‘How Does it Feel?’: Masculinity, Transformation and Structures of Feeling in British Television in the 1970s and 1980s

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Abstract

This thesis examines representations of masculinity in British television of the 1970s and 1980s which reveal a structure of feeling around masculine discourses of the period. It questions the ease of transformative change in gender identities and gender relations in terms of masculine performance by stressing both limitations and resistance to change against the backdrop of social, cultural and economic shifts which took place in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s.

While the Introduction sets out the key questions and problems which this thesis addresses together with the historical context, Chapter Two consists of a Literature Review of some of the most important extant literature concerned with the representations of masculinity on screen. Chapter Three establishes the methodological framework which underpins this investigation which incorporates both textual analysis, particularly through the application of Raymond Williams's concept of structures of feeling, and gender theory. The thesis then goes on to deconstruct the work of a number of television writers who foregrounded a structure of feeling around male anxieties examining the interrelation between residual, dominant and emergent discourses of gender within their work. In the first of a series of case studies, Chapter Four examines the work of Peter McDougall arguing that the social structures which underpin his protagonists' milieu are so potent and insidious that they render masculine transformation as highly problematic. Chapter Five places Trevor Preston's *Fox* and Alan Bleasdale's *Boys From the Blackstuff* as the obverse of each other as responses to social change. The former shows how patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity remains in place by absorbing emergent

discourses into adapted configurations of gender practice, the latter reveals the increasing marginalisation of traditional masculinities whilst largely ignoring gender inequity. Chapter Six examines Clement and La Frenais' *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* where more fluid, open, fragile, and multiple masculine identities emerge as a consequence of a variety of discursive practices and inter-subjectivity. Yet in the face of change the narratives stress the importance of nostalgic homosociality as a way of reaffirming residual identities.

In conclusion this thesis suggests a model of gender which, whilst undergoing a considerable degree of destabilisation which may facilitate certain changes in normative behaviour, may also be so deeply entrenched within the individual and collective unconscious as to render certain aspects of reflexive transformation problematic.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aims

> Identities are not fixed essences locked into eternal differences. They are fluid possibilities, the elements of which can be reassembled in new political and cultural conditions.[1]

> As historically specific organisations of language, discourses present themselves in the plural, coexisting within temporal frames, and instituting unpredictable and inadvertent convergences from which specific modalities of discursive possibilities are engendered.[2]

This thesis aims to explore discursive constructions of masculinity in relation to new emergent discourses in the 1970s and 1980s. Through the analysis of fictional television narratives of the period it will seek to demonstrate the existence of masculine anxieties around change and adaptation, and endeavour to establish why transformation in masculinity and gender relations remained so problematic for many men. It will go on to analyse how fictional representations of men, as faltering and directionless, but entrenched, reveal deficiencies and instabilities within constructions of masculinity, examining how the narratives frequently work to re-legitimise or re-formulate dominant discourses of gender.

While this thesis seeks to investigate the televisual representations of masculinity through a number of theoretical perspectives concerned with the construction and performance of masculine identities, what underpins this study is a methodological approach based upon Raymond Williams's concept of structures of feeling, which will explore both text with context. The programmes themselves will reveal the feelings and experiences of fictional representations of men within the broader social

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1 Jeffrey Weeks, *The Lesser Evil and the Greater Good: The Theory and Politics of Social Theory* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1994), p. 12.

2 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 184.

and cultural structures of the period. The overall aim of the thesis is to isolate a structure of feeling expressed by a number of significant writers which emphasises anxieties around white, heterosexual, working-class masculinities. It will reveal how they attempt to manage emergent discourses while simultaneously engaging with dominant and residual ones. It will go on to investigate the degrees of embeddedness and resistance to social and cultural changes in order to establish the reasons for these, informed by a number of significant theoretical studies on identity and reflexive transformation.

If then, as the opening quotations of Weeks and Butler have asserted, identities should be seen as fluid, this thesis will argue that they may also be embedded and constrained. With the emergence of new positions and new identities, produced in changing economic and social circumstances, the question arises, to what extent are people able to reconstruct themselves and their own identities? How are changes which are deemed to affect identity experienced and what effect do they have on the construction and crucially the maintenance of identities? If, as I will argue, many men's constructed masculine identities were particularly resistant to new cultural conditions this then leads to questions about how identity is formed and maintained, the relationship between construction, limits and constraints and the dialectic of social structures and agency.

My aim then, in an attempt to answer these questions around identity, is to examine key fictional television texts which were broadcast at a particular time in Britain when the very notion of working-class masculine identity and the attendant structures and institutions which underpinned it, were challenged socially, culturally and economically. In his work on masculinity in literature Knights has suggested that

male identities are 'reinforced and re-enacted through social forms of communication' and fictional narratives are an important part of this.[3] 'Stories oriented to men and to men's experiences', argues Knights, 'not only articulate for the future what it is to live and be as a man, they also act as a blueprint for future stories'.[4] As Woodman has observed, while fictions may relate to a fictional past they also 'revalidate, reinforce or question the meaning of masculinity' and particular masculinities at crucial temporal and spatial junctures in history.[5] The study of texts then, 'can contribute to a critical cultural politics of gender, fictional representations being one among many other contributing factors'.[6] Foucault maintains that

> discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and effect of power but also a hindrance, a stumbling block a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy.[7]

Thus, the discourses emanating from the selected televisual texts may serve to offer up their own explanations of these complex and unstable processes, whilst themselves subscribing to and questioning gender power relationships.

While there has been some limited analysis of representations of masculinity on television, for example that of Rebecca Feasey, most academic work has been confined to the area of Film Studies.[8] As I explain in the subsequent Literature Review there is a paucity of work done on the representations of masculinity on television particularly with regard to working-class men. Seventies and eighties popular television is an area which, with a few notable exceptions such as Leon

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3 Ben Knights, *Writing Masculinities: Male Narratives in Twentieth-Century Fiction (*Basingstoke and London: MacMillan, 1999), p. 17.

4 Ibid.

5 Joanne Woodman, 'Narrating White English Masculinity: Male Authored Fiction of Crisis and Reconstruction, 1987-2001' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Birkbeck College, 2005), p. 7.

6 Ibid., p. 8.

7 Michel Foucault*, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction,* trans. by Robert Hurley, 3 vols (New York, NY: Vantage, 1990), I, pp.100-101.

8 Rebecca Feasey, *Masculinity and Popular Television*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008).

Hunt, has largely evaded serious academic research especially in addressing representations of masculinity undergoing revision in the period.[9] These exceptions have tended to focus on working-class sitcoms or middle-class adventure series while most popular drama has been overlooked. Conversely, where serious drama has attracted a number of academics, for example the work in the early eighties on *Boys from the Blackstuff*, it has tended to sideline masculinity as a given within a wider narrative concern, rather than something to be addressed and critiqued explicitly through feminist analysis. While some writers have undoubtedly opened up a number of interesting and productive avenues of analysis, this thesis seeks to make a new intervention through its interrogation of an area of television which has largely gone unexplored.

This thesis constitutes the first sustained analysis of the televisual representation of working-class masculinity of the period and, as such, this work offers an original contribution to the field of study, combining television analysis with the 'cultural politics of gender'.[10] By identifying writers who foregrounded a structure of feeling around male anxieties and change, my own research into television of the period addresses both popular and serious drama and focuses specifically on the male experience. It does not provide types as examples of change, but examines how the male experience of masculinity is represented; it does not simply assume normative masculinity as part of a wider discourse of given texts, but critiques that masculinity directly. Thus, the programmes I have selected are ripe for examination or re-examination from specific perspectives, which will reveal a considerable amount about male subjectivity.

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[9] Leon Hunt, *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (London: Routledge, 1998).
[10] Woodman, (2005), p. 8.

Ultimately this thesis argues that the practices, experiences, and feelings of white, heterosexual working-class men reveal a structure of feeling offering up a model of gender transformation which is at odds with post structural theories. While essentialist notions of identity have been widely critiqued and discredited, although variants still persist, Stuart Hall has rather dismissively described certain post-structuralist alternatives as 'the endlessly performative self, advanced in celebratory variants of postmodernism'.[11] What he appears to be alluding to are the ostensible opportunities for the transgression and reconstruction of gender identity (and gender power) relations whether in the social constructionist and discursive theories of Foucault or the performative theory of Butler. While fully in accord with the enabling dimension of discourse and performativity, this thesis aims to interrogate the limits and constraints that inhibit change and progress. As I will demonstrate, the post - structural theoretical perspectives of Foucault, Butler, and Giddens which emphasise the 'potential for artifice, flux, and contingency' provide excellent ways of approaching identity construction.[12] However, while all articulate the increasing possibilities for the transformation of social identities as a consequence of social, cultural, and economic changes in contemporary society, this thesis will explore fictional televisual narratives which fall short of this. While these narratives may address discursive disruptions and open up the potential for change, they also highlight a structure of feeling which exposes the limits and constraints which may inhibit any such action.[13]

[11] Stuart Hall, 'Who Needs Identity', in *Questions of Cultural Identity,* ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), pp. 1-17 (p.1).

[12] Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity (*Oxford: Routledge, 2006), p. 3.

[13] Butler (1990); Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991), pp. 18-37; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

1.2 The Case for Television

Through its selection of television programmes this thesis operates on the understanding that by the 1970s television had become central to British cultural life. In terms of both popularity and subject matter it was undoubtedly more important than film as a reflection of British working-class experience.[14] Indeed, it had come to replace film as the prime site for social realism, whether centrally in *Play for Today* (UK, 1970-84) or within something more generically formulaic such as *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* (UK, 1973-74).

While there was a declining mass audience for the cinema, television was experiencing something of a boom.[15] As it moved from, what Ellis has described as, a period of scarcity to a period of availability audience figures for many programmes on both BBC and ITV remained extremely robust.[16] While the figures for light entertainment programmes could exceed 20 million, popular series like *The Sweeney* (UK, 1975-78) in the late1970s and *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* (UK, 1983 -86) in the early 1980s could attract 14 or 15 million viewers, and 'serious' drama such as *Play for Today* was seen by up to 8 million.[17] Thus, television was identified by a

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[14] See for example Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Fontana, 1974); Richard Dyer, *Gays and Film* (London: BFI, 1977); Andrew Spicer, *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2001); David Rolinson, 'The Last Studio System: A Case for British Television Films', in *Don't Look Now: British Television in the 1970s,* ed. by Paul Newland (Bristol: Intellect, 2011), pp. 163-176.

[15] Paul Newland, 'Introduction: Don't Look Now', in *Don't Look Now: British Cinema in the 1970s* (see Rolinson above), pp. 9-20 (p. 17).

[16] John Ellis, *Seeing Things: Television in the Age of Uncertainty* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2002), pp. 39-73.

[17] Lucy Douch, 'Audience Measurement in the UK', in *Made for Television: Euston Films Limited,* ed. by Manuel Alvarado and John Stewart (London: BFI, 1985), pp. 190-210 (p. 191); Franc Roddam and Dan Waddell, *The Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* Story: *That's Living Alright* (London: BBC Books, 2003), p. 102; Irene Shubik, *Play for Today: The Evolution of Television Drama*, 2nd ed., (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 95.

number of writers as the key ‘platform to address mass audiences’.[18]

This enormous popularity of television was largely a result of its institutional stability consisting of a duopoly (until 1982) with a reduced cultural gap, rather than the proliferation of extreme diversity and increasingly smaller scale production within film.[19] Nevertheless, rather than producing programmes which reflected a relatively homogeneously constructed industry, television was extremely important in the generic variety, quantity, and quality of its output. As the breakdown of social consensus impacted on this output, television was able to work through an enormous amount of contentious issues and deal with matters brought about by social fragmentation presenting a diversity of programmes to a mass audience.[20]

As the period developed, notions of social and cultural flux, increased opportunity for and visibility of marginalised groups, and a greater variability in society, emerged into wider consciousness. Of all media, television was the most favourably placed to disseminate many of these ideas and issues acting as a key indicator of social and cultural changes. Furthermore, while much of its output may have been reactionary and conservative, expressing residual discourses, it was just as likely to be radical and innovative, reflecting emergent ones.

Television thus operated as an intermediate mechanism to convey ideas.[21] John Ellis has argued that the specificities of television as a cultural medium furnish it with the ability to work through and mediate meanings. He sees television as a 'vast

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18 Rolinson (2011), pp. 163-176 (p. 168).
19 Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History* (London: BFI, 2003), pp. 90-91.
20 Ibid., p. 91.
21 Matt Briggs, *Television, Audiences and Everyday Life,* (Maidenhead: OUP/McGraw-Hill, 2010), p. 9.

mechanism for processing the material world into more narrative, explained forms'.[22] Television drama and entertainment 'derive their power from their displaced working through of current and perennial anxieties'.[23] As such, 'television imbues the present moment with meanings. It offers multiple stories and frameworks of explanation which enable understanding'.[24] As Ellis has argued:

> Narrative provides empathy with attitudes that are seen, through successive scenes, increasingly from the inside rather from the outside. Yet television is often at its best in this process when it does not confront social problems directly, and does not seek to articulate a particular position in a problematic way.[25]

Television then, can 'take up and incorporate […] issues of social and cultural concern' which allows audiences to 'think through, ponder, believe […] reject […] judge […] get angry (and) impassioned'.[26]

Thus, 'television provides a forum and a locus for the mobilization of collective energy and enthusiasm' and this is achieved partially because of its 'liveness and intimacy'.[27] The idea that television has a particularly intimate relationship with its audience is one which has been argued by a number of academics. Silverstone has described it as a social practice which operates within 'the space of intimate distance'.[28] Similarly Turnock sees the act of watching television as 'negotiated intimacy'.[29] This intimacy is achieved in a number of ways. Firstly, while Gripsrud has argued that television may act as a window to the world it can also operate as a

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22 Ellis, (2002), p. 72.
23 Ibid., p. 87.
24 Ibid., p. 74.
25 Ibid., p. 87.
26 Briggs, (2010), p. 8.
27 Roger Silverstone, 'Television, Myth and Culture', in *Media, Myths and Narratives: Television and the Press* ed. by James W. Carey, (Beverley Hills, CA: Sage, 1988), pp20-31 (p. 25); Ellis, (2002), p. 1.
28 Silverstone, (1988), pp. 20-31 (p. 23).
29 Rob Turnock, *Television and Consumer Culture: Britain and the Transformation of Modernity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), p. 184.

mirror offering up a representation of ordinary contemporary life.[30] Secondly, by occupying domestic space it affects domestic life becoming an ordinary act of repetition and routine.[31] Thirdly, its small scaleness is particularly suited to small scale intimate narratives. Fourthly, unlike the cinematic experience it has an 'immediate presence'.[32] As Ellis has argued, 'television is intimate and therein lies its power. It underlies its social status as a mechanism for working through and exhausting society's preoccupations'.[33]

While I will argue that television was particularly well placed in working through male anxieties in the period, which were then worked back to a mass audience in the form of its 'affect', how far were the representations of working-class masculine anxieties which I have chosen to focus upon specifically televisual? Briggs has argued that television 'as a communicator of meaning and as a daily activity is ordinary'.[34] Thus, the very ordinariness of the dramas I have selected in terms of locations, characters, and narrative events appear to be well suited to the medium of television whereas cinema offers up more heroic, goal driven and self consciously dramatic narratives which have a high degree of narrative closure and tends to shy away from everyday ordinary experiences.

While the representations of characters in a variety of television genres of the period, for example police series, could be seen to derive from filmic conventions, the

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[30] John Gripsrud, 'Television, Audience, Flow', in *The Television Studies Book* ed. by Chistine Geraghty and David Lusted (London: Arnold, 1998), pp. 141-157.

[31] Jeremy Orelbar, *The Television Handbook*, 4th ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p. 85: Briggs, (2010), p. 14.

[32] Briggs, (2010), p. 11.

[33] John Ellis, 'Television as Working Through', in *Television and Common Knowledge*, ed. by John Gripsrud, (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 55-70 (p. 68).

[34] Briggs, (2010), p. 1.

representations I will focus upon tend to fall outside of the remit of mainstream cinema.[35] These are small scale portrayals of ordinary men in ordinary situations experiencing anxieties and confusion over their performances of masculinity. These are played out in ordinary stories featuring bricklaying, unemployment, drinking, fighting, skipping work, family and marital problems, and are punctuated by clichéd banter as well as dramatic dialogue.

While other popular media may have echoed television's interest in ordinary working-class men this was frequently limited or superficial. Advertising for example, while largely aspirational, did occasionally feature, as a riposte to this aspiration, what Hunt has called 'bitterman', existing in a working-class 'rowdy slightly dog eared, male group'.[36] Film representations were primarily confined to sitcom spin offs and Carry on films, and while they did address certain masculine anxieties they tended to be superficial and conservative. Other films, such as *Slade in Flame* (UK, 1975: Richard Loncraine), *The Long Good Friday* (UK, 1980: John Mackenzie) and *The Squeeze* (UK, 1977: Michael Apted), while considerably more adventurous in their portrayal of male uncertainty, were narratives primarily driven by goals or genre conventions. In some other culturally related areas reactionary, working-class masculine performances expressing residual attitudes to changes in gender and class can also be traced, for example in both the Oi music movement and the books of Richard Allen, but these were confined exclusively to the young.

Television in the seventies and early eighties then was suitably placed as a medium to explore and mediate cultural issues. Its modest scale, its domestic placement, its

[35] See for example Geoffrey Hurd, 'The Television Presentation of the Police', in *Popular Television and Film*, ed. by Tony Bennett and others, (London: BFI, 1981), pp. 53-70 (p. 59).
[36] Hunt (1998), p. 61.

intimacy, its mass popularity, its willingness to experiment for a popular audience, its championing of social realism, all worked in its favour. Whether the single play with its 'ventilation of public issues […] (being) one of the most valuable functions that television can perform' or the sitcom where shifts in society were both 'marked and resisted' and 'residual and emergent world views […] (were) continually at play', it functioned as a key cultural medium.[37]

As *the*

> central cultural medium it presents a multiplicity of meanings rather than a monolithic dominant point of view. It often focuses on the most prevalent concerns, our deepest dilemmas. Our most traditional views, those that are repressive and reactionary, as well as those that are subversive and emancipatory, are upheld, examined, maintained and transformed.[38]

While this thesis seeks to establish the ways television texts work to convey feelings about masculine identity, anxiety and change it will also consider television's ability to mediate these feelings and its affect on its audiences. While lack of substantive evidence may render this potentially problematic I will go on to provide viewing figures and specifically written audience responses for each of the programmes which make up the case studies within this thesis in an attempt to assess their 'affect'. As Gorton has argued, audiences are guided by what they think but also how they feel and their 'bodily response to feelings'.[39]

Millington has talked about the 'phenomenon of interdiscourse' within television, being the 'process in which readers either consciously or unconsciously compare

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[37] George Brandt, 'Introduction', in *British Television Drama*, ed. by George Brandt (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1-35 (p. 32); John Tulloch, Television Drama: Agency, Audience and Myth, 2nd edn. (London: Taylor Francis, 2002), p. 265.

[38] Horace Newcomb and Paul M. Hirsch, 'Television as Cultural Forum: Implications for Research', *Quarterly Review of Film,* 8.3 (Summer 1983), 561-573 (p. 563).

[39] Kristyn Gorton, *Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 69.

their sense of the world with mediations of the world'.[40] However, as Gauntlett and Hill have argued, it would be naïve to assume that identity would be absorbed from media representations.[41] As they go on to say 'it is virtually impossible to produce firm empirical evidence that television cultivates […] prejudices, since they are deeply rooted in our culture'.[42]

While television may have limited impact on audience behaviour and identity construction it can nevertheless, considerably affect audience responses. As Gorton has argued, affect in television consists of the affective strategies employed by producers, the affective qualities transmitted within what is produced and the affect these have on the viewer: 'Emotion is fashioned by producers to elicit a response from the audience'.[43] Similarly, Smit states that 'emotion is cultivated by television producers to encourage certain kinds of intensely intimate engagements with the medium' which mitigate against the 'possibilities of distraction and ambient viewing'.[44] Thus, 'television uses emotion to sustain the interest of potentially distracted viewers'.[45] Furthermore, 'valuation and use of emotion informs the formal structure of television texts […] (such is) the value placed on emotion by writers'.[46]

As Bird has argued, television consists of 'images and messages which wash over us, but leave little trace, unless they resonate, even for a moment, with something in

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40 Bob Millington and Robin Nelson, *Boys From the Blackstuff: The Making of a TV Drama* (London: Comedia, 1986), p. 185.
41 David Gauntlett and Annette Hill, *TV Living: Television, Culture and Everyday Life* (London: BFI, 1999), p. 211.
42 Ibid.
43 Gorton, (2009), p. 100.
44 Alexia Smit, 'Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion', *Screen,* 51.1 (Spring 2010), 92-95 (p. 93).
45 Ibid.
46 Gorton, (2009), p. 144.

our personal or cultural experience'.[47] 'These moments' suggests Gorton, 'signal an emotional engagement with television', and the level of engagement is 'marked by our emotional response to what we are watching'.[48] Furthermore, television texts can both orientate people's emotions and become repositories of those feelings and emotions.[49] Gorton goes on to differentiate between emotion and affect both of which are contested terms and frequently used interchangeably.[50] Emotion, she says, is the sociological expression of feelings, while affect is the physical response to those feelings.[51]

Shouse defines affect as 'the passage of one experiential state to another' either through 'augmentation or diminution'.[52] While 'feeling is a sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled [...] (being both) personal and biographical' and 'emotion is the projection' of that feeling, 'affect is the non-conscious experience of intensity'.[53] Thus, argues Shouse, 'without affect feelings do not 'feel' because they have no intensity'.[54]

Crucially, Shouse stresses 'the non-conscious resonance with the source of the meaning (as) more important that the message consciously received'.[55] He goes on to say that 'the intensity of the impingement of sensations' can mean more than

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47 S. Elizabeth Bird, *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World,* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), p. 2.
48 Gorton, (2009), p. iix; 2.
49 Ibid., p. 3; 8.
50 Ibid., p. 56.
51 Ibid.
52 Eric Shouse, 'Feeling, Emotion, Affect', *M/C Journal* 8.6 (December 2005), 1-15 (p. 1) <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0152/03-shouse.php> [accessed 2 April 2014]
53 Ibid., p. 2; 4; 5.
54 Ibid., p. 11.
55 Ibid., p. 12.

meaning itself.[56] Thus, affect has less to do with the communication of meaning than how we are 'moved'.[57] While meanings do matter the affect of television should not be collapsed into meanings alone.[58] Thus, the power of television 'lies not so much in […] (its) ability to create ideological effects, but in […] (its) ability to create affective resonances independent of content or meaning'.[59] While the 'power of affect is that it is […] abstract making it transmittable', because it is transmittable it is potentially a 'powerful social force'.[60]

While I shall go on in this introduction to justify my choices of particular television programmes by explaining the contributions each case study will make to my overall argument it is worth mentioning at this stage what informed my choices. Although issues around gender relations and masculine anxieties featured across a number of television genres, my selection has not been driven by generic similarity or diversity. As with Knights, they might not appear to be 'necessarily the most obvious' in terms of genre.[61] However, they do all occupy in some way the territory of social realism and are not particularly bound by generic conventions. They are also texts which work explicitly to convey their characters' feelings and anxieties about masculine identities and, as I will go on to argue, have the ability to mediate these feelings and affect their audiences.

I have also chosen to focus my study on television writers on the understanding that author and drama have a singularly intimate relationship, and while increased

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[56] Shouse (2005), p. 13.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., pp. 14-15.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Knights (1999), p. vii.

location shooting and the use of film stock allowed for greater creative input from the director, this was also a period when there was increasing 'artistic freedom afforded to dramatists',[62] However, while my analysis focuses on the output of writers, the actual textual analysis is of the programmes as broadcast, incorporating mise-en-scene as well as non-diegetic elements, and acknowledges the contributions made by others in the production process.

A further criterion for selection has been the desire to follow the writer's issues and concerns over an extended duration. Thus, with Peter McDougall I have selected single dramas which are connected by their thematic consistency while with Trevor Preston, Alan Bleasdale, and Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais the texts consist of lengthier drama series which allow the authors to draw out and develop themes and representations over a longer period than many one off dramas or films. While this thesis focuses on the representations of individual fictitious men, key to our understanding of them and their constructions and performances of masculinity are the interactions they have with each other, and how these develop within the narratives. Here I have used the term narrative to describe fictional stories, largely with cause and effect relations and temporal linearity (although with some digressions), but also lacking in clear resolution or denouement, thus highlighting a degree of ambivalence by the authors to their subject matter.

What the selected programmes present is a chronology of working-class masculine anxieties from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s representing a slow but subtle shift in those anxieties. All the stories specifically feature groups of men in homosocial yet

[62] Cooke (2003), p. 91.

generally non goal oriented interaction, and it is through this interaction that these anxieties are worked through. While there is no denying the cultural dominance of men's voices in television these particular narratives express feelings which had previously been 'elusive' and 'invisible'.[63]

1.3 White, Heterosexual, Working-class Masculinities

While this thesis focuses on narratives which deal with working-class, heterosexual, white masculinities and acknowledges that as a broad category it should not be interpreted as homogeneous, there is obviously a need to qualify the reasons for these parameters. In her own study of female masculinities Halberstam has argued that it is imperative to examine previously ignored marginal masculinities.[64] She suggests that what she terms 'dominant masculinity', that is in particular white and heterosexual male masculinity, has been naturalised and remains at the centre of academic study.[65] Thus, she continues, if there 'appears to be a naturalized relation between maleness and power, then it makes little sense to examine men for the contours of that masculinity's social construction'.[66] While this may be a perfectly valid argument in the first part, Woodman has suggested that

> Halberstam's very acknowledgement that our dominant cultural assumption is that a seemingly 'naturalized relationship between maleness and power' exists and persists, […] is precisely why men's self-representations of 'dominant white masculinity', and the crucial role they play in the power relations of gender requires continuous re-examination.[67]

<u>Thus, this thesis seeks to further this examination in an effort to both make the mechanisms of masculinity visible, but also to assay the strategems which</u>

63 Knights (1999), pp. 1-2.
64 Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press,1998).
65 Ibid., p. 2.
66 Ibid.
67 Woodman, (2005), p. 18.

traditional, hegemonic masculinities have used in an attempt to maintain their position.

There are additionally a number of more specific reasons why this thesis focuses on white, heterosexual, working-class masculinity. Firstly, while the construction and performance of all subjective identity is always fragile and contingent, those that were formulated upon traditional working-class masculine values (and more specifically those which are both white and heterosexual) and its attendant mythic status, appear to have been rendered particularly vulnerable as a consequence of changes in the period which exposed and laid bare this instability. Since those socio-cultural changes with regard to gender and race impacted particularly on the normative assumptions of both heterosexuality and whiteness, while economic shifts significantly affected the place, function and expectations of working-class men much more than those from the middle-class, then this particular construction of masculinity would be affected most dramatically. If, as has been argued, the relationship between class and masculinity was particularly intimate within 'heavy industries' and 'most apparent within the experience of manual labour', then 'the breaking up of the rigid frontiers of the working-class' whether through increased upward class mobility or changing work patterns would be profoundly disruptive for working-class masculine identities.[68]

Secondly, white, heterosexual, working-class discourse frequently defines itself by what it is not. While there is considerable evidence of emergent discourses in the

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[68] David Morgan, 'Class and Masculinity', in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities,* ed. by Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and Robert W. Connell (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 165-177 (p.172); Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity* (London: Tavistock, 1977), p. 58; Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945: The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 4th edn (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 275; 172.

period, themselves constituting emergent structures of feeling, for example around, feminism, gay activism, black consciousness, greater permissiveness and so forth, I will argue that television witnessed another emergent discourse, but one oriented towards the past stressing stasis and continuity in the face of change. As socio-cultural and economic changes challenged normative assumptions about heterosexual, white, working-class masculinity a new discourse emerged expressing a sense of 'panic or anxiety' and marked by reactionary characteristics.[69]

Thirdly, as a constructed category white, heterosexual, working-class masculinity of the period has tended to be relatively invisible. As a category which constituted a particular form of hegemonic masculinity it was only when its dominant normative position began to be challenged that its construction began to become more visible. Butler has pointed out that there is no 'relationship called "sexual difference" that is itself unmarked by race' and while blackness may be a significant factor in the construction of masculinity so too is whiteness.[70] However, she argues, the reason why 'whiteness is not understood [...] as a racial category' is because 'it is yet another power that need not speak its name' allowing it to remain invisible.[71] Hence she argues for academic studies to recognise whiteness as a form of racial difference.

Similarly, heterosexual masculinity, in as much as it has assumed a normative hegemonic position while defining itself 'in relation to women and subordinate masculinities', in particular homosexual masculinities, has nonetheless remained,

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[69] Edwards (2006), p. 6.
[70] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. I81.
[71] Ibid., pp. 181-182.

until recently, relatively invisible as an area of study.[72] As Butler has argued, heterosexuality while socially constructed as an ideal is little more than a 'norm, and a fiction that disguises itself as a developmental law regulating the sexual field that it purports to describe'.[73] Thus, what Butler is suggesting, is that the norm of heterosexuality is maintained through gender identity acting as a regulatory construct.[74] This she has called the 'heterosexual matrix' where there emerges the compulsory practice of heterosexuality.[75] Thus, heterosexual masculinity as a normative construction has tended to evade the scrutiny afforded other categories.

Fourthly, there is substantive evidence that white, heterosexual, working-class masculinity has been particularly disposed in its resistance to social and cultural changes in the period. For example, with regards to ethnicity, there was the enthusiastic response to Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech in 1968 with backing coming from London dockers, Smithfield meat porters and Heathrow airport workers, all demonstrating their support.[76] Similarly, with regards to homosexuality, reflecting the residual attitudes and values of a particularly entrenched working-class community, Labour candidate Peter Tatchell failed to win a by-election in the staunchly Labour constituency of Bermondsey following an aggressively anti-gay tabloid campaign, homophobic insinuations within the Labour Party, and physical and verbal attacks on Tatchell's supporters, particularly by local working-class males.[77]

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[72] Robert W. Connell, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', in *Gender-A Sociological Reader,* ed. by Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott, (London and New York: Routledge,2002), p p.60-62.

[73] Judith Butler*, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 173.

[74] Ibid., p. 175.

[75] Ibid., p. 194.

[76] Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Pan MacMillan, 2008), p. 304.

[77] Peter Tatchell, *Capital Gay,* 26 February 1993 published in a slightly edited form <http://www.petertatchell.net/politics/votes.htm> [accessed 14 January 2012]

There are, then, a number of reasons why this thesis focuses on white, heterosexual, working-class masculine identities. However, what is central to my argument, is that social, cultural and economic changes which were occurring in the 1970s and early 1980s presented profound challenges to many of the normative assumptions on which these particular masculinities were based. As men's position and privilege together with the perceived stability of gender were being questioned, and the traditional functions and expectations of working-class men became undermined, it was white, heterosexual, working-class masculinity which was rendered particularly vulnerable by these changes. The next section will go on to detail the historical specificities of those changes placing them within the wider historical context of the period.

1.4 The Historical Context

Much recent work into gender identity has recognised it to be primarily a construct 'always interpolated by cultural, historical, and geographic location'.[78] Whether, for example, the discourse governed gender constructs theorised by Foucault, the performative notion of gender put forward by Judith Butler, or the work on masculinity formulated by Connell, it would appear that gender is a product of particular socio-cultural configurations. If then, as Foucault, Butler, Connell et al argue, gender is primarily a social construct, then any understanding of how it comes to be constructed will necessarily entail looking at the social frameworks which condition it, a particularly efficacious route being to isolate moments when the traditional structures and common sense ideas which underpin gender identity and relations are disrupted. As Stuart Hall has argued 'we need to situate the debates

[78] John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 1.

about identity within all those historically specific developments and practices which have disturbed the relatively settled character of many populations and cultures'.[79] It is, he states,

> precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside discourse, (that) we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites and within specific discursive formations and practices. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power.[80]

While the 1970s and 1980s in Britain were certainly not unique as a time of instability, since there can be no interval of true stability, it was undeniably a period of profound change which impacted substantially upon gender relations. While periodisation may be somewhat problematic and potentially misleading, the 1970s through to the 1980s were undoubtedly a watershed for British society. However, like any other period, it was characterised by what Raymond Williams has termed the dominant, the residual and the emergent, where culture is composed of a set of relations between all three emphasising the dynamic and uneven quality of any given moment.[81] Mark Garnett has described the period as 'The Long Eighties', which marked a period of 'successful militancy, generated especially among the young, who thought that reactionary force stood in the way of progress to greater justice and social economic equality'.[82] Similarly Rosen recognises that while the 1960s did not herald a revolution, it did yield 'a climate of opinion particularly hospitable to social innovation'.[83] Here then, according to Moore-Gilbert, was a positive development of a

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[79] Stuart Hall, 'Who Needs Identity?', in *Questions of Cultural Identity,* ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), pp. 1-17 (p. 4).

[80] Stuart Hall, 'Who Needs Identity?', in *Identity: A Reader,* ed. by Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman (London: Sage, 2000), pp. 15-30 (p.17).

[81] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 121-127.

[82] Mark Garnett, *From Anger to Apathy: The British Experience Since 1975 (*London: Random House, 2007), pp. 7-8.

[83] Andrew Rosen, *The Transformation of British Life, 1950-2000: A Social History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 54.

> distinctively new socio-cultural configurations, (taking place outside of traditional class and political contours), which were articulated around questions of gender, race, sexuality, region and, more diffusely, ecological issues. Thus the process of fragmentation and division […] provided the momentum for cultural-political realignments which have since consolidated their identity and influence.[84]

As Whitehead has argued, black minorities in Britain were beginning to make their presence felt; women, disillusioned by the lack of real progress in the sixties, began to mobilise themselves in a more organised and dynamic way; while other groups, not least gays, began to campaign to heighten awareness about their own positions or challenged widespread acceptance of relentless industrial progress and its environmental costs.[85] In short there was beginning to emerge a greater sense of plurality.

These developments then effected changes in the construction of masculine identities and while they may have helped to facilitate new emergent constructions of masculinity, how they were actually experienced and accommodated by many working-class men and why these men remained particularly resistant to them are open to debate and analysis. As Marr has argued, in a Britain that was 'becoming more feminized, sexualized, rebellious and consumption addicted', some men were appearing to be increasingly out of step.[86]

Andy Beckett has suggested that the seventies were not simply the hangover after the sixties but were a revolutionary decade in their own right, operating as a theatre of opposition and dissent.[87] While the legislation of the 1960s together with

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84 Bart Moore-Gilbert, *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 8.

85 Philip Whitehead, *The Writing on the Wall: Britain in the Seventies (*London: M. Joseph in association with Channel Four, 1985), pp. 221-225; p. 25; 310; 240.

86 Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Pan MacMillan, 2008), p. 232.

87 Andy Beckett*, When the Lights Went Out: Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 201

significant social changes particularly among the young signaled a shift in values and attitudes, it was actually the following decades where a greater plurality was seen to work its way through British society. However, this was frequently a contradictory, fraught, even violent affair since neither a clear disintegration, continuation or replacement of values can be demonstrated.[88]

While liberalising legislation regarding homosexuality had considerable impact, it was only partially reforming, failed to provide equality, and was subject to criticism.[89] Nonetheless throughout the 1970s it did provide an opportunity for a far greater visibility and platform for gay issues. While popular conceptions of homosexuality on television continued to peddle the camp stereotypes of Larry Grayson, John Inman and Dick Emery, caricatures which were acceptable to a mainstream heterosexual audience, the reality of a more assertive gay presence could not be ignored. While the Gay Liberation Front, Gay News, and Gay Pride all established themselves in the period, a greater presence also emerged in popular music, film, and television.[90] However, change, while occurring, is often fought for, resisted, and ultimately slow. Decriminalisation, for example, did not happen in Scotland and Northern Ireland until the1980s and varying degrees of prejudice continued to affect a widely socially conservative society.

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88 Marwick (2003), p. 219.

89 Ibid., p. 133; Marr (2008), p. 255.

90 Examples of this are John Schlesinger's 1971 BAFTA winning film *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* (UK; 1971, John Schlesinger) which featured homosexuality as a matter of fact rather than as a social problem; pop star Elton John discussing his bisexuality openly in 1976 as did David Bowie, declaring that he was bisexual in 1972 and again in 1976. Cliff Jahr, 'Lonely at the Top', *Rolling Stone*, 7 October 1976, pp. 1-3; Michael Watts, 'Oh You Pretty Thing', *Melody Maker*, 2 January 1972, pp. 1-2; *Glad to be Gay* by Tom Robinson achieving considerable chart success in 1978 in spite of being banned by BBC Radio One; the BBC broadcasting *The Naked Civil Servant* (UK, 1975); and in 1979 LWT commissioning the first ever series on gay issues *Gay Life* (UK, 1979).

As with homosexuality, the move towards racial equality was also difficult and fractured. While Government legislation was intended to simultaneously curb immigration and improve race relations, much of the populace remained guarded, if not antagonistic, in the face of increased visibility of ethnic minorities in both the media and everyday life.[91] Moral panics around black crime, the electoral successes of the National Front and the routinely racist representations of ethnic minorities in sitcoms such as *Mind Your Language* (UK, 1977-79; 1986) and *Love Thy Neighbour* (UK, 1972-1976) signified continued suspicion and resistance.[92] If, as Arthur Marwick has argued, television was the single biggest leisure activity of the majority of British people during this period, these dominant representations were likely to affect perceptions and attitudes.[93] Here was a greater visibility, but one which was, with a few exceptions, wholly attuned to its white and largely working-class audience.

Equal rights and liberalising legislation was rather more complex in regard to the position of women, being a combination of legislation aimed directly at sex discrimination and acts intended to allow for a greater degree of personal and sexual freedom among both men and women.[94] While these went a considerable way in improving the position of women in a number of areas, many of the changes, particularly in the 1970s, had to be continually fought for by women themselves. Consequently, taking its lead from America, second wave feminism emerged at the cutting edge of the women's movement. For example, the period witnessed the

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[91] Marwick (2003), p. 133; Marr (2008) p.300; Sarita Malik, *Representing Black Britain: A History of Black and Asian Images on British Television* (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 47-48.

[92] Malik (2004), p.14; Marr, p.193; 304; John Gabriel, *Whitewash: Racialised Politics and the Media* (Routledge: London, 1998), pp.157-159; Stuart Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (London: Palgrave-MacMillan, 1978).

[93] Marwick (2003), p. 206.

[94] Jane Lewis, 'Women and Social Change 1945-95', in *Britain Since 1945,* ed. by Jonathan Hollowell (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 260-278 (p. 267).

emergence of the National Women's Liberation Conference together with publications like *Shrew* and *Spare Rib,* crucial as a means of self-representation, and feminist texts from Kate Millet and Andrea Dworkin.[95] While it could be argued that for many women second wave feminism hardly touched their lives, at least in a conscious and overt way, some elements did make a deeper impact into public consciousness. Events like the disruption of the Miss World competition and the publication of *The Female Eunuch* for example, ensured a much wider media profile. What they both marked was a surge towards visibility and away from passivity.[96]

However, while this was a level of equality being vigorously fought for by women, it was also being resisted and ridiculed by men. A typical example of this was the sour response by Bob Hope to the Miss World protest. As host for the evening, he had suggested that the protesters were clearly not pretty, as 'pretty girls don't have these problems'.[97] What was a pioneering and passionate movement was frequently derided as 'Women's Lib' in much mainstream popular media including the grotesque parodies of the movement in *Carry on Girls* (UK, 1973: Gerald Thomas) and Benny Hill's *Women's Lib Television* (UK, 1980). Even without these more explicit attacks, much of the male dominated media carried on as usual, while benefiting from a 'trickle down' of 'permissive populism', where female nudity would be routinely exploited in television programmes such as *Budgie* (UK, 1971-72) or on page three of *The Sun*.[98]

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95 Anon, 'Shrew', *British Library: Dreamers and Dissenters* (British Library, [n.d.]) <http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/counterculture/liberation/shrew/shrew.html> [accessed 7 January 2012]

96 Lynne Harne, *Women's Liberation and Radical Feminism 1970s to early 1980s (*London Feminist Network, 2010) <http://londonfeministnetwork.org.uk/what-weve-done/what-we-did-in-2010/womens-liberation-and-radical-feminism-1970-early-l980s> [accessed 17 January 2012]; Christine Wallace, *The Untamed Shrew* (New York: Faber and Faber Inc., 1998), p. 160.

97 Anon, 'Shrew', [n.d.]

98 Hunt (1998), pp. 20-21.

While then, through a combination of legislation, activism and changing attitudes, a greater sense of plurality was emerging, this was frequently not welcomed or actively resisted, particularly by those who felt their positions threatened. While it could be argued that this was a generational phenomenon, likely to change as the young replaced the old, it was still something that needed to be worked through within society over a period of time. Here was a considerable and rather traumatic cultural and social shift, the vicissitudes of which had to be negotiated by its participants.

While I have no intention of subscribing to what could be termed a crisis discourse, where men are posited as powerless against external forces, I would argue that, for those lacking appropriate cultural and social capital, profound changes led to certain predicaments.[99] The period may have experienced what Connell has called the three key sites of crisis tendencies.[100] The first of these was in power relations with the threat to the patriarchal system.[101] The second was in production relations with women's entrance into the labour market, the beginning of the collapse of gendered divisions of labour and the 'patriarchal dividend'.[102] The third was in what Connell describes as the relations of cathexis, with a disruption of previously taken-for-granted assumptions about the relationships of desire and emotional attachment, such as those between sexual orientation and cultural notions of gender.[103] Crisis tendencies, he stated, have 'resulted clearly enough in a major loss of legitimacy for

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99 Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), p. 57.

100 R. W. Connell, *Masculinities,* 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), pp. 81-86.

101 Ibid., p. 74.

102 Ibid.,p. 85; 79.

103 Ibid., pp, 74-75.

patriarchy, and different groups of men are now negotiating this loss in very different ways'.[104]

While socio-cultural shifts had a significant impact on working-class male identities, more specific socio-economic developments had an equally profound effect on identity construction. As Britain slid into industrial decline in the 1970s and its industrial base was vigorously dismantled in the following decade, the importance of particular traditional working-class male skills was undermined and ultimately devalued. As Marwick has observed, while class remained so central to the period it also marked the demise of the traditional working-class.[105] Thus the skills that had been so valued in the industrial economy were about to become largely redundant and replaced in the 'virtual economy'.[106]

Duncan Gallie has argued that the seventies and eighties witnessed the radical restructuring of the British labour market and 'the most pervasive technological revolution since the nineteenth-century' which altered the nature of the jobs available and the types and levels of skills required.[107] The combination of new forms of work and changing social values brought about a marked increase in women's participation in the labour market, giving 'a new salience to issues of gender equality'.[108]

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[104] Connell (2005), p. 202.
[105] Marwick (2003), pp. 278-288.
[106] *A History of Modern Britain: Revolution 1979-90*, BBC Two, 12 June 2007, 21.00 hrs.
[107] Duncan Gallie, 'Employment and the Labour Market, in *Britain Since 1945* (see Lewis, above), pp. 404-424 (p. 404).
[108] Ibid.

While much of the traditional, established heavy industries were still in place by the beginning of the decade, the 1970s had already witnessed a steady decline in major industry in much of industrialised Britain.[109] The spectre of unemployment was already pervasive particularly in the North, with the old dockland areas of Liverpool, for example, already dying by the early part of the decade.[110] When the Conservatives under Edward Heath were elected in 1970 'British productivity was still pitifully low'.[111] With exceptionally heavy levels of unionisation through all key industries and a large number of muscular unions, this was a time of considerable political militancy.[112] Consequently, throughout Heath's tenure, he faced continual industrial action. Ultimately Heath failed in his objectives in the face of powerful trade union opposition, culminating in the miners' strike of 1973/4.[113] To many older Britons these were years of out of control change.[114]

The period which followed under the Labour governments of Wilson and Callaghan, while calmer and less confrontational, also witnessed a decline in living standards with the long working-class boom coming to an end.[115] Under Callaghan the government without a majority was kept going through pacts and deals in an air of continual crisis.[116] However, this 'fragile calm' came to be disrupted in 1978, following stringent new pay restrictions, by what came to be known as the 'winter of

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[109] Marwick (2003), p.157.
[110] This is, for example, illustrated by a routine exchange between two characters in the LWT drama series *Villains* (UK,1972) discussing Tyneside: 'no work up my way, coal, steel, shipbuilding, the towns are dying and all those traditions are dying'; Dai Smith has observed, even under Wilson in the 1960s the Labour government 'hastened to run down the coal industry'. Dai Smith, 'Ms Rhymney Valley 1985', in *Raymond Williams: Film TV Culture,* ed. by David Lusted (BFI: London, 1989), p. 35; Marwick (2003), p. 158.
[111] Marr (2008), p. 324.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., pp. 340-343.
[114] Ibid., p. 343.
[115] Ibid, p. 359.
[116] Ibid., p. 363.

discontent'.[117] With the electorate now alienated from the government, the consequences of a newly elected Conservative government would lead to the unions losing almost half their members, relinquishing any political influence.[118]

Peter Hall, cited in Marwick, has described the dilemma of the inner cities in the 1970s and the predicament of its inhabitants:

> A significant minority of these residents are poorly educated, unskilled, have incomes too low to travel far, and perceptions too low to know the possibilities. They could perform the heavy simple jobs needing much strength but little skill that were once plentiful. But in the new age of automated machines and computers there is no place for their modest talents.[119]

Similarly Humphreys, also cited in Marwick, talks of a new breed of 'mining technocrats' replacing 'men skilled in the arts of manual labour'.[120] As working patterns changed it was frequently older men unable to acquire newer skills who formed a high percentage of the unemployed.[121]

With the relentless pursuit of deindustrialisation under the ensuing Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, manufacturing industry diminished alarmingly in Scotland, the North, Wales, and West Midlands.[122] What followed was perhaps the most decisive moment in the decline of the power of the unions with the defeat of the miners, following the longest strike in British history.[123] As defeated miners leader Arthur Scargill observed 'without jobs our members are nothing'.[124] What was

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117 Marr (2008), p. 373.
118 Ibid., p. 376.
119 Marwick (2003), p. 158.
120 Ibid., p. 160.
121 Ibid., p. 164.
122 Ibid., p. 228.
123 Marr (2008), p. 411.
124 Ibid., p. 413.

emerging was what academics were beginning to understand as a new post-industrial age based on IT, services, and leisure.[125]

With the selling off to private buyers of nationalised industries and the deregulation of the city after the big bang, the emphasis was now on the world of finance and not productive industry.[126] This was coupled with the deskilling of much of the workforce, replacing skilled crafts with routine work. However, as Gallie has noted, with the growth of IT, supportive as it is to individualistic desk top enterprises, permeating many aspects of work, there was a shift which had little to do with party politics.[127] Thus, in the twenty years following 1971, the percentage of those employed in the service sector, financial services and leisure rose while those in manufacturing declined. 'Jobs generated by the service sector', however, 'were frequently part time (and) largely taken by women'.[128]

1.5 Structures of Feeling

Earlier in this introduction I stated that one of the overall aims of this thesis was to isolate a structure of feeling expressed by a number of significant writers which emphasises anxieties around white, heterosexual, working-class masculinities. In this section I intend to provide an introductory explanation of the concept as defined by Raymond Williams, setting out its parameters, its development, its usefulness, and limitations and finally how and why it is employed in this thesis. I will then go on to expand and develop upon this in the chapter dealing with my methodology.

125 Marwick (2003), p. 240.
126 Ibid., pp. 267-269.
127 Gallie (2003), pp. 404-424 (p. 405).
128 Ibid., pp. 407-409.

Firstly I must acknowledge that as a concept structure of feeling is hardly new. However, while it has been developed and redefined throughout Williams's career and has undergone considerable criticism for its ambiguity and failure to have been developed to 'theoretical satisfaction', I will argue that it retains currency as a methodological tool in a number of disciplines and is used in a number of innovative ways, not always entirely in accord with Williams's own intentions.[129]

Williams's proposal of the concept of 'structures of feeling' emerged into the prevailing climate of Marxist structural determinism and was principally a methodological approach that would allow for the examination of cultural meanings rather than reducing them to the inevitable outcome of material structures.[130] Culture had been of less concern as an object of analysis but was simply a phenomenon that, once evaluated, would lead to an understanding of the 'logic of capitalism', thus any reading of literary texts would be reduced to ideological critique.[131] This base-superstructure model argued that the 'economic base of society' should be understood as 'determining everything else in the superstructure including social, political and intellectual consciousness'.[132] In developing his own theory of cultural materialism Williams defines 'culture as a constitutive social process' rather than something marginal or subsidiary.[133] Thus, in interpreting culture as material Williams was enabling a much subtler analysis of culture and literary texts.

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129 Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (1979; rpt. London: Verso, 1981), p. 159.

130 Ismo Kantola, *Attachment of Enthusiasm in Structures of Feeling.* (University of Jyvaskyla, 2005) <http://www.jyu.fi/yhtfil/teer2005/abstract/kantola2.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2012] (p. 2).

131 Ibid.

132 Daniel Chandler, *Marxist Media Theory: Base and Superstructure* <http://www.irfanerdogan.com/marxism.htm#C> [accessed 15 September 2012]

133 Williams (1977), p. 19.

Williams intended structures of feeling to convey how individual experience and emotion are connected to wider social and economic structures. He is particularly interested in uncovering social experiences which may be undervalued, dismissed, or repressed and which exist outside of official consciousness or the dominant ideology. Williams's concept attempts to 'define the quality of social experience' which is 'historically distinct from other(s)' and provides a feeling of a period or generation.[134] However, these particular qualitative changes are not assumed to be 'merely secondary evidence of changed social and economic relations' and are far from superficial or incidental.[135]

Williams argues that a generation's structure of feeling can be understood by engaging with cultural and literary artefacts from any given period. In particular, he wants to 'show the importance of literature for the articulation of alternatives to dominant world views, and thus is related to the politics of social change'.[136] For Williams, texts can be seen as both dynamic yet subtle interpretations of specific structures of feeling.

Morag Shiach has suggested that the structure of feeling of a period 'seeks to historicize emotional as well as cognitive frameworks; it describes the characteristic fears, desires, and blindnesses of the period'.[137] It is, according to Kaplan, 'the lived

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[134] Williams (1977), p. 131.

[135] Ibid, p. 131-132.

[136] Paul Filmer, 'Structures of Feeling and Socio-Cultural Formations: The Significance of Literature and Experience to Raymond Williams's Sociology of Culture', *British Journal of Sociology*, 54.3 (June 2003), 199-219 (p. 199).

[137] Morag Shiach, 'A Gendered History of Cultural Categories', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams,* ed. by Christopher Prendergast (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp 51-70 (p. 58).

affect of a time, its dynamic, ephemeral stories'.[138] I will argue then, that there were a number of writers in television who expressed these 'fears, desires and blindnesses' in their own 'ephemeral stories' by foregrounding a 'structure of feeling' that emphasised anxieties about socio-cultural changes while exploring the limits and constraints upon effective transformation particularly within working-class cultures. They explored an area of social experience of individuals and groups which was frequently discounted, overlooked, or inhibited together with the relationship between these experiences and the structures of the period. They also question the potential for genuine transformative change in masculine identities, suggesting that working-class men had an adherence to a construction of masculinity which, while perceived as authentic, was actually both troubling and troubled.

If, as Mercer has argued, 'identity only becomes an issue [...] when something assumed to be fixed, coherent, and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty', then these writers actively engage with those feelings.[139] What emerges from the texts themselves is the actual experience of masculinity and change in contrast to the confident assertions of the social order, revealing a set of tensions frequently at odds with prevailing discourses; in short, what Raymond Williams has defined as, a 'structure of feeling'.[140]

While structure of feeling is a term which occurs across much of Williams's work how it is expressed, defined, and articulated over time reveals a degree of variation. It

[138] Cora Kaplan, 'What We Have Again to Say: Williams, Feminism and the 1850s', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams* (see Shiach above), pp. 211-236 (p. 231).

[139] Kobena Mercer, 'Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Postmodern Politics', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), pp. 43-71 (p. 43).

[140] Williams (1977), pp. 128-135.

first appears in *A Preface to Film* and is then variously applied and referenced throughout his career.[141] It is subject to both discussion and application in *The Long Revolution*, abstraction in *Marxism and Literature* and defence in *Politics and Letters*, and while Williams does offer a number of definitions of the term, it tends to remain somewhat imprecise.[142]

Although the term is not explicitly articulated as such in 'For Continuity in Change' Williams asserts that he aims to 'explore the relation of art to society' while expressing the 'desire to factor […] feeling into the equations of historical and sociological study'.[143] Later in the 'Literature in Relation to History' conference he stresses the need for literature to be included in an interdisciplinary approach. 'Change and continuity' he states, is 'often seen most clearly in […] literature, (which) forms a record of vitally important changes and developments in human personality. It is as much the record of the history of a people as political institutions'.[144] Williams questions intellectual conventions where historians dismiss 'certain kinds of important literary evidence' particularly the 'distinction between thought and feeling' and 'hard fact and experience' arguing that 'it seemed to me another simply historical phenomenon'.[145]

It was in *A Preface to Film* that Williams first articulates explicitly structure of feeling as well as employing it as tool for the analysis of contemporary literature. Here he

141 Raymond Williams and Michael Orrom, *Preface to Film* (London: Film Drama, 1954).
142 Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Peterborough, On: Broadview Press, 1961 repr. 2001); Williams, (1977), pp. 128-135; Williams, (1979), p. 156-162.
143 Raymond Williams, 'For Continuity in Change', *Politics and Letters,* 1.1 (Summer 1947), 3-5 (p. 5); Sean Mathews 'Change and Theory in Raymond Williams' Structure of Feeling', *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies,* 10.2 (2001), 179-194 (p. 183).
144 Raymond Williams, 'Literature in Relation to History', in *Border Country: Raymond Williams and Adult Education,* ed. by John McIlroy and Sallie Westwood, (Leicester: NIACE, 1993), pp. 166-173 (p. 172).
145 Ibid, p. 170.

suggests that changes in art, including drama, are an articulation of 'man's radical structure of feeling' and are most apparent at transitional junctures when social and cultural change occurs.[146] Thus, Williams sees structure of feeling as a manifestation of the new and emergent.

Subsequently, in *The Long Revolution,* Williams brings together much of his previous work setting out an entire chapter on the analysis of culture central to which is the structure of feeling and the process of change.[147] Here, he argues,

> one generation may train its successor, with reasonable success, in the social character or the general cultural pattern, but the new generation will have its own structure of feeling, which will not appear to have come 'from' anywhere. For here, most distinctly, the changing organization is enacted in the organism: the new generation responds in its own ways to the unique world it is inheriting, taking up new continuities that can be traced […] yet feeling its whole life in certain ways differently, and shaping its creative response into a new structure of feeling.[148]

In suggesting that it is beyond 'social character' or fixed ideology, Williams critiques European Marxist theory for the 'reduction of the social to fixed forms'.[149] Thus, what they may reveal are 'the experiences to which the fixed forms do not speak at all, which indeed they do not recognize' because they are beyond the 'available meaning', being 'actively lived and felt'.[150]

What Williams wants to relate is the experience of life, and while clearly this is affected by ideology it is in some way an expression of something more. Expanding on this in *Marxism and Literature*, he is talking about the

146 Williams (1954), p. 23.
147 Williams (1961), pp. 57-88.
148 Ibid., p. 65.
149 Ibid., p. 63; Williams, (1977), pp. 129-130.
150 Williams, (1977), pp. 129-130.

> characteristic elements of impulse, restraint and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships; not feeling against thought but thought as felt and feeling as thought.

and it is the arts he argues that are of 'major importance' since it is 'here, if anywhere, the characteristic is likely to be expressed'.[151]

As Williams's writing moves into the 1970s and literary criticism is coming under threat from French theory his defence of literature and its unique qualities becomes even more vehement.[152] Once again Williams makes a case for artistic forms recording 'the pressure and structure of active experience, creating forms, creating life', with the structure of feeling manifesting itself in the 'lived and experienced but not yet quite arranged as institutions and ideas'.[153] Above all, however, it is the literary form which is most capable of conveying original experience.[154]

It is in *Marxism and Literature* that Williams is able to articulate the nature and application of structures of feeling most precisely. What emerges here is that they constitute an evolutionary process. While much cultural analysis has frequently tended to separate 'the personal, seen as fluid and changing, and the social seen as static, and thus wrongly deemed irrelevant to the personal', Williams's concept sees this as a false distinction.[155] Thus, where feelings and experiences may operate on

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[151] Williams (1977), pp. 131-132; Williams, (1961), pp. 64-65.
[152] David Simpson, 'Raymond Williams: Feeling for Structures, Voicing History', *Social Text,* (1992), 9-26 (p.19).
[153] Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 138; 192.
[154] Simpson, (1992), pp. 9-26 (p. 19).
[155] Anon, 'Structures of Feeling', *Marxwiki*, [n.d.] <http://machines.pomona.edu/Marxwiki/index.php?title=Structures_of_feeling&redirect=no> [accessed 18 June 2011]

a personal and collective level, they should not be viewed as random, since structure 'exert(s) palpable pressures and set(s) effective limits on experience and action'.[156]

Finally Williams sums up his theory thus:

> methodologically a 'structure of feeling' is a cultural hypothesis, actually derived from attempts to understand such elements and their connections in a generation or period, and needing always to be returned, interactively to such evidence. It is initially less simple than more formally structured hypotheses of the social, but it is more adequate to the actual range of cultural evidence'.[157]

As such, while 'the effective formations of most actual art relate to already manifest social formations, dominant or residual […] it is primarily to emergent formations (though often in the form of modification or disturbance in older forms) that the structure of feeling, as solution, relates'.[158]

While Williams's definition and uses of structure of feeling may shift throughout his work, in certain key ways it also remains relatively consistent. It is always utilised as a way of identifying new and emergent voices at moments of change although he does concede that it could be applied in other ways; change is always identified by comparing new emergent feelings with more formal conventions and expressions; structure of feeling is always considered to be more subtle, complex and unstable than ideology; it provides a way of considering greater varieties of evidence for studying societies; it facilitates a way of linking ordinary cultural experience to cultural products; it privileges literature over other sources; and it remains outside of

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[156] Anon, 'Structures of Feeling', *Marxwiki,* [nd]; Williams (1977), p. 132.
[157] Williams (1977), p. 133.
[158] Ibid., p. 134.

the theoretical precepts of European Marxism and in opposition to the economic determinism of orthodox Marxism.[159]

As I have already suggested, as a concept, structure of feeling is not without its problems, attracting a fair degree of academic criticism. It has been variously critiqued for its literary exceptionalism, its employment of the selective tradition, its attempts to reconcile (or not) high and popular culture and its absence of 'women as active agents, as producers or transmitters of culture'.[160] While I intend to discuss some of the more specific criticism in greater detail in the Methodology, here I will outline Williams's awareness of the difficulties inherent in his approach and the justifications he offered for it**.** As a term it would appear to be somewhat contradictory. In *The Long Revolution* Williams describes it as 'firm and definite as ''structure'' suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity'.[161] Later in the *Politics and Letters* interviews it appears 'deliberately contradictory', as 'a structure in the sense that you could perceive it operating in one work after another which weren't otherwise connected-people weren't learning it from each other; yet it was one of feeling much more than of thought-a pattern of impulses, restraints, tones'.[162] Thus, as Mathews has observed, by bringing these two terms together Williams is challenging those who might dismiss emotion as unmeasurable or extraneous his writing representing a struggle to grasp changes that are of historical significance but also of private concern.[163]

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159 Williams, (1954), p. 22; Williams, (1961), pp. 64.
160 Shiach, (1995), pp. 51-70 (p. 54); Kaplan, (1995), pp. 211-236 (p. 212).
161 Williams, (1961), pp. 64.
162 Williams, (1979), p. 159.
163 Mathews (2001), pp. 179-194 (pp. 179-181).

Williams himself while justifying the concept has also alluded to its difficulties. As he states in *Marxism and Literature*: 'The term is difficult, but 'feeling' is chosen to emphasize a distinction from more formal concepts of 'world-view' or 'ideology'.[164] Indeed, even in suggesting that 'an alternative definition would be structures of experience: in one sense the better and wider word', he says that this would itself not be without its own 'difficulty that one of its senses has that past tense which is the most important obstacle to recognition of the area of social experience which is being defined'.[165] Ultimately, while Williams justifies its use as a way of looking at the 'actual conventions of literary or dramatic writing' he also says he has 'never been happy' with it and appears to acknowledge its lack of substance as a theoretical concept.[166] As Simpson has argued, Williams 'permits himself an untroubled foundational rhetoric that either cannot be theoretically factored out, or can be so factored only by adding in missing links and crucial limitations'.[167]

Significant inconsistencies in Williams's concept were identified in interviews by the *New Left Review* in *Politics and Letters* where it emerges as a key concept, but one which lacks a stable conceptual identity.[168] Where Williams is variously critiqued for his 'blurring of the formal literary and general ideological', his 'literary exceptionalism', and 'descriptive ambiguity' of the phrase, while he accepts these criticisms, he still defends structures of feeling for its use pragmatically as 'an analytic procedure for actual written works'.[169]

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164 Williams (1977), p. 132.
165 Ibid.
166 Williams (1981), p. 159.
167 Simpson (1992), pp. 9-26 (p. 21).
168 John Higgins, *Raymond Williams: Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 37.
169 Simpson (1992), pp. 9-26 (p. 20); Williams (1979), p. 159.

While the notion of structure of feeling is not without its problems with some critics pronouncing it as ‘ambiguous […] slippery […] and shifting’, Peschel argues that ‘it is also a rich and evocative concept, and retains considerable resonance in a number of disciplines’.[170] However, as Peschel goes on to say, ‘few […] engage with all its aspects. Some, for example, have applied the term simply as a label for almost any socially shared emotional experience. Others, more creatively, have selected individual elements from Williams’s description and then interpreted those elements more flexibly than he allows for’.[171] This thesis, as I will argue, will itself adopt a more flexible interpretation of Williams’s concept.

As Peschel observes, structure of feeling is increasingly being employed ‘not as a term but as a methodology: as a way to isolate and identify certain characteristics of the affective experiences they are trying to analyze’.[172] ‘This methodology’ she says, ‘is creating richer descriptions of extremely varied emotional structures rather than identifying those that actually match Williams’s definition’ and is thus an ‘even more productive use of his work’.[173] Peschel, has recognised that in a number of recent studies, the employment of structure of feeling has become increasingly past oriented focusing upon new and emergent structures which draw upon residual discourses rather than on Williams’s preference for the emergent or pre-emergent.[174]

Central to Williams’s concept of structures of feeling is the notion of the residual, the dominant, and the emergent which he addresses explicitly in *Marxism and Literature*.

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[170] Lisa Peschel, ‘Structures of Feeling as Methodology and the Re-emergence of Holocaust Survivor Testimony in 1960s Czechoslovakia’, *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 26.2 (Spring 2012) 161-172 (p. 161).
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.

Culture is not static or coherent and there is constant interrelation between movements and tendencies which Williams describes as 'internal dynamic relations of any actual process'.[175] It is this concept of the residual, the dominant, and the emergent which forms the framework for the analyses in this thesis. However, while it focuses on a period of social and cultural change it works to deconstruct the feelings and experiences which are attached to residual discourses.

This thesis then seeks to establish the voice and presence of a particular structure of feeling informed by residual discourses. While there is considerable evidence of new emergent discourses in the 1970s and 1980s, (frequently within the media) themselves constituting powerful structures of feeling around feminism, gay activism, and black consciousness, this thesis argues another discourse became evident but one which was oriented toward the past. Expressing anxieties around social and cultural changes and masculine transformation, this was an affective experience largely confined to heterosexual, white, working-class males. This was at once new, in that it was responding to challenges to normative, previously unchallenged patriarchal systems, but residual in the way it drew upon older discourses to meet those challenges. Thus, a structure of feeling can be traced which, while oriented towards the past and founded upon residual discourses, was a response to changes and emergent discourses in the present which were oriented towards the future.

In this way Williams's methodological concept has facilitated my analysis of a particular group of writers as they explore an area of social experience of individuals and groups which may be frequently discounted, overlooked, or dismissed together

[175] Williams (1977), p. 121.

with the relationship between these experiences and the structures of the period. Structure of feeling is employed as a methodology to conduct a textual and contextual study of the representations of masculinity of the period where textual analysis facilitates purposeful dialogic exchange between television narratives and the wider, prevailing discourses of masculinity.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. Following on from this Introduction, Chapter Two consists of a Literature Review of some of the most important literature concerned with the representations of masculinity on screen. It begins with the most significant early literature on representations in American cinema which have provided a framework for later studies. It proceeds to examine more recent work undertaken on British cinema which covers a number of critical approaches before reviewing the limited amount of work to date on masculinities in British television. It concludes with an overview of literature covering the context of broader developments in masculinity studies which developed concurrently with that in screen studies.

Chapter Three is divided into three sections. The first section will outline the principal methodological approach which underpins this thesis. It will develop some of the issues previously raised in this Introduction, looking at Raymond Williams's structures of feeling, the principal criticisms of it, and how it is applied in this thesis. This is intended to further validate its uses while acknowledging some of its limitations. The second part of this chapter will introduce the key theoretical perspectives which will be applied directly throughout the textual analysis as a

method of understanding the reconfiguration of discourses of masculinity. It will outline the approaches to gender and transformative change put forward by key theorists, followed by a third section which will address questions about structure and agency.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six consist of the analysis of case studies which are targeted at exploring the shifting discursive constructions of masculinity and gender politics in Britain of the period, while accounting for the embeddedness of residual masculinities particularly in the face of emergent discourses. Their principal aim is to deconstruct the work of writers who foregrounded a 'structure of feeling' that emphasised anxieties about these changes while exploring the limits and constraints upon effective transformation particularly within working-class cultures.

While these case studies employ a chronological structure moving from the entrenched residual and dominant discourses of the mid to late seventies with the work of Peter McDougall, through the challenges to these from emergent discourses, to the increased plurality of the early to mid eighties with Clement and La Frenais' *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, each chapter examines a different reason for the limits of discursive masculine transformation. Of course while these are not mutually exclusive the fictional narratives tend to treat them in relatively discrete isolation. Thus, while each chapter establishes its own unique focus it also develops the argument that masculine transformation was highly problematic by adding another layer to this thesis.

Anxieties around change and the problems around masculine transformation are polysemic and can refer to the bleak pessimism of McDougall, the hegemonic resistance of Trevor Preston's *Fox*, the ineffectual desperation of Alan Bleasdale's *Boys from the Black Stuff* or the recursive uncertainties of *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*. Thus while the notions are variably modulated they are consistently employed to designate the means by which televisual narratives of the period display men and masculinity as both faltering yet deeply embedded.

While the principal method of approaching the case studies will be through detailed textual analysis of the programmes in the context of social and cultural change, I will also draw upon other sources to assess their impact. To this end, each case study will initially examine the critical reception of the relevant programme as evidence of wider structures of feeling principally through press reviews and comments. This material functions as a barometer of both the popular and serious press and their attitudes to the ways television represented particular issues at the time. As such, any critical response will frequently be inflected with a class bias and political bias of its own, which are, at times, clearly written into its assessment. While academic debates of the time about form, style, realism and so forth were rarely engaged with outside of academia they were, to some limited degree, employed in more popular criticism. This can be seen, for example, in the criticism from right wing commentators of much docudrama for its formal tendencies as much as for its frequently left wing content.[176] While some critics celebrated realism as a way into understanding ordinary experiences others viewed it as a pernicious mask for left wing propaganda. Thus, the reviews will reveal criticism of both form and content

[176] Cooke (2003), pp. 100-101.

from a number of different class and political perspectives. While this professional critical response is clearly something of a specialist view, I will also go on to assess the impact and affect of the programmes on their wider constituent audiences.

In the first of the case studies, Chapter Four will aim to consider how and why a sense of working-class masculinity was so particularly entrenched within wider social structures that it largely escaped any possibilities of self reflexive transformation. The key objective is to interrogate specific structures to reveal the ways in which they establish and confine working-class masculine identity. Through an examination of three social realist plays written by Peter McDougall, *Just Another Saturday* (UK, 1975), *The Elephant's Graveyard* (UK, 1976) and *Just a Boy's Game* (UK, 1979), I will argue that while the narratives are critical of residual and dominant discourses of masculinity and express some of the anxieties of their male protagonists, they are also profoundly pessimistic about the possibilities of any meaningful engagement with emergent ones. Thus, while they articulate a profound need for change they reveal men who are largely unable or unwilling to effect that change, entrenched within a deeply conservative sense of residual working-class masculine discourses. This is in accord with Connell's argument that the 'unreflective dimensions of gender' set the 'limits of discursive flexibility'.[177]

The first part of this chapter will place the narratives within the context of broader meanings of working-class culture and their effect upon working-class masculine identity. Here I will argue that there is a particular link between class and masculinity which is especially explicit in working-class cultures. Throughout this section I will

[177] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender and Society,* 19.6 (December 2005) 829-859 (pp. 842-843).

draw on a number of theoretical perspectives, including those of Connell and Messerschmidt, which emphasise the importance of social structures as constraining. The second part will examine a number of more specific cultural traditions and how they bolster a certain kind of working-class masculinity. Particular focus will be on the place of violence and working-class masculinity which will be linked to identity, belongingness, and masculine performance. Here 'symbols, myths, and ideologically informed practices lend gender representations a sense of order, naturalness and timelessness' creating structures which position subjects within specific confinements.[178]

Chapter Five will go on to examine the reactions of men when confronted with changes which threaten to erode their patriarchal positions revealing deep anxieties about these changes. While the previous chapter considered the ways existing social structures worked to inhibit emergent discourses of gender, this chapter is principally concerned with identifying strategies employed to manage and resist new and emergent discourses. In examining Trevor Preston's *Fox* (UK, 1980) and Alan Bleasdale's *Boys for the Black Stuff* (UK, 1982), two television drama series which focus on working-class communities experiencing social and cultural change but in markedly different ways, the key objective of the chapter is to demonstrate that while circumstances may differ between the narratives the principal aim of their male protagonists is to maintain or restore patriarchy. The chapter will examine how key male characters negotiate change adopting two very different strategies, but while they may have different emphasis, they share a deeper structure of feeling around anxiety which is manifested in a number of ways.

[178] Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank Barrett, 'The Sociology of Masculinity', in *The Masculinities Reader,* ed. by Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank Barrett (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), pp. 1-26 (p. 12).

While they articulate anxieties around changes within working-class culture in general, exhibiting a sense of foreboding, I will argue that both writers deal particularly uneasily with the emergent voice of working-class women. While much contemporaneous analysis of *Boys for the Black Stuff* tended to focus on the plight of its male protagonists and the consequences for their masculine identities while largely ignoring their female equivalents, this chapter will redress this imbalance adopting a feminist analysis to parts of the narrative. As Laclau argues 'the constitution of a social identity is an act of power' since 'if [...] objectivity manages to partially affirm itself it is only by repressing that which threatens it' or is perceived to threaten it, in this case, women.[179]

This chapter will also argue that Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity is a particularly apposite in its analysis of *Fox* where identities and configurations of gender practices are allowed to remain virtually unaltered. Here hegemonic masculinity is shown to adapt by absorbing some but rejecting most emergent discourses, particularly with regard to women. As patriarchal positions and existing gender relations are challenged, the chapter will also demonstrate how nostalgic feeling is employed by both narratives as a key discourse in attempting to maintain or restore identities, relying on increasingly residual discourses of masculinity.

In its exploration of the discursive limitations of gender construction and transformation, Chapter Six aims to engage with the ways emergent and residual discourses in the 1980s were frequently experienced by men as a site of conflict.

[179] Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), p.32.

While the previous chapter argues that working-class masculinities were particularly resistant to social and structural changes in the early eighties, I will argue that Clement and La Frenais' drama series *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* (UK, 1982; 1986) demonstrates a greater willingness to embrace new discourses but nevertheless highlights the limitations for many men.

In examining *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* as a drama which exhibits a range of working-class masculine discourses, this chapter seeks to show the ways men are frequently moving back and forth in a recursive relationship between emergent and residual discourses of masculinity, revealing identity construction as a non-linear open ended process operating in a state of tension. As Whitehead has argued, while men's notions of the masculine self may undergo shifts, there may also be minimal change, since men are frequently subject to 'the pressures and compulsions which limit the scope of […] (their) agency' and 'the costs of making certain discursive choices can be extremely high'.[180]

The first part of the chapter will seek to establish the shifting discourses of working-class masculinity which were beginning to emerge in the 1980s, particularly in relation to structural changes in the working-class. The chapter will then go on to examine Whitehead's theories around the perceived dichotomy between public and the private spheres, and examine how homosociality, nostalgia, and myth making

[180] Whitehead and Barrett (2001), pp. 1-26 (p. 10); Thomas Okes, 'Power Always Goes on and on: The Limits of Masculinity in Marabou Stork Nightmares and Fight Club', *Academia.edu* <http://www.academia.edu/2093523/_Power_Always_Goes_on_and_On_The_Limits_of_Masculinity_in_Marabou_Stork_Nightmares_and_Fight_Club> [accessed 2 February 2013] (p. 76); R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender and Society,* 19.6 (December 2005) 829-859 (pp. 842-843).

operate as a way of dealing with problematic feelings, relationships and anxieties around change, which are articulated within the narrative of *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*.

These three case study chapters serve to develop the argument that the practices, experiences and feelings of white, heterosexual working-class men reveal a structure of feeling which sits uneasily with some of the more confident assertions of post-structuralist theories of gender identity. In employing an analytical perspective to the televisual narratives and their representations of masculinity, these case studies will explore how discourses of masculinity, anxiety, and change were both constructed and interpreted by television informed by the cultural, social, and economic contexts of the period.

1.7 Conclusion

This thesis then is concerned with male masculine identity and what happens to it at times of stress. While discourses emanating from the social order may suggest a relatively comfortable embrace of change, other discourses, particularly popular fictional representations, may assume normative, traditional masculinity as continuing and untroubled. Such androcentric representations will thus render masculinity all but invisible. As Middleton writes:

> Masculine bias in many existing concepts of subjectivity and power is an obstacle to gender reflection. Men have after all written plenty about their subjectivity and power, but they have constantly universalized it at the same time, and assumed that the rationality of their approach was the sum total of rationality. Universality and rationalism were built into these concepts to avoid disturbing self-examination by men.[181]

[181] Peter Middleton, *The Inward Gaze: Masculinity and Subjectivity in Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 3.

It is this very self-examination which emerges from these texts as they ask the question what is the experience, the structure of feeling, which leads masculine identity to be so indelibly linked to immutability and intransigence?

By the end of this study then, this research will have provided some answers to key questions about how and why, even when there are manifest economic, social and cultural challenges to normative/traditional identities, as was the case in the 'long eighties', change is often slow to follow. Masculine identity, constrained by discourses, structures and institutions, those which men have frequently constructed themselves to underpin masculine myths, makes them particularly resistant to change as does their privileged position in gender power relations. The construction of masculine identity is necessarily linked to wider structures of identity and power which both influence that construction and provide institutional structures to facilitate it. Race, class, religion, work, leisure - all these spheres have been dominated by patriarchy, with attendant institutional structures, constructed with a sense of permanence, not intended to be fluid, intricately woven, complexly and rule governed. But, as Lawler observes 'it is perhaps when identities are seen to 'fail' that we see most clearly the social values that dictate how an identity ought to be'.[182]

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[182] Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), p. 144.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Until the late 1980s there was a paucity of research and theorising on men as men, rather than men as the norm, in mainstream academia. For example, in the discipline of psychology Wetherell and Griffin have argued that traditional psychology has not been about men, but 'about some sort of mutant person'.[183] 'The idea that you would actually look at [...] male self-presentations, male meanings, male perspectives, was something absolutely absent'.[184]

However, in the past two decades studies of masculinities have proliferated particularly in the discipline of sociology. These have consisted of the critical interrogation of men, largely informed by feminism, intent on questioning assumptions about masculinity, making it visible, and in the process 'demonstrating that masculinities are historically constructed, mutable and contingent'.[185] Studies of masculinities which have emerged over the last twenty years have been both theoretically and methodologically diverse, emanating from a number of disciplines. Just as feminist theory has moved through first, second and more recently third waves of critical enquiry so has the sociology of masculinity. It is an area that has drawn on many theories including Marxism, psychoanalysis, critical structuralism and post-structuralism. Academics including R. W. Connell, Stephen Whitehead, David Morgan, Lynne Segal, Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill have made

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[183] Christine Griffin and Margaret Wetherell, 'Feminist Psychology and the Study of Men and Masculinity, Part 1: Assumptions and Perspectives', *Feminism and Psychology,* 1.3 (1991), 361-391 (p. 385).

[184] Ibid., p. 387.

[185] Rachel Adams and David Savran, 'Introduction', in *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, ed. by Rachel Adams and David Savran (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), pp. 2-8 (p. 2).

considerable and significant contributions to the area with a diversity of approaches.[186] Others such as Simon Winlow, Tim Newburn, and Elizabeth Stanko have investigated specific aspects of masculine construction and performance.[187]

As with Gender Studies as an academic discipline in its widest sense, the bulk of literature which dealt with representations of gender in the media, including that of television, has largely given priority to the representation of women, for example Christine Geraghty's *Women and Soap Opera: A Study of Prime Time Soaps* and *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the New Look*; Tania Modleski's *Loving with a Vengeance : Mass Produced Fantasies for Women;* and *Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War* by Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson. These have all helped to formulate the basis for the study of gender on screen.[188] Partly as a consequence of this very necessary and valuable work which emerged from second wave feminism, representations of masculinity were largely overlooked. Nevertheless as part of an increasingly wider move to address questions around masculine identities there has, in recent years, been a number of academic works examining masculine representation on the screen.

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[186] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2005); Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Morgan, David, 'Class and Masculinity', in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities,* ed. by Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and Robert W. Connell (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 165-177; Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*, 3rd imprint (London: Virago, 1990); Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill, *Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research and Social Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003).

[187] Simon Winlow*, Badfellas: Crime, Tradition and New Masculinities* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Elizabeth E. Stanko, 'Challenging the Problem of Men's Individual Violence', in *Just Boys Doing Business?; Men, Masculinities and Crime*, ed. by Tim Newburn and Elizabeth A. Stanko (London: Routledge, 1994, repr. 1996), pp. 32-45.

[188] Christine Geraghty, *Women and Soap Opera: A Study of Prime Time Soaps*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1991); Christine Geraghty, *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the 'New Look'*, (London: Routledge, 2000); Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance : Mass Produced Fantasies for Women,* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1982); Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson eds., *Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality and British Cinema in the Second World War,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Sue Harper, *Women in British Cinema: Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know,* (London: Continuum, 2000).

The aim of this chapter then is to explore how Film Studies and Television Studies have dealt with masculinity. It will show that while there has been sustained and wide ranging analysis of American and in particular Hollywood cinema with regard to representations of masculinity, British Cinema, with a few, somewhat isolated, exceptions has only recently attracted critical attention. It will also reveal the paucity of critical research into masculinities in British television to date.

The first section of this chapter will map out some of the most prominent literature and assess its range and diversity. The second section will address research specifically into British Cinema. The third section will focus principally on literature dealing with representations of masculinity in British Television including those of the 1970s. The final section will place these within the wider context of sociological investigations into masculinity and gender identity which preceded or developed concurrently with the studies of media representations.

This chapter will thus demonstrate how studies of masculinities from a number of critical approaches in both film and television have developed, and how they have informed my own research. It will also argue that academic interrogation of masculinities on the British screen remains somewhat inchoate, especially in the area of television, and that this thesis makes a significant contribution as the first critical interrogation of representations of men and masculinity in British television of the 1970s and 1980s.

2.2 Masculinity and Film: American Cinema

The study of screen masculinities developed as something of an ‘afterthought’ to feminist scholarship and ‘was never constituted as a discipline in the same way as feminist film analysis’.[189] Powrie, Babbington and Davies argue that the principal reasons for this were firstly that Film Studies had been focused on a ‘few key issues in spectatorship theory’ in the 1970s and 1980s; secondly, they suggest, by focusing on representations of deviance which challenged accepted norms, Gay and Queer Studies in the 1990s avoided any investigation of ‘heterosexual masculine structures’.[190]

Nonetheless, in the 1980s there was some significant literature which did engage with representations of masculinity in the cinema. The first of these was Pam Cook’s *Screen* article ‘Masculinity in Crisis?’. In her analysis of Scorsese’s *Raging Bull* (US, 1980: Martin Scorsese) Cook suggests that the violence the film depicted as a consequence of the disempowerment of its principal male protagonist, while presented as problematic, is simultaneously celebrated within the narrative. While the film critiques violence as destructive and self-destructive, it is also validated, as the audience is invited to mourn the loss of masculinity as it is placed within a state of crisis.[191] While the narrative characterises the ‘explicit representation of violence as a masculine social disease’ it is nonetheless ‘ambiguous’ in that it does not offer a ‘radical critique of masculinity’ presenting violence as one of its ’essential components’.[192] By combining ‘moralism’ and ‘nostalgia’, Cook argues, whatever the

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[189] Phil Powrie, Ann Davies and Bruce Babbington, ‘Introduction: Turning the Male Inside Out’, in *The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema,* ed. by Phil Powrie, Ann Davies and Bruce Babbington (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), pp. 1-17 (p. 1).
[190] Ibid., p. 2.
[191] Pam Cook, ‘Masculinity in Crisis?’, *Screen,* 23.3-4 (1982), 39-46 (p. 39).
[192] Cook (1982), 39-46 (p. 39).

positive value placed on change' any such change also 'involves loss'.[193] This notion of male disempowerment and violence and how the latter is simultaneously critiqued and celebrated by particular narratives is something which I will explore in the case studies which are to follow.

Steve Neale's article for *Screen* the following year 'Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema', was intended to open up the discussion of representations of masculinities on screen as well as in a wider context.[194] He argues that Laura Mulvey's melding of psychoanalytic perspectives on the cinema and feminist approaches to the representation of women, while important in exposing the normative assumptions of patriarchy, was followed by work which either focused solely on the representation of women or on stereotypes of gay men.[195] Thus, he argues, 'images and functions of heterosexual masculinity' have been largely ignored, and while it 'has been identified as a structuring norm' in relation to women and gay men, it is rarely discussed as such.[196]

What Neale attempts to do is problematise the notion of the male spectator's identification with the active male subject together with the passive female being the sole object of the 'male gaze'. Neale argues that even if identification is channeled and regulated in terms of gender it nonetheless should be seen as 'multiple' and 'fluid', shifting across 'positions and roles'.[197] Thus, the process of identification is far more complex than had been previously understood, with both men and women

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[193] Ibid., p. 46.
[194] Steve Neale, 'Masculinity as Spectacle: Reflections on Men and Mainstream Cinema', *Screen,* 24.3-4 (1983), 2-16 (p. 16).
[195] Ibid., p. 2.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid., p. 4.

constantly transgressing these positions, identifying with and objectifying both male and female characters.

Neale argues that objectification in Hollywood cinema applies to men as well as women. Thus, the spectacle of male bodies in Italian westerns and the epic film can function as the object of both voyeurism and fetishism for its male audience. He goes on to say that the male can also operate as the object of the erotic female look citing the cinematic treatment of particular male stars and genre specific examples including the musical.[198] However, Film Studies continues in its 'refusal to acknowledge or make explicit an eroticism in relation to the male image' by differentiating between the 'cinematic representations of images of men and women'.[199] Even if the spectator is implicitly male, which he acknowledges that within mainstream cinema it usually is, this does not deny the possibility of 'erotic elements involved in the relation between the spectator and the male image' since any suggestions of homosexuality are constantly repressed and disavowed within mainstream cinema.[200] Neale concludes that within Film Studies the interrogation of gender representation has meant that women have come to be seen as 'a problem, a source of anxiety, of obsessive enquiry; men are not'. This, he says, works on the assumption that 'masculinity is known […] femininity is a mystery'.[201]

While these two early works, together with those from Richard Dyer and Paul Willemen, constituted important interventions in the study of masculinities, they could be considered something of a 'false start' since it was not until the 1990s that there

[198] Neale (1983), 2-16 (p. 14).
[199] Ibid, pp. 14-15.
[200] Ibid., p. 15.
[201] Ibid., pp. 15-16

was any sustained analysis.[202] Powrie, Babbington, and Davies have argued that there were two principal reasons for this. Firstly the resurgence of what were considered masculine genres and the accompanying academic interest in them; secondly, the shift towards issues of performance influenced by Judith Butler's work which 'clearly was an issue for men, as well as for women'.[203] A third reason was that academic study of masculinities was emerging in a number of disciplines, particularly in the area of sociology.

Brian Baker has recognised the early 1990s as the 'origin point for the study of screen masculinities'.[204] The considerable body of work which has since emerged engages with discourses of masculinity in American cinema, is informed by masculinity studies and feminist film theory, and crosses both historical and generic boundaries. Some of this work has taken a specifically generic approach to masculine representation. It includes Mike Chopra-Gant's and Frank Krutnik's different explorations of film noir, Melvin Donaldson with the interracial buddy films and masculine crisis, Roderick McGillis and the B western and Robert Eberwein on American war films.[205] Two volumes, Jeffords' *Hard Bodies* and Yvonne Tasker's *Spectacular Bodies*, have also dealt with the rise of action movies in the period and their significance to the performance of masculinity.[206]

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202 Richard Dyer, 'Don't Look Now: The Male Pin-up', *Screen*, 23.3-4 (1982), 61-73; Paul Willemen, 'Anthony Mann: Looking at the Male', *Framework,* 15-17 (Summer 1981), 16-20; (2004), pp. 1-17 (p. 2).

203 Powrie (2004), pp. 1-17 (p. 3).

204 Brian Baker. Masculinity in Fiction & Film: Representing Men in Popular Genres 1945-2000, (London: Continuum, 2006), p. vii.

205 Mike Chopra-Grant, *Hollywood Genres and Postwar America*, (London: I. B. Taurus, 2005); Frank Krutnik, *In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Melvin Donaldson*, Masculinity in the Interracial Buddy Film,* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2005); Roderick McGillis, *He was Some Kind of Man*, (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier UP, 2009); Robert Eberwein, *The Hollywood War Film*, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

206 Susan Jeffords, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993); Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

There have also been a number of collections including *Male Trouble* edited by Constance Penley and Sharon Willis.[207] The most significant early contribution, however, is Steven Cohan's and Ira Rae Hark's collection, *Screening the Male* which examines the notion of masculine subjectivity as central to Hollywood. In their introduction they outline what they hoped to achieve stating, 'instead of the unperturbed monolithic masculinity produced by a de-contextualised psychoanalysis, this volume portrays filmed men and male film characters overtly performing their gender, in neurotic (and even psychotic) relationships to it, or seeking alternatives to masculinity as their culture defines it'.[208] In critiquing feminist work of the 1970s they suggest that screen representations of men are no less a spectacle than those of women. 'In concentrating on the female body as the primary stake of cinematic representation' they say, Film Studies has 'ignored the problem of masculinity'.[209] While they stress the importance of work on both female spectatorship and women within the diegesis in American films, by ignoring the spectacle of masculine representation, Film Studies may actually work to preserve the notion of masculinity not being a social construction.[210] Thus, they include essays which explore issues of 'spectacle, masochism, passivity, masquerade […] (and) the body' which film theory had linked to femininity but not masculinity.[211] The notion of spectacle together with performance is made explicit in the essays included in their anthology which is divided into four sections. The first, 'Star Turns' stresses the overt performances of actors, in particular dancers. The second section 'Men in Women's Places' includes

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207 Constance Penley and Sharon Willis,(eds) (1993). *Male Trouble: A Camera Obscura Book* (Mineapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

208 Steve Cohan and Ira Rae Hark, 'Introduction', in *Screening the Male : Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema,* ed. by Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1-22 (p. 3).

209 Ibid., p. 2.

210 Ibid.

211 Ibid.

essays which examine narratives which place men in positions which had largely been occupied by women, for example performing the role of victim. The third section, concerned with homosociality, is entitled 'Man to Man'. The final section 'Muscular Masculinities' comprises of essays which foreground the role of the male body in action movies.

Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim's two volumes of the same period also assume the existence of plural masculinities and focus on masculinity as spectacle. While the first of these volumes *You Tarzan* only included contributions from male academics the ensuing volume *Me Jane* consisted entirely of essays from female contributors. While this may have invited criticism that they were reinforcing a binary model of gender, their rationale was that social experience may lead to readings being inflected in different ways. In explaining their first volume they stated that 'it is important for men themselves to write about the construction and representation of the masculine in relation to their experience'.[212]

While the chapters in both volumes come from a variety of theoretical perspectives and include European, Asian and American cinema, many are informed by genre theory and star studies. Kirkham and Thumim's argument that gender difference may lead to readings being inflected in different ways is borne out by the male writers being principally concerned with signs and performance of masculinity, focusing particularly on issues around the body and action and how these are socially played out.[213] The female writers, however, concerned themselves more

[212] Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim, 'You Tarzan', in *You Tarzan: Masculinity, Movies and Men,* ed. by Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), pp. 11- 30 (p. 11).

[213] Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim. 'Me Jane', in *Me Jane: Masculinity, Movies and Women*, ed. by Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), pp. 11-35 (p. 12).

with sociology and gender politics, particularly through feminist critique of the way films work in the reproduction of patriarchal power.[214] They also looked at the fragility of masculinity, particularly with regard to the body, something which the male writers, the editors suggest, may have felt threatened by. There was also a difference in genre focus with the second volume having a bias towards 'thrillers, westerns and melodramas' and the male writers working with 'action and the spectacular display of the male body, and the epic, war, horror and science fiction genres'.[215]

Ultimately, through their diverse and wide ranging approaches, both Cohan and Hark's, and Kirkham and Thumim's volumes feature essays which serve to problematise gender and representations of masculinity rather than seeking any form of theoretical closure. They offer feminist critiques of American cinema by exposing the ways patriarchal hegemonic masculinity is maintained through its representations. In the process they reveal masculinity as a social construction rather than the natural entity presented by much of American culture, together with the existence of multiple masculinities and their attendant instability.

While Cohan and Hark, and Kirkham and Thumim presented the most important contributions to the study of screen masculinities in the 1990s, since the millennium the work of Phil Powrie, Bruce Babington and Anne Davies has made the most significant contribution to the area. In their book on masculinities in European and Hollywood cinema *The Trouble with Men* they attempt to assess the state of scholarship on the representations of masculinity, concluding from the diverse

[214] Kirkham and Thumim (1995), pp. 11-35 (p. 18).
[215] Ibid., p. 12.

collection of essays included in their anthology 'that there are two poles of spectacular masculinity, 'damaged man' and 'man feminised by spectacle and display'.[216] Drawing on a number of theoretical perspectives they argue that the image of the damaged man has been seen as 'a smokescreen' for the realignment within patriarchal power structures.[217] Indeed, they argue, images of man feminised through suffering might be seen as 'complacent male hysteria' allowing masculinity to consolidate its power.[218] However, they also acknowledge Kirkham's argument that 'the ideal man is one who is partly de-masculinised in order to be partly feminised; who is deconstructed to be reconstructed. Wounding makes men more accessible to women's imagination'.[219] This echoes Gledhill's suggestion that representations of men who exhibit wounded vulnerability may offer for women 'the gratifying spectacle of masculinity crossing the gender divide'.[220] However, as Kirkham and Thumim have said 'the masculine crossing of the gender divide is an adventure largely conducted in the interests of the male subject'.[221] Nonetheless, Powrie, Babington and Davies maintain that the 'redemptive function ascribed to the damaged male on screen […] (may) operate as much for male as for female spectators'.[222] Thus, they argue, damage 'has a positively destabilising function' and should be seen as reconstructive.[223]

These reviews of the most significant critical analyses into representations of masculinity in American cinema serve to illustrate how they have contributed to the

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216 Powrie (2004), pp. 1-17 (p. 12).
217 Ibid., p. 13.
218 Ibid., p. 12.
219 Pat Kirkham, 'Loving Men: Frank Borzage, Charles Farrell and the Reconstruction of Masculinity, in *Me Jane: Masculinity, Movies and Women* (see Kirkham and Thumim above), pp. 94-112 (p. 107).
220 Christine Gledhill, 'Women Reading Men', in *Me Jane: Masculinity, Movies and Women* (see Kirkham and Thumim above), pp. 73-93 (p. 87).
221 Kirkham and Thumim, (1995), pp. 11-35 (p. 31).
222 Powrie (2004), pp. 1-17 (p. 13).
223 Ibid., p. 14.

considerable body of work which has emerged in the last twenty years. This work has engaged with a variety of theoretical approaches, has been informed by feminism and its corollary masculinity studies which emerged and developed over a similar time frame, crosses both historical and generic boundaries and has ultimately provided the framework for the study of screen masculinities.

2.3 Masculinity and Film: British Cinema

While sustained critical attention on representations of masculinity in American cinema has been extensive, with regard to British cinema it has been much more fractured. Discussions about masculinity within British cinema studies have tended to focus on some eras and genres to a far greater degree than others. Steve Chibnall's collection *British Crime Cinema,* for example, while setting itself up as comprehensive analysis of a previously neglected genre also features two chapters which deal specifically with representations of masculinity. Andrew Clay's noir essay, *Men, Women and Money: Masculinity in Crisis in the British Professional Crime Film 1946-1965* argues that the portrayal of professional criminals operates as an expression of 'men's contradictory experience(s) of power' as ordinary men with little power are seduced into crime, but inevitably pay a heavy price.[224] Claire Monk's chapter argues that in contrast to many anachronistic British gangster films of the period which were profoundly masculinist, a number of crime films emerged in the 1990s which challenged the 'tough macho ethos' of the genre.[225] However, while

[224] Andrew Clay, 'Men, Women and Money: Masculinity in Crisis in the British Professional Crime Film 1946-1965', in *British Crime Cinema,* ed. by Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy, (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), (pp. 51-65) (p. 51).

[225] Claire Monk, 'From Underworld to Underclass: Crime and British Cinema in the 1990s', in *British Crime Cinema* (see Clay above), pp. 172-188; Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy, 'Parole Overdue', in *British Crime Cinema* (see Clay above) pp. 1-15 (p. 14).

a number of other chapters, as one might expect from studies on crime cinema, touch on issues around masculinity, these are rarely dealt with explicitly and remain rather peripheral.

Andy Medhust has made a significant contribution to the analysis of masculinity in British films, television, and popular culture combining historical scholarship with queer and gay readings of a number of texts. Although these are of less relevance to this thesis, they are worthy of note since they provide evidence of the diversity of engagements with the subject area.

In 'Masculinity and Forbidden Desire in *The Spanish Gardener*', Medhurst posits a queer reading of *The Spanish Gardener* (UK, 1956: Philip Leacock).[226] Medhurst argues that this is a film entirely about male relationships and masculinity. It is about how look, gesture, and nuance are sufficient to convey these very things. Generically, it may be a melodrama but its subject as well as its theme is the relationship between the three male characters. The rest of the narrative is merely perfunctory providing events to examine these relationships. Medhurst argues, that while many British films of the 1940s and 1950s were about masculinity and Englishness, what makes *The Spanish Gardener* stand apart is its degree of interrogation.

In his star study of Dirk Bogarde, Medhurst explores similar ground, arguing that many of the actor's films exhibit 'distant hints of homosexuality'.[227] Thus, while a film like *The Blue Lamp* (UK, 1950: Basil Dearden) may be a 'troubled examination of

[226] Andy Medhurst, 'It's as a Man That You've Failed': Masculinity and Forbidden Desire in *The Spanish Gardener'*, in *You Tarzan: Masculinity, Movies and Men* (see Kirkham and Thumim above) pp. 95-105.

[227] Andy Medhurst, 'Dirk Bogarde', in *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*, ed. by Charles Barr, (London: BFI, 1986), pp. 346-354 (p. 349).

post-war youth' it also operates as a test of 'masculine parameters'.[228] What underscores Bogarde's performances, argues Medhurst, is a degree of 'sexual ambiguity' operating 'beneath repressive ideologies'.[229]

Medhurst does not confine himself to Film Studies and he has examined a number of areas including television and music hall performance exploring the tradition of effeminacy in English comedy and issues around gender in the male double act.[230] What much of his work shares, however, is a concern for the construction of national identity and potentially subversive rereadings of popular culture of the past.

While Chibnall's anthology and Medhurst's specific historical studies are evidence of not only the diversity but also the fractured nature of the study of masculinity, Powrie, Davies and Babbington's diverse collection of essays mentioned above, offers more sustained yet wide ranging approaches. While it covers an astonishing range of films and issues around the cinematic representations of masculinity there are three chapters on British Cinema which share some common ground through their focus on working-class masculinities.

Robert Shail's chapter is a star study of Michael Caine in the 1960s. He takes a Butlerian approach, stressing the instability and fluidity of masculinity of the period as a result of wider historical processes.[231] He goes on to discuss the emergence of a new, particularly southern, masculinity, one which was both metropolitan and

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228 Medhurst (1986), pp. 346-354 (p. 347; 349).
229 Ibid., p. 350; 354.
230 Andy Medhurst, *A National Joke: Popular Culture and English National Identities*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).
231 Robert Shail, 'Masculinity and Class: Michael Caine as 'Working-class Hero', in *The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema* (see Powrie, Davies and Babbington above), pp. 66-76 (p. 66).

working-class, which he traces through Caine's films. Ultimately, while he recognises an 'emancipation' for working-class masculinity at the start of the decade, by its end, he says, these films indicate a 'hardening' of 'proletarian' masculinity.[232]

John Hill's essay focuses on working-class masculinity and its relationship to socialism. He argues that through an analysis of three films portraying miners between the 1930s and the 1990s, that there has been the 'decline of Socialist Man', as these films gradually move towards 'questioning the norms of male heterosexual masculinity' which have 'underpinned working-class political activism'.[233] His analysis culminates with *Billy Elliot* (UK, 2000: Stephen Daldry) which 'articulates themes of class and gender' as it 'mobilises its anti-macho statements'.[234] In conclusion, however, he critiques the film on a number of levels, including its 'simplified confrontation between class and gender politics', its critique of masculinity as 'mobilised against the miners', and its inability to depart too radically from the ideologies of masculinity which it questions.[235]

John Leggott's essay is concerned with a number of films at the turn of the millennium which concentrate of paternal obligations.[236] He argues that these films exhibit an 'obsession with 'failing or absent father figures and the threats posed to homosocial territories'.[237] He recognises two strands of film, one which is presented from the adult male point of view, the other which 'deploys young boys as central

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232 Shail (2004), pp. 66-76 (p. 75).
233 John Hill, 'A Working-class Hero is Something to be? Changing Representations of Class and Masculinity in British Cinema', in *The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema* (see Powrie, Davies and Babbington above), pp. 100-109 (p. 108).
234 Ibid., p. 100.
235 Ibid., p. 108; 105.
236 James Leggott, 'Like Father?: Failing Parents and Angelic Children in Contemporary British Social Realist Cinema', in *The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema* (see Powrie, Davies and Babbington above), pp. 163-173 (p. 163).
237 Ibid.

characters'.[238] He goes on to argue that while the adult male seeks to 'restore homosocial brotherhood' and reclaim contested patriarchal territory the boys attempt to 'reanimate homosocial space' in a different reimagining of masculinity, thus offering up narratives which could be considered to be more progressive.[239]

While the majority of literature has been diverse, somewhat fractured and focused on particular genres or eras, Andrew Spicer in *Typical Men* has provided the most comprehensive and sustained account to date of representations of white and heterosexual masculinity in British cinema. While he covers a broad chronology, his focus tends to be on the 1940s and 1950s with some attention to the 1960s before, rather curiously, adding a chapter on 'contemporary types' of masculinity, drawing on films from the 1990s.[240] While his research is exhaustive he acknowledges his reluctance to develop his analysis through the seventies suggesting that in Britain cinema had become 'undeniably supplanted by television' which took its place 'as the central form of popular entertainment'.[241] As such, this thesis takes up this mantle to make an important intervention into representations of the 1970s and 1980s which Spicer largely ignores.

Beyond chronology, Spicer adopts as his organising principal a taxonomy of male cultural types and how these are established, reinforced, and modified in key paradigm films. These types, he argues, are dynamic and competing, frequently evolving within specific genres.[242] In focusing on 'dominant popular types' Spicer

[238] Leggott (2004), pp. 163-173 (p. 163).
[239] Ibid., p. 170.
[240] Andrew Spicer, *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema (*London: I. B. Taurus, 2001), pp. 184-200.
[241] Ibid., p. 4.
[242] Ibid., p. 2.

largely ignores 'circumscribed or marginalized types'.[243] However, through his 'cartography of varying masculinities' and their continuities and changes, his work ranges across all classes, including working-class masculinities.[244] It takes in representations of spivs, delinquents and gangsters but also the working-class everyman, and the angry young man of social realism, which prefigures and leads into my own work. Spicer is also interested in 'British culture's marked preoccupation with the bonds between men' something which is central to my own work.[245]

Spicer's work then is useful in charting the changing representations of masculinity allowing for a largely historical rather than particularly analytical look at the development of those representations. This thesis, however, by concentrating on a specific historical period allows for greater depth in its analysis. Additionally, while Spicer acknowledges that his work allows 'us to understand gender in Foucauldian terms' his engagement with theoretical perspectives does not go beyond this.[246] Thus, since my own work is informed much more by gender theory it provides a critique of masculinity, gender discourses, and gender relations as they are manifested within the context of television, something which Spicer does not do for cinematic representation.

Furthermore, Spicer's cultural types appear relatively discrete, each type embodying a particular manifestation of masculinity, rather than the performances of multiple and conflicting masculinities which may reside within any one character which I address in my own analyses.

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[243] Spicer (2001), p. 5.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.

E. Anna Claydon takes a rather different approach from Spicer with a much tighter focus on four apparently unconnected films from one decade. Employing Kristeva's concept of 'abjection' and Brittan's notion of 'masculinism' as theoretical approaches, her aim is to investigate the 'culturally specific iconographies of masculinity' in British cinema.[247] She argues that the 1960s witnessed a questioning of gender norms by other 'decentred' masculinities which rejected 'masculinism'. A number of films, she suggests, demonstrated uncertainty around masculinity, highlighting its problems. These films 'question the ideological apparatus of ''the establishment'' and offer various modes of cultural rebellion that result in the rejection of the male protagonist from society'.[248] Thus, Claydon's work offers up a far more critical and theoretical analysis of British masculinities than Spicer's much broader historical overview.

A particularly significant strand of studies into masculinity has focused on a number of British films from the 1990s, informed by social realism, which were perceived to suggest a crisis in working-class masculinity. This was seen to be predicated upon unemployment and feminism; transgressive and transformative masculinity; violent masculinity; and dysfunctional masculinity. Each of these engendered several academic studies which either concurred with the prevailing notion of crisis at the time, or critiqued it. For example, Bromley's questioning of the unreflective assumptions about masculinity in traditional working-class communities implicitly addressed in *The Full Monty* (UK, 1997; Peter Cattaneo); Glen Creeber's analysis of *Nil By Mouth* (UK, 1997; Gary Oldman) suggesting that while the narrative initially privileges the intense masculine world it depicts, in accord with much traditional

[247] Elizabeth Anna Claydon, *The Representation of Masculinity in British Cinema in the 1960s: Lawrence of Arabia, The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, and The Hill* (New York, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), p. 41.

[248] Ibid., p. 5.

social realism, it ultimately foregrounds the female voice, reflecting a positive but nonetheless painful repositioning; Mark Schrieber's reading of *Brassed Off* (UK, 1996; Mark Herman) and *Billy Elliot* seeing them 'as triggers for a cultural healing process (for men) of the trauma of social and cultural destabilisation caused by economic decline and a gradual realisation of what one might call 'post-industrial masculinity'; Claire Monk's argument that there was a cycle of post-industrial underclass films which either functioned as a process of loss, mourning and restoration (again for men), evident in *Brassed Off* and *The Full Monty* or, as with *Trainspotting* (UK, 1996; Danny Boyle), reject the notion of problem and solutions entirely; and E. Anna Claydon's trenchant dismissal of perceived crisis, which many of these films represent, as a form of hysteria, an acting out of discontent on the part of the masculinist as a consequence of the condition of British male social identity.[249]

Monk has also made a case for British films of the period reflecting both 'hard times' for male protagonists and 'interesting times' for the 'emergence of men and masculinity as key themes' and the 'diversity of representations'.[250] She argues that a 'range of contradictory tensions' may have led to the 'masculinism and misogyny' evident in some films, while in others there was a celebration of gender confusion

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[249] Roger Bromley, 'The Theme that Dare not Speak its Name', in *Cultural Studies and the Working-class: Subject to Change*, ed. by Sally Munt (London: Cassell, 2000), pp. 51-68; Glen Creeber, 'Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man: Social Class and the Female Voice in *Nil by Mouth*', in *Cultural Studies and the Working-class: Subject to Change* (see Bromley above), pp. 193-205; Mark Schreiber, 'Renegotiating Concepts of Masculinity in Contemporary British Film', *Gender Forum: The Internet Journal for Gender Studies,* 17.1 <http://www.genderforum.org/issues/working-out-gender/re-negotiating-concepts-of-masculinity-in-contemporary-british-film/page/6/> [accessed I March 2011]; Claire Monk, 'Underbelly UK: The 1990s Underclass Film, Masculinity and the Ideologies of "New" Britain' in *British Cinema, Past and Present*, ed. by Justine Ashby and Andrew Higson (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 274-287; E. Anna Claydon, 'New Perspectives on British Cinema: Going Beyond the 'Crisis' in Masculinity' , *A Conference Paper Presented in Newcastle* (25 May 2007), University of Leicester Research Archive <https://lra.le.ac.uk/handle/2381/415> [accessed 3 March 2011].

[250] Claire Monk, 'Men in the 90s', in *British Cinema in the 90s,* ed. by Robert Murphy (London: BFI, 2000), pp. 156-166 (p. 156).

and ambiguity.[251] She goes on to trace, across a wide range of films, both 'emotional inarticulacy', male rage, 'dysfunction' and 'desperation', and the 'mourning' of a perceived loss of gender certainties as well as 'more fluid and provocative images' which celebrate the 'changeability […] of gender and sexual relations'.[252]

Thus, while the majority of literature dealing with representations of masculinity arising from social and economic changes in the 1990s seeks to question discourses of crisis, interrogating narratives which either retreat even further into misogyny and dysfunction or those which mourn the residual masculinities of the past, Monk argues that there were far more positive and hopeful discourses at work.

There are clearly parallels between the film representations of masculinity in the 1990s and those of the 1970s and 1980s. In both periods, as dominant discourses were challenged, representations emerged which expressed either male anxieties or embraced and encouraged new gender discourses. Of the recently published books which have explored British culture in the 1970s, both Justin Smith and E. Anna Claydon in Paul Newland's collection *Don't Look Now* have addressed this issue most explicitly.

Claydon makes a case for 'aberrant' masculinities, those that do not 'fit in', moving from a state of abjection in the 1960s, which she had previously addressed, to a

[251] Monk (2000), pp. 156-166 (p. 158).
[252] Ibid., p. 158; 156.

state of dejection in an era of social fragmentation.[253] Claydon argues that the way men were represented in the 1970s was not simply as the 'evolution of the 1960s' but existed in a 'broader cultural framework' which she identifies as including memories of National Service, the demise of Empire and greater visibility of those who had been previously 'othered'.[254] Crucially, however, she says that while 'a dialogue of identity' emerged there was 'little acceptance of changing practices'.[255] As older men struggled with their increasingly residual constructions of masculinity, what had been considered as aberrant emerged questioning patriarchy and masculinist power regimes, not least in the form of the rock star. However, while what was normal became debatable this existed in tension with aberrant masculinities which moved into a 'state of limbo'.[256] She goes on to examine this notion of aberrant dejection as it is represented in a number of key British films.

Smith's essay takes three 'cult' films from the period which, he says, represent 'particular crises in British masculinity'.[257] Each of the films feature performances of masculine ambiguity, with their male protagonists displaying qualities of 'emotional vulnerability and physical dependency'.[258] He goes on to argue that here there is a 'displacement for the audience's own sexual anxieties', where the dominant sexual divisions of the phallic order do not, temporarily, exist.[259] Thus, the films provide

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[253] Elizabeth Anna Claydon, 'Masculinity and Deviance in British Cinema of the 1970s: Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' 'Roll in *The Wicker Man, Tommy* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*', in *Don't Look Now: British Television in the 1970s,* ed. by Paul Newland (Bristol: Intellect, 2011), pp. 131-142 (p. 133).
[254] Claydon (2011), pp. 131-142 (p. 134).
[255] Ibid., p. 136.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Justin Smith, 'The ''Lack'' and How to Get It': Reading Male Anxiety in *A Clockwork Orange, Tommy* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*', in *Don't Look Now: British Television in the 1970s* (see Claydon above), pp. 143-160 (p. 147).
[258] Ibid., p. 154.
[259] Ibid., p. 155.

alternative subject positions furnishing the audience with 'reassuring symbols of identification'.[260]

In Sian Barber's book *The British Film Industry of the 1970s: Capital, Culture and Creativity,* the author features two chapters which deal explicitly with masculinity in British films. The first, *Stardust* (UK, 1974: Michael Apted) she argues, shows the 'uncertain male' of the fragmenting 1970s, experiencing 'the difficult transition from fixed certainties and exciting possibilities of the 1960s' leaving them in a state of 'awkward unease'.[261] This manifests itself in *Stardust* with the lead character displaying both qualities of 'softness' and 'vulnerability' together with 'androgyny and femininity'.[262] However, as class and gender relations shift he also experiences 'guilt' and 'anxiety' and highlights dress and costume as a key signifiers of both shifts and anxieties.

Barber also considers the film version of *Scum* (UK, 1979: Alan Clarke) where masculinity is 'presented as reactive, violently aggressive, and unequivocal'.[263] She suggests that the 'reaffirmation of patriarchy' at the end of the film, could be linked to 'the turbulent social period' which saw a number of traditional masculine social structures experiencing collapse.[264] While masculine power regimes may be challenged at times within the narrative, she argues that, through a complex set of hierarchies the film shows 'the rules of patriarchy (as) clear and immovable'.

[260] Ibid., p. 154.
[261] Sian Barber, The British Film Industry in the 1970s: Capital, Culture and Creativity (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), p, 130.
[262] Ibid., p. 132.
[263] Ibid., p. 153.
[264] Ibid.

Attention to critical issues around representations of masculinity is also evident in Sue Harper and Justin Smith's anthology *British Film Culture in the 1970s: The Boundaries of Pleasure.* The authors argue that many films of the 1970s 'look back in longing' to when gender certainties seemed more fixed while simultaneously anticipating future shifts with both 'terror and desire'.[265] What many shared was the concern with 'what men are […] how they should behave' in the face of 'the gradual transmission of power'.[266] While some were preoccupied with 'codes of masculinity' others were dealing with 'transformations in masculinity'.[267] Films like *The Man who Fell to Earth* (UK, 1976: Nic Roeg) foregrounded the 'instability of masculinity' while others dealt with 'troubled masculinity'.[268]

As is evident from the critical analysis of representations of masculinity in British cinema, the literature covers wide ranging ground, is extremely diverse, and is frequently driven by a concern for particular genres and stars. Some work is overwhelmingly historical and relatively uncritical in its approach, as with Andrew Spicer, while other writers, such as Claydon employ more rigorous theoretical approaches which constitute the foundation of their critical analysis. However, with the surge of interest in the1990s together with more recent work addressing the 1970s, a theme has begun to emerge which suggests degrees of tension between emergent and residual discourses of masculinity in decades of social, cultural and economic change. Thus, while a number of writers have recognised that both periods produced films which were either conservative or presented negative

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[265] Sue Harper and Justin Smith, 'Boundaries and Taboos', in *British Film Culture in the 1970s: The Boundaries of Pleasure*, ed. By Sue Harper and Justin Smith, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 138-154 (p. 148).
[266] Ibid.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Sue Harper and Justin Smith, 'Key Players', in *British Film Culture in the 1970s: The Boundaries of Pleasure* (see Harper and Smith above), pp. 115-137 (p. 133; 131).

responses to change by their male protagonists other films offered far more alternative or progressive representations.

2.4 Masculinity and Television

While there has been then considerable research in the last two decades into masculinity and film, work on television has been rather more limited. Television Studies, particularly in Britain, has tended to focus on issues around institution and audience or provide broad historical overviews of developments and analysis of particular decades.[269] Where there has been significant critical attention into gender this has almost exclusively focused on women, which has tended to leave the representation of men as a marginal issue, suggesting that there was little need for analysis.[270] Despite this, however, there have been a number of significant studies including Iglebaek's work on heterosexual male friendship in *Friends* (USA, 1994-2004) and how this, at times, serves to challenge accepted normative masculine behaviour and Mackinnon's *Representing Men* which devotes a considerable amount to television, including sport on television, as part of a wider analysis of hegemonic gender roles in the media in the 1980s and 1990s.[271]

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[269] See for example Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History* (London: BFI, 2003); George Brandt ed., *British Television Drama in the 1980s* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1993): Bob Franklin ed., *British Television Policy: A Reader,* (London: Routledge, 2001); David Gauntlett and Annette Hill, *TV Living: Television, Culture and Everyday Life* (London: BFI, 1999).

[270] See for example Christine Geraghty, *Women and Soap Opera : A Study of Prime Time Soaps* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990); Tania Modleski, 'In Search of Tomorrow in Today's Soap Operas: Notes on a Feminine Narrative Form', *Film Quarterly,* 33.1 (1979), 12-21; Charlotte Brunsdon, *The Feminist, the Housewife and the Soap Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[271] Vegard Iglebaek, 'What Kind of Male Friendship? A Case of Joey and Chandler in *Friends', 4th European Feminist Research Conference, Bologna* (2 October 2000) <http://www.theory.org.uk/vegard-printversion.htm> [accessed 3 May 2009]; Kenneth MacKinnon, *Representing Men: Maleness and Masculinity in the Media* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003).

More recently Rebecca Feasey's *Masculinity and Popular Television* has attempted to provide detailed textual readings of a variety of masculinities from contemporary British and particularly American programmes and how the representations of men can be understood in relation to wider social and sexual debates. This examination is crucial she says 'not because it accurately reflects reality but because it has power and scope to foreground culturally accepted social relations and define norms'.[272] While she acknowledges that the

> lived experience of masculinity will always be more complex and fluctuating than those representations of manhood in contemporary television, this does not detract from the power of the medium to define norms and conventions and to portray what is considered appropriate and inappropriate social relations.[273]

Feasey lays out her methodological approach thus 'the scope is not to test out interpretations through audience research or look at economics, structure, organisation or production practices but to examine representations within the wider context of society'.[274] While her approach is indeed comprehensive in its coverage of the most popular and prevailing genres and deals effectively with issues around homosociality and the public and private dichotomy, it covers a great deal of ground and a considerable number of programmes and in that sense some of her analysis lacks depth. Additionally, the historical aspects serve as a useful but relatively perfunctory preamble to the main business of her book, to examine the contemporary television landscape as a site for emergent masculinities and how contemporary masculinity can adhere to, negotiate, or challenge hegemonic masculinity. Indeed it is Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity, which I will discuss later, which forms its principal theoretical thrust. However, in doing so she fails to account for the complexities of individual constructions of masculinity and

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[272] Rebecca Feasey, *Masculinity and Popular Television* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 4.
[273] Ibid., p. 155.
[274] Ibid.

tends to pit new masculinities against some form of monolithic and relatively static hegemonic masculinity.[275]

While then these few examples of research into the analysis of representations of masculinity in television show a degree of critical engagement, research into specifically British representations, while diverse, would appear to be even more fractured, faltering and limited than with that of British cinema. Leon Hunt's book on the 1970s, *British Low Culture* covers a wide range of media and literature from the period, which includes popular television. While Hunt's focus is not primarily on masculinity he does devote a chapter to the topic of what he calls 'Some 1970s Masculinities' and the renegotiations of these particularly in situation comedies.[276] Hunt tends to adopt, at least in part, a similar approach to Spicer involving a limited form of typology. While he acknowledges that politically and economically there was a 'sense of impending apocalypse', together with a mood of uncertainty unfolding which led to a culture of nostalgia, there was also something very positive which emerged in the1970s.[277] The legacy of the sixties was manifesting itself in a more democratic form in the 1970s, something Hunt terms as 'permissive populism', a trickle down of what had only previously been permissible in elite middle-class and new aristocratic circles.[278] This clearly had significant implications for the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. Through a conflation of permissive populism together with a shift away from consensus towards fragmentation, there was a social and cultural climate which allowed for the emergence of a variety of masculinities,

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275 Ibid., p. 154.
276 Leon Hunt, *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 56.
277 Ibid., p. 17.
278 Ibid., pp. 19-20; p. 2.

which, while undermining dominant constructions of masculinity, were able not to be perceived as aberrant.

Hunt is able to identify a number of new and emergent masculine types in popular police shows and low brow sitcoms, some of which emerge from traditionally working-class masculinities, others from middle or upper-class traditions.[279] It is the former, however, which informs my own research, embodying masculine attitudes far more grounded in everyday reality rather than aspirational fantasy. These are the types who are caught between the reality of their own often mundane situations, grounded in tradition and the rhetoric of a new order, often barely comprehended by those exposed to it. These are closer to the representations which this research will endeavour to explore.

While Hunt deals with masculinity across a range of media and as part of a wider project of media and cultural analysis, there are a number of other writers who have dealt with specific television programmes. David Rolinson's unpublished paper on masculinity and class in *Steptoe and Son* (UK, 1962-74), argues that the series reveals the 'inadequacy and failure' of masculinity in modern society while imbuing it with a sense of pathos.[280] He sees in the recurring themes of thwarted class aspiration and 'the association of culture with failed masculinity', a principal protagonist who is simultaneously 'unsure of his masculinity and class position'.[281]

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279 Hunt (1998), pp. 56-73.

280 David Rolinson, 'You Dirty Old Man!: Masculinity and Class in *Steptoe and Son* (1962-74)', *British Television Drama* <http://www.britishtelevisiondrama.org.uk/?p=2346> [accessed 17 April 2014]

281 Ibid.

Similarly Phil Wickham's BFI Classic *The Likely Lads* explores as part of its remit masculinity and class in a British situation comedy, again revealing a tension or unease. He sees the series and its sequel *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* (UK, 1973-74) as revealing the homosocial appeal of the working man's world together with their fear of women and the perceived emasculation that class and gender changes might bring about.[282]

Osgerby and Gough-Yates' anthology on action television, while focusing on American output from the 1970s, includes three significant chapters which deal with masculinity and its representation in British Television. While Rolinson and Wickham are concerned with working-class masculinity these chapters are concerned with programmes about aspiration and fantasy. In Hunt's analysis of *The Professionals* he argues that the key to understanding the series is the possibility of reading the political through codes of masculinity.[283] As a hybrid it was able to combine the testosterone heroics with a more reflective and comparatively moderate discourse. This was reflected in its protagonists being both tough in the course of protecting the national interest while mediating fashion and consumption. Hunt sees this as an adaptation or remodelling of masculinity which incorporates 'New Man'. Thus, while the series celebrates tough masculinity it was also critiques its characters' sexual chauvinism and profound insecurity.

Andy Medhurst's piece on the subversive construction of masculinity of *Jason King* (UK, 1971-72) offers a queer reading of the series through his clothes and

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282 Phil Wickham, *The Likely Lads* (London: BFI, 2008), pp. 53-83.

283 Leon Hunt, ''Drop Everything…including Your Pants!': *The Professionals* and 'Hard' Action TV', in *Action TV*: *Tough Guys, Smooth Operators and Foxy Chicks,* ed. by Anna Gough-Yates and Bill Osgerby (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.127-140 (p. 129).

mannerisms rather than his actions. He embodies a particular type of masculinity – a fop, dandy, aesthete, epicurean peacock.[284] These are traits, according to Medhurst which have a somewhat ambiguous relationship with conventional codes of masculinity being outside the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity.

Hermes offers a feminist reading of what she calls duplicitous masculinity in *The Persuaders* (UK, 1971-72. For all its trappings of glamour and material pleasure it is the sentiments of friendship that lie at the heart of the show's narrative. *The Persuaders'* carefree life of jokes and fun can be mobilised by a female audience because of its open coding and its presentation of a fairly diffuse and ungendered form of sexual identity.[285] They are unfettered by Tolson's concept that men face a 'tough job at containing emotions and providing for dependents'.[286] Therefore, they are bound less by gender codes.

Together with Hunt's book on low culture, these essays represent the limited amount of work that had been done on masculinity and British television until very recently. However, as part of wider interest in 1970s culture, which yielded the essays on masculinity and British cinema dealt with earlier in this chapter, several academics have looked at its manifestation in television of the period. Emerging out of a paper at The Portsmouth 1970s Conference, Peter Hutchings has produced 'I'm the Girl He Wants to Kill', which posits the argument that 'women in peril' narratives such as those included in the ITV series *Thriller* (UK, 1973-76) reflected 'doubt and

[284] Andy Medhurst, 'King and Queen: Interpreting Sexual Identity in *Jason King*', in *Action TV*: *Tough Guys, Smooth Operators and Foxy Chicks* (see Hunt above), pp. 169-188 (p. 169).
[285] Joke Hermes, '*The Persuaders!*', *in Action TV: Tough Guys, Smooth Operators and Foxy Chicks* (see Hunt above), pp.159-168 (p. 161).
[286] Ibid., p. 162.

uncertainty' with particular regard to gender identities through, for example, the representation of male protagonists as inadequate and dysfunctional.[287]

From the same conference Peri Bradley's chapter in *British Culture and Society in the 1970s*, deals with its somewhat contentious argument, that the politics of camp in British television signalled a disruption in the representation of gender identities and operated as a liberating force. This is an argument supported by some journalists claiming that camp characters were a powerful symbol of popular tolerance but undermined by gay activists who saw their television presence at the time as an affront.[288] However, as Claydon has suggested, in her previously discussed chapter in *Don't Look Now*, while there may have been a dialogue around what masculinities were acceptable, it remained a site of conflict. Thus, she suggests, television of the period allowed for the visibility of 'aberrant masculinities' including camp men, to be simultaneously permissible and not permissible.[289] Through the stereotyping of types of what she calls 'deject' they were consequently 'made safe' for a mainstream audience.[290] While this is a particularly fascinating argument about popular television at the time, regrettably Claydon does not develop it in this essay, preferring to explore its manifestation in cult films of the period.

While then, there is some evidence of a broad based engagement with issues of masculinity within recent British television studies, there is not a strong critical tradition of sustained textual or discourse analysis. Consequently it tends to feature

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[287] Peter Hutchings, 'I'm the Girl he Wants to Kill', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 10.1 (2009), 53-70 (pp. 65-68).
[288] Peri Bradley, 'You are Awful…But I Like You!: The Politics of Camp in1970s Television', in *British Culture and Society in the 1970s: The Lost Decade*, ed. by Laurel Forster and Sue Harper (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), pp. 119-130 (pp. 122-130).
[289] Claydon (2011), pp. 131-142 (p. 135).
[290] Ibid.

in much literature principally as an addendum to other media or cultural analysis, as with Hunt. While there have been a few significant contributions, recent academic studies of 1970s culture appears to have either placed television as the poor and perhaps less worthy relation to British cinema or suggested that it is an area still awaiting sustained investigation.[291] I would argue that it is the latter which should be seen to be the case.

2.5 Masculinity Studies

This thesis approaches the representation of masculinity from an interdisciplinary perspective which demands an engagement with a number of other academic disciplines. In combining television analysis with the cultural politics of gender it is informed by a number of studies which emerged concurrently with the study of screen masculinities. This section, while providing a brief overview of some of the extant literature, will also examine a number of texts which have provided this thesis with its wider theoretical basis.

As I have already acknowledged, recent years have witnessed the growth of studies of masculinities in a number of disciplines, not least sociology. Largely informed by feminism, these have questioned normative assumptions about masculinity though their critical interrogation of men's practices. They have included work by R. W. Connell, Stephen Whitehead, David Morgan, Lynne Segal, Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill all of which provide theoretical frameworks for the study of masculinities. While they have all been employed to varying degrees in the critical

[291] See for example Sue Harper's suggestion that 1970s television could be studied in tandem with film, in Sue Harper, 'Keynote Lecture: Don't Look Now Conference, University of Exeter, July 2007', in *Don't Look Now: British Television in the 1970s* (see Claydon above), pp. 21-28 (p. 27).

analysis in this thesis, this section will focus particularly on Connell and Whitehead.[292]

Early studies into masculinity by, for example, Tolson and Farrel, were founded upon the sex role paradigm of the 1970s.[293] These highlighted the

> socially constructed nature of masculinity and its reliance on socialisation, sex role learning, and social control. These processes were identified as limiting and even harmful to men's psychological and physical health, the pressures of performance and emotional repression being common targets.[294]

Coming from a sociological background, writers such as Kimmel, Brod and Pleck wrote largely as a response to feminist critique and tended to imply a high degree of homogeneity.[295] Men were socialised into masculinity and were consequently

> shaped by the institutions in which (they) are embedded. Furthermore, aggression, competitiveness, and emotional inarticulateness reflect men's position in the economic system.[296]

Beynon argues that with these early studies,

> masculinity is thus viewed as a set of practices into which individual men are inserted with reference to upbringing, family, area, work and sub cultural influences. Socio-economic positioning profoundly

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[292] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2005); Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Morgan, David, 'Class and Masculinity', in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities,* ed. by Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and Robert W. Connell (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 165-177; Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*, 3rd imprint (London: Virago, 1990); Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill, *Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research and Social Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003).

[293] Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity (*London: Tavistock, 1977); Warren Farrel, *The Liberated Man* (New York: Random House, 1974).

[294] Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity (*Oxford: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.

[295] Michael S. Kimmel, *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity* (New York: Sage, 1987); Harry Brod ed., *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Joseph H. Pleck, *The Myth of Masculinity* (Cambridge, MA; MIT Press, 1981); John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Buckingham: OUP, 2002), p. 54.

[296] Ibid., p. 56.

> impacts on the masculine sense of self so much so that men's identities are constructed through social structures which exist over and above any actions of the individual.[297]

While these writers were concerned with the conditioning of appropriate gendered behaviours, they also tended to assume a degree of ahistorical gender essences. Thus, regardless of conditioning they attempted to define and measure masculinity as something objective. Pleck suggests, however, that while there may be an ideal role for males, lived experience is likely to be in contradiction with this, thus falling short of what masculinity should be.[298]

The second wave of literature in the 1980s was highly critical of this first wave, firstly because it assumed a 'level playing field' between men and women and, secondly, because it did not address pluralities of masculinities and only really addressed hegemonic masculinity.[299] Consequently the second wave was overtly pro-feminist, concerned itself with power, and took a far more political approach.[300] Addressing women's oppression and how masculinity is situated within a structure of gendered hierarchies, these writers examined the ways 'particular social practices are used to reproduce social divisions and inequality'.[301]

These studies recognised a greater degree of heterogeneity of masculinities allowing for considerable variance according to social locations. Hearn, for example, argued that masculinity was experienced differently within specific historical contexts and that the type and amount of male power was dependent on its relationship to the

297 Ibid.
298 Pleck (1981), p. 11.
299 Edwards (2006), p. 2.
300 Ibid.
301 Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003), p. 8.

existing social structures.[302] Taking this further, Connell with his widely influential book *Masculinities* puts forward the idea that masculinities are not only multiple and different but exist in a hierarchy of relations of power. Drawing upon Gramsci's concept of hegemony, where one social class is seen to predominate over others, Connell adapted the term and applied it to masculinity, where it referred to the dominant form of masculinity within the gender hierarchy.[303] However, while a particular paradigm of masculinity may become culturally dominant, subordinating both femininities and other masculinities, this dominance will not be immune to challenge. Thus, this is an approach which acknowledges the possibilities of change.[304] However, while Connell recognises that masculinities may be complex and multiple, the notion of hegemonic masculinity suggests that there are inevitably culturally dominant forms of gendered being. [305] It must be stressed that Connell sees considerable disjuncture between the cultural ideal of hegemonic masculinities and the realities of men's lives, thus what they actually provide are models 'embedded within specific social environments' which 'express widespread ideals, fantasies and desires' about what masculinity *should* be.[306]

Masculinity, according to Connell, operates within a structured world, where social structures operate as constraints in 'social organisation'.[307] While he recognises the importance of practice in the 'transformation of […] (a) situation in a particular

[302] Jeff Hearn, *Men in the Public Eye: The Construction and Deconstruction of Public Men and Public Patriarchies* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[303] Connell (2005), p. 77.
[304] Ibid., p. 67.
[305] Ibid., p. 77.
[306] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender and Society,* 19.1 (December 2005), 829-859 (p. 839; 838).
[307] R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), p. 92.

direction' this nonetheless can only occur within existing structures.[308] The structure thus 'constrains the play of practice' while the 'consequence of practice is a transformed situation which is (then) the object of new practice'.[309] In this way structure 'specifies the way practice (over time) constrains (further) practice'.[310] Thus, while practice is constrained, it is also open to both history and change in a dialectic which attempts to acknowledge both the importance of structures together with the possibility of commutation.[311]

In the face of criticism that his concept of hegemonic masculinity equated to a model of social reproduction, Connell's response in 2005 was to acknowledge a more complex model of gender hierarchy and open up the 'dynamics […] recognizing internal contradictions and the possibilities of movement toward gender democracy'.[312] Nevertheless he continued to emphasise the limits to discursive flexibility which he had established in *Masculinities.*

The third wave of masculinity studies is one which is principally post-structural, seeing gender in terms of 'normativity, performativity and sexuality'.[313] Covering the disciplines of media and cultural studies as well as social science, it is concerned with change and continuity, emphasises the 'potential for artifice, flux and contingency' and leans toward the positive.[314] Much of this work has been particularly influenced by theoretical approaches to the construction and performance of gender identity developed by Michel Foucault and Judith Butler. As

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[308] Ibid., p. 95.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Connell (1987), p. 95.
[311] Ibid., pp. 96-116.
[312] Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), 829-859 (p. 829).
[313] Edwards (2006), p. 3.
[314] Ibid.

these have particularly informed the analysis of case studies in this thesis, I shall examine them in more detail in the following Methodology chapter.

Stephen Whitehead in *Men and Masculinities* has highlighted the growing influence of the post-structural perspectives of Foucault circulating around the notion of identity and applied them directly to masculinity. He argues that there are multiple masculinities, that they

> differ over space, time and context, are rooted only in the cultural and social moment and are thus inevitably intertwined with other powerful and influential variables such as sexuality, class, age and ethnicity.[315]

Whitehead goes on to say that while it is only fictional and superficial accounts of masculinity which suggest an 'embeddedness in men's inner selves', these are frequently both powerful and mythic.[316] However, while in this sense it is illusory, masculinities are nonetheless implicated in the everyday practices of men. Thus, as terms applicable to identity, masculinity and men are fluctuating, transitory and general, 'inadequate in themselves for revealing the subjectivities of the individual male and consequent anxieties'.[317] Consequently, Whitehead clearly sees masculinity as something individual men experience in often vastly differing ways.

Whitehead's approach emphasises the importance of understanding men and masculinities as discursive. However, in adopting Foucault's analysis of gender he recognises both the limitations as well as the possibilities of this approach as he examines the way Foucault's discursive subject intersects with its 'incomplete and fragmented and shifting material existence'.[318] In the process of examining men's

[315] Whitehead (2002), p. 34.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Edwards (2006), p. 134.

practices and lived realities including the perceived dichotomy of public and private in contemporary society, men's relationships and families, sense of loss and emotional immaturity, and perceived sense of crisis, Whitehead is, in a sense, materialising the discursive male body.

Whitehead has also cogently outlined what he has called the sociology of masculinity and its relationship to change. Feminism, he states, is the forerunner of masculinity studies and its direct consequences have been to expose and highlight the power, position, and practices of men in an effort to expunge gender inequalities.[319] One particularly acute observation he makes, which is particularly relevant to this thesis, is that for all the changes that have benefited Western women over the last few decades, none is a direct result of men changing.[320] Whether through changes in law, science and technology, educational opportunity or economic transformations, the social, economic, and political transformations that have come about are in spite, not because of men, and are largely driven by financial imperatives. Increased opportunity for women in many cases has been a consequence rather than an intention. Furthermore, in concurrence with many other commentators, structural gender inequalities continue to exist, even in the West.[321] As Lynne Segal has observed, men overall, still have greater power, cultural prestige, political authority and wealth than women.[322] Consequently, any notion that men are or were in crisis is discredited, since men still 'retain a capacity to resist and threaten this challenge' of feminism to male privilege.[323] Despite then,

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[319] Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank Barrett, 'The Sociology of Masculinity', in *The Masculinities Reader,* ed. by Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank Barrett (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), pp. 1-26 (pp. 4-8).
[320] Ibid., p. 5.
[321] Ibid., p. 6.
[322] Lynne Segal, *Why Feminism?: Gender, Psychology, Politics (*New York: Columbia U.P., 1999), p. 161.
[323] Whitehead and Barrett (2001), pp. 1-26 (p. 7).

> the apparent multiplicity of masculine expression, traditional masculinities and associated values still prevail in most cultural settings. Many men still act dominant, deny emotions, resort to violence as a means of self-expression, and seek to validate their masculinity in the public rather than the private world.[324]

A performance which, Whitehead suggests, masks a deeply fragile identity.

However, Whitehead argues, men adapt, and this is a continual process, generational, largely experienced unknowingly, where men's notions of the masculine self undergoes shifts.[325] Nevertheless within their lifetime many men experience minimal change, while resistance to change is likely to be a consequence of men's perceptions that they may gain little from the gender revolution.[326] 'Such men', suggests Whitehead 'often remain locked in a juvenile and crude display of masculinity', what he calls the 'performance as masculine subject'.[327] While this is 'detrimental to men emotionally and in their relationships', it is sustained 'through fraternal groupings […] male bonding rituals, rejection of intimacy and an avid denial of the other'.[328] Clearly then, Whitehead is suggesting that while the discursive possibilities of transformation in gender relations is not impossible, it is frequently contradictory and subject to considerable male resistance.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored how Film Studies and Television Studies have engaged with issues of gender and specifically the representation of masculinity. It has demonstrated that while American cinema has a strong tradition of sustained and wide ranging analysis into representations of masculinity, British film, with a few, somewhat isolated, exceptions, has only recently attracted critical

[324] Whitehead and Barrett (2001), pp. 1-26 (p. 7).
[325] Ibid.
[326] Ibid., p. 10.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Ibid.

attention. It has gone on to reveal the lack of scholarship on British television and masculinities. In the process it has provided an overview and assessment of a number of groundbreaking and influential works informed by feminism which have become important in establishing a framework for understanding masculinities on screen together with more specific essays which have informed my own analyses. Finally it has accounted for the development of masculinity studies focusing particularly on two key academic texts which stress the limits of discursive flexibility, something which underpins the case studies that are found in my own research. Thus, while this thesis draws upon a number of academic works in the disciplines of film, television and masculinity studies it also makes a significant intervention as the first critical interrogation of representations of men and masculinity in British television of the 1970s and 1980s.

3 Methodology

This chapter will outline the principal methodological approach which underpins this thesis, together with the theoretical framework which informs the textual analysis in the case studies which are to follow. The first section will explain how Raymond Williams's concept of structures of feeling has been appropriated as a methodology for the analysis of television programmes through the combination of textual and contextual study of the representations of masculinity. It will develop some of the issues previously raised in the Introduction, looking at Williams's application of the concept, the principal criticisms of it, and how it is applied in this thesis. This is intended to further validate its uses while acknowledging some of its limitations.

The second part of this chapter will introduce the key theoretical perspectives which will be applied directly throughout the textual analysis as a method of understanding the reconfiguration of discourses of masculinity. It will outline the approaches to gender and transformative change put forward by key theorists which stress both possibilities and limitations, examining both the notion of the discursive subject of Foucault and Butler's theory of gender and performativity. Following directly on from this, the third section will address questions about structure and agency put forward by Giddens concluding with a discussion of the limits of reflexive transformation suggested by Bourdieu.

3.1 Textual Analysis and Structures of Feeling

As I have discussed in the Introduction, Williams's own definitions of the concept of structures of feeling and its applications altered in emphasis over the arc of his career. However, the principal aim for Williams at any of these stages was to 'show the importance of literature for the articulation of alternatives to dominant world

views, and thus is related to the politics of social change'.[329] He stresses the need for literature to be included in an interdisciplinary approach. 'Change and continuity' he states, is 'often seen most clearly in […] literature, (which) forms a record of vitally important changes and developments in human personality. It is as much the record of the history of a people as political institutions'.[330] Indeed, in attempting to construct an interdisciplinary approach, Williams was explicitly critical of the 'lack of any methodological consensus between historians, literary critics and sociologists'.[331] While literary analysis dominates much of his early work he later engages with wider cultural and social practices arguing that literature should not be regarded as being privileged over other sources. He also argues that all forms of writing should be studied, not just the high canonised texts.

In practice, however, Williams's attempt to analyse the cultural meanings of art forms and their contexts has not gone without criticism. By prioritising the literary-critical it has been argued that Williams becomes distanced from any 'engagement with non-literary historical' elements.[332] Thus, 'the relation of any of these literary particulars to any more general social-historical formation' and hence '"total" history' remains unexplored.[333] While literature is 'assumed to be the barometer of a general culture […] no exact interactions are specified'.[334] Thus, it could be argued that Williams, while claiming that he wants to 'define the theory of culture as the study of

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329 Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (1979; rpt. London: Verso, 1981), p. 159.

330 Raymond Williams, 'Literature in Relation to History', in *Border Country: Raymond Williams and Adult Education,* ed. by John McIlroy and Sallie Westwood, (Leicester: NIACE, 1993), pp. 166-173 (p. 172).

331 Sean Mathews 'Change and Theory in Raymond Williams' Structure of Feeling', *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies,* 10.2 (2001), 179-194 (p. 184).

332 David Simpson, 'Raymond Williams: Feeling for Structures, Voicing History', *Social Text,* (1992), 9-26 (p. 18).

333 Ibid.

334 Ibid.

relationships between elements in a whole way of life' in practice, by drawing entirely from literary sources, is guilty of literary exceptionalism.[335]

Nonetheless, Williams intended structures of feeling as a 'tool to facilitate the movement in analysis between social wholes and parts, between subject and disciplinary boundaries, between background and text'.[336] Indeed, in the 'Idea of Culture' Williams elevates context to the same level as text, so it is no longer treated as mere background to textual analysis.[337] Although at one point he concedes 'it seems to me impossible directly to relate the highly specific experiences of a work of art to any more general qualities of living in the society in which it is provided'.[338] He goes on to say that

> however difficult it may be in practice, we have to try to see the process as a whole, and to relate our particular studies, if not explicitly at least by ultimate reference, to the actual and complex organisation.[339]

Thus, while Williams sees art as central in understanding social and cultural change, he also stresses the need to study those wider structures in which it operates. He calls for

> the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life. The analysis of culture is the attempt to discover the nature of the organisation which is the complex of these relationships.[340]

In the case of television, while it functions as a key mediator of cultural ideas the construction of its narratives is conditioned by prevailing cultural ideologies and discourses. Thus, while the principal method of this thesis is textual analysis, the social, historical, cultural, and economic contexts are also addressed. This then

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335 Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Peterborough, On: Broadview Press, 1961 repr. 2001), p. 63.
336 Mathews (2001), pp. 179-194 (p. 185).
337 Raymond Williams, 'The Idea of Culture', *Essays and Criticism*, 3.3 (July 1953), 239-266 (p. 259).
338 Raymond Williams, 'For Continuity in Change', *Politics and Letters,* 1.1 (Summer 1947), 3-5 (p. 5).
339 Williams (1961), p.44.
340 Ibid., p. 46.

allows for the examination of discourses circulating at any one time and how television contributed to and was a product of those discourses.

A further complication with structures of feeling is what Williams himself has recognised as the 'selective tradition'.[341] As Dickens has observed 'much cultural and social analysis, and certainly most analysis of literature concerns itself with the dead, and while records may survive, processes of selective tradition will inevitably ensure that the records that do survive tell a decidedly biased story', one which has largely determined by 'hegemonic forces'.[342]

In attempting to isolate the structure of feeling of any given period, Williams himself has outlined three distinct levels of culture.[343] First there is 'the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those who live in that time and place'; then there is the 'recorded culture of every kind from art to everyday facts'; finally there is 'the selective tradition'.[344] This last level occurs when culture is not lived anymore, and can only be approached through its records. However, it would of course be impossible to access all the recorded works of a period.[345] Thus, although 'theoretically a period is recorded […] this record is exposed to a selective tradition which starts even at the given period, when certain works are more valued or emphasized'.[346] Subsequently as further selection takes place over time much of

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341 Williams (1961), p. 64.

342 John Dickens, 'Unarticulated Pre-emergence: Raymond Williams' Structure of Feeling', *Constellations* (University of Warwick) [n.d.]<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/constellations/structures_of_feeling/2/> [accessed 20 February 2014] (p. 2).

343 Williams (1961), p. 66.

344 Ibid.

345 Ibid.

346 Ibid.

what is deemed unimportant, but may indeed be extremely significant record of a particular culture, is rejected.

Simpson has argued, that while Williams acknowledges this selective tradition, he does not allow it to ‘interfere with his assumption of a relatively direct transmission of the structure of feeling; as if we may indeed choose between different ones, but what we get is real enough when we do get it’, and is largely ‘unaffected by the process of reconfiguration’.[347] For Williams, the analysis of art can enable us to go beyond fixed formations of the ‘social character’ taking us ‘behind and beyond the selective tradition’.[348]

However, a further related criticism levelled at Williams is that because ‘he chooses to discuss mainly the most prescient literature, not even tentatively complete analysis of historical determination can be attempted’.[349] Furthermore, while he may have proclaimed that ‘culture is ordinary’, the cultural products he selects in which to locate ordinary, lived cultural experience are, what Dickens has called, the ‘exceptional, the hegemonically determined extra-ordinary’.[350] As Scott Wilson has observed, in Williams’s work

> there was the desire to study not just high-canonical texts, but a “whole way of life”, yet this went along with an actual distaste for and disapproval of the actualities of the mass entertainment that actually constituted much of working-class life, so [he] either ignored or gave an uninformed or unsympathetic account of a crucial part of that whole way of life.[351]

[347] Simpson (1992), pp. 9-26 (p. 16).
[348] Ibid.
[349] Ibid., p. 17.
[350] Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1989), pp. 3-14; Dickens, ‘Unarticulated Pre-emergence; Raymond Williams’ Structure of Feeling’, [n.d.] p.2.
[351] Scott Wilson, *Cultural Materialism: Theory and Practice,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 29.

Indeed, while Williams himself states ‘we should not seek to extend a ready-made culture to the benighted masses […] we should accept, frankly, that if we extend our culture we shall change it’, he also devotes little critical attention to anything that might be considered truly popular.[352] However, as Dickens has observed, ‘while the literary text can be and invariably is an excellent conduit in which to unearth traces of structures of feeling, to fully understand a community at a certain time, you have to include everything which that community values as important; whether modernist novel or Christmas pantomime’.[353] By analysing ‘high-cultural forms’ Williams is thus encountering that ‘which are socially and linguistically some of the least amenable to articulating working-class experiences, and most tied to hegemonic forces’.[354] However, while I would argue that this weakens the efficacy of structures of feeling as a methodological tool, I also concur with Dickens’s assertion that future writers should seek to strengthen it by ‘extending […] analyses to broader areas of culture’ by going ‘beyond the confines of […] (Williams’s) own, formalized and hegemonically crystallized work’.[355]

It should be noted, however, that while most of Williams’s focus was on literature, he also considered film and television, as evidenced by his reviews and articles on a number of generically and formally diverse programmes for *The Listener* between 1968 and 1972.

> These illustrate Williams’s response to a wide range of TV themes and pleasures - from an enthusiasm for television sport to a distrust in the medium's stress on ‘visibility’, to arguments about the economic and political relationships between production and transmission.[356]

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352 Williams (1989), p. 16.
353 Dickens, ‘Unarticulated Pre-emergence: Raymond Williams’ Structure of Feeling’, [n.d.] p.2.
354 Ibid.
355 Ibid.
356 Anon, ‘Williams, Raymond’, *Museum of Broadcast Communications* <http://museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=williamsray> [accessed 18 June 2011]

Indeed, Williams himself has argued for the significance of television drama as a cultural form. He argues that the television play was the 'ultimate realisation of the original naturalist convention […] in which a few characters lived out their private experience of an unseen public world'.[357]

Williams sees television drama in terms of 'the exploring eye of the camera, the feel for everyday ordinary life, the newly respected rhythms of the speech of work and the streets and of authentic privacy'.[358] He cites the *Wednesday Play* (UK, 1964-70) as the most notable British example of creative innovation in British television in the 1960s which tended to embody this naturalist approach.[359] Writing in 1974, Williams observed that the place of drama was transformed. What had been, in the theatres a 'minority art, was now a major public form'.[360] 'Drama as an experience is now an intrinsic part of everyday life […] watching dramatic simulation of a wide range of experiences has now become an essential part of our modern cultural pattern'.[361]

Williams also talks about the dramatic importance of both the popular serial and series. While frequently generically specific or historically based, often produced as a corporate dramatic enterprise, and restricted by limiting conventions and formulae, may also make 'serious engagements with the run of ordinary experience' where 'in so much traditionally serious drama and fiction, there has been a widespread withdrawal from general social experience'.[362] Thus, he sees the original serial as perhaps the most important of all television forms. Clearly then, Williams was acutely

[357] Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Fontana, 1974), p. 56.
[358] Ibid.
[359] Ibid., p. 58.
[360] Ibid., p. 59.
[361] Ibid.
[362] Ibid., pp. 60-61.

aware of a popular cultural form like television, and although there was no extended analysis of any television programmes themselves, he did attribute them with value and meaning.

In the face of possible criticism over selectiveness of particular texts, I will of course make no claim to universality. While they have a generic and formal diversity ranging from the one off social realist drama to the drama-comedy series and thus are neither exclusive to one type or style nor comprehensive in their coverage of all, what the texts I have identified share is a structure of feeling which is grounded in the experiential and the emotional and which operates both personally and collectively in exploring male anxieties about change and flux. However, this is not confined to, what was considered to be, serious drama and can be traced in television across popular drama as well. While the work of Alan Bleasedale and to a much lesser extent Peter McDougall, emanating from the high canon of *Play for Today,* could be considered to be legitimate drama worthy of analysis, *Fox* and *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, generally fall outside of that category. However, since they were part of 'the mass entertainment that actually constituted much of working-class life', their analysis goes beyond Williams, incorporating a wider cultural scope.[363]

A further weakness with the concept, which some feminist writers have identified, is the absence of 'women as active agents, as producers or transmitters of culture' along with the characteristic displacement of gender and sexuality as categories of

[363] Wilson, (1995), p. 29.

analysis.[364] Thus, according to Shiach, it is difficult for feminists to appropriate the term, since much of Williams's writing including critiques and his own novels place women 'consistently within the sphere of the domestic, providing a kind of moral grounding for the narratives of male working-class identity' largely removing them from any notion of 'class, poverty and struggle'.[365] Thus, as a concept it is blind to its 'own gendered history' and 'the social experience and identities of women'.[366] Nonetheless, Shiach argues that feminist scholarship can uncover structures of feeling around the historical experience of women, and one of the ways to do this is to move away from canonized, tightly defined literary tradition and include a number of other genres where women's experience is valued, and focus on areas which appear marginal in Williams's writing'.[367]

Unlike Williams, this thesis places gender as the principal category of analysis rather than class. While it does focus on representations of men and masculinity my analysis has foregrounded and critiqued these rather than working with normative assumptions. Furthermore, although it is not intended to uncover structures of feeling around the historical experience of women, those experiences are necessarily included as part of a critique of masculine practice. Thus, by problematising working-class masculine identities this thesis has also been able to explore gender relations and go beyond Williams's normative assumptions about gender within working-class communities.

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[364] Morag Shiach, 'A Gendered History of Cultural Categories', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams,* ed. by Christopher Prendergast (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp 51-70 (p. 54); Cora Kaplan, 'What We Have Again to Say: Williams, Feminism and the 1850s', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams* (see Shiach above), pp. 211-236 (p. 212).

[365] Shiach (1995), pp. 51-70 (p. 54).

[366] Ibid., p. 56; 68.

[367] Ibid., pp. 67-68.

A further way that this thesis differs from Williams's own use of structures of feeling is in how it employs his concepts of the residual, dominant and emergent. At the core of Williams's structures of feeling is the interplay between all three.[368] This opens up opportunities for alternative or oppositional elements within the dominant culture through the inclusion of 'marginal' or 'incidental' evidence.[369] While Williams suggests that the residual and emergent may be 'significant both in themselves' within the process, they can also 'reveal […] characteristics of the dominant' which otherwise may not be recognised.[370]

It is this notion of the residual, the dominant, and the emergent which comes to form the framework for the analysis in this thesis. However, while it is concerned with moments of social and cultural change in accord with Williams, it is also, unlike Williams, particularly interested in feelings and experiences which are attached to residual discourses.

As I have attested earlier, Williams's principal focus is on the emergent rather than the residual. He distinguishes the emergent from 'elements of some new phase of the dominant' or something which is 'merely novel.'[371] His is a concern for, 'new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships' which are 'substantially alternative or oppositional to' the dominant culture, providing 'the sense of a generation or of a period', and while it is 'the undeniable experience of the present' it is nevertheless oriented toward the future reflecting something

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[368] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 121.
[369] Ibid.
[370] Ibid., p. 122.
[371] Ibid., p. 123.

which has ‘not yet come.’[372] However, while Williams focuses his concept on emergence and indeed pre-emergence, the not yet fully articulated, I will argue that it could equally apply to the residual subjective experience’ itself a ‘living presence’, perhaps never fully articulated because of either a degree of marginalisation or because its articulation takes on new meaning within a new and changing context.[373] Thus the residual as well as the emergent may equally be without recognisable ‘semantic figures’.[374]

As I observed in the Introduction, in a number of recent studies, the employment of structure of feeling has become increasingly past oriented focusing upon the residual rather than on Williams’s preference for the emergent or pre-emergent.[375] As Peschel has argued, while new emergent arts may become apparent, particularly among the young, offering an alternative or oppositional view to the dominant hegemonic order, older people may draw on residual art forms which also, in their own way, ‘may have an alternative or even oppositional relation to the dominant culture’.[376] Thus, in ‘reaching back to those meanings and values which were created […] in the past’ residual discourses may ‘still seem to have significance because they represent areas of human experience […] which the dominant culture neglects’.[377] It is this particular interpretation which has proved most useful for this thesis in focusing upon residual discourses throughout the 1970s and 1980s, but how they are employed within an emergent structure of feeling.

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[372] Williams (1977), p. 123; 121; 128; 130.
[373] Ibid., p. 122.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Lisa Peschel, ‘Structures of Feeling as Methodology and the Re-emergence of Holocaust Survivor Testimony in 1960s Czechoslovakia’, *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 26.2 (Spring 2012) 161-172 (p. 161).
[376] Ibid.; Williams (1977), p. 122.
[377] Williams (1977), p. 122.

Williams defines residual as something that is not necessarily located in the past but rather 'formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process' frequently not 'as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present'.[378] Thus,

> certain experiences, meanings, and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue-cultural as well as social-of some previous social and cultural institution or formation.[379]

So, like Peschel and others, while I employ Williams's concept, I have used it as a methodological tool for the examination of texts which generally express feelings that are largely conservative and residual rather than the progressive and emergent which so interested Williams.

Connell has argued, with regard to his own theories, that 'theoretical formation finds application in other settings and by other hands, the concept must mutate-and it may mutate in different directions in different environments' and this too can be the case for structures of feeling.[380] Thus, this thesis employs structures of feeling in a number of ways which mark it out from Williams's own uses. It engages with popular forms of television rather than high canonical texts; it addresses issues around gender rather than solely around class; it concerns itself with residual discourses rather than emergent ones; and while textual analysis is its principal focus it also incorporates social, historical, cultural and economic contexts into that analysis.

Structure of feeling then, is employed in this thesis as a methodology to conduct a textual and contextual study of the representations of masculinity of the period. It

[378] Williams (1977), p. 122.
[379] Ibid.
[380] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept, Gender and Society, 19.6 (December 2005), 829-859 (p. 854).

allows for textual and discursive analysis which facilitates a purposeful dialogue between television narratives and cultural discourses of masculinity. As a methodological approach it has facilitated my analysis of a particular group of writers who explore an area of social experience which may be frequently overlooked or dismissed together with the relationship between these experiences and the structures of the period.

3.2 Gender Theory

This section is intended to outline the principal theoretical approaches to gender identity that have been employed in the textual analysis of the case studies which are to follow. This thesis is about change. Thus it engages with Williams's concepts of residual, dominant, emergent. It is also about gender. Therefore it seeks to interrogate theoretical approaches which stress both the transformative possibilities as well as the limits to reconfigurations of gender practice. Through the application of these theoretical approaches to the textual analyses which follow, this thesis will show how they can contribute to the understanding of masculinity of the period.

A number of academics principally in the discipline of sociology, in addressing identity in its widest sense, have developed a social constructionist perspective of identity formation. Hall for example argues that:

> Identities are never unified and in late modern times increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions […] they are subject to a radical historicisation and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.[381]

Similarly, Lawler has suggested that 'identity, subjectivity, personhood are all slippery yet necessary terms which are entirely embedded within and produced by

[381] Stuart Hall, 'Introduction: Who Needs identity?' , in *Questions of Cultural Identity,* ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), pp. 1-17 (p. 4).

the social world'.[382] While many claims for identity continue to take an essentialist perspective, Woodward maintains that identity is in fact 'relational and difference is established by symbolic marking' and is maintained through social and material conditions.[383]

All then reject any notion of essentialism as the basis of identity which sees it as something which is inherent and natural rather than a categorisation which is historically and culturally constructed.[384] Similarly, in the discipline of academic psychology, Cordelia Fine has critiqued the essentialism of what she describes as neurosexism, placing culture at the root of identity formation.[385] The approach to identity then, which dominates and informs much of my own research, is one which is predicated upon the model of social constructionism but one which incorporates a dialectic between structure and agency where the discursively constituted subject is neither fully determined nor fully agentic. Thus, the textual analysis of the case studies which are to follow operates on the understanding that while masculine identities are socially constructed, that construction is heavily reliant upon discourses which may both enable and constrain.

As an approach to gender identity specifically, constructionism has been theorised with particular acuity in the writing of Michel Foucault. Foucault's work has been hugely influential on subsequent theories of gender identity, for example those of Judith Butler and Anthony Giddens, which tend to emphasise the increasing potential for the transformation of social identities as a consequence of social, cultural, and

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[382] Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), p. 144.
[383] Kathryn Woodward, 'Concepts of Identity and Difference', in *Identity and Difference,* ed. by Kathryn Woodward (Milton Keynes: OUP, 1997, repr. 2002), pp. 7-62 (p. 12).
[384] Vivienne Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 13-14.
[385] Cordelia Fine, *Delusions of Gender (*London: Icon, 2011), pp. xxvi-xxix.

economic changes in contemporary society.[386] For Foucault the construction of one's identity is dependant upon social processes and is thus potentially open and mutable. Nothing then, not even the body itself, can be considered to be natural, identities being neither fixed nor stable. The subject is not a firm entity, but rather identity is contingent upon historically constructed discourses, which, through reiteration can become reified. 'It's my hypothesis' argues Foucault 'that the individual is not a pre-given identity' and that 'the positions of the subject are defined by the positions that it is possible for him to occupy' and what will be acceptable.[387] However, while these discourses may enable subject positions they are also subject to constraints, limits, and 'regularities'.[388] Foucault critiqued long term socio-cultural trends, searching instead for 'displacements and transformations'.[389] He recognised that while discourses are 'governed by analysable rules' they are also characterised by' transformations'.[390] Gender and sexual identity are always shifting, argues Foucault, and these can change through resistance, itself 'a process of breaking out of discursive practices'.[391]

Thus, while Foucault acknowledges that identities are regulated by available discourses he also recognises the possibilities for transformative agency. He suggests that agency could only operate within the parameters of existing discourses

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[386] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990); Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991), pp. 18-37.

[387] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, trans. Colin Gordon and others (New York: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 73-74: Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 52; p. 197.

[388] Foucault (1972), pp. 231-232.

[389] Ibid., p. 211.

[390] Ibid.

[391] Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984: Ethics,* trans. by Robert Hurley, ed. by Paul Rainbow, 3 vols (New York: The New Press, 1997), I, p. 168-169.

yet he also maintains 'that knowledge should transform the self' and that 'the main interest in life and work is to become someone else you were not'.[392]

Foucault has also made significantly radical advances in his conceptions of power. While in his early work including *Madness and Civilization* and *Discipline and Punish*, he gives the impression that power is vested in institutions, he subsequently shifted his position seeing power not as something which a person can have but rather as something exercised in interaction.[393] While certain power relations may seem unchangeable, since 'power is exercised from innumerable points' it should be understood as being dynamic, fluid and mutable since 'where there is power there is resistance'.[394] This resistance will lead to 'liberation' which in turn will create 'new power relationships'.[395] However, as Sawicki has argued, while Foucault may emphasise resistance, he is also 'sceptical about widespread transformation and far from utopian'.[396]

Since Foucault's definition of gender identity is not rigid and immutable but in a constant state of fluctuation, it is thus possible to disrupt accepted notions of gender identity. For Foucault, the principal way to undermine accepted social positions is to

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392 Rux Martin, 'Truth, Power: An Interview with Michel Foucault', in *Technologies of Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault,* ed. by Luther H Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick Hutton (Amerherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), pp. 9-15 (p. 9).

393 See Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, trans. by Richard Howard (London: Routledge, 2001 repr. 2005 originally published 1961); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1995, originally published 1975).

394 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge,* trans. by Robert Hurley, first published under the title *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* 1978, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1998),I, pp. 94-95.

395 Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984: Ethics,* trans. by Robert Hurley, ed. by Paul Rainbow, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 2000), I, pp. 283-284.

396 Jana Sawicki, *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 28.

> emancipate historical knowledges from […] subjection to render them […] capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse.[397]

This clearly has significant consequences for the construction of masculinity in its challenge to dominant discourses of gender construction, 'normative standards' for the masculine and its call to transcend prevailing prescriptions.

In his later work, Foucault puts forward an idea which lies at the core of his conceptualisation of identity formation. He talks about an individual's ethics as the 'care of the self' itself 'a certain way of considering things and having relation with other people' or 'an attitude towards the self, others and the world'.[398] This then leads to certain practices, which Foucault calls 'technologies of self' which are 'exercised by the self' and 'by which one takes responsibility for oneself and by which one changes, purifies, transforms and transfigures oneself'.[399] Thus, technologies of self can be understood as what it means to be a person, how one constructs and polices oneself and this is highly dependant upon the discourses circulating at any historical moment.

Judith Butler has developed this Foucauldian perspective of gender construction in her conceptualisation of the notion of performativity. Like Foucault, she argues that identity is an agglomeration of cultural and social facets and components which one has acquired through prior expression or attribution and these then solidify into a performance where one's identity is reified through repetition 'of meanings already

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[397] Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures' in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault Habermas Debate,* ed. by Michael Kelly (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 17-46, p. 24.

[398] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France, 1981-82*, trans. by Graham Burchell, ed. Frederick Gros (New York: Picador, 2005), p. 11.

[399] Ibid.

socially established'.[400] The corollary of this is that as a construction, identity is potentially open, dynamic, and liable for transformation. Thus, Butler argues, that her aim is to subvert and displace 'naturalized and reified notions of gender that support masculine hegemony and heterosexist power (and) to make gender trouble'.[401]

What then has been socially constructed as an ideal is little more than a 'norm, and a fiction that disguises itself as a developmental law regulating the sexual field that it purports to describe'.[402] Thus what Butler is suggesting, is that the norm of heterosexuality is maintained through gender identity acting as a regulatory construct.[403] This she has called the 'heterosexual matrix' where there emerges a

> stable sex expressed through a stable gender […] that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality.[404]

As Butler observes in *Gender Trouble* 'gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free floating attributes for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practice of gender coherence'.[405] Thus, 'gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed'.[406] Consequently 'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ''expressions'' that are said to be its results'.[407]

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[400] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 178.
[401] Ibid., p. 44.
[402] Ibid., p. 173.
[403] Ibid., p. 175.
[404] Ibid., p. 194.
[405] Ibid., p. 33.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid., p. 25.

Butler offers a model of gender identity which is progressive and positive. She argues that 'the loss of gender norms would have the effect of proliferating gender configurations, destabilizing substantive identity, and depriving the naturalizing narratives of compulsory heterosexuality of their central protagonists: man and woman'.[408] However, as Berger has critiqued, if the 'rigid social constructions of the masculine have resulted in political, (social) and cultural forces of oppression, repression, and denial' how easily can these be transformed?[409] Other critics of Butler such as Tim Edwards, for example, argue that while gender may certainly be performative, this does not necessarily lead to endless possibilities and potential, and a variety of other social factors and circumstances may actively mitigate against these possibilities.[410] Thus, through the application of these theoretical approaches to the textual analysis in the case studies which follow, both the limits as well as the transformative possibilities to reconfigurations of gender practice are explored.

3.3 Structure and Agency

Of particular concern to this thesis are the ways existing social structures function to limit agency. While several theorists have attempted to resolve the dichotomy between structure and agency, it is with Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration, where we can see the fuller implications it may have for identity transformation. Giddens' notion of structuration, which he developed in *The Constitution of Society,* sees structure and agency operating in a recursive relationship.

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408 Butler (1999), p. 187.

409 Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson, 'Introduction', in *Constructing Masculinity,* ed. by Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 1-10 (p. 5).

410 Tim Edwards, 'Queer Fears: Against the Cultural Turn', *Sexualities*, 1. 4 (November 1998), 471-484 (p. 472).

While defining structuration as the 'conditions governing the continuity and transformation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of systems', Giddens allows for a degree of modification through human agency.[411] By developing a theory which incorporates both 'enablement and constraint', he argues that 'to be a human being is to be a purposive agent' with a degree of reflexivity which may engender change 'across space and time'.[412]

Like Foucault and Butler, Giddens sees the self not as something either essential or fixed, but rather there is a 'reflexive project of the self, which consists of the sustaining of coherent yet, continually revised, biographical narratives'.[413] However, while subjects have become increasingly able to freely construct and perform their identities in 'post-traditional times', there are 'standardising influences too'.[414] As Giddens has argued, 'for individual actors […] social structure and social constraint can be extremely powerful', comparable, he says, to any physical constraints.[415] 'Society only has form' he continues, 'and that form only has effects on people in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do'.[416] In this sense individual and group behaviour while informed by social conventions will then feedback into and re-enforce those conventions.[417] People develop a considerable investment or 'faith' in the 'coherence of everyday life' which is continually reiterated

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411 Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 66.

412 Christopher G. A. Bryant and David Jary, *Giddens' Theory of Structuration: A Critical Appreciation* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 8; Anthony Giddens *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 3.

413 Giddens (1991), p. 5.

414 Ibid.

415 Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998), p. 87.

416 Ibid., p. 77.

417 Giddens (1984), p. 14.

in social interaction[418]. How the subject chooses to act is thus both influenced, and arguably constrained, by traditional discourses whilst being affected by greater freedoms in contemporary society. However, 'the more post-traditional the setting in which an individual moves, the more lifestyle concerns the very core of self-identity, its making and remaking'.[419]

This then is a resolutely positive view of agency and self-reflexive identity transformation within late modernity. While the performance of gender may be learned and policed and constantly monitored, in a post-traditional society, identity becomes 'the reflexive project of the self', where it is made rather than simply assumed.[420] However, Giddens also stresses that identity relies on a sense of continuity where a 'continuous narrative can be sustained' and while being open to subtle reinterpretations and alterations, is nonetheless involved in the ongoing dialectic between structure and agency.[421]

The work of Foucault, Butler, and Giddens then, has been immensely important as theories of reflexive identity transformation emphasising new possibilities as a consequence of the destabilisation of the traditional. Foucault's concept of the technologies of self for example suggests that sexual identity is generally open to a process of self-modification. However, it could be argued that this may underplay the entrenched elements of gender which resist adaptation or remodelling. While I

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418 Giddens (1991), p. 38.
419 Ibid., p. 81.
420 Ibid., p. 9.
421 Ibid., p. 53.

am not suggesting that identity is stable and unchangeable, I am arguing that what may persist as a consequence of 'inculcation' may remain extremely durable.[422]

It is here then, that Bourdieu's notion of 'an open system of dispositions […] constantly subjected to experiences', and identified as 'durable' but not immutable, proves particularly apposite.[423] Bourdieu's model suggests a set of subjective dispositions, which he calls habitus, which operate within wider social structures and are a response to objective conditions, which he calls the field. This results in the emergence of a doxic relationship where the assimilated, axiological, routine 'common sense' beliefs and values serve to inform an agent's actions and thoughts within a particular field.[424] Furthermore, the habitus is not something which is reflexively constituted since 'agents never know completely what they are doing' but is acquired through 'le sens pratique' or 'feel for the game' which Bourdieu describes as 'tactical intelligence'.[425] While this may be viewed as somewhat deterministic, Bourdieu's model does allow for a degree of identity transformation within the bounds of the field, where the habitus can forge new performative paradigms. However, these tend to be 'reasonable' and 'common sense behaviours […] which are possible within the limits of […] regularities'.[426]

In his most influential work *Distinction,* Bourdieu maps out the limits of reflexive transformation and identity in relation to class. Here social divisions organise and

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422 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), p. 67.
423 Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), p. 133.
424 Bourdieu (1990), p. 55.
425 Ibid., p. 69; 82.
426 Ibid., p. 55.

limit the social world, where objective limits become subjective limits and 'the *sense* of limits implies *forgetting* the limits'.[427] As Bourdieu argues:

> One of the most important effects of the correspondence between real divisions and practical principles of division, between social structures and mental structures, is that doxa facilitates adherence to relations of order which, because they structure both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident.[428]

It is in *La Domination Masculine* where Bourdieu examines the embedded character of identity with regard to gender. With his research into the androcentric Kabyle society, Bourdieu notes how male dominance works to affect an essential position by assimilating itself into the wider objective social world which is then adopted and reified into an individual's socially learned dispositions. As Bourdieu argues, 'the strength of the masculine order is seen in the fact that it dispenses with justification: the androcentric vision imposes itself as neutral and has no need to spell itself out in discourses aimed at legitimating it'.[429] The dualism of masculine and feminine is experienced in ordinary, quotidian, daily practices and interactions, 'with the very strict distribution of [...] activities' where the social arena is structured restricting women to the limits of particular areas, particularly the domestic, while men are free to inhabit those locations which are deemed to be in the public arena.[430] This is then further endorsed by the doxic relationship which emerges from the consolidation and solidification of oppressive power relations which are imposed onto and habituated within gender identities which have come to appear as natural.[431] This is how,

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[427] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*: *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984), p. 471.
[428] Ibid., p. 471.
[429] Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. by Richard Nice, previously published 1998 and 2001 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 9.
[430] Ibid., pp. 9-10.
[431] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

according to Bourdieu, the ‘social order functions […] to ratify the masculine dominance on which it is founded’.[432]

Ultimately, what Bourdieu suggests is a model of gender, which, whilst undergoing a considerable degree of destabilisation which may facilitate certain changes in normative behaviour, may also be so deeply entrenched within the individual and collective unconscious as to render certain aspects of reflexive transformation problematic.

The theoretical perspectives outlined in this chapter have focused on transformative possibilities as well as the limits to reconfigurations of gender practice. Throughout the textual analyses of the case studies which are to follow, I will develop my analysis and application of these theories of gender in the context of the representations of masculinity within those case studies. They will reveal how far masculinities are enabled and constrained by discourses, what are the limits to reflexive transformation, and how social structures operate in relation to agency. In this way I intend to show how theories of gender, when applied to the textual analysis of popular television, can contribute to an understanding of masculinity.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the principal methodological approach which underpins this thesis, Raymond Williams’s concept of structures of feeling. It has shown how Williams intended it as a method for textual analysis while incorporating discourses circulating within the wider social, cultural, and political contexts. It went on to

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[432] Bourdieu (2002), p. 9.

examine some of the limitations of its use both theoretically but also in how it was applied by Williams himself. It explained how it is used in this thesis, and how it differs from Williams own application. Firstly, it allows for the examination of both wider historical discourses as well as textual analysis. Secondly, it focuses on television and in particular popular television rather than canonical texts. Thirdly, its principal concern is with gender representations and relations rather than class. Fourthly, its main consideration is for residual discourses of gender rather than emergent ones.

The second part of this chapter examined the theoretical framework which underpins the following case studies. While the principal methodology throughout this thesis is the textual analysis of significant television programmes, I have outlined the approaches to gender and transformative change which will inform that analysis. Through the introduction of key theorists who stress both possibilities and limitations this section has examined the notion of the discursive subject of Foucault, Butler's theory of gender and performativity, questions about structure and agency put forward by Giddens and finally the limits of reflexive transformation suggested by Bourdieu. In the next three chapters I will apply these directly throughout the textual analysis as a method of understanding the reconfiguration of discourses of masculinity within the specific cultural context of Britain in the 1970s and 1980s.

4 Dead End: Peter McDougall and John Mackenzie

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will argue that the work of Peter McDougall reveals a structure of feeling expressing male anxieties around the construction and performance of masculinity, which, while showing residual and dominant discourses as both troubled and troubling, sees the possibilities of change as profoundly problematic. It will consider the argument that in certain societies working-class masculine identities may become so habituated and conditioned within existing social structures that the potential for self reflexive transformation is heavily proscribed. The principal aim is to investigate culturally specific social structures to establish the ways in which they create and limit working-class masculine identity. Through an examination of three social realist films written by Peter McDougall and directed by John Mackenzie which emerged out of the broader context of BBC television drama strand *Play for Today* in the 1970s, this chapter will show how the extant social structures serve to establish and confine masculine identities on both collective and individual levels and restrict the capabilities for reflexive transformation. I will argue that while the narratives may operate as a critique of residual and dominant discourses alluding to emergent discourses existing outside of the immediate culture, by prohibiting both access to and comprehension of these discourses by his protagonists, McDougall expresses anxieties about the masculinities he chronicles, suggesting that there is minimal possibility for meaningful change.

This chapter will initially introduce McDougall's work within its historical, cultural and production contexts, and attempt to assess its critical reception. It will draw upon the

press coverage for all three films as wider evidence of anxieties and concerns around working-class experience revealing both engagement with and hostility to its fictional representations of working-class men, alternating between sympathy for their plight and criticism of the excesses of their masculine practices. While this material functions as a barometer of both serious and popular press and their attitudes to television, further evidence will be considered for the impact of the programmes on their wider constituent audience.

The chapter will then go on to explore specific theoretical perspectives which underpin the analysis which is to follow, focusing on masculinity and social structures and examining how they function as constraining forces. It will take into account Connell's approach which understands masculinity to be operating within a structured world where 'social structure' refers to 'the constraints that lie in a given form of social organization'.[433] It will also consider Messerschmidt's position which argues that while there may be both the 'meaningful actions of individual agents and the structural features of social settings', also acknowledges that the ways gender may be performed are highly dependent upon the social circumstances which frequently demand a set of normative standards.[434] Thus, while masculinity is a construct which is experienced and negotiated in particular contexts through a colloquy between reproduction and revision, specific social structural conditions may serve to limit the many ways gender can be performed.

[433] R. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), p. 92.
[434] James W. Messerschmidt , 'Men, Masculinities and Crime', in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities,* ed. by Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and Robert W. Connell (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 196-212 (p. 197).

I will then go on to introduce the specific social structure of class and working-class practices in particular which will form the principal framework from which the masculine experiences described by Peter McDougall can be understood. At this point the chapter will consider a number of more specific working-class cultural traditions relevant to McDougall's narratives and how they serve not only to establish and bolster but also to confine a particular kind of working-class masculinity. First it will explore the tension between work and play in working-class cultures and how this functions in relation to the construction and performance of masculine identities. I will argue that while work and working practices performed a key function in the formation and self-definition of working-class masculinities it is play and leisure which informs the masculinities portrayed by McDougall as his protagonists manage the formal system through both flight from responsibility and 'domestic refusal'.[435]

This chapter will then go on to examine the geographically and culturally specific literary tradition of Clydesideism and the notion of the 'hard man' which portrays masculinities that are at once oppressive, self-destructive and deeply dysfunctional. Through the analysis of some of McDougall's key protagonists I will assess how they fit into this Scottish literary tradition. This will then lead on to an extended examination of the function of violence in helping to establish identities. Informed by a number of significant academic studies I will show how masculinities can simultaneously be characterised by conflict, competition, and self-differentiation which can manifest itself in violent behaviour. What emerges is a pattern of violent interaction which while a consequence of economic deprivation is also a means to achieve status. I will show how McDougall's work conforms to a number of social

[435] Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill, *Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research and Social Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003), p. 37.

and cultural concepts as it explores how the social distribution of honour and prestige, frequently within one class-based strata, is achieved through violence and how this can become a pleasurable experience taking on both expressive and aesthetic qualities. However, I will go on to stress that again it is the social structures which underpin this violence, whether territoriality and affective localism or sectarianism and localised gang culture, and examine how these function in helping to construct and confine masculine identities.

Finally this chapter will consider McDougall's conclusion that, for his protagonists, masculine transformation is something of an impossibility, since the extant social structures, created by men, have left those same men so brutalised and adrift from discourses emanating from outside of their own culture that they remain locked into their subject positions. It will show that even when his male characters possess a degree of awareness about their constructions and performances of masculinity, revealing their anxieties and uncertainties, the possibilities opened up by those anxieties are ultimately extinguished by established discourses.

4.2 Peter McDougall in Context

While McDougall's films make minimal allusion to their wider historical context, they nevertheless emerged from, and were a product of, their times. Thus, there were a number of historical factors in the 1970s which might be considered to affect both the timbre and content of his work. Firstly, there is the social and cultural context with the ostensible legacy bestowed by the 1960s upon the 1970s. A great deal has been written about the differences between the two decades, with the sixties widely

characterised by its optimism and the seventies by its 'surliness and introversion'.[436] While Shail has argued that the two periods are not discrete from each other, he goes on to say that 'there was a historic shift from the exuberance which marked the working-class emancipation of the early sixties, to the besieged mentality which was to become a characteristic of the […] seventies'.[437] Another view, from Christopher Booker, coming from the right, was that while the 1960s and early 1970s had been a period of escapism and fantasy it was only by 1975 that Britain witnessed an 'explosion into reality'.[438] He saw the decade as one that was wholly dispiriting. Hunt has argued that while there was important liberalising legislation in the 1970s most actually occurred in the 1960s.[439] Indeed, he goes on, there was actually a 'counter-strike of punitive legislation' including the Industrial Relations Act, Emergency Powers Act, Misuse of Drugs Act and Immigration Act all of which were intended to defend what Hall has described as 'hegemony in conditions of severe crisis'.[440] Thus, from a number of critical perspectives the decade has been perceived as a period of disillusion and retrenchment.

While then, the widely accepted though certainly not uncontested axiom was that the seventies was the negative corollary of the sixties, on initial viewing McDougall's three films might appear to bear this out.[441] They are certainly bereft of the optimism, hope, or opportunity that many have argued the sixties heralded for the working-class. They are also characterised by their lack of escapism reflecting a

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436 David Gibbs ed., *Nova 1965-1975*, (London: Pavillion, 1993), p. 38.

437 Robert Shail, 'Constructions of Masculinity in 1960s British Cinema' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2002), p. 96.

438 Christopher Booker, *The Seventies: Portrait of a Decade* (London: Allen Lane, 1980), p. 110.

439 Leon Hunt, *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 17.

440 Ibid; Stuart Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*, (New York, NY: Holmes and Meier, 1978), p. 278.

441 See for example Andy Beckett*, When the Lights Went Out: Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 201, for a more measured assessment of the decade.

largely grim view of society. McDougall's work, however, does not sit particularly comfortably with this rather oversimplified view of the two decades. Rather than suggesting that the sixties had come to a crashing end, for his protagonists, it had largely passed them by. As Wickham has observed with *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads*, the characters may be 'bound up in the times but also the place', in this case the North-East.[442] He sees Clement and La Frenais' protagonists as 'distanced by geography and wealth' living in a place which is both 'industrial and provincial'.[443] Thus, while this may have led to much of Britain being remote from the ostensible changes occurring in the South, when sixties permissiveness did trickle down, it did so in a very different form.[444]

Away from metropolitan London social and cultural changes may have trickled down but, arguably, these could be viewed as superficial. Where promiscuity, long hair and rock music have finally reached the West Coast of Scotland from swinging London they have done so in a bastardised, threadbare and highly localised form. In one telling scene in *Just a Boy's Game*, as The Cuban Heels perform The Rolling Stones' 'Paint it Black' from 1966, to a backdrop of violence, it is clear that the ostensible spirit of the 1960s is characterised by its absence. Other writers such as Waterhouse and Hall recognised this failure of the 1960s to have little real impact on working-class lives, and in their case this was even in the West End of London. Thus, the legacy of the 1960s was frequently experienced in a watered down, piecemeal way with signifiers of emergent discourses around permissiveness largely without their full meaning behind them. For many, social mobility, greater equality,

[442] Phil Wickham, *The Likely Lads* (BFI: London, 2008), p. 32.
[443] Ibid., p. 33.
[444] Hunt (1998), p. 20.

and freedom from traditional social practices, let alone feminism and gay rights had little impact on prevailing dominant discourses.

Another view of the 1970s was that while it was undoubtedly a period of widespread economic decline it also witnessed, for a considerable amount of the population, aspiration, affluence and increased consumerism.[445] Once again, while this may have been the case, McDougall's work, seems to accord more comfortably with Marwick's economic assessment of industrial Scotland where 'whatever optimism there had been in the late 1940s' by the 1970s it 'had by now almost completely evaporated'.[446] From the 1950s there was 'a deepening depression in the old heavy industries' with unemployment 'well above the national average'.[447] Thus, while the 1940s and 1950s may have witnessed a degree of prosperity for previous generations in Scotland, whatever economic benefits the 1960s or 1970s may have had to offer, these were not felt everywhere, as Scotland's population declined throughout both decades.

A further historical factor, with specific regard to gender, which would appear to have influenced McDougall's work, is that the 1970s can be seen as an extremely important decade for working-class men. Regardless of the decline in manufacturing throughout the period, the decade actually witnessed the apotheosis of the power of the working man, largely through the economic importance of heavy industry coupled with the strength of powerful trade unions. By 1971 over half of all male employees

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[445] See for example Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974-1979* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), pp. 13-19: Alwyn Turner, Crisis, What Crisis?: Britain in the 1970s (London: Aurum, 2008), pp. 126-127.

[446] Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945: The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 4th edn (Penguin: London, 2003), p. 154.

[447] Ibid.

were members of a union and throughout the 1970s all governments needed union cooperation if they were to be able to operate effectively.[448] With exceptionally heavy levels of unionisation through all key industries and a large number of muscular unions, this was a time of considerable political militancy.[449] Consequently, throughout the decade the country experienced almost continual industrial action, powerful enough to bring down a government.[450]

If this power may have led to a level of hubris and feelings of invincibility for many working-class men there were only minimal signs in their working experiences of the dramatic fall that was to occur in the following decade. While McDougall's films do not address politics or economics in any explicit sense there are, however, indications of what may be about to come to an end. He shows us automated shipyards with sealed containers largely negating the need for multitudes of dockers; more tellingly, as two of his unemployed working-class protagonists discuss their situations this is juxtaposed against employees' cars entering an IBM factory. Thus, McDougall appears to be suggesting that many men will not be well placed to take advantage of these new post-industrial economic developments.

While McDougall's work is clearly conditioned by the wider historical context of the period, as a writer of original fiction for television he was perfectly placed within the production context of the period. As I have already argued in the Introduction, by the 1970s television had become central to British cultural life and in terms of both popularity and subject matter it was undoubtedly more important than film as a

[448] Marwick (3003), p. 173.
[449] Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Pan MacMillan, 2008), p. 324.
[450] Ibid., pp. 340-343.

reflection of British working-class life.[451] Television was also willing and able to work through an enormous amount of contentious issues and deal with matters brought about by social fragmentation presenting a diversity of programmes to a mass audience.[452]

Throughout the 1970s *Play for Today* (UK, 1970-1984), which had evolved out of the *Wednesday Play* (UK, 1964-70), was among 'several strands which encouraged writers to tell their own stories in their own voices, the more original the better'.[453] It was at this time that the BBC was looking for social realist screenplays and 'had started hot-housing Ken Loach, Mike Leigh and Willy Russell'.[454] Colin Welland, however, felt that they should not be looking for writers who are writing plays, they should be looking for writers who are not. People from backgrounds where they do not consider writing to be something they could ever possibly be involved in. McDougall has claimed that he had never read a book, and when he did start to write he would be so embarrassed he would hide his work.[455] What resulted from Welland's subsequent 'discovery' and championing of the writer was a six year collaboration between McDougall and director John Mackenzie, which Mackenzie has described as 'a sort of marriage, we complemented each other'.[456] Indeed it would be foolish to underestimate the contribution made by Mackenzie to the

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[451] See for example Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Fontana, 1974); Richard Dyer, *Gays and Film* (London: BFI, 1977); Andrew Spicer, *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2001); David Rolinson, 'The Last Studio System: A Case for British Television Films', in *Don't Look Now: British Television in the 1970s,* ed. by Paul Newland (Bristol: Intellect, 2011), pp. 163-176.

[452] Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History* (London: BFI, 2003), p. 91.

[453] *Razor Sharp*, w. Simon Farquar, d.Bevis Evans-Teush, p. Gillian McKirdy. [Included as DVD extra to *The Peter McDougall Collection,* John Williams Productions, 2006].

[454] Paul Dale, 'Peter McDougall and John Mackenzie: Pull No Punches', *The List*, 631, 11 June 2009, List Film Section <http://www.list.co.uk/article/18274-eiff-2009-peter-mcdougall-and-john-mackenzie/> [accessed 14 August 2009]; *The Late Show: Big Boy's Tale: A Profile of Peter McDougall*, BBC2, 15 September 1993, 23.15, 40mins.

[455] *Razor Sharp* (2006).

[456] Ibid.

success of their work together. While accuracy, situation, and dialogue may be attributable to McDougall, Mackenzie gives 'brawls an alarming urgency', observes Greenock as 'poised between desolation and the picturesque' and provides 'immediacy, fluidity and pace'.[457]

According to Simon Farquhar this was

> pretty much the first time that contemporary Scotland had been seen on screen […] without concession and without apology. It changed Scotland's image permanently.[458]

Not used to seeing their nation painted in such bleak and unflinching detail, 'the local press had a field day'.[459] While some critics valued its impact seeing it as a positive exposure of the problems in contemporary society, others viewed that same impact to be entirely negative. Indeed much of the critical reception for McDougall's work has taken exception to its violence, its depiction of Scotland and to its ostensible moral ambivalence. *Just Another Saturday*, (UK, 1975) for example, while inviting the ire of both the Orange Lodges and Greenock Council also disgusted many other viewers.[460] It was, however, *Just a Boy's Game*, (UK, 1979) which received the most negative press reaction. Richard Last accused it of dredging the 'depths of human degradation for its own sake' and while it was 'shudderingly atmospheric' it was without the 'strong social motivation of *Scum*', (UK, 1977).[461] *The Glasgow Herald* forewarned that 'the correspondence columns of newspapers (would be) a colourful riot […] of indignation' epitomised by a letter to the *Western Mail* calling it a

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457 Allen Wright, 'Life in the Raw –But the View is from London', *Scotsman,* 3 November 1979; Duncan Petrie, *Contemporary Scottish Fictions: Film, Television and the Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp. 22-23.
458 *Razor Sharp* (2006).
459 Dale (2009).
460 Wright (1979).
461 Richard Last, 'Nastiness for its Own Sake', *Daily Telegraph,* 9 November 1979.

‘most repellent and sickening piece of TV drama’.[462] Elsewhere Clydeside Councilors claimed it was far from typical, would fail to attract industry or people, and showed ignorance of the area.[463] However, responding to accusations that his work is unnecessarily and graphically violent, McDougall has argued that while the stylised violence of *The Sweeney* (UK, 1975-78) might prove more acceptable, what he shows is the real thing.[464] ‘To emulate those fights you have to have been there’ he says which accords with Mackenzie’s claim that this is ‘a serious look at violence showing it for what it is – nasty’.[465]

However, while McDougall may have some grounds for questioning why the Scottish objected to him for giving them a bad name, which he says is not the case with Liverpool and Bleasdale (contrary to what Bleasdale himself attests), positive critical reception for his work was considerable.[466] Stanley Reynold, for example, described *Just Another Saturday* as a small piece of life, riveting in its little details and exchanges and James Thomas saw it as taking ‘a scalpel to the bone of everyday society’.[467] Similarly Sylvia Clayton recognised the privileged nature of the ‘writing charged with the energy of direct experience’ evoking what Stewart Lane has called the ‘heady nature’ of its subject matter; and while Allen Wright described it as one of the ‘most pungent plays that any Scotsman has written’, critics also singled out its

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462 William McIlvanney, ‘Why The Demons Should Steer Clear Of Greenock’, *Glasgow Herald,* 10 November 1979a; Judith Cook, ‘Letters’, *Western Mail,* 10 November 1979.

463 William McIlvanney, ‘Violent TV Play Angers Clydeside’, *Glasgow Herald,* 9 November 1979b; Anon, ‘Provost Calls BBC Liars and Cheats’, *Glasgow Herald*, 10 November 1979.

464 *The Late Show* (1983).

465 Ibid.

466 Ibid; *The South Bank Show: Alan Bleasdale,* LWT, 13 January 1985, 22.30 hrs.

467 Stanley Reynold, *The Times,* 25 August 1977; James Thomas, ‘A Day When Hate Erupts into Violence’, *Daily Express,* 14 March 1975.

part documentary approach, the 'powerful fusion of actuality and fiction' being a 'triumph for the production team'.[468]

Just a Boy's Game was received even more favourably by parts of the British press. McIlvanney described it as 'a bathyscope sunk into the social identity, an examination of working-class subcultures, in this case machismo 'revealed through a repetitive structure of 'sequences of bleak events'.[469] It showed, he said, violence as 'a contrived response to a penal environment' which is 'assuredly real and with us'.[470] While Wright maintained that 'seldom has the ugly futility of violence been explored to greater effect', Stanley Eveling's praise was that while it 'did not provide answers' it did furnish a 'sharp picture of the questions'.[471]

McDougall then, had done what no one before him had: taken the language of the streets of Glasgow and put it on the page.[472] What emerged were scripts depicting 'the dirty footprint of (Scotland's) sprawling West Coast' liberally laced with 'gallows of mirth'.[473] Jeremy Isaacs has said that McDougall's 'greatest achievement is giving a voice to a section of the public who don't often get to see themselves on television'.[474] He writes about things that matter, even if they are uncomfortable exploring the 'spirit of human defiance and endeavour' in the face of bad situations.[475] Described in 1993 as having written the 'most controversial and

[468] Sylvia Clayton, 'Disillusion of the Orange Day Parade' *Daily Telegraph* 14 March 1975; Stewart Lane, 'Orange Day Splendour and Spleen', *Morning Star*, 15 March 1975; Wright (1979); Thomas (1975); Lane (1975).
[469] McIlvanney (1979a).
[470] Ibid.
[471] Wright (1979); Stanley Eveling, 'Television', *Scotsman*, 10 November 1979.
[472] Dale (1979).
[473] Ibid.
[474] *The Late Show* (1983).
[475] Ibid.

important television in the past twenty years', Isaacs believes his work is capable of saying 'very serious things about the human heart and condition'.[476]

McDougall has made much of his early background in Greenock. He has talked of being married at seventeen; 'weans' at twenty; and working in the shipyards from fifteen.[477] He has vivid recollections of going to work in Greenock, the harsh conditions, the raw environment and the shabby treatment by employers. As a writer, he says, you project back to your past and memories.[478] He was unhappy at technical school where he saw his first fight with a Stanley knife and a meathook; he left at 15, entered the shipyards, which he hated, with only the Orange parades and baton throwing to keep him going.[479] He can also recall the masculine performance of men in that particular milieu, 'their poses and grimaces', and his own feelings of 'malaise' and 'ennui' where he gradually realised that he 'didn't fit in to the vacant lot fate found for him in 1950 in Greenock': 'Even when I was a child I'd wonder what I was doing' there.[480] It was believing there was something else which drove him out of Greenock.[481] Thus McDougall, in expressing his own experiences and feelings in the characters he has created, chooses to employ the trope of escape, emphasising the individual, seen as different and special, over the collective or class. Indeed it is the 'restricted codes of working-class life' from which he sees it necessary to liberate himself from.[482]

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[476] *The Late Show* (1983).
[477] *Razor Sharp* (2006).
[478] *The Late Show* (1983).
[479] Ibid.
[480] *Razor Sharp* (2006).
[481] *The Late Show* (1983).
[482] John Kirk, 'Changing the Subject: Cultural Studies and the Demise of Class', *Cultural Logic,* 5 (2002) <http://clogic.eserver.org/2002/kirk.html> [accessed 15 January 2012] (para 23 of 24).

McDougall's films thus reveal a structure of feeling which emerges from lived experience. This is an experience which McDougall himself went through, one which reflects an unease with dominant discourses of masculinity while simultaneously unsure of alternative or emergent discourses. Kirk has argued that within Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* there is a

> structure of feeling striving to combine in a useful tension between what might be termed the cognitive and the emotive: what Raymond Williams tried to make sense of in the term 'thought as feeling, feeling as thought'.[483]

Here experience is crucial in speaking of working-class subjectivities. It is the experiential which confers an 'authenticity' upon Hoggart. It is this experience then which forms the nucleus of McDougall's writing. Much of his work is at least semi-autobiographical, reflecting his involvement with sectarian violence, actively partaking in the Orange parades, his grandfather and uncles who ran with Glaswegian razor gangs, and existing within the Greenock tenements. A useful comparison may be drawn between McDougall and Scot Hames analysis of James Kelman, who operates within a tradition of working-class realism.[484] Like McDougall, Hames suggests that in Kelman there is no aesthetic distance between what appears to be the objective view of the world, the narrator or author's voice and the world itself. We are forced to experience it ourselves subjectively in the 'moment to moment consciousness' of the 'characters perceptions'.[485] It is this focus on experience which may provide McDougall with his voice of experiential authenticity. Indeed, as Petrie has suggested, what McDougall and Mackenzie appear to want is to

483 Kirk (2002), (para 23 of 24).
484 Scott Hames, 'Dogged Masculinities: Male Subjectivity and Socialist Despair in Kelman and McIlvanney', *Scottish Studies Review,* 8.1 (Spring 2007), 67-87 (p. 67).
485 Ibid., p. 85.

> confront the problem of how to represent working-class experience in terms that will be understandable and recognisable to the very members of society that their work claims to represent.[486]

Indeed, Mackenzie has said about McDougall, that as a writer he is 'a primitive in the best sense of the word', with the potential to explore the experiential subjectivities of his protagonists from a particularly privileged and authoritative position.[487] It could be argued then that within McDougall's writing there is much which is Hoggartian in that he is able to combine both ethnography and autobiography. However, what Laurie Taylor and others have described as 'sentimentality and nostalgia' in *The Uses of Literacy* is entirely absent in McDougall. There is nothing romantic about his unequivocally dystopian vision.[488]

McDougall's work articulates a structure of feeling which conveys how individual experience and emotion are connected to wider social structures. He uncovers social experiences which are frequently undervalued, dismissed, or repressed and which exist outside of official consciousness or the dominant ideology. He describes what Shiach has called the 'characteristic fears, desires, and blindnesses of the period', expressing 'the lived affect of a time' with his 'dynamic, ephemeral stories'.[489]

Mackenzie has remarked that McDougall himself tends to write the same plays.[490] While this may not strictly be the case across the entire body of McDougall's work

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486 Petrie (2004), p. 22.
487 *The Late Show* (1993).
488 *Thinking Aloud: Richard Hoggart*, BBC Radio 4, 31 August 2009, 16.00.
489 Morag Shiach, 'A Gendered History of Cultural Categories', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams,* ed. by Christopher Prendergast (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp 51-70 (p. 58); Cora Kaplan, 'What We Have Again to Say: Williams, Feminism and the 1850s', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams* (see Shiach above), pp. 211-236 (p. 232).
490 *Razor Sharp* (2006).

which includes the prison/crime biographical drama *A Sense of Freedom* (UK, 1979) about professional criminal Jimmy Boyle, *Down Among the Big Boys* (UK, 1993) dealing with the forthcoming marriage between the daughter of a Glaswegian career criminal and an ambitious young detective, and *Shoot for the Sun* (UK, 1986) a bleak drama concerned with Edinburgh's burgeoning heroin problem, the three plays he worked on in collaboration with Mackenzie for the BBC do bear some striking resemblances in themes and concerns as well as narrative structures, if not in tone. *Just Another Saturday* and *Just a Boy's Game* appear to be the most similar in their expression of masculine dysfunction while *The Elephant's Graveyard* (UK, 1976) could be seen as a critique of the other two, an exegesis of the situations and characters depicted within them.

Just Another Saturday takes place over one day, is centred around the Orange Parade March and features as its principal protagonist John, a seventeen year old Protestant drum major of the Maryhill Flute Band. McDougall has described the play as an 'exorcism of that malaise' which he felt at the time, 'an articulation' of feelings.[491] There is very little that marks John out as anything exceptional or special within his working-class milieu as he drifts through pubs with their excessive drinking sessions and violent street confrontations. Peter Leaven has described it as 'an emotionally crippling environment' where, according to Sylvia Clayton, 'the need to belong, to believe in something' leads to 'a study of disillusionment, of tarnished magic'.[492] While the day itself may stand out as unusual, an annual celebration of marching, music, drinking, and speeches it is made up of a series of events which

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[491] *The Late Show* (1983).
[492] Peter Leaven, '*Just Another Saturday*', *Sunday Times*, 23 March 1975; Clayton (1975).

have probably been played out, with slight variations, for decades. Indeed the notion of continuity and sectarian tradition underscores the entire narrative.

The narrative of *Just a Boy's Game* also takes place over a period of approximately twenty-four hours, and features Jake, an older but still young working-class protagonist. His world is almost entirely concentrated around traditional masculine activities and their attendant purlieux, where women are largely elided from the narrative, and at the core of these activities is the constant threat or actuality of violence. It is a world where 'respect for the hardman holds sway […] wherever there is social misery'.[493] Here is what McDougall describes as the 'irony of boys playing boys games' with men who have 'not grown up yet'.[494] However, where John in *Just Another Saturday* is ultimately an innocent victim of masculine violence, Jake is the perpetrator. Indeed violence is pivotal to his existence. Again continuity plays an important role where Jake sees himself as the bearer of a highly coded and respected male tradition of violence.

What is most striking, however, are the thematic similarities of these two plays. While both the narratives operate as critiques of masculine practices within a specific milieu, they also question any real possibility of change. The characters appear to be locked into their class and gender positions with very little suggestion that they can evolve. While the possibility of generational change may be entertained, even this appears to be eclipsed by repetition and stasis. The narratives themselves have no real sense of closure, but rather than opening up possibilities for the future, one is actually left with a bleak sense of pessimism. If we were perhaps to witness the next

[493] Wright (1979).
[494] *The Late Show* (1983).

24 hours played out by the two protagonists, the next year or indeed the rest of their lives, they might be seen to resemble the myth of the *Flying Dutchman,* doomed to wander through their milieu forever.

It is these thematic similarities which are addressed, indeed discussed explicitly, by the protagonists in *The Elephant's Graveyard* in a self-conscious almost referential way. Once again the narrative is played out over a short period of time, in this case a working day. However, while *Just Another Saturday* and *Just a Boy's Game* both have, to some degree, dramatic narratives with incident and event, here there is merely a gossamer of a story, an encounter between two men shirking work and evading their wives. There are only two protagonists, and while they do engage in some competitive games and story-telling the main body of the narrative consists of reflective verbal exchanges between the two. Much of the dialogue operates as a homily about the pointlessness and hopelessness of the protagonist's existence. While the narrative attempts to articulate an alternative discourse to those which dominate his other two plays and establishes the profound need for change, appearing to be open to the possibility of this happening, the end offers something which is far less optimistic. Indeed the play as a whole operates as a unique almost supernatural experience for its protagonists, but one fears that ultimately little has been enduringly comprehended and learned. Thus like the Bourbons they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

Critical reception for *The Elephant's Graveyard* was understandably mixed. While some of the more middle-class commentators failed to see its relevance to contemporary Britain, other critics were far more aware of its ability to reflect the

mood of the times. James Thomas saw it as a 'self-indulgent experiment' with 'nothing relevant to say about their plight' and revealing a 'strange philosophy', while Dennis Potter dismissed it as 'a worthless argument […] a tartan Christ with aphorisms'.[495] While others, however, thought it 'insightful but oblique' many critics were entirely positive.[496] Shaun Usher saw it as 'little more than eavesdropping, but what a lot that was'.[497] With its 'sprightly minded dialogue' and ' intelligent direction' it revealed a 'sense of communion between strangers' who have 'opened their hearts' and while it was 'poetic and uplifting' it was ultimately defeatist suggesting that 'things will only get worse'.[498] While others saw it as simply 'imaginative and resonant' or 'refreshing television', Peter Knight recognised its subject as the 'deep rifts and personal conflicts which divide people' and its treatment of 'light raw humour' and 'sharp edged irony' was 'quite brilliant' revealing the 'helplessness of their situations'.[499]

While critical responses to McDougall's plays were varied and official responses were frequently driven by vested interests within Scotland, for many of the general audience the overall affect was a feeling of disgust and outrage.[500] While there is a need to guard against making generalisations about the precise impact on the audience at the time, there is some limited evidence of viewers' responses. This, however, while providing an indication of how the programmes' affected their wider audience should not, of course, be regarded as conclusive evidence. Judith Cook in

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[495] James Thomas, 'Marathon Bletherers', *Daily Express,* 13 October 1976; Dennis Potter, '*The Elephant's Graveyard', Sunday Times,* 17 October 1976.

[496] Alan Freason, 'The Friend Who Never Was', *Evening News,* 8 August 1978.

[497] Shaun Usher, 'Treasures in *The Elephant's Graveyard', Daily Mail,* 13 October 1976.

[498] Ibid.

[499] Nancy Banks-Smith, '*Play For Today', Guardian,* 13 October 1976; Stewart Lane, '*The Elephant's Graveyard'*, *Morning Star,* 13 October 1976; Peter Knight, 'Raw Humour Highlights Personal Rifts', *Sunday Telegraph,* 13 October 1976.

[500] Wright (1979).

a letter to the *Western Mail* found *Just a Boys Game* so beyond the pale that it was only likely to 'appeal to those with sick minds'.[501] The BBC also received numerous complaints from viewers for both first and repeat screenings of *Just Another Saturday* and *Just a Boy's Game* and of these, the majority expressed a deep distaste at the level of violence in the plays.[502]

However, as Millington and Nelson have argued, television consists of polysemic texts with 'complex encoded signal(s) which the viewer interprets' decoding them 'in terms of their individual constructions of its meanings'.[503] The text 'directs but does not determine viewer response' which is constrained though not determined, by (the viewers) 'cultural and ideological disposition'.[504] Inevitably then, loose groupings of viewers would be affected in different ways. As such, 'audiences are problematic' since they are 'difficult to define', 'never completely knowable' and are neither fixed nor controllable.[505]

Nonetheless, the high viewing figures recorded by the BBC for initial and repeat screenings clearly reflected something other than outrage or disgust.[506] In her survey of the responses of Glasgow audiences to the plays, Ajay Close has argued that the male audience, in particular, interpreted McDougall's characters as 'tough and tender, fearsome and vulnerable' enabling them to identify with the emotion

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[501] Cook (1979).
[502] *The Late Show* (1993).
[503] Bob Millington and Robin Nelson, *Boys From the Blackstuff: The Making of a TV Drama* (London: Comedia, 1986), p. 152.
[504] Ibid., p. 153.
[505] Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian J. Longhurst, *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*, (London: Sage, 1989), p. 1; Kristyn Gorton, *Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 4; 12; 11.
[506] *Razor Sharp* (2006).

while simultaneously engaging with the violence.[507] Thus, while a largely male audience may have recognised the 'fears' and 'anxieties' behind the 'tough facades' this was just as likely to be counterbalanced by an appreciation of the more visceral elements.[508] While some of the audience may have felt uneasy about McDougall's sense of ambiguity about the world he presented, exposing weakness and cruelty but also looking on in awe, it is this ambiguity 'that permits his plays to be at once an indictment of West Coast machismo and cult viewing for those that subscribe to the code'.[509] *The Elephant's Graveyard*, however, elicited a rather different response from the audience, one male viewer being particularly struck by the intimacy of the piece with the idea of two men exchanging confessional thoughts and anxious fears as something quite alien to television which should be welcomed.[510] More generally a BBC Audience Research Report recorded its participants finding the combination of optimism and pessimism with idealism and cynicism particularly affecting.[511]

Gorton has made a convincing case for the study of television audiences together with the concept of emotion and aesthetics.[512] She suggests that television in Britain developed in such a way that the dominant aesthetic was one associated with realism, and that this aesthetic can be employed to elicit audience emotion.[513] Thus, in exhibiting an 'understated, real-life effect', Gallagher argues that film stock, camera movement, natural lighting, location shooting and ambient sound, contribute to the 'emotional impact' of McDougall's plays, with brief close-ups and human

[507] Ajay Close, 'Heart of Darkness-Peter McDougall', *Scotland on Sunday*, 16 May 1993. First printed in *Glasgow Herald*, 14 January 1980.
[508] Wright (1979).
[509] Close (1993).
[510] Stuart McGraw, 'Television', *Western Mail,* 17 October 1976.
[511] BBC, Audience Research Report, *The Elephant's Graveyard*, November 1976, BBC.
[512] Gorton, (2009), p. viii.
[513] Ibid., p. 73.

details building on that emotional affect.[514] When there is violence it becomes even more disturbing because much is hidden from view. For Gallagher, the emotional affect on the viewer is driven as much by the visual elements as it is by the dialogue.[515] Thus, he argues, while many of McDougall's characters may experience 'emotional impotency' the affect upon the audience is one of both pathos and emotional intensity.[516]

Indeed, as McDougall himself has stated, in writing emotionally retarded and inarticulate characters he wanted to affect his audience, which he recognised as principally male, in a much more profound and deeper way than through emotional excess.[517] While, however, there was only limited contemporaneous written response which might bear out McDougall's intentions, a number of viewers did express a degree of understanding for the male characters and the ways they were portrayed as trapped by environment and circumstances.[518] Thus, while the overwhelming written response from viewers was a negative one there were also indications that sections of his audience found that this emotional inarticulacy constituted a particularly affective experience.[519]

4.3 Masculinity, Social Structures, and Class

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514 Paul Gallagher, 'Peter McDougall's Classic Gangland Film', *Dangerous Minds* <http://dangerousminds.net/comments/Frankie-miller-peter-mcdougall-just-boys-game> [accessed 19 March 2014]

515 Gallagher, 'Peter McDougall's Classic Gangland Film', *Dangerous Minds*[n.d.].

516 Ibid.

517 *The Late Show*, (1983).

518 Anon, 'Did You See?', *Glasgow Herald*, 10 November 1979; *Razor Sharp* (2006).

519 *The Late Show*, (1983).

McDougall's work is concerned with the ways particular social structures serve to construct and confine masculine identities to the point where any meaningful agentic action becomes problematic. While his own experience of working in the Greenock shipyards and participating in violence and sectarianism was cut mercifully short through his 'escape' from his immediate environment, his films are far more pessimistic about widespread change either on an individual or collective level. What McDougall is suggesting is that social structures, including class, operate in ways which permit or prohibit the available discourses. Thus, his narratives deconstruct his protagonists' experience of the overpowering influence of the social structures which come to determine their construction and performance of masculinity.

Connell refers to 'social structure' as 'the constraints that lie in a given form of social organization'.[520] However, he also maintains that practice, while constrained, may also alter social structures. As Connell explains:

> Practice is the transformation of […] (a) situation in a particular direction. To describe structure is to specify what it is in the situation that constrains the play of practice. Since the consequence of practice is a transformed situation which is the object of a new practice, 'structure' specifies the way practice (over time) constrains practice.[521]

In terms of gender relations Connell identifies three principal structures, which I have previously outlined in Chapter One, labour, power, and cathexis.[522] While Connell sees these as interrelated and in some way ordered, they are also shifting and altering due to historical process.[523] The consequence of this process is that the gender order is construed as 'a historically constructed pattern of power relations

520 Connell (1987), p. 92.
521 Ibid., p. 95.
522 Ibid., p. 96.
523 Ibid., p. 116.

between men and women'.[524] What this seems to suggest, argues Jefferson, is that while gendered relations may be ordered and hierarchical, the structures within which they operate are both multiple and complex.[525] Thus, by 'placing constrained practice in command […] questions of history and change' are accommodated.[526] While Connell's argument may be relevant to many cases it is not necessarily universally applicable. For McDougall's protagonists practice does not lead to transformed situations, and while all identities are historically constructed here they have become so entrenched that any alteration in social structures is rendered all but impossible.

Messerschmidt argues that gender must be viewed as something which emerges from specific social practices and settings.[527] Adapting West and Zimmerman's concept of 'accountability' he goes on to say that as individuals begin to understand that in the process of their behaviour being frequently observed and scrutinised by others and measured against a set of norms, in becoming accountable for their actions they may be forced to adapt and perform in ways which are considered appropriate and acceptable in certain social contexts.[528] Thus, the ways that gender may be performed are highly dependent upon the social circumstances which frequently demand a set of normative standards.

Messerschmidt is particularly interested in the ways that social structural patterns come to influence, enable, and constrain behaviour over time, where, according to

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[524] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[525] Tony Jefferson, 'Theorising Masculine Subjectivity', in *Just Boys Doing Business?*: *Men, Masculinities and Crime*, ed. by Tim Newburn and Elizabeth A. Stanko (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), pp. 10-31 (p. 15).

[526] Ibid.

[527] Messerschmidt (2005), pp. 196-212 (p. 197).

[528] Ibid.

Giddens, they come to ‘exist as the reproduced conduct of situated actors’.[529] He suggests that social structures are not simply forms of external constraint and that generally, while subjects may tend to reproduce gendered behaviours they may also alter social structures.[530] Nonetheless, as with McDougall’s protagonists, specific social structural conditions may serve to limit the many ways gender can be performed. As Messerschmidt has argued:

> Through this interaction masculinity is institutionalized, permitting men to draw on such existing, but previously formed masculine ways of thinking and acting to construct a masculinity for specific settings. The particular criteria for masculinity are embedded in the social situations and recurrent practices whereby social relations are structured.[531]

It is this embeddedness which comes through so clearly in McDougall’s narratives.

While then, Messerschmidt and Connell see masculinity as a construct which is experienced and negotiated through a colloquy between reproduction and revision, within specific contexts it is reproduction that may become the norm. Where the practice of hegemonic masculinity has become so fixed and social structures so firmly established any form of revision is rendered particularly problematic. Thus, while McDougall offers fleeting impressions of alternative and emergent discourses of gender practice they appear to have little impact on dominant and residual discourses which are constructed by and confined within the existing social structures.

While McDougall’s films feature a number of specific and localised social structures, central to the understanding of his male protagonists is the idea that their

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[529] Ibid.; Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1976), p. 127.
[530] Messerschmidt (2005), pp. 196-212 (p. 197).
[531] Ibid.

constructions of masculinity are inextricably linked to their working-class experience. As Messerschmidt has argued, men are positioned differently throughout society and socially organised power relations among men are constructed historically on the basis of class […].[532] The importance of class, however, in the construction of masculinity is further compounded, as Morgan argues, by men being holders of class power, 'men as centrally involved in class practices as individual or class actors' which may lead to 'economic circumstances and organisational structure (which) enter into the making of masculinity at the most intimate level'.[533] While Kirk maintains that gender and class, 'are inseparably linked in any understanding of subjectivity', it is perhaps the particularly intricate and relatively explicit relationship between working-class experience and masculinity which can reveal and express this dynamic in a particularly cogent way.[534]

In discussing the relationship between working-class identities and working-class experience Munt has maintained that:

> Despite its objective existence as an expressed category and its enduring subjective existence as lived experience, the effects of relative deprivation can not only affect life chances but also lifestyles. The gradations of such social status inform and prescribe our mobility through social space. They affect our bodily practices, circumscribe our ideational reality, our sense of self.[535]

Munt maintains that class is a crucial factor in determining how masculinity or femininity are experienced. Thus, for McDougall's protagonists, their construction and performances of masculinity are entirely informed by their working-class

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532 Messerschmidt (2005), pp. 196-212 (p. 198).

533 David Morgan, 'Class and Masculinity', in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities,* (see Messerschmidt above), pp. 165-177 (p.168); R. W. Connell, *Masculinities,* 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p.36.

534 John Kirk, 'Changing the Subject: Cultural Studies and the Demise of Class', *Cultural Logic,* 5 (2002) <http://clogic.eserver.org/2002/kirk.html> [accessed 15 January 2012] (para 16 of 24).

535 Sally Munt, 'Introduction', in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Change*, ed. by Sally Munt (London and New York: Cassell, 2000), pp. 1-18 (p. 3).

experience. It operates as a social structure which simultaneously constructs and constrains their masculinity.

Morgan has argued that there seems ‘to be something particularly masculine about the idea of class’ within social science discourse but also certain class practices, with men having ‘assumed or been allocated the role of class agents’.[536] This has its deep historical and symbolic roots argues Morgan, in the prized masculine characteristics exhibited within men’s work which largely excluded women and of course men were at the top of any class hierarchies. Whatever the class it was men who defined its dominant practices and marginalised or trivialised those practices of women.[537] Thus, even when these dominant practices are characterised by nothing more than heavy drinking, foolish behaviour, and pointless fighting, McDougall’s protagonists still consider them to be more important than anything women may be engaged in.

Class, then, provides a principal framework from which masculine experiences can be examined and understood. It constitutes a social structure which serves to enable and constrain the construction and performance of masculinity. This relationship is especially intimate where men, functioning as breadwinners, have been involved in heavy industries, where occupational roles have been relatively stable and there is a clear delineation between home and work.[538] Tolson has argued that this is especially marked for working-class masculinity and it becomes ‘most apparent within the experience of manual labour’.[539] However, as I will now go

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[536] Morgan (2005), pp. 165-177 (p. 168).
[537] Ibid., pp. 168-9.
[538] Ibid., p. 172.
[539] Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity (*London: Tavistock, 1977), p. 58.

on to show, while tough, hard, physical work may be fundamental in defining working-class masculinities this has much wider implications for the connected practices and structures which have grown out of that work.

4.4 Work, Play, and Identity in Working-Class Cultures

As I will go on to argue in the next chapter, work and working practices performed a key function in the formation and self-definition of working-class masculinities. Winlow has argued that in industrialised Britain the men who were born into working-class communities

> were socialised to believe that hard physical labour was a manly pursuit. Boys would be keen to enter the world of work as soon as possible and thereby establish their masculinity.[540]

As Joanna Bourke has noted in her research into working-class culture, the correlation between work and masculinity was paramount to masculine gender construction, suggesting that, for some, it was not the money that encouraged them to work but a sense of manhood'.[541]

While work and its attendant homosocial spaces may have the power to confer masculine status, for McDougall's protagonists that status is more likely to be achieved through different but related physical activity which has grown out of their working practices. Winlow asserts that work was the principal location where working-class men 'attempted to prove themselves and legitimate their image and self-image as men'.[542] It was, he says, that 'working-class self-respect and concepts of manliness were constructed in response to class deprivation and the paternalism

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540 Simon Winlow, *Badfellas: Crime, Tradition and New Masculinities* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), p. 36.

541 Joanna Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 94.

542 Winlow (2001), p. 36.

of capitalism'.[543] However, argues Winlow, it was not the work itself which bestowed a sense of working-class masculinity, but the resultant structures which provided its framework. Thus it furnished an environment for the affirmation of masculinity where

> work places were almost completely male environments where the basic elements of masculinity were accentuated, where behaviour was tested and categorised and took on specific meanings.[544]

The friendships and rivalries formed in these tough, uncompromising environments enabled its inhabitants to negotiate a sense of self.[545] As Kimmel has noted in large part

> it's other men who are important to […] men; […] men define their masculinity not as much in their relation to women, but in their relation to each other. Masculinity is largely a homosocial enactment.[546]

Thus, the homosocial space becomes a crucial element in masculine construction and performance. However, while the workplace may offer the ultimate homosocial space, in McDougall's work it remains peripheral. When we do get to see Jake's place of work in *Just a Boy's Game*, while it may be presented as exclusively male, potentially dangerous, and thus masculine, it features only briefly, as something to escape from. His protagonists are more frequently shown sharing each others company in snooker halls, public bars, or stairwells. These are spaces over which they can exercise far more control than the workplace.

While work may be seen as important for masculine identity, Clarke has recognised a more general working-class masculine culture, which, while dependent upon the

543 Ibid.
544 Winlow (2001), p. 37.
545 Ibid., p. 38.
546 Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1997), p. 7.

shop floor, dilated into other areas of life. As Clarke argues:

> Shop floor culture has always been contradictorily constructed in that many of its elements of resistance have been articulated through specific conceptions of toughness and masculinity, about being one of the boys, being able to take it.[547]

While these elements may have originated within the specific culture of the working environment, they also came to dominate elsewhere. Cultural forms such as drinking and football thus come to be recognised for their valorisation of a particular type of masculinity.[548] For McDougall these are far more important than the actual working environment itself. 'These sexual and cultural structures have persisted as the organising elements of working-class life in the post-war, with some degree of modification' and in the process of becoming embedded, women have become elided from those cultures.[549] As Clark has argued, in nineteenth-century working-class culture, bars operated as clubs both formal and informal and the 'drink itself lubricated solidarity', where men could become less inhibited and more intimate.[550] A particular definition of masculine honour emerged, one which was wholly reliant on keeping separate from women, away from 'feminine interference'.[551] Thus, by focusing his attention upon homosocial cultural practices almost entirely based around leisure McDougall is able to dissect the ways working-class masculinity operates away from both the bounds of work and the influence of women.

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547 John Clarke, 'Capital and Culture: The Post-War Working Class Revisited', in *Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. by John Clarke, Chas Critcher and Richard Johnson (London: Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 238-253 (p. 250).
548 Ibid.
549 Ibid.
550 Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p.30.
551 Ibid., p. 122.

While being employed may be the foundation for working-class masculine identity, there is an apparent tension between the responsibility of work and the freedom and autonomy of leisure. This tension between work and play is particularly apparent in both *Just a Boy's Game* and *The Elephant's Graveyard.* While there is no genuine threat of unemployment for its protagonists, *Just a Boy's Game* portrays a world where there is the urgent 'desire to be released form the bonds of responsibility'.[552] Haywood and Mac an Ghaill cite the study of working-class masculinity by Willott and Griffin, where being away from the house and escaping from the domestic sphere was a crucial aspect of men's identities: 'The pub became an important resource within which to maintain a spatial division between the public and the domestic' and where irresponsibility becomes part of a way of life allowing for a disavowal of respectability.[553] With the public sphere seen as more significant than the private sphere, and the downgrading of the domestic, 'on the one side there appears risk and danger, the possibilities of heroic achievement or spectacular downfalls and on the other side there is the routine of the everyday'.[554]

It is perhaps Dancer in *Just a Boy's Game* who embodies this tension between work, leisure and the domestic most unequivocally in his attempt to break free from the responsibility that both work and family demand. His is the portrayal of a feckless, irresponsible alcoholic yet not without considerable positive resources. His problematic relationship with his wife becomes clear when it is revealed that he regularly fails to come home for several days and drinks to the point of alcoholism from early in the morning. However, while she physically attacks and berates him, his response is to make light of the situation. To Dancer it is a joke, just another

552 Winlow (2001), p. 38.
553 Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003), p. 38.
554 Morgan (2005), pp. 165-177 (p. 169).

unavoidable part of the game. Indeed, as Petrie suggests, beneath these overly masculine narratives there is a matriarchal underside where many men 'expect their wives to function as mothers'.[555] Dancer appears to see his relationship with his family as an informal contractual arrangement, as long as he works and provides for them they should demand nothing more from him. This is as far as his sense of duty goes. He refuses to be constrained in any way by any form of responsibility whether it is work, family, or home.

Bromley has described a Glasgow with a strong political cultural tradition of infantilised males who 'inhabit spaces snatched within a culture of poverty and where women lack even these spaces'.[556] McDougall, however, while showing us men who are prone to selfish destructiveness and self-neglect also tends to portray women 'in largely unsympathetic terms: as downtrodden, bitter wives or smothering mothers'.[557] Ultimately, argues Petrie,

> McDougall has little interest in attempting to view the situation from the perspective of these women and consequently they remain a mystery, equally remote and closed off from the audience as they are from the immature male protagonists.[558]

Mackenzie has suggested that McDougall portrays the women he writes from the perspective of many Scottish men of the period. This is largely a matriarchal society, he says, where boys go out to 'play', and are cared for by their mothers until they are married.[559] Many men, however, continue to 'play' after they are married. Thus, one maternal figure is replaced by another. This then is precisely what McDougall is describing with Dancer's exasperated yet indulgent wife and the unseen spouses in

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555 Petrie (2004), p. 34.

556 Roger Bromley, 'The Theme That Dare Not Speak Its Name: Class and Recent British Film', in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Change* (see Munt above), pp. 51-68 (p. 57).

557 Petrie (2004), p. 34.

558 Ibid.

559 *The Late Show* (1983).

The Elephant's Graveyard. Perhaps, however, it is Jake's brutalised and compliant yet perceptive grandmother who epitomises this most succinctly. As McDougall has said, when her husband tells her 'get me ready, you' there is 'no more to be said'.[560] Nevertheless, it should be noted that while McDougall does not offer anything like a feminist critique of his male protagonists, there are moments when female characters do pass comment on masculine practices. They variously employ pithy ridicule, direct criticism or show resigned insights into residual and dominant discourses, particularly around violence and sectarianism. However, while his male characters may at times display a degree of unease or discomfort with these comments, this falls far short of any serious challenge.

Haywood cites Segal's argument that it is the performance of public masculinity which is so important to many men's masculine identities, thus, should there be any possibility of the convergence of the private and the public the same men will feel the need to dislocate themselves from the private through 'domestic refusal'.[561] In other words, argues Haywood and Mac an Ghaill:

> As workers their flight from fatherhood was mediated by their pay packet: men's quest to purge women from the world of work, and their struggle to gain privilege for their own pay packet, at the expense of women, was expressed symbolically in the notions of 'breadwinner' and the 'family wage'.[562]

Dancer delights in his freedom as he runs like a boy past the tenements, down the steps, and launches himself into the off licence. However, this sense of freedom, a self-declared holiday from work, wife, and family, is immediately undercut. As the sales assistant suggests he should try milk instead of alcohol and he replies 'I'll stick with what I'm used to', it becomes apparent how ensnared he is by his

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[560] *The Late Show* (1983).
[561] Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003), p. 37.
[562] Ibid.

circumstances, unable to change. Framed behind the counter grille, hands clinging to the metal bars, the visual metaphor is unambiguous. Dancer's sense of freedom is one which is both fleeting and illusory ,and, without alcohol, of little substance.

As he attempts to persuade Jake to take the day off with him, to embark on a day's drinking, his remarks are at once pathetic yet poignant. 'Let's tan this ball and jump the wall into the other garden', he says, suggesting a barely acknowledged yearning for something different. Thus, while McDougall is not suggesting that Dancer represents any sort of genuine alternative to dominant discourses of masculinity, his actions being ultimately futile and unrewarding, and in many ways conforming to those dominant discourses, he does allow him a degree of limited awareness of his circumstances. However, the narrative simultaneously denies him the ability to fully grasp the consequences of those circumstances or articulate any clear alternatives other than evasion.

Dancer, more than anyone, sees freedom in 'managing the formal system', constructing his own day through self-direction, 'the preservation of personal mobility' and the 'thwarting of formal organisational aims'.[563] In this opposition between the formal and the informal within working-class culture, antinomy is frequently marked by a withdrawal into the informal and expressed in its characteristics mode as being just beyond the reach of 'the rule', what Willis has called 'having a laff'.[564] This then functions as a crucial means of overcoming boredom, problems and hardship, indeed almost anything.[565] While fighting may

563 Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (New York: Columbia Press, 1977), pp. 26; 27; 28.
564 Ibid., p. 22; 23.
565 Ibid., p. 29.

valorise status, as it does for Jake, for Dancer, masculine presence may be affirmed by other practices such as 'being funny or being good at 'blagging'.[566] Dancer, however, is not alone. McDougall shows us a world where most of the men are attempting to manage the formal system in some way, attempting to evade the presence of authority and the perception of authority as an emasculating power relation. Several men have taken the day off work to visit Clatty Bella; younger men and boys congregate in gangs around the tenements; Jake's foreman remarks on how many men regularly make some excuse to take Fridays off; old John spends his working day reading in a toilet cubicle, getting his apprentice to bring him tea rather than teaching him his trade. Thus, like Dancer, while they may seek to escape from what is expected of them as men, the alternative they construct fails to consist of anything other than infantile, hedonistic, or destructive practices.

It is in *The Elephant's Graveyard* where 'the pressure to be a successful breadwinner' becomes a 'source of strain and conflict, not pride and motivation'.[567] However, where Dancer is unable to reflect upon his position and circumstances, and why he makes particular choices with anything approaching real understanding, Jodie in *The Elephant's Graveyard* has the prodigious cognitive ability to set him apart from other similar working-class men, and most saliently, have an affective influence upon Bunny. For Jodie and Bunny, while their escape into the surrounding countryside is initially presented as a way of avoiding both their wives and work, it cautiously becomes something of a far more transformative nature.

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[566] Willis (1977), p. 35.
[567] Kimmel, p. 265.

On the surface this is a celebration of being irresponsible, about the guilt of lying to their wives and the subsequent joyful release they achieve in each other's company. But, as Farquhar suggests, 'this is not about escaping your spouse; it's about finding yourself again'.[568] From the opening establishing shot with the camera slowly panning across the tenements, set in relief against the hills and brooding skies with its cranes and shipyards, all Bunny can do is look back at this man-made blight on both environment and people's lives. The ensuing drink, cigarettes, physical games, games of the imagination, boyish unselfconscious companionship which Bunny and Jodie subsequently indulge in, within the restorative setting of the country, understandably brings a lightness and sense of humanity to their mood.

However, this flight from work, wives, and responsibility takes on qualities and meaning which Jodie interprets as a way of buying time to think, time to question the residual and dominant discourses which condition their lives and their constructions of masculinity. Thus it becomes 'a long cool tilt at the work ethic, family and education'.[569] Jodie recognises the conflict between husbands and wives is born out of their frustrations and the limited options of their environment: 'You get neither chance nor choice and spend your life using your wife or your work as an excuse for never having done anything'. While Jodie is able to articulate their barely bearable existence of habituated repetition, inactivity, and stasis, and alludes to alternative and emergent discourses, without narrative closure, as the play ends with a tangible sense of bathos, we are left merely to anticipate Bunny's return to alienation from both his wife and his work.

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[568] *Razor Sharp* (2006).
[569] Lane (1976).

4.5 Clydesideism, the Hard Man, and Dysfunctionality

McDougall then, is particularly concerned with the ways existing, dominant and residual working-class cultural practices impact on the construction and performance of masculinities and how these are worked through in the spheres of work, leisure, and family. I would now like to examine how a number of more specific cultural traditions which feature in McDougall's work function within the narratives. While the three plays would appear to inhabit a space within the general social realist tradition of British film and television, in stripping his stories back to raw, frequently unpleasant, everyday events and denying his characters strongly dramatic motives for their actions, McDougall's bleak vision extinguishes the optimism, hope, agency and ideological dimensions that feature in a number of other contemporaneous social realist works, notably those of Ken Loach and Jim Allen. As such, it is the more geographically and culturally specific literary tradition of Clydesideism and the notion of the 'hard man' which furnishes McDougall's work with much of its more distinctive flavour, and this is particularly the case with *Just a Boy's Game*.

McDougall's particular masculinities are at once oppressive, childish, selfish, destructive, self-destructive and deeply dysfunctional. Most of the older men are dissolute, lazy, bigoted, drunks and frequently infantilised, physically, emotionally and intellectually, within his narratives. They are frequently shown to be obsessively partisan in terms of sectarianism, and where the 'other' is in evidence it is likely to be in the form of women, Protestants or Catholics, rival gangs, police or simply other males not unlike themselves. They can exercise no real power in relationships at work, but they can attempt to exercise power in their relationships and opposition to

the ‘other’. Trapped and oppressed, they resort to a futile and pointless power struggle. Here then is working-class masculinity as defined not by job, itself a subservient role, but by the protagonists’ own self-created worlds. This masculinity is then worked out through power struggles within the social and the domestic sphere, and violence, and the threat of violence through both language and action,, permeates every aspect of these power struggles, creating an enduring image of dysfunctionality.

Whyte has traced the emergence and history of the dysfunctional working-class Scottish male, colloquially known as the ‘hard man’, through a variety of literary sources going back to at least the 1930s in the work of Long and re-emerging in the 1980s and 1990s with Kelman and Welsh. Whyte, however, also notes a certain contradiction within the literature. In Long’s *No Mean City* for example representing the male protagonist as having the status of ‘victim’, which lends a sense of pathos and tends to ‘feminise’ him, at odds with one who wants to be so resolutely masculine.[570] Whyte maintains that since the role of hard man is based so resolutely on performance, it reflects a high degree of vanity, a characteristic more often associated with, although not without considerable contention, women.[571]

Whyte also recognises a rural-urban dichotomy, where ‘femininity’ has become associated with closeness to the land.[572] The city conversely ‘destroys men’s dreams of femininity. In an industrial environment women cannot *be* women. All they can be is a distorted, deformed version of the feminine role or an equally

[570] Christopher Whyte,’ Masculinities in Contemporary Scottish Fiction’, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 34.3 (1998), 274-285 (p. 274).
[571] Ibid., p. 276.
[572] Ibid., p. 274.

unacceptable mimicking of the masculine'.[573] The effect, according to Whyte, 'is to project the responsibility for comforting and nurturing into male companionship'.[574] Consequently it is other men who come to fulfill the feminine function which wives and partners have abandoned. This idea is perhaps most succinctly embodied in *Just a Boy's Game* when Dancer's wife acknowledges the pre-eminence of his relationship with Jake over that which he has with his wife. 'You're always with McQuillan' she says, 'you should have married him, he's got a grip over you'. By turn Dancer acknowledges the tenuousness and incompatibility of that relationship; 'we're only related through drink'. Despite this, however, and the fact that much of the narrative is brutal, cruel, and lacking in finer emotion, there are some genuinely surprising and tender exchanges between Dancer and Jake, reflecting the crucial importance to the protagonists of male companionship in a comforting sense. However, as Petrie has argued, while the narratives may deal perceptively with male friendships, they at once portray them 'as an extension of the code of the playground'.[575]

Whyte goes on to account for the re-emergence of urban Scotland and the hard man in particular, in more recent Scottish fiction as 'an outpouring of the 'hard man' […], gripped by death throes, a terminal form of masculinity'.[576] If, by the 1990s, he was becoming something of an anachronism, then his 1970s incarnation in McDougall's work shows him at his ubiquitous height, operating within a working-class environment which tolerates or perhaps endorses his violent behaviour. Here the

[573] Whyte (1998), pp. 274-285 (p. 274).
[574] Ibid.
[575] Petrie (2004), p. 21.
[576] Whyte (1998), pp. 274-285 (p. 279).

dominant and residual forms of culture embodied in the hard man appear to conflate within a deeply conservative and slow moving cultural milieu.

Catherine Munroe in her examination of literature and recent film suggests that the struggle for many urban Scottish males to become 'real hard men' is a direct consequence of 'their inability to break free from the limitations of their community', and 'is part of the interplay between power and powerlessness'.[577] She goes onto argue that the notion of Clydesideism has become the most dominant discourse in late twentieth-century Scottish film and literature.[578] John Caughie has described the discourse as 'a modernised myth of male industrial labour […] pub and football field alive and in place, surfacing […] in the celebration of a real Glasgow' beneath the lives of the middle-classes.[579] Thus, the Clydesideism of film and literature focuses on the 'working-classes or the underbelly of these cities, riddled with crime, violence, drugs, and alcoholism' which is so vividly delineated by McDougall.[580]

Munroe defines Clydesideism thus:

> Taking its name from the Firth of Clyde, the river that was responsible for the transformation of Glasgow into a centre for international shipping during the age of industrialisation. Clydesideism is associated with gritty realism and the urban working-class.[581]

Caughie argues, however, that through literature and film it has become

> the mythology of the Scottish twentieth-century, the discourse which seems currently the most potent, and not yet universally acknowledged as mythology.[582]

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[577] Catherine M. Munroe, 'From Highlander to Hard Man: Representations of Scottish Masculinity in 1990s Cinema' (unpublished Master's thesis, York University, Ontario, 2000), p. v.

[578] Ibid., p. 9.

[579] John Caughie, 'Representing Scotland: New Questions for Scottish Cinema', in *From Limelight to Satellite: a Scottish Film Book*, ed. by Eddie Dick (Edinburgh: Scottish Film Council and BFI, 1990), pp. 13-31 (p. 16).

[580] Munroe (2000), p. 63.

[581] Ibid., p. 9.

[582] Caughie (1990), pp. 13-31 (p. 16).

As Munroe has observed, Clydesideism is as witty as it is hard and often brutal, a real world antidote to the more ancient myths of Scotland. Central to the understanding of Clydesideism is the male hero, one who may, as in contemporary literature and film be engaged in a struggle around identity and loss.[583] 'Determined by the harshness of their community and environment', their masculinity is defined by their displays of power and is frequently characterised by the 'perpetual cycle of addiction and hard luck'.[584]

The hard man identity reinforces a particular form of masculinity through a particularly precise and exacting performance. In discussing the performative, Butler contends:

> Acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts, which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if the reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse.[585]

As a form of hegemonic gender identity, the hard man masculinity is performed constantly and to a degree self-consciously until it becomes naturalised in particular places. Here the performance demands a high degree of self-reliance, eschews familial obligations, and is crucially performed almost exclusively for other men.

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583 Munroe (2000), p. 11.

584 Ibid., p. 50; 63.

585 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*: *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* 2nd edn (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990, repr. 2007), p. 185.

For Jake, the archetypal hard man, with his self-defining existential masculinism, subject to the values in which he is socialised, identity is located where violence brings self-respect. Indeed, while

> violence may not be the last option to which he could resort, it may actually be his first option. It becomes an activity that represents a masculine currency that is recognised by all he encounters, an activity in which participation brings no shame.[586]

This performance of masculinity is endowed with its authenticity partly because it has been passed down, is a product of acculturation, and operates as a powerful residual discourse and partly because of its high degree of corporeality. As we have already seen, the physical practices of work frequently determine working-class men's masculine constructions and performances elsewhere.

Jake himself is shown as brutal, hard and extremely violent. It is suggested that what we see are but the vestiges of his even tougher more violent past. Yet he is also shown to be someone who is deeply scarred, damaged, and capable of some degree of sensitivity. As Wright has remarked 'behind the tough façades there are fears, anxieties and the urge to be admired and stand out from the crowd'.[587] His emotional inarticulacy is described perfectly by McDougall himself as 'a mass of emotion. Dealing with hot emotion, but you can't get it out; an inability to grasp, I'm not sure what I'm doing or why I'm here'.[588] For Jake his experience is one of blockage or a cognitive inability to successfully reflect on his own existence, half opaque realisation that you do not belong, a realisation just beyond reach. Hence his emotions are 'shifted to a physical level where they can be contained and

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[586] Winlow (2001), p. 52.
[587] Wright (1979).
[588] *Razor Sharp* (2006).

tangibly balanced' within violent conflict.[589] Yet his motivations, like many of McDougall's characters remain obscure and difficult to comprehend, in part as a consequence of their 'impassive blank demeanour and emotional inarticulacy'.[590] As McDougall has said, even for the writer, Jake is an 'enigma', behind his façade there is 'not much there'.[591]

Nevertheless, while Jake's masculine identity is entirely informed by residual discourses centered around violence and territoriality, those same discourses that informed his grandfather's construction of masculinity, McDougall does suggest that he has the propensity to exhibit 'the compassion that's trying to grow there like flowers in the interstices of stone'.[592] This, however, is only barely glimpsed within the narrative and as an alternative to residual and dominant discourses exists in a state of tension with them. Thus, Jake reveals his anxieties about expressing these emotions while preventing them from undermining his identity as a 'hard man'.

Violence then is Jake's only satisfactory outlet for physical and emotional expression. However, Donaldson, cited by both Connell and Winlow, argues that while working men's bodily capacities are their 'economic asset' this asset inevitably changes.[593] Bodies are used up through 'fatigue, injury' and, 'wear and tear', resulting in a decline in strength, vigour and vitality.[594] The body is the corporeal nexus between manual labour and physicality and this connection is further

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[589] Joyce E. Canaan 'One Thing Leads To Another: Fighting, Drinking, and Working Class Masculinities', in *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas*, ed. by Mairtin Mac an Ghaill (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996), pp. 114-125 (p. 121).

[590] Petrie (2004), p. 24.

[591] *The Late* Show (1983).

[592] McIlvanney (1979a).

[593] Connell (2005), p. 55.

[594] Ibid.

emphasised by hard labour. However, this hard labour 'literally used up workers' bodies, and by undergoing this destruction as proof of the toughness of the work and the worker', it may also be a 'method of demonstrating masculinity'.[595] For Jake, while his physical sacrifice in fighting, endurance of pain and wounds may indeed be an accepted way of substantiating his masculinity it may also be the only way he can have a physical connection with others, the only way he can feel anything.

4.6 Masculinity and Violence

While the notion of the 'hard man', is central to understanding Jake in *Just a Boy's Game*, violence and the social structures which underpin it operate as key discourses in the construction of masculinity for most of McDougall's male protagonists. As such, his writing dissects violent behaviour, exploring how it functions socially, how it bestows masculine status, how it works to undermine and retard any emergent or alternative discourses, and how it both unites and divides men who practise it:

> On the one hand, men often seem to collaborate, co-operate and identify with one another in ways that reinforce a shared unity between them; but on the other hand, these same masculinities can simultaneously be characterised by conflict, competition and self-differentiation in ways that intensify the differences and divisions between men. Given these deep-seated tensions, ambiguities and contradictions, the unities that exist between men should not be overstated. They are often more precarious than superficial appearances suggest.[596]

In *Just Another Saturday* the precarious nature of the male bond is clearly and starkly played out as the day unfolds. While there is plainly a significant female presence within the Orange Day Parade, it is the ubiquity of the men which

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[595] Winlow (2001), p. 37.

[596] Michael Flood and others, *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities (*Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 71.

dominates and is highly privileged within the narrative, with the posturing of the marchers, the drinking and resultant bonhomie, and the masculine image of the male body. The men have the uniforms, the men lead the marches, it is principally men and boys who are in the bands, and it is men who instigate and perpetrate the violence. Although the parade, and indeed the whole day, may appear to be a unifying experience for the Protestant community, it comes to resemble something closer to a celebration of homosocial bonding, and it is through their interactions with each other that the men reveal that they define themselves collectively by who they are not.

Away from the sectarian focus of the parade, however, as they retire to the pub now exclusively male, they encounter other men with shared interests and backgrounds. Yet almost immediately divisions and fissures arise, fuelled by alcohol. Their humour is both brutal and unpleasant; at once confrontational, aggressive, featuring riposte and ridicule, frequently lapsing into a series of obloquies. It is as if, at times, when they can identify the enemy, the 'other', whether women, Catholics or the police, they are united in their homosocial bond through drinking. Yet there is always the threat that someone may say something out of place or a remark may be willfully misinterpreted. Anyone and everyone may become the recipient of this confrontational humour or ridicule. Consequently any real potential for feelings of solidarity is swiftly undermined. Drinking partners, treated initially with bonhomie, are told to 'just shut up and drink'. Language is peppered with confrontational remarks. However, execrations are curiously cold blooded and fail to reveal any genuine animus. Indeed, even greetings to friends feature insults. Furthermore, when there is real and actual violent confrontation it is infused with dark humour. 'A

complex dialectics of knowledge' allows for violence to be either confronted or negotiated; 'protective friendships can be cultivated […] (and) humour can be used'.[597] For all the men there appears to be little distinction between their humour and their aggression. While the humour is aggressive, the aggressive threats are laced with humour.

While one reviewer noted that *Just Another Saturday* revealed 'the arbitrary, illogical and ironic nature of urban violence', this is not to say that it is not deeply rooted in men's practices.[598] In his study of working-class male violence, Winlow describes a 'world where male identity is expressed each day through physical strength and power'.[599] He goes on to examine how workshop camaraderie, hard physical labour and violent behaviour allow for changing reputations.

While it may be true, as Clarke has argued, that violence was an accepted part of the life of most working men, the reasons for this violence appear to be both varied and complex.[600] Men use violence 'for a number of reasons: to save face, to resolve an argument, to defend personal territory, to cajole compliance, to enhance status' or to have fun.[601] Drawing upon the work of Katz, Stanko sees 'the distinctive features of violence as strategic calculation, militaristic delight, symbolic representation of enemies and melodramatic self-absorption'.[602] Thus some men come to employ violence as a strategy to manoeuvre within and manipulate male power relations:

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[597] Winlow (2001), p. 10.

[598] Shaun Usher, 'Peeling the Orangemen Bare', *Daily Mail,* 14 March 1975.

[599] Winlow (2001), back cover.

[600] John Clarke, *Football Hooliganism and the Skinheads* (Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies & University of Birmingham, 1973), p. 2.

[601] Elizabeth E, Stanko, 'Challenging the Problem of Men's Individual Violence', in *Just Boys Doing Business?; Men, Masculinities and Crime* (see Jefferson above), pp. 32-45 (p. 43).

[602] Ibid.

> Complex systems of identity and self-perception are at stake – honour, shame, status and a working appreciation of the seductions and repellent aspects of violence.[603]

Inevitably, argues Stanko, it is 'poor young men with dismal prospects for the future who have good reason to escalate their tactics of social competition and become violent'.[604] Consequently, it is here that violence for status is particularly prevalent. As Connell has argued the 'agency of subordinated and marginalized groups […] conditioned by their specific location [...] may result in protest masculinity'.[605] This, he says,

> embodies the claim to power typical of regional hegemonic masculinities […] but which lacks the economic resources and institutional authority that underpins global patterns.[606]

Violence is an 'immediate aggressive style of behaviour' that Tolson argues emerges out of 'memories of poverty and physical insecurity'.[607] While *Just a Boy's Game* shows Jake's environment to be marked by both poverty and deprivation, this could be seen as relative when compared with that of his grandfather's youth or the poverty of the 1880s when the razor gangs first emerged. Thus for Jake and other younger men and boys, memories of deprivation become culturally imposed and these are bound up with memories of violent behaviour and achievement through violence. Jake's grandfather is perceived to have 'successfully' asserted his masculinity in the harshest of conditions and Jake must, in turn, do the same. This attachment to residual notions of violence and masculinity is for some men the recognition of, what Winlow has called, 'their working-class cultural inheritance'.[608]

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603 Stanko (1994), pp. 32-45 (p. 44); Winlow (2001), p. 9.
604 Stanko (1994), pp. 32-45 (p. 44).
605 R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept, *Gender and Society*, 19.6 (December 2005), 829-859 (p. 847).
606 Ibid, p. 848.
607 Tolson (1977), p. 28.
608 Winlow (2001), p. 45.

Polk has recognised a particularly strong link between the masculine image of males and the social organisation of production: 'The harsher the environment and the scarcer the resources the more manhood is stressed as inspiration and goal'.[609] While the positioning of working-class men as economically marginalised within a patriarchal society might be seen to destabilise patriarchy, it is because masculine power is threatened that it must be fought for even more vigorously, thus reinforcing dominant discourses. For Jake's grandfather verbally aggressive behaviour towards both his wife and Jake is a reassertion of his patriarchal position, even when everything around him signifies his lack of power. Similarly, the violent aggressive behaviour of Jake's usurpers is simply a mask, a veneer which disguises their impotency with the very absence of any ability to make some impact on the world. While the violence itself might be perceived as somewhat aberrant, it is the rules, reputations and practices which become embodied in the razor gangs and sectarian groupings and seek to bolster that behaviour, that maintain a more formal perception of masculine power. Thus the gangs and lodges emerge as a grotesque, impoverished mirror image of the patriarchal power regimes which operate in the wider world.

Drawing together a number of cultural theorists, DeKeseredy and Schwartz have recognised several factors which serve to influence the use of violence among men. While in accordance with Messerschmidt and Polk, they assert that there is no single way of being a man that influences male behaviour and that includes violence, they also say, as suggested by Connell, that while in fact 'society functions in many ways

[609] Kenneth Polk, 'Masculinity, Honour and Confrontational Homicide', in *Just Boys Doing Business?: Men, Masculinities and Crime* (see Stanko above), pp. 166-188 (p. 186).

to promote male violence, there remain in many situations other means of expressing one's masculinity'.[610] However, for those who may lack the particular relevant skills to do so, under intense pressure to 'be a man' they may resort to other methods. Violence, they conclude, is a resource that some men can employ when they lack other resources for 'accomplishing masculinity' and is thus simply a means of expressing masculinity in a culturally specific way.[611] For those who may resort to violent behaviour, their decision is most specifically affected by their class positions within a structure which denies them the appropriate resources to accomplish their identities in any other way.[612] As Polk has argued, for those disadvantaged in terms of economic resources, any attempt to reconcile this with a sense of masculinity may be rendered problematic, consequently 'for such males the expression and defence of their masculinity may come through violence'.[613]

Resources are limited for McDougall's protagonists, their jobs being generally menial, or subservient. Apart from John with his mace throwing, they hold no important positions in society and they have minimal economic capital. However, where all his male characters are aware of and collude in some way, with this violent world, not all feel the need to express their own masculinity through violence. While Tanza and Dancer use aggressive behaviour they are ultimately forced into a genuinely violent confrontation. Similarly, John uses defiant aggressive behaviour in both his performance as drum major and in caustic pub banter with other males, but recoils from the actuality of violence. Others, like John's Catholic friends are prepared to utilise it, since it is the backdrop although not the focus of their lives.

610 Walter C. DeKeseredy and Martin D. Schwartz, 'Masculinities and Interpersonal Violence', in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (see Messerschmidt above), pp. 353-366 (p. 356).
611 DeKeseredy (2005), pp. 353-366 (p. 356).
612 Ibid.
613 Polk (1994), pp. 166-188 (p. 186).

What McDougall appears to be suggesting is that all males will have to actively participate in violent confrontations as an affirmation of their masculinity, whether they wish to or not. For his protagonists, while they remain within their deprived and marginalised environment, they will be unable to escape engaging violently with other men. As Messerschmidt has argued:

> Some marginalised males adapt to their economic […] powerlessness by engaging in, and hoping to succeed at, competition for personal power with rivals of their own class […] and gender. For these marginalised males, the personal power struggle with other marginalised males becomes a mechanism for exhibiting and confirming masculinity.[614]

Here, according to Messerschmidt, masculinity is confirmed within a tough, collective performance where violence becomes a major vehicle for the assertion of that masculinity.[615]

It would appear then that a sense of alienation and disempowerment as a direct result of their class positions within the social structure and the relative deprivation of their lived experiences, together with a celebration of physicality and toughness garnered from harsh and demanding working environments, conflate to become a gendered strategy of action to accomplish masculine status through available alternative resources. This is especially apparent in the final brutal, visceral, and bloody fight scene in *Just a Boy's Game* as it is played out in the industrial setting of containers, cranes, forklifts, and merchant ships. This is the very work place that some of the participants may occupy during the working day, frequently but momentarily escape from, but where they can never exercise control or power. The narrative seems to suggest that violence and the work place are immutably

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[614] James W. Messerschmidt, *Capitalism, Patriarchy and Crime: Towards Socialist Feminist Criminology* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1986), p. 70.

[615] Ibid.

connected and that the brutality of the men's actions is a consequence, an inevitable corollary, of their brutalised working conditions. However, while the automated shipyard goes on about its business, regardless of the human drama taking place in its midst, these same men are exposed as anachronisms in a changing industrial world. Their violent actions as marginalised actors appear irrelevant and ultimately self-defeating.

While class may be seen as the unequal distribution of life chances, status is concerned with the social distribution of honour and prestige, frequently within one class based strata.[616] Winlow maintains that 'men's violence towards men involves a masculinity of status'.[617] Class and status are both aspects of social stratification, but the distinctions can be frequently blurred.[618] There are apparent tensions between class and status and different ways of doing masculinity may themselves constitute status divisions:

> Violence operates as a common means by which men could rise above other working-class males. A crucial signifier of self-image, a reflection upon a culture that favourably judged those who maintained a credible threat of violence.[619]

What is involved here is a complex combination which involves maintaining face, controlling individual space, preventing others from potentially invading that space, and being prepared to defend it.[620]

Thus, Winlow argues, a hierarchy emerges which reflects the individual's 'perceptions of honour and shame' which furnishes a structure for a 'system of

[616] Morgan (2005), pp.165-177 (p. 167).
[617] Winlow (2001), p. 40.
[618] Morgan (2005), pp. 165-177 (p. 173).
[619] Winlow (2001), p. 40.
[620] Ibid., p. 43.

symbols, values and definitions' as well as 'categories, rules and processes […] which may be specific to a given culture'.[621] Here

> violence and the act of negotiating a route through life that maintains honour and avoids cultural definitions of shame are of central concern to the masculinities of this domain.[622]

This is particularly the case for those who are actively involved as participants. In *Just a Boy's Game* it is the young razor gangs, pretenders to Jake's violent reputation. They may achieve some degree of honour in violent conflict but there is always the threat of shame. At two points in the narrative Jake humiliates other gang members, reducing them to tears of both fear but also mortification. While one confrontation involves hitting a boy in front of his friends who bear witness to his humiliation, the other consists of little more than a prolonged threatening stare, a visual challenge to either act honourably and suffer the inevitable violent consequences or be humiliated. As Winlow has noted, citing Bourdieu, 'perceptions of honour are strongest in those who see themselves through the eyes of others', which he sees as manifestly apparent with the cultural importance of violent reputations among hard men.[623]

A number of cultural theorists have identified the pleasure to be gained by some men from the expressive and aesthetic qualities of violence. Tomsen for example maintains that violence, while being a key element in the construction of tough, working-class male identities, is also an expressive experience involving 'heavy group drinking' and codes of social interaction associated with honour.[624] Within the context of social constraint and its corollary, resistance through social disorder, while

[621] Winlow (2001), p. 44.
[622] Ibid.
[623] Ibid.
[624] Stephen Tomsen, 'A Top Night: Social Protest, Masculinity and the Culture of Drinking Violence', *British Journal of Criminology*, 37.1 (Winter 1997), 90-102 (pp. 90-94).

destructive, it could be seen by its participants as something approaching a cathartic sense of 'pleasure and carnival'.[625] This is not, however, 'the romanticised carnival of literary theory […] overturning prevailing social classifications with playful zest. There is not the merest hint of utopian impulse'.[626] This is a much darker expression of working-class cultural traditions. This is what Robson has described as the 'menacing sense of carnival'.[627]

As Tolson has noted, this kind of performance is itself the basis of a style which incorporates being both physical and displaying one's feelings.[628] Thus, for McDougall's protagonists, violence has become something more than an expression of class deprivation or an attempt to achieve status. It has transcended its initial functions to take on qualities 'where everyday life becomes a place for symbolic creativity, a place where a nihilistic grounded aesthetic' is experienced.[629]

4.7 Violence and the Public Affirmation of Masculinity

While McDougall recognises violence as a residual discourse which retains considerable currency in working-class communities, for his male protagonists it requires public affirmation if it is to enhance masculine status. For a boy, this status must be achieved in the public domain, and masculinity must be tested in the presence of, and gain the recognition of peers.[630] As Stanko has observed, masculine identity, is something that needs to be accomplished and which places

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625 Tomsen (1997), 90-102 (p. 90).
626 Garry Robson, 'Millwall Football Club: Masculinity, Race and Belonging', in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Change* (see Munt above), pp. 219-234 (p. 229).
627 Ibid, p.228.
628 Tolson (1977), p. 43.
629 Paul Willis and others, *Common Culture: Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990), p. 106.
630 John Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do About Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain', *History Workshop Manual*, 38.1 (1994), 179-202 (p. 185).

considerable importance on practice: ‘Masculinity is not an essence, but simply a way of living one type of relationship’.[631]

In *Just Another Saturday* John is shown to be naïve, idealistic, and already immersed in a culture of prejudice. Throughout the narrative his masculine bravado waxes and wanes according to his circumstances. Initially he has a clear idea of his identity, the drum major, who hates Catholics, confident in the masculine world of pubs and back streets, of drinking and posturing, of swearing and the exercising of aggressive yet humorous confrontational behaviour. Long shots place John firmly and comfortably within his environment. It is only with much tighter shots at moments of stress, when he feels threatened or when he begins to have his assumptions challenged, that he appears to have doubts about the particular version of hegemonic masculinity that he aspires to. As he questions the dominant discourses of masculine aggression perceiving them as increasingly residual and belonging to an older generation of men he is nevertheless unable to find any meaningful emergent or alternative discourses to replace them.

As he is faced with the stark reality of the situation, John becomes increasingly uncomfortable. He is disgusted by an aggressive older man searching for his missing false teeth; as more and more drunken men cross his path, his face, in tight close up and shallow focus registers his growing distaste for this reality, at once incredulous, concerned, disappointed. Each shot, of drinking men, a drummer playing until his hand bleeds, men acting foolishly, builds to a disorienting effect. Yet when the band starts up again, John’s existential confusion swiftly evaporates as he

[631] Stanko (1994), pp. 32-45 (p. 44).

again reclaims his sense of purpose and identity. The confident, swaggering, provocative, and confrontational manner is restored, and he readily colludes with the maverick Rab to leave the main march and enter 'Fenian Alley'. It is from this key scene that the inevitable reality of the threat of violence is realised and from whence it escalates. As the indiscriminate nature of the violence shocks and disgusts him, with a bathing baby showered with broken glass and an old man cut in the face, John is almost moved to tears. He appears exhausted, stripped of his exuberant physical strength, without the certainty to carry on like before. As the march comes to an end their brotherhood disbands with self-congratulatory platitudes and farewells, John appears isolated.

McDougall then, repeatedly critiques the men he portrays along with their constructions and performances of masculinity. As seen from the point of view of John, they appear cruel and dysfunctional. Nevertheless, McDougall allows him to be drawn back into the familiarity of the homosocial world where his masculine confidence and certainty can be restored. Indeed, he appears genuinely comfortable with the crude sectarian humour, excessive drinking, and confrontational behaviour. Even when he is threatened by a Catholic man whose brother was hospitalised after the violence earlier in the day, his drunken bravado, surrounded by his friends, is not diminished. However, 'masculinity demands action – even self-consciously performative action – in the sphere of collective life'.[632] As Hames has argued:

> Masculinity is meaningless as a mere act or as an inward conviction of one's virtue. Like all abstractions these ideas must be authenticated by concrete experience, and tested against other competing masculinities if they are to be affirmed in the sphere of collective life.[633]

[632] Hames (2007), p. 73.
[633] Ibid., p. 83.

Consequently John must perform adequately in the sight of others and have his masculinity tested. Later, as he and his friends are involved in a machete fight, John, despite his heavy drinking, joking and posturing, is clearly struggling with this final piece of the masculine jigsaw. As the fight ensues before him, he becomes increasingly agitated and hysterical, breaking down in tears, needing to be calmed down and comforted with emollient platitudes, almost like an infant.

Polk has argued that the 'settings for confrontational violence are inevitably public, with a large social audience of other males'.[634] It is here, and only here, that males can achieve masculine status and prove themselves worthy of approbation from other males. However, conversely, humiliation and shame of defeat or cowardice may also become exposed when played out in this arena. It is the final violent confrontation, when he is hit by a stranger at the bus stop, which seals John's lack of real understanding or place within his frequently hostile and volatile environment. As John whistles along with the two men, as they sing and smile, it becomes clear that his naïveté has led him to seriously misjudge the situation. 'What the hell are you smiling at?' one of them demands, punching him in the face. As he staggers home he is now simply scared, shocked, lachrymose, and chastened. His place within this masculine hierarchy is now shown to be uncertain and far more precarious and fragile than he first thought. However, while his wounds may be readily visible, the circumstances of how they occurred together with the concomitant implications of shame have not been generally witnessed. Thus, while John's experiences throughout the day have exposed the residual and dominant discourses of masculinity as pernicious, self-defeating, and pointless, by allowing him to escape

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[634] Polk (1994), p.166-188 (p. 172).

any public humiliation, McDougall shows John to be drawn back to those same discourses the narrative had critiqued.

4.8 Identity, Affective Localism, and the 'Narcissism of Minor Differences'

While McDougall dissects the role of intra-male violence as a key discourse in the construction of particular working-class identities, he also portrays the social structures which underpin, regulate, and legitimate this violence as too firmly established, and men to be too entrenched within them, for there to be any chance of meaningful change. What these structures provide many men with, is a tradition which both unites and divides resulting in a firm sense of identity.

Robson argues that the constructions and performances of many working-class masculine identities are frequently informed by residual, even archaic, identifications with locality and region. Their experiences of social identity he says 'are grounded at the deepest experiential levels in specific regions and cultural formations […] the maintenance of particular modes of regional masculine identity'.[635] Robson recognises an historical link between this and lawlessness of localised territorial and largely urban masculinity of the past. While hegemonic civilising processes have tended to restrict the range of particularly volatile activities for working-class males, football, with its close connection to local affinities and loyalties, has developed as a 'highly charged,' public arena for what could be seen as customary and 'historical undercurrents in the development of modern social relations'.[636] Here there is 'an insatiable need for physicality, competition and visceral collectivity and ludic

[635] Robson (2000), pp. 219-234 (p. 219).
[636] Ibid., p. 221.

expression', where 'hardness, stamina, courage and loyalty' are hugely valued.[637] This then is a conception of masculinity which is manifested within a 'volatile, unpacified and passionate interpretive community'.[638]

Robson has argued that within working-class communities there is the desire which is 'ultimately towards the confirmation of boundaries as opposed to their dissolution', what he calls 'affective localism'.[639] This is characterised by an intense pride in the local area or territory which has come to represent their identity, their place in the world. Thus the notion of territory functions as a means to distinguish between similarly located working-class groups. Furthermore, according to Canaan, local territory is particularly important to those 'lacking the cultural capital to move far from it both literally and figuratively'.[640] Consequently, the 'demarcation and affirmation of place […] becomes located' on the bodies of young working-class men, with fighting becoming its most visible manifestation.[641]

Just as individual identities could be acknowledged through fighting, so could group identities be emphasised in territory, especially evidenced through football and sectarianism.[642] Robson has argued how the conflation of class, masculinity, and localism filtered into identity through football rather than sectarianism.[643] He talks about 'the broad concept of the 'blood tradition', an extended metaphor for long

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637 Robson (2000), pp. 219-234 (p. 221); Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 173.
638 Robson (2000), pp. 219-234 (p. 223).
639 Ibid., p. 229.
640 Canaan (1996), pp. 114-125 (p. 118).
641 Ibid.
642 Ibid, pp. 118-21.
643 Robson (2000), pp. 219-234 (pp. 223-224).

standing patterns of affiliation through place', the concept of 'blood' conveying authenticity and belonging.[644]

Localism and territorialism are both key features in McDougall's writing. The gangs in *Just a Boy's Game* are keen to protect their housing schemes, policing the visible boundaries that surround them.[645] From this male tribalism they achieve a satisfying sense of identity, male camaraderie and a means of expressing aggression.[646] Indeed defence of locality provides a rationale for violent behaviour where it comes to represent something tangible. In building reputations, protecting boundaries, and defending territories, the young boys inhabiting their estates are confident in their ability to challenge rivals and outsiders. However, as they confront Jake as he moves through their defined territory they appear far more limited than he is, remaining largely locked within their immediate environment. In short they have become so closely identified with their immediate area that it is virtually impossible for them to venture out of it. Thus the corollary of affective localism and territorialism is a sense of confinement within that territory.[647]

Where particular public social spaces become identified with specific territorial gangs, both Jake and John pay little heed to these boundaries. However, while Jake appears to be able to move freely across territories, he is at times compromised particularly with the confrontation at the housing estate and later at the snooker hall and the quayside. Similarly John in *Just Another Saturday* moves casually from

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644 Robson (2000), pp. 219-234 (p. 224).

645 Ross Deuchar and Chris Holligan, *Territoriality and Sectarianism in Glasgow: A Qualitative Study* (University of Strathclyde and University of West Scotland, June 2008) <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/images/Territoriality_and_Sectarianism_in_Glasgow_-_Report_tcm4-584986.pdf> [accessed 18 May 2012] (p. 8).

646 Ibid., p. 10.

647 Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Mary Hill to Fenian Alley, frequenting Catholic pubs, but ultimately this freedom is revoked and moving away from his immediate locality is seen to be a dangerous enterprise. What McDougall appears to be suggesting here is that to ignore the fierce local rivalries and trespass into forbidden territories is both unwise and perilous. While there was a clear territorial basis for most Glasgow gangs this became conflated to varying degrees with sectarianism.[648] The territorial nature of gangs frequently drew upon sectarianism as an increasingly residual resource for masculine aggression, while football related sectarianism from family influence and continuing traditions, with boys influenced by fathers to link their male identities to particular allegiances, was a particular feature of Glasgow.[649]

Thus, while affective localism may be a significant contributing factor to working-class male violence in McDougall's films, it is the more specific notion of sectarianism which also underpins the narratives:

> I don't believe in the word (respect). I was brought up in the Protestant culture where respect was everything. We used to look down on Catholics as my family was the scruff of the scruff. There was no one else for us to look down on but Catholics. I'm not into respect.[650]

While Clarke has argued that in working-class life local identities have always been of great importance, clearly these identities can operate as a divisive force as much as they are forces for unity.[651] In Glasgow and parts of Western Scotland, from the 1830s Protestant Orange lodges flourished as a reaction against poor Irish Catholic

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648 Reg McKay, 'Crimes that Rocked Scotland', *Daily Record,* 19 October 2007 <dailyrecord.co.uk/news/special-reports/crimes-that-rocked-scotland/2007/10/19/razor-gangs-ruled-the-streets-but-even-in-the-violence-of-pre-war-years-one-man-stood-out-86908-199778261/> [accessed 18 May 2012]

649 Deuchar (2008), p. 9; 4.

650 Mackay (2001).

651 Clarke (1973), p. 3.

immigration as well as a result of Protestant Ulster immigration.[652] The working-class Orange groups that were formed a little later were made up almost entirely from shipyard workers who moved between the Glasgow and Belfast shipyards. What emerged from these were the public processions intended as a demonstration of solidarity and strength.[653] As King has pointed out, 'belonging to an ostensibly ancient order […] provided an anchor to the past' together with a sense of stability, ritual and colour otherwise absent in daily life'.[654] It also operated as an allegiance, a powerful and tangible signifier of identity within poor working-class environments.

While the opening establishing shots of *Just Another Saturday* depict the asperity of an environment that all its working-class inhabitants share, one which is bleak, harsh, deprived and impoverished, a world of industrial tenements, graffiti, and neglect, almost immediately these subtly suggestive static shots are succeeded by the divisive motifs of sectarian history: Ulster marching music, the Orange sash, a portrait of King 'Billy', a sectarian tattoo. John shares a bedroom with his younger sister and brother (who share the same bed); his mother is hunched over an ironing board in their cramped and shabby home. Each shot establishes a world of poverty and relative deprivation. Yet it is the barely understood legacy of John Knox, the stirring yet anachronistic Protestant music, the floats, the Orange lodge banners, the despised Fenians, and the fighting lyrics of 'To Hell or Connaught', all emanating from an entrenched nostalgic impulse, which defines and motivates John.

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[652] I. G. C. Hutchison, 'Glasgow Working Class Politics', in *The Working Class in Glasgow, 1750 -1914*, ed. by R. A. Cage, (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 98-141 (p. 127).

[653] Ibid.

[654] Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow', in *The Working Class in Glasgow, 1750 -1914* (see Hutchison above), pp. 142-187 (p. 147).

This is a divide where 'instinctual passions are stronger than reasonable interests'.[655] While everyday experience has shown him that he shares a similar background, outlook, lifestyle and both economic and cultural circumstances to his Catholic workmates and drinking pals, it is his membership of the Maryhill Flute Band which serves to control, establish and fix John's own sense of self-identity against others. As Bourdieu writes in *Distinction,* social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat.[656] Similarly, Freud has argued that it is precisely the small differences between people who are otherwise alike that form the basis of feelings of strangeness and hostility between them. This he calls the 'narcissism of minor differences', and while it is a behaviour exhibited by individuals he also says that it can be applied to a 'caste or stratum of the population'.[657] While there may be some truth in Freud's observation that this may be relatively harmless behaviour, it is undoubtedly self-evident that it has the propensity to be precisely the opposite.[658]

Here it is not harmless. It blights people's lives and exacerbates their problems. It fuels their already brutalised existence and actions and manifests itself in the inclination towards aggression. However, while this sectarian identity may have its foundations in a doctrinal fissure, McDougall makes it clear that for the majority of the participants the theological, ideological, and indeed historical foundations of the sectarian divide are barely comprehended. As the day progresses and the march comes closer we are shown children shouting Protestant slogans of 'no surrender',

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[655] Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), p. 69.
[656] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* trans. by Richard Nice (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 172.
[657] Freud (1989), p. 49.
[658] Ibid., p. 72.

while old men spit out sectarian profanities. The extreme long shots of street and crowd scenes serve to establish how much of the community regardless of age and gender largely subscribe to sectarianism. This is a sectarianism that pervades every corner of the collective consciousness. Yet, as the day unfolds it becomes clear that for many it is less about religious belief and more about identity. Here there is little room for debate between two ideological discourses. It is far more about establishing, through differing degrees of confrontation, a sense of identity. As the Orange officials and Protestant clergy make pronouncements, hectoring the crowd about mixed marriages, the Act of Settlement and the royal family, few are listening, fewer care. As the men play football, sleep, drink, and fight it is clear that their experience of sectarian existence is simply one of establishment of identity in the face of everyday confrontation and conflict. What McDougall is suggesting is that, regardless of any emergent discourses of the period it is those that are residual, archaic, barely understood but deeply embedded, which define and bolster masculine identities.

4.9 Transformation and Escape

Neil MacKay has claimed that what lies at the heart of McDougall is 'his obsession with morality - what makes a man a man, and more importantly what makes a man a good man?'.[659] As his writing explores how his protagonists and their individual subjective experiences are played out within a social sphere, McDougall seems to be suggesting that John, Jake, Bunny, and Jodie are all capable of being good men. If they can break free from the constrictions of their environment and abandon the residual and dominant discourses which largely inform the prevailing constructions of

[659] Mackay (2001).

masculinity then they may be able to realise this. However, by providing little more than barely articulated insights into alternative or emergent discourses of masculinity, McDougall abandons his male protagonists' anxieties leaving them to flounder in troubling and troubled residual and dominant constructions. Each film is nothing short of a battle, a struggle for the protagonist's soul, but while there are moments of insight, there is nothing approaching true epiphany. Where *The Elephant's Graveyard* sees the possibility of a more optimistic future, *Just Another Saturday* is far more circumspect and equivocal about escape and progression, and *Just a Boy's Game* dismisses any sense of transcendence and self-realisation as an impossible chimera.

Physically moving out appears to be barely an option. There are few cars on the streets, travel is by foot or bus, and the further you venture, the greater the threat of real and tangible danger. Even for those who do leave, like John's father, Dan, in *Just Another Saturday* and the old drunk on the bus who once sailed with him, there is the inevitability that they will return, unchanged. It is the final scene of *Just Another Saturday* which plays out this dichotomy between change, progression, and individual agency versus stasis, repetition and the magnetic pull of social structure in succinct exegesis. Dan is aware of the appalling nature of this violent environment, 'either you laugh or you do something about it, or it will sap your ability to feel' he says. But as he attempts to focus John's confused misgivings about sectarianism and male violence into something positive he acknowledges his own shortcomings. While he has always known that there was something better and encourages John not to get trapped, he admits 'I'm weak and frightened like everyone else. It's a big place out there. You gotta make it yourself, most don't because they're afraid. I'm

one of them'. However, without any meaningful alternatives being articulated John is positioned where he has no other option but to continue his construction and performance of masculinity based on the same residual and dominant discourses which were available to his father and most of the other men within his milieu.

Finally, as John lies in his bed, it is clear that his chances of ever escaping his environment and background are negligible. As his mother tells him 'there is no one like your own', adding how proud she was of him in the parade, John smiles to himself, mouthing 'We are the people', and, as he remembers the parade, 'Magic'. This then is him, his identity. This is what he has become; this is what he will largely remain.

Throughout the narrative McDougall and Mackenzie take care to underscore John's predicament with potent images of men who have been destroyed by years of habitual drink and brutalisation, visually portrayed as unfocusing gargoyles, grotesque and incoherent. They are part of a recurrent pattern that has been generationally reproduced. For John's father this pattern is already clearly established, but for John it is only just beginning. Thus, for McDougall's working-class men, life is relatively static and slow moving, punctuated by more immediate physical pleasures within a cycle of drink, violence and poverty is one that never ends.[660] Even commentators such as Creeber with a relatively positive view acknowledge that while 'change is possible, multigenerational dysfunction and the

[660] Aytul Ozum, 'The Representation of the Working Class and Masculinity and Alan Sillitoe's Saturday Night and Sunday Morning', *Journal of English Language and Literature,* 3 (December 1995) <http://warlight.tripod.com/AYTUL.html> [accessed 15 January 2012] (para 28 of 28).

material conditions of these peoples' lives cannot be swept away or resolved overnight'.[661]

McDougall's protagonists are far removed from the 'purposive agent' suggested by Giddens, lacking the reflexivity that may engender change 'across space and time'.[662] In defining his theory of structuration as the 'conditions governing the continuity and transformation of structures', Giddens allows for a degree of modification through human agency.[663] While he acknowledges that 'for individual actors […] social structure and social constraint can be extremely powerful', his emphasis is upon agency and transformation.[664] However, as Stjepan Mestrovic has argued, this places far too much belief in people's own capabilities, people as rational agents, in control of their lives, who have the ability to evaluate received ideas and creatively bring shape to those lives.[665] What McDougall suggests however, is that his protagonists' social lives are principally characterised by their irrational, ill considered, and frequently prejudiced actions.

Where Williams has identified residual, dominant and emergent cultures competing with each other, each gradually coming to supersede the other, Terry Eagleton has implied that in recent times there 'is an increasingly close interweaving of all three of Williams's categories'.[666] Within McDougall's work, however, the distinction between the dominant and the residual cultural elements is particularly blurred. Where

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[661] Glen Creeber, 'Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man: Social Class and the Female Voice in *Nil by Mouth*', in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Chang*e (see Munt above), pp. 193-205 (p. 196).

[662] Anthony Giddens *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 3.

[663] Anthony Giddens*, Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis (*London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 66.

[664] Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998), p. 87.

[665] Stjepan Gabriel Mestrovic, *Anthony Giddens: The Last Modernist* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 77-81.

[666] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 126; Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 123.

sometimes there may be apparent tension between the two, here they coexist, almost melding into each other, barely distinguishable from each other. Where the dominant culture includes the values, practices and experiences which belong to the essence of the community and are shared by the majority, these cultures are infused with residual ones as well. Where Williams sees organised religion for example as a predominantly residual concept, here it is still strong and pervasive.[667] While some members of the community participate in and endorse it, or merely accept it, very few question it. Similarly the boys in the razor gangs are following in the established practices of their grandfathers. While their actions, to some, might appear aberrant and residual, to many they are part of the status quo, one specific manifestation of the dominant culture within this particular social milieu. Thus, McDougall shows us a world where the dominant and residual discourses have become both deeply rooted and potent while emergent ones have limited impact.

Winlow has suggested that the conservative tendencies within working-class communities have led to a certain conditioning where 'roles are learned through cultural transmission' of 'robust physicality […] group loyalty' and displays of toughness.[668] Thus, young working-class males in an attempt to acquire status but with limited ways of doing so will use cultural precedents established by adult males, only somewhat remodeled to suit prevailing circumstances.[669] They have been 'socialised in accordance with a fatalism that led them to believe their lot was basically to follow their father into one of the dominant local industries', and it is this 'cultural transmission between generations of males' which is likely to be an

[667] Williams (1977), p. 122.
[668] Winlow,(2001), p. 40.
[669] Ibid.

‘influential predicator of life course’.[670] Jake is a fighter; both his father and grandfather were in razor gangs; a new generation of young boys compete violently to take on his reputation. As Farquhar has observed, *Just a Boy’s Game* is ‘a road movie, but at gutter level, going nowhere and shameless about the fact. A story which leads in every sense to a dead end’.[671]

What McDougall’s films reveal are masculine working-class cultures which reinforce the status quo. With its ‘emphasis on private struggles for autonomy’, there is no possibility of ‘salvation through political or economic transformation’. [672] Lives are not characterised by ‘struggle, development, liberation, but stasis, failure and resignation: no ‘future’ is possible which is not merely a dilation of the present’.[673] For McDougall’s protagonists this dullness, fatalism, inherent conservatism, what he himself has described as ‘malaise’ and ‘ennui’ is further compounded by the principal male protagonists’ own cognitive limitations.[674]

Nevertheless, while McDougall never fully articulates the meanings and implications of the emergent discourses he alludes to, he does show his characters to be anxious and uncertain about their constructions and performances of masculinity. For Jake this is about reconciling his finer emotions about his grandparents with his brutal and violent reputation. For John it is about whether the disgust he experiences for the ugly expressions of masculinity which he witnesses can eclipse the lure and comfort of homosocial activity and relations.

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670 Winlow,(2001), p. 41; 8.
671 *Razor Sharp* (2006).
672 Hames (2007), p. 67; Cairns Craig, ‘Resisting Arrest: James Kelman’, in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies: New Visions, Old Dreams,* ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 99-114 (p. 101).
673 Hames (2007), p. 67.
674 *Razor Sharp* (2006).

It is in *The Elephant's Graveyard* however, that McDougall abstracts this discourse around class, gender and transformative agentic action and distils it into a disputation without distraction or context. Jodie is fully aware of the stifling class-bound environment which conditions the rigid adherence to hegemonic masculinity and established gender relations, and that the options for any genuine form of mobility are severely circumscribed. However, what he attempts to do is open up the possibility of Bunny's imagination and mental and emotional life through allusion and metaphor, things that have atrophied through impoverishment, brutalisation, and violence:

> Jodie has given Bunny the opportunity to rise from the dead, to come to life. Bunny's experience while he has been unconscious isn't a dream play but a wake up call.[675]

Thus, Bunny articulates emergent discourses of masculinity and gender relations as alternatives to the destructive dominant and residual ones which so ensnare McDougall's protagonists. He suggests a masculinity that is gentler, more thoughtful, kinder, and less selfish, and gender relations which are more equal and open rather than the brutal, selfish, antagonistic, cruel masculinities portrayed in McDougall's other films. As the narrative unfolds, rather than the dark dead ends of *Just a Boy's Game* and *Just Another Saturday,* McDougall presents us with a story which is light, optimistic, and driven by the possibilities of change and progression. However, he then proceeds to close these possibilities down, suggesting they are an impossible chimera and that men in the world he presents, particularly on a collective level, cannot change. They will, he suggests, resist or dismiss emergent discourses, ultimately adhering to those they already know and understand. This, however, may

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[675] *Razor Sharp* (2006).

not be an overtly conscious decision his protagonists make, it is simply that they can see little further than, and feel more comfortable with, ‘the rules of the game’.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the films of Peter McDougall reveal a structure of feeling expressing male anxieties around the construction and performance of masculinity. It has maintained that while his work offers a critique of residual and dominant discourses presenting them as profoundly problematic, it also suggests that for many men there is minimal possibility for meaningful change or engagement with emergent discourses.

Initially this chapter opened up the association between individual masculine subjectivities and a specific social structure, one configured around class and working-class practices in particular. Class, it argued, provides a principal framework from which masculine experiences can be examined and, for working-class masculinity this ‘is most apparent within the experience of manual labour’, together with its attendant institutions, structures and practices.[676] It has gone on to argue that in certain societies a sense of working-class masculinity can became habituated and conditioned within specific social structures that this sets the limits to the capabilities of reflexive transformation. In examining specific structures this chapter has revealed how they work to both establish and confine working-class masculine identity.

By drawing on a number of theoretical positions which focus on the place of violence, drinking, territoriality and group identity, and their importance to the

[676] Tolson (1977), p. 58.

construction and performance of working-class masculine identity I have demonstrated how specific cultural traditions help to reinforce specific kinds of working-class masculinity. I have argued that the work of Peter McDougall offers up a particularly potent and poignant articulation of the experience of this for working-class men presenting a masculinity which is both troubled and troubling. However, the narratives articulate a pessimism which, while expressing a profound need for change, offer no solutions, suggesting that any possible transformation is rendered beyond the reach and understanding of their protagonists.

In attempting an analysis of the work of McDougall this chapter has drawn upon the theories of masculinity of Connell and Messerschmidt. Both are concerned with the relationship between practice and structure. Messerschmidt argues that gender must be viewed as something which emerges from specific social practices and settings. He is particularly interested in the ways that social structural patterns come to influence, enable, and constrain behaviour over time, where they come to 'exist as the reproduced conduct of situated actors'.[677] Thus specific social structural conditions may serve to limit the many ways gender can be performed.

Similarly Connell states that 'social structure' refers to 'the constraints that lie in a given form of social organization'.[678] This, Messerschmidt argues, leads to a 'culturally idealised form of masculinity in a given historical and social setting. It is culturally honoured, glorified, and extolled situationally and is constructed in relation to subordinated masculinities and women'.[679] However, both also suggest that social structures are not simply forms of external constraint and that generally, while

677 Messerschmidt (2005), pp. 196-212 (p. 197).
678 Connell (1987), p. 92.
679 Messerschmidt (2005), pp. 196-212 (p. 198).

subjects may tend to reproduce gendered behaviours they may also alter social structures. Thus, both argue that change can occur within specific historical contexts.

This chapter, however, has argued that while Connell and Messerschmidt emphasise 'both the meaningful actions of individual agents and the structural features of social settings', in certain circumstances the extant social structures remain so potent and subjects so deeply embedded within them that this prohibits any such possibility.[680] Indeed, as this chapter has argued, while the narratives may allude to the possibilities of emergent discourses emanating from outside of their own immediate culture, for McDougall's protagonists, stitched into residual and dominant discourses, there is minimal opportunity or willingness to engage with them. Thus, as this chapter has demonstrated, through the work of Peter McDougall we can see both 'the limits of discursive flexibility' and the 'unreflective dimensions of gender'.[681]

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680 Messerschmidt (2005), pp. 196-212 (p. 197).
681 Connell and Messerschmidt, (2005) 829-859 (pp. 842-843).

5 North and South: Trevor Preston and Alan Bleasdale

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to consider the ways social and cultural changes of the late 1970s and early 1980s impacted upon working-class masculinities examining the reactions and strategies engaged in attempting to confront them. Through the analysis of BBC drama series *Boys from the Black Stuff* (UK, 1982) and the earlier *The Blackstuff* (UK, 1980) both written by Alan Bleasdale, and the Euston Films' production of Trevor Preston's *Fox* (UK, 1980) this chapter will explore how changes in Britain had a profound effect upon two very different working-class communities. It will go on to show how both writers expressed a structure of feeling concerned with anxieties around the erosion of patriarchal positions, and dominant and residual discourses of gender, through the examination of the way changes are negotiated by the principal male protagonists. Thus, while the previous chapter examined the way existing social structures worked to inhibit emergent discourses of gender, this chapter is principally concerned with identifying strategies employed to manage and resist new and emergent discourses.

Opening with Trevor Preston's *Fox* the chapter will look at the production background, noting Preston's reflections on the series as an elegy for change and loss of community and family at a particular historical moment, and document the critical reception of *Fox* particularly in relation to realism. Through an examination of press coverage for the series, it will reveal a general critical antipathy to the melodramatic representation of working-class masculine experience, while further evidence will be considered which suggests far greater enthusiasm from its wider working-class audience.

The chapter will then go on to examine the principal theme of the series – familial patriarchy. It will assess how the narrative engages with a conflation of dominant and residual masculinities particularly in the key character of patriarch Billy Fox. As the narrative arc explores the gradual decline of a patriarchal family (and by extension community) the perceived certainties about family life and gender identity are opened up to question. Drawing upon a number of critical perspectives this chapter will show how themes of continuity, tradition, stasis, and individual and collective nostalgia are played out in the narrative and how they serve to construct and confine identities.

I will then go on to explore the ways Preston deals with emergent discourses on gender and gender relations. Particular focus will be on the interactions between the principal male characters together with their relationships with a number of key female protagonists who represent new emergent discourses. I will argue that the narrative allows hegemonic masculinity to adapt by absorbing or largely rejecting these emergent discourses particularity with regard to the sexuality and independence of women, treating them as either aberrant, marginal or, to a far lesser degree, accomodatable.

The second part of this chapter will deal with *Boys from the Black Stuff* providing analysis of the production background, Bleasdale's own reflections on the series and its critical reception, again with particular regard to realism. Press coverage of the series will reveal a wider structure of feeling around anxieties about working-class masculine experience and the economic condition of Britain, as will further evidence

of the affect on its wider audience. As with the previous chapter on McDougall I will go on to interrogate the centrality of work to working-class masculine identity, however, in the case of *Boys from the Black Stuff* it is the trope of absence which constitutes the central theme.

I will then look at the implications of this absence for the apparent collapse of patriarchal identities through its key male characters. Drawing on Beatrix Campbell I will argue from a feminist perspective that they represent a conflation of residual and dominant masculinities every bit as flawed as those in *Fox*, and that the disruption of the established norms expose the problematic assumptions on which the male protagonists have based their masculinity. The narrative's treatment of their 'crises' leaves little room for the exploration of female perspective, opening up one sole opportunity for female discourse, before, as with *Fox*, closing it down. Thus, I will argue that Bleasdale fails to adequately address the inequities within gender relations within a much wider socialist discourse.

The chapter will then go onto address the function of nostalgic feeling in the narrative. As the perceived stability of the present recedes, nostalgia, I will argue, provides an illusory sense of permanence for what are manifestly fragile constructions of masculine identities. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the chief problem with the use of nostalgia within the narrative is that, while it is predictably highly selective, it functions almost exclusively as a memory of male experience and values, lamenting the loss of solidarity and power of working-class men, marginalising the experiences of women.

The chapter will then go on to bring both narratives together in a lengthier discussion about their treatment of women, arguing that in presenting gender and power relations as largely unproblematic with any changes viewed as pernicious and needing to be resisted, this represents a deeply conservative and entrenched viewpoint. While both series introduce significant female characters who question and problematise masculine practices revealing male anxieties about women moving into the workplace or having aspirations outside of the family, most of the others are either marginalised, directly critiqued or dismissed in passing.

Finally, I will examine how themes of change and entrapment are played out in both the narratives. I will argue that masculine adaptation and change prove highly problematic for Preston and Bleasdale, and that while the narratives suggest to varying degrees that their male protagonists are trapped by circumstances, they also show them to be resistant to emergent discourses which might alter those circumstances and endanger their patriarchal positions.

5.2 Tales of Two Cities: *Fox* and *Boys from the Black Stuff*

Arthur Marwick sees the question of class as one that is key to the radical changes in economic and social life in the 1980s. What emerged, Marwick says, was a greater division between a deprived North and a relatively prosperous South as the North lost much of its heavy industry.[682] While it could be argued that this decline may have been inevitable, it was clearly accelerated in a way that left some of the

[682] Arthur Marwick, British Society Since 1945: The Penguin Social History of Britain, 4th rev. edn. (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 163-164.

country in a state of shock and resentfulness. At the root of this North-South divide, however, was class.

In a sense the old communities of the working-class were on the verge of disappearing. As the roots which meshed them together became even more tenuous and fragile, the institutions which supported them and had grown up around them were becoming irrelevant and anachronistic. For the working-class there were only two choices, either join what Marr has termed 'The British Revolution' or persist with something which was going to have very little meaning in the years to come.[683]

Monaghan has argued that 'Margaret Thatcher challenged much of what had come to be considered 'natural' in the long period of consensus politics into which Britain entered after World War II'.[684] Widely accepted and prevailing notions about class, equality, industry, and ownership were confronted directly in her effort to 'transform society'.[685] 'By so doing she inevitably lent a new sense of urgency and even crisis to perennial debates about national identity, class relationships, and the economic order'.[686] However, while both *Fox* and *Boys from the Black Stuff* may operate as valedictories for class, place, and community, they also function as devices which question accepted notions around the stability of identity. Ultimately both narratives are concerned with the erosion of established working-class masculine identities and how the male protagonists attempt to preserve them and foster a sense of continuity. By articulating the experiences of ordinary men they are concerned with how the

[683] Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2007), p. 379.
[684] David Monaghan, 'Margaret Thatcher, Alan Bleasdale and the Struggle for Working Class Identity', *Journal of Popular Film and Television,* 29.1 (Spring 2001), 2-13 (p. 2).
[685] Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London: Verso, 1988), pp.103-4.
[686] Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 2).

understanding of an era's emotional relations may rub up against its institutional and social structures.[687] Here the 'confident assertions of the social character' contend with the practical world in which things are not that simple.[688]

Foucault has argued that the subject is determined by circulating discourses, and 'are defined by the positions that it is possible for […] (them) to occupy' and what will be acceptable.[689] However, while these discourses may enable subject positions they are also subject to constraints, limits, and 'regularities'.[690] Additionally, while there may be a number of discursive possibilities circulating at any one time, the subject is also self-regulating. *Fox* as a narrative conforms to this notion of gender identity with its high degree of self-regulating and normative behaviour with restricted agency providing limited variations within a tightly knit working-class community. This is one which is both conservative and resistant to the emergent and reluctant to embrace the new (gender) discourses with which Preston confronts his protagonists. The narrative presents a world where Bourdieu's notion of 'social divisions become the principles of division organising the limits of the social world. Objective limits become a sense of limits, a sense of one's place'.[691] Consequently, *Fox* articulates a world with limited taste for change or alteration, particularly on the part of its privileged male protagonists.

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[687] Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1961 repr. 2001), p. 82.
[688] Ibid.
[689] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, trans. Colin Gordon and others (New York: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 73-74: Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 197.
[690] Ibid., pp. 231-232.
[691] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*: *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984), p. 471.

With *Boys from the Black Stuff* it is the conflation of localisation and constraint which is continually emphasised within the narrative. Foucault, argues Whitehead, has suggested that while the masculine subject may be discursively enabled he is also bounded within a political category not directly of his own making. He is not free and is subject to the disciplining conditions of discourse:

> The question is, not whether men take up masculine discourses as practices, but rather which masculine discourses to engage in. Whatever choice is available is heavily localised and thus constrained by numerous variables such as age, cultural capital, body, health, ethnicity, geography, nationality and not least the unique history of that subject as an individual.[692]

While Bleasdale takes a particularly bleak and sombre view to the new prevailing conditions, acknowledging defeat and subsequent lapse into madness where meaningful change is impossible for those men who have become marginalised, *Fox* recognises change as something that can be adapted to, but very much on one's own terms. However, by focusing on men's experiences of this change both do little to question the 'rights' of men's positions and their privilege within gender relations. If anything, the narratives are reticent in any acknowledgement of the *need* for change and since men's position and privilege were reliant on the status quo then any change that undermines this may be seen as particularly deleterious to them.

Nevertheless, while highly sympathetic to men's predicament, both also, at times, address the inconsistencies and ambiguities which that predicament unearthed. Crucially, rather than completely marginalising women within the narrative, or simply making them scapegoats, active participants or even agents for perceived masculine decline, something which can be traced in some of the writing of Clement and La

[692] Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p. 110.

Frenais, both writers have indeed written some significant and trenchant parts for women which serve to open up new discourses about masculine (and indeed feminine) identity and practices.

Despite their different approaches and subject matter, and the fact that generically they inhabit different spaces, what resonates throughout both narratives is their concern for the 'gradual erosion of class consciousness and individual worth' together with the 'spectre of negation which threatens to replace the presence of community and identity'.[693] This then throws up questions particularly around masculine identity, experience and change as both narratives are founded upon the normative assumptions of patriarchy.

With *Fox*, Preston establishes a mode of traditional South London working-class masculinity and then rubs it up against all manner of contrasting abrasives which serve to either undermine or reinforce a sense of unity and permanence. Preston introduces questions of class and regional mobility; homosexuality; higher education; the middle-classes; race; and disability to varying degrees within the narrative. While any 'direct feminist of radical address is outside its remit' argues Cook, 'it *is* dramatically putting under scrutiny a range of conservative values'.[694] Consequently, the heterogeneity of the emerging London of the late Seventies and early Eighties constantly threatens to puncture the hegemonic homogeneity of Preston's cockney world. As O'Sullivan has noted,

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693 Sean O'Sullivan, 'No Such Thing as Society: Television and the Apocalypse', in *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism*, ed. by Lester D. Friedman, 2nd. edn (London: Wallflower Press, 2006), pp. 223-42 (p. 224).

694 Jim Cook, '*Out* and *Fox*: Better Popular Television Than We Deserve?', in *Made for Television: Euston Films Limited,* ed. by Manuel Alvarado and John Stewart (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 144).

> by the 1980s the South looked more like transient territory where class barriers and neighbourhood identity might seem to matter less than capital and freedom of movement.[695]

This then is a story about adaptation, but specifically male adaptation, where existing elements and practices of masculinity are impugned, but residual vestiges and structures remain relatively intact.

Bleasdale on the other hand with his Liverpool based drama *Boys from the Black Stuff*, deals exclusively with unemployment and its consequences for its male protagonists. He presents the North as a location 'defined by its obsessive regionalism and sense of local identity and history' and perhaps a more entrenched view of working-class masculinity.[696] Furthermore the immediate consequences of economic and subsequent social change were to have a far more negative and detrimental effect on many aspects of Northern life than of that in the South. Here, however, there is little if any room for adaptation. Thus, *Boys from the Black Stuff* is a cataclysmic and conclusive tale where the protagonist's ultimate destiny is infused with a desperate and largely redundant nostalgia for a time when they considered masculine identities and men's patriarchal positions to be more stable.

Ultimately both Preston and Bleasdale express a structure of feeling which conveys how individual experience and emotion are connected to wider social and economic structures. These are social experiences which exist outside of official consciousness or the dominant ideology. As such they seek to describe 'emotional as well as cognitive frameworks' describing the anxieties, impulses, and blindnesses

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[695] O'Sullivan (2006), pp. 223-42 (p.224).
[696] Ibid.

of the period, those which were experienced by men.[697] By the early 1980s changes in economic, social, and cultural circumstances demanded concomitant changes in masculine practices and gender relations. Whether shifts in working patterns or the position of women, these were to have important consequences for the reconfigurations of masculinity. However, while Preston and Bleasdale acknowledge these pressures upon traditional, established working-class masculinities it is something which both feel uncomfortable with. Ultimately, as this chapter will show, theirs is a disavowal of new discourses of gender relations and masculinity as their protagonists retreat further into residual discourses.

5.3 *Fox*: Introduction

Fox emerged from Thames' subsidiary Euston Films which had been set up in 1971 to produce dramas entirely on film and largely eschewed studio locations, ensuring lower production costs and greater verisimilitude.[698] Preston's lineage had been to work on many of these including *Special Branch* (UK, 1969-74) and 'the stylised fictional realism' of *The Sweeney* (UK, 1975-78), as well as other 'tough' generically situated ABC/Thames drama series such as *Callan* (UK, 1967-72) and *Public Eye* (UK, 1965-75).[699] Brought up in South London, this milieu has, according to Williams, informed much of his writing. By his own admission he was 'a bit of a tearaway when young and, for a time, he had considered a career as a boxer'.[700] As Preston himself has claimed, much of his writing was biographical, about 'people I

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697 Morag Shiach, 'A Gendered History of Cultural Categories', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams,* ed. by Christopher Prendergast (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp 51-70 (p. 58).

698 Roddy Buxton, 'Behind the Screens: Cinema for Television', *Transdiffusion Broadcasting System* <http://www.transdiffusion.org/emc/behindthescreens/cinema_for_tele.php> [accessed 2 December 2011]

699 Ibid..

700 John Williams, 'Preston, Trevor', *Screenonline* (BFI, [n.d.]) <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/1157184/> [accessed 5 December 2011]

have known or heard about'.[701] Thus, *Fox*, while a melodrama, emerges from lived experience, one which Preston himself had witnessed. The series was directed by Jim Goddard who had previously worked with Preston on its smaller scale and more generically precise maquette, *Out* (UK, 1978) and indeed with Bleasdale on *The Blackstuff*, and had similar, although not exclusive, experience in crime genres. With comparable working-class backgrounds they developed a particularly close working relationship.[702]

Lez Cooke maintains that *Fox* conforms to Preston's ethos of 'presenting a sympathetic portrayal of a working-class fraternity in South London'.[703] As Jim Goddard has explained, 'it was about loyalty, working-class loyalty, working-class villain loyalty'.[704] With *Fox*, Preston endeavours to establish the demise of the working-class as something to lament, honest, hardworking, family based, with its own traditions, structures and ethics, but not without its faults. If, as Peter Ackroyd has suggested, London 'has always provoked sensations of loss' as well as continuity, then what is explored here are those sensations for a specific strata of its inhabitants.[705] However, with its emphasis on the fraternal, the narrative necessarily privileges those sensations experienced by men.

Generically *Fox* is an epic serial, a dynastical melodrama concerned with familial disputes and conflict but where the protagonists are invariably united against outside forces. It is heavily infused with elements of traditionally regarded 'male' genres

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701 *King Billy* with Audio Commentary Featuring Trevor Preston and Jim Goddard, [included in *Fox: The Complete Series* DVD, Network, 2007].
702 Ibid.
703 Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History* (London: BFI, 2003), p. 150.
704 Ibid.
705 Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 121.

including the gangster film, boxing drama, film noir, and action thriller and explores ostensibly masculine narrative themes such as revenge, duty and honour. It also features, however, strong elements of the traditionally regarded 'female' genre, the soap opera with its open-ended, cliffhanger episodes and multi-stranded narratives dealing with personal disclosure, feelings and emotions, and set as much in domestic settings as public spaces. However, while *Fox* incorporates a number of features from a variety of genres, it also has elements of what Jim Cook calls 'social drama'.[706] As Cook has argued, it is this combination of realism, social drama, and thriller which makes it so distinctive.[707] While its realism emerges from its locations and its 'recognisably working-class idiom', the 'circumscribed society, the family, the flawed characters, the external pressures, the violent conflicts' provides its melodrama:

> The narrative takes place within a London that's rapidly changing, very symbolical of the wider changes in society under the narrative of Thatcherism and keys into Trevor Preston's own reaction to this and his upbringing as a working-class Londoner.[708]

Indeed, it is these changes which both Goddard and Preston have explicitly lamented, as Preston has said: 'We were very passionate about London and what was happening to it'.[709] Preston has described *Fox* as 'a love song to London and the London people' and while he recognises what was happening to London was happening in other cities, he demurs the 'decline of life in London' and the disappearance of certain 'types of families'.[710] He saw the drama as a response to

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[706] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 139).
[707] Ibid, p. 140.
[708] Ibid, pp. 140 -141; Williams, 'Preston, Trevor', [n.d.].
[709] *King Billy* (2007).
[710] Peter Keating, 'South London Slick', *Times Literary Supplement,* 28 March 1980; Kenneth Hughes, 'New Family Blockbuster: The Fox Saga', *Daily Mirror* , 8 March 1980; Baz Bamigboye, 'King Bill's Southside Story', *Evening Standard,* 10 March 1980; Hughes (1980).

the destruction of a way of life, a ‘warm loving look’ at a family, but nonetheless a family pitted pugnaciously against London itself.[711]

Like *Boys From the Black Stuff*, *Fox* is concerned with place and time, portraying a kind of fin de siècle emphasising change, loss, and portent, exploring how the working-class inhabitants of South London can adapt to what is essentially the demise of their post-war working-class community and milieu. The closing aerial shot of the entire series almost self-consciously emphasises the city as one about to undergo considerable change not dissimilar to the London landscape depicted in *The Long Good Friday* (John Mackenzie, UK, 1980). The opening titles of each episode similarly essay the Thames, Battersea Power Station (which closed in 1983), and Chelsea Bridge, establishing an indelible sense of place. This is then underscored by an epic, portentous, orchestral sweep before finally moving into a more contemporary variant, signifying the encroachment of new, outside influences. This is a London whose landscape and demographic will soon be profoundly altered whether through the formation of the London Dockland Development Corporation in 1981 and the subsequent re-development of the Docklands and Canary Wharf or the de-regulation of the City in 1986, both heralding the demise of traditional heavy industries requiring both physical labour and a highly localised labour force. It is this very moment that witnessed the ‘end of the industrial economy and the start of the bland virtual economy and the new masculinity of the deregulated City’.[712]

Throughout the narrative the dialogue engaged in by its characters reiterates and emphasises that this is a London that no longer belongs to them, and more generally

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711 Anon, ‘*Fox’, Evening Standard,* 10 March 1980; Bamigboye (1980).
712 *A History of Modern Britain: Revolution 1979-90*, BBC2, 12 June 2007, 21.00.

that no longer belongs to the working-class, if indeed it ever did.[713] Perhaps the most revealing comments are made by Rene, patriarch Billy Fox's daughter-in-law. In a relatively straightforward commentary on changing times, not dissimilar to the opening scene in Preston's previous drama series *Out*, she opines:

> I'm beginning to hate London – it's changed – not like it was when we were kids, its dying slowly, bit by bit, nobody laughs, nobody whistles, it's all grab, grab, grab, money, money, money, too many cars, too many drunks, too many foreigners, filth everywhere, not a place to raise kids,

pausing only to express the reality of her situation with 'the family, the firm, the house, we're tied to London'. While these are changes which might be felt to affect working-class (white) Londoners generally, the perceived threat to working-class masculinity is subsequently articulated more precisely through the character of Billy's son Phil, particularly in a drunken but no less trenchant diatribe about the perceived emasculation of the changing Covent Garden. What, then, the narrative presents us with are the vestiges of a recent, once ostensibly secure, and mythically elevated past.

While I will go on to argue that *Fox* represents a deeply conservative tendency in the work of Goddard and Preston, they nevertheless opened up a 'rare televisual space to address itself uncondescendingly and pleasurably to working-class values and to problematise them by dramatising a whole range of questions about social identity'.[714] Indeed, as Cook has argued, while their address was 'uncompromisingly popular' they also offered a range of representations 'of equal complexity and commitment to those of social drama'.[715]

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[713] Norman Collins, *London Belongs to Me,* 1st Published 1945 (London: Penguin Classics, 2008).
[714] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 145).
[715] Ibid.

While it is not within the scope of this project to examine the debate around realism which prevailed in the 1970s and 1980s it might be useful to reflect upon some aspects which have a bearing here upon critical reception. Within the climate of growing freedom for dramas to emerge out of studio bound production, Millington has recognised that some felt that 'taken to its logical conclusion' the quest for naturalism would lead to the photographing of a 'slice of life', an achievement at odds with the artists desire to transcend or comment upon actuality.[716] This also has political implications, since what is presented as objective, unmediated reality is nevertheless still mediated. Looking towards Williams's account of naturalism and realism, Millington argues that television naturalism is seen by its critics to depict people as 'stuck in their environment and unable to change it'.[717] Realism in contrast:

> reveals interaction between character and environment which is not rigidly determinist but which affords the possibility of social change through the inevitable working out of dynamic and conflicting elements in the social structure.[718]

Into this debate is added non-naturalistic modes of representation aimed at disrupting realism, questioning its authenticity, and engaging the audience in this question.[719]

Undoubtedly, what Millington calls 'Northern realism' contributed considerably to the success of *Boys From the Black Stuff* and the surreal experimental distancing techniques invited critical approval.[720] However, while Millington has critiqued the

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716 Bob Millington and Robin Nelson, *Boys From the Blackstuff: The Making of a TV Drama* (London: Comedia, 1986), p. 14.
717 Ibid., p. 15.
718 Ibid.
719 Ibid., p. 16.
720 Bob Millington, '*Boys From the Blackstuff* (Alan Bleasdale)', in *British Television Drama in the 1980s*, ed. by George Brandt (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 119-139 (p. 125).

'current dominance of the thirteen part drama series' governed more by established conventions than the single play, *Fox* was only partly a product of these conventions.[721] Cook argued that it was the combination of melodrama, realism, and experimentation which mitigated critical success. For Cook neither realism nor anti-realism is 'the best model for understanding' *Fox*.[722] While it does conform to notions of realism/naturalism in certain ways, in that it deals with 'ordinary peoples' lives' which have a 'representative quality' and 'provide insights into the nature of the whole society, its attitudes and values', and Preston is writing from a working-class point of view, it also employs the techniques and forms of thriller and melodrama.[723] However, while Cook sees this as a positive advantage preventing it from 'falling into the miserabilist variant of social drama' he also argues that this may well have lead to a certain confusion in its reception together with academic dismissal.[724]

It was this blend of melodrama and realism then, which attracted considerable critical attention at the time. While some more middle-class commentators dismissed the impact of its melodramatic treatment of working-class life as false and sentimental, preferring the realist depictions of *Play for Today,* it was this that others found so affective. Dunkley with his antipathy to social realism, which he had expressed in his review of *Just Another Saturday* praised *Fox* for its authentic dialogue and images which practically exude 'the very scent of the city'.[725] With its 'affection and pedigree' he said. 'I believe that when we look back we shall identify *Fox* as one of the best items in a larger body of work which will by then be seen to have the same

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[721] Millington and Nelson (1986), p. 18.
[722] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 139).
[723] Ibid., p. 140.
[724] Ibid.; Ibid., p. 136.
[725] Chris Dunkley, 'London Pride', *Financial Times,* 12 March 1980.

coherence and distinctiveness'.[726] This body was principally the output of LWT, Thames, Euston, and in particular Verity Lambert. Others recognised the 'action packed' and 'poignant' storylines as 'better than realism'.[727] 'The Foxes have blood in their veins', wrote Patrick Stoddart 'not sham kitchen sinkery', this being 'an answer to the many family sagas of the gritty North'.[728] This combination of melodrama and realism, however, also invited some criticism. It was 'deranged' and 'wildly uneven in style'; the 'cardboard characters of cockneyland' were merely 'one dimensional'; it had 'lost touch with reality'; it was a 'voyeuristic look at South London'; it was without 'the bleak authenticity of *Law and Order* (UK*,* 1978) which had been recently repeated and served to expose *Fox* as a soap.[729] Indeed some critics compared it to *Dallas* (US, 1978-1991).[730]

It was the subject matter, however, that was decisive in dividing the critics. Some, particularly in the popular press, received it unproblematically as 'lively, street smart, mean, evocative' or 'heartwarming and bawdy', evoking the 'spirit of those rowdy good old days'; others saw it as simply enjoyable and 'watchable'.[731] Far more typical, however, was Andrew Davies' response that he was 'morally affronted not by content but by the ambivalent attitude towards it'.[732] While most critics praised *Fox* for its visual style and dialogue, they also described it as 'virtuosity over virtue […] overdramatised, oversentimental', 'maudlin, overemotional' and a 'popular fantasy

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726 Ibid.
727 Martin Jackson, 'Menace', *Daily Mail,* 11 March 1980a.
728 Patrick Stoddard, 'Did You See?', *Evening News,* 11 March 1980.
729 William McIlvanney, '*Fox', Glasgow Herald*, 3 May 1980; Sean Day-Lewis, 'The Cardboard Characters of Cockneyland', *Daily Telegraph,* 18 March 1980a; Martin Jackson, 'Tearaways', *Daily Mail* ,15 April 1980b; Peter Dunn, 'The Tribe has its Reasons', *Sunday Times,* 16 March 1980; Elkan Allen, '*Fox', News of the World*, 7 March 1980; Keating (1980).
730 Kevin Cully, '*Fox', Tribune,* 25 April 1980; Martin Jackson (1980b).
731 Julian Barnes, *'Fox', New Statesman,* 18 April 1980; Margaret Forward, 'The Fox Has to Win', *Sun,* 11 March 1980; Hughes (1980); Sean Day-Lewis, 'Passing the Time', *Daily Telegraph,* 20 May 1980b.
732 Andrew Davies, '*Fox', Times Educational Supplement,* 21 March 1980.

about family solidarity'.[733] Russell Davies expressed 'the suspicion that writer and director would like us to approve of these people', who he felt 'cheap and nasty', others describing them as a 'charmless London tribe'.[734] Ultimately for Davies it combined 'the slush and the horror'.[735]

Nonetheless, many recognised the considerable popular appeal of *Fox*: 'In a society with fewer and fewer genuine outlets for self-advancement, the Foxes combine a street-wise grittiness with a fighting spirit reminiscent of the dark days of 1940'.[736] Indeed, the working-class audience which Preston sought to address reacted favourably to seeing 'themselves, their fears and concerns […] in dramatised form' with ordinary characters taking on heroic qualities and the working-class community portrayed as largely 'solid in a changing world'.[737]

While it was suggested that its audience might attract middle-class voyeurs of working-class life offering a voyeuristic look at South London it was itself not aimed at the middle-class audiences targeted by many one off plays about working-class life.[738] Unlike the work of McDougall or Bleasdale it does not share the 'tendency to confront the symptoms/effects of decay with a fairly blank, predominantly naturalistic stare'.[739] While its 'display of social attitudes to family, relationships, sexuality, and work' does retain a considerable degree of realism it is melodrama which provides its

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733 Roy Shaw, 'Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer', *Times Educational Supplement,* 30 May 1980; Anon, '*Fox*', *Glasgow Herald,* 29 March 1980; Stewart Lane, *'Fox', Morning Star,* 11 June 1980a; Russell Davies, 'The Family Business', *Sunday Times,* 22 June 1980.
734 Russell Davies (1980); Cully (1980).
735 Russell Davies (1980).
736 Cully (1980).
737 Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 140); Cully (1980).
738 Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 138); Peter Dunn, 'The Tribe has its Reasons', *Sunday Times,* 16 March 1980; Cook, (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 139).
739 Steve Jenkins, 'Ghost Dance', *Monthly Film Bulletin,* 51.601 (February 1984), p. 197.

‘emotional dynamic’.[740] In this sense it is the combination of poignancy with ‘flawed characters, […] external pressures, […] violent conflicts’ which proved more affective than realism or bleak authenticity for the audience.[741] While it may have been maudlin and sentimental ‘wearing emotions on its sleeve rather more than would be acceptable to working class families’ much of its considerable audience of several millions was made up that same constituency.[742]

Thus, the ‘centrality of relations of feeling and intimacy in the pleasures of television’ seems to lie at the heart of *Fox*.[743] If, as Smit has argued, television can be ‘defined by its affective capacity to forge a sense of connection between off-screen viewers, on screen characters’and what Kavka has called an ‘imagined community’, then *Fox* itself evoked strong feelings of intimacy and proximity to this community for its audience.[744]

With regard to the affect that the series had on a specifically male audience, while there is only limited evidence to support an assessment of this, it should be noted that while it featured a considerable amount of emotional interaction expressed by its male protagonists, it was also recognisably traditionally masculine in its representations of those characters.[745] Thus, while it was able to explore male anxieties as the principal characters fended off challenges to their masculine identities and previously regarded gender certainties, it retained enough traditionally

740 Cook, (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 144; 141).
741 Ibid., p. 144; 141.
742 Lane (1980); Cook, (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 137).
743 Misha Kavka, *Reality Television, Affect and Intimacy: Reality Matters* (Basingstoke and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 20.
744 Alexia Smit, ‘Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion’, *Screen,* 51.1 (Spring 2010), 92-95 (p. 93); Kavka, (2008), p. 17.
745 Max Sexton, *Urban Imaginaries and Euston Films* <https://www.academia.edu/4414290/Urban_Imaginaries_and_Euston_Films> [accessed 7 May 2014}.

masculine narrative and character tropes not to alienate its target audience. As Gauntlett and Miller's research into male audiences has suggested there was 'little enthusiasm for introspective men's programmes' of an overt or explicit kind, with 'emotional analysis perceived as unnecessary'.[746] Thus, while it revealed men to be open to emotional engagement this was still couched within other traditionally masculine elements.

Nevertheless, one male viewer, a London taxi driver, expressed his appreciation for the way *Fox* was able to deal with the dilemmas for many men attempting to negotiate traditional working-class values of family, loyalty and comradeship in a London were those values were being rapidly eroded.[747] Indeed, he went on to say, the show represented a London, with its male haunts of pubs, boxing clubs and cafes, which he was beginning to no longer recognise. Another viewer, while lamenting a perceived decline in contemporary society, expressed his delight in the return to working-class male pride he found in the series.[748] This idea of the passing of time as an affective experience was reflected in a number of other commentators, stressing the appeal of its poignant nostalgia as well as its action, recognising it as both touchingly plaintive and earthy.[749]

5.4 ***Fox*, Patriarchy, and Masculinity**

Fox is essentially the story of the Fox family, dominated by their patriarch Billy Fox, a retired Covent Garden market porter who is regarded with something approaching

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[746] David Gauntlett and Annette Hill, *TV Living: Television, Culture and Everyday Life* (London: BFI, 1999), p. 238.
[747] Glenn Mathews, 'Your View', *Evening News,* 11 June 1980.
[748] Bob Stafford, 'Your View', *Evening News*, 17 June 1980.
[749] Cook, (1985), pp. 136-146; Forward (1980).

reverence by the residents of Clapham where much of the drama takes place. 'He has five sons by two marriages and, although he is a family man, the sons struggle to form their own identity under his shadow'.[750] Billy Fox then could be seen as, what Simone de Beauvoir, cited by Ursula Owen, has described as, the father as God:

> It is through him that the family communicates with the rest of the world: he incarnates that immense, difficult and marvelous world of adventure; he personifies transcendence, he is God.[751]

The overall arc of the 'saga', as Preston has described it,

> focuses on the construction of the family and the internal, often very tense, relationships between a father and sons. The series is as much about male identity, ideas of masculinity, working-class pride and common sense versus intellectual and political idealism, as it is about the erosion of what are regarded as sacred family ties.[752]

Throughout the series there is a strong element of ambivalence in the writing, at once celebratory of tough working-class masculinity, lamenting its passing, and its difficulty in changing, but also acknowledging the different possibilities for gender identity construction. However, while the narrative explores issues around male sexuality and father and son relationships opening up possibilities of new reformulated masculine identities, those possibilities are both constrained and ultimately revoked.

Building upon Foucault's notion of socially constructed and unstable genders with the subject as a result of discursive possibilities, Butler sees gender identity as a performance which becomes reified through repetition 'of meanings already socially

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[750] John Williams, '*Fox', Screenonline* (BFI, [n.d.]) <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1135828/index.html> [accessed 1 December 2011]

[751] Ursula Owen, *Fathers: Reflections by Daughters (*London, Virago,1984), p.32.

[752] *It Must be the Suit* with Audio Commentary featuring Trevor Preston, Jim Goddard and Barry Hanson, [included in *Out,* Network, 2007]; Anon, '*Fox'*, *Television Heaven* <http://www.televisionheaven.co.uk/fox.htm>[accessed 12 October 2011]

established' and as such can be altered and changed.[753] While Butler's work on gender identity has highlighted performativity as a means of gender construction and challenged the normalisation of gender roles, it has also tended to focus upon self-consciously marginal and often confidently transgressive expressions of gender rather than those experienced within particularly restrictive social structures and particularly liable to be constrained by existing dominant discourses. Here normative practices and existing structures may propel, if not compel, people to 'act' in certain ways.

For Preston's male protagonists, acculturated into existing discourses of masculinity, there is little possibility of genuinely transgressive performances. As Beynon has argued 'most men are still culturally propelled to incorporate dominance, whether physical or rational competence, into their presentation of self'.[754] Although this has been increasingly undermined, there may remain residual cultural constraints and this was undoubtedly the case in the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore human behaviour appears to lean towards the maintenance of a relatively stable identity and may be extremely resistant to change, something which has been made apparent in various analyses of the relationship of nostalgia and identity: 'The reality for many people much of the time is that their sexualities remain remarkably constant and stable over time even when lived experience may contradict this'.[755] If identity is

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753 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 178.

754 John Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002), p. 11.

755 See Fred Davis, *Yearning For Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: Free Press, 1979); Constatine Sedikides, Tim Wildschut and Denise Baden, 'Nostalgia: Conceptual Issues and Existential Functions', in *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology*, ed. by Jeff Greenberg, Sander L. Koole, and Tom Pyszczynski (New York: Guilford Press, 2004),pp. 200-214; Stuart Tannock, 'Nostalgia Critique', *Cultural Studies*, 9.3 (October 1995), pp. 453-464; Tim Edwards, 'Queer Fears: Against the Cultural Turn', *Sexualities,*1.4 (1998), 471-484 (p. 472).

achieved through the repetition of discourses then is it not likely that to some degree that subjects may become comfortable within what may be simply a set of 'habits'?

Gender may be performative but, as Edwards has argued, it may not necessarily result in 'endless possibilities and unlimited potential'.[756] Circumstances such as race, class, education, physicality, and social grouping may mitigate against these endless possibilities and, of course, the existing social structures and dominant discourses may themselves be resistant to change. While Edwards has critiqued Butler's 'idealism' which he says may offer 'much potential' but has 'limited purchase' in the context of the real world, it is perhaps in this tension that much may be revealed about actual experience, in the gap between the rhetoric and the reality.[757] Thus, while Preston opens up a number of new and emergent discourses he also suggests that they do not, or should not apply, to working-class experience, stressing both stability and tradition.

Fox offers up a narrative which accords with Bourdieu's notion of doxa and 'adherence to relations of order which, because they structure both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident'.[758] Bourdieu states that:

> Dominated agents who assess the value of their position and their characteristics by applying a system of schemes of perception and appreciation which is the embodiment of the objective laws whereby their value is objectively constituted, tend to attribute to themselves what the distribution attributes to them, refusing what they are refused ('that's not for the likes of us').[759]

Consequently for these agents, possibility becomes subsumed to probability, where they define 'themselves as the established order defines them reproducing in their

[756] Edwards (1998), 471-484 (p. 472).
[757] Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.
[758] Bourdieu (1984), p. 471.
[759] Ibid.

verdict upon themselves the verdict the economy pronounces on them'.[760] Thus, the established order of the social world is bolstered and sustained. In other words 'the orchestration of categories or perception of the social world, which, being adjusted to the divisions of the established order' and 'present every appearance of objective necessity'.[761] Consequently Preston presents us with a world where ultimately his protagonists and indeed the narrative conform to the existing social order, one where the patriarchal order established by Billy Fox is accepted as 'common sense'. Thus, the characters develop a considerable investment, or what Giddens has described as 'faith', in the 'coherence of everyday life' which is continually reiterated in social interaction.[762] While exposed to greater freedoms from emergent discourses, it is their emotion and sentiment which draws them back to more residual discourses.[763] Affect, therefore, 'identifies the strength of investment which anchors people in particular experiences, practices, identities, meanings and pleasures'.[764]

5.5 King Billy the Patriarch

King Billy Fox is the capacious, larger than life, repository of traditional working-class masculine values, his presence at the epicentre of the community. While he epitomises a rather sagacious, benevolent, paternalistic patriarch there are nonetheless clues within the narrative to his more dogmatic and fierce reputation built in the past. He is, as Philip Purser has described him, a 'patriarch full of energy

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[760] Bourdieu (1984), p. 471.
[761] Ibid.
[762] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991), p. 38.
[763] Stjepan Gabriel Mestrovic, *Anthony Giddens: The Last Modernist* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 77-81.
[764] Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of this Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (Routledge, 1992), p. 82.

with hints of a combative' history.[765] The opening scenes show Billy striding along the South London streets establishing his 'manor' and his esteemed place within the community. He is greeted warmly, but deferentially, by his neighbours, flirting with a much younger woman. The music is upbeat and sanguine, redolent of the long gone world of London music halls, and the accompanying lyrics, sung in the cockney vernacular, set out the myth of King Billy. With the final line of the introductory verse 'you better remember, it's still Rule Britannia!', the narrative establishes an unambiguous celebration of Billy's Britannia, one which is pugnaciously all white, all working-class. These scenes of apparent blissful harmony are, however, predicated upon a lifetime of protracted dissonance.

As the succession of opening scenes gather momentum, the seventy year old Billy emphasises his physicality, which he clearly sees as a crucial part of being a man. By jogging and mock sparring with his son Kenny, a professional boxer, he is able to affirm with his son the importance of the body and particularly the strong, tough, unflinching body as a key site of genuine masculinity. In short, the body and its various physical expressions retain the power to convey masculine identity.

As Bourdieu has argued, there exists 'the practical philosophy of the male body as a sort of power, big and strong, with enormous imperative brutal needs'.[766] 'Strictly biological differences are (subsequently) underlined and symbolically accentuated' through a process of signification.[767] With its attendant 'valorization of virility' the

[765] Philip Purser, '*Fox', Sunday Telegraph,* 16 March 1980.
[766] Bourdieu (1984), pp. 192.
[767] Ibid.

male body may then become the signifier of social differences between masculinities and accrue physical capital.[768] As Edwards has argued:

> The body is a metaphor or the bearer of symbolic meaning and values, and a key site through which social differences are created, perpetuated and reinforced.[769]

For Billy, such capital as strength and fitness has been produced, learned and developed within 'particular social fields', particularly in the workplace in Covent Garden and the community around Clapham, and this has already been successfully converted into other forms of capital including material and economic, status and social standing.[770] Thus '*individual* bodily management' has been and 'remains profoundly important' for both Billy and the other male characters for, as Bourdieu argues, working-class men have a different, perhaps more intricate relationship to their body than middle-class men, particularly in terms of strength.[771]

However, while corporeality as a form of capital has already been converted by Billy into other forms of capital, physicality nevertheless remains a residual but no less important marker of masculinity in a rather more symbolic sense. Thus, the tough physical body is a recurring motif within the narrative of *Fox*, emphasising masculinity at both the core of family and community. This can be seen, for example, in Billy's physically dominant presence in a number of scenes, which allow him to dominate the frame; Kenny stripped to the waist, placed within the boxing ring; Vinny fearlessly adept at sliding down a scaffolding pole; or all five brothers

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[768] Bourdieu (1984), pp. 192.
[769] Edwards (2006), p. 145.
[770] Ibid.
[771] Ibid.; Bourdieu (1984), p. 190.

united and appropriately attired for pugnacious confrontations with rivals, in what Morgan has called the 'conflation of body and masculinity in practices of fraternity'.[772] The importance of the body then raises significant issues about its control.[773] Giddens has argued, 'society is premised on patterns of reflexivity in a state of turning inwards. Here there is a situation of heightened anxiety, self-absorption and a desire for control'.[774] Thus, in an attempt to affirm identity and the concern for self-image, 'the body becomes a reflexive project to be moulded and adapted'.[775] While this may be particularly pertinent to what Giddens calls late modernity, it nonetheless has relevance here. Consequently, if bodily management is crucial, then any lapse in that control becomes highly problematic.[776] An example of this is when Kenny allows himself to be seduced by a stranger whilst incapacitated by alcohol. As she and her accomplice steal his car and belongings and strip him of his clothes, his tough hard body, previously celebrated and admired in the ring, has been rendered weak and dependent. His naked vulnerable torso is revealed as both fragile and less than acceptably masculine.

As we have seen with the work of McDougall, violence can operate within the narratives as either an expression of masculinity where other avenues are closed off, as a tool to establish masculine status and as an expressive carnivalesque

[772] David Morgan, 'You Too Can Have a Body Like Mine', in *Body Matters: Essays on the Sociology of the Body*, ed. by David Morgan and Sue Scott (London: Falmer Press, 1993; repr. 1996), pp. 69-88 (p. 86).
[773] Edwards (2006), p. 129.
[774] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity in the Late Modern Age (*Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 1991), pp. 56-58.
[775] Edwards (2006), p. 129.
[776] Giddens (1991), pp. 56-58.

enactment.[777] With *Fox,* however, violence, like tough physicality, appears to be a far more residual expression of masculinity, since it is invoked only when deemed entirely necessary. While status is at the root of violent action it is less about the gaining of that status than the maintenance of it. Indeed, violence is almost always used as a means to rein in those who have transgressed and upset the status quo. As such, while it is an important signifier of masculinity, as with Kenny's boxing and in the practices of all the men of the Fox family, it is less central to masculine identity, contained within the boxing ring or used as a final resort. However, as Preston has observed, within many working-class communities there is always 'the inevitable aggression between two groups of men'.[778]

While Billy himself is clearly still capable of violent action, he is nonetheless an elderly man. Whitehead has suggested that as men grow older they 'internalise new subjectivities and sense of self', while physical decline is frequently accompanied by a 'deep and lasting existential crisis' as 'their place in the world shifts'.[779] However, although Billy is approaching his seventieth birthday there is little explicit physical evidence of this. As Lane has suggested 'he is denying his old age as he mixes it with his sons'.[780] If, as Whitehead continues, 'masculinity is seen as being about occupation, vigour, activity, mastery' then both Billy and those around him continue to recognise those attributes as part of Billy's 'essence'.[781] Here there appears to be

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[777] See Simon Winlow, *Badfellas: Crime, Tradition and New Masculinities* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), p. 20; p. 171; Elizabeth E, Stanko, 'Challenging the Problem of Men's Individual Violence', in *Just Boys Doing Business?: Men, Masculinities and Crime* ed. by Tim Newburn and Elizabeth A. Stanko (New York: Routledge, 1994, repr. 1996), pp. 32-45, p. 43; Stephen Tomsen, 'A Top Night: Social Protest, Masculinity and the Culture of Drinking Violence', *British Journal of Criminology*, 37.1 (Winter 1997), pp. 90-102; Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill, *Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research and Social Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003), pp. 38-39.

[778] *King Billy* (2007).

[779] Whitehead (2002), p.199.

[780] Stewart Lane, '*Fox*', *Morning Star,* 19 March 1980b.

[781] Whitehead (2002), p. 200.

a collective disavowal of any recognition of physical decline, perpetuating a myth which may mask the reality, a myth which is subsequently shaken by his collapse and death.

Billy's world then, has become one of control, stability, tradition, respect, codes of honour, all of which have been long established, and at the centre of this world is the male and, in particular, Billy himself. While he is content with the 'comfortable standard of living' he has achieved, he also retains 'a sentimental attachment to less affluent days'.[782] However, as Lowenthal has argued, few who are 'guilty' of the nostalgic impulse, would truly wish to return to the past, realising that their position in the present is actually preferable.[783] His deep sense of nostalgia and certainty about his own masculine identity emerges particularly strongly at the family gathering for his seventieth birthday as Billy publicly reflects on his personal history: 'Forty years working in the Garden, that was when Covent Garden was a real place with real people not like this new one' (Covent Garden wholesale fruit and vegetable market closed in 1974 and reopened as a shopping mall in 1980). His speech then, reveals one of the emerging cracks in his world. His work as a market porter is, of course, not his sole achievement as a man: 'Five sons that any man would be proud of' he continues, 'if I had it over again, I wouldn't change a thing', and why would he want to? His immediate world has become exactly the way he wants it and his sententious rhetoric is designed to preserve that state. Like Frank Ross in Preston's *Out*, Billy Fox has become a mythical construction and as Horrocks has observed 'patriarchal society has demanded and constructed a fearsome male narcissism'.[784]

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[782] Keating (1980).

[783] David Lowenthal, 'Nostalgia Tells it Like it wasn't', in *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia,* ed. by Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989), pp. 18-32 (pp. 25-27).

[784] Roger Horrocks, *Male Myths and Icons: Masculinity in Popular Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 20.

The birthday gifts he receives from his family are further testament to the man he and they see him as, and crucially form motifs of his own masculine identity: a musical fob watch which plays *Oranges and Lemons,* evoking his authentic London roots; cufflinks in the shape of boxing gloves, evidence of his tough youth (the narrative later reveals that he could have been a boxer); and a 'willy warmer' accompanied by coarse humour, 'You gonna put it on then Billy?'; give us a flash!', humour rooted in his sometimes brash expression of his sexuality.

Some critics took great exception to Billy's character and this depiction of the family. Andrew Davies saw it as 'the real horror of family life' with Billy presiding over 'the sickening, overpowering sentimentality' with 'the madness leaking through the mohair suit'.[785] Other critics saw his character as a 'maudlin, vainglorious old bully' and deeply 'uninviting'.[786] While Billy possesses, what Goddard has called, a high level of intelligence and integrity, he also displays an astonishing degree of unyielding hubris.[787] Indeed, as Horrocks has argued:

> The strenuousness of masculine identities is a pointer, not to their solidity but their fragility. As an accomplishment won and maintained with pain and difficulty and tested against a ferocious set of myths and rituals, it is hardly likely that once accomplished it would be readily relinquished.[788]

5.6 ***Fox*** and Nostalgia

Central to Billy's sense of both self and collective identity is the notion of nostalgia. This is linked to the continuity of identity, male identity to privilege and ultimately to the mythic constructions of his own masculinity, which nostalgia serves to solidify

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785 Andrew Davies (1980).
786 Nancy Banks-Smith, '*Fox*' , *Guardian,* 11 March 1980.
787 *It Must be the Suit* (2007).
788 Horrocks (1995), p. 18.

and augment.[789] Davis has examined some of the general dimensions of nostalgic experience as they pertain to identity formation, maintenance, and reconstruction.[790] The main thrust of his argument is centred around the continuities and discontinuities we experience in our sense of self. The dilemma for the individual is 'one of effecting change while simultaneously ensuring a modicum of order and stability'.[791] While survival may be threatened by the failure to adapt, there is also the need to retain integrity.

However, while Billy is subject to what Davis defines as the first order or a simple nostalgia, essentially a celebration of lost values, a yearning for return, together with the ambivalent recognition that this is not possible, where he sentimentalises the past and censures the present, much of the conflict within the narrative is centred around his son Phil's second order of nostalgia, which is what Davis describes as reflexive.[792] In some way, albeit only implicitly, the truth, accuracy and completeness of the nostalgic claim are questioned by Phil. Here there is a challenge to the historical accuracy of Billy's nostalgic construction. Phil is thus far more acutely aware of the negative aspects of the nostalgic past, and is wary of dismissing new and emergent discourses.

In the affirmation of his identity, Billy's recourse to nostalgia allows past biographical detail to be selected and presented so that he may think well of himself in both past and present incarnations. It is, as Davis says, a 'rhetorical formula' which tells the individual through their nostalgic evocation, that they were of considerable worth in

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[789] Sedikides (2004), pp. 200-214 (p. 206).
[790] Davis (1979), p. 31.
[791] Ibid., p. 32.
[792] Ibid., p. 17; 21.

the past (often in adverse conditions) and are still of considerable worth despite the anxieties and uncertainties of the present.[793] In this sense, it is highly self-referential and provides a range of existential functions.[794] Billy's is a nostalgia which, as an emotion, it is more likely to sentimentalise rather than rationalise, but also involves, in this case, only minimal or implicit comparison of the past and present.[795]

While much of what Davis says is concerned with the individual, he does take time to look at how it may affect society generally. He sees collective nostalgia as a response to major historic events and abrupt social changes which are experienced by the collective simultaneously.[796] The sense that there is a degree of collective nostalgic reaction within the narrative, 'may allow enough time for changes to be assimilated into the institutional machinery of society', in a way that they could not be at first.[797] Davis points to the acceptance of practices such as cohabitation, homosexuality, female assertiveness, nudity, and so forth and the 'concomitant nostalgic binge', particularly in the 1970s.[798] He goes on to make a convincing argument for the collective nostalgia in the seventies becoming the means for holding onto and reaffirming identities in the face of radical social changes. It is this very balance between the nostalgia for an ostensibly stable past and the clearly flagged up social changes of the present which sets up the dialectic which is so central to the narrative of *Fox*.

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793 Davis (1979), p. 36.
794 Sedikides (2004), pp. 200-214 (p. 202).
795 Davis (1979), p. 21; Sedikides (2004), pp. 200-215 (p.203).
796 Davis (1979), p. 113-114.
797 Ibid., p. 104.
798 Ibid.

Nostalgia does of course have its own political implications. The left has generally seen it as 'collective self-indulgence' or even a deliberately created and 'exploited obstacle' to 'reform or revolution'.[799] These collective manifestations of nostalgia appear at least conservative, if not reactionary, turning attention away from the key contemporary issues while looking back to 'obsolete societal arrangements'.[800] It is perhaps the conservative expression of nostalgia by the Fox family as a whole which serves to reveal their anxieties around the changing values occurring in contemporary Britain and particularly within London.

This unbearable weight of nostalgia, carefully constructed around the presence of Billy, pervades both the family and the wider community. This is invoked either through what could be described as the sentimental or the ethical. One of the most pronounced examples of the sentimental is particularly apparent once again at the central narrative event of Billy's seventieth birthday party. With the upright piano, the ensemble celebration resembles a traditional cockney, 'knees up'. As the pianist launches into Albert Chevalier's 'Knocked 'Em in the Old Kent Road', a popular music hall tune written in 1901, it is clear that all are cognoscente with the words, regardless of age. As they all join in, the scene closely echoes the community singing of *Millions Like Us* (Sidney Gilliat and Frank Launder, UK, 1943) or, more accurately, *Holiday Camp* (Ken Annakin, UK, 1947). Following on from Billy's own rendition of 'They're Moving Father's Grave', as they all dance the 'Hokey Cokey' through the house, the close communal and familial spirit of 1940's domestic market films like *Here Come the Huggetts* (Ken Annakin, UK, 1948) is once again evoked. What we are witnessing then is nostalgia operating as an emotional experience on

[799] Davis (1979), p. 108.
[800] Ibid., p. 109.

both individual and collective levels. Here, emotions are working towards the production and reproduction of cultures as well as 'individual and collective identities'.[801] For some critics this 'regret (for) the passing of old ways and customs, tending to ignore all that was brutal and squalid' was highly suspect, serving to offer the 'feeling of satisfied well being to millions of Londoners'.[802]

Billy's ethical values similarly suggest a nostalgic world of 'working-class integrity', what Goddard has called 'good cockney morals'.[803] When a young newspaper boy attempts to steal from his employer, Billy's homily to the boy is: 'if you gotta thieve, thieve from them that can afford it'. This ethical code of Billy's also stretches to others sexual transgressions, however while 'promiscuity is severely critiqued' it is done so from the 'position of authoritarian patriarchy'.[804] As he slaps his errant son Joey because of his affair with a married woman, he reproves him thus: 'You've had your feet under some poor bastard's table, and that ain't right, if you'd come to me earlier, we could have sorted something out'. However, as one critic maintained, Billy's treatment of Joey might have less to do with ethics than with Joey's 'sexual carelessness'.[805] Billy's ethical attitude is further undermined in a later episode, where, following his death, his widow Connie visits a married woman with whom Billy had had an affair and fathered a child. While Preston could have used this as a critique of Billy's hypocritical values and philandering, what he actually does is imbue it with a sense of dignity suggested by the stoical, understanding attitude of the two

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801 Jennifer Harding and E. Diedre Pribram, Losing Your Cool? Following Williams and Grossberg on Emotions, *Cultural Studies,* 18.6 (November 2004), 863-883 (p. 864).

802 Cully (1980).

803 *King Billy* (2007).

804 Sean Day-Lewis, '*Fox*', *Daily Telegraph*, 18 March 1980c.

805 Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 144).

women. It is as if Billy's foibles must be indulged at all costs, his patriarchy and memory must ultimately be protected.

Davis has argued that men and, in particular, older men tend to be particularly prone to nostalgic emotions.[806] He looks to early studies, principally by American psychologists in 1930s through to the 1960s, which appeared to establish through their particular approach to behavioural phenomena, that men were the more nostalgic.[807] It is here that Davis's model of nostalgia as a way of restoring a sense of continuity becomes particularly pertinent. In America and the West in general, he says, men tend to experience sharper transitional discontinuities of status, role and often geographical location, than women.[808] The fixing of a sexual identity, the choice of occupation, the attainment of a secure place therein, military service, the assumption of husband and father roles, unemployment and other breaks in work career, retirement and old age, these, Davis maintains, add up to a more disruptive and discontinuous life cycle experience than the equivalent status transitions in a woman's lifecycle. Women's status passages tend to occur in the reassuring context of home, family, and friends, whereas men may experience abrupt shifts in locale, peer groups and life style. Davis does, however, go on to qualify this, saying that changing employment patterns, greater freedom of choice and shifting cultural expectations may lead to many women experiencing the same discontinuity in their lives, as men.[809] However, while the situation has undoubtedly been attenuated over the last three decades, if, as Butler has argued, since masculinity has been so indelibly linked to dominant value systems, then men are likely to be particularly

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[806] Davis (1979), pp. 55-57.
[807] Ibid., p. 55.
[808] Ibid., p. 56.
[809] Ibid., pp. 56-57.

resistant to change and less flexible than women with regard to identity construction, and thus more disposed to seek recourse to nostalgia when those systems are challenged.[810] Additionally Davis sees the last decades of life as the most problematic life transition with skills becoming obsolete, previously defined roles becoming increasingly inapplicable and a decline in physical wellbeing.[811] For Billy, while he is still ostensibly generally in possession of all of these attributes, these are partially fabricated and bolstered by the residual mythology of his past invoked through nostalgia.

Nostalgia then is a key discourse in Preston's writing which operates as an affirmation of working-class identity and traditions and one which is largely uncritical. While Campbell's critique of working-class 'traditions' highlights the unequal structure of working-class gender relations, the very invocation of nostalgic feeling in general is something which has attracted considerable criticism from feminist scholars.[812] Greene, for example, recognises feminist memory as both progressive and liberating, being diametrically opposed to nostalgia which is regressive and reactionary.[813] Feminist memory, she argues, can function as an examination and critique of the dominant assumptions of the past, whereas nostalgia in its backward search for authenticity and cohesion works to achieve a sense of closure.[814]

Doane and Hodges similarly argue that nostalgia can be both pernicious and damaging for women. Their principal aim is to highlight the nostalgic retreat to the

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[810] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 25-34.
[811] Davis (1979), pp. 64-71.
[812] Beatrix Campbell, *Wigan Pier Revisited: Poverty and Politics in the Eighties* (London: Virago, 1984), p. 102.
[813] Gayle Greene, 'Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory', *Signs*, 16.2 (1991), 290-321 (p. 305).
[814] Ibid.

past (by male writers) in the face of what they regard as feminist authority. In this way nostalgia is not merely ‘sentiment’, but becomes, more forcefully, a 'rhetorical practice' attempting to retrieve ‘reality’ and 'natural' sexual identity.[815] Here nostalgia is seen as a male discourse intended to defy reality and construct a vision of the past which ignores or challenges feminist criticisms. In championing the values of the past, the male nostalgic discourse, with its greater sense of heterogeneity, is seen to threaten the advances made by feminism.[816] While this is not made explicit in either *Fox* or *Boys from the Black Stuff*, according to Doane, implicit in any form of male nostalgic feeling is a discourse which ignores the place of women in the past.[817]

5.7 Billy’s Sons

It is against this pervasive sense of an anachronistic, nostalgic masculinity that Billy’s five sons each have to struggle as they attempt to construct their own discursive identities. It is here, argues Cook, that the narrative is able to explore a ‘range of contradictory attitudes’ which is both ‘working-class based and *wider* than most realist TV representations’.[818] While all five have immense respect and awe for their father, the narrative strips this away to reveal characters who in Billy’s eyes have masculine identities which are to some degree flawed or fall short of Billy’s own. What they lack is the apparent certainty of his personal sense of masculinity, without the strength of character, exuberant style, and unquestioning confidence which marks this out as the benchmark.

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[815] Janice Doane and Devon L. Hodges, *Nostalgia and Sexual Difference* (New York: Methuen, 1987), p. 3.
[816] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[817] Ibid., pp. 3-7.
[818] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 144).

It is Billy's sons who, in some way and to varying degrees, each transgress and destabilise Billy's construct of patriarchy, family, and ethical codes, moving it in new directions. While most of them, in themselves, do not represent emergent discourses of gender and gender relations, they are, to varying degrees, willing to engage with those discourses in ways which Billy is unable. Vinny, his eldest son, conservative and traditional, disrupts the familial unity when he almost escapes its spatial strictures, planning to move away on the insistence of his wife Rene, from the cloying confines of both family and London. Thus, his position within the narrative allows for an examination of 'divided responsibilities and loyalties' along with the important influence on him of Rene.[819] Ray, the second eldest, trapped in a construction of masculinity which privileges a degree of criminality, operates under an ethical code antithetical to that of Billy's. Here, while underworld friendships and loyalties are positioned diametrically against the law, they are also placed in opposition to the well being of the family unit. However, while both bring into question Billy's sense of patriarchy, stasis and unity, both disruptions are resolved within the narrative. Vinny, financially entrapped, unable to leave family, London and his scaffolding business behind; Ray, more literally entrapped and imprisoned for a number of crimes.

In the youngest son, Kenny, the idea of a tough, uncomplicated, heroic masculinity is seen to be embodied from the opening scenes which confirm his link to Billy's own masculinity. The first relatively static shot of King Billy is infused with a gentle sense of melancholia as he picks a button hole from his own garden, something he may have done in his time working in Covent Garden. This sense of the past is

[819] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 144).

immediately juxtaposed with a tracking shot which picks up with Kenny in training, jogging on Clapham Common. As the music becomes more buoyant, it is clear that Kenny represents the future, he will be the keeper of the tradition. With a career in boxing, itself emblematic of working-class masculinity and the quest for heroic success, Kenny is undoubtedly the most likely candidate to exceed Billy's reputation built upon a powerful masculine identity, carrying it onto another level, while ensuring a familiar degree of continuity.

Ultimately, however, even Kenny is unable to live up to his father's expectations. After accidentally killing an opponent in the ring he retreats from this most violent of pursuits initially into self-doubt, remorse and then some form of breakdown, which Cook interprets as 'adolescent uncertainty'.[820] While his actions and state of mind are readily accommodated by Billy, his subsequent abandonment of boxing still brings into question his masculinity on a psychological level if not a physical level.

It is the characters of Billy's two other sons Phil and Joey however, that are pivotal to the narrative's examination of accepted notions of masculine identity and change. Joey embodies a loose, confident, irresponsible, and highly sexualised masculinity. He displays a degree of arrogance with his sexual conquests while entertaining them in an apartment which principally serves that purpose. In one episode he arrives at his father's birthday party in full drag, much to the delight of all, indulges in Mae West style innuendoes and dances with his own father. He ends the evening, however, in retreat from a suicidal spurned ex-lover by dancing with his mother. Despite his

[820] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 144).

apparent irrepressible sexual confidence he reveals himself to be spoilt and selfish and ultimately infantile, turning to others to extricate him from trouble.

While, as with working-class East End culture, drag is accommodated here in a playful, humorous, coarse way, confined principally to the sphere of entertainment, evident in for example *The Sweeney* and the working-class East End associations of Ron Storme or Paula La Dare, any notion of genuine sexual or gender transgression from normative standards is treated with suspicion and aggression, particularly by Joey. Thus, while Joey's, performance in dragging up at Billy's party, is accepted and enjoyed, what emerges later in the narrative as open bisexuality is not.

It is here that Preston rather schematically introduces two female characters who bring into question Joey's construction of masculinity and attitude to women. The first and most striking of these two characters is Bette. On their first encounter it is apparent that Bette is undoubtedly very different from any woman Joey has met before, something which Bette acknowledges as she remarks, 'I'm not one of your South London scrubbers'. Tall with a deep rasping voice, dressed like a forties Hollywood star in silk, pillbox hat and veil, with a parakeet named after the Samuel Beckett character Krapp, Bette is both striking and strident. Edited in juxtaposition against Kenny's raw, brutal, and basic aggression in the gym, her environs are characterised by the exotic mise-en-scene of her apartment, with its erotic murals, stained glass, ferns, and pot plants, screeching parrots, and stuffed exotic animals. Once again juxtaposed against Kenny's crude masculine behaviour in the shower with his trainer, Bette, now naked, serves jasmine tea in her sauna to an astonished Joey. Rather than expose his insecurity at being usurped from his usual position as

sexual predator, he disguises it by invoking humour about his class position ‘I’m a working-class hero love, tin bath in front of the fire on Fridays’. In this way his sense of masculinity may be seen to remain relatively intact.

It could certainly be argued that Bette is unique as a feminist representation within the narrative. She is financially independent, indeed financially more successful than any member of the Fox family. With a professional career, her attitudes and practices in both gender norms and sexual norms of the time, are both confident and challenging and while she might not be wholly acceptable to the family as a ‘normal’ woman, she can, through both her achievements and a number of traits, certainly gain the respect and admiration of both male and female family members.

Cook has argued that ‘given its overall masculine address it is difficult to imagine a dramatic context better able to problematise macho sexuality than the ‘realist/melodramatic’ one in which Bette explains the nature of her sexuality to Joey’, exposing Joey’s inadequacies in dealing with the situation.[821] The narrative, however, while generally treating Bette with sympathy, ultimately presents her as beyond the pale, and it is her sexuality which presents the biggest problem. When her bisexuality is revealed, Joey initially reacts predictably with shock, outrage, disgust, and humiliation but later, at the point of reconciliation with Bette, he seeks the confidence of his brother Phil. Phil’s advice and, by extension that of the narrative, is unambiguous, ‘don’t move too far away from what you know’. Bette is indeed too far and Joey subsequently retreats into something far more comfortable and far less challenging. Thus, while emergent discourses around gender and

[821] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 145).

sexuality are given a voice within the narrative, it is the 'common sense' of dominant discourses which Preston ultimately privileges.

While Preston sees Joey as taking a circuitous route to becoming another person, this transition is rather more conservative than Preston imagines.[822] While he may have been a disruptive character, to the family as well as others, Joey's eventual marriage to Peg, an older, conventional, middle-class widow, shows him as conforming rather than transgressing. Crucially, while Bette has earned her own living and made her own wealth and has never been dependent on a man, Peg's business was set up by her husband. Thus, while Joey is marrying a woman who is financially independent, that wealth has come from her actually having once been dependent on another man. Hence the narrative closes down both discourses around what it sees as Bette's transgressive sexuality and her financial independence. In this sense, once again, Preston could be accused of a resistance to contemporary feminism through nostalgia. Doane and Hodges have argued that some male writers have, in a response to the destabilisation of sexual identity and the proliferation of discourses suggesting increased heterogeneity, 'attempted to reinstate the notion of natural, fixed sexual difference'.[823] With the character of Bette, while giving a limited voice to these destabilising tendencies, Preston goes on to dismiss her from the narrative, so that a nostalgic equilibrium is once again restored.

While Joey's response to changing gender roles and sexual politics is largely intuitive and reactive, Phil's is far more self-conscious, overtly ideological and

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[822] *The Family…and the Future* with Audio Commentary Featuring Trevor Preston and Jim Goddard, [included in *Fox: The Complete Series* DVD, Network, 2007]
[823] Doane and Hodges (1987), p. 7.

proactive. However, while Phil, a left-wing intellectual firebrand student, appears to confront and reject the rigid and stifling world of Billy's patriarchy, with the blinkered localism of his upbringing, and his physical definition of masculinity, the final narrative resolution shows him as ultimately embracing his own new role as familial patriarch.

While Phil's story examines both 'the allure and limitations of family', rather than celebrating the possibility of emergent discourses which Phil has articulated throughout the narrative, the series concludes with a lingering sense of ambivalent compromise.[824] Ultimately, while the narrative allows him to transgress normative behaviour it closes down any possibility of permanent transcendence, exposing his attitudes and actions as merely provisional. In this way, argues Cook, he remains a 'profoundly ambiguous figure'.[825] Through the character of Phil, Preston seeks to question Billy's patriarchy as potentially problematic, while simultaneously acknowledging the 'common sense' validity of it. Rather than positing a progressive discourse however, much more in keeping with the times, *Fox* resorts to a deeply conservative residual discourse articulated decades before by South London familial melodrama *This Happy Breed* (David Lean, UK, 1944), where the transgressive promiscuous daughter and revolutionary son-in-law are brought back into the fold, having seen the error of their ways.

As Phil is cast against particularly repressive masculine regimes, his self-conscious and politically aware attempts to challenge the status quo are undermined as the narrative repeatedly draws him back to the basic tenets of working-class masculinity.

[824] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 144).
[825] Ibid., p. 145.

He is acutely aware of his background, what is expected from him and by whom, and the parameters he is expected to operate within as a working-class male. As his girlfriend, the upper-class Anna recalls at their first meeting, he was performing his 'last of the working-class heroes act'. On another occasion, he encounters two of her male friends, both drunk, and irritatingly obnoxious. They act as signifiers of effete upper-class masculinity while he resorts to his own tough, streetwise past in order to manhandle, ridicule and humiliate them. Here he retains the 'Fox ability to conduct a successful and acrobatic street fight'.[826] Despite his intellectual approach to life, when required he is still able to exercise what the narrative treats as his authentic working-class masculinity. It is not, as with Hoggart's scholarship boy, that 'he has lost some of the resilience and some of the vitality of his cousins still knocking around the streets', but rather that he retains those qualities and attempts to channel them into his ongoing class war.[827]

Thus, Phil is allowed to exhibit enough traits not to bring his masculinity into question, in accordance with Clarke's notion that while physical work may be one principal way of establishing one's masculinity a more general working-class masculine culture which has grown up around it is equally important. Thus, while Phil performs no physical work as such, he does exhibit 'toughness' and is 'one of the boys'.[828]

On several other occasions the narrative allows Phil to express this masculinity without critique or comment, and allows it to stand once again as 'common sense'.

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[826] Sean Day-Lewis (1980c).
[827] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy,* 3rd edn. (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 267.
[828] John Clarke, 'Capital and Culture: The Post-War Working Class Revisited', in *Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory,* ed. by John Clarke, Chris Critcher and Richard Johnson (London: Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 238-253 (p. 250).

When the morning of Billy's funeral has been disrupted by a rival family, he participates with his brothers in a show of violent revenge against them; on another occasion he colludes with brother Ray in some casual misogyny, smiling as Ray describes how he once gave an ex-girlfriend 'a slap'. Perhaps his most explicit expression of the weight of his working-class masculine identity occurs when late one night, in a newly regenerated Covent Garden, Phil launches into a drunken invective berating the new consumer values which have accompanied this regeneration at the expense of the authentic working-class masculine ones of the old fruit and vegetable market, those same values expounded by Billy. Thus, Preston appears to endorse the idea that for many men physical work, no matter how alienating, may take on, what Haywood and Mac an Ghaill have termed, 'heroic' qualities.[829] The 'hard, physically demanding labour of manual work', they argue, 'is understood and reinterpreted by working-class men as being heroic' requiring 'strength and endurance'.[830] Consequently 'manual workers perceive white collar workers as possessing a lower masculine status'.[831] As Winlow has argued, men born into working-class areas 'were socialised into believing that hard physical labour was a manly pursuit'.[832] Thus Phil, in spite of his education and pursuit of the cerebral, retains a belief in residual discourses of masculinity where authenticity resides in work where the body is involved.[833]

In *The Uses of Literacy* Hoggart has described his own feelings as a student coming from a working-class background and entering into the academic world. He states that in order to succeed, the scholarship boy will have 'to oppose the ethos of the

829 Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003), p. 29.
830 Ibid.
831 Ibid., p. 30.
832 Winlow, p. 36.
833 Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003), p. 30.

hearth the intense gregariousness of the working-class family group' and will have learned how to separate himself from his working-class peer groups.[834] Phil has thus 'cut himself off mentally' from his family in order to participate in the academic world.[835] Yet there remains a palpable tension in his relations with both academia and family. Indeed he would appear to possess a 'particular combination of affinity and distance' for both.[836] Vacillating between assimilation and resistance, he embraces the academic but rebels against the class it predominantly represents. He retains his commitment to the 'ethos of the hearth', but principally when he is not actually in physical contact with it.

While the narrative sometimes works through Phil's ongoing dilemma in a somewhat maladroit way, for example through unsubtle, contrived lyrics to songs which counterpoint the drama:

> *Father and son, drifting apart,*
> *Close to the edge*
> *The times are changing, not the past but the future*
> *Head against heart,*

this conflict remains both powerful and highly pertinent to the times, articulating more widespread discourses regarding changes in masculinity, class, and family. However, while Phil is the most open to change and changing definitions of masculinity, indeed seeing the need to instigate, to become an active agent for these changes, the narrative eventually turns this around. While the melancholic lyrics which accompany Phil's decision making process reflect on 'those we have left behind', Phil manages to change nothing and leaves nothing behind. As with Joey, Preston is communicating a deeply conservative message which ultimately reaffirms

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834 Hoggart (2009), p. 264.
835 Ibid., p. 263.
836 Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2006, 5th imprint), p. xiv.

the values of Billy's patriarchy. Here then the hegemonic project retains much of its dominant position within the family, largely through its ability to adapt and appropriate.[837]

What Phil has previously described as his feelings of guilt have now transmuted into something approaching remorseful reconciliation. Describing his brother's criminal activities and consequent arrest he asserts that 'Ray made the wrong decision, I know I did...I let pop (Billy) down'; and as his mother Connie reflects, 'the more I remember what Billy said to me the more I realise it was right', Phil reaches his epiphany as he agrees, 'well he wasn't wrong about much'. If, as Probyn has argued, experience may work just as well to obscure as to reveal social relations, through, for example, 'common sense' feelings, then this is illustrated here as the ultimate sapience of Billy's patriarchy is thus reaffirmed.[838]

In the final scene, as the family gather for that most conservative and traditional celebrations of both stasis and nostalgia, Christmas, Phil has symbolically abandoned his jeans and leather jacket for a cardigan and shirt and is now firmly placed at the centre of the familial mise-en-scene rather than on its peripheries. As he is called upon to address the gathering, his rhetoric is both confused and ambiguous, refraining from any true resolution: 'Times change, we change with them, we have to, but the more things change the more they are the same'. Change has been accommodated within a wider framework, yet the bedrock remains the same, the patriarchy, however benign, remains in place, although arguably

[837] Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, 'Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique', *Theory and Society,* 30 (2001), 337-61 (p. 355).

[838] Elspeth Probyn, *Sexing the Self: Gendered Positions in Cultural Studies,* repr. (Oxford: Routledge, 1993), p. 21.

attenuated. Here there has been what Mandy Merck has called a shift in the style of gender rather than a change in gender relations.[839]

From her perspective of the early 1990s, Segal has argued that while there undoubtedly was change, it was 'not on a scale or character that […] seriously altered dominant perceptions of gender'.[840] While recognising that certain changes did occur in men's lives she questions their 'precise significance for undermining men's power'.[841] Change, she suggests, 'has occurred where the social as well as the individual possibilities for it have been greatest, and in particular where women's power to demand it has been strongest'.[842] With *Fox,* however, these possibilities together with the influence of women are heavily circumscribed.

The narrative ends with a sense of continuity rather than fracture and dislocation, and as the lyrics played out over the final shots juxtapose clichés about both old and new London, it becomes clear that Preston is suggesting, or perhaps more modestly hoping, that any apparent changes have been nothing but superficial. This is then underscored by the use of the same orchestral theme music which had opened the saga, played out over the end credits, only now performed on contemporary instruments.

Demetriou, drawing upon both Gramsci's notion of hegemony and Connell's hegemonic masculinity, has suggested that ruling orders perpetuate their existence

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[839] *Swinging Britain: 1965 – 1966: The 60s - The Beatles Decade*, Yesterday Channel, 12 February 2011, 20.30hrs.
[840] Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*, 3rd imprint (London: Virago, 1990), p. xxxiv.
[841] Ibid., p. xxxvi.
[842] Ibid., p. xxxvii.

precisely through a process of appropriation, which he calls dialectical pragmatism: 'Here the fundamental class is in constant mutual dialectical interaction' with subordinated groups and 'appropriates pragmatically useful and constructive elements' for a continued hegemonic project.[843] Useless or harmful elements are eliminated: 'It is this constant hybridisation that makes the hegemonic bloc capable of configuring itself and adapting to the specifities of new historical conjunctures'.[844] This might be regarded as a process of 'negotiation' rather than 'negation'.[845] Thus, the

> hegemonic bloc changes in a very deceptive and unrecognisable way. It changes through negotiation, appropriation and translation, through the transformation of what appears counter hegemonic and progressive into an instrument of backwardness and patriarchal reproduction.[846]

However, while Preston appears to close down many of the more progressive possibilities within the narrative, the consequences might not be as pessimistic as Demetriou's model suggests. Inevitably with appropriation there may be some degree of absorption or leakage, where the new values have positive effects upon the hegemonic ones. Thus, as Shail has suggested, Butler's description of patriarchy as adapting within historical specifics allows for a degree of 'elasticity', where it can be subverted, adapted, and influenced by the individual.[847]

Preston's tough working-class stories then emerge at a time when, as Beynon has argued, the 'conception of a uniform masculinity' was 'exploded' by both feminism and the gay movement resulting in masculinity becoming increasingly characterised

[843] Demetriou (2001), pp. 337-361 (p. 345).
[844] Ibid., p. 348.
[845] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', *New Formations,* 5 (Summer 1988), 5-23 (p. 8).
[846] Demetriou (2001), pp. 337-361 (p. 355).
[847] Robert Shail, 'Constructions of Masculinity in 1960s British Cinema' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2002), p. 24.

by ‘variety and fragmentation’.[848] However, any move towards a general expression of a plurality of masculinities may be slow and difficult precisely because men held a privileged position in the dominant gender structure or system. Consequently, while some men may embrace change, it may be likely that some or indeed many men may be actively resistant to any form of adaption or any reorganisation of gender relations and their own gender identity. Ultimately, in Phil, Preston has created a character who articulates this dichotomy as personal dilemma. As Aitchley has argued:

> In making adaptive choices […] subjects will attempt to preserve and maintain existing internal and external structures; and they prefer to accomplish this objective by using strategies tied to their past experiences of themselves and their social world. Change is linked to the person's perceived past, producing continuity in inner psychological characteristics as well as in social behaviour and in social circumstances. Continuity is thus a grand adaptive strategy that is promoted by both individual preference and social approval.[849]

What Preston has done then is to articulate the inconsistencies that many working-class men would have experienced together with the strategies they employed in accommodating and adapting to these changes.

5.8 ***Boys From the Black Stuff*: Introduction**

Described by Melvyn Bragg in 1985 as ‘the best British drama written in the last 25 years’, *Boys from the Blackstuff* emerged out of Bleasdale’s previous television play *The Blackstuff* and both share somewhat unusual and fragmented developments.[850] *The Blackstuff* was originally written as a BBC1 *Play for Today* (UK, 1970-84) in 1978 but was not screened until 1980. Thus, while it was made in the penultimate year of Callaghan’s Labour Government, it was not transmitted until eight months

[848] Beynon (2002), pp. 1-2.
[849] R. Atchley, ‘A Continuity Theory of Normal Ageing’, *Gerontologist,* 29.2 (1989), 183-190 (p. 183).
[850] *The South Bank Show: Alan Bleasdale*, LWT, 13 January 1985, 22.30 hrs.

after the Conservatives had come to power.[851] Similarly, much of *Boys from the Blackstuff* had been written by Bleasdale in 1978 but due to budgetary, production and scheduling delays emerged onto British screens as a critique of the monetarist policies of Thatcherism four years later, thus allowing the scripts to adapt to the prevailing economic and social changes, not least the 'highest level of unemployment in fifty years'.[852] However, while the series is without doubt making a series of trenchant political points, it is far more about the experience of those whose lives were destroyed by the events of the period rather than being overtly politically partisan.[853] As Bleasdale has stated about his own political motivations, 'I have no tendencies to be Marxist'.[854]

Bleasdale himself was becoming established, according to Cooke, as a writer whose work was firmly rooted in the city of his birth and celebrated the lives and culture of the disenfranchised working-class, on both *Early to Bed* (BBC, 1975) and *Scully's New Year's Eve* (BBC, 1978).[855] While Bleasdale had previously been a teacher, his intimate understanding of the milieu is undeniable, with his 'knowledge of Liverpool' being 'vital to his work'.[856] As he has remarked about his family 'a huge number of them were asphalters' providing 'amazing stories about the boys from the blackstuff' while many others worked in the docks.[857] This then echoes Preston's claims to authenticity emerging from those people and situations he had known or heard

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[851] Cooke (2003), p.129.
[852] Ibid, p.131.
[853] Peter Goddard, '*Boys from the Blackstuff*' in *The Museum of Broadcast Communications* <http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=boysfromthe> [accessed 22 October 2011]
[854] Millington and Nelson (1986), p. 21.
[855] Lez Cooke, 'Bleasdale, Alan', *Screenonline* (BFI, [n.d.]) <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/566774/> [accessed 12 November 2011]
[856] *The South Bank Show* (1985).
[857] Gareth Roberts, 'Alan Bleasdale', *Knowsley News,* Spring 2005, p.9; Adam Ford, 'Interview with Alan Bleasdale', *Nerve,* <http://www.catalystmedia.org.uk/issues/nerve3/bleasdale.htm> [accessed 29 September 2011]

about.[858] Thus, *Boys From the Blackstuff* reveals a structure of feeling which emerges from lived experience. This is an experience felt acutely by Bleasdale himself, one that is disturbed by changes that have occurred and their implications for working-class masculine identities.

Unlike McDougall, Bleasdale thus appears to be once removed from his writing, however, in several ways they share a considerable amount of common ground. While Bleasdale says that there is little of his own past in his writing, there is a great deal of those around him as he grew up.[859] He has described his work as 'misery laced with laughter' with the 'blackest humour', an examination of the 'human condition' which looks at 'the quality of our lives or lack of it'.[860] Like McDougall his view is, he says, 'jaundiced and despairing' as he observes the world at large and its 'lunacy'.[861] 'I never give answers' he says 'I just ask a few questions'.[862] Similarly, they share a distaste for organised religion, Bleasdale stating of his encounters with the Catholic Church that he 'didn't want to join those games and be told what to do'.[863] His poor school experiences also motivated him to a point where he had 'got to do something', later being mentored by a teacher from his own background.[864] He also recognises that while many in working-class communities are denied opportunities, there are 'also arseholes' and, no matter how unpalatable, there is no achievement without being truthful.[865] Indeed, Bragg's comment that *Boys From the*

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858 *King Billy* (2007).
859 *The South Bank Show* (1985).
860 Ibid.
861 Ibid.
862 Millington and Nelson (1986), p. 21.
863 *The South Bank Show* (1985).
864 Ibid.
865 Ibid.

Blackstuff depicts a world of unhappiness and waste, could be equally applied to McDougall.

While there were reservations in some quarters, critical reception for the series was hugely positive. Most commentators recognised not only its ability to reflect the mood of the times but also its potential to have widespread social impact. Chris Dunkley, for example, appreciated the 'love and compassion' Bleasdale had for its characters, while maintaining a 'slight distancing […] a small isolated space to write from'.[866] While Bill Grundy had previously compared *The Blackstuff* unfavourably to Dickens, seeing its 'depressing authenticity' as unable to provide insight or transcend the subject matter, a not too dissimilar criticism made by Dunkley of McDougall, here Dunkley sees 'the minute observations of social mores' as entirely in keeping with Dickens.[867]

In terms of its political stance, criticism was, inevitably varied. While some saw the characters as mostly apolitical, and others saw it as 'subtly partisan' and hence effective, Philip Purser felt it was 'an unstable mix of truth and propaganda and Peter Ackroyd maintained that 'Bleasdale's feelings about the social situation have outstripped his ability to represent them in an imaginative manner'.[868]

More generally, however, the enthusiastic response eclipsed criticism, with *TES* calling its repeat a 'triumphant return', *Sunday Times* declaring it a 'masterpiece of dramatic realism' and David Self describing it as 'passionate, compassionate writing

[866] Chris Dunkley, '*Boys From the Blackstuff*', *Financial Times,* 17 November 1982.
[867] Bill Grundy, 'Dirty Work on the Pitch', *Evening Standard* , 31 January 1980; Dunkley (1982).
[868] Anon, '*Boys From the Blackstuff', Evening Standard*, 11 October 1982; William Boyd, 'The Liver Blokes', *New Statesman,*15 October 1982; Philip Purser, '*Boys From the Blackstuff', Sunday Telegraph*, 7 November 1982; Peter Ackroyd, 'Television', *Times*, 11 October 1982.

[…] a black comedy of despair and gloom […] a play which has found its time and struck an emotional chord'.[869] Indeed across the political divide there emerged a consensus that the plays, in 'making the unimaginable horribly real', were presenting 'the ugly reality of dole life'.[870]

While the press were generally favourable to its representation of social and political concerns, its accuracy or 'realism' and its use of dark humour, this of course constitutes something of a specialist view.[871] The affect on wider audiences is more problematic to assess. However, while there has been, if any, minimal research into the audiences of the other programmes dealt with in this thesis, there is considerably more research evidence for *Boys from the Blackstuff*. This is partly because it has received more academic attention than the others, but also because the 'written response to Bleasdale was exceptional' and tended to represent very strong feelings, responses being particularly 'emotional and passionate'.[872]

Initially attracting audiences of 4 million, itself considerably higher than most late night BBC2 serious 'arts' television, early repeats took this figure to 8 million turning the series into a television event.[873] If, as Hobson has argued, 'mass audiences are pleased that issues which affect their lives are explored on television' then *Boys from the Blackstuff* appears to have attracted its mass audience largely on the basis of this.[874]

[869] Hannah Charlton, 'Bleasdale and the Quality of Mersey', *Times Educational Supplement*, 9 January 1983; Boyd (1982); David Self, 'Black Comedy Stuff', *Times Educational Supplement*, 14 January 1983.
[870] Sean Day-Lewis, '*Boys From the Blacsktuff*', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 November 1982; Stewart Lane, 'Ugly Reality of Dole Life', *Morning Star*, 30 October 1982.
[871] Millington and Nelson (1986), pp. 156-161.
[872] Ibid., p. 162; 167; Charlton (1983).
[873] Cooke (2003), p. 131.
[874] Dorothy Hobson, *Brookside Conference*, Burton Manor, Wirral 8-10 March 1985.

While any interpretation of realism is necessarily culturally determined, many viewers said they were particularly affected by the realism, seeing the series as representing 'the true facts of working-class life'.[875] Indeed, some read it as so true to life that they interpreted it as being unmediated.[876] Viewers letters to Bleasdale stressed how they had been affected to the point of both 'love and anger', this being particularly from a regional response.[877] Thus, *Boys from the Blackstuff* appears to have struck an especially strong emotional chord with part of its audience.[878]

Others stressed the combination of 'realism, sensitivity, affect' which showed 'our hopes, our aspirations, our frailties, our contradictions' and expressed 'the feelings of us who are not articulate enough to put these feelings into words'.[879] However, while audience identification tended to centre more around class than region, in depicting 'the life of the ordinary working-class' it actually appealed across professional groups, the unemployed and the traditional working-class.[880] This, it was argued, was 'because it presented insights into a perceived reality thought to be obscured by middle-class mores', revealing things that the audience had previously considered taboo for television.[881]

Many male viewers were particularly affected by the plight of the male characters and their struggles with eroding masculine identities. Some revealed that they had cried at the hopelessness and despair of Yosser; others, including inmates in HMP

[875] Millington and Nelson, (1986), p. 162.
[876] Ibid.
[877] Ibid.
[878] Self (1983).
[879] Millington and Nelson, (1986), p. 164.
[880] Ibid., p. 163.
[881] Ibid., p. 163-164.

Liverpool identified most strongly with Chrissie's circumstances and impotent gestures.[882] However, as Lusted has argued, in the character of Yosser, for all his weaknesses and inadequacies, for a working-class male audience 'signs of masculine power, loyalty, and swift justice' were equally affective.[883]

Ruth Smith has argued that *Boys from the Blackstuff* was far less affective for a female audience. As an unemployed woman she recognised how close it was to her reality, with its struggles, temptations, fears, and hatreds, stating that she was moved to 'crying with relief that it was on screen'.[884] However, she also felt 'disappointed and angry' when she 'discovered (that) she was excluded from all this'.[885] With its lack of affecting female representations of unemployment, she saw only stereotypes which allowed for a sentimental affection from male viewers recognising their own plight but nothing to affect a female audience experiencing something similar things.[886]

However, while feminist critique of the series was entirely valid, in actuality viewers responses to *Boys from the Blackstuff* appear to suggest the considerable affect it had on its audience regardless of gender. Issues such as marital problems and the suffering of children, only touched on in the series, resonated with many women's own experiences far more than the principal thrust of unemployment and masculine identity.[887] Nonetheless, the most profound affect was inevitably experienced by many men through sympathy and identification with the male characters rather than

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[882] Millington and Nelson (1986), p. 164.
[883] David Lusted', What's Left of Blackstuff? Political Meaning for a Popular Audience', in *Boys From the Blackstuff: BFI Dossier Number 20*, ed. by Richard Paterson (London: BFI, 1984), p. 41.
[884] Ruth Smith, *Leveller,* February 1983, p. 35.
[885] Ibid.
[886] Ibid.
[887] Millington and Nelson, (1986), p. 164.

through any direct ideological meanings.[888] However, these might not necessarily be seen as opposites. Gorton, for example, in arguing against the critical orthodoxy in some areas that champions emotional distance, believes that emotional engagement does not necessarily preclude intellectual engagement, and that the former can in fact lead on to the latter.[889]

5.9 Identity and Work

While *Boys from the Blackstuff,* like *Fox,* articulates the considerable discomfort that many working-class men felt about social, cultural and economic changes in the early 1980s 'the underlying discourse is concerned with the effect of unemployment on men and with the male role in the family' while 'the secondary discourse' is the destruction of 'community cohesion'.[890] This consequently exposes male anxieties around the 'undermining of established and traditional notions of masculinity'.[891]

Sharing with *Fox* a structure that was character based rather than plot driven, *Boys from the Blackstuff* is principally a realist drama combining melodrama with tragedy and comedy.[892] The series interrogates notions of both masculinity and femininity, as the ostensible stability of these is threatened by unemployment. This is then dramatically played out

> within the domains […] of the family, workplace and community using particular representations of gender and class in narratives set up around an opposition of power and powerlessness at a particular historical conjuncture.[893]

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[888] Millington and Nelson, (1986), pp. 169-170.
[889] Kristyn Gorton, *Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 72-88.
[890] Richard Paterson, 'Restyling Masculinity: The Impact of Boys from the Blackstuff', in *Impacts and Influences: Essays on Media Power in the Twentieth-Century,* ed. by James Curran, Anthony Smith and Pauline Wingate (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 218-230 (p.222).
[891] Ibid, p. 218.
[892] Cooke (2003), p. 132.
[893] Paterson (1987), pp. 218-230 (p. 219).

As a melodrama about men, the emphasis is on the male protagonists' home life, which has transformed radically due to unemployment.[894] This is the very home that men had traditionally tried to escape from, where they had attempted to establish 'their right not to be there'.[895] Thus Bleasdale manages to explore on one level a discourse concerned with history, memory, struggle and achievement of labour epitomised in George Malone together with the problems for working-class family life and masculinity in the narratives of Chrissie, Dixie, and Yosser.[896]

The central 'crisis', within the narrative, unemployment 'speaks to both the tangible and metaphorical deterioration of the materials that organise the world' and 'the collapse of infrastructure', an infrastructure which underpins a variety of secondary structures.[897] The corollary of this is the collapse of family and the 'unravelling of what manhood and personhood connote', portraying the 'internal entropy' of its male characters.[898] Throughout the narrative the central emphasis is on the search for personal identity for its male protagonists and, as Lusted argues, the emphasis is on the 'crucially formative role of work in the combination of individual and social identity'.[899]

While physical work acts as a key signifier of working-class masculine identity in *Fox* it is far more central to the narrative of *Boys from the Blackstuff*. As Winlow has argued, citing both Ford and Rose, 'work was the primary place in which working-class men attempted to prove themselves and legitimate their image and self-image

[894] Paterson (1987), p. 221.
[895] Campbell (1984), p. 170.
[896] Paterson (1987), pp. 218-230 (p. 226).
[897] O'Sullivan (2006), pp. 223-42 (p. 225).
[898] Ibid.
[899] Lusted (1984), p.44.

as men' and this, together with 'working-class self-respect and concepts of manliness, were constructed in response to class deprivation and the paternalism of capitalism'.[900]

One consequence of this then was to render the failure to work as particularly damaging to self-identities by undermining the importance of independence in working-class male masculinity and facilitating a sense of humiliation and dishonour.[901] Work then was essential in defining working-class man while not working challenged his social identity.[902] As a crucial factor in the construction of masculine identities it can provide

> an important arena through which the discursive subject can achieve a sense of identity, the accomplishment of being; it is a primary vehicle for the otherwise contingent and unstable subject to achieve a sense of self, to become grounded and located in the social world.[903]

When this breaks down or is taken away it leaves several of the protagonists with what can only be described as a crisis within their sense of identity. The temporal and spatial structures, once so important and ostensibly permanent, no longer function as signifiers of identity, nor do the knowledges, values and codes which have now become largely redundant.[904] Without the distinct and explicit marker which work provides, identity has become less than verifiable.[905]

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[900] Winlow (2001), p. 36.

[901] Mary Ingham, *Men: The Male Myth Exposed* (London: Century Publishing, 1984), p. 27; Joanna Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.130-133.

[902] Ying S. Lee, Masculinity and the English Working Class : Studies in Victorian Autobiography and Fiction (New York ; Abingdon : Routledge, 2007), p.14.

[903] Whitehead (2002), p. 24.

[904] Ibid.

[905] Ibid.

Campbell has talked about ‘the cult of masculinity where elemental work is believed to confer ‘essential’ masculinity […] where work can make men both victim and hero’.[906] However, as Monaghan has argued:

> Bleasdale's central proposition that paid employment is the cure for all working-class ills is a dangerously simplistic one […] most jobs in an age of mass production, particularly for unskilled workers, offer little personal satisfaction of the kind that Snowy gets from plastering and Chrissie from laying tarmac.[907]

Nevertheless, for Bleasdale, masculine identity is immanent within and inextricably linked with paid work. George Malone continues to work or seek work even when hospitalised with a terminal illness; Jimmy, a peripheral character in the first episode, when asked what he used to be answers ‘I used to be a machine fitter’ and then adds emphatically ‘and I still am!’; and George’s son, the militant Snowy, argues persuasively for the achievement of dignity and pride through both his craft and skill. However, the nexus between identity and work is most extensively articulated through the narratives of its three central characters, Dixie, Chrissie, and Yosser.

As Paterson has argued, *Boys from the Blackstuff* shows a world where ‘the status of the man and the male order are in crisis’ and ‘masculinity is undermined’.[908] In this sense each member of ‘the male group is shown as broken by unemployment, unable to obtain (self) respect through work and unable to interpret his own circumstances’.[909] As Monaghan has argued:

> While the individual situations and personality of […] (Bleasdale’s protagonists) differ as do their conceptions of themselves, they share several things in common, all of which are directly connected to their failure to find work. These are a loss of identity, of a clear sense of direction and of an ultimate goal.[910]

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906 Campbell (1984), p. l97.
907 Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 5).
908 Paterson (1987), pp. 218-230 (p. 221).
909 Ibid.
910 Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 5).

5.10 Chrissie and Yosser

Bleasdale sees Chrissie as:

> The pivot of the series. He's the most important because he is your common man. He's the bloke […] who has a few pints, comes home, plays with the kids, has a reasonably solid relationship with his wife. And everything's gonna be OK, until forces he has no control over take him over, and he's shipwrecked; his reference points are lost.[911]

In this way he epitomises lack of change and contentment with the status quo, but a status quo which leaves little room for any expression of his wife Angie's identity outside of what is expected of her as a wife and mother. Paterson has rightly asserted that Chrissie's episode constitutes a particularly powerful feminine discourse which is largely absent elsewhere, but this nevertheless remains as part of the story's wider discourse concerned with the damage to masculinity inflicted by unemployment.[912] Here everything remains subordinated to the male predicament.[913]

Chrissie's identity appears to rest upon a number of facets. His ostensibly phlegmatic personality, his traditionally male hobby of keeping geese and rabbits and, inevitably, his work. It is these last two which crucially provide him with an identity outside of the family, something which he has not considered that his wife may also want. However, it is work that ultimately provides him with his masculine identity and when this is withdrawn he believes his masculinity to have been compromised.

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[911] Millington and Nelson (1986), p. 170.
[912] Paterson (1987), pp. 218-230 (p. 221).
[913] Millington (1993), pp. 119-139 (p. 131).

It is this very disruption of the established norms which exposes the problematic assumptions on which Chrissie has based his masculinity. His solipsistic view of his family's situation, leads him to act in increasingly selfish ways which reveal his underlying belief in the fabric of patriarchy, with himself at the centre. Arriving home late one night he takes the last slices of bread which Angie had kept for their daughters; following an intense confrontation between them, he finds money down the back of the sofa and spends it on himself; the ensuing drunken reverie where he sings, both loud and confrontationally through the night, brings into question his thoughts for the wellbeing of his children.

It is during a particularly protracted and bitter argument with Angie which exposes Chrissie's residual construction of masculinity. As Angie begins to falteringly articulate emergent discourses around the expectations and desires of women, Chrissie reveals himself to be entrenched and backward looking. 'All I want is a job!' Chrissie declares, but what this serves to highlight is the question, what does Angie want? As he launches into his modest self –mythologising:

> I had a job Angie, it wasn't a bad job, and I was good at it. I laid the roads girl, I laid the roads! I could tamper and grit like nobody you ever saw, nobody put the black stuff down quite like me,

Chrissie is creating a myth of a kind of golden age when he 'had a job'. 'Once you could get away with it', he says, 'but not now, that's the problem'. However, that is not the *sole* problem, but it is, according to Chrissie, *his* sole problem.

Campbell has talked about 'mass unemployment for men evoking a sense of mass martyrdom, a kind of death' and this is worked through in further exchanges between

Chrissie and Angie.[914] As she tries to make her feelings known: 'I am 28 years old, Chrissie', he immediately dismisses her with 'what's that got to do with it?' He clearly feels that the expression of his own circumstances and experiences is paramount, to the virtual exclusion of Angie's. Nevertheless Angie continues to explain her own experiences:

> I married you when I was 17; I was a mother at 18. I'm not blaming you for that, but I'm a person, I live, breathe and fart after five lager and limes. I have a mind up here and its screaming.

Unlike Chrissie, she does not recognise the past as a golden age: 'It was never much fun early on, babies, sick, nappies, no sleep. It's not how you imagine it to be'. As the camera dollys in, momentarily privileging Angie with a tight close-up, she continues: 'But I loved you, I love the kids'. Chrissie then interjects: 'I like the past tense with me'. Thus, if he can no longer be the subject, he can nevertheless emphasise his importance as the object.

Angie continues:

> No! No! No! You never listen to me! I've never had a life outside of you Justine and Claire. I was going to do a lot, back to college, job of me own, out in the world, hi Angie.

What she is expressing here is her need to 'take pride in her work, pleasure in her skills, skills that are valued by others, and pleasure in her workmates', the very things that until now, Chrissie has taken for granted.[915] Here she is attempting to assert her subjectivity outside of her relationship with her husband. 'This was gonna be my time' she says, 'not even living hand to mouth', but once again Chrissie commandeers the conversation, turning it back to himself as victim: 'All down to me

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[914] Campbell (1984), p. 189.
[915] Ibid.

eh, good old Chrissie done it again. Don't look at me cos you're not going to college, if you've got no life'.

Frustrated, Angie pleads again: 'You never listen to me'; but it is too late, this is about the experience of men, not women. 'What is there to listen to?' asks Chrissie, 'what do you think its like for me eh? A second class citizen, a second class man, with no money, no job and no place!' Here he is able to turn the argument around, back to himself, *his* place as a *man*, while any route for Angie's self-expression and search for identity is closed off. 'How much guilt can I take, where do you go from bread? How about breadwinner – bread winner!'.

Chrissie's final, futile gesture, killing his pet geese ostensibly for food, is an act of anger and violence intended to punish himself, for it is this act which crystallises *his* sacrifices. He wants to show that his sacrifice is greater than hers and as he breaks down in tears, he wants her sympathy, as he is incapable of giving her his. As Beatrix Campbell has argued:

> Most men grieve for the loss of their skills, but they don't notice the de-skilling of women in their own communities through marriage to themselves and then motherhood.[916]

She describes this as men's 'mass narcissism' which is supported by the social structures in which they work and play.[917] Thus, for Chrissie, as those structures begin to disintegrate he perceives himself increasingly as a victim while ignoring the perceptions and feelings of those around him.

[916] Campbell (1984), p. 205.
[917] Ibid., p. 98.

While Chrissie as the everyman should have been ostensibly the character that many men would have identified with, it was actually Yosser who appeared to capture the (male) public's imagination. Indeed with both *Boys from the Blackstuff* and the relatively contemporaneous *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* (UK, 1983-1986), the two most dysfunctional and aggressively masculine characters, Yosser and Oz, proved to be the two most popular. Dick Clement was made all too aware of the cultural penetration and indeed rivalry between the two characters when he attended a Newcastle v Liverpool FA Cup match where Newcastle fans taunted their opponents with chants of 'Oz is harder than Yosser!'.[918] This then, might serve as some indication of how they were adopted as icons of masculinity. Rather than identify with the everyman Chrissie, or indeed his equivalent, Dennis in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, the violent maverick, embodying a particularly residual construction of masculinity, would appear to have been a far more attractive option for many working-class men.

Perhaps then the role of ordinary everyman was considered to lack the 'heroic' qualities deemed necessary to be a representative idol for certain groups of men. Bleasdale has himself expressed astonishment at the popularity of Yosser and while the entrepreneurial spirit of the time produced records and T-shirts celebrating Yosser's aggression and violent inclinations, it is perhaps his chauvinist yet nevertheless emblematic white working-class character which touched a collective nerve.[919] As Bleasdale has remarked, 'Chrissie is the true hero', he 'says more to

918 BBC, Press Release for *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* (BBC, [n.d.]) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2002/04_april/12/awp.pdf> [accessed 5 December 2011]

919 *The Reunion: Boys From The Blackstuff*, BBC Radio 4, 20 August 2011, 09.00 hrs.

me than Yosser'.[920] However, while Yosser may be uncomfortable, there was also a 'sense of release for some people' in that it resonated with their own experiences.[921]

It is in the character of Yosser that the notion of a crisis of identity is most explicitly addressed. Throughout the series, as he declares 'I'm Yosser Hughes' his identity appears increasingly submerged, aspects of the mise-en-scene suggesting that it is almost physically being drained out of him. However, there is evidence that his identity has been extremely fragile and his mental state volatile for some considerable time. Thus the notion of crisis is itself questionable, since it implies a previously coherent system.

Yosser fantasises about what could have been, 'I could have been a footballer' he claims or 'when I'm rich I'll have a harem'. In his dream sequence, at the beginning of the episode 'Yosser's Story' he envisages a world he has been excluded from, probably having only encountered it through the images in advertising. This is a world inhabited by happy, successful, contented middle-class families. This uncertainty is further emphasised by him constantly feeling the need to assert himself, stating who he is: 'Everywhere I get noticed, that's me, everybody knows me, I'm Yosser Hughes'. Like McDougall's hard men protagonists and Preston's patriarch King Billy, for Yosser being noticed and respected is a way of affirming identity. Unlike the others, however, what is suggested in the initial play *The Black Stuff* is that he is profoundly uncertain about who he is: 'I wanna be noticed, Chrissie. I wanna be somebody. I wanna be seen'. Thus, as Monaghan has

[920] *The South Bank Show* (1985).
[921] Ibid.

argued, 'he has never had more than a fragile sense of who he is'.[922] Yosser vacillates between projecting forward to the mythic hero he wants to become and retreating into the apparent certainty of the childhood he has left behind. When George tells him to grow up he replies, 'Why should I? What's there to grow up for?' Elsewhere he reflects, 'When I was little there was so much to look forward to. When I was little I built sandcastles. Sometimes I think that's all I've ever done', thus suggesting a growing realisation that nothing he has achieved has any sense of permanence. While Paterson argues that Yosser's loss of self-esteem and identity is a direct consequence of his diminished circumstances, his catatonic state in the final scene of *The Blackstuff* suggests that his identity was already profoundly uncertain.[923]

Where work had been the foundation of Chrissie's identity its importance for Yosser was in its potential to secure wealth and with that wealth a newly constructed identity. His working life had been predicated upon getting better paid jobs, to live in a bigger house and to gain the status which would allow him to transcend his present identity:

> The need to complete the triangle work-money-identity also inspired Yosser to come up with the entrepreneurial scheme that ruined not only himself but also his workmates.[924]

Thus for Yosser, unemployment and poverty prove even more damaging than for the others, since he already has no firm sense of identity beyond wanting to 'be someone'. In the absence of any alternative route toward his goal, of becoming the hero of his narrative, 'Yosser increasingly loses his grip on reality'.[925]

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[922] Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 7).
[923] Paterson (1987), pp. 218-230 (p. 222).
[924] Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 6).
[925] Ibid., p. 7.

5.11 *Boys from the Black Stuff* and Nostalgia

While I have argued that nostalgia operates as a key discourse in *Fox*, in *Boys from the Blackstuff* its role is far more desperate and astringent, highlighting the dire present circumstances of its characters. O'Sullivan maintains that *Boys from the Blackstuff* swings between reportage and nostalgia, and while the former features predominantly in the stories of Chrissie, Dixie and Yosser, the latter manifests itself most explicitly with the character of George Malone.[926]

Davis identifies what he calls the special past of nostalgia as distinct from the mere past. Looking at a number of other 'subjective states' that are past oriented, 'history, remembrance, recollection, reminiscence' for example, he maintains that none of these can convey the same feeling or tone as nostalgia.[927] Merely to remember is not the same as feeling nostalgic for it is a past imbued with special qualities:

> Nostalgic feeling is infused with imputations of past beauty, joy, satisfaction, happiness, in short, the positive affects of being. Even if nostalgia is often experienced with an element of sadness, or a kind of melancholy, this only serves to heighten the quality of recaptured joy or contentment. Nostalgic mood allows what may have been painful or unattractive about the past to become bathed in a benign aura.[928]

While both George Malone and Billy Fox express feelings of nostalgia which certainly sentimentalise a past which in many ways is highly problematic, for George there is a yearning for a world where 'his class' (that is working-class men) was far more active and engaged, when faced with one where they have been largely disenfranchised.

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[926] O'Sullivan (2006), pp. 223-42 (p. 233).
[927] Davis (1979), p. 13.
[928] Ibid., p. 14.

Davis has suggested that while nostalgic feeling may be a response to subjective, personal experiences of changes, these changes, in 'their timing, social substance, and trajectory' are also informed by 'values, expectations […] and institutional arrangements of the social order in which they occur'.[929] Hence historic events, personalities, and occurrences collectivise the 'essential individuality of our biographies'.[930] Indeed Sedikides maintains that while nostalgic feeling is to do with individual experience it is often connected to something far wider, perhaps an organisation to which one is affiliated, a generational cohort, a historical period in a culture, or perhaps something even more specific within a wider culture.[931] Thus George's nostalgic feeling is one which emanates from a collective, class-based fraternity.

As Tannock has argued, nostalgia is a response to a 'diversity of personal needs and political desires'.[932] Nostalgic narratives may embody a number of different values and ideals, and may be used, as a cultural strategy, in a number of different ways. It is only by recognising such heterogeneity, that 'critique can then focus on both the openings and the limitations that nostalgia, as a general structure of feeling, may create for effective historical interpretation'.[933]

Much criticism of nostalgia, Tannock maintains, has tended to dismiss it as conservative and sentimental, often being used by dominant forces and social groups in an effort to distort historical truth.[934] Although Tannock concedes that

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[929] Davis (1979), p. 52.
[930] Ibid., p. 53.
[931] Sedikides (2004), pp. 200-214 (p. 203).
[932] Stuart Tannock, 'Nostalgia Critique', *Cultural Studies*, 9.3 (October 1995), 453-464 (p. 454).
[933] Ibid., p. 454.
[934] Ibid., p. 453.

nostalgia, as a general structure of feeling, has indeed been appropriated by reactionary politics, he goes on to point out that it has equally been invoked by liberal and radical voices.[935]

Raymond Williams points out nostalgia may conjure up 'the happier past […] as an impulse to change rather than to ratify the actual inheritance'.[936] While some, in the face of change and instability, may long for a stable past where 'everything is held in its 'proper' place', others may equally, in the face of a present that appears 'fixed, static and monolithic, long for a past where things could be opened up' and 'put into play'.[937] As Tannock has argued, while some, usually dominant, nostalgic narratives need to be questioned, challenged, and put into place, others we may wish to view in a positive light as being progressive and enabling.[938] For George, his nostalgic reverie is linked to greater political engagement, struggle, and activism. This is particularly evident when,

> in a valedictory moment (he) impugns the weaker new generation (his less radical sons, his doctor who has forsaken his socialist roots for the S.D.P.) while he still keeps a postcard of Marx on his parlour wall.[939]

Thus George's departing threnody differs from Billy's wistful and acerbic lament at the passing of old ways in that it is far more expansive and far more passionate.

Indeed, George's sentiments are in accord with Strauth and Turner's assertion that nostalgic feeling is frequently a response to a perception of a 'loss of simplicity, authenticity and spontaneity' with the consequence that 'genuine feeling and emotion

[935] Tannock (1995), pp. 453-464 (pp. 455).
[936] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford UP, 1973), p. 43.
[937] Tannock (1995), pp. 453-464 (pp. 455-6).
[938] Ibid.
[939] O'Sullivan (2006), pp. 223-242 (p. 232).

is prohibited'.[940] Bather goes on to develop this argument, suggesting that within contemporary Western society there remain no 'dominant systems' to replace the old structures which have broken down leading to a loss of a true 'sense of identity'.[941] Furthermore, he argues, 'individuality and social relationships that were built on people working together for common cause' are 'replaced by bureaucracy' where the individual becomes a 'cog in the machine'; new 'transnational bureaucracies' become 'increasingly remote'; the 'logic of the market' forces discontinuity in labour; there are no more boundaries around nation states, 'let alone home'; and genuine emotion is 'constrained by lifestyles' and 'pressures of consumerism' in increasingly 'global patterns'.[942] While I would certainly not suggest that Britain had already fully entered into these conditions it would appear that Bleasdale is certainly aware of the nascent state of a number of these discourses.

While George's nostalgia is largely redundant as a potent political tool, what it does offer is an explanation of the feelings around the collective past and acts as an emollient as that past disintegrates. Examining how nostalgia is frequently linked to nationalistic and patriotic sentiment, Davis seems to suggest that at the societal level nostalgia functions as a kind of 'safety valve for disappointment and frustration suffered for the loss of prized values'.[943] For George nostalgia operates 'through kinship or through a broader feeling of identity', in this case class affiliation: 'these were in some way *my* people, and my present therefore was bound up in their

[940] Georg Strauth and Bryan S.Turner, 'Nostalgia, Postmodernism and the Critique of Mass Culture', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 5.2 (1988), 509-526 (p. 513).
[941] Neil Edward Bather, ''There is Evil there that does not Sleep'': The Construction of Evil in American Popular Cinema from 1989 to 2002' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Waikato, 2007), p. 261. <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/2564/thesis.pdf?sequence=2> [accessed 21 September 2012]
[942] Ibid.
[943] Davis (1979), p. 110.

past'.[944] However, while collective nostalgia acts to restore, at least temporarily, a sense of 'socio-historic continuity' which had verged on being discontinuous, George appears to be virtually alone in his nostalgic visions, which closes down any notion of a positive collective future.

Even the last shot of the derelict industrial landscape emphasising loss and change is one which nostalgically, becomes talismanic in the process, possessing an 'auratic patina' for the past.[945] This feeling for the past, however, is highly contradictory as the camera essays the Tate and Lyle factory taking in its lettering, almost as if we are invited to admire this deeply ambiguous structure of capitalism and working-class identity.[946] What this serves to highlight is the very struggle of labour and the idea that a working-class could not exist without the presence of capitalism. This then is a deeply ambivalent vision of the past hence the ambivalence of nostalgic yearning. Perhaps the structure of feeling works to 'mystify […] the extent to which decline' is caused by 'pressures and forces internal to the past'.[947] Indeed, it would be difficult not to conclude that the seeds for any lapse between past and present are likely to lie in the very past that one is nostalgic for, one with its foundations in capitalism.

While George's feelings of nostalgia are highly contradictory and may be both appreciated and critiqued on a number of levels, perhaps the most pertinent criticism and indication of their highly selective nature is that they function exclusively as a memory of male experience and values. However, as Beatrix Campbell has argued:

[944] Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, 'The Dimensions of Nostalgia', in *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia,* ed. by Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989), pp. 1-17 (p. 2).
[945] Shaw and Chase (1989), p. 4.
[946] O'Sullivan (2006), pp. 223-42 (p. 233).
[947] Tannock (1995), pp. 543-64 (pp. 460-1).

> Many of those good old values rested on the weary labours of women, whose economic, social, sexual, cultural and political interests are not given any political primacy by any party.[948]

Furthermore, she says:

> Hoggart treats the tradition of men and women power relations in the working-class as natural and that this hides the highly fabricated and rigid construction of that tradition.[949]

While George and Snowy represent activism and Yosser and Chrissie martyrdom, both are ‘contradictory and conservative forces evoking a world of committed communities [...] but not equal ones’.[950] Consequently George is nostalgic for a world where ‘solidarity in work and play is founded on the exclusion of women […] solidarity based on sex as much as it is ever based on class‘.[951]

Ultimately then, what George is lamenting is the passing of a period of labour struggle and activism, but a period nevertheless infused with patriarchy and its concomitant structures, practices and institutions. George is unable to see the contradictions inherent in this position, his being a somewhat myopic vision of history, one that is both sentimental and largely uncritical.

5.12 What about the Women?

While we have seen in both *Fox* and *Boys from the Blackstuff* that the writers have introduced significant female characters who question and problematise masculine practices, this does not necessarily apply to the other women within the narratives. Monaghan has argued that Bleasdale's version of working-class life is ’no less an ideological construct than Margaret Thatcher's and, as such, is characterised by

948 Campbell (1984), p. 225.
949 Ibid.
950 Ibid., p. 110.
951 Ibid., p. 102.

inconsistencies and omissions', and ultimately the most significant of these is Bleasdale's treatment of women.[952]

Director Phillip Saville's request 'for a slightly more feminine aspect to the music' and the fact that 'he wanted, just in general terms, the idea of something softening the heavy political dialogue', meant he was able to insert a stronger female presence into the series, which may have resulted in a degree of inflection away from the concerns of the male characters.[953] However, while the character of Angie provides the one coherent female voice articulating an inchoate form of feminism, Bleasdale falls short of following 'Beatrix Campbell in exploring the advantages gained by working-class women as a result of the weakening of patriarchal power that went along with male unemployment', since this would inevitably have weakened and dissipated the principal thrust of Bleasdale's narrative.[954]

When asked why he had written few significant parts for women, Bleasdale has candidly revealed: 'I was thirty before I would talk to a woman for any length of time if I didn't fancy them. I'm still trying to understand women'.[955] He also cites, with a degree of humorous embarrassment, that the fact that he had only written two lines for Angie before Saville asked him to write a woman's part, proved that 'I'm not a feminist'.[956]

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952 Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 13).
953 Millington and Nelson (1986), p. 146; John Tulloch, *Television Drama: Agency, Audience and Myth* (Oxford: Routledge, 1990), p. 184.
954 Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 13).
955 *The South Bank Show* (1985).
956 Ibid.

It is hard not to agree then with feminists who were angered by *Boys from the Blackstuff's* androcentric 'male dependent representation of women'.[957] Ruth Smith for example saw the series as never seriously challenging 'the oppressive relationships the men have with women'.[958] 'What upset me' she said 'was not that women only featured as wives and holders of jobs' but that 'these were presented so badly'.[959] George Malone's wife, for example, while portrayed as a strong and purposeful character in her own right, is largely reduced to reflecting his Marxist politics rather than expressing it herself (outside of personal exchanges). Consequently her narrative function is reduced to that of mother, grandmother and the supportive wife of her husband. She shares George's view of the past as one which needed to be fought for, one where the struggle was essential and positive for the community, but always acquiesces to her husband's authority and position garnered through his benevolent activism. Thus George has become the 'patriarch of the community'.[960] As Campbell argued at the time, 'men move into politics like learning to walk' and the 'structures are built for them and wives make space for them' thus 'women live in the shadow of men's seizure of public life'.[961] One consequence of this was the degree of muscular masculinity which characterised the unions of the period. Indeed, while the narrative focuses on men's loss of identity it allows little space for women's search for identity which has been largely subsumed by their husbands. Nonetheless Bleasdale does hint at emergent discourses around male/female power relations, but without giving them too much narrative space.

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[957] Ruth Smith, 'The Feminist's View', in *Boys From the Blackstuff: BFI Dossier Number 20 (*London: BFI 1984), pp.39-40.
[958] Ibid.
[959] Ibid.
[960] Millington (1993), pp. 119-139 (p. 133).
[961] Campbell (1984), p. 191.

Beatrix Campbell, in her account of early 1980s Britain, *Wigan Pier Revisited*, provides a counterbalance to Bleasdale's heavily biased discourse on male experiences, by foregrounding the experiences of women within the conditions of the working-class. Campbell argues that socialism and the labour movement not only failed to address problems like men's violence against women but actually suppressed them by defining the real politics around the interests of waged males.[962] Socialism in Britain she continues 'has been swept off its feet by the magic of masculinity, muscle and machinery' and created a solidarity which is founded on the exclusion of women.[963] It was only with the 1980s that men's exclusionary political practices revealed the penalties men themselves had now accrued through what she describes as their 'narrow, short sighted, economism'.[964]

The problem in part, she argues, is that men had long stopped imagining their control over work and had settled for a breadwinner's wage which may give some men a relative privilege within the wage system, but this has led working-class politics into deep conservatism.[965] As the recession, mass unemployment, and Thatcherism confronted men with the fact that wage bargaining was not a political strategy and it had come to be of little more use to men than it had ever been to women. This then, is a powerful argument highlighting feminist discourse and the inequities within gender relations within a much wider Socialist discourse. For Bleasdale, however, this particular discourse appears marginal, if not largely irrelevant, within the principal trajectory of the narrative.

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[962] Campbell (1984), p. 97.
[963] Ibid.
[964] Ibid.
[965] Ibid.

Nevertheless, as Lusted has argued, *Boys from the Blackstuff* does attempt to integrate 'the political, social and cultural histories […] of the working-class' which is usually separated across different genres.[966] Unlike the soap opera, the place of the home in its relation to work (and unemployment) becomes an object of analysis. Thus the conventionally accepted connections or indeed oppositions between the two are upset, which may undermine 'the dominant divisions along gender and wage-labour lines among men/women'.[967] This, then, Lusted argues, 'is a major shift in the politics of working-class representation'.[968]

While this may indeed be true, the drama is nonetheless focused around the plight of men and, apart from their respective partners, the most notable presence of women within the narrative are the clerks and principal officer at the Department of Employment. This can be read in a number of ways. First, where women come to represent the enemy of unemployed working-class men, being the agents of negative change; second, a further perceived humiliation for the unemployed men, where they have to, perhaps for the first time in their adult lives, be answerable to women; third, an acknowledgement that traditional masculine skills and physical strength are no longer required in the workplace. Indeed it may be seen to herald the greater value about to be placed upon what were traditionally regarded as 'feminine' skills. These are the very skills that had been ignored, undervalued, trivialised and derided by a patriarchal society, the very skills, as Tim Lott has described in his novel *Rumours of a Hurricane*, that would provide women with a

[966] Lusted (1984), p. 44.
[967] Ibid.
[968] Ibid.

way into the new economy, achieving a level of self-worth previously denied to them.[969]

Nonetheless the male protagonists continue to regard women in generally dismissive ways, their sexism and misogyny operating as their ultimate recourse in increasingly desperate attempts to maintain their entrenched and patriarchal informed identities. Dixie is particularly confrontational to the female clerk at the Department of Employment. He also treats his wife as foolish and naive while she appears to be more stoical, if not exactly sanguine, about the changes in their circumstances, simply just 'getting on with it'. Yosser's invective litany of anger against women includes his dismissal of his female psychiatrist, 'you won't shrink me, she (his wife) tried that' and jokes at the expense of women, 'the Catholic Church has enough problems without women'. As Saville has pointed out, here 'the tenor of a joke is based on someone's misery, someone's bad luck and it's often anti-women'.[970]

However, for a more dramatic indication of gender power relations we need to look again to *The Black Stuff.* Here the boys' casual sexism is worked through in a number of quotidian exchanges with each other; Chrissie justifying bringing his pets on a job to Middlesbrough, 'you know my tart, if I leave them at home she won't look after them'; their attempts to embarrass or belittle women in ostensibly subservient positions to themselves; and in a far more pointed fashion, the misogyny which Yosser expresses to women who have transcended, achieved, or have opportunities of which he is denied. How the narrative treats these women and the reaction of the boys differs from character to character. Where Chrissie's understanding of Angie's

[969] Tim Lott, *Rumours of a Hurricane*, First Published 2002 (London: Penguin, 2003).
[970] Millington and Nelson (1986), p. 132.

aspirations is an amalgam of incomprehension and solipsistic self-regard, for Yosser it is most frequently women who are the targets of his particularly minatory execrations.

Janine Duvitski plays a particularly transgressive female student whose treatment by the boys, and in particular Yosser's greeting, 'been raped lately love?' has led Bleasdale to claim that this now makes him embarrassed.[971] However, while he regards it as 'typical male chauvinism of the seventies' he suspects that very little has changed.[972] As a harbinger of emergent discourses around gender she invites a litany of invective grounded in residual discourses. Yosser is provocatively antagonistic towards her because she is a student, but principally because she is a female student: 'Bloody students. Bloody women!'. His exaggerated baiting of her, with a description of women when he worked in Saudi, 'where women know their place […] they await a man's pleasure', progresses into a vitriolic invective which proceeds to become more specific about his own situation:

> Tarts like you, you don't know your position in life. Some things you're good at, making the tea and having babies. You don't need an education like yours to change nappies and cook chips.

Some of the others actively participate in this provocation. Loggo humiliates her in reading aloud her love letters and stealing her personal items; when she learns that Kevin had wanted to go to college and suggests that he still can, she is clearly regarded by Kevin's father, Dixie, as a questioning and potentially harmful and disruptive presence. While it is the boys that the narrative explicitly asks us to identify with, this exchange highlights both their inadequacies and the already anachronistic values which they have invested heavily in.

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[971] *The Black Stuff* with Audio Commentary Featuring Alan Bleasdale and Jim Goddard, [included in *Boys from the Blackstuff: The Complete Series* DVD, BBC, 2003]

[972] Ibid.

As she leaves the boys, her parting riposte shows her acute understanding of Yosser's attitude; 'Your wife must give you hell' and indeed it could be argued that this is true. Even before Yosser became unemployed his relationship with Maureen, his wife, is shown to be fraught and antagonistic. As she returns home late from her job at a casino (which the boys deride as a 'knocking shop') the humiliated Yosser confronts her: 'You bitch, at this time, in front of the lads as well'. 'Oh yeah, you're only bothered about that aren't you' she ridicules, 'the boys are waiting for you. Aren't you going out to play today?'

Throughout this visceral exchange the threat of violence is palpable. 'I'm not scared of you anymore' asserts Maureen, and as Yosser grips her by the throat stopping just short of striking her, it is clear that the power relationship here has shifted. Maureen is now economically free from Yosser, she is no longer dependent upon him, it is her chance now to assert herself and establish her own sense of identity.

While she is of course a deeply unsympathetic character she is emblematic of opportunities which many women could grasp in the 1980s and this is to some degree a consequence of men losing those same opportunities through unemployment. Furthermore, Maureen recognises the pleasures (and privileges) which men may gain from being engaged in work. As Campbell has argued, 'loneliness and relative poverty of economic dependence is common currency in the culture of women'.[973] While this may not exonerate Maureen's actions, such as abandoning her children, it certainly provides a cogent case for them.

[973] Campbell (1984), p. 171.

While Bleasdale, with the encouragement of Saville, is able to offer in Angie a female character who articulates an explicit critique of the prevailing gender relations, there are no women within *Fox* who are able to perform such a function.[974] However, that is not to say that there is no questioning of gender behaviours and relations. While addressing the concerns of men within a narrative largely from the point of view of men, Preston allows for a degree of looseness within the narratives with several female representations challenging the normative standards accepted within his working-class milieu. Thus, as we have seen, while most of the women tend to perform somewhat stereotypical roles of supportive wife, forgiving mother and so forth, he does allow room for some female characters to operate outside of familial and domestic confines. However, in doing so he appears to draw a distinction between working-class and middle-class women,and it is the latter that tend to be far more assertive and less understanding of masculine obsessiveness and foibles.

Some critics recognised that *Fox* was 'weak on feminism with the character of Liz treated as a piece of property passed between Joey and her husband'.[975] While Philip Keating lamented the portrayal of women as lacking authenticity, Davies recoiled at the narrative's 'warped idea of women as either Madonna or whore' with the female actors 'markedly less convincing than the action as well they might be given the archaically stylised roles they play'.[976]

In *Fox*, Billy's wife, together with his former mistress represent women dominated by men. They perform a role which is supportive and understanding but which leaves

[974] Cooke (2003), p. 131.
[975] Stewart Lane (1980b).
[976] Keating (1980); Andrew Davies (1980).

them without any life away from men. While arguably this may have a generational element to it, Kenny's young fiancé Nan is not dissimilar to them, vacillating between passivity and something approaching a maternal attitude towards him. Even with Vinny's wife Rene who appears to share a more equal and, at times, combative relationship with her husband, Preston still places her emphatically within the private domestic sphere. Ultimately then it is left to the rebellious middle-class Anna, the American academic Stella, the strident Bette and independent Peg, to suggest that women might be able to have their own internal lives and exist independently rather than as reactions to the male characters.

However, Preston also frequently portrays women as neurotic and possessive across the classes, whether Joey's suicidal jilted ex-lover or Frank Ross's middle-class mistress in *Out.* Additionally several women are only briefly sketched as either objects of sexual gratification, inconsequential presences or appendages to the male protagonists. Indeed, like Bleasdale, Preston has in hindsight expressed a degree of regret of at least one scene which he says was 'a bit sexist, I wish I had never put it in'.[977]

All this would appear to suggest that Preston may accept that while some degree of change in gender relations may be inevitable, the instigator of this is likely to come from outside of the community and class. He appears to place the idea of independent women as a class apart, something exotic, since most of the working-class women 'know their place'. This would accord with the notion of working-class community where everyone understands their position and role. There are

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[977] *It Must be the Suit* (2007).

exceptional women, but this does not fundamentally alter gender relations in their wider sense. Thus, women who are seen as potentially harmful, such as Bette, are elided from the narrative, while others viewed as less disruptive, such as Peg, are accommodated with a degree of appropriation which renders them no longer a threat to the maintenance of the continued hegemonic project.[978]

While bonding between the men inevitably finds its articulation with a degree of predictable sexism and misogyny, whether Joey's sexually promiscuous use of women, Ray's more manipulative and subtle subjection of ex-wife, girlfriend or conquests, together with the occasional sexist 'jokes' male characters share at women's expense, this falls short of any genuine or widespread aggression towards women. Rutherford has suggested that homosocial bonding is essentially a defensive mechanism to ward off the threat men perceive from women. Here male bonding 'is collusion by men to resist the other', something which is evident in the way Phil and Ray find humour in Ray's description of slapping a former girlfriend.[979] However, while several of the male characters articulate a degree of misogyny within *Fox*, it is never as explicitly expressed as it is in *The Black Stuff.*

If, as Cooke has suggested, Preston's ethos is a sympathetic portrayal of a working-class fraternity, then this is frequently achieved at the expense of women as significant factors within the narratives.[980] Indeed, as Linda Agran, Head of Scripts and Development at Euston has noted, there was a degree of feminist criticism of a

[978] Demetriou (2001), 337-361 (p. 345).
[979] Jonathan Rutherford, 'Who's That Man?', in *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity,* ed. by Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988, repr. 1996), pp. 21-67 (p.52).
[980] Cooke (2003), p. 131.

number of the production company's male centred dramas. The male writers, she explained,

> found it difficult to write convincing female characters. They're afraid of getting them wrong, so they leave them out or drop in a stereotype just in order to get a point across.[981]

In this sense then the narrative's negative treatment of women operates in a more subtle fashion where the male characters dominate the narratives' more central, and arguably important, issues and the women are excluded from and remain outside of the 'real business' of men's lives. As Whitehead has observed:

> The public worlds of men are often very private, with men's practices often obscured behind ritualised behaviour, bound by fraternities and frequently embedded in misogynistic attitudes and sexual stereotypes.[982]

Thus, family conflict and problems with external forces are only allowed to be handled by men, frequently in a forceful and violent manner. When Vinny is faced with losing his business and money he elects not to tell his wife Rene; Ray, arrested by police will only confide in his male employee, refusing to use his one phone call to talk to his girlfriend; when Kenny is kidnapped the men go in search of him, the women remain at home. As Whitehead has argued:

> Woman is omnipresent, yet necessarily curtailed by the masculine mysteries invoked by the images of the man 'doing his own thing' and woman is the other that necessarily exists in order to allow man to assume his central role.[983]

Thus, women are frequently marginalised in *Fox,* regarded by several of the male characters as being irrelevant to what is deemed to be men's public business.

Cook has argued that the problematic portrayals of women in Preston's previous drama *Out* contributed to its critical dismissal. While the 'faithful sufferers […] can be

[981] James Saynor, 'Minders Keepers', *Stills* (Nov 1984), p. 42.
[982] Whitehead (2002), p. 116.
[983] Ibid., p. 119.

rationalised as the staples of the thriller genre […] such representations when offered in a realist mode with a dominantly masculine working-class address' were open to considerable criticism.[984] However, in countering this criticism, Cook points to similar representations of women in the majority of social dramas including those of Loach and Bleasdale, which while recognised by critics, 'were quickly passed over'.[985]

It would appear then that while *Fox* allows for a degree of limited feminist discourse it is *Boys from the Blackstuff* which provides a genuine voice for a female character. However, as I have already acknowledged, it was the influence of the rather more middle-class director Philip Saville, which resulted in that female voice emerging. As Bleasdale himself has commented 'I didn't have the courage to write that woman's part' and it was only after Saville's intervention that Bleasdale created it, based upon his own experiences.[986] As he has expressed so ruefully, 'I hadn't given my wife an opportunity to fly as perhaps she should have done'.[987] So while the more middle-class Saville had a direct influence upon the female voice in *Boys from the Blackstuff*, it could be argued that no such influence was exerted by Goddard upon Preston, both coming from broadly similar working-class backgrounds, hence the virtual elision of any form of meaningful female subjectivity. However, while Cook has recognised the 'relegation of women to reactive roles in relation exclusively to (white) men' as a 'severe limitation', it should not be seen as a 'crippling limitation'.[988]

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[984] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 143).
[985] Ibid.
[986] *The Reunion* (2011).
[987] Ibid.
[988] Cook (1985), pp. 136-146 (p. 145).

5.13 Change and Entrapment

As I have argued, while the male characters in *Boys from the Blackstuff* are looking towards the past the female characters largely are not. It is the women who adapt and survive to new circumstances, while the routine of work has led the men to adopt habits of a lifetime.[989] While their embeddedness in working-class patriarchy appears to be the prime reason for this masculine entrenchment, the nexus between masculine identity and work lends considerable credence to Monaghan's proposition that,

> far from finding new opportunities, working-class men in the 1980s can no longer even be confident of securing the kind of jobs readily available to them throughout the post-war era.[990]

This then has consequences which go beyond economics: 'For men raised in a culture where masculine self-esteem is directly related to their work', the loss of that work will lead to a loss of identity.[991] This apparent loss of identity is clearly communicated in silhouette, blurred and, overhead shots together with the framing of individuals isolated within the landscape, to provide a network of visual motifs to suggest that to be out of work is to suffer a crisis of identity that leads in turn to a breakdown in familial relationships and in class solidarity.[992]

Rather than opening up possibilities of new discourses around gender relations and constructions of masculinity, the narrative suggests that for its male protagonists there is limited opportunity for agentic redefinition. As with *Fox*, Bleasdale presents a world which accords with Foucault's notion of recognised agency but within certain

[989] Campbell (1984), p. 185; 179.
[990] Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 5).
[991] Ibid.
[992] Ibid., p.12.

discursive parameters. As Whitehead has noted, Foucault sees the self as being created through the self-disciplinary 'techniques of the practices of self that are at the disposal of the subject (as individual) seeking self-signification'.[993] In this way the discursive subject becomes enabled. However, discourses also carry with them knowledge, 'through their capacity to signal what is possible to […] do at a particular moment and in particular cultural settings'.[994] Unlike *Fox*, for Bleasdale, there is no longer any meaningful sense of agency as his protagonists retreat further into the redundant and otiose discourses which had been so crucial in their identity construction and had fostered the dominant beliefs surrounding gender and sexuality.

Although the variety and diversity of emergent discourses of gender is immediately apparent in the increasing plurality of masculinities in the 1980s, there remained residual resistance to many of these. Yet as different discourses emerge which may threaten 'masculine power regimes', once out in the public domain they are often unstoppable.[995] Nevertheless, individuals may still attempt to exercise power through the utilisation of dominant discourses of masculinity.[996] This is clearly the case for Bleasdale's protagonists as they fail to understand that the dominant discourses which inform their particular constructions of masculinity are in the process of becoming residual.

This loss of identity and the inability to construct a new or altered one partly because of the embeddedness of working-class masculinity and partly because of the

[993] Whitehead (2002), p. 102.
[994] Ibid., p. 103.
[995] Ibid., p. 109.
[996] Ibid., p. 107.

genuine lack of alternatives, at least in the immediate future, leads to both entrapment within the legacy of the past and the futility of any activity within the present. It is therefore impossible to open up new meaningful personal narratives in this new and inhospitable climate. As Monaghan has argued, *Boys from the Blackstuff* is essentially about the 'futile attempts of the film's main characters to construct personal narratives in the absence of any but redundant subject positions'.[997] This is then intensified through a powerful

> visual language of recurring images of frantic but aimless movement, paralysis, entrapment, loss of identity and madness and in setting the film's action against a backdrop of literal and metaphorical wastelands.[998]

As Bleasdale's male characters are depicted as largely entrapped by their circumstances, so much of the mise-en-scene is symbolic of this entrapment. As they are framed from behind the wire mesh at the Department of Employment, the iron railings as they arrive there, or the grille behind which Yosser is confined within the confessional box, all act as powerful metaphors for their circumstances. A sense of claustrophobia and isolation is given further weight by the use of shallow focus to alienate the individual protagonists; tight shots which cloister characters; small discrete settings like the toilet cubicle in which Dixie receives his bribes; a general but realistic use of small houses, cramped rooms, rows of terraces and the foregrounding of venetian blinds and stair treads to further entrap the protagonists and turn their homes into prisons. Perhaps, however, the most powerful metaphor for the characters' entrapment 'is the close shot of Chrissie's ferret as it rushes frantically from one side of its tiny cage to the other in perfect mimicry of its owner's state of mind'.[999] It is this very type of frenetic, repetitive, and futile action which is

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[997] Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 5).
[998] Ibid., p. 12.
[999] Ibid.

perpetually stressed by the narrative. The nature of much of their work, whether laying asphalt or bricks is necessarily repetitive and this is cruelly parodied by the repetition of the same questions asked of them every week as they sign on at the Department of Employment. Bleasdale seems to be suggesting that the boys are now leading frantic but futile lives which are further emphasised by an atmosphere of frantic but futile movement. Snowy, vital and with a clear sense of purpose, dies in the first episode; Chrissie scurrying about the empty docks to find help for George, while all the time George is beyond help; and any sense of purpose and energy halted emphatically by the freeze frame which ends each episode. The use of freeze frames, however, does not serve to provide any sense of closure to the narratives as, ultimately, Bleasdale's characters are either left to drift aimlessly through the landscape or make futile gestures equally without lasting purpose or resolution. The narrative finally reveals them as unable to recuperate their old identities or engage with emergent discourses which might lead to constructions of new ones. As Monaghan has argued, in direct contradiction of ‘Margaret Thatcher's claim that her policies were opening up new avenues of self-understanding for working-class people’, *Boys from the Blackstuff* recognises nothing in their lives other than a void.[1000] These are lives that have become entirely deprived of meaning by unemployment.

Regardless then of the emergence of new discourses in the early 1980s, these discourses were not open to all and were highly dependent upon where one was placed within the social order. Once again Bourdieu’s argument that class acts as a major mitigating factor, where social limits becomes one’s own sense of limits and

[1000] Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p.13).

may result in an adherence to the relations of existing order, is singularly applicable.[1001] This may be true, particularly within traditional working-class societies, where Bourdieu argues, there may be an inability to understand one's position or envisage possibilities because of where one is placed historically, culturally and socially.[1002] Here again social limits become one's sense of limits where social structures may transfer and become mental structures with a resultant 'adherence to (the) relations of order'.[1003] Ultimately, the narrative suggests that this is the case for Bleasdale's principal protagonists.

Bleasdale's vision of change then is one that is almost entirely bleak, unavoidable, and damaging and the entrapment of his male protagonists suggests identities which are so disadvantaged and embedded in residual discourses as to render transformation in accordance with this change impossible. *Fox*, however, suggests a more subtle notion of entrapment, not from external forces and lack of agentic self-definition but rather from a stifling nostalgia burdened with expectations and tradition, which can only be eroded slowly. Clearly for the younger South Londoners new discourses are becoming available as they accompany new opportunities and they are better positioned to accommodate changes rather than those in a traumatised North. Indeed, it could be argued that what Paul Du Noyer has called the 'collateral damage' suffered by Bleasdale's protagonists is, if not the direct corollary of Southern economic growth, then at least it must be seen as connected to it.[1004] Here, in the relatively prosperous South is the obverse of Monaghan's assertion that Thatcher's claims about new avenues for self-understanding for working-class

[1001] Bourdieu (1984), p. 471.
[1002] Ibid.
[1003] Ibid.
[1004] *The Reunion* (2011).

people rang hollow.[1005] However, the changes which accompany these new opportunities need to be tentatively negotiated rather than embraced and what appears to be at risk here is the fragility of both individual and communal identities.

This then suggests a certain flexibility in identity formation and maintenance which Bleasdale largely denies his male characters. Here the possibility of change is in accord with Bourdieu's notion of durability rather than immutability of identity. While Bourdieu argues that the subjective 'dispositions (are) durably inculcated by the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions', this does not mean that they remain constant.[1006]

Thus, for the next generation of the Fox family, given that the habitus possesses 'temporal structures and dispositions towards the future', while repetition and reproduction of gender identity may be the norm, there is potential for change.[1007] However, this is likely to be far from uniform, hence the ability to accommodate change and render oneself amenable to the transformation of one's identity varies significantly from character to character. As Beynon has suggested, men are acculturated into masculinity,

> which is composed of social codes of behaviour which they learn to reproduce in culturally appropriate ways. It is indexical of class, subculture, age, and ethnicity.[1008]

However, 'easy generalisations about working-class experience belie the considerable variation of experience and expression'.[1009] Thus, even within this

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[1005] Monaghan (2001), pp. 2-13 (p. 13).
[1006] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, by . Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), p. 54; Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), p. 129.
[1007] Bourdieu (1990), p. 64.
[1008] Beynon (2002), p. 2.

tightly knit group of five working-class brothers, masculinity is 'interpreted, enacted and experienced in a number of different ways'.[1010]

While masculine identity in *Fox* is seen to be associated with community, tough physicality, and family, it is not wholly determined by them. Nonetheless, entrapment within these structures and their residual and dominant discourses of masculinity does operate as a powerful motif within the narrative, and it is particularly germane to the circumstances of Vinny and Ray. For Vinny, the tough physical job of scaffolding remains his principal source of identity. Any avenue of escape or attempt to create a new life and identity is closed off. Ultimately he must remain 'just another iron monkey'. Any aspirations to anything else are severely curtailed by a lack of greater cognitive awareness and circumstances which are beyond fruitful agentic intervention. In short, Vinny is tied to a construction of masculinity which favours physicality. Of all the sons it is Vinny and Kenny, who later joins him in the business, who remain under their father's shadow reproducing their own secondary and rather diminished versions of him.

Similarly entrapment features in the narrative of Ray but in a rather different way. Far more intelligent and open than Vinny, he is nonetheless caught in the past, self-consciously performing his own construction of a tough, vain, posturing mythologised and highly stylised masculinity. This performance is clearly signified within the narrative as being informed by specific discourses including criminal codes of honour and classic film representations. While this is initially an entrapment of his own construction it later becomes the instrument of his literal imprisonment, itself the

[1009] Beynon (2002), p. 2.
[1010] Ibid.

extension of the noir inflected chiaroscuro, claustrophobic and recondite world of nightclubs and bars. For Ray, perhaps the least subject to the constraints, confines and expectations of the family, one entrapment has been replaced by another, literally as punishment for crime and figuratively for the transgression against family.

Ultimately then, change is not something which *Fox* accommodates particularly well since much of the narrative actively resists or negates its dynamic possibilities. Indeed Sean Day-Lewis saw the entire series as one in which stasis and stagnation prevailed, where there was a disavowal of change even after the introduction of significant events and people. Characters were 'frozen in the attitudes stated when they were first introduced' and had failed to be 'changed by whatever action there has been'.[1011]

5.14 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that both *Fox and Boys from the Blackstuff* reveal a structure of feeling concerned with anxieties around the erosion of patriarchal positions and dominant and residual discourses of masculinity. It has explored the significance of wider prevailing shifts in society upon working-class masculinities, examining the reactions and strategies engaged in attempting to confront them. It has argued that through their individual focus on working-class communities undergoing radical change both Bleasdale and Preston have formulated narratives which, while exploring markedly different milieux, have the primary intention of positioning their male protagonists where they need to preserve or recover patriarchy. Thus, while changes in economic, social, and cultural circumstances of

[1011] Day-Lewis (1980b).

the period demanded a reconfiguration of masculinity and gender relations both narratives express a structure of feeling which is attached to residual and dominant discourses rather than engaging meaningfully with emergent ones.

I have shown how both narratives conform to the notion of masculine identities bound to physical work, the role as provider, the position of patriarch with the privilege that it entails and are underpinned by attendant structures. Here I have argued, the sense of established identity is reliant on sense of continuity and therefore is resistant to change, demonstrating how the texts explore this as a consequence of patriarchal privilege, existing social structures, dominant discourses and social disadvantage.

This chapter has demonstrated how both narratives articulate a structure of feeling which, reveals both individual and widespread experience, and their relationships with the shifting political, social and economic structures of a specific period. However, while structures of feeling may be interpreted as productive processes facilitating the construction of subject identities in new emergent situations, the texts here articulate the problems men had in formulating these new adaptive identities.

While I have explored the ways the narratives articulate anxieties around changes within working-class culture in general, this chapter has been particularly concerned with the considerable discomfort the narratives exhibit in the ways they deal with the emergent voice of working-class women**.** While the narratives attempt to engender sympathy for the plight of their male protagonists portraying them as victims of change while also trapped by circumstances, this chapter has established that it is

those very changes which are obdurately resisted by men in an effort to marginalise women and retain their patriarchal positions.

Thus, while this chapter has acknowledged the central theme of the male protagonists attempting to contend with the disintegration of their masculine identities in *Boys from the Blackstuff* it has also examined the previously unexplored area of gender relations within the narrative. Similarly, while examining the pivotal discourse of change in family and community in *Fox,* this chapter has also addressed gender relations and identities and the ways that hegemonic practice works to facilitate configurations of gender practices to allow them to remain virtually unaltered. Ultimately, in presenting changes which do not 'make sense' to their male protagonists, I have argued that the narratives conform to Bourdieu's notion where 'social divisions become the principles of division organising the limits of the social world. Objective limits become a sense of limits, a sense of one's place'.[1012]

Finally, drawing upon a number of significant theories on nostalgia this chapter has also examined nostalgic feeling as a particular response to social, cultural, and economic shifts. It has demonstrated the ways in which nostalgia functions in both narratives as a key discourse in attempting to maintain or restore identities, relying on increasingly residual discourses. Thus, as the perceived stability of the present recedes, nostalgia provides an illusory sense of permanence for what are manifestly fragile constructions of masculine identities.

[1012] Bourdieu (1984), p. 471.

6 Howay the Lads!: Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to consider the ways emergent and residual discourses of masculinity in the 1980s were frequently experienced by men as a site of contention. In examining Clement and La Frenais' *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* (UK, 1983-86) as a drama which displays a series of working-class masculine discourses this chapter seeks to show the ways men conducted a faltering, hesitant relationship with emergent discourses while simultaneously engaging with residual ones. Thus, while the previous chapter was concerned with identifying strategies to manage and resist new discourses of gender, this chapter will demonstrate the iterative relationship between emergent and residual discourses of masculinity revealing identity construction as a disrupted, open ended process operating in a state of unease.

While I acknowledge that 'masculine patterns may change by incorporating elements from [...] others' in a process of 'mutual conditioning of gender dynamics and other social dynamics', I shall also argue that in foregrounding the ordinary, everyday experiences of men, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* demonstrates a greater willingness to embrace new discourses, while simultaneously recognising the limitations of those experiences.[1013] Thus, this chapter will develop the argument that the practices, experiences and feelings of white, heterosexual working-class men, even when relatively open to change, reveal a structure of feeling which is nonetheless characterised by anxieties and uncertainties.

[1013] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender and Society,* 19.6 (December 2005), 829-859 (p. 837-848).

The opening section focuses on the production context, critical reception and the evolution of the series through its extant players. It will examine the press coverage for both series as evidence of concerns around the impact of social and economic changes on working-class masculinity and go on to assess the affect of the programme on a wider audience. The chapter will also argue that what emerged was outside of the generally accepted domain of masculine genres, with its emphasis on dialogue, feelings, and intimacy in a homosocial context, rather than relying explicitly on action or goal driven narratives. I will go on to argue that unlike *Boys from the Blackstuff* , *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* does not confront the social, cultural and economic changes of the late 1970s and early 1980s head on but largely sidesteps them in order to develop a more subtle exploration of masculinity.

The chapter will then explore the shifting intersection of class allegiances and constructions of masculinity, and how this is played out in the narratives offering up new opportunities to engage with emergent discourses. Through the principal trope of foregrounding relationships between male characters exhibiting a range of masculine discourses which belies any notion of homogeneity, it will argue that *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* is able to explore the residual, dominant, and emergent showing how these are related to class aspirations and how they shift through intersubjectivity and exposure to other discourses. However, I will also argue that while the narratives open up multiple discourses they also frequently rescind on these opportunities for their protagonists to fully engage with them. Drawing upon Whitehead's work on masculinity this chapter will show that while *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* allows for a degree of possibilities and capacities for resistance to, and indeed transformation of, existing gender practices, the lived, grounded experience for many

working-class men may have been manifestly different. Whitehead's appropriation of Foucault's post-structural analysis of gender adopts an approach which, while emphasising the importance of understanding men and masculinities as discursive, recognises both the limitations as well as the possibilities of this approach.

The chapter will then explore a number of specific aspects of *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* where this uneasy relationship between possibilities and limitations is worked through. Employing Whitehead's post-structural perspective of masculinity as a framework it will demonstrate how individual and society are inextricably connected since emotions are a response to the 'expressive relations between people' rather than something which emerges from deep within the individual.[1014] The close textual analysis will then explore the social and cultural changes affecting the construction and performance of gender and gender relations and how these are played out through relationships, friendships, family roles and the expression of feelings, again across a range of masculine discourses within the narratives.

Finally, this chapter will demonstrate how the two key themes which concern the writers in relation to changes and continuities in identity construction, homosociality and nostalgia, function within the narratives. It will argue that while homosociality is employed as means to alleviate anxieties about changes which undermine the perceived continuity of identity, as the homosocial group engages with both emergent as well as residual and dominant discourses of masculinity. It will go on to examine how nostalgia also works to construct and reaffirm identities and one of the principal ways it does this is through the construction of individual and particularly

[1014] Ian Burkitt, 'Social Relationships and Emotions', *Sociology*, 31.1 (1997), 37-55 (p. 40).

collective myth. In creating heroic roles the narratives augment 'pride and self-esteem' affirming the 'value of the narrative of self-identity'.[1015]

6.2 Breaking Away: The Emergence of *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*

It has become a generally accepted axiom within media studies that gendered genres in television, because of their dissimilar and distinct narrative structures and varying emphases on either action or dialogue, tend to predominantly appeal to either women or men. Soap operas, for example, with their dominant female characters, stories which deal with emotions and intimacies, emphasis on family and relationships and narrative structures which suggest ambivalence and contradiction are seen to offer greater opportunity for emotional engagement especially amongst women. Indeed Geraghty has talked about a feminine aesthetic existing within soap operas and Modleski has argued that they operate within a 'feminine narrative form'.[1016] Conversely, goal oriented narratives with individuals or groups of men, where the goal is paramount and conclusive, and any personal revelations are either absent or smuggled into the narratives have been seen as a requirement for, what have been considered to be, masculine genres, including police and crime dramas. If, as Easthope has maintained, the masculine ego is particularly inclined towards self-contained, closed narratives which privilege action over dialogue, then any suggestion of vulnerability, revelation or ambivalence is necessarily subsumed within the goal oriented narrative.[1017]

[1015] David Gauntlett, *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction,* 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p.108.

[1016] Christine Geraghty, *Women and Soap Opera : A Study of Prime Time Soaps* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990); Tania Modleski, 'In Search of Tomorrow in Today's Soap Operas: Notes on a Feminine Narrative Form', *Film Quarterly,* 33.1 (1979), 12-21 (p. 12).

[1017] Antony Easthope, *What a Man's Gotta Do : The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture (*[n.p.]: Unwin Hyman, 1990; repr. Routledge: New York, NY, 1992), pp. 83-84.

Where perhaps certain situation comedies like *Hancock*'s *Half Hour* (UK, 1956-60) and more particularly *Steptoe and Son* (UK, 1962-65; 1970-74) may have allowed for a degree of open and ambivalent personal exploration amongst men, together with narratives where any action and indeed goal become secondary to emotional revelation around masculine anxieties, British drama series, with the possible exception of *Budgie* (UK, 1971-72), have rarely done this. Perhaps this is why the development in the 1980s of the comedy drama genre, set over an hour and not driven by an overarching narrative, created such a prodigious impact. If, as has been suggested, dominant discourses of masculinity have led to men becoming emotionally inarticulate and inhibited, then a fictive space like *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, which was able to open this up was particularly rare in British television.[1018] By initially exposing these inarticulacies, and then subsequently exploring genuinely intimate emotions amongst men, it operated as a drama which directly addressed particular aspects of the 'masculine condition'.

While Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais were the creative force behind the series, the initial idea was actually conceived not by the writers but a director from Teeside, Franc Roddam. Roddam had a track record including the 'fly on the wall' documentary *The Family* (UK, 1974) and the television drama-documentary *Dummy* (UK, 1977). He envisaged a 'hard hitting play […] in the tradition of *Cathy Come Home*. (UK, 1966)' and initially approached Willy Russell.[1019] As someone who was acutely aware of his background in the industrial North-East, his aim was to 'shed light on common experience' declaring that he had 'wanted our voices to be heard

[1018] Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), p. 175.
[1019] Franc Roddam and Dan Waddell, *The Auf Wiedersehen, Pet Story: That's Living Alright* (London: BBC Books, 2003), p. 13.

correctly'.[1020] This was to be a story about the experiences of his friends, bricklayers and plasterers, who had been forced by unemployment at home, to seek work elsewhere. To this end then, he followed one of them out to Germany.[1021] Here he observed men 'away from their wives answerable to no one, but themselves'.[1022] Roddam remembers that for many of these men this was indeed a good life. While many had married young and had wives, children and adult obligations, in Germany they had money and minimal responsibilities, their experience being one which was weighted considerably toward the notion of having fun. Thus, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* emerged from the lived experience of ordinary working-class men, those witnessed by Roddam. This experience was one which reflected their comfort within the homosocial world with its largely residual and dominant discourses of masculinity together with uncertainty about the responsibilities and expectations of emergent discourses as the consequence of social and cultural changes in Britain.

Thus, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* expresses a structure of feeling which conveys how individual experience and emotion are connected to wider social and economic structures. It is in essence a small, ephemeral story which uncovers social experiences which tended to be undervalued, dismissed, discounted or overlooked, expressing the unease, the hope, and the incomprehension experienced by its male characters.[1023]

[1020] *Drama Connections: Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, BBC1, 6 September 2005, 22.35.
[1021] Ibid.
[1022] Roddam (2003), p. 13.
[1023] Cora Kaplan, 'What We Have Again to Say: Williams, Feminism and the 1850s', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams* ed. by Christopher Prendergast (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp. 211-236 (p. 231); Morag Shiach, 'A Gendered History of Cultural Categories', in *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams,* (see Kaplan above), pp 51-70 (p. 58).

It should be acknowledged that both the collaborative nature of television production along with the specific circumstances of the production's evolution allowed for a number of authorial voices to make significant contributions. As I have already discussed, while the contributions of Mackenzie, Goddard, and Saville influenced the quality of output from McDougall, Preston and Bleasdale this was also the case for Clement and La Frenais. For example, while they may have been by far the most influential factors, in terms of dialogue and storylines, there was considerable input from Stan Hey who wrote several episodes in the first two series, Jimmy Nail who demanded rewrites and of course Roddam.[1024] Additionally, director Roger Bamford with experience on *Play for Today* (UK, 1970-1984) and *BBC2 Playhouse,* (1974-1983) insisted on authentic locations, even for interior scenes, which lent a degree of realism.[1025] Indeed, any claim to authenticity may actually be supported by the input from these contributors. La Frenais himself has stated 'everything we have done is a complete fraud'.[1026] As middle-class, privately educated writers they have conceded, 'we're one sort of people really, and we write about another sort'.[1027] Nevertheless, while there may be some truth in this, and the fact that their writing has been generically varied and diverse, what their most notable work retains is an acute insight into men, homosociality, and male nostalgia.

Described by Alan Parker as two of the best writers for British television, which suggests they can be placed alongside writers of television drama such as Alan Plater, producer Martin McKeand has remarked that, while 'they may be middle-class

[1024] Roddam (2003), p. 13; *Omnibus: Whatever Happened To…Clement and La Frenais?*, BBC1 20 July 1997 22.45 50mins; Roddam (2003), p. 9.
[1025] Roddam (2003), p. 36.
[1026] Andrew Martin, 'Everything We've Done is a Fraud', *Telegraph*, 26 April 2002.
[1027] Ibid.

they write really good working-class characters'.[1028] Jimmy Nail sees them as particularly adept at shining the light on working-class men under pressure and while much of their work has been in the area of comedy, this emerges, La Frenais claims, from natural speech and situations.[1029] Arguably they have been able to write about very different male characters, because they themselves are very different personalities, La Frenais, 'laddish' and knowledgeable about rock and roll, writing the character of Wayne as a reflection of himself, Clement far more 'straight' and conservative. Indeed Kevin Whatley has mused that there may have been much of *The Likely Lads,* (UK, 1964-66) in their relationship.[1030]

Of their most successful work it is perhaps the three television series *The Likely Lads* and its sequel *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* (UK, 1973-74), *Porridge* (UK, 1974-77) and *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* with which they have become most readily identified. What connects all three is the emphasis on groups of men inhabiting a milieu where women are either excluded or liminal. As Clement himself has pointed out, they have placed their characters in a state of confinement which for the actors themselves sometimes led to an atmosphere of claustrophobia.[1031] This confinement with its 'limits placed on the pleasures of life', highlights 'the way in which men communicate […] the tensions, the petty feuds and the camaraderie'.[1032] This allows for an almost laboratorial exploration of men and how they relate to each other and operate within each other's company. The emphasis is almost exclusively on modes and practices of masculinity and how they are played out within

[1028] *Omnibus* (1997); Roddam (2003), p. 17.
[1029] *Omnibus* (1997).
[1030] Ibid.
[1031] *Drama Connections* (2005).
[1032] Roddam (2003), p. 16.

homosocial relationships, together with the tension created by characters being 'trapped by job, circumstances, environment and trying to get out of it'.[1033]

Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? and *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, however, share an even closer affinity concerning a general sense of anxiety around class, national and regional identity and non-hegemonic individual masculine identity. There is also the recurring concern on how group identity and interaction may come to reinforce or indeed undermine individual notions of masculine identities. As Connell has argued:

> Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in […] personality traits of individuals […] (but) configurations of practice that are accomplished in social interaction […] (and) can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting.[1034]

Furthermore by reuniting the principal characters in subsequent series Clement and La Frenais are able to explore the fracturing and moderating of these identities and the urge to either restore or adapt them. This is then combined with a wider sense of loss in terms of community and locality underwritten by a profound nostalgic impulse. However, where *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* benefited from having its two central characters sharing a back-story which originated in childhood, and being set in a familiar (to them) place, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* works in an entirely different and much more challenging way. *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* allows for an extremely intense relationship because of the characters' conversance with each other and their milieu of the industrial North-East. While things are certainly changing both economically and socially, there is a great deal of comforting familiarity in their surroundings and circumstances which cushions them against the encroachment of time and social change. Conversely, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* at once

[1033] *Omnibus* (1997).
[1034] Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), 829-859 (p. 836).

deracinates and brings together its seven male characters, they being disparate in age, social background, education, attitudes and values, family commitment, aspirations, skills, regional background, and interests. Even their physicality is markedly different. Indeed in terms of back-story, while some of the characters have limited knowledge of each other, most have none. As one critic observed 'all human life can be found here'.[1035] Nonetheless, as the protagonist's friendships develop the writers suggest that, to a degree, their patterns of masculinity adjust and reshape as they absorb elements from others in a process of 'mutual conditioning'.[1036]

What makes for the intensity of their relationships and interactions is that the characters are not only displaced from the familiarity of their home environs, and cast into a different country, but that they also exist in a somewhat artificial world where they share almost every minute of their lives, whether working, socialising, sleeping, or simply living. These characters have to get to know each other in frequently fraught and testing conditions, as they unwittingly explore each other's individual identities and are exposed to forms of masculinity which they may not have encountered or wished to have encountered before. If, as Phil Wickham has said, the narrative of *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads*? facilitated the protagonists with relationships which allowed them to 'experience another kind of manhood vicariously', then *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* does this sevenfold and with a far greater degree of diversity and hence possibility.[1037] Here Demetriou's concept of dialectical pragmatism describes this process most succinctly capturing the ways

[1035] Lenny Broon, 'Hip Hod', *New Musical Express,* 22 February 1986.
[1036] Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) 829-859 (p. 847; 848).
[1037] Phil Wickham, *The Likely Lads* (London: BFI, 2008), p. 61.

masculinities exercise a reciprocal influence on each other.[1038]

While the idea for *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* was Roddam's and the characters were created and developed by the writers, the casting also had considerable impact on how the individual characters emerged. As with McDougall and Mackenzie using comedian Hector Nicol, folk singer and welder Billy Connolly and blues-rock singer Frankie Miller in key roles, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* also benefited from the casting of a number of semi-professional actors together with those from a variety of diverse backgrounds. This was a cast of relative unknowns, which, Jimmy Nail claims, led to 'actors on proper dramas' being dismissive of their efforts, asking rhetorically 'who would want to watch a drama about bricklayers?'.[1039] This then 'bred a siege mentality […] us against the rest' which 'forged a special bond between the cast'.[1040]

While Clement and La Frenais were able to typically explore the intersubjectivity between their male characters, it is also worth considering what the actors themselves brought to these diverse and heterogeneous constructions of working-class masculinity. While an accomplished actor like Timothy Spall was able to use his dramatic skills to realise the character of Barry, Kevin Whately has remarked that most of the others were 'selling one aspect' of his character.[1041] Indeed it could be argued that the close resemblance between some of the actors and their characters was unique in television. As Bamford maintained in 2002, 'I would not have been able to cast any of them now'.[1042]

[1038] Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, 'Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique', *Theory and Society,* 30 (2001), 337-61.
[1039] Jimmy Nail, *A Northern Soul* (London: Penguin 2005), p. 185.
[1040] Ibid.
[1041] Roddam (2003), p. 109.
[1042] Ibid., p. 28.

Spall has been described as ’shabby’ and a ‘shambles’ but also as the ’hottest talent in town’ and a ‘truly gifted individual‘ with the ability to convey the ‘pathos, humanity honour and pain’ at the heart of Barry’s character.[1043] Spall’s talent allowed him to transcend his London background, if not his physicality, when cast as a ‘Brummie’ after being considered unsuitable for the character of Wayne.[1044] Similarly, Christopher Fairbanks was also cast against type playing a ‘Scouser’. However, his significant contribution to the role was that it drew on a year’s experience of living in Liverpool and it was he who suggested it.[1045]

Whatley and Tim Healy on the other hand used their own ‘Geordie’ accents, Whatley being keen to play characters from the North-East, Healy committed to promoting new writing and acting talent from the region and having already played tough Geordie characters.[1046] Bamford has also suggested that Whatley was cast because of a ‘vulnerability’ that impressed him and that it was ‘easy to imagine him with a strong wife […] always eager to please’.[1047] Indeed the quiet politeness that Nail first noted about Whately, provides the backbone of Neville’s diffidence.[1048] However, it is with the characters of Bomber, Oz, and Wayne where the resemblance between actor and character becomes most acute.

[1043] Nail (2005), p.157; 158; 384.
[1044] Roddam (2003), p. 20.
[1045] Ibid., pp. 26-28.
[1046] Ibid., p. 20.
[1047] Ibid.
[1048] Nail (2005), p.155.

Pat Roach had been an action actor with few lines in a number of prestigious films and never really considered himself an actor.[1049] As a professional wrestler he was largely cast for his huge physicality rather than acting abilities. However, as Nail has noted, his physical presence contrasted markedly with his softly spoken, non-aggressive approach.[1050] Additionally, having been extremely well travelled in the male world of wrestling may have furnished him with a degree of insight into the confined homosocial environs of men temporarily separated from their homes and families.[1051]

While Roach brought something of his own experience and personality to the role of Bomber, Jimmy Nail, arguably, was even closer to his character of Oz. While Nail had no experience of professional acting at all, this was eclipsed by a degree of consensus by the producers that he was eminently suitable for the role. Bamford has stated that on seeing Nail he knew he had Oz: 'Tall, uncouth, a face that could sour milk at a glance, all missing teeth, a bashed up nose, and surly working-class contempt' and the fact that he 'could not understand a word he said'.[1052] Similarly Clement has said 'he was Oz', his incomprehensibility adding to his authenticity.[1053] With his aggressive behaviour at his audition and Healy attesting that he was 'a scary looking lad' who thought actors were 'poofs', Nail already possessed some of the principal characteristics of Oz.[1054]

[1049] Roddam (2003), p. 24.
[1050] Nail (2005), p. 156.
[1051] Anon, 'Obituaries', *Daily Telegraph,* 19 July 2004 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1467315/Pat-Roach.html> [accessed 18 June 2012]
[1052] Roddam (2003), p. 20.
[1053] Ibid., p. 23.
[1054] Ibid., p. 21.

Indeed, Nail himself has detailed much of the more difficult aspects of his immediate past which informed the character of Oz. His drinking, arrest for football related violence and a period in Strangeways; his time as a hod carrier and a welder; his aggressive homophobia; and his pugnacious and confrontational audition.[1055] As he himself has said, 'I've led a bit of a naughty life up until now'.[1056] So, while by the second series he was afraid of typecasting, with Oz's traits being seen as his own, initially character and actor were very similar.[1057] Indeed, as Bamford observed, as a non-actor, taken out of his environment and paid considerable amounts of money to enjoy himself, his initial excessive and unpredictable behaviour was not unlike that of the real builders he was playing.[1058]

If, as La Frenais attests, there is some truth in the assertion that Nail was actually playing himself, this has also been claimed about Gary Holton's performance as Wayne, and it was this apparent conflation which the popular press were eager to exploit.[1059] Unlike Nail, Holton had considerable acting experience having appeared in both *Quadrophenia* and *Bloody Kids,* (UK, Stephen Frears, 1979) but he had made his most emphatic impact in rock music. On their first meeting Nail has described him as 'larger than life', emanating 'energy', with his 'jet black barnet' and 'wild pecking head movements' looking like an 'oversized crow', but impossible not to like.[1060] Dave Ling, who knew him with *The Heavy Metal Kids,* claimed that he 'didn't

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[1055] Nail (2005), pp. 63-66; 76-94; 71; 198-201; 139.
[1056] Pat Codd, 'I've Led a Bit of a Naughty Life Up Until Now', *Daily Star,* 9 October 1983.
[1057] Roddam (2003), p. 72.
[1058] Ibid., p. 34.
[1059] Michael Hamilton, 'Auf Wiedersehen, Pet 25th Anniversary: An Interview with Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais', *NE4Me: North East England-The Inside Track* <http://www.ne4me.co.uk/celebrities-3/wiedersehen-anniversary-interview-clement-15.html> [accessed 14 April 2012]; Geoff Baker, 'Gary is Alright', *Daily Star,* 19 October 1985.
[1060] Nail (2005), p. 156.

have to act too much to portray Wayne […] as a skirt-chasing, beer-swilling, lovable rogue'.[1061]

It was this persona which Holton was able to crystallise, drawing on the showmanship, frequently unconventional and provocative attire, typically juvenile, destructive and confrontational rock and roll behaviour and overpowering presence which he had already developed with *The Heavy Metal Kids*.[1062] As several who knew him have commented, Holton was not acting and what he brought to Wayne was not only the look:'Ronnie Wood […] too thin for […] (his) own good' but also 'his cockiness […] conceit […] the way he carried himself […] the jack-the-lad swagger'.[1063]

While the performances of the principal actors were therefore vital to the delineation of character, it was the way the writers constructed their inter-relationships which provided the dramatic tension. Wickham has talked about the considerable debt *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* owes to *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* Despite being 'less dependent on laughs', featuring rather more complex and troubled characterisations, together with the absence of a studio audience and a longer format,

> there is empathy and warmth in dealing with the characters that create, a curiosity in exploring aspects of everyday life and how it affects the soul – and of course a feel for dialogue, for the ebb and flow of conversation, particularly between men who do not have power or real ownership over their own lives.[1064]

1061 Dave Ling, 'Heavy Metal Kids', first publ. in *Classic Rock* (October 2003) <http://www.daveling.co.uk/dochmk.htm> [accessed 14 April 2012]
1062 Ibid.
1063 Ibid.
1064 Wickham (2008), p. 20.

In terms of narrative structure the first series is able to explore the different individual identities of its characters while constantly emphasising the nature of the group's dynamics. Each of the characters have their own distinct and to some extent entrenched individual identities, but are clearly affected by each other and the repertoire of discourses that each exhibit. There is little to unite them outside of living together in a confined space, and while most of them are emotionally reserved and distant from each other, as the series progresses expressions of feeling and understanding emerge together with a quiet celebration of different masculine identities. Indeed nearly every episode is structured to accommodate both individual, sometimes existential, dilemmas within the drama along with the broader aspects of the group dynamics, the latter primarily through humour.

Structurally, however, the second series works in an entirely different way. They are no longer confined to one space, they often interact in non-homosocial spaces, and their wives and partners are frequently present. Indeed while some criticism of the first series noted the marginalisation of women, McKeand claimed there was a conscious decision to introduce them in more significant roles enabling the series to become more heterosocially inclined.[1065] The result of all this is a lessening of the intensity of the relationships within the group, since we spend less time with them and they are at times no longer at the centre of the narrative. However, with its own back-story, the series introduces elements of nostalgia, frequently through explicit self-reflexive myth making. Furthermore the narrative also allows for individual characters and their friendships to develop. This idea of development is crucial to the second series for while the theme of social aspiration becomes increasingly

[1065] Hugo Williams, 'Ground Level', *New Statesman,* 25 November 1983; Broon (1986); Central Independent Television/Witzend, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet Press Release* (Central Independent Television/Witzend, 1986), p. 2.

linked to emergent discourses of gender and gender relations, these remain in a state of tension with residual discourses which are frequently called upon as anxieties emerge.

While the critical reception for the first two series was generally positive, as befitting a series aimed at a popular audience, most critical attention emanated from the popular press. However, while some coverage tended to focus on the more superficial aspects of the programme, it nonetheless recognised that it was reflecting the mood of contemporary Britain and had the potential for a degree of social impact. The general consensus was that it was a hard-edged comedy, celebrating 'manly camaraderie'.[1066] The enthusiastic response delighted in the 'earthy dialogue', the bawdy humour of the 'labouring louts', the colourful pasts of some of the actors and production anecdotes.[1067] Other critics, however, took a more measured approach. While some recognised 'the argot of real life' and the situations as 'only one remove from reality' with the 'scripts creat(ing) a fine sense of realism' others noted the dramatic tension rather than the humour within these hour long dramas.[1068] Viewed as 'harder edged and more raw' than *Minder,* (UK, 1979-94), this was 'not mere fantasy', but was how 'most Geordies seriously regard themselves'.[1069] Compared, at times unfavourably with *Boys From the Blackstuff,* (UK, 1982) and the authors' previous work, some critics recognised that while it was not 'a serious show' it did have some 'serious themes' providing 'a story of occasional optimism about people

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[1066] Carlo Gebler, '*Auf Wiedersehen, Pet:* The Return of the Seven'*, Times*, 22 February 1986.
[1067] Broon (1986); Hilary Kingsley, 'Awful Pets are Fun', *Daily Mirror,* 22 February 1986; Baker; Maureen Paton, 'Auf Wiedersehen, Pets', *Daily Express,* 20 May 1986; Jack Bell, 'Danger Men at Play', *Daily Mirror,* 11 November 1983.
[1068] Gethyn Stoodley-Thomas, '*Auf Wiedersehen, Pet'*, *Western Mail,* 13 December 1983; Broon (1986); Sheridan Morley, 'Distant Relations', *The Times,* 4 November 1983.
[1069] Philip Purser, '*Auf Wiedersehen, Pet', Daily Telegraph,* 22 January 1984; Stan Eveling, '*Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, *Scotsman'*, 18 February 1984.

in work'.[1070] What it adeptly combined was both humour and 'desperation' creating a recognisable 'edginess' reflecting the anxieties of the times.[1071]

Of all the programmes dealt with in this thesis *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* was undoubtedly the most populist in its approach, building on a tradition of British audiences responding 'to the shabby everyday' and 'the familiar'.[1072] Playing 'variations on the theme of 'them and us', its conspiratorial note intimate(d) that the television audience […] (was) to be included in the latter fraternity'.[1073] This notion of inclusion in the fraternity manifested itself in an enthusiastically vociferous and frequently physical public response, particularly from working-class males. Several of the actors bore witness to this display of intense audience identification with the 'realness' of the characters.[1074] Conversely, others felt that being so close to a representation of their ordinary experiences made it less than drama, less than crafted, rendering itself as ordinary.[1075]

Nevertheless, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* attracted extremely large audiences of up to 14 million viewers, suggesting that, regardless of gender, many wanted be part of the fraternity.[1076] Franc Roddam has argued, however, that within this audience there was a considerable number of men who identified directly with the characters. Oz, the most popular with male audiences, 'said what he liked and liked what he said', echoing Yosser's 'signs of masculine power' as well as self satisfaction.[1077] Other

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[1070] Sean Day-Lewis, 'Blood Brothers', *Daily Telegraph,* 11 February 1984; Morley (1983).
[1071] Sue Summers, 'Lump It-and Like It', *Standard,* 11 November 1983; Anon, 'The Farce of Class', *Times Educational Supplement,* 27 February 1986.
[1072] Phil Wickham, '*The Likely Lads'* (London: BFI, 2008), p. 85.
[1073] Anon, 'The Farce of Class', *Times Educational Supplement,* 27 February 1986.
[1074] Nail (2005), p. 169.
[1075] Ibid., p. 170.
[1076] Roddam (2003), p. 105.
[1077] Ibid., p. 60.

men identified with naïve and gentle Neville, particularly those who had been in National Service or itinerant builders themselves, frequently stating 'I was just like Neville then', reflecting on how, like Neville, they had missed their wives and families.[1078] Many saw it as 'a subtle story of a section of humanity' which they recognised, with seven interacting, distinct and crucially familiar types.[1079] What one male viewer found so affecting was the lack of heroic qualities of the characters rendering them 'just like us' in the ways they dealt with ordinary problems.[1080] Audiences remarked that it had the homosocial poignancy of *The Likely Lads* together with some of the social comment of *Boys From the Blackstuff,* which made the series such an affecting experience.[1081] Viewers expressed their delight in the 'interplay between the sprawl of characters' and their verbal sparring' and their particular affection for the characters rather than the situations.[1082] Indeed, by the end of both first and second series several commentators suggested that the affect of the programme had been so considerable that 'a large part of the television audience will find it sad to live without the lads' expressing a sense of loss.[1083]

Gauntlett and Hill have critiqued Morley's and Gray's audience research as reinforcing gender stereotypes, which suggests that 'male' texts involve heroic tales of public life and physical action, whilst 'female' texts emphasise the emotional.[1084] While, they argue, this may have been the norm, it is merely a convention driven by society's wider gender stereotypes.[1085] They acknowledge that much research into

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[1078] Roddam (2003), p. 60.
[1079] Anthea Hall, 'Review', *Daily Telegraph,* 2 March 1986.
[1080] Stephen Phillips, 'Letters', *TV Times*, 25 February-2 March, 1984.
[1081] Day-Lewis, (1984).
[1082] Roddam (2003), p. 17; 106.
[1083] Day-Lewis (1984); Maureen Paton, 'Auf Wiedersehen, Pets', *Daily Express,* 20 May 1986.
[1084] David Gauntlett and Annette Hill, *TV Living: Television, Culture and Everyday Life* (London: BFI, 1999), p. 214.
[1085] Ibid.

soap operas in the seventies and eighties found that they were largely appreciated by and targeted at women, but they also hold with Van Zoonen's criticism of this for presuming that 'we can find a stable and easily identifiable distinction between men and women'.[1086] This fails to account for the 'possibility of fragmented and multiple subjectivities in and among […] men […] (which) allows for difference and variety'.[1087] If, as Smit has argued, audiences are 'diverse and unpredictable' and television is 'a medium long associated with intimacy and emotional excess' then it is likely that at least some of the male audience would seek to engage with programmes that feature emotion and intimacy.[1088] As one viewer wrote, the strength of the series lay in the affection the male characters had for each other, their loyalty and friendship being its most compelling components.[1089] Thus, with its depiction of ordinary 'thoughts and feelings' around work, marriage and friendship together with a largely unprecedented level of intimacy and emotional revelation between men in a television drama, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet,* in presenting far from typical representations of men, revealed affective qualities which were picked up in at least some viewers responses.[1090]

6.3 Britain in the 1980s

Monaghan has argued that 'the most active sites of ideological resistance' and

> the most effective opposition to the Conservative government that ruled Britain throughout the 1980s was often to be found in the creative arts, particularly in the realm of literature and film.[1091]

[1086] Liesbet Van Zoonen, *Feminist Media Studies,* (London: Sage, 1994), p. 40.
[1087] Gauntlett and Hill (1999), p. 226.
[1088] Alexia Smit, 'Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion', *Screen,* 51.1 (Spring 2010), 92-95 (p. 92).
[1089] Phillips, (1984).
[1090] Wickham, (2008), p. 4; Roddam (2003), p. 17.
[1091] David Monaghan, 'Margaret Thatcher, Alan Bleasdale and the Struggle for Working Class Identity', *Journal of Popular Film and Television,* 29.1 (Spring 2001), 2-13 (p. 2).

He singles out *Boys from the Blackstuff* which Millington has described as a 'high watermark' of the 'oppositional tradition' of BBC drama because of its ‘exceptional intervention’ in ‘British culture in the Autumn of 1982’.[1092] With its directly confrontational narratives together with its viewing figures of nearly eight million it did indeed make a significant and important contribution to the ideologically discursive climate of the period.[1093]

While the press described *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* as ‘*Boys from the Blackstuff* with jobs’, Stan Hey has called the series *Boys from the Blackstuff* ‘with laughs’.[1094] While both these may be either superficial or perhaps disingenuous comparisons, there is an element of truth in both of them. However, while there are certainly similarities between the two series they differ in one crucial way. If *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* can be seen in some way as an equivalent response to Thatcherism as *Boys from the Blackstuff*, then it is largely a response without the explicit politics. Even if ‘the initial idea emerged two years before the Conservative election in 1979, (and) this event and the decline in British manufacturing industry made it even more relevant’, politics is marginal to the narratives.[1095] However, while the programme did have some political impact, and it did illuminate a section of Britain that was being left behind by Mrs. Thatcher’s increasingly divisive leadership, there is no hint

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[1092] Bob Millington, ‘*Boys From the Blackstuff* (Alan Bleasdale)’, in *British Television Drama in the 1980s*, ed. by George Brandt (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 119-139 (p. 121; 119).

[1093] Bob Millington and Robin Nelson, *Boys From the Blackstuff: The Making of a TV Drama* (London: Comedia, 1986), p. 155.

[1094] Rob Turnock, ‘Auf Wiedersehen, Pet’, in *The Encyclopaedia of Television,* ed. by Horace Newcomb, 2nd edn, 4 vols (New York: Taylor and Francis 2004), I, p. 172; Paul Armstrong, ‘Interview with Stan Hey’, *The Original Auf Wiedersehen, Pet Homepage* <http://www.aufpet.com/shey.htm> [accessed1 March 2009]

[1095] Roddam (2003), p. 13.

of militancy, no characters who lament the demise of heavy industry or forcefully declare their class allegiances.[1096]

La Frenais has said that while they were keen to write the series because it had a political message, they did not set out to be political, but politics does underpin the situations the characters find themselves in.[1097] Indeed what they wanted to do was write one-hour dramas which dealt with contemporary issues including 'feckless men'.[1098] To draw a, perhaps clumsy analogy, where *Boys from the Blackstuff* could be seen as the equivalent of a social problem film, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* is rather closer to social realism. Where the former is explicitly addressing the social fallout of the problem of Thatcherism, the drama, while operating on a personal level, linked to the wider but nonetheless specific political and ideological contexts, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* uses the social and political climate as a vehicle to explore the personal, the ordinary, the everyday. Where *Boys from the Blackstuff* has a strong narrative thrust, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* is much looser, allowing for greater character development and exploration rather than a powerfully driven narrative. Indeed, where the principal characters in *Boys from the Blackstuff* could be seen as having their flaws exposed as a direct consequence of unemployment, in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* these men are clearly flawed, whether working or not. Thus, while becoming unemployed and having to leave the country to find work is the catalyst for the story, at the centre of the narrative is an examination of subtly shifting discourses of masculinities.

[1096] Roddam (2003), p. 17.
[1097] Ibid., pp. 14-15.
[1098] Ibid., p. 17.

While *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* eschews the direct political engagement of *Boys from the Blackstuff* it does explore changes in class and their impact on masculine identity. If, as Wickham has observed,

> working-class culture had a very fixed view of what a man should be, especially in the North East. A distinctively male culture was established, centred on the rituals of hard physical work,

then shifts in the class structure and patterns of employment which occurred in the early 1980s would have a profound effect on that culture.[1099] While Marwick has argued that the question of class was central to the changes of the period with an increasing division between the deprived North and more prosperous South, which we have seen in the previous chapter, it is the ostensible weakening of class barriers, the possibilities of upward mobility and the consequences for working-class masculinity that are addressed in *Auf Wiedersehen,* Pet.[1100] Marwick cites Lynn Banks, suggesting that she may have had a point claiming that class identity was so deeply embedded in society that it had become

> a kind of civil war, wearing out our energy and emotions, wasting our time and money. It holds back progress, destroys prosperity, impedes social and working relations on every side.[1101]

However, this sense of rigid class identity was beginning, under pressure, to disintegrate. Banks's view would have been shared by many middle-class Britons as well as the more upwardly working-class, including Barry and to a lesser extent Neville and Wayne. Others, both from the left and the right wanted to see an end to class consciousness seeing the situation as them and us. However, the mainstream of the Conservative party recognised an inevitability to the class structure. Marwick cites the right-wing Centre for Policy Studies paper, *Class on the Brain: The Cost of a*

[1099] Wickham (2008), p. 54.
[1100] Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945: The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 4th edn (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 166.
[1101] Ibid., p. 167.

British Obsession for example, which declared that if British society was class bound and differentiated, there was considerable scope for mobility through effort and endeavour. What all agreed upon, however, was that class was still an issue very much in evidence.

While the middle-class self-image was becoming increasingly assertive, many who had previously prided themselves of progressive sympathies were beginning to succumb to the appeal of Thatcher from as early as the mid-1970s.[1102] Furthermore class mobility from the working to the middle-class was a continuing trend throughout the decade, many of whom dropped their former Labour allegiances.[1103] While class divisions remained, they became more blurred:

> Within the working-class the expansion of certain types of work […] provided physical mobility and freedom, uncharacteristic of most traditional working-class jobs; the growth of white coated occupations in the former heavy industries also softened the division between working and middle-class.[1104]

Industrial disputes ceased to be drawn along purely class lines, as many working-class men aligned themselves against industrial action, while at the same time unionisation now included those involved in white collar employment.[1105]

Marwick has argued that 'the critical developments in the years of privatisation were an acceleration of the breaking up of the rigid frontiers of the working-class'.[1106] An era emerged of buying and selling with their attendant commissions, while manual workers employed in manufacturing shrunk drastically as did the number of those

[1102] Marwick (2003), pp. 171-172.
[1103] Ibid., p. 172.
[1104] Ibid., pp. 173-4.
[1105] Ibid., p. 174.
[1106] Ibid., p. 275.

performing the tasks of the skilled manual worker.[1107] Crucially, however, one area of expansion which was actively encouraged was the shift of those same skilled manual workers to becoming self-employed entrepreneurs. However, this did not necessarily mean that a 'sense of working-class awareness had become diminished'.[1108]

In *Social Class in Britain Today*, however, Marshall et al have recognised a decline in those who regarded themselves as working-class.[1109] As they went on to observe, it was the shape rather than the openness of Britain's class structure which was undergoing change as growth of service industries and the decline of manufacturing gained momentum.[1110] While Marwick observes that within this smaller group of self-defining working-class there was a strong sense of class identity, this is not in a Marxist militant sense.[1111] This is evident from the collapse of widespread support for Scargill towards the end of the miner's strike in 1983. The strike was no great testament to class consciousness. While there was sympathy from workers in other industries, there was little evidence of support through equivalent industrial action.[1112]

According to Marwick, *Social Trends* of 1980 pointed to the phenomenal growth in consumerism, the availability of credit for the purchase of durable consumer goods, and latterly the use of credit cards for purchases from alcohol to dining room suites was a central phenomenon of the age, while Marr has argued that the Tories were

[1107] Marwick (2003)., p. 275; 277.
[1108] Ibid., pp. 277-278.
[1109] Gordon Marshall and others, *Social Class in Modern Britain* (London: Unwin and Hyman, 1989), pp. 144.
[1110] Ibid., pp. 137-8.
[1111] Marwick (2003), p. 279.
[1112] Ibid., pp. 281-288.

intent on creating a 'property owning democracy'', whose allegiances would naturally shift to the Conservatives.[1113] The selling of shares to ordinary people, the 'right to buy' policy where over a million families bought their own council properties and the encouragement given to thrift and enterprise were perhaps the instruments which facilitated the emergence of something of a new class.[1114] Together with the establishment of the SDP, an answer to the extreme socialism of the militant left, these phenomena allowed for some to acknowledge their working-class roots but also to embrace the new opportunities that had become open to them.

While Barry and Neville are wiling to embrace these new opportunities, to some extent ignoring the reality of their situations, Oz and Dennis find themselves far more adrift from the prevailing climate, vainly attempting to retain their working-class masculine identities in the face of enormous change. With rapidly rising unemployment, a startling decline in manufacturing, bitter and violent strikes failing to stop closures and job losses, government spending controls and rapidly rising inflation with the resultant erosion of the spending power of benefits, the working-class were becoming further disempowered and eroded. Inevitably those who remained and felt some form of class loyalty became even more firmly entrenched and embittered.

6.4 Changing Class, Changing Masculinities

Rutherford has argued that the survival of the enduring masculine myth and men's heterosexual identities relies upon a complex web of structures and institutions.

[1113] Marwick (2003), pp. 200-201; Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain (*London: Pan MacMillan, 2008), p. 429-430.
[1114] Marr (2008), p. 430.

Thus, he continues, 'when these shift or weaken, men's dominant positions are threatened'.[1115] Consequently the changing nature of work and the disruption of work culture with the decline of manufacturing industries, the introduction of new technology and subsequent de-skilling of traditional male jobs are changes that undermined traditional working-class masculinities.[1116] Rather than being an examination of these phenomena in an abstracted way, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* explores the experiences of historically situated individuals. Indeed as Annette Kuhn argues:

> There is too often a failure to imagine how social class is actually lived on the pulse, how it informs our inner worlds as it conditions our life chances in the outer world.[1117]

While gender and class are 'inseparably linked in any understanding of subjectivity', it is masculinity as defined by working-class men that appears to be especially dependent upon a particular type of working-class identity.[1118] As Casey has attested, within television fiction 'even progressive dramas with their emphasis on the economic and social circumstances of labour have tended to produce working-class heroes rather than heroines', thus conflating working-classness with masculinity.[1119]

Within the narrative of *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, for Oz, Dennis and Neville, this traditional form of working-class masculine identity, which was apparently reasonably stable throughout previous decades, would appear to be under threat by the early

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[1115] Jonathan Rutherford, 'Who's That Man?', in *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity,* ed. by Rowena Chapman & Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988, repr. 1996), pp. 21-67 (p. 23).
[1116] Ibid., pp. 21-67 (p. 23).
[1117] Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London, Verso, 1995), p. 101.
[1118] John Kirk, 'Changing the Subject: Cultural Studies and the Demise of Class', *Cultural Logic,* 5 (2002) <http://clogic.eserver.org/2002/kirk.html> [accessed 15 January 2012] (para 16 of 24).
[1119] Bernard Casey and others, *Television Studies: The Key Concepts*, 2nd edn. (London: Taylor and Francis, 2008), p. 38.

eighties. Anoop Nayak, in his study 'Last of the Real Geordies?', has recognised this key shift in the North's economy and industry as one which has challenged traditional notions of working-class masculinity, notions that had grown out of economies which offered viable yet restricted options for working-class males.[1120] While heavy industry and physical work celebrated masculine camaraderie with an attendant pride in craft or graft, economic restructuring in the North 'led to changes to the conceptions of gender identity and the relationship between masculinity, work, and leisure'.[1121] Even the North-East, associated with the culture of manual labour, was beginning to prize 'feminised' attributes like communication skills over 'the robust masculine qualities associated with the culture of manual labour'.[1122] As labour relations fragmented and split in the nexus of a new, intensified global economy, working-class males either embraced the changes and altered their masculine identities as new discourses emerged or displaced their traditional notions of masculinity into activities away from work. Thus, according to Nayak, the Geordie in the post-industrial context retreats into 'two key masculine zones, football and drinking'.[1123]

Of all the key characters, it is perhaps Oz who personifies this retreat most emphatically. His drinking is prodigious, his enthusiasm for Newcastle United energetic, aggressively partisan, reinforced by and reinforcing the male bonding process and occasionally ending in violence. Bricklaying may constitute the bedrock for his existence, but only in so far as it provides money for his leisure activities. Indeed his own particular masculine identity derives far less from his work than from

[1120] Anoop Nayak, 'Last of the 'Real Geordies'? White Masculinities and the Subcultural Response to Deindustrialisation', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 21.11 (2003), 7-25 (p. 7).
[1121] Ibid., p. 7; 9.
[1122] Ibid., p. 9.
[1123] Ibid., p. 8.

how he practises and engages with his leisure pursuits. Of course, others who do not share in these practices are, for Oz, with his highly solipsistic view of the world, in some way suspect, lacking as real men.

While Oz is not entirely alone in his celebration of working-class masculine pursuits, the key difference here, however, is that unlike Nayak's post-industrial study, all the characters are still engaged in traditional physical labour, and they still retain a sense of pride in their craft. Furthermore while the restricted options for working-class males that Nayak discusses are generally accepted, some members of the group see the possibility of transcending their current circumstances and benefiting from the new emerging economic and social climate, which has profound consequences on the constructions of their own particular masculinities. Where Dennis remains firmly set within traditional working-class attitudes and values, the younger Neville and Barry, and to some degree Wayne, represent a new emerging class, still relatively incipient in 1982, but a class nevertheless with a particular set of values and attitudes. While their particular circumstances may reap few rewards in the economic climate of the early eighties by the end of the decade their diligence may have proven worthwhile.

However, their virtual abandonment of their working-class allegiances and embracing of a new class identity means that any attendant discourses surrounding their individual constructions of masculinity will also have to be negotiated. While their somewhat pusillanimous approach to working-class male bonding might appear out of step with the rest of the group, it serves to underline their openness to new and different discourses. Barry is prudent, thrifty, and enterprising. By the second series

he has his own building business, enjoys holidays and restaurants with his fiancée, and owns his own home. He has bought into the notion of a fluid class system and appears to have transcended his class roots. All this serves to inform his own sense of masculinity, something that is far removed from Oz's stridently aggressive masculine performance. Similarly Neville's masculine identity is rooted almost as much in his economic aspirations as his working-class experiences. He likes his football and is proud of his work, but is less interested in spending his leisure time drinking in bars with other men, than at home with his wife, saving for a new house, on, as Dennis puts it, 'that posh new estate'.

The character of Wayne also appears to engage relatively easily with emergent discourses of masculinity. Rutherford has suggested that the emergence of working-class men's interest in designer clothes was a reflection of masculinity that had 'partly detached itself from its formative links to traditional class identities. It has become aspirational and more narcissistic'.[1124] Disruption in sexual identity, he argues, produced a new flexibility in masculinity.[1125]

However, in the case of Wayne, to overstress this flexibility may be a mistake. Wayne does exhibit a rather more effete masculinity than the others and for all his posturing he is actually physically waif like. However, unlike the sexually ambiguous, truly transgressive working-class fops who had emerged in the 1970s from Bowie through to Martin Degville and George O'Dowd, or the upper middle-class fantasies of *Jason King,* (UK, 1971-2) and *The Persuaders,* (UK, 1971-2) the character of

[1124] Rutherford (1988), pp. 21-67 (p. 39).
[1125] Ibid.

Wayne owes more to the legacy of dandyism which emerged in working-class personalities like Terence Stamp in the 1960s.

While the dandy can be traced at least as far back as Beau Brummell, these were wealthy, well connected males and 'the most striking and historically specific characteristic of this revived male decorativeness is that it was led almost exclusively by working-class men'.[1126] As Shail has argued, the swinging London dandy in the shape of Stamp and 'the importance of being a sharp dresser as an indicator of self-worth' led him to occupy 'the centre of fashionable' London and this was bolstered by a number of his sixties films, not least with Stamp being initially cast in the central role of hip photographer in *Blow-Up,*(UK/Italy/USA, Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966) but also the dandy sergeant in *Far From the Madding Crowd,*(UK, John Schlesinger, 1967).[1127] Indeed Stamp has highlighted the importance, as a youth, of his first made-to-measure suit.[1128] Similarly Elms has recognised the significance of tailoring in Michael Caine's character Charlie in *The Italian Job,* (UK, Pete Collinson, 1969) to his 'metropolitan working-class assertiveness', qualities different from Northern working-class heroes.[1129] In this sense he personifies what Caughie and Rockett, cited in Shail, have called 'the crafty working-class lothario'.[1130]

If, as Shail asserts, 'the exuberance which marked the working-class emancipations of the early 1960s' led to a dandified, meritocracy in certain circles, then from the

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[1126] Robert Shail, 'Constructions of Masculinity in 1960s British Cinema' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2002), p. 81.
[1127] Ibid., p. 207.
[1128] Terence Stamp, *Stamp Album* (London: Bloomsbury, 1987), pp. 175-8.
[1129] Robert Elms, *The Way We Wore: A Life in Threads* (London: Picador, 2005), p. 69; Robert Shail, 'Masculinity and Class: Michael Caine as 'Working-Class Hero', in *The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema,* ed. by Phil Powrie, Ann Davies and Bruce Babbington (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), pp. 66-76 (p. 69).
[1130] Shail (2004), pp. 66-76 (p. 69).

'besieged mentality' of the 1970s emerged a masculinity, based upon this meritocracy but without many of the concomitant attributes.[1131] Thus Wayne has much in common with the Adam Faith character Budgie who had emerged a decade earlier. Budgie was 'a cheeky, money-hungry, street-savvy, young, working-class guy, obsessed by wearing the right schmutter'.[1132] Here was 'a guttersnipe peacock', a Jack-the-Lad, or as Faith has described him, a 'dandy'.[1133] Thus the seventies dandy, personified by Budgie and evident in the Bowie Boys and mascara wearing, *A Clockwork Orange*, (UK/USA, Stanley Kubrick, 1971) influenced, football hooligans, could be seen as something far less socially mobile than its sixties equivalent.[1134]

Wayne then, can look the part, but lacks the opportunities to turn that 'look' into anything beyond immediate hedonistic pleasure. Indeed Wayne actually resides in the Essex suburb of Tilbury rather than the metropolis, and thus could only be considered to be on the peripheries of anything fashionable. Arguably, it is to the world of music to which Wayne is more closely aligned, from the avowedly heterosexual swaggering of The Faces to the street punk peacockery of Barrie Masters and Gary Lammin.

Like Budgie or Bob Ferris resembling Illie Nastase, while Wayne may look and behave like a working-class sixties dandy, this only belies the reality of his situation as an itinerant builder. For all the apparent trappings of the metropolitan new aristocracy, when juxtaposed against Barry or Neville, Wayne's exoticism is only

[1131] Ibid., (p. 75).
[1132] Elms (2005), p. 81.
[1133] Ibid., pp. 81; 83.
[1134] Ibid., pp. 93-98.

fabric deep. Furthermore by 1983 his character could be regarded as something of an anachronism, out of step with the new, younger working-class dandies of Billy's and Blitz.

While Wayne may indeed be a type of dandy, the narrative fails to offer up his dandified masculine performance as anything other than, in many ways, a reproduction of traditional masculine values. While, as Shail has argued, Stamp and David Hemmings in *Blow-Up* are able to acknowledge masculine beauty in a way that is not problematic to their heterosexuality, for Wayne any question of his vanity equating to effeminacy is entirely extinguished by his ever more aggressive pursuit and prodigious success with women.[1135] Indeed Holton has declared himself to be both 'old fashioned' and 'sexist', with the tired aphorism 'a woman's a woman and a man's a man'.[1136]

Clearly then, for these protagonists, as they conduct a hesitant relationship with emergent discourses while simultaneously engaging with residual ones, the practice of masculinity appears far more problematic than in many other fictional narratives. This is further compounded by Clement and La Frenais' negative view of class mobility. Here Marwick's argument that opportunities were opened up by shifts in class structures in the period, rings rather hollow for even the most upwardly mobile of them. This is highlighted in key scenes throughout the second series. When confronted with an irrationally angry and distinctly middle-class resident both Bomber and Barry are confused by his questions: ''Who are you people? What are you doing here?', replying respectively, 'who do we have to be?' and 'everyone's got to be

[1135] Shail (2002), p. 215.
[1136] Anon, 'Gary's Perspective', *Melody Maker,* 31 March 1984, The Original Gary Holton Tribute Site, <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/richard.smith1976/indec.com> [accessed 18 June 2012]

somewhere sir'. Later, as they are drinking in The Cross Keys Hotel, this sense of class conflict reaches a crisis point. Where Barry blithely sees the bar as simply a pleasant place with an upmarket clientele, Neville grimly recognises the looks of distaste from the locals which meet them: 'It's another country round here' he says, 'I feel more of a foreigner here than I did in Germany'. When Barry suggests that Neville is perhaps overly aware of his class origins, Neville's response is that Barry is also working-class. Barry reluctantly agrees but suggests that he has the social capital to transcend class barriers. It is only when confronted with an irate middle-class, middle England local who accuses him of taking his barstool, that a confused Barry begins to realise that he may never be accepted, that there is little possibility of his transcendence. Indeed the nuances of differing class identities within the group are certainly not recognised here, they are simply irrelevant. The writers seem to be suggesting that the possibilities of the discursive individual subject are severely limited. It does not matter how you define yourself, since it is more about interaction with others and how they define you. These are 'the consequences of acts of categorisation that confine individuals to lives in certain spaces and distinct positions in culture'.[1137]

This somewhat negative view of working-class social mobility has of course been explored elsewhere, as exemplified in the work of Mike Leigh. Indeed Leigh has at times invited criticism for his apparent disdain for lower middle-class aspiration and petty snobbishness.[1138] In *Abigail's Party*, (UK, 1977) for example, estate agent Laurence, displays his volumes of Shakespeare remarking that they are not something one would actually read, while his wife Beverley is a comic grotesque, a

[1137] Simon J. Charlesworth, *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 181.
[1138] Michael Coveney, *The World According to Mike Leigh* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 20.

vulgar snob. However, while aspiration is shown to be amusing in its vacuousness, it is also portrayed as tragic in its inability to facilitate happiness. In *Meantime,* (UK, 1983) for example, for Chigwell dwelling Barbara, with all her trappings of new affluence, the future remains as emotionally bleak as it does for her sister's unemployed working-class family.[1139] Similarly in *Secrets and Lies,* (UK, Mike Leigh, 1996) Monica's delight in ostentatiously showing off her house is undercut by the empty misery of her childless life.

Arguably, this negative view of class mobility for the working-classes can be traced back to the New Wave. Vic, for example, in *A Kind of Loving,* (UK, John Schlesinger, 1962) is forced to choose between the 'honest' working-class pursuit of a brass band concert and an evening watching commercial television in the avaricious affluence of his mother-in-law's house; In *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner,* (UK, Tony Richardson, 1962), Colin's mother spends on consumer goods in a display of assiduous vulgarity; In *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning,* (UK, Karel Reisz, 1960) once again, the acquisition of a television represents both emptiness and decline; and in *Room at the Top,* (UK, Jack Clayton, 1959) Joe Lambton is deemed to have forsaken his working-class 'authenticity', and 'emotional and spiritual' happiness in his pursuit of 'superficial, material values'.[1140]

Clement and La Frenais, however, also seem to be questioning why anyone would *want* to transcend their own working-class roots and join the middle-classes. In a series of broadly drawn strokes, most of the middle-class characters are portrayed as appalling caricatures, which the audience are invited at once to laugh at and

[1139] Coveney (1997), p. 175.
[1140] John Hill, *Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956-1963* (London: BFI, 1986), p. 158.

dislike intensely. While the narrative constantly deflates, ridicules or undermines the middle-classes it is equally critical of anyone who attempts to leave their class and tries to join them. Neither Neville nor Barry, aspirational and upwardly mobile, find any lasting fulfillment or happiness. Others with aspirations, in particular women such as Barry's fiancée Hazel, are portrayed as grasping, avaricious and socially pretentious. Indeed, not unlike *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* it is the wives and girlfriends who are seen to ignite and stoke the men's drive for social mobility. As with Leigh and much of the New Wave, social aspiration and shallow consumerist values are most frequently associated with women.[1141] While Clement and La Frenais, emerging from the 1960s of the New Wave, appear to subscribe to this highly questionable perspective with Thelma, Mrs. Chambers and Brenda in *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* and Brenda and Hazel in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, explicitly representing these values, as their writing progressed this perspective lessened considerably.

The changes in class structure then, together with other significant economic and social changes which became evident in the 1980s had a particular and significant impact on constructions of individual masculine identities, as new discourses were being opened up. What subsequently emerged led to a greater plurality even among working-class men. However, as I have previously argued, while certain conceptual models of gender argue for the possibilities and capacities for resistance and indeed transformation, the lived, grounded experience for many men may have been manifestly different. Thus, the narratives articulate the anxieties men felt as they

[1141] Hill (1986), pp. 156-7.

attempted to negotiate the shifting parameters of residual, dominant, and emergent discourses which they frequently experienced in a state of tension.

Drawing upon Foucault, Whitehead has argued that while discourses are both multiple and dynamic and consequently always shifting, allowing for a number of subordinated discourses, dominant discourses, he argues, do have 'normalcy and regulatory capacities' the consequences of which are the establishment of 'beliefs and rituals around gender'.[1142] Although the variety and diversity of discourses of gender is immediately apparent in the increasing plurality of masculinities in the 1980s, there remained residual resistance to many of these discourses.[1143] As Whitehead has argued, emergent discourses may be resisted as they are perceived to threaten 'masculine power regimes' and dominant discourses may continue to be utilised.[1144] Thus, through a reflective process and the subjective engagement with the wider world, individuals perform their 'identity work' through both consensus with, and resistance to, prevailing discourses.[1145] However, Whitehead acknowledges that there are limits upon the subject's capacity to reflect upon different discourses.[1146] While enabling the masculine subject, discourses also constitute the disciplinary bounds within which the subject validates himself.[1147] Thus, while *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* explores masculinities which are 'plural and multiple', these are frequently informed by dominant and residual discourses.[1148] For all the characters, the construction of their individual masculine identities is contingent on what is allowed,

[1142] Whitehead (2002), p. 104.
[1143] Ibid., p. 109.
[1144] Ibid., p. 107; 109.
[1145] Ibid., p. 103.
[1146] Ibid., p. 105.
[1147] Ibid., p. 110.
[1148] Ibid., p. 34.

what is restricted, what is available, what conflicts, what can be readily accommodated.

In his analysis of Foucault and the limits of masculinity, Duff has argued that

> limits restrict the flow of existential possibilities open to the subject defining certain modes of existence, behaviour and comportment as unintelligible with respect of the ontology of the self.[1149]

This fixing of identity is what Foucault actively opposes. Foucault, argues Duff, asks us to consider the costs of subjectification in terms of restriction of freedom and agency. What is lost in the realisation of masculine identity? Masculinity is a limit restricting the subjective experience of male identifying individuals.[1150]

In constructing and establishing masculine identities, it is the feminine and its attendant signifiers that are rejected, defining itself by which it is not, 'that is woman'.[1151] Thus, Duff maintains that

> the experience of emotionality and passivity, nurturing, intimacy and receptivity are made problematic for men through their classification as essentially feminine characteristics.[1152]

Consequently, says Duff,

> the social construction of masculinity is characterised by the privileging of a set of behavioural and ontological properties such as virility, courage, self-mastery and independence.[1153]

While such a process may have become widely accepted by many men in the construction of their masculine identities, in terms of the experience of masculinity by the individual subject, it is one which involves a considerable amount of tension and

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1149 Cameron Duff, *Stepping Through the Eye of Power: Foucault, Limits and the Construction of Masculinity* (Queensland University of Technology, 1999) <http://foucault.qut.edu.au/duff.html> [accessed 15 October 2008] (p. 3).

1150 Ibid.

1151 Ibid., p. 4.

1152 Ibid.

1153 Ibid.

negotiation. Nonetheless, while these traditional 'behavioural and ontological properties' of masculinity may have been undergoing some degree of challenge in the1980s they still largely held common currency within working-class male communities.

6.5 Fatherhood and Relationships

Whitehead has talked about a dualism which exists at the heart of many men's conceptions of their own masculine identities: 'If the public world of men is rooted in myth, then men's private lives can appear deep, dark, almost gothic in their impenetrableness' emerging as a 'gender category that is omnipresent yet distant and obfuscatory'.[1154] While Whitehead's post-structuralist perspective does not allow for the ontologically grounded individual, he does recognise that there is an apparent 'inner' world of the male, with points of subjectivity, ambiguities of self and emotional depth.[1155] However, as Burkitt has observed, emotions are a response to the 'expressive relations between people' and do not emerge in isolation from within the individual.[1156] As social and cultural changes impacted upon constructions of masculinity, Auf *Wiedersehen, Pet* explores how this is played out in the everyday practices of its protagonists. Through their relationships with partners and children, their friendships with each other, their displays of emotion and their shifting performance Clement and La Frenais draw out their anxieties about a number of emerging discourses.

A great deal of writing on masculinity which has emerged since the 1980s has sought to establish some form of crisis discourse. One particular strand has tended

[1154] Whitehead (2002), p. 146.
[1155] Ibid, p. 149.
[1156] Burkitt (1997), 37-55 (p. 40).

to focus upon men's relationships with family life and children. Whitehead cites Anthony Clare for example, as having

> identified the UK's burgeoning divorce rate, the rise of lone women parents and the rise in post-divorce absent fathers as evidence of increasing separation from fatherhood and family life.[1157]

Whitehead, however, refutes the notion of a deepening sense of crisis, seeing identity as permanently in a state of chaos, contingent upon continual social change which largely evades individual or social manipulation. While employment patterns, post-industrialisation, increased education opportunities for women, globalisation and so forth are significant influences on how men and women respond to 'family responsibilities', those responses will not be uniform in any way.[1158]

Auf Wiedersehen, Pet tends to bear out Whitehead's analysis, with the relationships which each man has with his family being both complex and variegated, the narrative suggesting that these are a consequence of the protagonists' relationships with their own fathers and male role models. For most of them, fathers have been all but elided, while mothers and female siblings are foregrounded. While this may simply be a narrative device to isolate its male characters even more from outside masculine influence, it may also indicate the roots of their own tensions in starting, maintaining, and relating to their own families.

Bomber has a particularly ambivalent relationship to his wife and family. From the very first episode of the first series Bomber is portrayed as a father wanting to fulfil his dutiful obligations by providing for his family. Having worked and saved for his return to the UK, however, he clearly feels as a working man that he deserves some

[1157] Whitehead (2002), p. 152.
[1158] Ibid., p. 153.

leisure. It is here that his allegiance to duty is betrayed by his libido. While his moral code stretches as far as his children he does not harbour any reservations about not remaining faithful to his wife.

While Bomber's sense of duty is undeniable, it is, however, probably a consequence of his age and the era he was born into. In his early forties, he is in many ways shown in sharp relief to the others, representing a residual construction of working-class masculinity largely untroubled by any emergent discourses. Although he is clearly aware of his own failings as a husband and father, he sees little moral conflict between his familial duties and his personal gratification. The only real conflict occurs on a level where the money that is needed for the former is used for the latter.

In sharp contrast to Bomber, Neville is portrayed as the embodiment of 'New Man'. Whether 'New Man' as an entity actually existed in the 1980s or whether it was simply a media creation, an advertisers marketing device, is something of a moot point. Nevertheless as a discourse of masculinity that circulated at the time, it is inevitable that it would bear some influence on how some men were to construct their own individual masculine identities. Jonathan Rutherford has defined 'New Man' as 'an expression of the repressed body of masculinity'.[1159] He sees it is a fractured and awkward means of attempting to reconcile masculinity, emotionally and sexually. As such it appears to be a response to both feminism and the structural changes in society at the time. Thus Rutherford sees it as a form of compromise which while embarked upon with tentative caution does not retreat into the denial and reaction of, for example, the male protagonists in *Boys from the Blackstuff.*

[1159] Rutherford (1988), pp. 21-67 (p. 32).

Neville, being relatively open to new ideas, is likely to absorb some of the elements of the 'New Man' discourse. However, there would also have been a number of competing discourses which are likely to have been far more entrenched within his psyche as a working-class bricklayer from the North-East. While Neville has no problems sharing his emotions with his wife, and openly displays his intense feelings for her to his colleagues, both these have to be accommodated within more traditional working-class discourses of man as breadwinner and provider, and crucially as 'one of the lads'.[1160]

Rowena Chapman sees 'New Man' as a sort of composite identity which became fragmented. In reality it was an uneasy mix between, what she calls 'the narcissist', evident in the rapidly proliferating style culture of the time and the nurturer, a product of the men's movement and its readiness to engage in female terrain to open up their emotions and embrace female subject positions.[1161] Both Chapman and Rutherford recognise a shift in the way men regarded fatherhood, partly brought about by 'new liberalised images' of men attending births and pushing buggies.[1162]

The opening montage of the second series depicts Neville running to be with his wife for the birth of their baby daughter. As is evident from the first series, he is committed to his relationship with his wife, and one would expect him to be the same with his family. His eagerness, however, is rapidly undercut by the circumstances he begins to find himself in. He is soon shown to have been laid off work, looking after

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[1160] Wickham (2008), p. 53.

[1161] Rowena Chapman, 'The Great Pretender: Variations on the New Man Theme', in *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* (see Rutherford above), pp. 225-248 (pp. 230-231).

[1162] Ibid; Rutherford (1988), pp. 21-67 (p. 34).

his daughter full time and cooking all the family meals, while his wife pursues her successful career as a hospital ward sister, coming home late from work, and playing in the hospital badminton tournament with the male doctors. Neville finds that his conceptualisation of masculine identity is compromised, as he feels increasingly useless and out of his depth. This is further compounded by the glaring class difference between his wife's doctor colleagues and his position as a bricklayer. What makes this worse is that he is unable to practise his métier in the prevailing economic climate.

Whitehead has drawn upon a number of sources as evidence of a degree of tension between new and emergent characteristics of fatherhood and more conventional and residual conceptions of the authoritarian provider.[1163] While there is, he argues,

> some evidence of a shift in attitudes over the last thirty years to family and domestic roles by some men, dominant discourses of masculinity do not sit easily with these practices.[1164]

He cites Smith's research that for those who have become full-time house husbands 'the role can engender illegitimacy (as a man), self-doubt and social isolation'.[1165] Similarly, for Warrin,

> while western men's attendance at antenatal classes and childbirth have become accepted and encouraged, many men remain unsure about their role in the relationship to childcare work.[1166]

Neville is now as enthusiastic as any of the others to be part of the homosocial world, where he might feel some validity as, what he considers to be, a man. He admits to Dennis that he is keen to see 'the lads', feels like getting away, is fed up with babysitting. Brenda is actually the one who has a far more open and

[1163] Whitehead (2002), p. 154.
[1164] Ibid.
[1165] Ibid.
[1166] Ibid.

progressive attitude to gender differences exposing Neville's traditional working-class view commenting, 'you have some fixed idea that the wife won't let you go'. When Brenda declares that she thought they had both accepted changing roles, Neville, clearly uncomfortable with his wife as sole breadwinner, replies, 'you might have accepted it'. Neville, for all his 'New Man' credentials, still defines himself and his sense of masculinity from largely traditional discourses, of which man as provider and worker is one.

While Neville is markedly consistent in his attitudes and emotional engagement with his family, something which is only challenged when he remains unemployed, both Oz and Dennis vacillate between indifference, confusion, and resentment. Rutherford writes 'when men fall in love they surrender their solitude and relinquish their masquerade of self-sufficiency'.[1167] For Oz and Dennis, rooted in more residual masculine discourses, this sense of solitude and self-sufficiency sits uneasily with the needs and requirements of their individual marital relationships. As Whitehead has noted, a great deal of writing on masculinity within the discipline of sociology sees many men's relationships as highly 'problematic' and even 'dysfunctional'.[1168] Men may seem to lack 'the emotional tools, empathy, sensitivity, (self) understanding, indeed maturity necessary to enable a committed relationship on equal terms'.[1169] While Whitehead sees this as something of a stereotype, he concedes that there may be some grounding in reality which supports the argument that in constructing a particular type of masculinity many men are frequently ill positioned to exercise the emotional labour needed in sustaining relationships.

[1167] Jonathan Rutherford, *I Am No Longer Myself Without You: An Anatomy of Love* (London: Flamingo, 1999), p. 3.
[1168] Whitehead (2002), p. 156.
[1169] Ibid.

While this is a consequence of having learned to be self-sufficient, the corollary of this is 'the sense of loss and emotional immaturity that pervades masculine subjectivities, together with the pervasiveness of the public/private dualism in sustaining this condition'.[1170] As Whitehead concludes:

> Whether it be the fear of rejection, vulnerability, wariness, a lack of self-esteem or simply emotional illiteracy, many men appear unable to expose their inner selves to the outer world.[1171]

Both Dennis and Oz are in similar situations. Both are fathers, both are in problematic marriages. Oz is portrayed as feckless, irresponsible, impulsive, violent, undomesticated. Indeed, like many of his more egregious traits, his treatment of his family at times serves to alienate him from the rest of the group. His flight from responsibility is not dissimilar to that of Dancer in *Just a Boy's Game*, but where Dancer possesses a degree of charm, his humour and genuine affection for his children acting as a counterbalance to his selfishness, Oz has no such equivalence. His relationship with his wife Marjorie is fraught and antagonistic, with his son Rod awkward and strained. He is, what Rutherford has termed 'Retributive Man' struggling to reassert traditional masculinity, tough and independent, 'wildly lashing out at everything that threatens or disappoints him. He confronts a world […] pacified by traitors and cowards and dishonourable, feminised men'.[1172] Notions of manhood and honour are under threat, challenging his understanding of his own self-identity. In an effort to recreate order and subdue these forces he often resorts to violence, if only in language.[1173]

[1170] Whitehead (2002), p. 157.
[1171] Ibid.
[1172] Rutherford (1988), pp. 21-67 (p. 28).
[1173] Ibid., p. 29.

Philip Wickham, discussing *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?*, has made some particularly trenchant observations about the relationships between men and women in working-class Northern communities.[1174] It was a world where men revel in their own masculinity, 'in being a typical, chauvinistic, Northern working-class man'.[1175] They are 'happy to live the way they were brought up […] distrustful of women and of men from a different background'.[1176] Oz is not dissatisfied with his life, but it now seems to be under threat from forces like aspiration, feminism, economic change, forces he cannot control. Oz personifies this extreme version of working-class masculinity precisely believing that 'women hold you back, drag you down, nag you as you work your fingers to the bone, and stop you having fun'.[1177]

Unlike Oz, Dennis sees his role of father and husband as one which demands a strong authoritative masculine persona based on the repression of vulnerability and dependency. This then creates a set of tensions and contradictions, which are borne out explicitly in the personal dilemmas facing him. Dennis is perhaps the everyman and through his character the narrative is able to explore the consequences of marital breakdown, something that was occurring increasingly in the eighties. Furthermore the notion of emotional inarticulacy is perhaps most notably played out within his character, where, throughout the narrative he 'represses those emotions which he feels cannot be expressed in social practice'.[1178]

When his wife Vera accuses him of being insensitive to other peoples' feelings Dennis responds angrily. It was his masculine pride, she suggests, that was hurt by

[1174] Wickham (2008), pp. 53-55.
[1175] Ibid., p. 54.
[1176] Ibid.
[1177] Ibid., p. 64.
[1178] Rutherford (1988), pp. 21-67 (p. 28).

her wanting a divorce, not his emotions. Dennis is clearly mystified and frustrated by the situation he finds himself in. This confusion is perhaps best encapsulated when he declares 'The older I get the less I understand women. I don't know what they want or who they want it from'. Thus Dennis, like Bomber, represents a generation of older men who felt increasingly uncomfortable with emergent discourses of gender and gender relations.

Like many men he has put all his efforts into his work, having had his own business at one time, with Vera alluding to his absences in the past. Nonetheless, when Dennis is placed in a position of choosing between the love of his new partner and duty to his children, it is duty that triumphs, since duty needs no emotional involvement, has little ambiguity, and can be accommodated by clearly defined accounts of traditional and dominant discourses of masculinity. For both Dennis and Bomber, while they lament that they probably married far too young, seeing through their dutiful obligations to wife and family remains an important part of their conceptualisations of masculinity.

6.6 Feelings

Whitehead has argued that 'dominant discourses of masculinity do not sit easily with notions of emotional literacy and maturity', and while he recognises that men differ from each other in a number of significant ways, he sees many prevailing conventional discourses as remaining so powerful that they will inevitably 'influence the behaviours and practices of countless men'.[1179] However, while cultural embeddedness accounts for the dichotomy of emotion and reason together with the

[1179] Whitehead (2002), p. 175.

notion of gendered dualism, ‘masculinity is not singular or cohesive, emotions are not simply the product of innate, gendered impulses and there are numerous dimensions to emotionality’, allowing for a degree of variation.[1180]

Writing in the 1970s, Tolson has maintained that some men discovered that they had no ‘language of feeling’.[1181] They were ‘trapped in the public, specialised language of work’.[1182] By the end of the decade Tolson argues that the profound change brought about by globalisation, post-industrialisation and feminism led to a questioning of these prevailing expressions of masculinity. Indeed, citing Rutherford, Whitehead argues that these changes confronted many men with

> the tenuousness at the heart of their sense of masculinity, an insecurity heightened by the emotional tensions, blockages, and inarticulation at the root of many prevailing expressions of masculinity.[1183]

Clearly this is the case for the majority of the group in the first two series where they find it difficult to express any really deep emotional feelings whether in the contexts of their relationships or friendships. Caught between residual, more traditional discourses of working-class masculinity and a world which is beginning to require greater emotional engagement from men, they appear initially unable or reluctant to express their true feelings about anything on an intimate level. What frequently passes as an expression of deep inner feelings is more often sentimentality, the maudlin or merely self-pity.

Wayne prides himself on his ability to have no emotional involvement with women, his mantra being 'jump ‘em and leave ‘em'. Although he does claim to be 'smitten' at

[1180] Whitehead (2002), pp. 175-6.
[1181] Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity* (London: Tavistock, 1977), pp. 135-136.
[1182] Ibid.
[1183] Whitehead (2002), p. 177.

one point, one suspects that this does not involve any genuine emotional commitment. While his pride as a lothario precludes any intimate or emotional revelations concerning love, conversely neither aggression nor anger figure within Wayne's construct of masculinity. Barry frequently camouflages his own emotional insecurity with trivia and facts, rather than engaging with his emotions. Even his relationship with his fiancée Hazel is weighed down by practicalities rather than feelings. Dennis, as we have seen, struggles with his emotional inarticulacy, at times being open and at other times displaying his discomfort with emotional engagement. In one scene, when Neville is released on bail having been accused of attacking a German woman, and in a state of extreme distress, breaks down in tears, Dennis's response is to tell him to 'let it all out' before he 'faces the lads'. For Dennis it would be undignified and unmanly to reveal Neville's level of emotional upset to more men than is necessary.

Nonetheless, there are moments of intimacy and expression of feelings within the narrative. While I have argued that Neville displays the greatest emotional fluidity within and regarding his relationship with Brenda, it is Barry, struggling with his inexperience and emotional confusion, who reveals an ability to open up to others, expressing himself candidly and ingenuously. At one point, in emphatic close up, he poignantly asks Wayne, 'what's it like, being in love?'. In the second series when he declares his love for his fiancée Hazel and is subsequently rejected, he pleads, 'I've got feelings'. It is Barry's ingenuousness which allows him at times to express his emotions without the barriers which the others have erected in their constructions of masculinity. Indeed, as Jimmy Nail has observed, it is Tim Spall's interpretation

which gives it the 'pathos, humanity, honour and pain'.[1184] What, however, makes these expressions even more poignant are the other times when he can only write them on a postcard or articulate them in a soliloquy. Yet it is this repression of emotion and inability to express inner feelings intimately, which makes the occasional open exchange and the awkward revelation all the more powerful and affective. What makes the characters so emotionally interesting and indeed complex, is not that they do not feel, but rather the difficulties that they have in expressing that feeling. When there are moments of intimate revelation or genuine closeness between any of the male characters, these are diffused by a visual style which places the characters side by side rather than facing each other. In this way, unlike *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?,* the need for eye contact is obviated. When Neville breaks down in tears after his release on bail, he and Dennis are seen sitting on the back seat of a taxi, looking away from each other. Within homosocial spaces such as the pub, the characters in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* are placed at the bar, where they can glance at each other but where drinking takes precedence over interaction. Of course there are times when two characters do face each other directly, and occasionally much tighter shots are used in these scenes, but some activity is usually placed between the characters, such as playing cards or, rather poignantly, darning socks, which diffuses the intensity of any interactions. Thus, while all of the characters to some degree engage with emergent discourses around masculinity and the expression of feeling, the mise-en-scene generally works against this preventing any form of excessive intimacy.

Vergard Iglebaek has observed that

[1184] Nail (2005), p. 158.

> personal disclosure and intimacy among heterosexual Northern European men tend to be restricted to specific arenas and situations such as blissful moments on the football pitch or situations of external crisis.[1185]

By male intimacy she says 'I think of men sharing personal feelings with each other in such a way so that disclosure has an intrinsic value'.[1186] Iglebaek has thus identified a number of narratives where no action is needed, where dialogue and interaction is more important. Thus, while

> the exchanging of emotional interest in each other displaying notions of care and dependency are alien elements within the paradigm of male homosocial relations, there may be moments within particular narratives when this emotional barrier is breached.[1187]

While Auf *Wiedersehen, Pet* largely conforms to this dominant model, the characters do at times threaten to transcend it, albeit awkwardly. The fact that they exchange favours rather than genuinely intimate moments with each other cannot mask the fact that they do care for each other. It is simply that their feelings, inhibited through emotional inarticulacy have been displaced onto other more practical devices. Thus, it is the prevailing tensions over revelatory exchanges, together with repression of feelings, avoidance of intimacy, and displacement of emotional contact which provided *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* with its powerful emotional impact for the audience.

6.7 Homosociality

As I have argued, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* explores new discourses of masculinity and gender relations emerging from social, cultural, and economic changes and how they are experienced by working-class men. Whether previously accepted certainties

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[1185] Vegard Iglebaek, 'What Kind of Male Friendship? A Case of Joey and Chandler in *Friends'*, *4th European Feminist Research Conference, Bologna* (2 October 2000), <http://www.theory.org.uk/vegard-printversion.htm> [accessed 3 May 2009] (p. 1).
[1186] Ibid, p. 5.
[1187] Ibid.

around class, changing dynamics within relationships and friendships or the need to realign their constructions and performances of masculinity the narratives scrutinise the ways the protagonists meet these pressures with varying degrees of uncertainty. While their identities and practices are seen to be grounded in residual discourses Clement and La Frenais are particularly interested in how they reconcile these with emergent ones and one of the principal ways they do this is through the homosocial group dynamic. This chapter will therefore go on to examine the ways homosociality functions within the narratives in relation to changes and continuities in identity construction.

Fiske has discussed how many television dramas featuring a predominantly male cast tend to be goal oriented.[1188] The insecure basis for the protagonists masculinity has to be constantly reactivated through achievement, he says, and the close relationships inscribed in the male bonding process are protected from intimacy precisely because they are goal oriented rather than relationship oriented.[1189] Action is predominantly foregrounded over feeling, relationships serve the common goal, and the needs of that relationship itself need to be externalised into a goal. *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, however, initially without a genuinely clear and consistent common goal, exists in something of a state of tension. There are of course goals throughout the series, but they provide a framework, a narrative mechanism on which to approach the friendships within the group. It is these that are explored and foregrounded as the goals recede within the narratives. Essentially the focus is on the homosocial and the ensuing bonding process.

[1188] John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 174.
[1189] Ibid., p. 172; 174.

Homosociality has been defined by Lipman-Blumen as ‘the seeking of engagement, and/or preference for the company of the same sex’.[1190] With specific regard to heterosexual men, it is a concept variously examined by Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick through her analysis of male homosocial desire in nineteenth-century English literature; employed by Anthony Easthope in his study of masculinity across a wide range of media; and analysed by Jonathan Rutherford in his examination of white heterosexual masculinity in the 1980s.[1191] As defined by Schwyzer, it is the principle that men aim to please other men rather than women and this process is worked through within homosocial spaces where men are expected to bond with other men.[1192] While some writing on the subject including that of Kosofsky Sedgewick has recognised desire and intimacy between men as primary characteristics of homosociality, the majority of literature has stressed the suppression of non-hegemonic masculinity and the subordination of women as its principal defining features.[1193]

The public homosocial world is frequently characterised by its rules, protocol and recherché practices. These help to engender a unique group identity, which, while ostensibly open to all, excludes those who are unable or unwilling to 'play the game'. As Whitehead has pointed out:

> Paradoxically, the public worlds of men are often very private, with men's practices often obscured behind ritualised behaviour, bound by

[1190] Jean Lipman-Blumen, ‘Toward a Homosocial Theory of Sex Roles: An Explanation of the Sex Segregation of the Sex Segregation of Social Institutions’, *Signs,* 1 (1976) 15-31 (p. 16).

[1191] Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Easthope (1990); Rutherford (1988), pp. 21-67.

[1192] Hugo Schwyzer, ‘Homosociality’, *XY: Men, Masculinities and Gender Politics*, 23 (April 2009) <http://xyonline.net/content/homosociality.shtml> [accessed 14 May 2009].

[1193] Kosofsky Sedgewick (1985), p. 3; see for example Sharon Bird, ‘Welcome to the Men’s Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity’, *Gender and Society*, 10.2 (April 1996), 120-132 (p.120-122).

> fraternities and frequently embedded in misogynistic attitudes and sexual stereotypes.[1194]

As with Barrett's work on the organisational structure of masculinity, Whitehead maintains that:

> Fraternities within an organisation can require, if not demand, a particular validating masculine display from its (men) members; anything less, rapidly making would-be participants' membership untenable.[1195]

While 'playing the game' may offer a vague indication of what these validating rules may be, the reality is that it is the frequently excessive display of traditional masculine behaviour which prescribes the place the individual has within the group. As Wickham has pointed out in relation to *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?,* men work and live in the company of other similar men, taking pleasure in 'the pint, the match, the betting shop, chasing girls'.[1196] 'Interactions with each other and with those outside the group are governed by implicit codes of behaviour and expectations'.[1197] These are unwritten rules that have to be negotiated and deviation from them is questioned possibly leading to loss of acceptance.[1198]

Rutherford sees male cultures which have grown up around homosocial bonding as essentially defensive:

> The threat that women have posed to men, that they will expose their weaknesses and undermine the myths and illusions upon which their claims to superiority are founded has produced a male bonding, a collusion amongst men to resist the Other.[1199]

The attendant structures and protocol of homosocial bonding and collectivity, while intended to emphasise 'prestige' and power actually signify men's weakness and

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1194 Whitehead (2002), p. 116.
1195 Ibid., p. 127.
1196 Wickham (2008), p. 54.
1197 Ibid.
1198 Ibid.
1199 Rutherford (1988), pp. 21-67 (pp. 53-54).

‘trepidation‘, serving to provide ‘reassurance and validation’ particularly at times of perceived threat and anxiety.[1200] Rutherford sees this as men's culture pitted against women since

> it is not just what is going on inside the pub that unites men, it's what the pub door is shutting out. Men have created a culture around drinking, sport and work that seeks to shut out the troubling contradictions of male heterosexuality. They have produced a language that has diminished the central influence of women in their lives. Wives and sex become disassociated objects.[1201]

As Wickham has pointed out, it becomes a state of 'us and them’, where sex is seen as a pleasure, but women themselves a threat to the lad’s stability’.[1202] While this may generally be the case for *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* where we come to understand the ‘pleasures of male company’, it is not without its ‘problems, limitations and in the long term its ill effects’ which are seen as most of the characters, on occasion, demur to the group’s practices.[1203] Indeed *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* is at once both a celebration of male homosocial bonding, together with a critique of its constrictions on individual constructions of masculinity. However, as the narratives progress, there emerges a softening of attitudes allowing for a greater expression of their own individualised and internalised conceptualisations of masculinity as they become more heterosocially rather than homosocially oriented.

What is evident throughout *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* is the character’s need be in the company of other men as a way of affirming their masculinity. While their interactions with women frequently challenge their normative assumptions about gender and sexuality leaving them uncertain about their own identities, the

[1200] Rutherford (1988), pp. 21-67 (p. 54).
[1201] Ibid.
[1202] Wickham (2008), p. 54.
[1203] Ibid., p. 56.

homosocial group dynamic, regardless of any internecine conflict, allows for the collective affirmation of masculine status. Anthony Easthope has discussed what he calls The Masculine Myth and how it operates within homosocial groupings:

> The masculine myth argues that at present masculinity is defined in the way that an individual deals with his femininity and his desire for other men. The forms and images of popular culture lay on a man the burden to be one sex all the way through. So this struggle to be masculine is his own struggle to cope with his femininity.[1204]

From the versions of masculinity examined by Easthope, he concludes that men are in actuality concerned about other men rather than about women: 'In the dominant myth it looks as though women take on more value for men in terms of the game of masculinity than in their own right'.[1205] Thus, positioned as they have been with the power to make decisions in this arena, men have chosen to spend most of their time in the company of men rather than with women.[1206]

While I would argue that most of the aforementioned characteristics attributed to heterosexual male fraternities do have considerable bearing on how we might come to understand *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet,* they fall short of adequately describing the intra-group male relationships portrayed in the series. Since the narratives do not wholly conform to most of the precepts outlined above it would seem more appropriate that another model of homosociality should be applied. Hammaren and Johansson have recognised a distinction between what they call vertical/hierarchical and horizontal homosociality. The former, conventional use of the term, has been used to describe the 'means of strengthening power and of creating close

[1204] Easthope (1990), p. 6.
[1205] Ibid.
[1206] Ibid., p. 7.

homosocial bonds to maintain and defend hegemony'.[1207] Here men form friendships to 'exchange valuable cultural and social capital'.[1208] They go on to use the term horizontal homosociality as a means of describing 'relations that are based on emotion closeness, intimacy, and a non profitable form of friendship'.[1209] While they acknowledge that there can be no absolute boundaries between these approaches they are clearly different aspects of the same concept.

The former approach has been argued by Snyder, Kiesling, Messner and others as a way that men perpetuate hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, sustaining privileges and the existing gender order.[1210] Thus, homosociality operates as a 'mechanism that supports and reinforces hegemony' through the employment of a number of different strategies.[1211] These strategies may include, for example, emotional detachment, competitiveness, which facilitates the hierarchical relationship between men, and the sexual objectification of women, which binds men but excludes women.[1212] While this may be a perfectly valid model of homosociality in many, if not most, circumstances, Hammaren and Johansson argue that male homosocial relationships can also be discussed in terms of 'intimacy, gender equality, and non homophobia' suggesting a more dynamic view of homosociality.[1213]

[1207] Nils Hammaren and Thomas Johansson, 'Homosociality: In Between Power and Intimacy', *Sage Open*, (January 2014) <http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/4/1/2158244013518057> [accessed 10 June 2014].
[1208] Ibid.
[1209] Ibid.
[1210] Mark Snyder, 'Crisis of Masculinity: Homosocial Desire and Homosexual Panic in the Critical Cold War Narratives of Mailer and Coover', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 48, (2007) 250-277; Scott F. Kiesling, 'Homosocial Desire in Men's Talk: Balancing and Re-creating Cultural Discourses of Masculinity', *Language & Society*, 34,(2005) 695-726; Michael Messner, 'Friendship, Intimacy and Sexuality', in *The Masculinities Reader,* ed. by Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barrett (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), pp. 253-265.
[1211] Hammeren and Johansson (2014).
[1212] Bird (1996), pp. 120-132 (p. 122).
[1213] Hammeren and Johansson (2014).

While the fictional examples of horizontal homosociality cited by Hammaren and Johansson reveal 'traces of changes and redefinitions of masculinity' over the last fifteen years, I would argue that *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* was already negotiating these imminent changes through its exploration of homosocial relationships in the early 1980s. While the character's interactions take place around more traditional activities such as sport and drinking they also entail a degree of 'emotional sharing'.[1214] Indeed as Easthope has argued, sport and drinking are highly potent images in defining masculinity and bringing men together, where they can share some instantly common ground.[1215] While they may lead to competition, aggression, and conflict they may equally result in a level of 'personal intimacy otherwise frowned on'.[1216]

While homosociality is a key component to understanding *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* it is horizontal homosociality rather than vertical homosociality which takes precedence. As I have already described earlier in this chapter, expressions of intimacy do at times emerge to threaten the masculinist status quo. While some members of the group may be uncomfortable with certain emotions and behaviours, this does not prevent them from occasional expression. This, I would argue, suggests a degree of engagement with something that could be considered to be emergent. Competitiveness is also played out somewhat subtly within the group dynamic. While a form of hierarchy appears to emerge within the group, this is a result of deference rather than competition. When any competition is introduced it is frequently utilised as a way of sharing time together. With regard to the sexual objectification of women this undoubtedly plays a crucial part in the way we come to

[1214] Hammeren and Johansson (2014).
[1215] Easthope (1990), p. 77.
[1216] Ibid., p. 75.

understand the homosocial interaction between the characters. These are, after all, ordinary working men, relatively isolated from women, brought up in a culture that objectifies women. Yet this objectification does not go without challenge throughout both series.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's contribution to the conceptualisation of the term homosocial is the notion that the boundaries between the social and the sexual are indistinct and that homosociality and homosexuality are connected and can never fully be disentangled. While she acknowledges that the nature of this boundary varies from society to society and from era to era, and even within one society, she argues that 'obligatory heterosexuality is built into male-dominated kinship systems', the necessary corollary of which, is homophobia.[1217] This is, to a degree, the case with *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet,* when homophobic remarks are used to pre-empt any moments of intimacy between the characters being misinterpreted as homoeroticism. However, while this conforms to Kosofsky Sedgewick's model of heterosexual male groups, homophobia is entirely absent from the rest of both series.

Thus, I would argue, while homosociality is a key component to understanding *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet,* it does not function simply as a way of upholding hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy.[1218] The narratives present a multiplicity of contradictory masculinities each one as important as the other; the relationships are presented as largely non-hierarchical and involve a degree of emotional intimacy; and while the focus is upon a group of men, women are not necessarily excluded from non-romantic or non-sexual interaction with them. Thus, it is a fraternity which is

[1217] Kosofsky Sedgewick (1985), p. 3.
[1218] Hammeren and Johansson (2014).

relatively open and incorporates emergent as well as dominant and residual discourses of masculinity.

It is the notion of horizontal homosociality then which informs the friendships within both series. While Messner has asserted that throughout the twentieth-century it was generally accepted that men, rather than women, were more liable to create ‘deep and lasting friendships’, much research cited by Whitehead, including that of Franklin, reveals the 'importance of friendship to men's lives and the capacity that exists for empathy, trust and intimacy between [...] men'.[1219] However, ’men's friendships with other men can (also) be seen to be crucial in sustaining masculine subjectivities and men's sense of identity as men’.[1220] Thus, with *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet,* while the protagonists’ homosocial relationships are characterised by a degree of intimacy and trust they also function as a way of reaffirming their identities. It is precisely when the characters experience changes in both circumstances and relationships with women, or they face particularly radical challenges to their constructions of masculinity from emergent discourses, that they turn to each other. It is the stability and relative coherence of the homosocial group and the lasting friendships within it that provide a sanctuary in the face of a chaos of discourses.

6.8 The Heroic Project, Mythologising and Nostalgia

While the concept of homosociality and male friendship are central to the understanding of *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet,* nostalgia also performs a key function within the narrative. As a key discourse in identity formation and maintenance nostalgia

[1219] Michael Messner, *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1992), p. 215; Whitehead (2002), p. 158.
[1220] Whitehead (2002), p. 158.

provides a sense of continuity by reaffirming both individual and collective identities. It can contribute to what Giddens describes as, the 'reflexive project of the self, which consists of the sustaining of coherent yet, continually revised, biographical narratives'.[1221] It is a place where a 'continuous narrative can be sustained', while being open to subtle reinterpretations and alterations.[1222] However, it also frequently functions as a site for fantasy. Here, the writers allow their characters to create their own mythic past rather than simply feeling nostalgic about the actual past. Thus, they interpret past events and circumstances in a way which conveys heroic status upon the group.

Whitehead has argued that the centrality of the

> public and private dualism is founded largely on myth. Such mirages and legends surrounding men's public endeavours are potent and ubiquitous. This is a reification of a state of being that presumes a separation between emotion and practice and between family and work.[1223]

This myth may work for men, but it also works against them. The public world of men and its accompanying myths of 'heterosexual hyper-masculinity' may inform gendered actuality, but can rarely be lived up to in reality, for few men could be considered as genuine heroes.[1224] This idea is repeatedly worked through the narrative of *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* where the protagonists fall short of the heroic stature which they might be expected to achieve and perform. They are continually revealed to be weak, naïve, selfish, immature, lacking insight and intelligence. This is precisely how the narrative is able to expose this need for the mythologising of a heroic project, for noble or dignified validation, when all the evidence suggests there

[1221] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991), p. 5.
[1222] Ibid, p. 53.
[1223] Whitehead (2002), p. 144.
[1224] Ibid., pp. 143-144.

is none. By throwing up the reality and the myth in sharp contrast the narrative exposes the dichotomy within the public world of men.

Whitehead argues that the mythological and heroic narratives created by men are the basis of the public domain where 'man becomes a hero [...] an adventurer'.[1225] While what he calls 'the heroic male project' appears to suggest both 'self-aggrandisement and self-sacrifice' it actually operates as a means of alleviating existential uncertainty.[1226] Thus, in their departure from home, facing new challenges, enduring trials and subjecting themselves 'to the rigours and dangers of the world' without comfort or solace, the men in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* would appear to conform closely to Whitehead's 'heroic project'.[1227]

A particularly illuminating intimation of this mythologising is in the theme song which accompanies the opening titles of the first series. The opening theme is a plaintive lament to failure and loss, sung entirely in the first person:

> *Used up my options, paid all my dues,*
> *played all my cards, now there's nothing to lose.*

This sets up a certain tone of sacrifice, honour, and dignity:

> *Don't want tomorrow to be like today,*
> *that's why I'm breaking away.*

Here a sense of a heroic project has been set up where there is no choice for the protagonists. They have been victims of external forces, but the situation can be rescued through a process of mythologising. The lone, independent, and self-sufficient male must do what he has to do, and embark upon the heroic journey.

[1225] Whitehead (2002), p. 118.
[1226] Ibid.
[1227] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

Although the chorus is rather more upbeat and positive, the mood remains sombre as the open ended guitar picking lingers on into the opening scene of the narrative, contributing to a sense of ambivalent expectation.

Throughout both series this idea is worked through and often commented on by the protagonists themselves. It is, however, in the second series that this mythologising becomes much more formalised and self-aware. By re-uniting the characters the writers are able to couple this mythologising with a deeper nostalgic impulse. Sedikides et al see the prime existential function of nostalgia as an 'exercise in search for identity and meaning, a weapon of internal confrontations with existential dilemmas, and a mechanism for reconnecting with important others'.[1228] In doing so it serves to provide 'a positive emotional and experiential reservoir that people delve into to deal with existential threat'.[1229] Perhaps the most important existential function, Sedikides argues, is the ability of nostalgia to solidify and augment identity. It may operate as a 'mechanism for coping with loss of self-esteem', a sort of 'self-affirmation tool' allowing one to 'escape present mediocrity by resorting to a splendid past'.[1230] Sedikides goes on to say that nostalgia can function to regenerate and sustain a sense of the meaningful: 'In instances of felt loneliness, separateness and alienation' one can resort to 'nostalgic engagement which can be therapeutic' for the individual.[1231] This reinforces the 'value of cultural traditions and rituals of which we were once part', leading to an increased sense of 'cultural belongingness'.[1232] A further existential function according to Sedikides is that nostalgic feeling may

[1228] Constantine Sedikides, Tim Wildschut and Denise Baden, 'Nostalgia: Conceptual Issues and Existential Functions', in *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology*, ed. by Jeff Greenberg, Sander L. Koole, and Tom Pyszczynski (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 200-214 (pp. 202-3).
[1229] Ibid., p. 206.
[1230] Ibid.
[1231] Ibid., p. 207.
[1232] Ibid.

invigorate social connectedness. In 'nostalgic reverie' one draws upon memories of people from one's past which may allow for the re-establishing of symbolic bonds reinforcing belongingness, identity and self-esteem.[1233]

While Clement and La Frenais employ nostalgia as a key discourse in their writing, they actually do so in a rather deliberate and self conscious way. In bringing into play, what Robertson has described as, 'a certain kind of willful nostalgia', they stress a perceived 'threat to local distinctiveness' and the need to 'strengthen the collective sense of uniqueness'.[1234] Thus their characters frequently resort to nostalgia in an effort 'to retain dignity and a sense of rootedness in an era of rapid change'.[1235] Boym has argued that

> globalization encouraged stronger local attachments [...] an affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world. Nostalgia inevitably reappears as a defence mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals.[1236]

As their characters are shifted from location to location with considerable ensuing uncertainty amid broader social and cultural changes, nostalgic feeling becomes more central to the narrative. As Michael Skey maintains, while difference may be increasingly evident because of greater physical mobility, globalisation has tended to reinforce some people's feelings for the past.[1237]

[1233] Sedikides, (2004), 200-214 (pp. 207).
[1234] Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 31; Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Globalization: The Key Concepts* (Oxford Berg, 2007), p. 144.
[1235] Eriksen (2007), p. 144.
[1236] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York, NY: Basic, 2002), p. xiv.
[1237] Leonhardt Van Efferink, 'Interview with Michael Skey: National Identity, Multiculturalism, Cosmopolitanism, Globalisation', *Exploring Geopolitics* (July 2011) <www.exploringgeopolitics.org/Interview_Skey_Michael_National_Identity_Multiculturalism_Cosmopolitanism_Globalisation_Selfhood_Otherness_Belonging.html> [accessed 14 March 2012].

However, as Hutcheon has argued, the emotional appeal of nostalgia may be contingent upon it being wholly irrecoverable.[1238] Furthermore, rather than being a past that has been experienced, it is far more likely to be one that has been created or imagined through a conflation of 'memory and desire'.[1239] As Boym has suggested, 'nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy' or fantasies.[1240] Thus, it may employ a considerable degree of reflexivity relying heavily upon myth making strategies.[1241] Stewart sees nostalgia as narrative where 'the past it seeks has never existed except as narrative' and 'the realization of re-union imagined by the nostalgic is narrative utopia'.[1242] Thus, the collective nostalgic narrative which emerges in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* is one which is based upon fantasy or myth and stresses the heroic qualities of the characters' past.

Here then is a myth in which all the group are complicit, some immediately and actively, some more hesitantly. As they reconvene after a couple of years, a little more disappointed and mature, they are able to consider their circumstances and what has drawn them together. However, as the group reflect upon their past experiences and anticipate future events these are imbued with a sense of heroism. Rather than feeling nostalgic for the realities of their past in Germany, they attempt to build upon some form of mythic past, one where they performed heroic tasks. In the

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1238 Linda Hutcheon, *Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern* (University of Toronto English Library, [n.d.]) <www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp/html> [accessed 18 April 2008] (para 9 of 27).

1239 Ibid.

1240 Svetlana Boym, 'Nostalgia and the Off-Modern Swerve: From ''a Hypochondria of the Heart'' to the Off-Modern Swerve', *Tank Magazine*, 7.4, [n.d.] <http://tankmagazine.co/issue-5/features/nostalgia-and-the-off-modern-swerve> [accessed 11 February 2012].

1241 Robertson (1992), p. 31; Roland Robertson, 'After Nostalgia? Willful Nostalgia and the Phases of Globalisation', in *Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity*, ed. by Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1990), pp. 45-61 (p. 48).

1242 Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1984), p. 23.

prosaic and mundane surroundings of a motorway service station they spell out their own myth, seeing themselves as *The Magnificent Seven* (USA, 1960: John Sturges). Oz describes them as 'misfits, drifters on the highway of life', Moxey expands on this, 'free spirits, rebelling against a system that wants to grind us down', to which Wayne responds, 'free spirits embarking on a great new adventure – we're *The Magnificent Seven*'. Subsequently through some brief analysis of their individual personalities they ascribe one of *The Magnificent Seven* to each of themselves. This idea is further compounded by the use of the theme from the film and intertextual references to *High Noon* (USA, 1952: Fred Zinnermann).

Regardless of the realities, in the characters' eyes, theirs was, and will once again, be a heroic project. As the narrative progresses, the self-referential mythologising that they indulge in strengthens this impression. The theme songs from the second series only serve to re-emphasise this mythologising in their rhetoric.

Opening theme:

> *No one said it was going to be easy, no one said it had to be fair,*
> *all of the chances taken together, all of the chances you had to share,*
> *everything that made it all worthwhile, then you realise no one cares,*

End theme (extracts):

> *Helpless heroes caught in a dream.*
>
> *One for all and all for anyone as long as you play the game.*
>
> *Longing for the way we were.*

With its allusion to failure, loss and nostalgic feeling combined with a renewed determination which can only be provided by the reunification of the group, these themes are now thoroughly unambiguous. This is not simply the selective treatment

of the past but the creative treatment of it. The past has become a site of heroism and self sacrifice rather than simply homosocial. If, as Sedikides maintains, nostalgia can function as a way of escaping mediocrity by 'resorting to a splendid past', then this is a splendid past that never was.[1243] Thus, for the characters in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet,* nostalgic feeling works to restore the mythic certainties of heroic masculinity, ameliorating any doubts about their own fragile and increasingly residual masculine identities.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the practices, experiences and feelings of white, heterosexual working-class men, even when relatively open to change, reveal a structure of feeling which is nonetheless characterised by anxieties and uncertainties. It has gone on to contend that for many men, the experience of masculinity in the 1980s was typified by both residual and emergent discourses held in a state of tension. While it has engaged with Foucault's concept of the discursive subject and the possibilities for the social construction of gender, it has demonstrated how this intersects with its 'incomplete and fragmented and shifting material existence', which facilitates an approach which allows for the greater understanding of experiences, practices and lived realities.[1244] Thus, I have argued that within the context of social and structural changes in the early eighties *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet,* while demonstrating a degree of openess and engaging with new discourses, also underscores the very real constraints and inhibitions experienced by many men.

[1243] Sedikides (2004), 200-214 (p. 206).
[1244] Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity (*Oxford: Routledge, 2006), p. 134.

With their acute insight into men, homosociality, and male nostalgia, Clement and La Frenais explore the limits of discursively informed identity construction and transformation through the feelings and experiences of their male protagonists. In *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* they have constructed a series of narratives which perlustrate British working-class male identities at a time of particular stress and unease. They explore the shifting intersection of class allegiances and constructions of masculinity, and how this is played out in the narratives offering up new opportunities to engage with emergent discourses. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, these identities, while attempting to awkwardly accommodate emergent discourses, are shown to be grounded in those which are far more residual. While certain established discourses may continue, precariously dominant, their characters remain faltering or uncertain about emergent ones.

This chapter has been particularly influenced by Whitehead's work on masculinities, employing it as a framework to understand how social and cultural changes are worked through within the narratives. It has focused particularly on relationships, friendships, family roles and the expression of feelings and how these influence masculine construction and performance. Thus, it has been able to explore both the possibilities and limitations for the discursive subject which are articulated within these interactions and relationships. It has gone on to explore the notion of homosociality which serves to both enable and constrain discursively informed masculinities. Ultimately, I have shown how *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* demonstrates that 'although the variety and diversity of discourses of gender' may be 'apparent in the increasing plurality of masculinities', while any combination of these may be

taken up by the individual. 'there remains residual resistance to many of these discourses'.[1245]

Finally, this chapter has demonstrated the ways both homosociality and nostalgia have been deployed by Clement and La Frenais in relation to changes and continuities in identity construction. It has shown how the homosocial group, while incorporating a number of emergent discourses around masculinity also functions as a site of relative stability for its protagonists. It has gone on to examine how nostalgia also operates as a method to ease anxieties about changes which threaten the perceived continuity of identity, suggesting that the primary way it achieves this is through the construction of myth at individual and collective levels. Thus, it has argued, in order to validate their increasingly fragile constructions of masculinity the male protagonists frequently retreat into both the homosocial and nostalgic mythologising.

[1245] Whitehead (2002), p. 109.

7 Conclusion

My thesis began by bringing into question the ease of transformative change in gender identities and gender relations in terms of masculine performance by white heterosexual working-class males. The 1970s and 1980s, I argued, was a period where fundamental change in British society had a particularly profound effect upon masculine identities, and television, which had surpassed cinema by virtue of 'overall quality, audience pleasure, the development of talented artists and technicians, and the honest reflection of contemporary life and crises', was particularly well placed in working through many of these anxieties about change.[1246] In doing so, it was able to express what lies 'between the articulated and the lived […] all that is not fully articulated, all that comes through as disturbance, tension, blockage, emotional trouble'.[1247]

While I acknowledged the emergence of new positions, identities, and possibilities produced in changing economic and social circumstances, I went on to posit three key questions: To what extent are people able to reconstruct themselves and their own identities?; how are changes which are deemed to affect identity experienced?; and what effect do they have on the construction and crucially the maintenance of identities? My intention was to demonstrate how and why many men's constructed masculine identities were particularly resistant to new cultural conditions leading to questions about how identity is formed and maintained, the relationship between construction, limits and constraints, and the dialectic of social structures and agency.

[1246] Dave Rolinson, 'The Last Studio System: A Case for British Television Films', in *Don't Look Now: British Cinema in the 1970s*, ed. by Paul Newland (Bristol: Intellect, 2010), pp. 163-176 (p. 165).
[1247] Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London and New York: Verso, 1979), p.168.

I have argued that while construction and performativity may function as enabling processes, they may also operate within power structures and sets of values which leave the transformation of masculine identity constrained, limited, and embedded. This is a consequence of men's own privileged position within those power structures, their inability to understand those power structures, the lack of discursive possibilities open to them, the notion of identity predicated upon biographical continuity or the doxic relationship between social structures and mental structures which emerges as axiomatic beliefs and values. Thus men are subject to 'the pressures and compulsions which limit the scope of […] (their) agency'.[1248] As Connell has noted, 'recognizing the non-discursive and unreflective dimensions of gender gives us some sense of the limits of discursive flexibility' and 'furthermore, the costs of making certain discursive choices can be extremely high'.[1249]

Whitehead has argued that some men may have difficulty in understanding the complexities of the social world, perceiving existing patterns as natural rather than culturally conditioned: 'The multiplicity, contingency and disorder of our everyday existence cannot be fully accepted, for to do so would be to place our sense of ontological security at risk'.[1250] Thus existing gender patterns may give the 'illusion of order and thus a certain security'.[1251] Consequently, 'symbols, myths and ideologically informed practices lend gender representations a sense of order, naturalness and timelessness' creating structures which position subjects within

[1248] Thomas Okes, 'Power Always Goes on and on: The Limits of Masculinity in Marabou Stork Nightmares and Fight Club', *Academia.edu* <http://www.academia.edu/2093523/_Power_Always_Goes_on_and_On_The_Limits_of_Masculinity_in_Marabou_Stork_Nightmares_and_Fight_Club> [accessed 2 February 2013] (p. 76).
[1249] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender and Society,* 19.6 (December 2005) 829-859 (pp. 842-843).
[1250] Stephen M. Whitehead & Frank Barrett, 'The Sociology of Masculinity', in *The Masculinities Reader,* ed. by Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank Barrett (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), pp. 1-26 (p. 12).
[1251] Ibid.

specific confinements.[1252] Clearly then, Whitehead and others are suggesting that while the discursive possibilities of transformation in gender relations and identities is not impossible, it is frequently contradictory and subject to considerable male resistance.

However, as Mercer has observed, 'Identity only becomes an issue [...] when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty'.[1253] If, as Stuart Hall has argued, 'we need to situate the debates about identity within all those historically specific developments and practices which have disturbed the relatively settled character of many populations and cultures' then the 1970s and 1980s, which challenged the very notion of working-class masculine identity and the attendant structures and institutions which underpinned it, is certainly one of those historically specific sites.[1254] As both socio-cultural and socio-economic changes brought into question the perceived stability of gender relations they had an equally profound effect upon the construction of masculine identities.

Thus, as I have argued, through my examination of particular case studies in Chapters Four, Five and Six, there were a number of writers who foregrounded a 'structure of feeling' that emphasised anxieties about these changes while exploring the limits and constraints upon effective transformation particularly within working-class cultures. Raymond Williams's methodological concept has facilitated my

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[1252] Whitehead and Barrett (2001), pp. 1-26 (p. 12).

[1253] Kobena Mercer, 'Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Postmodern Politics', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), pp. 43-71 (p. 43).

[1254] Stuart Hall, 'Who Needs Identity?', in *Questions of Cultural Identity,* ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), pp. 1-17 (p. 4).

analysis of these writers as they explore an area of social experience of individuals and groups which may be frequently discounted, overlooked, or inhibited together with the relationship between these experiences and the structures of the period.

Williams's 'structure of feeling' allows for the exploration of specific cultures at particular moments through privileging experience. Hence I have used it as a methodological framework for the analysis of television to facilitate the understanding of the experience of wider culture and cultural change. These are texts which emerged from the individual concerns of the writers together with 'crucial aspects of the broader social, political and cultural context of the time'.[1255]

I have argued that the three films by Peter McDougall, Trevor Preston's *Fox*, Alan Bleasdale's *Boys From the Blackstuff* and Clement and La Frenais' *Auf, Wiedersehen, Pet* are particularly sensitive to the experiences of working-class men, and whilst relating to a fictional past also 'revalidate, reinforce or question the meaning of masculinity' and particular masculinities at a crucial temporal and spatial juncture in history.[1256] The discourses emanating from these texts offer up their own interpretations of complex and unstable processes, whilst themselves contributing to and questioning gender power relationships. They are engaged in exploring and highlighting struggle, dialectic, tension, and inarticulacy, in short, the feelings of their male characters. In doing so they reshape, re-mythologise, legitimate or consolidate working-class masculine subjectivities or indeed a combination of all four, while examining the strategies employed by the characters to accomplish this, as

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[1255] John Kirk, 'Class, Community and 'Structures of Feeling' in Working-Class Writing from the 1980s', *Literature and History*, 8.2 (Autumn 1999), 44-64 (p. 44).

[1256] Joanne Woodman, 'Narrating White English Masculinity: Male Authored Fiction of Crisis and Reconstruction, 1987-2001' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Birkbeck College, 2005), p. 7.

normative masculinity becomes increasingly compromised, thus revealing a historically specific structure of feeling.

By accounting for residual, dominant and emergent consciousness, Williams's concept provides an avenue into the ways 'individuals and communities engage with fundamental transformations in their everyday life-world […] to engage with changes in the present'.[1257] It is precisely this model of the residual, dominant and emergent which I have used to explore residual meanings and values in the narratives which could be said to be operating outside of the dominant culture. As Williams has acknowledged, while the movement of structures of the past into the present and future allows for the dominant, emergent and residual to exist simultaneously they are likely to be in a shifting state of contention and discord.

These then are narratives which express male anxieties about the reconfiguration of masculinities and gender relations revealing 'gradual awareness, barely articulable', frequently confused and contradictory, and indeed possessing a strong element of resistance, to radical change and disruption.[1258] If structures of feeling are 'social experiences in solution', while not necessarily radical they may be to varying degrees, oppositional to, or rather in dissent with, the social order, or official consciousness, expressing a degree of heterodoxy.[1259] However, as I have demonstrated, they also need not be progressive in any way whatsoever and indeed they may run contrapuntal to the wider prevailing drift, for while they may be directly related to the politics of social change, they may not actually positively articulate it.

[1257] John Kirk, 'Working Paper: Theory/ Method/ Themes-A Discussion Document', *SPHERE*, [n.d.] <www.workinglives.org/…/Working%20Paper%20Theory%208_9_0…> [accessed 12 April 2011] (p. 7).
[1258] Kirk (1999), pp. 44-64 (p. 47).
[1259] Ibid., p. 61.

The case studies have developed the argument that the practices, experiences, and feelings of white, heterosexual working-class men reveal a structure of feeling that emphasised anxieties about changes while exploring the limits and constraints upon effective transformation. They have shown how discourses of masculinity, anxiety, and change were both constructed and mediated by television informed by the cultural, social, and economic contexts of the period. While each of the narratives may be focused differently they are all characterised by their representation of men and their constructions of masculinity as both uncertain yet deeply embedded.

In Chapter Four I argued that while Peter McDougall is critical of residual and dominant discourses of masculinity and expresses the anxieties of his male protagonists he is also profoundly pessimistic about the possibilities of them engaging meaningfully with alternative ones. Even when the narratives allude to the positive possibilities of emergent discourses of gender practices he portrays men as being unwilling or unable to effect change or transformation to their constructions and performances of masculinity.

McDougall suggests that his protagonists are both so embedded within and emotionally ravaged by the social structures underpinning their milieu that there is little possibility of escape let alone transformation. Here, I have argued, McDougall conforms to Connell's notion of 'social structure' which refers to 'the constraints that lie in a given form of social organization'.[1260]

[1260] R. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), p. 92.

As Messerschmidt has argued:

> Through this interaction masculinity is institutionalized, permitting men to draw on such existing, but previously formed masculine ways of thinking and acting to construct a masculinity for specific settings. The particular criteria for masculinity are embedded in the social situations and recurrent practices whereby social relations are structured.[1261]

However, while Connell and Messerschmidt maintain that social structures are not simply forms of external constraint and that subjects may alter social structures as well as reproduce gendered behaviours, McDougall sees minimal possibility of this on either an individual or collective level, thus masculine transformation is rendered profoundly problematic.[1262]

In Chapter Five I have gone on to examine the reactions of men when confronted *directly* with changes and emergent discourses which threaten to erode their patriarchal positions revealing deep anxieties about those changes. I have argued that the relationship between social and economic change and the transformation of masculinity is particularly problematic through my analysis of two writers whose male protagonists experience this change in very different ways. Alan Bleasdale's protagonists like those of McDougall, are revealed to be so firmly embedded within their class and gender positions that they are unable to adapt or transform when confronted with profound economic and social change. As their already insecure identities are further eroded, attempts to reaffirm their patriarchal positions and hold onto those identities, particularly in their relationships with women, take on an air of ineffectual desperation. In effect the drama played out reinforces Campbell's assertion that working-class masculinity failed to recognise its gendered position

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[1261] James W. Messerschmidt, 'Men, Masculinities and Crime', in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities,* ed. by Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and Robert W. Connell (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 196-212 (p. 197).
[1262] Ibid.

where ‘many of those good old values rested on the weary labours of women, whose economic, social, sexual, cultural and political interests are not given any political primacy by any party’.[1263] Furthermore, she says:

> Hoggart treats the tradition of men and women power relations in the working-class as natural and that this hides the highly fabricated and rigid construction of that tradition.[1264]

Ultimately then, all the narrative can do is offer a largely redundant nostalgia for working-class solidarity, unity (and power) which ignores this gendered inequity.

In contrast, with Preston’s treatment of social change, identities and configurations of gender practices are allowed to remain virtually unaltered. Here Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity is shown to adapt by absorbing or rejecting emergent discourses, realigning itself generationally. Nonetheless, the importance of the family and patriarchy is emphatically reaffirmed within the narrative.

Connell’s approach acknowledges ‘the dynamics of change’, and while practice is constrained, it is also open to both history and change in a dialectic which attempts to acknowledge both the importance of structures together with the possibility of commutation.[1265] However, with Preston this commutation is less than satisfactory, as vague, superficial change belies the continued maintenance of common sense values and beliefs.

[1263] Beatrix Campbell, *Wigan Pier Revisited: Poverty and Politics in the Eighties* (London: Virago, 1984), p. 225.

[1264] Ibid.

[1265] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p. 67; Tony Jefferson, ‘Theorising Masculine Subjectivity’, in *Just Boys Doing Business?*: *Men, Masculinities and Crime*, ed. by Tim Newburn and Elizabeth A. Stanko (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 10-31 (p. 15).

Indeed I have argued that *Fox* conforms to Bourdieu's model which maps out the limits of reflexive transformation and identity where social divisions organise and limit the social world, where objective limits become subjective limits.[1266] With *Fox* there is an 'adherence to relations of order which, because they structure both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident'.[1267]

Ultimately, both Bleasdale and Preston exhibit considerable unease about changes in gender relations. While they open up emergent discourses they are more concerned with how men can deal with these rather than working through their full implications within the narratives. Thus, they allow their male protagonists to continue to exist within dominant but increasingly residual discourses of masculinity.

In Chapter Six I argued that with *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, Clement and La Frenais have created more nuanced depictions of masculinity, fragile and more open, with a degree of heterogeneity. This heterogeneity allows for a variety of discursive practices and an element of inter-subjective fluidity for its protagonists. Any adaptation and transformation, however, while not proscribed within the narrative, is still experienced as a contradictory, confusing, and painful process. Indeed their writing reveals the importance of nostalgic homosociality as a way of reaffirming residual discourses when faced with challenging emergent ones.

Clement and La Frenais' characters are placed within increasingly pluralistic representations of masculinity, and engage with varying discourses of gender revealing the limitations as well as the possibilities for the discursive subject as it

[1266] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*: *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984), p. 471.
[1267] Ibid.

‘intersects with its incomplete, fragmented and shifting material existence’.[1268] As the narratives explore emergent discourses they also suggest that there is considerable conflict between these and more dominant traditional working-class masculine discourses. As Whitehead has observed, despite

> the apparent multiplicity of masculine expression, traditional masculinities, and associated values still prevail in most cultural settings. Many men still act dominant, deny emotions, resort to violence as a means of self-expression, and seek to validate their masculinity in the public rather than the private world.[1269]

This is a performance which, Whitehead suggests, masks a deeply fragile identity, itself exposed by changing social contexts.

While Whitehead takes a highly critical view of a perceived crisis of masculinity, he does recognise that social transformations have been particularly profound for working-class men where,

> male dominated industrialisation (has) largely given way to female oriented service industries; women are increasingly exercising choice over relationships, divorce, child bearing and their sexual expression.[1270]

This then is precisely what is addressed in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*. However, Whitehead argues, men adapt, and this is a continual process, generational, and largely experienced unknowingly, where men’s notions of the masculine self undergoes shifts. Nevertheless within their lifetime many men experience minimal change.[1271] Thus, while Clement and La Frenais explore the effects of change upon their varied male protagonists, their constructions of masculinity remain remarkably constant. Ultimately, I have argued, *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* presents a problematic relationship between emergent and residual discourses of masculinity, revealing

[1268] Tim Edwards, *Cultures of Masculinity* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), p. 134.
[1269] Whitehead and Barrett (2001), pp. 1-26 (p. 7).
[1270] Ibid., p. 9.
[1271] Ibid., p. 10.

identity construction as a disrupted, open ended process operating in a state of considerable unease.

While fully in accord with the enabling dimension of discourse and performativity, this thesis then has been far more concerned with interrogating the limits and constraints that inhibit change and progress. As I have demonstrated, the post -structural theoretical perspectives of Foucault, Butler, and Giddens which emphasise the 'potential for artifice, flux and contingency' provide excellent ways of approaching identity construction.[1272] However, while all articulate the increasing possibilities for the transformation of social identities as a consequence of social, cultural, and economic changes in contemporary society they also acknowledge that there may be certain limits and constraints.[1273]

According to Foucault, the construction of one's identity is dependant upon social processes. The subject is not a firm entity, but rather identity is contingent upon historically constructed discourses: 'The individual is not a pre-given identity' and 'the positions of the subject are defined by the positions that it is possible for him to occupy'.[1274] However, while these discourses may enable subject positions they are also subject to constraints, limits, and 'regularities'.[1275] Gender and sexual identity are always shifting, argues Foucault, and these can change through resistance, itself 'a

[1272] Edwards (2006), p. 3.
[1273] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990); Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991), pp. 18-37; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).
[1274] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, trans. Colin Gordon and others (New York: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 73-74: Michel Foucault, (1972), p. 52; p. 197.
[1275] Foucault (1972), pp. 231-232.

process of breaking out of discursive practices'.[1276] Thus Foucault recognises the possibility of a degree of transformative agency. However, as Sawicki has argued, while Foucault may emphasise resistance, he is also 'sceptical about widespread transformation and far from utopian'.[1277]

Butler's development of this Foucauldian perspective of gender construction in her conceptualisation of the notion of performativity similarly argues that identity is potentially open, dynamic, and liable for transformation. However, while performance should defy notions of originary identities it may also 'conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility'.[1278] While Butler offers a model which is optimistic and positive, she nonetheless recognises that through the acquisition of social and cultural facets gender identities may become solidified and reified through repetition. As she argues, 'the action of gender requires a performance that is *repeated*' re-enacting 'a set of meanings already socially established'.[1279]

Like Foucault and Butler, Giddens sees the self not as something either essential or fixed, but rather there is a 'reflexive project of the self, which consists of the sustaining of coherent yet, continually revised, biographical narratives'.[1280] For Giddens 'a human being is […] a purposive agent' with a degree of reflexivity which may engender change 'across space and time'.[1281] However, Giddens

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[1276] Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984: Ethics,* trans. by Robert Hurley, ed. by Paul Rainbow, 3 vols (New York: The New Press, 1997), I, p. 168-169.

[1277] Jana Sawicki, *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 28.

[1278] Judith Butler*, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 24.

[1279] Ibid., p. 178.

[1280] Giddens (1991), p. 5.

[1281] Christopher G. A. Bryant and David Jary, *Giddens' Theory of Structuration: A Critical Appreciation (*London: Routledge, 1991), p. 8; Anthony Giddens *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 3.

acknowledges the influence of, what he describes as, 'standardising influences'.[1282] People's actions, he says, may be conditioned by the expectations of others, their investment in the 'coherence of everyday life' and the reliance upon a sense of continuity in the maintenance of their identities.[1283]

While the work of Foucault, Butler and Giddens, while not necessarily utopian, would appear to be generally positive as theories of reflexive identity transformation emphasising new possibilities as a consequence of the destabilisation of the traditional, this has not, however, gone without criticism. McNay, for example has argued that they underplay aspects of gender which are deeply embedded and resistant to adaptation or remodelling; Edwards has suggested that Butler's notion of performativity does not necessarily lead to endless possibilities and potential; and Mestrovic sees Giddens's theory of structuration as perceiving agents as rational rather than emotional.[1284]

Thus, while I have applied these post-structural theories as a way of approaching gender identity, I have suggested, that in the context of the structure of feeling evident in the narratives of McDougall, Preston, Bleasdale and Clement and La Frenais, they have certain limitations. While I have not suggested that identity is stable and unchangeable I have argued that what may persist as a consequence of 'inculcation' are 'durable, adjusted, dispositions'.[1285]

[1282] Giddens (1991), p. 5.
[1283] Ibid., p. 38; 53.
[1284] Lois McNay, 'Gender, Habitus and the Field: Pierre Bourdieu and the Limits of Reflexivity', *Theory, Culture and Society,* 16.1 (1999), 95-117 (p. 95); Tim Edwards, 'Queer Fears: Against the Cultural Turn', *Sexualities*, 1. 4 (November 1998), 471-484 (p. 472); Stjepan Gabriel Mestrovic, *Anthony Giddens: The Last Modernist* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 77-81.
[1285] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), p. 67.

It is Bourdieu's model then which I have found to be a more appropriate way of understanding these narratives. While Bourdieu allows for a degree of identity transformation, new performative paradigms are heavily circumscribed by the bounds of the field and are 'limited in their diversity'.[1286] Thus, an agent's actions and thoughts can be seen as a set of subjective dispositions informed by assimilated routine beliefs and values.[1287] Ultimately, what Bourdieu suggests is a model of gender, which, whilst undergoing a considerable degree of destabilisation which may facilitate certain changes in normative behaviour, may also be so deeply entrenched within the individual and collective unconscious as to render certain aspects of reflexive transformation problematic.

In conclusion then, what I have suggested is that change should be understood as a process rather than an outcome, a process which is experienced and responded to emotionally. It is rarely linear or uniform, is the e
ffect of other overlapping shifts, and is characterised by residuality as well as emergence. Nonetheless, there have undoubtedly been periods when this process of change could be said to have been more rapid and fundamental than others, felt more acutely, and required considerable realignment by those experiencing it.

This thesis has proposed that throughout the 1970s and 1980s a number of writers were able to explore a structure of feeling around anxieties about shifts in gender relations and question the potential for genuine transformative change in masculine identities. They suggest that working-class men have an adherence to a construction of masculinity which is perceived as authentic but is actually both

[1286] Bourdieu (1990), p. 55.
[1287] Ibid.

troubling and troubled and they show how men have adopted strategies of adaption, control, and denial in an effort to maintain that construction. Particularly when faced with new gender practices, men reveal themselves to be entrenched and embedded. Whether for the preservation of privilege, maintenance of biographical continuity, lack of discursive possibilities or doxic perception of the social world as natural, transformative agentic action can be severely inhibited.

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