

## DOCTORAL THESIS

### The Bridge to Manhood: How the Masculine Self is affected by the Father-Son Relationship

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**The Bridge to Manhood: How the  
Masculine Self is affected by the Father-  
Son Relationship**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of PsychD  
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## ABSTRACT

This study explores how men experience the construction of the masculine self as influenced by the father-son relationship. It employs a mixed methodology using Hollway and Jefferson's Free Association Narrative Interview model, Farough's Photo-Ethnographic Interviewing technique and a data analysis informed by Foucauldian concepts, to explore the father-son dynamics of twenty male participants and their subsequent effect on the adoption of masculine subject positions and beliefs. The mixed method design accesses the intrapersonal, interpersonal and wider social fields, in which the gendered self is built, performed and negotiated.

The results find that the father-son relationship is a key factor in shaping the masculine self and set out a masculinity spectrum of male positions adopted (eg. *thug, dominator position; laddish bravado position; traditional provider emotionally detached; good provider emotionally holding; effeminate male weakling position*). The spectrum can apply equally to a man's style of "doing maleness" and to a man's style of fathering. Men are not tied exclusively to one spectrum position. Most will express aspects of different positions depending on context, company and age. Most men tend to move in a rightward direction (*ie. from more traditional rigid or hegemonic male styles towards more emotionally open styles*) on the spectrum as they grow older. However, men (and their fathers) will tend to have a dominant style of masculinity and the gaps between their relative

spectrum positions (or masculinity subject positions) are unpacked and analysed in terms of what such gaps may mean for their relationship and ways of doing maleness. Implications for working with men in counselling psychology practise are considered, as are suggestions for future research work in this field.



### **3: INTRODUCTION**

#### 3.1 Navigating the thesis

Any examination of how gender is lived, or any search for the origins of gendered beliefs or behaviours in childhood relationships, will invariably be very complex. Gender has many nuances, subtleties, boundaries and contradictions that lie beyond our attempts at explanation, structuring or categorisation. Like all lived phenomena it is experienced, struggled with and understood at a profoundly personal, subjective level, some of which may be shared with others, much of which will not. The qualitative research method is one which tries to delve as deeply as possible into this personal lived experience of the phenomena and report what we have found. However the needs of presenting research findings in a thesis format necessitates imposing some form on the relatively formless. So at the outset it seems sensible to give some initial map to the reader who will be navigating the water.

The introductory section first looks at the relevance of this research to the applied field of counselling psychology. Given that this is a PsychD in counselling psychology and that the researcher has been a practising Chartered Counselling Psychologist for five years it is important to contextualise what follows and set out its possible usefulness for the practitioner.

The sections that follow are largely based on literature review covering some of the major themes reflected in the methodological design of the study and the results which emerged from it. The first examines how masculinity is constructed, particularly referencing much recent work on the concept of '*hegemonic masculinity*'. The second expands this to look at how father involvement affects sons, concentrating on the quality of father involvement and its likely affect on the growing boy in terms of behaviour, emotional wellbeing and masculinity beliefs. The third section focuses on the traditional psychoanalytic view of fathering, in particular father's role as the breaker of the initial warm, symbiotic relationship with mother. Freudian, Lacanian and Jungian approaches to fathering and the developmental impact on boys are examined.

The fourth section moves onto the next stage in psychodynamic theory development: object relations and looks at how the fathering role was severely relegated in comparison to the great emphasis placed on the mothering role. The fifth section explores feminist ideas of fathering, focussing particularly on the work of Benjamin and Hooks.

This naturally flows into looking at how wider social and political discourses about gender affect the ways in which an individual is exposed to different ways of doing gender and, crucially, receives messages about which ways are socially approved or disapproved of. In other words how we each make

decisions about adopting, displaying or hiding certain gender subject positions. This section concentrates on the work of Foucault.

The seventh part outlines theories underlying intersubjectivity and how these are central to this thesis, both in terms of the researcher/participant relationship, but also the father/son and therapist/client relationships. The intersubjective nature of these dialogical relationships is outlined as being central to how methodology is used in this study.

The introduction ends with a look at how a male clients' understanding of his maleness may affect his presenting issues, the therapeutic relationship itself and the way he communicates distress, requests for support and vulnerability. Included here are a series of client vignettes from my own therapeutic practice which give some flavour of the range of issues that can be affected by masculinity beliefs. Finally the research question for this study is outlined, including the aims, the questions employed and the methodological strategy used.

The Method chapter begins with an explanation of why a mixed design methodology was employed to tap into the three main inter-related levels where gender construction takes place: *intrapersonally* (within the self, possibly unconsciously); *interpersonally* (within relationships, particularly with the father) and *the social/political arena* (where broader discourses will affect how the first two levels operate). Each of the three methodological

approaches which make up the design is tapping into a different one of these three levels.

The following section, 'Positioning the Researcher', reports the findings of a self-study (where I interviewed myself using the same questions that would be put to participants), considers some key issues around reflexivity and explores the tensions and opportunities inherent in being both researcher and practitioner. Next is a report on the pilot study and subsequent changes made to the overall methodology and interview style, namely the introduction of Farough's Photo-Imagery interviewing, whereby photographic images related to the phenomenon under investigation are presented to the participant in an attempt to elicit responses based around narrative, possibly emanating from a more unconscious position. The images selected are then presented. Some discussion follows about the decisions made in sampling the phenomenon and how participants were recruited. A detailed participant table follows.

Following some consideration of the procedure employed during interview and the ethical implications of this work, there is a detailed explanation of how the data produced was analysed using the three different methodologies, and then a final stage of drawing together all the data outputs to produce a masculinity spectrum of eleven masculinity (and fathering) subject positions.

The results section begins with a pen picture for each of the twenty participants and the masculinity spectrum itself, which although the final

product of the analytical stage is reproduced early in this chapter to assist the reader in understanding what follows. Following this is a table which sets out the relative positions of each participant and his father in the spectrum and, crucially, the numerical gap between those relative positions.

Next the three qualitative analyses are presented, including a selection of representative quotes that typify particular categories and analysis of some of the categories produced. This section begins with a cross-case analysis of each of the ten photographic images presented to participants. The Free Association Narrative analysis follows, employing the major categories produced together with illustrative quotes and full analysis. Finally, the third analysis uses Foucauldian ideas about discourse to look for exposure to wider social and political messages about maleness. Related tables are produced for each analysis.

The second stage of analysis is then laid out whereby the categories, themes and subject positions produced by the three earlier analyses are combined. An overall table then shows how this process produced eleven overall categories which form a spectrum of masculinity subject positions. Some commentary on the spectrum follows, including some illustrative examples of where some participants and their dads are located and what this might mean.

The discussion chapter explores the gaps between father and son spectrum positioning in more detail, paying greater attention to those groups where the

gap was at its highest and it's lowest. This leads into a discussion of what the relative positions tell us about the effect of the father-son relationship on doing masculinity. The research findings are then examined in the light of the various theoretical constructions around masculinity that were highlighted in the introduction, namely, hegemonic masculinity, psychoanalytic, Object Relations, Feminist perspectives and the Foucauldian view.

The next section explores what the findings might suggest for counselling psychologists working with male clients. It examines how men located at various spectrum positions might present in therapy and respond to the various aspects of the therapeutic endeavour itself. It highlights some particular lessons for male therapists working with male clients. A critique of the present study is followed by an examination of the implications for future research working this field. A final conclusion ends the main body of the thesis.

### [3:2 Relevance of this research to Counselling Psychology](#)

Gender is a massive subject. It pervades society, politics, and personal relationships and arguably drives much of the modern world via its influences on religion, nationalism, conflict, the media, education and family issues. This research is not an attempt to explain, understand or theorise around gender in its broadest sense.

This thesis will focus on two main issues centrally relevant to the practice of counselling psychology. Firstly, the dominant theme will be how father influence is involved in building the sense of a masculine self. Secondly, the findings will be used to examine how choices around masculinity affect the presenting issues men bring to therapy and how the client's sense of his masculine self will affect the therapeutic relationship itself.

As well as furthering understanding of the processes whereby a sense of masculine identity is developed, blocked, maintained and changed over time, this work will offer some insights into "fathering" itself. For example, from a psychodynamic perspective it should help to illuminate the effects of internalising a particular way of being male and, crucially, the role of the father in co-constructing that internalised object. This is what Hollway and Jefferson (2000, p14) call the "psychosocial subject" (a subject that is simultaneously psychological and social).

Frosh and Phoenix (2002) in their work with young men in London schools look at how discourse theory can combine with psychoanalytic thinking to offer accounts of the social construction of masculinities. Crucially, from the point of view of this research, they extend this to address the "way in which individuals adopt particular identity positions from those available to them". Of course there will be a wide variety of influences affecting this adoption process; mother, siblings, heroes, peers, media imagery etc. This project seeks to understand and illumine the specific influence of the father.

There is a long history of work which seeks to illumine the role of fathering in establishing a man's sense of emotional wellbeing (O'Neill, 1981; Wester et al, 2002). Much of this work has traditionally focussed on the emotional absence of fathers from their son's lives. Male restrictive emotionality has been found to be related to low self-esteem (Cournoyer, 1994), difficulties with relationship intimacy (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991), relationship dissatisfaction (Sharpe, 1993), anxiety (Cournoyer, 1994), depression (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991) and a negative view of help seeking (Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992)

Studies such as Veneziano et al (2003) show paternal availability as much less significant for emotional well-being in adulthood than paternal warmth. In a review of studies from the USA, Europe and China they found that paternal warmth is often a more significant predictor of young men's functioning than maternal warmth, particularly when considering aggression and anti-social behaviour. This suggests fathers' have a crucial role in preparing boys for their entry into wider society. It is however simplistic to focus on whether the father is present or not, instead a more fruitful line of enquiry should consider the emotional quality of his presence in the boy's life. So a man could be physically present in his son's home throughout childhood yet completely distanced from the boy emotionally and offer little support, closeness or modelling for ways in which men can manage and express difficult emotions. Alternatively a man may separate from his partner and live away from his son, but be a constant warm, guiding and



loving presence in his son's life. In practice it is not uncommon to see divorced dads where the son has an alternative place to go for a different type of emotional holding, particularly in the pre-teen and teenage years where the confines of the main home may sometimes prove too much. So in practice we can see four main positions: the physically and emotionally present dad, physically present but emotionally absent; physically absent but emotionally present and, finally, both physically and emotionally absent.

Much literature and media commentary focuses on the damage done to boys by fathers in the final category. Less focus is placed on the differences between the experiences of son in the middle two categories. The assumption that a physically present dad means a positive emotional role model or relationship is dangerous; equally the automatic assumption that separated parents' means such emotional closeness is absent should be avoided.

This work should be directly useful for anyone practicing from an Object Relations standpoint, for male counselling psychologists and for women counselling psychologists with male clients. These findings may also be interesting for other psychotherapists, psychologists and counsellors working with male clients, children and families. Practitioners with younger male clients may find the work of special interest. At this stage in life boys' attitudes around masculinity are often still fragile, vulnerable to peer pressure and acting out, yet still flexible enough to undergo real change which may

benefit their emotional and psychological health (and that of their future partners and children).

### 3:3 Constructing Masculinity

Recently the main focus in understanding masculinities has been the investigation of “*hegemonic masculinity*” (Connell, 1997). This is broadly defined by Garde (2003) as having four main features: power, ambivalence towards femininity, domination and objectification of nature and the psyche and the avoidance of emotion. Certainly throughout history, and particularly during times of war, conquest, rapid industrialisation or urbanisation, men able through their physical strength, or socio-economic power, to embody this type of masculinity tended to be the ones who physically survived, were rewarded with money or position, and have greater choice among the women. Or it may simply be that they were able to dominate others (men, women and children) through the use, or the implied threat of, physical violence. Hence Garde’s first feature: power, is probably the most crucial to understand when conceptualising hegemonic masculinity. The remaining three; avoiding the feminine, avoiding emotion and dominating nature can be seen as ways of both maintaining the sense of power within oneself but, more importantly, demonstrating constantly to others that you are powerful and not to be controlled, challenged or threatened lightly.

The term *hegemony* describes how one social group manages to dominate, and have power over, another. That group, the *hegemon*, over time comes to

be seen as at the top of the pile, as landed gentry would have naturally been seen as above serfs in Medieval England. Eventually they (the hegemon) do not 'rule' merely by exercising violence but through some widely shared sense that they are the powerful ones. The majority within society have sufficiently internalised the idea that this is the natural order of things, even if they suffer terribly within its hierarchical order. This notion, that hegemony works most effectively inside people's minds, was originally made by the Italian Marxist Gramsci (1986) who said that eventually naked brute force is no longer needed to enforce the hegemony, those subjugated by it will often come to consent to its rule and even believe it is natural (as in the divine right of kings to rule). Danaher et al (2000) make the point that dominant discourses and their associated control over knowledge, truth claims and power "are the result of power struggles in which they have triumphed over other disciplines and forms of knowledge" (p27). This idea has been expanded to examine the historical domination of some nations over others, and to look at how some races, genders, religions or sexualities have been oppressed as less 'deserving' of power than others.

The term *hegemonic masculinity* began to be used in the 1980s to describe maleness characterised by Garde's four features. Until relatively recently this type of masculinity was so widespread as to be almost synonymous with maleness itself. It is still widely observed within single male systems (such as prisons, gangs, military, some schools) and within working class or impoverished communities where there is much crime or social breakdown. Stanko (1994) offers a good summary of this approach to being male; "being

a man entails being tough, never crying when hurt, standing up for yourself, giving as good as you get, never admitting to fear, sympathy or sensitivity and never flinching at pain or hardship”.

So within the relevant literature hegemonic masculinity has been seen as the dominant style of masculine performance in traditional western societies. It received the most social approval from those in powerful positions (usually other hegemonic men) and could offer individual men great power. This is particularly so among young working-class men, of all races, where hegemonic masculinity apparently offers instant access to a power often denied them by their socio-economic status (Willis, 1977; Comstock, 1991).

It is important to distinguish here between two terms often used in this literature and throughout this thesis: *hegemonic masculinity* and *traditional masculinity*. As explained above in certain time periods, or certain specific locations today, the two would be fairly interchangeable. The traditional masculinity would be hegemonic masculinity. However, certainly in the West following the industrial revolution and the rise of waged employment and societies ruled by the force of law, the nature of dominant masculinity, certainly amongst the working classes, began to shift. A poor man working in a mine or a steel foundry could not afford to be too violent or domineering in public space as this would likely lose him his job or see him in trouble with the police. More often the exercise of unrestrained power moved to the home, where he could still act as lord and master over his relatively powerless wife and children.

As social mores have altered, and particularly since the changing role of women, the last sixty years has seen the increasing dominance of the *good provider traditional masculinity*, described by Pleck, 1987 (p92) as the ‘distant breadwinner’ when related to fathering . In subscribing to this approach a man could still avoid being too emotional, or being associated with anything female or gay, but his sense of his role, his power, would be derived mainly from being a good financial provider for those who depended upon him. He would still be perceived by others as masculine or manly, but he would act very differently from the more ‘thuggish’ man, who may often get drunk, be frequently brawling or involved in criminality, and who enjoys the fact that others may be afraid of him.

In other words the traditional good provider may be respectable in a way that the hegemonic male (in modern society at least) is often not. In a capitalist society the traditional good provider is seen as a useful model citizen whereas the outright hegemonic male is more usually seen as a threat. This is not to say however that they may not share many of the same attitudes and beliefs about gender. It is also worth noting that many of these rules do not apply the further up the socio-economic ladder we move. Big business bosses, sports stars and rap celebrities get to exercise pure hegemonic male behaviour and have it celebrated and admired by others. A poor boy from a sink estate acting in the same way will be treated very differently for the same behaviour, outside of his own tight social group.

Two of Garde's four features tend to be of supreme importance to modern young men in establishing their masculinity in the eyes of their peers: the avoidance of femininity and the emotionality associated with it. This usually expresses itself by hostility towards anything seen as gay. Another way of understanding this would be to recognise that underlying most homophobia is misogyny. Gay boys are viewed almost as having tainted their maleness with something female. In a similar way, for girls to wear male clothing is no longer remarkable, they will not lose face among their peers. A boy wearing female clothing certainly will. Generally we can say that a girl has greater scope to take on typically male attitudes and behaviours without being totally stripped of her femininity. Men have far less scope the other way. Teen boys are desperately aware of this fine line that they walk. And often the best way to defend your own masculine credentials is to attack those of somebody else.

Hartill (2008) gives examples of how this process functions within school sports. He argues that within traditional male team sports "boys are often required to engage with and successfully negotiate a heterosexist discourse that valorises certain forms of masculinity and rejects others". As others have found the "boy code" is in full operation, whereby heterosexuality is assumed for all but "continually questioned, necessitating continual demonstration and reaffirmation" (ibid).

Much standard work in this field supports this idea that masculinity only exists "in relation to femininity" and is largely constructed through everyday

discourse (Mac an Ghail, 1994, Edley and Weatherall, 1997). Quantitative research offers some interesting insights into these masculine role norms. Kilianski (2002) found masculinisation of the ideal self and feminisation of the undesired self were positively correlated; in other words when describing how they wanted to be boys will outline an extremely masculine ideal and when describing how they would hate to be they give a very feminine alternative. Kilianski suggest this factor collectively accounts for many common factors underlying misogyny and homophobia. Even among many gay men there is a similar contempt and hostility toward effeminacy and effeminate men on both socio-political and personal levels (Taywaditep, 2001).

Much quantitative research appears to offer support for the argument that hegemonic masculinity still predominates in modern, industrialised societies. It provides a good deal of underpinning evidence, which appears to confirm the male emotional struggle outlined above.

Recent qualitative research has tried to extend the focus to look at what lived male experience tells us about the construction of masculinities. Key factors emerging from this work include the idea of masculinity as something that must be “achieved” (Edley and Wetherell, 1997), a set of “performative acts” (Butler, 1990) and as something as much defined through what it is not (female, gay or sometimes, black) rather than in positive terms. Seidler (1994) argues this means hegemonic masculinity is “ultimately an empty thing”. At the extreme end of the binary polarity it can operate much like an

empty shell-like suit of armour defending itself against what it is not. This model stands opposed to the far richer and fuller notion of positive masculinity offered to adolescent boys in the rites of passage of indigenous societies across the world, who saw a more balanced role model of the adult warrior male, who knew when to use his undoubted strength and when to restrain it, who was no stranger to strong emotion and respected, rather than denigrated, all things feminine. This type of man was seen as being central to the well-being of his society and profoundly valued by it. Many young men in the modern west have no such clear journey to positive adult maleness set out before them.

As explained above, young men are only too well aware that their masculine status can be stripped from them by their peers all too rapidly if they say or do the wrong thing. They do not experience their budding manhood as being encouraged or nurtured by older men within the tribe. Rather they are judged and evaluated by other boys who often hold simplistic and dangerous templates of what a man is, boys who are just as nervous as they are of being seen as not properly male. It should perhaps come as no surprise that under such circumstances young men frequently come to associate being male with the external aspects of performance; physical size, willingness and ability to fight, lack of emotional expression and power and dominance; what Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) characterise as “hardness” .

Performing the type of masculinity that sits atop the pile in terms of power frequently involves violence or threat (Archer 1994, Bowker 1998). As



Bowker puts it, violence represents the “dark side of masculine role performance”, with 90 % of violence being perpetrated by men. Edwards (1989) points out “the safest place for men is the home. By contrast home is the least safe place for women”. Where hegemonic masculinity has been widely accepted and becomes dominant, the idea that men are meant to be violent becomes normalised. This may help to explain men’s huge overrepresentation among those involved in violent crime (Newburn and Stanko, 1994).

Dominant forms and codes of masculinity can serve to legitimise violence, both towards others and the self, as a means of dealing with emotional pain, when to talk about difficult feelings, or ask for help, would only lead to a loss of masculine power. Scase (1999) suggests that macho stereotypes are a contributing factor in the 60% increase in male suicides between 1991 and 1997; “some men face an increasingly sad and lonely existence, being unable to cope physically, emotionally or psychologically with their isolation”. If there is a strong incongruence between their internal world and the emotional expression permitted to their gender, some young men will feel unable to find a socially sanctioned outlet for painful or troubling feelings. Research by Walker and Kushner (1999) into the emotional experience of male teenagers found many boys experience “an acute dichotomy between a public and private authentic self”, which reinforces emotional problems. Many studies quote individual young men who are very aware of these polarities and the pressures they tend to create for boys making choices about masculinity as they grow up.

For example, De Visser (2008) presents a case study of “John” who describes himself as not “a manly man”. When De Visser asks him to say what he means by that he is very clear that “manly men” embody a “masculinity characterized by dominance, machismo, leadership, and competitiveness”. His own masculinity is described using more traditionally feminine attributes such as being thoughtful, quiet, and intuitive. De Visser notes that John uses a “binary categorization with masculine attributes at one pole in contrast with feminine attributes at the other pole”. Here we see what can be characterised in psychoanalytic terms as *splitting*. This is the idea that there are only two options available to you, good or bad. In this context you either fit the prescribed masculine template or you don’t. And for many young men masculinity is a very narrow ledge along which they must walk, all too easy to slip off and fall.

This type of binary understanding of masculinity tells men that they are not really free to define their own masculinity, taking up some aspects of hegemonic maleness and refusing others. The approved way of being male is decided for them and they must try to fit it as best they can, certainly in public spaces of performance. The tension between these private and public male selves is often very difficult for men to negotiate and often shows up in the consulting room. An emotionally close relationship with a balanced father is one of the best ways in assisting a boy through this difficult process, helping him to realise that a man’s private space is nearly always more complex, unsure and nuanced than the sort of maleness sold as the norm

within mainstream public space, especially the extremely split public space of the average teenage boy. Revealing to his son that he too may have shared such struggles as a young man, and offering to talk about them, may be one of the greatest gifts a father can offer his son. Sadly it was a gift all too rarely received by sons in the past, where fathers were often constrained from opening up in such ways by the very models of masculinity which were damaging their sons in the first place.

This dichotomy also shows up in writing related to the intersection between masculinity and fathering itself. Lupton and Barclay (1997) point out that most academic writing about masculinities tends to focus on the performance of maleness in public space (work, sport, between male friends) and less on the “domestic or private sphere”. This, they argue, is strange when psychology tells us that early relational experience in the home is of crucial importance in building a subjective sense of gender. Experience of being fathered is mostly absent from much of this literature in a way that the whole construct of motherhood is rarely absent from feminist writing.

Seidler (1992) argues that whether it is fear of rejection, vulnerability, wariness, guilt low self-esteem or emotional illiteracy, many men appear unable to expose their inner selves. A 1999 Samaritans study of depressed and suicidal young men identified a paradox about emotional expression: they had a deep wish to be heard yet hugely feared revealing their vulnerability. One young man said “nobody asks me how I feel but I would rather smash something up than talk about my feelings”. Of course these

feelings will not apply exclusively to young men, but in internalising what it means to be male in our society this man has understood only too well what is required of him; suppress your emotions and fear to such an extent that they may leak out as anger and violence (which is then punished). As Lewis (1997) says: “it is no wonder they try and solve this problem by turning off their feelings altogether”. It is clear from my therapeutic practice that anger is the one feeling that men feel able to express easily without compromising their masculine sense of themselves; other feelings can be more problematic.

Kimmel (1994) suggests the overriding emotion of masculinity is fear – of one’s sexuality, emotion and, not least, of other men. The fear we will be exposed as less than men. This provides the conditions for the thriving of homophobia and the objectification and abuse of women. Men’s’ complicity in anti gay or anti-female attitudes may stem from a fear of being “cast out” and declared not a proper man like “us”.

Henwood, Gill and McClean (2002) argue that psychologists are now looking at men and masculinity theory in new ways. Instead of arriving at explanations for men’s conduct based on assumptions, they are questioning what it means to be a man (Ferguson, 1993). Henwood *et al* see this as a new sensibility critical of dominant constructions of masculinity whilst still being able to empathise with the psychological distress of individual men. In occupying the dual role of researcher/practitioner it feels vital for me to honour this position. In other words being able to investigate, and often

critique, dominant forms of masculine performance in research whilst still genuinely attuning to the real internal world of male clients.

Everyone in society, men and women, may benefit from men being released from their internal, emotional prison, what Henwood *et al* call the “myths of male stoicism, self-containment and autonomy”. Bordo (1999) points out that current masculinity research is helping us to appreciate “just how needy men can be, that they do really come from the same planet as women and that we are all desperate for love and demolished by rejection”.

#### 3:4 The influence of father involvement on their sons

There is a striking absence in the literature (both research and psychoanalytic) of the role played by strong, positive father relationships in helping boys to shape their sense of masculine identity. Certainly psychoanalysis tended to concentrate more on the need for father to break the potentially smothering bond with mother. This will be explored in greater detail in section 3.5 of this chapter. How does the boy make decisions to either emulate or go against the model offered by his father and other key men?. What happens to a boy fathered by a man with little or no capacity for empathy? My Masters research found that boys who are initially exposed to, and internalise, strongly hegemonic masculinity beliefs are sometimes able to transform their gender beliefs into something more balanced which enhances their sense of emotional wellbeing (Evans and Wallace, 2007). To date the literature available to therapists hoping to understand this

transformative process is sparse. In particular, the role therapeutic practitioners can play in helping clients to explore or reshape masculine identity needs to be more clearly understood.

Odone (Observer, March 2006) quotes a study which found that when fathers and mothers were tested for their reactions (in terms of sweat, heart rate and body temperature) to their baby's crying, the fathers heart races, his skin heats up and his hands sweat just as much as the mothers. This raises some very interesting questions about the instinctiveness of fathering which is often downplayed or ignored, whilst the instinctive reactions of the mother are reified and feted.

Osherson (2001) argues for the central importance of the father-son relationship to a boy's emotional development. He feels fathers' model manhood for their sons and the hunger for father's love and approval is a theme which suffuses literature, mythology and religious texts. He cites research (eg. Ullian, 1981; Lever, 1976) which shows that between the ages of three and five, boys begin to withdraw from mothers and femininity, becoming quite stereotyped in their thinking on what it means to be "like mummy or like daddy" (p 65). These studies show us that boys, from five upward, will tend to focus more on rules rather than relationships and will emphasise "games of power, strength and achievement".

Osherson says that some boys grow into men with a "wounded father within" (p76) because their fathers were either rejecting, incompetent or absent. His

contention is that many men are left with an internal legacy of loneliness, vulnerability and rage as a result of never really knowing what went on in their father's inner, emotional life. The older we are, and the more our own fathers stuck to this silent, remote, breadwinner model of fathering the more likely we are to suffer this legacy. Hite (1981, cited in Osherson) says that of over 7,000 participants in her seminal work on male sexuality "almost no men said they had been or were close to their fathers". It may well be that over the past quarter century as men's and women's roles have changed many men are more emotionally available to their sons than before. Of course, parallel to this change, has been the ever more rapid break-up of marriages, families and the rise of the "weekend dad". Today many boys in our culture struggle for close, emotionally available contact with older men, particularly as any contact between adult men and children becomes possibly tainted by the angst about paedophilia currently evident.

Corneau (1991) says that many men live in a "hereditary silence that has been passed down the generations which denies every teenage boy's need for recognition from his father. It is almost as though fathers are subject to a rule of silence that decrees that fathers who speak about their internal world are a threat to male solidarity" (p10). With the huge pressure on men to appear in charge, autonomous and self-reliant this should not be a surprise. In my study of male prisoners a tiny minority group emerged who had experienced a strong and loving paternal relationship in which emotional dialogue played a central role. They had never internalised the codes and

rules of hegemonic masculinity and defined themselves as men outside of its dictates. Both described themselves as happy, emotionally open men.

By contrast those who had inadequate or painful relationships with their fathers, or very little fathering at all, have been left with “psychological holes that quickly fill up with dangerous fantasies about masculinity” (p22) (Corneau, 1991). The truth of this is evident for me when reflecting on my clinical work with many young, male sexual and violent offenders.

There is now a wide body of research detailing the effects of positive father involvement on child development. The discussion on page 15 looked at exactly what we might mean by ‘positive father involvement’, and how it was important not to oversimplify this notion down to whether the father lives with his child or not. Some research quoted in this next section is unclear on this point, although more recent studies such as Fagan and Iglesias (1999) found that there needed to be actual change in the quality of the fathers’ engagement with the child in order to see significant outcomes. This offers support for the idea raised earlier that conceptual oversimplification around father involvement is problematic, not just in the research field but in much media discussion on this topic.

In their meta-analysis of studies looking at parental involvement and child educational outcomes, Pleck and Masciadrelli (2004) found most studies showed significant positive relationships between the level of father participation and the child's development (these studies all controlled for



mother involvement). Children with involved fathers are also more likely to achieve economic and educational success, manage good careers and display greater levels of emotional and psychological well being (Amato, 1994; Furstenberg & Harris, 1993). One crucial base for well-being is a child becoming securely attached to primary care-givers. Normally this refers to mothers but studies show that when fathers are involved in caring for infants the baby will develop a secure attachment to them too (Cox, Owen, Henderson, & Margand, 1992). Father involvement is positively correlated with lower rates of depression (Furstenberg & Harris, 1993) and lower levels of fear and guilt (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1990). Young adults who had nurturing and available fathers are more highly self-accepting (Fish & Biller, 1973) and we see greater emotional wellbeing when the paternal relationship is secure, supportive, sensitive, nurturing, and warm (Biller, 1993; Radin, 1981).

Such research also suggests that close paternal bonds can help to prevent children, especially boys, from becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour (Harris et al., 1998) and is associated with lower rates of drug use, truancy, and stealing (Barnes, 1984). Furstenberg and Harris (1993) found that boys who strongly identified with their fathers were 80% less likely to have been in jail. In the UK a National Literacy Report (2001) found that boys with involved fathers were less likely to be involved with the criminal justice system

Conversely, boys lacking a good father relationship may have higher rates of emotional problems; for example Bogels and Phares (2008) suggest that if father is not warm, involved and robust in encouraging the child's active exploration of the world, his son may be at risk of developing anxiety symptoms. Boys with absent or uninvolved fathers are more likely to be hyperactive or disruptive in schools (Kasen, Cohen, Brook, & Hartmark, 1996) and are more likely to commit suicide (Brent, Perper, Moritz, & Liotus, 1995).

In summary boys lacking a strong, emotionally available father are very vulnerable to internalising and acting out the boy code perpetuated by hegemonic masculinity or to retreating within themselves when under emotional pressure as the 'traditional good provider' model dictates. Their "empty" masculine self, referred to by Seidler (above) needs to be filled with something. This body of work suggests that in the absence of a good masculine object to idealise and receive mirroring confirmation from, the boy is left to fill this empty masculine vat with whatever is instantly available; often the posturing, aggressive, unfeeling, strongman imagery to which the average teenage boy is often exposed to via peer groups, sporting and music video scenarios. The 'hardman' archetypal image so prized by hegemonic masculinity leads many of its followers straight to the prison, the morgue, the gang or the unemployment office and many more to a life of emotional isolation, violence and conflict.

A study of heterosexual adult men in Australia by Gruenert (2003) found the memories of “securely” attached or “resilient” groups of men showed their fathers were involved with their lives. They mentored their sons and there was a sense of mutual respect and understanding. Any punishment or conflict was perceived to have been handled fairly and mildly. Their fathers were still seen as role models for maleness and it was felt their support was available throughout their lives. In contrast, the “anxious” “foreclosed” and “fearful” groups (p189) had experienced abusive, negative or distant father relationships. These groups reported greater all-round psychological problems, restricted intimacy with other men and higher levels of homophobia.

Several researchers point out that men may face great conflict between their internalised view of masculinity (particularly those who hold the hegemonic masculine or even traditional provider model of maleness) and the role of being dad. Doucet (2004a, 104) notes that fathers who are primary caregivers for their children often hold stories about maleness which conflict with “the ways in which practices, identities, and ideologies of caring remain strongly associated with femininity.” This suggests that for some men there is a persistent sense of embarrassment in disclosing their child-care role to others, particularly to other men, as they are concerned this may detract from their sense of masculinity (both internally and in the eyes of others). Wall and Arnold (2007) analysed articles in a Canadian newspaper about family life. They note that even where stay-at home dads and/or highly involved fathers are described there is “an absence of talk about the importance of attachment, bonding, and meeting emotional or developmental needs. The

assumption that it is mothers in particular with whom young children need to spend time is also reinforced”.

This concept, that fathers are unsure of what their roles might be and how they might reconcile psychological conflicts with internalised models of masculinity, has a long history in psychoanalytic theory. From a counselling psychologist perspective it is vital to look at how some key therapeutic theory has typically understood the role of the father in his son’s life.

### 3:5 Psychoanalytic view of Fathering

Psychodynamic theory, together with my own clinical experience (as a Chartered Counselling Psychologist), suggests father can serve as a guide and mentor on the boy’s journey into the wider world, a bridge away from primary merger with the mother figure. In that sense he represents otherness. Where good enough fathering is present he can act as a mediator between the child’s subjective experience and the world “out there”. He is naturally intersubjective. This links back to the crucial role outlined above whereby dad can help his son, particularly in the tricky time surrounding adolescence, to work through his feelings about being male.

Commonly in psychoanalytic literature the ‘Oedipal father’ took centre stage in the early life of the child, particularly the boy child. According to Kalinich (2007) this view remained dominant until the early 1980s (especially in the US) when the mother-child dyadic focus of theories like

self-psychology began to closely mirror the post-feminist shift taking place in how society viewed women's roles. The Oedipal father is the potentially castrating rival for mother's body and intimacy with whom the little boy will compete and be fearful of from the age of 3 until about 6 or 7 when the latency period begins. Tangled up with this view was the very particular take on gender roles predominant in Freud's era. In *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) Freud puts it like this "this turning from mother to father points in addition to a victory of intellectuality over sensuality – that is an advance in civilisation". As a result of the oedipal struggle the boy will come to identify more with father, who after all shares his biological make-up, than with mother. Father saves him from remaining overly absorbed with the mother.

It is also important to add that psychoanalytic writing remained obsessed with the idea of the death or murder of the father. Indeed in *Totem and Taboo* (1913) Freud recounts an old morality tale in which a band of brothers come together to murder their violent and incestuous father in order to have access to the tribe's women. After this act they are tortured by guilt and then impose a taboo on incest and murder. Freud argues that such an event (the template for the Oedipus complex) heralds the birth of "religion, morals, society and art". This idea, that men are the ones who must create and sustain a moral society, runs deep throughout all hegemonic male thinking and has been established at the heart of Western society through the male-dominated power structures seen within religion, politics and the law. This ancient notion runs back to the biblical story of Eve as the original sinner and

can be seen in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century male arguments that women were too emotional and unreliable to be given the vote.

To prepare himself for this important moral role as an independent adult male Freud felt the boy must (both symbolically and psychologically) 'murder' his father. In this account, the dead father eventually becomes the child's superego. If we look at Freud's circle it is full of rebellion against the father (Freud): from Jung to Adler and from Kohut to Ferenczi the 'sons' eventually turned against the father.

Grunberger (1989) describes the role of the father as something deeply cruel but necessary. The disrupter of the heavenly bond between mother and child, the beast that tears the little one away from the nurturing but illusory safety of the mother's body and redirects them towards the harder, colder realities of the outside, adult world. He is the boatman on the river across the gulf from infancy to separated adulthood. His task must be accomplished, if necessary, with cold, emotionless starkness. If he fails, particularly in the case of male children, the boy will be condemned to "regressive narcissism, avoiding the world and searching for the illusory consolations of the womb". The price of failure is the emergence of the mummy's boy: the weak, dependent, possibly effeminate male child that represents the ultimate horror of the traditional or hegemonic male. This is what most boys and men are so keen to distance themselves from. Indeed hegemonic masculine performance is a deep-seated defence against this feared outcome. A great deal of effort and emotional energy goes in to reassuring themselves, and everyone else,

that they are not this terrible thing: the feminised male. Prince Phillip once described his role in the formative life of the infant Prince Charles being “to beat all that namby-pamby, girly nonsense out of him”. Perhaps we see here the archetypal English Upper Class mindset which tears male children from the bosom of the family at age seven or eight, sending them away to boarding school to train for the reality of life. Or possibly, as they saw it, to “rescue” them from mummy’s clutches?

Frosh *et al* (2002; p 8) says that many boys communicate to him “a strong sense of limitation imposed on them by the hegemonic ideal: how for instance they could not confide in others when upset, could not reach out to their fathers and were constrained by homophobia from getting close to other males”. We should not underestimate the terror underlying this need to appear as a tough, straight, independent male. Or the emotional price paid for its maintenance.

Lacan (1953) echoes this, describing the fatherly function as a negative one, to say no, set limits, punish, to use language that usually constrains or limits the child by “breaking into the cosy world of narcissistic absorption and announces the creation of a cultural subject, the child as social being”. In this we can see that the father must be willing to disregard his own emotional needs for closeness to the child in order to prepare him for what is coming.

Conveniently this fits closely with the hegemonic/traditional idea that men will have very limited needs of this type to begin with. If they do it is

healthier, and more male, to suppress them. And if you cannot suppress them certainly do not admit to them publically. This perpetuates the common notion of masculinity as sacrifice, disregard for one's own health or safety, the man who is willing to die in battle, or symbolically on the sports field, in exploration, in conquest, on the road or through labour and work. The king, the warrior and the hero archetypes all share this ability to disregard one's own physical or emotional needs for the greater good. We see it in Captain Oates' understated "I may be some time" as he wanders out of the tent to his certain death in the arctic wastes. We see it in the officer who leads his men over the top despite the danger. In the team captain, the astronaut, the test pilot and almost every Hollywood action hero who ever graced the silver screen.

The tendency to split around templates of maleness, outlined above, leaves young men vulnerable when the only models of masculinity offered public approval are the extreme versions described here. It is not that the cricket captain, the space hero or the sacrificing warrior are bad models per se, but to be reflected reasonably in the life of this modern young man, they may need some realistic adaptation and nuancing, which he might not be easily capable of alone.

The direct shadow side of this suggested superhero performance is what presents itself in therapy rooms, doctor's surgeries, prisons and mental hospitals. The fear of one's body as anything other than a performing machine, heedless of danger or injury to itself, the fear of vulnerability or



dependence on others for well-being, the fear of femininity which needs protecting, support or demonstrates softness, concern or gentleness. Masculinity as competition, aggression, control, violence and, crucially, distance from the emotional world of others and estrangement from the feeling side of self. The whole Oedipal competition echoes this concept of maleness, the battle only ending in the boy child's renouncing of his claim on mother because of terror at the prospect of being castrated by father.

Some Jungian analysts have seen a more positive role for the father. Von Der Heydt (1973) feels he "embodies reason and knowledge, light and sun. Father is mediator between the exciting world outside and the home. This is the way in which the father gives birth to his children (p133)". Again we see the recurring idea of father as a bridge to the rest of the world, to adulthood, to masculinity in the case of the boy. As my practice and previous research demonstrates, the presence of this bridge, and how the boy experiences it, will set the pattern for many of his later relationships (to self, others and the world). Von Der Heydt's definite splitting of the paternal/maternal roles is the product of reductionist analytic thinking, typical of its time, which believes that mother broadly teaches anxiety while father teaches resilience. She keeps the child looking inward to the home, protected, while he turns them to face outward, into life. This too is a very old idea; a Mayan Indian proverb says "*mother must hold the baby close so that the baby knows it is his world. Father must take him to the highest hill so that he can see what his world is like*".

Jung himself in his paper “The Significance of the Father in the Destiny of the Individual” (1949) presents several case studies where the role of the father in the development of the child’s psyche is seen as central.

Unfortunately, as with many analysts of the time, he tends to focus on the two central themes of father-son relations in early psychoanalytic writing: the oedipal struggle and the need to avoid homosexuality. As other Jungian writers (eg. Corneau, 1997) have pointed out this merely mirrors the fear of being homosexual present in many men; “so insidious and persistent, it haunts all the friendly bonds men have with other men. It poisons the possibility of masculine eroticism and it prevents many fathers from touching their sons (p26)”.

Later Jungian theorists expand these original ideas. Ralph Layland (cited in Samuels , 1985 p 153) argues strongly for the concept of the “good enough or loving father” to mirror the familiar “good enough mother” developed earlier by Donald Winnicott. Samuels posits four key functions of the “internal father” (p24): around personal authority, ideals and values, sexual identity and role in society. One could add that father may well simply offer a different attachment style to mother, a different way of regulating affect and arousal and an alternative way of being in the world. In this way the object relational environment inside the child, which Bowlby (1969) called “the internalised working model of relationships” is likely to be enriched and diversified, and helps the child to function more effectively and easily within the adult world of relationship.

### 3:6 Object Relations: Internalisation of the masculine object and its effect on later mental health

Within psychodynamic theory the area of object relations offers another important theoretical context for this research. It is also the major area from which I practice therapy personally.

The basic premise of object relations is that the need for relationship is primary and the self is made up of internalised relationships at both conscious and unconscious levels. Early experiences of closeness and how we come to feel about the struggle between intimacy and autonomy shape our sense of self and our way of being with others. Fairburn (1946, 1955) made differences with Freud explicit. He redefined the purpose of life as relationship not gratification of instincts. Winnicott (1963, 1971) developed the concept of “good enough mothering” which has entered mainstream consciousness. The central focus of much of his writing is on the intersubjective experience of the self. He did not see development as coming either from inside out or outside in. Rather he was interested in overlap—the “intermediate space”—between internal and external reality, in other words the realm of intersubjectivity.

Bowlby (1969, 1988) proposed his own synthesis of Freudian and Object Relational ideas in the idea of inbuilt attachment behaviour. His work provides powerful evidence of the young child’s need for a stable

relationship. He particularly looks at the impact of different parenting styles on the future secure or insecure attachment styles of children. This will impact their approach to relationships later in life. From the standpoint of this research the different ways of fathering, or acting male, that a young male child is exposed to in his connection to his main father figure will influence his later relationship to his masculine self, other men and to women.

However it is important to note that while classical psychoanalysis relegated father to the competitive oedipal role, the breaker of the bond with mother and the guide towards the outside world, it still saw his role as central if somewhat brutal. Object Relations more or less ignores him completely. From Klein, through Winnicott's Good Enough Mother to Bowlby's focus on attachment theory, the concern is almost entirely on the quality of relationship between mother and child. Father is relegated to providing the structure within which this mothering takes place. He pays the bills and keeps a safe, warm roof over everybody's heads. This fits very neatly with the idea of the good, emotionally detached provider father which was becoming increasingly dominant in the post-war years when Object Relations theory was beginning to challenge some central tenets of classical psychoanalytic theory. As Frosh (2002) puts it "where is the father in all this? Eaten by the mother it seems (p26)".

In many ways this relegation of the father to the sidelines is a by-product of modern society. As Diamond (2007) suggests, before the industrial revolution men tended to work near to the home and often were closely

involved in their son's lives, teaching them their trade, how to farm or raise livestock. Following urbanisation more men began to commute and were away from home for much longer hours. Contact between fathers and children dwindled. Eventually by the mid-twentieth century men were largely seen as the providers who built the frame within which the crucial work of mothering the child could occur. In recent years this notion is still widely held, despite the fact mother is increasingly involved in 'building the frame' too.

It is surprising, and saddening, that father got so lost in the Object Relations literature. According to Kohut (1981) we form our own identity by idealising someone else, receiving positive, warm mirroring from them, feeling that we are like them in some way (twinship) and, finally, by incorporating elements of them inside ourselves through the process of "transmuting internalisation". In this way we structure self. It was just primarily assumed that the person who helped us to do these things was mother. As Corneau (1991) points out the "young male must proceed from the primary identification with the mother to an identification with the father (p14)". It seems sensible to think that this will be through following a similar mixture of idealising, mirroring and twinship needs met in the context of a close relationship, but with dad as well as mum.

And indeed the fathers may well be yearning for this closeness as much as their sons. Akhtar and Parens (2004) quote a variety of studies demonstrating fathers' "instinctive" responses to their children, including one

from Greenberg and Morris who describe fathers' "engrossment" in their new-born babies. They draw the comparison between this "engrossment" and Winnicott's notion of "primary maternal preoccupation".

Chodorow (1989, cited in Lupton et al) argues that the process of separation from the mother is more important for boys than for girls "underpinning the apparent need for detachment and rationality that supports a masculinist approach to self". Classically within psychoanalysis there has lurked the fear of what Jung called "the mother-devoured neurotic personality", who never escapes mother's domination and control. Boys are usually a different gender from their primary care-giver and inhabiting one's role as a boy/man requires a definitive break with mother that is not required of girls.

More recently some theorists have been arguing that this need to completely break with mother is exaggerated. Diamond (2004) places equal emphasis on the father's pre-oedipal relationship with both his son and the boy's mother saying both are significant in shaping boys' gender identity. Additionally he sees the way the mother responds to the son's developing sense of his maleness as vitally important. The author argues that "these early paternal (and maternal) identifications live on in every male and continue to impact the sense of maleness in a dialectical interplay throughout the life span" (p359).

Far less prevalent in the literature is the "father devoured consciousness" as defined by Stein (1973), whereby through his "rigid insistence on

conventional thought, feeling and behaviour.... he demands attention to duty as defined by prevailing collective norms (p64)”. This type of male consciousness, devoured by hegemonic masculinity beliefs, emerged clearly in the group “HM internalised and maintained” in my previous research.

Finally, another relevant concept from Object Relations theory is the Kleinian (1945) notion of schizoid splitting between good and bad already mentioned above. This tends to apply in many areas of life – especially during childhood – as in the ‘in group’ and the ‘out group’, proper boys and the rest.

It is also interesting to look at how the therapist-client relationship changed (from about 1960 to 1980) when drive theory was superseded by object relational ideas. As Richards (2007, cited in Kalinich and Taylor, 2009) puts it “the analyst as father, distant and unquestionable, was superseded by the self-disclosing participant analyst”. In other words the therapeutic relationship became warmer and more emotionally available to the client.

### [3:7 Feminist Perspectives on Fathering](#)

Some of the most interesting revisioning of the fathering role has come from feminist theory. Benjamin (1988) questions the traditional polarised split between male and female roles in parenting. For her the process of internalising parts of others and building them into a new self is far more complex than the wholesale adoption of mother or father. She suggests that

the identificatory and nurturing love which many small boys share with their fathers is prematurely snuffed out because of parental fears of producing a feminised or homosexual child. Frosh (2002) interprets her work in this way “the active presence of a loving father, unafraid of the threat of the young child will give the capacity to surmount loss and become integrated in relationships with others (p30)”.

If on the other hand there is an emotional and physical abandonment of the boy by his father in early childhood (to protect his future masculinity or the father’s sense of his own maleness) the boy is likely to come to only one conclusion: that to be male is to be separate and emotionally and physically unavailable and self-reliant, particularly when it comes to other men.

Hooks (2004) said that “in our culture we say very little about the longing for father love. Feminism tended to focus on the idea that males were powerful and had it all. It did not tell us about the deep inner misery of men” (p4). She argues that the emotional unhappiness of men goes unnoticed in society precisely because “patriarchy teaches a form of emotional stoicism to men that says they are more manly if they do not feel, or if they do feel, to stuff them down, forget about them and hope they go away (p6)”.

Her next key point reinforces something present in much of the literature. “There is only one emotion that patriarchy values when expressed by men: anger. Anger is a positive expression of patriarchal masculinity (p7)”. Again this is something recognisable from my practice, particularly young,



working class men who are on the edge of criminal activity or social exclusion. Hooks suggests that all of us – men and women – are afraid of this patriarchal maleness. Men have a tough choice when faced with it. They either become complicit with it and act from a hegemonic masculine position themselves or if they show they are afraid or disapproving of it they risk mockery, shame, violence or exclusion from other men.

Boys learn this is the deal very early on. When very small, boys tend to be just as tearful, emotional, fearful, clingy and playful as girls. The intensity of this largely depends on the child's personality and their home setting rather than simply being a given of their gender. The rigid policing of gender can start either in the home (with parents or siblings) or may wait until play school or primary school. But at some point boys realise forcefully that certain tastes, activities, behaviours, clothes, toys, colours and emotions are shameful for them as boys and carry the threat of being called girly or gay. These messages pervade everything from choice of colours for their bedrooms, through messages about "big boys not crying" to the current pervasive use of the word "gay" to mean anything lame or rubbish, in UK schoolrooms. Stores like Mothercare have clearly separate aisles for boys' and girls' toys. The threat, sometimes explicit, more often implicit, is of exclusion from the boys club, of mockery and ultimately of violence. To stay as one of us you must act as we do, like the things we like, speak as we do and dislike and mock the things we feel different from.

As Hooks says “boys are encouraged by patriarchal thinking to claim rage as the easiest path to manliness. It should come as no surprise, then, that beneath the surface there is a seething anger in boys, a rage waiting for the moment to be heard” (p44). And heard it often is. As outlined above when anger is seemingly the only expression available to boys if they wish to stay masculine, and when their natural self-expression of other feelings is often so rigidly curtailed and suppressed, why do we wonder that anger, violence, sarcasm, materialism and the fierce bonding mentality of gangs become so attractive to adolescent boys. If feelings are feminine, and anything feminine in boys makes you gay, then you shy away from them for fear of being cast out by the other boys (and often by girls too). We can see that homophobia arguably does much emotional damage to straight boys as well as to those growing up gay. Cut off from much of the natural emotional outlet and support available between women they resort to joshing, competing and fighting with each other. The only safe time to touch another man is on the sports field, the only safe time to talk about your emotional inner world on the other side of a barrel of beer. No wonder this emotional isolation produces such dire consequences for many men.

And if your father is also absent or distant there is no man at home to comfort you and explain why all of this is taking place. So one of the only options open to you is to join the club and accept this is the way things are meant to be. Many writers in this field (Pittman, 1992; Connell 1995; Mac An Ghail, 1994, Whitehead, 2002) make the point that boys are longing for someone to teach them how to be men and to show that loving closeness can

exist between men. This wound, “father hunger” as Pittman calls it, is often carried throughout life and re-emerges in connections to partners, children, friends, colleagues and therapists.

Hayslett-McCall and Bernard (2002) argue that boys disproportionately experience disruptions of early attachment. In earlier societies, they point out, social practices helped boys accomplish that task, these included ‘initiation rites’ that occurred at puberty which help boys become men. Modern societies, however, largely lack such practices. Chodorow (1989) feels that boys achieve the first part of this process: they break attachments to the mother but do not always establish attachments to the father. As a result by the time they reach school age many boys are largely unattached to anyone. We can see that many of the emotional problems already outlined may stem from this lack of attachment. In this lies the root of the male emptiness, loneliness and rage that so many writers speak of.

However, all is not lost. There is some interesting recent research suggesting that the notion of acceptable masculinity may be expanding, particularly when it comes to fathering. Johansson and Klinch (2007) found the majority of the new Swedish fathers they interviewed showed far greater involvement with their children than previous generations. They suggest the traditional hegemonic structure may be changing fast; “to qualify for hegemonic masculinity, it is no longer enough to be rational, goal-means oriented, career oriented, and disciplined. Today, men must also show their readiness to engage in child care...” (p17). And if that underlying construct of

masculinity is expanding, to incorporate a different response to children, then the emotional impact we see in many of today's adult males may start to shift in the generation coming up. It may also be, of course, that the very nature of hegemonic masculinity will be radically changed, as most hegemonies do alter over time in response to changing conditions.

This shows us that individual men are not making choices and decisions about maleness in a total vacuum. Much as we like to think of ourselves as free agents when it comes to deciding who we are and how we express ourselves, most of us realise that this process takes place within a much wider series of power structures, political and social discourses about gender and exposure to different language, or ways of approving or disapproving of particular ways of doing maleness. Just as we will have operated within such forums, so will our fathers. To examine these ideas more closely we must turn to post-modernist thinking and, particularly, to Michel Foucault.

### 3:8 The Subject of Wider Discourses: Constructing gender in the face of gender policing (Foucault)

As Frosh (2002) puts it “human subjects may be socially constructed but from that constructed position they exert choices which are never quite reducible to the forces that constructed them in the first place (p3)”. In other words we are much more than the sum of our original formative parts. There is something for the therapist here in that we can recognise those clients for whom a sense of authorship over or control of their own lives has been lost.

It is from that place of feeling stuck or losing hope that many men make the choice to come to therapy. We also, hopefully, have witnessed the profound changes that occur when male clients begin to regain a feeling of mastery over their journey and their lives.

So as subjects we take in and incorporate much that is outside of us. Initially this will be from relationships with primary caregivers but over time will extend to siblings, peers, teachers, role models and wider social, political and cultural messages about what it means to be male. One key therapeutic task is for the practitioner to assist the client in unpicking the intersubjective relationship between these interpersonal/extrapersonal forces and what takes place inside us, intrapersonally. How do we make sense of the varieties of masculinity on offer to us? How do we decide on their relevance to us? Clearly most of us do not merely swallow wholesale one of the competing versions and simply ape it. Through continual negotiated life and relational experience we come to perform a series of masculine roles that vary enormously given the context, our life stage and how safe we feel with others around us. Clinical experience suggests that male therapists particularly will be crucial in helping male clients understand the relationship between the secret and public male selves they inhabit, particularly so if the man's father did not do such a good job in this role during childhood.

Frosh draws our attention to the classic adoption of a "scientist's gaze" around gender which mimics the "medical gaze" in Foucault. He suggests that the scientist needs to rid himself of "the personal, the erratic or the

confused” and that traditionally this meant the removal of anything related to femininity: “the fertile, messy, unpredictable, all-too-sensual, all-too-human, incoherence that reflects the ambiguities of feeling more than the abstruse convictions of logical thought (p5)”. This notion fits precisely with the experience of men in prison (Evans and Wallace, 2007) who know very well that there are certain thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are better kept “off the landing”, away from the gaze of other men. While the harsh policing of acceptable maleness (both in others and in self) is particularly tangible in prison it occurs everywhere in society, as Foucault (1980) says “there is no need for arms, for physical violence....Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze which each individual under its weight will end interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer...thus exercising surveillance over, and against himself.” With the traditional dominance of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity men are usually their own most effective “panoptican” of surveillance. It is this internalised pressure which produces the “closet” from which many gay men struggled to liberate themselves. It also produces the guardedness over certain ways of acting, thinking and feeling which many of my male clients have reported.

Several other writers have drawn our attention to this blending of the personal and the societal in producing our gendered sense of self. Lupton and Barclay (*ibid*) sum it up well; “the interlinking of discourse, subjectivity, knowledge and power.....has a relationship to the project of the self and gender practices (p8)”. This is essentially making the broad Foucauldian point that our subjective experience of self does not, and cannot, arise in a

vacuum. We are subject to the power and gender discourses operating within our families, our communities and wider society. The decision to take up radical or alternative ways of being male was traditionally only made at great personal cost to the individual. Facing ostracisation or labelling as deviant, dangerous or powerless was often the result. As Foucault (1984) said “truth is linked in a circular relation with the systems of power which produce and sustain it”. Truth in this context being those hegemonic discourses which are able through their exercise of power to define what the truth is. Patriarchal or hegemonic masculinity has certainly been doing this in western societies for centuries.

These dominant discourses “invite and persuade individuals to conform to norms and expectations” (Lupton and Barclay, *ibid*). Whilst we do have choice as to whether, and how, we take up these discourses and make them our own, in many circumstances this choice is very limited. Lupton and Barclay argue that there is no coercion involved, that these discourses cleverly appeal to our natural desires for approval and belonging instead. I would argue that this is the “carrot” part of the equation. Certainly the promise of status being conferred, being one of the boys, being just like us, is a strong part of the appeal of hegemonic masculine discourse for adolescent boys. It is a point which Foucault articulates in the idea that power is not only repressive but generative too; it creates very strong discourses (Macey, 2004). By producing categories of “normal behaviour and people” it effectively produces a type of knowledge as well as repressing others.

However, the “stick” side is probably more powerful in reality. The threat of not adopting certain male ways of being is that you may be cast out, mocked, rejected, attacked, threatened and hated. This would seem to be a strong motivating factor for children and teenagers desperate to fit in and feel wanted. This process starts very early. Social learning theory studies such as Archer and Lloyd (1982) (cited in Stainton Rogers, 2001) show that three year old toddlers are less inclined to play with children who play in ways associated with the opposite gender. This tendency may be more pronounced in boys. In the BBC series ‘Child of our Time’ an experiment with four year olds asked children to drink from two cola cans (blue Rocket Cola and pink Princess Cola). The girls universally preferred Princess Cola (even though both drinks were in fact the same). The boys preferred Rocket Cola. More striking, however, were the sizeable group of small boys who refused to even touch the Princess Cola can let alone drink from it. It was as though they had already learned that boys can be ‘tainted’ and damaged socially by associating with ‘girly’ things. None of the girls refused to drink the ‘boy’ cola.

It is during adolescent years that this policing of maleness boundaries (by others and eventually, self) is at its most fierce. Duff (1999) says that western hegemonic masculinity must be regarded as a powerful limit restricting the experience of men. The policing of these limits is initially performed by others (fathers, brothers, friends, media and – crucially - girls and women) but eventually becomes internalised and the concept of self-policing takes hold (like the internalised panopticon referred to above). Most



adult men have a very strong sense of where these limits fall and the penalties for transgressing them. In recent times there has been some pushing of acceptable boundaries around male grooming and fashion awareness (driven by icons such as David Beckham). However, most teenage male discourse (eg. Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002) is still obsessed with what counts as properly male and differentiating oneself from anything too female. Diamond (2007) reminds us that “masculinity (in this culture) has to be proven over and over again”, and that the easiest way to do this is to “completely renounce femininity”.

Martino (1999) in his study of teenage boys’ discourse at an Australian school sees a strong Foucauldian frame for interpreting how heterosexual masculinities are policed in terms of category boundary maintenance work. This is documented through identification of certain categories of boys such as 'cool boys', 'squids', 'party animals' and 'poofs.' The 'cool boys' were actively involved in football and had a popular profile at the school. The ‘poofs’ were not. All of the boys were very clear which groups were desirable and which weren’t.

Foucault calls these “dividing practices” whereby the subject is either divided within themselves or from others. Examples include the sane and the mad, the criminal and law-abiding, the gay and the straight and, of course, the real man and the rest. Duff (1999) sees the integrity of masculine identities as being built on the “rejection of all feminine signifiers such that masculinity is essentially defined by that which it is not: woman”. This

offers reinforcement for Seidler's argument, quoted above, that masculinity is ultimately, in this account, an empty thing. However it is important not to fall too heavily in with this line. Much of the performance of hegemonic masculinity can be empty, rage filled, dominant over others and violent. But the existence of father-hunger, male bonding and this very sense of unfulfilled male closeness suggests that there is a very different type of softer, more open maleness that many men yearn for and secretly feel they already are. As we know profoundly different models of maleness have existed across the world for millennia. In western society we seem to have lost touch with them.

One of the strongest critiques (Cain 1993, Lupton et al, 1997) of Foucault from some therapists' viewpoint is that they see him as ignoring anything 'extra-discursive'. In other words those experiences (key from an object relational standpoint) that occur in the child's pre-verbal years and, perhaps more importantly, those experiences throughout our lives that go beyond words, chiefly the sensual, feelings related, inner world of subjective experience. As therapists we know that some of the most profound and moving moments in the practice space come from silences, eye contact, emotional energies that cannot always be translated into language. This is the key reason why it is felt important for this research to honour both the intrapersonal and interpersonal worlds of the participants. And, crucially, how these worlds combine in the intersubjective field to produce our experience of self.

However Kendall and Wickham (1999) sense a limited understanding of Foucault's intentions at work here and make it plain that they and other Foucauldian scholars interpret the idea of "discourse" outlined in the 'The Archaeology of Knowledge' as being about far more than simply language. They use the example of torture and its actions on the body; not necessarily involving actual language but communicating effectively nevertheless. Discourses will have produced the practice. The essence here is that dividing practices do not need actual spoken words to operate extremely effectively.

It is also worth mentioning here the idea of *gender schema theory* (Bem, 1981). Although originally interested in looking at psychological androgyny Sandra Bem expanded her work beyond the masculinity-femininity scale to argue that children note how society expects men and women to act and then internalise these ideas as 'core beliefs', or as she calls them gender schema. They will then assess all future experiences of gender (their own and that of others) against these gender schema. This implies a direct relationship between the child and societal discourses, whereas in reality parents will be the initial transmitters (and filters) of these messages for very young children, and an important influence thereafter. It also fails to acknowledge that there are multiple gender discourses operating and the child must select from those which feel practically applicable to their own situation.

3:9 Understanding Intersubjectivity: Relevance to the father-son forum, the researcher – participant dyad and the therapist-client relationship.

Based on the work of his mentor Edmund Husserl, Ortega y Gasset in his important work *Man and People* (1957), points out “the radical solitude of human life, the being of man, does not, then consist in there really being nothing except himself. Quite the contrary--there is nothing less than the universe, with all it contains. There is, then, an infinity of things but--there it is!--amid them Man in his radical reality is alone--alone with them. And since among these things there are other human beings, he is *alone with* them too (p134)”.

Klugman (2001) helps us to locate this idea within Object Relational therapeutic practice. He suggests therapists should bring into focus at all times "*both* the individual's world of inner experience *and* its embeddedness with other such worlds" (Stolorow & Atwood, 1992). Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2005) relate this idea to the young man's experience of trying to negotiate subject positions around gender: “having to construct their masculinities in the face of potent social discourses of hegemonic masculinity as hard and homophobic, and of intense personal struggles which intertwine with one another (p 53). So, the choices which finally feed into making up the sense of masculine self inside him are not made in a neutral environment, rather they come pre-loaded with the discursive energy and judgment of those around him. The boy knows or imagines when adopting a

subject position around masculinity the likely reactions of others to that position.

Intersubjectivity theory introduces the concept of an *intersubjective field* into which both parties contribute and help to co-create. No two intersubjective fields will be the same and indeed, one can argue that a new intersubjective space is created each time two people interact. Mitchell (2000) describes the increasing analytic acceptance of this idea as the “relational turn”. This acknowledges that “subjectivity always develops in the context of intersubjectivity”. With regard to a boy’s developing sense of maleness we can say that this does not develop merely inside of him but in relation with and reaction to the ways of being male he sees around him. And in reaction to the commentary and judgment placed on them by other people (both male and female). But it also means that each of us brings something to the table from within, some reaction, some resilience or choice to the options presented to us within our environment. As Frosh says “because of the agentic nature of human subjectivity these discourses do not hold absolute sway: they can be resisted and commented upon”.

This informs our understanding of certain ideas or behaviours that can be permitted expression in some intersubjective space and others which the subject feels must be hidden. It takes courage, and sometimes indifference to one’s popularity or wellbeing, to publicly resist strong and dominant discourses. The research interview, or even more the therapeutic relationship, may become a space where it is safe to let this mask slip in the presence of another man. Crossley (2000) believes that we learn

“intersubjective scripts concerning the appropriateness of certain types of action to certain types of situation and that we develop “back regions” in which to let the mask slip (p47)”. And as we have seen masculinity is often achieved by rigorously avoiding displaying anything associated with femininity and homosexuality.

### 3:10 How the male client understands his maleness will affect the therapeutic relationship

The post-modern period has seen our understanding of the therapeutic endeavour change radically. The turn to language/narrative and the rise of feminist, subjectivist and social constructionist thinking has seen a great focus on the processes through which identities are built, maintained, challenged and changed. Therapy is a space where this identity can be played out in transference, reflected upon, unpacked and understood. Stephen Frosh captures this nicely: “it (therapy) can facilitate a process of self-making in which the discursive possibilities in the culture are examined for their constraining and enabling potential, are revolved in the therapeutic space, and are made available for critique and a certain kind of reconstructive play”.

This suggests that male therapists need to be aware of how masculinisation processes have affected the building (and constant re-negotiating) of their own masculine self. They also need to understand and explore these processes in their male clients and, crucially, be alert to how wishes, beliefs,

fantasies and fears around maleness will arise in the relational space between the two men in the room.

Lupton and Barclay (*ibid*) look at how boys are encultured to find intimacy and dependency with another more threatening to their sense of self. They argue that boys soon come to recognise gendered meanings around autonomy/intimacy and learn how to phrase their own emotional needs according to this divide. For men who deeply inhabit this position there will be massive implications as to how they experience close relationships with partners, children, family, friends and, of course, therapists.

At some level “adult sons must be able to mourn the ideal fathers they did not have (p176)” (Corneau, 1997). In essence they must learn to father themselves. And considering the reparative aspect of the therapeutic relationship, they will take in certain elements of closeness, emotional openness and modelling of maleness from male therapists.

A fascinating study by Moynihan (1998) showed that a significant minority of men, who were cured of cancer, were experiencing anxiety or depression, or both. Yet no man had sought therapeutic help, which she suggests means it was crucial for men to be controlled and silent about their emotional pain. During interviews some men reveal their private fear and sadness, sometimes cuddling soft toys, usually in secret. But the concept of “self control” was clearly demonstrated and a stereotypical masculine identity constantly re-enacted in the face of illness where men described how they wept

(“blubbered”) in private far away from their families, and often in their cars where they felt “enclosed and safe.”

As practitioners we need to be deeply aware of this fear of vulnerability and help-seeking among many men. Masculinity beliefs may be the prime driver behind these fears. We already know that men, particularly black men, tend to seek help far later than women for both medical and psychological problems (eg. Moller-Leimkuller, 2003 and Banks, 2001). Other writers (Addis and Mahalik, 2003) have pointed out that ‘self-stigma’ in help seeking is particularly high where people associate psychotherapy with failing, losing control or being weak. All three factors are closely associated with men who hold hegemonic or traditional masculinity viewpoints. Vogel and Wade (2009) also make the point that practitioners need to be very sensitive to such men just at the point where they are finally able to ask for help; some active normalisation of this process as being fine for men may be needed early on. Pederson and Vogel (2007) found that men holding what they call “more traditionally masculine gender roles (p378)” are more likely to avoid seeking help and self-stigmatise. Their study compared men and women and found that men were far more likely to do this.

Some practitioners (eg. Nyland and Nyland, 2003) are now suggesting we can build on this knowledge by actively considering men’s personal narrative construction in our therapeutic approach. This acknowledges the effects of discursive practices in shaping identity, particularly gender discourses. Their approach does not see men as the problem, but rather views “the problem” as



the internalization of patriarchal discourses. That is what Edley and Wetherell (1999) see as “ what it means to be a person, the formulation of an internal life, an identity and a way of being in the world develop as external public dialogue moves inside to form the 'voices of the mind'” (p104). Seen this way therapy can be a safe space to examine and critique dominant discourses and can offer clients the possibility of stepping into different stories of being male. This is only true, of course, if the therapist, male or female, can respond to such concerns sensitively and with real awareness of the dilemmas facing individual men in our society.

Blazina (2001) urges the male therapist to pay special attention to his own countertransference. For example, self-disclosing around one’s own masculine insecurities as a client begins to develop idealising and merging transferences. He reminds us that we may “inadvertently rework the client's fragile masculine self if the therapist is unable to contain these dynamics....the therapist should become a self-object who serves the function of one who understands and explains that the gender role conflict that the client experiences is due to a cultural ideal that is unobtainable (p57)”. In line with object relational theory this becomes part of the “corrective emotional experience”, offering relief rather than shame.

The next short section offers a number of client vignettes from my own therapy practice which gives a brief flavour of how awareness of masculinity issues can offer the practitioner a greater depth of understanding on issues which may seem to be unrelated at first glance. Pseudonyms have been used for all these clients and any identifying information removed.

3:11 Client Vignettes from my therapy practice: Men and their relationship to father

JOSH

A 23 year old white man, working in the music industry, who is haunted by fears of inadequacy around his lack of height and his perception of having a small penis. His father, also a musician, had shared many tales around his youthful sexual hedonism and Josh feels unable to confide in his father or live up to the presented male image he sees amongst his male peers. He has deeply bought into the idea that other men are always sexually successful and dynamic. He feels there is something very wrong with him.

VIKRAM

A 35 year old Indian accountant whose sense of masochistic bitterness and lack of confidence stems largely from a very domineering and financially successful father. His model for maleness as he enters into marriage and considers fatherhood is fundamentally damaged and constricting. He has found it difficult to assert his real self in the face of his father's domination and control. He strongly dislikes his father's way of being male yet feels defeated by it and somewhat inferior to his dad.

GARY

A 22 year old white man with serious anger management issues. He has a history of violence and imprisonment. His father was a very similar man and had taught him to fight and to never show weakness. Our work together involved finding different ways to manage stress and express emotion. In many ways finding a new way to be male and still feel masculine.

### TREVOR

A 60 year old sex offender, whose father died during wartime and whom he never really knew. His sense of de-masculinisation, anger and injustice against his mother had been substantially transferred onto other young women whom he sexually assaulted and dominated. He had never been close to men and carried strong fantasies about the father he could have had. These feelings were a large part of the working through that occurred during therapy in his relationship with me.

### BILLY

A 25 year old white gay student. Billy is also HIV+. His emotionally distant father had left the family home several times during his childhood and left Billy with a strong sense of abandonment. His father also had a difficult reaction to his son's emerging sexuality and softer nature. Billy had been searching for a stronger, older male to look after him ever since he left home. He had contracted the HIV virus in a short relationship with one such man

who again abandoned him shortly after his diagnosis. His inability to insist on safe sex within this relationship was driven by his fears around further rejection.

### 3:12 The Research Question

#### Aim

The major research aim is to try and illumine men's processes of gender construction and maintenance and how this is affected by the relationship they had with their fathers growing up. This will, of course, be in turn affected by the fathers' attitudes on masculinity and the wider social messages on being male that both father and son would have received. Father is also likely to be a major influence on what type of "internalised masculine object" (Kohut, 1977) the boy takes with him into adulthood. He may well provide the central model of maleness that the boy either tries to emulate or explicitly rejects. It is clear from the psychodynamic literature that the role of father is under investigated, particularly when considering the developmental experience of boys.

From my previous research (Evans and Wallace, 2007) a clear split emerged between men who had internalised a good enough, loving relationship with father and those who hadn't. My findings reported a clear division between three groups of men. The first experienced a strong and loving paternal relationship in which emotional dialogue played a central role. From an

object relational perspective they had internalised a balanced, loving male object. The second group reported very negative and/or abusive relationships with fathers or fathers absent from a young age. They often express huge dislike for their fathers but lived predominantly from within hegemonic masculine codes. From an Object Relational perspective they had internalised a bad, abusive or empty male object. The final group also reported abusive/negative/absent paternal relationships and initially internalised the hegemonic masculine codes. However certain turning point experiences allowed them to move towards a more balanced view of their own masculinity. They had internalised a bad male object but had been subject to corrective emotional experiences which enabled this bad object to undergo some level of transformation.

As this research seeks to investigate an intersubjective phenomenon it will also be important to look at how the boy interacted with the wider social and political influences on gender (possibly mediated through father and his belief and behaviours).

The final aspect of the research aim is to try to discover information about the gender construction process between fathers and sons so that male practitioners particularly can be better informed about the transference dynamics at work between themselves and male clients. Also for all therapists to better understand that part of a male client's woundedness may originate in the intersubjective space co-created with his father.

## Questions

In order to gain access to the three levels on which I am arguing that gender is constructed (intrapersonal, interpersonal and social/political) it is vital that the questioning taps into these three inter-related fields.

So attempts must be made to tease out some of these beliefs, experiences, attitudes and feelings using questions such as:

- Can you tell me about your relationship with your father?
- Is there anything that you would have changed about him?
- Did you ever see him cry?
- What are your happy memories of being with him?
- How do you think he thought about being a man?
- What do you think about men who cry?
- What are your beliefs about how men should behave towards women? To other men?
- How do you feel about gay men?
- Do you feel men should be the financial provider?
- Do you feel comfortable expressing your personal feelings to women? To other men?

However these questions are only really guidance points. The methodologies chosen (as will be explained in depth later) aimed to make the best use of my experience as a psychodynamic therapy practitioner, as well as my research knowledge. So all of the interviews were conducted more as conversations

rather than a series of questions. The connection I built with participants enabled me to deepen, explore and offer possible interpretations of comments back to them for further clarification. Each interview was an attempt to investigate each man's lifelong experience of building ideas on gender (on all three levels) with particular reference to his father.

I aimed to help each man explore the construction of his masculine identity and how this inter-relates to the sense of self that develops in childhood and adolescence, particularly within the context of the father-son relationship. As a stream of this I tried to focus in on particular masculinity narratives and discourses men were exposed to growing up and how and why they select certain discourses as both relevant to them personally and socially acceptable.

#### **4: METHOD**

#### 4:1 Rationale for Combined Methodologies

A combination of three qualitative methodologies was employed to analyse data produced from a series of twenty semi-structured interviews. The decision to use this combined methodology came from my understanding of the complexity of the phenomena under investigation. Gender identity construction and father involvement will operate on a variety of inter-related levels as has already been outlined. Trying to access any of these without considering the impact of the others is likely to leave any piece of research with some serious gaps. The first level is the *intrapsychic arena (self)*, where the boy (and later the man) will try to make sense of gender ideas and messages within his own psychological and emotional inner world. Many of these beliefs and instinctive responses will operate at an unconscious level. The second level is the *interpersonal arena (me and dad)* of the father-son relationship and its emotional dialogue, modelling and transmission of desirable and non-desirable male characteristics.

Finally both of these levels are located within and affected by the *broader political and social gender discourses (other men and women, media, society`)* which both father and son will be exposed to. How the boy digests gender messages, images, judgements and discourses within the *intrapsychic arena* will be shaped, to a large extent, by what occurs in the other two fields. Indeed from the Object Relational viewpoint we see an internalisation of a particular masculine object. The boy takes in masculinity material from outside of the self, pre-loaded with the beliefs, attitudes, fears and fantasies



of others around maleness and wrestles with it inside of himself, holding onto some aspects and rejecting others. The way he then presents his maleness in the other two fields will be affected by what has taken place in this first, internal, field. So we can see that there is a continuous loop of creation, feedback and expression which runs across all three fields. A big shift in one will likely produce tangible results in the others. This is true even in regard to the wider social and political discourses, for although the individual man has a limited effect on shaping grand social narratives around gender, he has much greater control over his own response to these discourses, whether he accepts, resists, challenges or promotes them as a version of 'truth' on masculinity.

The combination of all three levels seems to match closely what Hollway and Jefferson (2004) refer to as the "psycho-social subject". The chosen design had to be able to access each of these three separate fields in order to capture the phenomenon as fully as possible and help to illumine the processes by which masculinity ideas are formed and maintained. It was also vital, however, that all three methodologies produce outputs which could be combined in a final stage of data analysis. As I have outlined, in the real living of this phenomenon the three fields blend and affect each other, they are experienced holistically. Likewise the chosen research methods for this study needed to get as close to this lived field as possible. Three final and clearly delineated data summaries would not do justice to the real thing; therefore the overall guiding epistemological philosophy throughout the research process was to stay as close as possible to the lived realities down

on the ground rather than sticking rigidly to the ‘recipes’ (Willig, *ibid*) of each method in an attempt to claim some sort of methodological purity. In this respect I embraced Willig’s concept of ‘adventures’ in qualitative research.

This approach also bears comparison to Foucault’s idea of “*technologies of the self*” set out in ‘The Archaeology of Knowledge’ (1972) which explores the psychological “processes of construction of selfhood” (Kendall and Wickham, 1999). Foucault points out that we are neither completely constrained by the available discourses in which we find ourselves located nor are we completely free to choose. Selecting and expressing certain subject positions and giving voice to particular discourses may win us some power, status or privilege or expose us to exclusion, judgment or attack. The discourse itself will operate certain dividing practices over which we have little control. His argument is that the intersection of power, knowledge and subject must be considered together when considering how an individual subject is produced. This contention appears to fit exactly the intersubjective production of the gendered self under consideration here.

## 4:2 Arguments in support of each methodology

### 4.2i: First Analysis: Farough's Photo-Imagery (Intrapsychic Field)

After the pilot interview (reported below) I discovered a variety of work on using visual imagery within qualitative research by Ball and Smith (1992), Akeret (1973) and Harper (1994 and 2000). All suggest using still photographs as a way of accessing more immediate, instinctive, unedited emotional responses about controversial subjects. Harper argues visual data can help to place non-visual data in context and sheds light on phenomena related feelings in a way words cannot. This seemed particularly powerful in that it might offer access to that *intrapsychic* level of understanding masculine identity. This level is often difficult to verbalise (particularly within the context of a research interview with a stranger) but likely to be extraordinarily powerful in generating our deepest beliefs, fears and fantasies about gender and how we fit into the 'gender roles' family and society may try to carve out for us.

Indeed Farough (2006) in his paper on using photo-ethnography in studying how white masculinities are constructed suggests that so much of male gender performance is based on immediate visual cues (physical size, muscularity, dress, body language, how space is occupied etc) that response to visual cues should occupy a central place in researching such phenomena. The concept of photo-ethnography, in this case used in a sociological context, originally meant participants took their own photos (that reminded

them of the phenomena under investigation) and were then questioned about their responses to the photos. However Farough (*ibid*) extended this method by using these same photographs in future research. I have loosely followed this second methodology, although the images chosen came from a number of online image libraries rather than any previous participant.

Johansson and Klinth (2007) in their study of Swedish mens' attitudes to fathering and masculinity presented a series of photographic images when working with focus groups of Christian men, immigrant men and psychotherapists. The pictures were taken from nine different "daddy leave campaigns" carried out in Sweden during the period from 1976 to 2005. The imagery was used to stimulate discussion within focus groups and to help men to explore their own attitudes and feelings about masculinity, in much the same way as imagery was employed here.

The use of photo imagery is wholly consistent with the central methodological approach of the second method employed: FANI. Hollway and Jefferson (*ibid*, p 37) state that their method tries to elicit associations that "follow pathways defined by emotional motivations rather than rational intentions. Free associations defy narrative conventions and enable the analyst to pick up on incoherences and accord them due significance". Using such ambiguous imagery allows the participant to construct stories, reflect and interpret on the subject of maleness and their feelings on it.

#### 4.2iii: Second Analysis: Free Association Narrative Interview (Interpersonal Field)

The second data analysis used Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) Free Association Narrative Interview method (FANI). This allowed a close examination of participant narratives and the identification of any striking features about the developmental set up of their paternal relationship and their views on masculinity.

The FANI method was attractive to me for a number of reasons. First Hollway and Jefferson take seriously the notion of the '*psychosocial subject*' (p4). They argue that as researchers we cannot understand somebody's experiences without "knowledge of the way in which their inner world allows them to experience the outer world". This fits neatly with my central idea that gender is built intersubjectively between father and son (amongst others) in the context of a wider world full of pressures and messages about masculinity. The term *psychosocial* captures wonderfully the reality that our internal subjective experiences can never be understood as totally separate from, and unaffected by, everything outside of self with which one is in relationship. This concept is central to the methodological approach set out here.

The name itself (Free Association Narrative Interview) implies that one's aim as a researcher under this method is to help the participant to tell stories (in other words free associate) around a number of themes, ideas and issues suggested to them. Its founders argue it is best suited to exploring issues of self and meaning. They offer a strong critique on the usual qualitative

question and answer interviews which they feel tend to produce “thin, rationally driven accounts” (p155), which miss most of the depth, complexity and humanity which is involved with real people living real lives. Given that on the topic of gender people (particularly men) are often very cautious about what they will say, any method which encouraged them to over-intellectualise or stay on the surface would not be productive. The FANI concept of being with the participant (and thinking about what the interview means) seemed to offer great possibilities for reaching the stated research aims.

Hollway and Jefferson (*ibid*) also challenge the widespread qualitative research assumption that participants’ know who they are and are able to report it direct to researchers: what they call the “transparent account problem”. By allowing the participant to wander and clarify and tell stories around particular themes, questions or images it is possible to access narratives that are not structured according to conscious logic. Rather they follow pathways defined by emotions, beliefs and fantasies outside of normal narrative reportage, allowing the researcher (in this case also a qualified therapeutic practitioner) to pick up on apparent inconsistencies or defences. This may be particularly illuminating on the topic of gender construction. In their writing on this method they do not shy away from arguing for the inclusion of the researcher’s feelings, intuition, and their own subjectivity in the research process. They feel that psychoanalysis “has largely conceded that interpretation is an art and not a science” (p78).

Whilst this may be somewhat akin to heresy in the eyes of some, it seems to me, in trying to honour the dual role of practitioner/researcher, a very useful expansion of the approaches available to therapists conducting qualitative research. In essence they are saying that we have particular expertise (as therapy practitioners) in understanding human emotional experience and in helping people, through our dialogue with them, to explore, unpack and come to a deeper understanding of self. Rather than allowing ourselves to fall down the crack between the two roles, they propose instead to blend the knowledge and experience from both and to bring them to bear on the research interview itself as the initial site of data creation and interpretation. I see this as very beneficial to the research process and it is one of the key reasons I was attracted to Hollway and Jefferson's approach.

They also take very seriously the need to understand the "unconscious intersubjective dynamics in the interview relationship" using concepts such as transference and containment familiar to me from psychodynamic therapeutic practice. In this sense the interviewer interpreting the representations people make of their internal subjective world closely mirrors the dynamics present in therapeutic space. They also argue strongly that as researchers we must avoid the standard assumption of social science interviews that the researcher asks questions and the respondent answers them. Indeed, they point out that Mishler (1986), one of the pioneers of narrative research, sees this approach to research as actively suppressing stories. Rather they remind us that the participant is a story-teller and our

conversational style as researchers should encourage these stories to resonate. Added to this is their argument that we are actively interpreting during the interview rather than postponing all interpretation until the transcript lies in front of us. Much qualitative research does this of course, and even trumpets it as virtuous, believing presumably that maintaining such 'neutrality' is ideologically sound. Hollway and Jefferson would challenge this, as would I. Firstly, the claim that we can even approach neutrality while spending an hour in someone's company discussing personal matters is suspect. Our non-verbal communication and tone of voice will communicate much to the participant about how we are receiving their material. The questions we ask, and the throwaway comments we make, will likely be influencing them in the later responses they make. So rather than making spurious claims to neutrality the FANI method acknowledges the fact that as practitioner-researchers we will be offering interpretations back to the participant during the interview. This offers some clear advantages: the participant can clarify what we say, disagree with our interpretation, correct us, expand on what they have already said or maybe open a line of reflection that may not have occurred to them before.

#### 4.2iii: Third Analysis: Foucauldian Concepts (Wider Social Field)



The third analysis was the subject of some very serious reflection. Eventually it was decided that using a full Foucauldian Discourse Analysis did not seem either necessary or practical given the already complex three-fold methodology being employed. Additionally the second stage data analysis (which brings the findings from all three analyses together) does not fit with the processes required by a full FDA. As was argued earlier this was an occasion where it seemed better to go with the adventure rather than stick to the recipe. However given that FDA aims to examine wider social and political discourses, beyond the intersubjective father-son arena, it was felt vital there was some analysis informed conceptually by Foucault.

Following discussion with my supervisory team it was decided to carry out an additional data analysis which would acknowledge and identify how each subject has been affected and influenced by the wider masculinity and power discourses available to them in childhood and adolescence. A useful guide in making this decision was the work of Graham (2005) who argues that some tight methodological system employing Foucault is contrary to the spirit of his writings. Suggesting a looser application of rules to data analysis she says “this does not equate to unsystematic speculation but instead reflects the characteristic reticence of those “doing” discourse analysis within a Foucauldian/post structural framework to prescribe method or similarly make claims to truth through ‘scientific’, ‘objective’, or ‘precise’ methodologies (p3). She goes on to support the notion of ‘methodological anarchy’ in a creative sense, to use systems of thought “as

catalysts to move beyond the strait - jacketing confines of methodological rules” (p6).

Foucault argued that discourses offer “subject positions”, which, when taken up, have implications for subjectivity and experience. Further he sees dominant discourses as offering privilege “to those versions of social reality which legitimate existing power relations and social structures” (Willig, 2001). I have been particularly interested in the Foucauldian concepts of the panopticon, surveillance and the gaze. Foucault said that the “gaze of society’s authority does not rest in a particular person, rather it was recognised as part of the system, a way of looking that could operate as a general principal of surveillance throughout the social body (p54)” (Danaher et al, *ibid*). This certainly applies to gender. We all police each others gender; especially men. The process of deciding which people fit into normal categories, what Foucault calls “dividing practices”, can be seen or overheard when any group of teenage boys get together. Much of the discourse revolves around reassuring other boys that “I fit the expected male template”; and mocking or excluding those who don’t. With adult men this process may be less explicit but is likely still occurring.

Willig (*ibid*) further argues that “Foucauldian analysis aims to produce knowledge about this discursive economy within which we find ourselves, how it got to be this way (historically) and what this means for us as subjects (for our sense of self) (p120)”. This has clear relevance to the construction of gender, and more pertinently, the acting out of ‘chosen’ forms of

masculinity. Hollway and Jefferson (ibid; p 15) take up this point in their notion of “*investments*”; that is how a subject becomes invested in taking up particular discourses. Investments involve “someone’s desires and anxieties, probably not conscious or intentional, which motivate the specific positions they take up and the selection of accounts through which they portray themselves”. Fathers may well be a crucial element in shaping these investments.

Several other researchers (Mac An Ghail, 1996; Jefferson, 1996) have combined Foucauldian perspectives with psychoanalytic thinking. Mac an Ghail, for example, as an educational sociologist, examines how young men come to build their gendered sense of self within the various discursive economies working within schools. He believes that we can only begin to understand subjective masculinities by looking at social/political contexts alongside personal internal psychological responses. This is how we live our gendered selves; therefore any reasonable study of this topic must come from the same place.

Lupton and Barclay (1997) feel that in bringing the two together we can “understand the experiential, affective, embodied nature of masculinity (*in their case fatherhood*)”. Bourdieu’s (1971) approach to social theory is also very helpful in this present context as it offers further support for the idea of integrating subjective experience and more external social structures. By acknowledging this reality he states simply that we are neither entirely free to choose our destinies, nor forced to comply with objective rules imposed upon

us. We are never entirely free, nor entirely constrained. We all operate within a framework of messages, models and influences which affect our choices and our presentations of self.

#### 4:3 Positioning the researcher

Crossley (2000) sets out the fundamental difference between subjectivist and intersubjectivist qualitative researchers. Whilst the subjectivist makes their own position subordinate to that of the interviewee, the intersubjectivist recognises that they must use their own sense of belongingness to try and understand the world of the other. This holds great similarity to the position therapists adopt in relation to clients. As Crossley (*ibid*) puts it “he cannot assume a view from nowhere”. One of the great attractions of the newly created mixed methodology employed here is its recognition of the intersubjective construction of all human experience. Willig (*ibid*) makes a similar point “that it is impossible for a researcher to position themselves outside of the subject matter because the researcher will inevitably have a relationship with the phenomenon he or she is studying” (p7). She quotes Haraway (1998) saying that attempts to pretend we do not do this as the ‘god’s eye view’. For me this means me reflecting on my relationship to the studied phenomenon, before, during and after the research process, but also requires me to think carefully about the epistemological issues and shape the chosen methodologies in order that they can illuminate the lived experiences of these participants, rather than shaping my process to fit the dictates and specifics of someone else’s method.

As I have argued, the dual role of practitioner/researcher offers many opportunities for expanded engagement with research subjects and for considering wider epistemological issues. However it is also right to acknowledge the tensions at work between the two roles.

One challenging aspect of research interviewing for me has been the fact that such interviews mirror therapeutic sessions in some ways. One has to stay very conscious of this and not stray into the type of interpretation that could open things up too emotionally for participants. Also the interviewer's agenda drives the conversation's direction (although the stories naturally remain those of the participant). This is a fundamental shift from working therapeutically, as is the fact that no money changes hands. It is perfectly proper to draw attention to some parallel dynamics operating between the two situations but caution is required. The boundaries, ethics, approach and intended outcomes are very different. The researcher must use his/her conscious awareness to stay alert to these issues throughout the research process.

Each of us has a lifetime's experience of doing gender; it is through this we try and understand the approach of others. As a male researcher I must be aware of and recognise my reactions to other ways of being male. From a psychodynamic perspective I must be aware of my countertransference reactions to material. My professional training and practice gives me a good deal of experience of working with countertransference material. It also

gives me a solid experience of interpreting the emotional meaning behind people's narratives. As Frosh, Phoenix and Patmann (2005) put it "psychoanalytic interpretive strategies may be able to throw light on the psychological processes, or perhaps the conscious and unconscious reasons behind a specific individual's investment in any rhetorical or discursive position" (p40).

For this research it felt appropriate to answer the same questions on building maleness and father relationship as my participants. This will help to heighten my awareness of my own feelings on gender prior to working with participants and assist in bracketing off my own prejudices, beliefs and assumptions as far as possible during the interviews.

I therefore conducted a self-study which was recorded on a digital voice recorder, transcribed and analysed ([Appendix 6](#)). Naturally this interview is not intersubjective in the true sense (after all only one of me is taking part) but I posed the same questions out loud to myself as were later put to the participants. I tried to answer those questions fully, honestly and openly, in much the same way as I have done on numerous occasions as a genuine participant in Qualitative Research.

Several key themes emerged from the self-study. "*When I was a baby he would walk around at night holding me singing to me to try and get me to sleep*". This is a story I have been told many times by my mother but never by my father. I have no memory of it and it conflicts with the lack of

emotional closeness in our later relationship “*so little physical contact – I have no memories of being kissed, held or cuddled by my dad – at all – it stopped too early for me to remember. We shook hands. And until I was truly adult so much of his own struggle and emotional inner world was kept from me – his struggles growing up, his journey from the valleys into management and a social world that must have been very scary for him. He was very stressed and tended to shout and get angry most of my childhood – or be shut away and not reachable.*”

As an adult my relationship with him is friendly and cordial but not really close at all. We discuss ideas, things and facts rather than feelings. This conflicts very much with my own sense of what being a man entails and my journey towards becoming a practising therapist. It is still a source of some regret and frustration. More positively I feel some of my more outgoing side comes directly from him “*I get from him a kind of excitement about the world and a desire to explore and investigate things. He is really the positive one in the family.*”

As I have grown older I have developed a more balanced view of him as fundamentally “*a very decent man, not especially patient or openly loving, but deep down very solid and reliable. He has softened as he has gotten older*”. In terms of the masculinity literature I would place my father within the “solid, distant provider model”. “*As I got older I saw him as cold, remote, unemotional so didn’t really see him at all as a model for the kind of man I wanted to be. Its only in later years that I realise I got a lot from him -*

*decency, responsibility, curiosity about the world, love of knowledge, a certain showmanship under the right circumstances and he is a good model for a kind of confident, solid man.”*

Although I would consider myself to have a more emotionally open and balanced view of maleness than my father, he has provided a good model for certain elements of my own beliefs. It is, however, only as an adult that I have come to realise this. As a younger man I believed that my way of doing maleness was in direct opposition to his.

#### 4:4 Pilot Study

It is important with any piece of research to test out the appropriateness of the methodology, questions, imagery and procedure. The pilot study gives the researcher the chance to become more familiar with the operation of this particular piece of research interviewing. It also gives an opportunity to reflect on what could be changed to enhance the session and uncover ever deeper layers of the phenomena under investigation.

A pilot study (Eric) was carried out using the original set of questions as part of a semi-structured interview. The pilot study proved to be extremely useful in several ways. Firstly it confirmed for me something learned from earlier research. Namely that in order to assist the participant to speak about their relationship with their father and how it has affected their views on masculinity a flowing conversational style of interview was most helpful



rather than trying to ensure that all the listed questions were asked in any particular order. This was also supported by my awareness of the Hollway and Jefferson FANI method. I allowed myself to offer tentative interpretations to the participant (in much the same way as one does during clinical practise). This has two benefits: it allows the conversation to move to much deeper levels and it also gives the participant the chance to clarify, support or disagree with the interpretation you have raised. In the pilot it was clear that my responses helped the participant to think around the topic and to explore it in a variety of different ways.

However post-interview I was left feeling that the participant had still been exercising considerable editing over his responses, particularly to questions which may require him to reflect on the prevailing “politically correct” responses around gender and men’s roles. The interview had also been quite short. Sometimes in face-to-face interviewing there can be a tendency for participants’ to edit their replies; for instance softening or removing anything deemed as controversial, embarrassing or casting the respondent in a poor light (as they imagine the researcher might see them). I began to think about presenting some photographic imagery related to masculinity as a way of accessing a less defended, more immediate, level of belief, feeling and response than talk alone. I have supervised undergraduate projects previously where response to imagery was used to positive effect.

#### 4:5 Presentation of Images

So following on from the pilot the remaining nineteen interviews used ten photographic images (A3 Laminated) which were shown to participants at the end of the interview. They were asked to say how the image made them feel, did it make them think of anything in relation to the masculinity we had been discussing and, did they see the image as an interesting, attractive version of masculinity or as something unwanted, unpleasant they would want to disassociate themselves from. These were the ten images used (always in the same order):



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

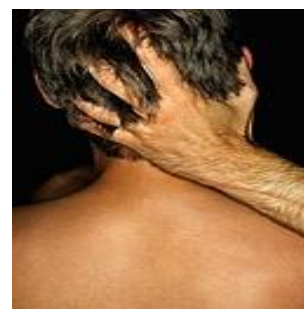


Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Image 8



Image 9

Image 10

The choice of images was guided by reference to Mahalik et al (2002) who developed the Conformation to Masculinity Norms Inventory (CMNI). They identified twelve masculine norms for the CMNI. These were labelled Winning, Emotional Control, Risk-Taking, Violence, Dominance, Playboy, Self-Reliance, Primacy of Work, Power Over Women, Disdain for Homosexuals, Physical Toughness, and Pursuit of Status. The ten images listed above were chosen from a group of over forty collected by the researcher. This larger group of images were discussed with one of my supervisors and considered against the Mahalik work. It was felt the final images selected best tapped into a variety of the CMNI norms, as follows:

Image 1: bravado, disregarding risk to self and display

Image 2: status display, transferring feelings onto things rather than people, love of cars, playboy

Image 3: femininity in men, physique, males roles, views on homosexuality

Image 4: physique, weakness, femininity in men

Image 5: misogyny, violence, power, anger

Image 6: homosexuality, physique, display of feelings

Image 7: violence, power, honour

Image 8: courage, violence, domination, self-sacrifice, protection

Image 9: honour, courage, display of feelings, tenderness between men, physique

Image 10: emotional absence, distance between fathers and sons, provider role

#### 4:6 Participants

Table 1

PART	AGE	NATIONALITY /CULTURAL BACKGROUND	SEXUALITY	OCCUPATION
ERIC (PILOT STUDY)	45	UK WHITE	GAY	CHEMIST
ALAN	19	UK WHITE	STRAIGHT	STUDENT

DON	43	UK WHITE	STRAIGHT	MANAGER
FRANK	58	UK WHITE JEWISH	STRAIGHT	PSYCHOTHERAPIST
CRAIG	42	UK WHITE	GAY	CIVIL SERVANT
BRIAN	47	UK WHITE	STRAIGHT	FIREFIGHTER
GUSTAF	19	SWEDISH WHITE	STRAIGHT	STUDENT
HARRY	37	ZIMBABWEAN WHITE	GAY	ADVERTISING
ITALO	35	ITALIAN WHITE	STRAIGHT	TEACHER
JONNY	29	SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE	STRAIGHT	SHIPPING BROKER
KARL	22	UK WHITE	STRAIGHT	TRAINEE TEACHER
LOU	34	IRISH WHITE	STRAIGHT	BAR MANAGER
MARCUS	34	UK WHITE	STRAIGHT	IT MANAGER
NEIL	38	UK WHITE	STRAIGHT	TEACHER
OLLY	26	IRISH WHITE	STRAIGHT	BUSINESS MANAGER
PETER	33	UK WHITE	STRAIGHT	FINANCE
ROBBIE	35	UK WHITE	STRAIGHT	MARKETING
SIMON	34	UK WHITE	GAY	NHS MANAGER
TARIQ	20	UK ASIAN	STRAIGHT	STUDENT
YOUSEF	34	IRANIAN	STRAIGHT	WRITER
Average Age	34.3			

#### 4:7 Sampling the Phenomenon

How father-son relationship affects gender building is a complex and hard to access phenomenon. Prior to interviewing it was important to think about how best to sample this phenomenon before designing the questions/statements participants were asked to free associate around. I must be aware of why I am asking these questions to these men.

Firstly, I have been gaining experience of this through client work (with predominantly men) for the past ten years. I have, of course, lived as a man for forty three years and spoken of fathering and the male experience with others throughout my life. Theory has directed my attention to particular questions as have studies and literature in this field. From an ethnographic viewpoint I have kept a diary of relevant questions and possible participants over the period I have been exploring this issue.

It was decided to interview 20 men for this study. This number was chosen after reflecting on the nature of sampling within qualitative analysis. Twenty participants is large enough to allow the potential variety within the phenomenon to find its voice but not so large as to make the data analysis process over-burdensome. Because of the sample size and the qualitative methodologies employed I tried to ensure a diversity of voices rather than a representative sample (impossible anyway within a qualitative piece of work).

My earlier research and clinical experience suggests three things in particular drive men's attitude to their own masculinity: age, class and cultural

background. Of course within a sample which consciously tries to capture diverse ages, class and cultural experiences there will likely be a mix of racial and sexual identities.

As can be seen from the participant table above (Table 1) within the twenty participants there was an extremely good age range: from 19 – 58 (average age 34.3), 15 heterosexual and 5 gay participants, and a good range of occupations (from student, bar manager and firefighter, through finance, advertising, civil servant to teacher and psychotherapist). There were two areas where the mix is less satisfactory. Firstly on race/ethnicity: two participants are Muslim (one from an Iranian background, one British Muslim from Pakistani origin). There are no black participants. This is despite the researcher making additional effort to recruit via snowballing across his student group, many of whom are of Caribbean or African origin.

However there are many participants from non UK cultural backgrounds (South Africa, Sweden, Zimbabwe, Italy and Ireland). Working Class men are also underrepresented. Possible reasons for this mix will be considered in the discussion section. However opportunity sampling, by its nature, means that ultimate choice of participants is largely driven by those who choose to make themselves available for interview.

#### 4:8 Recruitment and Procedure

Following a self-interview and pilot study (reported above) I conducted 19 taped semi-structured interviews (See [Appendix 1 – example transcript](#)) which lasted for between forty-five minutes and one hour fifteen minutes. Men were recruited through poster recruitment ([Appendix 2](#)) at different locations (in university, a local council housing estate, a local library, variety of workplace notice boards) and using snowballing/word-of-mouth techniques. Potential participants were then invited to contact me via e-mail and a suitable time and venue for the interview was arranged.

At the start of the interview the participant was asked to read through, and then sign, the informed consent form ([Appendix 3](#)). Space was given for any questions and I reminded them of how confidentiality would be protected (including use of pseudonyms in the write up). Participants were asked to reflect on/free associate around their relationship to their father and their sense of their own masculinity. This led into a deeper conversation with the researcher on these topics. At the end of each interview they were also presented with a variety of images related to masculinity (shown above) and asked to respond to them. The images were presented in the same order (1-10) in each interview.

After the interview participants were debriefed, allowing space for any concerns or questions to be raised. The participant was then provided with a debrief sheet ([Appendix 5](#)) containing the contact details of support organisations should they feel they need additional support.



#### 4:9 Ethical Issues

The research obtained clearance from the Roehampton University Ethics committees in a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 2007 (Appendix 6). The main ethical issues for consideration in this research concerned the possible loss of confidentiality, minimal effects on psychological health and the general treatment and well-being of participants throughout the research process.

It was vital that confidentiality be protected as far as possible. It was explained in the informed consent form and the debriefing letter that the research results will be written up, discussed with a research supervisor and possibly be made available for publication in psychology journals. Both letters made participants aware of being able to contact the Head of Psychology in the event of any complaint. The researcher allowed time for the informed consent and debriefing material to be discussed at the start and end of each interview. Further sources of support and information for anyone emotionally affected by the interview were provided in the debriefing material. In addition my e-mail contact details were made available. In the event that any man taking part wanted to explore possible counselling I was well positioned as a Chartered Counselling Psychologist to make referrals.

It was explained that in transcribing digital recordings pseudonyms would be used and any identifying information would be removed. The Windows Media files interview recordings are stored on my home computer which is

password protected. They will be erased once the examination process is completed.

In order to reduce the minimal psychological risk participants were told they could stop the interview at any time, without giving any reason. They could also withdraw all or part of their contribution at any time. They have been able to request to see the transcribed version of their interview. If anything was disclosed which may affect their confidentiality, the tape would have been stopped and this would have been discussed with the participant.

Likewise it was explained confidentiality would only need to be broken if there was a suggestion the participants would harm themselves or someone else. This follows normal practice for the start of therapeutic contracts.

#### 4:10 Data Analysis

##### *Stage One*

There were three analyses of the data. The first was the data produced from discussing the images (the intrapsychic arena) following the methodology

outlined above from Harper (2000) and Farough (2006). The responses from 19 participants to each image were grouped together and then marked for language, ideas or emotional reactions that stood out.

The second, using Hollway and Jefferson's Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) method, looked at the main interview transcript to uncover themes, ideas and concepts formed, chosen and maintained in the interpersonal worlds. The third used Foucauldian concepts to mine this same data looking for exposure or reaction to dominant messages and beliefs about gender expressed within discourse outside of the family (school, media, wider society). This analysis aimed to uncover how the father-son dyad and the participant himself had been influenced in the taking up of particular discourses or subject positions affected by wider social and political ideas.

Some of the data produced during image discussion was wholly relevant to the FANI and Foucault analyses. This is not viewed as problematic in any sense, rather it offers the researcher the inviting possibility that certain themes, ideas, positions and beliefs may show up on the intrapsychic, interpersonal and wider social discourse levels.

This may well suggest something about the strength of the internalisation of that message by this particular man. Indeed we would almost expect this to be the case given that men attempt to make sense of themselves as male subjects on all three levels. Even though there are three separate data analyses in this research, employing three different although complimentary

methodologies, it would be unwise to think of the three levels being discussed as discreet or separate. They overlap, influence one another and share much in common. However we must also acknowledge that there are important differences too.

Aspects of the male self may be hidden, disguised or altered (in that sense “kept off the landing”) according to a particular subject position adopted. This affects how a man’s masculinity is presented within the intrapersonal arena. The strong messages internalised from dominant wider social discourses will affect which aspects of his maleness it is deemed wise or effective to show in a particular public arena and which to keep secret. The tensions inherent in this process are frequently part of what brings men to psychotherapy. The stress involved in keeping the ‘required male mask’ fixed in place can be enormous, secret sadness, loss and confusion only exacerbated by the sense that it is shameful for men to feel these things to begin with. Intuitively this may partly explain why men present less frequently for psychotherapeutic help and why they commit suicide far more often than women.

There are also strong temporal and contextual factors affecting how men decide which parts of the masculine self can be displayed and which hidden. A fifteen year old boy is far more likely to be sensitive towards peer group assessment than a fifty year old man. Likewise that same boy may show certain sides of himself to his mother or best friend that he will clearly not in the playground. This is naturally true of all of us when we think about the

idea of “self”: we usually have multiple selves, the more acceptable of which are served up easily in public arenas, while the least acceptable stay hidden for whole lifetimes, even from ourselves.

As a practitioner one of my central theoretical models is self-psychology: within this field the concept of multiple-selves is well recognised (Kohut, 1981; Goldberg, 1998), as a way of understanding that none of us live from a single, well organised and expressible self that is consistent over time and in different contexts. So to say we adopt a subject position around gender is false; rather each person inhabits a variety of subject positions (privately and publically). Some will tend to dominate and perhaps lie closer to the real heart of who we are, whilst others will emerge on an expedient basis in order to allow us to feel we fit in or are reducing external threat to our self-esteem or physical safety. A variety of factors (eg. social pressure, age, self-confidence, a sense of ownership over one’s gendered self) will influence the positions adopted by any one individual.

My application of FANI was influenced greatly by Hollway and Jefferson’s comment that “we had to find a way of performing a comparative analysis of our data, without sacrificing the complexity and uniqueness of people’s stories” (ibid, p107). This balancing act lies at the heart of most qualitative research and I was conscious of it throughout, preferring in the end to facilitate the emergence of the participant’s voice and story over sticking rigidly to the minutiae of the methodological model. This is an important point to emphasise in this section. The loose application of methodologies in

data analysis can imply laziness, misunderstanding or arrogance, but there has been a wide debate about methodological application within psychology in recent years. Woolgar (1996, in Richardson (ed)1996 p22) argues that qualitative researchers should be wary of judging the merits of different methodologies on the basis of some claimed “scientificity”. Other theorists, such as Henwood (in Richardson, *ibid*) make the point that in entering “the maze of qualitative research...we are confronted by complex decisions and choices about how to deal with the crisis of representation” (p39), in other words how to capture in the text, tables and results what she calls “the importance of understanding the meaning of experience...as interpreted through the eyes of particular participants and researchers” (p27).

My approach to this dilemma is informed by my professional practice. When immersed in a field (whether data, or a lecture or a psychotherapy client) I try to allow my actions to be situated so that I am guided by my intuitive intelligence, which includes my understanding of methodological concepts, to do that which serves the best interest of the field rather than clinging on blindly to models-led specifics, anxiously seeking very clear, but constraining, instructions of what to do next.

Forshaw (2007) argues that we must aim to free qualitative research from the shackles of method. He says “I am uneasy with the colour of much current research, which on the one hand posits that objectivity is impossible and that any interpretation is valid and valuable, whilst almost equally proposing that the researcher’s interpretation is particularly valid because it is the result of a

long process of research and a carefully documented paper trail. The assumption is that hard work and a thorough process produce the best results. Sometimes it does, sometimes not (p479)". This is a radical position with which I have much sympathy but have not wholly concurred in this study. I mention it in order to provide some further support for not being bound by "rigorous method" and taking a creative stance towards methodological application.

However the above does not mean that the research process itself should not be rigorous, or that the epistemological reasoning underlying the relatively free application of method, should not be carefully thought through and clearly explained. Breakwell, Hammond et al (2006) argue that "psychologists should be building theories that encompass processes at the intrapsychic, interpersonal and societal levels of analysis" (p8). They go on to say that research methods for investigating such processes should likewise operate on all three levels and may involve creatively moulding existing methods to fit the occasion. My discovery of this support for my research approach came very late in the day (at the end of the writing up process) but is reported here to show that many others are starting to conceive of qualitative research on 'psycho-social' matters in a similar way.

Forms of narrative analysis are particularly well suited to exploring lived experience and identity construction which operates within the three-level concept outlined above. In conducting a narrative interview, particularly as guided by Hollway and Jefferson in their epistemological grounding of the

FANI concept, the researcher encourages the participant to free associate around themes, ideas and memories connected to the phenomenon under investigation, encouraging them to tell stories and reflect on their meaning, rather than sticking rigidly to some a priori group of static questions. In analysing transcripts I looked for lived meaning to emerge around the relationship between hegemonic masculine beliefs, father absences, separations or emotional distance.

As suggested in the FANI method, the researcher is engaged in interpretation of the data, and thus having carefully marked the text, begins a process of choosing what is selected for analysis and for building up into initial categories. The second and third stages of the model (coding interviewees on each category and clustering them according to their scores) was held over until stage two of data analysis (explained below).

The Foucauldian analysis loosely followed procedure set out by Kendall and Wickham (1999) which employs far fewer stages to produce data than the twenty originally set out by Parker (1992). The loose usage was necessitated by the fact that a full Discourse Analysis was not being employed (as explained earlier). This felt more consistent with my proposed later usage of the data in the final stage of analysis and more coherent with the concept of masculine positioning which is at the heart of this work.

Willig (2001) points out that “the concept of *positioning* has received increasing attention in recent years and that FDA is intrinsically concerned



with “the role of discourse in wider social processes of legitimisation and power (p107)”. Foucault says that the dominant discourse within a discursive economy changes radically from time to time as new ideas and social forces take hold: ‘*counter-discourses*’. We may be witnessing something akin to this as various forms of new masculinity become more widespread and multiple masculinities are accorded new status.

Kendall and Wickham’s method is as follows:

- **Stage 1: Discursive Constructions:** all instances of reference to the discursive object (in its widest and most implicit sense) were highlighted;
- **Stage 2: Discourses:** locates these discursive constructions within wider discourses eg: social discourses, sexual discourse, belonging discourse, fear discourse etc;
- **Stage 3: Action Orientation:** Asks what does the person gain or avoid by constructing things this way?;
- **Stage 4: Positionings:** This is where the subject positions taken up are identified;
- **Stage 5: Practice:** How these subject positions open up or close down opportunities for action;
- **Stage 6: Subjectivity:** Looks at the consequences of taking up various subject positions for the participants’ subjective experience.

On close examination it seemed as though stages 3, 5 and 6 are very closely tied together: looking at the impact that particular discourse choices and

subject positioning has for the person. In effect the emotional, social and practical impact of taking up particular positions. This led to a decision to closely follow stages 1 and 2 in the first analysis. The fourth stage, of identifying positionings for the individual, is carried out as part of the stage two analytic processes where each man (and his father) is located on the masculinity spectrum. The data analysis and discussion then look at the personal consequences of such positioning (which mirrors stages 3, 5 and 6 as set out in Kendall and Wickham).

### *Stage Two*

Stage two of the analytical process involved bringing together the outputs from the three earlier analyses. The discursive constructions produced from the Foucauldian analysis, the thematic clusters from the FANI analysis and the data gleaned from the imagery analysis were used to construct the Masculinity Spectrum. A table showing how this process worked in practice is given in the results section and the spectrum itself is set out. To explore the construction process here, however, we must go back to the key idea that gender is built on three differing levels (intrapsychic, interpersonal and societal) which is why three methodologies were employed to begin with.

The final product of this data analysis – the eleven positions on the Masculinity spectrum – is each built of ways of doing maleness drawn from all three levels in which gendered subjectivity is produced, experienced and negotiated with the world outside of us. Each spectrum position draws from

across the three analyses, encompassing a group of ideas, thoughts, feelings, relationships or beliefs which cohere to produce a distinguishable way of understanding one's masculinity. Whilst it relatively easy to distinguish between them, it would be too reductive to say they are somehow separate categories, rather they blur and merge into one another at the margins. This is why the idea of a spectrum seemed more in keeping with the realities of the reported lived experience, than a set of neat, clinical and separate categories or master-themes. In addition the spectrum encapsulates the idea that we move our position according to time, context and personal change processes, and it makes comparisons between our position and our father's much easier.

Once the spectrum was built each man was then located on it (using his most dominant Masculinity position). His father was also located and a table examining the gap between the two positions was set out. This data was then used to examine the tensions, meaning and challenges produced. Does harmony between the two produce high levels of emotional contentment? Or a sense of being comfortable with ones own masculinity? Does discord between the two produce high levels of tension, difficulty or dissatisfaction with one's own masculinity?.

This final analysis forms the basis for a discussion of whether a new a desirable masculine paradigm is emerging and how this is likely to affect the issues men bring to therapy. This scoring of participants according to earlier

produced categories to reach conclusions is very similar in spirit to Stages 2 and 3 of the Hollway and Jefferson FANI method held over from earlier.

## 5: RESULTS

### 5:1 The order of the results section

Three separate methodologies have been used in this research, combining them to give a final analytical stage. The results presented here do not follow the chronological order in which the data was analysed (ie. picture analysis, FANI analysis, Foucault analysis, building the masculinity spectrum, locating participants and fathers on that spectrum, analysing the gaps and relationships). Rather it begins with a pen picture for each participant which includes his position on the masculinity spectrum (and his fathers) and some commentary on the relationship between the two. In order that this makes sense the masculinity spectrum is given early on. It serves as a continual reference point throughout the chapter although, as stated, in real time it was built after the first stage of data analysis.

Following the pen pictures I have laid out the three individual data analyses (first the imagery, second FANI and finally the Foucault). A section on how the initial outputs of these three scans were used to build the spectrum follows.

## 5:2 Participant Pen Pictures

This section aims to give the reader a brief introduction to each participant, their relationship with their father, salient events in his life and relevant examples of belief systems and masculine subject positioning. I have included a table for each participant which sets out their predominant position on the Masculinity spectrum along with that of their father. The comments box then briefly examines the gaps and tensions between the two positions.

It should be noted that no man will consistently occupy only one position on the spectrum. A man who we could situate at position 3 (Fake show off Empty Masculinity) when drinking with his mates at a football game may well display traits associated with position 8 (New Masculinity, Strong, Emotionally Available) when playing with his small son at home. All men have multiple masculinities which will be heavily influenced by a number of factors including their age, the company they are in and the way they are trying to present themselves. However this data suggests that one masculinity position will tend to dominate much of the time, particularly within the man's private internal world and in his closest relationships. As has already been mentioned there may well be tension between the public masculine self and the private one, which could be of key interest to any counselling psychologist.

A dominant masculinity location for each participant (and his father) was allocated after a further close reading of the marked interview transcript. For example Karl is placed at position 7/8 (Emotionally Present New Masculinity). This would be based on aspects of his story analysed from his transcript (eg. I would be very different to my dad, I would be more affectionate, I would strive to have a healthy relationship, I would do more things with him that I didn't do with my dad, definitely. I know what it is like to be a good person, I don't think it's relevant or necessarily because of your sex.). Karl's father was placed at position 5 (Decent Provider, Cold Distant) based on comments such as these ("He was always there, but there wasn't really wasn't any closeness, he was always there if you needed a lift or some money good provider kind of thing but no real emotional relationship with him at all. It was a very kind of cold relationship". And "He would spend a lot of time on his computer or sat reading the paper, he was never really involved, and he isolated himself so it didn't really affect us".)

In many instances participants report fathers "mellowing" as they have grown older. The figure for the father given here is drawn from the data which reports the participant's experience of father in childhood and adolescence. The figure for the participant is drawn from their reporting on how they see their masculinity in the present day. It is important again to highlight how such masculine positioning has a strong temporal component – many men report huge changes over time in their positioning (usually, but not exclusively, in a rightwards direction along the spectrum).

# MASCULINITY SPECTRUM

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
THUG VIOLENT DOMINATOR	HYPER- MASCULINE HEGEMONIC MALE	FAKE SHOW OFF MACHISMO EMPTY MASCULINITY	IRRESPONS IBILE LADDISH BRAVADO EMBRACES RISK	DECENT PROVIDER COLD DISTANT UNLOVING	TRADITIONAL PROVIDER EMOTIONALLY DETACHED DISTANT HERO	GOOD PROVIDER EMOTIONALLY PRESENT AND HOLDING	NEW MASCULINITY STRONG, BELIEVES IN EQUALITY, EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE	NEW MASCULINITY SOFTER, GENTLER VERSION	CREATIVE ARTISTIC MAN – IN TOUCH WITH FEMININE	EFFEMINATE MALE, COWARDLY WEAKLING



**ALAN, 19, UK WHITE, STRAIGHT, STUDENT**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (ALAN)	6: Traditional Provider Emotionally Detached	Alan seems content with his father's masculinity style, which is quite comparable with his own beliefs.  As Alan is only 19 this may change as he matures.
FATHER	6: Traditional Provider Emotionally Detached	

Brief Background

Dad works for the post office. He was very sporty in his youth, seen as a committed, decent family man. Not especially emotional but supportive and kind. He worked very hard to financially support the family through some difficult times. Alan believes masculinity involves "having a lot of responsibility, a lot of hard work, supporting yourself and others, making your own way".

**BRIAN, 47, UK WHITE, STRAIGHT, FIREFIGHTER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (BRIAN)	7: Good Provider Emotionally Present	Brian is broadly happy with his father's masculinity style, which is similar to his own. Although he has certainly moved to the right a little personally in that he is more open with his emotions and has tried to pass this on to his own son.
FATHER	6: Traditional Provider Emotionally Detached	

Brief Background

Dad was quiet but they had a good relationship. Home is remembered as stable up to the point where Dad was sent to prison (Brian aged 12). He was married to Brian's mum for 40 years. He died at the age of 63 over 10 years ago. They shared similar interests but could be very competitive. Dad is seen as strong, caring and protective towards his wife and children.

Brian's sees masculinity as being not about "how big and strong you are it's about what you do, it about how you act, how you care, but he like me, I'm loyal I've been married twenty six years. The thing of caring for my wife and children being there and loyal and reliable is far more about than lifting weights".

**CRAIG, 42, UK WHITE, GAY, CIVIL SERVANT**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (CRAIG)	9: New Masculinity Softer Gentler Version	Typically Craig has moved towards the centre of the spectrum away from those aspects of his father's masculinity style that he disliked. Interestingly however he still defines masculinity as being at the far left end of the spectrum (positions 1-4) and feels somewhat uncomfortable with himself.
FATHER	10: Creative Artistic Man in touch with Feminine Side	

Brief Background

Craig's dad is sixty six, gay, and separated from his mum over twenty years ago. In his youth Craig saw his father as "pathetic, he had no sense of responsibility". He was often embarrassed by him and often felt angry with him. Dad was an actor and would sometimes mock Craig for his speaking voice during adolescence. Until adulthood it was a very strained relationship. Outside the family dad was seen as warm, kind, thoughtful and funny.

Craig himself is gay and this led to thawing of the relationship in recent years. They now are much closer. Craig sees masculinity as being about "aggression, detached, role, unhappy, not being touched".

**ERIC, 46, UK WHITE, GAY, CHEMIST**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (ERIC)	8: New Masculinity Strong Emotionally Available	Eric loves his father but feels very sad about the continuing emotional void between them and how his father seems trapped inside a world where emotional communication with others seems threatening.
FATHER	5: Decent Provider Cold Distant Unloving	Eric has moved at least 3 places to the right of his father on the spectrum over the past 20 years.

Brief Background

Eric's dad suffered from serious mental health problems during his childhood. At one point he was hospitalised. Eric has very limited memory of his father's presence during early childhood. From puberty onwards there was a "kind of war in the house, between me and my dad until I left at twenty four".

Dad would tend to behave very passively then explode in violent anger under pressure. Feelings were never discussed. He was a good provider and took care of practical things around the house. Dad is still alive although the relationship is still sometimes awkward and distant, although contains an undercurrent of affection.

**DON, 43, UK WHITE, STRAIGHT, MANAGER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (DON)	9: New Masculinity Softer Gentler Version	Don has very good, warm memories of his father's masculinity style and has adopted much of it for himself.
FATHER	7/8: Good Provider, Emotionally Present, New Masculinity	He is slightly less involved in traditional all male activities as his father and his relationships have tended to be with powerful, more dominant women

Brief Background

His dad died in 1988, a week after his eightieth birthday. He was very kindly very loving, very affectionate. He worked hard, long hours, he did well and made a good success of his career. He was not a negative man, critical man or angry man. He was married to Don's mother for forty years.

Don describes him as a gentleman, generally easy going and always open to the other person's point of view. He was often sentimental. Don's own view of masculinity is that it is about being able to cope with things, to stay strong in good times and in adversity. It's about being a bread winner but not to the exclusion of your wife. He feels his dad was a strong, positive influence of him

**HARRY, 37, WHITE ZIMBABWEAN, GAY, ADVERTISING**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (HARRY)	9: New Masculinity Softer Gentler Version	It is striking that although Harry's father could be fragile and over-emotional he was clearly affectionate, loving and proud of his son. Harry has adopted much of his father's masculinity style although he has moved two positions to the right (he credits his mother for some of this)
FATHER	7: Good Provider Emotionally Present and Holding	

Brief Background

His father died when he was twenty, having been 52 when Harry was born. His father died six weeks before he was born, from TB as a result of being gassed in the war. He was brought up by his mother and three aunts who all worshipped him and adored him. Harry describes his upbringing as "almost Victorian". His father had low self esteem, a fragile ego and was a very emotional man. There was a good deal of physical affection between them right into adulthood.

Harry says his father was "the recorder of my life".

**FRANK, 58, UK JEWISH, STRAIGHT, PSYCHOTHERAPIST**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (FRANK)	8: New Masculinity Believes in Equality Emotionally Unavailable	Again we see a considerable shift 2-3 places to the right on the spectrum. Interestingly however had Frank been interviewed in his twenties he would probably have been placed at position 2 (Hypermasculine Hegemonic Male). That is what his father's influence produced. It is only through much self-discovery work and training as a therapist that Frank has shifted to position 8.
FATHER	5/6: Traditional Provider Emotionally Detached Distant Hero/Cold Unloving	

Brief Background

Father was a Solicitor, born in Wales, the youngest of thirteen; he was brought up by his sister because of the large number of children. He had been in the army, part of the infantry part of the D Day invasion. He was an academic guy but also very athletic. He worked hard and was very rarely at home. He spoke up against the British Union of Fascists, on a communist platform. There were death threats against the family and they were protected by the communists. Frank often saw his father in a glamorous, heroic light as a child.

Frank is a much more emotionally open man, which he puts down largely to his journey towards becoming a psychotherapist.

**TARIQ, 20, UK ASIAN, STRAIGHT, STUDENT**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (TARIQ)	7: Good Provider Emotionally Present and Holding	Tariq is young enough so that the full effects of his father's emotional distance are presently unclear. However he is sufficiently mature to know that his beliefs about male and more emotional are different to his dad's. He still longs for his father's attention and approval.
FATHER	5/6: Decent Provider Distant/Emotionally Detached Distant Hero	

Brief Background

Father was usually understanding in early childhood, provided well for the family and often singled Tariq out as "special" amongst his children. Later Dad became far more involved with work and Tariq feels there has been a growing distance between them over the past 10 years. Dad never expresses vulnerability or shows much of his emotional internal world.

This is often frustrating for Tariq.

Dad is now a security guard and Tariq feels he is frustrated because he has not been able to achieve his life dreams.



**YOUSEF, 34, IRANIAN, STRAIGHT, WRITER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (YOUSEF)	8: New Masculinity Strong Equality Emotionally Available	Despite their very challenging and painful family history Yousef holds great affection and respect for his father and his masculinity style. Much of it is evident in his ways of being male, although his experiences and the different social and cultural contexts have moved him marginally to the right on the spectrum.
FATHER	7. Good Provider Emotionally Present and Holding	

Brief Background

Yousef's father is currently in a coma and is likely to die shortly. He used to be a very strong man physically. Yousef describes him as "100% male, masculine, he had some views on how young man should be like, never resign, never give up, always fight, I really believe he never did something against his principle".

The family became the target of political violence within Iran as a result of father's position. Yousef was imprisoned and tortured at a very young age and was separated from his family until adulthood, having escaped to the West as a refugee.

His father was extremely supportive of his sisters in a way that was unusual at that time. Yousef has strong views of some aspects of masculinity but is a firm believer in men being able to express emotion and have women as their full equals.

## ITALO, 37, AMERICAN, STRAIGHT, TEACHER

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (ITALO)	6. Trad Provider Emot Detached	Italo has moved three and a half places towards the centre of the spectrum trying to drop those over-emotional, anxious tendencies of his father that were so overwhelming for him in childhood. Although 9/10 predominates for dad – there were also strong elements of 7 present.
FATHER	9/10: New Masculinity Softer/Creative Artistic Man	

### Brief Background

Italo's father is gay. His parents divorced when he was 10 and he continued to live with his father. He is a very sensitive man, aware of people's feelings and injustice and absorbed by his life mission: music. His father was always absent, always working.

He could be very rash, emotional and anxious and Italo often felt like he was placed in the supportive role to take care of his dad. At times he could be very affectionate, hugging, listening, encouraging, and loving. Italo himself says he rarely reveals emotions and tends to stick to facts. Although he is a very modern man in many ways he holds some pretty traditional views about maleness.

**GUSTAF, 19, WHITE SWEDISH, STRAIGHT, STUDENT**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (GUSTAF)	9: New Masc. Softer, Gentler version	Gustaf remembers his father's presence as mixed: sometimes harsh and unnerving, sometimes warmer. However he was always seen as absent emotionally (if not physically). Gustaf is 3 places to the right of his father although (at only 19) still settling on which ideas about masculinity feel right for him
FATHER	6: Trad Provider Emotionally Detached	

Brief Background

Father didn't live at home for the first two and half years of Gustav's life, because he was in the military. He is remembered as mainly silent, not very good with social interactions. He would often withdraw off to a room on his own. He has a vicious temper and rarely expressed emotion. That has begun to change recently since Gustaf left home.

Gustaf himself feels very uncomfortable around loud, angry men and does not see himself as typically masculine.

**JONNY, 29, WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN, STRAIGHT, SHIPPING  
BROKER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (JONNY)	6: Trad Provider Emotionally Detached	Jonny has a very similar style to his father and they have a strong relationship even though they live so far apart. He speaks of him very warmly. However he realises the downfalls of the emotional detachment style in his own marriage and is trying to change. In a few years time Jonny may be a 7.
FATHER	6: Trad Provider Emotionally Detached	

Brief Background

Dad is a strong guy, quiet, loves sport and jokes. Jonny always looked forward to spending time with him. They talk about everyday stuff very easily and get on but struggle to talk about anything more emotional. Dad is not a big talker. Jonny also finds it hard to talk to his wife about such things, although he is trying hard to change, believing a man should be allowed to let his emotions out. Dad was very practical and not the type to hug or say I love you. He worked very hard and was a good provider for the family.

**KARL, 22, UK WHITE, STRAIGHT, TRAINEE TEACHER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (KARL)	7/8: Emotionally Present/New Masculinity	Karl has some fairly damning views on his dad and his masculinity/fathering style. Given the recent divorce and Karl's relative youth there may be something of a thaw in the relationship later on. For now Karl locates himself at least two places to the right of his father.
FATHER	5. Decent Provider Cold Distant	

Brief Background

Dad is a project manager. Karl doesn't talk to him much at present following his parents' separation four years ago. There was little closeness with his dad although he was always a good financial provider. Karl says it was a very cold relationship and dad is "the most unemotional person I have ever met". He would spend a lot of time on his computer or sat reading the paper, he was never really involved, and he isolated himself. He sees emotion as weakness.

Most of Karl's friends are girls. He struggles to interact with guys. He wishes there has been more interaction with his dad, he feels it has had a quite negative effect on him

**LOU, 34, WHITE IRISH, STRAIGHT, BAR MANAGER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (LOU)	7: Good provider Emot Present/Holding	Lou's dad fits position 6 clearly – although much more on the distant hero side of the category rather than fully emotionally detached. Lou clearly loves him and respects him. Lou is slightly to the right of dad (possibly given his wider life experience in California) but they share the eloquence, wit and charm
FATHER	6: Trad Provider Distant Hero	

Brief Background

Dad was very honest and “god fearing, you go to mass on a Sunday because you have to”. He was very self-disciplined, believed in honesty above all. He was very eloquent, charming and witty. Lou describes him as “cheeky, a big fat man. Not very good looking but it would never stop him from stealing a kiss”.

He ran a petrol station and worked very hard. He believed in taking care of his wife and kids. He never played with his children but worked sixteen hours a day. Until he had a heart attack in recent years he was quite emotionally distant. Now Lou sees him as his hero but growing up was scared of him. You didn't step out of line and if you did you were in for it. Lou says he is nothing like him, yet he notices things come out of his mouth that his father would say. “Its uncanny, I've spent my whole live not being like him, being a traveller but not going along his road but I still end up naturally saying the things he would say”

## MARCUS, 34, UK WHITE, STRAIGHT, IT MANAGER

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (MARCUS)	8: New Masc, Equality, Emot Available	Puts his dad on huge pedestal and admires both him and his masculinity style, much of which he has adopted. His views on equality issues place him just to the right of his dad, but much of that may be about growing up in more modern times.
FATHER	7: Good Provider Emot present/Holding	

### Brief Background

Dad was born into a Liverpool sea faring family, he had five brothers and they all went into the Merchant Navy. His father died when he was young, following an injury whilst on air warden duties. This affected dad greatly in that he became the organiser within the family, taking responsibility for his brothers.

Dad is very traditional, a “man’s man”. Marcus felt like his favourite and that all dad’s energy was poured into him although “he never said I love you or put his arm around me and said you’re a great son, to this day he has never said that”. Marcus sees dad as a gentleman, “opinionated but not forceful.....he is gentle, not violent and I’m the same, I’m a non aggressive person”.

**NEIL, 38, UK WHITE, STRAIGHT, TEACHER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (NEIL)	6: Trad Provider Emotionally Detached	Neil father left the family and has made relatively little effort to keep in touch with Neil. This is the source of some anger. Neil has fairly traditional views on masculinity and tends to look down on his fathers masculinity; his own is somewhat ambitious and driven
FATHER	4: Irresponsible	

Brief Background

Mum and Dad split up when he was five, he had contact with him initially but this tailed off. Since the age of 14 Neil has seen his dad twice. Dad was “pretty laid back, never a high flyer. Mediocrity was fine for him”. Neil feels he is nothing like father and was very ambitious, partly as a result of losing contact with his dad.

Neil is separated but sees his children regularly and feels his dad should have made greater efforts to stay in touch with him.



**OLLY, 26, IRISH WHITE, STRAIGHT, BUSINESS MANAGER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (OLLY)	6: Trad Provider Distant Hero	Olly's style is close to his father's whom he admires, loves and respects. Dad clearly has some traditional hegemonic male traits but is able to show the softer, loving side of him to his children.
FATHER	6: Trad Provider Distant Hero	

Brief Background

Dad is a very masculine man, very into sport especially Rugby. He comes across as a hard man but underneath is quite soft. He works in Insurance, gets stressed very easy, wears his heart on his sleeve and can get quite uptight and angry. He was a strict father for whom Olly has much respect. As a child Olly saw him as “cool”, driven and successful who sacrificed much to send him and his sister to private school.

Dad has become more open emotionally as he has aged. He is a very masculine man. He is six foot “built like a brick shit house, swears a lot, has very strong opinions, likes rugby, hates long hair.....he was always the bread winner and my mother stayed at home”. In terms of similarities, Olly has the same views as him, he wants to “grow up, have kids, successful job, and get married”.

**PETER, 33, UK WHITE, STRAIGHT, FINANCE**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (PETER)	6: Trad Cold Provider	Both father and son are extremely similar: banished from family warmth very early, both are alcoholics and both struggle with close relationships. There is clearly love present but mostly unexpressed and disconnected.
FATHER	6: Trad Cold Provider	

Brief Background

Peter comes from an upper-middle class background. Dad's father died the day he was born (killed in action in the Royal Navy Reserve), his mother died of cancer when he was fifteen. He doesn't appear to "do feelings" and is quite closed. He was not very engaging as a father. He didn't appear to show a great deal of interest in Peter, was always an enthusiastic drinker although never violent.

Peter was sent away to boarding school aged 7. He feels there were secrets in the family and feelings were avoided. As an adult Peter is a recovering alcoholic – Dad still drinks, a few years ago he nearly died of pneumonia related to his drinking. Dad was not a very masculine man; Peter describes him as "a sort of sensitive feminine-ish man..... very gentle and kind. I love him very much. But it's hard to have a very close

relationship with him”. Peter still struggles with intimacy in relationships. It could be argued that dad should be located more on position 8 because of this. However as was argued above all men will have aspects of multiple positions within them, the position allocated was the dominant one during childhood from the child’s point of view. In this case that would definitely be the cold provider role, with no sign of the distant hero aspect of that position.

**ROBBIE, 35, UK WHITE, GAY, MARKETING**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (ROBBIE)	8: New Masculinity Emotionally Available	This is the largest gap between father and son: 6 places. Three things seem to have led to this radical shift for Robbie: firstly, his maternal grandfather was probably at position 7 and played a big role in his life; coming out as gay as a young adult; and dad has (quite typically) relaxed and mellowed with age
FATHER	2: Hypermasculine Hegemonic Male	

Brief Background

Dad worked on Oil Rigs in Scotland and was a hard man who Robbie was very frightened of as a child. He wouldn’t hesitate taking the belt off if the children were naughty. Robbie remembers being “dragged away” to do “masculine things like play football play rugby do all these sporty things”. He was a weekly boarder at school from age 4 onwards. Dad would never show emotion or hug his children. His own father died when he was

twenty one and his father is the youngest of the six, so he hasn't had a father figure in his own life.

Robbie's grandfather is remembered as a much more positive masculine role model. He had his own business, a huge group of friends, he adored his family and "his wife was his most important person in his life every Friday would take her out to dinner, Saturdays would spend it with his grandson". , Robbie says "maybe he is the man I am today".

**SIMON, 34, UK WHITE, GAY, NHS MANAGER**

	POSITION ON MASCULINITY SPECTRUM	COMMENTS
PARTICIPANT (SIMON)	9: New Masculinity Softer Gentler Version	Although there is a gap of three places here (to the right): there are also many similarities between Simon and his dad.
FATHER	6: Trad Provider Emot Detached	Like many in the 6 category the only emotion dad did do was anger and like some in the 9 category Simon can be over-sensitive, anxious and easily hurt. They both seem to find intimacy difficult.

Brief Background

Dad was a solicitor and sportsman, a feather weight boxer, a slight man although six foot tall. He doesn't know his dad emotionally: the only extreme emotions he can remember are being drunk or angry. He doesn't feel him as being close.

Simon describes the atmosphere as "very much stiff upper lip, shoulders back etc, he was in the TA and my Grandfather was in the army, so that was running though, and I remember once he saw me coming down the

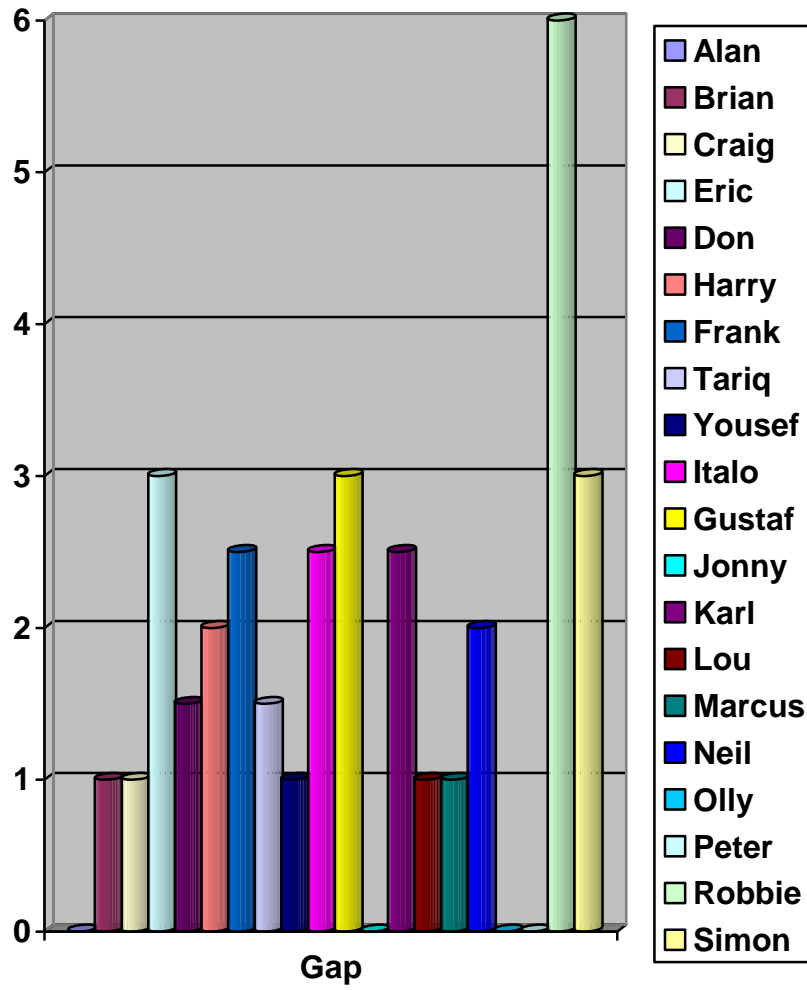
path and he commended me on my posture which was a strong manly posture”. Simon felt he had to hide his sexuality.

## **TABLE 2: MASCULINITY SPECTRUM LOCATIONS**

The table below shows where each participant is placed on the Masculinity spectrum, where his father is placed and what the gap between the two positions is. Figure 1 below shows the gap for each participant. It should be noted that only two men moved to the left of their own father. In both cases (Craig and Italo) the father was gay and occupied a relatively soft or feminine masculinity position.

	<b>PART</b>	<b>FATHER</b>	<b>GAP</b>
ALAN	6	6	0
BRIAN	7	6	1 Right
CRAIG	9	10	1 Left
ERIC	8	5	3 Right
DON	9	7.5	1.5 Right
HARRY	9	7	2 Right
FRANK	8	5.5	2.5 Right
TARIQ	7	5.5	1.5 Right
YOUSEF	8	7	1 Right
ITALO	6	9.5	3.5 Left
GUSTAF	9	6	3 Right
JONNY	6	6	0
KARL	7.5	5	2.5 Right
LOU	7	6	1 Right
MARCUS	8	7	1 Right
NEIL	6	4	2 Right
OLLY	6	6	0
PETER	6	6	0
ROBBIE	8	2	6 Right
SIMON	9	6	3 Right

Figure 1



# MASCULINITY SPECTRUM

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
THUG VIOLENT DOMINATOR	HYPER- MASCULINE HEGEMONIC MALE	FAKE SHOW OFF MACHISMO EMPTY MASCULINITY	IRRESPONS IBILE LADDISH BRAVADO EMBRACES RISK	DECENT PROVIDER COLD DISTANT UNLOVING	TRADITIONAL PROVIDER EMOTIONALLY DETACHED DISTANT HERO	GOOD PROVIDER EMOTIONALLY PRESENT AND HOLDING	NEW MASCULINITY STRONG, BELIEVES IN EQUALITY, EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE	NEW MASCULINITY SOFTER, GENTLER VERSION	CREATIVE ARTISTIC MAN - IN TOUCH WITH FEMININE	EFFEMINATE MALE, COWARDLY WEAKLING

## 5.3: ANALYSIS 1: FAROUGH'S PHOTO-IMAGERY

### Cross-case analysis of visual imagery responses

In addition to using the visual imagery data to look at masculinity construction for each man I conducted a cross-case analysis of how each image was responded to. Of course there were also many different responses which I felt would merit further investigation outside of the main analytical track. The next section is a summary of the key comments on each image and some preliminary thoughts about what the range of response might imply for my later consideration of father role, building of the masculine self and the presentation of related issues in therapy.



### Image 1

#### Fake, pretend masculinity

I don't think this has anything to do with masculinity, it's a stupid sport. And he is *provoking* a bull with a spear; I'm totally against all that kind of stuff. (Alan)

No I think it looks *pretend, bravado* not masculine. (Craig)

He is opening himself up to being gored, but he definitely got the "*come and have a go if you think your hard enough*" attitude. It's quite admirable but there is also an element of *showing off*. I actually quite hope that he will get his comeuppance. (Don)

*putting it on for show*, what we said earlier, they guy in the pub *doing it for effect*, almost like the *peacock* effect. (Marcus)

a vision of *stupidness as masculinity*, I know this version I am from a culture with very strong tendency, I think *we don't need to be heroes*. (Yousef)

Many of the participants are clear that they do not see this image as representing anything real or solidly masculine. There is an obvious level of performance here (clear from words like fake, bravado, image, showing off). They speak of things being exaggerated, clearly about image. They don't see the matador as



doing anything real or worthwhile, rather it is pretend and transparent. These respondents are not impressed. The second grouping has an even more harsh analysis.

### **Effeminate, stupid, cowardly**

I always found the matadors very traditionally *feminine*.  
(Gustaf)

*Pretty stupid*. I don't think it's especially masculine, thought he is showing a form of courage. I don't consider that as masculine *just incredibly stupid*. (Karl)

I always found that guy *always effeminate, super effeminate*, even the dance around the bull and the pink back. (Lou)

These are fairly damning verdicts, although they are often tempered ('some masculinity' 'a form of courage'). There is some ambivalence expressed here but the predominating feeling is negative. It is also striking that the comments about femininity appear very frequently, in contrast to the attempted display of total masculinity which the matador is presumably engaged in. This may have a strong cultural component too; it would be fascinating to get the responses of a group of Spanish men to this image, the bullfighter archetype being strongly associated with virile maleness in that nation.

The third group of responders are similar but almost reverse this last pattern. They also indulge in some mockery of the bullfighter ('tight leotard' 'page three pose' 'foolish') but overall there is a

flavour of slightly admiring, and being excited by, the recklessness, the craziness on display here. It is possible, of course, that the respondents in the earlier two categories also feel some of this, but decided it was too embarrassing to report. However, the categories are produced from the data as recorded.

### **Brave, averse to risk, machismo**

That one is a *sexual image*, probably because his pelvis is thrust forward, he is opening up his heart, his mouth is open, he is saying come on come on....sexually yes it is appealing; if I wasn't reading it sexual then I would find it repugnant. It has a *heightened sense of machismo* (Simon)

I do see that as masculine. *Brave, foolish, dangerous, flamboyant*, showing off.....yes, I foster that sort of masculinity in myself, like learning to sky dive, even though I'm scared of heights. *Doing the more extreme adrenaline things* (Peter)

That's *soccer mentality, taunting "here we go"* that's exactly what he is doing, its nearly a page three sexual pose but the fact that this bull is dripping blood and is about to die, its quite taunting. (Lou)

Quite ironic that he is wearing tight leotard and having a bull charge at him. I have seen the French equivalent do this and I think it's *quite cool*, yes I think they are *crazy, quite a macho masculine thing* to do, but not something that I think was amazing especially since the bull dies at the end of it (Olly)

Image 2



### Masculine, loving machinery

Its *very masculine* to like cars, a lot of my mates are into their cars.  
(Alan)

*More masculine, because it's mechanical* and actually says a lot about me not feeling that masculine, because that feels like a world apart.  
(Craig)

I feel that people with sporty cars are people that are *living the life*, who *have control, masculine grip of life*. (Tariq)

Maybe they are embracing it because it is a Porsche, *men love their cars*. They car looks like it is on a ramp maybe they are *proud of what they have just achieved*. I would kiss a Porsche if I had one (laughs)  
(Robbie)

This group deeply associates love of the mechanical (here typified by cars) with being very masculine. Two of the group are the youngest participants in the study (Alan, 19 and Tariq, 20): their attitude summed up by Tariq's phrase "living the life".

Interestingly two of the other men (Robbie and Craig) are gay, although Craig's statement locates him outside in his "world apart".

This is an interesting example of where men may hold apparently contradictory beliefs about masculinity. A belief that having a

snazzy, fast car equals real masculinity would tend to locate somebody on the left side of the spectrum (positions 1-4). None of the four men quoted here are located there, on balance the other views they expressed put them further to the right. However it is interesting to note that some hegemonic masculine attitudes are far more persistent than others. As will be noted the ‘good provider’ belief about being male seems near on universally held, despite other changes, and the attitudes towards fast cars are similarly persisting in this group who hold different views on masculinity outside this particular topic.

### **Unappealing, fake, unmasculine**

This is part of the masculinity which is so incredibly detached from me, I’m terrified of driving and I’ve never understood the fascination of it. At the same time my father has never had an interest in cars either. *Unappealing masculinity. Extremely dull* (Gustaf)

A lot of guys think they have to drive a Porsche to say I’m a man look at me, of course I would like one to but for different reasons, because I like it. But again I would say it is *sort of fake*. (Jonny)

*Not masculine*. They are kissing something. Someone kissing something other than his bird is not masculine, plus they are kissing in front of each other which you wouldn’t do unless it was your bird. (Neil)

*It’s meaningless, it can’t be a good life, its pathetic* (Italo)

The remaining two categories cover the majority of men. Here we see a very negative assessment of the image “dull” “fake” and “pathetic”. There is good deal of contempt expressed here. This is striking; men such as Italo and Gustaf do not just disassociate themselves from this type of maleness they are openly hostile

towards it ('pathetic' 'unappealing'). Jonny hints at something else which may be happening here; envy. If he had a Porsche it would be for different reasons than the men in the picture.

### **Ambivalent: love cars, odd being so emotional towards them**

*Flash car, the ultimate male achievement, I'm a car lover it's an ultimate male symbol.*

**TE:** *And the fact that they are kissing it?*

*That's gay* (laughs) (Lou)

*The big thing is the mechanics of the car and I had that with my dad fixing things doing DIY, so in that sense I can relate to that. It's interesting how you can show a huge amount of emotion to a car; I love sports so I show a lot of emotion to that but to me a car is a function.* (Karl)

*they have emotional problems, that they are more attached to a machine rather than a person.* (Harry)

*It feels a bit creepy. Why would you kiss a car? To me that comes across in quite a sad way. They are expressing feelings for a chunk of metal.* (Don)

This group tend to express more liking for cars on a personal level but are all struck by the "creepy" "sad" or "gay" idea of kissing your car. It is very clear here that an ideal masculine position or set of behaviours sits within fairly tightly controlled boundaries: it is masculine to love your car and be pleased with it (for most respondents) but to cross over the line and kiss it in front of other men becomes weird and heavily detracts from the any notion of desirable masculinity. This is a good example of how something seen as typically masculine can, placed in the 'wrong' context, be stripped of all masculinity. This harks back to the notions of

gender policing laid out in the introduction. Boys and men are extremely alert to expressions of masculinity which stray across some invisible line; the notion of walking on a very narrow and precarious ridge appears again.



**Image 3**

### **I would never do it but its ok for him**

*Personally I would never be doing that. It's not a feminine thing, if he wants to do it then fair enough. If it was all about ballerina then I would say yes (not being masculine), but he could be at a dance school doing other forms of dance. (Alan)*

*I won't dance ballet but I have not problem with it. (Yousef)*

*I wouldn't do ballet, and I think it might be because a little bit of the way I grew up, it's for girls. It's one of the things I don't think I would do, maybe it's because I'm worried about what other people would think. But I don't think badly on other guys for doing it, in fact I think it's quite strong. For you to stand there and do it, you need hours in the gym and be very balanced. (Jonny)*

*I don't think it's masculine or feminine. I wouldn't do it; I don't think what a poof. If anything it could be seen as he is lucky he gets to be in a room with three birds. (Neil)*

Some real ambivalence runs through the response to this image. The first two groupings both tended to say that there are some things they can admire in the picture although there are some things that make them feel immediately uncomfortable and want to distance themselves from. The first group clearly say it is not for them then go on to talk about some positive aspects they can respect. Here again we see personal dissociation from the image but it is not accompanied by anger, mockery or judgment. Indeed Jonny goes on to say is “quite strong”. His personal doubts may be explained by the statement “*maybe it’s because I’m worried about what other people would think*”. This is another clear example of the internalised panopticon at work. There is kind of gut reaction which says he should distance himself, largely because he holds a perception that others will judge him harshly for taking part.

The following group report much stronger gut responses but all four contextualise or balance their responses: in Lou’s case saying very clearly that he feels bad for having his response. In reality they are probably reacting from that same internalised trigger as Jonny in the group above: one clear message of the boy code these men would have been exposed to growing up is that real men avoid anything girly or gay. Ballet has traditionally been associated with both these things and, therefore, is not for men. All of the men in this group are typical of that split between genuine personal reactions (‘like it’ ‘muscular’ ‘admired them to the end of the

earth’) and expressions of the internalised hegemonic/traditional codes which are triggered unconsciously (‘homosexual’ ‘pink, frilly things’ ‘walking on tip toes’). Men like Lou are able to reflect on this paradox and admit to some confusion around it, a confusion which shows up in other parts of Lou’s transcript and, no doubt, in life as well.

It is precisely this ambivalence and confusion which can be anxiety producing for some men and lead to them feeling shame, worry or fear about certain responses they have which conflict on an ‘instinctive’ level with the boy/men code they have internalised. It must, therefore, be suggested that what feels ‘instinctive’ here may in fact be simply those messages that so permeated their childhood environment, and were taken in so early, that the man experiences them as merely natural.

### **Gut instinct says it’s girly or gay**

We got one guy *doing girly things*. I like that, though it *makes me feel a little uneasy*. I guess *elements of gayness* come out of that, like I said earlier, I’d strike all the political correctness about gayness but I’m aware of a slight uneasiness about it. I admire his ability to do it, but it does *take him away from what I feel is an appropriate place*. (Don)

We should be more accepting of the Billy Elliott’s but still in no matter what way you look at it he is in the wrong picture.

**TE:** *So that looks really out of place to you?*

It always will, the male ballerina, its something, like I’ve always admired them to the end of the earth, but *in my heart my first judgement is like, dude. And I hate to say that but that is my first reaction*. (Lou)



*I automatically think that he is gay, he has got a nice body, I see an athlete there, he would be very graceful if I could see him moving, there is a femininity there as well. This is a feminine side of masculinity but not masculine (Simon)*

*It doesn't seem very masculine at all. I think it's impressive that these men do it because they are very muscular.....ballet is perceived as pink, leotards, frilly things. A lot of people would assume he was gay which is the wrong thing to do. I think the main thing is that they walk around on their tip toes; it's not a masculine thing really (Peter)*

*I will think homosexuality for some good reasons because I know this industry very well and chances are feeling of devotion, a passion a love of these people in particularly the man. Manliness through devotion through art, through physique so in some ways very manly, but my concept of manliness for the time being is also still associated to liking women. (Italo)*

### **Contemporary, modern, very masculine**

*That's much more a contemporary man, I quite like it, it shows a quality in its gentleness. It's a modern image of male. (Marcus)*

*Its extremely masculine because these dancers are so fit they carry the same strength as a rhino more or less and they get to all day long 'throw around' these slim female bodies like their toys, they get to touch them very erotically and just play, then go onto the next one. There is such a prejudice around ballet (Gustaf)*

*I do consider him masculine. Ballet requires great physical strength, dedication and balance. More respect than anything else. (Karl)*

*He looks very masculine. That's his appearance, physique; he obviously works out hard to do this, but we always think that ballet as being very feminine, but I would always associate with a gentleman. I'm going to a ballet tomorrow; my father has never been to a ballet and it's not something he has an interest in (Robbie)*

This third group have only positive views towards the image. They see it as a very modern, contemporary image. Three of the six men in this group are gay men, and two (Gustaf and Karl) are 19 and 22 respectively. Of real interest was the comment from Marcus. He is a straight, working-class origin man in his mid-thirties whose dad

was in the merchant navy. He was the only straight man over 25 who expressed such positive views about this image. However his father is one of the few working-class fathers located at position 7 (Emotionally Holding Good Provider), which seems to have left Marcus very relaxed about men and emotions.

Several things are suggested by the membership of this group. Firstly that some men have already begun the process of questioning more mainstream messages about masculinity, in effect assessing how the internalised panopticon works within them and how the men code is expressed and policed in wider society.

It is not really surprising most of the gay participants are in this group. Gay men (particularly those who are slightly older) have grown up in a time where a central part of their being was condemned as sick, wrong or evil by much public discourse. When one begins to question the veracity of those messages in relation to oneself it very often leads to a questioning of other messages and truth claims and to a tendency to look beyond surface discourse. Something similar may be true of the younger men here, in that they have been raised in a period where the public denunciation of homosexuality has been more muted. In both cases there are further factors that may have encouraged this process: Gustaf grew up in Sweden, a country that has perhaps made greater strides towards gender equality than any other and Karl, from a divorced

family, struggles to form close friendships with men and feels more at ease in female company.

Image 4



### **Skinny weakling – no masculinity at all**

It's not feminine, but it may take him a while to be seen more masculine. *He looks so small, skinny.* He is trying to do weight lifting but there are no weights and it's just a pole, maybe with a couple of more weights on there it would make it more masculine.....*To be masculine is always seen to physically strong.* (Alan)

*She's very thin,* which is alarming, seems to be struggling with the weight, unattractive, she's flat chested I'm thinking if this is something she does regularly...

**TE:** *I think it's a boy*

*(Laughs) I thought it was a woman! I thought that was a skirt.* Given that I thought it was a woman and not a bloke then the weight training isn't going well for them. (Don)

*His shorts look like a skirt* (Gustaf)

He looks like a *weak man*, he looks like *the kid that you would be cruel to* anywhere in society. *He is a weakling.* (Marcus)

*Reminds me of the guy on the carry on movies* the guy with the *skinny legs the ultimate insult to man*, you know, if we were hunting buffalo *what good are you?* And it does come down to the ugg thing, survival of the fittest. I always felt sorry for the skinny kid, it's *very unmanly.* (Lou)

Apart from the smaller category outlined below (containing three participants) there is only one major category for this image. Of all ten images presented it is the one which drew the most consistent and hostile commentary from the participants. Two thought the man pictured was wearing a skirt – in one case even thinking it was a picture of a woman not a man. The other comments are all brimming with scorn and negativity – ‘embarrassing’ ‘weak’ ‘unmanly’ ‘ludicrous’ ‘ultimate insult’ ‘what good are you?’ – even from men such as Robbie, Marcus and Craig who expressed much gentler views on masculinity elsewhere. The gay men were just as hostile as the straight, the younger men just as uncomfortable with it as the older. Some kind of limit was apparently reached with this image, where even those with much broader notions of acceptable maleness were in some way affronted by this portrayal, and some green light was given for a torrent of negativity and judgment.

The only people to feel more empathy, and to relate to him in some way were Karl: a young man of 22 who is quite slight himself, Harry and Italo. Harry is gay and a well built man. Of interest here is Italo. He had a gay father and tends to display fairly modern open views on masculinity. He is fairly empathic towards the young man in this image, yet goes on in image 6 (of two men embracing) to display openly negative feelings.

## Feel some empathy but also sorry for him, at least he's trying

Trying hard to bulk himself up. *I relate to him in a way* because I do work out and I would like to be a bit more muscley: women like muscles.

**TE:** *So in your view, women have stereotypes that they find attractive, what about in terms of how men see each other?*

I suppose if you're really massive you're going to get less hassle than someone smaller. I think though its less about your body size its how you carry yourself.....Not sure if it's because I need more validating because of my masculinity or things like that, I don't think if I was more muscular I would be more of a man, I suppose that may be how people view it, I guess its kind of what I want, but maybe to conform to other peoples idea of masculinity. (Karl)

*a skinny man picking up a dumbbell. I feel sorry for him, I feel empathetic for him, he is trying to be something he is not..... Inside every giant bodybuilder man is a skinny person.* (Harry)

*Someone again who is manly, struggling.* You can come across individuals who come across poorly as he does and have tremendous masculine qualities in some of the traditional sense (Italo)



Image 5

## Not at all masculine, he has lost control

He may think he is masculine I don't think that, if you touch a girl *that is not masculine it's just a bully.* (Alan)

I find *this image horrible* because that is just *complete loss of control*

.....yes you do have to reign it in, you cant just unleash all the destructive power, men do have that power I think that is a masculine thing, to exercise that level of power responsibly (Simon)

I would say he was *aggressive*. *It doesn't make him masculine* (Don)

*Of all these pictures that is the worst one*, not because I reject violence, *I reject this, to make another person feel small*. (Yousef)

Domestic violence that to me *looks grotesque*, waving his fist. That is just *someone who can't control themselves* (Olly)

Now that's *totally wrong, that's a horrible image*, that's the kind of guy I avoid like the plague. (Marcus)

This image also provoked a strong, almost visceral, reaction amongst the majority. They felt disgusted and thought the image looked “horrible” or “grotesque”. Many spoke of the loss of control typified here as being very unmanly. This category again suggests that to be thought of as positively masculine a man must possess the capacity for powerful, physical reaction but exercise great restraint over this power in most situations. This image, for most men, seems to violate the central notion of a man seeking to protect those seen as weaker than him and provide for them. Despite thirty years of feminism and shifting of the gender role boundaries this “hunter” aspect of the male psyche has stayed fairly intact even for those men positioned on the emotionally open/new masculinity part of the spectrum.

### **Disgusts me but that's just how men are**

**TE:** *When you look at that do you see him as masculine?*

Yes, because *that's the way men are*. *They are brutal fucking wankers* and I'm sure that's way more common that I know there is nothing in my spirit that comes close to that.....men are way stronger physically and to get to that stage means you have already

lost, *that's the scariest one yet. You grew up always looking at who was the best fighter, who was the coolest guy on TV, the slickest guy with the gun we do aspire to be the arse kicking male.* (Lou)

*It's quite a male thing to do,* I think it's a quite sharp contrast between these two people, she looks like her feelings have been hurt in some way and he looks happy about that.....not a favourable image of masculinity for me (Peter)

*Men always feel they need to be at the top* of a relationship top of the ladder, to be honest I always feel that you need to be on top of a relationship. *I still feel that a man has to have some sort of control* on the relationship to sustain their position. (Tariq)

This separate, smaller category was created to take into account one aspect of these men's` responses. Like the larger category these respondents shared much of the instinctive negative response to the image. However they also added another dimension: the idea that men will act like this sometimes, implying it is not so shocking. Tariq particularly does not feel the need to condemn the image and instead starts to talk about he feels that men have to exercise some sort of control. Overall however it is important to stress the overwhelmingly negative reaction from nearly all participants.

Image 6



### Seeing masculinity and sexuality as two different ranges

He is obviously gay; someone who is *very masculine could still be gay*...I think there are different types of homosexuality and *they can still be masculine*. (Alan)

Well that's I'm assuming two men kissing, but its *very masculine the grasp*, that's clarified for me I *don't associate masculinity with being straight or gay* it's a different element. (Craig)

If anything masculine. I didn't realise it was a guys hand. To me there is *nothing feminine about touching a man*. (Neil)

Yes that's *very masculine*, I think you need huge masculinity to accept homosexuality and because two of my very best friends are homosexual, and they are really masculine. I think you *need to be real man to show you are interested in guys*. (Yousef)

*You can have a masculine gay person*, his sexuality has nothing to do with it. (Lou)

I think it is a guy being kissed by a guy; *this is how I expect a guy to kiss a guy, roughly. They are quite masculine men* (Peter)

This was a striking category for me. In most mainstream media discourse and much qualitative research there is a very clear association in some people's minds between men being gay and lacking masculinity. Gay is usually seen as equalling camp in other words. The image was chosen to be somewhat ambivalent and to depict men with strong bodies and hands to see if the typical responses would still hold. This is the



largest category for Image 6. It is perhaps not surprising to know that all four of the gay men who looked at the image are placed here; their responses ranging from tenderness to seeing real sensuality.

Interestingly the majority of the straight men are in this category too.

Like Peter, Neil, Alan and Yousef above they realise that some gay men can be very masculine, whilst others might be very feminine.

The presence of men such as Neil, Alan and Peter (all position 6: Traditional Provider; Emotionally Detached with fathers at either Position 6 or Position 4: Irresponsible Bravado) in this group is surprising at first glance. In the main these men express more traditional masculinity views and would, in the past, have been expected to hold either more homophobic views or to at least be somewhat uncomfortable with such imagery. That they do not show such discomfort suggests that responses to homosexuality may well be one central part of the mainstream male model that is starting to shift, particularly where the image retains a good deal of masculinity, as this one does. Displays of male-to-male sexuality which were more flamboyant or effeminate would likely have received a more negative response. Indeed of these three men Alan and Neil appear in the groups which interpret the matador image (number 1) as fake, cowardly, and stupid, whilst responding much more positively to this image of gay men embracing.

### **Ambivalence: at gut level some feelings of disgust**

Pretty hairy arm. I don't find it appealing again, its giving the image of two guys kissing. There is this strength and masculinity to it which

I find sort of acceptable again there is this *ambivalence in me*, all the gay people I have met I have got along with just fine, but *at gut level somehow it makes me feel slightly uneasy*. I had a religious upbringing thanks to my mum and we basically *got told homosexuality is a sin*. (Don)

I think I would think of it as masculinity, *oh it's a man kissing a man*. when I came to England I had already met my wife and I was totally against it, and thought it was wrong but my wife knows two or three gay people and I have met them and have realised they are nice people. I would say at this point, *the less masculine side*. (Jonny)

That does *not seem masculine to me at all*. That's a male hand; no I don't see that as masculine at all.....I don't know why I would think that as not being masculine, *just my first reaction*. (Olly)

Something to do with closeness it's not a fight. But there is *something disgusting and incompatible, I find something wrong about the proportions*. (Italo)

The four men in this category all comment in some way that they have nothing against gay men. They do not wish to be seen as homophobic in any way. However they are honest enough to admit to feeling “uneasy” and “disgusted” and rate the image as less masculine. It is a similar immediate trigger to that experienced by some men around the ballet image (number 3). Both Olly and Jonny rate as a 6 on the scale, as do their dads. Italo is one of the few men to have moved to the left along the scale; his gay father being at 9/10 whilst Italo has moved to the more mainstream position of 7. Don has moved just to the right of his dad and at position 9 would certainly be expected to be placed in the first category here. The fact that he isn't is maybe explained by the strong anti-homosexual religious messages present in his childhood.

The shift in heterosexual men's attitudes towards homosexuality mentioned above means that this category is far smaller in number (4)

than the category above (10). In the recent past it highly likely the numbers would have been reversed.

### **Neutral, doesn't bother me at all**

Two gay men kissing, *doesn't repulse me*, just make me think two gay men kissing..... but it doesn't make them more masculine, *it's neutral*. (Marcus)

nowadays a man is rated in another mans eyes by the amount of times he has had sex with another woman. I feel that that is *definitely part of masculinity, having sexual experiences is important* I feel. Not having it is a missing block of masculinity. (Tariq)

There are two men in the neutral category. Marcus, in his response to Image 4 (Ballet Dancer) has already shown himself to be very relaxed about this imagery. He is one of the few older, straight men consistently displaying such positions. Marcus' father is located at position 7 (good provider, emotionally present, holding) and is many ways is a typical working class good provider dad. He certainly was not touchy-feely or "new man" in any way but did have "a soft spot" and clearly adored Marcus who felt great "empathy and support" from him.

Image 7



### Looks like a victim, mixed feelings

*He looks like a victim, he looks quite feminine, and it's his lips that seem feminine. It looks like his boyfriend has battered him, he looks like he didn't instigate what happened he is the victim. (Craig)*

**B:** Hate to say it, but first reaction was *he had it coming to him*.

**TE:** *How do you think he got the injury?*

**B:** I don't know, *maybe cross dressing?*

**TE:** *(Laughs) that's a new one, I've not had anyone say that before. Seriously?*

**B:** Well yeah, he is out of drag now, that could be a good reason for it, it looks like he either got punched in the lip or there is still a bit of rouge still down there, but *he's a guy that could slip a wig on pretty easy you know*. In the context of what you have given me, I would say it's got something to do with hate maybe.

**TE:** *So can I ask you would the masculinity of that image be very affected by how he got that injury? Would you need to know a bit about the story before you could really judge whether it was masculine or not?*

**B:** Yeah, *there is nothing masculine about that, to me you have been bandaged and taken care of so you were weak in a sense* maybe you were better than the other guy, I don't know, but you see a guy with his arse whooped, like the kid that I hit. (Lou)

There is a definite feeling here that the man is a victim, weak and maybe brought the violence on himself in some way (Lou). Of the three men in this group, two are gay. Two men have interpreted some of the marks on the man's face as being related to make-up or

cross-dressing in some way. Lou is the by far the strongest in terms of believing the man ‘had it coming’ and could ‘slip a wig on pretty easy’. Craig sees the man’s lips as being feminine. The feeling here is that something intrinsic about the man’s body or his behaviour contributed to the violence done to him.

### **Context is all**

This is fifty fifty, probably masculine. Be *interesting to know how he got the beating*. Sometimes guys just get into fights whether it is down the pub or just happened, *maybe he was defending his friend?* (Jonny)

*If that was a guy on a rugby pitch then it would be masculine.*(Neil)

Maybe the second worse picture. I have seen a lot of injuries in my time and I have had a lot of these fights, *I know you can be beaten not because you are a bad boy.* (Yousef)

I think its masculine to be injured in a fight, I think it’s more masculine to lay the other bloke out.

**TE:** *So if he was the winner that would make it more masculine.*

Yes, *he doesn’t look like a winner. By looking at his face, he looks like a bit of a turkey.*

**TE:** *What if he was a football fan that has been hurt on the terraces?*

I thinks serves you right you thug.

**TE:** *But some kind of arena for fighting is acceptable for you.*

Boxing match. This would be ok if someone had taken his mobile and he had punched him, I think it’s an admirable trait. But for football and fighting is boring (Peter)

When you see someone with a black eye you think they have been *in a fight and people think that’s macho, I don’t think that it’s that macho, it’s a waste of time. But then again he could have been a boxer then it’s in a controlled environment and that’s the most masculine sport really.....* Yes, *if he got the injury say having a domestic with his wife who threw something at him then I wouldn’t think it was masculine at all*, but if you said he was a championship boxer and he just won the title of the world then I would think it was pretty masculine.

**TE:** *so would it be safe to say then that there would be contexts in which violence is very masculine but there are contexts where it loses that?*

I suppose yes. *Where there is some element of control and skill but I don't think brawling in a street* when you have had a few drinks or fighting with a friend, it has a big influence on how I would perceive it (Olly)

This is by far the largest category. None felt able to really say whether they felt this image was masculine or not without exploring the various possibilities in their own heads as to how the wound was caused, which bears some similarity to the above category. Indeed a case could be made for saying that there is only one broad category at work here.

All the men needed to construct a story around the image first, in other words context was everything in making the decision about masculinity. Some things they agreed on: in any kind of sporting contest the wounding was noble and clearly masculine. In most case fighting was not, particularly in any kind of domestic context. Even those, like Peter, who state that fighting is masculine, go on to qualify that statement by saying that if the man was fighting on the terraces at a football match he would be a "thug" and would have no sympathy with him. Each person has an instinctive, subjective take on where these lines would be drawn. Again we see the central idea that to be masculine is to possess the capacity for real physical strength and willingness to fight, yet real men must also temper this with knowing when to restrain and when to let go. There must be a contest, a broadly equal trial of strength, within a

recognised arena. Only then can the exercise of violence be admired and feted, seen as noble and manly. Where the exercise of violence is seen as abusive, reckless or out of control – or is directed towards any person conceived of as weaker - the attributed masculinity drops markedly.

**Image 8**



### **The soldier as the ultimate man**

This is the *most masculine out of all* the pictures so far. I think something like that requires a lot of discipline, *fighting for the country and putting their life on the line*. (Alan)

That is *masculine*. It takes some *courage and commitment* to do that. They have trained hard and are *putting their lives on the line* (Jonny)

*Masculine*. If that is a real soldier then masculine. (Neil)

Quite a manly pose, I think the armed forces are, especially soldiers, for me that is *the most manly image you can have* (Marcus)

*The ultimate man*. I hate to say it, I know going to war is the worst thing ever, but there is *something about you that wants to be a GI*. *You got the gun, you're all padded up ready to kick arse it is the ultimate expression of the modern man*. Yeah, he's a warrior he's standing on the wall he's kicking arse. I don't even know if he is in the right fight. Its still hats off to them though for doing what they are doing.

**TE:** *So there is something noble in there for you.*

*Hugely, even though I can't stand the fuckers.* (Lou)

This is a *masculine image for me, a soldier on patrol defending something*. He is standing up not behind the rock, yes very masculine. I do admire in many ways soldiers, I do think they love being at war. *It shows certain courage of beliefs and convictions, its brave* (Simon)

Here we have a clear example of violence being exercised within an acceptable arena: war. The largest category (11 men) displays a clear and admiring attitude towards the image, “very masculine” “most masculine” “defining masculinity”. They mention courage, discipline and commitment, all of which seem to sit at the heart of those desirable masculinity positions on the spectrum from positions 5-8. The vast majority of the men in this group do not appear to need to contextualise the image first, as most of them did with the previous image of the injured man’s face (image 7). The positive response is immediate, powerful and unambiguous. This is striking when many of the same individuals engaged in quite complex story creation and personal debate around the immediately preceding image. Something in this archetypal ‘soldier’ image gives one of those green lights to express an unalloyed view.

Only Lou shows some ambivalence here, having heavily praised soldiers as “ultimate men” and “hugely noble” he goes on to say he “can’t stand the fuckers”. Lou showed a similar internal struggle in his responses throughout. At one level there is a fairly typical hypermasculine reaction and yet fairly soon another voice (much



more connected to new masculinity) kicks in and challenges this. Interestingly his father shows a similar dichotomy for Lou, holding many very traditional hegemonic male attitudes and beliefs, often being very cold and domineering, yet still deeply heroic and admired in his son's eyes. Most of the men in this group have very small gaps between father and self on the spectrum (in most case 0, 1 or 1.5). They have a fairly stable model of masculinity which has largely persisted across two generations. This image is one area where very little change has taken place for the majority, unlike the gay male image at number 6

### **Rejection of war as murder**

*Don't get me started on this. It's masculine but it's tied up with so many other things, I have a real problem with war and fighting. I do connect that with men not women. (Craig)*

Maybe *the highest level of rejection ever*. Maybe because I really do believe I reject violence but without any exception. I think there is *no good or bad killer there is just a killer*. (Yousef)

I consider *killing in war is an unsung act of murder.....*the argument is that men can get away with it more, a violent man is just being a man! A violent woman would be far more scrutinised. (Karl)

Its uncontrolled.....*the idea of shooting someone is cowardly, it's done at a distance.....*No, you don't have to be masculine to shoot a gun. (Simon)

However, real hostility is expressed by the four men in this group.

Killing is seen as "murder" "cowardly" and given the "highest level of rejection ever". Two of the men (Simon and Karl) had very difficult relationships with their father and both have large gaps between their place on the spectrum and dad's (3 and 2.5 respectively). Yousef was imprisoned and tortured as a child and

has lived through the reality of war and its violence. All three have seen the brutal side of unrestrained masculinity close up and clearly reject it in this image. It is also striking that two of the other men with strained father relationships and large gaps on the spectrum positions (Gustaf 3 and Italo 2.5) are in the next ambivalent category. Gustaf's father was in the military when he was a small boy. So it seems that when young boys have been exposed to ways of being male that have hurt, frightened or repelled them in some way they are less able or less interested in adopting some standard archetypal male imagery, particularly when it is tinged with violence.

### **Ambivalent feelings**

When I see this image, *the alone soldier, I only see this as masculine, superficially*, it's a profession but not what it entails to be a soldier it's definitely masculine. *It's the loneliness; loneliness I would say is an easier trait for males than females.* The females I know have a great difficulty in accepting that they are alone because it is unnatural for them

**TE:** *Where if a man is thought to be a loner,*

It's almost admirable (Gustaf)

*There is an element of masculinity to it but there is also injustice in my head, especially this kind of uniform and it's not the way I want to resolve issues, which is going back to the shouting. There is an element of it being manly, but this is an invader. (Italo)*

## Image 9



### It's ok to cry when you've been through hell

A boxer that is crying and got beaten up. I *don't think the crying affects his masculinity, he is well built.* (Alan)

*Very masculine, but broken.* I'm interpreting that he has lost the boxing match, *he has been through real hell*, I don't like boxing but I think he has clearly been broken. *His physique is very strong and dominating.* (Craig)

*Mixed messages because you can see his muscles, the same time he is weeping.* It's a battle between this immense physical aggression, and you don't know if he has won or lost.....it does seem quite masculine because once you have succeeded you're allowed to actually be very happy...*I don't think that crying is excluded for being masculine.* (Gustaf)

I think that is masculine. He looks like a sport contest, the boxer has lost the fight and thinking how hard he has trained for the fight, *I almost feel for him, it's masculine because he is crying because it shows how much he believes in himself.*

**TE:** *Tears don't take away the fact for you that it is a masculine image?*

**C:** No not at all. (Jonny)

I have once in my life been in a situation where I wished to cry, but I knew if I cry I encourage the other fight and I did it and I know that *it is a privilege especially for a guy, it's a privilege to be allowed to cry if you are in pain* physical, psychological, for me I was very small minded, it was not allowed for me to cry. If I cried then they knew they had broken me.

**TE:** *So he is lucky then in that photo, to have people to accept his tears.*

C: Yes absolutely and that's a privilege. (Yousef)

Brave, boxer looks lost. I don't see crying as someone who is weak, even though I would not do it in public.

**TE:** *So he is crying and he is being physically comforted by another man and yet that still feels masculine to you.*

*I think it's because he has lost a fight, his dream has gone. I find that similar to crying at a funeral. (Neil)*

I used to do that in my childhood, a very manly image. My uncle was a boxer, it's a man's world for me.

**TE:** *And the fact that he is crying and being comforted by another man?*

That for me doesn't really matter, *I think that is fine, I think that is a really good image or someone who is perceived as a really tough guy, breaking down and crying.* It's a masculine image of modern day really. (Marcus)

Crying shows how much you have put into something, *crying is natural and its part of self healing. It has to be a masculine trait.* (Tariq)

*Real strength there, this is a well built man and he is crying, if it was the younger man with the weights it could have had a different impact* (Simon)

Very manly, years and years of training.

**TE:** *And the fact that he is crying?*

**I:** *That's perfectly reconcilable with my framework.*

**TE:** *And the fact that he is being comforted by another man?*

**I:** *Wonderful. In that situation I would want a hug from a man not a woman. Its evidently sports, its boxing, a life invested in it. (Italo)*

In some ways this is the most remarkable set of responses to any picture. Every single man of the 18 who looked at images gave a very positive response. In many ways this picture might be assumed to break some of the central rules of masculinity: the man is crying, he may have been defeated, he certainly looks vulnerable,

he is being touched and comforted by another man. And yet every participant responded positively.

Across the board they probably showed more empathy towards this man than any of the others and liked this image more. Not one condemned him for crying, or was even slightly ambivalent towards him. The context: a strong man having given his all in a physical, sporting contest allowed all of these things that many of them have condemned vociferously elsewhere. Certainly if the skinny man trying to lift weights (image 4) was sobbing on somebody's shoulder the reaction would have been harsh. This is despite the fact that objectively it could be argued that he represents some of the most positive aspects of maleness: lifting weights, putting in effort, trying to improve oneself. Indeed these two images represent the most positively responded to and the most negatively responded to image. It is interesting to speculate what the reactions may have been to simple descriptions rather than the pictures themselves: an image of a man lifting weights versus an image of a man breaking down and crying in the arms of another man. This is a good example of why the employment of imagery is so powerful when researching gender.

**MOST POSITIVE RESPONSE**



**MOST NEGATIVE RESPONSE**



**Image 10**



**Longing for some attention from dad**

*You're waiting to be discovered* because you don't want to say anything and when you are not discovered you walk away, in a way he knows he's not going to be discovered, that its difficult to get a response its more difficult because my father was not that aware (Gustaf)

Not masculine. If it was me and my little boy came in then you would stand up or at least look up. He obviously doesn't have much time for him. *The boy probably feels that his dad has no interest, or that he has done something wrong.* (Jonny)

This is one I'm familiar with, for me I look at that and *I feel sorry for the kid, because his dad is so busy and hasn't got time for him*. I see myself in that picture with my daughter looking at me. (Marcus)

*Rejection I guess. Too much distance between them, father on the computer and the kid is looking for attention. He is too busy being a man's man.....He is definitely feeling lost, that's going to be a broken window in half an hour, that's what I get from that.* (Lou)

(Laughs) *It's my dad on his computer.....I suppose he wants to spend some time with his dad. My dad works from home a lot and goes out for meetings....you can provide on a financial and emotional level, a good provider should be able to provide emotionally* (Karl)

*Very unmanly, because manliness is a lot about this relationship, its about affection, empathy, physicality.*

**TE:** *What do you think the boy might be feeling there?*

**M:** *Unattended, lonely. This does profoundly irritate me.* (Italo)

This image, like the one above, seems to cut across the main spectrum positionings these men hold. All but one of the men responded in a similar way, feeling huge empathy towards the boy and critical towards the father. This includes both the fathers and non-fathers in the group. Almost all of them related to the image personally in a very immediate and emotionally powerful way, often making links back to their experience with their own father. I had a very similar reaction myself when I first saw the image. Many seemed the most moved by this image. The child within them seemed to be the one reacting. Many of them stated that being a good financial provider is not sufficient and that a father should provide emotionally for his children too. Even those participants who are located at position 6 (traditional provider, emotionally detached) based on their main interview (like Peter and Alan), express views on this image, about the need for emotional presence and availability, that are more consistent with positions 7 through 9.

Only one person (Simon below) shows much sympathy for the poor harassed dad and responds in a less emotional way.

**TE:** *And with regard to the dad, what would you say about the masculinity of the dad?*

*He has got a job to do, he really has got to finish this piece of work, he has got no option, he has his boss etc breathing down his neck and so he is in a difficult position. He hasn't got his shoes on, so he is not going anywhere, so he can spend a bit of time with his son later*  
(Simon)

Table 3 below brings these categories together in groups.

**TABLE 3: FAROUGH ANALYSIS CATEGORIES**

MAIN CATEGORIES	COMBINED CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fake, pretend masculinity</li> <li>• Unappealing, fake, unmasculine</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Shallow, pretend, fake masculinity</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brave, averse to risk, machismo</li> <li>• Masculine, loving machinery</li> <li>• Gut instinct says it's girly or gay</li> <li>• Ambivalence: at gut level some feelings of disgust</li> <li>• The soldier as the ultimate man</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mainstream Hegemonic Male</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longing for some attention from dad</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cold distant father</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context is all</li> <li>• Rejection of war as murder</li> <li>• It's ok to cry when you've been through hell</li> <li>• Looks like a victim, mixed feelings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Masculinity is contextual – balanced emotionally open view</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effeminate, stupid, cowardly</li> <li>• Skinny weakling – no masculinity at all</li> </ul>	<p><b>Effeminate, cowardly, weak</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutral, doesn't bother me at all</li> <li>• Seeing masculinity and sexuality as two different ranges</li> <li>• Ambivalent: love cars, odd being so emotional towards them</li> <li>• I would never do it but its ok for him</li> <li>• Feel some empathy but also sorry for him, at least he's trying</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tends toward mainstream male position for self; non judgmental of others</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not at all masculine, he has lost control</li> <li>• Disgusts me but that's just how men are</li> </ul>	<p><b>Softer gentler maleness – rejects all violence</b></p>

#### **5.4: ANALYSIS 2: Free Association Narrative Interview**

As has been mentioned this analysis of the data focused on the relational aspects of the space between father and son. This scan follows Hollway and Jefferson's model up until the end of stage one: the production of categories. Stages two and three (coding and clustering) were held over until the final stage of the meta-analysis.

A full list of the categories produced is given at [Appendix 8](#).

Below is a list of the main categories produced with some representative quotes. Categories were not carried forward to this stage if they contained data from only one or two participants. The first five categories are used as examples, and are unpacked to look at some the issues being represented and to give some sense of how category construction worked within this analysis.

### **Emotionally available**

I'd say we just hung around with each other and he was always there for me, I never really had any problems to talk about but if I did *I could always go to him*. Alan

He was *gentle* and I would say he was *soft as well*. He did tell me a few times in business he had struggled to impose himself. *Yes, I remember lots of hugs and kisses holding my hand*. I remember I reached an age where he wanted to hold my hand and I didn't want to, I was growing up.  
Don

This category sums up something seen in many accounts where there was a solid yet warm father relationship. A sense that dad was there when you needed him and that you could go to him as an alternative to mother if you wanted to. The two quotes here typify this group; although Don's account (hugs, kisses, gentle, soft) offers a far more tactile, physically expressive version.

From an Object Relations point of view this type of relationship carries an additional benefit. If the young boy has internalised a warm, available father object, he can respond to that internalised object and feel connected to it, and even held or contained by it, even in those

times where his father is physically absent. It can become part of the boy's self-soothing process. So an emotionally available dad is not merely adding something positive to his son's life just during their quality time together, but also adding to an internal resource of bonding, memory, feelings and support when he is not there too.

### **Work kept him apart from me**

Total bread winner. Never played with us, never kicked ball, *worked sixteen hours a day, come home for his lunch back to work, come home for his tea back to work, he never sat and played with us.* Lou

And our relationship to begin with was difficult because *he didn't live at home for the first two and half years of my life, because he was in the military.* So he worked away. Gustaf

This category shares an immediate face value similarity with the cold distant father category produced in response to image 10 in the analysis above. The constant sense here is of a father who is away, unavailable to the young boy, and often greatly missed by him. Lou's "*he never sat and played with us*" sums this up nicely, father was away doing his father job but the price paid by the child was an absence, a lack of connection, a sense of the family getting used to being a unit where father was frequently not present at all.

So boys in this category (and the one that immediately follows) are deprived of not just the actual father, but have very limited opportunity to internalise a warm, loving father object. They have little access to the positive processes described above.

## Emotionally absent

*My experience of him was that he wasn't there and when he was there, the only time he would come forward was when (in my teens) we had a screaming match at each other and it ended up it being a fight. Eric*

*The most unemotional person I have ever met. Karl*

*Emotionally distant, up until he had a heart attack he was emotionally distant. I mean the first time we gave him hugs he was like, what you doing? ....we would be like let's freak him out and give him a hug.....he came from an old school country family, I don't think they ever hugged; I don't think they ever told their mother they loved them. Lou*

This category harks back to the introductory debate in this thesis about the difference between physically and emotionally absent fathering.

Many of the fathers (like Lou's) fit into both categories, so that most of the time Lou's dad was away at work, but even when he was at home there was no physical contact, indeed even a fear of it, and love was never expressed. Some participants, like Eric above, rarely experienced a present father but when they did, it was an angry father who appeared, not a communicative, warm or holding one.

Boys whose fathers fit this category have the worst internalising process of all. The father object inside of them is likely to be angry, cold, critical, maybe even frightening, so that even where father is not there they will be responding, possibly unconsciously, to the threat of his angry return. The 'wait til your father gets home' threat used by some mothers in these circumstances only adding to this.

## Flawed and Fragile

My father had *low self esteem, pretty fragile ego*, very emotional man, if he was happy he would laugh, if he was sad he would cry if he was angry he would shout and scream and slam doors, quite childish in a way, my mother was quite rational. Harry

He was *emotionally distraught, for a long time (after mother left family)* for two or three years he would sob, because of the loss, he didn't want to accept. He was happy for them to go off have their relations, her with the men he with boys and then come back together. Italo

Boys in this group had a different experience, but again not an altogether positive one. Father was far more often present, but not in an adult, holding, constructive way. The father presence for these two men was '*shouting, screaming*' '*slamming doors*' '*distraught*' '*sobbing*' and '*childish*'. Not surprisingly the child often comes to act more like a parent to the parent who is acting more like a child. Sometimes referred as the 'parentified child'. The smaller, vulnerable, less rational side of the boy has nowhere to go with this father and be taught by him. The child is too busy trying to work out the emotional storms and stress produced by his father. He is reacting rather than simply being himself. This set up can produce very intellectual and rational men who struggle to become comfortable with their own more 'child-like' emotions.

## Living with Dad's anger

He was scary because he shouted it would stop your heartbeat. It was a little *like living on a volcano*. Harry

I guess he is not verbal in a sense which I feel is perpetuating his sense of identity. *He rages rather than speaks* Gustaf

*I was scared shitless*, he would come in the front door id go out the back door. Just because he wouldn't smile when he would see you, it would be more what the fuck you doing? Years later he is like my hero and I love him but growing up I was scared of him.  
Lou

Anger is often the one emotion left to men who are occupying a hegemonic or traditional masculinity position. As we have already outlined many men can be left feeling frustrated, constrained and isolated by the masculine positioning they adopt. Frequently anger is one key consequence, particularly towards those who are less powerful, for example their own children. Participants here talk about 'living on a volcano' 'stopping your heartbeat' 'raging not speaking' and being 'scared shitless'. These small boys developed a strong fear of their fathers which was not allayed until adulthood. Powerful explosions of anger from father result in fearful reactions from his small son, learning to walk very carefully around this man for fear of triggering the temper again.

This also of course serves as part of the male modelling offered to his son; this is how men deal with stress, or disagreements, it can become part of the legitimising of the boy's own angry responses to disputes with others, treatment of women, or simply to overwhelming negative feelings within the self. Every parent gets angry sometimes, but if

father is not someone who can apologise, reassure or communicate about his angry outburst afterwards, the child can only guess as to the internal male processes of anger and is left with only its external violent display.

### **Dad as serious disciplinarian**

...he has got this intimidation thing about him like *if he is angry you know when to stop*. Alan

*He is the presence*. My mum is a very calm person who rarely gets upset. I always remember as a kid *when my mum would say wait till your dad gets home*. You would then crap your pants, oh my god dad will find out. He was very strict as a father but I thank him for that now Olly

### **Respecting dad**

He had many disappointments in his life that he didn't really work on *he just kept going and worked right up until the end*. Frank

He was 100% male a masculine, he had some views on how young man should be like, never resign, never give up, always fight, *I really believe he never did something against his principle*. He was a masculine person. Yousef

So in that sense *I've always respected the fact that he made sure there were gonna be no holes in the picture, he was solid*. Lou

### **Dad's only cry at funerals**

I have never seen him cry, *well only when his mother died* Frank

*Did you ever see him cry?*

No. Oh....*at my grandmothers funeral*, other than that I can't remember. Simon

Never see him cry, so he is keeping it to himself. I remember *once seeing a tear come down his eye* and that was really quite shocking for me because I have never seen my dad cry, I think *it was when his mother passed away*. Tariq

## **Dad as good provider: admiring his commitment to family**

*He always provided for us, I had a stable home life, mum and dad my little brother and my grandmother lived with us. It was always the two of them they were married thirty-nine years when he died that was a very good model for me.* Brian

He had a filling station, Texaco filling station. Every morning you had to sweep the front pick up all the cigarette butts exactly how he wanted it, he took pride in it and I remember one day I said “you like this fucking place”? He pulled his car over to the side of the road and said “*listen, its given me a house to put my wife and my kids in, a car and money in the bank. Do you think I like dipping oil sticks, do you think I like pumping gas? No, but it has provided me with the things I do love so I put up with it*”. That was the first time id ever heard him say he didn’t like the garage, because I could never tell because he took so much pride in it.  
Lou

## **Closed internal world of my father**

It is sometimes *difficult to get what is going on inside* Alan

He would *never show emotion*, he would never show emotion towards myself or my sister, *he doesn’t know even today how to hug his own children...* even today he doesn’t know how to show emotion to his own children, he does with my mother they are like super glue Robbie

There are two things, there is the opening up part of it and *there is a sacrosanct centre which is totally private*, he was mostly private. He was a shy guy who forced himself through debating societies things like this to come out. Frank

## **Father’s direct positive influence on masculinity**

Other people affect your opinion but *he has got a great deal of influence on masculinity*. I don’t think him working so hard was to convey a message it was just something that had to be done. Alan

In terms of similarities, *I have the same views as him*, I want to grow up have kids, successful job, get married. Olly

He is a mans man not a real hard mans man *I think he has got a real soft spot and I think that has come out in me a little bit.* Marcus

## **Changing balance of power during teen years**

*We fought a lot, violently sometimes*, he would be very passive and say nothing until my mum brought him on board and then he would be roped into things...probably up till my early teens and then *I started to get*



*bigger and it caused more fractures and just brought things to a head. It accelerated me leaving home really. Eric*

I just remember staying out of his way until I was sixteen and then I figured *I'm not doing this anymore you're coming over to my side now* I have enough of that shit. And then he sort of loosened up, Lou

### **Broken Family, Broken Relationship**

*I ranged from hating him to thinking he was pathetic* he had no sense of responsibility, we have spoken about this since and I think now we have a very good relationship..... As far as I was concerned it was dad's fault, he was going away a lot on tour at that time. Craig

To both of us our *family was something that we had survived* we look back as though we were shipwrecked or something. Frank

### **Knowing love is there – but it is never spoken or shown**

He used *to put all his affection into me although he never said I love you* or put his arm around me and said you're a great son, to this day he has never said that. Marcus

Sometimes he would just come up with an idea to help someone or make a situation easier for us *and the times that he did that you knew that he really cared* Jonny

### **Overall negative view of dad's masculinity**

*Even today it's all about caring for him and his crisis, I don't want to have that kind of relationship it's not masculine for me.* Masculine I associate with other models in my family. Italo

*Dad is not a very masculine man* I would say that my mannerisms sometimes are not very masculine, and dad running doesn't look very masculine. He just not very man's man, he has never encouraged me to play rugby or stuff like that but *he's sort of sensitive feminine-ish man.* Peter

### **Improved relationship in adulthood**

*I think we have got a brilliant relationship now,* where in fact I've had to stop him talking about things, where he has had problems with ex partners and he has started talking about sex I've not liked it.....I've learned to laugh about it now and *accept him for what he is.* Craig

First I was years in jail, then after that I left the country and I came as a political asylum to Europe and then many years later I saw my family: a time frame of about fourteen years I had not seen my family *as I saw them again it was different, I was maybe a little bit wiser and I could see*

*that he had got old. I have in last year a very close relationship with him.*  
Yousef

### **Lost opportunity for connection**

*I don't know him and I don't feel I ever will. I've tried as we are older but I feel he has closed off.* Eric

I don't remember hugs or I love you. I don't think it was ever something I desired, you don't miss something you don't have. *I suppose I would like of us to have done more together, more interaction, laddish interaction.*  
Karl

### **Dad lacking his own father figure**

*He also never had a father, his father died six weeks before he was born, he died of TB as a result of being gassed in the war. He was brought up by his mother and three aunts who all worshipped him and adored him, he was the male of the house Harry.*

*His father died the day he was born, his mother died of cancer when he was fifteen.*

**TE:** *His father died the day he was born?*

Yes, he was killed in action he was in the royal navy reserve Peter

### **Showing his pride in me**

*He was very much the recorder of my life; he was the man with the clipboard making down my achievement literally in spread sheets, as he was an accountant. Harry*

I saw him about four years ago and I went down to his house and that was quite scary. I used to professionally race cars and was on telly all the time. I went down to his house and *there was this one room which was like a shrine to my racing, pictures and newspaper articles all on the wall.....I feel a bit weird, that the wrong way to look at it. He was obviously very proud that I raced professionally. I felt that if he hadn't lost contact he could have had been more involved rather than just pictures on the wall, he could have been at the race.* Neil

**Combining Categories**

The next stage of analysis involved examining the main list of categories to look for similarities of underlying narrative content and emotional feel. This reduced the number of categories from 19 to 6.

This is shown in **Table 4** below:

**TABLE 4: FAN CATEGORY STAGES**

MAIN CATEGORIES	COMBINED CATEGORIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotionally Available</li> <li>• Knowing love is there – but never spoken or shown</li> <li>• Showing his pride in me</li> </ul>	<p>Father as positive emotional presence</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respecting dad</li> <li>• Dad as good provider: admiring his commitment to family</li> <li>• Father’s direct positive influence on masculinity</li> </ul>	<p>Father as respected provider and role model</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flawed and Fragile</li> <li>• Broken Family, Broken Relationship</li> <li>• Negative view of dad’s masculinity</li> </ul>	<p>Father as broken or flawed relationship</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lost opportunities for connection</li> <li>• Work kept him apart from me</li> <li>• Emotionally absent</li> <li>• Dad’s only cry at funerals</li> <li>• Closed internal world of my father</li> </ul>	<p>Father as emotionally distant, absent or closed off</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dad as serious disciplinarian</li> <li>• Changing balance of power in teen years</li> <li>• Dad's anger</li> <li>• Improved relationship in adulthood</li> </ul>	<p><b>Father relationship as conflict and control</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father lacking his own father figure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Father lacking his own father figure</b></p>

I will outline how one of these combined categories was constructed using “Father as emotionally distant, absent or closed off” as an example. The connecting themes and type of language typical of this category speak of distance from father, whether physically, because of work or simply emotional distance. There is a sense in which the internal, emotional world of the father becomes unavailable to the son, to the extent that the son is not sure whether it even exists. Given this, his experience of father is of rigidly controlled emotion, a tendency to isolate himself, and to prefer speaking of practical rather than feeling based things. Tears and crying provide a good example of this. Of the twenty men in the study, ten had either no memory of their father ever crying or a single memory of him crying at a funeral (six participants), usually his own mother. The adult sons speak of much regret about being so separate on this level, for some of them this inability to share and express one’s emotional self has carried over into relationships with partners and children.

On a broader Object Relational level these men did not experience the emotional attunement of their closest adult male when they were small. For not only does father keep his own emotions under rigid control, and thus mysterious and unknowable in the eyes of his son, but it also tends to limit his ability to communicate empathy to his son. So the boy has much of his own internal emotional world unrecognised by father, which means that the man nearest to him is less able to support him in shaping his own emotional regulation. Thus the cold distant father is a double loss to the boy, and the internalised male object he is left with can be one with a very conflicted relationship to emotional expressions, intimacy and empathic connection.

### **5.5: ANALYSIS 3: Foucauldian Ideas on Discourse**

This analysis is influenced by Foucauldian ideas and forms the third part methodology already set out in detail. This analysis loosely followed the Kendall and Wickham (1999) methodology as set out in section 2:10 Data Handling. After stage one (marking all discursive constructions), these constructions were then located within wider discourses. The full list of Stage 2 discursive constructions is at Appendix 9. Eight examples are given below: each is unpacked and analysed.

## **Men must stand on their own two feet**

*As I've got older he thinks its just me on my own road. And I have to be there taking on everything myself. Tariq*

*I had a lot of troubles in school, I got expelled three or four times. I had the feeling that they didn't understand me, for this reason I can't ever remember talking to my parents about my emotions or my problems, I learnt I have to cope on my own. Yousef*

Here we see an absolutely central masculinity discourse. It is one of the most resilient in that men in many categories express the same ideas, not just those in the hegemonic/traditional left hand side of the spectrum. This discourse revolves around one simple idea: that in the end men must deal with things alone. Nobody is going to prop you up or come to your rescue and, in any case, it would be less than masculine if they did. This taps into the archetype of the lone hero, typified in much media presentation of 'real men'. It is something manly to which small boys are taught to aspire. It appears to be very resistant to wider changes taking place around gender.

Some men express a slight anxiety about this discourse, others, like Yousef, 'learn' that they must do things alone. It is not necessarily their own choice but they soon pick up that 'this is how things are'.

## **Good, responsible provider discourse**

*It's about being a bread winner, not to the exclusion of your wife not to be staying that the woman should be staying at home, I see the male and female roles as equal.*

He believe a man had to take more responsibility, I think he thought that he has to protect my mother and us, my mother can give us love and take care of us but *his part is to protect the family*. Yousef

*I feel the responsibility to work hard and bring something in and support my wife and my family.* Jonny

This is closely linked to the discourse above. This study suggests that this discourse is perhaps the most resistant to change. It is expressed almost universally by these participants and seen as the basic platform on which all of the desirable masculinity positions are built. Only the very far left and the very far right of the spectrum would not sit comfortably within this discourse, and those positions are all viewed negatively by most of these men.

The idea that a good man should be the main provider, and as in Yousef's quote 'protector', for his family in an ancient idea and one seen in the vast majority of cultures. Whilst the conception of his emotional role, childcare involvement and attitudes towards women, gays and grooming may be presently shifting, this old notion shows no signs of moving. Indeed the commonly expressed media and political discourse about 'deadbeat' dads, or men trying to shirk their financial responsibilities to their children, is perhaps becoming even more vehement as women become relatively more powerful.

It is also interesting to note that even people outside of mainstream political, moral or social discourse also appear to hold this idea quite widely. Commonly on daytime talk shows people will chide men who

have abandoned their children by telling them ‘take care of your business’. The sense that men must provide and protect for their offspring exceeded only perhaps by the notion that women must not abandon their children physically or emotionally.

### **Men should keep their emotions under control and private**

*Would he cry at a soppy film? I would say no, reason why is because if I'm watching something on telly, for example secret millionaire where the guy gives away twenty thousand pounds, I'm like, I'm not embarrassed by it but I don't want anyone to see me crying.*

*Why*

*Because they are not a man, it's not masculine. Jonny*

*The unwritten rules, no feelings, unpleasant feelings are glossed over, sadness was glossed. When I first went to school I literally just turned seven my parents had dropped me off and we asked to build constructor straw, build a tower as big as you can and split into teams of three boys. Once we concentrated on that our parents we ushered out of the room, we didn't get to say goodbye to them because they didn't want mass hysteria. I was home sick for years and I was about ten before I stopped crying saying goodbye to my parents Peter*

I think its more acceptable now for a man to give another bloke a hug rather than the good match sort of thing. *A bloke in the street crying you would think oh god what's up with him, a girl you just know she is upset.* I don't know why, but I don't think is acceptable for a bloke to show his weaknesses like that, in public.

**TE:** *And for you, where does that side go?*

It doesn't. *It either works itself out or it just eats at me for a while, it doesn't go anywhere.* Neil

This is one of the key hegemonic masculinity discourses. It matches one of Garde's (ibid) four key features: avoidance of emotion. Many participants ascribe this discourse to their fathers or to other men around them growing up. Often however when it comes to their own



feelings things are more mixed, or even contradictory. Many men, like Neil and Jonny here, speak of it being more acceptable to hug another man or to cry at something moving on TV, yet almost immediately they pull back from this by saying it is not masculine. Jonny says he would not be embarrassed by crying but would not want anybody to see him.

Neil says this side of him has nowhere to go; he doesn't know why this side of him has no place in public discourse, he only knows that it is so. Many of the other participants express views which directly contradict this discourse and it is certainly less widely held among these men than it was among their fathers. Even men who do still broadly subscribe to it, are somewhat conflicted (like Neil and Jonny) and may have an initial response about emotional expression being acceptable for men only to quickly pull back if anyone else might witness it.

### **Hypermasculinity discourse**

*(In Rhodesia growing up) Absolutely they don't have emotions, they fight, they can hold their drinks, they are in the army, real men smoke, they play rugby and they don't really like women really. Bizarrely I found myself being sexually attracted to that kind of male, the rugby player, thug. Those were people that bullied me in my secondary education. Harry*

*That was the role my father took up, in every fairy tale there is a child who is beautiful, gentle and loving and then somebody, a step mother/father comes along and fucks them up until they grow, they have to then take on the messiness and blood of the world to survive properly and I think that is an important hardening off process that you have to go through. Frank*

Frank sums up this hypermasculinity discourse as “father comes along and fucks them up until they grow, they have to take on the messiness

*and blood of the world to survive properly*". His father was clearly a subscriber to the older psychoanalytic idea of father as the brutal breaker of the cosy mother-son bond. The Prince Phillip school of toughening him for the hellish world outside of the nursery. None of the twenty men in this study live from this position, or anything even close to it, so those who speak of it do so, as here, from a position of being very conscious of the harm it did to them as children. Although in Frank's case having said that this process "fucks him up", he goes on to say that this "harding off process" is something you have to go through. Again we see the ambivalence at work where the child self was aware of the pain and damage caused by exposure to this discourse, but the adult male at some level feels it did him some good.

### **Men are getting mixed messages from society**

Society is fairly confused about it these days. *Men do not know what is expected of them*, there is this new cliché about them being expected to do the washing up, talk about his feeling, listen to the woman. That seems to be slightly at odds with an undercurrent the man's out there hunting and bringing home the bread. Don

I remember saying to people it was hip there for a while for a man to change nappies and cry at movies and when they did that they lost their identity, *women were like, I want a man that builds a house, cuts down trees etc and its like which do you want*. Lou

This discourse was identified in a relatively small number of accounts, however it is a recognisable modern discourse. Two men (eg. Lou above) imply that these mixed messages are women's fault, that they want men to be two incompatible things at the same time. This is

interesting in so much as it contradicts in some ways the main findings here: that the good provider masculinity role still dominates but with some realisation that emotion, intimacy and warmer fathering can co-exist with it. This may be a function of the fact that this shift is still relatively recent and men have been trying to adjust to this new normal, whilst they are growing up. It is noticeable here that men like Don speak of society being confused on this point, rather than of a very personal confusion. Don's father was born in 1908 yet is still located at position 7.5 (and Don at 9). Don grew up with a father who was very tactile, loving and emotional and seemed to take that model of masculinity as the norm.

### **Influence of wider society or culture**

*The whole culture is based around that, where fathers are just not as emotionally active with their family, its all to do with compliance where he took that on and felt that he had to do that. My whole family even my uncles just conformed to that without realising. Tariq*

*Partly yes. It's difficult to know because I went to a British school so I had to play football with the broken fingers or things of that kind. So it's difficult to know whether its modelled from school, stiff upper lip. I would leave my father and his Italian sensitivity to enter a football coach that was from Scotland. Italo*

Many of the discourses which emerged from this analysis are related to discourses operating in wider society. However this particular one is based on accounts of how the specific cultural or national influence affected the young boy. This talk explores the notion that some men are very constrained in their emotionality, or in how they interact with their children by their culture. Tariq typifies this when he says "even

my uncles conformed to that without realising”. This suggests that for an individual man to somehow go against the notion of masculinity prevalent within his wider cultural milieu is almost unthinkable, and that often the transmission of these masculinity models from man to man, generation to generation, goes unnoticed and unremarked upon. These things are taken as being factual; this is how men are in our world and you must not go against it.

### **Balancing good provider role with emotional presence**

*I think that there should be a bit of both of it shouldn't be one or the other, its different within cultures, my dads culture is about providing and being there a man is defined through his social status, I feel that's not significant. Yes you need to provide for your family but its not all about providing financially it's about mentally and emotionally as well, he didn't do that. Tariq*

*Now I have a wholesome conception of manliness which is you have got to show strength and you have got to have virtues and character but empathy, transcendence all these things the acceptance of emotions and how painful or pleasurable it can be is part of it. Italo*

This discourse relates to one of the key findings of this study; that the notion of idealised maleness may be shifting (among this group of men) from the cold, distant good provider to one of a warmer, more emotionally available provider. It lies at the heart of positions 7 and 8 on the masculinity spectrum. Men in this category speak of the importance of combining these two aspects of masculinity and that one doesn't need to necessarily obliterate the other.

Others using this discourse talk of how it is sometimes tricky to balance these two requirements, but still believe it is important for men to do so, particularly when they are fathers.

### **Running with the herd**

The stripper bar thing, that's nearly applauded still, oh yeah you're a man, I think the soccer thing takes a huge chunk of male something, *you would see twenty thousands males all jumping at the same time, singing the same songs*. Part of me is a little bit jealous thinking that must be great fun but its also one of the most scariest things I've seen too, because that's to me is kind of wrong, *that's a massive group mind set that leads to nothing*, like what's at the end of the game? A score of one nil the pub or maybe a fight on the way home or something. Lou

*I think that's what maleness is, staying with the herd* Lou

I've been to a lot of football games and *you see what you call the alpha male and everyone praising them, and I'm thinking that wasn't funny or clever and you might get into trouble doing that sort of thing*. There I do see that as a positive is if you're a team captain on a sport and you have to take control and you're using it for good and there is a skill involved  
Marcus

There is some real ambivalence at work here. On the one hand some participants mock this “staying with the herd” aspect of doing maleness, or admit to being somewhat disturbed or frightened by it, whilst at the same time clearly understanding that there is some sense of belonging and safety in being part of the ‘in-crowd’. This harks back to much of the earlier material on the pressurising process of the boy code, dividing practices and peer surveillance of masculinity. It may feel safer to go along with the mainstream attitude or behaviour, whilst still secretly questioning or rejecting it in your personal world.

#### Stage 4: Positionings

In this stage the subject positionings adopted by the speaker (or by his father) are identified. These represent a combination of these earlier discursive constructions. They are shown in Table 5 below:

**TABLE 5: SUBJECT POSITIONINGS**

<b>DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS</b>	<b>SUBJECT POSITIONINGS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discourse of editing masculine performance</li><li>• Positive masculinity discourse</li><li>• Discourse about challenging and moving beyond hypermasculine attitudes</li><li>• Locating self outside of usual masculine discourse</li></ul>	<b>Defining your own masculinity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Men are getting mixed messages from society</li><li>• Balancing good provider role with emotional presence</li><li>• Male strength and power can be used well or abused: its all about context, restraint and control</li></ul>	<b>Challenge of balancing provider role with emotional presence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Men must stand on their own two feet</li><li>• Men should keep their emotions under control and private</li><li>• Men should stand up for themselves discourse</li></ul>	<b>Independent, controlled and emotionally opaque</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Good, responsible provider discourse</b></li> <li>• <b>Society expects men to be strong, tough and dominant discourse</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Bring home the bacon at all costs</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Running with the herd</b></li> <li>• <b>Laddish Bravado – One of the boys discourse</b></li> <li>• <b>Violent young male discourse</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>The boys are back in town</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hypermasculinity discourse</b></li> <li>• <b>Men and women should have clear and separate roles</b></li> <li>• <b>Big muscles equals a real man</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>The Hard Man</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Masculine influences outside of father</b></li> <li>• <b>Influence of wider society or culture</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Society helps shape the man</b></p>

## **5.6: STAGE 2 ANALYSIS: COMBINING THE DATA OUTPUTS**

Each of the data analyses has now produced combined categories or subject positions which will tap into the intrapersonal, interpersonal and wider discourse levels on which each man will have constructed his sense of a masculine self. They all describe ways of being male that may relate to him, his father or to other men that he has known or witnessed. Some are seen in a very positive fashion, others deemed very negative and the participants go to great lengths to condemn these ways of being male and wish to dissociate themselves from them.

The next table brings together the data outputs from all three scans (and from Tables 3-5). The table shows how each category on the masculinity spectrum was grounded in the data. Table 6 is below:



**TABLE 6: FINAL STAGE OF ANALYSIS**

EXAMPLE CATEGORIES	MASCULINITY POSITIONS	SPECTRUM POSITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Not at all masculine, he has lost control</li> <li>*Disgusts me but that's just how men are</li> <li>*Not masculine just a bully</li> </ul>	<p><b>Thug, dominator, violent, loses control</b></p>	<p>POSITION 1</p> <p>THUG DOMINATOR</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Brave, averse to risk, machismo</li> <li>*Masculine, loving machinery</li> <li>*Gut instinct says it's girly or gay</li> <li>*The soldier as the ultimate man</li> <li>*Men and women should have clear and separate roles</li> <li>*Big muscles equals a real man</li> <li>*Father's direct negative influence on masculinity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hegemonic Male: The Hard Man</b></p>	<p>POSITION 2</p> <p>HYPER- MASCULINE HEGEMONIC MALE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Shallow, fake masculinity</li> <li>*Brave, foolish, dangerous, flamboyant,</li> <li>*Showing off</li> <li>*Doing the more extreme adrenaline things</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shallow Fake Empty Masculinity</b></p>	<p>POSITION 3</p> <p>FAKE, SHOW OFF, EMPTY MASCULINITY</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The boys are back in town</li> <li>*Running with the herd</li> <li>*Laddish Bravado</li> <li>*One of the boys discourse</li> </ul>	<p><b>Laddish, one of the boys</b></p>	<p>POSITION 4</p> <p>IRRESPONSIBLE LADDISH BRAVADO EMBRACES RISK</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Longing for some attention from dad</li> <li>*Independent, controlled and emotionally opaque</li> <li>*Men must stand on their own two feet</li> <li>*Men should keep their emotions under control and private</li> <li>*Father as emotionally distant, absent or closed off</li> <li>*Lost opportunities for connection</li> <li>*Dad's only cry at funerals</li> <li>*Closed internal world of my father</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cold distant father – emotion under control at all costs</b></p>	<p>POSITION 5</p> <p>DECENT PROVIDER COLD DISTANT UNLOVING</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Men are getting mixed messages from society</li> <li>*Work kept him apart from me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Emotionally absent</li> <li>*Bringing home the bacon</li> <li>*Context is all</li> </ul> </li> <li>*It's ok to cry when you've been through hell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Respecting dad</li> </ul> </li> <li>*Dad as good provider: admiring his commitment to family</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Masculinity is contextual – some emotion yet still distant, still good provider, well respected by son</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">POSITION 6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TRADITIONAL PROVIDER EMOTIONALLY DETACHED DISTANT HERO</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Emotionally Available</li> <li>*Knowing love is there – but never spoken or shown</li> <li>*Showing his pride in me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Respecting dad</li> </ul> </li> <li>*Dad as good provider: admiring his commitment to family</li> <li>*Men should be the protectors</li> <li>*Balancing good provider role with emotional presence</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Father as positive emotional presence</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tends toward mainstream male position for self; non judgmental of others</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">POSITION 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GOOD PROVIDER EMOTIONALLY PRESENT AND HOLDING</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Seeing masculinity and sexuality as two different ranges</li> <li>*Influence of wider society or culture</li> <li>*Masculinity is about more than size – its how you act</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contains all of attributes of position 7 but with more emotional expression, political awareness and belief in equality issues.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">POSITION 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NEW MASCULINITY STRONG, BELIEVES IN EQUALITY, EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Discourse of editing masculine performance</li> <li>*Positive masculinity discourse</li> <li>*Discourse about challenging and moving beyond hypermasculine attitudes</li> <li>*Locating self outside of usual masculine discourse</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Defining your own masculinity, Softer gentler maleness – rejects all violence</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">POSITION 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NEW MASCULINITY SOFTER, GENTLER VERSION</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Flawed and Fragile</li> <li>*Emotionally distraught</li> <li>*Devotion through art</li> <li>*Seen as gay or feminine</li> <li>*Doing girlie things</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Defines self through artistic, creative means – often perceived by others as feminine or gay</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">POSITION 10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CREATIVE ARTISTIC MAN – IN TOUCH WITH FEMININE SIDE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Effeminate, stupid, cowardly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Feminine</li> </ul> </li> <li>*Skinny weakling – no masculinity at all</li> <li>*The ultimate insult to man</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Effeminate, cowardly, weak, skinny</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">POSITION 11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EFFEMINATE COWARDLY WEAKLING</p>

### 5.7: Commentary on the Masculinity Spectrum

The spectrum applies equally to a man's style of "doing maleness" and to his style of being a father. It is important to reiterate that very few men will be tied exclusively to one position on the spectrum. Most men will express aspects of different positions depending on the context they are in, the company they keep and how old they are. Most men will tend to move in a rightward direction as they grow older (this will be fully discussed later): this was confirmed by this research but also in my previous research with male prisoners (Evans and Wallace, 2007). However, men will tend to have a dominant style of masculinity (as will their fathers) and the gaps between their position on the spectrum and their fathers' are perhaps the most interesting data from this study in terms of my original research question. This aspect will be unpacked in the discussion section.

Gay men could be located at any point on the spectrum (although the gay men interviewed here tend towards the right hand side - positions 8 or 9 - and intuitively that may be commonly true). However it feels important to highlight the fact that most of the men here recognise that masculinity and homosexuality can coexist. Part of what would place a man in positions 1-3 (Thug: Hypermasculine: Fake Masculinity) is his homophobia and misogyny and so men in that position would likely categorise all gay men (or any men perceived as gay) in position 11

(Effeminate weakling). Nobody from those categories presented themselves for interview in this study; so those attitudes are under-represented here (possible reasons for this are examined in the discussion). Flashes of them do surface from time to time in the data, particularly in some of the gut reactions to the imagery.

It also bears pointing out that these are not hard and fast categories with clear boundaries separating them. It is a true spectrum. For example if we take two men within Position 6: Traditional Provider, Emotionally Detached, Distant Hero. Olly, like his dad, is a 6. However they share many sporting interests and although they do not share much of their emotional selves with each other Olly speaks very warmly of his dad. He is something of a hero to his son. Peter, on the other hand, has a very different relationship with his dad. They are also both sixes but Peter's father was an alcoholic (as is his son) and with Peter away at boarding school there was a huge distance between them. There is no hero narrative at work here, distant or otherwise. Peter's dad is probably on the border with Position 5, whilst Olly's is closer to the border with Position 7.

It is also important to acknowledge the inherent problem in any qualitative research in trying to place some kind of pattern, structure or template onto the data. Whilst it can inform us as to the deeper lived experience of those within the phenomenon it also offers an easy critical target in that there is no absolute clarity or neatness.

There are some clear problems with the spectrum. For example, Karl's father sits at Position 5. It is clear from Karl's transcript that his dad could to some extent be categorised as the classic hypermasculine male (Position 2). And clearly some men at Position 2 (like Robbie's father) were reasonably good financial providers for their family. So should the positions described at 2 and 5 not sit next to one another on the spectrum? In some ways this could be true. The two positions separating them (Fake Masculinity and Laddish Bravado) have not shown up in the fathers described in this data, although they are very clear and distinct masculinity positions described in the Farough imagery data and in some descriptions of the participants themselves, especially when younger (eg. Frank). In fact one could almost say that both positions tend most often to be ones adopted by adolescent youths or younger men: in other words most men grow out of it, and becoming a father may be one of the things that helps solidify this change.

However, I know from my previous research that some fathers do fit these categories, particularly very young fathers, men on the fringes of criminality or where children are the product of very casual relationships. The twenty participants in this study did not happen to have a father in those categories.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Mind the Gap

The key data set is that produced by the relative spectrum positions of each participant and his father. The father-son gaps were set out in Table 2 and Figure 2 Chart in the results section.

I wanted to examine those relationships where the father-son gap was highest (Robbie, Italo, Eric, Gustaf, Simon, Frank, and Karl) and lowest (Alan, Jonny, Olly, Peter, Brian, Lou, Marcus, Yousef and Craig). This data set is perhaps most relevant to the main research question. Where there is a very low gap this means that the man has developed very similar masculinity beliefs and behaviours as his father. This suggests that he found something reasonable, attractive or meaningful in the masculinity template offered by his father. Or it could mean that he and his father were exposed to similar messages and pressures around maleness and came to very similar conclusions. There could, of course, be a mixture of these two things. The men with the highest gaps between themselves and father may well represent the opposite phenomenon: there was something unpleasant, undesirable or unfathomable in their father's masculine presentation which they chose not to adopt for themselves. I present some examples here from both groups.

## High Gap

Robbie: the gap here was 6 places. Dad was 2 (Hegemonic Male) and Robbie was 8 (New Masculinity). In terms of dad's impact Robbie seems to have experienced a doubly negative situation. Dad was absent much of the time through work (Oil Rigs) and because Robbie was sent away to school as a weekly border from age 4. When dad was present he was "hard" and "strict", the children were often frightened of him and would come to "dread" his discipline. Robbie's grandfather provided an alternative, warm, engaged, adult male presence throughout Robbie's childhood. Although his relationship with his father has improved in recent years it is still very unemotional. The father has struggled to come to terms with his son being gay and with his original career choice (Air Steward).

Robbie has the largest shift from his father's spectrum position of all twenty men interviewed. Father was absent much of the time but when present offered a frightening, aggressive and unwelcoming male presence which Robbie found overwhelming. He also had a warm emotionally available male alternative (in the shape of his grandfather) on whom to base his growing maleness. His sexuality added another important element which served to differentiate him from dad. Here we have an almost full house of factors, identified in the introduction, as making a distant or broken father relationship more likely: physical absence, emotional absence, violence or strict discipline, a stronger bond with another male role model and intrinsic

difference within the boy (in this case being gay) which makes him feel very different to his father. I would also argue that his father's positioning at 2 (Hegemonic Masculinity) would have made it far more difficult for the father to emotionally connect to the son when he was around. The levels of anger, discipline and hardness displayed by the father are all consistent with what we would expect from a man unquestioningly obeying the dictates of the hegemonic 'hardman'. If dad had been a more constant physical presence in his son's life, if the grandfather had been absent and if his son had been straight, it is far more likely that Robbie would have developed a masculinity position much closer to his father's.

Eric: The gap between Eric and his dad is less (three places: dad is 5, Eric is 8). However with Robbie the father mellowed over time so that the gap may not seem so stark. With Eric this has not happened. Eric is 46 and when he was younger may have been closer to a 6 on the spectrum. There was a real struggle for supremacy in his teen years and as he has grown older and moved towards an 8, his sense of the gap with his dad has grown stronger. Eric's father also represents men whom could at some levels have been categorised as a 2 (he shows some elements of hegemonic masculinity) rather than the traditional cold provider (5). Likewise Robbie's father was a good financial provider and worked throughout Robbie's childhood; so in many senses could be categorised as a 5 himself. This aspect of the spectrum was discussed in detail on page 196 of the results section.



Two of the men with the largest gap are gay and had very traditional fathers (Robbie and Eric). The other (Italo) had a gay father, is straight himself and whilst seemingly more of a new man on the surface retains some fairly traditional (almost hypermasculine) views about what being a man entails. So whilst it is clear from the data that attitudes are changing around homosexuality it is still striking that men who grow up with a different sexuality to their fathers' are likely to adopt a very different masculinity position to him. Of course the men referred to here are now in their 30s or 40s – and the homosexuality (of either the son or the father) was often kept hidden and only revealed later in initially traumatic and confusing circumstances. In situations where the son is made to feel early on that his father is comfortable around gay people, and responds lovingly to his own coming out process, the gap may be less stark. Similarly a son who has grown up with an openly gay father may well have different responses to Italo. Selig (2009) reports his own experience as a gay father of a straight son:

*“I became a better parent after coming out. I no longer harbored the internalized feelings of hate, despair and inadequacy that I felt trying to live a doomed role as a straight husband and father. I learned to love myself for the real person that I am. I also nurtured my son to love the self that he was, no matter who that self turned out to be. When Nathaniel had a fever, woke up from a nightmare or had a problem with a friend, my sexual orientation wasn't the issue -- my parenting was. “*

Gustaf: He also has a three gap (dad is 6, he is 9). This appears to be a case where the emotional absence of a traditional provider dad, who tended to be

away often in the military or isolating himself in his shed even when at home, had a fairly hard impact on a sensitive and intelligent little boy. For men like Jonny and Olly (both only a little older than Gustaf) who also had a Traditional Provider Emotionally Detached dad it proved much less of a problem. They developed a very similar style themselves (their gaps are both zero) and are able to bond with dad around sport, humour and practical activities which are often the arena for father-son bonding. They describe their relationship with their dad in much more positive terms than Gustaf. There was a difference in Gustaf to which his father was unwilling or unable to respond. Not sexuality in this case but rather gentleness, a quiet intelligence to which the father struggled to attune himself. Most of Gustaf's positive mirroring of self came from his mother. Additionally in Olly's case the "distant hero" aspect of this category comes to the fore. Underneath the very hard, masculine, sporty exterior his dad had "a soft side" and was seen as very "cool".

This raises a vital question. Is the father sufficiently aware of his own masculinity style and wider masculinity issues to be alert to and explore with the boy his own growing struggles with what it means to be a man, even if that maleness may be different from his father? If the boy is starting to model a style of maleness very different from his own how does the father react? By accepting the difference? Or by showing shock, disappointment, confusion or withdrawal? If the latter is the case then the effect on the boy seems to be powerfully negative. Whereas if dad and son are very similar in how they do maleness an immediate platform for bonding is created: where I

feel like dad and dad feels likes me. From a Kohutian perspective the boy has access to a type of male ‘twinship’, which is vital in building a secure sense of self. For those men with high gaps with their fathers such twinship experience is in very short supply.

A similar question can be asked of male therapists of course (this will be explored in detail later in this discussion). If the father responds with negative mirroring (distaste, fear, mockery) then this is likely to increase distance within their relationship and make the boy feel shame, worry, anger or rebellion against his father. This is particularly so if the same aspect of difference (sexuality, non-sportiness, slight or overweight physique, being very intellectual, very feelings based) is already the source of negative peer evaluation for the boy and often derided by wider gender discourses too. Rather than father becoming a source of support to assist the boy in standing against such external pressure, instead he becomes part of the enemy team.

Simon: He also has a three gap and is also gay. Just like Gustaf he is a 9 while dad is a 6. Also he is similarly very sensitive, bright and somewhat anxious. Both dads have military backgrounds and both mothers were clearly the main parents and the source of warmth and companionship.

Most of the ‘high gap’ men appear most often in the two FAN categories closely connected to poor father relationships: Father as Broken or Flawed relationship and Father as Emotionally Distant, Absent or Closed Off (ie. Frank, Italo, Gustaf, Karl, Eric). These would tend to correspond with

positions 1-5 and 9-11 on the Masculinity spectrum. Of interest here, and not fitting this mainstream pattern of big spectrum gaps equalling poor father-son relationship, are Robbie and Simon. However although both men make relatively few appearances in these two categories they make no appearances in the main two positive relationship categories. Interestingly both are gay and both have a relatively improved relationship with Dad in later life. Robbie's father was absent during most his childhood working on oil rigs and Simon was away from his father having been sent to boarding school from the age of four.

### **Low Gap**

The low gap men (Marcus, Jonny, Brian, Lou, Olly and Alan) are all very highly represented in the two FAN categories which typify a warm, positive and respectful father relationship: Father as positive emotional presence and Father as respected provider and role model. These would tend to correspond with positions 6, 7 and 8 on the Masculinity spectrum (7 and 8 probably offering the optimum blend of these two categories). Marcus, Jonny, Brian, Lou, Olly, Alan, Peter and Yousef all have fathers located either at 6 or 7 on the spectrum. Peter and Yousef are the only two from this group who do not appear frequently in the two most positive categories. Both their stories reveal why this is probably the case. Yousef was a political prisoner from nine years of age and then became a refugee; his contact with his father in childhood was very limited. Peter is something of an outlier

within this group. Although both he and his father rate at 6 on the scale, they are both alcoholics and struggle with relationship and intimacy issues.

Also in the low gap group and not mentioned yet is Craig (he is at 9, Dad is at 10). Both Craig and his dad are gay, dad leaving the family when Craig was 18 following years of emotional strife and conflict. Although they have gone on in later adulthood (Craig is 42) to develop a much closer relationship, it is fair to highlight two factors. One, that Craig probably had one of the worst childhood father-son relationships in the study and, two, that Craig really struggles to have a positive sense of his own, or his father's, masculinity (the only one of the five gay men in this study to do so). They are both good examples of the far right of the spectrum being mostly undesirable for the majority of men, including men such as Craig and his father who inhabit those positions themselves.

Men on the far right of the spectrum are likely to face very different life issues to their counterparts on the left. Whilst those in positions 1-4 (Thug, Hegemonic, Fake Show Off and Laddish Bravado) may sometimes come into conflict with others and the law, they are still seen as 'properly' male in the eyes of many. For men at positions 10 and 11 (Creative in touch with feminine side and effeminate, weakling) there will often be much exclusion, mockery, negative judgment and shame outside of particular artistic or sexual sub-cultures, particularly during adolescence and young adulthood. Even within the gay world such men are often seen as less desirable and not as 'proper men' whilst many are seeking to emphasise their muscularity and

strength. Certainly the main male template emphasised, almost idolised, within gay sub-culture is a very masculine, beefed-up version of maleness.

## 6.2 What do the relative positions tell us about the effect of father relationship

The results here would seem to offer strong support for Veneziano et al (2003) who argued that paternal warmth was more important in determining emotional well-being in adulthood than paternal presence per se. Much writing on masculinity and fathering makes the clear distinction between good, loving, emotionally present fathers and those fathers who leave the family, often typified by media discourses about ‘broken homes’ ‘single mothers’ and ‘deadbeat dads’. These accounts have a tendency to simplify the matter as if these two polarities were the only fathering realities.

However this ignores at least two other key positions, the father who separates from mum but manages to retain a strong, positive ongoing relationship with his children and the dad who, whilst physically present in the family home, is completely remote from his children and feels cold, removed and unknowable.

The masculinity spectrum produced here does not have a predominant focus on the physical presence of the father or the survival of the parental relationship. Rather it looks at the emotional and psychological relationship. It is perhaps appropriate here to restate that the spectrum can be used to look

at masculine subject positions adopted by an individual man but also at fathering styles (the two naturally having a very deep effect on one another).

The physically present/emotionally distant father is represented on the spectrum by positions 5/6. A full twelve out of twenty participants have fathers located at these two positions. We could make a tentative assumption that these masculinity positions were among the most common adopted by men raising sons over the past fifty years. The fathers' would all have grown up before the rise of the women's movement, gay rights movement or the gradual softening of gender roles particularly evident over the past twenty years. The range of socially acceptable masculinities available to them for adoption was fairly narrow. The sense gained from the data is that these fathers worked terribly hard to meet what they saw as their main masculine obligation: "bringing home the bacon" and providing a protective roof over the heads of their wife and children. They can be described as decent, solid providers. Largely, however, they were unwilling, or unable, to reveal much of their internal emotional world to their children (and often to their partners too). Often the softer, more sociable, attributes were only witnessed from afar (as in the distant hero paradigm) and much of dad's emotional energy and real self seemed to be directed outside of the family. For example, Gustaf's father in the military, Frank's father fighting the British Union of Fascists or Simon's with his boxing and the Territorial Army.

Or his energy seemed to be more internally directed within himself, as in Peter's father struggling with his alcoholism, Karl's dad shut away in his computer room or Eric's struggling with his own depression.

It is worth noting that none of the twelve men with a father in category 5/6 moved to the left of their dad on the spectrum. Four stayed at the same position (Alan, Jonny, Olly and Peter: Position 6). The remaining eight moved to the right. This move varied from one position (Brian and Lou) through to three with Eric, Gustaf and Simon. In both Brian and Lou's accounts of their father relationship there is an evident warmth and affection underlying the accounts of competition and harshness, and both were left with much to admire in their dad. In both cases they have adopted some of his character traits. Both fathers would probably fall to the right-hand side of category 6 (the distant hero end).

It is striking that of the three men with the largest shift two are gay, Eric and Simon, and the other Gustaf, is a sensitive and intellectual 19 year old. It may be that in growing up and discovering either their sexuality or their softer, gentle male self in Gustaf's case, the harsher, colder aspects of their dad's style affected them more powerfully than if they had been a rugby playing, straight boy like Olly (who like his dad is at position 6 and has adopted dad's masculinity style to a very close degree). All three have made conscious efforts to move themselves away from the father's masculinity position and they speak of their dad with greater sadness, regret and anger.



It seems then that if a boy has a position 5/6 father with whom he senses some underlying love and affection or admires from a distance he will tend to adopt much of the same masculine style. The fact some of these men have moved slightly to right on the spectrum could be accounted for by the different social and cultural context we live in around gender. One example of this would be Lou, who grew up in socially conservative rural Ireland with a “god-fearing” father. However he has travelled widely in adulthood, including living in San Francisco for ten years, has been exposed to other ways of being male and has grown comfortable with them.

Alternatively if the predominant sense within the psychodynamic space created between father and son is one of coldness, distance, conflict or fear, there is little to admire or emulate in sons who feel different or sensitive, and the rightwards shift is more pronounced.

These findings offer good support for Osherson (2001) and his contention that fathers model manhood for their sons and that there is an in-built hunger for father’s love and approval. He goes on to argue that many men are left with “a legacy of loneliness” by this style of fathering and many of the statistics quoted in the introductory section would support this (eg. higher rates of suicide, crime, mental illness etc). However one aspect of these findings is paramount here. Many men find other ways of overcoming this “legacy”: if father did not provide it they will go and find it elsewhere in peers, partners, friends and personal development work. They are not left stranded with this hole of father hunger inside them, although for men like

Frank, Eric and Alan, they are left with some emotional scars despite much real change work. Much of the research Osherson uses comes from the 1970s/80s, for example Hite in her 1981 study of 7000 men saying she found “almost no men close to their fathers”. It is clear from this study, other literature and my clinical practice that we could not make such a statement today. Many men in this study do speak of closeness to their fathers, and many are making real efforts to be more emotionally demonstrative with their own sons.

The model of ideal masculinity spoken of by most participants here (typified by positions 7/8) has some space for the opening up of your emotional world and sharing it with others (including your sons). That the majority of men in this study see this as a desirable trait, which adds to one’s masculinity, is a real shift from the days when this trait would have clearly lessened a man’s sense of himself as a man. It is vital to add here that this move towards a more “new man” orientation has its limits. Any suggestion of effeminacy, preening, weakness or cowardice is just as roundly condemned and mocked as it would have been thirty years ago. Any sense that the man is not meeting his obligations to protect and provide for his family is still anathema to these men. Also worth noting is that most of the straight men interviewed would not automatically place gay men in this undesirable group. This may also suggest real change in social attitudes is occurring (or merely that it is now thought less socially acceptable to express such views).

It will of course be noted that men from the left-hand side of the masculinity spectrum are massively under-represented in this study (possible reasons for which are explored later in this discussion). This is true. However it may be too simplistic to think that if more men from positions 1-4 (or with fathers at these positions) had come forward then we could discount this idea that acceptable masculinity (and fathering) subject positions are widening. In my previous research with male prisoners (Evans and Wallace, 2007) most participants had fathers at positions 1-4. Many still occupied those positions themselves (which may have contributed to their presence in prison in the first place). However a sub-group of about 30% were categorised as “*hegemonic masculinity transformed*” and had made real shifts towards becoming less violent, more emotionally open men. Several spoke movingly of being deliberately affectionate towards their sons in an attempt to provide a different father relationship to the one they had grown up with. This strongly supports the Swedish study of new fathers in 2007 by Johansson and Klinck. Changing gender roles is a vast topic and depending on the geographical location, culture, class and age of the men studied we will expect to see very different masculine subject positions privileged and repressed.

This idea naturally requires further research and study with a variety of different male groups. However it does seem as though some shift of the desirable masculinity (fathering) positions is occurring. It is too simplistic to characterise this as a plain move from “traditional masculinity” towards some kind of “new man”. Any move must be described in a more nuanced

and sophisticated way in order to do any justice to such complex and multi-faceted territory. Moir and Moir (1998, cited in Rogers and Rogers, 2001) take up a fairly hostile and dismissive position on the notion of the ‘new man’, sarcastically describing him as “*civilized, declawed and gentle.....suspiciously like a female*”. They then go on to talk about celebrity transvestite RuPaul as an example of this phenomenon. It is clear that RuPaul would sit at either position 10 or 11 on the spectrum and would probably be characterised as an 11 by most other men. He is certainly not a good example of position 7/8 which is the ‘new ideal’ spoken of by most men in this study. Moir and Moir seem to have picked a very extreme example (not really representative of the discussed phenomenon anyway) to try and belittle the ‘new man’ construct.

It is striking that certain commentators and theorists in this field seek to conflate transvestism with any changing form of ‘new maleness’. This is fairly close to the old style hegemonic masculine attitude which perceives things in a split, cleanly defined fashion: real man versus everything else. And if a man falls outside of the ‘real man’ definition he becomes automatically feminine, gay, and girly or likes dressing up in women’s clothes. The underlying message here perpetuates one of the underpinning planks of the ‘boy code’: you cannot afford to allow anything ‘feminine’, soft or too emotional into your way of acting male or you will be cast out.

More usefully Foucault’s (1980) idea of ‘*technologies of self*’ by which people construct their identities, allows us to see there is a changing process

at work whereby young men will think more about their male image than may have been the case in the past. Today a wider palette of possible masculinities is available as subject positions. Some may actively resist hegemonic or traditional masculinities (such as transvestism, being openly gay, being interested in creative activity rather than sport etc) but most represent smaller, less obvious changes, like the majority of participants here, which are worth documenting from the therapist perspective. For example, showing your son that it is acceptable for men to talk about feelings, being tactile with him, or believing it is manly for straight men to be friendly with gay men or to acknowledge loving feelings towards other straight male friends. Indeed this latter phenomenon is now sufficiently well known as to be popularised within mainstream youth culture as a “bromance” (a loving friendship between two straight men).

### 6.3 Hegemonic Masculinity

Since the investigation of “*hegemonic masculinity*” (Connell, 1997) got underway in the early 1980s researchers in this field have been somewhat hypnotised by this particularly dramatic form of being male, which was rather taken for granted as being the de facto male position. There are good historical reasons for this. Acting out this masculinity (defined by Garde, 2003) has often catapulted a man to the top of the power pile in societies (or sub-cultures) where traditional gender roles are entrenched, manual labour is the main form of male employment or where there is a high level of violence or conflict. For a man to publically act out a form of masculinity outside of

the hegemonic norm in such societies may entail a risk of serious social disadvantage or physical harm (Hooks, 2004, Newburn and Stanko, 1994).

But as any Foucaultian analysis of gender, power, class and sex could tell us the social, political and personal dynamics which produce particular '*dividing practices*', power relationships and technologies of the self, will shift and change over time. There is good support in these findings for the contention that a real shift may be currently underway in the masculinity paradigm in the Western world. This will likely become apparent in certain locations, groups and ages of men first and multiple studies would be needed to truly document such a shift. However it could be time that we should no longer privilege the old model of 'hegemonic masculinity' as the default setting for most men. What constitutes the hegemony may be undergoing a dramatic shift: as an example the dominant form of upper-class male expression in Eighteenth Century France would have involved wearing a powdered wig and tights; this is not so today. During my childhood, in working class Wales, it was felt by many men to be deeply unmasculine to be seen in public space pushing your own child in a pram or pushchair. That is a dying attitude amongst the younger male members of my extended family today. It is also interesting that many researchers in the masculinity field study masculine locations in which the older template may still tend to dominate (groups of teen boys, sport, army, prison systems etc). These arenas may produce the more dramatic stories but may be ill-placed to capture any change in the masculinity paradigm.

Corneau (1991) pointed out those boys who had inadequate or painful relationships with their fathers, or very little fathering at all, have been left with “psychological holes that quickly fill up with dangerous fantasies about masculinity (p40)”. There is nothing in this work to contradict that point. Boys do seem to need something particular from their fathers and if they do not get it, they will look for it elsewhere. The men in this study who made such positive transformations found their masculine role models from strong positive peer, partner or therapeutic relationships. However many young men will not have the same opportunities and may fill up their “father gap” with the hardman fantasies which keep them locked in an emotionally repressed world where anger, domination over others and violence are seen as the only acceptable male outlets. Farrell’s (2001) writing that “fathers’ desire to be involved with their children is to the 21<sup>st</sup> century what women’s desire to be involved in the workplace was to the 20<sup>th</sup> century” seems to catch this transformation beautifully.

So these findings offer support for the argument that the dominance of positions 1-5 may be on the wane as certain social forces continue to sweep through society (increasing equality for women and gay men, increasing acceptability for men to acknowledge and express emotions, decreasing numbers of men involved in heavy labour, more focus on male grooming, dress and body consciousness). However these forces do not impact every group, age, sub-culture or geographical location at the same time or in the same way. In some parts of the world, some classes, some specific locations, the old patterns of dominance will retain power much longer, and tend to

actively repress alternative versions of maleness from gaining public acceptability. Attitudes that are becoming mainstream in middle-class Sweden, Britain or Germany would provoke a very different response in a South African prison, in a neighbourhood controlled by drug gangs in Guatemala City or on a deprived housing estate in East End Glasgow, where reasonable, emotionally open position 6/7/8 men may well become victims of the thugs or hardmen who still rule the roost.

So the argument here is that individuals can only truly exercise some choice over their masculine subject positioning where the environment is either positively welcoming to, or at least neutrally disinterested in, differing forms of masculine expression. Where position 1-4 men are in the majority, or in control of the power positions, exercising such choice may well be very dangerous or even life-threatening. It is interesting to note that exactly the same process operates for women in different situations around the world: their 'choices' around expressing different versions of being women are radically influenced by the environmental response (both within the family and in society at large) and its relative reactions of permission, encouragement, threat or violence.

#### **6:4 Psychoanalytic view of Fathering**

The classical psychoanalytic view of the father-son relationship, as the breaker of the bond with mother, the harsh teacher about the realities of the outside world (Grunberger, 1989; Frosh, 2002) seems to have some basis in



the reality described by the men in this study. However the idea, set out in Grunberger, that father must accomplish “his cruel task” by tearing the boy away from maternal warmth in order to prevent the feared outcome of the effeminate mummy’s boy is not supported. Father seems to perform a particular function in modelling maleness for his son, and part of this function seems to rest with the fact that dad may be more emotionally directed towards the outside world. It should be made clear however that there is no suggestion from this data that those men who have closer emotional relationships with their sons (positions 7/8/9) fail in this role of modelling manhood or providing a secure bridge to the outside world. It may also be that with more women in the world of work and some fathers being more involved in the “domestic” sphere this role of *bridge* may change.

The main difference to the traditional psychoanalytic view however comes in defining an active positive role for father, rather than the simply negative one outlined above and in Lacan’s 1953 description of the fatherly function as “breaking into the cosy world of narcissistic absorption and announces the creation of a cultural subject, the child as social being”. In this role father’s main tasks are to punish, set boundaries and to avoid becoming overly close to his son. In other words he should act as the “bad cop” to mother’s “good cop”. The emotional and psychological price paid for this by both father and son (and also of course by mother) was seen as a necessary sacrifice to draw the son away from the devouring orbit of his mother and toughen him up for

life. In societies where more traditional masculinities still dominated there was some logic to this position, if very little love and warmth.

This research falls more in line with the Jungian notion of father set out by Von Der Heydt (1973) whereby father “is the mediator between the exciting world outside and the home. This is the way in which the father gives birth to his children (p133)”, by acting as a positive, loving and strong bridge through childhood towards adult masculinity. The point here is that the cold, punishing distance once thought necessary to the accomplishment of this developmental task in fact produces a father wound which the adolescent boy must either overcome or suffer with indefinitely. To sum up: father must be a bridge for his son, but a loving bridge produces a solid, secure positive masculine object to be internalised rather a defended, angry, isolated one. Ralph Layland (1985) in his concept of the “good enough or loving father” captures this concept very well. One final point here is that it seems to be insufficient to argue that boys can get the “emotional stuff” they need from mother and dad can concern himself with other things. Boys learn their early template of “men and emotions” mainly from father rather than mother (or from other males if father is not around). Later experience affects this enormously, as these participants’ show, but if dad does a good job of this work early on in the boys life it saves a good deal of painful work later on.

## 6:5 Object Relations

As pointed out in the introduction Object Relations more or less ignores the father role completely. From Klein, through Winnicott's Good Enough Mother to Bowlby's focus on attachment theory, the concern is almost entirely on the quality of relationship between mother and child. Father is relegated to the providing container within which this mothering takes place. He pays the bills and keeps a safe, warm roof over everybody's heads. As has already been shown most men have internalised this main expectation of them as men very well. And whilst this research suggests some key shifts in the ideal masculine paradigm one aspect which shows no sign of changing is the man as "good provider". Many of the straight participants' here spoke of believing in gender equality and not minding if their partner worked. However just below the surface, the notion that it was still their job to "provide and protect" proved very resilient. One of the fastest ways to lose respect for the masculinity of another was to see him as failing to properly fulfil this role. Indeed this idea has gained sufficient common currency in recent years to be familiar to tabloid newspaper readers and tabloid talk-show viewers as "deadbeat dads".

The findings here offer some support for Layland (cited in Samuels , 1985 p 153) for the concept of the "good enough or loving father" to mirror the familiar "good enough mother" of Winnicott. This certainly appears to be true in terms of developing a positive, balanced sense of the masculine self

on the middle part of the spectrum. Samuels four key functions of the “internal father” (p24): (personal authority, ideals and values, sexual identity and role in society) all show up quite clearly in this data.

It is also interesting to note, however, that is not necessary for the biological father to perform this function for the boy. For someone like Eric, who had a very distant relationship with his dad in childhood, it is later relationships (some in early adulthood) that have been more powerful in shaping his masculine self. For Frank, psychotherapy training performed some of that role. Neil, whose father left the family when he was five, has stayed both angry at dad and pretty traditional in his masculinity views. He attributes much of his masculine shaping to media exposure: “*probably from films, programmes as a kid, tough guy weak guy*”. And for Robbie, whose position 2 hypermasculine dad was either away on the oil rigs or at home being violent, the ‘good enough father’ was in fact his grandfather. He says “*maybe he is the man I am today*”.

From an Object Relations perspective this would seem to show that boys, particularly once they begin the process of separating from the mother-child primary merger (between ages 4-8) are extremely hungry for suitable masculine objects to internalise and help shape and build their growing sense of a male self (it is ironic of course that it is just at this stage in their life that little boys are least likely to come across male teachers).

In an ideal situation the same person will provide the bulk of this throughout the key developmental period (ie. dad). However if dad is absent (physically, emotionally or both) or if dad is living from a masculine subject position that hurts the boy or which he does not respect or idealise, then substitute male objects will be turned to (the older brother, the uncle, the sports hero or the gang leader). These findings offer support for this process whereby ‘father hunger’, as Pittman (1992) terms it, can become a dominating and dramatic aspect of young male psychology which can add fuel to various forms of acting out and risk taking behaviour. This again suggest that Bem’s (1981) Gender Schema theory is too simplistic in implying there is a straightforward route for societal gender preferences to enter the unconscious minds of children.

All this suggests that Object Relations theory has a great need for father to be placed much more firmly at the centre of the original family dynamic which produces the self, its defences, beliefs and behaviours. Modern research like Akhtar and Parens (2004) is beginning to show more examples of fathers’ “instinctive” responses to children, including fathers’ “engrossment” in their new-born babies. This may mean that many men, given permission and encouragement, could form much deeper and emotionally demonstrative bonds with their children.

According to Kohut (1981) we form our own identity by idealising someone else, receiving positive, warm mirroring from them, feeling that we are like

them in some way (twinship) and, finally, by incorporating elements of them inside ourselves through the process of “transmuting internalisation”. In this way we structure self. In the main Object Relations theory has assigned this function mainly to mother. The data presented here suggests there is a parallel and, somewhat unique, process of internalisation happening between father and son. The fact that it has often been ignored or under-represented in the psychological literature does not mean it is not of huge importance. It also suggests that if this father-son internalisation process is absent or seriously damaged there may be a high price to pay for the son.

The downplaying of the importance of this father-son process also serves to reinforce the idea that it must be mother who is always there, that in some way she alone is uniquely equipped to parent. Such assumptions have lain at the heart of much public policy for years (maternity leave vs paternity leave entitlement being one example). Many feminist writers (such as Hooks) point to the fact that these entrenched beliefs serve to shut fathers out of their sons emotional life but also to pressure women to stay predominantly focussed on the child’s world rather their own. Both genders (parents and children) may benefit hugely from expanding acceptable notions of masculinity and fathering.

## 6:6 Feminist Perspectives on Fathering

The feminist perspective on fathering outlined by Benjamin (1988) and Hooks (2004) fits well with the findings of this study. Benjamin points out that the early tactile, loving and “nurturing” contact between father and his young male child will often be downplayed or removed entirely as the boy grows for fear of producing a homosexual boy. As was pointed out in the introduction a boy abandoned by his father in such a way may well conclude this is an important part of becoming a man. If hugs become handshakes and messages of “boys don’t cry etc” start to dominate, it would be hard for the child to reach alternative conclusions. This leads us back in a circular fashion to the old psychoanalytic idea that “father as the cold bridge” is needed.

However these results show that the cold bridge is harmful. They also show that the warm bridge model, far from harming the male child, produces good emotional outcomes. The four men in this study with fathers at position 7/8 (Don, Harry, Yousef and Marcus) are all themselves located at positions 8/9. Don had a warm loving father relationship throughout his life, describing his dad as a “gentleman” and very “easy going”. He also remembers much physical affection “yes, I remember lots of hugs and kisses holding my hand. I remember I reached an age where he wanted to hold my hand and I didn’t want to, I was growing up.” Here his father allows Don to choose where that

physical intimacy comes to an end rather than imposing a sudden break from a position of fear. Harry likewise describes physical affection with dad up to adulthood. Yousef and Marcus also felt greatly loved and “special” to their fathers. The word “gentleman” crops in several of these transcripts. All say they took mainly good things from having father as a warm, loving presence. All have a settled, happy sense of their own masculinity and a relaxed, easy going manner.

### 6.7 Foucaultian Perspectives on Masculinity and Fathering

The ‘ideal’ masculine position seemingly preferred by the majority of men in this study has moved significantly rightwards compared to most of their fathers. The average spectrum position of the twenty fathers is **6.15** - this is just across into the “Traditional Provider Emotionally Detached” style of being male. The average spectrum position of the twenty participants is **7.475** – this is almost exactly right in the centre of the “Good Provider Emotionally Present and Holding” style. This represents a rightwards shift of **1.325** in just one generation. Clearly from an unrepresentative qualitative sample we need to exercise caution in saying anything more than that for this particular group of men there has been a significant rightwards shift in their predominant adopted masculine role. In breaking this down by age group there is also a suggestion that younger men may be moving even faster: the 5 participants aged under 30 have a gap of 1.58 (rightward shift) compared to their fathers; the 6 participants over 40 have gap of 1.4 (rightward shift) compared to their fathers.



Analysing the average spectrum position within age groups also offers some support for the idea that men tend to move gradually rightwards as they age. The average position for the men under 30 is **6.91**. The average for men aged between 30-40 is **7.44**. The average for men aged over 40 is **8.2**.

From a Foucaultian perspective this suggests several things. Firstly, that boys and young adult men are more exposed to the narrow hegemonic discourses around maleness inherent in the active panoptican gaze and dividing practices of the typical school playground, youth gang or football terrace. Because of the internal pressure most of us feel in our teenage years to belong and fit in with peer groups, the wholesale adoption and internalisation of such attitudes will tend to be more pronounced.

There is a suggestion here that over time individuals will, as they become more experienced, more exposed to different ways of being male and more sure of their own masculine self, be more likely to question those clear-cut dividing discourses about maleness which create a tangible in group/out group split. As we mature many people become more conscious of complexity, paradox, grey areas and that men they like, respect or admire (or even themselves) do not necessarily fit into the rigid categories within hegemonic/traditional masculinity discourse. For some men (gay men for instance or young men such as Gustaf or Karl who tend to be quieter, softer or less domineering) this process starts earlier and progresses more rapidly than for men like Olly or Jonny, who in terms of physique, sexuality and

temperament are closer to the idealised male versions on offer within mainstream teenage discourse.

Aging also seems to provide a variety of ‘turning point’ experiences (fatherhood, relationships, wider life experience, lower testosterone, general maturity) which allow some men to mellow in their masculinity subject positioning, and to grow more comfortable around feelings. However this is not automatic – it does not happen to everybody as the years advance – something must occur whereby the attitudes of youth are challenged or become more easily expressible.

Discourses around maleness have expanded and changed over the past thirty years such that a sixteen year old boy today has probably been exposed to a wider variety of socially acceptable male styles than his contemporary forty years ago. There has also been a parallel shift in the conception of female and gay male roles. Whilst the accusation of being ‘gay’ or a ‘girl’ is probably still the strongest weapon to belittle another boy among male teens, these attitudes seem to be softening among many older men. Again this is a considerable shift compared with the social attitudes of the previous two generations. So as Foucault argues “subjects are active in producing themselves” (Kendall and Wickham, 1999) and this study suggests younger men may be becoming ever more active and reflective in producing their gendered self. So it is useful here to be cognisant of the Foucaultian concept of ‘*epistemes*’: whereby particular historical periods allocate certain values and meanings to things which deeply affect the way we respond to them.

Gender is a great example of this and, it is fair to say, has been undergoing a relative earthquake in our understanding over the past century (particularly in the West). This first emerged around the female role but in the last quarter century it has expanded into a widespread questioning of male roles. Now, as Foucault argues, “our thoughts and actions are influenced, regulated and to some extent controlled by these different discourses” (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2002) and whilst all the participants will have lived through these socio-political changes, the younger men will have been fathered by men exposed to them and, crucially, grown up in a society increasingly debating them.

#### 6.8 Implications for working with male therapeutic clients

So far this discussion has been largely concerned with father influence in building the masculine self. It now turns to the implications for therapists working with male clients.

Perhaps the first and most obvious implication here is that men on the left hand side of the masculinity spectrum (positions 1-5) are far less likely to show up in therapy settings, given that their construction of masculinity is more likely to rest on the idea that “real men” are self-sufficient, don’t require help from others and would not be comfortable talking about feelings which would tend, in their view, to feminise them or make them seem gay.

However this group is likely to be over-represented in some settings (prison, addiction centres etc).

The findings here suggest that men up to and including position 6 (Traditional Provider, Emotionally Detached, Distant Hero) are likely to be somewhat dubious of the whole therapy enterprise. In clinical practise men will often get their partners to make the initial enquiries about coming to therapy. Part of the work, over and above whatever presenting issues the man brings, is to assist him in feeling comfortable to explore his emotional reactions within himself and with others. Men sometimes need assistance normalising those parts of the self which may feel unsure, vulnerable, frightened, tender or weepy. Therapists need to be especially alert to such realities and not simply dismiss the man's reaction as resistance or defence. Some men will be more reluctant to explore these parts of self in front of another man; others in front of a woman. In both cases, these findings suggest, therapists may need to explicitly name some of the typical male struggles around such issues and spend time creating a permissive space into which these parts of the self can emerge.

Likewise the therapist may need to be carefully attuned to any material about the original father-son relationship, or to any beliefs about maleness which may be adversely impacting the male client which were shaped by the father-son dyad. They need to pay attention to the internalised masculine object and its effects on the man's feelings, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. There

may be many opportunities to work on such core beliefs in the here and now of the therapeutic relationship.

It may be that projections relating to ‘father hunger’, for instance, may show up in the idealisation of a male therapist. If the practitioner’s theoretical orientation focuses on the transference relationship it may be important to pay attention to this dynamic aspect.

Additionally we can say that the way in which men self-soothe, communicate distress and experience relationships is likely to be affected by their masculine subject positioning. An effective therapist will need to explore their client’s masculine positioning in order to fully understand the ways in which this man deals with anxiety, depression, self-esteem, trauma and relationships, in just the same way as we may examine his character style, maladaptive thinking or early psychodynamic experiences.

In this sense it can be argued that the gendered self is woven into the subjective lived experience of the wider self and may, in actuality, go some way to explaining how that wider self was shaped and constrained. The way a young man goes on to experience the ‘boy code’ policing of later childhood and adolescence, and the choices and performances it imposes upon him, will leave a deep psychological mark. This is likely to be just as true for the laddish or the emotionally cold, as for boys who express more alternative ways of being male. As was argued earlier homophobia and the avoidance of femininity does not only affect gay young men; straight young men are often

hurt by it too. One may have swallowed many of the hegemonic rules and tried to live by them, whilst the other may have been forced to question aspects of the code and striven to find new ways to do maleness outside of its confines. Even though two such men may act very differently and be positioned well apart on the spectrum both have been shaped by the '*dividing practices*' they were exposed to in youth. One, able to remain within the powerful 'in group', and the other having been excluded, striving to create his own place. Even for the young man able to stay within the 'in-group' there is frequently a sense of fear that this status could be removed at any time. And one of the key prices paid for maintaining this position is the suppression of emotionality. It is also true that many who do not initially fit the 'in group' template will come into their own as they grow older, whereas the more rigid hegemonic positioning becomes increasingly problematic as the man ages.

One of the things evident from this research (and from both clinical practise and life experience) is that most men mellow in their attitudes as they age and shift towards the right on the spectrum. Many participants here describe a relationship with their father which has become more open, less charged and more real as the years pass by. Positions 1-4 on the spectrum: thug; hypermasculine; show off and irresponsible lad, offer a good deal of social status and power among male peers (and to a lesser extent in the eyes of some women) during adolescence and young adulthood. This is far less true as we age; a man expressing these subject positions at 40, 50 or 60 may come across as somewhat pathetic, immature or pitiable.

Some men unable to grow out of the far left of the spectrum may struggle to become productive, law abiding members of society. It is perhaps no great surprise that we are likely to find large numbers of these adult males in gang and prison cultures, where physical size, threat of violence and avoidance of feeling is the swiftest guarantee of top dog status. For the therapist encountering such men in their older years it will be important to understand that the man may have become stuck in a male identity which appeared to work for him in youth, but has increasingly imprisoned him as he ages. Accompanying this may be a good deal of frustration, loss, shame and confusion which may present as anger or withdrawal on the surface.

Alternatively working with young men on the far right of the spectrum (positions 9-11) may mean helping them to value their own unique way of being male. They may have been the target of mockery, abuse, exclusion or shaming in childhood and the therapist will need to be sensitive to this. Much of the wounded child self may have been split off, repressed or denied in order for the child to survive psychologically in very hostile environments, whether in the home from parents or siblings, in school from teachers or peers or from wider messages within societal or media discourse. Sometimes this will have developed into self-hatred of parts of the self. A therapist will need to provide an environment in which some good mirroring is provided for these discarded, lost or hated aspects of self, to assist the client in bringing them into the room for exploration, healing and understanding.

It may also be that men who fall in the middle right of the spectrum (positions 6-8) and have a low gap between their own and their father's masculinity positions (eg. Jonny, Olly and Lou) are far less likely to bring issues associated with their male sense of self to therapy (either directly or more implicitly). Men in this group express far less conflict about their maleness, either within themselves or when comparing themselves to the mainstream expressions of masculinity around them. It may well be that the low gap with dad's male role model has given them a sense of security and continuity about their masculinity which does not lead to the questioning of self and society which is a feature of many men's '*turning point*' experiences. However even where men are less conflicted about their own masculinity they may still bring issues related to father, sons, brothers, friends or colleagues that would benefit from a solid therapist grasp of masculinity issues.

I have argued throughout that there is a tendency for boys, men, fathers and therapists towards splitting around masculinity (as with so many other aspects of life). Certainly many men will have grown up with a sense that you are either one of the boys or you are not. This is the core message that the boy code communicates to them: play by the rules or you are out. It is hoped that the eleven spectrum positions set out here will help all practitioners (but especially the men) to think very carefully about whether they too tend to be split around maleness. Some masculinity literature (eg. Moir and Moir, *ibid*) tends to replicate this splitting (possibly unconsciously)



and to not be attuned to the subtle differentiation between masculinity positions which the spectrum represents. Hopefully one of its key benefits is the opening up of the middle positions 5-9 which are often conflated together in the literature as being the same thing. Here there is a much finer sifting out of the components of these positions in order that we can understand them at a much more realistic level, giving due weight to their key features.

From a psychological perspective this is vital given that underlying the common factor within these positions (ie. being a good financial provider to those who depend upon you) are a vast array of differing psychodynamic relational possibilities (eg. cold and unreachable, distant admired hero, warm and holding). These will have hugely differing impacts on the maturing masculine object within the boy and his understanding of male emotionality and its expression. This brings us back to the key differentiation between father as a cold bridge and as a warm bridge. The broad conceptual notion of 'traditional masculinity' often misses these powerful distinctions in its sole focus on the economic provider role. Likewise psychoanalytic theory has maintained an over-focus on the need for a cold bridge father whilst Object Relational theory has downplayed his importance altogether. The masculinity spectrum set out here offers the possibility of revising some of this constraining thinking in the best interests of clients.

As we have already seen psychology research (and counselling theory) is often more drawn towards the dramatic and clearly distinguishable stories expressed by the extreme positions (1/2 vs 10/11). However it would seem

from this research (and clinical experience) that this is not where most men (or their fathers) are positioned. The 'boy code' seems to offer these two extremes as the only options for young men; if you can't grab a spot in 1/2 you will be banished to 11/12. The central point of this data is that hopefully a young man will have a father able to help him overcome the simplistic internalisation of such discourse. He certainly does not need a therapist unable to do so.

Of course the vast majority of therapists (male or female) will be more open to the middle ground subtleties explored in this work but are less likely to have the time or space during practice to name and explore them in quite this way. The spectrum (and more importantly the unpacking of the differing positions in this discussion) may assist them in doing this with their clients, providing a tool which can start a dialogue within therapeutic space about the client's relationship to his father but also about his own sense of masculine self and where elements of this may be blocking him personally and within his relationships.

Many male clients do seem to need active permission and encouragement from me to allow feelings to surface and be worked with. This is most striking with men whose fathers were unable to do this for them (for whatever reason) and for men who fit the schizoid or obsessive-compulsive personality types, where curtailment of emotional response is prevalent along with a tendency to employ rationalising or dissociative defences against anxiety.

Men who fit the more oral dependent personality type (Johnson, 1994) may need assistance from the therapist to be more present and compassionate towards their own emotional needs rather than acting them out through drinking, drug abuse, sex or food issues, or through the ambivalent relationship attachment patterns typical of the oral dependent personality.

Also the argument underlying the three fold methodological structure employed here (that gender is co-constructed across the three fields of intrapsychic, interpersonal (particularly with father) and within wider social discourses) may be illuminating for the practitioner in understanding the complex generation of some male client issues. This may be particularly so where theoretical orientation predisposes them to focus on one aspect: for example the psychoanalysts will tend toward the intrapsychic, the person-centred towards the interpersonal, the CBT therapist the intrapsychic, in the form of thoughts, schema and core beliefs.

It may also be helpful to explain this three-fold construction of gender to the client himself as a way of understanding the aetiology of some issues and to encourage him towards greater agency over his own subject positioning. I have also found these concepts useful in talking to male clients who are fathering young sons and are sometimes aware the fathering they received was problematic or insufficient and are keen to respond to their sons differently and provide them with a closer, warmer fathering experience, but are unsure of how to do this or indeed, whether it is the right thing to do.

The old psychoanalytic panic of producing the ‘mummy’s boy’ is still present for some. Therapeutic reassurance that the warm bridge father produces good outcomes may help, as will examining the negative consequences of the cold bridge father.

Many female clients may also benefit from such psycho-education if they are dealing with issues relating to their fathers, male partners or sons, and the spectrum may be valuable here too.

#### 6.9 Criticisms of this study

Any qualitative study by its very nature has a limited pool of participants and naturally no claim to a representative sample can be made. However one of the stated aims of this research was to “ensure a diversity of voices”. This was broadly achieved around age, sexuality and occupational background. However it was less successful in three key areas related to masculinity as stated in the participants section. Firstly, in regard to ethnicity.

Whilst there is a reasonable range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds among these men, the ethnic mixture is more homogenous. One man is from a Middle-Eastern Arabic background and one is of British-Pakistani origin. The other eighteen men are all white. There are no black participants. The researcher made particular effort to ensure the involvement of some black men. A general call for participants using the snowballing method was made

to several of my university classes. The students are 90% female but they were asked to alert friends, partners or family to the study. At least 30% of the student body is of Black-Caribbean or Black-African origin and I know several students made approaches to men they knew. Not one agreed to take part. I suspect the lack of personal contact from the researcher did not help. With hindsight I could have tried to exhibit posters in locations where black men were more likely to see them. However there are likely to be other explanations. Clearly these men were either not interested or felt uncomfortable in undertaking such an interview.

Working class men are also low in numbers: several participants come from working class backgrounds but would be more likely categorised as middle-class now. The most starkly absent group are men from the left side of the Masculinity spectrum. No man who was subsequently placed at positions 1-5 inclusive presented for interview. Clearly I could not have known this ahead of time as it only became clear as the research process unfolded.

However it seems striking that such men are wholly absent. The explanation may be very simple. It may be that men in these categories have a notion of masculinity (and particularly a view of the masculine self) that precludes them from talking to a psychologist about being a man. This act may fall outside their notion of what “real men” do. However my prison research shows that men in categories 1-4 will talk about masculinity in certain settings. It may be just that within the prison environment there is not much to do; in mainstream life there may be too much distraction to contemplate an

hour long interview about being a man. A third possibility is that such men may well have experienced poor, absent or charged relationships with their fathers and would find the notion of talking about fathering and masculinity too uncomfortable or challenging.

It may be that larger numbers of working-class or black men fall into these categories but further work would be needed to determine this. It is also possible that working-class men may have made assumptions about the class origins of the researcher which may have made them less likely to volunteer. It could also be the case that black men felt less comfortable talking about such issues with a white researcher.

Given that the spectrum emerged out of the data it was not possible to ask the original participants to score themselves and their father on the scale. That had to be done by the researcher. Even though it would have been administratively tricky that could have added an interesting dimension to the analysis.

#### 6.10 Implications for future research

Future research could usefully focus on several key areas.

Firstly, on research with groups under-represented here. Particularly, it may be worthwhile to develop a version of the scale which unpacks and briefly

explains each Masculinity Position. This could be a way to identify men who broadly fall into the first five categories. Investigating their father relationships and how they saw them as contributing to their own sense of the masculine self would be instructive.

The spectrum and its underlying notions could be a very useful platform for discussion when working with male clients. Particularly in environments where hypermasculine behaviour tends to be predominate (prison, army, gang culture) or where the policing of 'boy codes' is at its most dramatic (schools, youth clubs, young offenders institutions). For therapists working with male clients it could also help men to explore their experience of being fathered and the thoughts, fears and hopes they bring to raising their own sons.

It would also be interesting for researchers in other countries or other sub-cultures to run research which employed the scale. This may illuminate the positions already set out, may suggest additions to the scale, different positionings for other groups of men, different ages, nationalities etc.

Further research could examine the particular blend of methodologies employed here as a means of investigating complex processes of identity construction. The suggested idea that three complementary methods, which tap into the intrapersonal world, interpersonal dynamics and the wider socio-political discursive economy, are best suited to the examination of building identities could be tested in very different contexts.

## 6.11 Conclusions

Over thirty years ago Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) outlined four main themes in internalising gender roles. Two of which were: “parents are by far the most likely role models for gender” and “children are more frequently exposed to models of their own gender than of the other gender”. The first statement is still clearly true, and this study offers additional supporting evidence. The second, on the other hand, has become very much less true for boys in western societies over recent decades. Few boys now spend large amounts of time with men when they are young: from mother via playgroup and primary school through to fathers who are absent in a variety of ways they are spending more time in female company.

This is problematic when it is clear there is a particular role for fathers. As far as most of the men in this study are concerned their father helped them to build an internal template for what being male means. If father is unable to fulfil that role, physically or emotionally absent, or where there is an incompatibility between the styles of father and son, the young man will look elsewhere to provide masculinity guidance. There does appear to be a shift underway in how masculinity is defined and experienced, mirroring the widening acceptable male roles now being seen in society. However the core element of idealised masculinity, the protector-provider role, is as strong as ever. The change seen in this data is from a cold, distant provider to a warmer, more involved provider. The masculinity spectrum helps to



contextualise these positions. This move towards greater emotional presence in fathering and more emotional openness in masculinity generally is of great importance in the life of children. Particularly for boys, having a father who is in touch with his own internal, subjective, emotional world provides him with a great gift; a role model for masculinity which allows for some feeling, some sensitivity and vulnerability alongside the more traditional male values of strength, action and self-reliance. In providing a warm bridge to manhood for his son such fathers open up the possibility of deeper relational presence to self, partners, children and other men. It models a way of using communication rather than violence or isolation to self-soothe or manage difficult or stressful situations. It also provides a sense of male twinship which will form an important template for later male friendships and crucially, for the man's relationships with his own sons. A more emotionally available and comfortable man is also likely to be more relaxed in his relationships with women as partners, friends, daughters and colleagues and less likely to suffer from the wide range of negative social, emotional and legal consequences outlined in the introduction amongst men with poor or absent fathers relationships.

For practising counselling psychologists a greater understanding of these processes and their effect on emotional expression, transference dynamics and how men will tend to present problems, will assist in developing even more effective ways of working therapeutically with male clients.

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# APPENDICES

<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Recruitment Letter</b>
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## **Appendix 1 – Recruitment Letter**

Tony Evans CPsychol  
Roehampton University  
Whitelands College  
Holybourne Avenue  
London SW15

March 2007

My name is Tony Evans and I am a Senior Lecturer at Roehampton University. I am also a Chartered Counselling Psychologist. I am currently conducting research for a thesis as part of my Practitioner Doctorate in Psychology at Roehampton.

I am writing to you to see whether you would agree to take part in this research which seeks to explore masculinity beliefs. This would involve being interviewed for approximately one hour about your experiences as a man, both as a child growing up and as an adult. There would be a particular focus on your relationship with your father. The interview would be one-to-one with me at a time and place convenient for you.

A good deal of research has been carried out into the experience of being a woman and its affect on emotional and psychological health and well-being. Relatively little research has been carried out on men. This is particularly so with regard to the effect a man's relationship with his father has on his later sense of his own masculinity and beliefs about being male. I would be very interested in hearing your story about growing up, your ideas, beliefs and feelings about what it means to be a man and where, in your opinion, those ideas came from. How does this all affect your relationships, your behaviour and your experience?

These are some of the things I am interested in but it is really your views on this subject that I am hoping to hear.

I am a Graduate Member of the British Psychological Society and will follow the Society's Code of Ethics. Before we begin the interview I will ask for your permission to tape the session and sign a consent form to this effect. There will be time at the end of the session for you to ask any additional questions you may have. The tape will be used to produce a written version. I will not use your real name in this and any information which could identify you will be removed. The tape will be kept in a locked draw at my home and will be destroyed at the end of the research process.

If you are interested in taking part please contact me on [tonyevans74@hotmail.com](mailto:tonyevans74@hotmail.com) I will then contact you to make an appointment.  
Yours sincerely,

Tony Evans

## Appendix 2 - Informed Consent Form

Tony Evans CPsychol  
Roehampton University  
Whitelands College  
Holybourne Av,  
London SW15

### General Information

This research is being conducted by Tony Evans, currently studying for a PsychD Psychology Doctorate at the above university. The Director of Studies will be Dr Anne-Marie Salm who can be contacted at 0208 392 2000. It will be supervised by Dr Jamie Moran and Dr Marcia Worrell, my research supervisors at the university.

### About this research

The research will be based on interviews carried out with approximately 20 men from different backgrounds. Each one-to-one interview will last about an hour.

The ethical guidelines for this research will conform to the rules of the British Psychological Society of which I am a graduate member. I will tape the session and then produce a transcript of the tape. I will not use your real name in this transcript and any other information which could identify you will be removed. The tape will be kept in a locked draw at my home and will be destroyed at the end of the research process. The data will be kept for approximately two years, until the doctoral examination process is completed. The tape will only be heard by me and possibly by my supervisors at university and the examiners of the research. Extracts from the transcript, with identifying details removed, will appear in the thesis and may appear in any published research.

During the interview you may decline to answer any questions without explanation. You may withdraw from the interview at any time and in this case any information you have given will not be used in the research.

I am aiming at all times to protect your confidentiality and information will be treated with the strictest anonymity. The only occasion when this would need to be broken is if I was worried that you may be about to hurt yourself or somebody else.

I recognise that emotional issues may well arise as a part of this process. We will have a few minutes after the interview itself to discuss your experience of taking part. Should you feel the need for further support you may wish to contact the organisations listed in the debrief letter:

I thank you for participating in this research and request that you read the following statements and tick the box if you agree:

*I understand what this research involves and have been full informed as to what is required of me.*

*I agree to being interviewed and I am happy for this to be tape recorded.*

*I am aware that all the information I contribute is confidential and will be treated in the strictest anonymity.*

*I am aware that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without reason or justification.*

Signature..... Date .....



### **Appendix 3 - Debriefing Letter**

Dear.....,

Thank you once again for agreeing to take part in this research.

I will be producing a transcript of the tape of our session. I will not use your real name in this transcript and any information which could identify you will be removed. The tape will be kept in a locked draw at my home and will be destroyed at the end of the research process. The tape will only be heard by me and possibly by my supervisors at university and the examiners of the research. Extracts from the transcript, with identifying details removed, will appear in the thesis and may appear in any published research.

Sometimes emotional issues arise as a part of this process. Should you feel the need for further support you could get in touch with:

British Association for Counselling [www.bacp.org.uk](http://www.bacp.org.uk)

British Psychological Society [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

Local Counselling Organisations

WPF (Kensington: Low Cost Psychodynamic work)  
[www.wpf.org.uk](http://www.wpf.org.uk) 020 7361 4800

Wimbledon Guild  
[www.wimbledonguild.co.uk](http://www.wimbledonguild.co.uk) 020 8296 0030

Samaritans (Putney Branch)	Tel: 020 8789 9121
Samaritans (Kingston Branch)	Tel: 020 8399 6676

I would like to thank you for taking part in this research which aims to increase our understanding of men's emotional and psychological health. Your contribution to this process is valuable.

Yours sincerely,

TONY EVANS  
Roehampton University

## **Appendix 4 – Semi Structured Interview Schedule**

### Father Questions

Can you tell me something about your father?

Can you tell me about your relationship with him?

Can you tell me about some of your happiest memories of dad?

Can you tell me some things that make you feel sad about your relationship with him?

Can you tell me about some times you saw dad get angry?

Did you ever see dad cry – if so what were the circumstances

What do you remember of your dad's relationships to other men?

What would you say was your dad's view of women?

What would you change about your dad if you could?

What makes you most proud of him?

How did your relationship with him change as you got older?

### Masculinity questions

Can you tell me your own views about what it means to be a man?

How would you see your own masculinity when compared to the other men you know?

Has this view of yourself as a man changed over time? If so, why do you think this is?

What do you think society expects from a man? What do you think society disapproves of in men?

How do you think your relationship with your father affected your current sense of your own masculinity?

Appendix 5 – Recruitment Poster



# Masculinity and your Father

Would you be interested in taking part in some research about masculinity beliefs?. You would be interviewed for approximately one hour about your experiences as a man, both as a child growing up and as an adult. There would be a particular focus on your relationship with your father. The interview would be one-to-one with me at a time and place convenient for you.



A good deal of research has been carried out into the experience of being a woman and its affect on emotional and psychological health and well-being. Relatively little research has been carried out on men. Especially on the effect a man's relationship with his father has on his later sense of his own masculinity and beliefs about being male. I would be very interested in hearing your story about growing up, your ideas, beliefs and feelings about what it means to be a man and where, in your opinion, those ideas came from. How does this all affect your relationships, your behaviour and your experience?



If you are interested in taking part please send an email to:  
[tonyevans74@hotmail.com](mailto:tonyevans74@hotmail.com)

I will then contact you to make an appointment.

Thanks

Tony Evans

## Appendix 6: Marked Self-Interview

Self-interview of Tony Evans: 4<sup>th</sup> April 2007

Tell me about your father

My father is David – born in the Welsh mining valleys during the depression eldest of four kids – he was the only boy. His father was a miner as had been several generations before him. My dad **couldn't read or write properly until he was 10 years old** and then left school at 14 to work at a butchers shop. He did National Service at 18 for two years and guarded the Suez Canal in Egypt. Got married to my mum when he was 24 and shortly after I was born left the valleys to better himself – eventually working as a manager for Nabisco – we moved many times during my childhood as he got promoted each time. I guess **he is really a self made man – taught himself to read properly** and do maths and **how to sell himself and be accepted by all sorts of people. He is a bit of a charmer really.** Always got an answer for everything. I always said to him you would tell a brain surgeon you're doing you're job wrong. In his early years he was often away from home on the road as a rep – and often at home would be sitting in his study (the dining room) – “writing” – which always seemed to involved lots of pencil sums on graph paper. **He didn't like to be interrupted and I guess was very stressed although I didn't really understand what that meant at the time.**

Tell me about your relationship with him

Well apparently **when I was a baby he would walk around at night holding me singing to me to try and get me to sleep – which I wouldn't.** So I get told that **he was very patient and loving towards me – but of course I can't remember any of that.** My **earliest memories of him are of him leaving to go away for work** – sometimes days, once just before we moved to England – for months – and him coming back home. **He was always busy and not to be disturbed.** I have very **limited memories of him playing with me** or spending much time with me. One that does stick out is him testing me on geography – capital cities and the American states and being very pleased with me getting answers right, **I'm sure my love of general knowledge and trivia comes from that – that feeling of attention and approval from him.** Looking back I suppose knowledge and achievement must have been all the more important for him, coming from a family where nobody had much schooling including him. Even now **he doesn't read much fiction – but on politics, history and geography he loves to be the clever, knowledgeable one – and so do I.** Our relationship took a huge dip when I was 13 – and he announced one Saturday night that were moving from Birmingham to Berkshire over the Easter holidays. As an only child my group of friends that I had been with since I was 6 were hugely important to me – plus I had only just moved schools to a new high school the previous September which had had its own traumas and I was just starting to feel settled again so to have that dropped on me six months after was really terrible – one of the worst moments of my life. And he didn't understand it – or didn't seem to – I threatened to run away and was

really miserable about it. I can remember him and mum summoning me in from playing in the street and sitting me down and it felt like my world had ended. Mum didn't want to go either so it was only for him and his promotion that we had to leave. I can see now that **he saw his role as one of being good provider** – although he actually had a mean streak a mile wide and was notoriously tight with money. And his promotion meant we had to go. I was just entering puberty too so the disruption was huge. I was **very angry with him and for months after we moved could barely speak civilly to him and there were ongoing and tumultuous rows. I really thought for a while that I hated him.** When I was 18 I left home to go to university and shortly thereafter we had the huge debacle of my wedding being called off and me coming out to them as gay. So **for many years it was a disrupted relationship – polite and overformal.**

Tell me about some of your happiest memories of dad

Him coming home from being away when I was very small and bringing a big bag of sweets back for me, I can remember **the anticipation of him coming back was huge, like safety and solidness was coming back to the house** what with mum being so fragile. It felt like the only grown up was coming back. My dad is **curious about life** – whereas my mum is scared of it. So he would be **always be the keen one to go and explore something new and push us into things.** For years I saw this tendency as a nuisance but have really come to appreciate it as I got older. He was **always very proud of me whenever I did well at school** – again given his own lack of opportunity he took a vicarious pleasure in seeing me do well. I feel he is **genuinely proud of my latest run of academic achievement** – whereas mum feels more threatened and distanced by it he really is glad for me and probably thinks some of it reflects well on him which it does. I also remember getting very scared of the dark when I was about 7 and being scared to go up to bed alone. I would fall asleep on the sofa behind him and then when I was asleep he would carry me up to bed. **Often I would pretend to be asleep just so I can feel him carry me upstairs.**

Tell me some things that make you feel sad about your relationship with him

**So little physical contact – I have no memories of being kissed, held or cuddled by my dad – at all – it stopped too early for me to remember. We shook hands. And until I was truly adult so much of his own struggle and emotional inner world was kept from me** – his struggles growing up, his journey from the valleys into management and a social world that must have been very scary for him. He was very stressed and tended to shout and get angry most of my childhood – or be **shut away and not reachable.** He was not a hobbies man – so we had nothing that just he and I could share our love of apart from books and trivia. He changed his mind about them adopting when I was three – they had a little girl already arranged through an agency who would have been my little sister. But at the last minute he changed his mind and said he couldn't raise another man's child. They couldn't have more children after me. Instead he bought my mum a puppy – that was somewhat typical really – **he could really be quite insensitive at times.** I only found out about this when I was in my early thirties – which made me very angry that all these years I could have had a sibling. He is like a lot of men of his generation – more **comfortable talking about practical things.** Even now my dad will happily babble on about roadworks and which motorway he drove up

on rather than anything real. He can talk about work and stuff I'm doing to the house – but rarely asks about me or my emotions or my relationships. I just wish we had been really close and affectionate when I was younger as I have seen other people be with their dads.

Tell me about some times you saw dad get angry

I remember him chasing me upstairs with a tennis racket when I was about 7 after I told him to piss off in front of my friends in the street. I ran in the house and locked myself in the bathroom and wouldn't come out for ages even though he was trying to say he had put it down and wasn't going to do anything. I didn't believe him and sat there terrified for ages. I don't know why really cos I had never been hit by him or seen him hit my mum or anything its just he was quite big and did shout a lot and could be very loud and I think I just got scared of him. Its funny it sticks in my mind that one. Other times it was mostly with my mum they would argue a lot – she would normally end up crying which would just make him shout more. But he was never violent or anything and since I became a therapist I realise he was pretty easy to handle really.

Did you ever see dad cry – if so what were the circumstances

Don't ever remember seeing him cry when I was growing up – not once actually. The only thing that sticks in my head is my grandmother's funeral last year – his mum and he was quite old to lose a mother – 73. At her funeral after we left the house and went to the graveside – it was mostly just men and the women stay back at the house – one of those weirdo welsh customs from the dark ages. So my dad's three sisters and my mum were still at the house and I was there with my dad and my uncles and cousins and it was a really hot day and I could tell by looking at him how upset he was but being the only son he was trying to do the host thing and be really together. When we were asked to throw dirt onto the coffin he walked away and I could tell he was crying and was hanging his head down – seemingly so embarrassed even tho his mum was dead. And the therapist part of me is processing all this and I went up and put my arm round his shoulder and just squeezed him. But the son part of me was a bit freaked out by it – I was very aware of not wanting him to feel lessened in some way by crying in front of the other men even tho I think that whole hegemonic discourse is such bullshit – but I knew it mattered to him. Of course nothing was said and I had to process this almost tender moment with Doug when I got back to London. I think that is the point really emotion is to be rigidly controlled even in such an extreme situation and not discussed afterwards. Still it was a nice moment and I'm glad I was there for him to be able to do that for him.

What do you remember of your dad's relationships to other men

Very little really – his rels with other men took place away from the house – through work and his one hobby – snooker – which I detested. Having seen him with other men outside the house he could be very matey and jokey and get on with blokes but he is not a sporty man and wouldn't have the first clue how to put up a shelf or mend a car so he seems most at ease with other salesmen types – flash harrys my mum always said – and to be fair he is a bit of a show off and likes to hold court with people. Good at telling anecdotes so long as he has an audience. As for seeing him with men in more domestic

settings I didn't really – my dad didn't really have friends in the sense I would understand them – no mates that called round the house or anything. He did meet up with blokes at the club or pub and kept in touch with work colleagues but none of these relationships were close or confiding in anyway at least not that I'm aware of. He also didn't have any brothers so was used to being more surrounded by women – and my uncles and male cousins were all back in Wales so we only saw them at holidays. And usually the men would leave the house and go off to the working men's club to drink, play cards or play snooker – so it was always away from the house and as a child you stayed with the women and other children. By the time I got old enough to go out to the club with him – maybe 15, 16 or so I was sick to the back teeth of going to Wales and made every excuse not to go – and then at 18 I came to London. So not only did I never really see that side of him with other men but I never shared that matey kind of thing of going down the pub with your dad that some of my friends have done. Its only when we started sitting up late at night getting drunk together at Xmas a few times that I had some of my best conversations with him about his own childhood and me growing up and that.

What would you say was your dad's view of women?

My dad was always very respectful towards women, never inappropriate or smutty, suggestive that kind of thing. And yet he was pretty patronising, not consciously I don't think but in the kind of old fashioned way men of his generation had that women were quite fragile delicate little things – and in the sense of domestic stuff my mum did everything, cooked, cleaned, housework – the lot – during my childhood my dad barely boiled an egg and still doesn't do much, if he so much as makes a sandwich or a cup of tea he expects a round of bloody applause. He likes women to be very feminine. I remember him meeting one of my best female friends in London and being very shocked because she was drinking pints of beer not halves. Being a polite man he didn't say much but I could see by his face that he was pretty much outraged actually.....it just went against his idea of how women were meant to be – not demure exactly but definitely not act in the same way as men. He hates women swearing for instance, as I got older he would occasionally swear with me....but would never swear in front of a woman. I can't recall him vocalising much about his attitudes as such but you would never call him a feminist supporter....was an enthusiastic watcher of Miss World when I was a kid. But thinking about it he was never openly leary or objectifying about women in the way lot of my uncles and that could be sometimes .....I think he saw that as slightly common and for sure my mum would have been very offended and I just don't remember him doing it.

What would you change about your dad if you could?

I would give him a better education – not just for me – but mainly for him. He is such a bright, smart, curious man he would have loved university and I know it has left him with something of an inferiority complex around people who are better educated. I just think it would have transformed him and his confidence, well not his confidence exactly cos he is fairly full of himself at times but just his sureness around his intelligence and place in the world. The main thing I would change is his openness with his emotions – especially towards me when I was little, more hugs and play and emotional contact. In recent years as mum has become more ill we have had several more open conversations where he has shown himself to be a very sensitive man, who is

much more aware of other people's internal emotional state than he lets on. And I think he stopped himself from being that way when I was young cos that's not how he saw his role in bringing up a boy and that makes me pretty sad that we missed out on that sort of bonding.

What makes you most proud of him?

His optimism and persistence in the face of a wife who could be very miserable about their moves up the social ladder and who blamed him for leaving Wales – she moaned on and on for years about it and still does and he gets snappy back for sure but still quite calmly points out that the life they have had is vastly better than the one they would have had staying in the valleys. So I guess for someone who struggled to get a half way basic education he has done pretty well for himself and always been ultra responsible about money, property and shares and stuff to make sure we were ok. If I had grown up in the valleys I would likely be a very different person today – most of my cousins who stayed are either unemployed or doing very basic jobs. So I think I get from him a kind of excitement about the world and a desire to explore and investigate things. He is really the positive one in the family.

How did your relationship with him change as you got older?

Oh it has changed a lot. We went through a very rough time after I left home and came out. For years we barely spoke properly – very formal and careful with each other. It was only really after I went through my therapy whilst training that I started to see him in a very different light. My dad is a very decent man, not especially patient or openly loving, but deep down very solid and reliable. He has softened as he has gotten older and I guess I have too – and as my mum's mental health has become more precarious lately – especially since they moved back to Wales he and I have been talking on a much more adult to adult kind of level – probably for oh over twelve maybe fifteen years now, no actually not that long, maybe twelve. He still tends to talk on the surface of things, work, practical stuff - for sure he isn't a "I love you son" kind of dad and probably never will be – in fact that would probably freak me right out if he were to start that kind of thing now. I still wish we could hug just once – we shake hands and that's it. But I suppose I see him more as the product of his generation and culture than I did before and have become much more accepting of his flaws and been able to place higher value on the good things about him of which there are lots.

Can you tell me your own views about what it means to be a man?

There are two really. One side of me which is much smaller now still holds on to a lot of the imagery and beliefs I was exposed to growing up - and there is part of me that is still slightly in awe of the rough, tough, macho kind of guys who are all sport and cars – and that is further complicated by the fact that I find those kind of very masculine blokes more attractive. On a personal level just like the Taywidetep study I find I am still quite uncomfortable with effeminate men. But the stronger side of me - especially since I have worked with so many male clients and been studying masculinity - has really come to see that so much of that externally performed maleness stuff is so restrictive and emotionally hurts men – and of course feeds into the horrible attitudes still out there towards women and gay men. A lot of my personal struggle



has been to equate the notion of being gay and masculine in my head – they are not mutually exclusive even though in most common discourse they are still treated as such. Even amongst gay men there is often this idea that if you are masculine you are trying to be straight acting - which I see as madness. For me real men are strong, loving, gentle, open, brave and balanced. They are not scared of feelings in themselves or in others and don't see mutual support and tenderness as things to disown or mock.

How would you see your own masculinity when compared to the other men you know?

Pretty good really. I think it really helps being so tall and quite broadly built. A lot of the very basic “men” things that other people project onto you when they first meet you or see you in the street are fairly positive for me – I think coming to terms with my gayness would have been much harder for me if I was very small, slight or softly spoken kind of man. I think I am quite tough, speak my mind and stand up for myself and yet am very in touch with the emotional side of myself and others. Being a male therapist helps me to manage that balance. That's all the good stuff....there is also a part of me that sometimes wishes I played rugby or knew how to fix an engine – that real kind of obvious bloke – but I wouldn't swap my sensitivity or love of books or ideas for any of that – it would only be a temporary fix it seems to me, and yes I guess I would like to be even stronger, bigger, more muscular without doing extra gym time..... but I have grown to think of myself as a good man, a proper man, which is quite a journey from being a boy who was told by the world (indirectly) that because he is gay he cannot be a proper man. So my sense of my own masculinity has been quite hard won....from a straight world that sometimes wants to strip gay men of that feeling to a gay world that at least in parts over focuses on the camp, effeminate sort of man – which also de-masculinises us. So its kind of been an assault from both sides – its mainly been through partners and friends who think more like me that I have begun to develop resistance practices towards that sort of overwhelming flood of thought which locates gay men with girls or women. Plenty of women do that too – even some of the nicest most gay friendly people I know tend to still think if your gay you'll want to talk about shopping, make up or posh spice – there's kind of a shallowness implied along with the non-manliness even though some of the most blokey blokes are just totally shallow about different things - football, cars, women and stuff. I suppose anyone who is hyper-masculine or hyper-feminine is just as strange to me – I really love people who are a good strong individual blend of so called male and female traits – tough women and emotionally sensitive men

How do you think your relationship with your father affected your current sense of your own masculinity?

This is a tough one for me – its pretty complex I think. When I was very small I think he was disappointed that I wasn't a more rough and tumble kind of kid – although having said that my dad is hardly the kick around a football type either, not exactly a sporty man all he plays is snooker. But he watches lots of sport, football, rugby anything really and that was something we didn't really share. I just always remember him being quite hard with me if I ever hurt myself or had arguments with friends – and I'm talking really quite little here – four or five. He was never hugs and make it better – more why did it start, what did you do to encourage it. Far too rational for a child that age – no unconditional love on tap or so it felt then. I think in his own way he was

trying to toughen me up and I can remember cutting my knee open when I was about 8 and coming in to the house in tears and him saying I thought you'd have stopped that by now. It felt so harsh, not only was my knee hurt but he was mocking me too.

As I got older I saw him as cold, remote, unemotional so didn't really see him at all as a model for the kind of man I wanted to be. It's only in later years that I realise I got a lot from him - decency, responsibility, curiosity about the world, love of knowledge, a certain showmanship under the right circumstances and he is a good model for a kind of confident, solid man. But most of the man I am today came after he stopped being a major influence on me like I said earlier - more through my own life experience and seeing other men - especially gay men I admired and realising that many men are comfortable with that inner emotional world and can communicate it and share it with others - I guess some key straight men too now that I come to think about - friends like Ray and Danny who are really ease with their own maleness - and also by modelling myself against posturing aggressive idiots like Lee who look so tough on the outside but are really like scared little boys underneath, their toughness is so brittle and rigid and not attractive really. So I guess I tried hard to emphasise the bits I like and discard or play down the ones I don't. If my dad had been a different kind of man I think I would have probably made that journey more quickly and less painfully than I did. And I think for sure it would have affected the way I am in romantic relationships where I have tended in the past to chase after men who are emotionally constipated and unavailable and hope to fix them - and you don't need to be Dr Freud to figure that one out.

## **Appendix 7: Example Participant Transcript**

Interview 3 - Lou

Interviewer - Tony Evans (TE)

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**TE:** *So first of all I just want to ask you a little bit about your father, what sort of man he is, what your memories of him are like, what you saw him as his role within the family, that kind of thing.*

**L:** Very honest, god fearing but he always said it was due to err, like in the Army when they say you got to deal with it like it or not, you go to mass on a Sunday because you have to..

**TE:** *Like a duty almost..*

**L:** Self discipline, always says his prayers first thing in the morning with his windows down, if your gonna do it do it right, always made sure we were honest, he had a big thing about being true to yourself, that was his favourite quote. He speaks his mind he's very eloquent, cheeky he's a big fat man and he's not very good looking it would never stop him from stealing a kiss, he gets away with murder. Very charming, very witty he didn't have the looks to back it up but he didn't give a fuck, he's like screw you if you don't like it.

**TE:** *Big family?*

**L:** Brother and sister and that's it.

**TE:** *So just the two of you?*

**L:** Another brother, so two brothers and sister.

**TE:** *Where are you in that?*

**L:** I'm the bottom.

**TE:** *Ok so you're the baby...*

L: Yeah I'm the baby, but id also be more of the black sheep too, I got away with a lot more than they did.

TE: *The youngest are nearly always the rebels.*

L: You kind of have to be you know, either that, or I do it better.

TE: *Exactly. So what did dad do? What was his profession?*

L: He had a filling station, Texaco filling station. Every morning you had to sweep the front pick up all the cigarette butts exactly how he wanted it, he took pride in it and I remember one day I said "you like this fucking place"? he pulled his car over to the side of the road and said "listen, its given me a house to put my wife and my kids in, a car and money in the bank. Do you think I like dipping oil sticks, do you think I like pumping gas? No, but it has proved me with the things I do love so I put up with it". That was the first time id ever heard him say he didn't like the garage, because I could never tell because he took so much pride in it.

TE: *So from your prospective then what would you say, how would he have seen his role within the family?*

L: Total bread winner. Never played with us, never kicked ball, worked sixteen hours a day, come home for his lunch back to work, come home for his tea back to work, he never sat and played with us. As kids he couldn't wait for us to grow up, like don't wipe your feet go outside and take your boots of and you would think, I'm supposed to wipe my feet here, he didn't tolerate kids.

TE: *Messiness of childhood was a bit much for him.*

L: Yeah just wasn't having it. He wanted it straight into cop on, do what you're supposed to do.

TE: *So in terms of someone who might be openly emotional, openly supportive would you say he fits...*

L: Emotionally distant, up until he had a heart attack he was emotionally distant. I mean the first time we gave him hugs he was like, what you doing? And it was also play for us; we would be like let's freak him out and give him a hug. And then we started calling him Cyril when we were kids and he was like I'm dad. But he came

from an old school country family, I don't think they ever hugged; I don't think they ever told their mother they loved them.

**TE:** *So would you say then your dad was a fairly typical representation of how men behaved in the place that you grew up?*

**L:** Yeah.

**TE:** *Similar to other men? I mean a mans man regarded as masculine by other men?*

**L:** No never did the pub thing and would tell his best friend to fuck off in a heart beat and loose business because of it, high principles, he played golf and that would be the only time you would see him in a social setting, I never saw him make a fool out of himself or hear him say something stupid.

**TE:** *So quite contained in a way? Certainly not about losing control or letting himself go.*

**L:** No

**TE:** *And for you as a small boy, how do you remember him as dad.*

**L:** I was scared shitless, he would come in the front door id go out the back door. Just because he wouldn't smile when he would see you, it would be more what the fuck you doing? Years later he is like my hero and I love him but growing up I was scared of him.

**TE:** *And that kind of gruffness, would that relax later on or was he like that pretty much all of the time?*

**L:** I just remember staying out of his way until I was sixteen and then I figured I'm not doing this anymore you're coming over to my side now I have enough of that shit. And then he sort of loosened up, Tracy was great for loosening him up and her friends would come back from school, maybe because they were school girls and they were stealing kisses off him, just to freak him out, he kind of loosened up a bit but up until we were seventeen eighteen, we were like oh shit we're in trouble again.

**TE:** *And that trouble was he quite a disciplinarian?*

**L:** Coolest guy in the world, if your in trouble, if you left your cup on the table he would kick your arse, but if you came home saying, cops outside or she's pregnant, not a problem cool as a cucumber when it was a big problem. But with the other things he would be like, you think your mother is going to pick that up, so it would make us conscious.

**TE:** *So a shouter?*

**L:** No more of a stern couple of words, awareness was his big word when we were growing up.

**TE:** *But those couple of words would induce some guilt in you, so not a shouter or a violent person or anything of that nature.*

**L:** More of a "cop yaself on, what do you think you are doing"?

**TE:** *It sounds as though he was very much the setter of boundaries within the family.*

**L:** Oh yeah, you didn't step out of there and if you did you were in for it. He never hit me, as you kid you were just scared, you were like im not doing this and scoot out the back door. Oh he did once, he heard me call my mother a bitch once and I never heard him coming up behind me and he just gave me a clatter and I was looking at her thinking are you gonna stick up for me here? That was the only time he ever moved fast and he ever hit me, never again, I was like that's cool, I was kind of proud as well at him for sticking up for his wife like that.

**TE:** *And what would you say his view of women were generally?*

**L:** Considering the way he treated my mothers sisters and the rest of the women on the road, they were all "Miss wouldn't touch it", I don't think he really liked other, he was a flirt he loves women but he wouldn't tolerate womanly shit coming into the house, she would go out to do her womanly stuff.

**TE:** *What do you mean by womanly shit? From his point of view.*

**L:** He comes home from work and he sees a couple of them in the kitchen all nattering he probably have it once, but my mother would be so embarrassed she would make sure it wouldn't happen again.

**TE:** *Was he fairly clear would you say, that there are fairly clear roles for men and fairly clear roles for women and that there shouldn't be too much overlap or cross between the two?*

**L:** Coming from Ireland in the 70's 80's that was a very black and white year where women were still quite happy to still be washing the dishes. He would cook once in a while and it would be a big deal and he would screw the whole place up, but we used to love his food and my mother would freak but because she would go into the kitchen and it would all be turned upside down. He was the bread winner, he worked and she worked with him, did the books and stuff but she would come home make us lunch and go back to work, where you never see him do a thing. So yeah it was pretty defined, plus his father was a very strict man, he would always plant something on the 1<sup>st</sup> May, my father still plants something on the 1<sup>st</sup> May he still has got that respect to his father.

**TE:** *Did you know his father; did you know your granddad?*

**L:** Never met him any of my grandparents.

**TE:** *And did your dad used to talk about him very much?*

**L:** Not too much, there was definitely respect for him, you would have to kind of drag it out of him; you'd never hear "my father".

**TE:** *And that kind of part of him where he would maybe open up about himself a little more, again like lots of men that sense where you have to drag it out of them that's quite common. Has that altered as you have grown older?*

**L:** We were actually talking about this on the way down, my older brother would paint a different picture of my father because he never played with us, my brother is very bitter about that, where I'm like he never hit us and he provided us with a nice house, id take that shit over an arsehole that played with us. So in that sense I've always respected the fact that he made sure there were gonna be no holes in the picture, he was solid. I often felt it would have been nice if he had played with us a little bit more, but he just didn't, he couldn't, he didn't know how. No one ever played with him, he grew up in a rural town, where soon as you could walk you were working and he felt the same way. He used to do this thing when I was a kid when he got up, he felt that everyone had to get up and if you weren't in school you came

down to the garage to work. Couldn't abide people sleeping if he was up, he would get some aftershave and cup it over your face and for the rest of my life if i could hear him coming I would be like, I'm awake I'm awake.

**TE:** *So there was a real kind of deep work ethic, that you couldn't afford to be too soft and piss around, you just to get on. Strict in many ways but not in a kind of a physical disciplinarian kind of way. And you said way back in the beginning that since he has had a heart attack and got a little bit older these have changed a little bit?*

**L:** He has totally loosened up, he don't care anymore.

**TE:** *Tell me a little bit about what has happened.*

**L:** He had a heart by pass and was morphine based and it just mellowed him out, when he came off them, I think he learnt a lesson. Like I said if he saw you touching the wooden floor he would freak he would make a fool out of you, after that he was lie do what you want. Because he realised that life was too short to be correcting everybody, now he is just sees the beauty of life.

**TE:** *When you think about that way of being male that your dad was when you were growing up, if you have to try and imagine yourself into his head and try and say what he thought the philosophy of being male was all about, what would you say it was?*

**L:** The classic, you go, you work, the wife is at home, she takes care of the kids. I don't think he ever saw his role as to be a father, to give advice and to make sure you were on the right path. He would always say to me, because I was the wanderer, "I'm not leaving here, checking out till your ok, now get yourself a job and settle down".

**TE:** *And did all that feel loving to you? Despite the fact it was delivered in quite a tough way.*

**L:** Yeah it did because the house was quite loving my mother was loving. I loved growing up, I loved my house. Like when I was in trouble, I crashed the car, he would just sit me down, I always respected him for that because he should have picked me up n kicked me, but he didn't he was like its car a piece of metal, we will get through this. His logic I always aspired to be like that.



**TE:** *So thinking, a bit about you and as you have grown older and the kind of man that you have become, do you see many parallels between you and him?*

**L:** I would say I'm nothing like him at all, but things come out of my mouth and I think, that's what's he says. And it freaks me out thinking, is my wife going to be like to me as my mother was to him? It uncanny I've spent my whole life not being like him, being a traveller but not going along his road but I still end up naturally saying the things he would say.

**TE:** *What sort of things are you starting to notice in you that are very reminiscent of him.*

**L:** Mostly relationship stuff. I don't think he was ever very comfortable kissing, I remember being really young and he told us to stay in the room, but I peeked out of the door and he was kissing my mother and he freaked out at me. Even to this day I think what was so bad that I caught them kissing? I think there was something so old school about him that a moment like that was not to be viewed by kids.

**TE:** *It sounds like he is a very private person in many ways around certain things. I mean would he ever sit down and do anything like this for example?*

**L:** Now he would, you can sit down and talk with him all day, he is great. I've just moved home from America, part of it is guilt that I have spent most of my adult life away from them, so now I spend as much time as I can with them. Putting up shelves that don't really need to put up, just so they two of us get to hang out. I love that and I can't get enough time with him. I'd be proud as punch to introduce him to anybody, he's a character he is now much more himself now that he ever was as a young man.

**TE:** *In terms of thinking of why there is that sense of having to hold himself in when he was younger, have you copied that at all?*

**L:** No I'm totally open

**TE:** *So tell me a bit about how you act around emotions and openness, all that kind of stuff.*

**L:** In what kind of sense, in relationship terms?

TE: Well I suppose, all of us have things go on inside of us emotionally and I guess part of what you have talked to me about your dad is that it wasn't about revelling his vulnerabilities or his softness..

L: That would be a weakness thing with him

TE: *And is that the same for you?*

L: No, I'm quite happy to be weak I would definitely be portrayed I'm cool as shit but the fact I'm only slightly like him in my wit and personality, I think I've inherited enough from him I'm happy with that, emotionally I wouldn't have the same as him, I'm totally cool, I kiss and hug. I'm not very open with my emotions, id keep my worst day inside and say yeah everything is fine.

TE: *And would you say that's something that you will regard is what a Man ought to do?*

L: Yes, because you grow up thinking don't be a winging little bitch, you deal with your shit, the girls always want you to reveal your inner most and when you do you feel like an idiot. So a lot of the times it the man thing to say no it's all ok.

TE: *And would that be true with your male friends as well, In terms of how you are with each other?*

L: Well most of my male friends are Californian, they will tell you anything and then I come back and everyone is closed shopped. I've got two classes of friends, Californian hippy kids and Irish!

TE: *Are the comfortable for you both, just in different ways?*

L: I feel like it's a trade off, when I'm in California, I can say whatever I want as deep as I want but if I said that in Ireland they would be like what are you talking about?

TE: *So let me ask you then, one of the things I'm very interested in is what we call the masculine code, so in other words in a particular context there be a very strict masculine code built around what is ok and what isn't ok in terms of how man may act of behave or the things he might say, I would be interested to hear your observations of how that is differs between California and Ireland.*

**L:** The one thing I've always looked at is the stag party, the strip club. I've been in plenty of strip clubs but I hate them, the minute you walk into one you're a mark you're a sucker with money in your pocket, id rather get a hooker spend the money and go home, forty guys walking into a strip bar for me, I cant stand that mentality, I think that's the worst part of the male psyci, I thinks that's as bad as it gets.

**TE:** *So what do you think happens to men when they get in that kind of pack?*

**L:** I think it depends on your gang as a kid, did you play soccer, where you in a team sport, were you in a gang where you just robbed cars, were you the single parent thing, I find that most kids that come from single parents are mostly introverted super aggressive, they are either a home maker and even take on the feminine qualities later in life, because they had to get their lunch ready for their little brothers and the other is get your own lunch I'm going to steal cars. I remember saying to people it was hip there for a while for a man to change nappies and cry at movies and when they did that they lost their identity, women were like, I want a man that builds a house, cuts down trees etc and its like which do you want.

**TE:** *So for you, do you feel quite aware of the expectation of the people outside of you around of you of how you are male? Whether that's women of whether that's men?*

**L:** Not so much anymore, I've got a lot of frank honesty and ill tell people where to go, I've got more girl friends than I do male friends I think its just easier, the group male thing never really.. I mean I didn't play sports as a kid always hung out with much older guys so I didn't have a crew of my own it was always my brothers older friends. I wouldn't be your standard Irish kid, I mean, I drank in bars before I drank in the field, at fifteen I already looked eighteen, the first time I ever drank in a field I thought this is great fun forget the bar but I was already eighteen at that stage. I didn't do things a standard way, all I ever wanted to do was get out and travel even at the age of four I saw this guy hitching a lift once and my dad said he was a bum, so I used to tell people I wanted to be a bum when I grew up. My view that the male, coming from Ireland, is it was always the city kid and the bog country kid and you were always grateful to be a city kid because the bog kids just weren't as hip. I wouldn't say I have a male identity just a life identity I guess, I don't feel I have to prove myself to anybody as a man, I don't have to go into the strip bar drink ten pints of larger but a lot of the guys I know do, that's what they are based on that's where they come from.

**TE:** *So would you say then even now given you have got an open view on manness is, would you say that there are still particular forms of behaviour that society really disapproves of in men and certain ones it really looks for and supports?*

**L:** The stripper bar thing, that's nearly applauded still, oh yeah you're a man, I think the soccer thing takes a huge chunk of male something, you would see twenty thousands males all jumping at the same time, singing the same songs. Part of me is a little bit jealous thinking that must be great fun but its also one of the most scariest things I've seen to, because that's to me is kind of wrong, that's a massive group mind set that leads to nothing, like what's at the end of the game? A score of one nil the pub or maybe a fight on the way home or something.

**TE:** *So that tribal thing has always felt a bit alien to you?*

**L:** that has, but the tribal in California is more, like this kind of music, then so do we, we like to dance all night, so do you, lets all do it together here and that was your tribe. When I first went to California everyone had kind of clicks gangs, based on music fashion or what ever and you could just slip into that group and if you were accepted then you were all good to go.

**TE:** *Would it be a reasonable guess to assume that those are not just single gender groups? That those are mixed groups.*

**L:** Yes

**TE:** *Where I suppose what were talking about just now it nearly always just men.*

**L:** I think that's what maleness is, staying with the herd.

**TE:** *Where as it sounds like for you if though you have got some relatively traditional ideas about manliness, it sounds as though you are more comfortable in a more diverse, rather than that kind of everyone's the same, the different herd mentality. What I would like to do, is show you the images if I can, what I've been saying to everybody is just first of to give me a kind of reaction what it makes you think about or feel when you see it, but then also if you would see it as an image of masculinity or not. And if it is an image of masculinity is it an appealing one or is it nah not really for me. (TE shows image one)*

**L:** (Laughs) I always found that guy always effeminate, super effeminate, even the dance around the bull and the pink back. I went to bull fighting when I was a kid and

when the started putting the swords in it that took all the gameness out of it to watch the guy skewer it and chop the head off. So I guess it was a marriage of femininity and masculinity.

**TE:** *Because there is especially in the way he is dressed and the performance aspect which is quite feminine.*

**L:** That depends on a good day. I always like the fact that prince was a guy that could wear high heels and every woman in the room wants him, that unique, I always kind of felt that with these guys, would I call it masculine, I guess I have too. First off no, first reaction I think that's very effeminate very postured, but it is brutal.

**TE:** *And the way he's displaying himself to the bull, what do you think that's about?*

**L:** That's soccer mentality, taunting "here we go" that's exactly what he is doing, its nearly a page three sexual pose but the fact that this bull is dripping blood and is about to die, its quite taunting. I had a fight once when I was a kid and the guy was like stop stop, it was the only fight I ever had and I remember when he said stop I was all ready to whale on the guy and that's the scariest thing I've ever had to deal with, that I didn't like what was making me want to go further, I think that's exactly where he is at.

**TE:** *So for you that kind of bravado so is it like an over compensation would you say?*

**L:** He's on stage really and the people loved them, those guys are the hero's of Spain, the dress and everything about it is very effeminate but I think in hotter countries guys are allowed to be more effeminate they can hold hands and they are not gay, they lie down in the meadow and lay on each other and its ok.

**TE:** *So for you is that the boundary that men are very conscious of, if you cross it too far the gay label might be attached to you.*

**L:** Of course it is your stamped you cant take it back, it wouldn't bother me, but to most guys you just cant say that.

**TE:** *Ok, thank you. (Shows picture two).*

**L:** Flash car, the ultimate male achievement, I'm a car lover, its an ultimate male symbol.

**TE:** *And the fact that they are kissing it?*

**L:** That's gay (laughs)

**TE:** *What the fact that they are kissing the car?*

**L:** It's a hunk of metal, I mean are the kids or are the grown men?

**TE:** *Well, I guess they are quite young aren't they.*

**L:** Revering the unobtainable I guess, I do think the super car is the ultimate false god. I always wanted a Lamborghini when I was a kid, now I wouldn't have one if you paid me but I think the car is the ultimate dream of.

**TE:** *Would you say then that part of feeling like a successful man is being seen by others as a successful man? It almost has to come from the outside in as much as from the inside out.*

**L:** More so now I think yes, years ago you were a man because of what you did, now it's how you look. Because people don't have time to think if your cool or not, honest or not. I think we have lost what makes men men.

**TE:** *Ok, (shows picture three).*

**L:** Billy Elliott. It's the ultimate expression really, he is out of his league and really shouldn't be there, he my hero for doing that but I still see it as three women and this guy is like u know.... Its like when women want to be bakers and try to lift bags of flour and they cant. We would be more accepting of the Billy Elliotts but still in no matter what way you look at it he is in the wrong picture.

**TE:** *So that looks really out of place to you?*

**L:** It always will, the male ballerina, its something, like I've always admired them to the end of the earth, but I'm my heart my first judgement is like, dude. And I hate to say that but that is my first reaction.

**TE:** *That's good, its good to be honest if that's what you think it is. (Shows picture four)*

**L:** (Laughs) First reaction erm reminds me from the guy on the carry on movies the guy with the skinny legs the ultimate insult to man, you know, if we were hunting buffalo what good are you? And it does come down to the ugg thing, survival of the fittest.

**TE:** *So there is something about size, bulk, strength, physicality all of those things that do quite equate quite close with masculinity.*

**L:** Yeah, the bigger you are. When I was young, I figured big guy give him an even bigger hand shake but who does he think he is being that big that was my reaction to the guy. I always felt sorry for the skinny kid, it's very un manly.

**TE:** *And the fact that he is trying to lift weights to make himself bigger?*

**L:** I think he is just making a mockery of himself.

**TE:** *So its not giving him any masculinity at all?*

**L:** No, the fact that he cant even wear the outfit is just don't event try.

**TE:** *So for him, it almost be better to not try and just to stay where he is.*

**L:** Yeah, I don't like being truthful, but I don't like what the truth says its an unfortunate picture but yeah, your not much of a man, but if it was some rugby player tearing down the pitch, he is all man. That's the image that you are sold on its what your brought up with.

**TE:** *Ok (number five)*

**L:** The soccer agro expression, I don't know much about this I only come across one guy hitting his girl and I jumped in and she went for us. That's my only experience of that.

**TE:** *When you look at that do you see him as masculine?*

**L:** Yes, because that's the way men are. They are brutal fucking wankers and I'm sure that's way more common that I know there is nothing in my spirit that comes close to that, the Spanish bull fighter is more familiar to me than this is. In my house the woman was very much respected, to even start shouting at a women was gonna

get you a kick in the arse. If you look at how men are portrait on TV ie Coronation Street etc, the roaring you know.

**TE:** *If its an image of masculinity, is it an image of positive masculinity?*

**L:** Oh no, negative masculinity, your going back to the nethanderal ages.

**TE:** *So what you are saying then, is that even though there is a place for strength and violence in some ways it all depends on context in a way. In certain situations its ok to display that and in other situations like that one it very clearly isn't.*

**L:** Well he is obviously not from Essex because he already would have a black eye, but I do, I do identify with the fact one is way stronger physically and to get to that stage means you have already lost, that's the scariest one yet.

**TE:** *So what if he was holding his fist up to the guy on number four, what would you think then?*

**L:** I would have said he's super masculine picking on the weakest species.

**TE:** *So there is that raw association with masculinity to violence if is its not that for you is always something you would approve of necessarily.*

**L:** You grew up always looking at who was the best fighter, who was the coolest guy on tv, the slickest guy with the gun we do aspire to be the arse kicking male.

**TE:** *Okay (picture number six)*

**L:** Kind of out of my league again, a gay shot, it's a mans hand on a mans head. I lived in San Francisco for twelve years so I'm totally cool with that.

**TE:** *So it's hardly a shock to you.*

**L:** No, the first time I saw a gay couple meet on the stairs and they said, you want to go meet Wednesday and go fuck and the other guy was like sure. I was like wait a minute, that's too honest. This is a relationship without the bull shit. I've always been jealous of the fact same sex relationships have a brutal honesty.

**TE:** *Okay. (Picture seven)*



L: Hate to say it, but first reaction was, he had it coming to him.

TE: *How do you think he got the injury?*

L: I don't know, maybe cross dressing?

TE: *(Laughs) that's a new one, ive not had anyone say that before. Seriously?*

L: Well yeah, he is out of drag now, that could be a good reason for it, it looks like he either got punched in the lip or there is still a bit of rouge still down there, but he's a guy that could slip a wig on pretty easy you know. In the context of what you have given me, I would say it's got something to do with hate maybe.

TE: *So can I ask you would the masculinity of that image be very affected by how he got that injury? Would you need to know a bit about the story before you could really judge whether it was masculine or not?*

L: Yeah, there is nothing masculine about that, to me you have been bandaged and taken care of so you were weak in a sense maybe you were better than the other guy, I don't know, but you see a guy with his arse whooped, like the kid that I hit. The biggest damage was the next day at school was the kids looking at him going shit, I felt bad for that guy, not for beating him up but for the grief for loosing. I could have held my dignity and told people to piss off, he couldn't and I felt so bad because he got demoralised because he lost a fight. He lost all his respect because he lost.

TE: *So winning is really important.*

L: In that environment then it's really important. Like even if you put up a really good second place, you lost.

TE: *Okay. (Number Eight)*

L: The ultimate man. I hate to say it, I know going to war is the worst thing ever, but there is something about you that wants to be a GI. You got the gun, your all padded up ready to kick arse it is the ultimate expression of the modern man.

TE: *So inside of you there is a bit of you that hates the idea of war but there is a bit of you that responds to that image in a very positive way.*

L: Yeah, he's a warrior he's standing on the wall he's kicking arse. I don't even know if he is in the right fight. Its still hats off to them though for doing what they are doing.

TE: *So there is something noble in there for you.*

L: Hugely, even though I can't stand the fuckers. I've have much respect for anybody in uniform, yeah your tasking shit for me, I've got to give them credit.

TE: *Okay. (Picture nine)*

L: Somehow he looked like he won. Crying with sheer stress beating the guy, I don't know. I think he looks like a win and he is crying with emotion and that's okay.

TE: *Okay, so that's still quite a masculine image for you?*

L: Very much so.

TE: *Even though he is crying being comforted by other men?*

L: Yeah, it looks as though he just went twelve rounds. Yes that is a masculine shot. If he had a shirt and tie on it wouldn't be.

TE: *It's quite interesting that the other image of a man with his arm round the other man, it's the image where the two guys look like they may be kissing. So what is it about physical contact without a shirt on that kind of gives it the permission for it to be ok?*

L: I always have a hard time with sports; you know when you see guys score a goal they pat him on the arse, it's the gayest thing you are ever gonna see and yet there is no time for that in that spirit, you know in boxing you often see that extreme the male achieving is so strong that you are gonna break down and cry. I suppose having your shirt off is the ultimate expression of rraaggh and that guys shirt is off a good while. I get the feeling he is being consoled through triumphicy.

TE: *Okay. (picture ten)*

L: Rejection I guess. To much distance between them, father on the computer and the kid is looking for attention. He is to busy being a mans man.

**TE:** *So what do you think that kid is feeling?*

**L:** He doesn't know, because he doesn't know he is being short changed so he is going to go off and make his own fun somewhere, but I kind of feel that he is probably going why, the kid is just going leave it and the man is saying you don't understand this report has got be on the table in fifteen minutes and the kid is like well I only want ten. But he is probably providing for him in a way, that's kind of like me and my old man expect for I couldn't see him. He was always from the house. But I guess the modern father isn't way from the house. He is definitely feeling lost, that's going to be a broken window in half an hour, that's what I get from that.

**TE:** *Thank you that's been brilliant.*

## **Appendix 8**

### **The first stage of analysis for FAN (Free Association Narrative)**

#### **Categories Produced**

##### **Emotionally available**

I'd say we just hung around with each other and he was always there for me, I never really had any problems to talk about but if I did I could always go to him. Alan

He was very caring we had quite a good relationship Brian

He was gentle and I would say he was soft as well. He did tell me a few times in business he had struggled to impose himself. Yes, I remember lots of hugs and kisses holding my hand. I remember I reached an age where he wanted to hold my hand and I didn't want to, I was growing up. Don

He was also someone I was looking forward to be with. I always look forward to spending time with him, going to rugby games with him together. Jonny

##### **Work kept him apart from me**

He is now a security guard at the airport, but he used to work a lot of hours to provide for the family, my mum wasn't working at that time. Because of his work load, the father son interaction time cut loose and because that cut loose I started to get to experiencing engage with my environment myself, that's when I started to take on experiences accommodate and model other peoples behaviours, he stopped becoming that kind of role model to me. Tariq

Total bread winner. Never played with us, never kicked ball, worked sixteen hours a day, come home for his lunch back to work, come home for his tea back to work, he never sat and played with us. Lou

My father was always absent, he was always working. Italo

And our relationship to begin with was difficult because he didn't live at home for the first two and half years of my life, because he was in the military. So he worked away. Gustaf

### **Emotionally absent**

My experience of him was that he wasn't there and when he was there, the only time he would come forward was when (in my teens) we had a screaming match at each other and it ended up it being a fight. Eric

The moment my mother left, which was sudden, she just left and never came back, although I did see her later on, I was with him and very concerned, I felt like I was left with a stranger. Italo

He would leave early in the morning and come back late in the evening. I don't know that being such a young child my awareness even had a purpose of him being around. Gustaf

He was always there, but there wasn't really wasn't any closeness, he was always there if you needed a lift or some money good provider kind of thing but no real emotional relationship with him at all. It was a very kind of cold relationship. Karl

My mother and father split up when I was five, and I had contact with him about twice, well initially every other weekend for about a year I think up until I was about eight and then my brother and I just saw him the summer holidays for about four weeks, every year. Up until the age of fourteen, fifteen. He moved away and I've seen him twice since. Neil

The most unemotional person I have ever met. Karl

Emotionally distant, up until he had a heart attack he was emotionally distant. I mean the first time we gave him hugs he was like, what you doing? ....we would be like let's freak him out and give him a hug.....he came from an old school country family, I don't think they ever hugged; I don't think they ever told their mother they loved them. Lou

### **Flawed and Fragile**

My father had low self esteem, pretty fragile ego, very emotional man, if he was happy he would laugh, if he was sad he would cry if he was angry he would shout and scream and slam doors, quite childish in a way, my mother was quite rational. Harry

He was emotionally distraught, for a long time, (*after mother left family*) for two or three years he would sob, because of the loss, he didn't want to accept. He was happy for them to go off have their relations, her with the men he with boys and then come back together. Italo

He's a very gentle man very kind, I don't know anyone quite as kind as dad. There are lots of good qualities about him a lovely man and I love him very much. But it's hard to have a very close relationship with him. Peter

### **Dad as serious disciplinarian**

...he has got this intimidation thing about him like if he is angry you know when to stop. Alan

when my mum says I don't want to tell your dad, then you know you're in a lot of trouble and it's serious. We were never punished that hard, but the thought of our dad disciplining us was hard. Alan

As a younger child I remember you could push boundaries with other people but not with him. Jonny

He went to work in the oil industry for BP.....off on Oil Rigs in Scotland.... he is a very hard man he has got that typical Northern mentality ....we were quite frightened of my dad. He would come home at weekends not

every weekend, we had a good up bringing, we were sent off to school...I remember my father figure almost being in the back ground but this very strict man who we were very aware of (Robbie)

Self discipline, always says his prayers first thing in the morning with his windows down, if your gonna do it do it right, always made sure we were honest, he had a big thing about being true to yourself, that was his favourite quote. Lou

He is the presence. My mum is a very calm person who rarely gets upset. I always remember as a kid when my mum would say wait till your dad gets home. You would then crap your pants, oh my god dad will find out. He was very strict as a father but I thank him for that now Olly

### **Dreams of gaining dad's approval**

I'm going to show my dad one day who I am and he will see it and I'm hoping that one day he will approve it. Tariq

### **Respecting dad**

All through after his problems and stuff like that he didn't walk away he faced up to what he had to do he paid his penalty and then afterwards he came back into the same church, same town all that sort of thing. Brian

Putting up shelves that don't really need to put up, just so the two of us get to hang out. I love that and I can't get enough time with him. Id be proud as punch to introduce him to anybody, he's a character he is now much more himself now than he ever was as a young man. Lou

I put my dad on a huge pedestal Marcus

He is six foot, built like a brick shit house, he swears a lot, have very strong opinions, he likes rugby, he hates long hair, he is very straight down the line very driven, he still thinks in a less modern way, he was always the bread winner and my mother stayed at home..... I played

rugby up until I was twenty he was always there shouting at the side line, he drove a merc, big car, larger than life big person. Olly

He had many disappointments in his life that he didn't really work on he just kept going and worked right up until the end. Frank

He was 100% male a masculine, he had some views on how young man should be like, never resign, never give up, always fight, I really believe he never did something against his principle. He was a masculine person. Yousef

So in that sense I've always respected the fact that he made sure there were gonna be no holes in the picture, he was solid. I often felt it would have been nice if he had played with us a little bit more, but he just didn't, he couldn't, he didn't know how. No one ever played with him, he grew up in a rural town, where soon as you could walk you were working and he felt the same way. Lou

### **Dad crying**

I have never seen him cry, well only when his mother died Frank

Yeah, when my granddad died and when was in hospital before and at the funeral.

**TE:** *Was it an unusual thing to see him cry?*

**A:** Yeah he don't cry that often, that really got to me and my sister, we have never seen it, it was a bit of a shock. Alan

I've only ever seen him cry once, and that was the news that his mother had died Robbie

*Did you ever see him cry?*



No. Oh....at my grandmothers funeral, other than that I can't remember.  
Simon

He keeps it hidden, the only time I ever saw him cry was when my mum died, and he couldn't help himself then it just all come out. Marcus

Never see him cry, so he is keeping it to himself. I remember once seeing a tear come down his eye and that was really quite shocking for me because I have never seen my dad cry, I think it was when his mother passed away. Tariq

### **Dad as a hero**

He also did something which I thought was heroic, he spoke up against the British Union of Fascists, on a communist platform. There were death threats against our family and we were protected by the communists. I thought that was quite glamorous.

**TE:** *So he sounds quite like a heroic figure if distant in a way.*

He was to me, I wanted to be like him I thought he was great. There was no closeness there. Frank

I remember him being the coolest dad ever. I remember on one holiday we were on Norfolk having a picnic and I remember him getting out his pen knife and I thought it was the coolest thing in the world. Olly

### **Dad's anger**

He was scary because he shouted it would stop your heartbeat. It was a little like living on a volcano. Harry

I guess he is not verbal in a sense which I feel is perpetuating his sense of identity. He rages rather than speaks Gustaf

Yes, I always thought he was a nice man but his temper was rash he would scream. When my mother left I remember having this enormous

fear of being with him, I think this was because I have never been with him much. Italo

And he has a vicious temper which I don't really know where it comes from but in a way I would consider very childish, still do because he would just rage at something and then go slam the door and you wouldn't see him for the rest of the evening. Gustaf

He either shuts down silence and doesn't really answer when you question something or he gets rage. So in a way it's a way of insulating himself Gustaf

I was scared shitless, he would come in the front door id go out the back door. Just because he wouldn't smile when he would see you, it would be more what the fuck you doing? Years later he is like my hero and I love him but growing up I was scared of him. Lou

### **Being a gentleman with women**

He has always been faithful they have their rows like everyone else, but he has never mistreated women. I think when he was young I think my granddad was a bit rough with my nan and I really think that has affected how he treats women. He has said to me a couple of times never hit a woman, manners wise he is not sexist or mistreating anyone Alan

### **Dad as good provider: admiring his commitment to family**

Commitment to my mum and my family, because we have been through a lot. When I was two we lived on this estate and we were broke for money my dad was working all the time, just how hard he work supporting us all, Alan

He always provided for us, I had a stable home life, mum and dad my little brother and my grandmother lived with us. It was always the two of them they were married thirty-nine years when he died that was a very good model for me. Brian

I remember him going to work in the morning and coming back about six everyday, hardly ever having any holidays Marcus

His kindness and the fact that he was able to go through the war able to run his own business be a faithful and good husband for forty years. And just retain that gentlemanly way about him. Don

When it comes to providing for the family, my mum didn't work at all. He was the one that worked. He enjoyed his job, he did it without even saying anything, it was his drive and hard work that enabled us to go on the holidays that we did. Jonny

He had a filling station, Texaco filling station. Every morning you had to sweep the front pick up all the cigarette butts exactly how he wanted it, he took pride in it and I remember one day I said "you like this fucking place"? He pulled his car over to the side of the road and said "listen, its given me a house to put my wife and my kids in, a car and money in the bank. Do you think I like dipping oil sticks, do you think I like pumping gas? No, but it has provided me with the things I do love so I put up with it". That was the first time id ever heard him say he didn't like the garage, because I could never tell because he took so much pride in it. Lou

I think mostly because he couldn't get out of the situation he was in, he could have left us with his family and gone off back to sea, but he never did that because I think partly because as a man the thought he couldn't do that and it was the wrong decision to make. Marcus

I respect him so much because he takes on so much for my mum and for the family. He sent me and is still sending my little sister to Private School, the money for that is ridiculous. Someone that will do that for me is a lot and I will always respect him for that. Olly

## **Closed internal world of my father**

It is sometimes difficult to get what is going on inside Alan

Love was never talked about in my house; it was something that was never mentioned. Frank

He doesn't really appear to do feelings, although I know he does feel them. He doesn't really show them, he is quite closed Peter

He would never show emotion, he would never show emotion towards myself or my sister, he doesn't know even today how to hug his own children.... even today he doesn't know how to show emotion to his own children, he does with my mother they are like super glue Robbie

Emotionally, I don't know my dad emotionally, first thing that comes to mind, stepping outside the normal range of emotions, I see him drunk laying on the floor once, coming home from a rugby match or something, I didn't know what was going on, dad laying on the floor next to the dog, I think my mum found it quite funny, And that's the only really, extreme emotions I can think of. I know he has been angry, infuriated, I can't see him being sad. Simon

There are two things, there is the opening up part of it and there is a sacrosanct centre which is totally private, he was mostly private. He was a shy guy who forced himself through debating societies things like this to come out. Frank

He has become more stubborn, he won't let any of his feeling out, he won't express anything he will never ask me how my life is going and how I'm doing in my degree for example. Tariq

I remember a couple of years ago he had glaucoma and he had to get the surgery done. And he was at the dinner table as usual he was quiet and I asked him how it was and he just passed it away. And later on I heard him talking to my mother being really upset in the room, but of course when he left the room he was a blank slate again. Gustaf

My mum says he was never emotionally there for her either ....He never showed weakness and I guess he saw showing emotion as a weakness.

Karl

### **Men should be independent**

Having a lot of responsibility, a lot of hard work, supporting yourself and others, making your own way.....to be a man and a grown up you need to be independent. Alan

### **Men should be the protectors**

I'm very much into protecting for example Sharon and I had been out and we were just walking when a man come up to us and I moved Sharon out of his way and stood in-between, I don't know if that's masculine but that just seems what is inherent in me. Brian

My father was extremely supportive of my sisters in my culture at that time this was unusual some people can and make proposal for two of the girls, my father rejected all these proposals and said to my sisters, you never need to marry a guy you don't like or love and please get your PHDs and then marry. Yousef

### **Physical affection from dad**

I would kiss my father good night every night right up until he died.

Harry

I roughly remember sitting in this lab watching television being fed oatmeal very simple wonderful memories I have. Because he had too, in a sense I think it was definitely that he wanted too as well, during that time period when my mother was away a lot erm we started getting into this habitual pattern of watching cartoons after dinner, which is something I remember very vividly as well this hung around until I was about eight nine years old. And it was really nice and once again a wordless communication where we would sit and watch these funny Tom and Jerry cartoons. Gustaf

### **Father's direct positive influence on masculinity**

Other people affect your opinion but he has got a great deal of influence on masculinity. I don't think him working so hard was to convey a message it was just something that had to be done. Alan

My true feelings are that the man should take the lead and the woman should be able to do things for herself, I guess I'm a bit uneasy with that, maybe I think they should be at home giving attention to the children. I'm sure my dad was a strong influence in that, I don't recall any conversations with him at all about the nature of being a man. I think his was to demonstrate and to show. Don

In terms of similarities, I have the same views as him, I want to grow up have kids, successful job, get married. Olly

He is a mans man not a real hard mans man I think he has got a real soft spot and I think that has come out in me a little bit. Marcus

### **Father's direct negative influence on masculinity**

I think that I'm just so out of touch with what dads masculinity is that maybe I've not enabled it to, I've never looked at him as a role model. I've never had any sense; I didn't want to be like him. Craig

### **Experiencing his criticism of me**

He had a knee operation, a mackintosh one of the first ones, which was two steel plates in his knee and he had the same steel plates in his knee when he died at sixty-three (in 1997). I think he got very frustrated at not being able to do things and he would criticise things that I did because it wasn't quite what he did. Brian

## **Changing balance of power during teen years**

He tended to shout, I could remember certain times he would get into a strop over things which was a bit odd to me. I do remember one instance where I had quite a big row with him. I had been in the fire service for a while, I was still living at home, I had been in it for about a year if that and I remember him saying something and I let fly at him, I remember him saying don't you talk to me like that Mr Fireman Brian

And then from fourteen fifteen, kind of war in the house, between me and my dad and my mum until I left at twenty four.

**TE:** *So tell me a bit about the war.*

**E:** We fought a lot, violently sometimes, he would be very passive and say nothing until my mum brought him on board and then he would be roped into things. Eric

Probably up till my early teens and then I started to get bigger and it caused more fractures and just brought things to a head. It accelerated me leaving home really. Eric

I just remember staying out of his way until I was sixteen and then I figured I'm not doing this anymore you're coming over to my side now I have enough of that shit. And then he sort of loosened up, Lou

## **A reliable, trustworthy figure**

He wasn't one for going out with fists and stuff like that, but he was very good with words. If he said he was going to do something then generally he would. Brian

### **Someone you couldn't trust**

You could trust him to fuck you up, he wouldn't do it on purpose but you could trust him to trick you into something, throw you into an experience. You couldn't trust him to be a safe haven nor could my mother. Frank

### **Masculinity is about more than size – its how you act**

It's not about how big and strong you are it's about what you do, it about how you act, how you care, but he (dad) was like me, I'm loyal I've been married twenty six years The thing of caring for my wife and children being there and loyal and reliable is far more about than lifting weights. Brian

### **Broken Family, Broken Relationship**

I ranged from hating him to thinking he was pathetic he had no sense of responsibility, we have spoken about this since and I think now we have a very good relationship..... As far as I was concerned it was dads fault, he was going away a lot on tour at that time. Craig

When he was present I wanted him to be absent, I couldn't bear being in the same room as him.

**TE:** *What was it about him that you couldn't bear?*

**C:** Oh stupid stuff, like the noise he would make when eating his food at the table, I think it was the physical presence the noises....I remember once me having friends round, I was probably about fifteen and dad is trying to join in, like dads do, and I remember being furious that he was even in the room, I was embarrassed and didn't want him in there and he went berserk....he said "what the fucking hell was all that about, have I got two heads or something"?

He was just vile to me over there, he has apologised since, he would make fun of me, I was going through adolescence and I was struggling to speak,



so my dad decided to give me elocution lessons, which consisted of my standing in the bathroom and he getting me to say these things and laughing when I couldn't say them, my brother would say they could hear this going on and it was really painful. I remember overhearing him talking to some of his cast members saying I don't know what is wrong with him and that was really difficult. Craig

To both of us our family was something that we had survived we look back as though we were shipwrecked or something. Frank

(Dad leaving) It made me incredibly ambitious. I had to have a brand new Ferrari by the time I was thirty and I had one by the time I was twenty five.

**TE:** *Why do you think his absence had that particular effect on you?*

Probably to replace something, I don't know Neil

### **Knowing love is there – but it is never spoken or shown**

My wife is from a family of twelve children, six of which are boys and her dad would say I love you and hug them. My dad would never do that. Jonny

He used to put all his affection into me although he never said I love you or put his arm around me and said you're a great son, to this day he has never said that. Marcus

Sometimes he would just come up with an idea to help someone or make a situation easier for us and the times that he did that you knew that he really cared Jonny

They manifested themselves not so much in hugs and kisses more so in support, understanding, empathy. Marcus

## **The two faces of Dad**

My memory is that he was at ease with everyone, I think I did have a sense that no one else saw the person I saw.....the only involvement I had was real tense feeling was about just get out of here.

**TE:** *So if you ever saw him in the company of other people other than your mum,*

**C:** Very gregarious, very funny.....I know people really genuinely loved him they adore him they like him and he is a very kind thoughtful generous man. He just didn't know how to do it with us, he was frightened I think Craig

But generally I always considered him quite silent in between, not very good with social interactions, he becomes very, I would say very gregarious when there are strangers around but not when it is immediate family. Gustaf

## **Overall negative view of dad's masculinity**

Aggression, detached, role, unhappy, not being touched. Craig

Majority of the time would be taking care of him, for example there was a time when I missed nearly six months of school because he had panic attacks, he wouldn't go to Naples which was a two hour journey because he thought he was going to die, so I had to go with him. Even today its all about caring for him and his crisis, I don't want to have that kind of relationship its not masculine for me. Masculine I associate with other models in my family. Italo

Dad is not a very masculine man I would say that my mannerisms sometimes are not very masculine, and dad running doesn't look very masculine. He just not very mans man, he has never encouraged me to play rugby or stuff like that but he's sort of sensitive feminine-ish man. Peter

## **Improved relationship in adulthood**

I think we have got a brilliant relationship now, where in fact I've had to stop him talking about things, where he has had problems with ex partners and he has started talking about sex I've not liked it.....I've learned to laugh about it now and accept him for what he is. Craig

First I was five years in jail, then after that I left the country and I came as a political asylum to Europe and then eight years later I saw my family: a time frame of about fourteen years I had not seen my family as I saw them again it was different, I was maybe a little bit wiser and I could see that he had got old. I have in last year a very close relationship with him. Yousef

For example when I left last year he was very emotional, It was actually the first time I saw him cry erm and then we hugged and kissed like when I was a child Gustaf

I think he has got a lot of anger inside I spoke to him about this, as I've got older now my father is fantastic we have a much better relationship now than when I was a kid. Robbie

## **Lost opportunity for connection**

I don't know him and I don't feel I ever will. I've tried as we are older but I feel he has closed off. Eric

I would just like to ask him stuff about how he felt and tell him that I did love him and that I was sorry that I had let him down in certain ways, to thank him for some stuff and also to say I couldn't have done it differently. Frank

At this age I've never gone out with my father and had a good time I've never interacted with my father on that level and it seems that sometimes now, before I used to notice that even though he used to provide for me as a child he never encouraged me. Tariq

I don't remember hugs or I love you. I don't think it was ever something I desired, you don't miss something you don't have. I suppose I would like of us to have done more together, more interaction, laddish interaction.

Karl

### **Strong, silent presence**

He is a strong guy, comes across as quiet, mum does all the talking dad will be watching TV. Very strong in the fact of when he makes a statement then that's final. Jonny

### **Dad lacking his own father figure**

My father died when I was twenty....father was very old when he had kids, fifty two when I was born, forty two when he got married..... he also never had a father, his father died six weeks before he was born, he died of TB as a result of being gassed in the war. He was brought up by his mother and three aunts who all worshipped him and adored him, he was the male of the house Harry.

I forgot to mention his own father died when he was twenty one and my father is the youngest of the six, so he hasn't had that father figure in his life, which I think it is important to have that man in your life as a father figure. Robbie

He was born into a sea faring family, he had five brothers and they all went into the Merchant Navy, born on Liverpool and there's a massive sea port there, it was what working class men did. His father dies when he was young, I never met my grandfather, his father was in the war and he was an air warden and something fell on him, he came home and my dad was in the house at the time, I think he had a bang on the head, he came home and he must of died on the stairs, I think that affected my dad quite a bit. Marcus

His father died the day he was born, his mother died of cancer when he was fifteen.

**TE:** *His father died the day he was born?*

Yes, he was killed in action he was in the royal navy reserve Peter

### **Showing his pride in me**

He was very much the recorder of my life; he was the man with the clipboard making down my achievement literally in spread sheets, as he was an accountant. Harry

Because I was a boy, there is a bit of resentment in the family from my sister that he favoured me, he still favours me now. ....I was a young playing with train sets, because he likes them things himself he used to show great interest and take me to train exhibitions, I was really into motorbikes and he encouraged me to ride motor cross when I was little. Marcus

Just a few years ago he nearly died of pneumonia after drinking too much and he did stop drinking for a while and he is now back on it. Although maybe in a little bit more of a controlled manner. We haven't really engaged a lot about it expect for just a couple of moments when he said he is proud with what I have done, which meant a lot to me Peter

I saw him about four years ago and I went down to his house and that was quite scary. I used to professionally race cars and was on telly all the time. I went down to his house and there was this one room which was like a shrine to my racing, pictures and newspaper articles all on the wall.....I feel a bit weird, that the wrong way to look at it. He was obviously very proud that I raced professionally. I felt that if he hadn't lost contact he could have had been more involved rather than just pictures on the wall, he could have been at the race. Neil

### **Father as distant teacher**

They are a bit patchy, playing with him, that didn't happen, he instructed me all the time his job as far as he could see was to educate me.....for me to succeed for me to be successful, he was a keen scout so I was in the scouts. Frank

### **Father fearing homosexuality in his son**

I was much more effeminate and I really loved ballet, which really pissed him off he didn't like that at all..... he was panicking about me being gay, he thought this guy is going to be queer this is appalling, but having said that, my grandfather who was a tough guy, he was Russian and adored ballet! I was a very effeminate fellow who liked ballet, showed emotions this was a huge no no to him, this was like you are going down the toilet on this one. From then on I didn't go in that direction. Frank

## **Appendix 9**

### **Foucauldian Analysis**

#### **Discourse of editing masculine performance**

I think it's acceptable for men to take pride in their appearance and I think it's more acceptable for women to be more into their appearance than men.

**TE:** *Do you think for a lot of men they are secretly kind of more interested in that stuff more than they let on?*

**A:** Yes I think, a lot more blokes now are more into their looks rather than hundred years ago. I'd say to people I take about five minutes looking in the mirror but it's a lot longer.

**TE:** *Why do you think that pressure is there to play down something?*

**A:** I'm not sure its pressure; you just know someone is going to call you a girl. Alan

#### **Men must stand on their own two feet**

As I've got older he thinks its just me on my own road. And I have to be there taking on everything myself. Tariq

Being masculine is all about having control, being who you want to be, doing what you want to do and not conforming to something you don't really want to conform to being of your own social value, representing who you are, that's what I feel masculinity is. Learning and adapting from

your experiences what you have learnt what you have been through, I have always felt that. Tariq

I had a lot of troubles in school, I got expelled three or four times. I had the feeling that they didn't understand me, for this reason I can't ever remember talking to my parents about my emotions or my problems, I learnt I have to cope on my own. Yousef

### **Laddish Bravado – One of the boys discourse**

I think it's more going out drinking with your mates and stuff, that's a much more masculine thing. It's different to a bunch of girls going out for a drink.

**TE:** *Why is it different?*

**D:** You go out with the lads and stuff and you meet some girls and have a lot to drink, maybe get into trouble. When girls go out they talk about boys and relationships, which to me is a bit boring. Alan

### **Good, responsible provider discourse**

you're expected to raise a family, support yourself, but in one group of society they think blokes are trouble, like the football hooligan. I think a lot of people think men are a nuisance. Alan

It's about being a bread winner, not to the exclusion of your wife not to be staying that the woman should be staying at home, I see the male and female roles as equal.

He believe a man had to take more responsibility, I think he thought that he has to protect my mother and us, my mother can give us love and take care of us but his part is to protect the family. Yousef



I feel the responsibility to work hard and bring something in and support my wife and my family. Jonny

### **Men should keep their emotions under control and private**

Would he cry at a soppy film? I would say no, reason why is because if I'm watching something on telly, for example secret millionaire where the guy gives away twenty thousand pounds, I'm like, I'm not embarrassed by it but I don't want anyone to see me crying.

*Why*

Because they are not a man, it's not masculine. Neil

The unwritten rules, no feelings, unpleasant feelings are glossed over, sadness was glossed. When I first went to school I literally just turned seven my parents had dropped me off and we asked to build constructor straw, build a tower as big as you can and split into teams of three boys. Once we concentrated on that our parents we ushered out of the room, we didn't get to say goodbye to them because they didn't want mass hysteria. I was home sick for years and I was about ten before I stopped crying saying goodbye to my parents Peter

I think its more acceptable now for a man to give another bloke a hug rather than the good match sort of thing. A bloke in the street crying you would think oh god what's up with him, a girl you just know she is upset. I don't know why, but I don't think is acceptable for a bloke to show his weaknesses like that, in public.

**TE:** *And for you, where does that side go?*

It doesn't. It either works itself out or it just eats at me for a while, it doesn't go anywhere. Neil

## **Men and women should have clear and separate roles**

My true feelings are that the man should take the lead and the woman should be able to do things for herself, I guess I'm a bit uneasy with that, maybe I think they should be at home giving attention to the children.

Don

He was very traditional about that, he used to give my mother house keeping, my mother had her own job as a midwife. He bore the right to tell my mother what to wear if they were going out Harry

My view of being male was his for a long time and being male must be a contrast of being female because when I was being brought up men had everything going for us, being female was really rotten second choice

Frank

There is a lot more scope for men to be equal with women. Personally I think you should be the man of the house, I think that your wife could work but if someone told me their wife earned more money I would think that it is a bit strange Olly

## **Men should stand up for themselves discourse**

In certain situations fighting is needed. If someone does something to you then you need to stand up for yourself and others, but I don't agree in causing a fight. Just stand your ground.

**TE:** *So as long as you don't go out of your way to provoke it,*

Yeah but if trouble comes your way, that's ok. Alan

Strength of character, happy in your own skin, not concerned to try to have to change to fit in. Harry

## **Hypermasculinity discourse**

*(In Rhodesia growing up)* Absolutely they don't have emotions, they fight, they can hold their drinks, they are in the army, real men smoke, they play rugby and they don't really like women really. Bizarrely I found myself being sexually attracted to that kind of male, the rugby player, thug. Those were people that bullied me in my secondary education. Harry

That was the role my father took up, in every fairy tale there is a child who is beautiful, gentle and loving and then somebody, a step mother/father comes along and fucks them up until they grow, they have to then take on the messiness and blood of the world to survive properly and I think that is an important hardening off process that you have to go through. Frank

Yes it's a tough world and he and his father had moved themselves up socially and he knew what it took, you had to fight. Being Jewish he was used to having to move quickly so he learnt not to attach himself to stuff and I have done the same.

**TE:** *So paradoxically in a way to keep yourself safe you have to be less attached to things that might be taken away from you.*

Yes, including people. It was a post holocaust view that he had. Frank

A man's man does a physical job, big, not a hairdresser, wasn't thin or fat, six foot tall, down the pub with the boys, bringing home the bacon.

**TE:** *The provider aspect of that role.*

Behind a BBQ on a Sunday under control. Neil

## **Big muscles equals a real man**

People are judged a lot more on what they look like these days.

**TE:** *And do you see it that way?*

I have caught myself thinking that way, if I see a big muscular man walking down the road and then he is followed by small skinny male wearing skinny jeans I would think that the front bloke was more masculine and I think 99.9% of the population would as well.

**TE:** *How much of masculinity is linked to physicality?*

I think a lot. I'd love to say it is not but I think a lot of people base it on that. Olly

## **Positive masculinity discourse**

I think masculine people should have a positive impact on the psychological environment and not intimidate other people. Yousef

(if you had a son) I would like him to be non aggressive, gentle, non violent, considerate, helpful just a gentle man Marcus

There is a bigness in their eyes, which I want and I don't think I have Simon

## **Society expects men to be strong, tough and dominant discourse**

Now I think masculine is someone who is very self assured is quite dominant would look at me as if, I don't quite get you, its something quite alien to me. Of all the people I can think of they would be masculine to me and I wanted dad to be like that and yet when I'm with those type of people I actually feel quite uncomfortable. I think society expects

aggression from men, strength, still expects decisions I think, leadership, directness, and what society disapproves of I think is aggression, irresponsibility, lack of openness, Craig

Physicality, strength, pain, endurance are masculine qualities both physiological and physically in my world. Italo

Because you grow up thinking don't be a whinging little bitch, you deal with your shit, the girls always want you to reveal your inner most and when you do you feel like an idiot. So a lot of the times it the man thing to say no it's all ok. Lou

Having manners make you a man, I'm very strict with my kids. I've only hit my son once, it wasn't very hard, and I never had to do it again, because the threat was enough. Masculinity to me is being decisive and sticking to it. And I'm installing that into my son. Neil

I guess it's about being able to cope with things be able to stay strong in good times and in adversity. Don

Part of masculinity for me is to learn to tolerate distressing thoughts, emotions and physical states and get on with it. Italo

I'm not sure, maybe its just the old story where the man has to show he is a man and not cry and give hugs, because it doesn't belong in the culture. Jonny

### **Men are getting mixed messages from society**

Society is fairly confused about it these days. Men do not know what is expected of them, there is this new cliché about them being expected to do the washing up, talk about his feeling, listen to the woman. That seems to be slightly at odds with an undercurrent the man's out there hunting and bringing home the bread. Don

I remember saying to people it was hip there for a while for a man to change nappies and cry at movies and when they did that they lost their identity, women were like, I want a man that builds a house, cuts down trees etc and its like which do you want. Lou

### **Violent young male discourse**

I became a very violent boy, because it was something I was really good at, something I could really excel at and I did that by excelling not by size but through viciousness and I refused to be beaten, the two things went hand in hand. I would be sneakier more horrible do things that would appal people and I wouldn't be beaten, that's one way I handled things, second I was continuously trying to please them and I was not being who I was and I had a pretty hard time mentally and emotionally. So by the time I was about twenty four I was really fucked up, I couldn't function Frank

### **Masculine influences outside of father**

After that I started to re-integrate some of the feminine attributes that I had and re valued them, it was a long process but in 1977 that began for me. And I was also able to go back to some of the values that my father and grandfather had of community, social, looking after people. And at the same time the humanistic movement was very central to discovery of a new maleness, plus my later psychotherapy training of course Frank

There was obviously a great need for me in terms of me needing a more masculine role model, I became very close to my mothers brother, he sort of filled in the gaps that dad didn't seem to perform, although I only recognised that later. He was a very important man to me and he taught me stuff, he got me golf clubs and had them cut to the right length, he also taught me to ski, took me on holiday, really connected with me, more than dad. Both of my schools were an all male environment, I was surrounded

by masculinity and very little femininity from seven onwards. I was a sensitive little boy I think, I still am, although I'm a man now Peter

*Your style of managing yourself emotionally and how you express that does it feel to you like a conscious reaction against the way your father was?*

A big chunk was British schooling that contrasted heavily with some of my father's blatant behaviour. But there was also another person that played a role was my Grandfather, he is in the good and bad generalisation of manliness. My Grandfather went through two World Wars he was a super provider, super fighter, he work for two weeks with malaria. He was very strong psychologically. Italo

### **Discourse about challenging and moving beyond hypermasculine attitudes**

He always had control over emotions and he never used to reflect, his behaviour never ever reflected anything else. There was never any negative energy vibes or anything when he was down, you wouldn't really be able to guess it. I always used to think that it was just a masculine thing that was in you that you would keep it to yourself. Nowadays its not and that's just totally rubbish but that's what I used to believe. Having that control meant he had control over everything else. He had control over how I would be treated. Tariq

**TE:** *And the hard man, how would you spot a hard man?*

The one who looks like a thug, the one who doesn't care about themselves that violent attitude, the people we see out on the streets, tattily dressed, don't give a damn about themselves, no respect for other people or property Robbie

## **Influence of wider society or culture**

The whole culture is based around that, where fathers are just not as emotionally active with their family, its all to do with compliance where he took that on and felt that he had to do that. My whole family even my uncles just conformed to that without realising. Tariq

Partly yes. It's difficult to know because I went to a British school so I had to play football with the broken fingers or things of that kind. So it's difficult to know whether its modelled from school, stiff upper lip. I would leave my father and his Italian sensitivity to enter a football coach that was from Scotland. Italo

Most of my male friends are Californian, they will tell you anything and then I come back and everyone is closed shopped. I've got two classes of friends, Californian hippy kids and Irish! Lou

Masculine for me was quite defined in school up to about grade eight or nine, I was in a small town, my family are not from there, I came to first grade and about seven or eight of them were related like cousins and they were all into soccer, I would try and I would be awful, I would feel this is not for me, that in a way defines masculine for me that something that is isolating for me or isolated me in a sense. Gustaf

*Have you noticed much difference in how Swedish men behave as to how men in England behave.*

Yes, but then again that may be based on my preconceptions but I would definitely say that its more ok to be vain because guys in Sweden are vain at least the people in my age group and the people I interact with, its expected you would have a female friend the same way you would have a guy friend in England the closeness relationship, I think there are more defined rules here for how you could engage with a girl or a boy for example its more based on friendship, something I've found very irritating. Gustaf



## **Balancing good provider role with emotional presence**

I think that there should be a bit of both of it shouldn't be one or the other, its different within cultures, my dads culture is about providing and being there a man is defined through his social status, I feel that's not significant. Yes you need to provide for your family but its not all about providing financially it's about mentally and emotionally as well, he didn't do that. Tariq

Now I have a wholesome conception of manliness which is you have got to show strength and you have got to have virtues and character but empathy, transcendence all these things the acceptance of emotions and how painful or pleasurable it can be is part of it. Italo

## **Male strength and power can be used well or abused: its all about context, restraint and control**

If it is a fight to defend somebody or a fight for sport then its masculine.

*TE: The context of the physicality in the violence is very important.*

And how it's used and when it's used.

*TE: So there is something about restraint and control which is just as important as the explosive side.*

Yes

Italo

## **Locating self outside of usual masculine discourse**

I found with sports I was completely useless..... there have been times of seeing they share something I cannot share and that makes me feel in a way lonely. But at the same time I have always tried to avoid that loneliness by not valuing what they have Gustaf

*(with his own imagined future son)* I would be very different to my dad, I would be more affectionate, I would strive to have a healthy relationship, I would do more things with him that I didn't do with my dad, definitely.  
Karl

I've always enjoyed being quite different in some way and not conforming to the norm. I'm a rebel in some ways and I rebel against, I find myself wanting to take a different point of view to everyone else. The forms of masculinity that I don't like are crass, aggressive, typical thick, like football I've rejected its entirety, I could adopt it and really enjoy football but I choose not to. I don't like the fighting I don't like the lager louting, drinking.....the aspects of maleness that I like and aspire to is intelligence, sensitivity, the ability to have people listen to you, respect.  
Peter

### **Running with the herd**

The stripper bar thing, that's nearly applauded still, oh yeah you're a man, I think the soccer thing takes a huge chunk of male something, you would see twenty thousands males all jumping at the same time, singing the same songs. Part of me is a little bit jealous thinking that must be great fun but it's also one of the most scariest things I've seen too, because that's to me is kind of wrong, that's a massive group mind set that leads to nothing, like what's at the end of the game? A score of one nil the pub or maybe a fight on the way home or something. Lou

I think that's what maleness is, staying with the herd Lou

I've been to a lot of football games and you see what you call the alpha male and everyone praising them, and I'm thinking that wasn't funny or clever and you might get into trouble doing that sort of thing. There I do see that as a positive is if you're a team captain on a sport and you have to take control and you're using it for good and there is a skill involved  
Marcus

Certainly from where I come from men go out in groups of five or six they do it to appear more powerful Marcus