – a family which sometimes argues and falls out, may at times ignore some of its members, has certain members who wish to dominate, yet a family which sees itself as different from other forms of research, and is certainly willing to pull together in the face of criticism or hostility from supposedly 'objective' ways of doing research.
>
> (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:xxiii)

Effective Action

> Not to do something is doing something.
>
> (Suzuki, 1970:30)

Action has to be more than obvious activity. Action has to be allowed to contain simply 'be-ing' oneself in the world, maybe encouraging certain happenings or not preventing certain happenings. As a Zen poem illustrates:

> Sitting quietly, doing nothing
> Spring comes, and the grass grows by itself
>
> (cited by Watts, 1957:134)

Notions of effective action come and go, and have gender associations. I, as a man and a manager, may be more able than some others to walk into a room and cause people to jump around – although I am told that women managers have learnt how to do this pretty well by now (JM, personal communication, 23/03/00) – but it is not this that I want. I would rather be engaged with *creating, or not-interfering* with the conditions where something can happen, than with attempting to, or even believing that I can, create the thing itself by myself. In fact, I have great difficulty in believing that one can create anything by oneself. Creation derives from an act of union, a 'bringing together' of separates, and differences, to create a new whole.

Evidence that little action goes a long way

My managerial style is one where observation and reflection, rather than obvious passion or action, might be seen to dominate. I would like to make the link here with my research and the value I put on a *rejection* of overt Action. I would argue that this approach is *useful* for me and for others in that it facilitates, renders easier, the doing of work. Prior to a professional appraisal of my role as manager (March 2000) my own manager circulated a brief questionnaire to approximately 25 colleagues of whom 15 responded, all with positive comments of my approach, some of which are selected below:

'...an uncanny knack of sensing when I'm feeling under pressure, and offering support...'

'...ability to make members of the Team feel valued and included...'

'...easy to talk to and seek advice from ...'

'...a reciprocal relationship and one that works well, and which I value...'

Action: When and What?

How can a man who re-acts so strongly against action, see when action is necessary, and go on to act appropriately? An interesting model for the enactment of change has been developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1982, 1992). This model has been mostly applied as a way of understanding and working with, people who have substance-addiction problems but, I believe, people can be 'addicted' to particular ways of doing and being in the world as much as they can to any form of drug. The Prochaska and DiClemente model, I believe, may be applied to a situation where any form of purposeful action is required.

The model illustrates five different stages: Pre-contemplation, Contemplation, Action, Maintenance, Termination/Relapse. At the Pre-contemplative stage a person is unaware, or refuses to recognise, that purposeful action is necessary. At the Contemplation stage the person acknowledges that a problematic situation exists and considers doing something about it. At the Action stage the person decides to intervene, to change behaviour, and sets about devising an action plan and putting this into action. At the Maintenance stage the person attempts to acquire and practise new skills to maintain the desired behaviour. It is then that the person has to face up to the difficulties that the loss of familiar behaviour inevitably incurs. This stage is followed either by Termination, in which the new behaviour, the new situation, is successfully incorporated into the person's life; or by Lapse (or Relapse) where the person succumbs to pressures to resume the former, more familiar patterns of behaviour.

Prochaska and DiClemente's model is not a linear one but a cycle, a revolving door which people can re-enter at any stage. People usually make more than one attempt before succeeding. Following a lapse, if sufficient mental barriers are erected to avoid having to face the problematic issue, people can return to the pre-contemplative stage. Otherwise, a person may begin again at the contemplative, action or maintenance stages. Motivation can be seen to vary at different stages within the cycle, and the skills or techniques used at one stage may differ from those used at another. Importantly, Prochaska and DiClemente (1992) cite research indicating that action-oriented therapies applied when a person is in the pre-contemplative or contemplative stage, can be not only ineffective, but detrimental to their progress. I believe that this is not simply an artefact of substance addiction, but may also pertain when applied more generally. A move into an action before one is prepared can be counterproductive.

Whether one is working to overcome an addiction to drugs, or to particular ways of doing or being in the world, progress is rarely straightforward, and is a social process requiring changes within the environment as much as in any one individual. If the focus is entirely on one individual accomplishing a desired outcome, then many people will fail. If changing inappropriate behaviour, or maintaining appropriate behaviour, were simple, straightforward outcomes to accomplish, no one would have a problem. The real difficulty is modifying the system that supports the unwelcome behaviour.

Within Prochaska and DiClemente's model I can, at any given time, place myself at all stages of change with reference to a wide variety of problematic or positive behaviours. I suspect that there are some problem areas in my life which, as yet, I have not yet recognised. There are, also, areas where I am contemplating change, wondering what I can do. In some areas I am devising action plans, moving forward, acquiring new skills. In some areas I have already changed, in others I continually relapse. These ongoing situations exist in my personal and professional lives. As illustrated in Chapter 5, for example, I feel I have been able to instigate and maintain active listening much more successfully in my work situation than I have in my home situation – but the issues at home may be experienced as much more personally challenging than those at work. Different issues, different situations, create different dynamics.

The Tao of Golf

Golf is something I do in my leisure time. I started having lessons a couple of years ago, and one of the earliest things that the 'pro' said was that there were two ways of approaching the game: one as a 'hitter' and the other as a 'swinger'. 'Hitters' concentrate on trying to hit the ball a long way or into the hole. 'Swingers' concentrate on perfecting the way they swing the golf club. In the view of my teacher the only type of player worth being was a swinger. You set yourself at the right distance to the ball, you hold the club in the appropriate manner, you take the club back at the correct angle, and you swing it forward on the same angle. You keep your eye on the ball, but you don't worry about hitting the ball, or where it is going. If you swing correctly, the club must make contact and push the ball forward. Hitters can be successful golfers, but they are also likely to be quite erratic, as the focus of their attention is on where they want the ball to go rather than on perfecting the process which will lead by itself to that outcome.

If you can control the process of the swing, the outcome of the ball going where you want will follow - as if by accident. My repeated experience of golf supports my teacher's theory. On the practice range when I am 'practising' and, therefore, under less pressure to 'perform', I can concentrate on the swing of the club. Out on the course, when I am playing with someone, I try to at least 'keep up' if not 'win' each hole. And, what I tend to do, time after time, is thrash at the ball in a vain attempt to hit it farther and more accurately. Result: balls disappear into hedgerows and ponds, and scores are less than satisfying. My brother-in-law, with whom I play, gently advises me 'A nice slow swing, Will, nice and slow'. And I know he is right, and some days I can do it. But on other days I keep on trying to hit that ball, get it to that little round hole, and come away feeling psychologically and physically exhausted.

Where is the Passion?

> Only connect!...Only connect the prose and passion, and both will be exalted..
>
> (Forster, 1879-1970)

At my MPhil to PhD transfer session, within the same context as the questions about the (lack of?) action in my action research, several members of the CARPP community commented that although my text was interesting, and held their attention, it seemed to lack evident passion for my subject.

> *The very first page was a strange feeling – I didn't have any sense of passion*
>
> (SM, CARPP: Dec, 1999).

The derivations of this word, passion, are interesting. One root is that of suffering: the Passion of Jesus Christ. Another root is that of passivity, being overwhelmed from without. And these two meanings can be seen to combine in a third meaning in use: any over-powering emotion, desire, or enthusiasm. Now, a sharp-eyed reader may see my references to passivity, to emotion, and reflect: aha! *Ecce homo*! Fearful of feelings, demanding of autonomy, self-control, rationality! This may well be true. I cannot dispute that what I want, or do not want, derives from who, or what I am. But, there is something about passion that is exclusive rather than inclusive, that focuses on the 'one' to the detriment of the 'other'. To what extent do the suffering, the passive or over-powered (*i.e.* the passionate) accept responsibility for, or recognise the effects of, their own agency?

Passion

For some time, in a similar way to my aversion to action, I have had something of an aversion to passion. Passion (as commonly portrayed) seems to me, most of the time, as simply making an unwarranted fuss.

Some people seem to love to rant and rave, jump up and down, wave the flag, argue-the-toss, thump the desk, spread the gospel, convert the heathen, harangue the innocent. Some people put a lot of passion into trying to convince the rest of us that whatever is happening is, without a doubt, World-Moving! Or Earth-Shattering! What has happened to them, or is about to happen to us, is always Staggering! Wonder-ful! or Marvellous! It is, without doubt, The Event of the Century! (or, more recently, of The Millenium!). In the world of Business, I hear only of Mega-Mergers! of Devastating Results! Any (every!) night on the television, I find myself assaulted by Passionate Chefs, Passionate Gardeners, or Passionate Painters and Decorators. From advertising to current affairs, from the latest deodorant to the destruction of the ozone layer, whatever it is will Change My Life! or Alter the Course of Human History!

Of course, the reader will respond, this is not Passion – this is simply Hype. So, what or where is real passion? Do we hear, or need to hear, of people passionate about action that is 'ordinary', about action that is thoughtful, caring, decent, correct: something that is not going to 'change the world', but maintain or sustain it. Brushing one's teeth, sharing a thought, preparing a meal, or doing a job that needs to be done is not something one gets passionate about – one simply does it.

We say "In calmness there should be activity; in activity there should be calmness". Actually, they are the same thing: to say "calmness" or to say "activity" is just to express two different interpretations of one fact (Suzuki, 1970: 104).

I believe in the value of the approach suggested by Suzuki, and this is reflected in the following comments from work colleagues for my annual appraisal (2000):

'...calm, friendly, efficient...'

'...I find his calmness helpful...'

I would argue that being a good manager does not necessarily entail much evident Action or Passion (although to be a financially or socially successful manager might seem to require being noted for both). A really good, effective, manager, like any really good, effective government, I would argue, might hardly be noted at all. A really good manager facilitates professional, corporate, academic, or personal life without fuss or furore, without evident or even felt, passion. Within my body, my brain, heart, lungs, liver, stomach could be said to manage my existence on this earth and, when they are doing their job properly, I don't even register their existence, let alone get passionate about them. My Islets of Langerhants, unfortunately, are not doing their job properly - they do not produce enough insulin to support my life - and so I am forced to take action (control my diet; inject insulin four times daily) to remedy the situation. I do not, nevertheless, get into a Passion about this Action. I, simply, do what needs to be done in an imperfect world.

This, for me, is working with, engaging with, what 'is', rather than what 'should' or 'ought' to be. I have little time for 'world-changers' – most often men – who are prone to exercise a passion for the action of establishing a new world order (whether this be by 'restructuring' a multi-national corporation, 'civilising' a 'developing' country, or 'leading' a professional team). The world continues to be littered with corpses (both real and metaphoric) of 'others' who have been unfortunate enough to find themselves in the way of such passionate agents of change. Ironically these men of passion and action are often quickly displaced by some new, bigger and better, action men, whose heroic accomplishments, too, soon pass away:

> *My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:*
> *Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!*
> *Nothing beside remains.*
> *Round the decay of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,*
> *The lone and level sands stretch far away.*
>
> (Shelley, 1792-1822)

Feedback I received from a member of my CARPP supervision group also supports my concept of effective action, and provides another way of conceptualising passion.

Dear Willm

I enjoyed reading your chapter which generated all sorts of thoughts ... partly it rekindled my thinking around leadership as creating, gently and without fuss, an environment in which people can flourish, as you mention in your text ... I'm currently reading a book called 'Stewardship' which might help me.

I do think more and more that one's ego can get in the way so easily ... and your writing encouraged me to explore it further.

I sent the following quote recently to a senior manager who is genuinely trying to be an 'enlightened leader', and seeking to bridge the gap between his espoused theory and his practice:

A leader is best
When people barely know he exists
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him
Worst when they despise him -
Fail to honour people and they will fail to honour you.
But of a good leader who talks little
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled
They will all say "We did this ourselves"

(Lao-Tzu, The Way of Life).

Finally, I have come to think of Passion as 'being fully present', which appears to me to be the opposite of the big gesture, big voice, big show type .....

Best wishes

K

The Passion of the Western Mind (Tarnas, 1991)

Tarnas (1991) has created a text which traces a path through the historical evolution of the thought of man (sic) in the 'developed' countries of the world with the aim of demonstrating the Passion of the Western Mind. Tarnas admits that the evolutionary history he traces 'has been from start to finish an overwhelmingly masculine phenomenon'(1991:441). He believes that masculine dominance in the annals of Western thought has been 'not only characteristic of that evolution, but essential to it', and 'should be seen as a necessary and noble part of a great dialectic, and not simply rejected as an imperialist-chauvinist plot.' Tarnas argues that this male-mind enterprise has been fired by a passion to accomplish two goals: 'to forge its own autonomy and, finally, to come to terms with the great feminine principle of life' (ibid:443).

Four hundred and forty pages of text very clearly hymn the virtues of masculine thought processes, and intellectual hegemony, with no recognition of the concomitant subordination of women (in body as well as mind) which both derived from this, and was necessary to support it. The last five pages, and only the last five pages, refer to women or the feminine. And this is very much in the context of someone or something that a man *comes home to*: 'a threshold must be crossed ... towards a reconciliation ... toward a profound and many-levelled marriage ... to bring forth ... a "child"... that would bear within itself all its antecedents in a new form' (ibid:444).

Does not this image seem familiar? Does not the reader recognise the final scene of countless romantic novels and films where, at last, the man arrives home from his important work, wars, politics, and other public perambulations, to his faithful woman passively waiting in the little cottage with roses around the door, to be, at last (as in Tarnas' final words, ibid:445) 'fulfilled, in the embrace of the feminine'.

If I were a cynic, or perhaps a woman, I might be tempted to believe that this whole His-story is simply a eulogy to man's self-serving autonomy and domination of the realms of intellect and action in the public world. Meanwhile, at home, 'the girl's prison, and the woman's workhouse' in the words of Shaw (1856-1950), women have been, and many will continue to be, left holding the baby (the "child", above).

Tarnas' book, in my personal view, very accurately reflects in its form, but not in its exegesis, the situation in the Western world. A clever man is able to write a history of philosophical development, and amass public praise for the brilliance of his exposition, and at the same time allot just 1.12% of text (5 pages out of 445) to women. This clever man, although clearly in awe and adulation of the 'masculine', recognises nevertheless that we live in 'feminist' times and is able, in these five pages, to 'explain away' this male-stream history in terms of an evolutionary process leading to a golden future which sounds remarkably similar to a populist, romanticised version of the past and the present.

Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose

If this is the result of Passion I would suggest that at least half the world could well do without it.

Sometimes, however, it seems I transmit more passion than I might believe I possess. I received confirmation of this from several people engaged in the CARPP programme.

'I did feel that your writing about reticence was very passionate – not in the hyped sense, but very much 'lived': "This is really how I am, and can we please have a bit of space for this too". It really hit me very strongly. (KK, CARPP: March 2000)

'You seem very passionate about it!' (MP, CARPP: March 2000)

'You have to make this the ground for the next phase of your research'
(JM, CARPP: March 2000)

The 'problem' of action and passion, doing and being, has continued to dog me. The following extract of myself speaking at a PhD supervision session is included here to indicate my thought processes, my personal exploration at that time, and now. I believe that the tensions evident in my struggles with action and passion, doing and being, are core dynamics of my life and, as such, are central to this thesis.

Is this something to respect, Passion? I see a lot of false passion around. There's a part of me that says no! That's not what the world is about ... Underlying good management, as underlying a good world, is not a lot of fire and glory but the fact that the rain falls, the grass grows, that things just tick over ... you can read passion into it if you want to but also you can look at it and say that that is the world getting on with being itself ... and me getting on with being myself. I am a certain kind of person, and a certain kind of manager: as little passion and as little action as possible. I am reacting ... against this perceived demand to be 'out- there' 'in-your-face' about things. I have this desire to write a minuscule little thesis saying:

do nothing.

I react against a lot of things I see going on in the world ... I want to back off ... There is all this fire and fury going on in the world, and I just don't like it. There's too much passion and action in the world – everyone running around cutting each other's throats, blowing each other up ... everyone fired up about things, <u>doing</u> things - and I distrust that. I get passionate about that, a passionate rejection of that ... But it is very easy to set up straw men and then knock them down ... I could focus on macho male management behaviour and say: I'm not like that, I'm a Relational Practice manager, a la Fletcher (1999), and start to demolish these macho men – but I think that's bullshit really – I'm just as macho in my own way. There's something beyond that ... It's not the central issue, because once you get into it, you think: these are like symptoms of something - they are not the real issue'.

What is interesting is that I do get passionate about Action and Passion: there is something that reverberates there. Part of what I want to capture in my writing is the fact that there is part of me that wants to back off and do nothing – but that's not a viable option for continuing living – but there is another part of me that is very instrumental, very end-oriented, and will sacrifice all these lovely values I've got very easily just to get a bloody stupid job done, because something takes over and I think: that's got to be done! It's a life choice about living in the world – the logical conclusion of doing nothing is Death.

(WM, CARPP: May 2000).

The latter remark attracted immediate reactions from the three women in my supervision group:

'No, it's not, I don't think so. For me the other side of doing, the one that immediately comes to mind is being, just to be free in your life rather than get distracted by doing all sorts of things' (KK, CARPP: May 2000).

'I don't think so.' (MP, CARPP: May 2000).

'...the choice between doing and death struck me as having validity in how many men see their choices: that if they are not 'doing' that is tantamount to inviting death. Whereas many women would have much more this juxtaposition of doing and being – many men would as well, but there seems almost like a received stereotyping'

(JM, CARPP: May 2000)

Afterwords

This chapter cannot be finished to my satisfaction at this time. Where I have come to is unclear. To find an appropriate balance of action / non-action, passion / non-passion is problematic for me. A lack of obvious action does not mean that things do not get done. A lack of evident passion does not mean a lack of caring. But I feel I am blundering about with these fragile concepts which are, in some way or another, linked to my values - to what I experience as a valid way of being in the world. Whenever I attempt to express my values, to find words to exemplify them, I quickly falter. There is a subtlety, a sensitivity, that I seem to lack and which might convey a way of being that is, perhaps, *undemonstrative.*

Chapter 8 Tell Me a Story

> *In any sort of research we are telling our stories, or we are telling other people's stories, and that issue about opening ourselves up to the world or telling other peoples lives... that's scary stuff.* (RC, CARPP: March, 1999)

The story I want to tell in this chapter is the process of my discovery of what this PhD thesis is all about. The story of my PhD as a learning journey. This thesis has not been developed in the way of many academic theses. I did not begin with a formal question or hypothesis, but with an idea that a male management style was causing problems in my working environment, and that this merited investigation. Over time and numerous re-beginnings, a more complex thesis has emerged, but this has not been the result of a straight-forward voyage from research question, via methodology, to results and conclusions. My work was formerly titled 'Managing the Male Manager', and for three and a half years this title acted as the helm by which my course was steered toward particular data and particular interpretation of these data. It encompassed my presupposed purpose: to research the male manager and find a way of managing him, such that he became a better manager to others and himself.

Having charted a large data-mass, my efforts to write a coherent report of my discoveries seemed to be continually frustrated by recurring doubts about the validity of my purpose. After three and a half years I realised that the title which had been my guide was no longer consistent with my emerging text. I had been, for some time, a kind of Columbus, believing myself to have sailed to India when I had in fact grounded upon a whole new continent. This required that I reconsider my position and undertake a re-cognition of my text, a re-framing its meaning and implications.

Temporarily this new-found-land became known as 'Myself as Manager, Manager as Myself', but this title, while including the centrality of my subjective experience, failed to represent the gender issues which are such strong features of my landscape. This new land, the present thesis, then came to be called 'Myself, Man and Manager'. This title, I believe, captures the primary, and inextricably inter-connected issues addressed in this thesis: the privileging of my subjectivity, and the understanding that my situated identities are configured by forces of gender and power.

This chapter has come about because, as part of the process leading up to the above title change, I realised that my experiences during the time of writing this thesis are my data. I have (finally) discovered this story by looking back over what I have been saying and doing, repeatedly, in different contexts, for the past three and a half years. These different contexts include my writings, my reactions to comment and criticism within the context of the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP), my reactions to my professional situation at work, and my reactions to my personal situation at home. I have taken three and a half years to realise this in despite of the fact that throughout my writing I have regularly referred to the importance of focusing on present-time process! This in itself is a salutary lesson: I do not always do what I say. As a learning point, this may appear trite – but I do believe that we need to be constantly reminded that what we think or say about ourselves may not match what actually 'happens' in the world.

Aligned with this is the fact that I have had trouble, in the writing of this document, not only doing what I say, but in saying what it is that I do. One reason for this is because I see 'myself' as an integral part of an environmental system. Even when I (apparently) do nothing, things happen, things change. My inaction can facilitate action. As Bateson (1972: 458) points out, a letter that I do not write can receive an angry response. But, do I 'cause' this response by acting irresponsibly in failing to write? Or does the other person 'cause' their angry response by their expectations of me, of what I should do? Or, is the notion of single-directional cause and effect inappropriate when discussing human social systems?

The bulk of this chapter comprises quotations taken from audio-tapes of my CARPP supervision group sessions (these sessions are routinely taped, if participants wish, so they can benefit from re-listening to their own comments and those of colleagues). I kept my own tapes without realising, initially, that they would provide valuable evidence of the development of my inquiry (once again the same lesson re-learnt: keep note of the process!). The quotations are included to illustrate my expressed thoughts on my inquiry, the reactions of others to my inquiry, and my reaction to their reactions. CARPP supervision (the format and function of which are explained in the first chapter to this thesis) has proved a very useful forum where my thoughts, ideas, fears and enthusiasms have been discussed, compared, criticised, and encouraged in the company of my peers.

Tracking my use of CARPP supervision sessions was also suggested to me by my PhD supervisor:

> *You could look at how you use this group as part of your rigorous research process... and you could be tracking how you respond to that, and what do you do with it. For anyone in CARPP this is a possible part of rigour in an inquiry process* (JM, CARPP: March 1999).

A major part of the inquiry represented in this thesis comprised writing, reading, rewriting and rereading my evolving text, as well as listening to, and reading transcripts of, the audio-tapes of my supervision sessions. Draft chapters of my thesis were shared with my CARPP supervision group and I engaged with this group in discussion of my evolving text. A number of quotations in the present chapter make reference to my emerging text. A brief explanation of the way I went about selecting the quotations that appear in this chapter is necessary. This is relevant to the validity of my story. Another person (perhaps some future mythographer?) would no doubt select other putative 'facts' to illustrate this period of my life. It would have been easy, in advance, to have decided upon a narrative of continuing personal and professional development throughout my PhD process, and then search for quotations to support this. And (we need to be realistic here) this is to some extent what I have done. Searching for data to support my beliefs is, to some extent, what I have done throughout this whole thesis. It is I, after all, who am responsible for the choice and presentation of data and I am no doubt influenced by my own views of my own ecology. These views change, however. Each time I return to my data - transcripts of supervision sessions or my own text – it is as if I begin again. Not having forgotten what has gone before, but not beholden to it. My approach has also been influenced by Krueger's (1998:35) analysis of Focus Group transcripts: paying particular attention to the frequency, intensity and extensiveness with which themes arise.

I understand this analysis as a search for meaning amongst the harmony and discord of many different voices. I find that several themes recur quite frequently throughout my text, tapes and transcripts. Some demonstrate an increased level of intensity relative to others via a particular style of writing (*e.g.* the use of underlining, of italics, of capital letters, of repeated words) and, on the tapes, via the inflection of my speech; and some demonstrate an extended focus of attention by being elaborated with more than my usual sparse quota of words during supervision sessions or in my text.

My approach to the whole inquiry which forms the basis of this thesis has been similar, I believe, to the process of self-reflective inquiry as described by Marshall (2001:433): 'seeking to notice myself perceiving, making meaning, framing issues, choosing how to speak out ..'. The factor of major importance that I have to face with this approach is that of the quality of the process. A classic action research strategy is one of self-reflective cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning (Marshall, 2001:434). I am hesitant about using the word 'cycles' with regard to my own research, because I do not want to give the impression that my process was carefully planned or constructed in advance. My *cycles* have had, and continue to have, more of an organic or (again I hesitate) *natural* evolution. It is only in retrospect that I can see cycles, a recurrent round or series, of conscious (or perhaps even unconscious) engagements in inquiry. I say 'unconscious' because I can at times find myself, become aware of myself, pursuing a questioning, inquiring mode of behaviour intuitively, acting out my values in an un-self-conscious expression of my self. Having become aware, I then have the choice to continue in a consciously self-reflective mode, noting and choosing how I respond to the environment in which I am immersed, or to 'let go' to 'forget' myself, and *be* in the moment. Sometimes I can return, perhaps hours, days, or weeks later, to reflect upon these periods of doing and being in terms of whether my behaviours were appropriate or inappropriate (generative or degenerative, in the words of Marshall, 2001:435) with regard to my values – what I aspire to be and do in the world.

By this method I discover, presently and retrospectively, what my thesis and my self are about. I discover what matters to me. What has meaning for me. Also, from my supervision session and the sharing of my written work I discover what matters and has meaning to other people. As I discover my thesis I also add, at different dates and from different viewpoints, comments or considerations to my text. Sometimes these comments are simply additions, sometimes they are almost contradictions of the primary text. This simply demonstrates the development, or the tensions, within my thought, within my actions, within me. My development is not, however, a linear, continuous, or straightforward incremental process of increasing understanding, but a series of new understandings, and new ways of seeing. The following account of my involvement with Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice during the creation of this thesis will demonstrate this process.

CARPP: the First Year

In March 1997 I enrolled with the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP) because a/ I wanted to do a PhD; b/ I was interested in a qualitative approach to research; and c/ this programme seemed to offer a more supportive structure than appeared to be available within some other University departments to which my educational and professional background might more naturally lead me.

Once accepted into the CARPP programme, I was initiated into its critically subjective, interactive approach to research. I found, as is perhaps inevitable in any newly constituted group, a range of varying expectations and agendas which led to the forming, and falling apart, of small cliques of people seeking supportive allies for their own cause or world-view. The CARPP academic leaders sought to engage this seemingly disparate population of would-be action researchers in joint participatory activities.

Many of the activities in which I was asked to engage during this first year (in a group of 20+ people) I found personally confrontational and embarrassing. At the time I experienced this as a 'new-age encounter group', with leaders promulgating somewhat effete, theoretical values of 'save-the-world' by 'love and peace', 'co-operation' and 'collaboration', which I tolerated rather than embraced.

I am old enough to remember similar happenings in the nineteen-sixties, and my memories are somewhat tainted by images of gurus, ego-trips, affectations, and tune-in, turn-on, drop-out behaviour by a lot of mostly middle-class kids temporarily rebelling against their parents' comfortable life-styles and opinions. (A *nuage* of residual resentment may be noted here. I came from a working-class background which did not offer the same 'comfort-zone' of financial or emotional support for such self-indulgence. My present opinions are no doubt coloured by my interpretation of the past).

So, the first year of my PhD training I found difficult. I did believe, however, the promise of another way to doing research, another way of understanding the world: an alternative to the narrow, reductionist, materialist dogma which I had never believed, but which was different from the over-stated and under-researched holistic beliefs of the world of 'alternative' medicine in which I had lost faith.

CARPP: the Latter Years

The CARPP experience became much more interesting, enjoyable, and *useful* to me once I became engaged in a small supervision group. In a small group of people, where views can be exchanged, concurrent ideas pursued, and possible conflict managed by dialogue, I feel much more at home. At this stage the activities and philosophies associated with inculcating and maintaining the broad, generic Action Research philosophy seemed to take on a more 'human' scale. I felt less pressure to conform to 'mob rule' and, crucially, became aware of the doubts and difficulties experienced by my peers. I also become aware of the doubts, difficulties and disagreements experienced by some of my tutors. And this, for me, made the whole inquiry process much more acceptable (as I reject the blind passions and actions that certainty induces). Although I did not have a clear sense of what I was doing, I was certain that whatever I did had to have some practical value.

> *I don't know where it is all leading but I would like it to be useful in the end*
>
> (WM,CARPP: March, 1998)

Nevertheless, one of the earliest, and repeated, problems I encountered throughout my PhD process was the experience of lack of direction:

> *I'm frustrated because I don't know where I'm going*
>
> (WM, CARPP: mid 1998)

The lack of direction was associated, for me, with an ignorance and incomprehension of the connection between the process in which I was so intimately involved and the actual writing of my thesis. I certainly failed for some time to see the relevance of writing the story of my own life to my inquiry.

> *I'm not quite sure of the relevance of this. My emotional responses or lack of them: what's the relevance of that to this?... I'm having a fundamental action research problem of making my life my research.* (WM, CARPP: mid 1998).

> *... my problem before, as I think I said before, about autobiographical stuff, is I couldn't see the point of it. What's the point of writing about my life, and what's that got to do with the theme, and what's that got to do with management, and how can people get something out of it?* (WM, CARPP: Sept 1998).

My CARPP colleagues, viewing my situation from a different standpoint to myself, continued to tell me what they could see in the work I was producing, although it took me some time to grasp that what I was incorporating, embodying, in my research was a tension between different ways of approaching the world.

> *I'm terribly fascinated by your straddling across two paradigms and how you can make that work. And the more you get into this inquiry, how that will affect the way you look at the work you are doing* (KK, CARPP: March 1998)

> *... in your Diploma paper I remember you saying...: I've learnt all this kind of stuff about homeopathy and all those kind of ways of engaging with the world, I've learnt traditional psychology and those ways – and what I'm interested in is more of a blending between, an inter-weaving, or juxtaposition...and again you've just done it now saying I used to be more attentive to my dreams and my inner life but I've got into a phase of being outer-directed and now want to give these more dual attentions.* (JM, CARPP: Sept 1998)

My supervisor saw part of my difficulties as finding an appropriate <u>form</u> for my work. This form could not be simply imposed, however, it had to emerge as part of my being and doing in the world.

> *One of the things is finding a form that is your form for doing, rather than somebody else's form, that is not about what I <u>should</u> be doing but what it is <u>possible</u> for me to do and what would be <u>generative</u> for me to do ... It has to be achievable and it is also valuable if it's got a sort of lightness that keeps it moving with your life...* (JM,CARPP: March 1998)

> *It sounds as though there are some interesting choices and questions around form. One, is there a big thing that you are really interested in that is coherent? Or are there various different things you are a bit interested in, and actually the whole diffuseness of what you might explore is part of its characteristics and quality...?* (JM, CARPP: mid 1998)

The connection between my interests (and my values) and my form of expression (in writing this thesis as well as in personal / professional interaction) continued to test me, and my CARPP colleagues continued to pose questions relevant to my inquiry.

> *Do men consider that they have all these multiple interacting channels of living or do they only focus on certain things and say that's my home life and that's my work life and that's that?* (JM, CARPP: mid 1998)

My path through this research, as through my life, has been and continues to be an erratic one, made only by my travelling it, often as if through thick fog. At various times, however, the fog through which I labour seems to clear a little.

> *I've started to think that if I could write a thesis like a novel that is actually interesting, then people will learn from the lessons and can draw the comparisons between where I came from and what I am as a man and what I am as a manager* (WM, CARPP: Sept 1998).

Of course the thesis I am now writing is not a novel, but it could be seen as such, according to this formal definition:

> A fictitious prose narrative of considerable length, in which characters and action representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity.
>
> (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary)

In many ways I would prefer to think of this as a creative work of fiction, rather than a factual report in the sense of some immutable truth. I am sure that I have re-created my self on numerous occasions, and my evolving life-story demonstrates a complex interweaving of this self and its environment. As in a mystery story, clues are not immediately visible, and some time is needed before the apparently commonplace is recognised as important. In March 1998, while this thesis was differently titled, one of my CARPP colleagues pointed out to me:

> *I think I like the fact that you are looking at lines and balances between care and control. There is a whole sense of nurture ... nurture in work that you might be doing with others and with yourself, which seems to be about looking after yourself ... I mean you've got this lovely title 'Managing the Male Manager' which in another way could be 'looking after me'*
>
> (RC, CARPP: March 1998)

I was unable at that time, it would seem, to hear what was being said, because nine months later I reported the following:

> *I have this title which I've been carrying around "Managing the Male Manager" and realised last night that I've always thought of managing the male manager in a controlling way, as a negative force needing to be managed ... And then I realised that things are happening which could be and ought to be positive and so that managing the male manager should have a positive aspect too, in terms of developing the male manager in a positive sense, rather than controlling this beast who is screwing everyone up! So, this was some flash of realisation really*
>
> (WM, CARPP: Dec. 1998)

Of course, as reported above, another realisation (almost two years later!) was that my title did not reflect what I was 'really' doing, although all of my findings were, and are, still relevant. After being on the CARPP programme for over two years, I began to prepare a paper for my MPhil to PhD transfer session. As part of this I wrote the following extract which addresses some basic questions about the motivations for my involvement in the PhD process.

[15/07/99]

Why am I doing this <u>PhD</u>? Why am I doing <u>this</u> PhD? Or, as I quite often feel in the face of apparent lack of progress: Why am I <u>not</u> doing either of the above PhDs?

Speaking from experience, I find researching and writing a PhD thesis is a long and demanding process. At the present stage, two and a quarter years in, I can look back on a lot of mixed experiences and emotions. I need to regularly recall and reconsider these in order, I think, to allow me to enjoy the 'highs' and endure the 'lows' of the process and, crucially, take it forward to completion. Below are listed just a few brief pointers as to why I am doing this PhD.

<u>My Professional Context</u>

My professional context and role creates expectations. The following instances, while individually trivial and easily dealt with, will serve in aggregate as an illustration of these expectations.

My manager ('Professor'), expects me to gain a PhD (as soon as possible) in order to increase both my own professional status and that of the unit which I manage. An important aspect of my work involves 'selling' myself and my unit to a variety of fund-holding organisations seeking external researchers and evaluators. A PhD passes as an index of capability and quality control. (My post often arrives directed to 'Dr' Mistral – another indication of the status expected of someone in my situation.)

An example of the importance of publicly recognised status may be evidenced by the following anecdote. In recent months I have been in the position of offering research advice and guidance to a group of two Nurses and a GP. Contrary to the behaviour of the Nurses, the GP seems unable to use my first name and addresses me as 'Doctor'. Now, I have not at any time halted the conversation and clearly said 'I am not entitled to be addressed as Dr. – and would prefer you to call me by my first name'.
I sense (rightly or wrongly – and I do not feel able to check this out with the individual) that this would only cause embarrassment and serve to devalue the quality of my assistance – in order for this person to receive my help in a public context I must be perceived as having at least peer status.
I know people who do not have a PhD and who are very successful and who are, I am happy to admit, in many respects much cleverer than I. Nevertheless I subscribe to the view that, professionally, a PhD for me would be no bad thing.

<u>My Personal Context</u>
I want to <u>have</u> 'a PhD': it is a prize, a 'gold star', and it will be nice to have people say 'Congratulations'.
I want to <u>do</u> a PhD in order to keep myself intellectually active, to prove to myself that I <u>can</u> do it.
I want to do <u>this</u> PhD because it provides (and will continue to provide) opportunities to explore my self (or my selves - as multiplicity has emerged as a recurring theme in my thesis).

What are the barriers to completing this PhD?

One quite solid impediment is simply that I have other things to do. My work not only keeps me busy on a full-time basis, but I have a backlog of unfinished tasks, and unwritten papers. At the end of the day I am tired. The thought of sitting down to another computer or another pile of papers does not fill me with enthusiasm. I need free-time: talk-time, tv time, golf-time, pottering in the garden time. I do not experience myself as a high-energy person, or as gripped by a grand idea, or having an overwhelming desire to inquire, to the extent that this primary focus allows me to disregard my other physiological, psychological and social needs. When I do turn my attention to this research, however, I find I can always add to, or modify, at least some small section. Until I can further organise my time such that a clearly defined portion of my working week is devoted to this PhD, it will have to survive by the input of limited amounts of data and attention. My present plan is to present a MPhil transfer paper in Autumn 1999, and to complete the PhD by the end of 2001. Most of my data are collected during my normal, ongoing, professional and personal interactions but I am determined to reorganise my working week such that a day is set aside to write (and also to reflect while I write).

At the present time of writing, fourteen months after having completed the above, it still rings true for me. My present plan, however, is to complete this thesis early in the year 2001 – the reduced estimate of the time necessary to this task reflects my sense of having found a way forward, a way of reflecting upon, and writing about, the theme which I now believe unifies my being-in-the-world. It has taken me three and a half years to begin to find, or perhaps to recognise, the form of my work, which I now see as both big and coherent, as well as various and diffuse.

My preferred form is both multiple and singular, both one and many at the same time. Although this recognition has been a struggle for me, the evidence for it might be seen in my almost unconscious re-presentation of the multiplicity of my self, or selves, on numerous occasions throughout my inquiry. The contrast between the different manifestations of my be-ing elicited the following feedback on my work in progress from members of my CARPP supervision group:

> *...there are different flavours in the sections ..... But the difference, that discordance, is quite interesting* (RC, CARPP: March 1999)

I was also very struck by the fact that you approached this from all these different facets as if they were separable, and I don't know whether it would be appropriate to explore about how you came to do that...the distinctions you made are really intriguing, I think ...the autobiographical bit was very strongly, I felt, a man speaking about being a man. That in itself I found quite powerful and I noticed that it was something quite different – there's not much I think I've read before which struck me quite so much as coming from a man speaking about being a man. I found that very powerful – it was almost like through the looking glass – I suddenly got this peephole on the other side of the curtain. (KK, CARPP: March 1999).

Although throughout this thesis I extol the value of focusing on process rather than outcome in the way we lead our lives, I had great difficulty for quite a long time in tracking the process of my learning in terms of what I think, and believe, as well as what I do, in the world. Sometimes this was because I could not see that much was happening, and other times I had difficulty with grasping certain ways of expressing processes, even when I was in fact involved in them.

I started off with the simple straw figures of gender difference, but I felt quite quickly that this was certainly an element, but that there is something else in there that needed addressing ... I'm not quite sure what the other thing is, so I flounder and say I don't know where I'm going (WM, CARPP: July 1999)

Well, you've named a couple of possibilities today, which is about the discordance, but also the relating between (JM, CARPP: July 1999)

As I realised (made real for myself) my progress, by discovering the path I was already on, I was able to begin to understand how my various interests formed the warp and weft of the web of my thesis.

There are multiple me's and multiple truths, and I hold a multiplicity of truths – sometimes they clash but often they just run parallel ... and I want to explore the way of meshing, in a worthwhile way, those multiplicities. But that doesn't mean that a lot of the time there are not going to be clashes and discordancy. So something I want to explore in my thesis is this discordancy within myself

(WM, CARPP: July 1999)

And again a CARPP colleague was able to recognise the importance of this exploration, for others as well as myself.

> *...it rings so many bells, the whole process, and I thought God, I could lift this chunk and stick it into mine! So I was identifying with the whole process as you were describing it and the whole multiple selves thing interests me*
>
> (MP, CARPP: July 1999)

The same colleague also voiced an issue that has historically coloured the thinking of people in the Western world with regard to the idea of multiple selves.

> *I struggle because I want to find a way of using it that's not model based on pathology. So I'm interested that you are thinking about it, and would be interested in sharing ways of thinking about it that's not based on therapy or pathology*
>
> (MP, CARPP: July 1999)

Other levels of complexity were added to this:

> *I like using it, thinking about multiple selves talking to each other and being different, but then that can become a sort of crude sociological thing about being different in different contexts. And what do you do with that? What's the use of it? Sometimes I think it can become a kind of rather sloppy get-out for not acting, not bothering about authenticity... which ignores the very real issue of how we need to locate ourselves in order to act, in order to make a difference*
>
> (MP, CARPP: July 1999)

> *I think that is an issue because although I have said about all this discordancy and multiplicity, I still think of myself as myself - there is something that is 'me'... even though I drop in and out of different selves, there is a central me which I hold throughout, a set of guiding values or a belief system – there is an ontology there that is me*
>
> (WM, CARPP: July 1999)

> *Then there's the stuff...about situated identities – the notion that we are all positioned differently in society and so instead of saying gender is the main thing or race is the main thing or class, you say people have situated identities ... So, one possibility is that your research is sliding towards looking at notions of self, with masculinities as elements of self...* (JM,CARPP:July 1999)

As my inquiry increasingly focused on my 'self' I had to learn a whole new discourse regarding this concept, and to look at how others use and understand words that might describe my experience. In so doing I have come to believe that I live and write this research process from a number of situated identities. As explored above (Chapter 6, My Self) I self-identify via a wide range of signifiers, including 'man' and 'manager', all difficult to define except in relation to an 'other'. I am only 'man' in relation to 'woman' (or, perhaps, a 'real' man in relation to other marginalised, 'lesser' men). I am only 'manager' in relation to those other who are 'managed', or to other occupational groups. An identity is always situated in a context, a system, an ecology. And that context contains meaning, or meanings, for all within it. The signifiers of my identity indicate, simultaneously, a place in a relationship, the practice which makes up that relationship, and my and others' experience of that place and practice. At times one signifier (gender, for example) is significant, most meaning-ful, at other times another. At times a situation, context, stresses separation and difference, at times it is possible to focus more on integration and mutuality.

> *...one needs to be reminded regularly that there are different ways of looking at things – that things aren't always about discordancy and multiplicity, they can also be about harmony and continuity and similarity* (WM, CARPP: July 1999)

Although I see myself situated within a system and, in that sense, subscribe to a participatory worldview, this does not mean that I feel in some kind of 'cosy' relationship with other parts of this system. To the contrary. I often feel very uncomfortable with my fellows. At various times I find other people too noisy, too demanding, too different, too threatening, too many, too much. I prefer, a lot of the time, to keep them at a distance, a comfortable distance. But that does not mean that I am not participating, that somehow I place myself outside of the social system. It is not possible to be outside, and everything I do, or do not do, has an effect in compound with everything else that is happening.

> Our concept of the individual is totally warped. All of us are walking communities. Every plant and animal on earth today is a symbiont, living in close contact with others ... Uneasy alliances are at the core of our very many different beings. Individuality, independence – these are illusions...
>
> (Margulis & Sagan, cited in Haste 1993:240)

My desire for a comfortable distance is reflected in the way I conduct my research. Although (and perhaps, because) my inquiry included my professional environment, I have felt very uncomfortable about setting up any kind of co-operative or collaborative endeavour (or, what seemed to me, *experiment*) there. For some time I felt pangs of guilt, a sense of failure, about this. Much of the Action Research literature refers to work-place collaborative / co-operative inquiry, in which a group of people are fully involved, as co-researchers, in all decision-making about the method, content, epistemology, validity, and practical purposes of the research (*e.g.* Heron & Reason, 2001). Many of my CARPP mentors and colleagues make reference to these types of activities. But, despite the pressure I felt (although I cannot say that any <u>overt</u> pressure was applied) to conform to this approach, for me it just did not seem the way forward. I felt (feel) unequal to the task of engaging people in what I saw as essentially <u>my</u> process. Rather than engage, as a research project, with other people in re-arranging my and their working world, I felt there was something else I had to do. Something prior, perhaps. Or something different.

I experienced the same problem with involving people outside of my work setting. At various times in discussion during CARPP supervision I came up with ideas or plans to form inquiry groups – with mixed sex couples involved in management, or with the members of my 'men's book group', for example. These plans came to be experienced as a string of albatrosses around my neck, as members of my supervision group regularly inquired after the progress of this (unfulfilled) programme of inquiry. What the questioning and discussion within my CARPP group did, was to encourage me to regularly reconsider my approach to 'doing' in the world, to interacting with others, to conducting in-depth action research. What this questioning and discussion did not do, however, was to influence me to act in a way that did not feel comfortable, to act in a way that was not 'my' way. In fact, on many occasions, the ideas and comments emanating from the other members of my supervision acted as a foil against which the qualities of my own ideas took on greater definition and clarity.

I see this type of questioning and discussion as an integral apart of my interactive inquiry process, and as a test of the integrity and validity of my inquiry, in terms of

> concern for engagement, dialogue, pragmatic outcomes and an emergent, reflexive experience of what is important (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:447).

I also circulated my autobiographical writing amongst my 'men's book group', and our discussions of this certainly contributed to my (I cannot speak for their) understanding of what it is to be myself, as a man and manager. I was very gratified by the responses to my autobiographical writing, and short excerpts of these are included at the end of Chapter 2 and in Chapter 3 of this text. Nevertheless, I could not, as it seemed to me, *organise* people into some form of co-operative inquiry or formalised cycles of group planning, action, reflection, re-planning and more action in our professional or personal lives. I felt incompetent to this task, and that there was something else I had to do.

I now believe that this 'something else' was to recognise and accept where *I* am in the world. To start from where I am. Not to try to be where I think others expect me to be. I need to validate my path. To tell my story.

The members of my CARPP supervision group, over a period of three years, provided feedback on the quality of my dialogic engagement in an inquiry process, and I also (eventually) came to recognise the value of my emergent, reflexive inquiry for my personal and professional relationships. Nevertheless, if my inquiry is to be accepted by others, by the Academy, as research, then it has also to be validated by the evidence of other voices, by illustrations of my actions, or by a convincing argument or demonstration of the quality of my own processes of self-validation. I am seeking to do this in the present chapter and, as part of my writing and rewriting of this whole thesis, I have added commentary from a number of colleagues of the perceived effects of my behaviours at work. My home-life is an area where I might have tracked my inquiry in a more complete manner. At times within my CARPP supervision group I recounted issues that had arisen at home. I did this because they were issues that I had seen arise regularly, not only in my own home, but also in the literature on gender relations. These issues relate to personal, gender-related confusion, and to the way power is exercised in gendered relationships: *e.g.* who says what, and when; who does what, or how much, 'home' or 'professional' work.

I felt, and continue to feel, that these are important because they relate to issues of power, role division, communication, and dualistic versus communitarian thinking – all of which inform my inquiry. And various forms of confusion and coercion take place all the time at home and at work: similar dynamics in separated spheres of doing and being.

> *...in a way it's a crux of one of the problems I'm exploring – in terms of gender differences, and of relating to this situation in terms of managing a home, a couple managing a relationship, managing a public and private persona*
>
> (WM, CARPP: mid 1999)

My tentative inquiries into my personal life have been encouraged and supported, both in the CARPP environment, and at home.

> *I'm feeling quite reassured really because you are ... crossing the divide about what is work and what counts as your professional practice ... it really takes your inquiry to a much more holistic level ... it would be interesting to look at what the common questions in the different contexts are.* (RC, CARPP: mid 1999)

My research arises quite frequently in conversation with my wife, and part of my learning about my management of my life, both personal and professional, has been not to deny or defend our different beliefs, behaviours, and ways of being, but to continually find ways to communicate about, and in despite of them. My home life is also a useful sounding board, a touchstone, where my espoused theories can be tried and tested – I know what I say, but what do I *do*? It continues to amaze me, as I put such emphasis on clear communication in my professional setting, that my wife and I have such regular and frustrating incidents of mis-communication.

One example of the usefulness for me (I cannot speak for her), of conversation about my research with my wife, is her ability to 'ground' the inquiry in our lived world of human interaction, as opposed to the intellectual mind-games of some of the academic literature. In one conversation (December, 1999) I voiced my concerns about lack of progress with my PhD. I felt I had run out of data and did not know what to collect or, more importantly, why to collect it. I could think of data collection methodologies such as interviews or focus groups with colleagues at work, but what I could not see was the point - I did not know what questions I was looking to answer. My wife responded that perhaps I could just listen to people's stories.

As she spoke I realised how right she was, and how, when it came to planning a move forward with my PhD work, I began acting in a highly 'instrumental' mode: I needed a 'problem' to motivate me, I wanted to act in a way to solve this problem, I wanted to have clear hypotheses and then set about collecting data in order to support or refute these hypotheses, I wanted to know in advance what the outcome of any data collection action was likely to be. I realised how difficult I find it to deal with life in terms other than problems and solutions. What I needed to do was act on my own advice, simply listen, and let the story emerge.

Homo Fabula

People sit in a room – telling stories. People populate an Earth - telling stories. How beautiful these stories are. How cruel they can be when mis-taken, misappropriated, misapplied. Was there ever a time when the people of the Earth simply listened to each other's stories? And, in so doing, appreciated them (i.e. being sensitive to, and sensible of, their delicate impressions and, in so doing, enhancing their value).

Can we imagine doing this? Simply listening. Not analysing for fault-lines, searching for non sequiturs. Not preparing a response, riposte, rejection. Not even preparing formal votes of thanks. But, simply listening - as one might listen to the wind, or to the water - And real-ising 'I', making real our self, as an integral component of the sound.

I wrote the above as part of a story-telling exercise, during a CARPP Gender, Race and Power workshop. This day brought home to me the pleasure, the usefulness, the validity, of story-ing. The sharing of stories seemed such a powerful experience, and not only for me: this seemed to be a common sentiment among the 12 workshop participants. These stories, for me, made other people 'real', felt, human-beings, in a way that 'social' chat, or professional question and answer, explanation or analysis, never could. My interest in Stories is also reflected, in my professional situation, in my preference for qualitative rather than quantitative research methodologies. I prefer approaches to research that allow people to tell their experience in their own words. With most commissioned research, however, it is difficult to simply listen to a person's story, because the research is driven by another purpose, directed towards another goal, and people must respond to questions that will suit a specifically formatted Final Report.

Producing what is expected by a particular audience is a challenge that I have also faced in the Action Research setting. My MPhil to PhD transfer session, in December 1999, comprised discussion with a group of CARPP peers and tutors. A 40-page excerpt of my writing was critiqued in terms of its qualities as an incipient Action Research PhD thesis. This group meeting was also audio-recorded and so, as well as engaging in dialogue with participants at the time, I was able to revisit the tape on later occasions to reconsider my presentation of my text, my CARPP colleagues' responses, and my reactions to these responses. My engagement in this session was very much part of my inquiry process and, I believe, demonstrated the quality of my inquiry in terms of my willingness to participate in group discussion regarding my work, and to listen and respond to comments in a practical, inquiring manner at the time, and in my subsequent reflections on my values and consequent behaviours. The important ingredient that the more vocal members of this group expected in my work, was more evidence of action and passion, and Chapter 7 of this thesis (Doing and Being) comprises my later written response to this perceived lack. This session was also for me an exercise in self-reflective, first-person inquiry, operating with what Marshall (2001) calls 'inner and outer arcs of attention'. Using an inner arc of attention, both during the session and afterwards via the tapes, I was able to note a range of levels of emotional engagement in my reactions to comments and criticisms of my work. I could, especially via the tapes, note my repeated patterns of speech, my assertions, my defences. This was used as part of my inquiry into what I do, how I am, with others in the world. Using an outer arc of attention I was able to focus on the ways that other people responded, how they seemed to me to be, what they seemed to do, what they could offer me in that context.

I continue to resist action and passion in the form I believe they are commonly interpreted or required. My supervisor recognised, however, that I might have to make my mode of inquiry more explicit in my text.

> *I think that the writing you have done so far didn't get seen by those who read it in December as much as inquiry as it could have been... it may also be that when you write it up as a PhD you have to say in what way was doing this writing, thinking about things in your life, these explorations with the men's group and others, in what way it was inquiry. Because it was a very engaged process, whereas it can look like writing one's background story – and there is quite a difference...*
>
> (JM, CARPP: March 2000)

My experience of the six months following the MPhil – PhD transfer session was of an almost complete hiatus in my research, a lacuna filled only with an increasing sense of frustration and depression. I could not see that I was going anywhere at all. With the benefit of hindsight, I can see that my inquiry was indeed progressing – the writings that make up a substantial part of Chapter 7, and in the text-box below, are evidence of the struggle I was experiencing in this active reflection on myself and my situation. These writings also demonstrate my willingness, as part of my inquiry, to pay attention to my doubts and resistances, to dwell with them where necessary and treat them with respect.

[February 2000]

This box is a type of interregnum, or discontinuity in my text, if not in my inquiry. I need a space to address some of my difficulties with my feeling and doing of this research: a sort of dumping ground or safe space where a number of problematic issues can be addressed; or simply signalled as existing; or indicate a recognition of a change in direction or focus. If I did not do this then my text might be a) littered with general negativity; and/or b) lack a lot of these felt problems, and become a tidier but more sterile and less truthful account of my exploration.

I am going through a period of great difficulty in 'getting-on' with this thesis. One of the main reasons for this seems to be that I have lost sight of what this thesis is. What I lack is an hypothesis, a research question, a clear and distinct focus.

A regularly recurring event in my professional working life as a research manager, is that I am consulted by clinicians, students, and less experienced researchers than myself. These people want to research a certain topic area, but are often unsure about how to proceed. In conversation with these people I attempt to help them clarify their wants/needs: What is the question that they wish to answer? What is the hypothesis that they wish to explore by collecting and analysing evidence which might support or refute it? What are the criteria by which they wish to evaluate the success of a particular project or intervention?

This is the way I have been trained to map an effective and efficient way forward from ignorance to knowledge, from confusion to understanding, from darkness to light. The great difficulty I confront with my present research is that I did not begin with clearly defined questions, hypotheses, or criteria, but with a general area of interest that I wanted to explore. I do not know, therefore, if I am any way towards discovering any answers, any supporting or refuting evidence, or meeting any specific standards. I feel lost. My task is not clear and I want / need it to be clear. Otherwise, how will I know when I have accomplished it? I am not happy with the ambiguity of my situation.

Management demands clarity (or so I believe). Clarity, or at least a semblance thereof, is demanded by the people or organisations that commission my work. I therefore need to be clear about the task to be accomplished, who will accomplish it, how, and by when. Clarity might emerge from discussion between myself and my commissioners, and be further refined via discussion between myself and another researcher. But clarity is demanded. In this present piece of work, however, clarity is missing. I have no commissioner other than myself; I have no other researcher than myself; no research area but myself; and, ultimately, I have to answer only to myself. I, therefore, demand clarity of myself. I have a sense, however, of proceeding blindly (or of not proceeding at all). This is neither enjoyable, nor acceptable. At this stage of my research, three years in, what I really want is the Answer.

In the course of preparing this dissertation, I have read dozens of books, discussed with dozens of people, and written tens of thousands of words. And I feel no nearer a goal – and I write 'a' goal not 'the' goal, because I am not clear towards what I am aiming at present, other than to finish. And, if I do not know where I am going, how will I know if / when I have got there? I cannot, at this time, imagine a way of finishing, because I strongly feel that, as I began without a strongly defined question, there cannot be any final 'answer'. There will be no solution, no finding, nor conclusion which will sum up, encompass, the subject. Somehow, nevertheless, my voyage through the literature, through my own professional and personal life, will have to be 'rounded off', turned into a 'whole', a discrete document, a chart capable of being read, interpreted, in such a way as to further the understanding of the reader.

What I would like my research to do is to enlighten the reader, in the dual sense of bringing a little illumination, and also of 'removing a burden'. Too little illumination, conjoined with too many burdens, makes for a difficult passage through life. I am not at all sure, however, what has been accomplished in my attempts to 'enlighten' myself. I have no doubt that I am changing, but the time-span is too short for me to say into what I am changing, or whether this 'changeling' will be somehow an improvement on what I was before. It is very easy to change one's appearance, while remaining an 'old' self in 'new man'/'new manager' clothing. It is also very easy to be convinced that one has changed, really, deep down: I'm not like that anymore! But, the proof of the pudding is in the eating: the question is not whether 'I' have changed, reformed, improved, in some internal deep psychical hinterland, but whether my and other's experience of me in action, in interaction in the social world, has changed, re-formed, improved. In other words change, improvement, is a social process not a cognitive one.

It is interesting that while a part of me, the professional part, the cognitive part, is looking forward to, demanding, a clearly defined goal, answer, outcome, another part of me remains convinced that the point of this proverbial pudding is definitely the process of eating it, and that this process is personal and social. There will be an outcome to this research, and it will take a period of years. If, however, I work only towards an outcome, the actual experience of those intervening years will be lost – I cannot capture the past, I can only live the present. The difference between process and outcome: This (process – what is happening), not that (outcome – a discrete result), is the 'stuff' and 'staff' of life.

Throughout this period my major concern can be seen to be, once again, reconciling myself to my own preferred approach to action.

> *...in my professional work, I manage people, and I'm not doing anything big, I'm just trying to be a decent human being. And I'm happy if the office is running smoothly and no one is thumping the desk or screaming at each other or leaving because they're unhappy. It only takes a little thing, it is the small little things that make things work or don't upset them ... Somehow I want to capture that, and I don't know how to do it. It's like nothing's happening, and nothing should happen.*
>
> (WM, CARPP: March 2000)

My desire to pursue 'non-action' was warmly received within my CARPP supervision group:

> *Before it was 'nothing's happening' and you were depressed with the sameness of it, but now it's like you've possessed 'nothing's happening' with a Zen sort of stillness* (MP, CARPP: March 2000)

> *How can we think of a leader as not the person who interferes and does big things, but the person who creates an environment where other people can do their own little or big things?...I think it's endlessly intriguing theme and one that a whole lot of people are struggling with, and it seems so rich and so worthwhile exploring* (KK, CARPP: March 2000)

> *I think there's a gender overlay, a stereotyped gender overlay to this whole bit about action research, and it is the heroic figure that can get invoked by it. What you have done is critique some of that ... rather than taking on a received task that would be inauthentic to you.* (JM, CARPP: March 2000)

My struggles with 'action' and 'non-action' were, are, ongoing.

> *What is interesting is that I do get passionate about action and passion and there's something that reverberates there for me ... people are always <u>doing</u> things and pushing one to <u>do</u> things and that is something I react against..... but there's another part of me that is very instrumental, very end-oriented, and will sacrifice all these lovely values I've got very easily just to get a bloody stupid job done* (WM, CARPP: May 2000)

It was during discussion at this time that I began to be more consciously aware of a 'doing' and 'being' dichotomy in my life, in my self, which was increasingly to become the focus of my inquiry.

> *What I want the style of my thesis to reflect is the fact that I go from pillar to post: death - giving up, not doing anything - and doing too much. I have to keep hold of this central issue – I have to explore that ... central theme about a way of living, a way of being...* (WM, CARPP: May 2000)

But, my inquiry still seemed not to be moving, either outwardly or inwardly. A possible factor hampering my progress was beginning to come clear to a CARPP colleague:

> *...is your title at the moment stopping you from working with some fascinating stuff you are thinking about and talking about which is broader than the narrower 'male manager'?* (KK, CARPP: May 2000)

I was keen to defend the title of my thesis, however, because it seemed to carry so many of the issues in which I continued to be interested.

> *It doesn't get away from 'managing the male manager' because what I like about my title is that it has the issues that I am concerned with within it: managing, being a male, being a man, and managing myself ...and how I perform at the office when I might be acting instrumentally and keeping a grip on myself, and when I go out of the office and become, as it were, the real me, the personal me, and how I might behave very differently. There are a whole lot of issues there about what one <u>does</u> and what is one's <u>being</u>, that are important to me.*
>
> (WM, CARPP: May 2000).

Saying what one wants to inquire into, and seeing how this is being accomplished are two very different things. Nevertheless, after several very long months, 'suddenly' the fog began to lift and I saw a way forward which would allow me to encompass the themes I saw as enduring throughout my PhD process, and which would honour my personal experience in the world.

> *...I'm going back to all the old tapes of these (supervision) sessions... and track 'me' through the last 3 years ... because I bet the same issues keep coming up...what I'm interested in now is this 'me' I carry around which stops me doing things and starts me doing things, and who no doubt I carry into my workplace and my management style and personal life...* (WM, CARPP: July 2000)

Although I felt the PhD process had been one of learning and development there seemed to be certain areas where I tolerated little or no change – my line in the sand, my ontological sticking point, my immovable subject.

> *I demand the right to be me – and I hear myself saying this all day long and I want to capture that. Because I can see that I'm not going to go out there and do something, my doing is going to have to be internal, reflective, looking at my practice, but looking at my internal doings, my doing of being. So that's it, end of story or beginning of story* (WM, CARPP: July 2000)

My supervisor was able to support my move towards inquiring into my self, and also to point out the dynamics inherent in that, when related to the values I had already written into my text.

> *The kind of attention you would give the material would be interesting because I would imagine you will see things you repeat and hold on to repeatedly ... and things that shift and change... your claim of 'I want my right to be me' to 'I can also hear the other'...seems like a very interesting dynamic...for us all to reflect on*
>
> (JM, CARPP: July 2000)

Recognising that I needed to speak from my self became very liberating. During the late summer of 2000 I was able to re-turn to myself, revisit my past and my present with a different type of attention. A conscious recognition of my 'doing' and 'being' struggle took me to re-read books that had interested me 15-20 years earlier, and which deal with this type of dichotomy, *e.g.* Zen Buddhist texts; Capra (The Tao Of Physics, 1972; The Turning Point, 1982). And discussions with friends involved with a Buddhist centre re-opened my mind to multiple ways of living.

And so, small bright themes began to emerge from my darkness. Themes of my tussle with 'doing' and 'being', my search for values, for validity, for ways of embodying my intellect and emotions, for a way of viewing the Whole: the unity of me, my life and lives, my profession and my person – my world.

The central dilemma I had encountered throughout my whole research process was not so easily solved, however. Recognition of a problematic issue may be the first step to resolving it, but recognition in itself is not the resolution. Perceiving themes is one thing. Communicating understanding in the form of words on pages is another. As I wrote in September, 2000: *I am still striving to find the words that will explain my world to me and others. Words will come but they will not be final words. My understanding will remain rudimentary. But this will serve the purpose of moving me forward.*

Having circumvented the dragon which had seemingly blocked my progress for so long, I felt that in myself I had moved, made progress, begun again. Within a few short weeks 20,000 new words appeared in my thesis. And it had gone through two changes of title. Nevertheless, although I 'knew' something was happening, I found (and continue to find, as I write, at this moment) great difficulty with producing 'hard' evidence for what my inquiry has accomplished.

> *What this document is about is tracing my path internally as it were, in interaction with the outside world. And my fear is that unless I can make that point very strongly then this doesn't count as a piece of action research ... I've got to somehow link myself with my world and somehow capture that in here ... What I am trying to do here is find out how I do link myself with my environment, and how I manage that interaction ...Coming towards the end of this, what I wanted say was how this has made a difference and, because I've not actually 'done' anything grand 'out there' that I can set up and say "Here it is! Here's the monument to my making a difference!" then I have to go into subtle difference, and subtle change, and subtle growing. And capturing that, to convince the reader, is what I'm working on at the moment ... I'm convinced that something has happened but I just can't say: Here is the evidence!*
>
> (WM, CARPP: Oct. 2000).

A member of my supervision group then rightly asked: "What has happened?"

> *I modify. Over time and over experience, coming here, considering the issues, having read the literature, talked to people, looked at my work situation. Without actively trying to instigate a careful plan to alter it in any way, my situation has changed over the last three and a half years. I'm not saying it's because of, but it's in tandem with, it's an evolutionary process that I'm going through, my work is going through, my personal life is going through. And I don't want to claim any cause and effect, but ...*

"How are things changing?"

> *What comes to mind is... a greater sense of assurance in my professional role, with my power base there, my authority in dealing with situations there, and with people I manage and supervise. I am not trying to say that because I have done this then that has happened, but it has happened and I have also been doing this*
>
> (WM, CARPP: Oct. 2000)

What is interesting in the above response is that my choice of words – assurance, professional role, power base, authority - can be easily interpreted as indicating that all I have done is firm up my position as a traditional, hierarchical, controlling, man, manager. This is not, however, what I see as having happened. I am able to feel more assurance in my role because I do not feel I have to fight for or defend the position I occupy. I manage comfortably because (I feel) the people with whom I work *allow* me to manage, they help me to carry out my role, to exercise power and authority in a way that is of benefit to us all. This is, I believe, a consensual stratification of tasks. A collaborative process.

For me this interpretation is borne out by feedback I get from the research staff I manage. They say that we have a good team, that people are very supportive of each other both professionally and personally. Members of the team help each other to work productively, to organise social events - and I hear a lot of laughter. As a manager I see my role as acting in a way that does not impede people's capacity to share, to support, and to enjoy.

And in my personal life – my wife and I still have our regular arguments, spats, disagreements about the same old subjects, but we can say we are communicating, we are talking about these things, we are resolving things. The flash-points will probably always be the same because they are the issues on which we differ so much ... that will always happen both personally and professionally - there will be pressures, fault-lines ... but it is how you cope, how you deal with this, what judgements you make ... that's the environment that one has to manage

(WM, CARPP: Oct. 2000)

My inquiry has not *caused* my world to alter, but is part of ongoing social interaction. Because I, and those others with whom I interact are in *continual* transformation, it may appear almost as if nothing changes at all – except when subjected to a frank, non-problematising, appreciative inquiry (Ludema, Cooperrider & Barrett, 2001).

I have begun to realise that when I set out on a process of personal inquiry I cannot anticipate what will emerge, and so I cannot fix criteria in advance by which to judge the *usefulness* of what happens. So how will I know that something, anything, has changed in a positive sense? I do not want to be seduced by, fooled by, fall into the rhetoric of, the modernist scientific approach which would present my story as: I signed up on an Action Research program which aims to be ethical, practical, useful; I reflected and acted (collaboratively) to accomplish certain things; I, and a group of my fellows have benefited from this; here is the evidence supporting this claim; and here are my conclusions and recommendations. Neither do I wish to take a naïve humanist viewpoint interpreting change in terms of continuous, onwards and upwards improvement (an Ascent of Man!). I accept neither of these narratives.

We have to live in this world that is constantly changing. There is nothing fixed. There is no point, in a reductionist mode, trying to chop up the world into bits and hold onto them; or to take some kind of, for me, airy-fairy overview and sit around chanting 'Om'. We have to live in the world and carry the different aspects of ourselves with that – and we have to manage our life in the world, in this realm of continual change and evolution... One can work positively towards a desired goal or value but there is no way of guaranteeing that it will come about – so you've got to focus on what you are doing, the process. (WM,CARPP: Oct. 2000)

As my supervisor pointed out about my approach to interpreting my world and my research:

> *You are quite a 'contrary' man (or whatever the generative word is for that)... You are continually fending off that simplification, of the sense of the journey lived and now coming to a glorious pinnacle – and you are reconstructing what life development means in a particular post-modern idiom...*
>
> (JM,CARPP: Oct. 2000)

I have had to find my form for doing my inquiry, and of presenting it in a way that is congruent with what I have done. That way is not necessarily linear, sequential, or cause and effect based. I am situated in the present, and I now have much more of an appreciation of process, *and* I can look back and see places in my past that really ring true for me, and both of these are what I am attempting to identify. What I do, what I am, *now*, *depends* on the past. But my past is not fixed. I experience my *present* self, at least in part, via my re-cognising, re-storying, re-constructing, re-experiencing my past. *Then* it was filled with frustration and depression while *now* it is positively productive. As a CARPP colleague pointed out

> *It is never too late to have a happy childhood*
>
> (KK, CARPP: Nov. 2000)

This is a thesis written by myself, a man and a manager. It is not a thesis on identity, masculinity, or management. It is a thesis written *from* an exploration of a situated identity, in-corporating masculinity and management. The connecting areas I have worked into are not all covered in great depth because these are issues I confront, avoid, or engage with to varying degrees as I explore my connection with the world at this time, given my own personal past and present.

So this is my story, at this time, of my process of discovering this thesis.

Of course there are other stories.

One of these other stories could be that four years of Action Research on my professional and personal life has, in fact, brought about no change, no development, no learning whatsoever. I can look at my self, my faults and foibles, and say I am the same as I ever was – a little older, still battling with life, a few more medals and a few more scars, but basically the same. And that story would be true. In the last few years my biological process has replaced almost every cell in my body, but a geneticist given any microscopic fragment could identify, separate, 'me' from the entirety of humanity. And, old friends I saw this summer had no trouble recognising 'me', even after several years separation.

My self, however, is greater than the sum of my parts. My self is also greater than that personality which is recognised by my friends. I am a dynamic, evolving system, forming part of and interacting with the one and many systems which make up the world, and it is this idea I now want to explore.

Chapter 9 Que sera, sera

> That everything changes is the basic truth of existence ...
>
> (Suzuki, 1970:102).

In this chapter I wish to briefly compare and contrast two ways of seeing the world which I believe continue to influence my being and doing in the world, and have informed the development, the evolution, of this thesis. Laszlo *et al* explain our ways of perceiving ourselves and our environment in terms of individual and social 'cognitive maps'. These mental maps are

> ... dynamic models of the environments in which we carry out our daily lives (which) represent and at the same time participate in the creation of our individual realities (Laszlo *et al*, 1996:3)

Dualist Thinking

Modernist scientific and social discourse in the Western world has given us a way of conceptualising the world in terms of hierarchically ordered mechanical structures, which can be manipulated by rational, analytic, minds towards achievable outcomes. In its application to the every-day world this view has extolled the virtue of accumulation of material goods and ever-increasing consumption, and the necessity of competing for scarce resources. This approach is atomistic and individualistic, seeing people as separate from, and in competition with, each other and the 'surrounding' environment. It contains a deep predilection to define the universe in terms of sameness and difference, affirmation and negation, thesis and antithesis. It is, also, a world view that idealises the exercise of power and control.

It is this world-view which has dominated the thinking and action of Western civilisation for several hundred years, at least since the period known as the Enlightenment, famously developed in the work of Descartes (1596-1650) and Newton (1642-1727). Illustrations of the social ramifications of the modernist scientific mental map may be seen throughout this thesis in the references to sex and gender differentiation, to 'othering', to hegemonic masculinity. More importantly, the effect may be glimpsed running almost invisibly throughout, and underpinning my text. I am not immune to this way of perceiving, I do not stand outside - I write *from within* this world.

Systems Thinking

There is another way of thinking, another map or metaphor, which sees us not as objects within an immutable structure, but as participants within a dynamic system (Capra, 1982, 1996). From a systems viewpoint one sees the inter-relatedness and interdependence of all phenomena – physical, biological, psychological, social, cultural - within an integrated and interactive whole, the function of which cannot be deduced from study of individual small particles or units. There are no rigid or fixed structures, but more or less stable manifestations of constantly moving, changing, underlying processes that flow and interact. These interactions are probabilistic rather than deterministic, and this unpredictability endows the system with creativity. I, we - all our universe - can be seen to constitute such a system. What we perceive as structures, discrete parts or persons, can also be seen as systems within systems.

> The features of order, manifested in the particular form of a structure ...are no more than the visible index of regularities of the underlying dynamics operating in its domain (Weiss, 1973:25)

Systems, and situations within them, evolve. A fascinating characteristic of evolution is its movement from lesser towards greater complexity – the whole of life on earth began as single cells which gradually joined together in a vast variety of patterns, to form self-replicating chains (Barnes-Svarney, 1995). Classical Darwinian theory sees evolution taking place via chance mutations, with organisms surviving only if they are able to adapt to the surrounding, given, environment. Systems theory sees evolution as a continuous process of simultaneous and mutual interaction, creativity and adaptation between multiple components within the total environmental system (Laszlo, 1996). Each one of us, as individual self-regulating systems, evolves transactionally with and within the larger human cultural and social system, which continues to evolve with and within the ecological system of Earth, which evolves with and within the solar system, and that with and within the universal system as large and as complex as we can imagine.

> In the systems view the process of evolution is not dominated by 'blind chance' but represents an unfolding of order and complexity that can be seen as a kind of learning process, involving autonomy and freedom of choice.
>
> (Capra, 1982:312)

Systems theory recognises that life is organised in the form of strata of differing levels of complexity, and that this stratification is an aid to evolution and survival. In the past the stratification readily observable within nature has been interpreted as evidence that hierarchy (in the sense of domination and control) is an intrinsic and necessary feature of the world. Capra (1982:305) argues, however, that the presence of strata does not imply hierarchy but, rather, interdependent organisation of complexity.

A balanced system demonstrates a complementary relationship between integrative and self-assertive tendencies within the larger systemic environment. Social ramifications of this are an emphasis on sustainable development through flexibility and accommodation among co-operative and interactive partners (Laszlo, 1996:11). An unbalanced system can result in an exponential overgrowth of certain elements – some plants become 'weeds', some species become 'pests', and within organisms some cells become cancerous growths. Such imbalances may seriously threaten the survival of individuals or eco-systems. According to a wealth of evidence referenced numerous times in the present thesis, the overweening power and concomitant arrogance of some men and managers have become a threat to the health and well-being of other individual men, to women, and ultimately to the planetary system itself. But this situation too is dynamic, and subject to the same rules of evolution and change as other systems.

Is change necessary within our present competitive, hierarchical, masculine-dominated society? Many would argue that the answer to this is: Yes!
There is, however, another and perhaps more valid question: Is change avoidable? And the answer to this question is: No.

Systems are dynamic and subject to continual modification. But, we must be aware that action engenders reaction, and that dominant forces within a social system act to prevent disturbance of the *status quo (*Bateson, 1972:405; Laszlo *et al.*, 1996:66; Meadows, 1991).

> Changing the physical system is as easy – or as hard – as changing the paradigm ... But there's nothing we resist more as individuals or as a society. Our paradigms are deeply embedded in our psyches. When someone questions my paradigm, they're attacking me. (Meadows, 1991: 59)

This does not mean that the *status quo* should never, or could never be challenged, disturbed, or overthrown, but simply that forces or negative feedback loops within that *status* will offer resistance. Although the ability to adapt within a changing environment is an essential characteristic of living organisms and social systems, deep-rooted adaptive behaviours will be achieved comparatively slowly (Capra, 1982: 294).

This thesis has illustrated, and been influenced by, a certain configuration of gender and power relations, and in particular the hegemonic position occupied by forms of masculinity. The continuation of this configuration of gender and power relationships in our social world is perceived to be unhelpful, unhealthy, and unacceptable, especially by feminist theorists and activists who have employed a wide variety of strategies to liberate female or feminine values that have been denied or 'disappeared'. Although change has been shown to be possible, it remains problematic. Haste (1993), in the epilogue to her book The Sexual Metaphor, recognises that many men and women have been reared with such deep anxieties about establishing and maintaining 'who they are' that they are not easily amenable to real change. Unless and until the sexual metaphor or cognitive map, is changed, until we find a different way of *thinking* about sex and gender difference, no amount of rationalist argument against stereotyping will have much effect (Haste, 1993:290). Similarly within the fields of leadership and management, any alteration to values and behaviours is difficult because

> they are deeply embedded in our cultural mythology, in economic structures and in social expectations (Sinclair, 1998:179)

That men, as a group or as individuals, should actively seek to change a situation, which many, many writers argue serves their advantage, presupposes a level of altruism, clarity of purpose, and psychological strength which, in the present state of the (male-dominated) world is unlikely. If, for the purposes of illustration, I place the behavioural psychology of men within the ambit of mechanical Physics: Newton's first law of motion states that in the absence of outside forces the momentum of a system remains constant. In other words, nothing changes direction by itself.

We no longer live in a Newtonian clockwork universe, however. Slowly we are beginning to realise the interconnectedness, the interactivity, the mutuality of all things.

We live in an increasingly transient social universe where persons exist in a state of construction and reconstruction (*e.g.* Gergen, 1991: 7). If we accept the notion of 'multiple selves' or 'subpersonalities' (Rowan, 1990) perhaps our different selves can act upon each other, and thereby initiate change within the whole of our be-ing and do-ing.

An increasingly complex system contains greater possibilities for creativity and for doing things differently. And, individual people can utilise their reflective self-consciousness as a means of working towards increasing the complexity and flexibility of themselves as a system, and within a system. Laszlo (1993) has illustrated how the patterns of thought and behaviour of even a single person might become a formative influence, potentially available as a gentle force on other persons, for the modification of society. Some people, however, seem better able to embrace, work with, and develop through change than do others. Chambers claims that

> ... eclectic pluralists for whom doubt is a way of life are better placed to learn and do better. Self-critical epistemological awareness – examining and reflecting on how and what one learns – is the key, but learning and doing better are both social, joint efforts (Chambers, 1997: 203)

And social change does seem to come about:

> despite centuries of patriarchal hegemony, a significant number of women ... are now exercising a degree of independence and self-reflexivity vis-à-vis gender relationships, which would have been unthinkable for most women only a few generations earlier (Whitehead, 2001).

If women can and do change so can, and will, men. Capra (1982:309) argues that all living organisms display an ability for self-transformation and self-transcendence which expresses itself in the processes of learning, development and evolution. Chambers reminds us, however, of what underpins all calls for, and resistances to, change:

> Personal change is a minefield, the subject of much evangelism, mythology, popular writing, and psychological and managerial lore. It is value-laden. It concerns what sort of people we are and become: closed or open, fearful or secure, callous or caring, hating or tolerant, violent or peacemaking. It raises the question: whose values count? (Chambers, 1997:233)

The challenge is to be willing to inquire into, reflect upon, what we do and why we do it – to consider what values underpin our purposes and pursuits. If highly prized and protected personal and social values are what drive our purposive behaviour, and part of our purposive behaviour may be to prevent change, how does change come about? Mangham and Overington (1987) argue that the continuance of any given social reality depends upon it being unquestioned. They see the very act of questioning as both indicative and precipitive of change.

> When any aspect of reality becomes a matter for attention, when it becomes a topic for action, then it is exactly the nature of this reality which is questioned. At such moments, the backcloth of social life becomes the focus of attention and those rituals which had become grounded in its existence can no longer continue
>
> (Mangham & Overington, 1987:48)

So, although the basis of social life may be entrenched ritualised behaviours, particular rituals eventually collapse as a consequence of their continued failure to deal with problematic situations, or meet the purposes of the people. The use of 'eventually' in the preceding sentence is important because, although movement is taking place, very little appears to happen for a very long time. Kuhn (1970) in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions describes this process within the scientific community. At any given time there exists a dominant scientific paradigm which influences the way all scientists understand the nature of the world, and in the light of which all scientific work is conducted and interpreted. The current dominant, masculine, scientific myth depicts scientists as courageous individuals subjecting reality to rational, rigorous and regular retesting. Typically, however, normal scientists seek confirmation of the prevailing world-view by interpreting data in such a way as to support current theories, and by ignoring, or explaining away, disconfirming evidence. It is well known (or at least an accepted academic myth) that papers describing research wherein acceptable hypotheses fail to be supported, are unlikely to be published in academic journals.

Masses of data that cannot be accounted for within the existing paradigm continue to amass however. Awkward questions continue to be asked. Then suddenly, or so it seems, something *happens*.

> Processes build up until they reach critical threshold; then they trigger sudden change
>
> (Laszlo, 1996:41)

The dyke which contained the unthinkable is breached, and a new way of seeing and being floods out and over the community. The world is understood in a different light, and that which was heresy becomes orthodoxy.

The whole slow process then begins again.

Tarnas (1991:439) argues that 'as with the evolution of scientific paradigms, so with all forms of human thought'. Tarnas speaks of the world as a womb which provides an intellectually nourishing environment that fosters increasing complexity and sophistication - until gradually the surrounding structure is experienced as a limited, constricting prison and the tension resulting from irresolvable contradictions finally leads to irrevocable change. It has been argued that such a change is upon us.

> A profound change in the cognitive maps of everyday people is now in the offing
>
> (Laszlo, *et al.* 1996:105)

A growing number of writers (who might be loosely grouped under the banner of 'new age' or 'new paradigm' theorists) argue that there is evidence of a change taking place from the cognitive map, metaphor, or paradigm which validated the domination and exploitation of nature by 'man', to a new paradigm of partnership. Evidence has been produced indicating a move from accumulating to sustaining, from fragmentation to wholism, from competition to co-operation, in an environment where humans act as an organic part of a self-maintaining and self-evolving system. In the arena of corporate management a new system-oriented culture is believed to be emerging. This is said to be leading towards a decentralised, networked decision-making process between self-regulating, semi-autonomous task-groups which recognise the complementary value of the two sexes and increasingly focus on ecological considerations (*e.g.* Capra, 1982; Laszlo *et al*, 1996; Tarnas, 1991).

This may be happening. But then again, it may not. For me the evidence, as presented, amounts to wishful thinking and a desire to spread a hopeful message. For every piece of evidence supporting the dawning of a new age, a dozen items might be found in any of our daily news media supporting a contrary argument. While having no wish to focus only on the negative, I believe that prognostications of a golden future (for everyone?) are somewhat premature.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for us to recognise an emergent social process, for we cannot observe a whole system from the perspective of just one of its parts (Bateson, 1972:438; Laszlo *et al.*, 1996:55). The knowledge of the whole is not held in any one portion nor, from a post-modern perspective, is there a universal, fixed, or 'true' knowledge or experience to be had. It is possible within any emergent process that some people will benefit while others suffer, and it is perfectly possible that some will perceive only suffering while others perceive only benefits. A partly filled glass may be seen as 'half-full' or 'half-empty' and those differing perceptions colour one's experience of the world. While change is inevitable, we do not know what change will bring. There is no solution to this conundrum.

> A narrative historical explanation of this phenomenon is possible, but only after the fact. Because new cultural cognitive maps are emergent forms appearing at bifurcation points, they are discontinuous with their pasts and cannot be predicted from them. (Laszlo *et al.*, 1993:17)

Not only can we not know the *outcome* of all this change but we cannot even be sure of the next step in the *process*. Yes, I can say that there is a high probability that for a certain length of time I will continue to tap on this keyboard, and the next key I touch will be *x,y,*or *z* (although with my typing even this probability is quite low!). I can say that, tomorrow, I will go to my office, attend such and such meetings, deal with such and such business, come home – but, will I? A small event may alter the day completely.

But, without knowing where we are going we can still work *towards* something. We can still do what we feel we must in any particular circumstance. We can still exercise our values in the world.

I did not know ten years, or even five years ago, that I would be in this room in this house writing this PhD thesis, and yet what I was working towards then has facilitated (or, at very least, not prevented) my being here now. Without doing a Psychology degree I would not have been employed in a research job that evolved into a managerial post, which has supported me to do a PhD, and this particular PhD because my work situated me within one particular University.

We can map our lives backward and see how *that* seemed to lead to *this*, but we cannot map our lives forward, with any certainty, and say that *this* will lead to *that.* In my life I am continually faced with choices, with cross-roads, with diverging paths, and every choice I make leads to other choices. As with individuals, so with society.

What has this grand theory of systemic evolution to do with the themes of this thesis? One thing is the concept that change is endemic. A second is that life is built on a system of interdependence, mutual interchange, and learning. A third is that, as we do not know where we are going then we had better focus on how we are going *i.e.* the process, not the outcome, is important.

> The result is not the point; it is the effort to improve ourselves that is valuable. There is no end to this practice. (Suzuki, 1970: 45)

My writing of this thesis has been, and continues to be, part of my evolutionary process, my learning, my development. This text is a partial enunciation of my experience over the past four years. Although it contains no directions for another to follow, nor solutions to another's problems, it can be *listened to, conversed with.* It can serve as a medium for *interaction.* And in that way this thesis, which has been and continues to be useful to me, can be useful to another.

Chapter 10 The 'End' of this Inquiry

The purpose of this final chapter is to draw together the connecting strands of this inquiry. While I believe that elements of the whole may be perceived within each part of this thesis, these now need to be brought forward, as in time-honoured tradition, for a final brief bow.

Myself

That this thesis is subjectively focused on myself is made clear in the first few pages of Chapter 1. My self, however, takes many forms. In the first paragraph of Chapter 2, I state that one purpose of that chapter is 'to establish my *bona fides* as a researcher'. With hindsight I can say that the other, unspoken, purpose of Chapter 2 and of this thesis is to establish my *bona fides* as a person, as myself inquiring into my life. It seems clear to me, now, that any justification of research validity is inseparable from discussion of my personal values, and my personal values are inseparable from my self. Throughout this thesis I have striven to be true to myself, to be authentic, and thereby valid. My writing is a reflection of my values, in the content of this thesis, in its form, and in the very act of writing it.

> Values are goals which behaviour strives to realise
>
> (Laszlo, 1996:78)

Although my behaviour while conducting the present inquiry has been driven by my values, these have remained indistinct – foreshadowed rather than clearly acknowledged. I believe this is because my values, my self, are to a great degree indefinable. A graven image of myself, a litany of my values, would be more likely to tell who or what I am *not* than who I am. This is because neither my self nor my values are discrete individuated entities. They are only be glimpsed during my purposive *interaction-with*. What is important is what I strive to do *with* the world. Early in my PhD supervision process, I made a statement which, I hope, reflects my values in action in the world:

> *I'm primarily interested in getting the best out of people, including myself*
>
> (WM, CARPP: March, 1998)

My self, man and manager, is the process of my coaction with and resistance to the multiplicity of my environment. My inquiry has given me cause to reconsider my personal and professional self. The reader of this thesis may imbibe something of the qualities of this personal and professional self. They may or may not see themselves, or part thereof, within my experiences, within my process. What this thesis demonstrates is me (my self) finding my way into another way of research, another way of doing, another way of being. Serendipitously, I came upon the quotation below as I was writing this conclusion to my work, and Lyotard seems to express the situation in which I discover myself.

> The postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and cannot be judged according to a determining judgement, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and principles are what the work of art itself is looking for.
>
> (Lyotard, 1979: 81, cited by Reason & Bradbury, 2001:5)

Ideally, having finished the present text I would present my new-found, newly-formulated rules for reading it – but the present text is not 'finished' and the only rule I have is to question the rules (which have all been devised with reference to other circumstances), and engage with what is here and now. Not knowing the 'right' way, the 'best' way, to inquire into and re-present myself as man and manager, I am simply doing it. And continually reflecting upon, and trying to make communicable sense of what I do.

To some extent, also, I see myself as 'representing' the people who have been brought up to live and work in a world posited on an positivist, dualist, reductionist, individualist paradigm, and who are now willing to, or having to, reconceptualise the world in terms of a post-modern, systemic, wholistic, participatory paradigm. I am the transition point between world views. I believe that both contain elements of value and, equally, both contain elements which need to be resisted.

Man

The second word of the title, and the first few pages of this thesis, indicate that gender is an issue to be addressed in this thesis. Chapter 3 provides a reflection on the influences which I remember from my past, and which I believe are constituent parts of myself as a man, *now*. I cannot separate my self from my past, or from being a man.

My membership of this sex and gender dynamic provides the foundation for my doing and being in the world, it is fundamental to my self-identification and my acts of resistance. I am steeped in masculinity, and so is this thesis. I write, firstly, *from* my masculinity and, secondarily, about my masculinity

Manager

Within the context of my own professional and personal life this thesis has given some indications of 'what is', 'what may be' and 'what could be'. My inquiry has meant that I question, in managing my life, what it is that I do and what it is I am trying to be. My 'manager' cannot be separated from my 'man' or my 'self'. I am a practical man and manager. I live in a world of consequences. A pragmatist – I search for what is useful. In this respect my inquiry has validity for me, because it has been useful for me. My real task, however, is not to discover what gets things done, but what is worth doing (the 'double loop' inquiry of Argyris & Schoen, 1996).

This Research

The validity of my inquiry process may not be obvious to a reader who expects, demands, a clearly defined and linearly-presented research rationale, background, methodology, analysis, results, and conclusion. My action inquiry has produced no quantifiable *outcomes* – I cannot display indisputable evidence of how my research has changed my life, or that of others. The present text is qualitative, and its value is in its descriptive quality – my fear is that my description is insufficiently 'thick' (Geertz, 1973) to convey a sensitive, sensual, sensational experience of a portion of my experience of my being in the world.

As this thesis has come into being under the broad aegis of Action Research I feel I should produce here a telling example of how, trapped deep within some positivistic prison I engaged my fellows in a collaborative escape plan which led not only to our personal liberation, but freed a whole population from the dreaded reductionist paradigm. But ... no. I have not even attempted such a feat. I am not (and this is said with some reluctance) an action-research hero.

Nevertheless when I ask myself: Does this thesis derive from real, valid, action research over these past four years? I respond with a definite Yes! This is hardly unexpected, because a negative response would make it very difficult to submit this text as a PhD thesis. An expected conclusion is not necessarily invalid, however. While MacMurray (1957:84), rephrasing Descartes, points out that 'I do' rather than 'I think' is the most appropriate epistemological starting point, he recognises that the totality of the self needs to be engaged in this 'doing'.

> Action, then, is a full concrete activity of the self in which all our capacities are employed (MacMurray, 1957:86)

And in the, much more recent, Handbook of Action Research it is also argued that the concept of 'action' must include

> the development of theory which may illuminate our action, guide it and provide it with meaning. (Reason & Bradbury, 2001: 8)

What has been, and is, the strength of my work in developing this thesis is the attention I have paid to myself - my inquiring gaze upon myself, my attempt to engage in 'first-person research in the present' (Marshall, 2001; Torbert, 2001). I make no claim, however, that this gaze has revealed some deep, previously hidden truth about who I am, and what I do. In terms of self-inquiry I am sure that other researchers have focused with less mercy on their own weaknesses, or with more celebration on their own strengths. But, I see only with *my* gaze. And, could I see my every lineament, I would have no wish to expose them to the world. I have aspects of which I am deeply ashamed, and others of which I am immensely proud. I do not have to tell anyone about them. They would reveal less 'truth' about me than do my everyday interactions in the world. This document comprises a series of mirrors re-reflecting my interface with the world.

This thesis does not simply tell a story *about* me, it *demonstrates* me, it *manifests* me.

The present research is ongoing. The themes raised have not been studied in their entirety and, in terms of both process and outcomes, I suspect that meaningful action research is only just beginning. My system has been disturbed. Pressure from unanswered questions is beginning to increase. These questions relate to the central core of myself and my life: What am I doing? Who am I being?

I cannot delay submitting this thesis until I discover the final answers to these questions, because there will be no final answers. My whole life revolves and evolves around these questions.

> Action research in all its forms is a long term, evolutionary, emergent form of inquiry
>
> (Bradbury & Reason 2001:453)

Myself, man and manager, also, are long term, evolutionary, emergent forms. The present state is just that: the present state. And *the present is a process of becoming* – even when this is not immediately apparent. Thus, situations can, will and do change – all the time. There is no fixed state of final 'happily-ever-after'. We will never be happily-ever-after unless we come to terms with, accept, the Pleasure of Possibility. There is no outcome from life but life itself. And life itself is simply process.

When I was young I looked into a kaleidoscope: the pattern was complex and beautiful. It appeared fixed. Immutable. But at a slight movement, all was altered into another complex and seemingly immutable pattern. Structured chaos. The pleasure of possibility. Forever becoming. Each pattern can and does, upon an instant, disappear. And a new pattern is instantly apparent. Myself, man and manager, and my world with me, disappear. And my disappearance is but an integral component of on-going transformation. A new self, a new man, a new manager emerges. As with me so with 'others' – each continually transform, reconfigure. New patterns, new paradigms, new systems for old.

Never-ending.

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