CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION—A STUDY OF MEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF TRADITIONAL MASCULINITY

Background to the Study

One question underlies the thesis: how do young males learn to be a man? The question was triggered by my experience running men's experiential workshops in Canberra. In the course of a day long workshop participants were asked, when did they become a man? Each man invariably struggled to answer, most often pausing, not defensively, but seemingly perplexed. What struck me in my role as facilitator was that when first asked the question, no-one of perhaps 100 men aged from 21 upwards, could give a confident, assured answer. Rather, they paused, looked bewildered or sometimes were even speechless. No one could immediately recall a momentous process or circumstance, which marked a personal transformation to perceiving themselves and being acknowledged as a man, an adult male. Time and time again, at numerous workshops over two years, males of all ages struggled to reply to this question. It crossed my mind that, how and when males believed they became a man might be a subject worth investigating. I truly never thought that it might be me who would undertake such a study.

The question, how do males learn to be men?, seems particularly relevant to males in the early stages of their life-course, as they seek to find and establish a place in the world and perhaps raise families. It is of relevance to note that, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures reveal that the two age sets, 15 to 24 years, and 25-44 years, that cover the first two stages of the male life course, have throughout the early 1990s recorded the highest rates and numbers of suicides for all male age sets (see Appendix 1). Further, the rate of suicide for males of these age sets, has consistently been four times that for females throughout the early 1990's.

Personal Relevance of the Study

The men's workshops offered participants an opportunity to talk about and reflect on some of the meanings and often unexamined assumptions, males associate with masculinity and being a man. It was my role as facilitator to establish a degree of safety and trust in the workshop. Many participants took the opportunity to put down their public, unemotional mask and talk about the joys and disappointments of their lives, some did not. Often we talked about growing up and the social messages we seemed to receive from Australian culture. Many of the men reported that they had thought being a man meant that they had to live up to a rather confined social code of masculine behaviour, that emphasised toughness and emotional reticence. As they talked, I realised that many of us had watched our dads, other male relatives, teachers or
sports coaches, hero worshipped male movie and sports stars, listened to priests and rabbis, and copied schoolmates, all in part seeking some clues about 'being a man'.

When we were boys it seemed we learnt much from our fathers, simply by example. Later as adolescents we looked up to movie images like the John Wayne persona, or sports champions such as boxer Muhammed Ali or Sydney footballer Johnny Raper. But our main instruction about masculinity seemed to be by way of a dominant social code, that prescribed that males act tough, be ready to fight, play sport, drink beer and try to be successful. As adolescents, masculinity was for virtually all of us, do it yourself. It also seemed that in our teens and early twenties, many of us sought to prove ourselves as men by competing against other males in sport, work, drinking, or by having a big car or maybe having the best looking girlfriend. Listening to many men's tales of youthful trials, tests and an apparent need to prove themselves as men, seemed to confirm suggestions by popular writers about masculinity such as Sam Keen and Steve Biddulph, that in countries such as America and Australia, masculine development is left to chance.

The interest to research some of the dynamics of how and when we become men was triggered by several factors. First of all my sex as a male is a factor. For me adolescence was a perplexing time, whilst I loved playing soccer and sports, I also enjoyed reading, history, was intellectually bright, and felt estranged from many of my peers growing up in inner western Sydney. The principal stimuli for examining how young males become men, came more recently. In my role as a telephone counsellor with Lifeline Canberra, at men's workshops and my experience at men's drop-in centres, I had many confidential, honest conversations with distressed men. I sensed the straitjacket many of us men feel trying to live up to the social ideal that 'boys don't cry', complain or mention their pain when faced with major personal disasters, such as marital separation or loss of employment.

**Significance of the Study**

This study seeks to explore the importance of a culturally dominant model of masculinity, as a factor in how young males learn to be men. Academic research identifies a dominant model of masculinity. This is seen as the measure by which all men are judged, called hegemonic masculinity—it is also described as the culturally idealised form of masculine character (Connell, 1990, 83). In Australian literature on masculinity, professional footballers and sports heroes are often regarded as embodying the masculine ideal (Webb, 1998, 89; Edgar, 1997, 34; Connell, 1987, 215). Academic researcher Bob Connell suggests that this dominant model of masculinity is associated with toughness, competitiveness, determination, aggression, the celebration of exemplars, and the subordination of women and homosexuals (1990, 94). Edgar says this model is most apparent in public arenas, such as pubs, clubs, sport, the beach and the workplace (1997, 39).
Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the study is to assess the significance of the dominant cultural model of masculinity, as a model for what it means to be a man, for males at different stages of their life course. The study will compare and contrast the experiences and perceptions of a small sample of males aged in their early 20s (referred to as young males) and around 40 years (mid-life males). In-depth, face to face interviews have been chosen as a first-hand technique to explore these matters with the participants.

The project will investigate the following. How do young males learn to be a man? Who talks to them and teaches young men about being a man? As adolescents, who were their role models (that is, older males they looked up to), who or what affected their ideas about masculinity, what are their experiences and perceptions about a dominant model of masculinity? The study seeks to examine what models or images males learn as adolescents. What values and behaviours are associated with a dominant model, and is it still relevant for mid-life men? The similarities and differences apparent between the young and mid-life men regarding such issues are also considered.

These are issues that need to be critically examined, if for no other reason than the inordinately high rate of male suicide for both these age groups already mentioned. Youth suicide is an acknowledged major problem occurring at an age when young men are commonly seen as attempting to come to terms with becoming a man (Webb, 1998, 149). Public education research and HSC results show that adolescent boys are also having troubles at school (West, 1999a), and furthermore they also have for some years shown a high rate of deaths in motor vehicle accidents. The O'Doherty Report (1994) suggests that some of the problems male youths are experiencing at school are attributable to the dominant male stereotype and traditional attitudes about masculinity.

Levinson (1978) identifies the different seasons of a man's life, and suggests at mid-life many men question ideas and images of masculinity acquired in early manhood, as they assess the meaning and direction of their lives. Robert Bly (1990) claims that by the age of 40, many American men realise the images they learnt as young men do not hold up. Mid-life has been identified as a stage when some men experience a real psychological crisis often by themselves. Such men question and reassess their lives, values and ideas of masculinity (Levinson, 1978; O'Connor, 1993). However, it is suggested that men experiencing such problems receive little serious attention from society and others (O'Connor, 1981).

The Research Problem
Underlying the entire thesis is one question, how do we, as young males in Australian society, learn to be men? The thesis seeks to consider the following problem:
is the culturally dominant model of masculinity a prominent model for young and mid-life males, of what it means to be a man? Does the impact of this model change for men around mid-life?

Research Questions
Inquiry and research are guided by the questions a researcher seeks to examine, they also reflect the assumptions of the study. The questions that guide the study are as follows:

- Is there a dominant model of masculinity for Australian males?
- What models of masculinity do adolescent males learn?
- Who do males as adolescents, perceive as role models and heroes; and what significance do they play?
- What are the major influences on adolescent males ideas and attitudes about being a man?
- When do young males become men?

As a male researcher, a study of such questions as these, in some ways reflects on ones' own ideas and experiences of masculinity. These questions are personally relevant to the researcher and most likely many, if not most men.

Aims
The project seeks to compare and contrast any similarities and differences between males at different stages of their life-course, with respect to their experience and perceptions of the culturally dominant model of masculinity. Further, the study seeks to:

- Establish what models of masculinity males learn during adolescence—do they learn the (hegemonic) dominant masculine cultural ideal, and from whom?;
- establish some of the features of what these men see as the dominant model of Aussie masculinity;
- establish some of the important factors that influence men's attitudes and perceptions about what being a man is about and the impact of other males;
- contrast and compare the attitudes and ideas about being a man between young and mature men;
- establish if young and mid-life males have a clear sense of when or how they became a man;
- assess the significance and implications of the culturally dominant model as a guide for men's behaviour and perceptions.

Research Methodology
Qualitative research seeks to examine people's beliefs and values, by first hand methods to establish how they understand and bring meaning to their lives. It uses a number of practices
and methods. As an exploratory study, in-depth interviews with 13 males, have been chosen as the tool to provide rich and thick descriptions and data on how they perceive a cultural model of masculinity. In-depth interviews are a favourite tool of qualitative researchers, providing a means by which participants are able to express their views in their own terms. This study utilises case study, life history and participant observation methodologies to provide empirical material. A phenomenological approach is used to interpret the data, which is presented in individual case records.

Limitations and Assumptions
The focus on the study is upon the impact of the culturally dominant model of masculinity, identified in academic research (hegemonic masculinity) as a factor in how young males learn to be men. Males in the first two stages of their life-course are the subject of research. These are stages Levinson identifies as young adulthood and middle adulthood, the first two seasons of a man's life, encompassing the years 20-45 years. Other particular factors, such as parental background, income, occupation, marital status and sexuality are not explicitly variables under examination.

Two current major streams of literature about masculinity are academic sociology and popular writings (often with a psychological or personal perspective) that examine the experience of being a man in countries such as America, Australia and Britain. These discourses often seem to be mutually antagonistic. They also offer, it seems, rather singular views and assessments about masculinity. This study seeks to connect some of the useful insights from both discourses.

Some of the literature on male psychology, suggests that the training to be masculine, and social pressure to meet the masculine cultural ideal, leave adult males with a limited emotional and behavioural repertoire (Biddulph, 1994, 4; Bolen, 1989, 14; Horrocks, 1995, 111). In light of this literature it is suggested that this study may find that males from both age sets have learnt the dominant cultural conceptions of masculinity, that it entails being tough, independent, competitive, hard working and emotionally stoic. Some popular writers suggest males learn a rather one dimensional version of masculinity. The study will also look and assess that idea.

The researcher has lived for some years and conducted men’s workshops in Canberra. However, the study has been carried out in Sydney and Bowral, where the researcher was living during the project. Gaining access to males keen to participate, it should be noted has been a challenge, particularly young males. Unlike if the study had been in Canberra, in these districts the researcher lacked a personal site of interest or status, to seek interested participants.

Finally, the researcher brings to the study his experience as a male who grew up in Australia, played organised sport, and has been part of the adult workforce for 15 years, mostly as a policy
analyst with Federal public agencies. During my 30s an interest in the training to be masculine and men’s issues surfaced, with the seeming endemic competition among many males in the workplace a noteworthy trigger. These factors contributed to my decision to leave a senior position in the public sector in 1994.

**Answering a Critical Question—so what?**

In exploring and examining the experiences of a small number of males, of various backgrounds, concerning a culturally dominant model of masculinity, the thesis will represent the first, in-depth, empirical Australian study of this phenomenon. Further, the study will attempt to make visible the dominant model and reflect upon its apparent implications for the young and mid-life men in this study. It is believed that such insights may have some relevance to other young and mid-life males.

**Thesis Outline**

This introduction provides an overview of the research study, including its background, purpose, significance, aims as well as the research problem and questions. It elucidates the background of the researcher as a mid-life male with an abiding, personal interest and concern in the project. Chapter 2 considers the two current major discourses on masculinity, as well as relevant Australian social research, and examines the main themes raised with regard to masculinity and its features. This is followed by a review of the major social theories concerning masculinity: social constructionism, psychoanalytic theory, life-course theory and Jungian psychology. Based upon element of all these theories a conceptual framework for the study is identified and constructed. The chapter discussing the qualitative methodology used in the study follows. This indicates that the research is based in the interpretive paradigm, and that descriptive, interpretive analysis of the data is the foundation of the study.

The case records of the thirteen participants are systematically examined under their age groupings. The young males are considered first in chapter 5, succeeded by the case records of the mid-life males. Therein follows a careful examination of particular features apparent among the young males, and the mid-life males. The lives and experiences of the young and mid-life males are then compared and contrasted, particularly with regard to the dominant model of masculinity. Finally, based on thematic analyses, conclusions and some implications of findings are suggested.
CHAPTER 2

DISCOURSES ON MASCULINITY-ACADEMIC, POPULAR AND AUSTRALIAN STUDIES

Recent years have seen a burgeoning literature on men’s experiences and masculinities in America, Australia and Britain. Two of the most prominent streams are academic discourses (sociology and feminism), which seek to destabilise traditional masculinity, and popular writings which seek to reassess and promote a new sense of masculine identity (Tacey, 1997, ix).

Academic discourses are mainly sociological studies of men and masculinity in these West European based societies, prepared by university researchers. These studies seek to examine masculinity at the social and collective level and are primarily of appeal to a mainly tertiary-educated audience. In contrast, popular discourses are non-academic books, many of which discuss masculinity from the perspective of Jungian psychology and or personal experience. They are written in a simple style, aimed at and accessible to a very broad reading audience. They include such well-known works as Robert Bly’s Iron John and Steve Biddulph’s Manhood.

This chapter will examine some of the key insights these two discourses have to say about men and masculinity. In addition, consideration is paid to the small but growing Australian social research and literature on masculinity. However, for the purpose of this review the contributions of Bob Connell will be located in academic discourses, as his work is seen as part of the sociological literature on masculinity in Western cultures of America, Britain and Australia (Moore, 1998, 10). Family therapist Biddulph will be located in popular discourses, as his works are popular bestsellers.

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1Iron John (1990) was on the New York Times bestseller list for 12 months following its publication. Biddulph’s Manhood (1994) sold 100,000 copies in Australia. Whilst most popular men’s writings are not such bestsellers, they are aimed at a wide reading audience, and so are herein termed, popular. Much of the popular literature considered in this review considers masculinity from a psychological perspective. Such discourses are mostly written by Jungian trained psychotherapists, who discuss patterns in men’s individual experience of masculinity, as reported to them by male clients; eg. Betcher and Pollock (1993), In a Time of Fallen Heroes: The Recreation of Masculinity.

2In Remaking Men: The Revolution in Masculinity (1997), David Tacey (a Jungian trained academic at La Trobe University, Melbourne) critiques the academic and popular discourses on masculinity available in Britain, America and Australia. His work is distinguished by being highly critical of both discourses; so he is more appropriately located in the Australian research and literature on masculinity.
Masculinity as a Universal

Masculinity has traditionally been seen as self-evident, universal, natural, unitary and whole, free of problems, the way men are (Buchbinder, 1994, 1; Rutherford, 1988, 23). For many men, masculinity is often a matter taken for granted, associated with sexual superiority (Dowrick, 1991, 83). Such a view remains quite widespread among many men. Edgar and West report that for their interviewees, ‘what is it that makes a man?’ is a non-question, because the answer is so obvious, ‘not being a woman’. Further discussion is irrelevant since it is about not being soft, feminine or gay (Edgar, 1997, 25). West notes the reply is commonly accompanied by nervous laughter, perhaps reflecting an underlying current of uncertainty about masculine identity (1996, 61). For many men, being a man seems to be conceived simply by virtue of sex, biology, the opposite of woman and associations of softness. It appears being a man is very often defined negatively and simply, the opposite to woman, a product of biology.

Recently, numerous observers have suggested that masculinity is in a state of flux, uncertainty, even crisis, triggered by the redefinition of gender roles since the 1970’s, and brought about by the challenge of feminism, women’s greater participation in the workforce and the restructuring of the labour market in Western industrialised countries (Buchbinder, 1994; The Economist 1996; Horrocks, 1994; Mackay, 1994; Rutherford, 1988).

Different Approaches to Masculinity

Academic sociology sees masculinity as a social construct, the attitudes and social practices relating to what men do, within the dynamic process of gender (Connell, 1995, 71). Masculinity (and gender) refer to the cultural differences between men and women, rather than to the male sex. Academic discourses (such as women’s studies and sociology) which focus upon social and collective life, criticise the use of the term masculinity on the grounds that there is no innate, monolithic phenomenon as masculinity. Kimmel and Messner advocate the use of the term ‘masculinities’, to reflect the different ways men construct different versions of masculinity (1995, 3).

However, psychotherapeutic literature, with its focus upon the individual, points out that masculinity can be seen as something all men share, a unifying function for all men, conveying the sense of not being a woman:

Within psychotherapy however masculinity has a unitary function for all forms of men (maso to effeminate) in conveying the message, ‘I am not woman’ (Horrocks, 1994, 33).

Sociology and psychology therefore take rather different approaches to the subject of masculinity.
Masculinity—conflicting views

Each person in some way has to relate to men and boys. It is quite likely everyone will have his or her own attitudes and interpretations about masculinity based upon what he or she have been taught and experienced. In common usage and popular culture, masculinity is often regarded as referring to qualities of men attributable to male biology. According to such conceptions men are seen as innately more aggressive and competitive than women (Buchbinder, 1994, 2-4; Edgar, 1997, 13). Such a view is cultivated and reinforced by the popular media in movie images and reports on physical contact sport (McKay, 1991, 117). Academic sociology, as noted, regards masculinity as a social construct, a product of culture, varying between time and place, with no biological imperative. It suggests that:

The masculine is what men in their immense variety do ... rather than what men are (Buchbinder, 1994, 2).

Jungian psychological literature accepts that gender (masculinity/femininity) has to do with the scripts 'for playing the roles of male and female in a society' (Steinberg, 1993, 13). Masculinity is viewed, in large part, the result of social conditioning, but is seen to incorporate a biologically inherited (archetypal) element. Betcher and Pollock state:

we believe that men’s aggressiveness is, in part, biologically driven, but that cultural precepts that restrict men’s expression of emotion to anger makes them far more aggressive than nature destined them to be (1993, 256-7).

There are therefore several different viewpoints concerning masculinity. Sociology and psychology regard masculinity quite differently; one as primarily a product of the social-cultural environment, the other seeing it, to some degree, as having an innate aspect. It is therefore understandable that Clatterbaugh states describing masculinity is difficult (1990, 3). Edgar observes, ‘masculinity is a highly disputed concept’ (1997, 33). Masculinity is therefore, a site of some contention. Drummond states ‘conceptions of masculinity vary from person to person and by social class, race, age, gender and society’ (1995, 19). He asks an important question, “what is masculinity and who decides what it is?” (1995, 19). This is an

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3 Jungian psychology hypothesizes that within the unconscious part of the psyche of every person are archetypal images (models of patterns of behaviour) that organise experience (such as father/mother/hero/martyr). Such archetypes are not invariant, but are affected and conditioned by an individual's personal experiences as well as cultural, temporal and historical factors (Levinson, 1978; Tarnas, 1993; Jaffe, 1971). Thus, an element of human behaviour has an inherited, biological component. Jung took the view that an individual does not begin life as a blank slate, with personality emerging out of experiences and learning, but inherits predispositions of behaviour. He found evidence of a collective unconscious, a part of the psyche common to all humans, which contains structuring principles, archetypes. The collective unconscious is a repository of the psychic heritage of humankind. So Jung proposed humans have both an inherited biology, (archetypes of the unconscious) and a personal biography. ‘the first is biological and common to the species, the second is biographical, socially determined and specific to each separate life’ (Campbell, 1972, 210).

4 Most popular writers, including Bly and Biddulph, accept the Jungian model that masculinity, although in large part a product of social conditioning, has an innate, biological component (Bly, 1990; Biddulph, 1997). Keen (1991), however, does not take the Jungian view.
important question. Initially, this study will view masculinity as referring very broadly to men, with a further association of what it is to be a man.

What is Masculinity?

Whilst a site of differing perspectives and some dispute, there is broad agreement in the three streams of literature under review about some characteristic features of masculinity.

Masculinity must be proved—Academic writers such as Kimmel maintain, ‘masculinity must be proved, and no sooner is it proved that it is again questioned and must be proved again—constant, relentless, unachievable’ (1994, 122). Levinson observes, ‘a man is supposed to get out there and do something: perform, accomplish, produce, bring home the bacon’ (1978, 233). Seidler comments:

it is as if we constantly have to prove our masculinity against a seemingly endless series of external tests. We can never rest confident in a sense that we are 'man enough' (1994, 17).

Popular discourses say men face endless trials and their masculinity can be taken away by other men if they fail (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 251; Webb, 1998, 16). The Australian social researcher West states traditional masculinity is based on three dicta; perform, protect and provide, which incorporate the idea of testing. He sees men on a life-long journey to prove their masculinity (West, 1996, 59).

Men compete against each other—Men usually see other men as competitors (Kimmel, 1994, 124). Boys learn at school and in sport to compete against each other. Messner’s study of elite athletes leads him to suggest boys ‘learn the key to acceptance and getting attention is by being better than the other guys’ (1992, 33-4). Biddulph, a popular writer believes men are compulsively competitive towards other men (1994, 5). A self-made businessman in his fifties admitted to the men’s group he had been going to for two years:

It’s taken me a long time to feel really comfortable here. In the past I’ve viewed most other men as my competitors for money, power or women. Even my friendships and alliances with other men were usually based on competition against other groups of men (Kipnis, 1991, 233).

Popular and academic writers agree that, in a capitalist system, men compete with others in order to prove themselves, to be a success (Farrell, 1987, 37; Keen, 1991, 61; Kimmel, 1994, 124). Australian social researcher Edgar says 'boys are taught to think and act, to achieve, but not to feel ... because all other men are their competitors' (1997, 53). Writers on psychology observe that since Freud’s pioneering psychoanalytic work, the father-son dynamic is commonly seen as a competitive and even destructive relationship (O’Connor, 1993, 18; Steinberg, 1993, 36).
Men have to be successful—The measure of a man in capitalist society is to be a success. Academic researcher Sabo states that by participating in competitive teams sport, boys learn 'achievement ideologies' (1990, 124). Having wealth, power, status and sexy women are the markers of successful manhood (Kimmel, 1994, 124; Keen, 1991, 62):

Men are expected to be successful, seek higher status and looked up to (Steinberg, 1993, 46).

Farrell argues men are pressured to be 'success objects' (1987, 37). In a capitalist, material-oriented society evidence of success is the acquisition of tangible goods and wealth (Kimmel, 1994, 123-4). Men pursue material success, power, wealth, status at the expense of their interior-emotional life (O'Connor, 1981, 100).

Masculinity is about being top-dog—The male focus is concentrated upon winning and being the best. In a capitalist society 'triumphant masculinity is won by beating the opposition, being number one, top dog' (Keen, 1991, 145). Male competition for dominance over each other is a common pattern amongst males, which psychologists report even features in the father-son relationship (O'Connor, 1993, 27; Steinberg, 1993, 36-41). To have the power associated with masculinity:

we've go to conquer, be on top of things (Kaufman, 1994, 148).

To be a man means to stand alone, self-sufficient—A boy learns 'you are on your own' in life (Edgar, 1997, 275). The archetypal male hero stands alone, free of all ties and emotional relationships (Rutherford, 1988, 59). Men are encouraged to be independent (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 119; Keen, 1991, 63-5). Webb says the process of masculinisation encourages men to be self-sufficient:

to be masculine a man must stand alone. If intimacy is threatening, then to be without ties is to be free and powerful (1998, 18).

Consequently, many men report they feel isolated, alone, separate from friends and family (Kipnis, 1991, 1). West believes men go on life's journey by themselves (1996, 83).

Being a man means repudiating the feminine—Messner states from his study of competitive sport as a gendering process for boys:

boys learn early that it is difficult to define masculine in terms of what it is, it is at least clear what it is not. A boy is not considered masculine if he is feminine. To be told one throws 'like a girl' is among the most devastating insults a boy can receive (1992, 36).

Psychoanalytic theory of gender identity suggests that to develop a masculine identity, a boy rejects the mother and associated feminine qualities, and identifies with father and the masculine
world (O'Connor, 1993, 26; Steinberg, 1993, 68; Tacey, 1997, 191). Psychoanalytic perspectives suggest that masculine identity is tenuous and fragile engaged in constant suppression and rejection of feminine qualities (Segal, 1990, xii; Kimmel, 1994, 127). Segal maintains that to be masculine, is not to be feminine, not to be tainted with any marks of inferiority (1990, x).

**Much of what men do is an act**—Horrocks, Biddulph and West see men constantly acting, living their lives according to a script about being tough, unemotional, hard working and providing for their families (Horrocks, 1994, 104; West, 1996, 62). Masculinity is seen as a drama in which a man never stops acting and often forgets he is acting:

> I have worked with a number of men who felt trapped by their public face, they had learned to be outwardly unemotional and rational ... there is a horrible sense that such men don't know they are playing a part, they are so accustomed to it, the persona has devoured them (Horrocks, 1994, 187-9).

Writings by therapists and some social research suggest that men fear they will not measure up to the masculine ideal—tough, unemotional, in-control, so they keep up a public mask for fear of being shunned, ridiculed or isolated by men or mates (Kingma, 1993, 56; West, 1996, 55).

**Emotionally stoic**—To meet the cultural ideal of masculine character 'men come to suppress a range of emotions, needs and possibilities, such as nurturing, empathy and compassion, which are experienced as inconsistent with the power of manhood' (Kaufman, 1994, 148). Levinson, adds men are allowed a narrow range of feelings which exclude 'dependency, intimacy, grief, vulnerability, such feelings are associated with childishness and femininity' (1978, 233). A man describing his experience at his child's birth says:


Most boys learn in sport to endure pain, that 'boys don't cry'. Being a man means putting on a mask of indifference, coolness and not breaking down in public, that it is 'unmanly', to show you are in pain or your feelings (O'Connor, 1993, 1; Kipnis, 1991, 22; Webb, 1998, 13).

**Work is central to male identity**—To be a man is to work, provide, be a breadwinner. Work is a key anchorage to a man's identity and how he defines himself (O'Connor, 1981, 51; Levinson, 1978, 242; Segal, 1990, 297). Seidler agrees that men 'identify themselves with work' (1987, 280). Webb states:

> Work is a central arena to a man in which he establishes and maintains an identity (1998, 131).
Work is commonly seen as providing a means of personal fulfilment, to provide satisfaction and meaning to a man's life, a means by which a man may make his mark on the world and if married, provide for his family (Keen, 1991, 55; Tacey, 1997, 124). The Age reported a survey of adult males in Melbourne in 1997 that showed work was the most important part of their lives, especially if the men had families with dependent children. Dowrick observes that a man might say he works hard to provide for his family, but 'his work dominates and his sense of self is located in and dominated by the world outside the home' (1991, 109).

Even if a man is unemployed, work will indirectly dominate him, since he will be preoccupied with the problems of unemployment and the strong social associations of men, work and identity (Johnson, 1997, 102; Sanford and Lough, 1988, 93). Leser reports on the experiences of several former Australian business executives who were retrenched or dismissed during the downsizing of many corporations and industries in recent years. These men aged in their 50s and 60s reveal feeling lost, alienated, limited self-worth, a loss of personal identity and sense of self (Leser, 2000, 25).

Men learn to be heroes—Boys and men must be ready and willing to fight to protect themselves, women and the state and prove they are men (Biddulph, 1994, 150; Farrell, 1987, 113; Morgan, 1994, 165). Those who do not are called 'sissies', often believing they have failed the test of manhood (Keen, 1991, 45). Playing competitive sport, boys learn to perform heroically, to win, to endure pain, the warrior ethos of courage, toughness and being the best. Sport shows them what it means to be a hero (Carroll, 1998, 35; Kipnis, 1991, 32-3). Those boys who reject the competitive ethos of sport are often ostracised (McKay, 1991, 55). Boys see potent images of male heroes in movies and on television that affect their ideas about being a male (Donald, 1994, 125; Edgar, 1997, 54):

we dreamed of ... becoming professional athletes with the San Francisco Warriors ... of being the hero (Messner, 1992, 1-2).

Jungian psychologists emphasise the potency of heroes as the personification of masculinity (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 25; Speilberg, 1993, 174-5). Keen says men have managed to create a world dominated by competition and warfare and have developed a warrior-psyche (1991, 43). Mid-life aged members of an American men's group came to realise that 'every one of us had attempted to live his life as some type of masculine hero' (Kipnis, 1991, 15). The ambitious male corporate executive 'must regard everyone with suspicion and do everything right ... (and) you're always on guard.' (Clatterbaugh, 1990, 114). West says many male pursuits serve to prepare men for war (1996, 59), and, in 'becoming a man, the boy has to become a soldier' (1996, 66).

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5 The Age. (1997, November 21). This was a survey of 1000 adult males living in Melbourne. It reported chatting about work was second only to sport as the most common topic discussed by men.
Importance of the body—The body is where a man can test and prove himself, especially in sport (West, 1999, 3). Physical prowess is one means of judging a man's masculinity. Connell says that a feature of being an adult male is to have a physical presence (1983, 33). Webb suggests that a big musculature is not only a visible symbol of male power, but also reflects inward rigidity and invulnerability (1998, 30). Bodybuilders were dissatisfied with their bodies, despite much of their self-worth being based on their imposing physical size and appearance (Drummond, 1995, 289). Webb suggests for males there is much anxiety associated with the body (1998, 41).

These are the principal features of a dominant form of masculinity, commonly identified in the three streams of literature. The dominant form of masculinity is variously called traditional, hegemonic or patriarchal masculinity in the literature (Webb, 1998, 19; Kimmel, 1994, 124; Tacey, 1997, ix). In light of such features, what can now be said about the contentious concept of masculinity? It can be seen as a cluster of values, notions, social practices, a construct men come to identify with as they grow up, often incorporating divergent and incoherent images and behaviours (Connell, 1995, 71; Webb, 1998, 6; Moore, 1998, 2). But there is more, since as psychoanalytical works show it forms a key part of personality and core gender identity (Connell, 1995, 44; Dowrick, 1991, 66; Steinberg, 1993, 134).

Masculinity is often an elusive subject in the various discourses. Whilst there is much discussion and debate about 'masculinity', only a small number of writers attempt to define masculinity, perhaps because of the multiple meanings and associations it can have. Attempting a synthesis of sociological approaches and psychoanalysis, Connell defines masculinity:

to be a socially constructed form of life or project in time, which appropriates the bodily differences of men from women into a social process of gender. This project is found in social practice, in personality, in culture and institutions, and in the use of the body. In any given society there are likely to be multiple masculinities (1991, 143).

In this conception masculinity reflects body, personality as well as culture and social structure. Buchbinder offers a practical, simple conception:

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6 See Playing the Man: New Approaches to Masculinity (1999), a book of papers of a postgraduate conference on masculinity at Sydney University in November 1998. Masculinity was taken as a given in many of the conference papers, but the academic researchers seem hesitant to offer an interpretation of what they mean by 'masculinity'. In the preface to the book 'masculinity' remains undefined, but the authors state 'feminism still offers the most compelling frame through which to view men and power' (Bibler et al., 1999, 12). Edgar discusses masculinity as a disputed concept, equated with power, violence and social control, but does not venture a simple conception of masculinity, except in its form as gender (1997, 33-4). Popular psychology writers Keen (1991) and Steinberg (1993) similarly describe associations of masculinity and masculine, without offering a definition.

7 The definition of masculinity Connell presented in 1991, is a more succinct definition than that offered in the more recent work masculinities (1995).
the attitudes and practices culturally deemed appropriate to men ... norms, standards or models men are commonly expected to conform to (1994, vii/4).

For the purposes of the study a conception of masculinity is required. It is conceived as referring to what it is to be a man, the values and social practices (incorporating behaviours and beliefs) deemed culturally appropriate to men, which are in most part socially constructed.\(^8\)

**Traditional Masculinity—the culturally idealised form of masculine character**

Academic discourses identify a dominant form of masculinity called hegemonic (herein called traditional). It is argued that industrialised Western European societies feature a gender order that institutionalises male dominance over women, that is called patriarchy (Connell, 1995, 77). Traditional masculinity is viewed as the predominant model of masculinity constructed on the subordination of women and other masculinities. It is the form of masculinity that sets the standard by which all men are measured (Morgan and Hearn, 1990, 12; Kaufman, 1994, 144). It is characterised by strength, courage, determination, emotional stoicism and independence. Furthermore, wealth, power and status provide the measure of a man’s success. Kimmel offers a simple summary of traditional masculinity:

- no sissy stuff—never do anything remotely feminine;
- be a big wheel—masculinity is measured by power, wealth, status and success;
- be a sturdy oak—‘boys don’t cry’, hold emotions in check;
- take risks—put on a manly act of daring and aggression, go for it (1994, 125).

Kimmel notes that traditional masculinity is associated with the standards set by white, middle-class, heterosexual, family men (1994, 124). Connell, however, sees an additional dimension to ‘hegemonic’ masculinity. At the social level he regards it as a ‘collective project of oppression of women’ in which all forms of masculinities (that is all men) are complicit (1987, 215).

Messner and Sabo identify institutionalised sport as a primary site for the production of traditional masculinity, especially in the values and behaviours it promotes and naturalises on the field and in organisational hierarchies (1990, 18). Based upon a study of American former high school and college footballers, Sabo and Panepinto contend that football ritual reproduces traditional masculinity and achievement ideologies (1990, 125).

Connell describes traditional masculinity as ‘the culturally idealised form of masculine character’ (1990, 83). He illustrates a champion surf sport ‘iron man’, as embodying the

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\(^8\)The researcher adopts the Jungian archetypal perspective that an element of human behaviour has an inherited, biological component. See chapter 3 for a discussion of the social theories about masculinity.
dominant cultural conceptions of traditional masculinity, physical strength, heterosexuality, competitiveness, sporting and commercial success, the subordination of women; but also the contradictions of such masculinity. The iron man, Connell says, is celebrated as a hero, and is constructed as a media exemplar of masculinity. But, Connell notes his exemplary status precludes him from doing many of the things his peer culture regard as masculine, such as drink driving and getting into fights (1990, 94).

A number of the popular discourses refer to a dominant model of masculinity in terms of the heroic-warrior image (Gerzon, 1992, 1; Keen, 1991, 46; Kipnis, 1991, 1-2; Pearson, 1989, 80-1). Kipnis says the hero is a prominent cultural ideal of being a man, based on being tough, decisive, not showing fear or pain and invulnerable (1991, 4). Gerzon contends that being a hero, matching up to heroic images such as the soldier or breadwinner, is a measure of being a man most men are unconscious of (1992, 3). Pearson believes that the heroic-warrior image is equated with masculinity especially in a capitalistic society. She contends men are socialised to be warriors in American culture (1989, 81). Keen argues that men are systematically conditioned to endure pain, to kill and to die in service for the nation. He says men have been 'culturally designed' to be warriors (1991, 38).

The popular Jungian literature identifies the masculine gender role as the constellation of qualities a man understands to characterise men in the culture (Steinberg, 1993, 12). The father is the most significant identification figure in the development of a son's masculine gender role (Sanford and Lough, 1988, 187; Steinberg, 1993, 69). Men it is proposed, commonly identify their gender role with the instrumental/active dimension, with behaviour oriented towards being rational, aggressive, competitive, self-sufficient, outwardly directed, emotionally stoic, achievement-oriented and successful at work. (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 41; Steinberg, 1993, 46). Such values become internalised as part of one's persona (that is, how a person presents himself, his social identity). Men and boys experience social pressure to conform to the traditional characteristics of the gender role, otherwise they are socially ostracised (Steinberg, 1993, 4). With the masculine gender role, masculine patterns of feeling and behaviour are seen as mostly socially conditioned, not innate (Sanford and Lough, 1998, 42; Steinberg, 1993, 30). Pedersen notes:

qualities of men are shaped both by behaviour that is discouraged and by behaviour that is rewarded or reinforced by parents and the culture at large.
In this way boys in western culture learn to conform to behavioural patterns (1991, 71).

Australian social research on men and masculinity remains rather limited. The O'Doherty Report on Boy's Education in NSW mentions a pre-eminent masculine cultural stereotype, which it sees as associated with 'power, dominance, physical strength, independence, aggression, action (O'Doherty, 1994, 19). For Montgomery the stereotype of traditional masculinity features being aggressive, active, ambitious, competitive, independent, self-
confident and decisive. He believes an emphasis on toughness, drinking alcohol, competitiveness and aggressiveness remain strong factors in Australian masculinity; concluding that a 'pervasive flavour of traditional masculinity is still apparent' (1998).

Edgar says the social institutions and situations men and boys find themselves in, can mould a dominant mode of masculinity. It is this 'one dominant form of masculinity against which most men are measured,' and find it difficult to escape from (1997, 31-33). Townsend says by definition a man is supposed to be independent, powerful, unemotional, in-control and without self-doubt (1994, 42). For Webb, popular male sports heroes represent the culturally idealised form of masculine character, and this type is pervasive and powerful as a measure of Australian masculinity (Webb, 1998, 89). West reports in his study of men from western Sydney, that his participants mentioned in slight variations they, 'felt they live their lives according to a script' of being tough, strong, hard work, drinking alcohol, sex and sport (1996, 63-6). Two men aged in their twenties say they felt pressured to act in certain ways, otherwise they would be ridiculed, shunned or isolated. He reports that a former policeman saw the 'tough, outer coating' as something men had to wear (West, 1996, 184).

The diverse discourses on masculinity identify a dominant model of masculinity that is variously called traditional or patriarchal masculinity. Such a model seems evident in the English speaking cultures of America, Australia and Britain, as Connell and others suggest. However academic discourses pointedly observe, this cultural model may 'not correspond at all closely to the actual personalities of the majority of men' (Connell, 1987, 184), 'there is a distance and tension between the collective ideal and (men’s) actual lives,' (Carrigan et al., 1987, 180). Traditional masculinity seemingly has some contradictory features.

Discussing a dominant model of masculinity indicates the different perspectives of the two major discourses. Academic discourses, in the main, adopt a conscious, profeminist viewpoint, seeing masculinity as socially constructed, an expression of male social power with no biological element. An explicit aim of work by Connell, Kimmel, Messner, Sabo and Segal is to undermine the male patriarchal gender order (Brod and Kaufman, 1994, 3; Tacey, 1997, 47). Popular discourses however, usually examine the personal psychological experience of masculinity, and do not often address issues of male social power. Such works by Betcher and Pollock, Horrocks, Keen, Kipnis and Steinberg are supportive of improvements to women's lives, but seek to address men's experiences. They believe the differences between males and females are not solely the product of social culture, but include biological, endocrinological and transpersonal factors. One of the few popular writers who does look at male social power is Farrell. He argues men's social role is harmful to men and that feminism has created a new

9See Kaufman and Brod. (1994, 2); Bibler et al. (1999, 12). A notable exception is Levinson et al. (1978), whose study takes a multidisciplinary approach to masculinity. Levinson identifies his study as set in social psychology and does not adopt a profeminist position on gender (1978, xii).
sexism against males.\textsuperscript{10} Such a work can be seen to belong to a men's rights perspective (Clatterbaugh, 1990, 10). Aligned along a continuum, popular discourses may be located between profeminist academic works and Farrell's men's rights perspective, which is quite prominent in America.

Australian studies on masculinity considered here can be broadly located in the following groupings. Academic commentaries by Buchbinder, Bibler, Bryson, McKay, McMahon, Moore and Saunders, who adopt a profeminist position. Academic research about men includes profeminist studies by Connell and Pease, but in the main does not pursue a deliberate profeminist focus. This research includes work by Drummond, Walker, Russell's studies on fathering and West's study of men in western Sydney. Edgar, Mackay, O'Doherty and Dye have conducted large scale social research and sought to address their findings to a broad audience. Tacey and Webb have prepared social commentaries on masculinity. (Webb's analysis is based upon a review of Australian biography and autobiography). Popular writings include works by Biddulph, Lennox and Townsend. Psychological perspectives on masculinity, based upon interviews and experience working with male clients, have been written by Dowrick and O'Connor.

As noted above, popular discourses identify a heroic-warrior image as a cultural model of masculinity. It is an idea worth exploring further, as even academics such as Connell accept that the image plays a potent role for masculinity (1995, 213).

The Cultural Image of Masculinity—the hero-warrior

The male hero in the form of a warrior is a central image in West European literature, art, history, mythology and popular culture (Campbell, 1964; Connell, 1995; Lash, 1995). Two of the great early works of Western literature, The Iliad and The Old Testament, are epics of war that feature men as warriors (Campbell, 1972, 174). The Iliad, believed to have been composed as an oral poem around 700 BC, is a story of a semi-mythical era in Greek history called the Heroic Age (Campbell, 1964; Warren, 1989). Achilles, the main character of the poem, which is set in the late Bronze Age, is the greatest warrior among the opposing Achaeans and Trojan armies. The son of a mortal man and a sea goddess, he chose a short life as a warrior crowned with immortal fame, rather than a long uneventful life:

there was no room for fear in Achilles' heart and he sprang at the Trojans with his terrible war cry ... he chased his victims with the fury of a fiend, and the earth was dark with blood (Book XX, pp. 376-379).

The epic tale graphically describes hand to hand combat. In a break in the fighting the Trojan Prince Hector tells his wife he must return to battle the Achaeans to meet his duty to defend Troy and its people (and eventually be killed by Achilles):

Fate is a thing no man born of woman, coward or hero, can escape. Go home now and attend to your own work, the loom and the spindle ... War is men’s business; and this war is the business of every man in Ilion (Book VI, p. 130).

Homer's heroes are male warriors, men of action, who strive for honour, glory, excellence (arete) and to be the best. They must show courage, strength, physical prowess, endurance and moral responsibility in exercising violence, with little room for fear, reflection, connection and doubt (Betcher and Pollock, 1993; Campbell, 1964; Lash, 1995: Rosenberg, 1994). They seem to cast a shadow extending to modern times. The male warrior image has a longstanding heritage in West European and most other cultures. Most heroes of myth, legend and history have been male. They reflect the heroic heritage of masculinity in Western culture (Byrne, 1996, 105; Lash, 1995, 5). Shakespeare has the warrior-king Henry V, say to his soldiers at the battle of Agincourt in 1415 against the French:

And gentlemen in England, now abed;
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here;
And hold their manhoods cheap, whiles any speaks;
That fought with us upon St. Crispin's day (Henry V).

For Connell, 'the figure of the hero is central to the Western cultural imagery of the masculine' (1995, 213). Keen says part of being a man is to have the life of a warrior so men acquire a 'warrior psyche':

it is tempting to put the blame on our biology ... but men are systematically conditioned to endure pain, to kill and to die in the service of the tribe, nation or state (1991, 37).

The male heroic warrior in its modern form is most commonly portrayed in celluloid images by John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mel Gibson and Bruce Willis in movies like True Grit, The Outlaw Josey Wales, Terminator, Lethal Weapon and Die Hard (Horrocks, 1995, 171). As recently as 1995 Wayne was voted the most popular actor in America. The actor has come to personify exaggerated masculine traits, toughness, physicality, willpower, a vibrant life force and elements of the Homeric-warrior, duty, courage and justice. The John Wayne image or persona stands 'for what it is to be a man', actively engaging in life, but he is a figure estranged from family and women (Carroll, 1998, 59-60). It is argued the warrior model is associated with physical prowess and strength, power, courage, stoicism, competitiveness and aggression (Keen, 1991, 43; Kipnis, 1991, 84; Rosenberg, 1994, 39). Other features include decisiveness, being the best, in-control, the repression of fear, emotions and the denigration of feminine.\(^{11}\) Today, competitive sport, which is seen as a site for the

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\(^{11}\)For feminist writer Germaine Greer, 'the myth that feeds masculinity is that every boy should become a strong and resolute warrior capable of defending his women and children from attack from other males'. She quotes an article by a US Navy officer in the Navy Times in July 1989:
construction of masculinity, commonly invokes the warrior ethos (Carroll, 1998, 32; McKay, 1991, 117). Professional football games are called 'battles', opponents are 'taken-out' (McKay, 1991, 117). Sporting heroes are seen to represent the cultural ideal of masculinity embodying physical prowess, strength, toughness, competitiveness and dominance (Connell, 1990, 94; Drummond, 1995, 306).

Movie stars, sportsmen, celebrities, politicians and businessmen are most commonly identified as popular heroes (Harris, 1994, 33; Connell, 1995, 215). Figures such as John Wayne, Ernest Hemingway and former world champion boxer Muhammad Ali, it is suggested in both academic and popular discourses epitomise the exemplary male hero (Biddulph, 1994; Connell, 1987; Segal, 1990; Webb, 1998).

Two differing themes, however, emerge concerning the roles of heroes. Connell regards masculine heroes such as Wayne and boxer Ali in cinema, sport and popular culture as exemplars (the public face) of the dominant form of masculine character (traditional masculinity). Exemplary masculinities as represented by movie stars and surf sport 'iron men', set the standard for masculinity, and help defend and 'naturalise' (interpret as natural) the dominant form of masculinity to maintain men's privileged position over women (Connell, 1987, 215; 1995, 214). In contrast, the popular discourses however, maintain a more traditional view that heroes serve as models of behaviour, inspirational figures and guides for male identity (Betcher and Pollock, 1994, 23; Keen, 1991, 153; Pearson, 1989, 75). Keen, for instance, says heroes are the incarnation of our ideals 'they give shape to our aspirations and put a face on our longing for wholeness' (1991, 153). For the Australian social researcher Mackay, inspirational example and personal sacrifice are the factors that he suggests make a hero. Historically, he notes, heroism has involved a sense of adventure, sacrifice and endurance. However Mackay considers that the idea of the hero is being reworked. 'Responsiveness ... to the needs of others, has become the crucial test of heroism in the postmodern world', which offers the possibility of a gentler, more intimate heroic style (1999, 94)

*Warriors kill. Men make the best warriors in comparison to women because men are better at killing in war.* (Greer 1999, 293).

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12 Connell states hegemonic masculinity is interpreted and portrayed as natural through cultural stories and forms such as ballads, sagas, movies that focus upon the male hero. The military use the cultural idea of male heroism to glue the members of the army together, to set standards and keep men in line (Connell, 1995, 214). A contradiction emerges that the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity may not be the most powerful people. Black American athletes may be exemplars of masculinity but fame and wealth of individual stars does not yield social authority to black men generally. In their personal lives individual holders of institutional power or great wealth may be far from the hegemonic pattern (Connell, 1995, 81).

13 Traditionally mythological heroes were models for behaviour and inspirations for their people, even their failabilities are instructive. Homeric heroes such as Achilles and Odysseus had notable strengths as well as less admirable qualities that also were instructive (Lash, 1995; Rosenberg, 1994).
The Australian male heroic tradition incorporates such figures as the bushman of the late nineteenth century, the Anzac warrior and the surf lifesaver in the 1930s, who were all presented as embodiments of the nation (Saunders, 1998, 96). The Anzac legend is infused with the warrior ethos, and remains a potent element in Australian masculine culture (Edgar, 1997, 106; Garton, 1998, 94). The male heroic image is an enduring feature of popular culture, with the famous cricketer, Sir Don Bradman, one of Australia’s greatest heroes. Australian cinema has perpetuated male heroic imaging in such films as Gallipoli, The Man from Snowy River, and Crocodile Dundee. But Lucas points out the heroism presented is often undermined by themes of anxiety and emotional isolation (1998, 139). 

West suggests sports and movies heroes are important elements in the social world of boys and male youths, exemplars whom they closely observe to pick up messages and clues about masculinity (West, 1996, 114). For Edgar, Australian sports heroes are dominant icons of masculinity (1997, 34). He admits movie heroes were important in showing him what men were supposed to be like. Edgar suggests mass media hero images have a significant role in defining masculinity:

it’s unavoidable that our cultural self-definitions are forged against this shining crucible of glamorous masculinity (1997, 54).

Lennox interviewed several Australian men both public and private persons whom she regarded as admirable, including noted cartoonist Michael Leunig and the founder of permaculture, Bill Mollison. She found the term ‘hero’ caused some controversy amongst her interviewees, arguing that the promotion of celebrities in popular culture has led some to believe the concept is obsolete, and has some association with self-inflation (Lennox, 1998, x). However, she believes men need heroes as models to counterbalance their physical robustness and potential to dominate situations, and that women presently need to see there are men worthy of admiration (1998, xi). Leunig commented:

men in Western culture are crippled by having to be warriors, or at least have the appearance of. Fighting and bullying are drummed into boys. There’s the aggression in male sports, and in workplaces, in business and politics. Maybe men have been made hard because they’ve had to be soldiers and miners, they’ve seen the brutality and haven’t relaxed yet (Lennox, 1998, 51).

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14 Biber highlights the common theme of the death of the hero in Australian films such as Gallipoli, Breaker Morant, Idiot Box. Death is reserved for those who do not conform to mythic masculinity. She also contends their deaths reflect the anxiety that actually underlies such masculinity. ‘The hero dies before he fulfils his destabilising potential for Australian masculinity’ (1999, 29).

It can be argued that Western culture can be seen as an heroic culture, organised around competition and warfare, that conditions men and boys to be warrior-soldiers, to take leading roles in warfare and the economy (Byrne, 1996; Keen, 1991; Kipnis, 1991; Lee, 1991). Physical contact sports such as football help perpetuate the warrior ethos. But the warrior mentality is not limited to men on the sportsfield, it is apparent among males in the workplace and politics.\(^\text{16}\) Clatterbaugh reports some American studies show corporate executives regard other men with suspicion, work very long hours to keep ahead of competitors and are praised for being workaholics (1990, 114). Webb observes that the competitiveness of the workplace keeps men separate and men who work together may not 'care much for each other in actuality' (1998, 135).

Keen comments that somehow men and women have created a world based on competition and warfare. With the hero-warrior, a cultural image of masculinity, it could be said that men and boys, seemingly obliviously, learn a heroic masculinity—to be physical, unemotional, action-oriented, competitive, and beat-off challengers to be the victor—successful. With the dominant model of masculinity having such a longstanding heritage featuring triumph and glory, it is understandable that it is often equated with power.

**Traditional Masculinity as Power and Oppression yet Damaging to Men**

Academic discourses focus upon society and collective life, they equate masculinity with power, control, violence and aggression, adopting a pro-feminist viewpoint (Kaufman, 1987, 13-17; Messner and Sabo, 1990, 3). Western culture is seen as constituting a patriarchy: institutionalised male dominance over women (Moore, 1998, 1; Tacey 1997, 1). Men are seen to hold predominant economic and political power. Masculinity emerges as a feature of social institutions as men control public life (Segal, 1990). Power is conceived as the capacity to impose control on others (Kaufman, 1994, 140). Gender relations are seen to embody relations of power with men exalted and women seen as subordinate (Connell, 1995, 74). Male domination, it is argued, is sustained by the structure of the state, work practices, the family structure and by heterosexual practice. Connell states the dominant form of masculinity is ‘fundamentally linked to power, organised for domination and resistant to change’ and involves the subordination of women and other masculinities (1995, 42). For Segal traditional masculinity:

> condenses, above all, the cultural reality of women's subordination. This reality is embodied ... in the daily functioning—the routines and ritual—of the state, industry and every other institution of social, economic and political power (Segal, 1993, 629).

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\(^{16}\)Military terminology and concepts such as strategy and tactics are commonly used in the world of business. With regard to politics, Graham Richardson, the former secretary of the Australian Labor Party in New South Wales and Cabinet Minister, described a former Prime Minister in the following way: 'Paul Keating was, of course, the only warrior-stateman Australia has had'. *An Eloquent Sufficiency—Sydney Morning Herald Literary Luncheons* (1998).
Levinson states, ‘for many men the essence of masculinity is power: exercising control over others, being a person of strong will, a leader who gets things done’ (1978, 233). Power and oppression also manifests at the personal level. Kaufman notes dominant masculinity ‘requires a suppression of a whole range of human needs, feelings and forms of expression’ (1987, 13). Similarly, Rutherford acknowledges that masculinity requires the suppression of feelings, ‘using our bodies as instruments to our own wills’ (Rutherford, 1988, 26). However, there is a contradictory element to the equation of masculinity with power. The project of male domination of women is seen to tie men together, but as Messner notes, the advantages of such domination are shared very unequally (1991, 72). Kaufman notes contrary to the social messages they receive, many men report the personal experience of feeling powerless (1994, 142).

Popular discourses explore the personal impact of masculinity. Traditional masculinity is seen as oppressive and damaging to men as well as women (Lee, 1991; Keen, 1991; Kipnis, 1991). They contend the ‘training to be masculine’ is deeply damaging to men and boys, forcing them into a limited set of behaviours and attitudes, risk-taking behaviour and to neglect their health, wounding males who are unconscious of their wounds (Farrell, 1994; Gerzon, 1992; Lee, 1991). The oppression men experience is less obvious they acknowledge, than the social and economic disadvantages experienced by women, but is real and:

is expressed through behaviours such as physical abuse, drug addiction, poor health maintenance and violence towards ourselves and others (Kipnis, 1991, 58).

That men commonly neglect their health, it is suggested, shows there are ‘significant problems with the dominant cultural model of masculinity’, as men experience much higher rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, accidents, suicide and violent deaths than females (Kipnis, 1991, 55-6). It is pointed out that in America (Biddulph argues the same case in Australia) men’s average life span is some 6 years less than women, men have higher rates of death in all age groups and higher incidence of cancer and heart disease (Biddulph, 1994; Farrell, 1994; NSW Men’s Health Policy, 1999; Kipnis, 1991, 42-55). Keen suggests:

arguably, the fact that men die seven to nine years before women on average is due to the emotions, behaviours and character-armor that make up the warrior-psyche (1991, 42).

The popular psychology writers state that traditional masculinity cripples men, forcing them to be rational, unemotional, outward-oriented and stand alone (Betcher and Pollock, 1993; Horrocks, 1994; O’Connor, 1993). They argue that men become consumed by their persona, a ‘false self’, and disconnected from a range of emotions and behaviours (Horrocks 1994, 111). Men in therapy (especially mid-life men) say they find the pursuit of power, status, wealth and material goods dissatisfying. (Levinson reported similar findings in his study (1978, 249)). Frequently such men say they are not doing work they really want to do, and
feel alienated, isolated and disconnected from their family and community (O'Connor, 1981, 51). Betcher and Pollock contend that men pay for embracing a warrior mentality with a 'life of anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and emotional estrangement from the women they love (1993, 121). A female therapist Kingma states:

in faithfully enacting what it means to be a man, men bleed without knowing they are hurt (1993, 46).

Australian literature on masculinity acknowledges men's dominance of social institutions, the association of men and power, although, some point to men's contradictory experience of power. Moore acknowledges men's dominant social power is a feature of Australian culture (1998, 8). McKay accepts that Australian society is part of a global gender order based upon masculine hegemony, with women having a subordinate status (1991, 52). Edgar contends that the term masculinity seems to imply power and control and is aligned with the control of resources and social control (police, armies); even 'the language of power is gendered in masculine terms' (1997, 33). Tacey acknowledges the predominant possession of socio-economic power by males in industrialised Western countries, observing academic culture fully appreciates 'the continued hegemonic power of men, but is blind to the fact that many men are already suffering' (1997, 13).

But in studies of men's personal experiences Dowrick observes 'men's need to dominate and control--coming out of their intense fear of being shut out' is something women often comment on, but a dynamic most men are unaware of (1991, 99). West says many men have status and power, but few have a satisfying interior life, and suggests that 'in a sense masculinity is a cage in which men are forced to live' (1996, 184). Webb believes masculinity is about narrowed options which sees men pushed to conform to models, 'rather than considering broader ranges of behaviour'. The training to be masculine, 'masculinisation', and 'the experiences men undergo in order to fully achieve particular masculine styles are frequently deeply damaging to the individual male' (1998, 6). What is left he says is an emotionally impoverished person:

with few emotional skills, inarticulate in expressing his own needs, a deep distrust of himself and his body, cut off from his male peers as much as his own generation of women, unable to dialogue with his own self (Webb 1998, 18-19).

**Transforming Traditional Masculinity**

**Academic Discourses--change by social practice**

Academic discourses are concerned with theorising and deconstructing masculinity, opening it to critique and destabilising the nexus between masculinity and power (Segal, 1993, 638). They seek to refute the popular perception that masculine behaviour is biologically grounded, that masculinity has an innate, component, making it resistant to change (Buchbinder, 1994, 3; Hearn and Morgan, 1990, 8). It is argued, theorising masculinity as socially constructed, the
product of culture, opens the possibility of change in traditionally regarded masculine behaviours that often portray the feminine as inferior. Kimmel and Messner state:

our identity as men is developed through a complex process of interaction with the culture in which we learn the gender scripts of our culture ... Men are not born growing from infants through boyhood to follow a predetermined biological imperative, encoded in their physical organisation ... Men are not born, they are made (1995, xx-xxi).

The concept of masculinities, it is argued, serves as a means of challenging the idea of masculinity as monolithic, ‘natural, universal and free of problems’ (Rutherford, 1988, 26). The emphasis upon varieties of masculine identities (masculinities) accommodates the wide-ranging variations among men, that see masculinity constructed differently by culture, age, ethnicity and class (Messner, 1991, 73). Hearn and Morgan state, the term ‘masculinities’ aims to underline the fact that the experience of masculinity and being a man is not uniform (1990, 11).

Transforming traditional masculinity, it is suggested, is part of a political project of challenging the patriarchy which sexually oppresses women, and through changing the masculine scripts and ideology the culture fosters (Tacey, 1997, 193). Pease suggests that profeminism can be seen as a viable, alternate form of masculine identity to traditional masculinity for males, one that males can be educated about which would constitute a challenging force to the dominant practices of traditional masculinity (1996, 309).

Popular Discourses—change by psychological insight and personal practice

Popular writings emphasise the need for men to re-define and re-assess masculinity, both socially and individually. Two recurrent themes that are seen as contributing to such a reassessment, it is suggested, require men to address their relationship with their father, and rediscover rites of passage into manhood (Bly, 1990; Keen, 1991; Kipnis, 1991; Lee, 1991).

The literature emphasises the importance of addressing the impact of their fathers upon their lives, particularly the actual or emotional absence of their fathers when they were growing up. Bly was the first to bring this to popular attention:

the love unit most damaged by the Industrial Revolution has been the father-son bond (1990, 19).

Sheehy reports that father-hunger is a common theme amongst the mainly middle class American men she interviewed, who show a deep desire to know and get on better with their fathers with whom they have mostly been in competition with (1998, 166). Keen says, 'a grief close to the surface for men is the aching void of the absent father', (1991, 137). Bly,

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17Sheehy, G. (1998). Passages for Men: Discovering the New Map of Men's Lives. She reports on her group interviews with several hundred males (she fails to state her sample size) aged over 35 years, from various regions of America (1998, xv). Her work is considered here as part of the popular discourses, as it is aimed at the popular market.
Keen and Biddulph state the absence of fathers from boys' lives creates a father-hunger, a void in sons' relationships with their fathers. Kipnis argues that the importance of the father for children has been overlooked, and society still sees mothers as the primary parent responsible for emotional well being. He says boys who grow up without a healthy father, 'often have a very distorted notion of what it is to be a man and how to relate to women' (1991, 162). Members of Kipnis's men's group eventually admitted that:

we all grew up with father-hunger, we all felt something ineffable when we were physically near our fathers, and we missed it when they were gone (Kipnis 1991, 158).

Psychotherapeutic practitioners report most of the men who come to their practice say they do not relate well to their fathers (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 86; Moore, 1993, 31). Betcher and Pollock believe it is a common experience.18 These Jungian psychologists indicate that many of their clients report that growing up they experienced their fathers as absent from the home (at work), or critical, abusive or sometimes violent. The Jungian literature suggests such experiences can lead to a disturbed masculine identity (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 87; Sanford and Lough, 1988, 187; Steinberg, 1993, 2). Fathers are seen to play a critical role in a boy developing a positive sense of masculinity. These practitioners suggest men need to come accept their fathers' limitations and respect them, otherwise they will lack a sense of self-acceptance and assurance of themselves as men (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 242; Biddulph, 1994, 95; Tacey, 1997, 191).

The second recurrent theme in popular discourses is that young males are usually left to themselves to deal with the perplexing and lengthy transition from adolescence to adult malehood, that they have no formal rites of passage (Bly, 1990, 14; Sanford and Lough, 1988; 43). Members of one men's group reveal they often earned the standard markers of a transition for boys to men—work, independence, sex, fighting, alcohol, but felt something was missing. Kipnis says:

for the most part we initiated ourselves as men [but these transitions] were never marked by other men around us. Without that acknowledgment from other men, something was missing (1991, 163-4).

Bly, Biddulph and Kipnis stress the importance of initiation into manhood by older men. They point to the universality of the practice especially in primal cultures and its modern reflections in such religious ceremonies as the Jewish bar-mitzvah and the Catholic confirmation. They point out that becoming a man was a long, learned process, that did not take place automatically at 18 or 21. It required effort, ritual, time and the active, sustained intervention of older men (Bly, 1990, 15; Biddulph, 1994, 168):

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18Betcher and Pollock refer to an American study of 7000 men by feminist Shere Hite, who suggested most men did not get on with their fathers (1993, 87).
throughout the ages young men have gone through some rites of passage that let them know they're men. These rites have also connected young men to the depth of the masculine soul, the spirit of nature and the community ... something none of us experienced in our youth (Kipnis, 1991, 164).

Keen discusses the purpose and effect of initiation:

in many ways rites of passage, cruel as they were, were socially and psychologically economical. They gave both men and women secure identities and a comfortable knowledge of the roles they were to play. Men didn't have to wonder; 'Am I a man?' How do I achieve manhood? The male rite of initiation had the virtue of being a social event. At a specific time a boy underwent a series of ceremonies after which he was pronounced a man. Overnight his identification and social status changed (1991, 32).

Keen quotes anthropologist David Gillmore, ‘everywhere the path of manhood involves artificial ordeals and rites of passage that turn a boy's passage into social maturity into a second birth trauma' (1991, 28). Bly and Biddulph comment that in the absence of such rituals most men remain boys in big bodies, with no inner changes (such as stuck in rejecting the feminine), until a major event or crisis comes that changes their lives forever (Bly, 1990, 180; Biddulph, 1994, 3). Biddulph is critical that boys and men in our society are not given processes or mentors to help their growth into mature men. He is most concerned that:

masculine development is left to chance (1994, 172).

Several authors do not simplistically argue for men in Western cultures to adopt such initiatory rituals. Keen points out that the drawbacks of such traditional rites were that they were aimed at ensuring conformity and acceptance of group values and traditions, thereby hindering the development of individuality (1991, 28). Kipnis acknowledges that it is inappropriate for men in Western culture to adopt rituals of primal cultures, but he says the ubiquity of such rites of passages points to a deep need in boys and men’s psyches for an initiation into a bigger field beyond a focus on themselves (1991, 164). Initiation, he argues, can offer the opportunity to wound a youth's typical sense of unlimited ability, to be allowed to fail in mastering new skill with the guidance of protective elders, and to be instructed about compassion, tenderness, fear, failure and beauty. Its purpose is seen as assisting a young male develop his gender identity (Kipnis, 1991, 169).

Raphael suggests in his study of 100 American men, that in the absence of collective initiatory rites, men are forced to seek proof of manhood individually and competitively, through sporting achievement, sexual exploits, daring activities; all isolated attainments. Raphael says these men quietly suffer from seeing themselves as 'unmanly', and feel insecure and anxious about their gender identities (Segal, 1990, 131). It is suggested by some writers that adolescent rebellion, risk taking and gang violence are attempts at self-initiation (Bly, 1990, 29; Sanford and Lough, 1988, 51).
Relevant Australian Research

Edgar states the importance of fathers in parenting has been much neglected as it has been seen as the province of women (1997, 242). He notes that as married men commonly are providers for their families, they are absent from home much of the time, and their work is invisible to their children. Edgar refers to an Australian study which shows 40% of men felt work has a negative effect upon their relationship with their children (1997, 75). His research shows that where fathers take an active interest in their children, spend some time on a one-to-one basis, the children's self-esteem, school performance and social competence is much better than where fathers take little notice (1997, 20). He also refers to research by Russell, that fathers' typically more vigorous play is also guided by a concern for how well the child will learn to cope with the external world (Edgar, 1997, 263). Russell has found that many young fathers are looking for emotional closeness with their children and interested in a better balance between work and family responsibilities.19

Other researchers have considered the significance of fathers in men's lives. Drummond's elite sportmen acknowledge the major role their fathers play in their lives, but most said they were not particularly close to their fathers. Only the four surf lifesavers, who followed their fathers into the sport, said they they had a good relationship with their fathers (1995, 251). The majority of respondents in Pease's study however said they were not close to their fathers. These men report violence was a common feature of their childhood relationship and feeling betrayed by their fathers (1996, 167/9). Referring to the Jungian literature Pease says an uncritical reconciliation between father and son should be challenged so patriarchal masculinity is not reinforced (1996, 172). When asked about being a man, West reports many of his interviewees said, 'well my dad did this...'. He concludes a father has 'a central place in a man's psyche' and serves as a key example of how to be a man (West, 1996, 93). Townsend reports that for many of her interviewees father was a distant figure, who said they did not really know their father (1994, 34).

Tacey notes that at men's gatherings men frequently admit they feel neglected and deserted by their fathers, and by 'all others--surrogate fathers, mentors, social and political leaders, gurus, analysts, uncles and wise friends' (1997, 43).20 He argues this also reflects the absence of a archetypal Great Father figure (God) from Western culture (1997, 44).

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20Tacey mentions he was for some time an active member of the men's movement but does not offer a workable definition of this movement (1997, 12). Slattery (1998) observes the men's movement in Australia lacks a positive, definite public conception. Pease identifies it as a broad network of men's activities, such as support and health groups, father's rights groups, domestic violence therapy programs and profeminist social action groups (1996, 2). Pease states the main emphasis in the men's movement is upon personal change and the diversity of men's experiences (1998, 219). It is a diverse coalition of men's activities, and not a formal organisation or established group. (Kipnis reports the same for the American men's movement (1991, 62). Such various groups and individuals interested in men's issues, often run men's retreats or gatherings, such as the annual Sydney Men's Festival, were men may discuss issues they wish in informal groups.
There is certainly some evidence in this research of a common dislocation in the father-son relationship among many Australian men, that rarely seems to be addressed or even acknowledged. Dye suggests that this rift may never be healed, but sons and fathers ought to be encouraged to come to a sense of mutual acceptance of their differences (1998, 215). Notably, Biddulph and Dye perceive fathering as a major means of transforming men, and encourage fathers to take an active, positive roles in their children's' lives, unlike the absent fathering they received (Biddulph, 1994, 95; Dye, 1998, 214).

Australian research on men appears not to have addressed formal rites of passage and their absence from men's lives. Whilst Drummond and West suggest sport plays a similar role for boys, it is apparent they are referring to a lengthy socialisation process, rather than a brief, memorable passage (Drummond, 1995, 287; West, 1996, 58). Dye suggests that in the absence of any formal initiation rituals teenage boys take up physical contact sports such as rugby league to subconsciously initiate and wound themselves, as:

there is no specific cut-off point in our society where a boy becomes a man ... older men take very little responsibility for teaching of initiation in western society ... in the face of all this, boys try hard to make men of themselves (Dye, 1998, 194).

Discussing the purpose of traditional initiations from a psychological perspective, Jungian therapist, O'Connor, argues, the aim was to help young men acquire a confidence in their masculinity, a sense of masculine identity, an opening to the spiritual dimension of life and the death of boyhood identity (1993, 30). Tacey believes that initiation is a symbolic ritualisation of the necessary transition from primary identification with mother, to identification with the father, and development of a masculine identity and gender role—consistent with psychoanalytic theory (1997, 99). Tacey notes men's retreats often carry out forms of initiation, using a mix of primal traditions, to meet what he suggests may be a transpersonal need (1997, 102). Dye suggests that, at the present time, for many young males the journey to manhood begins when they become a father, and become responsible for another life (1998, 195).

New Visions of Masculinity

Academic discourses suggest pro feminism challenges and offers an alternate masculine identity to traditional masculinity, providing alternate ideology and scripts to encourage men to change (Pease, 1996, 187). In contrast popular writers such as Keen and Kipnis extensively describe their visions of new forms of a positive form of masculinity and activities to encourage such...

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21A passionate English soccer supporter in his midteens recognised he could no longer watch his team Arsenal play from the Schoolboys enclosure. He knew he could no longer stay among the boys. He writes about his uncomfortable transition to the unruly adult section of the stadium. Rites of passage are more commonly found in literary novels, or mainstream Hollywood films with pretensions, than they are in real life, particularly in real suburban life. All the things that are supposed to change me—first kiss, loss of virginity, first drink, first drugs—just seemed to happen: there was no will involved ... My only rite of passage then, involved standing on one piece of concrete as opposed to another; but the fact that I had made myself do something that I only half-wanted to do, and that it turned out OK, this was important to me (Hornby, N, 1992, Fever Pitch, 74-5).
change. They see this as a very long term process and avoid prescriptions for a ‘new male’. Keen says individual men have to take their own solitary, psychotherapeutic, inner journey and face their own conditioning, beliefs and fears.\textsuperscript{22} He suggests that a man, especially around mid-life:

\begin{quote}
must enter into a deeper relationship with himself, become an authority in the nuances of his own experience, define manhood for himself (1991, 130).
\end{quote}

Keen advocates the emergence of a version of manhood that incorporates such virtues as empathy, wisdom, compassion, a fulfilling vocation, wonder (so a man no longer sees himself as a conqueror of life), genuine male friendships and a sense of stewardship for the earth (1991, 155-183). He sees this as a very long term work in progress. Kipnis similarly sees the need for men to move beyond old stereotypes to develop an authentic version of masculinity, that allows men to be ‘emotional, joyful and spiritual’ which social conditioning has inhibited (1991, 84). Such a new vision of masculinity incorporates the strengths of the hero-image but allows greater flexibility and diversity, so that men no longer are predominantly one-dimensional:

\begin{quote}
the authentic male allows himself to feel his feelings but he's not flooded by his feelings like the feminised man. He retains the stoic warrior qualities while reclaiming his capacity to feel. He attempts to relate to women as equals, without overidealising them or demeaning them as the source of his pain. He's more likely to be an involved and nurturing father to his children (1991, 101-2).
\end{quote}

Betcher and Pollock contend that men are forced into an 'over-zealous form of Hemingway-like toughness due to the expectations associated with men’s gender role, and an unconscious need to defend against the early loss of a loving mother figure before emotionally ready' (1993, 247). They say men have to re-evaluate themselves, their sense of masculinity, their identity, their attitudes to work, love and parenting, and rediscover the special men and women in their lives (1993, 22). Simply, they state:

\begin{quote}
becoming a man should be understood as many, not a single pathway (1993, 259).
\end{quote}

The popular discourses suggest that masculinity will change slowly as typically men are more outwardly directed rather than self-reflective (Keen, 1991, 65). Keen believes that different visions will lie alongside the traditional model. But they suggest concrete and practical things men can do. These writers suggest men take active roles sponsoring worthwhile community projects, and help develop communities of men who positively contribute to others. They

\textsuperscript{22}Keen suggests the Grail Myth is the cultural myth for masculinity. He regards its psychological meaning as full manhood is to be found when men commit themselves to a life of questioning, accepting that life is a great mystery encompassing a spiritual dimension, and not believing they know the answers (1991, 132).
particularly emphasise the importance of men being positively involved in fathering (Betcher and Pollock, 1993; Biddulph, 1994). By simply expanding the qualities fathers often exhibit, spending more time with children, taking interest in their schoolwork and rejecting negative popular culture images of absent fathers, it is suggested may substantially refashion masculinity.

The theme of reassessing masculinity has been broached in some of the Australian literature. West believes that Australian men have yet to go through the redefinition of gender roles that women have undertaken (West, 1996, 141). Townsend reports some of the men she interviewed felt 'a desire for a more current view of masculinity' (1994, 284). Webb is emphatic that men need to reassess their lives. That built into feminism was a challenge for men to change and discover new forms of masculine identity. But he says, introspection is commonly seen as self-indulgent and effete (1998, 4). Traditional associations need to be relaxed so each man can work towards his own form (1998, 227):

masculinity has a vested interest in blocking unheroic masculine self-analysis. If men cannot separate themselves from that with which they identify, namely masculinity, they can know neither masculinity nor themselves. For men knowing masculinity is a cultural task yet to be achieved (1998, 20-1).

Tacey argues that traditional masculinity must be deconstructed, that new meanings for masculinity be developed and patriarchy overcome (1997, 7). He emphasises men require psychological insight into the dynamics of the masculine journey. For change to occur in a male dominated culture Tacey believes men must recognise the social reality of the patriarchy and accept the feminine principle within women, society and themselves rather than seeking to conquer it (1997, 190-3). However, Tacey avoids prescriptions for a 'new male', and suggests males must be allowed scope for various masculine identities (1997, 198-9).

**Building a Bridge**

The appeal of academic discourses remains largely confined to a university audience (Tacey, 1997, 194). Its profeminist character, intellectual focus and analysis of masculinity in primarily power terms seemingly finds little appeal amongst ordinary men. Describing masculinity in terms of male power, and at the social level as a collective project of oppression of women, is not an idea men wish to relate to or believe is accurate, especially those who have experienced female supervisors in the workplace (Kipnis, 1991, 73). Nor does such an analysis resonate with men's own experience of masculinity as an aspect of personal identity. Tacey however notes that the strength of academic discourse, is it recognises in return for social acceptance and gender certainty, many men sacrifice their individuality and are absorbed into an unconscious ideology, 'that is hegemonic, coercive and constructed in opposition to women' (1997, 190).
Popular discourses tend to focus mainly upon men's personal experiences. They mostly ignore the dimensions of men's continued dominance of social power. However, such discourses recognise the significance of the father to men, and that masculinity must initially be developed to oppose the psychological mother-complex each man has. But such discourses have the potential to unconsciously reinforce traditional masculinity (Tacey, 1997, 191).

The two discourses continue to ignore each other, and are sometimes mutually antagonistic (Pease, 1996, 248). Both offer valuable insights into aspects of the male experience, but neither can claim to be exclusively accurate analyses of the changes taking place around masculinity. By examining three important themes arising from both discourses, it is intended that the study will help establish a bridge between them. The discourses identify a dominant model of masculinity, variously called hegemonic (Connell, 1995), traditional or patriarchal (Horrocks, 1994; Tacey, 1997). Such a model is associated with such qualities as strength, toughness, independence, stoicism, heterosexuality, a guarded attitude to the feminine, as well as success, status and power (Connell, 1995). The study will explore men's recognition and awareness of such a dominant model of masculinity.

Male heroes are a feature of our earliest stories (Campbell, 1964). Masculinity and the heroic warrior figure are deeply intertwined. The word hero comes from the Greek word 'heros', meaning 'god-person'. In Western European cultures the mythical Greek hero-warrior such as Achilles provides the classic model. Western culture can be seen as an heroic culture since 'the hero is still part of everyday life, widely worshipped in politics, religion, popular culture and sport' (Byrne, 1996, 2; Carroll, 1998, 57). It is a culture that encourages the hero to achieve immortal fame and glory. Men's first heroes are often their fathers (Sanford and Lough, 1988, 188). The role of male heroes in men's lives as adolescents will be looked at.

Bly, Biddulph and Raphael suggest young males are left to negotiate the perplexing passage to becoming a man alone. The transition from teenager-adolescent to men is seen as a difficult time (Sanford and Lough, 1988, 47; Webb, 1998, 196). In Australia the period usually associated with such a transition, the 15-25 year age group, consistently has the second highest suicide rate for males of all ages, and the rate has trebled since the 1950s (Tacey, 1997, 128). How some Australian males negotiate their transition is clearly a worthwhile matter to explore, which may perhaps offer some insight into the disturbing problem of a rate of male suicide that is four times that of females (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997).

**In Conclusion—masculinity**

Masculinity is a site of much dispute, uncertainty and differing perspectives. In popular usage there remains a strong perception that it refers to innate, biological qualities associated with males. It is a subject that each person may have an opinion, based on their own experiences.
with boys and men. It is worthwhile to keep in mind Drummond's question, 'who decides what masculinity is?'

For the purposes of this study, masculinity is conceived as referring to what it is to be a man, the values and social practices (incorporating behaviours and beliefs) deemed culturally appropriate to men. Masculinity is viewed as being, in most part, socially constructed. The study adopts the view that there is an inherited, biological (hormonal) component that may affect human behaviour.

At this stage, it is appropriate that the researcher state his position with regard to the literature. The researcher is more inclined towards the popular and psychological literature, as their perspectives on the social-psychological dynamics of masculinity, have parallels with the researcher's experience as a male. However, the researcher acknowledges that a notable drawback of such works is that most fail to at least acknowledge in Western societies, that some advantages derive from being male in a male dominated culture (Keen is the exception in this regard). In contrast, academic literature emphasises men's social power, but appears to make all men guilty of oppressing women, just by being male. In the researcher's opinion, often such analyses, mostly from a politically left-wing inclination, fail to adequately acknowledge the emotional, relational and psychological dimensions of women's power. It is the researcher's experience conducting men's workshops and as a volunteer telephone counsellor, that analyses of masculinity as male domination are too deterministic, failing to accommodate differing male experiences. Further, such profeminist analyses by men with professional backgrounds, as Tacey observes (1997, 47), rarely offer a positive impression of masculinity, which limits their appeal for 'ordinary males'.

This chapter has reviewed some of the prominent themes about masculinity in the literature. Chapter 3 considers the various social theories concerning masculinity in the sociological, psychological and popular literature.
CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL THEORIES ON MASCULINITY

By examining men's perceptions and experiences of a dominant cultural model of masculinity, this study aims to look at both men's ideas and attitudes, as well as behaviours and social practices. The purpose of this chapter is to consider and critique various theories on masculinity offered in both sociology and psychology. It will also establish a conceptual framework for the study, that attempts to accommodate social, psychological and biological dynamics in the construction of masculinity.

Social Constructionism

Academic sociology theorises gender (masculinity and femininity), as being socially constructed, created within specific social and historical locations, yet entailing a dynamic process of continual change. Or as Davidoff and Hall state:

Masculinity and femininity are constructs specific to historical time and place. They are categories being forged, contested, reworked and reaffirmed in social institutions and practices as well as a range of ideologies. (1987, 29).²³

By participating in social structures like the family, kindergarten, school, the church, organised sport, the workplace and economy boys and girls learn behaviours and attitudes that are seen as meeting prevailing social conceptions of masculinity and femininity (Segal, 1990; Messner, 1992; Edgar, 1997). In the differing social settings they find themselves in, boys and girls are taught differing attitudes and behaviours throughout their formative years:

the family, school, sports, friends, church, clubs, scouts, jobs and the media all play a role as the adolescent struggles to put the final touches on himself as a real man (Kaufman, 1987, 12).

Gilligan refers to American research about games played by young boys and girls. It showed boys usually played outdoors more often than girls, in larger more age-diverse groups, and boys' games were usually more competitive and lasted longer than those of the girls (cited in Sanford and Lough, 1988, 18). The boys' games usually emphasised competitive, individualistic and organisational skills whilst those of the girls mostly encouraged intimate and cooperative orientations (McKay, 1991, 54). McKay suggests such research shows the influence of patriarchal values on how 'males and females are differently socialised into sport and by it' (1991, 54).

Goleman refers to American research on the sex differences in socialisation of emotions which shows boys and girls are taught very different lessons about handling emotions. He says contrasts in schooling in the emotions, leads to boys becoming adept at minimising emotions about vulnerability, guilt, fear and hurt, whilst girls become adept at reading both verbal and non-verbal emotional signals, and expressing and communicating feelings (1996, 132). He states:

parents, in general, discuss emotions— with the exception of anger— more with their daughters than their sons (1996, 131).

In his study of the development of masculine identities within organised sport, Messner suggests boys' experiences in sport constitute a gendering process, where they learn the dominant cultural conceptions of masculinity. He concludes that through their long involvement in organised sport, the 30 elite American male athletes in his study developed self-identities based on narrow definitions of public success. These men were inclined to see their bodies as instruments of power and domination (1992, 151). Messner states:

my research reveals an affinity between sport and men's developing identities ... sport clearly helps to produce culturally dominant conceptions of masculinity (1992, 150-1).

For Connell this study highlights the importance of institutional setting in the construction of masculinity. He believes that school, sport, workplace, family and economic circumstances contribute to a man's personal sense of masculinity (1995, 36). Masculinity is seen as being socially constructed within a historical setting of gender relations, and a dynamic process of social practice and personal construction. Masculinity is 'implanted in the male body, it does not grow out of it' (Connell, 1995a, 126). For Kimmel and Messner, the social construction of masculinity also incorporates two dimensions. Variations amongst men reflect that masculinity is constructed differently amongst various types of social groups in a culture by class, race, ethnicity and age. This perspective acknowledges the existence of various masculine identities (masculinities) such as gay men, youth, particular ethnic groups and a dominant form of masculinity. The idea of a man's life-course acknowledges that masculinity is not fixed throughout a man's life-cycle. As a man proceeds through life he confronts personal issues and differing social institutions which all can/do impact upon the experience of his masculinity. The design and pattern of a man's life (his life structure) varies and changes as he develops and matures over his lifetime (Kimmel and Messner, 1995, xxi-xii). In summary, they maintain that:

our identity as men is developed through a complex process of interaction with the culture in which we learn the gender scripts of our culture ... men make themselves, actively constructing their masculinities within a social and historical context (1995, xx).
Connell argues West European based cultures are characterised by a patriarchal gender order that accords women a subordinate status. For Connell gender relations forms one of the fundamental structures of all societies, intersecting with race and class (1995, 72). Gender is seen as a process, not a static thing, gender relations are formed and transformed over time. Connell suggests the gender order in Western industrial cultures is a dynamic process characterised by change, and a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and amongst men (Connell, 1995, 81). In this conception there are a number of differing masculinities that exist in relations of dominance and subordination to each other; hegemonic (the dominant form), complicit (men who benefit from the subordination of women), subordinate (men who are seen as inferior to the dominant form, such as gay men), and marginalised (Connell, 1995, 77-81).

Connell describes the dominant form of masculinity as 'the culturally idealised form of masculine character' (1990, 83). It operates in three realms, the personal, institutional and cultural, and in the use of the body. Hegemonic masculinity is associated with toughness, strength, determination, aggression, competitiveness, independence, domination, the capacity for violence as well as power, success wealth, status and being in-control, (Kimmel, 1994, 124; Morgan and Hearn, 1990, 12; Connell, 1995a, 130). Connell emphasises that dominant masculinity is not a fixed character type, it is open to contest and change from other groups (1995, 76).

Kimmel states that the dominant form of masculinity is commonly associated with middle-class professional, early middle-age, heterosexual men and the family; it provides the standard against which men are judged (1994, 124). This version of masculinity is regarded as the image of masculinity of those men in power (Kimmel, 1994, 125). At the social level Connell argues masculinity is a 'collective project of oppression' of women as well as other masculinities (1987, 215). It is a strategy to stabilize masculine gender identity and legitimise the gender order which sees the subordination of women (Connell, 1995, 77). All groups of men gain a 'patriarchal dividend' by virtue of being male because the social system privileges men over women (1995, 82). However, men share unequally in the benefits of this domination.

Connell points to some of the contradictions that characterise traditional masculinity, which 'may not be the usual form of masculinity at all' (1990, 83). Indeed, 'the number of men rigorously practising the hegemonic model in its entirety may be quite small' (1995, 78). Furthermore, 'there is a distance and tension between the collective ideal and (men's) actual lives' (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1987, 180). The most visible bearers, exemplars such as film actors may not be very powerful at all, but public figures such as John Wayne and Muhammed Ali help sustain and embody this hegemonic power (1987, 185; 1995, 77).
Sociology theorises gender as socially constructed to refute simplistic biological (essentialist) explanations that men's nature is innately aggressive, violent and competitive and so resistant to change (Hearn and Morgan, 1990, 11). Gender is seen to be like social class as the product of social cultures. It is argued that by viewing gender, and therein masculinity, as the product of culture, place and the period in time, opens the possibility of change in those features associated with traditional masculinity; they can no longer be explained as 'natural'. Traditional masculinity is made visible by theorising it as gender (Murrie, 1998, 169). The concept of masculinities accommodates the experience of diverse groups of men and the presence of various masculine identities that do not conform to the cultural model of masculine character.

Constructionism is criticised for numerous shortcomings. Pease points out that if masculinity is solely socially constructed, fundamental change requires the complete reconstruction of the social system with new values, laws and organisational forms, and the social relations of gender in both the public and private arenas. He believes such drastic change is an unlikely possibility (1996, 16).

Seidler criticises social constructionism as a social theory formulated within the rational, intellectual tradition of Western culture (dating from the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century), that identifies the self with mind and reason. Seidler states this framework is built on a rationalist discounting of the significance of human emotions, feelings and intuitions (1994, 68). It 'helps foster a form of rationalism that gives the idea that our lives are within our rational control, and that through will and determination alone we can determine our lives', excluding the role of emotions, feelings and irrational promptings (Seidler, 1994, 100). He also warns there is a danger of social constructionism (and feminism) reinforcing a particular kind of moralism in relation to how men should be. Seidler argues that men should not be pushed toward a new form provided by feminism which sees them squeezed into a new mould (1994, 113). Further, whilst many men might benefit from a social order that does privilege men, the definition of masculinity as oppression, makes all men guilty by virtue of their sex and almost precludes change (Seidler, 1988, 291).

Tacey similarly attacks the materialist premise of social constructionism, that views men solely as parts of a social process, saying that, 'if men are viewed as conditioned pieces within set patriarchal system, there is virtually no hope for us' (1997, 193). He is critical that social science ignores the psychology of the unconscious (the work of Freud and Jung) which suggests that men's psyches are moved by forces that are part of the collective psychological inheritance of humankind. He claims this is probably why the influence of social constructionism 'is largely confined to the academic sphere' (Tacey, 1997, 193-4). In his view masculinity is socially reproduced by means of ideology (system of beliefs/ideas about masculinity) uncritically passed on between men.
Constructionism seemingly under-estimates unconscious psychological influences upon behaviour (stemming from forgotten childhood experiences) that people are often ignorant of (Horrocks, 1994, 14). It 'fails to address fully questions of individual motivations and the development of the personality, due to its primarily political opposition to the tendency towards notions of normal development and unconscious instincts, drives and needs' (Edwards, 1990, 120-1). Seidler believes that constructionism encourages an externalised relationship, that silences one's experience of being bodily, emotional and spiritual selves (1994, 68). It implies that much of masculinity, masculine behaviour and feelings are a script that can be readily remodelled. Dowrick points to an individual's personality being more than a product of the strength of gender conditioning. She acknowledges that whilst a person may feel locked into the social expectations about gender, there are many shaping forces, such as a person's intelligence, attitudes, their world view, will, personality type, socio-economic position and psychological health of the family, biology as well as cultural and national attitudes (1991, 22).

But defining the dominant construction of masculinity as a collective project of oppression by men over women ignores the dimensions of women's emotional and personal power. It implies that men, just by being male oppress women, which simply is not true all the time. Horrocks, Farrell and Kipnis make a useful distinction between men's public power and women's private power associated with the home, relationships and sex (Horrocks, 1994, 26; Farrell, 1994, 35; Kipnis, 1991, 180). Horrocks and Edgar note women hold visible power in a household, which children perceive and experience especially regarding the importance of the mother in parenting (Horrocks, 1994, 79; Edgar, 1997, 242).

Wilber notes that despite gender being primarily culturally moulded, certain gender differences appear cross-culturally. He refers to work by Gilligan who identifies strong differences in male-female value spheres. Her research suggests men tend towards individuality and autonomy, whereas women tend to stress relationship (Wilber, 1996, 3). He says biology plays a part in the differences between genders, especially the potent hormone, testosterone; a matter social constructionism ignores (Wilber, 1996, 3-4). Furthermore, he says the idea that men, have in the past and continue to, collectively oppress women demeans women and is not consistent with the supposedly competitive nature of men (1996, 7).

However, despite such shortcomings, social constructionism highlights the role of social conditioning, time and place and the dynamic nature of the development of masculine identity. The concept of traditional masculinity is also useful as identifying a culturally dominant form of masculine character. These elements provide important bases for this research.
Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytical theory seeks to understand the development of masculinity from the perspective of the individual.\(^{24}\) Perhaps the most familiar psychoanalytic model of masculinity is Freud's oedipal complex. It is suggested that around six years the son desires to possess the mother, fearing the father's aggression he renounces this oedipal desire, and the boy identifies with the father (Pedersen, 1991, 122). The son thereby moves from his original identification with the mother to the father's world. In developing his sense of masculine identity, he identifies with traditional forms of masculinity and patriarchal values associated with power, authority, control, superiority over women and the repression of feminine qualities such as nurturance, gentleness and sensitivity (Keen, 1991, 19; O'Connor, 1993, 27). The emotional basis for male domination of women is thereby reproduced and a harmful competitive dynamic between father and son is established. More recent work has displaced Freud's concept. It was the subject of much criticism for failing to take into account the powerful role of mother, its cultural exaltation of masculinity and the penis, establishing competition as the prototype of the father/son relationship and the negative image of the father (Connell, 1994, 15; Pedersen, 1991, 123; Richards, 1990, 11).

Currently the most influential psychoanalytical model is based on the feminist scholarship of Chodorow (1978) and Gilligan (1981) (Kimmel and Kaufman, 1994, 270). It suggests that males and females have different experiences of separation and attachment from the mother. It proposes whilst a girl develops an identity based upon her similarity to her mother (attachment), a boy creates a sense of identity based on separation from the mother. Chodorow argues that, in developing masculine identities, boys are essentially learning to differentiate themselves from their mothers and women in general. The idea is that masculine identity and male dominance grows out of repression of maternal identification, and feelings associated with the feminine; so boys come to establish strong ego boundaries and have a reduced capacity for relationships (1978, 180-1).

Dependency on his mother, attachment to her ... represents that which is not masculine ... Masculine gender role training becomes much more rigid than feminine. A boy represses those qualities he takes to be feminine inside himself and rejects and devalues women and whatever he considers to be feminine in the social world (Chodorow, 1978, 181 ).

Gilligan suggests the early childhood experiences yield deep differences between males' and females' development, needs and moral reasoning. Men develop 'positional' identities, a sense of self based on separation from others, whereas women have 'relational identities' often defining themselves by their relationship with others especially family (cited in Messner, 1992, 33).

\(^{24}\) Psychoanalytic theory is seen as a contributory factor to social constructionism (Kaufman, 1987; Messner, 1992; Drummond, 1995).
Messner says psychoanalytic theory fails to accommodate the importance of the social structure and gender relations in constructing individual personality, and has been criticised for ignoring class, race, age and cultural differences between men and women (1992, 20-21). He argues that the suggestion that core gender identity is relatively fixed by age three, ignores that personality and social structure exist in dynamic relationship to each other. Gender identity he says is a process of construction that continues throughout life (1992, 20-21).

Psychoanalytic theory proposes that men come to define their masculinity through achievement-orientation factors, rather than relationships. It suggests men often display confused personalities seeking separateness but craving closeness and intimacy with females. Further, by highlighting the unconscious rejection of the feminine in the establishment of masculine identity, it offers an understanding of masculinity being defined as much negatively as positively; why men often see masculinity by what it is not, rather than what it is (Drummond, 1995, 49-50).

A Theory of Male Adult Development—the life-course
In The Seasons of a Man's Life, Levinson develops a theory of male adult development that traces a man's life course. He places his research study of the lives of 40 men from four occupational groupings as within the province of social psychology (1978, xii). A man's life cycle is seen to evolve through four overlapping eras, each incorporating lengthy periods of change, such as the early adult and mid-life transitions. The four eras are:

- childhood-adolescence, 0 - 22 years;
- early adulthood, 17 - 45 years;
- middle adulthood, 40 - 65 years;
- late adulthood, 65 - onwards.\(^{25}\)

It is proposed that a man's life structure (his life pattern at a given time) faces crises and change as a man progresses through each era. The life structure encompasses both social and personal elements; work, education, family, economic place, personal values, ideals, behaviour (conscious and unconscious) and his roles as father, husband. For Levinson masculine identity is shaped and constructed through the interplay of psychological dynamics, biology and the social world (1978, 41-3).\(^{26}\) He says, 'every man's life structure reflects the structure of society and is also a reflection of his specific self and circumstances' (1978, 53), and 'it is not

\(^{25}\)Levinson views the male life cycle (from birth to death) as following an underlying universal pattern with numerous cultural and individual variations which can however possibly alter and sometimes stop the developmental process (Franklin, 1992, 93). *The Seasons of a Man's Life* reflects the idea that development and growth can continue throughout a man's entire life.

\(^{26}\)In incorporating a psychological dynamic, he adopts the Jungian concept of organising factors in an individual's psyche, archetypes, 'that shape and are shaped by our experience over the life course' (1978, 211).
enough merely to acknowledge that history, culture and social institutions influence the life of an adult' (1978, 47).

The early adult transition, roughly extends between the years 17-22, forming a bridge from adolescence to early adulthood. Levinson sees it as a critical turning point, as a youth starts to formulate his first adult self and establish himself in the adult world (1978, 21). During the mid-life transition occurring between 40-45, Levinson identifies there are three major tasks for men. To review and reappraise one's life, assessing what is important, asking, 'what have I done with my life? what do I want? what are my values?' (1978, 192). Second, to modify components of the life structure, one's goals, occupation, perhaps alter one's lifestyle. Thirdly, to address neglected aspects of one's personality, inner qualities such as the masculine/feminine polarity, the role of work in life and attitudes to aging. These tasks encourage the evolution of a transformed life structure suitable to a new stage of adulthood (1978, 192-5). Mid-life is seen as providing an opportunity where men can develop a stronger sense of self, experience 'de-tribalisation', become more self-motivated and less concerned about being defined by others (1978, 243).

Messner believes Levinson tends to over-emphasise the psychological and under-estimates the very different contexts in which males from different ethnic groups and social class develop (1992, 196). Drummond inaccurately says Levinson's framework has the markings of a biological reductionist approach (1995, 53). He is inaccurate in arguing that the framework fails to account for individual variations: it explicitly allows for variations in individual experience (Franklin, 1992, 93). However, a notable drawback is the sample basis of the study, most of the participants were drawn from successful, professional middle-class occupations. Levinson notes the study has a 'preponderance of well-educated men' (1978, 12), with only a small number of blue-collar participants. One participant was a scientist with an international status, another was a former naval officer and senior corporate executive (1978, 65-68). Farrell and Rosenberg are critical that 50% of Levinson's participants work in the same corporation (1981, 22). Notwithstanding his reservations Messner uses the life-course framework for his study of elite athletes.

Life-course theory posits several features that are relevant for this study; the concept of life eras, the proposition of periods of early adult and mid-life transition: and not least that Levinson sees masculine identity as a combination of social, biological and psychological process.
Post-Jungian Psychological Theory

Post-Jungian theory offers a framework for psychological development encompassing the entire life span. The first half of life (roughly until 40 years) is to do with the development of the ego (conscious self), and establishing one's social identity (persona) and vocation in the world (Brooks, 1993, 21; Jung, 1971, 8; Stevens, 1990, 63). Jung uses the term 'persona' to refer to the masks individuals exhibit publicly. Steinberg says it is 'a social construct', the way the ego adapts and presents itself, an outer layer of the personality (1993, 43-4). The establishment of an ego identity is a key task of adolescence (Sanford and Lough, 1988, 37). In the development of the ego an individual must separate from his psychological connection with the mother and father. A major task of adolescence is for the individual:

- to develop an awareness of himself as a person separate from his parents,
- outgrowing the psychological fusion with parents that characterises the child
  (Sanford and Lough, 1988, 34).

The father is viewed as having an important role in adolescence (for both males and females) to help liberate the adolescent from the mother complex (the continuing influence on a male of the early relationship with the mother) (Stevens, 1990, 119). Father is seen to have a prime responsibility in facilitating the transition of the adolescent from home to society. He takes an initiatory role, presenting the values and mores of the adult group which the adolescent will have to adjust, acting as a bridge between family and community (Stevens, 1990, 119; Tacey, 1997, 52). However, it can be particularly difficult for males to separate from the unconscious influence of the early mother image. Hillman points out that the 'mother complex' is a widespread neurosis that some men never free themselves of in their quest for ego identity (Tacey, 1997, 73).

Jungian psychology postulates that our personalities are a composite of masculine and feminine qualities. For a man his masculinity is carried by the ego, and his feminine side resides in his unconscious personality and vice versa for women (Sanford and Lough, 1988, 131). The feminine component in a man is called the anima (Singer, 1994, 183). Jungian psychology makes great use of mythology. Hero myths, such as St George and the Dragon, are interpreted as symbolising the normal development of the ego from infancy to adulthood (Jung, 1956, 348; Stevens, 1990, 85). To achieve greater personal consciousness and autonomy in the world, the ego must break free from parental dependence, but to do so, the ego/hero must overcome the unconscious mother complex (Tacey, 1997, 70). For Hillman and Tacey the myths highlight a characteristic problem in the development of the Western male ego, the conquering of the feminine:

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27 Tacey illustrates the post-Jungian perspective saying 'father is a kind of doorway through which a son must pass (otherwise the son) ... suffers the condition of ongoing and chronic immaturity, effeminate, incapacitated by guilt, and alienated from his own masculinity' (Tacey, 1997, 52). A positive father/son relationship helps a boy develop a healthy, self-assured masculinity and sense of masculine self. An absent, critical or abusive father can lead to disturbed masculine identity (Sanford and Lough, 1988, 207; Steinberg, 1993, 2).
in a conventional hero myth, the male ego is compelled to defeat, kill the
toothed mother-dragon (1997, 96) ... the male ego, caught in the heroic
stance henceforth strives to 'overcome' the feminine in the inner and outer
worlds (197) ... operating internally as a suppression of feeling, intuition,
emotion, body-awareness and beauty; externally as the suppression and
domination of women, gay men and others who fail to express hegemonic
masculine prowess (Tacey, 1997, 198).

Tacey explains that the young male ego relates to the feminine as mother and seeks to defeat it.
After this developmental crisis, the 'heroic' ego is always on guard against the feminine. The
male ego becomes locked into striving to overcome the feminine in the inner and outer worlds.
This unconscious psychological dynamic is projected externally in the domination of women
(1997, 197-8). Tacey offers this as a Jungian explanation of the devaluation of the feminine
that characterises Western patriarchal culture.28

The second half of life for Jungian theory, involves the ego surrendering its place as the centre
of the conscious personality, as part of a continuing process of development in self-identity
(Brooks, 1993, 21; Singer, 1994, 238). It is suggested a man's primary attention needs to
shift from the material world of status and achievement to the redemption and cultivation of the
inner world (O'Connor, 1981, 99). The second half sees the cultivation of qualities ignored or
repressed in the earlier part of life, for men, these include the capacity for feelings, compassion
and relationships (the inner psychological world) symbolised by the anima (feminine). This
facilitates a shift from the ego to an inner centre, the Self, which embraces the total personality,
both conscious and unconscious (O'Connor, 1981, 99; Sanford and Lough, 1988, 63). The
cultivation of the anima (through reflecting upon one's dreams and relationships with women)
is seen as a critical function of the second half of a man's life (Levinson, 1978, 237). The
lifelong process of developing a fuller, more unique identity, with greater awareness and self-
understanding Jung termed 'individuation'.

Jung saw a man's capacity to integrate his anima, or feminine self, as being
most apt to develop during the mid-life transition in particular (Betcher and

Jung also proposed that individuals are born with certain kinds of personality and psychological
predispositions; they are not born as blank slates, with personality emerging out of experiences
and learning (Levinson, 1978, 210; Singer, 1994, 134; Stevens, 1990, 36). Present at birth
in the human psyche (the entire mental apparatus, comprising consciousness and the
unconscious) are organising patterns for behaviour, archetypes.29 These organising structures

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28 Jung suggests the ego can be transformed through the integration of 'feminine' qualities. He saw masculine
development as needing to progress from primary identification with masculine elements in the first half of life towards
an integration of the feminine. So the hero archetype, which is seen to represent conventional masculine identity in
Western culture, is required to die (typically around mid-life) for continued self-development (Levinson, 1978, 215;
Satinover, 1986, 150).

29 The psyche is defined as the entire mental apparatus of a person which comprises consciousness (the range of
(such as father/mother/son/hero/martyr) are not invariant, but are affected and conditioned by an individual’s personal experiences as well as cultural, temporal and historical factors (Levinson, 1978; Tarnas, 1993; Jaffe, 1971). Jung believed his hypothesis of inherited predispositions as elements in the psyche, provides a biological element to human behaviour.  

Jungian theory is much criticised in academic work for its focus upon the individual and personal psychological change, saying little about the impact of culture and society upon the individual and the relationship between personality and society (Pease, 1996, 12). The validity of such criticism, of little emphasis being focussed on the influence of the social environment as a factor in personality, has been acknowledged by some Jungian practitioners (Mindell, 1993, 12). Connell believes Jungs' idea of universal masculine and feminine principles (archetypes) within the personality precludes behavioural change, and is a conservative force. Further, he argues this concept 'yields the idea that modern feminism is tilting the balance too far and suppressing the masculine' (1995, 13-14). Connell seems to misunderstand the idea of archetypes. He seems to believe they are fixed in character, which Jungian writers stress is not the case. Jaffe stresses that such underlying structures to human life (like molecules of a crystal), respond uniquely to location, time, culture and the individual (Jaffe, 1994, 18).

Tacey asserts that the popular men’s literature, including such influential books as Bly’s, Iron John, offers a distorted version of Jungian theory. He is highly critical of the simplistic appropriation of Jung’s ideas, particularly the idea of the wild man and warrior archetypes, which he contends could impede the necessary change and evolution patriarchal masculinity must undergo. He is concerned that Jungian theory is being distorted and appropriated in a conservative male backlash against feminism, associated with what is known as the mythopoetic men’s movement (1997, 3-6). Tacey’s warning against unwise use of archetypes to bolster traditional masculinity is timely, but his attack upon Bly and a section of the men’s movement are full of excessive fury and should be treated with some scepticism (1997, 3-6).

Taking into consideration such criticisms, the post-Jungian theory outlined above is helpful in providing a theoretical outline for a continued process of psychological growth throughout the

experiences a person is aware of, a reflection of the ego); the personal unconscious (forgotten or repressed personal experiences, thoughts and memories) and the collective unconscious (that part of psyche which individual shares with others, comprising common psychic heritage of humanity) (Brooks, 1993, 14-5; Singer, 1994, 15; Jaffe, 1984, 29).

Jung proposed humans have both inherited predispositions (archetypes) and a personal biography. 'The first is biological and common to the species, the second is biographical, socially determined and specific to each separate life' (Campbell, 1972, 210).

Biddulph, Kipnis, Pease and Tacey briefly discuss a men’s movement evident in the US and Australia. Tacey identifies various sections and groupings, with academic literature seen as a profeminist position (Pease identifies with this position). The mythopoetic section of the men’s movement is popularly based, with a spiritual-therapeutic orientation (Tacey, 1997, 13).
life cycle, that changes at mid-life and seeks to cultivate personal inner qualities such as compassion and empathy. It illustrates the importance of working through one's psychological parental complexes in the establishment of masculine ego identity. Jungian theory suggests the hero archetype is a model for youthful masculine development. The concept of archetypes also offers a theoretical biological component to human behaviour that research, such as the contrasting patterns of brain usage and structure and hormonal differences between males and females appear to reveal.\textsuperscript{32}

**Conceptual Framework**

All these theoretical perspectives have been generated by different forms of empirical research, knowledge developed by data analysis of social and psychological studies of men and women in Western cultures. Each has their positive aspects but also some inherent flaws which have been identified. None of them can be used in their entirety because of such deficiencies. Theoretical formulations of masculinity are still at an incipient phase, an adequate framework that incorporates social, psychological, biological and even non-material elements has not been developed. Indeed, such a framework may not be possible, given as Keen says the dynamics of being human are still in many ways a mystery that we barely understand (1991, 218).

Furthermore, Gilligan and Seidler have identified that Western social theories reflect a masculine bias, because they were based primarily on the study of very successful men and are founded upon rational and empirical premises, which offer one view of reality (Seidler, 1994, 61). Intellectual thought has been characterised by male dominance and masculine assumptions about reality (Tarnas, 1993, 408). Gilligan argues such theories have failed to take into account the relationship-centred experiences of women (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 8). Seidler observes, 'in part, we have created social theories that are self-enclosing and which legitimate our existing as rational selves alone ... our traditions of social theory fail to illuminate important aspects of our personal and social lives' (1994, 68). In a similar vein, Pease identifies a drawback of much recent research and literature about men (including psychological discourses), is that it has mostly been about middle class, professional-managerial men, of similar background to the researchers. He questions whether the lives of these men can be taken as representative of masculinity (1996, 105). Similarly, Edgar maintains much of the writing about men is seldom based on research about ordinary men, but rather special pleading for certain causes (1997, x). So when considering the literature on men, the intent of the work must be kept in mind, as well as the background of the participants being reported on, and whether the discourse is based upon research with men or is in fact social commentary based primarily on personal experience and interpretation.

The framework adopted for this study draws variously from the above perspectives. Masculinity is seen as mostly socially constructed. Social constructionism highlights the importance of social conditioning for the development of masculine identity. It regards masculinity as being learnt or moulded as a result of the situations, groups, time and culture boys and men find themselves in. It identifies a dominant form of masculinity, traditional masculinity, which is the 'culturally idealised form of masculine character', the benchmark for men. Further, it acknowledges the wide-ranging variations among men, that is the existence of various masculine identities, such as gay, ethnic and working class men that do not conform to the cultural model.

Life-course theory looks at the life cycle, it incorporates different eras of male adulthood, and the concepts of early adult and mid-life transitions. The study follows Levinson's formulation that masculine identity is seen as constructed through the interplay of psychological dynamics, biology and social world and a man's life structure changes due to time, circumstances and personal experiences. Psychoanalytic theory highlights unconscious factors affecting gender identity, the development of the ego identity and masculine identities concerned with achievement, rather than relationships. Post-Jungian theory identifies the persona, the social identity individuals exhibit publicly. This theory also addresses the entire life cycle, and holds the cultivation of one's 'feminine aspects' as a key purpose of mid-life, with a man paying attention to his inner world of feelings for continued self-development. Such theory also incorporates a biological (inherited archetypal) dimension to the human psyche.

A comparative analysis of the dominant cultural model of masculinity for young and mid-life men, requires a theoretical framework that incorporates the social and psychological. It is a study of both social practices and behaviours, as well as values and attitudes (which may be conscious and unconscious). The conceptual framework established from the above perspectives provides a matrix for comparing experiences and values of men who are at differing life stages.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The intention of this chapter is to discuss the qualitative methodology adopted for the project. It will outline the design of the research and the paradigm in which it is based. It will elaborate on the sample size and establish the parameters around which the participants were selected. It explains the use of case study and life-history methodologies to provide empirical material, the utility of interviews as the means of data collection, the use of a phenomenological approach and the role of the researcher. Finally issues of reliability, validity and the limitations of the project are discussed.

Quantitative and Qualitative Research

The scientific model has been the dominant method for establishing knowledge in Western society since the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. Denzin and Lincoln identify various frameworks to examine the world. Science asserts objective accounts of the world can be established; this has been called the positivist paradigm (1994, 5). Denzin and Lincoln state qualitative research sits within a quite different framework which they identify as the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative researchers (inspired by Kant, Foucault and others) stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between researcher and what is studied, that the mere act of observation affects the entity being observed.

The scientific model, called positivism, views the world and its phenomena as concretely material that can be studied by fragmenting and measuring smaller components (reductionism) and that 'truth' is confirmable. The observer and subject are assumed to be independent. The observer can study the object without influencing it or being influenced by it. Values and biases are excluded from an experiment by following prescribed procedures. Propositions are developed and subjected to empirical test for verification, and replicable findings are true. It aims at the production of generalisations that contribute to factual knowledge of the world (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, 109). Kuhn and Popper, however challenged the assumption that scientific knowledge is value free, an accurate description of reality, independent of social influences.

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33 Denzin and Lincoln indicate the interpretive (constructivist) framework is an overarching set of beliefs (worldview) about how to understand and study the world. Whilst the scientific framework assumes the existence of a singular material reality that can be objectively measured, interpretivism assumes there are multiple realities socially constructed by human beings, rather than a single, measurable reality operating according to physical laws (1998, 26-7).

34 The scientific view provides the fundamental worldview of Western culture (Capra, 1982, 40; Seidler, 1994, 61). The scientific framework established in the seventeenth century, is associated with French philosopher and mathematician Descartes, who viewed nature and the universe as a machine operating according to mathematical laws, that could be explained in terms of its constituent parts. Capra and others point out that science does not deal with truth but with limited and approximate descriptions of reality, it cannot provide complete description of reality (1982, 33). The
Quantitative studies commonly used in mathematics, physics, chemistry and economics emphasise the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables. Quantitative methods require the use of standardised measures, so varying responses can fit into a limited number of categories. Applied to the social sciences, the quantitative approach can measure the responses of large numbers of people, facilitating comparisons and giving broad generalisable set of findings applicable to large populations. But qualitative research which seeks to find out what people do, think and feel, focuses upon process rather than results (Patton, 1990, 97). It is suggested such issues are not readily amenable to measurement (Mackay, 1997, 203).

There has been a longstanding, debate between the physical sciences and humanities about the use of quantitative versus qualitative methods. Qualitative research has been criticised as unscientific or exploratory (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, 7). For Denzin and Lincoln the two approaches represent different work traditions and interpretive frameworks to investigate and establish knowledge (1998, 11). Patton contends both approaches constitute valid alternate research strategies for establishing knowledge (1994, 14).

The Nature of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research aims to investigate people's attitudes, values and beliefs, what they think, know and feel, to illuminate our understanding of why people behave as they do (Mackay, 1999, 204; Patton, 1990, 97). It explores how human beings construct and give meaning to their actions in concrete social situations at a particular time. It examines significant public and private issues that distinguish a particular time period (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, xi).

Denzin and Lincoln explain that qualitative researchers, 'study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them,' (1994, 2). Qualitative research acknowledges that research is an interpretive process, guided by a particular set of beliefs and worldview, it does not purport to be objective and value-free (1998, 26). It recognises that the researcher and respondent interact, which may affect the outcome, and that the qualitative researcher may draw upon 'their own experience as a resource in their inquiries,' (1998, xi).
Features of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research seeks to examine peoples attitudes and values by intimate, first-hand (phenomenological) techniques such as interviews and observation to establish how they understand and bring meaning to their lives. The emphasis is upon phenomena and processes that, it is suggested, are not easily amenable to measurement in terms of quantity, intensity or frequency nor suited to assignment into preset categories of response (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, 4).

As a people-oriented form of inquiry, qualitative research offers an opportunity for people to tell their story and experiences in their own words. It provides the chance to capture what people actually say and what takes place as they talk (Patton, 1990, 32). This type of research provides for 'rich and thick description' and in-depth examination of an issue, as time is given to the participant to consider an issue and explain it in his or her own words. Patton believes the absence of preset, coded schema contributes to the depth, detail and openness of qualitative inquiry (1990, 58).

This form of research is commonly conducted in everyday settings where people are found. A key feature is that the researcher is the primary means of collecting data (the research instrument), so 'validity depends to a great extent on the skill, competence and rigor of the researcher' (Patton, 1990, 14). Guba and Lincoln argue a positive feature is that the researcher is adaptable to changing contexts, and may be resocialised to the values of others, so 'inquiry is grounded in real world context', which can be lost in quantitative studies (1988, 151). Patton mentions the shortcomings of human beings as instruments, such as fatigue and shifts in knowledge. He says the researcher must carefully reflect on, deal and report on potential sources of error and bias (1990, 58).

Qualitative research uses multiple methods and practices, such as case studies, interviews, ethnographies, life-history, personal experience, psychoanalysis and participant observation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, 5). The combination of these methods is seen as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth and depth to any investigation. Such research methods are often extensions of normal human activities, looking, listening and speaking and may come easily to the researcher (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 40). The drawbacks of this form of research are that it can produce copious amounts of data (Yin, 1994, 10). It can be constrained by the limits of conscious memory of participants and inordinately time consuming, especially in the preparation of case analysis (Connell, 1991, 143).

Research Design

Research design comprises the purposes of the study, research questions, selection of participants and strategies to obtain information. It sites researchers in the empirical (data based) world, and connects them to specific sites, persons, institutions and interpretive
material. In collecting and analysing empirical materials a combination of methods have been used in this study; case study, participant observation, life history and phenomenology.

This study seeks to compare the attitudes, experiences and perspectives of males from two differing age groups about the culturally dominant model of masculinity. The key question underlying this project is how do we learn to be men in Australian society?

In this setting case study and life-history were seen to provide methods facilitating an in-depth, exploratory investigation of men’s ideas and perspectives. Life-history research is concerned with lived experience, the ways people interpret their own lives and the world around them. It looks at the total biographical experience, weaving between personal experience, social influences, body and historical change. It is seen as particularly suited to documenting subjective experience (Plummer, 1983, 68-9). Connell adopts this methodology for his research on masculinity. He contends the method allows for a study of the process of historical change in masculinity, giving information about social practices situated in time (1991, 143). He suggests that theorised life-history can be a powerful tool for the study of the dynamics of social structure and institutions as they affect personal life (1990, 84).

Yin defines a case study as an empirical investigation into a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life setting, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear (Yin, 1994, 1). A case can be a person, an event, a program, a time period, a community (Patton, 1990, 54). Patton says case studies are useful where one seeks to understand a special group, or unique situation in depth (1990, 54).35 They are the preferred strategy when 'how' and 'why' questions are being posed, and when the investigator has little control over events (Yin, 1994, 1). Major steps entail conceptualising the study and bounding the case, setting its limits, seeking patterns of data to develop the issues, assembling the data, constructing a case record, writing a case narrative; with the final element being thematic categorisation and analysis of the data (Patton, 1990).

In this study, the case is the culturally dominant model of masculinity as perceived by a small number of males. The case study approach is a means of providing the necessary 'rich description' of men's ideas and experiences about a dominant model of masculine character, which can accommodate both the values of the researcher and the respondent (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, 42). Patton observes that case studies are valuable when seeking to capture variations between experiences (1990, 54). Case studies seek both what is common and what

35 As a research strategy case studies may be used in business, management studies, sociology, psychology and public policy analysis (Yin, 1994, 1). The researcher has had considerable experience using the case study approach as a public policy analyst with Federal Parliamentary committees. In preparing a report on the ecological condition and governmental arrangements applying to the Australian coastal zone for the House of Representatives Committee on Environment, a case study approach was used to examine specific examples of industrial pollution in north west Tasmania. See, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts, The Injured Coastline, (1991). Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.
is particular about the case, and can usefully be seen as a small step towards grand generalisation (Stake, 1994, 238). They seek to describe the subject in detail, context and holistically.

This project may be seen as a collective case study as thirteen participants are used to inquire into the dominant social model of masculinity. Interview transcripts provide the raw data. The individual case studies provide the first layer of analysis. This is followed by cross analysis at the age group level, succeeded by a comparative analysis of the two different male age groups according to themes that emerge from the data.

The research design is based in the interpretive paradigm discussed earlier in this chapter. The interpretive approach seeks to get inside the way others see the world, to obtain an understanding of their worldviews and feelings (Laurence-Neuman, 1997, 73). The data is systematically analysed (interpreted) by means of themes that emerge during the conversations, concerning the participants' perceptions of masculinity in their personal and social lives. The data is interpreted from a phenomenological perspective. Phenomenology is an interpretive practice that examines how human beings give meaning to their actions in concrete social situations (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, xvii). Phenomenological inquiry focuses on the question, 'what is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?' (Patton, 1990, 69). The phenomena may be an attitude, culture or belief system. The phenomenon under consideration is the dominant cultural model of masculinity. The perspective draws attention to what people experience and how they put together the phenomena they experience as to make sense of the world. There is no separate (objective) reality for people, there is only their experience and what it means (Patton, 1990, 69).

The in-depth interview is a favoured tool for qualitative researchers. As a phenomenological technique, it is an intimate, first hand method to find out a participant's ideas, values and beliefs on an issue (Fontana and Frey, 1994, 353).

Interpretivism, utilising phenomenological inquiry, therefore, provides the base for this research.

**Sample Selection**

The sample comprises 13 young and mid-life males born in Australia. They live in either the Sydney suburb of Dee Why or the rural township of Bowral in NSW. A small sample was decided upon, as a manageable number for one researcher undertaking an exploratory study, utilising in-depth interviews and case studies. Similar studies by Drummond and Pease also had a small number of participants.
Young males aged 20-26 years are selected as reflecting the period in the male life-course that Levinson associates with a transition from adolescence to early adulthood (1978, 18-19). Levinson suggests this is a critical phase for a male youth in establishing a sense of personal identity and first adult self (1978, 21). It is worthwhile to note that the age set within which these males, in the main, are sited for official statistical purposes, is characterised by a high and rising rate of suicide. In 1997, suicide accounted for 29% of all male deaths for the 15-24 year age group. Between 1985-1994, the proportion of total male youth deaths to all male youth deaths rose from 18% to 27% (ABS, 1996). Young rural males in particular, have been identified as the most high risk group (Donaghy, 1997, 94).

The age set 35-45 years is identified in literature concerning male psychology as a period of mid-life transition (Jacques, 1965; Levinson, 1978; O'Connor, 1981, 1993). Researchers suggest this is a period when males reconsider their work, family and lifestyle and ideas about masculinity learnt in their youth (Levinson 1978, 41-3; O'Connor 1981, 18). This age set overlaps with the ABS age category 25-44 years, which also exhibits a very high suicide rate. In 1998, this age set accounted for 22.7% of all male suicide deaths that year (the highest age-specific rate of suicide in that year).

A significant factor in choosing to study young and mid-life males, is that the researcher has been a young male who grew up in Sydney, and is presently sited in the mid-life age set. Personal association and involvement (currently and in the past) with the identified age sets provide a major rationale for this study.

Participants are drawn from the Sydney beachside suburb of Dee Why, and the rural township of Bowral, approximately 120 km. southwest of Sydney. The principal reason for selecting males from these areas is simply practical, the researcher lived in these districts during the study period. With limited resources available to the researcher, it was envisaged that recruiting males from the researcher's home district would promote relatively ready access to participants and facilitate arranging interviews. That the participants are drawn from an urban and rural setting can, however, be seen to enhance the scope of the study, as the districts having differing socio-economic features. The suburb of Dee Why has a low rate of home ownership, and a high proportion (29%) of families with a weekly income of below $500. It is also characterised by a high population density. Bowral has a long-standing well-to-do reputation. The rate of

36As reference is made to ABS age categories regarding suicide, it was decided to select young male within an 20-26 years age bracket, which slightly overlaps with the ABS category, but allows for a period where young males have been working or studying outside high school for several years. ABS, Causes of Death Australia 1997, Catalogue 3303.0.


home ownership is very high, accounting for 70% of private dwellings. In 1996, average household weekly income is recorded at $710.\textsuperscript{39}

Twelve of the participants are second generation Australian-born, since the intention is to explore Australian cultural attitudes concerning masculinity. One participant is from a non-Australian ethnicity. He was included following a suggestion from staff at the researcher's University. The suggestion came at an advanced stage in the project. Due to time constraints only one suitable and willing participant was added to the sample (this is discussed in more detail further on). The intention was to provide a contrasting data source to the Australian-born men, and a possible alternative viewpoint to strengthen the study design (Patton, 1990, 278). Finally, whilst it was not a variable in selection, all the males present themselves as heterosexual.

The study followed a purposive sampling procedure common in qualitative studies (Perry and Coote, 1994, 11), which provides for the selection of a small number of 'information rich' cases, worthy of in-depth study, rather than a random sample to facilitate generalisation (Patton, 1990, 181). In Dee Why, a gatekeeper figure (a person with access to a network of potential participants), James, was found who provided personal referrals to several males from both age groups (Patton calls such personal referral, snowballing sampling (1990, 176)). Other participants were sought by means of contacting sport, Church and community clubs and a public notice in the local newspaper. In most cases personal referrals were the main means of obtaining participants. In Bowral, however, approximately half the interviewees responded to a newspaper notice. It was left to potential participants to contact the researcher. During telephone conversations the researcher provided details of the study and the participation criteria relating to age, being second generation Australian-born, and had lived for some time in the local area (an arbitrary period of 10 years was decided upon). If the males were still interested and met such criteria, they were selected to participate.

Some difficulty was experienced finding males willing to take part. The Dee Why sample was characterised by a high refusal and drop out rate. The interviews were scheduled during the summer months. Despite agreeing to participate two young males failed to appear for interviews, and another four declined to take part. Sometime after the interview stage, one of the Dee Why mid-life participants told the researcher that an older male, who declined to take part, had asked the participant as they had a beer, 'who was that poof wanting to ask questions?'. Thus some difficulty was experienced finding males willing to participate in the study. The participants in this study are males who are willing to discuss aspects of their lives with the researcher, a notable number were not.

\textsuperscript{39}ABS 1996, Census Applications Small Area System. Bowral. .
As an indication of the social background of the participants, two of the participants hold university degrees, whilst six have trades qualifications. Of the males from Dee Why, two of the young males have trades qualifications, of the others, one is an accounts clerk, the other a waiter-musician. Two of the mid-life males have trade qualifications, the other is tertiary qualified. With respect to the males from Bowral, two of the older males conduct small businesses, the other is a clerk with the public sector. Of the young males, one has trade qualifications, one is a postgraduate tertiary student, the other a retail sales assistant. Strikingly, none of the males are married. However, the three older rural males are either divorced or separated.

Role of the Researcher
The methodological literature emphasises the significance the researcher plays in qualitative inquiry. Patton and Plummer both acknowledge the active role of the researcher (Patton, 1990, 58; Plummer, 1983, 137). Denzin and Lincoln state the researcher 'understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his personal history, biography, gender, social class and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting' (1994, 3). They point out that the researcher brings an interpretive framework to the process which may be very different to that of the participants (1994, 12).

Janesick says qualitative researchers should early on in research design identify our biases; to signify that no attempt is being made to pretend the research is value-free (Janesick, 1998, 41). The researcher's background is indicated in the introduction, particularly his role as a facilitator for men's workshops and drop-in groups. In the researcher's experience, males are usually reluctant to discuss personal matters with another man. It is likely that the researcher's gender may have a mostly unacknowledged affect upon what participants are willing to discuss.

Analysis and interpretation is an artful, creative and individual act. Patton acknowledges the key role of the researcher in this process and states that a guiding principle is to do the very best and fairly represent and communicate what the data reveal (1990, 372). Themes and patterns identified in the study have emerged from the empirical data. Several were not immediately obvious during the interview phase.

Data Collection
Data collection is about obtaining useful data that helps develop a picture of the empirical, social world of the male participants. Patton mentions some principles to guide data collection: capture what people actually say and what goes on, include detailed description of people's activities and settings, and use direct quotes of what people say (1990, 32). In-depth interviews and fieldwork observations provide the study's primary data. These techniques require the researcher to be a good listener, a skilled observer and able to relate well to people.
Most of the interviews were held in places chosen by the participants and lasted for well over an hour. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

Observation, 'is a major means of collecting data in qualitative research' (Merriam, 1998, 111). The 'thick descriptions' which may be prepared by the researcher provide a valuable source of evidence. Field notes comprise written records of what the researcher observes, experiences and remembers, and are usually prepared immediately upon leaving the field (Laurence-Neuman, 1997, 363). Merriam emphasises the self-discipline required to record observations as soon as possible (1998, 104). During the interviews the researcher jotted notes, usually single words, for instance describing participants' reactions to certain questions. Immediately after each interview, field notes were prepared which included a description of the setting, the physical appearance of interviewees, notable physical gestures and some verbatim statements. Preparation of these notes often took longer than the interviews. These records, however, provide systematic, first hand accounts of the observed behaviour of participants.

For Denzin the triangulation of data (use of multiple data collection techniques and data sources) enhance the reliability of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998, 204). In this case, interviews, documents, and participant observation provide multiple sources of data to critique the research phenomenon, as Patton recommends (1990, 278).

**Interviews**

An interview is a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening (Fontana and Frey, 1994, 353). The purpose of an interview is to access the perspective of the interviewee, to seek information about their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, feelings and experiences not available by observation (Patton, 1990, 278). Reisman and Benny define the interview as:

> a transitory relationship between two people, strangers to each other, in which one person seeks information from which he can derive no immediate personal advantage and the other gives it without suffering any disadvantage (1956, 226).

An interview provides an opportunity for the participant to express his views in his own terms and for the interviewer to learn from the respondent. As the study requires lengthy discussions of personal ideas and values, oral interviews were seen as the most suitable means to obtain such detail and provide a rich source of data to prepare case studies. However, there are many types of interviews. Most people have some familiarity with interviews through their own experience, such as job interviews for employment and watching media interviews with public figures.
In qualitative research, structured interviews are those where the respondent is asked a set of pre-determined questions where responses are put into a limited set of categories.\textsuperscript{40} Unstructured interviews (also called elite) are in-depth interviews often without pre-determined questions. This form of interview stresses the interviewee's definition of an issue with interviewer responding to the cues the participant provides. Respondents are usually selected for their special characteristics (Guba and Lincoln, 1988, 164). Mackay uses the unstructured interview as the primary information source and technique in his recent studies of Australian life and people (1997, 204).

The study interviews follow the elite style, as it is suited to the exploratory nature of the project and provides a means to pursue the research topic in depth (Guba and Lincoln, 1988, 166). All but one of the interviews have been conducted over a 10 month period. Rather than using a prepared set of standardised questions, a general interview approach was used, which involves outlining a set of issues to be discussed with the respondent before interviewing (Patton, 1990, 281). The interviewer adopts both the wording and sequence of questions to respondents in the interview. For Patton the guide allows the interviewer to freely explore and ask questions to illuminate the topic (1990, 281).\textsuperscript{41}

A pilot study comprising four pilot interviews with young and mid-life men was carried out to develop the interview guide and the researcher's skills. The preliminary interview guide was found to elicit responses not directly relevant to the main issue of study. As a result, two introductory questions about sport and how long they had lived in the study area, were included to assist participants to become comfortable talking.

**The Dynamics of Interviews**

The interviewer has numerous responsibilities: to establish rapport, to keep the conversation on target and exhibit a lack of bias (Yin, 1994, 56-9). The interviewer can shape the atmosphere of the interview. Fontana and Frey state, the interview 'is not a neutral tool, for the interviewer creates the reality of the interview situation ... the method is influenced by the researchers' personal features, race, class, gender and ethnicity' (1994, 353). As Plummer observes, 'I have found so much is dependent upon my mood and whether the interviewee and I get along, personal factors that books cannot really describe adequately' (1983, 99).

But also there can be dynamics over which the researcher has little influence, and may not even be aware of. A respondent may be concerned about what the interviewer thinks of him and may put on a deliberate facade or censor what he says. Fontana and Frey note respondents may

\textsuperscript{40}Such structured interviews are usually telephone, household surveys which elicit large scale generalisations about populations, and follow a stimulus-response format (Fontana and Frey, 1994, 364).

\textsuperscript{41}Drummond used this approach for his interviews with elite male athletes (1995, 63).
give a reply to please the interviewer that is not true (1994, 364). As noted earlier, the researcher's gender may also affect how the respondent replies.

It appears the methodological literature, whilst acknowledging the researcher's gender, may affect the interview, accords little space to the dynamics of interviewing men, and there is no clear reason for this omission. Even Connell, who has conducted considerable research and written extensively on the subject of Australian men and masculinity, omits to consider the dynamics of men interviewing men (1991, 141-170). West, however, observes that many of the male participants in his study of Western Sydney were reluctant to talk about their problems. He speculates these males may have not wanted to sound like whingers (1996, 50). Further, he says most men, 'feel they can confide in women ... most men find it difficult to talk unguardedly to a man'. He suggests there are many difficulties for men to talk openly, possibly because most men find it hard to deal with anyone being emotional (1996, 143). He implies that some participants' responses were influenced by the gender of the interviewers.

West's observations are consistent with the researcher's experience. The researcher has been a Lifeline telephone counsellor, and facilitator for men's experiential workshops and a men's drop-in centre. In confidential conversations numerous men report a fear of vulnerability, losing face and the respect of mates if they discuss personal matters or show emotions with other men. Others are simply unable to explain why they cannot discuss such matters with male friends. Support for this observation is found in some psychological discourses on masculinity, in which female therapists report some men admit they chose to work with a woman because they feel safer, and wish to avoid any competitive dynamic that could manifest with another man (Bolen, 1989, viii; Horrocks, 1994). Edgar makes a similar point that men are more likely to confide to their wives than their mates (1997, xii).

In light of the possible impact of this particular dynamic, it was decided to heed Plummer's suggestion to approach interviews 'akin to a non-directive, phenomenologically aware counsellor' (1983, 95), displaying some warmth, and a non-judgemental attitude towards what is said.

Data Analysis
Plummer highlights the creative, time consuming nature of data analysis:

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42 The major contributors to qualitative methodological literature, Guba, Lincoln, Denzin, Patton, Plummer and leading researchers on masculinity such as Levinson and Connell do not discuss this matter. See Connell (1991, 143-70). He mentions the greatly different background and experience of violence between the interviewers (male and female) and some young, unemployed male participants, but no mention is made of any interactions between subjects and interviewees, or if there was any indication that the men's responses varied with the interviewers gender.

43The researcher worked as a volunteer telephone counsellor with Lifeline Canberra for six years in the 1990s and introduced men's workshops to the organisation.
In many ways this is the truly creative part of the work—it entails brooding and reflecting upon mounds of data for long periods of time until it 'makes sense' and 'feels right', and key ideas and themes flow from it (1983, 99).

Plummer acknowledges that analysing life-history accounts is a laborious process, but the form of analysis can expose the processes through which the social world becomes meaningful to individuals (1983, 99). Patton contends it requires lengthy reflecting on the mounds of data and critical thinking, and much depends upon the intellect, style and discipline of the analyst (1990, 433). He also says, 'the discipline and rigor of qualitative analysis depends on presenting solid, descriptive data, in such a way that others reading the data can draw their own conclusions' (1990, 375).

For this study an inductive analytical approach was adopted, that is, the patterns, themes and categories of analysis emerged from the data, rather than being imposed prior to the interviews (Patton, 1990, 390). Initial data analysis took the form of preparing individual case records of the participants. The evidence was examined and categorised in terms of themes evident in the interviews such as the role of sport, attitudes to fathers and the impact of adolescent heroes or role models. In addition, the proposition guiding the study, the culturally dominant model of masculinity was also an analytic category [as Yin suggests with respect to case studies (1994, 103)]. Analysis of the evidence entailed examining such themes for each age group, and cross-analysis of the two age groups relating these to findings from academic and popular literature about men. The final layer identified common themes apparent from the cross-analysis of the young and mid-life men.

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. For Merriam it is, 'the process of making meaning', which leads to findings (1998, 178). The study utilises phenomenological analysis. As a form of investigation, its techniques require the suspension of judgement by the researcher, the setting aside of personal viewpoint in order to see the experience for itself, and trying to see the object of study from several perspective's (Merriam, 1998, 158).

With regard to data analysis, Patton implies analysis may not always be objective. Connell's discussion of the Australian surf 'Iron Man', Steve Donoghue (a pseudonym), perhaps reflects this. By using direct quotes Connell reveals much of the character of this sport hero, whom he sees as an exemplar of traditional masculinity. A professional athlete (earning $100,000 a year from competitions), Steve is devoted to surf-sport and training, the sport totally occupies his life; he seems to have no cultural interests beyond popular music. Connell argues that Steve's body is used both by commercial sponsors, mass media and the institution of surf-sport to give traditional masculinity a social definition. This is associated with winning (being a hero), success, competitiveness, toughness and the subordination of women (1990, 92). But

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Connell, amongst other things states, 'the picture then is of a psychological focus on the body together with a severely constricted social world and an impoverished cultural world' (1990, 91). This seems rather harsh and judgemental. Perhaps there is an element of social elitism in the analysis reflecting the different subcultures and values of sport and academe. Indeed, in some academic analyses, a element of elitism and hostility towards other groups of men and discourses on masculinity is evident.45

Reliability and Validity

Reliability is primarily concerned with rigorous practice, consistency and technique so that the study's operations and results can be replicated by another inquirer. Validity deals with ensuring the technique is studying what it is supposed to be studying, including the use of suitable operational measures for the concepts being examined (Yin, 1994, 35). Denzin and Lincoln refer to a methodological debate among qualitative researchers about the appropriateness of applying the concepts of reliability and validity that are usually associated with quantitative research (1994, 480). Patton and Plummer emphasise validity depends to a great extent on the skill, competence and rigor of the researcher. Both state the inquirer must report on and deal with potential sources of error, including the researchers' own personal experiences and bias (Patton, 1990, 56; Plummer, 1983, 103).

Lincoln and Guba suggest reliability, in terms of replication of results, as something of a 'misfit' when applied to qualitative research. Instead, they suggest thinking about the 'consistency' and 'dependability' of results. That is, given the data, do the results make sense? (1985, 288). Merriam suggests the dependability and reliability of results may be enhanced by the researcher explaining the assumptions of the study; by triangulating data; and by documenting how the study was conducted (1998, 206-7). Yin, similarly, states that the reliability of a case study is enhanced by documenting decisions and procedures, so an auditor could follow and repeat the research process.

Reliability and dependability have been addressed in several ways. A strategic framework document was drafted following review of the literature on masculinity, which outlined the research aim, issues, proposed design, suggested methods and anticipated outcomes. In another document, discussions with the supervisor concerning project decisions, deliberations and reflections on the analysis of interview data were recorded. These documents provide a chain of evidence of the progress of the project. The assumptions of the study are outlined in the introduction, and the role of the researcher has been noted earlier in this chapter. Interviews, participant observation and documents, including life-historical accounts, provide multiple sources of data to examine the research phenomenon. Reliability was further enhanced by

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audio-taping the interviews. These were (painstakingly) transcribed by the researcher, to ensure the accuracy of the conversations. Field note observations were without fail, written immediately after the interviews.

Validity deals with questions whether the findings capture what is really there? Techniques to address validity include using triangulation; repeated observations of the same phenomenon; peer comment on emergent findings; and clarifying the researcher's assumptions and worldview (Merriam, 1998, 204-5). Validity has been accounted for in the following ways; rigorous selection of Australian-born males within the study parameters; and, clarification of the concept of a dominant model of masculinity, by way of uniform reference to academic material. As discussed, multiple data sources were used to enhance data collection, and the researcher's background and viewpoint have been stated.

Peer comment on emergent findings at a staff-research student seminar at the researcher's University led to the inclusion of additional data sources. It was suggested that a participant of non-Australian ethnicity be included in the sample, and that some follow-up interviews be conducted. These suggestions came at an advanced stage in the study. Due to time constraints and considerable difficulty accessing willing and suitable potential interviewees, only one non-Australian male (Wes) could be included. Similar difficulties were experienced arranging follow-up interviews. Many original participants were not available or contactable. The researcher was, however, able to meet with one male from each age set. These interviews were held at the participants' home, and were more informal as they were not audio-taped. The researcher made detailed field notes, including quotes. As was the intention of the peer feedback, these interviews provide the study with differing data sources to the original data.

The study therefore uses triangulation with regard to data collection to strengthen reliability, validity and the research design. Plummer urges that with regard to validity for life history case studies, possible biases should be identified for both participant and researcher, and reference made to their interaction (1983, 103). Gender as an influencing factor in the interviewer-interviewee interaction, and difficulties in recruiting willing participants have been mentioned. Participant observation provided data to back up interview material, to assist the researcher's attempt to understand the interviewees' lives. Merriam observes that, 'being at once participant and observer is a by-product of this method of data collection and a problem not easily dealt with' (1998, 111). To improve reliability, she emphasises that the researcher's field notes should include as much detail as possible, including descriptions, comments and observations. As noted, detailed notes were drafted immediately upon leaving the field.

The use of several different methods of data collection provides rigour to the study, reducing the possibility of weaknesses that may have existed with a single method.
Limitations and Ethical Considerations

A drawback of this study is the phenomenological interview technique. As noted data collection may be affected by the honesty and interest of the participant, and seemingly with men, the gender of the researcher. Messner states the life-history approach provides a 'snapshot' of what an individual thinks, feels and believes about his life at a point in time (cited by Drummond, 1995, 72). Plummer comments that perspectives change over time (1983, 57) and Connell states life-history interviews rely on the limits of conscious memory (1991, 143). Further, analysis can imply an order to one's beliefs and attitudes that is not really evident. Life-course theory suggests interpretations and views of life and events alter as we age. A more accurate appraisal of changes in attitudes over men's life-course could be available with longitudinal research, where participants are interviewed several times over a number of years, but a timeframe for such a study would be approximately 15-20 years.

As noted, some difficulty was experienced recruiting males who satisfied the criteria for the study, and willing to discuss some personal aspects of their lives. It is the researcher's perception that he lacked a recognised position or status in either Dee Why or Bowral, as he was newly resident in these districts during the study. An unsought pattern among the mid-life males is that none are married. They are either divorced, separated or never-married. This feature is an unintended limitation to any possible generalisations that may be made in the study concerning mid-life men.

Case studies can involve the exploration of the intimate, private world of feeling, experiences, ideas, values and perceptions. A guiding ethic for the study was Stake's suggestion that researchers are guests in the private spaces of the participants. The study was conducted with the approval of the ethics committee of the University of Western Sydney, which examined procedures for confidentiality and participation. All participants have been given pseudonyms to conceal their identity. As Bowral has a population of only 8000 residents, the occupations of the rural males have been altered for the same reason.

Summary and Conclusion

Edgar says much of the recent literature on men is seldom based on research about ordinary men and often is special pleading for certain causes (1997, x). Pease states that much of the literature on masculinity has focussed upon middle class professionals and managers, and 'the lives of these men are often taken as representative of masculinity' (1996, 105). These observations point to a limitation in the developing literature. For example, Williams, in Father and Sons, interviews well-known, highly successful public figures, such as radio broadcaster, Robyn Williams and former federal Member of Parliament and Australian Olympic hockey team captain, Ric Charlesworth. Plummer suggests that life histories allow voices to be heard that often are not, and can reflect social structure and the contradictions of personal life (1983, 82). It is suggested that the males in this study are ordinary men, living ordinary lives. None are
public figures or hold professional occupations, it is worthwhile mentioning that only two of
the males have university degrees.⁴⁶ Only one man has taken part in therapy. They are not
males who stand out.

A culturally dominant model of masculinity is a subjective phenomenon. It is one that males are
likely to have divergent yet similar perspectives on. Conversations in the form of in-depth
interviews were seen as the most suitable means of eliciting participants views about an
unfamiliar concept and other aspects of masculinity. Such discussion allows insight into
attitudes that are not always explicitly acknowledged or possibly even recognised.

Connell suggests men show a lack of insight and understanding of traditional masculinity
(1990, 93). Webb argues Australian men cannot separate themselves from traditional
masculinity (1998, 21). Case study was seen as an information rich method that could
illuminate participants' perspectives about a dominant model of masculinity, which they may
not be immediately aware of. Whilst case study analysis is time consuming, demanding, with
evidence often emerging slowly and painstakingly, it permits comparison between the differing
age groups, and allows the reader to also make his or her own observations.

Finally, qualitative inquiry is people-oriented, focussed upon human interaction and stories. It
is a form of inquiry with which the researcher has considerable professional experience and is
suited to in terms of personal communication and analytical skills. This was a significant factor
in the adoption of qualitative methodology to investigate the study's research questions.

⁴⁶The ABS report, Sydney: A Social Atlas, notes that the distribution of people with tertiary qualifications is similar
to the distributions of people with managerial and professional occupations (ABS, 1998, 34). Similarly, Harris notes
that education level may be seen as a reflection of socio-economic status; (Harris, 1994, 120).
CHAPTER 5

THE YOUNG MALES—TWENTY-SOMETHINGS'

This chapter provides an overview and discussion of the case records of the seven young males involved in the research study. The aim is to obtain an impression of their lives as young males, their interests, their adolescent role models, and their attitudes concerning a dominant model of masculinity—identified as traditional masculinity, in academic discourses. In chapter 7 this information is drawn together and interpreted collectively.

In order to provide a greater range of diversity in terms of upbringing, experiences and backgrounds, the sample comprises four young males from an urban setting, the Sydney beachside district of Dee Why, and three from the rural township of Bowral, approximately 120 kilometres south west of Sydney. All the young males are single, and except for one, second generation Australians who have grown up in the Dee Why or Bowral districts. All are still living in the parental home, and their ages vary between 22-26 years. Six are engaged in paid employment. The young males from Dee Why variously work as an accounts and delivery clerk, a restaurant chef, waiter and a car maintenance workshop supervisor. The two employed males from Bowral work as a retail assistant, a craftsman with a local craft centre, the other is a university student. These young men have active, busy lifestyles with girlfriends not figuring very prominently in most of their lives.

Themes and categories identified in the following case records emerge from the interview data, but also derive from the personal interpretation of the researcher. Names have been changed to conceal the identity of participants. The following quotes are a verbatim record of what participants said. Laughter, expressions such as umm, aah, have been included to show the manner in which the males actually speak. With regard to punctuation .. indicates a pause in speech. However ... indicates passage to a later part of the interviewee's reply, omitting unnecessary text. Finally, square brackets identifies questions put by the researcher; round brackets identifies inserted material to help explain what is said.

Case Studies of the Young Urban Males from Dee Why, Sydney

Case Record 1: DARREN - DEE WHY/FRENCH'S FOREST
Background: 25 years, Single
Occupation/Interests: Car service manager; surfboat rowing, soccer, car mechanics.
Darren grew up at French’s Forest, a suburb adjacent to Dee Why. He has been a surf lifesaver at Dee Why beach since his mid-teens. Presently a workshop manager with a car lease company, he lives with his parents and has been with his girlfriend for four years.
Adolescent Sport

From the time Darren was a young boy sport has been the key element of his life. He still plays the sports that were the mainstays of his teenage years, soccer and surfboat rowing:

Oh, when I was young I played everything. Ah, for example after school I’d be knocking on the next door neighbours’ ‘lets go play’. If it was winter we’d play rugby league or soccer, if it was summer we’d play cricket, or go swimming. In summer we’d watch the cricket on TV and go out and play, same in winter, watch the footy and go out and play. I’ve played club soccer for 19 years and still do ... (with) my old next door neighbours ... I was about 15 and was at a party and met these guys who said, ‘we row surfboats. Why don’t you come and try that?’ We came down here, that’s 10 years ago or so!

As a young adolescent Darren became involved in the masculine-oriented domain of surfboat rowing. Initially he crewed with young men in their early 20s. One of the appeals of rowing was he thought it would develop his body:

Umm, they were all older than I was, so I could see, ‘wow if I do this for a couple of years I might be big and strong like these guys’. So they were the benchmark. Apart from the fact that they took me out with them drinking, that was also exciting.

It seems that Darren finds crew rowing rewarding as it involves being part of something beyond his own ego, personal sacrifice for a bigger goal and others. He finds the experience of working together, enduring physical pain together generates deep friendships:

Great friendships, like bonds you, ah, just couldn’t describe .. I have a fantastic relationship with a guy I row with, we’ve rowed for 5 years, and have a really good rapport .. We have a drink together, let our hair down, it’s really worthwhile doing the sacrifice to hang out with him .. Ah, when you’re rowing with someone, you’d do anything for them, you go through a lot of pain for them and for yourself, all in pain. Ah, it’s an unbelievable bond that 4 guys have when you’re rowing that boat together … the secret is to row together. If some person starts doing something different, the boat can rock, there’s no continuity. You can row as hard as you want all day, but if you’re not doing it together .. ah, crew rowing is half as powerful, you’ve got to do it together.

Darren learnt many lessons because he took an active part in the surf life-saving culture. Surfboat rowing taught him about team spirit, to train hard, to continually do better, the joy of working together with a small group of males and achieving success:

I was just watching everything going on, with big open eyes … I learnt, ah, to watch and see how people trained very hard. I saw how people competed hard and I saw people be very successful. I had the experience of not being successful at that age and wanting to be good at it. That made me want to more or less, want to strive to do a little bit better ... One year we won all sorts of titles and medals. We won the State Championships, came third in the Australian titles. Those guys I would consider, even though I don’t see them everyday, there’s still a bond between us that means a lot because we got something together, a piece of tin we can look at. everytime I look at it I think of those blokes I was with at the time, and that’s a good thing!
Darren is quite revealing. He explains the appeal of his sport and his motivations for taking it up. These were, to be fit and healthy, to develop his body, be part of a small team of men seeking a common goal, and develop friendships. But what is not mentioned is his interior emotional experience. There is no reference to the physical strain of pushing his body, the personal satisfaction of doing one's best and pushing oneself to the limit, the challenge of competing against other men, the thrill of the boat riding the surf or the buzz of adrenalin during a race peak, nor the exhilaration of success. Despite revealing the personal appeal of surfboat rowing, the realm of experiential feelings are avoided.

Darren is keenly attached to the sport he took up early in his adolescence. Surfboat rowing has shaped both his physique and his values. It is the key part of his life. It provides him with a sense of purpose, friends, his social life and much personal satisfaction. It taught him a physically-oriented style of masculinity. The sport of surfboat rowing provided him with a passage to manliness.

Work—cars and mechanics
When Darren was an adolescent he enjoyed tinkering with cars and motorbikes. After completing his Higher School Certificate he became an apprentice car mechanic. Now Darren manages a team of mechanics. As a manager he has learnt he must present himself well to customers:

Fleet manager, ah, it's a lot better than being a mechanic! ... As a mechanic you get your hands dirty, it's hard work and you're sweaty and dirty in summer. But being a fleet manager allows me to get away from the cars, but on weekends I keep in touch, friends' cars, my car ... Ah, fleet management is pretty hard core as well, you can't be rough like a mechanic, swearing, talking rough ... You've got to be refined, sophisticated, you're talking to people, umm, all the time ... giving a professional opinion.

Work does not seem to be a key part of his identity. But working hard is important:

I'm a supervisor at work, I manage half a dozen guys. Ah, in the physical side of things, I do my bit there. I get in and have a go workwise, leading from the front, I try to but that's for others to judge. My idea is to lead ... I've seen other supervisors who just bludge, spend half the day on the phone to personal friends, and I don't think that's appropriate.

His attitude about work is never clearly articulated. But its place in his life is shown in how he organises the shift-roster, he works from 6 am to 2pm. Every afternoon he works out at the surf club gym, or has rowing practice with the team. Work fits into his sports life.

Father and Son
Darren's father is retired. He worked for a government agency for forty-four years, initially as a draftsman. He finished his career as a senior manager, responsible for the agency's building maintenance programs, car fleet and operational services. A skilled handyman and
carpenter, he spends his retirement doing home maintenance. Darren first mentions his father as:

a meat and potatoes sort of guy, put simply, very much no-frills. Born in North Shore as I was. Sort of Sunday, baked-dinner sort of family.

Darren helped his father around the home as a boy but gradually they spent less time together:

Ah, my father was, umm, a good example of.. His attitude was earn some money, save, if put in the bank. Umm, I mowed the lawns every weekend with him. He'd do the front, I'd do the back, .. things like that. I'd be out in the yard doing things together. Then as my sports came on, got a car, .. you just naturally don't spend as much time at home. He's retired now, so he's got time to do the lawns anyway, haha! ... He is, ah, a perfectionist. Every day since he's retired he's had his workbench out doing something to the house, or whatever.

He says his father was a role model, but he fails to elaborate in what sense or how. Asked what he learnt from his dad, significantly it was not relating to his interests in sport or cars:

Ah, frustration! Haha. Now because I'm so busy, I don't have time to think. I'm always running around trying to do these things, yet he's got the time to prepare and do things. And to his credit he's always been like that, doing jobs and doing a job well. I'd like to think I'm capable of what he does, but I've got to be more patient to do it and have more time.

Darren gives a sketch of his father's character, suggesting he is rather conservative, a perfectionist, somewhat unsettled without full-time work and not an easy person to live with. He implies work was a big part of his father's identity. He respects his father's handyman skills, that he likes things done well. Yet there is a sense of competition between them, at least on Darren's part. He speaks about his father with a tone of affection, resignation, but little warmth: he admits he finds his dad frustrating. Adolescence seems to have been when they drifted apart, especially as his father did not share his interest in sport and cars. Darren does not reveal their emotional relationship, nor his feelings about his father. There is a clear sense of some emotional distance between father and son.

**Role Models: Surf lifesavers—slightly older peers**

Darren states his role models (older males he looked up to as an adolescent), were his father, the boys next door and his surfboat crewmates. From his father he says he learnt to do a task well. As a boy and youth he regularly played cricket and soccer with his neighbours next door. They were members of the surf club and he still plays club soccer with them. Although they were three years older than him, he was always trying to match them.

His most important role models were his first crewmates. At fifteen he was impressed by their physical size and strength. He consciously wanted to be like them. When asked about his adolescent role models, they are the ones he mentions first:
Well, the older guys down here to start with at the surf club ... When I was 16 say... they were 24 sort of my age now. They were like I am now, back then ... I was the youngest and ... I could see, 'wow if I do this for a couple of years I might be big and strong like these guys'. So they were the benchmark ... [What were they showing you as role models?] It's very physical because you're in the gym and they're throwing weights around with reckless abandon and huge amounts ... and you've got half of what they've got and struggling to do it. So obviously you're trying to match them. They had fun, they weren't always serious about it. We had a good time. We went out a lot of the time.

His crewmates introduced him to the adult social world of drinking. But his neighbours who were also part of the surf club scene, apparently watched out for him:

ey took me out with them drinking, that was also exciting, as you get to 15, 16 and a bit older, get exposed to that sort of thing. Because my next door neighbours were there, and were good friends, they looked out for me, I got exposed to it but I didn't get swamped by it ... But never drinking every weekend or ridiculously out all night. It was quite good in that. My parents knew what was going on, they weren't happy about it, no parents are about their kids growing up, but they sort of knew I was being looked after-controlled environment.

Despite the considerable age difference Darren admits he tried to match his older crewmates during the physical training workouts. By example his crewmates were rather unconsciously teaching him many values; to be big and strong, to train hard for his goals, to strive to do better, to be competitive, to be 'successful', to do well in sport, that manliness is about physicality and men drink beer:

I saw how people competed hard and I saw people be very successful. I had the experience of not being successful at that age and wanting to be good at it. That made me want to more or less want to strive to do a little bit better.

The older males he looked up to as role models, when he was an adolescent, were all active, sporty, physically strong men. But his crewmates were more than guys to look up to. They were men he wanted to be like, to emulate, virtually offering a form of identity as tough sportsman. They embodied a style of masculinity focussed upon the male body, physical prowess, courage, determination, competitiveness, being the best and success. As discussed in chapter 2, these are some of the features academic literature associates with a socially dominant form of masculinity (traditional masculinity). It is the traditional model of masculinity he saw, liked and adopted (what Connell identifies as hegemonic).

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**

The idea of a dominant model of masculinity is new to Darren. Immediately he interprets the concept through his experience as a sportsman:

I've always had the impression man is .. strong, strong physically. And, umm, because of the training what I've done over the past 10 years, I'm, I suppose, strong.
His ideas about masculinity focus upon a physical body-image. But he agrees with a suggestion that it also encompasses features such as being emotionally stoic, hard-working, not being feminine and alcohol drinking:

I think the drinking is pumped up a lot ... Hard-working I think that's...ah...essential .. there's guys in my work who I think don't pull their weight. I don't agree with that. I can't remember the last time I cried. And I don't think it's appropriate for guys to go crying ... Has to be a very good reason, you want to lose a good leg .. or something to break down ... especially in public. Okay at funerals that's .. to be expected. Now thinking about that I was at a funeral a year ago or so, and I was very emotional. Ah, the guy who died was 30 had cancer ... There were all his mates, we're talking guys 20 and 30—all in tears. In that respect you can't be too hard on people.

Darren recognises there are certain socially accepted practices men conform to, such as 'men don't cry'. He cannot immediately recall when he last cried, but then he remembers a friend's funeral. He thinks that a common image for the Aussie male, especially shown on television, is the sportsman, an image he personally relates to:

You look at the TV and that's a good place to start with, and you've got Mark Taylor is the Australian of the Year, a very popular sort of guy who's been a sportsman, talks well. That says a lot to me, someone who can present themselves well.

Darren recognises men conform to various social practices. He has not thought about these as forming a dominant model of masculinity; he finds it hard to grasp the idea. He struggles to recognise a dominant model of masculinity that features strength, physicality and determination, despite his firm place within it as a competition-grade sportsman.

**Becoming a Man**

Darren's immediate response to the question, 'when did you become a man?' is to lean back in his chair, and look up in surprise:

I don't know! In some ways I'm still not I suppose 'cos I still like being a boy and mucking around ... Obviously at 18 you're a man, you can vote. Ah, okay, I did things when I was younger. When I was 16 I played in an open age soccer competition and I was goalkeeper. I was matching it physically with them, I held my own.

There has been no specific event, situation or experience so far that he regards marking when he became a man. He talks about some of the societal markers of becoming a man, such as physically competing with older men, getting a job, buying a home, and getting married: but none apply to him:

I've been becoming a man since I was 16, I think and I still am. So I'm not going to give you a specific answer to that 'cos different things happen to me and whatever ... Somehow in the back of my mind I think maybe when you get married. That for me sort... in an ideal world I sort of think 30—marriage ... I think you sort of, umm, you evolve .. as a person ... I like that, haha. Evolving .. I like that idea, that you're not complete ... until like I've set a goal of 30 and marriage and maybe that's it, I'm a man now that's it.
What it means to become a man is not a matter he has considered deeply. His answer is a patchwork of ideas with many contradictions. There is no sureness in the way he discusses this matter. He says he legally became a man at 18 (when entitled to vote) but adds, since he still enjoys playing around he is not yet a man. He also says he is evolving as a man. He reaches no firm conclusion. Implicitly Darren admits he is not yet a man, but he believes marriage and fatherhood will provide a significant marker:

I think the ultimate responsibility would be with a kid. I think I would see myself fully a man before then though!

The major influence upon his ideas on masculinity he admits were his peers:

Yeah, peers for sure, sort of looking up to them or people older than me or on the same level as me. 'Cos everyone wants to be better than the next guy, so if you have a peer that's good then you want to be as good as him or better than him. That pushes you to grow up quick and try and impress other people.

Right from the beginning as a 15 year old he joined the surfboat rowers so he would become big and strong like them; he says 'they were the benchmark', his models of masculinity. He acknowledges surf lifesaving had a big role in shaping his attitudes:

I think sport has also had a role for me as I've said, really there's little things that can apply that have affected in small ways my perspective of what it is to be a man.

**Men Talking**

Darren took part in the study following an invitation to the surf club for a participant. He is very matter-of-fact talking about his experiences. There is a sense he wishes to make a good impression with the researcher, to not be seen in a poor light. But he seems guarded, especially talking about emotions. He recalls when his crew won the State title:

to get to the top of that tree which we have ... is quite a good feeling ... I've stood on a dais and received a gold medal. And I felt very emotional at that time as well, however I didn't show that emotion. Other guys ... laughed it off as a rite of passage, that to ... receive a gold medal. It meant something to them, I could see looking at them they were not as emotionally charged ... I'm actually quite emotional, in that I can watch someone being successful in sports on TV and feel very emotional, having been in the position where I've stood on a dais and received a gold medal.

There is a sense of unease discussing his own emotions, at least with a stranger. He says he did not show any emotions when receiving a gold medal nor seemingly at a friend's funeral. He admits he had strong feelings but remains vague about exactly what he felt at the time (elation, joy, anticlimactic, tears of joy?), perhaps reluctant to disclose his emotional state to appear unmanly to another man. It appears emotions are not for public display either in victory or during an interview.
Discussing his best friend he cannot bring himself to use affectionate or emotive words:

Ben? What do I admire about him? The fact that he thinks so much about me, 'cos it makes me feel good and, ah... Like he says things no-one else says, like you know ... Umm, I've been in situations where, ah, I might have been in a nightclub and I might have been hassled. He's about the same size as me, he's got the killer instinct, can look after himself and he's stepped in and made sure no-one would touch me ... I've heard him say, 'you touch him and I'll knock you out', so's-to-speak. And that feels good if someone wants to look after you like that, umm, you want to do the same thing.

Whilst he reveals some of his values, beliefs and motivations for playing sport, he still limits what he says. Emotions are avoided, he gives little idea of his feelings regarding his father, or how he felt as a winner. Masculinity, appears not to be a subject he has discussed with his mates nor his father. Rare moments occur where he haltingly gives some glimpses of his deeper self perception, such as his motivation for being fit and athletic. Such moments are passed over quickly:

I mean I want to be someone who is healthy, I don't want to get fat. I'm sort of vain in that sense ... years ago I was ... fatter so-to-speak. And I didn't like that .. from a physical, vain sort of view, I don't know, ah ...

... maybe its my ego, I like talking about myself–that's not quite right.

Self-portrayal
At the interview Darren wears a t-shirt, shorts and sunglasses, fitting it in before an afternoon training session. After more than ten years rowing surfboats, the sport has moulded his physique. Physically trim, tall, with well defined chest and shoulders, he is not overly muscular. His pastimes are playing and watching cricket, soccer, rugby league, water-skiing and swimming. He still tinkers with cars and motorbikes at weekends. He likes popular music, listens to Triple J radio and has a large CD collection, he rarely finds time to read. Whilst living with his parents he makes it clear that he owns a home unit, has had his own place, but now lives with his parents to save money.

Darren is very outward directed, his sense of self is externally based, in his role as a sportsman. Sport is his passion. However, Darren shows a good deal of his interior world, his values and beliefs. Yet it is apparent surf lifesaving has shaped the values he finds important; to be fit, competitive, do one's best and be successful. It is sport which provides his sense of identity and place in the world. He consciously cultivates his self-image as a sportsman, able, active and strong:

Certain songs make me ... associate certain things with sport, 'cos that's what drives me passionately! ... Yeah, and being successful at it!
Despite being a longtime active competitor in an elite adult male sportsworld, Darren admits in some ways he is still a 'boy' as he still enjoys 'mucking around' with sport, other young men and lives with his parents. He admits, at 25 years, there is a strong adolescent quality to his lifestyle, behaviour and even character.

Heroes and Self

Darren, surprisingly, says sports heroes had no part in his adolescence:

Yeah, I, ah, I don't really sort ... Some people I looked up to were fairly balanced ... like no-one stood out. There's all these guys I told you about down here, my father, my mates, you look at TV. As a young kid everyone says Superman, there was footy players. I didn't really have ... But nothing really sticks out, I couldn't tell you a name or a group who was an actual hero ... Someone I'd bow ... maybe I'm not the sort of person to bow to someone.

His ideas on the subject of heroes are muddled, almost incoherent. His interpretation of 'hero' is nebulous. But having a hero (a publicly known, inspirational male figure), does not seem to have been important to him as an adolescent, not even a sportsman. He can only name two men he presently admires, the surf club sweep who trains the crews (and has won several national championships), and a former Bathurst car rally champion:

Larry Perkins, he's won Bathurst a few times, he's not backed by the Holden team, or the Ford team. He's an engineer, gets in and does it himself ... drives the car himself, it's all up in here (points to head). He did it his way. I rate that, someone who can do it themselves ... And I would appreciate someone who's into life, athletic, goes for a run-swim, gets something done ... shows how it's done so's to speak, leading from the front! Instead of someone who stays inside, plays Nintendo play station games, gets fat! ... I admire sportspeople, people who 'have a go, who are successful, the underdog'.

Darren admires 'sportspeople' (which provides room for women) but it is men he mentions. He admires those who work hard, are independent, dedicated, successful, who present well and can manage others. But the absence of sports heroes in Darren's adolescent youth is a surprise and puzzle. He never refers to his first crewmates as heroes. Yet it is clear they were inspirational figures: he admired them, they inspired him and he wanted to be like them. Seemingly, for Darren, it was personal acquaintances who were his 'heroes', but he cannot call them that. Perhaps because young males cannot openly admit admiring other males, especially friends, for fear of being labelled 'a poof'? Or perhaps hero is a jaded, devalued term associated with fictional movie figures?

Darren's sense of self, his masculinity and his values have been shaped by his lengthy involvement in sport. Surf lifesaving has been identified as a predominantly masculine-oriented domain (Connell, 1990, 93; Pearson, 1982, 124). Through his long immersion in the sport, Darren has been socialised into a noticeably physical cult of masculinity; one which emphasizes physicality, strenuous exercise, strength, control, determination, independence, emotional
stoicism, competitiveness and success. Darren adopted but also has been socialised into the
dominant model of masculinity, traditional masculinity, as these are some of the values he
appreciates and indeed shows. His first crewmates also played a notable role of mentors
guiding and instructing him into the social practices and values associated with traditional
masculinity.

Sport has provided the setting for Darren's socialisation into traditional masculinity. But he
seems quite unaware of the masculine model his sport typifies, is unquestioning of its values,
and is unable to reflect on the masculinising influence of sport on himself. Whilst he admits
sport had some impact upon his ideas about being a man, he is unable to disentangle or clearly
articulate some of the practices and values he acquired about masculinity through sport; to be
strong, muscular, competitive, to work hard, the will to succeed, to strive to do better and that
men drink beer. He cannot name the form of masculinity he has learnt, experienced and
adopted.

Surf lifesaving sport has provided a setting where Darren has learnt the dominant conceptions
of masculinity. Yet he is blind to the traditional masculinity he embodies, a version associated
with strength, competitiveness, power, success and a guarded attitude towards femininity. It is
a form of masculinity that celebrates male success using heroes as exemplars to perpetuate itself
and its values. There are clear echoes of exemplary masculinity in Darren's comment:

we've got younger guys I'd probably like to think they were looking up to me. I
hope the younger guys now will strive to do what I'm doing now.

It appears he learnt a model of masculinity that seems to have little capacity for self-reflection, to
see itself. That is invisible to itself. It is invisible to Darren.

Case Record 2: TIM - DEE WHY
Background: Single, 26 years
Occupation/Interests: Chef; reading, outdoor activities, martial arts.

Tim has lived and worked in the Dee Why district since he was a boy. He grew up in the
adjacent suburb of Cromer, and presently lives in nearby French's Forest, with his family. Of
average height, slender build, he is talkative and has a ready smile. He works as an entree-chef
at a trendy cafe-restaurant at Dee Why beach.

Adolescent Sport
As a teenager Tim spent his weekends playing rugby union, as well as taking solitary
bushwalks:
Ah, I really enjoyed sport, and physical education at school. I played football at weekends, and a lot of different sports just to try them out. Pretty much overwhelmed with football ... We used to go down to the local bush in Davidson at least twice a week, just for bushwalks. Normally on my own, sometimes with other people, if anyone wanted to come. I spent a lot of time running around the bush.

Rugby was his favourite sport. Playing a physical contact sport taught him to concentrate on what was happening, face the fear of stopping bigger boys carrying the ball and to put aside personal worries for the moment; it also gave him a chance to feel a sense of release:

I enjoyed having that release where at one time in my week, I could exert all of my energies freely into something ..., without being told there were things I couldn't do. On the field I could run where I wanted to, tackle where I wanted to, if I had the ball I could go where I wanted to ... and I was never wrong. I learnt it doesn't matter how big a person is, if you are on a football field you have to tackle them. And that's it! No matter how big they are, no matter how good they are they go down, like anybody else ... When you take a tackle or you are under a ruck or, you can't be preoccupied with anything else in your life than just not being hurt and getting up. You're very much involved in the moment at the time and that's a very good emotional relief. I didn't think about it at the time. But I certainly realised it is a wonderful emotional release at the time.

It taught him the importance of co-operation and standing-by teammates. He did not consciously regard opponents as rivals, but if they played dirty they became objects for revenge:

My teammates, you'd do anything for them. If you saw they were going to take a big tackle from a big guy you'd get in there and try and lighten the blow for them ... If there was ever a blue like, you're all in there. You defend your teammates because they are the ones who will be defending you on the field in a moments' time ... There wasn't never a feeling of hatred or dislike toward the people. If someone did a high tackle on one of my friends I would feel I would want to tackle this guy really hard and put him in hospital, if it came to it, I wouldn't care. But it wouldn't be on a personal level, like. He may be one of the most wonderful people in the world but my objective was to take him out. So, not in the way of malice. And only if I felt something unjust had gone on, anyway.

Rugby offered Tim much. It taught him about co-operating with others, to act despite one's fears and even to see opponents as objects. It provided emotional connection and friendships with other youths. He mentions it gave him a much needed opportunity to be physically vigorous, and feel he could do what he wanted to do. Rugby was a great physical and emotional release for him. This suggests as an adolescent he felt a strong sense of being constrained. It seems rugby was a place he could briefly feel a sense of freedom from perhaps school and his family, constraints he does not discuss.

Team and individual sports played a significant role in Tim's adolescence. Now sport has a much smaller role in his life, especially since fulltime work precludes him playing union regularly, he spends his leisure time bushwalking, hiking and walking.
Work

Tim has been a professional chef for several years, working in cafes and restaurants in the Northern Beaches since finishing his apprenticeship. Presently he prepares the entree meals, he says the position is not very challenging. He enjoys the 'adrenalin rush' of preparing meals quickly, but in a high pressure atmosphere he says there are frequent ego-clashes among staff.

Tim talks mainly about his daily experience of work. But there is no mention of some of the drawbacks, such as the casual nature of employment and how he feels that working full-time means he can no longer play rugby. He gives no idea if he has any goals, does he want to have his own business? Much is not said and his attitude about being a chef is unclear. Whilst never articulated there is a sense he regards his present position as just a job, until he finds something else or it is time to move on. The impression is he takes work, day-by-day, with little thought of the future, and perhaps little satisfaction. A month after the interview Tim quit his job after an argument with the owner of the restaurant. He quickly found another position.

Father and Son

Tim's father is a computer programmer running his own small business. His parents separated when he was a teenager. His father now lives interstate. During a conversation of well over an hour he mentions his father twice, saying very little:

Father was ... I don't want to be like him. Haha, I love him a lot but fuck, I don't want to be like him. Any child who wants to be like their father, their father hasn't been honest with them. My father used to .. umm .. push me a lot .... If I was able to do it or achieve it, he'd just expect I would. He didn't .. have a lot of patience for me not achieving something I could. Although he didn't push me into doing things I didn't want to do, he just got very disappointed if I slackened off on something I'd decided I wanted to do. And, err, he used to get frustrated with me 'cos I'd ask him a lot of questions he didn't want to answer ha, 'cos he had his objectives.

Tim lived with his father for two years until he was 18, immediately following his parents' separation. He has not seen him for sometime. Tim's father remains a shadow. He gives no clue as to the type of man he is, his age or memorable things they did together. But his influence seems quite strong. Tim apparently regards it as rather negative. It could be that his father pressured him to conform to his views and rules and to do well, but Tim's comments are obscure. Tim is quite reticent. He admits his father was an early role model but fails to explain. He also says nothing about his step-father whom he presently lives with.

The reluctance to talk about his father suggests there are major problems. It could well be that the relationship is a painful one for him; apparently he still feels hurt by his father's pressure to perform in the past. It could be he believes he never got a sense of approval from his father. Presently it appears a somewhat emotionally distant relationship; and the relationship with his step-father is a complete unknown.
Role Models: Older men beyond his age set

Tim says as an adolescent he looked up to several older men he personally knew. His father was an early role model (how, he does not say). But an uncle and a Church youth leader were the main figures he admired. He says these men were very individualistic. They were willing to be unconventional, even if only having a different opinion from others:

I had a few role models who were real immediate people who I communicated with. I spent a lot of time talking to those people, just absorbing their ideas ... admiring their individuality. As soon as someone did something out of the ordinary, that I didn't expect, intrigued me, I was interested in why they behaved in that way. I used to speak to them to find out why they thought the way they did about certain things, to enable them to take that opinion or act in that way I also had role models from television as well. I saw characters doing activities ... that I'd like to ... futuristically ... involve myself with ... The role models like dad, Larry, my uncle and things like that weren't role models so that I wanted to be like them, so much that I wanted to take parts of their character that I found were good personality traits.

He explains his Church youth leader confirmed the personal importance of religion:

he was full of energy and enthusiasm for what he did, and he offered a clear direction.

Movie stars Mel Gibson and Tom Cruise he says were 'cool heroes', but not men he looked up to, he knew they were fictional figures, 'in a film everything is just perfect and there's nothing you want to take--it's not real!' Apparently they were of little practical significance. Tim's role models were older males he personally interacted with. Men he knew, were more influential than his favourite movie stars. With regard to these role models he also explains sometimes he might like something about their personality or behaviour and copy it:

When you take on a role model, I wouldn't think you'd ever want to wholly become that person, but it would make it easier to say this person isn't a God, they're just another human being and I'll take this from his personality.

But he idiosyncrastically also applies the term role models to his peers. But here it becomes apparent he means, as someone to emulate, to be like. His school peers he says were an important influence showing how to behave:

as immediate role models probably my peers more than ... were more important than anyone else! They are more so ... like real, more effective role models than anything else. If I can take some of their actions, drive or ... personality that looks to me like helpful, I could see the practical application that I could make to my life. There was one guy at primary and high school he ended up an Australian skier, you'd see him in the playground, the way he acted and say that's pretty cool, and sort of subconsciously adapt that for yourself ... I could see the practical application that I could make to my life. And get something immediately out of it.
Dominant Model of Masculinity

Tim gradually grasps the idea of a socially dominant model of masculinity that constitutes a code of behaviour many men attempt to conform to:

I've... (pause) got this idea, that what our society has evolved from is an ancient one, and it's probably the Roman society. And I still think we look at what the gladiators were and the Hercules of those times, as sufficient model for young children—massive, strength, great courage, can achieve what they set their mind to. And if they set their mind to doing something simple for someone they care about, then that's their objective and that's their heroism... People from the Bible, David and Goliath... from these old ancient stories there's a lot of teaching about a very large, strong, confident type of male in those stories... physical achievement...

Tim suggests Western historical and biblical figures such as Hercules, Goliath, and the ancient Roman gladiators are still potent cultural images of men. They portray a physical masculinity characterised by strength, courage, size, determination and doing what one must; a heroic-warrior style of masculinity. He explains that with his slight build he did not relate to the muscular-warrior image, but he subscribes to a feature associated with the model, that a man does what he believes in.

For Tim the movie character Crocodile Dundee, is an image of the typical Aussie male. This is a man who is physical and tough, confident, courageous, successful, can fight, drinks beer and can deal with all situations:

probably the Paul Hogan-type—Crocodile Dundee! Sort of laid-back... has his beer, but if something happens he can act and... If he gets threatened he can focus and go, 'this is it!'.

The dominant model of masculinity is for is Tim a physically-oriented, male warrior body-image. He appreciates one of the values he regards as associated with the image, doing what one believes in.

Becoming a Man

Asked, 'when did you become a man?' the pitch of Tim's voice rises slightly:

I don't think I have! I don't think I will! I mean I'm a kid to myself because then I'm free! If I'm a man, then I have to do this and that! And I get hindered enough by people telling me what I should do—instead of me telling myself how I should be. I'd rather exist freely... I don't want to carry around... my own perception of what me being a man should be... I don't think I've become a man because I don't think I ever want to become a man! If I'm 40 I might say I've become a man now. But I still won't care, I will still want that childish freedom!

Tim is clear that he does not yet see himself as a man, in his terms (which are unclear). There have been no notable experiences marking a transition into male adulthood, despite playing rugby and his six years in the workforce. Apparently he regards being a man as constraining
and limiting, bound by responsibilities and social conceptions; being a man is burdensome. But why is it a burden he does not say? And he fails to clearly explain why he may never want to become a man.

He has not totally regarded masculinity as a given. He has thought something about what it is to be a man, in terms of behaviour and values. However, his ideas are still rather inchoate, containing some contradictory features, individualism and conformism:

I think a definition of a man is independent for each person. But my definition of a man—it's having the balls to deal with whatever situation comes up. It's not that I have to do it 'this way'—or I have to react to this because I'm a man ... In an overall psychology for myself—I'm a child—and I don't have to behave any way... If I'm controlling my environment, I'm being dominant ... Having some physical control over what I'm doing ... I would still consider it manly behaviour because I'm the man I'm in control, yeah!

There were several major influences on his ideas about masculinity including family friends and his religious instruction. For several years in his teens he regularly participated in Christian fellowship groups, reading and talking about scripture and the Bible. Christianity still shapes much of his views, values and how he sees the world:

I've taken a lot of the Christian ideology. I don't believe in the Christ or Buddha. I believe in an essence ... Everytime I've been involved in anything there's an essence of Christianity, whether on a football field singing a national anthem about God blessing something, or in Church reading scripture, in scouts, whatever it is, there an emphasis on Christianity.

But it was his peers that had the longest influence upon his ideas, extending from early years as a boy to the present time. Early on he learnt the school playground was a tough place, where being a boy meant fights and standing up to other boys:

School playground, is another big place, yeah, where a lot of shit went down ... out in the playground all of a sudden you've got to fend for yourself, you're free. Got to decide who you wanted to spend time with ... you'd go through fights with other boys and arguments with girls, fights about marbles ... it's just a real life situation, without the protection of your parents and teachers. And it's quite intense at that age being in the school playground—it's your world it's all you've got. Fight or flight!

Around seventeen he turned away from Church to what his peers were doing, driving cars and drinking alcohol, what he calls typical local 'yobbo' activities for young men. These are things he still likes doing, and he says he loves his car and having a beer:

got into cars ... an' (pause) drinking alcohol when I was 17. Suppose I was into cars and alcohol when I was 17 probably. Which is the sort of local yobbo thing to get into. You have a drink and if you're not down at the surf, you're driving a fast car. Haha ...the cars is like playing football, it's something that seemed to be an enjoyable male preoccupation .. Something that you .. could work on and keep to play with like a male toy. When I was old enough to have a car that became a new male preoccupation.
Tim has had numerous influences, he has also read a lot of New Age literature, and values the ideas of authors such as Carlos Castaneda, who advocate an expansive sense of being human and non-material dimensions of existence. In his adolescence, Tim learnt a traditional style of masculinity, seemingly through copying his peers, and in terms of his values and activities (despite his New Age interest) seems well entrenched within this model, with little inclination to change.

**Men Talking**

Tim became acquainted with the researcher whilst both were working at a cafe. The discussion took place at a pub in Dee Why at Tim's suggestion. He is very chatty. But he speaks very clumsily and so awkwardly that his ideas are often difficult to understand. There is a recurrent theme of personal freedom and constraint in his conversation. Playing rugby he says gave him a chance to 'run where I wanted to', having a car seems to be related:

That's why I've got my car now, it's being able to experience your basic freedoms. It's exactly what it is. And to have the freedom where you ... to make your car go faster, to turn quicker. It's about you ... You can actually have some influence upon the freedoms you experiencing with your car. I mean it's yours, you own it, no-one can take it away, unlike a girl! Haha.

Freedom seems important to Tim, it is unclear why, it is not something he explains. But is there a connection to his adolescent experience of being pushed by his father to do things? Perhaps him leaving his job after the dispute is also a reflection of this? His reticence about his father raises the possibility he may not have felt loved and approved by his father.

Tim shows elements of his interior world, that he is religious:

Everytime I've been involved in anything there's an essence of Christianity ... It's an accepted medium and leads to people having a good intention... I believe in an essence. I believe all religions incorporate values, things that seem just.

He has a idiosyncratic mix of Christian, New Age and mainstream values and beliefs, they seem loose threads awaiting to be connected. He seems reluctant or unable to discuss their personal significance for his own value and belief system. It could be he is slowly building his worldview from diverse sources, that at this stage do not cohere with each other; and is unable to clearly articulate this process.

For a chatty young man, who is open about his Christianity his emotional world seems something to be avoided. He does not reveal how he really feels about his father. His conversation seems focussed upon the present time, what he is presently doing. He gives no idea of his goals, beyond hoping to travel overseas within a year, he does not mention if work is presently satisfying, nor his ambitions. He gives no idea of what he would like to achieve in
the future, there is no mention of owning a restaurant or marriage. Or perhaps he has privately decided these are not matters he wishes to discuss.

**Self-portrayal**
Tim has a happy-go-lucky air. Youthful looking, he is fit, healthy, enjoys being outdoors and practices martial arts. Work consumes his time, his job requires him to work weekends and evenings. It takes a big part of his life. He reads fantasy and alternate New Age books, loves his old Commodore cars and likes beer. He has a strong Christian background, and believes in a universal essence rather than a God.

Tim is outwardly directed, but also slightly reflective, as he reads a lot. He gives little idea of the type of person he sees himself as, his temperament, personality, what is important to him, his goals, what he wants to do in life. Despite being in his mid-20's, he gives the impression of a young man still in his late adolescence, more concerned with enjoying himself and doing what he wants now, than thinking about his future. He fails to give any picture of what presently inspires him or where he is going in life. The shadow of the figure of eternal youth seems to be around him.

**Self and Heroes**
Tim's recollections and ideas about his adolescent heroes are somewhat muddled, as well as hard to follow:

I didn't have a mainstream hero, someone I wanted to be like ... Everyone has got their faults ... I didn't focus my attention on who I wanted to be like. That didn't come into my life. I was having enough trouble dealing with myself ... I didn't preoccupy myself with other peoples lives and their shit ... Even in football, which I love, I thought Mal Meninga was just a fantastic athlete, big, strong, fast, just didn't stop, you know .. But I didn't see Mal Meninga as any sort of role model ... I can appreciate someone who does well at their sport but ... not as any sort of role model! ... I think my heroes as an adolescent were more related to interpersonal things that were happening with me... Like if I was playing a sport—football—I'd have a football hero. If I was being educated .. I'd have my scholastic hero, if I was going for a bushwalk I'd have the fishing guy .. he'd be my hero ... I can't identify individual people.

It is a muddled, unclear answer. 'Hero' is a problematic term. As an adolescent he says heroes (a publicly known, inspirational male figures), did not feature in his life. Then he says he did appreciate some men for their exceptional skill, but he can only recall Mal Meninga, the Australian rugby league captain at the time, and (puzzlingly) calls him his 'football hero'.

He cannot name or identify any older, public males he presently admires—not one. Is it more than a coincidence that, during a conversation of over an hour, Tim cannot name an older man he presently admires and also fails to mention one thing he admires about his father. There is a subtle sense of disillusionment regarding older men (perhaps heroes epitomise traditional masculinity). Even discussing New Age literature, he is exceptionally hostile towards the one
author he mentions, Carlos Castaneda, expressing his happiness on hearing about Castaneda's death in 1998.

Tim has a pre-occupation with freedom and release:

That's why I've got my car now. It's being able to experience your basic freedoms. It's exactly what it is. And to have the freedom where you ... to make your car go faster, to turn quicker ... You can actually have some influence upon the freedoms your experiencing with your car. I mean it's yours, you own it, no-one can take it away.

He enjoys the freedom to drive his car fast, have a beer whenever he wants and working to get money to enjoy himself. He likes the freedom of being able to act like an adolescent 'yob', with no responsibilities. But he never explains the motivations for this desire for freedom. Leaving his job after a disagreement seems symbolic. Tim has both individualist and conformist elements to his life. He reads and thinks about life's deeper questions. He believes in a transcendental reality beyond the material world, and is not devoted to material success, yet uncritically conforms to what he calls the local male yob stereotype. It is with respect to taking up traditional masculinity that he has been conformist. Uncritically he has taken up a lifestyle of beer drinking, sport, work focus, smoking and driving his car fast. He enjoys the typical practices associated with traditional masculinity, yet apparently believes the adult stage of masculinity would constrain him. Perhaps this is connected to the fact he finds no older men worthy of admiring, including his father.

Tim seems keen to stay in an adolescent state which he associates with freedom. He is consciously resisting becoming a man, which he apparently perceives as full of constraints that he cannot express. But Tim seems to realise adult traditional masculinity comes at a personal cost:

If I'm a man, then I have to do this and that. And I get hindered enough by people telling me what I should do ... If I'm 40 I might say I've become a man now. But I still won't care, I will still want that childish freedom!

Case Record 3: TOBY - DEE WHY
Background: 23 years, single
Occupation/Interests: Accounts clerk; surfing, drawing, kick-boxing.

Toby has lived in Dee Why, within walking distance of the beach since he was a small boy. He presently works as an accounts clerk with a timber company. Of average height, he has the well-shaped muscular physique of an active sportsman. He lives with his mother and younger sister in the house he has grown up in.
Adolescent Sport

Sport was the feature of his life as a boy and adolescent. He played basketball, rugby union, rugby league, soccer, as well as skateboarding, surfing and kick-boxing. In his mid-teens he was selected to play representative basketball for the Manly-Warringah district. But surfing has been the sport since he was very young, surfing he says, is fun:

I was always into heaps of sport ever since I was little! Probably the main sport I was into when I was little—living so close to the beach—was probably surfing. My mum used to take me to the beach all the time when I was younger. So I probably started surfing, just mucking around, since I was about 5. I've been doing it up until now ... *I just do it because I love it!* I like being out in the surf, the beach ... And you know getting into a nice wave. Just ... surfing ... sometimes I'll just go out there and surf not think about what I'm doing. Sometimes I'll go out and I'll say 'there's a trick I want to try, I want to learn', and I keep trying until I can do it. Usually I go surfing just for the fun of it.

Playing soccer and league as an adolescent taught him the importance of teamwork to achieve a common goal. Despite a pressure to be antagonistic toward opponents, he says he did not see them as 'rivals'; they were simply the opposing team. He would identify the best players but had no intention of going out to hurt them:

I reckon you learn different things from different sports. Well footy is more of a team sport, if everyone in the team doesn't like play together, you'll lose, no matter if 2 guys are the best players around—they'll pass it to someone and if he's not trying, they won't win... With the opponents, you don't think much of them, at the time, you think 'look at these guys'. Sometimes you play guys who are your mates, that's a bit weird, because you're supposed to be all against them, and then you see your mate on the other side and you go, 'oh I don't know!...' other soccer players? Don't really think about it! I'd see other players on the other team, see how they played and think, 'he's pretty good, have to watch out for him.' I'd start to think about who can play, more than what I thought of them as people.

He started kick-boxing when he was 15 years old after watching a Van Damme movie featuring martial arts. He saw it as a way to keep fit and be able to defend himself. He trained for a few years until injuring his back, but recently resumed to improve his fitness for surfing and compensate for the sedentary nature of his office job. He says kick-boxing keeps him fit and he enjoys that. He stresses it is very physically demanding and of course involves violent physical contact. Kick-boxing is personally rewarding. Greater proficiency he says gives him greater confidence in his ability, and also personal self-confidence:

I wanted to do a martial art, this was when I was only 15, and I wasn't sure what to do. I think I saw a movie actually ... I saw this old Van Damme movie, *Kickboxer*, and he goes to Thailand. They had Thai-fighting in it and I'd never seen Thai-fighting before ... It's more of an attacking art than a self-defence, fighting-style not really self-defence and I sort of liked it ... Fitness was probably the number one thing, as well. 'Cos, like Thai-boxing is really fitness oriented, all grabbing work takes so much energy out of ya ... I like to be fit. 'Cos when you're fit at that—then everything else you do you're also fit at... It gives you confidence, especially after you train for a while and you start to get good at it ... When you start to get a bit better you start to get a bit more confident when you go there. Suppose you feel a little more confident out, you know. Maybe if someone is going to try, you know, and beat you up or something, you know, you feel like you can do something about it!
His trainer has told him 'you’re ready to fight!' But Toby is somewhat ambivalent about going into a competitive bout:

He didn’t push me but I wouldn’t mind having a go. Not a 100% keen at the moment ... because you know it is a fight, you know, 'no holds barred', its full-contact like.

Surfing is his favourite sport. He says he loves surfing, but he talks mainly about the activity, being in the water; little is said about the physical and emotional thrill of surfing. Sport taught Toby a number of lessons, the importance of being fit and healthy, teamwork and he admits being skilful in kick-boxing gives him greater self-confidence. But little is said about the realm of experiential feelings.

Presently, sport fills most of his leisure time and being fit is important to him. Sport had a big place in Toby’s adolescence and it continues to hold a prominent place in his early 20s.

**Work**

Toby has been working for a few years as an accounts and distribution clerk with a local company, that imports and sells building materials to major retailers. He works each day with the man who established the business, organising the distribution and transport of materials to major retailers:

You’d say admin manager I suppose. Just recently I became the manager of the section I work. It’s an import company. We import timber, building materials from South East Asia and New Zealand and local. ... We sell to like [Hardware and General], all your big building supply places. Yeah, my position there is more accounting ’cos I do end-of-month reports, you know. Balance. All the imports, I get the documents to Customs, arrange the trucks to pick it up to the warehouse, or some of it goes straight from the wharves to whoever—it’s pre-sold, I arrange that. See I got two people working under me, make sure they invoice it, put it on stock and things like that.

Toby describes some of his tasks and the company business but finds it hard to categorise his job. He gives a bare outline of his work focussing on tasks and passes quickly over the topic. He reveals nothing about his attitude, whether he likes it or not or if he sees it as providing a career path. His reticence leaves an impression never articulated that it is 'just a job' for him, gives him money, but is not something that he enjoys.

**Father and Son**

Toby knows very little about his father. His parents separated when he was a baby. He grew up with his mother, and never saw his father. His mother remarried but the second marriage ended when he was ten. He does not mention his father until the end of the interview when asked about growing up without a father. His father was invited to celebrate Toby’s 21st birthday. It appears to be the only time they have met:
Don't really know much about him. I've met him a couple of times. Phew. He tried to make an appearance in my life when I was 21, which was like a long time after I've been born! So it was kind of like, 'here I am I'm your dad'. He gave me these gifts and it was meant to mean something to me. It was like some guy over the road could have given them, didn't mean anything like! I think it's down there in the cupboard, just a mug. Like thanks, 21 years. I went out with him. But actually he sort of turned about to be a bit of a pi**head, he wanted a few drinks. Actually haven't seen him since. I think he sort of felt we'd end up having this great sort of relationship. It was like talking to a stranger to me, and in the back of my mind I thought, 'you waited a while, what's the story now'.

Toby was sceptical about the sudden appearance in his life, and did not warm to his father. Whilst he says his father's uninterest in watching him grow up does not really bother him, there is a slight suggestion of some resentment, disappointment, anger and hurt, that he does not articulate. His words and his general demeanour as he talks do not quite match up:

He put forth a small effort when I was 21 and that was it. Probably doesn't really care that much, and it doesn't really worry me much either. See on TV people spewing because they don't have a dad, I never really thought about it, never bothered me too much, you know other people get affected different ways.

It is almost two years since he last saw his biological father. He realises not having a father has been a missing element of his family life as a boy. He is not sure what he missed out on, but he knows his father's functional absence, not fulfilling the roles fathers do every day in a family, had an effect on him. Yet he can be humorous about this gap in his life:

There was no-one like family member living with us, that I sort of ... You see TV shows where dads teach the son to shave an' that. I just did it by myself. One day I went and bought the stuff, you don't have to be Einstein to figure it out!

Role Models: Sportsmen and TV stars
Toby had no male figure in the family home to look to. The older males he looked up to as an adolescent included American basket-baller Michael Jordan and some Australian world champion surfers:

Like, I never had a male role model around, umm, I was pretty much on my own ... There was no-one, like family member living with us, that I sort of ... Used to look up to a couple of surfers, just because they were good surfers. Probably when I was younger I'd watch a video and go and try and surf like them, Mark Occhihuipo ... Tom Carroll. Mainly Australian surfers when I was younger ... And they were from round here too and that was good. Tom Carroll came from Newport, Bart Lynch he was from Manly. They were sort of role models, 'cos when I was younger, 12, 13 I'd go to the surfing contests when they were round here. So they were definitely role models. Footy players were never big role models for me because I thought they were meat-heads most of them, never looked up to them.

Toby looked up to them as role models for their sports abilities, he did not want to be like them. He says he would watch them on television and try to copy their techniques. But he says little
else about their impact upon him and his love of surfing, and what he learnt from them. He did not see them as models to base his identity and behaviour:

I just sort of respected them and liked them ... I never really had anyone who I thought, 'he's the greatest, I want to be like him' ... I just liked the way one surfed or played basketball. I never thought that's how I should be ... it's a bit hard to say, 'I want to be like them' for me because you don't know them. You don't know them, as a person, you only know them as a sportsperson. You say 'he's, may be the best basketball player, but at home who knows what he is like'. I prefer to know them if I'm going to say I want to be like them. Because at home he could be a full-on wife-beating alcoholic, gambling addict, who knows?

There is no mention of any schoolteachers or sports coaches whom he looked up to at that time. Toby appears to show a mature discernment in his attitude towards his adolescent role models. He admired their abilities, but did not want to imitate or identify with them. Apparently, he was exercising a sense of personal judgement with regard to his role models as he did not know them personally; what type of people they were.

Toby's role models were men with whom he had no physical or emotional contact, they were not part of his social world. Admiring them only for their sports abilities, seemingly, they did not provide significant guidance or inspiration about being a man. The absence of older men with whom he had close contact characterises his adolescence.

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**

Toby quickly grasps the idea of a dominant model or image of masculinity but his ideas are undevolved. His first comment is:

I know what you mean, umm ... out there in society there is ... some people sort of think that's the way to go, you know, 'be a man, be tough, do this!' Like people I know ... you might say, 'I'm gonna do this,' and they'll go, 'pffh, who're you kidding yourself, that's for little girls'.

The researcher refers to academic research suggesting a dominant model is about being strong, tough, unemotional, taking risks and not doing things girls do. Toby believes he and his friends have a model or script in their minds of what men must do to be manly/masculine. He recognises such a dominant model of masculinity. It is vague, but he says it nevertheless provides a subconscious psychological benchmark for judging manly behaviour:

It's kind of like, in your subconscious—what we can and can't do. And when you see someone do something that doesn't fit into your whole idea of what we should be doing—it alerts you 'hey he's doing ... that's not a manly thing he's doing'. Then you sort of make a judgement on it—you sort of see it and go that's not a manly thing to do and then you might make a joke about it—I've never been one to get upset about it, 'oh, don't do that', usually make a joke about it ... And then you realise that it's there, sort of pops up! Like it's there at the back of your mind and you're not always thinking about it, but when you see something out of the normal then it pops up, it sits there.
It is also a viewpoint that provides a mental reference point of manly behaviour, one he did not pick up from a father but acquired somehow growing up from his family, peers and the social world:

You might say it's from their dads but I never grew up with a dad, my mum was hanging up there saying 'go do this'. I still got that sort of feeling, if I went and did this—I can't do that, you know' ... made me think that everyone probably got built-in subconscious about what is manly and what isn't, I guess don't know where it comes from probably your surroundings.

He believes this vague but real model stops a lot of young men from doing certain things that are regarded as 'for girls'. It manifests as a gender pressure enforced by other schoolboys and friends. Asked if there is a code of behaviour for males, he replies:

Oh definitely! Like if ... with all your mates at school... if you said to them 'I think I'm going to do ballet', you'd get paid out. Everyone would just go, 'you're a poof', whatever, definitely. Probably stops a lot of people doing really what they want to when they're younger ... a lot might want to do something like that ... but they won't do it because people will take them out—and won't do it. There's definitely a thing like that ... with being macho ... you're not a man unless you do sort of 'manly' things, I suppose.

Toby initially says this pressure has never affected what he wanted to do, but after further reflection he admits it did amongst his school peers:

There's never been anything much that I've wanted to do that I've thought, 'I'd better not do that or people will pay me out'. I've never really felt the urge to do something people would consider ... Umm, I'm just trying to remember if I've ever been in that sort of situation, where anyone has sort of said, you know ... I think now, especially now, the way I feel now, if I wanted to do something people thought as feminine or whatever, I'd just do it anyway, do what I want. Probably when I was younger, when I was at school, I don't think I would have then 'cos you want to fit in more. Now I think I'm different.

Toby says the yob stereotype is a common image among males at Dee Why. He is not sure how accurate the typical male stereotype, is of men in general, but he does not explain further. Perhaps he means it is a limited image that men live up to in public, a façade:

Oh, there's stereotypes but I don't know how true they are, you know! There's a stereotype that everyone relates to when you say Aussie male—big beer drinking yobbo, I suppose. We muck around like, maybe like a bit of a yob—ya drink beer—'get on the piss'—and that's an Aussie male—being tough.

... just go down to Dee Why pub in the arvo, all the tradesmen hanging down there, drinking 12 quick schooners after work, ha. Dee Why pub nearly every afternoon is packed after work. You see all the tradesmen's trucks rock up, and that's your stereotype! Your Aussie guy rocking up to the pub after work, being a tradesman as well, because it's a pretty manly job—building, go and sink some beers.

He does not fit the stereotype, as he likes to be fit and healthy:
Ah, well I'm Australian ... so I'm not an Aussie yobbo. I don't sit in the pub all
day drinking beer. I don't even hardly drink at all anymore. Beer and hanging
in the pub are two things I'm not really into. And I'd rather not watch sport on
TV. I'd rather go outside and just go play. Ah, watch it at night. But I don't
really fit into that at all.

Becoming a Man

Asked, 'when did you become a man?', Toby's immediate response is to lean back and burst
into laughter. It seems the question has made him slightly uncomfortable, but he very honestly
says:

Haha, hmff. I don't know! I don't know if I'm one yet! I don't know. That's an
interesting question 'cos you hear 'grow up be a man' and all that. I don't really
know when that comes. I don't really know. People go 'do you consider
yourself a man?' I don't really think about it, its sort of question where you go 'I
don't know!'

Despite working in a full-time job for two years, practising the martial art of kick-boxing, there
has been no event or situation in his life which he regards marking when he became a man.
Toby says growing up he was pretty much on his own, finding out about masculinity by
himself from wherever he could find it, principally from movies and television. Asked about
the major influences on his ideas about being a man, he says:

Probably television because you know, it's in your house all the time beaming in
images that people want you to see! ... You know, on TV shows if they want to
portray someone who is really manly, like a hero, he's always really strong, big.
So after its on after 30 or 40 movies and every single hero is big and tough, you
start to think, 'well if you want to be a hero, be big and tough like those guys'.
Then if they want to portray someone who's weak and weedy they'll put some
little nerd on. You get an image. And if you see someone down the street who's
all skinny and glasses you go, 'ah nerd'. So when you cast a movie, hero is big
and muscly and little nerd is the skinny guy, everyone's sort of cast. action
heroes, like Van Damme, you know big hero, Stallone, Schwarzenegger.

... Err, I reckon the TV... seriously ... If you define man as masculinity ... just the
same influences that come from all around you. Probably more so for me
because I never had a 'man around the house'—it was things around you, media
and things. You see movies and little kids look up to the old man and all that
sort of stuff .... (Laughs) I became a man by watching TV.

Toby says he spent time with his grandfather whom he liked for his gentleness and artistic
abilities, but, 'I didn't aspire to be like him'. It appears there were no older men in his social
environment consciously showing him about being a man and masculinity. He says he never
thought much about being a man or masculinity, he just grew up. Nor does he explore when he
may become a man, he makes no mention of marriage, having children or owning a home as
markers of becoming a man:

Just never really thought about it a lot though. I wasn’t really looking for
anyone to show me when I was younger, like. I didn’t really think about it, just
sort of grew up.
Toby's sense of being a man, his masculinity, growing up and becoming a man is not a matter that has received much attention, either from himself or other men. He has received little positive guidance. Variously Toby has attempted to grasp ideas and examples from television, movie action heroes, elite sportsmen and social conceptions such as drinking alcohol is manly, what men do. He admits, without embarrassment that he is not yet a man but keeps a sense of humour about learning to be a man:

I don't know, I didn't go to any classes for it! I don't know.

Men Talking
Toby says he loves surfing, and talks animatedly about kick-boxing and his sporting adolescent feats. He does not appear to be on-guard as he talks at home, he seems to speak frankly, revealing his disappointment about meeting his father for the first time. But more personal things he does not discuss, he says little about his work, only after the interview does it emerge he is rather disenchanted. Nor does he discuss his keen interest in drawing and graphic design or the physical and emotional experience of sport.

Emotions are discussed but in a limited way. They remain confined to the world of sports, the world of action, and by way of allusion. He does not say he feels apprehensive and a bit anxious about having his first competitive kick-boxing bout. Instead he says, 'not 100% keen at the moment'. It does not quite ring true when he says he is not bothered about his father's uninterest, there are things that remain unsaid. His suspicion and disappointment with his father is indirectly reflected when he says, 'in the back of my mind' I thought, 'you waited a while what's the story now?' He does not directly state his feelings. They are in code.

Toby says this is the first time he has talked about masculinity, being a man, and it is something he has never thought about in a systematic or critical way. The interview made him think about masculinity, growing up as a man and what is 'manly behaviour', things he had never thought about but had just uncritically accepted:

It's probably made me think a little bit, wonder. When you raised questions about what did I define as being a man and what isn't? It made me aware that I do have a perception of what being a man is. I don't think I really ever thought about it before. Now I sort of think, yeah, suppose I do.

Whilst thoughtful and frank about his opinions and life experiences, Toby keeps a screen up, he actually reveals little about the type of person he is, or how he sees himself. He says nothing about his aims in life, nor any doubts he has about work and his future. But he does give glimmers of something below the surface, a glimpse into his interior-psychological world. He admits he does not yet regard himself as a man, that he is cynical about people, and does not really admire any older men.
Self-portrayal
Toby has a strong sense of physicality. Sport, physical strength and fitness seem to be primary elements of his life. He is conscious of keeping his body healthy and fit to improve his surfing. He says he reads very few books, he enjoys American comics and when not being physically active he may spend his time drawing. Toby is very outward directed, his life is about what he does in the world, work, surfing, and sport (and probably friends). He talks mostly about his activities.

Self and Heroes
Toby is athletic looking and physically robust. As a young teenager he looked up to the movie star Van Damme, an 'action hero', and later on, sports champions, all of whom embodied by a strong sense of physicality. But heroes, publicly known, inspirational male figures, were not a feature he recalls of his adolescence:

When I was younger for a while, I used to think Van Damme was pretty cool, but then I grew out of him ... Like when I say they were my heroes, I wouldn't really go that far, I just sort of respected them and liked them. I never really had anyone who I thought, 'he's the greatest I want to be like him. That's how I should be!' Never, ever! Never really looked up to anyone that strongly.

So he never had heroes he wanted to be like, and apparently there were no older men during his adolescence with whom he mixed and admired. Now as a young adult he cannot name anyone he admires, he says he is cynical about people:

Umm. Yeah. I'm a pretty cynical person. I don't know if I really admire many people ... its not like I've ever thought about it before, that I admire them ...

Asked instead, who he might respect, he mentions one of the kick-boxers at the gym, 'as an awesome athlete', an example of how skilled a martial artist he would like to be. He also respects the owner of the company he works for:

Sometimes I think about my boss at work. I respect him because I know he grew up in country Queensland came to Sydney, started a business which now has 3 offices around Australia. He's made quite a bit of money, he's quite successful. I sort of admire the way he's just gone out and done it ... he's made the whole company from scratch.

He respects these men for what they do and their success. He does not mention their personal qualities, the type of people they are, nor how they relate to others. He respects these men for their performance in the world of action, their achievements, not as men with admirable qualities. But he says little about them, they are shadowy, vague figures, even their age is unknown. There is a trace of negativity about Toby and men. Toby had no father nor a reliable inspiring male presence around as he grew up. He says he is cynical about people and cannot name any public male figures he admires. He seems alienated from older men.
Toby is engaging, thoughtful, his sense of self is focussed externally, in what he does in the world. Work seems a means to make money, there is no mention of a vocation he might find appealing. Surfing and kick-boxing are the only topics he becomes animated about. He has kept behind his persona. He does not say what he wants to do with his life, his life goals, what inspires him, other than sport.

Toby clearly shows many features associated with traditional masculinity, outwardly directed, emotional reticence, physicality, a focus upon the body, and devoted to sport. Television and peers were key influences in teaching him about being 'manly'. He acknowledges that young males are pressured to conform to a pattern of behaviours that must not be seen as 'feminine'. But Toby has not thought about the character of traditional masculinity, he is oblivious to the form of masculinity he has adopted and adapted growing up and being involved in a strongly male-oriented surf sub-culture.

In his early 20s, Toby seems at the moment to be meandering along with his life, enjoying his youth, not worrying too much about his life direction. But bereft of men to admire, and admirable men active in his life, he is not receiving much guidance about a direction for his life or about the transition to male adulthood. Perhaps these matters will take his attention in the coming years.

**Case Record 4:**

**Background:** Single, 25 years

**Occupation/Interests:** Waiter/musician: jazz-blues music, playing squash.

Wes is of mixed ethnic background. His father is Dutch and his mother was from the Solomon Islands. He is a young black man (unlike the other participants). Physically imposing, he is big, burly chested, with huge biceps, almost six foot in height he is perhaps 14 stone in weight. He has lived with his family on the Northern Beaches all his life. His relationship with his Australian girlfriend has lasted for over three years.

**Adolescent Sport**

He says sport had a 'pretty major role' in his adolescence, he played basketball, soccer, rugby league, tennis and golf:

> there’s a good thing attached to being a good sportsman as a young male. Your talents recognised, you become more popular, like, picked first for the footy team ... gives status .. I was lucky enough to have some ability.

Basketball was his favourite adolescent sport. Initially he played in the schoolyard between classes, later on he was asked to join the school team. Being noticed by other young males as
having ability he says, 'makes you feel good .. it was a good thing'. What he liked most about basketball was the competitive challenge and the exercise:

I like a bit of competition and winning, the physical challenge I guess .. As a teenager I liked to train a lot. There's a certain addiction to sport .. being really fit. Somehow it affects your mental well-being as well.

When asked what he learnt from sport he seems slightly abashed, saying whilst it is a cliche, it holds true for him:

it's how you play the game, not winning like, it can relate to other things. It was fun at the time, you played hard. Some would throw tantrums if they lost. If you won, good, but it was not everything ... It's hard to explain .. yet the skill of running with the ball, dodging .. high skill factor involved.

He implies that it is more important to participate enthusiastically, rather than being solely focussed upon winning. He acknowledges this lesson applies to other parts of life. It appears initially he played basketball as a way to be physically active during classbreaks. He has trouble explaining basketball's appeal, but mentions it was a way to develop his physical condition, ball skills and compete with other boys. He regards it is as a graceful sport, with much physical skill involved in being able to dribble the ball and dodge opponents. But the researcher has to ask something Wes never actually admits, 'did he enjoy basketball?'. Perhaps this is so obvious it did not need mentioning.

Basketball is in the past, he plays squash now. There are some echoes of an emphasis on developing a physical style of masculinity during adolescence, through sport and gym workouts, but Wes also mentions he found being physically fit helped his mental well-being. There were other ends in mind than just being physically active. At the time he was also learning music and how to play the piano. It could well be that sport provided a necessary balance in his life.

Work
Wes has been working a combination of jobs for over three years. During the day he works at a cafe in Dee Why. His principal passion is music. He has played in a jazz-blues fusion band for two years as a keyboard player at venues around Sydney, but performances are sporadic. It seems the band is likely to break-up, despite having made a CD. Teaching piano to young students is a means of making additional income.

Presently he is considering his vocational future. Music remains an option, as does university. He is also thinking about attending Bible College after getting to know a young Minister who has had a most remarkable life. He says he has a number of options about a future vocation, but is unsure what to take. He is keen to establish his life direction, and is giving himself time to sort it out:
This guy I know he had a great job as engineer, he could have been set for life, his family thought he was crazy ... He wrestled with his conscience. He's been a missionary, nearly died, witnessed miracles ... I've got five or 6 options, that I don't know what to choose, maybe by the end of the year I'll know.

Father and Son

Wes's father is a university-trained geologist. Initially working for mining companies exploring for minerals in central Australia and in various Pacific Islands, he has also worked as a resource analyst for stockbroking firms. He operated a supermarket business for several years when Wes was a teenager. At the time of the interview, he was unemployed but looking for work in his field. Born in Holland, he grew up as a teenager in Dee Why where there was a small Dutch community in the postwar years:

He was born in Holland after the war ... he would describe himself as a 'geologist' but basically just unemployed at the moment. He just finished working for Fox Sports doing television fillers.

He admits his father was the major boyhood influence upon his attitudes about being a man, simply by daily example. They live together and since his mother died a few years ago he says they get on okay. There is no tensions in the relationship:

we get on, but it's not particularly close.

The picture Wes paints of his father is virtually all in terms of work and career. The only personal matter he reveals is that his father is aged in his 50's. So much is unsaid, he gives no clue to the type of man his father is. There is no mention of memorable moments together as Wes was growing up, what he learnt from him, nor is there any indication of his feelings towards his father. Apparently they get on, but what is missing from Wes' comments is an indication of some warmth, and how his mother's death affected them.

Role Models: Sportstars

Dad was a boyhood role model by his everyday example. Spending much of his time playing basketball and working out at the gym as an adolescent, Wes says he looked up to internationally outstanding exponents of these sports:

sporting superstars were role model-type of figures, like Michael Jordan, I liked his sport ability. When I worked out, I liked Schwarzenegger.

As a keen musician at the time he also admired Miles Davis as a great trumpet player, but there was a proviso. He admired him solely for his musical ability, not his lifestyle or personality, since he thought, 'he was rotten at everything else'. Wes drew a distinction between admiring outstanding exponents in sport and music for their talent and abilities, as distinct from seeing them as men to emulate in terms of behaviour, lifestyle or personality:
you could try and emulate their sporting prowess without actually knowing what their personal lives were like.

Basketball, working out and jazz music were adolescent passions. Wes looked up to some outstanding exemplars reflecting his interest in these pastimes. These role models were men outside his family or social world. But his admiration was confined to their abilities, seemingly, they did not provide much inspiration about being a man.

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**

The idea of a dominant model of masculinity makes him pause and ask for elaboration. Seemingly, it is a foreign idea for him. The researcher refers to academic research suggesting the dominant form of masculine character comprises being unemotional, taking risks, not doing anything feminine, and being a 'big wheel', successful. Wes replies:

"Yeah, in a nutshell, that's generally the image of being a male portrayed everywhere ... as an adolescent saw that image in the media, TV, movies, like the 'real men don't cry' attitude.

He recalls the image was portrayed frequently in action-hero movies he saw as an adolescent, especially by Van Damme, Bruce Willis and Schwarzenegger. It was an image he just accepted. He says he did not think about it, it was part of the schoolyard and teenage male culture. At the age of 15, at friends' barbecues and parties, he noticed that his peers and the slightly older males were drinking beer. He says seeing this he just thought, 'all men drink beer', and got drunk for the first time. He says it was his friends and peers who most strongly embodied the dominant model. When he visited Amsterdam recently he saw many loud, beer drinking Aussies that he considers lived up to the obnoxious, big drinking Aussie male stereotype. But high school was a crucial period in learning about how men behave:

"probably friends more than anything else, yeah, definitely ... basically learnt everything knew in playground at school, and I guess they shape you.

Discussing the code of behaviour men are generally expected to conform to, Wes acknowledges there is a dominant model of masculinity, that is physically-oriented and incorporates social practices; perhaps most visible as the Aussie male stereotype. He still regards the model as a potent behavioural influence, even now in his 20s. He observes it among some of his old high school friends, and the young men he meets through his girlfriend's family. He comments many of these males are heavy beer drinkers, and talk mainly about sport and work.

**Becoming a Man**

Asked 'when did you become a man?', Wes laughs:
Haha, oh, I don't know, ha. Don't know if I am? Umm, being a man wasn't something you really thought about, it just was, know what I mean.

The question stumps Wes, seemingly making him slightly uncomfortable. Whilst he identifies notable moments in his teenage years, his first cigarette, first time drunk and first girlfriend, they did not trigger a change in how he saw himself. He recalls going to a friend's barbeque:

like, all the men are drinking beer, 16, 17 year olds. This was my first experience. I had a taste because it was the thing to do, all the other blokes were doing it, that's it. Without thinking I knocked back 5, 6 beers, later I felt sick.

He highlights some adolescent markers in the process of growing up, signifying they were common social practices among his peers. But he is unable to identify any memorable events or situations in his life that undeniably marked a personal transition to being a man. Nor does he make any mention of what might provide transformative means for becoming a man such as marriage, full-time work, establishing a vocation or becoming a father.

Yet he is quite certain of the major influences upon his ideas about masculinity, his father and mother, sport, movies, but most of all, his friends:

Yeah, definitely friends. I guess because dad was the only man around, and working late nights in the supermarket didn't really talk to him about those things. Basically learnt everything from playground ... Years 7 to 12 were crucial period in learning about masculinity--absolutely--had no-one to talk to.

He had no other older male relatives to watch and talk to. He says he only saw his Dutch grandfather infrequently, and believes he did not have an impact. So, apart from his father, there were no older males who were part of his social life as a youth affecting his ideas about being a man. None of his high school teachers left an impact. He recalls a primary school teacher, a 'big, burly, nice bloke', who was a rugby player. But the impression is Wes recalls the teachers' size and strength, which he implies the boys found intimidating, rather than the type of man he was.

For Wes becoming a man (and as he admits) being a man is not something he thought about, implying he saw it as something that just happens by virtue of biology and aging. Even now he has little idea of how or when he might regard himself as an adult male. Becoming a man seems to be a matter left to luck, chance and for Wes to try himself as best he might (if he thinks it important).
Men Talking

Both his parents are not Australian born, they are migrants. Unlike his friends he has a non Anglo-Celtic Australian background. He observes his family upbringing was quite different to his girlfriend's and other Australian friends. He finds it hard to put into words, so he refers to the recent popular Australian movie, The Castle:

my friend's families were like those in the movie, life revolves around the family, do an honest day's work, nice home to come home to, have a drink, they just like what they've got. The guys don't say much. It says Aussies like simple things.

He says the young males he meets at his girlfriends' family gatherings, are like the males in the movie. They say very little, except about sport, drink a lot, many of them are tradesmen, drive trucks and work mostly with their hands. Wes realises he comes from a different background. For instance, alcohol did not figure in his upbringing, occasionally his family had wine at dinner. He says he gets on with the young males, but feels slightly 'different', since he drinks moderately, plays music, does not have a settled job and is thinking about going to university.

Wes can discuss some differences between his upbringing in a migrant family and his friends' families, but he is rather reticent on more personal matters. He keeps quiet about the emotional aspects of the relationship with his father. Indeed, family life is not really discussed. There is no mention of the impact of his mother's death upon he and his father. Nor does he refer to his experiences being a young black male at school were his ethnicity made him stand out. He fails to give any explanation why he is considering going to Bible College. Perhaps such matters are too personal to discuss, or maybe it is just habit not to talk about such matters. Whilst the amount of time for the interview may have had an impact, it did not preclude a brief mention of such matters.

Self-portrayal

Wes is of Dutch and Solomon Islander heritage. He was born locally at Mona Vale Hospital and grew up going to state school in the Northern Beaches district. He is tall, big, burly, strong, imposing and black. His sheer size could be intimidating to others (possibly it discouraged some boys picking on him at school). He plays squash. Music is a passion. He plays electronic keyboard, piano and guitar. He seems to have a busy lifestyle, working in a cafe, playing night-time gigs with his band, teaching young music students, and spending time with his girlfriend and her family.

In the course of the conversation he emerges as a cheerful, gregarious, creative, thoughtful young male who is rather observant. But he does not give any inclination about the type of person he is, what things are important to him, not even the significance of religion to him, or if he thinks being black has affected his life. He talks about what he does, but gives very little clue as to how he sees himself. He has stayed behind his cheerful and physically large persona.
Self and Heroes

As an adolescent he says sportstars were the men who took up the wall space in his bedroom:

it's natural to be interested in those who really excel in your interests, because you want to try and be the best you are in those sports, hobbies. You tend to emulate the greats .. suppose you find that in any interest, chefs, scholars, scientists.

However, heroes, publicly known figures as personal inspirations, did not figure in his adolescence. Wes reiterates his distinction about role models. As an adolescent he might try to emulate the skills of a sportstar, but not their personality nor as an inspiration for how to be a man. The men he presently admires are personal acquaintances. A high school friend now operates a successful nursery business. This was his goal when he left school, he worked hard to get money to set it up, and now it is operating profitably. He also mentions a young Minister who turned down a highly paid engineering job when he was in his 20s to follow a religious vocation:

an amazing decision, he could have been set for life, his family thought he was crazy ... He wrestled with his conscience. He's been a missionary, nearly died, witnessed miracles. And he's done everything, can fix a car, a bike, a boat.

These men are clearly minor inspirations at a time when he is uncertain about his own life goals, direction and work. His reasons for admiring them are implied and not articulated; seemingly, for following what inspired them, for taking the hard road, and working hard for their goals. Perhaps, in light of his own uncertainty, they are men whose example he sees as somewhat inspiring, showing something important to him. He does not call them 'heroes', but do fulfil a function of a hero—an inspiration for what one can do and be. They are personal acquaintances, but what impact their example may have upon may not be known for some time.

Wes is visibly different to the other young males. He is of mixed ethnic background, his father (unlike the others) is tertiary educated. He recognises some of the cultural differences between his family and those of his Australian-born friends, particularly with regard to social practices such as beer drinking. He seems somewhat more reflective than the other young Dee Why males and yet shares some of their features, such as a strong physicality, affection for sport, alcohol and an emotional reticence.

Whilst his background reflects a different cultural experience to those of the other participants (the reason for his participation), there are reflections of traditional masculinity in his persona. For instance, his physicality, strength, attachment to sport, competitiveness, emotional reticence, sense of independence and individuality (relationships are little mentioned). However, these do not seem predominant features of his sense of masculine identity. He seems to have a flexibility in his attitudes and behaviours; perhaps by virtue of the importance he attaches to being a musician.
Wes has yet to set the trail he would like to make his mark on the world. He has an adolescent quality, possibly because he lacks a clear sense of life direction or vocation, and still lives in the parental home. He acknowledges he does not yet regard himself as an adult male, it seems he is in a liminal stage.

The Rural Males–NSW Southern Highlands

Case Record 5: DOMINIC - BOWRAL
Background: Single, 22 years
Occupation/Interests: Shop assistant; science fiction movies, playing music.

Dominic has grown up in the Southern Highlands. He is tall and lean, and looks somewhat younger than his 22 years. He lives with his parents and sisters, attends Church every Sunday and sings in the choir. He works as a sales assistant at a major local supermarket.

Adolescent Pastimes

Although he enjoyed playing cricket and basketball in primary school, there was no room for sport in his adolescence, as he devoted himself to learning a musical instrument:

I did enjoy sport growing up, I played plenty at primary school. When I was 11,12 I played cricket and basketball, and loved that, I wasn’t fantastic but I enjoyed myself. When I went to Chev, I had the chance to do plenty of music, was in the choir, concert band and orchestra. Unfortunately, I had to let the sport go, had to stop playing I didn’t have the time. I started the french horn in first year and after a while I got invited to join the concert band.

Being able to play the french horn with the school band gave him the opportunity to travel, for recitals and eisteddfods:

I did want to be in the music band because you got the chance to go places, eisteddfods. So a few teachers taught me how to play the french horn ... And I had to stick with it otherwise there would be no french horn in the orchestra. I think I’d rather play that, than any other instrument because a lot of the others—trumpet, brass—everybody plays them. I liked being different, to play something that makes a decent sound and that nobody else played ... Basically, it fed my ego. They needed a french horn player, they always had french horn parts, and if they didn’t they would write one for me. I love music. I like all types of music except heavy-metal ... Some music moves me inside, I assume it’s the same for other people, it’s part of me. I don’t know how to explain it. When I’m playing it in the middle of the orchestra, playing away, I’m part of it.

Playing music had several appeals for Dominic, including being able to play a specialist instrument made him feel special, stand out. It is not evident what he may have learnt being part of a musical troupe; quite possibly something about the rewards of dedication and hard work, and the joy of participating in a group project. But it appears he grew to appreciate and
love many types of music. However, learning to play an instrument is a very individual pursuit, requiring dedication and hours of practice alone. It seems a pastime that may have suited his temperament.

Now in his early 20s he still loves music, but he says little about its present role in his life. Although a member of his Church Choir, it is unclear whether he plays with a musical group.

**Work**

For three years Dom has worked as a part-time sales assistant and storeman at a major supermarket in Bowral, whilst studying at university. He has deferred his studies. He now works four days a week, and at the moment seems content with part-time work:

> I'm a checkout operator during the week, and on weekends, the storeman, checking deliveries, make sure stocks on the shelves, general runabout. Actually, I've been in it for 3 years. After I finished school mum and dad said 'get a job', I said, 'fine'. I went to uni and then got a casual job as a storeman ... I do enjoy it, partly because I like the people who work there and the work is not physically strenuous, I have to 'keep on the ball'. I'm not there 9 to 5 every day, so umm, I get to do a lot of different things.

It is twelve months since he deferred his chemistry studies, he is undecided if he will resume University. He has not thought about what he might move on to next:

> Uni is an option. I haven't thought too much about it, life's been very busy with family, work, helping dad ... I started a degree at the suggestion of my parents, I couldn't think of anything better to do. I thought I might as well embark on something that has some sort of direction, even if I decided not to stay. I've taken a year off because my motivation left before I did. If I stayed another semester I wouldn't get better than basic passes, and I know I should get better than that.

He has little idea of direction in his life, a vocation or satisfying work he could pursue. The confusion is generating some family and social pressure:

> Because I'm 22 I'm being told I have to get a full-time job—my parents. People who know me in the supermarket ask me if I'm going back to my study, that I have a good brain and should use it. I appreciate they take notice of me. But I feel people should ask 'are you happy, what would you like to do?'. I'm getting the message at this age I should have a licence, should be at uni or working.

Dominic seems content drifting, having a breathing space from the treadmill of school, university and work. But not having a sense of where his life is heading, or knowing what he wants to do at the age of 22, seems more unsettling for his family and others than for him. He finds their well meaning pressure discomforting. It also indicates some of the social pressures young males experience about 'what they should be doing'.
Father and Son

Dominic’s father is in his early 50’s, and has been a bank accountant and operated his own small business. For several years his father has been a senior administrator at a prestigious private school in the Highlands. It is a job he enjoys so much he has taken on extra responsibilities:

he’s there from half past 8 in the morning until 6, and most Saturdays.

Work may well provide a major part of his father’s identity, as well as a giving a sense of purpose to his life. It has always been an important focus of his life. As a young boy Dominic recalls his father worked a lot, so he spent more time with his mother and grandparents than with his dad:

Even on holidays, when we went to Durras, he would be there for 3-4 days, and we would be there a week. He would spend more time at work than with us. We never did the old camping–fishing trips. Mum took us on holidays. A lot of the time our behaviour was being reinforced by mum. Dad used to help us with our homework.

A memorable boyhood moment he recalls was his father telling him not to cry at the funeral of his grandfather. Dom was 7 years old at the time:

When I was younger, he’d say ‘stop crying’. He tried to teach me to deal with my emotions rather than let them control me. Even if he was telling me not to cry, he was comforting me. At the funeral for my pop, dad said, ‘don’t cry’, I don’t know whether he thought it was alright to be sad, but not to cry. I think I was 7. I managed not to cry all through the service but outside I broke down ... I wish I had spent more time with my father when I was younger, doing things like .. it may sound old .. like cleaning the car, just so we could be together.

Most of Dominic’s recollections about childhood experiences with his father are rather negative. There is no mention of him as an early role model. Nor is his father mentioned as encouraging an interest in music, or spending much time with him as a boy or adolescent. There is a tangible sense of sadness about the relationship. He admits he is not close to him, he is more likely to talk with his mother if he has problems:

Not really that close, we don’t spend too much time together. It’s a bit hard as we are both working. Not emotionally ... He’s not overbearing. I seem to have this apprehension about telling him my views. I don’t know why. I don’t talk to my father that much about things. I do talk to my mother a bit more.

Dominic finds it hard to talk about his father, it seems he has not really thought deeply about their relationship. He has no conscious explanation for his apprehensiveness towards his father nor the disconnection he feels. He cannot bring himself to state his feelings, but admits there is a huge emotional gulf between them. It is very clear he does not want to be like his father:

I look at my relationship with him, and if I had a son, use it to improve that. I’d take my relationship with my father and develop one that I feel is a better one.
Role Models: Teachers

Dominic does not readily recall his adolescent role models. He says his grandfathers had some impact showing him how men behave. Only later in the conversation does he remember he looked up to some priests at school:

When I was younger I had a closer relationship with my grandparents than my father. My mum's dad was important in showing you could work hard, be a good family man and have a good life, be happy ... Father Irwin at high school, he was partly a role model. He was a priest, he'd traveled a lot, he had a responsible job, he'd helped a lot of people. And Father Terry, he was a role model, he showed you could have religious beliefs and incorporate them into your life ... they were influencing my behaviour as I thought with part of my behaviour, I had to be a nice person.

Dominic watched how these men practiced their religious belief in everyday situations. He knew them principally in their roles as teachers and priests, with presumably limited familiarity with them as individuals. There is no sense of a strong personal connection with these men. He looked up to them as examples of how to practice, day-by-day, the values he regarded as important, to be a nice person and a good Catholic.

Dominant Model of Masculinity

Dominic does not grasp the idea of a dominant model. But he is well aware that many men conform to certain codes of behaviour and social practices:

I see a definite image of having to look after your family, the man standing up—protector. He has to make sure the family is alright. He is not expected to have emotions because he has to look after the family. Showing your emotions is not something you do because it's not something people think we need to do as a man ... In the media you see more men doing physical sports. And drinking is considered as a men's thing. At a barbeque, they don't just go to talk, they drink—the man and a beer is prominent ... being successful in your work, being good at sport, with a bit of time for a family.

At high school he saw his peers conform to a youthful male code of behaviour:

I found in high school I spent a lot of time not doing things the main group of kids would do, like, err, all in a hurry to get a licence. Yeah .. talk about parties and what they drank. I never really understood the need to go to a party and drink lots of alcohol. I didn't understand why that was considered normal, they know they will wake up with a hangover. I seemed to have lived my life logically, I know if you drink too much you end up sick! If you drive fast you can end up in a crash. This is what you see young males do. A lot of people say it's peer pressure, but a lot of it is they way they see they 'have to' behave. So a lot of things I haven't done.

Dominic is a keen observer, whilst unable to conceptualise a dominant model of masculinity, he is very familiar with many of its features. As a teenager he recognised young males conform to certain social practices and behaviours; an emphasis on physicality and sport, emotional
stoicism, beer drinking and working. It was a code of behaviour, characteristic of the male youth culture, that he did not relate to.

**Becoming a Man**

The question, 'when did you become a man?' clearly unsettles Dominic. He immediately leans back in his chair pushing it against a wall behind him, and his eyes roll upwards triggering his thoughts:

I honestly still think of myself as a late teenager, even though legally I have been an adult for 4 years, now I'm 22, I'm a young man. I'm still living the kind of lifestyle that kids coming out of high school do, and that makes me feel like I'm still stuck with that age group. Because I'm 22 I'm being told I have to get a full-time job ... I should have a licence, should be at uni or working ... I don't really see there is a turning point, changing from teenager still part of the family, to a single entity where I am judged by myself. Becoming a man to me, I have difficulty with that concept. I am consistently bombarded with people saying, 'at this age you should be doing this,' which I sort of rebel against. There's not a real cut-off point where things change, it probably would be a lot easier.

There have been no notable events in his life so far marking a transition to adult male. Dominic accepts he is not yet a man, but stuck somewhere in adolescence. Whilst being able to vote at 18 may have legally conferred adult status, he knows it did not mark him becoming a man. He also does not believe social markers such as leaving home or marriage and children will establish him as a man.

His answer develops as he speaks. Becoming a man is not a matter he has really thought about. He suggests a young male becomes a man when he makes a firm stand for his beliefs, a personal and subjective experience:

If I had to put an association, now, I think you are pretty much a man when you make a decision that whatever society throws at you, this is my belief. Point of time you accept these are your choices, no longer just the beliefs you've taken on board. You say this is who I am, these are what I believe in. There's not a real cut-off point where things change, it probably would be a lot easier.

There is little sense of this being a well considered idea, it appears to be triggered by the question, rather than a firm belief or personal conviction. He is very clear that the major influences on his ideas about masculinity were his family, his peers and Catholicism. He regards his mother as the most important influence on his life. A devout Catholic she encouraged him to make his own decisions, he did not have to follow everyone else:

My mother did instill in me the idea that you should look at what people are doing, respect their choices, like drinking and smoking, but you don't have to do it. She said see what they are doing, and chose what you want to do, just because the world is doing something doesn't mean it is right for you ... I tend to get more of my views and behaviour patterns from my mother because she was there a lot more than dad, as he was at work.
At high school he saw his peers follow a set pathway and conform to a code of behaviour. Despite disliking the male youth culture, his peers had a major impact upon him:

My peers played quite a fair part in my development, by their behavioural patterns, they spent a lot of time talking about sport or sportsmen, or drinking or driving. Anyone who held a job was thought of as more important, they had a job, it was 'cool'. They were seen as more mature, judged on what they had or did, than themselves ... I didn't want to behave like they did, getting drunk ... The basic way is at 17, 18 years they get their licence, and at 18 they go to pubs and nightclubs to socialise, play sport on the weekends. To me it seems they can only see one way to do things. And then they get a job.

It was Catholicism that taught him a code of ethical behaviour, to be a nice person:

A lot of the time, as a Catholic, it was reinforced you were to help others, offer everything you had to people in need. In my mind I had the image it was the man who did it, the man would stand up to help. That influenced me. My choices not to be like my peers were not just rational, I thought I had to be a person who helped, who cared. I use(d) my knowledge and my religious background to chose what I thought was the best way to behave.

Dominic could not relate to the local male youth culture of his peers. Catholicism, and the values he learnt from his family seem to have bolstered his conscious choice not to conform. But failure to join the adolescent crowd obsessed with sport, drinking beer and getting one's driver's licence, came at a cost. For failing to conform to the traditional model of masculinity, he was ostracised and ridiculed by his peers; they seemingly acted as gender police punishing him for not bowing to the strictures of traditional masculinity.

**Men Talking**

Dominic talks easily about growing up in the district, but remains very factual. Halfway through the interview it emerges that high school was a difficult time. Some of his peers called him 'pizza face':

I've got to the point that I'm guarded with my emotions, I see myself with a shield. I was teased at high school, a slow developer physically. I was called pizza face, as I had bad acne, in years 11, 12. I never blamed myself for having bad skin. I felt sorry for them for having to tease me to fit in. I knew they were good people. But in a group they behaved differently. And I had more brains anyhow.

Dominic glosses over the experience. There is no mention of feeling vulnerable, humiliated or alienated at the time, rather his feelings are externally oriented, towards others rather than himself. Nor does he discuss its impact on his self-confidence. The victimisation seemingly taught him to disconnect from his emotional self and not be vulnerable:

We (men) think of emotions as separate to our behaviour. Something happens and we might feel sad, we might want to cry but for me anyway, I might feel sad but to cry doesn't belong to that emotion. When I'm sad I don't think to cry. Whether it's because I've been conditioned or not I don't know.
Several times he mentions his unpleasant high school experiences, apparently the teenage wounds still hurt. But even some years later he glosses over his experience. Nor does he discuss the current role of the motivating forces in his life, music and Catholicism. He gives no explanation why he studied chemistry rather than music at University, nor the personal importance of God. He says very little about how these forces presently contribute to his life. His manner of expression means he gives rather simplistic explanations of his interests and Catholicism.

But he does discuss something that annoys him. Still living the lifestyle of a late teenager, not knowing what he wants to do, is attracting unlooked for advice. As a young male it reflects some of the expectations associated with his age:

> you constantly hear people in their 60, 70's say enjoy your youth, be happy, study, when you get a job do something you want to do. Yet I'm still getting the message at my age I should have a licence, should be at uni or working ... I am consistently bombarded with people saying to me, at this age you should be doing this! And I sort of rebel against that ... they should be saying what would I like to do.

Significantly, this is the first time Dominic has discussed what it is to be a man, with another male. He has not discussed masculinity with his own peers, nor his father or male relatives. The conversation he says has given him a vocabulary for talking about masculinity, and ideas he never had:

> This is not something you talk about very often. I think people don't talk about it because they find it hard to put into terms, like, becoming a man.

**Self-portrayal**

Slender in build, Dominic has the looks of a young male in his late teens. He collects coins and is a science-fiction movie buff. He has lived all his life with his family in the Southern Highlands. Dominic admits he still sees himself as a late teenager-adolescent, not a young man, explaining that living with his parents he believes they still shape his life.

> I honestly still think of myself as a late teenager, even though legally I have been an adult for four years, now I'm 22 ...

Being a Catholic seems very important to how he sees himself, as well as the source of his value system and beliefs. It shapes his behaviour, but his explanation of its personal meaning for him is simplistic:

> My faith is important. I'm a Catholic, I go to Mass every Sunday. I don't quite know if I'll get to heaven but you never know. Now I choose to follow my religion because I like the beliefs, I feel they are relevant. A lot of the time, as a Catholic, it was reinforced you were to help others, offer everything you had to people in need. I thought I had to be a person who helped, who cared, a nice person.
Self and Heroes

As an adolescent Dominic had no flesh and blood male heroes, he can only the figure he recalls admiring at all is Jesus Christ:

I didn't have a hero in particular, but I liked famous people such as actors, that had a family, that were seen to help others. [You can't think of any names?] No. I don't think I ever tended to look at a particular person, or group of people to be like them. I'm sure I admired some people. But... Ha (sigh), I admired Jesus a lot. He was someone I wanted to be like, and still do. He was nice to people, he had a patience with people, that I didn't, something I really wanted to get. He had an ability to help people, and that's something I'd like to do.

Discussing men he presently admires he takes a very long time to think before mentioning Australian tennis champion Pat Rafter and Nelson Mandela. He appreciates that Rafter is known as a non-drinker, and has set up a foundation for street kids:

Mandela reinforces to me part of being a man is having a real strength to stick to your views, to stick to your religious beliefs because they are important to you, a current through your life. He wasn't bitter after being in jail all those years, he wanted to help his country. He said go as far as you can go.

Living, publicly known, inspirational older males do not appear to have been of much significance to him during adolescence, and heroes is still a problematic matter. He does not readily name Rafter or even Mandela, perhaps reflecting his wariness of other males. Dominic does not have a developed sense of personal self and shows many contradictory qualities. He seems lacking in self-assurance yet has shown considerable strength of character, rebelling against peer pressure and social expectations about young males. He cannot talk about his teenage wounds but can admit he is stuck with a teenage self-image and cannot cry; he loves music but gives no idea of its current importance; his religion is integral to his identity but he cannot explain what it means to him. He seems oblivious to the possibilities of pursuing music or community service:

I believe I have a really strong need to help people. It makes me feel wonderful to know I've made someone feel better that day. To sit down for 5 minutes and listen to them, and help them with their problem, is something I admire.

There is a clear sense he has been living others' values, his parents and those of the Church, especially with his regard for the Christ figure. He seems lost, unable to recognise or follow interests he enjoys to find a vocation or a sense of life direction. Perhaps his parents are rightly concerned about him. But getting off a treadmill of school, university and work, could actually represent his unconscious struggle to develop a stronger self-identity, separate from family and Church.

Dominic emerges as a compassionate, thoughtful, introverted young man, reluctant or unable to acknowledge his self-esteem has been buffeted and apparently suffered for not conforming to traditional masculinity. Catholicism and his family's values supported his lonely,
individualistic stance. He remains unimpressed with the values and practices associated with traditional masculinity that his peers wholeheartedly embraced. This may perhaps be inhibiting his willingness to move towards adult masculinity. He unwittingly challenged the dominant model of masculinity and felt its sting for not conforming. It still affects his life. It has scarred him. He does not display a sense of ease with his masculine gender identity. He makes quite apparent his discomfort with traditional masculinity and the male youth culture.

At 22 he says he still sees himself as an adolescent-teenager. He is likely to remain in such a state for some time, and his pathway to becoming a man seems to be a solitary, perhaps lonely, unguided trail, particularly in light of his experience of traditional masculinity. He is struggling through a transitional period, and with little guidance or awareness of how to move towards the next stage of his life.

**Case Record 6:**

**Background:**
Single, 24 years

**Occupation/Interests:**
University student: psychology, weight-training, family history.

Alex grew up and went to school in Bowral. He is solidly built, a touch under six foot in height, with blonde hair. He carries an air of self-assurance. Presently at university, he lives with his parents and two siblings. He spends some of his spare time restoring a 1961 vintage Holden car. He is optimistic about developing a relationship with a female student he has recently met.

**Adolescent Sport**

In his adolescence Alex took up individualistic sports of long distance running and martial arts. He disliked school team sports particularly football and cricket:

Umm, I disliked sport as a kid. At primary school and Bowral High I went through a lot! There was a very, very rough crowd and they were into sports, so I got a low opinion of sports then. I didn't like playing with them. Liked physical exercise but I didn't like competing against the group. Who's to say I am answerable to what they like? And, err, I disliked it, and didn't think much of it as a social activity. I was more competitive at martial arts and long distance running, where it was myself I was competing against.

School sport meant mixing with boys he could not relate to. He disliked the competitive ethic of team sports and being subjected to others opinions:

Umm, in PE in my year there were a lot of rough blokes, pretty much from working class families and so forth. I didn't like them. And they'd select their mates, and you'd be the last one there, and they'd say (in rough accent), ah, 'es not a good player'. You'd have this scum, intellectual inferior, passing judgment
on me. That sounds snobby—yeah, but I hated that! And so I grew even more to
detest those team sports.

The sports he took up instead, distance running and martial arts, he says, taught him very
personal lessons:

Stamina, mental staying power, willing yourself to do things, and improving
yourself. I really enjoyed competing with myself, to see how far I could do
things, how well I could do things, where I could make improvements.

Alex's attitude to sport is full of intensity and contradictions. He says he disliked sport as an
adolescent, then admits he enjoyed long distance running. It still rankles that other boys judged
him by his ability to play football, so evident in his hostility towards football and cricket
enthusiasts. That he disliked team sports because of the other boys is only part of the story:

I think football and cricket are good sports. I wouldn't suggest anyone not play
sport, it's good for people to play sport—physically, mentally and socially. (But) I
sort of associate it with ratbags and scum that I don't really like, so. And
football and cricket still seem to attract the yobbo elements and media coverage
has supported that.

School team sport, it seems, was a place where Alex was ostracised by his peers. Football and
cricket seem to be associated with past humiliations. This seems to be what he means when he
says he went through a lot at school. But much remains unsaid. His unpleasant adolescent
experiences appear to explain his contradictory attitudes towards sport. Whilst he trains at the
gym and bushwalks, he holds popular sports in low regard. Sport has little importance for
him.

Work
Alex is a full-time doctoral student, researching the validity of quantitative-mathematical
measurement in psychology. Being at university is fun for him, he also tutors part-time. He
enjoys doing independent research and finding out new information. He believes his
personality is suited to this type of learning, in contrast to the spoon-fed style at high school:

I didn't like high school ... the material was not challenging or inherently
interesting. I thoroughly enjoy Uni. I love (that) you teach yourself, not having
it shoved down your throat as at high school. And my personality was not suited
to that type of learning. Now I'm doing a PhD, it's fantastic, I like going out
there, learning stuff that I'm interested in, teaching myself. I've gained a lot of
respect at UWS for not being spoon-fed.

Alex has discussed pursuing an academic career with his father:

I said to my father the other week, 'Dad I think an academic career is one of the
few careers left that has any sense of nobility in it anymore'. He said, 'Alex, I
think you are correct, and I think you are suited to that'. Yeah, I'd like to do that.
I really like to find out new information. And so I'm very cautious about how
people want to work themselves to the bone, 16 hours a day, 6 days a week. Get
paid a hell of a lot of money to do that, but get only one day out of the week to enjoy that money. So I don't really wish to fit into the dominant paradigm of work. I think an academic career is a very, very noble one.

Alex is quite passionate about his research and set upon following an academic career, and has acquired some working experience as a University tutor. He has a clear idea of his career direction and has set himself on such a path. With limited work experience so far, it seems likely his attitudes about work may be tested in the future.

Father and Son
Alex's father until recently operated a small, local industrial painting business, and is presently looking for another small business. Previously he had been a sales representative and a senior manager with a major paint manufacturer for over 20 years. He was offered an executive position with the Pascol Paint Company:

Dad stayed up all night thinking about it, he didn't get any sleep. He did something I think was very admirable. He looked at the lives of these executives and saw divorce, working 16 hour days, travelling everywhere, girlfriends in every town they go to, don't know their kids and don't really care. He stayed up all night thinking about that, and next day told the executives, 'no thanks, I won't sacrifice and have that type of lifestyle', exactly that. They were dumbfounded, but respected his decision.

His father likes sport, and was an elite sportsman at high school, talented at athletics, football and cricket:

At high school he played football, cricket, hockey, athletics. He was a brilliant sportsman. Even one of his teachers said to me, 'your father's jacket was covered in sports blues'. I think he was a little disappointed when I didn't really get into sports. I think he had a hard time with that.

Alex knows his father's work life, interests and says a little about the type of man he is. They talk together about Alex's career path, politics and family history. He admires his father and regards him as strong willed, determined, intelligent and individualistic. Whilst there is a warmth in the way Alex speaks about his father, there appears to be an ambivalence as well. He says they have very different personalities:

As I got older he (dad) did note that I was very much like his father. Not like my dad at all. Our intrinsic personalities differed and this did cause a fair bit of distance, but at the same time we had a lot of conversations. He is much better with people. As a dad he was a bit authoritarian, made a lot of mistakes, I think. I'm the oldest and of course my younger brothers could get away with so much more. So we have very different sorts of personalities.

Alex never says he is close to his father, nor how he feels about his dad. They get on and talk, but he admits there is a distance and a degree of estrangement. It is not a close relationship.
Role Models
Alex is emphatic:

As an adolescent I didn't have any role models, no. No, I can't remember having any role models at all, just plodded my own way through. I remember people used to say, 'oh, these are my heroes and idols'. I used to say, ah, I didn't have anyone who was a hero, I just did my own thing.

As an adolescent he says there were no older men he looked up to, not even apparently his father. It appears he was something of a 'loner' during adolescence. But in the past two years he has learnt about his colourful and exceptional forebears. A great-grandfather was an English doctor who emigrated to Australia in the 1890's to practise medicine in Goulburn, providing free services to low-income families. A great-aunt was among the first female legal practitioners in New South Wales. He admits he is full of admiration for their extraordinary determination, strong characters and compassion.

Dominant Model of Masculinity
Alex relatively quickly grasps the concept of a dominant model of masculinity. He has closely observed how in a rural town his peers and older men behave. With great gusto he says:

In this area the epitome of masculinity is Chips Rafferty—a figure I absolutely detest, the ocker Aussie, not overly bright type of person. In this town, at least, you get out of high school, preferably in Year 10. You don't go to Uni, that's only for weird nerds, whooses and bludgers. You get out of school, get a job or an apprenticeship. You do something you don't like, you whinge about your lot in life, you go get a female otherwise you're a raging poofdah .... You get married, you have kids, you live in the 'burbs, you have your 2 to 3 bedroom brick-veneer, with your 2.2 kids, and you're happy. That's what you do, you watch footy and drink booze. And you drive a ute with a 'no fat chick's' stickers on the back, and 'shoot ferals' and 'real Aussies drive utes'. That's all you do! That is something I absolutely hate and detest.

Alex is clear about the gender messages he has experienced as part of the young male culture; be rugged, play football, don't be smart, have a job, get a wife and kids to prove you are not homosexual and drive a ute. He recognises there is a set code of behaviour and pathway for young males in Bowral. He regularly sees young males conforming to a typical Aussie male stereotype at the local pubs. In his opinion there is a dominant model and image of masculinity that however varies according to place:

it is a typical stereotype and there would be plenty of men in Bowral who would love that sort of thing. The worship of mediocrity is so entrenched ... the dominant image I think would depend on where you live, and perhaps is a bit more open than it used to be. I still think it's that way inclined, we don't like snobs or intellectuals.

Whilst a new idea for him, Alex comes to terms with the concept of a dominant model. He is familiar with the local behavioural code for men in the rural town, calling it the Chips Rafferty-
image. He makes no reservations about his antipathy for this type of masculinity, in part because he experienced some harassment for choosing not to conform to such a model:

when I had long hair, and walked into a pub, people would say, 'he's a long-haired faggot, let's kick him'. But I went to the gym and built myself up, and that sort of died a fair bit after that. No-one actually physically assaulted me at all. I remember one typical yobbo, drunk out of his brain, said, 'what ya looking at, ya curly headed c--t?'. I walked straight off.

**Becoming a Man**

The question, 'when did you become a man?', triggers a chuckle from Alex, but it is more like nervous laughter, than amusement. He leans slightly back in his chair, and says:

Hahaha (chuckles). When did I become a man? I think I ceased being an adolescent about 3, 4 years ago, started to change. Wouldn't want to be 18 again, just a stupid kid when I look back. Yeah, in the past few years, just a general sort of maturity, interested in being me. I just think it was a gradual thing. I haven't given the issue much thought. I suppose I've been interested in blokey things. An evolution rather than a revolution. I feel very secure in my identity as a man.

Alex appears to equate becoming a man with the process of growing maturity. A gradual 'evolution' for him, assisted by going to university and being part of a more open-minded social environment:

It's been a gradual process over the past few years, particularly after finishing school, not being in Bowral all the time. Going to uni was great, I think that really aided my maturation process. Meeting people from Sydney, associating with people more with my culture, academically inclined, getting away from the culture here.

But he does not define what being a man means to him, which must be relevant if he now considers himself to be a man. Nor does he discuss possible social markers, such as first sexual experience, eighteenth birthday, marriage or becoming a father as relevant to the process. Whilst he regards himself as a man and speaks with some conviction, the admission that becoming a man is not a matter he has really thought about brings into question his response. If it is a matter he has not paid attention to, his reply must be regarded with some reservation. A change of circumstances and growing sense of maturity is not quite the same as a change in his sense of self and perception as an adult male (however he sees that).

He regards his peers and his family heritage as key influences on his ideas about masculinity. As an adolescent peers were the major influence:

It's hard to remember. I suppose you just have peer group influences in what to be a man. I really rejected them. I ignored it ... No, I didn't have anyone who taught be to be a man as such. ... One thing my parents did do, was not to protect, shelter me from the nastiness of the playground, which I respect. I'd have to say peers in high school. Yeah! It's a difficult question. I just watched movies for entertainment value, I didn't learn how to be a guy off movies. The American movies were a bit laughable, an unreality.
Peers were a major influence by their enacting the code of behaviour he discusses, sport, drink and acting tough. Intellectually inclined and not being keen on football probably contributed to him being seen as different, an outsider. He gives a very recent example of his peer's conformist attitudes and behaviour:

A friend was told that by a former schoolmate of his, 'you're queer because you wear jewellery, you don't have a good life because you're not married and don't have kids yet'. My friend couldn't believe it. This was in Bowral. It came from one of these guys who got out of school early, hates what he is doing, hates his wife, is going to have another kid, wife gets pregnant so she doesn't have to work, they have fights. And he's telling my friend, haha, that he has no life. My friend is to inherit a business in Bowral, he looks at this guy and says 'I'm having an absolute ball, thank you very much'.

Recently he has started exploring his family heritage, that comprises a number of determined, exceptional and successful men and women; notably his great-grandfather and a great aunt. He says their example provides a current influence on his changing ideas about masculinity.

**Men Talking**

Alex responded to a public notice for participants in a local newspaper. He is articulate and forthright expressing his opinions. He seems comfortable talking, making it abundantly clear he dislikes football and footy yobs. He believes Australian men are unsophisticated and distrust intellectuals, and has no time for the superficial types of people:

We're probably lower middle class but—we go to art openings—see Roger Woodward. I regard those who see themselves as upper class, with their degree of artificiality and fakeness, as a weakness. I detest and hate. And I hate the slave morality of the pissant, I hate those people, the weak and artificial types that seem to predominate in high-brow activity. Except the down-to-earth artists and musicians.

He talks easily but much of the conversation is outwardly directed about his opinions, life experiences and family heritage. But he does not explain his hostility towards footy enthusiasts or pretentious arty-types. Motivations, feelings, and past humiliations are not discussed, either as an adolescent or now as a young man. Much of the conversation has been kept outwardly focussed, away from his inner dimensions. It seems there are areas of his life he does not wish to reveal. There are clear signs he has censored what he says. For instance he does not elaborate on his ambivalence towards his father. But significantly, at the end of the interview he says he thoroughly enjoyed talking about masculinity. It is a subject he has rarely discussed with other males.

**Self-portrayal**

Alex has a solid physical build, is good looking, with an assured voice. He works out at the gym, bushwalks and enjoys intellectual study. He likes what he calls 'blokey things' like
science, physical exercise and working on a vintage Holden car. He believes he is like his grandfather, an intelligent, capable and somewhat emotionally cool man:

All my life I've always been interested in traditional guy things anyway, cars and physical activities, science that type of thing.

Ebullient, forthright, observant, he is not afraid to give his strong opinions. Exuberant about university life, he seems to have found an environment that suits him. He presents a self-confident persona, seeing himself as strong willed, intellectual, an individual with a strong personality. His self-perception is rather externally focussed. There seems to be a slight inclination to being intellectually snobbish, the boys who unsettled him at school are called 'scum' and 'intellectual inferiors'. His intensity perhaps reflects his sense of self may not be as assured as he portrays.

Self and Heroes

Alex is adamant that as an adolescent he did not have an inspirational male figure as a hero:

I didn't have any one who was a hero, I just did my own thing ... I didn't feel the need to look up to men really. No, not really. [You can't mention any men you looked up to?] No, I just liked cartoons. No, I only started to look up to a few people when I started learning about my family history about 3 years ago ... It sounds like I'm lying, didn't really look up to any men at all, except my elder cousins when they came around—typical kid thing. I enjoyed them being around, apart from that I didn't have any heroes.

It is an idiosyncratic reply, especially the remark about liking cartoons. But he makes it clear older males did not figure at this time as inspiring figures to emulate for being a man. However, he says since he learnt about his colourful family history he has recently started to admire people. Now he admires Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk for bringing political change to South Africa. He sees the German General Rommel as a brilliant and exceptional leader:

He wasn't one of these born to rule types ... He said 'never denigrate any soldier, if you shout at a soldier that says more about you than what it does about the person who did the wrong thing'. He led his forces from the front—(he had) courage, tenacity, braveness standing up to Hitler.

But his colourful family forebears are now personal inspirations:

I love talking about the family history, and learning about my great-great-grandfather and other figures. I've started recently to look up to them ... My great-grandfather was a very well respected English doctor. He was actually invited by Prince Albert (Queen Victoria's Consort) to go to a Crystal Palace furniture exhibition—still got the invitation ... He came out here on a journey in 1846. He went around Australia, he saved the wife of a prominent banker. He met a few famous criminals in Tasmania, he ran into a few of the last remaining Sydney Aborigines, he met Governor Darling's son. He decided to come out in 1890 with his son ... My great-aunt, Edith was one of the first females to obtain a law degree in this country. She wasn't allowed to practice, she became an exceptionally depressed, bitter individual. She got the degree in 1904. She was allowed to practice as a Barrister in 1918 ... My family was in the moneyed
class last century, and I was very proud of the fact they were very interested in people, in changing society for the better, doing something constructive and were very strong characters. Very psychologically tough, very determined, not conservative, very strong willed, original thinkers, individuals, not very good taking orders from others, not very subservient and they led constructive lives. So I really deeply admire them, and I try to be like them in my life now. But this interest only arose in my early 20’s, it didn’t occur until I was out of high school. So I don’t take after any American role models or Chips Rafferty—Aussie role models.

All the men (and women) he admires, appear as individualistic, intelligent, strong-willed, determined, independent, resilient, with strong self-belief. He regards certain family members as extraordinary people by their achievements and strong characters. Whilst not calling them 'heroes', they fulfil one of the traditional roles of heroes, a source of inspiration for the type of person to be, as Alex sees himself as, determined, strong-willed, intelligent like his grandfather and desires a successful career.

Alex regards these family members are inspiring personal models. It seems he is still consolidating his self-image and identity, the type of person he wishes to be, with these family figures serving as important guides. Perhaps learning about his relatives confirmed and validated his sense of character and personality. What he learnt about them may also have confirmed his sense of being different from most of his peers. Knowing his family roots appears as a significant recent contributory factor to his personal identity and sense of self.

When he was an adolescent Alex showed some strength of character to resist the tide of social messages he was receiving about traditional masculinity. He negotiated his personal response to how the local male youth culture (particularly at high school) portrayed masculinity. High school was not a place or experience Alex enjoyed, neither his peers' male culture or the style of education. It was a place where he was different. Failure to conform to the dominant model of masculinity led to Alex's isolation from his peers, harassment at pubs and seemingly a sense of being an outsider to the male youth culture.

Traditional masculinity has seemingly had positive and negative impacts upon his life. He chose not to conform to some of the more popular features of Australian masculinity such as drink driving, anti-intellectualism and being keen on sport, evident among his peers. Yet despite rejecting much of the dominant model of masculinity, he likes to see himself as independent, determined, resilient and rather unemotional, features often associated with traditional masculinity. They appear qualities he has deliberately chosen to cultivate, with his successful forebears providing a recent source of inspiration. Such qualities seem important to him and not least to help to persevere and establish the career he seeks. Alex has shaped his own response to traditional masculinity, but it seems to have precluded him establishing a distinct sense of masculine identity, recognisable and acceptable to many of his rural male peers.
Case Record 7: TERRY - BOWRAL

Background: Single, 25 years
Occupation/Interests: Craftsman: metalworking, martial arts, restoring cars, playing banjo.

Terry has lived in Bowral most of his life. He works as a craftsman at an arts centre in the Southern Highlands. Of average height, he has the well-developed upper torso often associated with footballers, he is softly spoken and has long hair. One of his pastimes is restoring old cars. He presently lives with his parents.

Adolescent Sport

Sport held little appeal for Terry during his adolescence. He disliked the competitive nature of school sports, football, cricket, athletics, preferring martial arts:

I was never really into sport when I was young, weren't important to me. They were kind of competitive, and I don't agree with how we were taught at school. We have to compete with everybody. We don't really have to. The only person you do perhaps compete with is yourself. I prefer that rather than compete with everybody else and be better. Haha. At 14 or so, I got into martial arts, I found it a bit more cerebral than kicking a ball around, kind of challenged yourself—mentally and physically. Yeah, you did it for yourself, I know I did.

Learning Tae Kwon do he says was a personal challenge, eventually he became an instructor.

In recent years he has practised Aikido, which he explains is not an aggressive martial art, with a philosophy of using the other person's energy:

Aikido comes from the opposite tradition of karate, kung fu—it's a peaceful .. there's no kicking, punching. The last thing you want to do is hurt anybody. You just want to teach them not to do it, haha! It's about using someone's energy against them. It teaches you a peaceful way. The more you do it, I find the more peaceful you become. You can see situations starting, you can calm things down, haah, and stop fights before they happen ... What do I get out of it? It's probably more of a personal challenge, I'm not learning to go and beat people up. I find it a way of improving yourself, becoming a better person. Like Eastern philosophies, I find a lot better than western ideas of doing things.

He says he learnt several things from martial arts; the ability to defend himself and others, a heightened awareness of people and circumstances, and a way to improve himself. Concerning a greater sense of awareness he elaborates:

I find through studying stuff like that you can see situations starting, and if you see things happening you have foresight to do something about it ... probably mainly in the pubs, some drunken idiots just want to start trouble and you learn to pick people, pick the ones that will start trouble. Through training I sort of like to watch people, you just got greater awareness. It's hard to explain ... with a friend of mine I said 'that guy there is going to hit that guy over there, there's going to be a fight'. We're sitting at the table, I said 'get out of the way if something happens'. He said, 'heheh!' Next moment, boom, haha, and the table
flew up in front of us, as they met in front of us. I didn't know the people, just knew something is going to happen here!

Terry took up martial arts to push himself rather than compete against other boys. He says it provided a personal mental and physical challenge; but in what sense is not really quite clear. He finds it difficult to describe the mental-emotional-physical experience of the martial art, the practice of combining physical techniques, body movement and mental state:

Like I see things most people don't, my friends go huh? Just a higher sense of awareness to what's going around you. You know the fight or flight sense, it's different to that. You're calm, everything is there. [You are centred in yourself, focussed, calm with yourself, aware of what's going on] Yeah! I've done stuff with a friend of mine ...

As an adolescent Terry was uninterested in competitive team sports (there is no mention of sports he played at school). He turned to martial arts as young teenager. Now, Aikido provides him with skills he uses constantly; he says it contributes to his perspective on life, seemingly encouraging him to keep growing as a person.

**Work**

Somewhat laconically he indicates as a jeweller he works with precious metals making rings, pendants and brooches:

I'm a jeweller. [What does a jeweller do?] My job, basically making jewellery, rings, brooches, pendants. [Do you work in metal or stone or both?] Umm, mainly I work in all precious metals, silver, different alloys of gold and platinum. Separate trade to cutting stones, something I'm getting into, teaching myself to cut stones. But mainly a metalworker, with precious metals ... I'm a proper jeweller. It's a bit hard to explain what I do without the workshop. I basically take a bar of 3mm square of gold and work it into a ring.

Terry chose jewellery as an occupation because it appealed to him. After finishing school he took an apprenticeship. He also trained in metal engraving by hand, and is presently studying gemology learning the qualities of precious stones, and how to cut them. Rather modestly he reveals his workshop is littered with awards and certificates for his works. He takes his work seriously in contrast to school which he found a waste of time:

I hated school with a passion, didn't know what to do! Stayed until Year 12 because dad said, 'stay 'til your leaving certificate'. Like people say what did you get for your HSC? Basically below 15%! I sat through the English exam with a pencil out of my ear, I hated school that much. I think its funny. The only time I spoke to my year adviser he said, 'what are you doing here? Why don't you leave and get a job packing at Coles. You should pack it in'. I said, 'no sir I'll hang around and just give you a hard time'. Quite funny really because at the shop I have awards and certificates hanging off the wall, I look at that and think, should have got a job packing. They're going to have to extend the wall ...

Without being explicit, it emerges that for Terry jewellery is a passion. Work is fun. It is something he does because he enjoys it, and this is important to him. Yet only at the conclusion
of the interview does he mention he is a member of the Gold and Silversmiths Guild, a professional association with stringent entry requirements:

I walk into the shop and have to say those certificates are me. I don't like saying it but I'm good at what I do! Basically I call myself a tradesman.

**Father and Son**

Terry's father has a small business in the village of Berrima and figures hugely in his life. Aged in his early 60's he takes an active role in community activities. Quite early in the interview Terry comments:

I've noticed I do some things same as my father. And it's, ooh, hang on, I can see I've picked that up without even realising it. I've done things that dad does and thought oh, I don't want to be like that! Hahaha. Its' not the right thing to do, I want to change it.

Terry describes his father as a pessimist, rather dour and conservative, and admits he is not particularly close to his father. He gives a limited picture of his father, but elaborates a little on the prickly character of their relationship. He believes their age difference is a factor:

We're not actually that close! Umm, dad struggled to understand me as a kid and it's got worse, haha. There are times when dad and I get on ... But mainly never really been that close! Umm, probably age difference. Dad's 63 and finds it hard to understand, probably just a clash of personalities really. Dad's a bit of a pessimist, and I'm a optimist, ah, it'll be alright.

He has observed that a lot of his friends do not get on with their fathers and admits he would like to be closer to his. He has reflected on nature of their relationship, and accepts his father is unlikely to change. As a future parent he would like to be closer with his son than he is with his father:

[Would you like to be closer?] I don't think it will happen. I've kind of accepted dad's the way he is, and he won't change. Basically you've got to learn from what's happened, let the bad stuff go ... like when I have kids not repeat the same pattern, haha! You know sit down, talk.

Terry has been unusually open about the relationship admitting to major problems, yet he has seemingly chose to not discuss his deeper feelings about his father. His disappointment, is apparent but never clearly stated. Father and son are emotionally estranged, mutually distant, with little likelihood of a major improvement in the relationship.

**Role Models: A television character—Dr Who**

As an adolescent Terry recalls he was a big fan of the science-fiction character Dr Who on television:

Umm, probably as a kid sounds weird, someone to be like, probably Dr Who. The character was intelligent, he was a man who would fight if he had to, ha! Sounds stupid but he was probably a role model for me. [Why does it sound stupid?] Umm, I don't know probably because he was a TV show, yeah it was a
passion as a kid, a role model, yeah ... books, magazines, you name it. Still got a Dr Who scarf in the wardrobe. Haha. There's a cyberman mask on the couch, bought that last year in England.

As a teenager he says he was fairly quiet, spending his time reading and watching television. But Terry is quite explicit he did look up to the Dr Who character as a role model because the character was intelligent and eccentric. The character triggered his interest in martial arts:

That's probably where I picked up the interest in martial arts because (the Jon Pertwee character) used to do a form of karate, or something. I like that idea of scientist, intelligent, bad dress sense, hahaha. And being able to fight if you had to. [Was that a key role model?] Yeah, when I was younger, reflecting now it was probably a major influence.

Terry is quite open but seemingly a little embarrassed that he regarded the television character, Dr Who, not merely as an older male he looked up to, but a man to consciously emulate, and identify with. Somewhat surprisingly, he mentions Scottish comedian Billy Connolly, as a current role model in the sense of a man whose views on life he likes:

now probably a big role model is Billy Connolly, apart from being a comedian, his views on life. He's from working class Glasgow. Basically he stuck his finger up at everybody and said I'm going to do it. I like his views on life, basically to do whatever you want to with your life.

Terry indicates Connolly's views provide him with a folk philosophy, a helpful approach to life:

(I like) a quote from Billy Connolly to the effect there is you and everybody else, there's now and never, so do as you damn well please! You sit and think about it and you go, its true! There is only now and never. The only time is now and the only place is here. Yeah, I've studied some Eastern philosophies. There's now and there is never--its true! Watch people and I find most of the population out there are not doing what they want to do, and they are miserable because of it.

Terry still retains an affection for Dr Who, but avoids discussing his seeming sense of embarrassment about seeing him as a role model. His explanation of why he liked this figure possibly reflects a degree of isolation from his peers and perhaps many of the older men he knew. He is not embarrassed to call Billy Connolly a present day role model. Both figures have been important influences. Both figures have provided some inspiration for developing his identity, being a young man and living a satisfying life.

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**

Growing up in a country town Terry says there was a definite way to be a man:

When I was growing up, umm, the general idea round here was you grew up to be a 'bloke'. I found you were expected to be a footy fan, that image. A man had short hair, drove a ute and had a blue heeler, you don't show emotions. That sort of stuff! That's the feeling I got growing up around here, that's the way everyone
else was, peer pressure thing. Go to the Portocall pub and they're all just short-haired, rugby playing ute drivers.

Terry acknowledges there is a code of behaviour that local young males usually conform to. Speaking from personal experience, he believes many young males conform to a 'blokey' image otherwise they are ostracised, mocked or picked on:

That's what you've got to be otherwise you get knocked. I found that 'cos I went to Sydney for 3 years. I moved to Cronulla and became a long-haired bum. Came back here to find you are one of two guys in a pub with long hair, this was about 3 years ago, and I got hassled quite a lot. 'Get your hair cut, bloody fag' and all that. It was from all these short-haired rugby players, hahaha!

[You are saying a lot of them are being short-haired, rugby playing ute driving blokes mainly from peer pressure?] Yeah, I think its mainly peer pressure, and people that aren't strong enough to stand up and go, 'hey I'm me!' That's what I find. There's a lot of people out here that just don't want to be picked on, so they go with the flow.

He perceives this model of how to be a man is generated and enforced as a gender pressure from male peers: failure to conform is seen as grounds for attack:

It's quite strange. You get labelled as being gay because you have long hair, are intelligent and dress well. Yeah, it's like hang on, who's this girl next to me. Fairly narrow minded.

Terry has a critical sense of perspective. He recognises there is a locally dominant model of being an man, that many young men in their teens and twenties conform to. Such men are afraid to be seen as different to other men. He views such men as 'sheep', afraid to be themselves for fear of being attacked or ridiculed by other men. So, paradoxically in Terry's view the tough guys are just conforming, and are not tough enough to venture beyond the dominant style. Terry admits he consciously rejected such a model which he believes is still very evident among his age group:

I've decided not to accept it. I don't believe guys have to be brought up hard, not to show emotions. Umm, you see guys with problems and they don't know how to show their emotions. Like, I go to movies and cry. Guys have to learn to show their sensitive side instead of the blokey thing, oh, I'm alright, just got a pain in the stomach, oh, it'll be alright, don't go to the doctor.

**Becoming a Man**

In response to the question, 'when did you become a man?' Terry chuckles a nervous laugh, and his head slips back into the cushioned chair:

Haha, (chuckle)! I probably haven't yet! I don't know how to define a man going from a kid to a man, maybe puberty, when hair grows in funny places—that's the physical. In one way I'd say 15, 16 when my views started changing, with a more grown up approach to things. And in another way I still haven't yet, I still have a childlike perspective. Like the people who are telling me to grow up and be sensible. If that's what growing up is like, I don't want to! I don't want to
grow up--like that. ... Probably growing up in your head, if you know what I mean, becoming aware what's going on.

There were no notable events or episodes that marked such a transition for him as a young male; nor does he regard becoming a father as particularly significant. He says he does not know how to define 'a man', to distinguish between an adolescent and an adult male. Almost thinking out loud, he develops his answer. He comes to a provisional conclusion, saying in some way he became a man when he started shaping his own views and attitudes in his mid-teens, and simultaneously that he has not yet become a man! Terry holds the contradiction without concern. There are numerous unstated elements to his thoughts about becoming a man including equating it with growing up, adulthood. Seemingly it is not a matter he has thought about or probably considered of much importance.

Terry identifies his father, family and male peers as the principal influences on his ideas about masculinity. He considers his father and his sister's boyfriend as solid influences:

Growing up like, I think you subconsciously learn from your father and other males around you how to react, do this. Kind of learn subconsciously what to do, how to ... probably just by growing up and watching. I know, I noticed I do some things same as my father ... I think your personality is formed as you're growing up by the people around you, and its mainly your parents and you pick up a lot to traits from them, and a lot of people are not aware of it. I became aware of it when I moved out of home. I kind of then became my own person, and could stop and look back and go, that's why I reacted like that because of my parents did ... Probably the other person would have been my sister's boyfriend. When I was 13, he was a lot older. Bruce was a fair bit older than my sister. They lived next door, he was around a lot, he was sort of another type of father figure, go and do things together, work on cars and that sort of stuff.

His family he says was a little pretentious:

Family was also pretty important. I was kind of brought up in what you'd call the old school (snigger). We had a fairly large extended family, at Christmas's whole family at my aunt's place, all around one table. And you learnt what glasses to uses and which plate for which--caviar that style. Old style--kids are seen and not heard, good manners, don't do that!

Terry can readily identify immediate influences upon his attitudes about masculinity but does not illustrate their impact. His comments about his family are rather unrevealing. He does not say what he does that is similar to his father. Presumably his joy in restoring cars may relate to his teenage experiences with his sister's boyfriend, but the connection is not made. There is no sense of what masculine legacy the men in his life gave Terry.

Peer pressure to conform to the local male youth culture he explains was quite potent:

I found at school peer pressure. Think everyone to start off with, succumbs to peer pressure somewhere. Up until Year 10 or so I followed what others did, but then I thought, this is a joke, and did my own thing. You were expected to be a footy fan, that image. A man had short hair, drove a ute
and had a blue heeler, that's the way everyone else was, a peer pressure thing. That's what you've got to be otherwise you get knocked ... The guys I hung around with at school ... still haven't changed, I found that they left school, got a job, bought a car, got married!

At school and even in his early 20s Terry explains male peers enforced an image of being a man, which is still very much in evidence at local pubs. He consciously rejected the peer pressure to conform and grew long hair, seemingly as a statement of his own identity:

I just look at people like that and go, ah, they're sheep, I think its mainly peer pressure, and people that aren't strong enough to stand up and go, 'hey I'm me'! That's what I find. There's a lot of people out here that just don't want to be picked on, so they go with the flow. Yeah, I had guys try and pick fights with me simply because I had long hair, in the Grand, in the Bowral, haha.

Men Talking
After a day's work Terry speaks quite frankly and seems relaxed talking at home. He discusses his failure in the HSC examinations, his dislike of high school in terms of its failure to engage his interest and the dominant male youth culture, his relationship with his father, his interests, self-image and matters he considers important. He makes it clear he finds it important to have fulfilling work, that he wants 'to be himself,' not have to conform to what others tell him to do. Terry is quite open about much of his external and inner life, he indicates Aikido has helped him develop a heightened sense of awareness. He discusses aspects of his psychological world, beliefs, motivations and life philosophy.

Whilst revealing parts of his psychological world, there are limited glimpses into his emotional world. Terry apparently feels as a young male, socially constrained, restricted, but exactly by what and why is not clear, even it seems to himself:

People ask me 'why do you have long hair?' And I say 'because I want to!' I go out and wear lary coloured clothing and I dance bad. I dance bad on purpose, I'm not on show! I'm sick of people saying I can't do that because someone might see me, or what would they think.

He cannot explain why he is so tired of being told what to do and how to be, how he feels about the emotional estrangement from his father, being hassled at the pub the significance of studying eastern philosophies, nor even the obvious joy he gets from his work; these aspects are not discussed. He tries but struggles to explain the inner effects of Aikido. He gropes for words to express the interior experience of self-awareness of feelings when practising Aikido:

you got greater awareness. It's hard to explain but you can see a situation starting to happen, you know the fight or flight sense, its' different to that. You're calm, everything is there.

Noticeably, when Terry speaks about himself he frequently chuckles:
being a jeweller helps because in a way you're expected to be eccentric, be a nut! I've found that most people who are good at what they do are slightly cracked, hahaha.

The 'haha's' seem to be nervous laughter. In one sense it is a camouflage and unconscious distraction. Most probably, they are a sign of unacknowledged discomfort and unease when talking about himself, and revealing aspects of himself to another person. But it is not something he comments on. Whilst revealing much, Terry has also left some areas closed.

Self-portrayal
Terry has many skills and interests. He restores cars, practises martial arts and plays the bagpipes. He sees himself as easy-going, good-natured, open, a bit of a larrikin and good at his vocation. He admits work is almost a hobby, he has deliberately pursued a vocation he enjoys. He modestly calls himself a tradesman, it seems he does not want to sound pretentious. Asked to describe himself, again, he chuckles:

A bloody idiot, haha. Yeah, good natured, get on with just about everyone, hahahaha. Image of myself, a bit of a larrikin. Hard trying to sum yourself up, I'd see myself as fairly successful, but have to keep reminding myself. I walk into the shop and have to say those certificates are me. I don't like saying it but I'm good at what I do!

He says some books on New Age psychology by Stuart Wilde have made a big impact on him. Aikido is, 'a way of improving yourself, becoming a better person'. It is implicit he wants to keep developing his sense of self, expanding his sense of self-identity, however he fails to say this. He seems to have avoided or been reluctant to talk about something important to him, possibly relating to the significance of life, perhaps a spiritual aspect. As he contrasts the lifestyle of his former school peers, something important about himself is not made clear:

The guys I hung around with at school, I don't see much anymore, they went and became plumbers, brickies, labourers, you know, with short hair. I found they still haven't changed since high school. They seem like my sister says, get married at 25, dead at 70 ... they left school, got a job, bought a car, got married. That's their life.

Terry emerges as a modest, talented man who acknowledges the physical, intellectual, creative and emotional aspects of his personality. He is thoughtful and reflective. He is also physically big, broad shouldered, with big biceps. He has considered the limitations of the local male stereotype. He is intelligent and apparently interested in a deeper perspective to life that differs from the seemingly local male view of being about work, marriage, kids, sport and driving a ute.

Self and Heroes
When asked about his adolescent heroes Terry jocularly replies:
Superman, haha. I've this vision of men in tights and underwear on the outside! Heroes? Defining a hero. I associate heroes with comic strips. Probably people who have got off their butt and done something in life. Umm. People who have had the balls to go and take chances, grab life! Umm. Billy Connolly mainly because he got out and gave life a kick, he didn't give up ... Another guy now is Steve Segal. Not because he's a Hollywood actor, not because he does Aikido and I do Aikido. He has strong views on life, stuff like the environment and what we're doing to the planet.

Heroes is problematic term, an idea he turns away from. But he is quick to explain that he admires those men who have a go at the type of work they love and for their approach to life. Billy Connolly is someone who has pursued a vocation he really enjoys. Whilst Terry rejects the term 'hero' it is clear both Dr Who and Billy Connolly fulfil some of the functions of a hero. These men seem to have served Terry as inspirations for following one's dreams, pursuing what one really wants to do in life, especially a fulfilling vocation that is not 'just a job', and even a life philosophy. But Terry is uneasy with 'heroes', and seems unaware that these men do fulfil some of the traditional functions of heroes for him.

Terry has an ebullience and a quiet joy of living. Learning from his alienation from school, his work as a craftsmen is something he enjoys immensely, and this seems to contribute to a certain degree of contentment with his life. He has a life philosophy, a direction, as well as a purpose, which seem to serve him well. Whilst sceptical of 'heroes', the men he has admired have been sources of inspiration for a life philosophy and direction, and continue to provide a source of useful guidance. This is not something he clearly states to the researcher.

Terry shows a strong drive to develop a sense of himself based on following his vocation, interests and beliefs, not mindlessly conforming to social norms and dictates and what other people say. He shows much critical awareness and discernment, having assessed and sifted through many social and familial messages about what type of person to be and what to do with his life.

A Second Conversation

As noted in chapter 4, informal follow-up conversations were held with one male from each age set, in light of the noticeable guardedness of the participants in the formal interviews. The idea for a small number of follow-ups came following feedback at a staff-student seminar. Terry was selected as he stood out as a reflective, physically active young man, keen to participate. The conversation was an opportunity to explore many of the matters raised in the interview in greater depth, such as work, masculinity and the influence of his role models. Discussing work he explains that at the end of high school he had several apprenticeships arranged. By chance he also attended a jewellery-making course at the Sturt Crafts Workshop, and found he really liked it. As a teenager he enjoyed building plastic models, jewellery-making had a similar
appeal. Terry emphasizes he deliberately chose to train as a jeweller because he enjoyed it, and still does:

just loved it, like metal is ultimate material to work with, belt it around, melt it, polish it ... you've got to be happy with what you are doing, if not change it, no use wasting your life.

He explains that being adept at martial arts gives him confidence to deal with the harassment he still very occasionally experiences at local pubs. He says Aikido encourages continual personal improvement by progressing through various belts, and he has incorporated this idea into his life. He admits being picked on, especially as a young teenager, feels unpleasant. Now he usually walks away from such incidents, brushing them off:

it hurts, you take it in, but learn to stand on your own feet ... because I've done martial arts, tend to know you can stand up for yourself—just laugh at them and walk off.

... you train to improve yourself, to progress to the next belt .. and you tend to take it into your life. I want to change and improve myself, and not be stuck in a rut.

Asked 'what does masculinity mean to you?', he immediately associates it with a muscular male body-image. 'All I can think of is a well-built bloke who works out'. He mentions he regularly trains at the gym, has a well-developed upper torso and biceps, he regards himself as masculine because of his physical attributes. Defining being a man he says is a problem, 'it's a guy who is decent, stands up for himself'. Masculinity he agrees is about limitations and physicality, but also part of himself, which he cannot clearly articulate. So, whilst Terry recognises a locally dominant model of being a man, for him this does not seem to form part of his concept of masculinity. Despite a critical inclination, he does not perceive masculinity as being in large part a cultural construct, but rather about male physicality.

Billy Connolly, he admits, provides an inspiration for pursuing a vocation he loves, 'he stood up for himself and has done what he wanted to do'. Terry says he has two guiding principles; to be able to say when he dies he had an interesting life and, like Billy Connolly, to do work he is passionate about. His observation that many people seem miserable with their lives reinforces the personal importance of these principles. He says many of his male school peers are married, have a job, kids and hate their wives and are visibly unhappy. He agrees these two ideas provide a life philosophy and seem to be a factor in him being relatively content with his life at the moment.

Some aspects of his life remain unmentioned. Whilst acknowledging suitable women are hard to meet in a rural town, he says nothing about girlfriends. Relationships, family and friends do not figure large in the conversation. Perhaps he has simply failed to acknowledge their significance. He admits his ponytail is probably a sign of rebellion. He emphasizes he does
not want to be normal, or a 'Pitt Street corporate clone', so he wears loud clothes. But he seems unable, or reluctant to explain this desire to be different.

On this occasion Terry is more revealing about his personal beliefs, attitudes and emotional experiences. He seems more at ease. Perhaps this is because he is more familiar with the study, and possibly because some degree of trust has developed between him and the researcher. (For example he knows details of the original interview have remained confidential as promised by the researcher). Further, he has had more time to reflect and consider some of the topics. But also the additional time gave the opportunity to say a little more.

Terry in his own perception is still a young man with little idea of when he will become a man. Masculinity is a confusing concept for him. He has reflected on traditional masculinity, consciously rejecting its local version, yet he shows some features often associated with the dominant model; physicality, a muscular physique, courage, determination, independence, the personal importance of work, and a keenness for cars. Terry likes to see himself as an individual, but has experienced his individuality being seen as a threat to traditional masculinity; even in recent times just by going to the local pub. There seems to be no distinct masculine identity he can presently relate to, so he has developed his own non-conformist, eclectic identity. Yet despite having a notable traditional masculine flavour, his distinct identity still apparently unsettles some of his rural male peers.

A Brief Summary
In the course of the conversations with these young males various themes, both looked for and unlooked for, emerged. Noticeably, they are typically physically active, sporty and outwardly directed, with one exception. They make little mention of high school as a positive experience during their teenage years. It seems possible it was a place many did not really enjoy; however this was not a topic of research. Certainly they make barely no mention of schoolteachers as providing role models for them during those years. Rather it seems a primary impact was in terms of the male youth culture of their high school peers.

But all these young males were confronted during adolescence by a phenomenon they had no actual name for, the culturally idealised form of masculine character, the dominant model of masculinity. As manifested in its local version, it appears to have left a noticeable impact upon them. Chapter 7 draws together and interprets this and the other issues identified in the case records.
CHAPTER 6

THE MID-LIFE MALES

This chapter provides an overview and discussion of the case records of the six males within the age set of 35-45 years involved in the research study. The aim, as with the previous chapter, is to obtain some insight on their lives and views as mid-life males, their interests, their attitudes concerning a dominant model of masculinity and an impression of their adolescent ideas about masculinity. In chapter 7 this information is drawn together and interpreted collectively.

As with the sample of young males, the mid-life males are drawn from both an urban setting, the Sydney beachside district of Dee Why, and the rural township of Bowral, in the district known as the southern highlands of New South Wales. All the men are second generation Australians who have lived in the Dee Why or Bowral districts for over ten years. Their ages vary between 37-45 years, they present as heterosexual. All but one of the mid-life males are presently unmarried. Two have never married, three are divorced and one is married, but has recently separated from his wife. That none of the males are presently in long term relationships with women is a coincidental factor, and was not relevant to their participation.

Their educational and occupational backgrounds were also not factors in their selection as participants. However, four of the men have trades qualifications (such as a mechanic or electrician), one is university educated, the other holds a High School Leaving Certificate. Four of the six males are in paid employment, that is they are engaged by particular organisations or other tradesmen. Two men operate their own small business enterprises, they are located in the rural township of Bowral.

All of the men were interested to take part in the research study. After being informed by the researcher about the nature of the study, it was entirely their decision, to be a participant.

Case Studies of the Mid-Life Males from Dee Why, Sydney

**Case Record 1:** James—DEE WHY

**Background:** 38 years, single

**Occupation/ Interests:** Gardener, surf riding, amateur theatre, reading novels.

James was the first man interviewed for the study. The researcher became acquainted with James as we often saw each other at the same cafe at Dee Why Beach of a weekday afternoon. Nods of acknowledgment progressed into ‘hellos’, which in turn followed into conversations about surf, work and sport. Intrigued, he agreed to take part in the project and to act as a
'gatekeeper' figure for identifying other potential participants in Dee Why. James was born in Toowoomba in Queensland, his family moved to Sydney when he was a young boy. He has lived in Dee Why for almost 20 years. He likes the beach so he can surf, and the mix of people from different cultures that live in the district. James has a muscular physique, and the tanned skin complexion of a man who spends much of his time outdoors, he works as a landscape gardener. He is single, with a girlfriend of some months.

**Adolescent Sport**

Sport featured prominently in his adolescence. He played soccer, rugby union and rugby league, but 'swimming and surfing - were the main activities'. They were fun:

I played soccer, rugby league and union, mostly rugby union. Swimming and surfing were number one priorities—the main sports. The best thing you get out of them was enjoyment. It’s fun—fun. I think that’s what motivates people in their leisure time. Sport is for everyone.

Playing rugby as an adolescent he says taught him about cooperating with others, trusting, relying on others to meet their responsibilities:

I suppose trust in each other. Like any teamwork you’ve got to all carry your own weight, otherwise you’re letting others down. Especially when you’re playing a game of football, where the backs are depending upon the forwards to get the ball to them. The forwards are hoping for the backs to make critical tackles when there’s a break on the other side, all that sort of thing. You can’t do it all on your own. That’s a minor framework for the rest of society really.

James recalls some boys would try to prove themselves to be the best in the team, he was more concerned with how well he played. But playing other teams he says gave him the chance to be aggressive, these boys were rivals, and fair game. He believes men are innately competitive, part of men’s psychological makeup:

I just wanted to crush the other blokes ha, ha, ha ... Tiger, tiger, tiger. That’s what the old man used to say at the time. You get on the field and you bring the tiger out of you. Aggression ... A competitive mindset I think is part of your instinct, its there in differing degrees and sport develops it. Yeah, you see that even in the most casual sport set-up. There are always one or two who have to win.

James has been surfing since his early teenage years. It is a longstanding passion, living at the beach allows him to surf almost every day. Yet the only thing he says about surfing is that his father taught him as a teenager and it is fun, nothing else. He says sport boosts self-confidence and helps build up character, confidence and make friends:

It helps you build your self-esteem. It also helps you physically to be healthy. There’s a mental reward as well. [So would you say as a boy in sport, these things happened to you?] Kids can be very shy and reserved, sport helps bring them out of it. Helps them become social. [Is that the
Sport played an important part in his adolescence. James discusses his experience factually, consciously avoiding personal reflections. Noticeably, he avoids answering if sport helped build his self-esteem. It is elsewhere in the interview that he mentions his father taught him how to swim, surf and play rugby union. It is likely playing sports cemented a bond with his father, but this is not something he apparently wishes to discuss. He even avoids talking about the sport that has shaped his physique and self-image, surfing. As a mature man in mid-life, surfing remains a key part of his life. Why, he does not say. Maybe it seems obvious, but it is strange that he does not talk about the longstanding passion of his life.

Work
James works as a landscape gardener tending the grounds of a prominent businessman’s home in the Northern Beaches. Discussing his interests as a boy he says he liked reading and:

I liked to be outside in the garden in peace and quiet surroundings when I was a child and I like that now. [And you work at that now]. It sounds very basic, some people learn early in life what they like and others don’t ha ha.

When he refers to his work there is a puzzling comment, reflecting perhaps an unease that is never clarified:

I’m a gardener, I guess I’d be regarded by the higher people as a tradesman (laughs).

James mentions he enjoys gardening and being outdoors but says nothing else. He reveals nothing of his attitude towards his job, if he enjoys it, and it is unclear if he works by himself or is part of a team. His reticence is surprising. But also there is a self-deprecatory tone as he talks about ‘higher people’ might call him a tradesman. This possibly reflects nervousness about being judged by his occupation. Subsequently James mentioned that because he works for a prominent Sydney businessman, part of his work contract stipulates he must not talk to the media about matters relating to his job. But even this condition is insufficient explanation for James not disclosing his attitudes about his work.

Father and Son
James’ father was for many years a sergeant in the Australian Army. A champion footballer as a young man, he uniquely represented Queensland at both rugby league and union:

He was a sportsman himself, he represented Queensland in league and union. Football, he coached half the teams we played in. He taught us to surf, he took us to the beach all the time. He taught us to swim. He taught us everything.
Talking about his father, James mentions they spent a lot of time together when he was an adolescent. The entire family regularly went to the beach and his father taught James and his brother how to surf and swim. He also trained their rugby team. James speaks with warmth and respect for his father. He says his father modelled expressing feelings, behaviours and encouraged certain values and attitudes:

He was never afraid to show feelings and encouraged that. Being very loving, caring, very hard working. But he also encouraged the good qualities in life, the will to work hard, and be honest, to care about other people, be considerate. And time. He just gave of his time whenever he could. In every way to all of us, mum, brothers, sisters.

James' father had a big part in his adolescence. He says his father was his role model for being a man, playing an active role in his life in those years:

[Who were your role models for being a man?] My father. Sports stars soon fade as you grow into your own person. But one that was as a young boy and adolescent and still as a man is ... ah my father!

Even now, as James approaches the age of 40, his father is a central figure in his life. He is not embarrassed to admit his father is still a role model for him for being a man. He admires him for his success as a sportsman, his qualities and his behaviour. A model not limited to the roles of provider and guardian, but also for the expression of love and consideration for others, and working hard. Speaking about their current relationship he says it is:

Very close. Very close. Very lucky compared to a lot of people!

James' close relationship with his father is very important to him. Yet he actually reveals little about his father. He does not mention what his father's current occupation is, his age, nor any of his current pastimes. Despite being a loved figure, James has given only an inkling about the type of man his father is. At a later occasion, James mentioned to the researcher, that shortly after the interview he phoned his father and told him how important the relationship is to him.

Role Models: Dad, TV, and sport stars
Asked what older males he looked up to as role models when he was an adolescent, James immediately says his father. But more than being a model to look up to and admire, he implies he wanted to be like his father. It seems he perceived his father as a man to copy and emulate. He does not mention any other men he personally knew, who impressed him as role models during adolescence, there may have been some teachers who had an influence but he cannot recall any:

Probably some teachers I had. I can't remember who they were because I didn't really like school that much. I'd say there were half a dozen teachers over the years, not in just what they were teaching, but the way they went about it, the way they were fair to their students ...
But he also looked up to some movie and sports stars as role models:

surfers, footballers and probably certain actors portrayed in films and television. You aspire to certain images, perhaps the Tarzans, the Daniel Boones, Davy Crockett. They were all I liked to see. But all that is part of your make-up as you’re growing up ... Sport identities. Well, initially, you look to their skill. They are number one or some of the best in their sport, the sport you love, so you aspire to be like them, even if it's the way they look or behave. You are vulnerable to that as a boy, and as a young teenager. But you soon learn as you grow older that a lot of those people are not as perfect as you imagined them to be. And you soon learn we are all fallible. So they sort of fade pretty quickly as you grow up ... I won’t give names because I don’t think it serves a purpose! If you’re talking about role models, you watch the football first-graders and the top of surfing and lifesaving.

James readily identifies his television role models, but deliberately avoids naming the sportsmen. James suggests he regarded some elite sportsmen as men to be like and copy in some way, and illustrates how influential their example can be, but at the same time distances himself from his explanation. He has to be encouraged to at least name one sports role model, eventually mentioning Mark Richards, an Australian world surf champion in the 1970's. James says he admired the surfer for his personal qualities and great ability, but still is rather reticent:

Mark Richards he was always polite, very humble, never had a big head. Very articulate, intelligent, supreme at what he did. The best in the world.

James strongly implies his adolescent role models were men to be like, and copy in some way, not just men he looked up to. But he avoids talking in specifics and is reluctant to mention a specific person, either television figure or sportsman. Most of the figures he mentions seem to embody traditional masculine qualities of physicality, courage, determination, strength, competitiveness, success and status. However, his principal role model was the man he spent a lot of time with as an adolescent, his father, a champion sportsman.

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**

Questioned about a dominant model of masculinity for Australian men, James struggles with the concept, for him there is no simple answer:

There’s a couple of answers to that. Number one, it's changed with time and there definitely was a dominant feature or image. There still is a dominant image as far as the media and the way a lot of Australians like to portray themselves, that's the image of the bushman. That's been the traditional image of the Australian male, rough and ready, but it's changing. It's hard for me to say ... The image of an Australian man could be of any race, colour, creed. Generally we would like to perceive ourselves as fair, honest, a good sort of bloke.

James both accepts and seems to want to reject the idea that there may be a dominant model of being a man. But there is in his opinion a stereotype of the Aussie male:
Oh well, the stereotyped Aussie male as identified and seen in the media, would have to be the yobbo, haahaa, the blatant yobbo, you know. The terry-towelling hat, thongs, the Esky and a good size beer gut, none of your little tummies. A good size beer gut that's taken a lot of meat pies and beer. That's your stereotyped Australian male image.

For some unexplained reason he is uncomfortable with the idea of a dominant model of masculinity:

I don't think this question about a stereotype Australian male or a model, image, can be really pinned down to one thing in today's society. Any five different people would have five different answers. I personally see the Australian male as an upwardly mobile, energetic, stressed out, young man with a lot of financial and social burdens. I do see a lot of that around.

Finally when a code of traditional masculine behaviour is outlined by the researcher, he suggests the model is epitomised by Aussie Rules footballers:

[Is there an image of an aggressive, independent, white, heterosexual, successful, beer-drinking male? Is there a dominant model?] Yes, yes there is, you wouldn't have asked that question with those specifics if there wasn't. But with our sports, even people from overseas would have to agree with the statement. You tend to see a lot of that in the AFL-Aussie rules. You do see the image tall, aggressive, over-confident male, eer. You can go to any pub on any night of the week, particularly on the weekend and see plenty of bad examples (sigh). But I think everyone knows, generally, that's not what the majority of Australian males are about ... It's a role model for young boys, teenagers growing up, wanting to emulate their sporting stars. It's the young people who believe in it, for a certain period anyway.

As he talks, he sighs deeply, and suggests this football image serves as a model of masculinity for mainly teenage boys; it features body size, physicality, being aggressive and arrogant. He is quick to point out that such an image does not typify the majority of Australian men. He adds there is a sense of Australian masculine identity:

I don't know (about) aggressive, perhaps tough in a resilient way, independent. And really a man of their own destiny, because you can be in this country. But, yeah, it's about being white, hard-working, tough, a good sense of humour, doesn't take himself too seriously. But it has negative side, racist, chauvinist, ignorant-crude. These types are a minority, can see them in country towns.

James' answer about a dominant model of masculinity is muddled, full of contradictions, and has to be untangled. Apparently it is not something he has thought about. It seems he accepts there was a dominant model, but suggests it is mainly confined to football sports. But he believes there is a typical Aussie male stereotype: the yobbo, tough, independent, a good sense of humour, doesn't take himself too seriously, white and hard working.
James mixes and works with many men who epitomise much of the traditional masculine style of behaviour and attitudes. But despite drinking at pubs with other tradesman and mixing with men who do embody his male stereotype, he does not talk about this experience. James is uneasy discussing a dominant model of masculinity, he both acknowledges there is a masculine code of behaviour, but also seeks to dispute it. It is not clear why he does so. He implies it is an outdated idea, as masculinity is changing with the influence of diverse migrant cultures. It seems to have been a personally confronting question, but he gives no clear indication why.

**Becoming a Man**

Asked, 'when did you become a man?' James' initial response is to lean forward on the table and look directly at the researcher:

> Am I a man? Are you a man? Are any of us really men? I don't know! When does any man become a man? Is it when he's circumcised, is it when he has the first sex, is it when he has his first child? I think it's a lifelong process. It's like learning you never finish. Physically it's when you become 14-15, mentally it's another 10 years after that. But socially, spiritually you're always growing as a man.

By the tone of his voice, James seems unsettled by the question, even defensive. Initially he says he doesn't know when he became a man. But then, he actually starts considering the issue. He says becoming a man is a lifelong process, identifying some of the dimensions of being a man, physically, socially and spiritually but without elaborating. Noticeably, he does not answer when he believes he became a man or how. There is no mention of a significant marker in his life that he regards symbolised or stimulated his transition to male adulthood.

At the very end of the interview James comes back to the idea of becoming a man, and suggests that having a family and children is a key to becoming a man, by providing for a family. This time he talks personally:

> For a lot of men it happens when they do have a family and children, and settle down in a serious relationship and then they have to become more men than selfish boys ... I suppose in some ways the Australian male, and possibly myself, may not regard himself as completely successful if he has not provided for a family. I haven't done that yet. I don't know if I want to. But I think a lot of men don't think they are successful until they have reared a family. Perhaps that's our own maternal instinct. I think I could live quite happily, single, for the rest of my life. But I think I would always wonder what I was missing out on as well. That was an important point to make.

So James initially suggests becoming a man is a lifelong process, but later on, adds that providing for a family, being a father are key elements in becoming a man. Seemingly, he regards being a father is an essential part of the adult male experience, when males can no longer be a 'selfish boy'. He makes no attempt to resolve or try to explain the contradictions in his reply. Despite identifying some dimensions to becoming a man, his response shows it is not something he has really considered. His answer is a jumble of ideas. It seems very likely
that when or how he became a man is not a matter he has thought about. He does not answer that question. Becoming a man is apparently a confusing process, and possibly an unsettling issue to discuss with another man he does not know very well, and who he possibly fears may judge him in an unfavourable light.

James speaks very generally about the major influences on his ideas about masculinity:

Your family, the way you see relationships develop within your family, that influences the way you behave. I’m lucky in my family it was all very good influences. Sport teaches you once again, how to behave and not behave. You see people throwing tantrums and you say, ‘I never want to be like that. Scouts, we were involved but didn’t enjoy it ... I’ve always been an observer. So I looked at the behaviour I didn’t like and that helped form how I wanted to behave. Every aspect of your life really determines who you want to be. Even now I see men older than myself, maybe because I’m almost a middle-aged man - I’m more perceptive. I see behaviour of men older and younger, that I don’t want to be like. That helps strengthen your character.

Family and father have been major influences. Watching the behaviour of other males and older men was also a factor. He also implies peers’ had an impact upon his ideas during his youth by participating in sport and scouts. But, whilst he admits learning about masculinity by watching other males and older men, he cannot offer specific, concrete examples, seemingly it was just be general example. It seems he has not thought very much about masculinity.

Men Talking

James talks about the benefits of sport, helping kids gain confidence and overcoming shyness, but he avoids talking about himself:

[So would you say as a boy in sport, surfing, rugby all contributed to your sense of who you were, your sense of identity?] Kids can be very shy and reserved, sport helps bring them out of it. Helps them become social. [Hmmm. Is that the case for you?] Haha ha ha ha. No, I was pretty social before I started. Haha haha.

He is clearly reluctant or uncomfortable to speak personally, but does not say this. When asked about the importance of sport in his adolescence, he says:

Learn how to get on with others in that teamwork frame ... [So sport is playing a role in building character and one’s self-esteem. You’re giving me a funny look] I’m getting you to answer the questions for me hahahaha. [That’s going to be the problem, ‘cause I can’t use it otherwise.] No. Everything you’ve said, yeah. It helps you build your self esteem.

Paradoxically James continually seems to try to keep himself out of the interview. Noticeably absent is any insight into his three major interests surfing, drama and reading. He does not reply to questions about what he is presently reading, and completely avoids talking about why
drama and surfing are so important to him. Yet he comments that he finds the research project 'a bit sexist' because it is only about men, but does not explain further:

I find this whole interview a bit sexist, it's about the Australian male ... I think the questions, what is a man?, the images, stereotypes of a man are a little bit old fashioned. In today's society men and women seem to be more equal in what they are able to do and have to do. There are villains and heroes on both sides. What can appear to be a good strong man, may not always have as good qualities for a woman.

It seems James is uncomfortable revealing himself to another man, and cannot openly acknowledge that:

[How did you find the interview?] Quite a pleasant experience, it makes you think. I find some of the questions difficult because the answers can be so broad, because the answer could be different for every individual. I suppose I'm answering for me. (Pause)....

There are dynamics and feelings occurring which he is not revealing. When the conversation focuses upon him and becomes personal, he resorts to laughter. It is a thin disguise; it seems to be about discomfort. He admits to manipulating the discussion, but gives no explanation. After the interview James said that being asked 'tell me about yourself?' at the beginning of the conversation was an intimidating question. He felt uncomfortable because it is a personal question, 'it means you become vulnerable to the other guy'. For much of the interview, James is guarded, reluctant to reveal his own views and experiences. However, this guard comes down when he talks about his father and sense of family, where he knows he is loved, and not likely to be judged.

Self-portrayal
James is of average height, blonde, tanned, solid and muscularly shaped from years of surfing. He has a strong physical quality to his presence. He works in the Northern Beaches district of Sydney. Starting work early in the day as a gardener gives him the opportunity to surf almost daily. He mentions he enjoys reading, this was something he enjoyed as a youth. But he does not answer a question about what he is presently reading. He enjoys amateur theatre, and has acted in minor roles in a number of productions, but that is all he reveals.

James refers to himself a tradesman but in a self-deprecatory way, and says he has always been an observer. But he says very little else about his temperament, personality, the type of person he sees himself as. Whilst an intelligent man, the sense of self he projects is about physicality and being externally focused. He has remained 'safe' behind an athlete persona.

Self and Heroes
For James it seems the terms role model and hero are synonymous, men to be like, to copy and emulate. But he is uncomfortable with the idea of heroes even discussing those of his
adolescence. Initially he says he will not give a name. Reluctantly, he names one man, an Australian world champion surfer of the 1970's, Mark Richards:

A very famous surfer. He was always polite, very humble, never had a big head—still doesn't. The best in the world when he reigned in the mid 70's when he won four world titles in a row. That kind of guy was a hero. I wouldn't like to name any other because they never lasted as a hero. They were only short-term heroes. [Okay. Any other heroes?] Just my father and my mother and my grandmother. She's a real hero, she had a hard life.

His adolescent hero (that is, a publicly known, inspirational male figure), was a world champion in his favourite sport, surfing. But he avoids explaining the influence Richards' may have had. James says he no longer admires famous people or sportsmen, and seemingly applies this also to his adolescent days:

No sporting hero really lasts very long. To me the real heroes, then and now, were good responsible fathers and brothers. I saw a lot of bad families growing up, with abuse, alcohol, abandonment. To me, the ones who took on the responsibility for families, they were my heroes and still are ... You soon learn as you grow older that a lot of those people are not as perfect as you imagined them to be. And you soon learn that we are all fallible. So they sort of fade as heroes pretty quickly as you grow up. You become more realistic about the fact that they are human beings.

James is sceptical about public heroes, and partly explains his reasons. But it seems there is a bigger story he chooses not to reveal. He mentions he saw plenty of abusive families growing up, but leaves it there. At 40 he (paradoxically) says his heroes are members of his family, father, mother and grandmother, ordinary men and women who are good parents, providing for their families, and also teachers who help others. He implies that people who face and endure the everyday trials of living are to be admired. That being responsible to provide and guide a family is demanding and heroic. But this is never articulated or explained clearly. There is much that James has chosen not to reveal, including the evolution of his ideas about heroes.

James spends much of his time outdoors, through his work and his pastime surfing. There is much similarity with the two men he mentions he admired as heroes when an adolescent, his father and the former world champion surfer—they both seem to share such features as physicality, sporty, outwardly directed, being active doing in the world, and being successful. He says he has always been an observer, in many ways this is how he has taken part in the interview; indeed he says at one stage, 'I suppose I am answering for me'. For over an hour James keeps mostly behind his sporty-athlete persona, deflecting the chance to talking personally. He remains reluctant to open-up to the interviewer.

It was having a cup of tea after the interview had finished, that James admitted that replying to some of the questions was uncomfortable because it makes 'you vulnerable to the other guy'. Here is a clear reflection of traditional masculinity, which fosters attitudes of competitiveness,
emotional stoicism, being invulnerable and on-guard towards other men. Without knowing it, or recognising it, James has shown how traditional masculinity has affected his interaction and attitude in the interview. James shows many features of traditional masculinity, and a softening of them, he can say he enjoys an artistic activity such as amateur drama. But, in the interview, values associated with traditional masculinity seem to have shaped his interaction with the researcher. His noticeable guardedness and defensiveness, apparently was because he did not want to become vulnerable to another man; something inconsistent with traditional masculinity and most uncomfortable for a man.

Case Record 2: Ashley-DEE WHY
Background: Single, de facto relationship, 37 years.
Occupation/ Interests: Sport strength and conditioning coach, contact sports, travel, reading, spirituality.

Ashley grew up in Dee Why. A professional sports coach with the State rugby union team, the NSW Waratahs, he is unmarried. His work has taken him to live in America and other cities in NSW, but he always returns to Dee Why, to be close to the beach and his parents. He and his partner have been in a relationship for four years, but they live apart. (A relatively short time after the interview the relationship ended.)

Adolescent Sport
He started playing rugby union as a boy of age 7. From his youth sport has been the centre of his life. Asked about the importance of sport as an adolescent, he says:

Haha. Basically it was it, it was everything. I guess my life .. has always been with team sports .. apart from doing a few stints with triathlons when I was younger, it never has been a individual sport pursuit. It's always been a team sport pursuit ... Have played rugby union since I was seven, aah, played my last season as a 30 year old in 1991 in America. So 23 years of more of less nonstop winter sport, with rugby predominantly. I was never good at throwing sports, so I never played tennis, squash or cricket or those sports.

A successful athlete at high school, he says he was big for his age and enjoyed the physical contact of rugby union to use his size and strength. He played football hard. On the basis of his sporting prowess he believes he was chosen School Captain:

I was a fairly physical player and based my whole game around my physical abilities to hit people, knock them over and make sure they stayed knocked-over. So I guess it was one of dominance to the opposition. Ahh, but one of togetherness and group harmonies. [Did you see your opponents as rivals?] Basically you're doing a job! You might... If that person in front of you is the person you have to run over to get the job done, you have no animosity to that bloke, he's not a rival, he's just an obstacle. And you remove that obstacle to promote the success of your organisation .. it's not a rival.
Playing rugby, his body was an instrument to be used to physically dominate other boys, who were not rivals but objects, and he appears to have been unconcerned whether he injured them. It appears he learnt in sport to see his body as a machine to be used for intimidation. But what he actually mentions is that he learnt the importance of teamwork:

Really it was basically the teamwork, that nothing ever got done by itself. But there's a push these days towards the me. If it's going to happen, it's going to be me! But in the team sports situation, aah, you tend to de-emphasize the me, and emphasize the team. So there's a common phrase, always used by coaches, there's no 'I' in team. So, umm, we tend to ... I don't think anyone who's real ego-centric ever is successful in team sports. So I've never really been, apart from early years... There was a degree of ego-centricity coming into high school, but that got bashed out of me fairly quickly in a boys school. Umm, really its always been 'team'.

At 17 years, realising that sport was his passion, Ashley chose to become a sports conditioning coach. He took a Physical Education degree at Teachers College, which he says was the only professional training available to him in the early 1980s, to enter sport coaching:

   Basically decided when I was about 17 years of age I wanted to be a strength and conditioning coach from travelling to the US, reading journals and things like that. And when I was living in the US when I was 30 came home, basically, had the tools to basically go after the job.

Sport is Ashley's passion, but he talks in a matter-of-fact manner. There is no, 'I just loved it—it shaped my life'. Many of the rewards for Ashley of sport are unclear, perhaps so obvious he does not state them. But it is evident that physical contact sport has shaped his life, determined where he lives, where he works, as well as shaped his body since adolescence.

**Work—professional sport**

To become a sports coach Ashley studied at University and later on worked with sports teams in America. He returned to Sydney when aged 30 years, and for several years coached with National Rugby League first grade teams. He recently completed a Masters' degree in sports science. He develops and oversees training regimes that improve sportsmen's physical conditioning, performance, speed, coordination and flexibility and reduce the risk of injury. He explains:

   Golden rule number one is to basically ... train people to minimise the risk of injury in their sport, and secondly to improve their performance as an athlete in their chosen sport. Basically we provide the strength, the speed, the coordination, flexibility balance—all the parameters of fitness—to ensure they have the tools, on top of their skills, to do battle with equally skilled and trained athletes ... We've just come out of a heavy off-season, so that's between 16-23 hours training time a week for the players. On top of that we have, umm, planning, meetings and that, where the face-to-face hours are minimal compared to the planning hours. They'd be doing strength training four days a week, flexibility after every session, speed training two days a week, conditioning work, cross-training on
equipment machines for another four-five hours a week, and integrated skills on top of that for another three-four hours a week.

Ashley's work is not a job to pay the bills. He enjoys his work, it apparently gives him a sense of personal fulfillment and presumably a means of self-realisation; he says:

[You enjoy what you do?] I do, it's a passion. It's a hobby but it also pays my way. Confucius said, 'if you find a job you love you never have to work a day in your life'. Pretty happy with that!

Sport is now a business. A drawback of his employment however is the short-term nature of coaching appointments, he usually has only 1-2 year contracts, with renewal based on results, improved team performances. So he calls himself a 'hired gun' because of the temporary nature of his employment. Discussing this he realizes the temporary nature of his work may affect his relationship with his girlfriend:

Umm basically if you don't have the results you then basically don't get your contract renewed. Or even if you do get results ... I had two first grade teams that made the semi-finals, successive semi-finals ... and my contract wasn't renewed. So, umm. You can't become too emotional about it because it's a business.

That means I don't stay anywhere for too long, but I also think it's a challenge and things like that. Some things become a bit mundane and a bit day-to-day it's time to move on, and that might extend to my personal life as well (smile, snigger)!

Despite loving work, emotions must be constrained in his job. With each team, as a coach he must develop a sense of emotional detachment:

I'm a hired gun. So, umm, when my contract concludes, I'm on the lookout for a new contract if I'm not going to be renewed. So I can't become too emotionally involved with the players, with the club, because if you pin everything with that particular team and then suddenly they don't want you at the end of a one-two year contract, then you can actually be shattered...Yeah, I learnt that from a mate of mine who was S and C coach with the Kansas City Chiefs in the NFL in the States. He basically told me back in '88 don't get too close to any of the players. Don't become too firm a friend with any of the players because injury will take them, umm, management will remove them, because your job is to work with the team don't get too associated with the individuals. It's a team sport, so ...

His work is his passion, but in a contradictory fashion he cannot be passionately involved with major elements of his work, he must be emotionally disconnected from both players and the team. Work is a place of personal fulfillment but also emotional disconnection; he believes he must be a 'hired gun', with no ties.
Father and Son

Ashley’s father is retired and in his early 70’s. He was a successful senior executive with a leading Sydney newspaper, regarded as one of the best in his field, who cultivated a tough newspaper man image. Work apparently was the centrepiece of his life. His job required him to work long hours, including every Friday and Saturday night. Yet he would go and watch his sons play sport Saturday mornings:

My father was always a tough ... my father’s a newspaper man, so, err, tough, hard-drinking, hard-swearing, aah, never really showed any true emotion things like that ... so, I guess, that was the image I had originally, I guess. Dad would work long hours getting a newspaper edition out for Sunday, so he would never be home on Friday night, Saturday night ... But always made sure we were well provided for, always came to our football games, always made time to have a look at that, even though he came straight off night-shift. Had a few drinks, came home, and went straight out and watched us Saturday morning, I guess that was always there.

Earning an executive level salary, Ashley says his father provided an upper middle-class lifestyle for the family. Ashley admires his father’s undoubted success as an executive with a major corporation. He says his father was the most influential man who showed him how to be a man, he was his first role model. Like his father he values the importance of being successful at one’s vocation. From his mother he learnt to try one’s best which is another guiding value. He aims to be recognised as a good strength and conditioning coach, and do his best; he admits it gives him great satisfaction to be well regarded by colleagues. But he has deliberately chosen to be different from his father in all respects, except with regard to success:

He was the best in his field. He was honoured by the PM as one of the top newspaper men in the county over the last 50 years. He served The Planet for 51 years from copyboy to editor, so, ahh, so he was a mark of success ... My father was a hero ... Yeah, I probably learnt to be more in touch with my emotions than to hide away from them! ... Yeah, tough, hard-drinker, hard-talker, yeah. And I don’t drink to get drunk, and I’m not aggressive. I get short. My partner would tell you I become more like my father every year.

Ashley says he was 27 before he saw his father show any sort of emotion. His father cried during a television interview about his career, saying he never had enough time for his family. Ashley suggests work was a big part of his father’s self-image; this is implicit in the comment that his father is a changed man since retirement:

He was crying on national TV. It was the first time I’d ever seen him show any sort of emotion. Since then... After that he had a nervous breakdown, he’s been a changed man over the last 10 years since retirement. Retirement killed him, he just hasn’t died yet.

Just a week prior to the interview, Ashley’s father watched him coach for the first time. Little was said by the father, but Ashley sees it as his father (finally) approving his life vocation. It seems for Ashley to have been quite important:
So, it was quite nice for me that he finally, last week, this is me at 37, came and watched me coach for the first time ever! And he got a great deal of satisfaction, and I got a great deal of satisfaction 'cause I'm well regarded in my field as a good strength and conditioning coach. And it was almost a mark of 'aah, well, you've done okay!' Not a begrudging sort of thing, he always respected my decisions to do what I've done.

Ashley, unlike others, does not mention his father until quite late in the discussion but does give a picture of him; yet there are few details of what his fathers' job actually involved, his interests or his personality beyond being tough and unemotional. There is a noticeable lack of warmth in how Ashley speaks about his father. There are no terms of affection about his father, nor mention of special moments together as Ashley grew up:

He always respected my decisions to do what I've done. But he wanted me to be a lawyer or a doctor, professional sort of person. Now I'm working in professional sports. I've always had the impression he wasn't 100% happy with my decision.

There seems to be a distance between them, yet also on Ashley's part, an acceptance of the type of man his father is.

Role Models: John Wayne, sportsmen and dad
As an adolescent, role models and heroes were the same thing, these were not just men to look up to, but men to be like, and emulate:

My father was a hero. John Wayne definitely was a hero. I copped a lot of shit over being very interested in John Wayne films when I was about 12-13 years of age. I used to attempt to have a similar speech pattern, ahh, until that was relatively bashed out of me by my, urrr, peers in first year high school. Err, my father was always a tough ... that was more the image I had, and the screen-John Wayne type. Again, it was a physical presence, physical size! Umm, but then again I was 12-13-14 very, er, easy to be moulded.

As a keen footballer he admired South Sydney rugby league stars Bob McCarthy and Ron Coote. They played in the same position as he did, as a forward. But his father stood out, he embodied being among the best and successful. In the final year at high school an English teacher helped him gain an appreciation of intellectual ideas:

Ron Coote, Bob McCarthy ... More for their prowess than anything else ... I had a pretty good English teacher in Year 12, very much an academic. Very much a non-physical person. A very intelligent man, I drifted towards that way. Ahh, younger–there wasn't any other ... probably my father was the most obvious influential person. And I quickly outgrew the movie stereotypes.

His adolescent role models reflected a traditional style of masculinity, tough, physically big, strong, unemotional, independent, hard-working and successful. They were men he admits he
copied in some way. However, his attempts to mimic John Wayne brought unwanted attentions from his peers that he can still recall and seemingly left an impact.

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**

The idea of a dominant model of masculinity makes Ashley think. He first interprets the concept in terms of a physical image, mentioning a well-known footballer Ian Roberts. But Roberts is a self-declared homosexual:

I don’t know whether there is a dominant image or not. Ian Roberts is a prominent rugby league player who, umm, basically is an out-an-out homosexual, is 6 foot 4, 110 kilos, sculptured out of marble and hits like a truck. Umm, so I guess that’s gone a long way to diminish the model of a man as purely heterosexual, for a lot of the hetero community. I guess if you look. Movies often push a male image, so that’s pushed all the time—your action hero movies, the Bruce Willis’, Schwarzenegger, your Jean-Claude Van Damme … it’s more of a character thing than a physical thing. I don’t think anyone who’s 5 foot 9 and 50 kilos is any less a man than someone who is 6 foot 6 and 125 kilos.

Despite acknowledging the male action hero image, and the physical image of sportsmen such as Roberts and surf iron man, Guy Leach, he believes there is no dominant physically-based model of masculinity. But then in a contradictory fashion, he says there is a stereotypical Aussie male image, that in his opinion features being physically strong, bronzed and athletic. An image based upon what he calls a ‘muscles maketh the man’ ideal:

Ohh, living on the beach you’d have to say, the lifesaver, the surfer, the bronzed image. The chiseled, square jaw Chesty Bonds’ type ad, that’s purveyed all the way through! Ahh, so, rippling six-pack muscles in the abs. It’s more cosmetic … it’s purely physical … the Australian male is. And when you look at it probably … 1% of the Australian male population actually measures up to that model of a man. So from a purely physical point of view only 99% of Australian men are failures! So, yeah ‘muscles maketh the man’.

Ashley perceives the idea, solely in terms of physical presence. He recognises the existence of a muscular, physical image as a model of masculinity, but acknowledges it is an impossible ideal. Apparently, the concept of a dominant model of masculinity, is not something Ashley has given much thought to, certainly not in terms of reflecting a code of masculine behaviours, values or practices. It is a contradictory reply—implicitly agreeing and disagreeing about a dominant model of masculinity. It is somewhat ironic that a physically well-built sports coach, who works professionally with elite first grade footballers, sports heroes, who are seen by some as representing the masculine cultural ideal (Connell, 1987, 215; Edgar, 1997, 34), does not believe these elite sportsmen reflect in any way a persuasive or dominant model of masculinity.
Becoming a Man

Asked 'when did you become a man?' Ashley rolls his eyes, takes a deep breath and pauses:

Ahh, biologically I guess at point of conception. But sociologically ... aah I think probably going through college 21-22. Ahh, I guess at ... College was a thinking experience that enabled me to sort out the wheat from the chaff, the ones I wanted to keep, the ones I wanted to discard. I don't think I can actually put a chronological time on it. I think it's an evolution from a point, and I'm still evolving as a man. I don't think I'll ever stop evolving as a man... Maybe that's when a man is ready to call himself a man, when he can move ... I'm just thinking this. When he can finally move from the physical ... as the most important criteria for a partner.

It is a challenging question for Ashley, one he apparently has not considered. He implies that becoming a man is a change of consciousness and a process, but then changes his mind, and is unable to reach a firm conclusion. That he offers contradictory suggestions reflects he has not thought about it in a systematic way. He makes no mention of major social markers such as marriage, or fatherhood. He recognises turning age 18 has some significance for white Australians, but asked if a social ritual to celebrate becoming men would benefit young males he replies:

No! The Jews have their bar-mitzvah, the Aborigines have their ceremonies, all indigenous cultures have that. Umm, white Anglo-Saxon males its getting drunk, 18th birthday, yeah, get a 'root'. I don't think any sort of physical ceremony can do that. It's a developing consciousness, which is far greater than any physical attribute or coming of age.

When he became a man is a matter that Ashley is unable to conclusively answer. There has been no memorable event or process in his life to conclusively mark his transition to being an adult male. Becoming a man for Ashley was not a conscious process; it seems to have occurred by accident. It is a matter he has obviously not thought about it before, seemingly unimportant, either as an issue or to his sense of self.

He suggests what it is to be a man is more to do with personal values and attitudes rather than physical image. But seemingly this is not a matter he has really considered in much depth as he is unable to explain his ideas. A willingness to stand up for one's beliefs is not an original, considered answer, it is a cliche. But it suggests, he has not passively accepted dominant social images that being a man is about being big, strong and muscular, even though he is exactly that:

The ability to do more that what is required of you .. I think its more aaah .. willingness to stand up and be counted for what you are, who you are, what you believe in! Even if it means standing alone. I don't think it's a physical sort of sense.I don't think anyone who's 5 foot 9 and 50 kilos is any less a man than someone who is 6 foot 6 and 125 kilos ... obviously sport is where I work, so I come across more of those large male individuals, but the smaller ones are just as tenacious, hard-working and diligent as the big ones. I think it's more an individual character that makes a man rather than any sort of physical attributes!
His father was the most important influence on his ideas about masculinity. Other major influences especially as a young adolescent were football stars whom he admired for their physical prowess and movie image of John Wayne. He does not say exactly what was so appealing about the celluloid Wayne hero-image. But as Carroll suggests Wayne epitomised a vital, robust presence, willing to face the trials of life, to make a stand for what one believes (Carroll, 1998, 59); surely some of these reflect what Ashley admired about the figure.

As an adolescent he says sport taught him about team work, but it also appears he learnt to see himself instrumentally, his body as a machine to intimidate opponents. But also his school peers had a pronounced impact:

I didn't conform to the short back and sides hairstyle. Umm, I had a fair degree of self-confidence too, which a lot of people took as ... a negative rather than a positive but I took a battering. My self-esteem was severely damaged for many, many years because they ... the group didn't like it. [Schoolboys] Oh, yeah, yeah! I was intimidated until I stood up for myself. I, umm. Probably the only fight I've ever been in. They used to call me 'Duke'—John Wayne's name. This one bloke ... knocked him out. After that I gained a measure of respect among my peers, that this man was not to be messed with. But, because I had a degree of physical size and physical strength—that was respected.

As an adolescent it seems Ashley was impressed by men embodying a traditional style of masculinity, especially physical presence. He mentions his ideas about being male continued to evolve. He says travel, college study and reading helped him see a range of behaviours, values, interests and ideas available beyond those he learnt growing up and mass media images of masculinity. He outgrew his original models, especially that of his father:

Ehh, yeah, I think I've learned more from, ahh ... reading, internalising and working things out myself! Ahh, and not through any external mass-media type situation. It's a process over time, and I have a few natural gifts of intellect I can use. You look at some people who are maybe stuck within a certain background class-environment, they get to one level ... and unfortunately they don't get any further, because they're not exposed to, umm, ideas or environments that promote a sense of thinking about who you are, what you are, where you came from and where you're going! So you're stuck. Unfortunately a lot of those people don't realize they're stuck either.

**Men Talking**

Ashley in many ways is quite open, talking quite freely about his youth, work and his ideas about being a man. Ashley does not seem to be constantly 'on-guard' in the conversation. He talks about problems of self-esteem, the importance of work that he enjoys, wanting to have a sense of inner spiritual peace; issues that few others talk about. But it is talking about sport, his passion, that some contradictions and omissions become apparent. Ashley shows an instrumental attitude and emotional detachment towards rugby. Opponents are viewed as
obstacles. Physical violence is just part of the game the hazards of a collision sport and he himself is a 'hired gun':

Basically you're doing a job. You might, if that person in front of you is the person you have to run over to get the job done, you have no animosity to that bloke, he's not a rival, he's just an obstacle ... You do de-humanize quite a lot of things in sport. We condition people to do, aah, unnatural things ... We emphasize that this is a collision sport. Umm, if you did the sort of things we do in normal society, you'd be put away for it. So, umm, it's not a natural thing to do, umm, go out and hit someone so hard you basically remove them from the game. But that's what we do.

There are (understandable) omissions in Ashley's story. He omits talking about the emotional satisfaction of his work. He never says he loves rugby or work. He does not discuss the paradox of working in something he loves, but which leaves him emotionally mute, detached from the team and the players. And it is not only in regard to the emotional appeal of sport that Ashley is reticent, a tension in his relationship with his father is not discussed. He makes no mention of his de facto partner and their relationship. It seems likely that some matters can be revealed, but others are possibly too personal and so avoided, and perhaps some issues not yet even recognised as of significance, and able to be talked about.

**Self-portrayal**

Ashley is physically imposing. A touch above average height, he has a very muscular physique. He is barrel-chested with large biceps. He exudes a strong sense of physicality without being intimidating. He regularly weight trains in the gym, is fit and strong. He has two degrees, and interests beyond sport such as reading fiction and biographies. He says he is currently attempting to read *A Brief History of Time*, by scientist Stephen Hawkings. He enjoys travel and artists such as Brett Whitely. He says he reads and thinks about fundamental spiritual questions of life, where we come from, he admires the Dalai Lama. He says, 'I'm more of the BP sort of person, the quiet achiever'.

But in terms of work, Ashley calls himself a 'hired gun'. Being a sports coach is a big piece of his sense of self, as work is the place to achieve, and possibly prove himself. Work seems the centre of his life, and seemingly his relationship plays a secondary role. But he has an introspective quality, he believes in a greater force and is interested in continuing to develop as a person. He is in the process of coming to recognise the significance of his values:

So to me, I guess umm, I'm probably more introspective these days, and looking at ways to improve myself from .. a spiritual perspective, rather than a physical. And if I get more internal peace, I'll be a much better man ... For our inner selves as well. It's like I'm who I am not for what I look like but who I am, deep ... what my spiritual values are, what my emotional values are and they're going to be there longer than my physique, my hair is going to be here. Yeah, that's now .. defines who I am!
Whilst he says he is starting to think about himself in terms of values, he actually does not reveal what they are, what values he believes in and regards as personally significant. The value he emphasizes is his desire to be a successful sports coach. So, his sense of self appears to be principally outwardly directed, incorporating an instrumental attitude. However, Ashley shows there are various dimensions to his character, but his introspective inclination is much less evident.

Heroes and Self
Ashley regards role models and heroes as the same thing, inspirational figures, men to copy and be like. This is how he saw such figures as an adolescent:

My father was a hero. John Wayne definitely was a hero. Ahhh, well I supported South Sydney, growing up in Manly, Ron Coote, Bob McCarthy.

He presently admires several public figures, for making a positive contribution to the world:

I think anyone who can make a difference ... Like err, Victor Chang made a difference! Because of his presence on this earth the earth is a better place for him being here ... Names I'm thinking of—Edmund Hillary, Malcolm X, umm, Martin Luther-King, Gandhi and they're not stereotypical white images either. They're four men I see ... made a difference, and there again it doesn't matter what colour, class, creed whatever. I guess I'm thinking men because that's where we're coming from, but there's women who've made a difference too. Brett Whitely, Lloyd Rees they define more than the physical ... they also bring great joy, they also, lead alternative lifestyles, they don't have to follow a certain pattern, they're not mainstream. They do what they do, even if sometimes it means doing it alone. The Dalai Lama is to me a great spiritualistic role model of what a man can be.

Implicit in what he says, there seems to be a change of meaning. These are not so much personal heroes, rather they are admirable men. He admires what they have done. Some have helped others, others have struggled to follow their dreams and been unconventional, particularly the Australian artists Whitely and Rees. Yet, these figures fulfil one of the traditional functions of heroes, as a source of inspiration, but not seemingly for him now at his age. A common feature is both the adolescent and present day figures, are all exceptional, successful public figures. They clearly help illuminate values he considers important; to be successful, to pursue a vocation, to follow one's goal despite hardships and not give up, contribute positively to society by helping others, and to be willing to stand alone for what one believes. They also, in a subtle way, give a positive perspective to masculinity and men.

Ashley outgrew his adolescent heroes, exemplars of a traditional, physically oriented form of masculinity. He mentions at College he thought about the type of person he wanted to be and decided he did not like his father's tough image. An interesting paradox emerges. At the personal level he thought somewhat about the type of man he wished to be, and it seems he grasped that many men usually act certain ways and have certain interests. But he does not
allude to traditional masculinity in terms of its social manifestation as values, behaviours and social practices deemed appropriate to men. When discussing masculinity his attention is focussed upon body-image rather than its social dimensions.

It is apparent traditional masculinity has shaped Ashley, many of its values and features are important to him, such as success, body, physical strength, independence and determination. Seemingly his education and his reflective capacity shows traditional masculinity does not have a stranglehold on him, but it still is a potent influence. He seems blind to the form and character of his own masculinity, and masculinity in its manifestation as a social code for males.

Case Record 3: Jon—DEE WHY
Background: Divorced, 39 years
Occupation/ Interests: Electrician, surfriding, drinking, watching sport, reading.

Jon has surfed at Dee Why Beach since the late 1960s. He is something of an 'elder', of the local surf scene. Working full-time as an electrician, he now finds time to surf about once a week. He rents a small apartment overlooking the beach. He has been divorced for almost ten years, and has not had a female partner for some time.

Adolescent Sport
Jon started playing sport as a boy. By age 12 he was boxing, surfing and also playing rugby league. He continued playing football until his mid-20s:

Played rugby league when I was younger. Started surfing when I was about 12. Hmm, a lot of boxing. I started boxing when I was 10 ... League was more like a social game, it was a time killer on weekends when I wasn't surfing, just fitted around that, just to kill time.

Sport seems to have been something to occupy his time, keep him physically active, although boxing taught him self-defense. Questioned about what he learnt from boxing and league he is very brief, speaking in a flat, matter-of-fact manner with no animation:

Yeah, mate, learnt how to duck and punch. It gave me a bit of discipline in a way, suppose. [Discipline in the sense of ?] Not panicking in a corner. Get out of situations, counter-attack and stuff like that.

He has more to say about surfing. Starting quite young, it was he says a 'macho thing', with other attractions:

Girls, not just the waves, but having the girls on the beach watching you. Or you thought they were watching you. Watching everybody else too, you know what I mean? Just having girls on the beach because in those days they just idolised surfers and everything like that! Macho thing to
do and that you know! Now I realise that like, you can go out there, and they wouldn't know who was who. Could be best surfer in the world or worst and they wouldn't know. Come back to the car park put your board on the car, and they wouldn't know. And don't think they'd care most of them. [Other things about surfing that appealed?] The ego trip... yeah, ego, right ... (pause). Yeah. Surfing probably biggest ego trip around, yeah. Get out there catch the waves. Everyone'd say, 'got into that one'. You'd say, 'did well, yeah'. They'd say 'beauty mate', and all that sort of thing.

Jon recalls his early motivations for surfing, it was a 'macho' thing to do, an 'ego trip' and a way to attract girls. Apparently his motivations were external, about recognition and belonging among his peers, rather than for pleasure and enjoyment. He now surfs once a week. Surfing has been the constant in his life, and whilst his teenage daughter now lives (nearby) with his ex-wife, she is a keen surfer and he watches her progress. Sport is still a big part of his life, but now rather than participating:

probably one of the greatest Norms around, haha. Yeah. I like watching rugby league, I like cricket. Even like watching surfing on the beach. I still go out once or twice a week to keep fitness up, if I can.

Work

Work is not a major talking point, Jon says very little. An electrician by trade, he does sub-contract work for another electrician. He starts work by seven in the morning and can find himself working on buildings anywhere within 10 kilometres of the Central Business District of Sydney. Virtually the only thing he says is work is time consuming and physically demanding, 'aahh, it's a lot of dirty work, crawlin' around in roofs and floors'. With little said, the impression is that despite making a comfortable living by working hard, he is rather weary of his job.

Father and Son

Jon never knew his biological father. His mother married his step-father, then a sergeant in the Australian Army with his own children, when Jon was aged 3. He says his step-father was 'a hard man':

My father was very similar to that guy, father in Muriel's Wedding, only a lot tougher. [Was he a model for you being a man?] Well, put it this way, if someone is washing a greasy pipe a bit of that grease is going to fall on top of ya, mate. That almost answers the question. You end up being hard yourself in that way.

[His background?] He was in the army! [How long?] Twenty years, a long time before I met him. [What rank?] NCO, yeah.

[And how would you describe your relationship with him?] I wouldn't say it was ever close, ya know. He never came and watched me play football. Cause he never came and watched me box ... No. Far from close. [How is it now?] Very very distant, very distant. Pheedwww. I haven't even spoken to him for 5 years.
His step-father was an ex-serviceman, seemingly, a tough, unemotional man with rather conventional ideas and behaviours about being masculine. This seems to be the reasons he took Jon to learn boxing at age 10, so he could defend himself:

My step-father ... he'd have to be major ... Yeah. You had to defend yourself and be tough. And that was his criteria. That's probably why I'm as big as I am now, because he pushed me to be tough, ya know. And I had to be 'cause, I had to go to work with him after school, so ... When my step-father was with me you couldn't cry, he'd call you 'sook'. I'm the same now I find it very hard to watch people cry, ya know. I find it very hard to cry. My step-father was really tough, ya know, he was hard on me and the kids but he never touched my mother or the kids, ya know. I never saw him lay into my mother, they had shouting arguments and that.

Jon acknowledges his step-father played a huge part in shaping his ideas about being a man. The messages about masculinity the step-father seems to have conveyed to Jon where, to be tough, hard, ready to fight and that 'boys don't cry'. Jon also admits as an adolescent he felt an outcast from his family, and disconnected from his step-father. He believes this had a role in him being a bit of a 'hot-head' at that stage of his life:

Frustration of being brought up by a step-father, yeah. Being like an outcast in the family, as he had his own kids, and all that sort of stuff ... Ah, that's here and there.

Talking about his step-father does not come easy to Jon, he has to continually be nudged by the researcher to say a little more. His step-father seems to have been a major but largely negative figure in his life. There is no warmth at all in the way Jon speaks about him, nor does he say anything positive about the step-father (not even that he provided for the family). The distance between them is vast, most evident in Jon's admission that he has not seen his step-father for five years. Jon appears to show no sign of bitterness, anger, nor to hold a grudge, but there is an air of resignation and seemingly a sense of having missed out on something.

**Role Models: Peers and sportsmen**

As a teenager, Jon became part of a group of young, rather macho, local surfers who were up to ten years older than him. These young males he admits, somewhat proudly, were a wild group. They would joyride stolen cars and drink heavily:

I used to hang around these guys we'd go and knock off cars and go for a joyride. And I used to do it myself when I got older ... Err. I remember in 1969, I was really young. I went up to Noosa with them. We drank all the way up, ya know. It was good. Did I tell you about the guys with guns. One killed a bloke down at Warringah Mall, a security guard—shot him dead. When I was a young kid, I just hung in outer circle with this guy. You had to be able to drink a bit in those days. I'm talking about when I was 15. It was good fun. The greatest fun in my whole life, ever.
Jon enjoyed being part of this set of teenage toughs, who he says, 'ruled the beach'. He regarded one of them as a role model, he looked up to him, but also saw him as an older male to try to be like:

Yeah. Denny, yeah. He was a big wave rider. Like a local hero. Really charismatic sort of guy. Eight years older. He was just a really wild guy. [What would he do?] Go into parties and wreck the place. He'd just have charisma. I don't know. Probably most charismatic person I've met. Pull women like that (clicks fingers) yeah.

He also regarded some elite sportsmen, boxers and footballers as role models. These were men who were great successes at their sport. He makes it clear he did not simply look up to them for their success, he also identified with their image as tough, hard men:

Lionel Rose and Johnny Famechon 'cos they were world champions you know and Australians. So it's only natural for them to be up there. They were the top ... Nat Young. Also Cassius Clay. The footballers, Terry Randall, John Sattler, Artie Beetson, all the hard blokes!

His adolescent role models, all strongly personified a traditional version of masculinity, associated with being tough, physically big, strong, unemotional, powerful and successful. They were men he admits he identified with, men to emulate.

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**

The idea of a dominant model of masculinity is quite foreign to Jon, he struggles with the concept. As with some of the other participants, the researcher refers to academic research suggesting such a model involves men being tough, aggressive, independent not doing anything feminine and successful. After some thought, he agrees such a model exists, but it is changing, he also suggests younger men are hiding it:

You mean a name of a person? Hmm ... I have seen a lot of aggressive men. Umm. I wouldn't say they were more aggressive in the old days. Still a lot of blokes like to hold the thumb down on women, ya know ... Like macho image. Umm. I'd say 20 years ago, yeah. But I think it's tilting the other way. It's still out there, I mean ... What I think now is that men don't show it straight off. In the old days they'd show it right away. I think they hide it more now then they bring it out later, after they've settled into a situation and that. And when it comes to sensitive new age guys, snags or whatever, I think they are probably worse than the domineering male in the long run. [Why do you say that?] 'Cos they don't show their true selves until it's too late, ya know. That's what I've seen in relationships. And they're more likely to belt, punch up a woman from what I've seen.

In his opinion, popular male movie actors can be seen to reflect the traditional macho model, but there have been changes over the years. He also recognises some different masculine styles based around work and class:

Say 20 years ago, that actor Jack Thompson he related to the old shearer–army movies and that ... Tough, go out and have a few beers,
get into a brawl, pick up a chick, come home with the chick, back to work with a hangover. Free-spirited ... Males actors generally portray the times, ya know, like Russell Crowe. Mel Gibson is tough right, but that’s all he is. Doesn’t show him as a dominating figure ... It’s definitely changed ... Ya get the yobbo, 'she's right mate, beauty, would like to crack onto that, had a barbie with mates, hope Manly wins the comp. this year’. And then you’ve got the working class guy. Works hard and everything is black and white. Then ya got the white collar workers, who look down on the others, even if he doesn’t earn as much money.

Whilst seemingly, a new way of thinking about masculinity, Jon comes to acknowledge that there is a dominant model of masculinity. The macho model he admits is the type of masculinity he learnt growing up. But in his opinion this model is no longer as preeminent as it was:

[You do see a dominant model, but its not as strong as it used to be?]
Yeah. Two, ummm, people working in a family watered it down a lot. The man brought in the bread and the woman stayed at home washed and cleaned. Now it's sort of equal-equal, but still the woman is hard done by, I think.

**Becoming a Man**

Without any hesitation, Jon immediately replies to the question, 'when did you become a man?:

Going in Army, I thought I was a man at 18. 'Cos I was surfing with the big boys out at the Point, getting into the big stuff, getting a bit of a reputation. Had a few girls hanging off me, a lost art, ha ha.

With an adolescence spent mostly as part of a macho surfer group, by age 18 he thought he was a man. But now he says:

I say I really became a man when I saw my daughter getting born. That changed my outlook on women a lot. Realised how much they go through in birth ... It mellowed me out watching me daughter getting born, to a degree. [Sounds like becoming a father, being a family man was a turning point in becoming a man.] Yeah. (Pause). I think it's an experience a man's got to have. I think you'd be lost without it. Got to have a strong captain in the family.

Despite all his wild young thrill-seeking antics it is significant that as a mid-life man Jon says, it was becoming a father, the birth of his only child, that marks when he became a man. It appears becoming a man is not a matter that John has even now paid much attention to. It is as if he assumes it as a natural progression that just happens as a young man grows older, takes up work and becomes a parent, not requiring any conscious effort or awareness.

An influence upon his youthful ideas about being a man was 'the John Wayne image', he enjoyed watching westerns as a teenager:

I was brought up with John Wayne image. I liked to watch John Wayne movies, couldn’t get killed (pause). [What image did he portray?] Open, tough, fast speaking, fast shooting.
He indicates it was his macho father and his surfie peers during his adolescence, that were the two major influences on his ideas about masculinity. To be accepted by his peers he mentions he had to pass a trial, surf a difficult section of the beach, the Point, adjacent to a dangerous rock platform:

If you didn't make it out there, you know, you'd get a stigma, like a piker. You'd see it happen to other guys who couldn't do it, right, just rejected out of the clan, like. So you had to be there to be in the group. [There was a bit of peer pressure to be accepted?] Oh, yeah, yeah. [The surfing was about being accepted amongst the group.] Oh, yeah. If you didn't do, it no-one would speak to you, yeah. It was a big prestige thing in those days, ya know, to surf the Point. Ah, yeah, I'd say I was about 14 at the time.

As an adolescent it appears Jon had a need to belong, he wanted to be part of what he calls a 'clan'. But before he could, he had to prove himself to his teenage-adolescent peers, by doing something rather physically dangerous. The culture of Jon's peer group cultivated toughness, drinking lots of alcohol, surfing, fighting, taking risks and joy-riding stolen cars. It appears as a very macho subculture. Among these young men he says he developed a reputation as 'a good fighter, good drinker, big rager, big surfer and footballer'. Apparently, he conformed to their code and practices, and being part of this clan it seems gave him some form of emotional connection to his peers. It seems this sense of belonging was important to him, something that perhaps he did not get from his family.

Men Talking

Jon is laconic and factual. He talks about a topic but usually gives little detail. The researcher often is required to take a more active role, adopting a counselling style of active questioning, where necessary, elaborating and reflecting back ideas and statements for Jon to agree or disagree with, and gently nudging him to say a little more. Yet at times he gives some pointed personal insights. He says he likes women, but has great difficulty attracting them. He believes the man should have the final say in relationships with women, in his opinion the man is 'captain of the family':

I always liked girls, you know. But always found it hard to associate with girls. Just didn't have that gift of the gab (pause ). Yeah, I don't know if it's got anything to do with this fat (points to his tummy). I would like women more than most blokes do. Everyone would say I was too manly, and too rough with them. I'm not rough ... I still think men should take the dominant role, a bit of a lead. Don't be severe. Blokes need to take the lead! [In the family situation?] I think, you cease being a man if you let the woman take over. You are against what nature has developed for a male for thousands of years ... If any bloke lets a woman make the final decision over a major point, then I think he feels cheated. And that he's not a real man. And I think it can even lead to sexual inadequacy ... Men don't need to be over-dominant in relationship, just have a dominant role.
Only at the very end of the interview does he discuss his role in the local surf riders club. He helps organise surfing competitions at the beach for young males, in their late teens-early 20s. One reason for his involvement is to help keep young men away from drugs, but this almost has to be prised from him:

Well, I help organise all the events, ya know. Help run the competitions, run inter-club competitions. Spend a Sunday at the beach running the show, judging the surf comps. [Who are mainly members?] Mainly younger guys down the beach. There's just a few of us older guys left. We do it for experience. It's good to watch the younger guys get up and have a go.

[You spend a lot of time encouraging the younger guys, teaching them?]

No, we don't teach. They learn it themselves. Surfin' is something you can't teach. It's something you pick up yourself. It's up to you how good you get. You keep them going on the right track, so they are competitive, so they don't go on drugs. Cos I've had a lot of mates go down on drugs, and that's what I don't want to see. But it still happens. But, if you stop a few going on that path, you've done your job, ya know.

But at one stage, in the interview, after the tape was played back (to ensure it was recording), he comments:

Sounds like my soul has been fractured at a very early age. There's no confidence in that voice, were there is in your voice. In my voice there's no confidence! You can tell I've got no confidence in the way I speak. [That's a big thing to say.] ... But you can see you've been educated and had a reasonable family upbringing, and that. mine was the complete opposite.

Jon admits to a gap in his psychological world, but it is an issue not pursued either by himself or the researcher. There is an uncertainty where to take such an admission, for both the interviewer and Jon. But he implies he found talking about his life with the researcher worthwhile:

It's good have to go back a bit on life. You find it hard to explain being a man. I think if you ask any man about being a man its hard for them to portray themselves, ya know. Every human being acts different, different catalysts. Some guys, what turns then on, more impressed by rockstars, other guys might like footballers and they might image themselves after them. I think I've had a lot of influences over the years.

It seems talking about how he sees himself, is not an easy thing. Jon finds it hard to explain being a man. He says he found the interview rewarding. To talk something about being a man, masculinity and his life is something he had not done before with another man. It offered an opportunity to reflect on his life and masculinity, something it seems he has rarely done.
Self-portrayal

Jon is of average height, physically burly with a noticeable large stomach. He has the facial skin complexion of someone who spends a lot of time outdoors. He has a strong accent, and regards himself as a working class man. He enjoys a beer, watching rugby league and to surf. He reads a lot of popular fiction, books by writers such as Colleen McCulloch, Wilbur Smith and Tom Clancy. Divorced, his daughter lives nearby with his ex-wife.

He says he was a bit of a hothead as a youth, now he says he likes to be laid-back. Being a surfer and an electrician seem the major elements of his self-image. But he also values being a father, and keeps a protective eye over his daughter whom he often sees surfing at the beach. Although outwardly directed, Jon shows something of his inner self, he implies he lacks some self-confidence, a belief in himself.

Self and Heroes

For Jon his adolescent role models and heroes were one and the same, inspirational figures to identify with. He perceived exemplars in the sports he played, surfing, boxing and rugby league, men such as world champion boxers Muhammed Ali, Johnny Famechon, footballers Bob Fulton and Arthur Beeton and John Saddler as examples to copy. He admired these men:

Because they were on top, top guns, everyone respected them ... They had power right .. you know what I mean. They didn't seem to have any fear. Probably something I've got heaps of. You can't get to where they were with fear ... Nat Young, local surfer he was big, ruled the ocean. He took no shit, he drew respect but what's the word for it? Really daunting being out in the water. Just see the awe around him, I'm the King! He was a hero mate, shit yeah! He used to surf at Dee Why. Other blokes just swamped around him. He'd go out with them. Chics'd come to him, with all that glamour.

These men appear to have embodied features associated with traditional masculinity, such as courage, control, aggression, fearlessness, being-the-best, glory and power. He is not at all hesitant to say that he currently admires popular musicians Jimmy Hendrix and Jimmy Morrison:

Everyone respects them, even young people. If you ask, who was the best guitarist ever they'll say straight away, Jimmy Hendrix. Who was the most outrageous person, they'll say Jimmy Morrison ... I just liked the way they had power over thousands and thousands of people, just had them in their hands ... getting them into hysteria ... it's the power they had over the situation and control. They controlled the audience ... both were hard drinkers ...

Seemingly, such figures modelled a particular way of being a man he recognised but did not question nor reflect on; a traditional macho model. He does seem to recognise that these men seem to symbolise power and success. Jon's adolescent heroes say a good deal about his beliefs and values. He spends most Friday evenings at the pub and occasionally has 'a skinful', that is, gets drunk. He enjoys watching sport and says men should have the final say in the
family. Jon's attitudes and behaviours still reflect the continued potency of traditional masculinity in his life.

Soon turning 40, Jon lives alone, socialises mostly with a few mates, finds work rather wearisome, and has some awareness that he lacks a degree of self-confidence. His teenage daughter is the bright light in his life. Unspoken, but implicit in what he says, there appears to be a lack of direction, and perhaps an emotional flatness to his life. Around mid-life he seems stuck and disillusioned, seemingly reluctant or unable to review his life and ideas, attitudes and behaviours he learnt as an adolescent male. It seems he knows something is awry with his life, but does not know what to do.

Whilst it appears the traditional model of masculinity, no longer has the tight grip it seems to have had when he was an adolescent, it still has reflections in his attitudes towards women and power. Jon shows limited understanding or recognition of the form of masculinity that has fundamentally shaped his sense of self. With an outward focus characteristic of traditional masculinity, perhaps it is a factor that inhibits him attempting to sort out and reflect upon the gap he perceives in his self-confidence.

The Rural Males–NSW Southern Highlands

Case Record 4: Noel–BOWRAL
Background: Separated, 45 years.
Occupation/ Interests: Art dealer; self-development, bushwalking.

Noel has lived for over 12 years in the southern highlands, where he has a gallery. Tall, softly spoken, with a slender body frame, he grew up in a small country town, near Townsville in northern Queensland. He presently lives by himself, having recently ended a long term de facto relationship. His two grown up sons live and work in Sydney.

Adolescent Sport
As a young teenager he enjoyed sport, particularly rugby league and cricket. But when he was 13 years old he had an accident that damaged his eyesight, and shortly afterwards, his family moved to Melbourne:

> When I got wire in my eye that affected my judgement. Not long before that I took 6 wickets for none in a school match. I remember telling the cricket captain at the school what I had done, but I couldn't reproduce it. And he thought I was bullshiting, and that hurt me. I realised my accident had affected my judgement. I've learnt over time to compensate, pretty well. My distance judgement is not as good as person with two eyes. So sport was pretty important to me, but after my eye accident .. and this was my excuse moving to Victoria, I found it difficult to adapt to Rules and I tended to want to get out of sport.
Sport was important to him as a youth. But there was a big turn around after his family's move to Melbourne. Unaware that his eye injury had affected his spatial judgement, and unable to perform as well at cricket as he had previously in Townsville, Noel's enthusiasm for sport, turned to disillusion. He implies being unable to match his deeds with his words made him lose face with some of his peers, and perhaps triggered a degree of personal insecurity. His perfunctory reply to what he learnt from sport, suggests a subtle air of disappointment about his youthful experiences:

I'm sure it has affected me in a lot of ways but ... Something about accepting that things aren't always not going to go your way! Learning that you have to try.

Another tragedy occurred during his adolescence. When Noel was 17 his older brother who was a serviceman with the RAAF was killed in a plane crash:

My brother was six years older than me. It was a very difficult time. I can remember feelings of being really upset, not knowing how to deal with it ... there was a song I used to play, which seemed to have some therapeutic effect. *Ring of Fire*, by Johnny Cash, which my brother had actually recorded ... My parents have said they were feeling like they were going around the bend at that time ... it was such a traumatic time for them ... Even now I feel the emotion myself, talking about my brother.

Two tragedies occurred in his adolescence with everlasting consequences. Whilst the impact of his brother's death is not readily apparent, his enthusiasm for playing sport totally changed after his accident, with perhaps, implications for his self-esteem. Teenage and adolescent sport switched from a setting where he could distinguish himself, possibly gain some status and be admired by his peers, to a place of ambivalence and limited enjoyment. Now at mid-life, he enjoys watching cricket on television, and regular bushwalks are his main leisure activity.

**Work**

Noel has worked as a small businessman for over 20 years, and been an art dealer for almost 12. He enjoys his work, making a reasonable income. However, work is not a topic he spends much time discussing. He says nothing about the responsibilities of running his own business, the rewards or drawbacks. It is apparent it is not a vocation, an activity he finds deeply satisfying, but it is very much more than 'just a job'. Whilst he enjoys his work:

There are times I feel frustrated that I'm just working for the wealthy in society. I'm fortunate it provides me with a reasonable living. I've put my kids through private school. I still wonder if I could be doing something else to make the world a better place. I'm aware at my stage in life, it can be very difficult to change career. I know a number of men who have done it, some have found it very hard.
Work seems a means to an end, a relatively pleasant way of earning money and having a comfortable lifestyle. It seems quite clear that there is little nexus between Noel’s self-image and his job. He never refers to himself as 'a small businessman'. It also apparent there is an element of dissatisfaction with work. But he is cautious about changing his workpath in light of his age.

Father and Son

Noel's father worked for a major bank as a branch manager, and later as an inspector for his entire working career. He says his father was a hard working, responsible man:

My father always had been a very responsible man, he had worked in a bank all his life, virtually ... He died about nine years ago from bowel cancer ... I suppose I've taken on his sense of responsibility, sometimes to my own detriment. Yeah, not allowed myself to have enough fun, and explore life enough ... It had been bred into me to get a job, a responsible job ... Although I've often dismissed the importance of my father, I feel sure as time has gone by, he was a very very central figure (in learning about masculinity). And I have taken on a lot of his values, although in slightly different manifestations! Like he followed the Liberal Party, I'm more interested in left wing politics, I suppose honesty was very important to him, umm. The responsibility thing has been a big issue, I know I've taken that on from my father.

Noel has little to say about his experiences growing as a boy and youth with his father. He mentions as a youngster he saw his father in a negative light compared to his mother. There is little warmth in how he speaks about his dad. But he acknowledges his father was a key influence upon his ideas about masculinity and personal values:

I didn't like what I saw from my father like, a selfishness and an inflexibility about trying different things, foods. He didn't want to try camping, and that turned me off a bit ... In Year 12 my ideas began to really change, and my ideas about the Vietnam war changed, and a lot of that was distressful for my parents.

Noel paints a minute portrait of his father. He gives no idea of his character, interests, not even how old his father was when he died. Unlike when he discusses the death of his brother, Noel makes no comment about feeling emotional when he mentions his father's death. Noel implies their relationship was fractured around his early 20s. At that time he was critical of the Vietnam War, dropped out of university, and eventually joined a spiritual community near Perth. He does not mention his father’s attitude, but it seems unlikely his father would have supported his sons’ actions. His mother refers to this as the time he ‘went off-the-rails’, presumably his father agreed. Opposing views about the Vietnam War triggered the initial rupture which never seems to have recovered.

Noel fails to give a positive impression of his father. Much remains unsaid. He does not comment on their emotional connection, or how he might describe the character of the relationship. Noel says he gets on well with his sons, who are in their late teens and early
twenties. He implies that in light of his relationship with his father he wanted something closer with his sons.

**Role Models: Sportstars**

As an adolescent he says he liked and looked up to popular, outstanding sportsman of the late 1960's, Australian test cricket batsman Doug Walters and Australian Rules footballer Peter Hudson of the Hawthorn Club. Admitting he was naive about politics he also liked the then Liberal Party Federal Minister for the Army, Andrew Peacock:

> I can remember Peter Hudson, a Hawthorn footballer, who was very very good, but had a reputation of being very fair. And he appealed to me quite a lot. I used to hero worship Doug Walters a bit at that time. I can still remember Doug scoring his first century, hearing it on the radio, haha.

He explains the reasons he looked up to these public figures:

> I guess they were out there having a go, being successful, umm, conquering all ... I think those people all appealed to me because they had a reputation, a perception of being fair and honest and 'good' sort of people. I think that's always been a thing important to me.

Whilst he admired them for their success as being amongst the best in their sport, above all he respected them for their reputations for honesty and fair play. These men were role models for him, principally in the sense of reflecting an important personal value, fairness. But, they were not men he saw as models to identify with, or copy in some way. Whilst he recalls during adolescence his older brother often brought him gifts after being overseas with the RAAF, yet he never saw him as a role model. He observes at the present time:

> I've often felt there are not many role models for men, men are so sort of vilified in our society!

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**

Asked does he perceive a dominant model of masculinity, he responds:

> I guess there is a lot of conflicting expectations ... that I'm expected to be strong, tough and not show my emotions, self-sacrificing, and work every day of my life to provide for my family ... And yet I feel like I'm also expected to be sensitive ... As a man I feel I'm expected to have my relationships and that sort of thing, all together, and I've seen that in my friends. If I don't that's a source of shame, and something not to discuss with other men.

Noel does not directly answer the question. Instead he refers to a social code he feels pressured to conform to; to be, strong, a provider, self-assured and in-control of his life. In contrast, the idea of a male stereotype does trigger him to think about male behaviour in a collective, social
sense. He sees the male stereotype is a mask men think they must wear. It does not reflect their true character:

It's to do with talking about sport all the time, drinking lots of beer and not expressing any emotion, not really talking about anything of a deep, personal nature. [Where do you see them?] I see them all around the place, although more and more I see that can often be a facade. That a lot of men think that is how they are supposed to be, but when you really talk to them, there's a lot more sides to a lot of blokes than they show.

It is clear Noel perceives a dominant model of masculinity, but does not label it in such terms. It emerges that he believes men conform to a code of various social practices and values, in order to appear masculine. Implicitly, but not directly, he acknowledges a social model of masculinity, that he has certainly experienced and continues to feel rather pressured by.

**Becoming a Man**

The question, 'when did you become a man?' triggers some visible discomfort and uncertainty. Noel has no ready reply:

Hmmph! (Wry smile). That's a hard question. I don't know! I wonder if it was when I had my first fuck, ha, but I don't think so. I s'pose it would be sometime after the birth of my first son. I began to accept that I am a man, in some degree. Mind you accepting that I'm a man, is not something that happened at a particular time. It been more a process. Becoming a man is part of accepting myself, and I've gradually gained more acceptance of myself. It's bound up with getting to know myself, it's a lifelong path ... I still also wonder if I'm too emotional ... Life has shown me if we run away from painful emotions they hang around, and that's were chronic depression can set in. And I've lived a lot of my life in mild depression.

It is a challenging question, but one that seemingly makes him think rather than appear defensive. Apparently, it is not an issue he has thought about or considered personally relevant, he has no ready, well-considered answer. He makes no mention of perceiving when he commenced university, getting married or establishing his business as such markers. But he does regard when he became a father as an important event. Noel continues to consider the question and interprets becoming a man, principally in terms of a process of self-acceptance, coming to terms with himself as a person and his personality. Becoming a man for Noel has a contradictory quality, both an ongoing process and a distinct event, with fatherhood being a key turning point. That is where he leaves the issue. However, as a young man there was no memorable experience or circumstance he vividly recalls marking the transition from being a young male.

He identifies his family as the predominant influence on his ideas about masculinity as he grew up. He now sees his father was a central influence. His mother was also very important:
I have taken on a lot of his values, although in slightly different manifestations. Like he followed the Liberal Party, I'm more interested in left wing politics ... Yeah, I guess the John Wayne image. That had a bit of unreality about it, to me. I don't know how strongly that influenced me. My mother had an influence on how I felt I should be, as a man, through the interactions between my father and her. I got some of my ideas around being a man, from what I didn't like and qualities I did like in my mother.

He recalls that during adolescence he found the John Wayne, tough guy movie image appealing, but says little else although apparently he recognised its presentation of masculinity had an element of fantasy about it.

**Men Talking**

The interview took place on the balcony at Noel's home with the sound of magpies in the air. He says much about his early adult life. He reveals in his early twenties he dropped out of university, and then subsequently resigned from the Australian Public Service after only eight months. He regards this as his drop-out period. This was when he squatted in a barn, practiced yoga and smoked marijuana. In his mid-twenties he joined a spiritually-inspired community outside Perth and lived there for five years. Here he married his first wife. He is also, it seems, very frank about his emotional and psychological life. He mentions he has been in a state of mild depression for some time and has low self-esteem:

> I still wonder at times if I'm a bit weird, if, because of this or that, maybe I like sex too much, or not enough, those sort of things. I'm slowly starting to accept I am a bit more sensitive and a bit more intense than some people. I also wonder if I'm too emotional. I've lived a lot of my life in mild depression. I have learnt more how to stay with my feelings, and process them, be with them and go through them and come out the other side. There was a time when I feared if I really stayed with my feelings, I would fall apart.

Women, either his female partners or his mother, are a recurrent topic. He says he is especially drawn to beautiful women, his last partner was a former model. He mentions he has had several long-term partners, but his intimate relationships are often troubled. He says he loses his sense of self. This appears to be one of the reasons he has been having psychotherapy:

> I've gone through many stages where I've tried to remake myself as a very, very sensitive, soft, caring man because I thought that was what would appeal to women. When I ended a 15 year marriage, which had been a very difficult one, six years ago, I thought I don't want to make any more of those mistakes. I'm going to work on myself ... I was in a relationship on-and-off for 3 years with a lady that ended last October, and that's brought up a lot of questions, about whether I'm too intense, things like that ... Saying 'no' to women in my life is something I find very hard. And standing up for what I want in a relationship is something I don't find easy.

His mother seems to have played a major role in his life. It seems some aspects of her influence even now in mid-life, he does not like:
I felt my mother was a very emotionally controlling woman, and that has also been an impact on my life. I love my mother, and find it very hard to say 'no' to her ... a few years ago, I can remember her getting very emotional and upset saying I didn't love her because I wouldn't get my hair cut for her at the time. After talking with my sister I eventually weakened, and got it cut, and hated myself afterwards, because I knew it was none of my mother's business what my hair looked like. This was three years ago.

At times Noel appears to be very frank. He admits he was sexually naive when he married. He also says much about his interior psychological life, that he has been mildly depressed for years, that he sees himself as an idealist, also revealing some of his personal self-doubts and his life philosophy, life is about coming to know and accept oneself. But he cannot talk about how well he got on with his father, how he feels about the relationship, nor about his brother's death:

[You were telling me about growing up. At 16 your brother was killed. That sounds like it had a huge impact on your life and the rest of your family]. Umm, yeah (long pause).

There are some things he seems comfortable talking about and does, and other things he apparently is not. Noel seems to have set his own limits about what he wants to discuss in the conversation. As with the example immediately above, the researcher might raise a topic, but if Noel seemed uneasy or reluctant to take it up, the researcher did not actively pursue the issue, interpreting silence as reflecting it to be a sensitive topic.

Self-portrayal

Tall and well spoken, with wrinkles around his eyes, Noel looks his age of 45 years. He enjoys bushwalking and is fond of classical music. Noel regularly attends personal development workshops, and has been having regular psychotherapy sessions for a few years. Introspection features significantly in his life:

When I ended a 15 year marriage .. I thought 'I'm going to work on myself, remake myself' .. My experience since then has shown how difficult it really is to change. I feel I've gone through a lot of growing. I'm trying to focus on, and this is a struggle for me, what do I feel comfortable with, than what will appeal to a woman, or other people. So I'm slowly getting a little bit more secure with myself, and able to accept my differences and stuff although there are times when I think maybe I'm too intense.

Psychological healing is something he values, he calls a process of self-acceptance, and a key part of his life. He believes life's meaning comes from following such a path:

From all my work, I think we all carry this feeling of being an outsider, in certain ways, if people are really honest about themselves. I've seen that almost without exception. Which brings me back to, we are all really on our own journey, and part of that is to learn to accept ourselves and get to know ourselves and know what our own needs are,
and to be comfortable with that! Yeah, I see that as one of the main things in life.

Although he conducts a small business, Noel talks about himself in terms of qualities, idealistic and compassionate. There is no sense he defines himself by his work:

High ideals are very important to me. I'm fairly idealistic, even though I feel my ability to live out my ideals falls short of what I'd like.

In portraying himself to the researcher, Noel has focussed mainly on his inner world. He lets his mask down to show much about how he feels about himself, and his self-image. But, he says almost nothing of his social roles as a self-employed businessman and father, or what he might consider as his achievements. He gives little idea of how significant he regard such matters. His self-portrait almost seems slightly overbalanced towards his interior life, at the expense of his social persona. There also may be an edge he has not shown, as once or twice during the interview, he assertively directed the conversation towards what he wanted to discuss, away from the researcher's suggested direction.

Self and Heroes
For Noel, role models and heroes are the same thing. As an adolescent he looked up to two sportsman, Doug Walters and Peter Hudson, for being amongst the best in their sport and their example of fair play. But that is all he says about these figures. That was the extent of his admiration. Asked about what men he admires now, he raises his eyebrows and takes some time to reply:

Nelson Mandela, through the media image, appears to be a wonderful man. Someone like Gandhi, possibly Sai Baba and I met Jim Cairns and had a lot of regard for (him). [What do you admire.] (They had) a lot of compassion, incredible ability to forgive, sincerity, intensity, honesty ... I'm sure there would be others, I just can't think off the top of my head.

When asked the question Noel pauses and looks uneasy, he does not allude to his physical response. He answers, as he says, 'off-the-top of my head'. Given his reply, apparently, admirable public male figures is not something he gives much thought to, or perhaps even accords much importance. However, all those mentioned are humanitarians, men who have helped others. They reflect values he considers important, compassion, idealism and integrity. His reply has a contradictory flavour to it. These are men who appear to reflect some of his values, yet he has little to say about them, and he speaks without any animation. Something is missing.

Noel seems rather content with his business, his home and lifestyle. However, it seems since early adulthood Noel has been something of a spiritual seeker. He believes self-knowledge is one of the important things of life. Yet, despite his avid pursuit of psychological healing for
some years, a degree of personal contentment still seems to elude him. He is slightly disillusioned with his business, which he calls 'working for the wealthy in society'. He would like to have work that helps people or the environment. But is unsure how to do this. There are some signs of turbulence at this stage of his life. He says he has been mildly depressed for some years and is often self-critical. He also admits he is unable to maintain long term intimate relationships with female partners, and is still adjusting to the ending of his last relationship. He implies some big parts of his life are possibly not working out as he would like.

Noel comes across as a capable, introspective, rather gentle male. A man Bly would call a 'soft-male', or what Tacey identifies (not in a critical sense) as a feminised male; introspective, introvertish, more concerned with his interior life, a man somewhat uncomfortable with traditional masculinity. Perhaps his alienation with traditional masculinity is most noticeable in his visible, but unexplained, ambivalence when discussing male heroes. He names some men he think are admirable, such as Nelson Mandela, but with little enthusiasm. Quite likely he may have been uncomfortable with the idea of male heroes, which as Connell says are often associated with traditional masculinity (1995, 215), but Noel remains silent about his attitude on the topic. It seems he has contradictory, jumbled ideas about males and heroes. He actually says he believes there are very few positive role models for men these days. He suggests men are more often portrayed in a negative rather than positive light by society and the media. And paradoxically he struggles to name admirable well known men, showing it is a matter he has given very little thought to.

Despite his introspective character, it seems the nature and scripts of traditional masculinity does not appear to have been an issue he has really thought about in his psychotherapeutic journey, which is surprising. Traditional masculinity is associated with power, competitiveness, strength and being invulnerable. The social character and ideology of traditional masculinity almost seems invisible to him.
Case Record 5: Glen—BOWRAL

Background: Divorced, 42 years.

Occupation/ Interests: Storeman: gardening, Salvation Army activities

Glen was born in inner-city Sydney, at Redfern. For the past 15 years he has lived in the Southern Highlands. He works as a storeman for the local government council. He is divorced and lives alone; his two young boys live with their mother on the NSW south coast.

Adolescent Sport

As a boy growing up in a working class district Redfern, Glen played rugby league at weekends. At school he took part in swimming:

I was good at swimming at school. Football was what I played at weekends. All the boys used to play football, you had to play a certain number of games and you got to keep the jumper and the socks. I played for a couple of years until I was 14, can’t say I was very good ... I used to train at Moore Park. [What did you learn from sport?] I think it made you have friends. Friends in your team, and the club used to have movie nights. Home movies, you met in an old garage at the back of a house, that’s what we did. And that was your big night out, you’d have chips and lollies but you could only come if you played football ... When I was a teenager and got my first job I used to go to the greyhounds. Meet some of the other teenage boys and you’d all go together to Harold Park, but you had to be home at a certain time, you had to be in the door by 11 o’clock.

Glen shows little enthusiasm talking about sport. By age 14, he had given up playing football. The one aspect that stands out is that sport provided a form of connection with other boys for Glen, as he recalls the social activities he did with friends he made playing football. In his late teens he would go to the greyhound track and at weekends watch the local rugby league team, South Sydney. As a teenager he says he enjoyed a more solitary activity:

I was a very keen gardener. I used to grow things in pots, the backyards were all concrete, and you used to have the old clotheslines. I used to fill up pots, with poor soil now I come to think of it, with cuttings and grow them. My step-mum would say you had to hose the yard down and keep it clean.

He is rather laconic discussing sport, seemingly it was a pastime of minor importance in his adolescence. Its significance seems to have been more in regard to connecting with other boys. Now, sport has no place in his adult life, although he occasionally takes his sons bushwalking. But gardening remains an activity he still enjoys.

Work

Glen has been working since he was 15. His first job was checking despatch orders at a nearby pharmaceutical factory. He has worked for several government authorities. Presently, he works as a storeman for the local council, where he orders and checks the delivery of goods, ranging from stationary and office supplies to road materials:
I started work with the South Sydney Council. Bought a house with my wife here, it was cheap here. I was travelling up and down to Sydney for a while to work at the Council, every day. I had a big office, I could have been a supervisor-foreman. After about three years living here, I got a job with the local council, I applied for a gardener's job here. [A big change.] Yeah, absolute horrible culture shock. I got a gardening trades certificate when I was with the City Council, so I applied for the job here and got it. Now I'm a storeman—nothing to do with gardening. That certificate is dead to me now. [You sound alienated from your job, to be honest.] Yeah. Well, now I'm divorced. My wife and children now live down the coast at Culburra.

Glen is clearly alienated and disenchantment with his job. Talking about work there is a strong sense of disillusionment. His attitude seems to be, 'it pays the bills'. There is little indication that he finds work personally satisfying, or even enjoyable. When discussing work he raises a seemingly unrelated issue, his divorce and separation from his children. It is a likely sign of what presently concerns him most.

**Father and Son**

Glen was 10 years old when his father died. Both parents died when they were in their late thirties, he mentions that they were alcoholics. His father physically intimidated his mother, but never touched the children. From age 10 he and his sisters were raised by an aunt and uncle who became their step-parents:

My parents when we were kids drank metho. We used to have to go to the shop and buy the metho, at the general shop. He come to know who's kids we are, why we're buying so much metho, one bottle a day or might have been more. He used to say no more. They would mix it with water. They were violent in the house. When my father used to hit my mother there would be hole in the wall, where she would fall and knock her head. We were in a housing commission house. She'd put a tea towel over it when Nanna would come down. And we had to not say anything. She'd have a black eye and say she fell down the backsteps.

Glen knows very little about his father, and he is rather vague about his step-father:

(dad) died when I was 10, and I don't know a great deal about my father. I know he was in the war fought and had war medals. I could easily find out what battalion he was in, and where, but I haven't done that. Umm. My step-father was a terrific fella. He was in the wars, he'd come home merry. His dinner would be in the oven when he came home. My step-mum would bring it out for him, the table all set. She'd say, 'go out and sit with him to keep him company'. He'd say, 'you eat it, don't let mum know, put it on a sandwich you're a growing boy, get it into you'. Got on terrific, he died a week before I got married. He was the father, she was the mother. Lovely time, nothing was discussed about money, like we can't pay the rent, or buy groceries. We never heard that.

He had a high regard for his stepfather, but says little about him:

He worked on the wharves. He never roused on you. You never got spanked. He told you whenever you meet a girl, you treat her as a woman, you never slap her around, never treat her bad ... Very honest
Glen talks about his 'two fathers' in a story-like manner. He says virtually nothing about the types of men they were, their work or their role in his life. He seems unable to discuss them in an analytical manner. Nor does he indicate his feelings about them, although his affection for his stepfather is clear. Glen's was presumably an unpleasant early childhood, and by the time he was twenty both fathers' were dead. Much remains unsaid about them. Any form of connection he had or may still have with his stepfather is not at all clear.

Role Models: Family members

When asked about role models during his adolescence Glen's replies:

I didn't have a great deal ... Probably my step-brother, he was about 18 and I was 14, he used to play football. He was on the Council street sweeper. He used to get out the back with the punching bag, and show you how to shape up. And tell you always protect your face, don't let this arm down, get them in the blockhole. But I was hopeless. Now I realise it was because of my violent parents, that I couldn't stand it ... Grandfather was a lovely man—let the woman do a woman's work. Never went into the kitchen and cooked. Just do men's work like fix the clothes line, fix the washing machine. Always doing something for his wife. [So you regard him as a role model?] Yeah, I think so. Very honest people—they were in their 60's when I knew them. Go and do their work, and have a few beers at the pub after, but they knew they had to be home by five o'clock for their tea. They'd come home read the paper, ask 'how are you all'. Sit in front of the TV. Homely.

Older males to consciously look up to and admire did not really figure in his adolescence. But Glen mentions his grandfather a number of times in the early part of the interview. He watched his grandfather, noting that he went to work, provided for his family, drank in the pub, did not help with domestics but fixed household things. A considerable degree of affection is evident in the way he speaks about his grandfather. The grandfather emerges as a, little recognised, subtle influence on Glens' ideas about masculinity. Glen's grandfather seems to have shown a very traditional masculine gender role as hard worker, provider, drinker, whose primary role was outside the household. He enacted a traditional model of masculinity on a daily basis.

Dominant Model of Masculinity

Glen struggles with the idea of a dominant model of masculinity, but recognises boys and men are taught to act in certain ways:

I was taught if he hits you, you belt him back. You stand up to him. Don't let any bloke thump you, you hit him even if you get knocked down again ... I drank with the council men ...

As with some other participants, the researcher refers to academic research suggesting such a model involves men being tough, aggressive, independent not doing anything feminine and
successful. He agrees that growing up he learnt such a form of masculinity, about being macho and tough. But as he has got older his ideas changed:

I'm learning this (being ready to fight) isn't important. I wouldn't teach my boys that they are not allowed to cry. It's okay to be soft and gentle. I think if we don't teach the young ones that, they are going to be very hard against females, you don't have to be macho ...

Glen learnt that being a boy meant being ready for a fight, not avoiding a scrap, nor being a sissy or giving up. But it was not the males in his family that he says taught him these lessons, but the women:

My nanna, she'd say, 'if someone hits you at school you stand up to them'. My step-mum would say, 'don't you dare let anyone push you around. They knock you down, get up again. And never put the boot in. Stand up like a man and fight with your two hands.' That's what I was taught.

Whilst the idea of a dominant model of masculinity is a totally new concept, Glen appears to perceive it in what he calls the macho-image for men. It was a model of masculinity he saw growing up in working class Redfern, that was taught by his family, both explicitly and by unconscious example.

**Becoming a Man**

Asked, 'when did you become a man?' Glen rolls his eyes and leans back in his chair:

(Long Pause) I don't know how to answer that. Probably in the early part of my marriage, when I had more control over home matters. I don't know. A great big achievement ... probably when your first child is born, made you feel very proud. Especially when you wash your baby when it's just been born, that's a very proud moment in your life. Knowing that you're a father, you are now a dad, that hits home. People congratulate you.

The questions makes Glen pause and think. He has no immediate answer. After some thought, he says fatherhood marks when he believes he became a man. It was assuming distinct social roles, as a father and provider, with responsibilities for a family of his own, that he considers marked a transition to perceiving himself and being an adult male. But it was not a transition he recognised at the time, only now, in retrospect. It appears that there has been no other memorable circumstance, physically affecting him, that impacted upon his self-perception. There is little evidence Glen has given the matter of becoming a man much considered thought, it seems most likely that it is an issue he has not considered personally important.

Glen frequently says, 'my step-mum said'. He indicates his step-mother held the household purse. As an adolescent Glen gave her his pay packet and she allocated the money for board, banking and spending. She and his grandmother appear as strong characters who deliberately shaped his views around masculinity to their conceptions, especially not to be a sissy. He
regards his stepmother and grandmother as the most important persons who taught him about masculinity:

My step-mum said if a bloke shouts you a beer, you shout back, never let anyone have that on you, owe them a drink. If you borrowed money you pay it back on payday. That's what she taught me.

He has warm memories of his step-family, where mother and father had distinct gender roles, just as his grandparents did. Glen says he still prefers the old-traditional style roles for men and women that he grew up with. But he is not always consistent, he calls himself a male chauvinist, yet says he is happy to do both what he sees as male and female tasks, such as paid work and cooking:

I'm happy to do both things. But then I'm a male chauvinist. I think women are taking over too many roles of what men should do. I don't believe that women should work, or be in higher wages than men. Because of my childhood ... dad (step-father) never went into the kitchen or helped mum (step-mother) cook, dad provided the money, dad provided the food on the table. That's how I was taught, dad provided the food and mum does the washing, cleaning. That's good. [And you think that's the way it should be?] Yeah! When you come home the beds were made, house was clean, your tea was at 5 o'clock—and you all sat together at the table, no watching TV. You all sat at the table together, and they are important to me.

Glen's family and upbringing are clearly the key influences on his ideas about masculinity. He acknowledges his family upbringing provides the basis for his view that men should be at work and women be at home. Growing up as a youth in a happy working class household where there were clear traditional gender roles, profoundly shaped and still affects his views on masculinity. Relatives of both sexes taught Glen a traditional model of masculinity.

**Men Talking**

Glen talks fondly and in a lively manner about growing up in Redfern:

My grandfather and grandmother lived around the corner, they were great to us. They'd give us threepence, and say go and buy some chips for your tea. Or you'd go down the pub and call out, they'd come out and give you a blue bow orange juice, and you'd have that and dart off. You knew it was an interesting life. Sydney inner city. They'd give you threepence to get rid of you, and get threepence worth of broken biscuits or a bottle of coke, or lollies. Everyone knew you, the butcher knew whose kids you were ... Normal working class, you never worried about the rich. We all lived the same terrace houses, very cheap rent, you never had a car. My grandfather I know would carry a potato bag, up to Newtown, fill it all up with vegies, and carry it back, in the 60's. We used to buy broken biscuits, you know. If you couldn't afford it you would till it up on the book, and you owed them a pound or two pound. It was working class, they used to sit on the verandahs, make scones, and everyone would come around. Wonderful times.

Yet he can say but little about his parents. He gives no clue to his attitude about his early childhood years:
As a young boy my mother and father were alcoholics, died at a very young age. After my mother died my father was violent. I had to go to Court because my mother had a cerebral hemorrhage. I had to go to court to witness whether my father bashed my mother. I remember going to the Court, I couldn’t testify because I was so upset. I was dismissed from the case. Then we were moved to my aunty and uncle, my mother’s sister.

But on some matters as he is quite candid. For example, he reveals something of the problems of his marriage:

Me, personally I give in. I had a very dominant wife, you see. And I shut it all up, to make things happy, because of my background with my mother and father being violent, I can’t stand violence! I’m just working on that now, it’s taken me forty-odd years to realise all that—forty-odd years! I suppressed a lot of my problems due to my childhood, and it's coming up. I repressed some of my anger, my frustrations ... the things I wanted. I just wonder if that’s why my marriage was a bit shaky. My wife went off with another man. I didn’t leave. Now was that because I wasn’t masculine enough, too soft, or too dominant. I gave her all my pay, never queried anything if she said the electricity was paid, that was it. It’s a pattern. I can see it all now, because of my childhood where I was told shut up, say nothing, don’t mention that hole in the wall, go in the bedroom—hard work. Now my children are a little bit the same. My youngest is having trouble at school.

At the end of the interview he says the separation from his boys, 'rips me to pieces' and:

I don’t know how they are going to end-up and that’s probably what’s eating me. I think their mother is not giving them enough discipline, but I can’t say anything because they live with her and the law says one parent has got the say. You can’t have two parents saying things different. Here we go again, if they have a haircut ... they’ve had mohawks, I hate it! If I say anything it causes this argument with my ex-wife, and I hate it. So I say, Jarrad it’s interesting or don’t comment.

Glen says he loves people, is open and, 'I'm happy to talk forever and ever.' But there are a number of things he does not discuss. He says very little about his attitude to work, his role in the Salvation Army or his step-father. Yet he mentions he is attending a support group for people with alcoholic family members. Despite being frank about the turbulence in his life, he mostly seems to avoid, either by habit or perhaps choice, matters of a more personal nature relating to his emotional responses.

Self-portrayal
Glen is softly spoken and diminutive. His grey hair and beard make him look older than 42. He is very down-to-earth, friendly and good-natured. He sees himself as a gentle, open, compassionate man, admitting he is not an assertive person. He consciously refers to himself as a soft male. Since being divorced he has lived alone in a rented house. He has a religious inclination, and it seems being active with the Salvation Army is a major pastime. His young sons aged 10 and 12 years, visit and stay with him every second weekend.
Self and Heroes

Asked about his adolescent heroes, Glen idiosyncratically replies:

They don’t have to be males? Shirley Bassey, I just loved her dynamic singing, her you know, drive, her cabaret music. [Any male heroes?] In football, South Sydney–Eric Simms in the 1960’s them sort of people, probably because he kicked all the goals to win the game. He was a great goal kicker, the best.

Publicly known, inspirational male figures apparently had little personal significance in his youth. He makes no mention of any well-known man, as a source of personal inspiration, whom he thought about copying in some way. He mentions a footballer Eric Simms, as a figure he seemingly admired as the best goal kicker in rugby league at that time, but has nothing else to say; there is no indication he saw him as a man to emulate. Presently, he admires two men he has met through the Salvation Army, a Commissioner who he regards as a great public speaker, and a local officer. He says he respects them for their good-nature, compassion and willing to help others, including him:

Kendall Blackman, I’ve shared a lot with him. He’s a soft gentle man who listens, a nature like mine, doesn’t like drama. He listens, expresses himself or gives me direction in a gentle way. Supportive.

Glen is laconic discussing these men. In one sense admiring them as compassionate and gentle natured men, seems to be self-supporting as they mirror something of how he perceives himself. But his reticence to say more about them is marked. Perhaps he is concerned that the researcher may think about him in a critical fashion.

Glen seems to lack a sense of solid, self-assurance. He admits he doesn’t like to ‘rock the boat’. Currently, his life is characterised by great disruption. Recently divorced, he is separated from his young boys, no longer owns his home and is alienated from his job. With such turbulence in his external world he has started to explore his beliefs and behaviour patterns (his interior world). He believes his personal pattern of avoiding disagreements, evident in his marriage, could be rooted in his experiences of witnessing his parents violence.

Glen appears to be drifting, being tossed by life’s’ events, living from day-to-day. It could well be that he is experiencing unrecognised, a degree of mental depression, as his life is in such disorder. Whilst never articulated, its seems his attitude to his present circumstances is to endure. He remains good-natured, neither self-pitying or bitter. It could well be his involvement with the Salvation Army and commitment to God are the important elements helping him in a turbulent period, but this can only be surmised, since he does not elaborate on their role in his life.
A Second Conversation

As noted in chapter 4, informal follow-up conversations were held with one male from each age set, in light of the perceived guardedness of participants in the formal interviews. This time the conversation is not tape-recorded. Glen was selected as he was readily available, keen to participate and had met with the researcher over a coffee a few times since the first interview. Matters not broached in the interview do come to light this time. Significantly, Glen admits his life is in turmoil, something he had only alluded to previously:

my whole life has crashed. I feel stuck in my job, don't like it. I'm 42, where do I go to get another job, I left school at 14, I'm trapped.

Glen has a lot to say about work. He finds his work as a storeman uninteresting. He admits he feels stuck in a job he hates. He is having troubles operating a new computer system, which has raised unwelcome comments from some female colleagues. Nor does not get on well with senior management, saying, 'there's them and us'. He says he is trapped, because he pays over half of his salary in child maintenance and has no idea where he could get another job. It irritates him that his ex-wife lives with another man, and receives a substantial part of his salary, whilst he is legally bankrupt as result of debts from the marriage. He is not unhappy to pay maintenance, but the amount means it is not easy to make ends meet. He says he presently is in 'a dark tunnel', that will last for several years until his children are 18. However, the Salvation Army has provided him with fellowship, emotional and material support, and his belief in God has bolstered him. He says his belief makes him feel secure inside, encouraging him not to collapse but 'get on with life'. He believes people need to believe in a higher power.

On this occasion Glen is considerably more revealing about his personal and emotional life. A sense of trust seems to have followed as a result of several coffees with the researcher. He mentions at the original interview he was concerned that eventually someone might identify him, and this inhibited him talking about his personal experiences. What also seems to come out, is the conversation has a slight therapeutic value for Glen, who possibly has few male friends he can talk rather openly about the difficulties in his life, without being judged. However, he is still unable to add to the limited picture he gave in the interview of his step-father as a 'nice fella' He seems unable to reflect on the relationship with his two fathers; the sense of disconnection with these father-figures seems confirmed by his reticence. In an off-hand manner, he calls this present period in his life a 'mid-life crisis', but makes no attempt to explain what he means. But he makes his attitude clear, to endure life and trust in God, particularly as he can see that things have worked out over time:

I see there is a light at the end of the tunnel ... think about 50 I will come out of it.

Since the original interview, he mentions he has recently met a slightly older woman whom he gets on very well with. He feels very comfortable with her and says they enjoy each others
company. Also, he feels appreciated by her, she tells him she values things he does for her. He implies being valued by her has given him a greater sense of well-being. It appears she is giving him a deal of emotional support to cope with being in the dark tunnel. It seems his life focuses upon work, providing, surviving, with some room for personal enjoyment with his new partner and activities with the Salvation Army. Facing a turbulent period in his life, he seems to have little sense of life direction, beyond survival and consolidating the relationship with his new partner.

Glen is a curious, contradictory mix. Masculinity is clearly an issue he has not given much thought to. He appears as what Robert Bly would call, a soft male, gentle natured and compassionate, more comfortable with women than with men. But the traditional model of masculinity, he grew up with still has some personal impact in terms of his rather old-fashioned, traditional inspired attitudes about male and female gender roles. As noted, he describes himself as a gentle, soft male, but it seems being a family man provides much of his present sense of masculine identity.

**Case Record 6:**

**Background:**
Separated, 41 years.

**Occupation/ Interests:**
Auctioneer; work; cooking, family.

Patrick has lived in the Southern Highlands for 30 years. He went to school in both Sydney and Moss Vale. He has been a local auctioneer and property valuer for 16 years. In his early 20s he lived in Britain for a few years where he met his wife. Recently separated, he has two young children and a noticeable air of self-assurance.

**Adolescent Sport**

Sport kept Patrick active and busy as an adolescent. At boarding school in Sydney he played rugby union, but when living at Moss Vale he switched to rugby league. After leaving school he trained for four years as a weightlifter:

I think I played union for three years before I even looked like scoring a try, then I scored one. Once I knew it was that easy to pick it up and put it over the line, there was no stopping me, and got top try scorer of the year blah, blah. Then I swapped codes to league, and played for three years. Sprinting ... yeah, I was in the senior relay team when I was a junior. I represented the school, in the 220 and 440 was more my distance, than the 100 yards. But even when I was 16 they put me in the senior team ... and for four years from 18 I did weightlifting, I quite enjoyed that, had quite a lot of natural strength.

Patrick's memories of adolescent sport are still sharp. He proudly recalls that he was his teams' top try scorer, an indication sport was quite important to him. Patrick says it was not team spirit he learnt playing sport:
You're supposed to say 'team spirit' and blah. I didn't. I'm an individual, I do what I got to do, and what I think is right, umm. Swimming was good, weightlifting you did your thing, and as I said playing football I was pretty hard to get the ball off, if I saw a break I went for it everytime, you know, ha. So, oh yeah, I wasn't really into the team spirit sort of thing. I realise you've got to do things as a team and that's why I work, on my own. I got me to worry about, no secretary, I take the garbage out, I bank the money, you know.

When directly asked how important sport was at this age, he instead mentions his father represented Australia at athletics as well as being a first grade footballer with the St. George rugby league team. When discussing his own athletic ability he frequently compares himself to his father. It seems Patrick was in awe of his fathers' athletic prowess. As an adolescent he admits he felt a pressure to try to match his father's success, and even now, is unsure why:

He was selected for the Commonwealth games... So he was real sports orientated, and I was never as good as that. I kind of, err used to hear these old stories and see these old trophies. I sort of. And then I tried ... wasn't anywhere near the sprinter the old man was but, yeah, I was in the senior relay team when I was a junior. I represented the school, in the 220 and 440 was more my distance, than the 100 yards. Dad was very quick for the 100 yards, I wasn't that quick ... I did (feel a pressure to live up to him) for a long time. Umm, yeah, probably all the way through my school years, but then I sort of realised I was never going to do that, so I cut it loose.

Patrick is quite categorical, sport taught him to compete and to do his best. It was a context in which he learnt that he had a rather individualistic character, being a team player was not something he apparently appreciated. He implies that as an adolescent and young man, sport provided a visibly masculine setting and a male group to be part of. In particular, the strong and longstanding masculine associations of football, seems to have been provided a setting to establish and confirm one's masculine identity, both personally, and in the eyes of others. Football, seems to have been a context for some gradual form of public transition to being a man for Patrick:

The most important thing I learnt was competitiveness, right! To get out there and compete, to do your best to be the best in what you are doing. So that's what I learnt from sport ... I guess it was one of these umm 'manhood' things you go through. I guess I'd rather be seen in the pub with the footballers, than having a few beers with the artists or the academics, because I'm no good at art, I can't draw a straight line with a ruler, and no academic I can tell you that, don't sit down well.

Competitive sport seems to have had a big role in his adolescence. It appears to have been a setting to confirm his independent nature, a means by which he sought to gain his father's approval: as well as a pathway for establishing his masculinity and becoming part of a distinctly traditional masculine world. Whilst sport, is no longer a part of life in his 40s, it has left a notable legacy.
Work

Patrick is a self-employed property valuer, running his business from a well-ordered home office. He initially trained as a motor mechanic, but in his late twenties he went to Technical College and learnt to be a valuer. He mentions both grandfathers were self-employed as boat builders, cabinet-makers and french polishers. He enjoys his work:

My grandfather, dad's father, was a boat builder by profession, he did house-building. In his retiring years bought a little general store. My mothers' side my grandfather and uncles were in the french polishing/cabinet making business, never millionaires ... not working for the man 9 to 5 ... I like this work because I don't like to be in an office all day, everyday. So with this you can go out, come back have a cup of coffee, sit down and do some advertising. A lot of the time, you're out and about seeing and talking to people. I also did the valuer agent course, I like the rural orientation. Umm, so I get to visit farms as well as residential houses.

Whilst he enjoys the independence, variety and mobility of his work, he half jokingly says he is in the wrong business:

I can't stand people who procrastinate, I suppose I'm in the wrong job. 'Cos so many people say, 'I'm not sure'. I can't stand people who can't make decisions.

The business seems to suit his temperament, he enjoys the mix of working indoors and outdoors and dealing with people. He relishes the independence of being self-employed. Patrick mentions he is a member and regular patron of the local golf club, and members provide a significant part of his business. Work seems to be a big element of his life. It is clear from the manner in which he speaks about work that he obviously enjoys it. His work seems not only to provide a good living, he has a large house, but also a deal of personal satisfaction. He talks about work with considerable animation and force, but makes no mention of the demands of the business.

Father and Son

Patrick's father has been a farmer operating a small property for thirty years. Previously he had been a policeman for 15 years. As a young man he was a champion sportsman, playing first grade rugby league in Sydney, and a national-level athlete:

He went in (the police force) at 15 as a cadet. He worked his way through, and was the youngest plain clothes detective in Australia at the time, he was 26. He was the youngest ever in NSW and at 30 he left ... He bought the farm in 1967.

He was athletic captain at school. He did the 100 yards in the NSW State titles in even time, 10 seconds ... That's quick! He was selected for the Commonwealth games ... So, he was real sports orientated. I was never as good as that ... when he was in the police force he played first grade for St George. Initially he signed up to play reserve grade. But with the war they couldn't take anyone from the police ... and was pulled up to play first grade for a few years.
Patrick's parents were separated when he was born. He grew up with his mother, spending more time with an uncle (his mothers' brother) than with his father. When he was 13 he came to live with his father and go to school in the Southern Highlands. Patrick knows about parts of his father life. He admits his father was his hero as a teenager, implying, but never explicitly saying, his father was an inspiring figure he sought to copy in some way. But he also felt he had to compete with him, to try and match him. Patrick cannot explain why he felt this, perhaps he unconsciously thought he had to excel in sport, to be successful like his father, to gain his attention and approval:

[Did you feel you had to compete with your dad?] I did for a long time. Umm, probably all the way through my school years, but then I sort of realised I was never going to do that, so I cut it loose. Basically, we cut one another loose about four years ago. We've only spoken about three times in the past four years.

He says a lot about his father yet still paints a limited picture of him. Sometime ago Patrick looked deeply at their relationship. He had been unhappy about the lack of interest his father had showed for some years in his (Patrick's) young children:

Here was this guy who at one stage was my role model, my hero, he was my dad .. I thought, the only time I ever see him is when I go to see him, he never comes down to see me, he never rings me up ... I got a little girl who's 8 and a little boy, 5. Jessie, err, he would have seen her about six or seven times, and Joe about three times in his five years on this earth, and he's their grandfather! ... I rang him one day, told him, 'mate we've got nothing, you've got nothing with your grandkids 'til you grow a big enough pair of balls to fix the situation at your end first (matters with his second wife). When you've done that you contact me'. It was a pretty tough sort of thing, but that's the way I looked at it, it was just not right ... Well it hasn't really done anything because he hasn't fixed the problem. He still doesn't see his grandchildren. When he sees me down the town, he's polite, and I'm polite to him.

Patrick believes by standing up for his beliefs, he did the right thing. He does not question the head-on manner in which he approached his father, that it did not resolve the situation. He is resolute that it is not for him to make the first move for any possible reconciliation. The relationship appears severed:

I found out a couple of days ago that he has had heart attacks, triple bypass and that ... And only .. last Wednesday his heart stopped, he died again, his heart has stopped a couple of times! They put him into hospital, I found out about it three days after, and it's Tuesday now. It happened about seven or eight days ago, I've had no contact with him and he hasn't contacted me.

Patrick's father emerges as a contradictory figure for him, a figure of affection and disappointment. He still seemingly admires his father. He is very proud of his successes as a champion sportsman in no less than two sports. But his father is now also a big personal disappointment, because of the lack of interest he has shown in Patrick's children. It appears
his father was a loved, yet distant figure for Patrick as a boy and this continues today. Whilst the father is no longer physically distant from Patrick, son and father are emotionally disconnected and estranged. Separation, disappointment, competition and sadness seem to characterise the relationship for Patrick. He does not want to repeat the experience with his own children:

When I think about it there probably never was a real lot of closeness between him or me. I always wanted there to be, but uhh, there wasn't. As much as it has been hard for me, in some respects it been good for me in others. Now my wife and I are separated I make sure I get my children two days a week, every week. I get them Saturday and Sunday. It's made me realise not to lose that contact, which my old man has done ... I know, what not to do, because I don't want my son thinking of me, like what I think of my old man.

Role Models: Family and cowboys

Patrick interprets the terms role model and hero as the same thing, someone to identify with, an inspiring figure to copy in some way. He admits his father was his hero as a young adolescent. It seem clear from the manner he talks about what his father did as a sportsman and policeman, that he admired his father's notable success. However, he calls his uncle, whom he spent a lot of time with as a boy, a role model, more in the sense of someone he looked up to, rather than a model to copy. His uncle was a serviceman in the Second World War, a carpenter in the family business, and a perfectionist in what he did:

He was a hard man but a fair man ... He only had to bark, 'hey, what are you doing?' and we'd freeze. And as we got older, he gave us more rope. When I was 17 I realised my old man was still talking to me like I was ten, Keith gave you a bit more rope, more leniency, more room to say things. Yeah he's been a fella I've always admired as being straight-down-the-line, honest, no bullshit, ummm, hard player but fair. Yeah. If he told you something it would happen, whereas if my old man said something, sometimes it didn't happen.

As a teenager he mentions he used to go horse riding, and was paid to work on a friends' farm rounding up cattle and bailing hay. His favourite movies were western cowboy movies:

We'd go out on weekends, saddle up horses, and move cows, I was 14-15 still at school. And my old man used to pay 50 cents an hour, and this guy would pay $2 an hour. So I'd go and work for my mates' dad, we'd bail hay, load the hay truck, we'd work with the cows ... deep down at heart I'm a bit of a cowboy. My favourite movies back them, and still a bit now, are westerns. And saying that, if you're into that sort of thing, then really John Wayne and Lee Marvin were the only two men who ever walked... the typical tough guy don't take any bullshit. You know. As I say, as I got older, I still believe in that, you got to be a bit tough in what you do and you can't let people get on top of you.

As an adolescent it appears he not only looked up to his father and the Hollywood John Wayne image, but saw these men as figures to identify with and in some way copy. Apparently he respected their toughness, physical prowess, determination, assertiveness and success. These
figures embodied some of the notable features associated with traditional masculinity, and in some way he sought to emulate them.

**Dominant Model of Masculinity**
The idea of a dominant model of masculinity initially makes Patrick pause, seemingly it is an unfamiliar concept. As with some of the other males, the researcher refers to academic research suggesting such a model involves men being tough, aggressive, independent, successful and not doing anything feminine. Patrick immediately recalls his experiences at school:

Oh, boarding school basically knocked that into you from day one. I guess that's what been drilled into me since nine years old. You couldn't be seen doing anything sissy things or you'd get chased by the other blokes. I guess I was brought up in a family where men were men, and men were like that. They had a job to do and they got on and did it. Some of them were still gentle-men, they did what they had to do. Others were, a bit like I turned out, a bit more rowdier, and sort of care free ... And the fact that my old man played first grade [rugby league] ... the typical tough guy don't take any bullshit. You know. As I say, as I got older, I still believe in that, you got to be a bit tough in what you do and you can't let people get on top of you.

It appears that at school there was a strong pressure to conform to an accepted masculine code, with some boys acting like gender police, enforcing a vague yet nevertheless distinct concept of manliness. Much is implied about how men typically behave, when he says he was brought up in a family 'where men were men', suggesting they did not do feminine things. He mentions many close male family members worked in physical, traditionally masculine, trades as carpentry, farming and house building. He implies, by the comment that his dad played professional grade rugby league, that these family males embodied a traditional, tough code of manliness and that it had a personal impact.

The idea of a dominant model is new to him, he is more at ease with the concept of the stereotypical Australian male, it is one he relates to. But he believes young males, 18-25 years, most typically embody the stereotype. He says, they are the ones who are full of testosterone, drink a lot and drive their cars too fast. This is the type of male youth culture he grew up in not that long ago:

I suppose there is a typical stereotype, for all intents and purposes I come across as one! Haha. I drink beer and I drive a ute, occasionally swear, hahaha! I'm not setting out to be the stereotype, I just want to do what I want to do, haha ...You go around the pubs, most of the drunks are blokes between 18 and 25 ... I think then, testosterone is ruling you, by the time you get to 30 hopefully, you're ruling it ... I used to sit in the pub getting pissed. We'd go to the Services Club and get really smashed, we'd drive home ...We used to have races up the main street of Moss Vale, tanked, like we were doing 80-90 miles per hour.

A dominant model of masculinity, is a new idea for Patrick. But discussing the idea, he comes to recognise his adolescent heroes John Wayne and Lee Marvin embodied a tough, physical,
stand up for yourself type of model, by their cowboy movie personas. He believes this model
is of value for him today. It seems he was brought up learning a traditional model of being a
man, featuring toughness, strength, determination and also in his view, about doing what is
necessary and fulfilling one's responsibilities.

**Becoming a Man**

Asked 'when did you become a man?', Patrick pauses, leans his chair back, tilts his head and
looks upward. His in-breath turns into a loud hiss. Slowly he says:

That's a hard question. That's a hard question. In all honesty I'd have to
say, on the birth of my daughter. Why? Unlike a lot of new born babies
who spend their first minutes on this planet with their mother, ha, she
spent her first three hours with her daddy.

The question appears to be initially unsettling, but, it does not take him long to think of his
answer. Patrick explains that immediately after his daughter was born, his wife had a life-
saving operation. He was handed the baby, minutes old, to look after. He now recognises this
was his key experience in becoming a man. Despite his youthful exploits, playing football,
taking wild risks driving a car whilst drunk, becoming a motor mechanic, working on the oil
rigs on the Scottish coast, it was fatherhood that constituted a memorable transition.

But, apparently it was more than becoming a father. The possibility of his wife's death during
childbirth, brought home to him that he could be totally responsible for some one else, other
than himself. Not only did he grasp and accept, he had responsibilities as a protector, guardian,
and provider and might have to look after a child alone, it seems to have triggered a significant
change in his self-perception. He believed his life was no longer solely his own, he was part of
something more:

For the first time in my life, I sat and realised, that, haha, if I do the wrong
thing here it's not only going to affect my life, but someone else's life.
Because right up to I was 33 I never had that attitude. If I got killed
doing it, it was my bad luck. All of a sudden, ha, I couldn't do what I
wanted to do, as I had the responsibility for another human life ... I
figured I owe them ... Not to do something silly, that ... that could
deprive them of having a father, or anything silly with them, umm, which
could harm them in any way. As I say right up 'til 33 I had no other
human life dependent upon me. I do now. So that's the way I look at it.
That's when I thought, 'you'd probably start changing a few things', not
all things, still drink beer and drive a ute. Hahaha.

The transition to becoming an adult male, does not appear to have been a matter Patrick has paid
that much attention to. However, it would appear that the combination of fatherhood, and the
possible sole responsibility for the well being of his child, triggered a major change in Patrick's
self-perception that seemingly affected his sense of self.
The major influences on his ideas about masculinity appear to be his family, his father, and during adolescence, John Wayne's tough masculine movie image, football and his peers. He mentions that in his late teens-early twenties his behaviour was no different to that of young rural males now. In a country town he says a young males' life is about work, playing sport and getting drunk Friday and Saturday night. He behaved in a similar fashion to his peers. He now admits some of his antics were silly and dangerous:

Ummm, we used to go to the Services Club and get really smashed. We'd drive home, so that's all part of growing up. And in a country town, unlike Sydney, there's not a lot to do. Umm, sort of working, playing a little sport and drinking of a Friday and Saturday night, that was what you were limited to... I remember we used to have races up the main street of Moss Vale from the Services Club, tanked, like we were doing 80-90 mph. At 1.30 in the morning, we were lucky we never had a bad accident, or got caught by the cops. Like there are plenty of people who weren't so lucky, so many are dead.

Men Talking

Patrick responded to a newspaper notice for participants. The interview was held in a relaxed atmosphere at his office, over a cup of coffee. In his own surrounds he seems relaxed and straight-forward. Patrick is rather talkative. But quite often he does not directly reply to a question, but instead gives a story or an analogy. At times he seems quite open, particularly when he discusses his youthful drink-driving escapades, and makes no secret of his passion for cowboys, the American West and the Civil War:

I've read a fair bit of the American Civil War, umm, and I guess I'm a believer in the South will rise again. There's a big confederate flag over there. Robert E Lee I've read about, he's great!

His father is a recurrent topic in the conversation. He seems very frank discussing his motivations for severing the relationship, which it seems was not easy for him:

The woman he's married to, umm she's worked a lot towards putting a wedge between me and dad ... at one stage I sat down and thought about things. The only time I ever see him is when I go to see him, he never comes down and sees me, he never rings me up. We've been in this town now pretty consistently for the last 16 years, and right where we are now this is the furthest we've been apart, about 4 1/2 kilometres apart. And, err, he would have seen Jessie about six or seven times, and Joe about three times in his five years on this earth, and he's their grandfather ... And I got to the stage where I thought, 'you were my role model, you've got to be kidding, you haven't got'. To me, he hasn't got enough ball to put his wife straight, so he's backing off, and basically forgetting all about this to keep the peace.

There is an implication that Patrick believes he was right to stand up for himself, and challenge his father over his apparent lack of interest in the grandchildren. There are clear echoes of his beliefs about masculinity in his stand against his father. Patrick seems quite stubborn and determined to maintain the distance with his dad. But whilst he discusses their dispute
factually, there is no mention of his emotional response to the estrangement. Instead he says he is keen not to repeat this pattern with his children:

As much as it has been hard for me, in some respects it's been good for me. Now my wife and I are separated I make sure I get my children two days a week, every week. It's made me realise not to lose that contact, which my old man has done.

Patrick has quite a lot to say about his place in the world. He can be quite frank and revealing about what he does and his pastimes. He makes it very clear that his children are dear to him, but never actually says 'I love them' during the conversation. Patrick gives the impression life is going well. His self-assurance is very convincing. However, there are some rather big cracks in his life; he is separated from his father and his wife. His children live with their mother and he may have to sell the family house he is currently living in. These wobbly elements of his life are not discussed or even alluded to. He seems to set his limits, either deliberately or unconsciously, on what he wishes to reveal and not to reveal. It appears more personal, emotional matters are not for discussion to someone whom he does not know. However, he is happy to discuss some of his personal values, beliefs and life principles. He does not seem to try to hide himself in the interview or to deliberately avoid questions.

Self-Portrayal

Patrick has an air of self-assurance and enterprise. He is of medium height and average build. At the interview he wears a tailored blue denim shirt, moleskin pants and ankle length cowboy style boots. He enjoys photography, cooking and cowboy movies. He is knowledgeable about his interests, having read about the American Civil War, and biographies of General Lee, Napoleon, and businessman Kerry Packer. It seems work, home, cooking and his kids fill his life. Although separated from his wife, his children stay with him every weekend.

Patrick is very outward directed. Running his own business for some years is an indication he is rather clever, thoughtful and industrious. He runs the business by himself, reflecting that he likes to be his own man. He sees himself as a typical Aussie male, he 'drinks beer and drives a ute', but insists he is an individual with an independent spirit; for him there is no contradiction:

I suppose some guys are that stereotype because they say 'we want to be that', to look to the public. I just want to do what I want to do, haha. I'm not setting out to be the stereotype ... deep down at heart I'm a bit of a cowboy. There's a goatskin on the floor, I shot it, I skinned it, tanned it. Did everything to it! Umm, I didn't buy it. I like those outdoor activities.

Patrick indicates he has consciously cultivated a self-image as a larrikin-cowboy, his office has a lot of cowboy memorabilia. He also has a strong set of well thought-out values that he discusses, such as having determination and personal goals:

Determination, probably is the best way of putting it. If I'm going to do something I don't do anything until it's done. Not saying it's too hard! If
I think I can do it, I keep doing it until the job is done, not matter how hard it is as I'm doing it, and thinking, 'I wish I hadn't started it.' I keep doing it until its done... Yeah, like the twelve tonne rock wall (in the garden), I just started and kept going. I've got two wheelbarrows left and that's it. ... And that's what I try and instill in my kids too. Do what you set out to do. Don't keep changing your mind, or saying I can't do it, a defeatist attitude. If you have a vision of what you can do and how it will look, you start it, and there ain't no coming back, you finish it. And I think it works.

**Self and Heroes**

Patrick apparently regards role models and heroes as the same thing, inspirational figures, men to identify with and be like in some way. This is how he saw such figures as an adolescent, especially his father and some Western movie stars:

As an adolescent I suppose John Wayne, Lee Marvin, Clint Eastwood, the typical tough guy ... I never really had anyone around my age as an adolescent who I wanted to be like, it's usually been older people.

He is comfortable identifying and explaining in his own terms, men he currently respects and admires. They are related to his interest in the American Civil War and his role as a businessman:

Robert E Lee, he's great. He was a role model for a more genteel persona, he wasn't six foot tall, he was a small man, not a swaggering John Wayne type ... go back to where his roots were and do the right thing by his people. So that goes back to not just taking the easy option, or the glory, doing what you believe in and that's the track you take ... And he did his job, he did it not for money or glory, but because he believed that's what he had to do ... business wise, another guy I really admire, if there's anything on TV I watch—I've read his book, is Kerry Packer. I think he's unbelievable, good businessman, hard but fair. Goes into that [parliamentary] inquiry and tells them what he thinks of the Taxation Department, which probably few have the balls to do, and he was in the position that he could have been crucified.

Patrick's heroes and the men he admires give an illuminating insight about him as a person. There is a pattern. They are men who have made a big mark on the world. These men (including his father) seem to reflect what are often seen as values traditionally associated with masculinity, such as determination, leadership, power, glory and success. The adolescent heroes emphasize physicality, toughness, a rather macho-style of masculinity. Whereas the men he currently respects seem to reflect values such as outstanding achievement, self-belief and standing up for one's beliefs. It appears men such as Lee and Packer do fulfil a traditional function of heroes, a source of inspiration and personal example for one's life. But there is no longer any suggestion of seeing them as men to consciously imitate in some way.

Patrick projects a noticeably traditional masculine style identity. Patrick implies he believes a man is what he does in the world, that a man is judged by his success, wealth and power he has, and must stand up for his beliefs (as he did with his father). After the interview Patrick revealingly says:
At the end of the day, when you die, it's not what you did for others that people talk about, but what you left, the size of your bank balance. It's a shame but that's the way it is!

Patrick's ideas about masculinity may have remained relatively constant since he learnt a traditional model growing up and as an adolescent. As he says, he still believes a man has to be tough (so people don't get on top of you), competitive, decisive and determined. It is as if masculinity for Patrick is not a matter to reflect upon, but a given, requiring a man to do what he has to, to act. Having children has opened a dimension of responsibility as a provider, but still sees him very much located in a traditional version of masculinity. He also implies being a man for him, is about responsibility and limited choices:

[What men were important in teaching you about masculinity?] My uncle, yeah. John Wayne, like you know the Alamo, yeah. Once again they had limited choices and you've got to make one ... I can't stand people who can't make decisions. I make a lot of decisions, sometimes they are not right but.

Patrick has a rather charismatic personality. He shows many features characteristic of traditional masculinity. He sees himself as extravertish, independent, determined, goal oriented and holds these in high regard. Yet unlike his adolescent days there seems to be little need to prove himself or take risks. He is content to appreciate cooking, reading and spending a lot of time with his children. His larrikin-cowboy self-image is clearly based upon a traditional model of masculinity; the John Wayne celluloid persona still figures in his life. But it seems he has not really thought much about the model of masculinity he came to adopt. It appears that he has not deeply questioned its characteristics, but accepted it without critical thought. He recognises the features of traditional masculinity, but he seems unable to distinguish or identify the form of masculinity he embodies or explain its social character and ideology.

A Brief Observation
All the mid-life males when interviewed were unmarried, although Patrick was only recently separated. It seems for several of them the interviews has a slight therapeutic effect. It offered a chance to mention, or at least allude to, some of the problems in their lives by another male, without being criticised or visibly judged. There seems to be few places for these males to go and talk about the turbulence or uncertainties in their lives, with other males, without fear of judgement. Some of these males seem not to have discussed some of the topics with another man before, most notably a dominant model of masculinity.

It is clear that as they discuss role models and heroes, that there are some variations and nuances in the interpretations the men accord these terms, that they rarely explain, and sometimes do not seem to recognise themselves. In the majority of cases the men see them as synonymous, men to identify with and copy, but there are some exceptions. However, defining heroes, as
publicly known, inspirational males, most, but not all, seem to have had such a figure in their adolescence. Finally, like the young males, there is little or no mention of high school as a positive experience during their teenage years.
CHAPTER 7

LEARNING AND ENACTING MASCULINITY

This chapter simply aims to provide a summary description of several major features of the lives of the young and mid-life males, particularly in terms of their experiences and perceptions learning about masculinity as they grew up.

The Young Men’s Experiences

Sporty, physical and active

From boyhood, sport had a big role in all the young men’s lives. In adolescence, sport was a major pastime for all but one. Most of their leisure time was spent playing rugby, soccer, basketball as well as surfing, rowing and martial arts. Now in their 20s, the same young men are all still playing sport. Darren’s recollection reflects something of their boyhood enthusiasm:

When I was young I played everything. Okay, aah, for example after school I’d be knocking on the next door neighbours, ‘let’s go play’. If it was winter we’d play rugbly league or soccer, if it was summer we’d play cricket, or go swimming.

Playing sport had a noticeable impact on them and their attitudes. Toby says practising martial arts helped him develop more self-confidence. Terry applied Aikido’s philosophy of self-improvement to his personal life. Experiences at school sport apparently left emotional scars for Alex that still appear to rankle. Being deeply immersed in the surf lifesaving sports culture, Darren admits, influenced his attitudes about competing and being successful:

you train to improve yourself, to progress to the next belt, you tend to take it into your life, continually trying to improve yourself - Terry;

I learnt aah, to watch and see how people trained very hard. I saw how people competed hard and I saw people be very successful. I had the experience of not being very successful at that age … that made me want to, more or less, strive to do a little bit better! ... I think sport has also had a role for me as I’ve said, really there’s little things that can apply that have affected in small ways my perspective of what it is to be a man - Darren.

Adolescent sport some say taught them about teamwork; to contribute, do their bit and to rely on others. In the vigorous sports of rugby and surfboat rowing, Tim and Darren would push themselves, testing the limits of their physical endurance, so as not to let their team down. Both emphasize the special friendships, seemingly cemented by such sacrifice. Tim comments:

My teammates, you’d do anything for them. If you saw they were going to take a big tackle from a big guy, you’d get in there and try and lighten the blow for them … If there was ever a blue like, you’re all in there.

Great friendships, like bonds you aah just couldn’t describe … Ah, when you’re rowing with someone, you’d do anything for them, you go through a lot of pain for them and for yourself, all in pain. It’s an unbelievable bond … I have
a fantastic relationship with a guy I row with, we've rowed for five years, we have a drink together, let our hair down. It's really worthwhile doing the sacrifice to hang out with him -Darren.

Yet there is an important dimension missing from their conversation about sport:

I just do it because I love it ... Usually I go surfing just for the fun of it!-Toby;

I enjoyed having that release where I could exert all of my energies freely into something-Tim;

they were all older than I was. So I could see, 'wow if I do this for a couple of years I might be big and strong like these guys--Darren;

it's hard to explain-- Wes.

Apart from Darren and Wes, they say little about the personal appeal of sport, what they get out of it. (Perhaps it is so obvious they forget to say.) Surf rowing initially appealed to Darren as a way to become big, strong, and manly, like his older crewmates. Despite saying sport is fun, much remains unclear and unsaid. What captivated and still motivates them about their sport is not mentioned. Dominic, who did not play sport in his adolescence, at least says he enjoys playing music because he can feel part of it; although he is unable to say more. There is a distinct lack of emotional colour and depth in how the others talk about their sports passions. There is no mention of the sheer emotional thrill of riding a towering wave, or the adrenalin rush of competing and winning. Most fail to acknowledge the emotional dimension, as a motivating factor in the appeal and enjoyment of sport, including the emotional connection with teammates. But further, for Tim and Darren this also seemingly extends to an apparent inability to openly admit and express affection for their male sports friends.

When these young men were adolescents, there seems to have been an unstated drive to release pent-up energies and physically develop their bodies and strength. Sport had many functions. It was a setting to test and develop their bodies, develop physical prowess, new skills and self-confidence. It also apparently taught them many unquestioned values. Darren learnt about competitiveness, success and hard work. For him, in particular, long-term involvement in the surf life-saving culture provided a setting for enculturation into the traditional model of masculinity.

Research about the involvement of male youths in institutionalised sport has led researchers to suggest that it is an important site for 'masculinising' young males (Drummond, 1995, 27), a gendered setting where boys learn the dominant cultural conceptions of masculinity (Messner, 1992, 151). In the case of those actively involved in organised, competitive sport as adolescent teenagers, Tim and Darren, this certainly appears to be the case. (A more in-depth comparison with the relevant literature follows in chapter 8.) Sport continues to be prominent in the lives of all but one of these young men, now in their twenties.
Self-image

Sport is the centre of Darren and Toby’s lives. Their self-image seems based on their sport and their healthy, athletic bodies. It has shaped their bodies and provides the framework for how they portray themselves. Darren describes himself as a sportsman. The activity that is his passion, that occupies much of his time, provides his sense of self. In a rather similar fashion, Terry regards himself mainly in terms of his principal activity, a craftsman, whereas Dominic, who is uncertain what activity or career to pursue, says he thinks of himself as a late teenager:

Ahhh, I did quite a lot of sport when I was younger, still do ... it's predominantly what I'm about—Darren;

I honestly still think of myself as a late teenager, even though legally I have been an adult for four years, now I'm 22—Dominic.

All except Dominic exude a strong physicality and appear quite self-confident. Yet they say little about their personality, their temperaments, or the type of person they are. Alex says something about his self-image, but not his temperament. The most they can give are very limited snapshots, which actually reveal little. They find it hard to talk about their sense of self. They are reluctant to talk about their own inner sense of ‘who I am’. They give little indication of the importance of relationships in their lives, their roles as son, brother, lover and how these contribute to their self-image. Terry says it is, ‘hard trying to sum yourself up’.

These young men, except for the introverted Dominic, are strongly outward directed, seemingly quite attached to their principal activity or pastime, work or sport, what they do in the world. These activities provide their social identities (personas). They give little clue to the type of person they are behind their masks.

Father and Son

All the young men, except Toby, presently live with their fathers or step-father in the parental home. Some have lived in group houses, but have returned to home to save money. Others have not yet left the family home. Several acknowledge that their fathers were their early role models for being a man. As boys they admit that they closely watched their fathers, unconsciously learning by example how men behave and act. But only Terry is able to articulate the experience:

Growing up like, I think you subconsciously learn from your father and other males around you how to react, do this. Kind of learn subconsciously what to do, how to ... probably just by growing up and watching. I know, I noticed I do some things same as my father ... I think your personality is formed as you're growing up by the people around you, and its mainly your parents and you pick up a lot of traits from them, and a lot of people are not aware of it.

When asked about their fathers’ work, they have very little to say. What they do recall however was their fathers spent a lot of time at work, as they were growing up, and seemingly not much
time with them. Typically, their replies are brief and often uninformative. Whether it is because they don’t know much about their father’s work, or simply don’t wish to discuss it is unclear. But it appears work was a very important part of their fathers’ lives, and a factor in their personal identity:

He worked for NSW Energy from when he was 16 until 60, starting as a draftsman ... forty-four years ... He ended up being a building manager ... setting up their shopstores where you can pay bills, etcetera—Darren;

He would spend more time at work than with us. We never did the old camping–fishing trips. Mum took us on holidays ... I wish I had spent more time with my father when I was younger, doing things like .. it may sound old ... like cleaning the car, just so we could be together—Dominic;

he would describe himself as a geologist but basically? unemployed at the moment—Wes.

Surprisingly, all say very little about their father’s major pastimes, interests, personalities, often not even their age. The portraits they give of their fathers are rather limited and opaque. Darren describes his father colourfully but obliquely as:

a meat and potatoes sort of guy, put simply, very much no frills. Born in the North Shore as I was;

At high school he played football, cricket, hockey, athletics. He was a brilliant sportsman—Alex.

None discuss their feelings about their fathers, nor the emotional character of the relationship, most simply say, ‘not close’ and nothing else. Even Alex, who speaks warmly of his father is reticent. Darren implies having to live up to Dad, to match his handyman skills. But he does not explain. Noticeably, none get on particularly well with their fathers, all saying something to the effect, ‘I don’t want to be like my dad’. Terry is the most open about the relationship:

We’re not that close. Umm dad struggled to understand me as a kid and it’s got worse, haha ... probably just a clash of personalities really. Dad’s a bit of a pessimist, and I’m a optimist ... Basically you’ve got to learn from what’s happened ... like when I have kids not repeat the same pattern, haha!. You know sit down talk ... I find a lot of guys do not get on with their father! I don’t think dad got on with his father and likewise—Terry;

Our intrinsic personalities differed and this did cause a fair bit of distance, but at the same time we had a lot of conversations—Alex;

And to his credit he’s always been like that, doing jobs and doing a job well. I'd like to think I'm capable of what he does—Darren.

Toby’s mother divorced her second husband when he was still a boy. He and Tim had or have step-fathers, yet neither mention these men at all. Explanations or understandings of the dynamics of these young men’s relationships with their fathers seem in short supply. Terry attributes his differences with his dad to differing age and personality types. Dominic just cannot fathom his discomfort towards his father:
He's not overbearing. I seem to have this apprehension about telling him my views. I don't know why. I don't talk to my father that much about things—Dominic;

As a dad he was a bit authoritarian, made a lot of mistakes, I think. I'm the oldest and of course my younger brothers and sisters could get away with so much more. So we have very different sorts of personalities—Alex.

All these young men feel relatively distant and rather alienated from their fathers, with the exception of Wes. None acknowledge feeling (or receiving) a sense of approval from their fathers. Typically they are silent about their feelings for their father and reasons for the poor state of the relationship. Nor do any explain their reticence. Perhaps it is too complex a puzzle for them, one they themselves do not yet understand, full of muddled emotions and experiences. Possibly it is something they have just accepted without thinking why. Probably it is too personal and too involved to discuss candidly with the researcher, someone they do not know. Seemingly, a notable gap separates them from their fathers.

Popular psychotherapeutic literature frequently observe that most men appear to be emotionally distant from their fathers, locked into rebellion and conflict (Betcher and Pollock, 1993, 87). There are clear echoes of this endemic conflict in these young men's conversations about their fathers.

Role Models and Heroes
The young men indicate that as adolescents, the older males they looked up to as role models, included some personal acquaintances (church youth leaders) and well known Australian sportsmen, such as footballer Mal Meninga, world champion surfer Mark Occhilupo and the American basketballer Michael Jordan. Most seem initially to interpret role models and heroes as meaning the same thing, men to be like, to copy and emulate. But as they discuss their ideas about role models, they clarify their views and make some important distinctions:

Father Irwin at high school, he was partly a role model ... And Father Terry, he was a role model, he showed you could have religious beliefs and incorporate them into your life—Dominic;

I just sort of respected them and liked them ... I never really had anyone who I thought, 'he's the greatest, I want to be like him' ... I just liked the way one surfed or played basketball ... it's a bit hard to say, 'I want to be like them' for me because you don't know them. You don't know them, as a person, you only know then as a sportsperson. You say he's may be the best basketball player, but at home who knows what he is like. I prefer to know them if I'm going to say I want to be like them because at home he could be a full-on wife-beating alcoholic, gambling addict, who knows?—Toby;

The role models like my parents, Larry, things like that, weren't role models so that I wanted to be like them, so much that I wanted to take parts of their character that I found were good personality traits—Tim.
Dominic is a committed Catholic. At high school he closely observed two priests enact their Catholicism on a day-to-day basis. He concedes he adopted certain, appealing qualities or aspects of their behaviour. Similarly, Toby admired world champion surfer Tom Carroll and other elite sportsmen, solely for their exceptional skills. For most of the young males, the older men they looked up to, were admired for certain qualities or as splendid exponents of their favourite sport. These older males could be called reference role models, as the young males only looked up to them for certain, specific personal qualities or their technical skill.

However, two of the young males say they did see their role models as men to be like. Terry saw the television character Dr Who, as modelling an intelligent, eccentric man, and inspired him to take up martial arts. For Darren, his crewmates were men he consciously wanted to like. They were his model for being a man—strong, muscular, robust and successful:

the guys down here to start with at the Surf Club ... they were the benchmark, apart from the fact they took me out with them drinking.

Darren is the only one whose role models were active parts of his social world. These competitive young sportsmen, were modelling various values and practices associated with traditional masculinity: physical strength, dedication, setting a goal, being successful and taking part in the male pub scene. In his view, they seem to have had a positive impact because of their genuine interest in him, his respect for them, their long-term involvement with him, and the seeming emotional connection that developed. Apparently they taught him about responsible alcohol drinking and affirmed his developing sense of self as a sportsman. Terry also regards his fictional role model (and more recently Billy Connolly) as a positive influence that provided useful guidance for his life.

Heroes are a problematic topic. None admit they had any 'heroes' when they were adolescents. Even now they must be coaxed to identify men they presently admire, mentioning just a few public figures, Australian tennis champion Pat Rafter, former Australian cricket captain Mark Taylor, Scottish comedian Billy Connolly and former South African President Nelson Mandela:

I didn't have a mainstream hero .. someone I wanted to be like ... Everyone has got their faults—Tim;

As an adolescent I didn’t have any role models. No, I can’t remember having any at all. I remember people used to say, ‘oh these are my heroes and idols’. I used to say, ‘ahh I didn’t have anyone who was a hero (sic) I just did my own thing. [You had no adolescent heroes, you can’t mention anyone you looked up to?] No, not really. I just liked cartoons—Alex.

Several presently admire some personal acquaintances. Toby respects his boss for setting up a successful small business. Alex greatly admires his great-grandfather, a successful, adventurous, philanthropic doctor. Darren admires his fitness trainer. They seem inclined to admire these men, more for their achievements rather than their personal qualities. Most say
that when they were adolescents, they looked up to certain older male figures as limited types of role models for being a man. Toby explains since he did not know what type of men his ‘role models’ really were and so was unwilling to identify with them or want to emulate them. None admit to having ‘heroes’ in the sense of publicly known, inspirational figures to identify with and imitate. Terry and Darren explicitly distinguish their role models, as different to ‘heroes’. (Yet, paradoxically, they were ‘heroes’ in the popular sense of the word, as, men to emulate.)

As adolescents, all say there were no older men (say over 30) in their lives, who were inspirational figures for them, guides for ways of living or values. At a time they were developing a firmer sense of ego identity, and negotiating the turbulent period Levinson calls the early adult transition, they had no men to regard as inspirations. It appears they were disconnected from older men. Even now in their twenties they still seem alienated, as they all struggle to name older men they admire.

That the young males rejected heroes during their adolescence, echoes, to some degree, Popora’s findings that most adults in her Boston study say they do not have personal heroes (Porpora, 1996, 221). But also could it perhaps reflect something about the limited portrayal of positive images of masculinity by the popular media of realistic, and possibly that the competitive world of adult males is something these young males as adolescents had little admiration for, or wish to be part of?

A Dominant Model of Masculinity
All of the young males initially found the concept of a dominant model of masculinity a rather awkward, unfamiliar idea to grasp. But after discussing expectations about how men are supposed to behave, they see it as a way to describe a code of behaviour men are commonly expected to conform to. They agree some key elements are, not acting like a girl or being feminine, taking risks, being successful and unemotional. They also repeatedly mention being tough, strong, physical, sporty, drinking alcohol and having a job. Toby regards this model as a subconscious marker that guides what men believe they can and cannot do; he says:

I know what you mean. Ummmmm ... out there in society there is ... some people sort of think that's the way to go, you know, 'be a man, be tough, do this!' Like people I know ... you might say, 'I'm gonna do this,' and they'll go, 'pphh, who you' kidding yourself, that's for little girls. It's kind of like, in your subconscious—what we can and can't do. And when you see someone do something that doesn't fit into your whole idea of what we should be doing— it alerts you 'hey he's doing ... that's not a manly thing he's doing'. Then you sort of make a judgement on it ... Like it's there at the back of your mind and you're not always thinking about it, but when you see something out of the normal then it pops up— Toby.

In this area, the epitome of masculinity is Chips Rafferty, a figure I absolutely detest, the ocker Aussie, not overly bright type of person. In this town ... you get a job or an apprenticeship. You do something you don't like, you go get a female otherwise you're a raging poofah ... you watch footy and drink booze. And you drive a ute with a, 'no fat chick's' stickers on the back, and
'shoot ferals' and 'real Aussies drive utes'. That's all you do! That is something I absolutely hate and detest—Alex.

Several participants say, such a model was most strongly in evidence in the attitudes of their teenage peers. At school there was considerable peer pressure to fit in with a male youth culture that featured being tough, active, sporty, footy followers, beer drinking and driving cars fast:

Like if .. with all your mates at school, if you said to them 'I think I'm going to do ballet', you'd get paid out. Everyone would just go, 'you're a poof, whatever', definitely ... with your mates at school there's definitely a thing like that being macho—Toby;

got into cars .. an' (pause) drinking alcohol when I was 17... Yeah. Which is the sort of local yobbo thing to get into. You have a drink and if you're not down at the surf you're driving a fast car. Haha ... Still love my car, got an old Commodore—Tim;

I found at school, peer pressure. I think everyone to start off with, succumbs to peer pressure somewhere. Up until Year 10 or so, I followed what others did, but then I thought, this is a joke and did my own thing—Terry.

For Terry, living in a rural town, the local image of being a young male is to play rugby, have short hair, drive a utility truck and have a girlfriend, or a wife and kids. Until recently he was regularly picked on at local pubs for having long hair. He says there is great pressure to conform to a dominant model of masculinity, otherwise one is ostracised or picked on:

When I was growing up, umm, the general idea round here was you grew up to be a bloke. I found you were expected to be a footy fan, that image. A man had short hair, drove a ute and had a blue heeler, you don't show emotions ... That's what you've got to be otherwise you get knocked.

Talking about a dominant model of masculinity is seemingly a strange new way of viewing masculinity for them. They initially seem to regard masculinity as something physical, part of their biological identity as males. As they talk, think and mull over the idea of a model, they accept it names a vague concept they have had about what it is to be manly. It emerges that they see this dominant model as physically oriented, associated with body strength and size, being macho; and also incorporating elements such as drinking, sport and taking risks.

The Dee Why males indicate they assimilated prevailing conceptions about masculinity, associating it with being tough, competitive, macho, playing sport, alcohol drinking, driving fast; and none felt isolated from their peers. The rural males stress a dominant model of masculinity was quite pervasive during their adolescence. Whilst most of their peers uncritically conformed to the local stereotype, they consciously rejected it. Alienated from the local male youth culture, the rural males say they became isolated from their peers, and physically harassed for not conforming to the local male stereotype. Even now, they tend to regard masculine behaviour as rather confining, with seemingly few options.
Many of the participants initially interpret the model in terms of the traditional macho male image. But the idea of a dominant model, provides them with a new means of viewing practices and values associated with being masculine, they have experienced, but not really thought about in a considered way. The young men come to recognise the existence and potency of a dominant model of masculinity. This model is rather paradoxical, seemingly, a code of behaviour and image never explicitly stated, but nevertheless real in the minds of young males and often physically enforced by peers. It seems to provide an unconscious pattern for being manly, which many male youths apparently seem to accept and judge others by. The dominant model seems especially potent during the high school years and adolescence. It remains influential for the young males, even now in their twenties.

Coming from a migrant family of mixed ethnicity, Wes says he is aware of some differences between his experience of masculinity in his family, and the social model of masculinity he sees amongst his old school friends. But he finds it difficult to explain. However he says the portrayal of the male characters in the recent Australian film, The Castle, showing them as laconic, unemotional, hard working, beer drinkers and family oriented, has strong parallels with what he has seen amongst his schoolmates' families. During Wes's adolescence his father placed more importance on intellect than physicality and sport, and drank wine rather than beer.

As noted in chapter two, writers on masculinity use numerous ideas to refer to what may be called a dominant model of masculinity. Connell calls it hegemonic masculinity (1995, 77). West suggests men in western Sydney believe they have to conform to limited scripts about being tough, working hard, drinking alcohol, sport and sex (1996, 55). The young men in this study recognise a traditional model of masculinity, which they have experienced, and variously responded to. Its potency is reflected in the harassment and isolation of the rural males and their ignorance of the range of masculine identities during their adolescence.

**Becoming a Man**

The question, 'when did you become a man?', triggers an involuntary physical response from every young male. All invariably laugh nervously, and lean backwards in their chairs. Yet none acknowledge or comment on their seeming discomfort. All bar one (Alex), say they have no idea when they became a man, and after further thought state they do not yet see themselves as being a man:

Haha, hmff. I don't know. I don't know if I'm one yet! I don't know. That's an interesting question 'cos you hear 'grow up be a man' and all that. I don't really know when that comes. I don't really know. People go 'do you consider yourself a man?' I don't really think about it, its sort of question where you go. 'I don't know'-Toby;

Haha, (chuckle). I probably haven't yet! I don't know how to define a man going from a kid to a man, maybe puberty, when hair grows in funny places—that's the physical. In one way I'd say 15-16 when my views started changing, with a more grown up approach to things. And in another way I still haven't yet—Terry;
Hahaha. When did I become a man? I think I ceased being an adolescent about 3-4 years ago, started to change. Wouldn't want to be 18 again, just a stupid kid when I look back—Alex;

Haha. Oh I don't know, ha. Don't know if I am? Umm, being a man wasn't something you really thought about, it just was, know what I mean—Wes.

For some the question triggers them to think about a definition of what it is to be a man:

Yeah, in the past few years, just a general sort of maturity, interested in being me. I just think it was a gradual thing. I haven't given the issue much thought—Alex;

If I'm a man, then I have to do this and that. And I get hindered enough by people telling me what I should do ... my definition of a man—it's having the balls to deal with whatever situation comes up—Tim;

Like the people who are telling me to grow up and be sensible. I don't want to grow up—like that. If that's what growing up is like I don't want to—Terry;

I think you are pretty much a man when you make a decision that whatever society throws at you, this is my belief. When you finally decide what your views are, what your attitudes are and live your life by them—Dominic.

Two suggest becoming a man is a process of maturing with age, rather than time or event specific, but say nothing more. Two allude to not wanting to be a man (grown up) which they imply is about constraints and responsibilities, but they are unable to clearly articulate what they mean. Others define being a man as about establishing and standing up for ones’ beliefs, and meeting life’s challenges.

The young males say, the major influences on their ideas about masculinity have been their father, mother, church and religion, television and movies, playing sport and school peers. All agree, in their teenage years peers were a key, primary influence. It was their peers who seemed to enforce a traditional, mainly physical model of masculinity. For Toby and his mates without fathers in the house, television and popular culture had a big impact:

I reckon the TV ... seriously. Like I never had a male role model around. Umm, I was pretty much on my own, find out for yourself, your mates. I wasn't the only one, a lot of my mates were the same, didn't have anyone around. There was no-one like family member living with us, that I sort of ... You see TV shows where dads teach the son to shave an' that. I just did it by myself—Toby;

My peers played quite a fair part in my development, by their behavioural patterns, they spent a lot of time talking about sport or sportsmen, or drinking or driving. Anyone who held a job was thought of as more important, they had a job, it was cool—Dominic;

probably my peers more than ... were more important than anyone else—Tim.

Discussing the transition to male adulthood they recall numerous signal posts: sexual maturation, playing competitive sport against older men, the legal entitlement to vote at age 18,
leaving the parental home, the first full-time job, the first sexual experience, buying a house and getting married. But such markers were not relevant for them. None believe they have experienced any memorable physical trial or passage marking a transition to male adulthood. Playing masculine-oriented sports, sex, full-time career work, being legally entitled to vote at 18 have not provided significant passages for any of them. Although these young males are in their early-mid twenties, none so far, have experienced a personally memorable circumstance that marks their transition from youth to being an adult male.

All say becoming a man is not a matter they have given much thought to, at all (presumably assuming it is something that just happens as they get older). Indeed, they say they have no idea how a young male becomes a man. Nor have they given much thought to what it may mean to be a man. Whilst Tim and Dominic suggest it means standing for one's beliefs, this seems a conception thought about in the course of the discussion, and more or a cliche, rather than a well considered viewpoint or personal belief. All indicate they had never before discussed such matters as social expectations about how men are typically expected to behave, masculinity, or being a man, with an older man.

West says there are rules for becoming a man: developing one's body, being successful in sport and ready to fight (1996, 58-59). But he is referring to the socialisation male youths go through, rather than attaining the status of adult male. Biddulph believes masculine development for young males in Australia is left to chance (1994, 170-2). These young men’s experiences, including those of Wes, support Biddulph’s contention. Becoming a man is an uncertain, vague process for all of them. They have no idea how, or when, they may become adult males; nor can they suggest significant personal markers for such a transformation. Aged 23 to 26 years, these males are still in the dark about when or how they will become a man.

Limits to their Conversation
All the young men appear to be comfortable talking about their lives, interests and experiences, yet they also seem slightly on-guard and reluctant to get too personal. Even discussing sport they are mainly factual and laconic, avoiding any mention of the emotional satisfaction and connections with other males they experience. Darren's team won the State surfboat championship and came third at the national titles. What does he say?:

... in our own realm to get to the top of that tree which we have in the past is quite a good feeling. I've stood on a dais and received a gold medal. And I felt very emotional at that time as well, however I didn't show that emotion. Other guys who I've been with laughed it off as a rite of passage (but) ... It means something to them. I could see looking at them they were not as emotionally charged as (me).

Each man avoids discussing important parts of his story, and usually it is about emotions. Toby says he is ‘not 100% keen at the moment’ to take part in his first competitive kick-boxing bout, nor does he discuss his disenchantment with his job and his father. Alex's dislike of
football and cricket goes back to high school when his peers gave him a difficult time. He says he 'went through a lot' and hated being chosen last for sports teams. He avoids mentioning the humiliation and isolation he must have felt; much is implied but never stated. Dominic avoids any explanation for his lack of motivation and thought about his future, but admits he learnt to dissociate from his emotions:

But having so much work at Tuckerbag, I haven't really been looking too hard... Uni is an option. I haven't thought too much about it, life's been very busy with family, work, other things... Showing your emotions is... not something you do because it's not something people think we need to do as a man... but for me anyway, I might feel sad but to cry doesn't belong to that emotion--Dominic.

The emotional realm is seemingly not for discussion. As adolescents, the young men from Bowral chose not to conform to the dominant male youth culture, its stereotypes and practices. None discuss how they felt being ostracised and humiliated by their peers, nor give any idea of how this affected them. Did they feel humiliated, demeaned, isolated, fearful, not good enough? What impacts did this have on their self-esteem and self-confidence? Not even some five years later since leaving high school, do they reveal their present feelings about their adolescent isolation. Either deliberately or perhaps unconsciously, they carefully choose what they wish to reveal. Dominic factually describes his experience. Only when directly asked during the follow-up interview does Terry give an inkling of his emotional experience:

I was teased at high school, because of my acne, a slow developer physically. I was called pizza face, as I had bad acne, in years 11-12. I never blamed myself for having bad skin. I felt sorry for them for having to tease me to fit in. I knew they were good people. But in a group they behaved differently--Dominic;

when you don’t fit in it hurts, when you are younger, early teens. I was one people didn’t want to know. You take it in, but learn to stand on own feet--Terry.

Not only do the young males not reveal their emotional world, most say very little about their psychological world. They give little insight about how they see themselves, their personality, or the type of men they wish to be. Most do not even allude to their attitudes about life, how they understand the world, what inspires their lives, their ideals, the role of work for them, and what they wish to achieve with their lives. Terry is the one person who freely talks about his worldview, life direction and personal life philosophy:

(I like) a quote from Billy Connolly, there is now and never, so do as you damn well please, meaning take a vocation you enjoy ... I look at people--they’re miserable, all they can see is what they missed out on, gotta take risks and make mistakes. You’ve got to be happy with what you’re doing, if not change it, no sense of wasting your life. If you’re not happy, get out.
Most of them speak rather awkwardly. All struggle to express the scope of their experiences, attitudes and their emotional dimensions. Tim makes no sense trying to explain his view that being a man is constraining and limiting. Even the capable Terry is quite tongue-tied describing the internal experience of Aikido:

it's about using someone's energy against them, but you're not trying to hurt them. It teaches you a peaceful way. You can see situations starting, you can calm things down, and stop fights before they happen, whatever ... You just got greater awareness. It's hard to explain ... [So you are alert to what's going on, alert to the different personalities that may clash.] Yeah, ha. Like I see things most people don't, my friends go 'huh?' Just a higher sense of awareness to what's going on around you. You know the fight or flight sense, it's different to that. You're calm, everything is there. [You are centred within yourself, focussed, attentive, content and calm within yourself and aware of what's going on around.] Yeah ...

Often they are not straightforward talking about experiences and incidents in their lives. They rarely explain why they took up sports. They rarely acknowledge their motivations. All except Terry remain outwardly focussed, talking about their actions and activities, opinions and experiences, with little comment on their inner lives or values. Perhaps this reflects a lack of connection with their interior world of feelings. Many of them do have difficulty identifying and describing feelings. Possibly this reflects upon the gender conditioning males receive, that men do not discuss personal emotions and beliefs, especially with other men. Certainly discussing such personal aspects is risky because it makes a man vulnerable to another.

These young men talk a great deal about their experiences, but not what makes them who they are or what might be really important to them. Wes’ different ethnic and cultural background offers something of a contrast. However, as with most of the young males, Wes gives little insight into his self-perception and is reticent discussing emotional experiences. Despite his visible difference as a young black male, shows many features associated with traditional masculinity, the strong emphasis on physicality, competitiveness, independence, attachment to sport, emotional reticence and a lack of critical awareness about masculinity.

The Mid-life Men's Experiences

Sporty, physical and active

As they approach the age of forty the men in Dee Why are still active sportsmen, and two of the slightly older rural men are regular bushwalkers. When they were boys and adolescents, organised sport had a big role in their lives; rugby union, league, surfing and weightlifting were the main activities. During their adolescence, sport taught them about teamwork, being responsible, relying on others and friendships. Several also say they learnt to be competitive, to try and do one’s best, not panic or give up when things do not immediately work out. Some emphasize they have incorporated these lessons and values into their lives:

really it was basically the teamwork, that nothing ever gone done by itself—
Ashley;
Yeah, learnt how to duck and punch. It gave me a bit of discipline in a way, suppose. Not panicking in a corner. Get out of situations, counterattack and stuff like that–Jon;

the most important thing I learnt was competitiveness, right. To get out there and compete, to do your best, to be the best in what you are doing–Patrick;

Like any teamwork you've got to all carry your own weight, otherwise you're letting others down ... That's a minor framework for the rest of society really, isn't it?–James.

Adolescent sport had a longstanding impact. Some men acquired values they still hold, about competing and doing one's best. Ashley decided to make sport his vocation, choosing a career as a conditioning coach. James and his father spent much time together, his father coached him in swimming and rugby union. He says he is still very close to his father. But, puzzlingly, the mid-life men give little clear idea why they took up sport. Jon alone mentions his motivations for starting boxing and surfing. His father took him boxing so he could defend himself. At 14, he started surfing to be part of a group of surfers, to feel important, and there was another motivation:

Girls, not just the waves, but having the girls on the beach watching you. Or you thought they were watching you ... Macho thing to do and that you know... The ego trip, yeah ego, right (pause) Yeah. Surfing probably biggest ego trip around, yeah–Jon.

In most cases, for these men, fathers do not seem to have been instrumental in initiating their interest in sport. James says sport is fun and good for people's health but offers no explicit insight into his reasons for surfing. Asked about the role of sport as an adolescent, Ashley says:

Basically it was it, it was everything!–Ashley;

It's fun-fun. I think that's what motivates people in their leisure time. Sport is for everyone ... It helps you build your self-esteem. It also helps you physically to be healthy. There's a mental reward as well–James.

What it was about their sport that captured and still captivates them is not really clear. None mention the experiential and emotional aspects of sport; the myriad of feelings involved in exerting one's bodies, the joy of executing skills they have learnt, the emotional connection one feels for team mates. All are typically matter-of-fact talking about sport. However, Patrick makes a pointed comment:

I guess it's one of these, umm, manhood things you go through. I guess I'd rather be seen in the pub with the footballers, than having a few beers with the artists or academics, because I'm no good at art, I can't draw a straight line, and no academic I can tell you that. Don't sit down well.
Patrick is not quite clear about it himself, but suggests somehow, just being part of the football scene confirms one's sense of being a man. He seems to view football as an unquestioned masculine domain. He implies it plays a role in a path to (physical) manliness and confirming men's masculinity in a subtle way. Patrick intimates that football provided a masculinising site for him, subtly and unconsciously, confirming his sense of being a man. Much is implied but not explained.

**Self-image**

Most of the men offer a glimpse of how they see themselves:

- I'm more of the err, the BP sort of person, the quiet achiever—Ashley
- I'm a gardener, I guess I'd be regarded by the higher people as a tradesman, hahaha—James;
- High ideals are very important to me. I'm fairly idealistic—Noel;
- deep down at heart I'm a bit of a cowboy—Patrick.

Patrick sees himself as a larrikin-cowboy, Ashley, calls himself a quiet achiever. Noel and Glen describe themselves in terms of personal qualities, idealistic or gentle. But the men say little about the types of persons they are, their temperaments, whether they are extroverts or introverts; they offer limited insight into how they see themselves. Most do not discuss their relationships. None talk about their girlfriends, a single reference may be made to having a partner but that is all. Whilst Patrick loves his children and takes his role as father very seriously, he and the other fathers do not mention how being a father contributes to their sense of self. With one exception they avoid relating what makes their lives meaningful, their fears, desires and hopes, their ideas about life.

Noel does not pretend to be self-assured, or stay behind a work persona, he discusses the type of man he is:

So I'm slowly getting a little bit more secure with myself, and able to accept my differences and stuff. Although there are still times when I think, maybe I'm too bloody intense or something like that! ... I wonder at times if I'm a bit weird, if, because of this or that, maybe I like sex too much, or not enough, those sort of things. I'm slowly starting to accept I am a bit more sensitive and a bit more intense than some people. That can be painful. If I put that out and get rejected ... I'm hoping to still be able to accept myself ... Look, I've been in weekly therapy for that last two and a half years ... Saying no to women in my life is something I find very hard. And standing up for what I want in a relationship is something I don't find easy.

Noel describes himself as intense, idealistic, interested in spirituality, and reveals he has difficulty maintaining long-term intimate relationships. He talks about his life view, emerging as something of a spiritual seeker, indicating a path of self-knowledge (psychological healing) is for him a key purpose of life. He talks about the type of man his is, an idealist, compassionate
a bit too intense and sensitive. His frankness illuminates how much the other men keep their psychological worlds closed. Yet he says very little about his successful role as a small businessman:

Which brings me back to, we are all really on our own journey, and part of that is to learn to accept ourselves and get to know ourselves and know what our own needs are, and to be comfortable with that. Yeah, I see that as one of the main things in life.

Four of the men are strongly outward directed, rather physical, with work or sport constituting key pastimes that keep them mostly outdoors, rather than in offices or buildings. They do give glimpses of how they see themselves. For Jon, James, Patrick and Ashley, it seems much of their self-image comes from what they do and their visibly strong bodies. Whilst Glen and Noel are both somewhat reflective, work is not a principal means of self-definition for them, yet neither describe a clear self-image they hold of themselves. Noel gives some detail about the type of man he is, but even his picture is still limited. The depth of most of these men is not easily seen. It is as if they have etched a picture and chosen not to provide any colour. Most have remained safely behind their social identities (personas).

Fathers and Sons

Without any prompting, three men identify their fathers as their early adolescent heroes, consciously seeing them as men to emulate and even imitate. These fathers had achieved notable public success, as elite sportsmen and a senior business executive:

[Who were your role models?] One that was as a young boy, and adolescent and still as a man is ... aah my father—James;

here was this guy who I thought, like, at one stage there he was my role model, my hero, he was my dad—Patrick;

heroes, role models, the same thing ... My father was a hero—Ashley.

All regard their fathers as very influential in showing them how to be a man. Several explain they learnt by their fathers’ example, or by being told to be tough, successful, responsible, do one’s best, to stand up and fight if necessary. Jon colourfully describes this mostly unconscious learning process for boys, as he discusses his tough stepfather:

If someone is washing a greasy pipe, a bit of that grease is going to fall on top of ya mate. That almost answers the question. You end up being hard yourself in that way.

However, they all give a very limited picture of their fathers. Most say little about their fathers’ personalities, their interests or memorable moments together. They mention their fathers’ jobs but little about what their fathers work entailed. Often they do not even say how old they are:
He was a sportsman he represented Queensland in league and union. Football, he coached half the teams we played in. He taught us to surf, he took us to the beach all the time. He taught us to swim. He taught us everything—James;

I’ve been slack with my father, he died when I was 10, and I don’t know a great deal about my father. I know he was in the war fought and had war medals ... My stepfather was a terrific fella. He was in the wars, he’d come home merry, drunk. His dinner would be in the oven when he came home—Glen;

Although I’ve often dismissed the importance of my father, I feel sure as time has gone by, he was a very, very central figure. And I have taken on a lot of his values, although in slightly different manifestations—Noel.

Despite the limited picture, the fathers seem to portray a traditional masculine style, primarily exhibiting features as being the family provider, emotionally distant, tough, alcohol drinkers and in some cases quite successful. Work was apparently a core part of their fathers’ lives. Whilst a majority acknowledge their fathers as their early role model, if they mention what type of behaviours and attitudes they copied from their fathers, there is a negative tone; such as being tough or over-responsible. For Ashley his father provided a model of what not to be like; he describes his father:

a hard-drinker, hard-talker. And I don’t drink to get drunk, and I’m not aggressive ... I probably learnt to be more in touch with my emotions than to hide away from them—Ashley;

You had to defend yourself and be tough ... that was his criteria—Jon;

the responsibility thing has been a big issue. I know I've taken that on from my father—Noel.

It is the manner in which they speak that is illuminating, the lack of warmth is noticeable. Most do not disclose their feelings about their fathers, even those men whose fathers are dead. There is little sense most of them receive a strong sense of support from their fathers. Two of the men have not seen or spent time with their fathers for several years:

Very, very distant, very distant. Pheewww. I haven't even spoken to him for five years—Jon;

Basically, we cut one another loose about four years ago. We've only spoken about three times in the past four years ... last Wednesday his heart stopped, his heart has stopped a couple of times! They put him into hospital ... I've had no contact with him and he hasn't contacted me—Patrick.

For all of the mid-life men, their fathers were and remain major figures in their lives. Yet these men’s relationships with their fathers seem distant for all but one, a source of perhaps considerable unacknowledged disappointment. The mid-life fathers say they do not want to repeat their estrangement with their children:

Now my wife and I are separated I make sure I get my children two days a week, every week! It's made me realise not to lose that contact, which my
old man has done ... I know what not to do, because I don't want my son thinking of me, like what I think of my old man—Patrick.

Two men in particular, exude a subtle sense of self-acceptance, not quite so apparent among the others. James says he is still close to his father, he knows his father loves him (although he never says this). A week before the interview Ashley's father watched him coach for the first time. Ashley says, "it was almost a mark of 'aah, well, you've done okay'". It appears both have received a sense of approval from their fathers.

Role Models and Heroes

All interpret the terms role models and heroes as synonymous, men to admire and emulate. Most acknowledge their fathers were boyhood role models for how to be a man. James says his father remains a role model even now, but for the rest of the men sometime during the early phase of adolescence their fathers fell from grace:

(Clears throat) As an adolescent. My father. Sport identities, surfers, footballers and probably certain actors portrayed in films and television ... But one that was as a young boy, and adolescent and still as a man is, aah my father—James;

My father was a hero. John Wayne definitely was a hero—Ashley;

I suppose John Wayne, Lee Marvin, Clint Eastwood, the typical tough guy—Patrick.

Asked what older males they looked up to as role models when they were adolescents, they immediately mention sportsmen and easily recall their names. They admired such men for being the best in their sport, and in some cases for their toughness:

Nat Young. Also Muhammed Ali. The footballers, Terry Randall, John Sattler, Artie Beetsorn, all the hard blokes—Jon;

well I supported South Sydney, growing up in Manly, Ron Coote, Bob McCarthy—Ashley;

I've often felt there are not many role models for men, men are so sort of vilified in our society. I remember Peter Hudson, who was a Hawthorn footballer, who was very, very good, but had a reputation of being very fair. And he appealed to me quite a lot. I used to hero worship Doug Walters a bit at that time. I can still remember Doug scoring his first century, hearing it on the radio, haha—Noel.

James explains something of the appeal of sportsmen as role models for adolescents:

If you're talking about role models, you watch the football first graders and the top of surfing and lifesaving. ... Well initially you look to their skill. They are number one or some of the best in their sport, the sport you love, so you aspire to be like them, even if it's they way they look or behave. You are vulnerable to that as a young boy and as a young teenager.
As adolescents, virtually all mention television and movie stars as men they looked up to. In particular, most of them say the John Wayne, tough-guy movie image had great appeal.

really John Wayne and Lee Marvin were the only two men who ever walked, hahaha! The typical tough guy don't take any bullshit. As I got older, I still believe in that, you got to be a bit tough in what you do and you can't let people get on top of you—Patrick;

the screen—John Wayne type. Again, it was a physical presence, physical size!—Ashley;

Yeah, I guess the John Wayne image. I don't know how strongly that influenced me—Noel;

I was brought up with John Wayne image. I liked to watch John Wayne movies, couldn't get killed (pause)... tough, fast speaking, fast shooting—Jon.

Sportsmen and movie stars figure prominently as their adolescent heroes. Donald comments that simplistic versions of manhood are made available to boys via the medium of Hollywood western and war movies (1994, 125). It appears the John Wayne celluloid warrior-image played such a role for these men, growing up in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

For most of the mid-life men, their role models and heroes were one and the same. These men's role models were not only outstanding exemplars of traditional masculinity, and males to look up to, they were more than that. They were inspirations to be like, men they sought to copy and imitate in some way. Whilst these figures were typically admired for a limited set of features, such as physical prowess, toughness or for being successful and among the best in their sport, yet they were for the men, models to be like. They appear to have been identity role models; seemingly influences upon these men's developing sense of identity as young adolescents. Notably, they were figures the mid-life men did not personally know. Except in the case of James' father, as adolescents it appears the men had no older men as role models, who took an active part in their social life.

Discussing heroes is problematic for James who is initially reluctant to name even one of his adolescent heroes, saying they are merely short-term heroes. Now he admires parents who provide well and inspire their families; he says his parents are 'ordinary heroes'. The others are not so hesitant naming men they presently admire, although they no longer regard such men as heroes. They mention mostly public figures, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, businessmen Kerry Packer and Gerry Harvey, former Labor Deputy-Prime Minister Jim Cairns, men no longer living such as, US Civil War General Robert E. Lee, musician Jimmy Hendrix and artist Lloyd Rees, and some personal acquaintances. However, in contrast to the traditional masculine style of their adolescent heroes, they now admire a greater variety of men, both public figures and personal acquaintances for a multitude of qualities, other than primarily for outstanding success and physical prowess.
A Dominant Model of Masculinity

All these men initially find the idea of a dominant model of masculinity rather hard to comprehend. To clarify, the researcher refers to features of traditional masculinity highlighted by academic research; not doing anything feminine, taking risks, being unemotional, powerful and successful. This description helps several to see the concept in terms of how boys and men are taught to act, a code of behaviours men are expected to conform to. Several recall what they were taught as boys. Glen's stepmother told him to be ready to fight:

if he hits you, you hit him back. You stand up to him. Don't let any bloke thump you, you hit him even if you are knocked down;

You couldn't be seen doing anything sissy or you'd get chased by the other blokes. I guess I was brought up in a family where men were men, and men were like that, and the fact that my old man played first grade [rugby league]—Patrick.

Two say the macho male image has been a dominant model, but suggest it was more persuasive when they were adolescents:

I'd say 20 years ago, yeah. But I think it's tilting the other way. It's still out there, I mean .. What I think now is that men don't show it straight off. In the old days they'd show it right away. I think they hide it more now then they bring it out later, after they've settled into a situation and that ... when it comes to sensitive new age guys, snags—Jon;

it's changed with time and there was definitely a dominant feature .. image—James.

Some suggest a physically strong body-image is currently a pervasive model or image of masculinity, epitomised by bulky footballers, bronzed lifesavers or movie heroes such as Van Damme, Schwarzenegger:

Movies often push a male image, so that's pushed all the time, your action hero movies, the Bruce Willis's, Schwarzenegger, your Jean Claude Van Damme .. Ohh, living on the beach you'd have to say, the lifesaver, the surfer, the bronzed image! The chiselled, square jaw chesty bonds' type ad, that's purveyed all the way through! Ahh, so, rippling six-pack muscles in the abs ... I guess these images are pushed all the time. Usually it's 'muscles maketh the man' type deal. So .. it's always physical—Ashley;

You tend to see a lot of that in the AFL—Aussie rules. You do see the image tall, aggressive, over-confident male, eer ... But I think everyone knows, generally, that's not what the majority of Australian males are about—James.

In the course of discussing the concept, they come to acknowledge men are generally expected to behave certain ways; to be tough, self-assured, show little emotion, be in-control, successful, drink beer, keen on sport and provide for their family:
I'm expected to be strong, tough and not show my emotions, self-sacrificing, and work every day of my life to provide for my family, and err all those sort of thing ... suppose the typical stereotype for me has to do with talking about sport all the time, drinking lots of beer and not expressing any emotion, not really talking about anything of a deep personal nature—Noel;

I suppose there is a typical stereotype, for all intents and purposes I come across as one! Haha. I drink beer and I drive a ute, occasionally swear, hahaha—Patrick.

Discussing a model of masculinity triggers many ideas about men and their roles. The mid-life men say being a father is a major role for males, taking responsibility as the family breadwinner and provider. Some mention ethnic, gay and yuppie men as examples of current non-macho masculine styles. But the major themes are a big, strong, body-image as a model of masculinity (like John Wayne and now Arnold Schwarzenegger), and the idea of a code of behaviour for men (boys fight and don’t cry).

A macho (John Wayne-style) model of masculinity was particularly potent when these men were boys and adolescents. They admit there is a manly code of behaviour men are expected to conform to. It also features a physically oriented, big-muscular model of masculinity, epitomised by elite sportsmen and figures like Schwarzenegger. But there are also some differences in opinions. Noel and James acknowledge there is a code of behaviour men are expected to meet, and James even comes to see it as a dominant model. Yet, both are either reluctant to call it a dominant model or still dispute a dominant model. James explains the visibility of a variety of masculine styles shown by yuppie, aboriginal and gay men, shows that a dominant model is no longer as pervasive as it was when he was younger. For all the mid-life men, the significance of work and the role of father, whilst important aspects of being men, are not factors they particularly emphasize as part of a dominant model of masculinity. It seems more a physically oriented concept for them.

This is a subject these men struggle to discuss and some are uneasy about. They appear to find the concept of a dominant model difficult, a new, unfamiliar way of thinking about masculinity. As a group they show no clear understanding of masculinity as comprising a combination (in large part) of social practices and values. They are also seemingly blind to their own style of masculinity, which is strongly traditional in character. It is almost as if the dominant form of masculinity is invisible to them in terms of values and social practices, but only visible in terms of physical body image.

**Becoming a Man**

All the men involuntarily react to the question, “when did you become a man?”. Some lean back in their chairs and take a deep breath, some laugh nervously, others roll their eyes or pause. All are literally taken aback. The question unsettles them, yet none comment on their discomfort:
Am I a man? Are you a man? Are any of us really men? I don't know. When does any man become a man? Is it when he's circumcised, is it he has the first sex, is it when he has his first child? I think becoming a man is a lifelong process. It's like learning you never finish ... But I think a lot of men, especially young men, don't think they're successful until they have reared a family—James;

That's a hard question. That's a hard question. In all honesty I'd have to say, on the birth of my daughter. Why? Unlike a lot of new born babies who spend their first minutes on this planet with their mother, hi, she spent her first three hours with her daddy—Patrick;

(Long Pause) I don't know how to answer that. Probably in the early part of my marriage, when I had more control over home matters. I don't know ... probably when your first child is born ... Knowing that you're a father, you are now a dad, that hits home—Glen;

That's a difficult question. I don't know. I wonder if it was when I had my first f...k, ha, but I don't think so! I s'pose it would be sometime after the birth of my first son. I began to accept that I am a man, in some degree ... it's not something that happened at a particular time. It been more a process—Noel;

Going in Army, I thought I was a man at 18 ... I say I really became a man when I saw my daughter getting born—Jon.

The mid-life men say the major influences upon their ideas about masculinity during adolescence were their fathers, mothers, school peers, movies and sport. They learnt about what it is to be a man by dad's daily example. For most their fathers were very influential in passing on certain attitudes during their early years, but later on adolescent peers became very influential:

your family, the way you see relationships develop within your family, that influences the way you behave. I'm lucky in my family it was all very good influences Sport teaches you once again ... how to behave and not behave—James;

I used to hang around these guys we'd go and knock off cars and go for a joyride ... I just hung in outer circle with this guy. You had to be able to drink a bit in those days. I'm talking about when I was 15. It was good fun—Jon;

Umm, we used to go to the Services Club and get really smashed. We'd drive home, so that's all part of growing up. And in a country town, unlike Sydney, there's not a lot to do. Umm, sort of working, playing a little sport and drinking of a Friday and Saturday night, that was what you were limited to—Patrick.

Discussing their transition to male adulthood, all except Jon hesitate answering. They have no immediate recollection of a memorable situation which marked when they became a man. Initially some suggest puberty, sex or having children. Work or marriage are little mentioned. After further thought, the four fathers (including Jon) say they became a man at the birth of their first child. They see this as when they unquestionably became a man, although they did not realise it at the time. James (who has no children) also accepts this view. However, none can immediately recall a personal situation which indelibly marked their becoming an adult male. There was no memorable occasion marking their own transition to male adulthood. Only after
some thought does fatherhood come to mind. Some also suggest becoming a man is a process, not specific to an event or time, but they fail to elaborate or relate it to being a father.

Such responses show becoming a man is not a matter they given thought to. It is as if they believe it is something that just happens, by age or whatever, without any effort or attention, for virtually all the mid-life men, becoming a father marked their unconscious transition to being a man. The realisation they were responsible for another life was an unforgettable turning point, Patrick describes his realisation:

I sat and realised that, haha, if I do the wrong thing here it’s not only going to affect my life, but someone else’s life. I figured I owe them .. not to do something silly, that could deprive them of having a father. Or anything silly with them which could harm them in any way.

Their answers also shed light on how they define a man. Most appear to implicitly define being a man as someone, who is recognised and sees himself as an adult male, by virtue of being a father willing to meet the responsibilities of family and children; a provider, guardian and partner (but not necessarily husband). Such a perspective is implicit, never clearly articulated, nor possibly overtly recognised by them. Whilst praiseworthy, it incorporates only a small range of experiences that are available to males. It is not a fulsome, empowering conception or image of manhood.

None can say they have become a man by a deliberate, memorable process they personally experienced, that transformed their sense of identity or self perception. Nor did their culture provide a commonly accepted reference for their transition. Their becoming men was left to chance, for each to do by themselves; with fatherhood assuming the most significant marker for them. It is as if women and children granted them the status of adult males.

**Limits to their Conversation**

Even discussing sport, there is a guarded quality to the way they talk:

The best thing you got out of them was enjoyment. It's fun .. it's fun. I think that's what motivates most people in their leisure time. Sport is for everyone. I suppose you get confidence out of them ... [So its playing a role in building character and one's self-esteem. And you're giving me a funny look.] I'm getting you to answer the questions for me, ha ha ha (emphasis added) ... Everything you've said, yeah. It helps you build your self esteem-James.

James has surfed for almost 25 years. Talking for over an hour, he never discusses his favourite sport, nor explains its longstanding appeal. He does not even say he chose to live near the beach to be able to surf daily. At the end of the interview he mentions he was feeling slightly unwell, but there is a hollow ring to his bonhomie, which however reflects on the personal importance of surfing:
If you'd talked to me after surfing the point, and the sun was shining, you wouldn't have been able to shut me up. I would have probably punched you out and taken over the microphone myself—ha ha.

Glen says he loves people, and is open:

I’m happy to talk forever and ever ... [What did you like about your stepfather?] He worked on the wharves. He never roused on you. You never got spanked. He told you whenever you meet a girl, you treat her as a woman, never treat her bad.

Initially Glen talks a lot, but only gives a limited picture of himself. He is very brief about his turbulent childhood, adolescent pastimes, says very little about his work and his involvement with the Salvation Army. He is more revealing during a follow-up conversation. But he still censors, perhaps by habit, personal experiences, he avoids answering about his stepfather. The other men are similarly reticent about their fathers, saying very little about the type of men they are or were. James has a very close relationship with his father, yet avoids saying how he feels about his dad, not even how old he is. Patrick no longer talks to his father. He never articulates his disappointment and hurt. Even Noel, who is quite candid about his personal life, does not disclose his feelings about his father, despite his death some time ago.

What are their abiding interests? what makes their lives worthwhile and gives them joy? For all this is not really clear or apparent. Most give very little indication of what things are important to them, Noel is the exception. He is committed to a path of psychotherapeutic, self-understanding, which he believes is a key to life, but work is problematic for him and does not seem to contribute to his path. Whilst sport is important to Ashley and James, what other things make their lives worthwhile and meaningful, they do not say. Jon earns a good living as a tradesman and enjoys surfing but gives no mention of a motivating passion for his life at forty. Patrick enjoys his business, but do his children give him more joy and satisfaction, he does not say.

All in some ways have been guarded, variously choosing to conceal or reveal aspects of their lives. As discussed in chapter 2, traditional masculinity encourages men to be strong, reticent, emotionally stoic and competitive towards other men. Vulnerability is eschewed. Significantly, after his interview James admitted being asked, ‘tell me about yourself’, was discomforting because, ‘it makes you vulnerable to the other guy’. Talking about personal matters to another man in this case made James uneasy, reflecting he has learnt to be guarded with other men. Talking about the more personal aspects of themselves would have made these men vulnerable to the researcher. Allowing oneself to be vulnerable to another man is something apparently inconsistent with traditional masculinity. This is probably why all but one of these men avoid revealing much about their psychological and emotional dimensions.
Conclusion
Noticeably, all the males are unsettled by the key question, 'when did you become a man?'. When asked, they all immediately physically react, often shifting in their chairs. Their responses consist of a multitude of ideas, sometimes contradictory. Whilst all eventually come to an answer, most of the replies of both the young and mid-life males, lack a sense of firm conviction. This is mainly reflected by their tone of voice and their body language. It seems that the question was experienced as personally confronting. In contrast, when the researcher has asked the same question at men's workshops, during group discussions, most men response slowly, but less defensively. Perhaps, in the situation of a face-to-face interview between males, a more apt question might have been, 'how did you become the man you are today?'. It might possibly have sounded less challenging, and stimulated rather more focussed replies.

After more than an hour's conversation the researcher has a sense of in many cases only being allowed a glimpse into most of their lives. This may be a reflection of the limitations of the short interview process, but also reflects something about how these males relate to another male, discussing their lives, they have been rather guarded. Similarities and differences in their experiences and impressions about traditional masculinity, as compared to those of the young males are discussed in chapter 8.
CHAPTER 8

PROMINENT FEATURES OF THE YOUNG AND MID-LIFE MEN’S LIVES

This chapter will consider some of the similarities and differences discerned between the two groups of males, in relation to matters explored in the interviews. It will also explore ancillary themes that emerge from the conversations. These findings are then compared with those of the academic and popular literature on masculinity.

Sporty, physical and active

Sport was the opening topic for the interviews, intended to make the participants comfortable talking on a topic most men enjoy. It is not a major line of inquiry. But noticeably both young and mid-life men give limited descriptions about why sport is so appealing for them. Four of the Dee Why males are active watersports men, by way of contrast, former world surfing champion Nick Carroll, now a writer, during a radio interview describes his experience surfing:

You get moments where your whole body, soul and mind are just concentrated on doing something in the surf. You have to just get up, trust your instinct and fall into the wave. You seem to totally disappear, you as a being don’t really exist at that moment. It’s hard to express, you throw yourself into the moment so heavily you’re inside the landscape around you and the ocean is surging. If you’re going to make a very big wave, you have to be totally unified with everything that’s happening, what the board’s doing, what’s happening with the wave. (Quoted in Jones 1999, 150).

Males of both groups are reticent about the emotional joy of playing sport. They almost seem cut-off, almost disconnected from the emotional pleasure sport provides, that initially captivated them. This extends to a noticeable inability to clearly express affection for their male team mates, perhaps for fear of being thought of as a homosexual by the researcher. Their emotional reticence may be due perhaps to habit, social conditioning or because they are uncomfortable discussing such dimensions of their experiences. However, several males from both groups agree sport taught them about being responsible, contributing to the team, relying on others; and certain values such as competitiveness, and to try and do one’s best. The mid-life men acknowledge they incorporated such values into their life. Of the young men, only Darren recognises he has adopted some of the competitive values of sport. But it is Wes, alone, who identifies a major social role of sport for male youths, when he says, ‘there are good things attached to being a good sportsman, you become more popular … gives status’.

Academic researchers Messner and Sabo, explicitly locate their study of masculinity ‘within the context of a feminist analysis of male privilege’ (1990, 13). They name sport as a masculine domain, and a primary site for the production of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ for young males (1990, 5-13). Sabo maintains that professional football, by its prominence in sport media and
folk culture, has sustained a hegemonic model of masculinity that prioritizes competitiveness, winning and superiority to women (1990, 115). Messner regards institutionalised sport as a 'masculinising site', where male youths are exposed to and learn the dominant values and ideology of traditional masculinity (1992, 19).

Sabo argues that competitive team sports and professional sport, ritualise and sanction the use of aggression and strength, linking masculinity with competitive achievement and a marginal status for women (Sabo and Panepinto, 1990, 115). Football is seen to be a setting where boys learn to endure pain, which serves to fuse players' allegiance to one another and sets men apart from women (Sabo and Panepinto, 1990, 124). Other academic writers highlight the importance that sport plays for boys to develop body size and strength. Whitson notes that athletic prowess and success provides status among adolescent male peer groups. But it is also a setting for sensuous experience of physical strength and skill, which he suggests may possibly explain some of the appeal of sport (1990, 23).

Booth and Tatz state that sport 'is an integral part of the cultural life of many Australians', which is reinforced by the great attention it receives in the media (2000, 3). Sport has long been male dominated in Australia, with women and Aborigines set apart from the mainstream (Booth and Tatz, 2000, 8; Vamplew, 1994, 15). Bryson contends that the major national sports, football and cricket, have served to reinforce male social dominance. Physical force and toughness are woven into traditional masculinity, with the resultant ideology transmitted through these sports (1990, 175). Surf lifesaving is perceived by Australian men as a masculine sport because it promotes athletic competition and a physical, muscular form of masculinity. It also has a strong ethic of community service, as volunteers patrol beaches to save lives (Drummond, 1995, 15). Drummond contends that lifesavers and professional footballers, are perceived by many as icons of the 'archetypal male' (1995, 306). Pearson observes that surfing and surf lifesaving are both male dominated sports (1982, 129). He reports that they share a similar 'striking' masculinity. That is a traditional form of masculinity, characterised by physicality, strength, competitiveness and a rather condescending attitude towards women (1982, 127).

Clearly, for the great majority of young and mid-life males sport has had, and continues to play a prominent role in their lives; an influence upon their values and ideas only a few are seemingly conscious of. Sport is a common socialising influence for both the young and mid-life males from Dee Why. It seems linked with the strong sense of physicality they all exude. Messner maintains that the institution of sport has long been seen as a masculine domain in terms of values, structure and ideology (Messner, 1992, 19). For most of the mid-life men, it is apparent adolescent sport did provide a setting to learn many values and practices associated with traditional masculinity, especially competitiveness, courage, determination and winning. They indicate they were taught, but also adopted many values associated with traditional
masculinity. This was not quite the case for the young males, since for the three rural males organised team sport was not an important part of their lives. For both groups, organised sport was a site where they were exposed to many values associated with traditional masculinity. For many of the mid-life men it almost appears as an incubator for traditional masculinity, but for the young males this was the case for only those from Sydney.

Messner believes involvement in competitive sport can see a young male develop a conditional masculine identity based upon public success, being a winner (1992, 150). His study it must be noted was comprised of elite, national level American athletes. However, his observations have some parallels with regard to two of the young urban males. For Toby and Darren their sport seems to contribute much to their personal sense of masculine identity. They see themselves primarily as sportsmen, rather than in terms of their occupations. But unlike Messner's elite athletes, their identity is not based upon public success. For these two young males, it seems sport also provides a setting they can be part of and feel they belong—the world of sport.

Messner also suggests that participating and success in organised sport is often a way boys try to gain their father's approval (1992, 28-33). Drummond found support for this suggestion amongst the surf lifesavers in his study, who as boys followed their father's sport. However, for the majority of elite athletes in his study, the fathers took very little interest in their son's boyhood sport. In fact, sport did not provide a path for an emotional connection with their fathers for most of the athletes during their youth despite their longings (1995, 249-253). None of the young males in this study mention their fathers taking an active interest in their adolescent sport. Only Patrick and James of the mid-life males mention their fathers' having a role, for the others, their fathers apparently had no interest or were busy elsewhere. In Patrick's case he acknowledges he tried to measure up to his father's elite standards (even now is not sure why). Only these two men's experiences clearly support Messner's suggestion that boys seek their father's approval and a sense of emotional connection by performing well at sport.

Sport played a major role in the adolescence of the young and mid-life males. It served many purposes. It was a setting to be physically active, test their bodies, develop prowess, new skills, self-confidence and make friendships. But there is more. It was a proving ground. For some of these males, it seems being a skilful sportsman gave them a degree of acceptance, popularity and position among their peers. They had proven themselves highly capable or outstanding in a physical activity, and such achievement seems to have been respected by other male youths. Sporting prowess and success accorded them status among their peers. For many of the young and mid-life males, team sport also seems to have provided a sense of belonging, and an opportunity for a subtle emotional connection with other males. But this connection is never articulated in terms of expressing overt affection for their team mates. For a small number of the males in this study sport may have been a way to seek their fathers' affection. But for the
majority, sport seemingly did not offer such an avenue of emotional connection because their fathers' took little interest.

Finally, it seems likely that as adolescents, most of these males perceived competitive, physical sports such as football, soccer, cricket, weightlifting and surfing as masculine domains, as Messner and Drummond contend. There is a suggestion that many may have believed that, by taking part in such visibly masculine settings for a lengthy period, by competing and being physically tested among their peers, their emerging sense of masculinity and manliness would somehow be confirmed and affirmed.

Fathers and Sons
Either by their presence or absence, fathers are huge figures in the lives of both the young and mid-life men. Those mid-life men whose fathers' were publicly successful, admit hero-worshipping them (wanting to be like them) as boys, and they still admire their fathers' achievements. Glen who is in his early 40's and whose father died when he was 10, still wants to know his father and feels guilty that he has not researched his father's war record. By his tone of voice, Toby is not convincing when he says not having a father at home has not really bothered him.

All those who grew up with their fathers say as boys they watched them closely and identified with them. Their fathers were their first role models, providing daily examples about being male. But sometime during adolescence, for all but one, this early admiration turns to disappointment and disconnection. Most say they now do not relate well to their fathers. All but one report little sense of emotional connection or closeness with their fathers. James is the exception. Only he recalls his father as a positive influence during adolescence. This was when his father spent a lot of time coaching James in rugby and swimming. James admits his father has been a major positive figure throughout his life, and still is. It could well be by father and son doing activities they both enjoyed together, they made a firm emotional connection at that time. In contrast, the others seem to have spent very little time with their fathers during adolescence. However, James himself gives little light on the matter, and avoids discussing reasons for their closeness.

For all but one, the father-son relationship is troubled and emotionally distant. The three mid-life fathers with young sons are very aware of the disconnection and emphasise they try to actively support their sons. They consciously say they do not want to repeat this pattern with their boys.

The pattern of fathers as early role models and heroes for boys mirrors other studies. The *NSW Government Report on Boys’ Education* states, 'boys particularly look to their father as their most important male role model’ (O’Doherty, 1994, 28). That daddy is usually a boy’s first
hero is noted in some popular discourses (Cohen, 1990; Sanford and Lough, 1988). However, as discussed in chapter 2, the popular discourses emphasise that for adult sons, the father-son relationship is typically characterised by disconnection (Bly, 1990, 19; Keene, 1991, 137; Sheehy, 1998, 166). Biddulph believes very few adult men have a close, supportive relationship with their fathers (1994, 38-41). A common theme at retreats is men’s deep wish for an empowering relationship with their fathers, in place of the estrangement and distance they experience (Crawford, 1997). Some reasons suggested for problems with the relationship include, childhood experiences of domestic violence or fathers not being available to sons during boyhood, that fathers may feel threatened by an adolescent son’s vigor and self-assertion, and that fathers treat sons as competitors as they grow older (Lee, 1991, 15-41).

Freud attributed a negative impact to the father, his idea of an oedipal conflict between father and son still casts a shadow upon psychoanalytic perspectives of the relationship (Keene, 1991, 19; Pedersen, 1991, 122). Psychoanalytic perspectives propose in developing a masculine identity, the young boy shifts his first identification with mother, to the father. By identifying with father and the masculine world the boy develops his sense of separate self and masculine identity. But in turning from the mother to the father, it is suggested, the son experiences competition in place of attachment (Chodorow, 1978, 181). So the father-son relationship is commonly characterised by conflict and competition (Chodorow, 1978, 181; Pedersen, 1991, 124). However, Jungian writers state this is not the natural condition of the relationship. Rather the conflict is a consequence of the father being physically or emotionally absent, his failure to develop a close emotional attachment with the son (Pedersen, 1991, 124). Jungian psychotherapists Betcher and Pollock believe that most American men are at an impasse with their fathers’ (1993, 87) and other therapists make similar suggestions (Moore, 1993, 31).

The actual character of the father-son relationship has not been a particular focus in Australian research on masculinity, other aspects of the relationship have been studied such as the role of fathers. But as indicated in chapter 2, Drummond reports for most of his athletes, the father-son relationship is not at all close (1995, 249-253). The twenty adult males studied by Pease in Melbourne, all report poor relationships with their fathers (1996, 162-5). West observes that around adolescence male youths seem to rebel against their fathers (1996, 83). However, West suggests most men gradually come to terms with their fathers in some way (1996, 92).

Neither young nor mid-life men show any recognition that a father has a profound psychological impact upon a man’s sense of self and masculinity during a son’s formative years; not even Noel who is involved in psychotherapy. With the young males attention focussed upon sorting out what they want to do to establish their place and roles in the world, none recognise any sort of psychological dislocation with their fathers. Even Toby and Tim, whose fathers’ were not around for them, do not suggest this may have left an emotional impact. To be aware of the possible implications of an estrangement between father-son, and
the particular individual character it takes for them, requires men to be more reflective about their lives. Levinson (1978) and O'Connor (1981) suggest this may occur around mid-life for men as they consider and reassess their lives. But the mid-life men in this study are not typically reflective, even Noel seems not to have thought about the emotional impact of ones' father upon the psyche.

The popular discourses assert that, for most men the father-son relationship is typically distant, with little emotional connection or support. They are not alone in highlighting the troubled nature of the father-son relationship. This is a theme in two great works of Western literature, Homer's *The Odyssey* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It also surfaces in popular culture, such as the classic movie *Star Wars* and the more recent film, *Gladiator*.

The experience of virtually all the males in the study, mirrors the assertions in popular literature that the father-son relationship is typically distant and unsupportive from the sons' perspective. All the males are seemingly unaware of the characteristic estranged nature of the relationship and its personal repercussions. Contrary to West's suggestion that men gradually come to terms with their fathers in some way (1996, 92), virtually all the young and mid-life males men from both groups show no evidence of such acceptance, not even the mid-life man who has been taking psychotherapy for some years. Their estrangement seems a formidable barrier not likely to be easily overcome, especially since most cannot recall receiving a sense of approval from their fathers'. Except for James, they seem to accept the relationship with their fathers will remain distant and unsupportive. They acknowledge that this is the way it has been for some time, the way it is now and that it is most unlikely it will change.

**Becoming a Man**

Every interviewee physically reacts to the question, 'when did you become a man?'; most often leaning back in their chairs. It makes them all visibly uncomfortable. (Defining what is a 'man' was left to the participants, how they individually understand the term.) Perhaps the question challenges their masculine identity or even their own sense of masculinity, yet none comment on their reaction. None of the young males could recall a memorable circumstance that marked an undeniable passage to becoming a man. Overwhelmingly, they admit that they do not yet regard themselves as men, but none have any idea what might mark their transition to becoming a man. Nor do they have any common agreed idea how to define, or what it is to be a man.

The mid-life men, similarly, cannot immediately recall a signal occasion or circumstance that marked their undeniable passage to becoming a man. However, after considerable thought (sometimes later in the interview), all but one say fatherhood provides the passage to becoming a man. The four fathers believe they became a man with the birth of their first child. With one exception (a single man), for these men being a man is characterised by accepting responsibility as guardian, protector and provider in service to family. For the mid-life men apparently
becoming a man was an accidental process, incidental to fatherhood, something they were not aware of at the time. Their definition of a man is principally, a father who willingly accepts his responsibility to his children.

For both the young and mid-life men, none can immediately point to with surety and conviction when they became a man, in their understanding of the term. There has been no memorable moment or process in their lives, physically personal to them, that marks their passage to male adulthood.

Becoming a man (here man is defined as, perceiving oneself and being recognised as having the status of an adult male) in terms of a memorable social ritual is seemingly little addressed in academic literature. Messner identifies sport as a masculinising site for male youths and Drummond suggests organised sport offers a rite of passage for boys (Messner, 1992, 150; Drummond, 1995, 287). But they are referring to a lengthy socialisation process, not a memorable social ritual or deliberate, conscious process marking a transformation of masculine status. Nor do they explore what might be involved in such a transition.

By contrast, as discussed in chapter 2, becoming a man is a topical issue in the popular discourses. Discussing the experiences of members of his men’s group, Kipnis mentions work, combat, independence, alcohol, sex and fathers’ approval were markers of their transition from boys to men. He says, each individually, initiated themselves as men by such experiences. Kipnis suggests, that at present, the only rites of passage available to male youths are the cult of the sports hero, in which they learn to endure pain in return for glory (1991, 163-4). Biddulph says boys are seen as becoming men when they turn 18, but boys in men's bodies are visible everywhere. He is most concerned that in Australia and other Western societies masculine development to left to chance (1994, 172). Keen notes that primal societies have rituals and ceremonies that mark young males' transition to becoming a man. In such societies becoming an adult male is a conscious and public occasion, intended to foster a new sense of self. The rite of passage involves a physical trial intended to severe the attitudes and attachments to boyhood; a rebirth to a new identity given by the culture. But, Keen observes, initiation fosters conformity (1991, 29-32). He says rites of passage do not occur in modern cities as men's loyalties are now to corporation and state (1991, 33).

Jungian therapists Sanford and Lough state that adolescents are left to themselves or form gangs to find ways to secure a sense of being men (1988, 47). They outline four dimensions of a young male becoming a man. The social dimension includes, finding a place in the social order, achieving financial independence and developing a social identity. Psychologically, a young male must establish a distinct ego identity, separate from his parents. Becoming a man also means undergoing the physical changes of puberty. Finally, becoming a man, spiritually, means establishing a relationship with his inner self and the divine order (1988, 34-43).
Sanford and Lough contend that American culture fails to guide and initiate adolescents of all backgrounds into becoming men (manhood), leaving them to do it on their own by trial and error over many years (1988, 43).

The issue of how young males may become men is little addressed in the Australian literature on masculinity, although there is much written about youth culture. Based on his research, West says there are rules for becoming a man, usually seen in terms of becoming a tough man; these are, developing one’s body, having sex, being successful in sport and ready to fight. Becoming a man he argues has a militaristic tone (1996, 58-59). But West is referring more to the socialisation of male youths go through, rather than the attainment of a socially acknowledged status of adult male. In his critique of men’s life narratives, Webb suggests the cultural norm is for a young male to become a man by successfully enduring a physical trial. He refers to the trial of ‘the lad’ in Banjo Patterson’s poem, The Man from Snowy River, who successfully chases brumbies over a steep cliff (1998, 8). Webb also comments that unlike most males, soldiers can vividly recall when they believe they became a man: their first experience of combat (1998, 82).

Tacey warns the men’s movement (defined in chapter 2) about idealisation of male initiation by tribal societies, saying they are also a form of indoctrination into culturally accepted social behaviours and attitudes. He regards male rites of passage as devised to facilitate a transition from identification with the mother, to an acquired identification with the father and paternal society, which matches psychoanalytic theory (1997, 99). He recognises that boys must change into men, but in the absence of an accepted, spiritually-inspired, cultural vision of manhood, he believes such a transition is not possible (1997, 127). New means of transition are necessary, but in the meantime he believes every man is left to his own pattern of initiation; 'solutions will have to remain personal and individual until we enter a new phase of collective spiritual wisdom' (1997, 130).

The experiences of the young and mid-life men of this study, lend some support to suggestions in the popular literature on masculinity, that becoming a man in Western cultures such as Australia, is a matter left for chance, an accidental process with little guidance from older, venerable men. For those in this study, becoming a man (that is, perceiving oneself and being recognised as an adult male), is a process they have paid little or no attention to. It is a matter they received no formal, life-affirming guidance about. It is apparent for the mid-life males, negotiating the early adult transition period and the passage to being an adult male, were endeavours they were left to do alone. Women gave the mid-life men their passage to male adulthood, making them fathers by having their children.

So for both the young and mid-life men in this study becoming a man (a self-responsible, adult male) has been left for each individual to make do in the best fashion he can. Given the lack of
attention to the matter, American novelist Norman Mailer's comments being a man is being continually on guard, because a man 'can hardly ever assume he has become a man' seems more meaningful (cited in Segal, 1990, 104).

Unlooked for Features of their Lives
Reticence and the challenge of vulnerability

The participants spoke for at least an hour, often up to an hour and a half in a private place usually of their choosing; the intention being to help them feel comfortable talking. They often they seem to speak in code, where meanings are implicit, not explicit, so at times it may not be clear what they really mean. Toby's comment that he is 'not 100% keen at the moment' to fight in a kick-boxing bout反射s this way of speaking; he makes no overt mention of his implied fear of being hurt. Darren describing his father says, 'he's a meat and potatoes sort of guy, very much no frills', is colourful but obscure. Paul's explanation of the appeal of football, 'I'd rather be seen in the pub with the footballers ...' also reflects this code. He is reluctant to answer personally. Such a manner of speaking allows them to disidentify from uncomfortable situations and feelings.

Most of the young and mid-life men are guarded in their conversation. Discussing their fathers is the best example. They speak about their fathers factually, that is all. Both young and mid-life men do not reveal their feelings about their father, nor give reasons for the condition of the relationship. Even James who gets on well with his father, avoids suggesting any reasons why they are close. Typically men from both groups often skirt around experiences in their lives and their sense of self. They rarely explain their beliefs, attitudes, or motivations. During the informal follow-up interviews, both Terry and Glen are more forthcoming about some youthful experiences and their emotional realms. But even these more reflective, talkative males are still careful speaking to the researcher.

Similar patterns appears in other in-depth interviews. The surf Iron Man interviewed by Connell talks principally about sport and what he does. He says little about his beliefs or emotions (Connell, 1990, 91-4). In Drummond's study the elite sportsmen are characteristically outwardly directed, intent upon achieving sport success. Beyond the appeal and their attachment to sport, they say little about their personality, offering only a restricted insight on their motivations and personal selves (Drummond, 1995). A notable exception is Pat, the oldest triathlete (45 years). Perhaps due to his age, maturity and owning a sports business, he does talk about more personal aspects of his life (Drummond, 1995, 108-119). West observes that many of the males from Western Sydney did not want to talk about their problems or personal matters (1996, 50). However two young males in their mid 20s are noticeably more open. With working class backgrounds Josef comes from an Austrian family, and Mike is a very intelligent trainee schoolteacher. They discuss the nature of the relationships with their fathers, girlfriends, emotions and occasionally their self-doubts (West 1996, 132-7).
West comments that Josef's tough persona covers a thoughtful interior, whilst Mike recognises that males are conditioned by society into acceptable behaviours (1996, 136/184).

As noted in chapter 4, West states that men find it difficult to talk unguardedly to another man (1996, 143). Therapists report male clients often say they chose to work with a female to avoid the competition dynamic with men (Bolen, 1989, 8). The interview is not a neutral process. Gender may affect the interaction. Sometimes this is a dynamic not commented upon in research concerning men. Whilst Levinson refers to biographical interviews with his 40 men requiring a relationship of some intimacy and intensity between participant and interviewer, he makes no mention to possible nuances in conversation that might reflect any interaction between them as males (1978, 15). Connell notes the difference in experience of violence between some of the unemployed young males and the researcher, in his study of thirty men of varying ages and social backgrounds from rural and urban NSW. Yet he makes no mention of the dynamics of interviewing men, and it is not at all clear why he fails to mention this interaction (1991, 149).

There are many unstated dynamics occurring in the interview for both researcher and participant. The interviewer has the power to ask questions, and the respondent is under some pressure to answer relatively quickly. There can be a subtle pressure to immediately articulate a reasoned, thoughtful answer. Sometimes a well considered response takes time to develop. The interviewee can become vulnerable to the researcher, which can be uncomfortable. Each person may be anxious about an unrelated matter than can also impact on the nature of the replies. The participants may have had several unspoken (semi-conscious) concerns about what they might say. This could include, 'what will this guy think of me if I tell him what I really felt?' 'How much do I want to tell him?' 'Is it safe to tell him I felt terrible, will he think me unmanly?' Such concerns were never raised by the participants, but seem to underlay some of the discussions. To offset this discrepancy, the researcher at times mentioned some personal experiences, and, as Plummer suggests adopted the mode of an empathic counsellor.

There seems to be a public and private domain to the topics of conversation for the males in this study. Playing sport, pastimes, work and much of their attitudes to these are safe subjects and for public discussion. But emotions, deep beliefs, family relationship problems and motivations seem to be more personal and private and not for broadcast. In most cases both young and mid-life male have through a combination of habit, social conditioning and personal judgement chosen what to reveal and what to conceal.1

1Lennox (1998) interviewed a small number of noted and ordinary men (volunteer bushfire fighters). One of the public figures was cartoonist Michael Leunig. He openly reflected on his views about life, his fears, hopes and vulnerabilities. He discussed the inner dimensions of his life, the problems of failure of his first marriage, the personal pain and distress of his estrangement from his mother. In contrast the bushfire fighters who took part in the Sydney bushfires of January 1994 mainly talked about their families and work, what they learnt from the bushfires and how they slowly came to terms with their experiences. Very noticeably, their discussion is mainly externally focussed, avoiding the deeper personal realms of their lives; they are not reflective about their experiences, but more practical 'you get over it'.
Men's Self-image

Most of the males portray themselves as rather self-confident, outwardly directed with a strong sense of physicality. For most of them, work or sport, their principal life activities, provide their self-images (the exceptions being Dominic, Noel and Glen who are somewhat introspective). Commonly males of both groups say little about how they perceive themselves, their sense of self, personality or temperament. They say virtually nothing about what really animates, motivates and brings meaning and purpose to their lives. Many of the males of both groups exhibit a sense of independence with family relationships apparently figuring only in the background of their lives.

Jung uses the term 'persona' to refer to how people present themselves; the masks one exhibits publicly, one's social identity. It is an outer layer of the personality, but also a 'false self', not a complete reflection of a man's individuality (Steinberg, 1993, 44). A person may have various personae, such as husband, parent and businessman. Therapists Horrocks and O'Connor report many of their male clients felt trapped by their unemotional public masks (Horrocks, 1994, 111). They suggest their clients personas are disconnected from the men's inner worlds (O'Connor, 1981, 67).

Most of the males of both groups are strongly attached to their personas, such as sportsman, cook, surfer-gardener or businessman. After a conversation of more than an hour the researcher is left with a sense of not really knowing most of these men, or what motivates them (even the more reflective types), beyond what the main thing they do in their lives. Webb believes men's silences hold significance, suggesting they overlay dilemmas, discomfort and difficulties men may be experiencing (1998, 12). He argues the mental habit to hide emotion could reflect a lack of connection to the self (Webb, 1998, 14). Most of the young and mid-life men guardedly reveal what they do, but conceal much about what makes them who they are. Perhaps their silence reflects discomfort and dilemmas talking about themselves, that they could not acknowledge.

Men's Life-Course

The young males—an extended adolescence

All except one of the twenty-something males say they do not yet see themselves as men (in their terms). However, all indicate they tend to see themselves enjoying an adolescent lifestyle. All still live with their parents, none are married; only Terry and Alex presently seem to accord work and career as important, long term priorities. Wes is still looking at what vocation to pursue. Dominic is uncertain what work or study he might find appealing. Darren's work as a car service manager is of secondary importance to his sport. Whilst Terry is devoted to his vocation, he still lives with his family and fills his time with lots of activities. Only a few have long term relationships with women. Much of their leisure time is spent on sport or hobbies,
Seemingly they all still like having the freedom to indulge in their hobbies. This is implied in Darren's comment. When asked about becoming a man Darren replies, 'I don't know .. In some ways I'm still not I suppose, 'cos I still like being a boy and mucking around'.

The idea of an extended adolescence for young men is raised in some of the popular discourses. Sheehy, without offering supportive research, suggests for middle-class American males, adolescence can extend up to at least age 30 (1998, 8). Biddulph makes a similar point (1994, 171). Based on his experience as a family therapist he believes for many young males, adolescence can extend until the mid-30s (1999). Tacey also suggests that adolescence appears to be extending for males until 30-35, party due to the lack of a positive, cultural vision of manhood for young males to relate to (1997, 128). Tacey contends that adolescence is only terminated when a person is gathered into a greater reality. Connell alludes to an extended adolescence as something he perceives in the lifestyle and attitudes of the champion surf Iron Man. Connell contends that the principal elements of the athlete's life, sport, competing, making money, are likely to retain their importance throughout his 20's. Other matters, such as committed relationships with women, he argues are likely to be of minor importance (1990, 92).

The young males are aged 22 and upwards. None of them have settled lifestyles incorporating career, their own home and committed relationships. Nor do social responsibilities such as providing for others, figure in their lives. They have few social and financial responsibilities: only two have set career paths (Terry and Alex). There is a clear sense they are all still enjoying an extended adolescence—most evident in their lifestyle. This extended adolescence also seems to characterise even those with long term female partners, coincidentally the two oldest, Darren and Wes.

**Mid-life men—unaware of a mid-life transition**

The mid-life men are aged from their late 30's to mid 40's. Whilst James mentions that he is moving towards middle age, that is all he has to say on the matter. At 45, Noel is the oldest, and involved in psychotherapy. He is exceptionally open, discussing much of his personal life including sexuality. Although, reflective and thoughtful, he does not suggest his difficulties may be pushing him towards a new stage of life. Nor does he allude to the possibility of facing a 'turning point' in his life. The mid-life men show little recognition of approaching a mid-life transition that Levinson suggests occurs around age 40, and may deeply affect a man's sense of identity and ideas about masculinity.

Men at mid-life has apparently only received a limited amount of attention in academic research. The work of Levinson (1978) and Farrell and Rosenberg (1981) stand out as the principal studies. Messner (1992) briefly discusses men at mid-life, as a sideline to his study of elite athletes. As discussed in chapter 3, Levinson refers to the season's of a man's life as a
metaphor for a man's passage through the life course. He proposes early male adulthood covers the years 17-45. A mid-life transition period occurs between 40-45, overlapping the beginning of middle adulthood, seen as 40-65 years (1978, 15). Levinson, in particular, seeks to explore the dynamics of a mid-life transition. He regards the years 40-45 as one when major changes occur to the features of a man's life structure, such as occupation, lifestyle, family and personal dream (goal). He suggests this is a time when males may reappraise their lives, address personal matters as the passing of youth, mortality and aspects of their personality (1978, 330-5). Levinson maintains that a mid-life 'crisis' is a common occurrence for many men. 'For 80% of our subjects this period evokes tumultuous struggles within the self and with the external world—their mid-life transition is a time of moderate or severe crisis' (1978, 200). Amongst his participants he also found some men were untroubled by the direction of their lives, others were aware of a change in the character of their lives, but it was not painful.

Farrell and Rosenberg surveyed 450 American men of up to 45 years of age, and criticised Levinson for the predominantly middle-class background of his subjects (1981, 22-3). Farrell and Rosenberg say that for mid-life men, family looms larger as the emotional centre of their lives, but also, more conflicts with wife and adolescent children occur. They note that mid-life (like adolescence) can also trigger concerns about personal history and identity (but not a 'crisis'), with responses varying from greater self-awareness to defensiveness (1981, 206-12). For males aged 35-45 years, Farrell and Rosenberg found a variety of paths of development. Those participants from affluent families say mid-life is a period of considerable satisfaction. A mid-life crisis is acknowledged by a minority of subjects. Unlike Levinson's study, only 12% of their sample report experiencing alienation and dissatisfaction with their lives around mid-life. These men did report a sense of their world collapsing (1981, 215).

However, Farrell and Rosenberg report that a majority of the mid-life males show a marked denial or defensiveness about problems in their lives. The majority of participants, (they suggest mainly lower middle-class men) become more defensive and self-insulated, withdrawn behind a protective shell, shutting out feelings or internal conflicts that challenge their masculine self-image (1981, 87-91). Escalation of denial emerges as a fundamental characteristic of mid-life men in our society' (1981, 91). Messner also discusses mid-life as many of his elite athletes were at this age when he interviewed them (1992, 147). He accepts Levinson's suggestion that men at this time may go through de-tribalisation. That is, males around mid-life may discard values and attitudes acquired in their youth, to establish a greater sense of their own identity. This occurred to one of the athletes Messner studied. However, he argues such an expansion in sense of self was not typical, and suggests that a mid-life crisis may not be a common phenomenon (1992, 148).

In her popular work, Sheehy bases her observations on interview research with several hundred American males over 35. Sheehy identifies the years around 40-45 as a period of mid-life
transition, which she calls mid-life passage, a critical turning point but not necessarily a time of crisis (1998, 12). With regard to a mid-life crisis, she mentions some interviewees looking back to their forties, recall going through a 'dark patch' but that is all they say (1998, 34). She suggests second adulthood commences around 50, and this stage can see major changes in personality, and a search for meaning in ones’ life, is a major preoccupation (1998, 34). Further, Sheehy suggests most American men do not recognise that their lives go through different stages, or that they will go through transitional 'passages' to these stages (1998, 8). However, this latter observation seems to be her opinion, as she does not actually providing supporting material for this statement.

Australian literature on men, mid-life and masculinity is limited to that of Jungian psychotherapist, O'Connor. He used his own experience of dissatisfaction at 40 to explore the mid-life crisis among men in Melbourne. Of 40 men he interviewed, most felt a sense of great dislocation around the age 40-45. Many reported their work was not what they really wanted to do. They had taken up success, status, power, money and materialism, yet at around age 40, felt empty and unfulfilled (1981, 18). O'Connor does not suggest a crisis to be common for mid-life males. Rather for his interviewees, it was a difficult period, a time of reappraisal of their life. He believes the experience can facilitate a shift of focus from material status and achievement to a deeper self-understanding. The period of turbulence can trigger the development of a man's capacity for relationships, mentoring and emotions and further psychological growth in the 'second-half' of life (1981, 88-90). He says many of his interviewees, 'had to kill the youthful hero of the first half of life' (1981, 30).

Glen and Noel are involved in counselling programs and have been forced to face major upheavals in their lives, their focus seems on 'surviving' the turbulence. Neither suggest they are reappraising their lives, or approaching a new life stage. Indeed, none of the mid-life men suggest that the character of their lives and self-perceptions may change in the coming years, or that they may face a period of transition. For half of the participants, Jon, Noel and Glen, their perspectives about the coming years, seem confined to needing to work with limited satisfaction to maintain their lifestyle. However, for the remaining men, work appears to be a prominent and satisfying focus of their lives for the foreseeable future.

All of the mid-life men show little awareness or recognition that men may experience a rather unsettling period during their early 40s, a mid-life transition that may entail reappraising one's life, and perhaps affect one's sense of personal identity. Nor do these men appear to recognise the different stages of a man's life-course. Certainly, these are not matters they have even alluded to with the researcher. Most of these males apparently pay little attention to their inner lives, nor seem inclined to reflect and reassess their lives, which is rather different to Levinson's findings.
A Significant Difference
Male heroes—no longer adolescent inspirations

In adolescence, males from both groups regarded some sportsmen as role models or heroes. The mid-life men's heroes were popular figures such as footballers, boxer Muhammad Ali, world champion surfer Mark Richards and movie star John Wayne. Such imposing men visibly embodied traditional masculine qualities of toughness, physical strength, size, courage, competitiveness and success. For the mid-life males these men were inspirational figures to consciously be like and imitate. The young males, in contrast, say they admired men such as basketballer Michael Jordan and footballer Mal Meninga, not as men to emulate, but only for particular personal qualities, or their exceptional sport skills.

The mid-life men imply that their traditional masculine style heroes gave them a positive impression of masculinity, inspiring them for example, to do their best in their sport. They consciously saw them as models to be like, (such figures can be called identity role models). Such a positive view of masculinity is not in evidence in the young males' attitudes. As adolescents they consciously rejected the idea of male heroes as men to be like. Role models had a place in their lives, but there is no sense that they saw such figures as positive embodiments of masculinity. They carefully state that they looked up to such public figures from a narrow focus, only as men with specific admirable qualities or skills (reference role models). Some suggest this was because they did not know what sort of men these figures were.

But the experiences of Terry and Darren stand out. Unlike the other young males, these two consciously see their role models (Billy Connolly and surfboat rowers) as inspirations and men to be like. Darren is the only one of all interviewees whose role models were part of his adolescence almost on a daily basis, and who carefully guided him into traditional masculine activities such as drinking at the pub. Both regard their role models as positive influences in their lives, giving them values and life direction that they still appreciate. None of the mid-life men had any similar experience of an actively-involved role model, although James' father may have played a similar role, during James' adolescence.

All of the participants shy away from admitting having present day heroes. For this reason, reservations about acknowledging personal male heroes are common to both groups. But the young men are very uncomfortable discussing the topic of heroes. Whilst it is seemingly understandable for men around forty to be reluctant to say they still have 'heroes', it is surprising that the young males say heroes did not feature in their adolescence, and that they are still reluctant to identify men they admire. This contrasts somewhat to the observations by West (1996, 60) and Edgar (1997, 53) that male heroes play a role in the lives of male youths.
Following her research study of some 100 American schoolchildren aged 6-18 years, Harris observes adolescents are more likely to identify sportsmen and celebrities as heroes/role models than adults (1994, 25). She identifies sportsmen, celebrities, politicians and personal acquaintances as the most commonly selected heroes (1994, 33). Porpora notes that has been little research on hero identification among adults (1996, 211). She conducted two telephone surveys of some 600 adults (over 18 years) in Philadelphia, USA. Only 40% of respondents said they had personal heroes, and of these close acquaintances (mother/father) were most commonly named (Porpora, 1996, 221). The tendency to identify with heroes she concludes characterises people concerned with matters of the meaning of human existence and religion (1996, 221).

Ashley has a spiritual perspective towards life, he most of all is comfortable discussing men he admires. Reluctance to identify personal heroes is a feature of this study. As adolescents, a stage psychotherapists Sanford and Lough say is associated with establishing a sense of personal identity, the young males apparently had no publicly known males as inspirations or models for life's possibilities. This is rather surprising and difficult to explain. Perhaps it reflects widespread negative portrayals of men as violent and aggressive by the mass media. Perhaps it may also reflect the absence of new, appealing conceptions of masculinity suited to the demands of current society (Speilberg, 1993, 173). Certainly it indicates that as adolescents the young men felt a disconnection from men beyond their age set, which still lingers on in their 20s.

Despite the problematic nature of the idea of 'heroes' for the participants, during adolescence, males from both groups did look up to successful men. Whether public figures or personal acquaintances, it seems likely the participants learnt something, however subtle, about being a man from such figures. It is Terry and Darren's experiences that attract attention. They say their role models have been positive influences, setting them on a life path they still follow and enjoy. For Darren, sport provides a setting for his identity, and for Terry, craftwork provides a vocation that he loves. Their experiences point to the potential significance of positive, older male guides for adolescents, as inspirations for a life-enhancing sense of masculinity.
CHAPTER 9
LEARNING AND ENACTING A DOMINANT MODEL OF MASCULINITY

Initially, this chapter examines the young and mid-life males' perspectives about the culturally dominant model of masculinity, a social phenomenon both groups have had to deal with. The chapter then discusses the distinctive and particular features of the young and mid-life men's experiences concerning masculinity and its dominant model. The final section identifies some features common to both groups concerning their experiences and perceptions of masculinity.

A Dominant Model of Masculinity

All of the participants initially had some difficulty comprehending the concept of a dominant model of masculinity. Seemingly it is not part of the way they think about masculinity, which they generally see as something concerning bodies and muscles. But stimulated to think about how men are typically supposed to act and behave, several initially mention the macho-image as illustrating that males are often expected to be tough, strong and unafraid.

As youths, the young males experienced a male peer culture that they were pressured to conform to, with features such as, acting tough, being ready to fight, not doing anything sissy, playing popular sport, beer drinking and taking risks by driving cars fast. Those who did not conform were often ostracised and isolated by their peers. The mid-life men indicate that as adolescents they learnt a similar youthful version of masculinity. Playing organised sport, many admit, they learnt to value competitiveness, courage, determination and success. At that time, their peers were most influential enforcing the unarticulated rules and code of masculine behaviour, which their heroes, like John Wayne and elite sportsmen, embodied by their tough-physical public persona.

From their experiences as boys, adolescents and later on in their lives, all the males understand men are typically expected to try and live up to a form of male code with many of the following features; to be tough, physical, competitive, not do anything feminine, unemotional, self-sufficient, as well as conform to social practices such as play sport, drink beer and have a job. In the course of the conversations, all of the interviewees come to acknowledge that this represents a dominant code of behaviour males are expected to generally conform to. All of them, either explicitly or implicitly, agree it can be seen as a dominant model of masculinity. Both groups indicate that they learnt about a dominant model from their fathers, family, peers, media, organised sport, church, school and other institutions including the workplace.

The males in both groups recognise the existence of a dominant model of masculinity that provides a social code of masculine behaviour that men are generally expected to conform to,
and are often judged by. It is the young rural males who point out the cost of not conforming to such a code. Being an exception, noticeably different (although not gay), opened them up to abuse, ridicule and sometimes physical threats from their adolescent peers in particular.

As discussed in chapter 2, the two major discourses on masculinity acknowledge a dominant form of masculinity, but call it by different names. Academic sociology refers to traditional (or hegemonic) masculinity as the pre-eminent version of masculinity (Connell, 1987, 184-5; Kimmel, 1994, 125). Popular writers identify a heroic model of masculinity, characterised by the same features (Gerzon, 1982, 1; Kipnis, 1991, 1), and in some of the popular Jungian literature on male psychology, it is called the masculine gender role (Steinberg, 1991, 12). Despite differing terms, these all represent attempts to describe and deconstruct a dominant model or form of masculinity evident in English speaking countries such as America, Australia, Britain and New Zealand (Connell, 1995; Kaufman, 1987; Seidler, 1994). There is considerable agreement among the two discourses that the dominant form of masculinity is typically characterised by being strong, tough, physical, competitive, decisive, independent, in-control, unemotional, and associated with success, work and power. It provides the measure by which all men are judged (Kimmel, 1994, 125; Kipnis, 1991, 5).

There appears to have been relatively little examination of Australian males' perception and understanding of a dominant model of masculinity. Some explanation for this may include the observation by Buchbinder and others that masculinity has traditionally been seen as natural, the way men are (1994, 1) and so not to be questioned. Further, this lack of attention may also reflect Webb's contention that traditional masculinity is focussed upon action and achievement; it thereby blocks reflection and analysis concerning masculinity, which is seen to be effete and 'unheroic' (1998, 20).

As discussed in chapter 2, in a NSW Government report, O'Doherty discusses a similar idea, identifying it as the male cultural stereotype associated with aggression, power and physical strength. He argues that the stereotype inhibits boys education, without substantiating the claim (O'Doherty, 1994, 22-4). West suggests a great proportion of men in western Sydney believe that they have to conform to limited scripts (1996, 55). It is clear these observations mirror a dominant model of masculinity that the males in this study recognise and indicate they learnt. However, West notes that displays of tough masculinity are common among males, he suggests the image can be a facade covering insecurity, and that there is actually a great variety in masculinity across race and class (2000, 7).

Young and mid-life males in this study all have experienced, and variously responded to a dominant model of masculinity: what Connell also describes as the cultural idealised form of masculine character (1990, 83). It is a social phenomenon all have had to come to terms with in various ways in establishing their sense of masculine identity. The young males say this model
remains a potent influence in their lives (especially for the rural males). For the mid-life men, it seems to still be a major influence, but many seem less inclined to have to prove themselves as meeting the model.

Distinctive Features of the Young Males Lives

Masculinity—difficult to talk about

Discussing a dominant model of masculinity forces the young males to consider exactly what is masculinity? It proves to be a very awkward subject for them to discuss and their ideas are rarely expressed clearly. Most immediately associate masculinity with a visual image of physically strong male bodies. Several, such as Darren, Terry, Wes and Alex say they deliberately lifted weights to build up their bodies. They see themselves as masculine, seemingly attributing this to their body strength and sex. To be masculine it seems, is about being physically big and strong. Primarily they equate masculinity with maleness.

Wes says masculinity, 'wasn't something you really thought about, it just was, know what I mean'. It appears they have taken masculinity as a given by virtue of their sex. Masculinity is a concept they cannot clearly explain. They are unable to articulate clearly it as an element of their personal gender identity, nor as also reflecting certain social values and practices. It is paradoxically both a familiar, essential part of themselves (part of their gender identity), but also an unknown, with dimensions they cannot explain.

Adolescent Pressure to Conform to Traditional Masculinity

All the young males confirm as adolescents they experienced great pressure from their peers to conform to a distinct code of manly behaviour, which they now come to acknowledge as reflecting a dominant model of being a man. Among their adolescent (mostly teenage) peers there was great pressure to act tough and cool, drink alcohol and:

Like, with all your mates at school ... if you said to them, 'I think I'm going to do ballet', you'd get paid out! Everyone would just go, 'you're a poof, whatever', definitely. Probably stops a lot of people doing really what they want to when they're younger. A lot might want to do something like that ... but they won't do it because people will take them out. There's definitely a thing like that, with being macho ... you're not a man unless you do sort of 'manly' things—Toby;

Suppose I was into cars and alcohol when I was 17, probably ... Yeah, which is the sort of local yobbo thing to get into. You have a drink, and if you're not down at the surf, you're driving a fast car. Haha [Do you still do that now?] Yeah I do. Still love my car, got an old Commodore!! —Tim.

Their peers apparently enforced such features of the male youth culture. Several who rejected such behaviours or social practices were verbally and physically intimidated, or ostracised by peers for not conforming. Terry explains such harassment is still prevalent in his twenties:
Go to the Portocall pub and they're all just short-haired, rugby playing ute drivers. That's what you've got to be otherwise you get knocked. I found that 'cos I went to Sydney for three years. Came back here to find you are one of two guys in a pub with long hair, was about three years ago, and I got hassled quite a lot. 'Get your hair cut, bloody fag' and all that ... Yeah I think its mainly peer pressure ... There's a lot of people out here that just don't want to be picked on, so they go with the flow.

The three city males show strong signs of accepting the model of traditional masculinity, whereas the rural males did not relate to the dominant form of masculine character (and still do not). The rural males questioned the typical adolescent masculine behaviours of their peers, and seemingly saw a code of masculine behaviours with limited choice. Apparently they regarded this code as a straight jacket, inhibiting and alienating, perceiving masculinity as monolithic with little room to move. They tended to become rather individualistic and loners, somewhat disconnected from many of their peers and older men. None of these young males apparently had any idea of other masculine identities at the time other than macho and gay. Seemingly there was no other readily identifiable masculine style for them to relate to. It is possible that the lack of involvement (and interest) in popular sport did not provide the rural males with an acceptable masculine reference point, such as sports player, that their peers could accept. There appears to have been little recognition of the various masculine identities (masculinities) either by the rural males, or their peers who enforced a youthful version of traditional 'macho' masculinity. Traditional masculinity for them seems to have been associated with few options.

The rural males experience, illustrates a little recognised, contradictory feature of traditional masculinity. A model that emphasises strength, independence, courage and rugged individuality, is actually about conformity. It punishes those males who actually do exhibit independence in rejecting it, and show personal strength of character to seek their own style of masculine identity and self. A model epitomising masculine strength and courage, in this case, paradoxically rewards those who fail to show true courage in the establishment of their own masculine identity, and who submit to peer pressure to conform.

What is evident is that, as Terry and Toby clearly say, failure to conform to the traditional 'macho' model as an adolescent, often led to being ostracised and sometimes verbal or physical attack by one's peers. The penalty for being different, is considerable hostility and being labelled a poof. It takes some strength of character and independence to not conform. However, in being isolated from one's peers, such courage and independence may not always be apparent to the one choosing his own path. It is possible feelings such as alienation and isolation may dominate, which may perhaps lead to depression for such young males.

**Becoming a Man—unguided and alone**

It seems as adolescents they mostly learnt about being and becoming a man (what it is to be an adult male) haphazardly from their peers, or painfully by themselves. But they also learnt about
being a man, by way of exposure to prevailing cultural masculine norms and images via films, television, professional sport, playing sport, school, church, and one or two older men who might show qualities they thought useful.

Absent from their adolescence, are men beyond their age set (say aged 30 and over), whom they respected, who took a long term interest instructing them in positive, empowering ways about the numerous dimensions of what it is to be a man. Even now in their twenties, these young males have received no positive, well considered instruction or cultural education, about what it is to be a man, nor a healthy, balanced perspective of masculinity that goes beyond traditional 'tough' or sporty masculinity. The absence of any positive social education about masculinity, is most clearly reflected in the fact that, all said the interview was the first time they had discussed being a man and the pressures connected to masculinity, with an older man.

They have no considered, convincing ideas of how or what it is to be a man (as distinct from their ideas about masculinity). Various suggestions are made (standing up for one's beliefs) but these seem to be off-the-cuff responses or cliches. Perhaps they have not considered what it is to be a man and becoming a man as important; possibly regarding such things as simply the consequences of growing older?

All but Darren (who rushed off to surf training) said they enjoyed talking about the social expectations they perceive males as subject to. The topic made some of them realise they had numerous assumptions and ideas about what it is to be 'manly', that they had just accepted and never really questioned. They could not say where these ideas really came from. But matters such as what it might actually mean to be an adult male, becoming a man and masculinity were not things they had talked about with their peers. Indeed, they had never discussed these matters with their families, their fathers or other older men. They had seemingly been left alone to try to comprehend the many dimensions of masculinity, without an older, discerning, guiding hand. These young males have been left to make their own way to become men.

No Inspirational Figures in their Adolescence

As adolescents, most of the young males at least looked up to some sportstars or acquaintances, admiring a particular personal quality or perhaps their exceptional ability. But all emphatically deny having any male heroes, in the sense of public figures as inspirations for a career, values, life path or as a model to imitate. The absence of such figures is common to those who rejected and assimilated the dominant model of masculinity. None of them are able to clearly explain a sense of disillusionment about older men. Toby perhaps gives an incomplete clue:

I never really had anyone who I thought 'he's the greatest', I want to be like him. That's how I should be! Never, ever! ... Its a bit hard to say, 'I want to be like them' for me because you don't know them. You don't know them as a person, you only know then as a sportsperson. You say he's may be the best basketball player, but at home ... he could be a full-on wife-beating
alcoholic, gambling addict, who knows? ... Umm. I'm a pretty cynical person. I don't know if I really admire many people.

Only Terry and Darren admit to having what are in fact inspirational figures during their adolescence; these were (respectively) a fictional character and several slightly older team mates. Admirable, real life, older males as inspiring figures for life's many possibilities and guides for a life path, apparently did not have a place in the young males adolescence, and it is not at all clear why. It could be that 'heroes' is a jaded and problematic term for these males. But as adolescents, there is a hint these young males, became sceptical, alienated and distrustful about public male figures, seeing them as having little to offer.

So, during adolescence and the period of early adult transition, not only is there a sense of the young males being left alone by older males (mentioned above), but also the young males becoming increasingly sceptical of popular male figures. Inspiring, well known male figures, offering a positive impression of masculinity, seem absent from their lives at that time.

Not Yet Men—staying in adolescence
These males are aged between 22 and 26, all but one say they have not yet become a man. The one who suggests (rather than states) he sees himself as a man, is Alex. But his response is open to question since he says becoming a man is not a matter he has thought about. Significantly, none have any idea how or when they will become men, or what type of process or event could foster a transformation in their self-perception and status. They make comments about marriage, or buying a house as markers of becoming a man, but pointedly omit to mention fatherhood.

Despite their age these young males, even Alex and Terry who have set their vocational paths, are enjoying an extended adolescence. Some are reluctant to move on. Whilst Alex and Terry are possibly in a liminal state, caught between adolescence and early male adulthood, unsure or uncertain about how and if they wish to progress to the status of an adult male.

Poor Emotional Literacy
Virtually all of the young males seem unable to discuss coherently, self-image, personality, masculine gender identity or managing their emotions. Several practice martial arts and sports where they would have been taught to recognise and witness feelings and not be overwhelmed by them. Terry, says Aikido focuses upon observing and confronting one's feelings, especially fear about being hit. But he clearly struggles to express the interior experience of self-awareness when practising Aikido:

you got greater awareness. It's hard to explain but you can see a situation starting to happen. You know the fight or flight sense, its different to that. You're calm, everything is there.
Dealing with, managing and describing feelings and are not matters they discuss. Even Terry is unable to explain how Aikido training has taught him to stay calm, and not succumb to fear when in threatening situations. Emotions, feelings, enthusiasm, personal motivations and relationships do not appear to be subjects they are at least comfortable talking about. Certainly these are not matters given much attention in their conversations, for most of them.

For Goleman emotional intelligence comprises, self-awareness (the ability to recognise feelings and thoughts), impulse control, self-motivation, persistence as well as compassion and empathy (1996, 22-5). An ability to articulate one’s self-perception could arguably also be seen as an aspect of emotional intelligence. With the exception of Terry these males fail to explain their life goals, motivations, desires, and what they want from life and feel they have to give. Unable to discuss who they are, how they see themselves, what motivates them or identify masculinity as an element of their identity, many appear to show a poor level of emotional literacy. It seems not to be a matter that they have not been instructed about.

The Mid-life Men

Inspirational guides to masculinity in their adolescence

Inspirational figures, men to consciously copy and be like, are features of the mid-life men's adolescence. They all immediately recall their adolescent heroes, champion sportsmen, footballers and movie actors, especially John Wayne. Ashley says he was impressed by Wayne’s sheer physical size and presence. As young teenagers Patrick, James and Ashley regarded their fathers' as their 'heroes', men to be like. Their heroes embodied traditional masculinity and its associations with power, strength, success, independence and emotional stoicism, but they were not real figures in their social lives.

It seems their heroes were often a source of inspiration for physical activities they enjoyed, like horse riding, cricket and football, and to try their best. They are unable to say much else about the impact of these men. In a sense their 'heroes' can be seen to reflect a developing sense of connection to a world of men. As inspirational figures, they may be seen as guides to an unstated set of values such as physicalness, toughness, competitiveness, success and power. It also seems that despite the very traditional masculine character of these figures, they also gave a positive impression of masculinity.

In the absence of respected older males, shaping and guiding them about the many dimensions of masculinity, it is quite likely that the primary and most memorable instruction about masculinity the mid-life men received during adolescence, was by way of example of their remote traditional masculine-style heroes.
Less Pressure to Prove Traditional Masculinity

As a group the mid-life men have differing opinions and perspectives of a dominant model of masculinity, but they acknowledge the existence of a persuasive, physical-oriented model of masculinity associated with a code of behaviour. Two of the city males say they believe such macho masculinity was more pervasive twenty or so years ago, in their youth; that traditional masculinity is fading somewhat with the loss of men’s pre-eminence as breadwinners.

Rugged Jon who says he was very macho as a youth, now reads a lot of popular fiction, something he never did as an adolescent and is learning to play the guitar. James takes part in amateur theatre, Patrick enjoys cooking and being at home. Glen does not believe he should teach his boys to be ready to fight. This suggests reflects a slight easing of the potency of traditional masculinity on their lives. It appears most of them no longer feel obliged to prove their masculinity, by mainly doing traditionally regarded masculine activities. Several have found activities very different from what they did as adolescents that they really enjoy, that are not typically macho.

Something Missing in their Lives?

All the mid-life men are materially comfortable. They all have secure work or businesses and enjoy where they live. None are presently married and living with a wife. Four are divorced. Most have female partners, but these are women they have only known for up to six months. Four of them indicate they are currently experiencing significant problems in their lives. Noel has been in a state of mild depression for some time and is somewhat disillusioned with his business. Patrick’s marriage has just collapsed and his beloved children live with their mother. Jon has self-doubts that he usually covers up and has been without a female companion for some years. Glen believes he is stuck in a long dark tunnel, tied to paying most of his salary for child maintenance for many years. It appears a very difficult time in their lives for these men:

I’ve got to the point where I’m turned off the job … my whole life has crashed … I’m in absolute turmoil, in the dark tunnel … think about 50 I will come out of it .. I see there is a light – Glen

Most appear uncertain about how to address their problems but seem inclined to ‘soldier on’ as usual. Whilst Noel is taking psychotherapy, he is uncertain how to face his dissatisfaction with work. They show little inclination of significantly changing things. They also seem tied to their work. Never openly admitted, they seem stuck. Large parts of their lives are not working out as well as they might wish; divorce and separation from their children is a common feature.

Independence seems a feature of most of these men’s lives. Intimate and supportive family relationships do not presently figure prominently. Work seems for most to be an important part of life that is, at least, financially rewarding. They have an air of being burdened. All except Ashley and James exude a slight air of disappointment with life presently, there is only a limited sense of great joy in their lives. They give little indication of how content they are with their
lives. However, it is quite likely that discussing a sense of disillusionment in their lives, is not something they would elaborate about to someone whom is still a relative stranger.

Despite such turbulence in the lives of the majority of the mid-life males, there little indication of them regarding these challenges as an opportunity for evolution in their personality, masculine identity, or to reappraise their lives. It is as if they see their sense of masculine identity as constant and stable, resisting tides of change and disruptions.

Common Features of the Men's Lives
Young Males' Vibrant Energy—stifled at school
When they were adolescents, most of the males were very physically active and adventurous—testing their bodies, building their physical strength, learning physical co-ordination or skills, often to meet their peer's expectations. All were busy, devoting much of their leisure time to activities they enjoyed.

In contrast, high school is a setting which all have very little to say about, beyond being the primary place of peer group pressure. Several young males say they did not find the structure, curricula and teaching style of high school at all appealing or interesting. Some even imply it was a waste of time for them. School does not figure at all prominently in the memories of the mid-life males, although one mentions in his final year, a teacher had a positive impact, teaching him to value intellect. For most of these males there is a clear sense that they felt constrained; their vibrant energies confined by the high school culture. It does not seem to have been a positive personal experience for them. Their active energies seem to have found other realms more appealing and satisfying; realms such as individual and team sports, martial arts, outdoors activities were they could test and prove themselves.

Masculinity—familiar but difficult to talk about
When asked what is masculinity? all are initially stumped. Terry says it makes him think of 'a big, muscular bloke'. Ashley says his impression is, 'muscles makes the man'. Most invariably initially discuss it in terms of muscular body-image and male biology. Masculinity is seen physically—a big body-image. Discussing masculinity is difficult for them. Their ideas appear as immediate thoughts in response to a question, lacking any indication of considered thought. Wes appears to speak for all when he says masculinity, 'wasn't something you really thought about, it just was, know what I mean!'. Jon makes a similar comment, 'you find it hard to explain being a man. I think if you ask any man about being a man its hard for them to portray themselves, ya know.'

Both young and mid-life men of various backgrounds, from tradesmen to tertiary educated, conceive masculinity very narrowly as principally being about muscles, failing to see it as also
reflecting cultural values and social practices. All the men equate their male sex (maleness) with masculinity. Most see masculinity as something innate.

West emphasises the importance of body size as visually embodying masculinity (1996, 58). Connell notes his champion surf Iron Man perceives masculinity mainly in terms of body, and shows virtually no understanding of the features of traditional masculinity he exemplifies (1990, 93). The twelve elite male athletes in Drummond’s study similarly equate masculinity with a body-image. Their bodies are essential to their masculine identities (1995, 305). It is West who suggests men fail to see masculinity as also a cage created by society for its purposes (1996, 184).

For both mid-life and young males masculinity is a subject they have great difficulty talking about. It is a known and an unknown. Seemingly, it is a biological element of their identity, yet also a great unknown, since they cannot discuss or distinguish the social dimensions of masculinity. They show little or no understanding of masculinity in terms of what men do, in large part, a social construct comprising values and social practices deemed culturally appropriate to men, at a particular time and setting, that can change and evolve. These men cannot clearly articulate the overlapping personal and the social aspects of masculinity.

Masculinity is a matter all the men in this study have taken for granted, yet it is fraught with contradictions for them. It is both externally-based (a big body-image), yet a part of themself (relating to their body). It is part of their sense of self (gender identity), yet something they cannot clearly articulate. Masculinity is something both personal and collective (part of being a male and not a woman) and a puzzle, something hard for them to talk about. It has not been a subject that they have critically considered.

A Dominant Model of Masculinity—what we learn as male youths

As adolescents, males of both groups learnt and experienced versions of a culturally dominant form of masculinity. All of them, including Wes who is of a non-Australian ethnic background, agree they learnt about a dominant model of masculinity associated with toughness, strength, physical size, competitiveness, emotional stoicism, alcohol, sport, work, male power and success, what Connell calls hegemonic (traditional) masculinity in the academic literature. In adolescence it appears there were two choices, conform or reject. The few who rejected the version fostered by the local male youth culture experienced victimisation and isolation. Those who conformed to traditional masculinity did not experience hostility or isolation from their peers. Seemingly, they sacrificed individuality for social acceptance, at least that is the opinion of one young male.

Toby, Terry and Noel say that the traditional model of masculinity remains the unconscious measure of men as the academic discourses suggest. It is a model whose character and features,
in their experience, was never identified or debated by males they knew, including their fathers or peers.

Ignorant of the Character of Traditional Masculinity

None of the men are able to name the dominant model of masculinity, which most embody, as traditional masculinity, nor distinguish it as one form of masculinity. Not even the young males who rejected the model promoted by male youth culture, are able to identify or characterise it as traditional masculinity, rather it is apparently seen as something 'natural', the way men are. Nor can the participants identify traditional masculinity as a form of masculinity, that is seen to be based on male social and economic superiority towards women (known as patriarchal masculinity), which has been a longstanding feature of Western culture and history, as well as other cultures (Capra, 1982, 10; Seidler, 1994, 12-13).

Connell points out in his analysis of the surf Iron man, that whilst he is an exemplar of traditional masculinity, the elite athlete does not understand it (1990, 92). Webb in his social commentary on masculinity believes that Australian men are ignorant of patriarchal masculinity, as just one form of masculinity (Webb, 1998, 20). His observation is not based upon empirical research with males, but is an assessment. The young and mid-life males in this study, are unable to identify or characterise traditional masculinity as one form of masculinity, that is founded upon and requires males to constantly be on-guard, test, compete and prove themselves, often at the expense of other males (Seidler, 1994, 17-18).

All the males are ignorant of the character of the model of masculinity they have grown up with. Both groups are oblivious to the militaristic quality of traditional masculinity. It is a model of masculinity that features physical strength, competition, testing, success and beating other men. Traditional masculinity is in fact a model that is actually heroic and elitist in character, as it celebrates glory, fame and victory, and seemingly has its roots in the ancient Greek heroic warrior code described by Homer almost 3000 years ago (Rosenberg, 1994, 39). As noted in chapter 2, in The Iliad, the Trojan Prince Hector tells his wife 'war is men's business; and this war is the business of every man in Ilium'. The participants show a lack of awareness of their cultural conditioning of what it is to be a man, what Australian culture celebrates as the ideal form of masculine character. It can be argued that these males do not really understand the social dimensions of masculinity, nor its dominant form.

Becoming a Man--no formal instruction

Neither young or mid-life males have had any positive, formal educational instruction about what it is to be a man, that respects the numerous (individual, physical, emotional and social) dimensions of masculinity. In most cases after reaching their early teens and throughout adolescence, there were no admirable men, beyond their own age set, actively instructing them about positive pathways of being a man.
That the males in their early twenties had never talked about what it is to be a man, especially in terms of social behaviours and expectations, provides support for the suggestion in the popular discourses, that the transition from male adolescence to being a man is left to chance. This is further seemingly confirmed by the mid-life men's slow recognition of fatherhood as marking their unrecognised passage to being a man. The males in this study learnt how to be men and masculinity in a haphazard manner, with little or no guidance in a positive educational form.

Their experience and lack of experiences certainly tend to support arguments that young males are left in limbo to negotiate a lengthy and difficult period, Levinson calls early adult transition, alone, unguided and unsupported. Enduring this transition stoically, by themselves can be seen as attempting to live up to the traditional heroic image of masculinity; the archetypal male hero is above all, independent, assured, 'free, self-sufficient, without anxiety', and in-control of his life (Rutherford, 1988, 47).

The Absence of a Passage to Manhood
Most of the young males are well into their twenties, and have had several years experience in the workforce. Most say they are not yet men, admitting they have not so far undergone any experience that has marked a conscious transition to being a man. But they are unaware of any social or personal circumstance that will confer upon them a definite sense of being an adult male. The transition from adolescence to man, the passage to male adulthood (state of self-perception and status of an adult male) is a puzzle for them.

The mid-life males similarly express uncertainty and contradictions about how and when they became a man. Only after much thought, do most of them conclude fatherhood marks the passage to male adulthood, when those who are fathers acknowledged responsibility for the lives of their children. However, they did not recognise the transition, at that time. Their passage to manhood was an accidental, unguided process, they were not aware of.

It is the popular discourses that draw attention to the process of young males becoming men. As noted in chapter 8, popular writers like Biddulph, Bly, Sanford and Lough, discuss the absence of positive, socially empowering rites of passage for young males, arguing that in the absence of such rites, masculine development is presently left to chance. However, such statements are personal assessments, perhaps based upon personal conversations and dealings with men, but not based upon documented, empirical research of young males. With respect to the Australian literature, Webb suggests that the perplexing high rate of male youth suicide, apparent in the 15-25 year age group, reflects the difficulties in the transition from teenager to man, which he believes was a factor in his brother's suicide. (He also notes the other peak suicide group is mid-life men (1998, 196)). Tacey notes that at men's retreats in Australia, forms of initiation are often conducted, he suggests to meet a transpersonal need (1997, 102). Further, he says in the
absence of a dominant cultural vision of being a man, 'boys cannot be transformed into men'; instead males must make their own individual transitions (1997, 127).

Clearly for many of the mid-life males, fatherhood certainly pushed them towards a new self-perception and sense of responsibility extending beyond themselves—to their children and family. When it seemed his wife might die at childbirth, Patrick grasped there had been a change in his responsibilities and status. As fathers these men were incorporated into something greater themselves, a family, which seemingly triggered a form of personal transformation. But none at the time recognised or were aware that fatherhood constituted their passage to a new status and self perception of adult male. Their passage was unconscious, and not physically specific to them. Seemingly, for both groups becoming a man is not a matter they have really considered as important, perhaps it is a matter they have assumed just happens as a male grows older?

For males of both groups in this study, a formal, socially sanctioned ceremony or passage to become a man, to foster a new status and self-perception, have not been part of their lives. These males have been left to themselves to make their own passage to manhood, in whatever manner they can.

Summary and Observations:--

Masculinity—its associations and contradictions

Discussing and examining masculinity is a particularly difficult research task, because as noted in chapter 2, it presently has a myriad of associations, interpretations and indeed meanings, both in popular usage and in the major discourses. In the literature on men, it is often used as a blanket term that refers to such diverse things as male biology, male bodies, maleness, gender, manhood, men's sense of self, masculine identity, men in general, groups of men, collective male images like footballers, as well as being associated with values and social practices such as aggression, competitiveness and sport. As Edgar says it is a 'highly disputed concept' (1997, 33), but it is also very much an amorphous concept in light of its many associations. The discussion here focuses principally upon masculinity as a dominant social code or model of behaviour for males, that reflects certain values and social practices, a social construct, identified in the literature as traditional masculinity.

However, for the participants in this study masculinity is mostly regarded very personally, as an element of their body, personality and sense of identity as males (their gender identity). They show little ability to identify masculinity as also a social construct that reflects values and social practices, nor do they recognise that it overlaps both the personal and social. In a somewhat contradictory fashion, masculinity for these males is something both deeply personal and familiar, yet something they simply cannot explain, certainly not as a social construct. It is both a known and unknown part of them.
The participants mainly physical and personal perception of masculinity, appears to explain the difficulties all have initially grasping the actual idea of a dominant model of masculinity. It is an unfamiliar way for them to perceive masculinity. Drummond observes in his study of elite sportsmen that masculinity is very often depicted as being a tough, rugged, form of ideology with muscles the dominant imagery (1995, 299). It is such a tough, physical form of masculinity that the males in this study come to recognise as a dominant model of masculinity.

Traditional masculinity is apparently not quite as monolithic as it may seem from these males' accounts, as seemingly it may take differing versions in different settings. During their adolescence, the young males in Dee Why and Bowral were faced with the local youthful versions of the traditional model. Terry refers to this in terms of a 'short-haired, rugby playing, ute drivers', heterosexual image in the rural town. Whilst Tim and Toby mention the surfer or yob image as popular for male youths in the beachside district of Dee Why. Yet both versions have many similar features, an emphasis on toughness, physicality, playing sport, beer drinking and driving cars fast. In these cases, traditional masculinity seems to manifest in distinct local versions, that however still retain many common features. These city and rural versions of masculinity reflect West's assessment that 'masculinity is always made in a context of some kind, and there are variations according to time and place' (West, 2000, 4). However, traditional masculinity does seem to retain a constancy, particularly in terms of its emphasis on competitiveness, physicality and toughness.

West suggests that tough masculinity despite its widespread manifestation among numerous groups of males, is actually a facade (2000, 7). This mirrors Connell's important observation that whilst traditional masculinity is very potent, persuasive and pervasive, 'the cultural ideal of masculinity need not correspond at all closely to the actual personalities of the majority of men' (1987, 184). For the young males traditional masculinity is still a potent force in their lives. It continues to be a phenomenon they have to deal with daily, especially in terms of the social expectations of others. The young rural males are still visibly uncomfortable with traditional masculinity. Traditional masculinity holds a tight grip upon most of the mid-life men, in terms of their values and behaviours, but they seem less inclined to have to prove their tough masculinity. They say they have more variety in their lifestyles than when they were adolescents. But none of the males in the study are aware that traditional masculinity is in many ways a facade, an unrealistic image that males cannot actually live up to. They are also unaware that researchers such as West suggest traditional masculinity is in one sense a cage in which men are forced to live in (1996, 184). The males in this study appear unaware of the contradiction that whilst traditional masculinity is the cultural ideal, it is simultaneously a facade and impossible model, that very few males actually meet.

Research by West and Connell show there is actually great variety in masculinity across class, race, ethnicity and age, what are called masculinities, or various masculine identities (West,
2000; Connell, 1995). Whilst the mid-life men recognise there are numerous groups of men, they have no idea of what masculinities might mean in signifying different types of masculine identities. Masculinities and masculine identities are ideas that the males in this study are unaware of. As noted the young males, especially the rural males and their peers seems completely unfamiliar with masculine styles other than traditional macho and gay.

As discussed earlier, all the males are ignorant or blind to the dominant model of masculinity they have grown up with, and which most embody in some way. They are unable to identify the dominant model as traditional masculinity, nor distinguish it as one form of masculinity. They are unable to characterise or explain it as a competitive (heroic) model that requires men to continually prove, perform and test themselves, most often against other males. So whilst they understand the personal and physical dimensions of masculinity, they show limited understanding of masculinity in its collective, social dimensions. Nor are the able to articulate the overlapping social and personal aspects of masculinity.

Finally, in a contradictory fashion, most of the males in the study have rather traditional masculine styles, yet there is much about masculinity they do not grasp or are unable to explain. It is both something personal and a puzzle. As males, masculinity is a subject that they have not received a positive and thoughtful education about. They apparently have learnt about masculinity in a haphazard manner, over a long period of time from wherever they could.
CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING A DOMINANT MODEL OF MASCULINITY

This chapter is intended to provide an overview of the research and emphasise the main issues, findings and their possible implications. It will assess the significance of the traditional model of masculinity for the young and mid-life males and suggest some implications. It also aims to offer some evidence concerning the assertions in popular discourses that masculine development in countries like Australia is mostly left chance.

Research Overview

This study has investigated what the male participants believe to be the major influences upon their ideas about masculinity, when they were growing up as youths. It looks at who taught them about being a man during adolescence, what men played a role in shaping their ideas, what models and images of masculinity did they learn as adolescents. The purpose has been to explore for males at different stages of their life course, the significance of the culturally dominant model of masculinity (identified in academic literature), as a model for what it is to be a man. Young males aged in their early twenties and males, aged around forty, are the subject of the research, as they are located within the male age sets with the highest rates and numbers of suicides.

A social-psychological perspective incorporating elements of social constructionism, life course theory and Jungian psychology has been adopted to provide a framework to view the males' lives. Life course theory, identifies four eras in a man's life cycle. It suggests that males undergo lengthy and turbulent periods of transition around the years 17-22 years (early adult transition), and around 40-45 years (mid-life transition). Jungian psychology proposes that around mid-life, for continued psychological health, a man's primary focus needs to shift from a preoccupation with making a mark on the world in terms of status, power and achievement, to cultivating inner qualities such a generativity and compassion.

How We Learn to be Men—the literature

Academic discourses as discussed in chapter 2, view masculinity and masculine identity as socially constructed, a process whereby young males learn and assimilate the dominant cultural scripts and ideology associated with masculinity, affected by time and place. Connell notes that family, workplace, economic circumstances and organisations all enter into the construction of masculinity. But he observes different masculinities can be produced in the same cultural setting (1995, 36). From their research, Messner and Drummond state that through participation in organised sport, boys learn the dominant cultural conceptions of what it means
to be a male (Messner, 1992, 19). Messner asserts that through their experiences in sport, boys learn to see other males as competitors (1992, 33). Drummond believes that sport may presently be a primary site for the masculine construction of men (1995, 299). For Kimmel and Messner, masculinity is seen as a product of culture, without a biological basis, 'men are not born, they are made' (1995, xx).

Popular discourses accept that masculinity is in large part a social construction, as boys and young males learn the dominant conceptions and ideology of masculinity from parents, the social culture and the settings in which they find themselves, such as school, sport and church. But writers such as Bly, Biddulph, Keen, Betcher and Pollock contend that masculinity has a biological, physiological component and also point to the importance of personality and personal will. They are particularly concerned that masculine development is left to chance, with no older males giving a helpful, guiding hand to male youths. They suggest, by way of anecdotal and personal experience but without empirical evidence, that adolescents are left to make a transition to being a man, by themselves. (Biddulph, 1994, 172).

What This Research Shows
In the work carried out by the researcher, young and mid-life men conceive masculinity physically and personally. They perceive it narrowly as being about muscles and body-image, but also personally as part of their gender identity as males. Masculinity is a subject they have great difficulty talking about. It seems that all the males in this study take masculinity for granted. They are male, and seemingly don't question masculinity. They do not apparently accept that masculinity is partly a social construct. It can be argued that they fail to recognise or understand masculinity in terms of its collective manifestation as a social construct, that reflects certain cultural values and social practices.

The research indicates that as youths, the participants learnt how to be a man in a haphazard fashion, initially from their fathers and family. Growing up as boys, teenagers and adolescents many unconsciously acquired some of the dominant conceptions of masculinity, apparently through their involvement in the masculine domain of sport. By participating in organised sport many learnt values such as strength, competitiveness, determination, independence and success often associated with traditional masculinity. Particularly as teenagers and adolescents, most participants reveal they experienced considerable pressure to conform and live up to a dominant model of masculinity, a cultural ideal, which was mainly a tough, brave and physical image. Noticeably, all say as adolescents, it was their peers who had the most important impact on their ideas about masculinity, and who seemingly enforced the tough and cool behavioural code associated with the model. Those who failed to conform, experienced some harassment and isolation from their peers.

During adolescence males of both groups also learnt about the traditional model by way of prevailing cultural masculine conceptions they were exposed to from films, television, school,
playing sport, sports stars, church, and other older males. In some cases, it appears they learnt about masculinity from wherever they could. For example, Toby actually says he and some of his mates without fathers, learnt by watching television. Peers and participation in organised sport stand out for many of the males of both groups as key influences upon their ideas, at a time when adolescents are attempting to establish a sense of personal ego identity. It is arguable that at this stage of their lives, popular cultural conceptions about traditional masculinity were the most potent influence upon their ideas and perceptions.

Amongst the young males and their peers, and especially the young rural males, there seems to have been a limited choice of masculine identities available during adolescence. The major identities appear to have been macho-yob or gay. There appears to have been little recognition or flexibility amongst the youth cultures the young males experienced with regard to varieties of masculine identities. Traditional masculinity for the rural males seems to be about limited options and choices, particularly with respect to masculine identity; and seemingly it is not open to challenge or questioning.

The idea of a dominant model of masculinity is a concept all participants slowly comprehend but, either explicitly or implicitly, they do come to acknowledge it as a key factor in their learning about masculinity. Whilst it is also an unfamiliar way for them to think about masculinity, basically it emerges as a tough, visually oriented, physical model. This model has some associations with sport, beer drinking and work, but does not seem to be consciously associated with considering women as inferior. Most of the young males acknowledge that the dominant model presently remains a potent force in their lives, two actually admit that the model is an unconscious measure of men. Whilst the mid-life males show less inclination to prove their masculinity in terms of what they do, the model still has a significant (mostly unconscious) influence in terms of their ideas, values and behaviours.

None of the men are able to name traditional masculinity, which most embody in various degrees, as the dominant cultural model of masculinity. Nor indeed can they identify it as a form of masculinity, that is seen to be based on male social and economic superiority towards women (known as patriarchal masculinity). Nor can they explain that traditional masculinity incorporates a competitive social ideology, that requires males to prove, perform and test themselves, usually against other men. Most seem blind to the character of their own masculinity, unable to distinguish it as a factor in their behaviour and beliefs.

It appears that during adolescence and even through their 20s, males of both groups received little or no positive, well-considered instruction about what it may mean to be an adult male, or masculinity, in terms of it reflecting social practices and values deemed appropriate to males. This is especially the case for the young males. Virtually all of these said that prior to the interview, they had never talked about being a man with an older male, especially in terms of
social expectations and a dominant code of behaviour. The absence of positive instruction is also evident in their inability to offer a well-considered definition or conception of a man. Most of their suggestions are clichés or seemingly hastily conceived ideas. The young males inability to discuss a considered definition of being a man, also reflects that absence of a widely accepted cultural definition or vision of what it is to be a man.

For all but one, adolescence was characterised by an absence of respected figures (older than 30 years), active in their social lives positively instructing them about the multiple dimensions of masculinity. There was no one, educating them in a positive fashion about the emotional, social, physical and spiritual dimensions of being a man, except in the case of James' father. It appears the only significant male figures (besides their fathers) influential in their teenage and adolescent years, were movie and sports stars. For the mid-life men, fictional figures like the John Wayne-persona, and elite sportsmen were inspirational figures (heroes) they sought to copy in some way. In contrast, the young males were more sceptical, they saw role models only as males to look up to in a very limited fashion. For both groups, the males they looked up during adolescence, were not personally active in their lives.

Also absent from the lives of all these males are formal and empowering rites of passage to male adulthood that foster a transformation in status and self-perception. All of the males are uncertain about when they may, or did become a man (in whatever manner they understand the term). The young males are unaware of any social circumstance that might provide a passage or transition, to a new self-perception and status as an adult male. Fatherhood is mentioned by most of the mid-life men. However, those who are fathers indicate that it was not a transition to a new status that they consciously grasped at the time. For both young and mid-life males there has been no memorable, socially sanctioned process that fostered a personal transformation in self-perception and status, to that of a self-conscious, adult male. Fatherhood, whilst hugely important, was not a physical process the mid-life men experienced themselves. Rather a new status as adult male was conferred to the mid-life men by women.

Males of both groups struggle to discuss masculinity. They lack a vocabulary to name and discuss common aspects of the male social and personal experience. Unfortunately, their ideas about masculinity seem limited and almost barren in colour and depth. Absent from the manner in which they talk about masculinity, are concepts such as a dominant model (the masculine cultural ideal), varieties of masculine identities (masculinities), one's public identity (persona), or the various stages or transitional phases of men's lives. They are also unaware of the psychological dynamics of the male journey through the life course. They are unaware of the need to deal with their early childhood images of their mother and father (complexes), to assist the establishment of a sense of personal identity during adolescence. They are unaware that the transitional phases Levinson identifies, the early adult and mid-life transitions, are periods often associated with questioning, fashioning and possibly refashioning one's sense of personal
identity. These phases can be lengthy and uncomfortable, yet offer the opportunity for growth and change in one's self-identity.

Finally, a sad paradox emerges from these men's lives for all but one. It appears fathers (for those who grew up with one in the household) were huge figures in their boyhood and youth, positively and in some situations, negatively. Presently, there is little sense of any supportive emotional connection with their fathers for all but one of the males. Disconnection from the men who first taught them about masculinity seems to be an overriding feature of the father-son relationship for these males.

**Implications of the Findings**

The males in this study are at different stages in their life course. They are at an age proximate to what Levinson associates with early adult transition and mid-life transition, at the cusp of early adulthood and middle adulthood. For both young and mid-life males, traditional masculinity remains a potent model of what it is to be a man. It is a form of masculinity, that for these males is typically a tough, stoic, physical model. As youths and adolescents all the participants appear to learn about a rather one-dimensional form of masculinity, which for a minority is confining and inhibiting. This form of masculinity is outwardly-directed, with a focus upon action, achievement and is arguably heroic in character. It is a version of masculinity with a limited sense of wholeness, seemingly placing little emphasis or connection to the inner life, emotional intelligence or a spiritual dimension.

As adolescents, these males learnt about being a man haphazardly from wherever they could, mainly influenced by dominant cultural conceptions of masculinity, particularly through involvement in organised sport. The findings of this study lend support for claims in the popular discourses on masculinity, that especially for young males, masculine development is left to chance. It is apparent that none of the male participants received a well-considered, positive education about masculinity, certainly not at school or from respected male figures. Nor did any apparently learn an empowering, socially accepted vision of what it is to be a man. It strongly appears that both young and the mid-life males have been and were left to make the transition to the status of a self-conscious adult male, alone and by themselves. They apparently have and were left to become men by accident, in whatever way they could manage.

Suggestions that masculine development is mostly an accidental process, is further reflected in evidence that neither the young or mid-life men appear to recognise that they go through different stages during their lives. Traditional masculinity appears as a static model that apparently covers these males from their teens to their forties, yet fails to provide a useful map of the first two seasons of a man's life. Traditional masculinity it may be argued is youthful and outwardly directed in character, and seemingly discourages males to be reflective or examine their own beliefs. The mid-life males in particular, seem oblivious to the possibility that there
might well be a significant transitional period (a mid-life passage) in their forties. There is little
evidence of many of the mid-life men consciously reassessing their lives. There is very little
indication of them preparing to let many of their youthful masculine ideas (the 'heroic male
image'), die, which Jung and Levinson regard as important for psychological health around
mid-life. Their masculine identities as they approach the second half of life may have changed
little since adolescence. Males of both groups seem to have very little awareness of the various
seasons or psychological dynamics that appear to be part of the journey through the male life
course.

The traditional model offers a persuasive masculine ideal that may be ill-suited to the mid and
later stages of men's life course. Its external and active focus may possibly inhibit many males
to reassess their lives and attitudes. It could well be that this traditional model of masculinity
may contribute to the alienation, isolation and lack of male friends many men report at men's
gathering and in the popular discourses. Furthermore, it may be a factor in the depression that
leads to males of these age groups taking their lives. Perhaps such males feel they cannot match
the expectations of such a cultural ideal, or they may find it a stifling constraint as the young
rural males apparently do.

It is the experience of the young rural males that illustrates something of the contradictory nature
of traditional masculinity. A model that emphasises strength, courage and rugged individuality,
rewards those who fail to show true courage in the establishment of their own masculine
identity. The model isolates those males who are different, and not necessarily gay. Whilst
featuring male independence, paradoxically the model is about male conformity, seemingly for
social acceptance. Those males who venture beyond the norm, are punished.

By regarding masculinity in physical and personal terms, the social character, values and
ideology of traditional masculinity are not at all easily visible or understood by the males of both
age groups. Young and mid-life males are oblivious to the competitive, militaristic character of
traditional masculinity; based upon being better than other men, a model that is arguably, a
heroic form of masculinity. They show little awareness of the traditional model as an
impossible ideal, that most men can never measure up to. They show a lack of awareness of
their cultural conditioning of what it is to be a man.

All the males are unsettled by a question concerning when did they become a man? Their visible
edginess seems to echo observations by West (1996, 59) and Webb (1998, 16) that men cannot
rest assured in their sense of masculinity, but have to be on-guard, ready to perform and prove
their masculinity, especially to other males. Perhaps for the males in this study it may reflect a
degree of uncertainty about their personal sense and understanding of masculine identity, and
possibly their lack of ideas about what it personally means to them, to be a man.
However, in terms of positive dimensions, there are things about these men to respect that they have done utilising such qualities as physicality, vibrancy, energy, activity, courage, determination and achievement. They have learnt specialist skills, trades, in some cases devoted themselves to certain pastimes or community services. All those who are fathers have taken their familial responsibilities very seriously. But there are clear intimations that there is a need to expand the perception and understanding of masculinity, to make visible its collective reflections in values, social practices as well as institutions and the culture.

Limitations of the Study
The study is an exploratory, comparative study of the experiences and perceptions of the traditional model of masculinity, of a small number of males of different age sets up to age 45, from Dee Why and Bowral. These males present as heterosexual and are apparently mostly from a lower middle-class background. It is a proposition of this study that the participants may be regarded as rather typical, ordinary Australian-born males, whom Edgar argues rarely provide the research basis for much recent literature on masculinity (1997, x).

In light of the non-exceptional background of these males, it is suggested here that the findings may offer insight on the experiences and perceptions of Australian-born males of similar age. The inclusion of Wes a young male of different ethnicity and background from the other participants, but who grew up in Sydney, suggests the findings may helpfully illustrate some aspects of the experience of young males growing up in NSW. Furthermore, despite the small scale of the study, the in-depth, phenomenological nature of the findings can be seen to offer support for claims made in the popular discourses.

However, it is beyond the parameters of the study to make any definitive assessments about the perceptions of young and mid-life Australian born men, concerning traditional masculinity. But the study does provide supportive, empirical evidence for assertions in popular discourses that healthy masculine development, in this case for young males in two districts of NSW, is often left to chance. Further, it seems likely that many males have been and are left to negotiate the perplexing transition to being a self-conscious adult male, alone and unguided.

As an exploratory study, the findings suggest the need for confirmation by means of perhaps large scale, social-psychological quantitative research. Such research might focus upon men’s recognition and understanding of a dominant model of masculinity, its features, how it might be perceived and termed, amongst males of various age groups and of differing socio-economic backgrounds.

Further Research
As boys and young adolescents the participants received limited positive instruction about masculinity, nor a socially accepted cultural vision of what it is to be a man. The findings
strongly point to the need for research on identifying suitable means for a positive, social education about masculinity for boys and adolescents. Possible areas of research might be identifying the sources of teenage boys images of masculinity, and why peers seek to enforce traditional images, ignoring masculine identities other than macho. Research could also be undertaken on male mentoring initiatives, in which older males take a long-term, active interest in guiding adolescent youths about the many dimensions associated with being a man.

The father-son relationship has been the subject of considerable popular literature. The disconnection evident in these men's relationships suggests it is a subject that may benefit from more rigorous social-psychological research. Further, mid-life male issues are poorly researched in Australia and seemingly rarely acknowledged. Men in their 40s and 50s could be studied to research their experiences to establish if there was a significant change in the orientation of their lives, and in issues that were important to them. Such research could be linked to the impact of the loss of full-time employment, a major trend among men in these age groups, upon men's sense of identity.

Establishing a Bridge—rendering traditional masculinity visible

**Heroic masculinity**

The study also seeks to establish a bridge between the two major discourses by way of three themes, the dominant model of masculinity, male heroes as prominent images of masculinity and male suicide. The males in this study conceptualise masculinity mostly in a physical image, as did the elite athletes studied by Drummond (1995, 299). The males of both groups are unable to identify and critique the social character of traditional masculinity, a competitive, heroic form of masculinity that celebrates toughness, success, power and glory, usually at the expense of other males. In light of this finding there appears to be a need to make traditional masculinity visible to males, in terms of its ideology and social character. It is proposed here that the dominant cultural model is immediately rendered visible — if it is conceived as heroic masculinity. The longstanding and ubiquitous male heroic-warrior image symbolises the dominant model of masculinity. The heroic warrior image—heroic masculinity, is a simple, easily understood idea, with both physical and social connotations.

Academic discourses call masculinity the 'gender of oppression'. Attention is upon masculinity as a power relation associated with males superior social and economic power, violence and the subordination of women. In light of the researcher's experience conducting men's workshops, describing the dominant form of masculinity as hegemonic, patriarchal and a power relation, does not help show men that masculinity is both personal and social. It does not help illuminate masculinity as also incorporating social values, practices and an ideology, which the males in this study struggle to grasp and articulate. The use of such terms is also alienating and even elitist. Defining masculinity is not the sole prerogative of any particular group, however accurate their analyses may be concerning a patriarchal gender order.
Heroic masculinity, with its clear associations with warrior image is a conception that simultaneously incorporates positive and negative, physical and social dimensions of masculinity. The hero-warrior has a positive social role—protector. Such men are devoted to a cause bigger than themselves, they serve and may self-sacrifice for others. The image highlights traditionally regarded masculine qualities such as strength, courage, success, self-sacrifice and competitiveness. But at the same time, the long history of ruthless warriors in Western culture warns of the negative aspects of heroic masculinity. Some of these are, the capacity for excessive violence, rigidity, compulsive competitiveness, the need to beat others; and also the devaluation of qualities such as compassion, empathy, relationships and women. It is the negative side of heroic masculinity, that Homer in his epic poems illustrates so graphically in the reckless, bloody deeds Achilles and Odysseus commit. Achilles' rage as he mercilessly slaughters his opponents, shows that warrior masculinity has the capacity to be one-dimensional, contemptuous of those who are weaker and treat women poorly. But in its positive form, as shown by the Trojan Prince Hector, it represents a form of masculinity where males are courageous, protective, self-sacrificing (to the point of death) devoted to causes beyond themselves, and are conscious of when to take off their armour to be with their family and community.

Furthermore, the heroic male warrior image also resonates with men's psyches, as well as their social and historical roles. In Jungian psychology, it is suggested that the hero image (an archetype) is present in the human psyche, reflecting an innate pattern of behaviour for males and females. Stevens describes this archetype as the primary expression of freeing oneself from infantile dependence and establishing ones sense of personal ego (1990, 85-7). However, the hero archetype is also seen as a model of the first stage of masculine development in Western cultures until around mid-life, helping a male establish an occupation, social place, material success and status in the world (Levinson, 1978, 215; O'Connor, 1981, 30; Satinover, 1986, 150). Jung emphasizes that at mid-life the youthful hero image must 'die' in order for a man to allow integration of qualities such as compassion, generatively, empathy and even soul, that were ignored in the first half of life which was focussed upon making a mark in the world (O'Connor, 1981, 31).

It is suggested here that identifying heroic masculinity as the dominant traditional model of masculinity is a more useful and educative conception of masculinity than those in academic discourses. Associations of traditional (patriarchal) masculinity with superior male social power and violence presented in academic discourses, are likely to alienate many men, who dispute they oppress women simply by being males. But above all, the idea of heroic masculinity does not induce guilt among men by defining masculinity in a negative fashion. The academic definition of masculinity as part of a collective project of oppression of women gives men no room to move, and makes all men guilty by virtue of their sex.
The heroic-warrior image renders traditional masculinity tangible and visible. It illuminates both the negative and positive character of this form of masculinity. It suggests it is a youthful version of masculinity, that is no longer appropriate for males at mid-life and the second half of life. The heroic warrior image links the individual, physical, social, psychological and institutional dimensions of masculinity. Using such an image to make the dominant cultural model visible, immediately opens traditional masculinity to debate and critique because of its innumerable positive and negative connotations with heroic saviours and ruthless killers. It makes the contradictions of the cultural ideal of masculine character more readily visible, especially since a hero-warrior is a ideal of masculinity that in reality few males can meet. But paradoxically the hero image is also inspirational for males, as there is great merit in the concepts of protection, service and inspiration for personal advancement that the hero also illustrates.

Reflections of Heroic Masculinity in the Study—males and heroes

For the participants of this study, the very idea of heroes is a problematic one. The mid-life men had numerous heroes. Such figures were identity role models, inspirational males the men consciously sought to copy and be like in some way, mostly in terms of physical activities; whereas the young males had reference role models. Their admiration was limited to merely looking up to a public figure for specific, personal qualities or sports skills.

As adolescents, males of both groups did admire outstanding public male figures in at least some fashion. However limited their influence, such popular figures are a noticeable element of their lives as male youths, and possibly subtle, unconscious guides to masculinity. Darren and Terry show how positive an influence, inspirational males may play in the lives of male youths. But male heroes are an uneasy issue for many of the men, perhaps reflecting the poor light in which men and masculinity are often portrayed, especially in the popular media.

Men with Personal Difficulties—heroically standing alone

The males in this study apparently learnt a stoic, unemotional model of masculinity, that 'boys don't cry', all of which echo a fearless, heroic male image. But a large number of males of both groups have or are experiencing major personal difficulties. Where do such males with personal difficulties of these age groups go to find non-judgemental support, particularly from other males where they may unburden themselves. It appears they mostly endure their problems stoically by themselves, in silence, unable or reluctant to receive support.

The young males appear to have endured their emotional isolation from their peers alone, with seemingly no one to turn to. For the mid-life males, Glen appears to have eventually found a male friend to talk to after he became active in the Salvation Army. Noel is the exception and
can afford the financial cost of long term psychotherapy. The other men appear to face their problems alone or possibly even try to ignore them.

It seems among these single rural and urban males, there are limited opportunities to talk honestly and safely about troubles with their lives, especially to other males. Indeed, the interviews seemed to have a slight therapeutic effect for a few of the mid-life males. There seem to be few suitable support services, but also there may be a possible reluctance by the males to admit their frailties, discomfort and not being able to cope. Perhaps seeking support and admitting to personal problems is not consistent with the invulnerability associated with the heroic image of masculinity that they learnt. Could it be that in light of associations of masculinity with toughness, being in-control, enduring pain without complaint, that males such as these face personal difficulties mostly alone? It is in terms of such understandings of masculinity as constraining men, that links to suicide for males of these age groups cannot be easily dismissed.

Some of the males in this study may have (or believe they have) some element of social power by virtue of their sex, as academic discourses contend. But it is suggested here that they show limited personal power. Personal power is here defined as an aspect of emotional intelligence. It is conceived as a sense of self-awareness as defined by Goleman, and in terms of being able to recognise emotional and psychological difficulties, and the ability to discuss ones' self-image. Such capacities are not readily visible among most of the males of both ages who have had significant personal difficulties. It seems quite likely that the haphazard training to be masculine, seemingly fails to address such aspects of emotional intelligence as Webb (1998, 19) and Edgar (1997, 51-2) suggest.

Suggestions Concerning Masculinity—distinguishing between masculinity, manhood and maleness

As discussed in chapter 9, masculinity has innumerable associations and differing conceptions in popular usage and among academic disciplines. The difficulty the males in this study have discussing masculinity suggest that it might be useful to develop a vocabulary of the male experience, starting with distinguishing between masculinity, manhood and maleness. These distinctions might be helpful to identify and deconstruct some of the many dimensions that are subsumed in the term.

It is proposed here, that masculinity can be described as mostly a socially construct, a set of values and social practices deemed culturally appropriate to males, incorporating a physiological (biological) element to behaviour, that is amenable to social education and personal restraint. Manhood, in contrast, might be seen as a special status, the sole province of adult males. It entails perceiving oneself and being recognised as having the status of an adult male; a self-conscious adult male. Manhood in such a sense could be a social construction, as concepts of
manhood do differ between countries and cultures. It should not be equated with masculinity, as many writers do. It is with regard to defining manhood that opens the possibility of education and changing traditional values, ideology and social practices for males. Finally, maleness can be seen to refer to male sex and biology, since it has been established that hormones such as testosterone can and do impact upon male behaviour. Maleness could therefore be associated with boys and males apparent innate need to be physically boisterous, active and suchlike.

Redefining what it is to be a Man

The study shows that in many ways the men cannot with certainty define or discuss what it personally means to them to be a man. Mackay (1994, 35) and West (1996, 141) both observe that, whilst Australian women have radically redefined women’s gender role and ideas about women in the past 30 years, men have barely started to reconsider defining masculinity. Certainly there needs to be more considered public discussion and writing about the many dimensions of being a man, the assumptions and character of traditional, heroic masculinity. In The Iliad, Achilles illustrates the dangers of being consumed by a ruthless warrior mentality, without compassion or regard for life. Odysseus in The Odyssey shows that men need not and must not be confined to the heroic-warrior model. Odysseus provides an example of the many simultaneous roles available to men as lovers, husbands, fathers, sons, adventurers, artists and protectors of their families. But in order to meet his wife as an equal partner after ten years of war, he must first re-engage with aspects of his emotional self.

Masculinity, what it is to be a man, is presently undergoing a transition and reassessment in Western societies, such as Australia. The transition has been triggered by such influences as feminism, the redefinition of gender roles, economic restructuring and related shifts in patterns of male employment. It is arguable that masculinity is shifting from an historical form of exhibitionist heroism, rooted in war, conflict over resources and capitalism, towards a more expansive understanding of masculinity, that values amongst other things, respect for others and interpersonal relationships.

The researcher has spent much thought on two questions. These are, what does it mean to be a man? But also, now as a mid-life male, what does it mean to be an adult male? The researcher believes the latter question to be a highly personal matter, best left for individual men to define in their own way; one they be encouraged to give considered thought. A personal suggestion is that, it might refer to a male who perceives himself as an adult male, who is:

- self-responsible, who takes responsibility for all aspects of his life—such as earning a living, health, having a home, who fosters his emotional well-being and personal relationships;
• devoted to a cause, bigger than oneself, who serves a greater purpose such as family and children, vocation, business, activity, community or even an idea; and is,
• willing to operate from his own set of conscious, well thought-out values, which in light of traditional conceptions of masculinity may for example, include being tolerant of diversity in masculine identities, and regarding women as peers.

An expansive definition of masculinity
As mentioned in the literature review, many writers discuss masculinity, but given its numerous associations, rarely explain what they take it to mean. At a time when masculinity is often seen to be 'in crisis', and in transition, there is a need for debate about an expansive conception of masculinity. The question who decides what masculinity is? is noted in chapter 2. It is, however, incumbent upon the researcher to offer a definition, in light of both the study's findings and the predominantly, publicly available literature considered.

Defining masculinity, in the researcher's opinion is not the prerogative of any particular group. Differing views must at least be respected and taken into account, especially after undertaking ethnographic research. Using this approach, it emerges that for the mainly, lower middle-class participants in this study, masculinity is perceived physically and personally. Seemingly, it is a matter they take for granted by virtue of their maleness; yet it is also a puzzle, a subject they struggle to talk about. The male body is a key site of their personal understanding of masculinity.

Several perspectives inform the following suggested definition of masculinity. Academic studies, for example by Connell (1990; 1995), highlight masculinity as a personal, dynamic project. Messner and Sabo (1990), Segal (1990), Drummond (1995) and many others, reveal how values and social practices are key elements of traditional masculinity. Popular psychological works point to the significance of individual will, personality and family. Goleman (1996) and Edgar (1997) emphasise the likely growing importance of emotional intelligence, and the lack of training for males in this area. This factor takes on considerable significance, in view of the characteristic emotional muteness and guardedness of many of the males in the study; and the apparent difficulty the mid-life males have sustaining long-term intimate relationships. So, masculinity could be (re-)defined as follows:

• Masculinity is both a personal and social project, varying with time and place. Masculinity entails associations with the male body and biology, it incorporates individual will, discretion, emotional intelligence, and the values and social practices deemed appropriate to particular groups of males and male sub-cultures.

Such a conception incorporates transitional masculinity, as a dominant version, but makes provision for other forms of masculinity. An expansive definition fosters recognition of a
diverse range of masculine identities, all of which share a similar physical identity, yet varying social masculinity. It is a definition that recognises the influence of society and biology; the social, personal and physical. It allows many choices about being a man, and suggests there are various pathways. This definition, also implies that being a man is a lifelong journey of choices that vary with the seasons' of a man's life.

As noted in chapter 2, the Australian social researcher Mackay suggests that notions of heroism are shifting to also incorporate the inner life: such as, people's struggles with values and maintaining successful personal relationships (1999, 93-5). The suggested definition of masculinity provides for a shift from traditional (heroic) masculinity, with its physical, external, achievement-oriented focus, towards gentler, more intimate forms of masculinity, that recognise men's inner lives and values.

It is the researcher's opinion there is much evidence that a slow, lengthy process of reassessment, discussion and redefining of masculinity, what it is to be a man, has commenced. The need for such a reassessment is shown by several findings of this study. The males are blind and ignorant of the traditional form of masculinity, that they embody in varying degrees. Becoming a man and what it is to be a man these days, are puzzling subjects for them that they have failed to give considered thought. For the mid-life males, traditional masculinity seems to be a factor in their limited emotional repertoire, and possibly their inability to sustain long-term intimate relationships.

In the inevitably slow process of reassessing masculinity, some important elements would appear to be to:

- shift the focus of masculinity from the personal and physical, to its social dimensions - explaining masculinity as in large part, socially constructed - reflecting dominant social values and practices;

- make traditional masculinity and its value system (ideology), visible by naming it 'heroic masculinity', a competitive form of masculinity based on achievement, testing, performing, proving oneself better than other males, and lack of respect for the feminine;

- shatter the key myth of traditional masculinity. A model that purports to embody male individuality, self-sufficiency and ruggedness, is actually about male conformity and social acceptance. It is a facade, a false self, possibly inimical to men's emotional well-being;

- foster the social acceptance of a diversity of masculine identities, drawing attention to the importance of emotional intelligence in the formation of more intimate, gentler, less heroic
forms of masculinity, that recognise men's inner lives and promotes what Goleman calls 'self' science;

- promote an accessible, positive literature about masculinity that maps the stages and key features of the male life-course experience;

- recognise the possible importance of a socially recognised, empowering rite of passage for young males, to provide a psychological reference point for a change in self-perception, and symbolising at least a change in male status, from youth-adolescent to young adult male

Final Observations

It is difficult to refute the assertion of academic discourses that males in a collective sense, have pre-eminent social power compared with females (one has only to look at the executive personnel of major organisations). However, popular discourses suggest male power may come at personal cost. Reports of males in therapy, say they feel alienated, lonely, disconnected from other males and their families. But both discourses are on rocky ground when they describe male experiences generically. Edgar is accurate when he says some writings are special pleadings for and by certain groups of men (1997, x). Both discourses need to specify exactly which men in particular are being discussed. The variations among men are immense. Identifying and referring to particular masculinities as Connell and West both emphasise, needs to become more commonplace in the discourses, research and the male vocabulary.

This research examines the experiences and perceptions of a small number of a small number of Australian males, who are mostly of a lower middle class background, living ordinary, unexceptional lives. It is believed that the findings may offer insights and have some relevance to other young and mid-life males. As already noted, there are limitations to what can be said about the implications of the findings, particularly given that all the mid-life males are unmarried. However, the research does offer empirical support for claims in the popular discourses, that in Western European societies such as Australia, masculine development is left to chance. The study highlights the conscious and unconscious impact of a dominant model of masculinity for the participants, during the first-half of their life-course. It seems to be a one dimensional form with a tough, physical and visual emphasis. Paradoxically, a model which features male strength and independence, is actually about male conformity. It is seemingly a surprisingly insecure version of masculinity hostile to questioning and difference, especially in regard to masculine identities. It also apparently fails to provide a personal and conscious benchmark for young males to foster a change in status to that of men (adult males).
The cultural emphasis upon a visual masculine 'image', perhaps reflects that present day Australia is a visual society, with much information and values transmitted via media and popular images. The emphasis upon image can be seen to reflect what Webb suggests is a feature of the training to be masculine, the tendency for males to be outwardly focussed concerned with performing, proving and achieving, and how they are seen by others (1998, 18). Most of the males in this study, are disconnected from their inner life, encased within one form of masculinity, they are unaware of.

Summary
This thesis as an exploratory study investigated the significance and role of the culturally dominant model of masculinity, for a small number of urban and rural males aged between 22 and 45 years. It was thought such an investigation might provide some insight upon a general question of how young Australian males learn to be men. Case narratives have been prepared for each of the 13 participants providing an insight into their lives and their experiences concerning the traditional model of masculinity.

The thesis used elements of life-course theory, social constructionism and Jungian psychology to provide a structured analysis of their lives and their form of masculinity. The study suggests the pervasive impact of a dominant, rather one dimensional, model of masculinity upon both the young and mid-life male participants throughout their lives, their ignorance of the social character and value system of traditional masculinity, and the absence of positive, well considered instruction about masculinity during their youth and adolescence. As an apparently static model of masculinity, for mid-life males it seems to be a factor in their showing little evidence of reworking their sense of personal identity or reappraising their lives. In light of the character and background of the participants from both rural and urban areas, it is suggested the findings of the study may offer a useful insight on the experiences of Australian males during the first half of their life course.
APPENDIX 1

MALE SUICIDES 1991-1996

Table 1: Male Suicide Deaths by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1.14 years</th>
<th>15-24 years</th>
<th>25-44 years</th>
<th>45-54 years</th>
<th>55-64 years</th>
<th>65-74 years</th>
<th>75-84 years</th>
<th>85+ years</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Male AIDS-Related Deaths, 1991-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>558</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>3828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A.B.S. Causes of Death 1996, Catalogue 3303.0 (October 1997).


In 1995, for males 15-26 years, suicides accounted for 25% total male youth deaths, with motor vehicle accidents the major cause of death. For males 25-44 years, suicide accounted for 20% of total male deaths. The first three major causes of death for this age group being accidents, poison and violence.

In 1996, males 15-24 years accounted for 22% of total motor vehicle accident deaths. Males 25-44 years accounted for 25% of (male) motor vehicle accident deaths.

In 1997, males 15-24 years accounted for 19% of total male suicide, but males 25-44 had the highest rate, 21%.
An interview guide was adopted to ensure particular aspects of growing up and learning about being a male and a man were discussed. The questions were posed to allow the interviewee to respond in their own style.

The following is a guide to the schedule.

**Interview Schedule**

- General questions to make participant’s feel at ease.
- Role of sport during adolescence.
- Adolescent role models and heroes.
- Males who had a role in their youth.
- Major influences on what it is to be a man.
- Dominant model/image stereotypes of masculinity.
- How young males become men.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>EMPLOYED</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOBY</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Accounts Clerk</td>
<td>Yes, by company</td>
<td>H.S.C.</td>
<td>Surfing/reading comics/kickboxing</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Dee Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DARREN</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Car Motor Service Workshop Manager</td>
<td>Yes, by company</td>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>Surf lifesaving/ surfboat rowing</td>
<td>Single, long-term girlfriend</td>
<td>Dee Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIM</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>Yes, restaurant</td>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>Bushwalking/ outdoor activities/ reading New Age literature</td>
<td>Single, no current girlfriend</td>
<td>Dee Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WES</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Waiter/Musician</td>
<td>Yes, shop</td>
<td>H.S.C.</td>
<td>Pianist/keyboard player with band</td>
<td>Single, girlfriend of 3 years</td>
<td>Dee Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOMINIC</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Shop Assistant</td>
<td>Yes, part-time shop store</td>
<td>H.S.C.</td>
<td>Musician/choir singing/science/action literature/movies</td>
<td>Single, no current girlfriend</td>
<td>Bowral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEX</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>University Student</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>Gym training/restoring cars/psychology</td>
<td>Single, no current girlfriend</td>
<td>Bowral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERRY</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>Yes, shop</td>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>Aikido</td>
<td>Single, no current girlfriend</td>
<td>Bowral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# MID-LIFE MALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>EMPLOYED</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JAMES</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Landscape Gardener</td>
<td>Yes, by company</td>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>Surfing/amateur theatre/reading</td>
<td>Single, never married, current girlfriend</td>
<td>Dee Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JON</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>Yes, sub-contractor</td>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>Surfing/reading</td>
<td>Single, divorced, no current partner</td>
<td>Dee Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHLEY</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Sportscoach</td>
<td>Yes, by company</td>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>Gym training/reading, dining out</td>
<td>Single, defacto relationship, live apart (ended shortly after interview)</td>
<td>Dee Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATRICK</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Auctioneer</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Trade Certificate Valuers' Certificate</td>
<td>Cooking, home maintenance, US Civil war enthusiast</td>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>Bowral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOEL</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Art Gallery Owner</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Leaving Certificate</td>
<td>Self-development workshops, psychotherapy, bushwalking</td>
<td>Divorced, no current relationship</td>
<td>Bowral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLEN</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Local Government Clerk</td>
<td>Yes, public sector agency</td>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>Salvation Army, Weekends with his children</td>
<td>Divorced (new partner after interview)</td>
<td>Bowral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCE LIST


www.cybersales.net/american_men's_studies_association/

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF YOUNG AND MID-LIFE MALES' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF A DOMINANT MODEL OF MASCULINITY

by

David Patrick Crawford
B.A.(Hons)(Syd.) Graduate Diploma (Policy Studies)(Canb.)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the School of Teaching and Educational Studies, University of Western Sydney Nepean.

January 2001
PLEASE NOTE

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Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and around and beneath me was the whole hoop of the world. And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being. And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mightily flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father. And I saw that it was holy.

The Great Vision - Black Elk

Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux (1932) - original edition
ABSTRACT

Two of the most prominent streams of the growing literature concerning men and masculinity in the Western societies of America, Australia and Britain, are academic sociology and popular discourses. Academic sociology identifies a dominant form of masculinity that is said to be the measure by which all men are judged. It is called hegemonic or patriarchal masculinity. It is seen as a form of masculinity with personal and social dimensions. In a similar fashion, popular writings identify the traditional male heroic image as the cultural model of masculinity.

This study explores the impact of such a dominant model of masculinity as a factor in how boys and young males learn to be a man. The research looks at the lives of 13 males aged in their early 20s and around 40 years of age, utilising life-course theory and a social-psychological perspective. It compares and contrasts the experiences and perceptions of these young and mid-life males, with regard to the dominant social model of masculinity. It considers their experiences growing up as youths and other aspects of their lives as males. The study seeks to assess the significance of the dominant cultural model of masculinity, as a model for what it means to be a man, for males at different stages of their life course.

This research found that as male youths, the participants learnt how to be a man in a haphazard fashion, initially from their fathers and family. Growing up as boys and teenage adolescents many acquired some of the dominant conceptions of masculinity, apparently through their involvement in the masculine domain of sport. Particularly as teenagers and adolescents most participants reveal they experienced considerable pressure to conform and live up to a dominant model of masculinity. This appears as a rather one dimensional model, a mainly tough, brave and physical image. It was their peers who exerted much pressure to conform at this time. Those participants who did not conform experienced some harassment or isolation from their peers. Also during adolescence males of both groups learnt about the traditional model by way of prevailing cultural masculine conceptions and images they were exposed to from films, television, school, playing sport, sports stars, church, and other older males. It is arguable that popular culture was the major influence upon their ideas and perceptions of masculinity at this stage of their lives. This influence came via their interest and participation in sport, the masculine cultural ideal enforced by their peers, and popular media images.

Noticeably, males from both age groups received little or no positive, well-considered instruction about masculinity as young males, nor did they experience formal rites of passage to male adulthood. Instead all were left to negotiate the puzzling and lengthy transition from young male to man by themselves. The dominant model of masculinity is an idea all participants slowly comprehend, but come to acknowledge as a key factor in their learning about masculinity. Masculinity (what it is to be a man) is perceived by all of the participants,
physically and personally. They show limited understanding of it as also, in large part, a social construct incorporating values, images, social practices and beliefs. Noticeably, males of both groups lack a vocabulary to name, discuss and critique common features of the male social experience.

Despite the growing literature on masculinity, research about ordinary Australian men is limited. By undertaking a comparative study of young and mid-life males and utilising life-course theory, the research strongly suggests that for the males in this study, the dominant model of masculinity is a static version of masculinity, that apparently covers the entire first-half of the male life course. It is a model that offers a persuasive masculine cultural ideal that males are pressured to live up to. It appears to be a version of masculinity with arguably a limited sense of wholeness. It shows an external, active, heroic focus, with little emphasis or connection to the inner life or emotional intelligence. It appears to be a model that not only fails to provide a map for the first two stages or seasons of a man's life, but may possibly inhibit many mid-life males in reassessing their lives and attitudes. It could well be that this traditional model of masculinity may contribute to the alienation, isolation and lack of male friends many men report at men's gatherings and in the popular discourses. But further, it may well be an unrecognised, contributory factor in the high suicide rates of males of these age groups. This may partly be attributable to the constraint the cultural model appears to exert upon the expression of varieties of masculine identities and behaviours, amongst the males in this study.

The traditional model of masculinity can be seen to be a heroic form of masculinity with its emphasis upon power, competition, success and glory; mostly at the expense of other males. Indeed traditional or patriarchal masculinity may more simply be called heroic masculinity, as a means to render it visible to males. It emerges as a potent influence for both the young and mid-life males in terms of values, behaviours and practice. Traditional masculinity emerges as an influence they barely recognise; and possibly a factor in the limited emotional repertoire and guardedness that the mid-life males exhibit.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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David Crawford
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