THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY:
INTERVIEWS INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF MEN

by

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the experience of being male from the perspective of a group of white middle class heterosexual men. A review of the literature reveals a dearth of research into the lived experience of being male. This study begins to address that lack.

As the aim of the study was to delve into the meaning of the experience of being male, a phenomenological method was employed. Five men were recruited from British Columbia. A semistructured interview was conducted with each man and the resulting transcriptions analyzed for common themes. Colaizi's (1978) method of analysis produced 12 major and three minor themes. This set of themes was then returned to the men for validation.

Themes included: expectations of economic responsibility, and confidence and competence; experiences of conflicting role expectations, uncertainty about the rules of behaviour, and being perceived as one of the victimizers; and the feeling that part of a man's role is to take responsibility for the safety and well being of others.
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DEDICATION

For my father,
whose courage and determination
have helped me to know
what it can mean
to be a man.
Chapter One

Introduction

What is it like to be a man today? A white man. A straight man. A man with an education. The kind of man who, in the not so distant past, was the man who was quizzed or interviewed or questioned by the social scientists of the day, in order to determine what was normal (cf. Gilligan, 1987). The kind of man whose thoughts, beliefs and desires were claimed to be the thoughts, beliefs, and desires of "Mankind". The man who was then compared to women, to blacks, to homosexuals, in order to try to learn what it was that was wrong with them. Those others. What is it like to be that man today?

This research grew out my interest in these questions. And being a man, it also grew out of a desire to explore, for myself, the experience of masculinity. So often it is the case that the Master of Arts thesis in counselling psychology has both a professional and a personal interest for the student. This work is no exception.

The issue of what it means to be a man is something that many men today are confronting (Brod, 1987; Doyle, 1983; Keen, 1991; Kimmel, 1987; Levant,
The definition of masculinity, along with the behaviours that inhere in such a definition, has come under increasing scrutiny in the last 30 years. This definition has undergone some quite dramatic changes within the last decade especially and this has left many contemporary men confused about what it means to be a man (Kimmel, 1986). Levant (1992a), in his brief introduction to the Society for the Psychological Study Of Men and Masculinity, suggests that "to many men, the question of what it means to be a man today is one of the most persistent unresolved issues of their lives" (p. 75).

Kimmel (1987) attempts to put these changes in an historical frame. He introduces us to two previous crises in masculinity, the first in England during the period 1688-1714 following the Glorious Revolution, and the second in the United States of America following the closing of the American frontier in the late 19th century. In each case he shows that the issue of masculinity became a focus of the discourse of the time, and that as a result men began to change their attitudes towards, and beliefs about, the predominant definitions of masculinity. In a very thorough review of the available literature on gender roles in each of
these times, Kimmel demonstrates how the changes that developed in men's attitudes towards masculinity were happening in response to changes in women's attitudes and beliefs about femininity. That is, he demonstrates that men only began to confront the definitions of masculinity and the impact that those definitions had on them as men, when women's attitudes towards their own experiences as women began to change.

The impetus for the present re-examination of masculinity has been the most recent wave of such activity by women (Seidler, 1989). Contemporary feminism has had consequences that have affected men's views of themselves in a variety of different ways. To cite only one example, men's understanding of themselves as men and as masculine has been significantly impacted by women's entrance into what has been called the world of men's work (Gerson, 1986; Mishkind, Rodin, Silberstein, & Striegel-Moore, 1986). Women's entrance into this particular world of work in the 1960's challenged not just men's jobs and power, but masculinity itself. As Mishkind et al. (1986) more broadly put it "whereas once a man could be assured of his masculinity by virtue of his occupation, interests,
or certain personality characteristics, many women now opt for the same roles" (p. 555).

What this suggests is that masculinity is a relational construct that is actively negotiated in relation to femininity. This is a central point in much of the contemporary work on masculinity (Doyle, 1983; Kimmel, 1986, 1987; Levant, 1992a; Seidler, 1989) and contrasts with previous views of masculinity that portrayed it as a natural component of a man's development, a vessel into which all men grew (cf. Pleck, 1981). And the specific form of masculinity that we are looking at in this study, white heterosexual masculinity, may also be viewed as developing and being defined in context of homosexuality and black masculinity.

Rutherford (1988) argues that white heterosexual masculinity defines itself by defining others as problematic. He suggests that what we men do not feel comfortable with in ourselves, we then use in our definitions of others. Thus, the black man becomes a savage, limited in intellect and absent of soul (Hunter & Davis, 1992), the homosexual is seen as a pervert, the woman weak and compliant. To be an acceptable man, then, means to deny, to oppose, these others. Men end
up having a great deal at stake, "having to differentiate themselves from both women and homosexual men" (Kimmel, 1986), and white men having to differentiate themselves from black men. Rutherford (1988) goes on to suggest that men's social power results both from efforts made to define these others, as well as efforts to hide what it means to be a man.

A significant issue that arises from this is that masculinity is defined as much, perhaps more, by what it is not than by what it is (Herek, 1986; Seidler, 1989). That is, as men we grow up learning how to behave by maintaining our distance from certain activities, specifically those oriented towards female behaviours, as much as behaving in ways that are defined as manly. "Boys may learn to be men primarily by learning not to be women" (Herek, 1986, p. 571). In Kaufman's (1987) view, this has produced a masculinity that is "terrifyingly fragile" (p.13).

If we accept this argument, it helps us to make sense of the impact of women's entrance into traditionally male arenas. For if masculinity is defined for us in large measure (or indeed in any measure) by being that which women do not do, then clearly when women begin to take on previously male
roles, jobs, and behaviours this will feel like a deep challenge to masculinity itself. If women can indeed do anything, there is no space within which to define masculinity. This also suggests where at least some of men's resistance to feminism lies (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1987; Kimmel, 1986).

In terms of doing research into masculinity, the issue arises of whether it will be possible for men to describe their experiences in relation to their being men. Rutherford (1988) has the following to say:

In writing I have become aware how heterosexual men have inherited a language which can define the lives and sexualities of others, but fails us when we have to deal with our own heterosexuality and masculine identities...Our language doesn't produce us as sexual subjects or a category in need of a label (p. 22).

Of course, there is material that describes the characteristics of masculinity (David & Brannon, 1976; Eisler & Blalock, 1991; O'Neil, 1982; Pleck, 1981). Brannon (1976), for example, states that the four themes of masculinity are (a) not being feminine, (b) being individualistic and unemotional, (c) being success and competition oriented, and (d) being
aggressive. Interestingly, all four of these themes can be seen as ways of being that are stereotypically unfeminine. That is, although these themes in masculinity can be expressed, they can all be construed as unfeminine ways of being.

The dangers of this form of definition are in its fragility (Kaufman, 1987) and in the ways that it keeps us, as men, distant from ourselves (Ochberg, 1987), our identities fragmented (Seidler, 1989). What then is the advantage? Rutherford (1988) suggests that a large part of the advantage is in the way that the lack of definition maintains patriarchal power structures. It makes men and masculinity difficult to pin down and thus complicates efforts to describe the sources of what might be wrong with the system as it stands. When those who inherit the power are hidden from view, it is difficult to hold them accountable for what they do. Indeed, it will even be difficult for those who are entitled to the power to acknowledge that anything is wrong.

A further issue is that of language, as noted by Rutherford above. Seidler (1989) suggests that part of the consolidation of patriarchal power has involved men's "acquiring a sense that we can speak for all" (p.
2). He would also agree that this is problematic for men. For although it allows for the consolidation of patriarchal power it "has made it hard for us to distinguish particular masculine voices or experiences" (p.2).

This situation has been exacerbated by a social science that has studied men as Mankind and so neglected the experiences of women (Morgan, 1981). In psychology specifically, it has been exacerbated by a paradigm that viewed masculinity and femininity as natural unproblematic structures and so did not leave room to question the status quo (Kimmel, 1986; Pleck, 1981). The question may arise as to what good there is in conducting a study such as this, given that the social sciences, for so long, have focused on men. It is a good question, and one that deserves an answer.

The present study is part of a relatively new area called men's studies. In his chapter 'The Case For Men's Studies', Brod (1987) has this to say:

Men's studies argues that while women's studies corrects the exclusion of women from the traditional canon caused by androcentric scholarship's elevation of man as male to man as generic human, the implications of this fallacy
for our understanding of men have gone largely unrecognized. While seemingly about men, traditional scholarship's treatment of generic man as the human norm in fact systematically excludes from consideration what is unique to men qua men. The overgeneralization from male to generic human experience not only distorts our understanding of what, if anything, is truly generic to humanity but also precludes the study of masculinity as a specific male experience, rather than a universal paradigm for human experience (p. 40).

Brod's point seems clear. In treating men as Mankind, we have excluded both women and men, and "if the former are obscured from our vision by being too far in the background, the latter are obscured from our vision by being...too much in the foreground" (Morgan, 1981, p. 94).

What is necessary is to literally "bring men back in" (Morgan, 1981, p. 108). We need to engage in research that treats men as gendered individuals rather than as Mankind. We need to engage in research that brings masculinity itself into focus (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1987).
One way to deal with this desire to focus on men qua men would be to return to the literature that took men as Mankind and deconstruct it in light of insights into gender and masculinity that have been developing over the last 30 years (A. Rice, personal communication, July, 1993). Another is to attempt to break new ground in the present as this study attempts to do.

Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study is to understand, using a phenomenological approach (Colaizzi, 1978; Marshall & Rossman, 1989) the experience of being male from the perspective of five white, heterosexual men living in the Vancouver area in the early 1990's.

There are several ways in which such research is of value. First, there is a dearth of research into the experience of being a man. This is a void that needs to be addressed. Second, in exploring masculinity we pull back some of the cloth that hides its nature. And in doing so, in revealing masculinity and ourselves as men, we reduce the power of the institution of patriarchy (Brod, 1987; Kaufman, 1987; Morgan, 1981). Third, in exploring masculinity and men's experience we
allow for the possibility of men healing and growing. In understanding how we have come to be the men that we are and the impact that those, often unconscious, choices have had on ourselves and those around us, we may begin to repair some of the fragmentation that we have experienced and in so doing narrow the distance from ourselves.

Definitions

For the purposes of the present study, the following definitions were used:

**Masculinity.** The definition of masculinity in this study is necessarily vague so as to allow the men's understandings of their own masculinity to arise during the interviews. This may involve their roles and goals, or their relationships and their fears. What I am interested in is how men define what they take to be their masculinity, and in what ways their masculinity in turn defines who they are.

**The Construction of Masculinity.** Constructivism is an approach that asserts that "rather than passively observing reality, we actively construct the meanings that frame and organize our perceptions and experience" (Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1988). In this sense, masculinity is conceived of not as something that is within men waiting to express
itself but rather as a factor that we—and here we refers to both the individual and his context—construct. This is in contrast to what Joseph Pleck (1981) has termed the male sex role identity paradigm in which the individual's masculine identity develops out of an innate psychological need, and as such, it is conceived of as an emergent part of a male's personality.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of the literature focusing on white, middle-class, heterosexual masculinity. It begins with a look at two opposing paradigms of masculinity, the gender role identity paradigm, and the gender role strain paradigm. This is followed by a brief look at some early material on men and masculinity and a review of the current literature on men.

As O'Neil (1982) did in his seminal work on the masculine mystique, we can identify three sources of information on men and masculinity: (a) popular books, (b) non empirical articles and chapters and books, and (c) empirical research. This third category, into which the present study fits, continues to be of a limited quantity.

Two Paradigms

The gender role identity paradigm "assumes that people have an inner psychological need to have a gender role identity, and...the extent to which this 'inherent' need is met is determined by how completely they embrace their traditional gender role" (Levant,
Pleck (1987) suggests that the origins of this theory are contained in the work of Terman and Miles (1936), wherein they suggested that there is a set of normal male and female traits and that, to the degree that a person possesses these traits, that man or woman is normal. Deviants could therefore be determined in part by their relative lack of normal male (for men) or female (for women) traits. Kimmel (1986) states that "the sex-role paradigm posits a historically invariant model, a kind of static sex-role container into which all biological males and females are forced to fit". The degree to which one fits into this mold, therefore, becomes a significant determinant of one's mental health. For men who do not fit into the container, the result may be homosexuality, brutality towards women, or hypermasculinity, this latter term referring to men who evidence "exaggerated, extreme masculine behaviour as a defense against (their) unconscious feminine identification" (Pleck, 1987, p. 31). As Levant (1992b) notes, "this paradigm springs from the same philosophical roots as the 'essentialist' or 'nativist' view of sex roles--the notion that there is a masculine 'essence' that is historically invariant" (p.381).
Pleck (1987) traces this paradigm from its origins with Terman and Miles, through its theoretical development from 1945 to 1970, and finally to its decline in the last twenty-five years. He suggests that the theory's demise occurred "not so much because of a detailed critique of its internal problems as because of new conceptual and research developments and new social attitudes about sex roles" (p. 37). One of these conceptual developments was Pleck's (1981) own gender role strain paradigm (Levant, 1992b). This paradigm proposes that:

- gender roles are contradictory and inconsistent;
- that the proportion of persons who violate gender roles are high; that violation of gender roles leads to condemnation and negative consequences;
- that actual or imagined violation of gender roles leads people to over conform to them; that violating gender roles has more severe consequences for males than for females; and that certain gender role traits (such as male aggression) can be dysfunctional (Levant, 1992b, p. 380).

Garnets and Pleck (1979) define gender role strain as "a discrepancy between the real self and that part
of the ideal self concept that is culturally associated with gender" (p. 278). Levant (1992b) argues that, in contrast to the gender role identity paradigm, the gender role strain paradigm "springs from the same roots as social constructionism" (p. 380). It acknowledges that gender roles are not static and ahistorical, but rather are "the product of gender relations that are historically and socially constructed" (Kimmel, 1986, p. 520). It also suggests that gender roles are imposed upon individuals as they develop according to the particular norms and stereotypes of the culture, rather than being a pre-existing inherent quality into which individuals grow (Levant, 1992b).

Kimmel (1986) criticizes the gender role identity paradigm for its inability to acknowledge the extent to which the content of men's and women's gender roles is relational, and the degree to which "the definition of either depends upon the definition of the other" (p. 520-521). He argues that the role, the "laundry list of behavioural characteristics" (p. 521) that are associated with the role, neither resembles the enactment of these roles, nor gives us any clues as to what the experience of the role might be like. In
addition, the construction of the role as static ahistorical truth, "minimizes the extent to which gender relations are based on power" (p. 521). Traits of the more powerful group, men, become the desirable ones, whereas those of the less powerful group, women, become associated with weakness. The paradigm itself "reproduces the very problem it seeks to understand" (p. 521).

In contrast, the constructivist view allows an historical view of masculinity, and the changes through which its definition, and the experiences of men, move. It rejects the necessity for the maintenance of a static form of masculinity that has provided ideological justification for the status quo between men and women and for men's continued dominance of women (Pleck, 1987). Finally, it allows for the opening up of new areas of empirical research (Kimmel, 1986).

Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1987) criticize role theory as a whole. They identify several problems in using the conception of role in any way. First is their assertion that "the sex-role literature does not consistently distinguish between the expectations made of people and what they in fact do" (p. 77), a point similar to Kimmel's (1986) above. They further argue
that "the result of using the role framework is an abstract view of the differences between the sexes and their situations, not a concrete one of the relations between them" (p. 79). Finally, they are "blunt about it. The 'male sex role' does not exist. It is impossible to isolate a 'role' that constructs masculinity" (p. 80).

Pleck and Thompson (1986), in the introduction to a recent study, attempt to deal with the criticisms of role theory. They suggest that they are using "the term 'male role' to refer to the social norms that prescribe and proscribe what men should and should not feel and do. It is a sensitizing concept that summarizes the general social expectations men face" (p. 531). Their study is reviewed below.

It will be noted that much of the research reviewed below focuses on masculinity as role. The gender role strain paradigm moves us away from the conception of there being a correct form of masculinity and allows us to conceive of the social constraints that impinge on men as they develop in this culture. Perhaps Pleck and Thompson's (1986) caveat concerning the idea of role is enough to solve the problems that Carrigan et. al (1987) present above. What is
interesting is that a good deal of the work in the area of masculinity as reviewed below continues to focus on the role and the social constraints as theorized by the authors and generally neglects the actual experiences of the men themselves.

**On Men and Masculinity**

One of the earliest books that focused on the deleterious consequences of gender role strain was Fasteau's (1975) *The Male Machine*. His assessment of the male experience, the male machine, is worth quoting at length.

The male machine is a special kind of being, different from women, children, and men who don't measure up. He is functional, designed mainly for work. He is programmed to tackle jobs, override obstacles, attack problems, and always to seize the offensive...and his most important positive reinforcement is victory. He has armor plating which is virtually impregnable. His circuits are never scrambled or overrun by irrelevant personal signals. In fact, his internal circuitry is something of a mystery to him and is maintained primarily by humans of the opposite sex (p. 1).
Fasteau goes on to chronicle the consequences of being a male machine: (a) emotional distance from family, friends, and indeed oneself; (b) never knowing one's children; (c) working to the point of exhaustion and ill health; (d) sexual insecurity; and (e) lack of intimate friendships. He argues that much of the pain of being a male machine is the result of the socialized need to compete.

Fasteau also outlines the consequences for Western society in terms of Watergate and the Vietnam war, which were then contemporary events, as well as institutionalized forms of misogyny and patriarchy. Fasteau argues that the male gender role as promoted by American culture is unhealthy both for the individual and for the culture as a whole. Tolson (1977), another early writer in the field, would agree. Indeed, he argues that the value system of the male machine is institutionalized to the point where all of our Western institutions operate according to its values and norms.

Skord and Schumacher (1982) carry on this view of the negative effects of the male role. They "propose that the male sex role is a handicapping condition" (p. 288) and outline the problems that men experience in the role of being sick, disabled, and in
rehabilitation. They explore the relationship between illness, recovery and masculinity, and conclude that successful rehabilitation is predicated by the client's acceptance of help, acknowledgment of dependence, and willingness to cooperate. These demands are incongruent with the present masculine role (p. 288).

In chapter five we shall return to the issues surrounding the relationship between masculinity and seeking help.

Burda, Tushup and Hackman (1992), in a more recent study, looked at the relationship between "traditional masculine attitudes and social support in alcoholic males and in non-alcoholic male college students" (p. 188). What they found was a relationship between alcoholism and adherence to traditional masculine values and beliefs. Although they acknowledge the correlational nature of their study, they suggest that "strong adherence to traditional gender roles may make it more difficult for men to cope successfully with dependency needs, leading to alcohol use as an effective but self-destructive coping strategy" (p. 191).
Isenhart and Silversmith (1994) also looked at the relationship between the traditional male role and alcoholism. They argue that "a man is supposed to be outgoing, competent, and in control in relationships, (and)...for the man who cannot meet this expectation because of shyness, lack of confidence, and/or social anxiety, he may learn to use alcohol to improve his functioning in interpersonal situations" (p. 130-131). They also argue that men are traditionally prohibited from demonstrating affect and that as men, being human, do in fact experience affect they may use alcohol to manage the feelings that they never learned to manage for themselves. This resonates with Fasteau's (1975) suggestion that members of the opposite sex are given the task of doing the managing for men.

Isenhart and Silversmith (1994) base their beliefs about traditional male norms on the work of O'Neil (1982) and David and Brannon (1976). O'Neil (1982) outlines what he calls the Masculine Mystique and Value System, which "shapes male assumptions, expectancies, roles, and behaviours" (p. 67). This system states that men should (a) be in control of themselves and their environment; (b) avoid expressions of feeling and the situations in which they arise; (c) focus on winning,
achieving and succeeding in career matters in order to maintain high personal worth; (d) maintain an attitude of superiority in relation to women; (e) avoid intimacy with women and other men; (f) avoid seeking help from others; (g) and believe that this belief system and the masculine ethos that it shapes are superior to their feminine counterpart.

In David and Brannon's (1976) The Forty-nine Percent Majority, Brannon (1976) argues that there are four main themes to the social construction of masculinity. They are the well known "No Sissy Stuff", "Be a Sturdy Oak", "Be A Big Wheel", and "Give 'Em Hell". The No Sissy Stuff theme discourages men from engaging in any sort of behaviour that may be considered feminine or related to the behaviour of women. The Be a Sturdy Oak theme encourages men to be distant and to stand on their own. The Be a Big Wheel theme demands that men be success oriented and never accept failure. A man must take up every challenge and treat all interactions as a form of competition in which they must come out the winner. This takes us back to Fasteau's (1975) assertion that socialized competitiveness is the source of much of men's pain. The Give 'Em Hell theme encourages men to be aggressive
in their dealings with others, especially in situations in which the man wants something from someone else.

Eisler and Blalock (1991) would concur. In their discussion of masculine gender role stress (MGRS), they note that behaviours that are considered despicable in the commission of criminal acts, are applauded when carried out in the arenas of sports, the military and business. They conclude that aggressiveness and combativeness are "socially sanctioned male coping styles" (p. 48). Having previously developed a measure of MGRS (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), the 1991 article goes on to investigate a factor analysis of the instrument. This analysis yields five interpretable factors that suggest experiences that cause men to experience stress. They are: (a) fear of failing to be competitive; (b) being faced with situations that require expression of emotions, or experiencing intense emotions in another; (c) perceiving a competitive threat from a woman; (d) fear of failing to be smart enough in a given situation; and (e) fear of failing to live up to masculine standards relating to work and sexual adequacy. The authors then trace the legacy of problems that arise for men from these fears and stressors. They include (a) men's negative attitudes
towards women, (b) difficulty in seeking counselling, (c) overemphasis on work and career, (d) increased vulnerability to so called Type A illnesses such as heart attack and peptic ulcer, and (e) a host of problems that may be located in men's relationships with others. They state:

Because men tend to deny their needs for emotional support from their partners, they will find it difficult to have those needs met. Thus, masculine prohibitions and difficulties with emotional expressiveness make it difficult for men to maintain mutually supportive relationships (p. 56).

Their views fall squarely in line with Pleck's (1981) gender role strain paradigm. They conclude that there is a strong relationship between MGRS and dysfunctional behaviour patterns in men.

A number of other studies have set out to determine the underlying assumptions of the traditional male role value system. Pleck and Thompson (1986) set out to study men's attitudes towards the male sex role. In their study they asked a group of 400 college men to respond to 57 belief statements about men's expected behaviour. They found that the items could be broken
down into three factors: a status norm which underscores "men's need to achieve status and others' respect" (p. 534); a toughness norm that "reflects the expectations that men should be mentally, emotionally and physically tough and self-reliant" (p. 534); and an antifemininity factor "that refers to the belief that men should avoid stereotypically feminine activities and occupations" (p. 534). In terms of the men's attitudes to these three factors, the toughness norm was only slightly supported, the status norm was neither supported nor rejected, and the antifemininity norm was slightly rejected. This would seem to suggest that, although the college students perceived the items in terms of three definable norms, they were not norms with which they generally agreed. We are left wondering what it might mean for something to be termed a norm, and, more importantly, what might be the experience of these men in relation to the norms to which they do or do not adhere.

Moore and Nuttall (1981) used the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974) to assess men's and women's beliefs about male stereotypes. The BSRI rates individuals along two scales, a masculine or instrumental scale, and feminine or expressive scale.
One group of men and women was asked to complete the BSRI as though they were rating the typical male. A second group of men and women was asked to rate the ideal male. As well, three groups of men were asked to rate one of either themselves, their ideal self, or a woman's ideal man. The data suggest that: (a) Men and women see the typical male as instrumental and inexpressive; (b) Although both men and women felt that the ideal male needed to be more expressive than the typical male, men's ratings for the ideal male were more expressive than women's; (c) Men's ratings of their perceptions of a woman's ideal man were significantly more expressive and slightly less instrumental than women's ratings of their ideal man; (d) Men rated themselves as both more instrumental and more expressive than the ideal male as rated by women; (e) Men rated the ideal man as more expressive and less instrumental than themselves. The authors conclude that "males are indeed confronted by contradictory demands and expectations" (p. 324).

One significant problem with this study is the fact that we do not know whether or not the men and the women would interpret the meaning of items referring to expressiveness, for example, in the same way. It seems
entirely probable that what, for a man, would be expressive behaviour, might seem somewhat inexpressive in a woman's eyes. One striking example of this sort of dual perception is in the area of house work. Although husbands who do house work may feel that they do a significant amount, wives generally feel that their husbands do less than what the men claim (Stein, 1984). However, the results of Moore and Nuttall's (1981) work do suggest that men want to change and that their perception is that women also want them to change.

Particular aspects of men's lives and their experiences of these aspects have also been studied, although there is much less of this material than either the popular polemical work like Fasteau's (1975), or the theoretical work of O'Neil (1982) noted above.

Messner (1987) explored the relationship between young men's sense of self and their participation in organized sports. He suggests that organized sports grew in importance in young men's lives in America as a result of the closing of the American frontier at the beginning of this century, the increasing bureaucratization of work in the post-World War II era, and the continued insistence in America that to be a
man meant to "amount to something" (p. 196). He
interviews a number of men who had success at a variety
of levels, both amateur and professional. The results
of these interviews suggest a number of conclusions
relevant to the present study. First, we find that when
the rule is success, most men are "'set up' for
disappointment, or worse, by the narrow...definition of
success in the sports world and the reality that very
few ever actually reach the top" (p. 201). Second, we
find that success is judged in terms of performance.
"You're only as good as your last game" (p. 199).
Finally, Messner's work suggests that any sense of
inadequacy on the part of men today is more than the
result of definitions of masculinity that are
unachievable.

Contemporary males often feel empty, alienated and
isolated, and as failures because the socially
learned means through which they seek validation
and identity (achievement in the public worlds of
sports and work) do not deliver what is actually
craved and needed: intimate connection and unity
with other human beings (p. 208).

This conclusion is based on the real experiences
of the men that Messner interviewed. In the interviews
they talked of the desire for some kind of connection, for a kind of closeness. Messner argues that the attraction of sport is that one can work at closeness with other men without violating the masculine norms which limit emotional expression and encourage homophobia.

Ochelberg (1987) looked at men's experience of career, and its relationship to the ideology of role, both for the individual men and for the discipline of gender studies. Ochelberg focuses on interviews that he conducted with two men concerning their careers. He concludes that these men use their careers as an opportunity to act in a role, which act then allows them to escape from themselves, their fears, and their inadequacies. Ochelberg argues that men experience a tension between being "both collegial and dispassionate" (p. 175) in their careers, and that taking the defensive position of dealing with their careers as if they were in a role allows a solution. Through his interviews with the two men of his study, we come to see that "in experiencing their selves as roles, both men escape a more private experience of selfhood" (p. 187). And further, that they "experience themselves in terms of their value to others" (p. 187).
Their actions are an abdication of their selfhood which "ultimately degrades their subjectivity" (p. 187) and subjugates "the private man to the public one" (p. 190).

In theoretical terms, Ochelberg relates the men's behaviour to that of theorists whose approach to the study of masculinity is to value the public over the private man, and the social constraints and cultural injunctions over the experiences of the men in these cultures. If it is the case that "men's studies has taken as part of its disciplinary mandate the critique of cultural forms that diminish male subjectivity" (Ochelberg, 1987, p. 190), then it is incumbent on us to delve into the actual experiences of the men who are assumed to be impacted by the social constraints and the cultural injunctions.

The issue of friendships between men has also been studied. Sherrod (1987) looked at the nature of male-male friendships through his own and others' research. He draws a number of conclusions, several of which are germane to the present work. In terms of self-disclosure, Sherrod found that men are much more likely to share intimate and vulnerable information with a woman than a man. Further, in studying male-male and
female-female friendships, Sherrod, Cohen and Clark (1985, cited in Sherrod, 1987) found that men tend to be less satisfied with their friendships than women and that men rate their friendships as less positive than do women. Sherrod (1987) then concludes that, although from one perspective, men's friendships may be seen to be less intimate than women's, from another perspective, the question may be the wrong one. He suggests that men "seek not intimacy but companionship, not disclosure but commitment" (p. 221). He argues that whereas women's friendships are based on shared intimacy, men's friendships are based on shared activities. This is reminiscent of what Messner (1987) suggests is at the basis of males' interest in sports. It offers a closeness that is based on shared pursuits, on shared risks, which experiences are consonant with certain of the male role norms discussed above.

Sherrod feels positive about the future of male friendships because he takes an historical perspective on the issue which reveals previous eras in which male-male friendship allowed the expression of love and intimacy. At the same time, he has this to say:

The problem with the male path to friendship is not so much its peculiarly male destination but
its rocky, winding, lonely route. Without the direct access of intimate disclosure, emotional catharsis, or physical affirmation, male friendships progress slowly and haltingly toward the goal of intimacy (Sherrod, 1987, pp. 236-237).

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the two major paradigms in contemporary research into masculinity. It has also explored literature focusing on men and masculinity. Much of what has been reviewed points to the problematic nature of certain definitions of masculinity and their deleterious impact on many men. This review also demonstrates the dearth of qualitative research into the experiences of men.
Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter introduces, and provides justification for, the methodology selected for the research. This is followed by a section that serves to bracket my biases and, finally, a series of sections that outline the methodology itself.

This research utilizes a qualitative, phenomenological approach involving semi-structured in-depth interviews. Such an approach fits with this research for several reasons. A phenomenological approach is useful when little is known about a subject, and when one wants to explore the depths of meaning for those being interviewed (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). As this research was undertaken to understand better the experience of being male, from the perspective of men living the experience, and as my interest was in reaching a depth of understanding and analysis that addressed issues of meaning for these men, a phenomenological approach was appropriate (Colaizzi, 1978).

Further, I chose a qualitative methodology because it, more than a quantitative approach, is consonant with the constructivist perspective which underlies
this research. Constructivism is an approach that asserts that "rather than passively observing reality, we actively construct the meanings that frame and organize our perceptions and experience" (Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1988). Having adopted the theoretical perspective that masculinity is constructed by individuals in society, by society through individuals, and in relationship to other constructs like femininity, I felt it incumbent on me to employ a methodology that reflects that belief and that forces me to acknowledge my part in the construction of the reality that is the data. Having done so, there exists a "consistency between the... philosophical assumptions underpinning the research to be conducted and the tools of data collection and analysis chosen" (Pope & Denicolo, 1986, p.157).

The implications of one's choice of methodology are far-reaching. The importance of the method chosen goes beyond issues of research strategy, and includes issues as deep as "the nature of the person" (Pope & Denicolo, 1986, p.154), of human existence, and of truth. In the empirical scientific paradigm, whence originates quantitative methodology, truth is conceived of as existing in the world, and our job as researchers
is to maintain an objective and distant stance in order to discover this truth. Interaction between the researcher and the phenomena being researched is seen as undesirable, and a value-neutral and disengaged stance is seen as desirable (Mischler, 1986). But, as Packer and Addison (1989) argue:

There are, perhaps, excuses for the belief of the time that the true way of understanding reality had finally been achieved by the new 'scientific method'. There is no longer any excuse, though, for this naive realism of 17th-century empiricism to continue unabated in contemporary psychological research. It is time to acknowledge that so-called objective reality is a product of human intervention (p.17).

In context of the selection of a research method, such a statement implies a belief that the meaning derived from research is influenced by the research itself. Thus, in a research interview "a question may...be thought of as part of a circular process through which its meaning and that of its answer are created in the discourse between interviewer and respondent as they try to make continuing sense of what
they are saying to each other" (Mischler, 1986, pp.53-54).

A phenomenological approach encourages the researcher to engage with the co-researcher in negotiating meanings. The researcher should "attempt as far as possible to feel their way into the internal frame of reference of their interviewees" (Pope & Denicolo, 1986, p.155). What is necessary is a true encounter between two individuals that can reveal the deeper layers of meaning (Colaizzi, 1978). This is not possible if one is attempting to ask a standardized set of questions in the hopes of codifying the answers. Nor is it possible if the researcher values above all a distance or a "standing-apart-from" his or her co-researchers.

Bracketing

It seems self-evident to say that, as a man, my own perceptions of masculinity come into play in my engagement with my co-researchers. In a quantitative approach, I would be rue to admit any biases and, insofar as any existed, it would be incumbent on me to eliminate them. However, the methodology that I have selected suggests that my biases not only exist, but
play a part in the construction of meaning within the context of the data and their interpretation (Pope & Denicolo, 1986). Tappan (1990) suggests that "not only must the text be engaged in its own personal and historical context, but the interpreter must also acknowledge his own perspective and point of view" (p.248). This acknowledging is what I now intend.

My experiences of being male no doubt began at birth. Kaufman (1993) tells the story of his son being born and, as he stared through his tears at his newborn son, the nurse said "what a strong little fella" (p.17). He was surprised by the fact that his tiny and vulnerable child had already been assigned a role and a place in the world of the masculine. This infant, born in a manner like most male and female children, was already having his actions interpreted in context of his gender. If Kaufman's child had been a daughter, would her struggle have been ignored and the focus been put on her pretty thin layer of hair? We cannot know for certain, but I suspect that this would have been the case.

When I was young my father worked outside of the home and my mother worked within. I grew up as a child of my mother, with my father being someone whom I saw
occasionally in the evenings, as well as on weekends. He had not known his father very well due to my grandfather having fought in the Second World War, and so wanted to spend time with both myself and my sister. As a result, we spent long weekends together as a family either at the cottage, or camping. He also spent time engaged with me in my hobbies and interests, including spending several months as the coach of my hockey team when I was 14. In this respect, I feel different from those men who report their fathers as being distant and uninvolved in their lives. At the same time, I am aware of a feeling that my father was not a particularly emotional being.

I concur with Chodorow's (1978) suggestion that men who grow up with women as their primary care-takers must engage in a process of separation in order to assert their identity. This deep seated connection between masculine identity and the need for separateness leaves men with a fear of being engulfed in relationships, and with a concomitant fear of expressing emotions that might leave them vulnerable. My experience of growing up was that I did not express emotions, indeed was unaware of any feelings of vulnerability or sadness. Like many adolescents, I was
full of confidence (arrogance some would say) and almost nothing could disturb me.

As a boy I remember being afraid of any suggestion that I might be a girl, or involved in girlish things. Although I do not have memories of having much of a sense of what it meant to be masculine, I have very clear memories of knowing what it meant to not be masculine.

I recall getting into a fight with a classmate when I was 8. We were in the school yard at lunch time, both of us needing to be home to eat. As we rolled and tumbled I was suddenly lifted off of him. As if in a dream I recall being thrown up against the school wall by his father who was slapping me over and over and bellowing: "what are you doing to my son?"

When he finished I crept home and sat at the kitchen table. My mother was cooking. The phone rang. It was my friend's father. When my mother came back to the kitchen she asked me if I had been beating up on "John". When I told her that I had, she became angry and began to tell me that fighting was not the way to resolve conflicts. Or some such thing. I do not remember the details.
To this day my mother cannot understand why I didn't say something, either when I got home, or after she began scolding me, about what my friend's father had done to me. Not a single one of my male friends has any trouble understanding. Despite being but 8, I already understood what it meant to lose a fight, to be dominated, to tattletale.

I am married to a woman whom I have been with for nine years. She is intelligent and motivated and I try to support her work insofar as I am able. We talk openly and at length about our relationship and ourselves, and in this respect I feel some distance from men who feel that women are incomprehensible or part of another species.

At the same time, I grew up being tremendously sexist. I delighted in upsetting women by talking about male superiority. Straight-faced, I spoke of a woman's place being in the kitchen, with no escape save a hall connected to the bedroom. As a teenager, I was aware of some sort of truth in these comments, some form of superiority that was, for reasons unclear, my birthright as a male. I had several close male friends and a variety of girlfriends, and thought neither of
the reasons for this birthright, nor the costs that I might have to pay in order to acquire and maintain it.

It was not until university that I was confronted with any serious questions about these issues. During training for a peer counselling job at the University of Toronto Sexual Education Centre, I said good-bye to one of the women there, and in the process called her doll. Her response was to tell me to blow it out my ear. I felt hurt, but when I turned to my male friend for help he did not side with me. He felt, as she did, that my words were an expression of a deep seated belief, a belief that women were inferior to men, deserving only of references like doll or kid or babe. This was the beginning of my introduction to feminism, and to the women and men who believed that such deep seated beliefs need to be challenged.

At this point in my life, I consider myself a feminist, in that I believe that our social structure is predominantly patriarchal and that women have been, and continue to be, oppressed in all walks of life. It has not been an easy road from there to here, but it has been educational; And one of the things that it has brought me more in touch with is the costs of my male birthright.
I will now turn to addressing several of the questions that I brought with me to each interview. In my experience, being a man brings with it both benefits and costs, both expectations and rewards. I do not deny the existence of the rewards and benefits as I hear some in the men's movement doing, but neither do I take lightly the expectations and costs that are commensurate with the rewards as I hear some in the feminist movement doing (I am reminded of a woman whom I saw at the Pacific National Exhibition wearing a button that said 'Cry Me A River White Boy').

I have felt the force of the expectation that I be strong, not back down in a fight, take care of my sister and mother. When I was young my father left early from our vacation to return to work, telling me as he left to take care of my mother and sister. That I was unable to on several occasions, despite the reality of being but five or six, had an impact on me that I cannot underestimate. I was weak. I would never be able to wear the mantle of manhood at this rate. My shame went deep.

I feel confused about how I am supposed to act as a man. I feel both the pleasure and satisfaction of those around me when I am strong, but I also have a
sense of having done something wrong. Life often seems to me as a double-edged sword, wherein I am damned if I do and damned if I don't. I do not suggest that my wife or my sister do not experience something similar in their being women. At the same time, I do believe that components of my experience are tied to my being male.

In regards to work, I recall as a child wanting more than anything else in the world to be able to see where my father worked. My mother recounts a conversation that I had with a family friend who was older and bigger than me, but whom I had been able to convince that I was bigger. The conversation went as follows:

Tracy: Lawrence, Why are you so little?
Lawrence: Because I'm a great big boy.
T: But Lawrence, why are you so little in your shoes?
L: Because I can't go to CBL Toronto.

My father worked for the CBC in Toronto where the local television station was known as CBLT. It seems clear that I had already internalized the connection between being male and having work. I feel that I have grown beyond this by now but then again, I am presently employed.
Procedure

Pilot Studies. Before engaging in the research proper, a number of pilot studies were undertaken to clarify the most provocative questions and to allow me to improve my interviewing skills. Questions were drawn from the literature and from my experiences of being male. A semi-structured interview was chosen over a non-structured interview because of Rutherford's (1988) concern that as heterosexual men we have "inherited a language which can define the lives and sexualities of others, but fails us when we have to deal with our own heterosexuality and masculine identities" (p. 22). It was hoped that a measure of structure would help to alleviate this problem.

The final set of questions was arrived at by determining which questions allowed for respondents to "illustrate their answers with exemplars so that their own personal interpretation of words becomes evident" (Pope & Denicolo, 1986). As well, the respondents in the pilot interviews were asked for their feedback about the usefulness of the questions. This information was given weight when determining the final questions.
Co-researchers. All co-researchers were volunteers who responded to either an advertisement in the Simon Fraser University (SFU) newspaper The Peak, or to posters placed by the researcher around the campuses of SFU and the University of British Columbia (see Appendix A). The poster and the advertisement all highlighted the following criteria: participants were to be white heterosexual males between twenty-five and thirty-five.

The intention here was not to exclude homosexual men or men of other races; Nor was the intention to suggest that other men do not experience masculinity or have issues with their experience of masculinity. As noted in the Introduction, it has been just this group of straight white men that has been studied as the norm, as Mankind. My intention here was to turn that assumption of normalcy on its head and to approach straight white middle-class masculinity as itself problematic.

Each man phoned the researcher and was informed of the time commitment, issues of confidentiality, and his right to refuse to participate in any aspect of the research. Demographic information about the co-researcher's sex, age, sexual orientation, education,
marital status and parents' status was collected at this time. In all cases the men agreed to be part of the research.

In selecting these men, Colaizzi's (1978) criteria for appropriate co-researchers were applied: each individual must have experience with the topic; each individual must be able to articulate the experience.

The Interview. Each co-researcher was involved in one interview of roughly two hours. Each man signed two copies of a consent form (see Appendix B) at the beginning of the interview and was invited to ask any questions about the form before the interview began. After the interviews had been analyzed, a summary of the common themes, along with comments from each man which referred to the theme at hand, was sent to each of the co-researchers. They were asked to read each of the themes and check a box indicating whether the theme fit for them or not. Comments were also requested, and each co-researcher obliged by including many comments. A letter accompanied the thematic summary, instructing the co-researchers as to what was expected of them (see Appendix D).

The interviews were semi-structured open interviews in which the co-researchers were asked to
respond to a series of pre-determined questions (see Appendix C). The interview began with the following introductory statement: The hope of this research is to understand more fully the experience of being a man in this culture at this time in history. Much of what is written today, in journals, newspapers, and books, suggests that many men feel misunderstood. There are also suggestions that men are confused about what direction to take in their lives. And yet few people are bothering to ask the obvious question: What is it like to be a man in today's world. That is what I would like us to look at today.

This was followed by the first of the series of questions, derived from the pilot studies mentioned above. Not all questions, however, were asked of all the men, as the method allows for the researcher to follow a line of discourse that is of significance to the co-researcher (Pope & Denicolo, 1986).

Data Analysis. Each of the interviews was transcribed and the resulting texts were analysed based on Colaizzi's (1978) framework of descriptive research. The transcripts were read over several times, first to gain a general familiarity with the material, then to extract significant statements that were evident in
what was said. Such statements were looked at in terms of the insight, or theme, that they expressed. Possible theme titles were written on cue cards and significant statements, or comments, from each transcript that seemed to fit were written under the headings for that particular transcript. This process was repeated until neither additional themes nor comments that fit with existing themes presented themselves.

The themes within each of the transcripts were then combined into a set of themes that included comments from all of the transcripts. This resulted in a cluster of 21 themes, with agreement between co-researchers ranging from two to all of them.

Interrelationships between the themes were then sought in order to understand more fully the meaning of the themes, and some themes were collapsed, leaving 12 themes with which all co-researchers agreed, two themes with three in agreement, and one theme with four in agreement. With this final cluster of common themes in hand, a final review of each of the transcripts was made to determine both the suitability of the comments selected as representative for each theme, as well as to search for other possible candidate statements for each theme.
From this work, a summary of the themes was presented to the co-researchers as noted above. Their comments were recorded and integrated into the final summary of themes.

Limitations and Assumptions

Given the small number of co-researchers, no claim to generalizability can be made. The results of this study are true for the co-researchers only. At the same time, these results may be used to point the way for further research into men and masculinity (Colaizzi, 1978).

Since this study was based on self-report, the results are limited both to what the co-researchers were able to remember and to what they were willing to report. Although I endeavoured to develop a relationship with the co-researchers that would allow them to speak freely and openly, it is likely that they selectively reported their experiences, beliefs, and feelings. At the same time, the interplay between the five interviews, my own interpretation, and the feedback from the co-researchers, is what is at the heart of this research. It is this interplay that
allows what is meant to be what is said, and what is said to be what is meant.

Finally, I assumed that the co-researchers and I would be able to find a language with which to discuss masculinity. Rutherford (1988) expresses a similar concern in that he has "become aware how heterosexual men have inherited a language which can define the lives and sexualities of others, but fails us when we have to deal with our own heterosexuality and masculine identities" (p. 22). It was the goal of this method to allow the men to talk of their masculinity. It is my hope that this will allow a sufficiently descriptive language to grow.
Chapter Four

Results

This chapter will introduce the themes that resulted from analysis of the transcripts. Each of the themes will be noted, followed by a brief explanation of the theme and illustrative remarks from the transcripts. Each remark will be followed by a roman numeral to denote which transcript is being cited. If the comments are drawn from the co-researcher's responses to the thematic summary, an 's' will follow the roman numeral. For some of the co-researchers' comments, I have inserted a clarifying statement in italics prior to the comment.

The themes are broken into two types: Major themes for which there was unanimous agreement among the co-researchers; Minor themes to which four or fewer of the co-researchers agreed. For the minor themes, the number who agreed is noted following the statement of the theme.
Major Themes

1) The experience of economic responsibility.

This theme is related to what one of the co-researchers identified as 'the 4 A's of masculinity': achieve, achieve, achieve and achieve. This is a sense that men are still expected to have a good job and make money.

Examples of comments that were made are:

--- that even though society is changing so that men are supposedly not expected to be the bread winner to support the family, if my family were to be poor, whose responsibility would that be? (II, p.24-25)

--- you should have a career, you should have money, you should, you should, you should. (III, p.20)

--- you know, if you're a guy and you're making an average salary you feel pretty inadequate. (V, p.3)
2) The experience of outdoor and/or physical activity reinforcing masculinity.

This includes sports, camping activities, physical labour and the like.

Examples of comments that were made are:

-- there is a two person Tai Chi; and I really like that, that aspect of, it's a bit more I don't know if you'd call it aggressive, it can and that has appealed to me. (I, p. 23)

-- doing the heavy physical work reaffirms your masculinity as well, because you are doing something very physical. And you're feeling fine about that (III, p. 41)

-- Physical work - sports etc. reaffirms the pride I have in my strengths (physical) as a male. (IIIs)

-- getting out and sort of like just messing about in the forest in the outdoors and, you know playing with axes and all those male things I mean, it's probably one of the few areas where I could think it's
something that I do that women I know probably didn't do. (IV, p.30-31)

3) The experience of not feeling representative of men in general.

First a brief note on this theme's inclusion as a major theme. In the feedback, co-researcher III ticked the box that says 'this does not fit for me' (see Appendix E). However, I am including this as a major theme because he then goes on to say: "I do have a desire to know how representative my experiences were and whether or not my experiences are common amongst other men. I do not feel that I am representative of men in general." As well, at the end of the thematic summary, he asks: "Am I alone, or in good company, with my responses to the questions?" I suspect that he ticked the 'does not fit' box as he did not see how the comment of his that I quoted from the interview fit with this theme, rather than that he did not agree with it as a theme per se.

This theme is about the co-researchers feeling unsure whether or not their experiences are common to
other men, as well as a desire to know how representative their experiences were.

Examples of comments that were made are:

-- I think it's great to see changes happening, like um, but I don't think I've taken on a lot of the traditional male roles and ideas, I don't think I feel as threatened as a lot of other males might. (I, p.12)

-- White males don't have a lot of cultural currency right now, you know? ... And I see other people who are close to me dealing with a lot of that same kind of pain. Other men, that's kind of where it came from. You know, I told you I said to my wife that there's a real need here. Um, and I don't think I feel that as acutely as some people do. (II, p.29)

-- I do have a desire to know how representative my experiences were and whether or not my experiences are common amongst other men. I do not feel that I am representative of men in general. (III)
-- I don't see myself as having a whole lot of those things um, it doesn't, it's part of why I'm saying I don't think I fit really well what society expects of a male. (IV, p.25)

-- Ties in with not measuring up to masculine models, ideals. (IVs)

4) The experience of encountering conflicting expectations.

This is just what it sounds like; the feeling that, while on the one hand, men are expected to behave in certain ways, there are also messages that men should be behaving in ways that seem either quite the opposite of, or at least in conflict with, the former expectation.

Examples of comments that were made are:

-- (in reference to idea of woman working, her male partner not) some women I think say that would be O.K. but I really I'm not sure if I believe a lot of them, I really don't know, I guess that's one issue where I am fairly confused, I don't know what women think of that in that respect. (I, p.14)
There are so many mixed messages about behaviour and attitudes that it is difficult to keep up. (IIIs)

I tried really hard to overcome what I saw as my weakness, this you know typically male thing of holding everything in and you know being ah, a bit wooden, or, or whatever and unfortunately in this situation it was with somebody who was, that's not what she wanted. (IV, p.41)

they want you to be sensitive and vulnerable, but yet always confident. (V, p.9)

5) Feeling greater safety as a white man in the world than you think others do.

This theme concerns feelings of greater physical safety in the world and fewer concerns about being attacked.

Examples of comments that were made are:

I feel a lot more secure when I walk the streets, I don't have to worry about being accosted or sexual
harassment. You know, I don't worry much about being suppressed, I don't think as women might, so no I think being male I'm very really lucky in a lot of ways. (I, p.7)

-- I know I do things like walking to my car late at night without considering whether or not it is safe to do so (in a place that is safe for me by daylight). I know others do think about this. (IIs)

-- no one is safe anywhere it seems but um, that kind of thing doesn't infringe on my world that often whereas I think it's reinforced for women constantly. (IV, p.5)

-- We are not raised to think of our bodies as "sacred". (Vs)

6) Feeling that as a man, you are a protector.

This theme is about comments made concerning behaviours and attitudes towards women in general, family members, employees and loved ones. The theme
suggests that men accept a certain measure of responsibility for the safety of others. Examples of comments that were made are:

-- males are traditionally warriors in our society, um, males in the ideal sense will sacrifice their lives for women and children, um, maybe I could see myself as being some kind of martyr. (I, p.35-36)

-- I do feel responsible for certain people - if I am in a care giver role (e.g. my kids, my students) or if I am in some other specific power position with respect to them. (IIIs)

-- The overwhelming sense of responsibility to protect home and hearth is as old as time. This can be quite tiring and frustrating at times. (IIIs)

-- (said with reference to getting off a bus late at night along with a woman he does not know)... Or if I got off first I'll walk really fast so that I'll get ahead of her so that you know she won't think I'm gonna turn and do something. (IV, p. 21)
For me, it's more of a sensitivity to not wanting to contribute to women's fears. (IVs)

7) The experience that what is "manliness" is often defined by context.

This theme encompasses several ideas. It suggests that the co-researchers feel that what is considered male changes depending on the people that they are with and how these people react to them. For some of them it contains the idea that what is male is often defined as what is NOT female.

Examples of comments that were made are:

-- the difference is, I see is being a male as opposed to a female is the way society looks at me. So I think that a lot of it comes from out there rather than inside. (I, p.6)

-- The general notion of identity - masculine or otherwise - being contextual seems clear to me even to the extent that identity becomes virtually
meaningless except as understood in relationships. (IIIs)

-- Sometimes you watch women and they have about 15 things going on and everything is just clicking.... But women seem to have this ability, so I think, the inability to do this, or lack thereof, would be uniquely male. (III, p.18)

-- Being in a romantic/sexual relationship...compliments my maleness and masculinity by juxtaposing these traits against the woman's feminine traits. (IIIs, from response to major theme 12)

-- I guess a common way to identify one as a male is trying to determine what's different from being female. (IV, p.3)

-- this is hard to differentiate cause I've so many friends, female friends that aren't representative so it's hard for me to say what makes me feel male. (IV, p.31)
8) The experience that others assume that you are confident and competent because you are a man.

This theme concerns the feeling that men are expected to be confident and in control, to be able to handle stress and pressure, and to handle the various different facets of life.

Examples of comments that were made are:

--- being male you're told that I'm supposed to be aggressive and um confident. (I, p.31)

--- we're bombarded with images that good men don't screw up. They don't ah, they don't say things that forget that there might be homosexuals in the room, they don't say things that assume that, they shouldn't do those things but that, well, we do. (II, p.34)

--- People assume that because you are a man you can handle anything and everything.....This puts so much unnecessary pressure on you. If you can't cope you feel like a failure when you should be saying to yourself "this is too much for me". (IIIs)
what almost everyone looks for in a, in a male
they want someone that is you know, not, not
belligerent not, um, perhaps arrogant or, or um
inconsiderate but they want someone that is very
confident in themselves. (IV, p.24)

When we complain or show vulnerability or self-
doubt we're labeled "immature", "babies". (Vs)

9) *The experience of being unsure of what the "rules of
conduct" are today, and so feeling unsure about how
you will be treated when you go out in the world.*

This theme is about the lack of clarity the co-
researchers feel of what the right or wrong thing is to
do and the experience of not always being able to be
sure how others will react to them when they behave.
Examples of comments that were made are:

-- there's no more seats on the bus and a woman gets
on the bus now do you get up um, does it cross your
mind whether or not you should get up ah, it
certainly crosses my mind, I kinda look and now is
this somebody who's gonna be offended, is this somebody who's gonna be grateful? (II, p.13)

-- I think you really have to be careful, you have to be very, very careful. You um, you don't offend, but then you don't want to ah, how should I put it, ah, you don't want to offend anybody, but then again, you don't want to subjugate or denigrate your own, or lose anything of your own position in the in the world. (III, p.4)

-- so it's really hard to know what to do, which, which game do you play and...it seems that um a bunch of us are gonna get caught in the middle with this uncertainties about what the new roles are. (IV, p.27)

-- if I just knew what the rules were, and they were set, then I could just follow along. But if the rules keep changing on me, and and they're continuously being stacked against me, then uh, what how do I play the game you know? (V, p.5)
10) The feeling that there are many images of men in our culture but few, if any, fit for you, or express your viewpoint.

This theme contains both the experience that, in our culture, we are flooded with different images of men and at the same time the co-researchers do not really see themselves represented in those images. Examples of comments that were made are:

-- (in response to my asking what prompted him to take part in the research) I always think well nobody ever asked me or people take a poll and they never ask me, so it's a chance for me to you know put my two bits worth. (I, p.3)

-- while there's these images that we're all faced with um and respond to in one way or another um, many of those images don't represent who we are and ah, and sometimes that leaves us responding in, in ways that are I guess, feel quite um fragmented. (II, p.10-11)

-- it is not a matter of confusion, but of constantly negotiating identity within contexts that promote
various conceptions more or less (or not at all). As much as it is constraining, this also sets forth many potentials. (IIIs)

-- There is so many different role models and things out there that it's difficult to identify with anyone of them. You have one version of manhood or masculinity and then, I like to say a Hollywood version, and then you perhaps have other versions in your own family or or whatnot, other versions in the printed in the printed media. (III, p.4-5)

-- Men are not well represented in the mass media. Who do you identify with? Perhaps it is our fear that prevents men from being portrayed accurately in our culture. Fear that once the secret is out, we won't be in control anymore. The big news flash is that men are seldom in complete control of anything in their lives. (IIIs)

-- (the they here refers to women looking for a partner) the look keeps changing like sometimes they want Alan Alda or Phil Donahue and then they want Rambo and they want Kevin Costner. (V, p.7)
11) The experience that, in relationships with other men, the intimate sharing of emotions is not prevalent.

For some of the co-researchers, this is about remarking on instances when they or another man shares deeply emotional stuff. For some of them this is about not having the kinds of experiences where they would share deep emotions with another man. For some of them this is about the experience of sometimes going for extended periods without seeing their male friends. For some of them this includes the experience of not experiencing close physical contact with other men. Examples of comments that were made are:

-- I know that I find it remarkable when I make a male friend, who I can talk to very intimately, very personally, um, and I don't think I remark, I find that as remarkable when it is a woman. (II, p.55-56)

-- I have maybe 1 or 2 and I don't see them every day, I don't phone them every day, you know, once a week or something. And that's fine, I'm happy with that. (III, p.14-15)
talked with him for about an hour and a half or two hours about personal stuff and it, I was very aware that this is very uncommon that, that guys just don't get distraught that often, they can get angry but not sad or you know really distressed. (IV, p.37)

this is probably one of your better known themes and I think it is very true. (IVs)

if I'm friends with a guy or something and I haven't talked to him in years and he phones me up all of a sudden and says "hey wanna watch a, you know wanna watch a football game or something and uh it's no big deal, I'm not gonna say uh "why haven't you phoned me in (laugh) all this time". (V, p.19)

12) The experience that men gain strength from being in a sexual relationship with a woman.

This theme suggests that men can feel a greater sense of confidence being with a woman. For some of the co-researchers this also includes an increased feeling of masculinity as a result of being with a woman. It includes the benefits of their sexual experiences. It
also includes the experience of feeling less confident, more lonely, less male, without a woman. Examples of comments that were made are:

-- the last relationship that I was in, it was good because... I felt like you know my lover felt like I was a really good lover... I feel more confident in myself being sexual, as far as in being a lover and that is, I guess that's important, that's another issue on male I guess and masculinity is whether you are a good lover. (I, p. 30-31)

-- Of course, the little sex thing does (laugh), that's I mean that's just icing on the cake, you know, its certainly a great part of it too. There are so many avenues you can pursue that way. That that reaffirms your masculinity, or enhances your masculinity and ah, and by the same token, reaffirms and enhances her femininity. (III, p.44)

-- I think being desired, accepted, loved is more a factor than the actual sex (although that certainly does impact on me). (IVs)
We can't just have self-confidence just for uh you know just from our own manhood, we need to have it reinforced by being around you know people, especially women who give us the self-confidence. (V, p.17)

Minor Themes

1) The experience that positive changes are happening.

[Three in agreement]

This theme is, as it says, about the fact that there are some positive changes coming out of the general changes that are happening to society. Examples of comments that were made are:

-- I'm an individual and I might find that, it means there'd be better chances that there will be an individual who, that, will have the same expectations as me, or that I might meet someone who is more open to different things. (I, p.16)

-- There are many very positive aspects of even the more traditional conceptions of maleness and even more so in current society that allows so many ways
of being "male" to be recognized and accepted, even rewarded in some ways that would not have been some years ago. (IIIs)

-- It lets everybody explore and to pursue what they themselves are interested in and what they feel that they are good at. There aren't these restrictions and I think that is a great thing has come out of the feminist movement or in modern times. (III, p.12)

-- Hopefully, the expectations for men to be the provider, protector, and stoic respectable individual will come to an end soon. (IIIs)

2) Feeling unsure if a particular trait is "male" or "human". [Three in agreement]

Again, this theme is self explanatory. Comments included in this theme are of the character of "but I can't be sure if my hesitation is about being male, or just because I'm a human being."

Examples of comments that were made are:

-- it's all tied up, and I think it's all quite messy, you know, how much of it is really maleness
and how much is this culture, traditional roles that we've taken on for years and it's just been reinforced. (I, p.38)

-- (said in context of his talking about holding a position of power in a company) it's getting back to that whether it's a masculine thing or a power thing, or if it makes you feel good as a man or as a human being in the position of power. (III, p.41)

-- I mean something makes me feel self confident but I, I don't know which things separate just general human confidence and and so on from male confidence. (IV, p.31)

3) The experience that you are perceived as one of the group of victimizers. [Four in agreement].

This theme addresses experiences of either having personally been perceived of as a threat, or of feeling that, because they are men, they are lumped in with "those who victimize."

Examples of comments that were made are:
(said in context of talking about the various images of men that exist today) that images of the man as the quintessential victimizer. (II, p.12)

they seem to be branding all men as uh as potential aggressors and ah, as violent people .....I feel alienated. I feel misunderstood, and I feel offended that, uh it might sound a little cliché, flip or even cavalier, but no one I know is like that. You know, most guys are sympathetic, and uh, you know, caring, compassionate individuals. (III, p.7)

Have been verbally abused on the basis that "as a male [I] tend to dominate debate". (IVs)

you're treated either as a genderless person or as a potential rapist. You know as if as if our you know male heterosexuality is something uh something disgusting. (V, p.23)
Chapter Five

Discussion

This chapter will begin with a re-statement of the purpose of the study, followed by a discussion of the results. The implications of the results for counselling and for future research directions will then be explored.

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to understand, from the perspective of a small group of young white heterosexual men, the experience of being male. The research question that was asked was: what is it like to be a man in this place, at this time in history? A phenomenological methodology was employed in order to probe the experience of these men at the level of meaning.

Analysis of the interview transcripts and the feedback from the co-researchers yielded 12 themes for which all of the men were in agreement, as well as two themes that received endorsement from three of the men, and one theme that received endorsement from four of the co-researchers.
Summary and Discussion of Results

Each of the themes yielded by the analysis will be discussed in turn. The 12 major themes will be discussed first, followed by the three minor themes. An effort will be made to explore the underlying meaning of each theme for the co-researchers. As noted in the Methodology, part of the value of the phenomenological approach is that it allows us into the meaning of the experiences of the co-researchers. It is in the present chapter that the richness of this approach will become evident.

Where relevant, relationships will be drawn between the different themes and between the present research and the literature reviewed in chapter two.

In order to make this chapter more readable, names have been assigned to the five co-researchers. Co-researchers one through five will be referred to as Al, Bob, Cam, Don, and Evan respectively. Also, I feel that it is important to note that, of the five co-researchers, four returned feedback to me. I was unable to locate Al when it came time to mail out the thematic summaries. His comments are drawn solely from his interview.
The experience of economic responsibility and expectations. For all five of the co-researchers, this theme fit. However, both the impact and the origins of this social expectation varied. Cam perceived it as absurd. In response to my question concerning the social expectations that he experienced he said: "...some of them are just so far gone and so out of touch with today's...ways of thinking and for this era that it's not even funny." He goes on to discuss the economic realities of the twilight of the 20th Century, the fact of high unemployment, and the need for two incomes in a family. Cam feels the expectation, but his response is to say 'oh come on!' He does not allow the expectation to have much impact on him.

Bob, the only one of the four who is married, makes reference to this theme, as noted in the Results, in context of his family. In his feedback, Bob asserts that his response was intended as an explication of a social expectation and not his own belief. It is unclear to what degree this expectation actually impacts upon his experience of himself. However, he also makes note, in his feedback, of recent media coverage "regarding 'dead beat dads'; men who skip child support. But little about men who are emotionally
absent. It is our financial presence that gets attention."

Al, Don, and Evan all make reference to this theme in context of their romantic relationships, or lack thereof, with women. Al speaks of the women his age as being primarily single mothers, and that they, understandably, want someone who is financially stable, someone who can provide. Being unemployed, this leaves him feeling inadequate. He states:

"I count myself out when I meet a woman. I say to myself 'well, you know, I don't have a nice car and I don't have a house and all these material comforts to offer so immediately she's not even gonna want to consider me'."

However, he then goes on to tell a story of a situation in which he made this assumption and was wrong. The woman ended up asking him out. His economic status was not as important to her as he had believed it to be.

Don, in his feedback, notes it "appears many, if not most, women look for [economic stability] also. Just look at the 'personal ads'." He feels this expectation from both women and society as a whole. For him, the expectation leaves him feeling a lack of
confidence since he does not measure up. As well, this expectation is tied up with a feeling that he is being penalized by the job market for being a white male. For him, the combination of the continued expectation to excel economically and the injunction that equality can only be reached if women are hired over men, leaves him feeling bitter.

Evan's comments are very similar. He, too, talks of the expectation specifically in context of women wanting men who are financially stable, also making reference to personal ads in which he perceives women as "being very picky. They say financially secure, which we know means rich." His experience is that he is not appreciated for himself. He states explicitly that "men get no appreciation or recognition unless we achieve." And like Don, he relates this to the expectation that men of this generation should give up opportunities so that women can forge ahead. He is left with a feeling that things as they stand are unfair.

Al also makes reference to this theme in context of his relationship with his father. He says:

I worry a lot about what my parents think about me, my father because I didn't get a trade and I haven't been working since high
school and I feel like I am a disappointment to my father.

We may conclude that, although each man experiences this expectation, it has differential impacts on each of them. One noteworthy item is Al's story of the woman whose actions contradicted his assumption that she would not want him because he was not working. We are left wondering how representative are the personal ads, or what each woman's motivation is for wanting financially secure men. What seems clear is that this expectation is still a part of this culture.

In context of the literature, we see that men today continue to experience an expectation that they behave like a male machine (Fasteau, 1975). It also supports the writings of O'Neil (1982), where he speaks of the Masculine Mystique focusing on achieving and succeeding in career matters, and those of Brannon (1976), in that the co-researchers experienced an expectation to be what Brannon (1976) would term a Big Wheel. Of interest are the different responses to this expectation and the focus of three of the co-researchers on this expectation as having specifically
to do with their potential romantic relationships with women.

In context of contemporary culture, this theme seems strikingly significant. I think particularly of the recent vociferous calls for the elimination of affirmative action programs and the election in the United States of Newt Gingerich and other strong right wing politicians. Perhaps these events would not be so pronounced were it not for the fact that many young white middle class men still feel the expectation to achieve, achieve, achieve. In context of this expectation as part of the male experience, as part of what it means to be a man in society's eyes, such events make more sense. It seems a clear double message to both ask these individuals to willingly make space for others' success and at the same time continue to tell them that they are expected to succeed in the same way as before. I suggest that this is a recipe for disaster and backlash. If we are to expect such men to buy into processes like affirmative action, we need to do away with the social expectation of their economic success.
Physical/Outdoor activity and masculinity. All five of the men supported this theme, with several caveats. In his feedback, Bob states:

I don't believe I look for the jock image. It is more a matter of a sense of self-assurance—approaching 'good old' ideals of individualism—that are reinforced when I take time for physical activity.

At the same time, he says in the interview that "most of the things I push myself in are [men's stuff]", men's stuff being a reference to those things which are traditionally considered within the male domain, like backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, and mountaineering. He also expresses a concern that, as masculinity and "the whole thing about being a man" is critiqued, such very positive activities not have the critique's "negative light or the negative shadow" cast on them. Bob indicates that he feels angry when such activities are put down or dismissed as part of the critique of masculinity.

In his feedback, Don comments that he does not see this area as exclusively masculine in that he knows women who engage competently in outdoor activities. This gets at one of the difficulties inherent in this
study, which is the way in which masculinity is defined by the co-researchers. We will look at this in more detail below.

There are also deeper elements of this theme that bear investigating. Cam played hockey almost to the professional level, and talked about the sense of being part of a team and the bonding and commitment that resulted. This supports Messner's (1987) assertion that one of the things that men want to get out of sports is a sense of camaraderie. At the same time, Cam notes that he needed that when he was young, but that as an adult, anything that all-consuming would be too invasive in his life. We will return to this when discussing friendships.

Both Cam and Don talk about, as Cam puts it, "the last person picked on the team crushing blow scenario." For both of them, being good at sports has enhanced their confidence. The flip side of this is that not doing well at sports lowered their sense of confidence. We can relate this back to the issue of achievement, and the feeling that a man is judged in terms of what he can do, how he can perform. This also lends support to Messner's (1987) findings.
Bob touches on several interesting issues in his interview. He notes that his son comes to him when he wants to play, or be rough, but to Bob's wife when he wants to be nurtured. He states:

Now I'm sure that there's stuff that I have done that...we've done that have nurtured that or done that or socialized him that way (Interviewer: Right.). But, um, so I am aware of that and ah, as much as I try to say 'well I'm a new age male and I'm gonna do all that stuff differently than the guys before me did', ultimately it's pretty much the same.

What is interesting here is that Bob touches on the communication of values here, of the value of play and roughhousing and its connection to masculinity.

Don also helps us to focus on this. In responding to my question about experiences in the home that gave him a sense of maleness, he says, with reference to his father, that "watching him in the outdoors and so on was a lot of what my awareness was of you know being male I guess." There is a suggestion that this information was transmitted from father to son through action. At the same time there is a sense of ambivalence both here and later in the transcript,
which relates back to the issue above concerning definitions of masculinity.

Representativeness. An underlying element of this theme for Al, Bob, and Cam is their sense that each is more emotionally available, or bristles less, or is more sensitive, respectively, than other men. My experience of all of the men in this study was that they were sensitive and thoughtful and tolerant. I am left wondering if there are not many men like them, but for certain reasons we do not know this. That is, I am left wondering how representative they are. We will return to this below. It is interesting, however, that this does support the results of Moore and Nuttall's (1981) research which found that men see the typical male as instrumental and inexpressive and themselves as different.

Don, in his feedback, says that this "tie[s] in with not measuring up to masculine models, ideals. I'm poor, underweight, not sexually experienced, etc. Don't know if this is the rule or the exception." In summing up the interview, he says:

A lot of the problem I have in trying to analyze my experiences is the problem of comparing it to anyone else (I: uh-huh). I
sure don't wanna compare it to the ideal or the, you know, the messages that we get from society, but it would sure be nice to know what are the common experiences.

This connects with Don's comments above about having trouble deciding what is masculine behaviour. Not knowing the norm, he has trouble deciding where he stands.

This echoes Cam's question at the end of his feedback about how his responses fit with those of the other men. We see here a genuine desire to have a sense of how they fit in as men.

For Evan, this is related to "what we hear from mass media. Being a male should be really easy (our group is in power). That makes insecurity worse, and feelings of being alone in my problems." This takes us to a deeper emotional level, and goes along with one of Don's comments that this not knowing makes it hard for him to figure out where and how he 'fits'. It is also relevant to the theme of expectations of confidence below.

Bob provides us with a useful caveat in his feedback, saying that he is "cautious here in that I would not expect anyone to be representative of a group
in general." I too am cautious, and do not want to suggest that there is in fact any 'in general'. And yet something clearly is going on here. I believe that there are two salient points to make.

First, if we refer back to Fasteau's (1975) assertions concerning masculinity, we find that he argues that much of the pain of being a male is the result of our socialized need to compete. Now competition means winning, and in order to win one needs to hold one's cards close to the chest as it were. An ethic of competition could be seen to lead to a situation in which the competitors do not know, indeed ought not to know, what and how each other is doing until the competition is over and the prize is awarded. It is only after the football team wins the Grey Cup that we hear of the extent of the injuries to the star quarterback. It is only once the battle is won that we learn that the victors had fewer missiles than they claimed. In terms of winning, it is suicide to admit weakness. If both I and my colleague John are vying for the same promotion, I do not disclose to him that I need help in a particular area of the job. Indeed, in all of these instances, one will exaggerate
the superiority of one's position relative to the others.

Of course, in order to know how each other is doing, we must share of ourselves with one another, and that is the second point. We will return to this issue when talking about friendship. For now, it is interesting to note that this fits with O'Neil's (1982) themes of avoiding intimacy with other men and, to some extent, seeking help from others, if we can conceive of "reaching out to learn what is typical" as a form of seeking help. It is at least an action that leaves one vulnerable. In this respect, it indicates some support for Brannon's (1976) theme of No Sissy Stuff, although here it is more a matter of leaving oneself vulnerable or admitting a need rather than not behaving in a feminine manner.

Experiencing conflicting expectations. One underlying experience, represented by Don and Evan's comments, relates to the conflicting expectations of women towards men, and how difficult it is therefore to know how to behave in relation to women. This causes problems for both of them in that they are left not knowing what is the best way to behave. Further, Evan
ends up feeling isolated and lonely as a result of these conflicting expectations.

For Al, the conflicting expectations are confusing, but he looks forward to them as a challenge. As well, he sees the conflict as holding out hope that he will be able to meet a woman who will fit him specifically. He notes that he is "not as concerned with, you know, too worried about, society in general because when I meet someone, you know, I can be an individual with them." Cam echoes these sentiments in his feedback, saying: "more importantly, I think, is that one should trust his instincts and do what he feels good about in any given situation."

Two points seem significant here. First, we note that the experience of conflicting expectations can lead to different secondary experiences. Second, we note that Al, Don, and Evan all locate the experience of conflicting expectations in their relationships with women.

This theme indicates support for Moore and Nuttall's (1981) conclusion that "males are indeed confronted by contradictory demands and expectations" (p. 324).
Feeling greater safety as a white man. Only three of the co-researchers made comments in the interviews that supported this theme. However, all five agreed that it fit for them in their feedback. Both Don and Evan note that they have read articles that suggest that statistically, most violence is committed against men. For Don, this leaves him wondering if he is just deluding himself since he lacks negative experiences with violence. For Evan, whose support for this theme is derived solely from his feedback, it comes down to ignoring issues of safety. In his feedback, he says: "I have to do whatever needs to get done and can't afford to worry about my own safety. We are not raised to think of our bodies as 'sacred'."

Bob, whose support is also derived solely from his feedback, talks of something similar. He says:

I do things like walking to my car late at night without considering whether or not it is safe to do so (in a place that is safe for me by daylight). I know others do think about this.

For all three of these men there is a sense that it is not so much that they are in actual fact more safe, but that they feel that way, or don't think about it.
O'Neil (1982) suggests that part of the Male Mystique is being in control of one's environment. Perhaps it is the case that in being socialized to expect ourselves to be in control, we end up putting ourselves at risk by not considering, or not being willing to admit, the risk. Or, again, perhaps what we have here is related to Brannon's (1976) theme of No Sissy Stuff. It would belie weakness to admit that we are in danger and so, due to our conditioning as men, we do not.

Another component of this may be just what Evan suggests, that we are not raised to think of our bodies as sacred. I believe that such a belief is of critical importance to the continuation of what I see as our violence obsessed culture. I cannot think of more than two or three men that I know who I could not goad into a fist fight. If we as men saw our bodies as sacred and felt concern for our safety, who would fight the wars? Who would be the cannon fodder? To encourage men in such a sacred direction is to challenge the underlying order of the military industrial system itself.

Feelings of being a protector. For Bob and Don the theme fits for them, although the specific word protector did not. I think that I selected this word in
large measure, with reference to my own experiences. Don says that for him it is only partly true. In his feedback he says: "for me, it's more of a sensitivity to not wanting to contribute to women's fears." Bob is explicit about feeling a sense of responsibility in situations in which he holds a power position with respect to others, rather than a general sense of being a protector.

In the interview, Cam talks about a similar experience around power. He has held jobs in which he had power over others, and he states:

You know, you really should just, I think, it's more manly to use that power...to the good of people than to use it selfishly or as a weapon against against other individuals."

Cam feels more a man when he uses power for the good of others. In his feedback, Cam takes a broader approach to the theme and talks of the frustration that comes from "the overwhelming sense of responsibility to protect home and hearth."

For both Al and Evan, this theme takes on a violent tone. Al says that, if someone were to attack his girlfriend he "would do everything to stop that. I could kill a person if I thought they were gonna harm
someone." Evan did not have comments that fit this theme, but agreed that it did fit for him and refers back to his comments in the previous item. There he says: "if we get hurt physically we move on and must not make excuses to avoid risk." Both of these men's comments suggest a willingness to risk being hurt in order to protect others.

This sense of responsibility towards others, Don's sensitivity towards women, Cam's and Bob's desires to use power to the benefit others, is not something that is much mirrored in the literature. It does not appear in Brannon's (1976) social construction of masculinity, nor is it part of O'Neil's (1982) Masculine Mystique. Indeed, most of the literature reviewed for the present research focuses on the negative aspects of the construction of masculinity and the negative personal and social outcomes of the construction.

**Manliness is contextual.** As is evident in the Results, this theme has two distinct elements. Al, Cam, and Don all make explicit reference to that which is masculine being that which women do not do. In Evan's interview, this element is implicit. When I ask him about the ways that men interact, he attempts to illustrate how men would behave by talking about how
women behave and then indicating that men would not do that.

For both Al and Don, this makes it problematic for them to say what makes them feel male. After asking Al about his experiences in recreational activities that connect him with his sense of maleness, he says:

Yea, it's just that it's so slippery because sometimes I do something like that which I feel is putting myself in touch with my masculinity but there's always an exception to the rule like I'll see a woman and she can be just like that too. Um, but so still you know, still if I feel it's, you know, being in touch with my maleness that's what it is, I guess. Um, God, I don't know! Sometimes, sometimes I just wish gender wasn't an issue at all.

Also in response to my question about recreational activities, Don says: "that is hard to differentiate cause I've so many friends, female friends that aren't representative (I: Yea) so it's hard for me to say what makes me feel male."

Note that they are not saying that women do things and so this makes it difficult to say what it is that
might be theoretically defined as male. They are saying that, when women behave in a certain way, it is hard for them to then say what makes them feel male. This is a significant difference, and relates to what Mishkind et al. (1986) talk about with reference to the world of work, and the idea that the entrance of women into male fields of endeavour was a challenge to masculinity itself.

It should be noted that Bob does not agree with the idea of what is male being what is not female. In his feedback he states:

This part I do not agree with. It is often a matter of being defined in relation to female--but not usually or even very much in opposition to female.

What does fit for Bob is the experience that what is male changes depending on who one is with. This is also true of the other men's experience.

Assumptions of confidence/competence. This theme was the result of collapsing two themes, one of which concerned assumptions of confidence, the other assumptions of competence. The two were collapsed because the issues blended well.
The impact that such assumptions have on the men varies somewhat, but comes down to a core of essential elements. For Al, the expectation leaves him feeling uncomfortable that he does not demonstrate such confidence. Evan feels this as a burden, and feels that as a man he is given the impossible task of being expected to always be confident. In his feedback he specifically relates this to his experiences with women wherein he has shown his more vulnerable side only to be labeled "immature" or "a baby."

Don's experience with this also has to do with his relationships with women. He feels that on dates women are expecting him to be the initiator, to be assertive. However, he does not feel confident in this arena and so ends up feeling like "a gutless wonder." At the same time, he states in his feedback that this theme is also a more general social expectation. He perceives business as wanting a self-confident go-getter.

Cam says that this assumption "puts so much unnecessary pressure on you. If you can't cope you feel like a failure." In his interview he talks of being expected to handle stress and pressure just because he is male.
In a lighter, but related vein, Bob talks of feeling embarrassed not knowing the rules of hockey. The knowledge, he jokingly suggests:

you know it comes with certain kinds of hormones or something, I don't know. But you know there is definitely that expectation and that equation of masculine equals male equals boys' interests."

This theme is present in both O'Neil's (1982) Masculine Mystique and Brannon's (1975) theme of The Big Wheel. It also supports Isenhart and Silversmith's (1994), and others' (Eisler & Blalock, 1991; Pleck, 1981; Skord & Schumacher, 1982) contentions that there can be significant negative fallout for men who do not fit the assumption of constant confidence.

There is a connection here between this theme and that of representativeness. Recall that there was a link between not knowing how one fits in and an ethic of competition. The presence of this stereotype of complete confidence means that men may imagine that other men actually perform at such a level. And if competition is the rule, then these men are unlikely to admit to others that they are not totally confident and competent.
**Feeling unsure of the rules.** This theme, as several of the co-researchers noted, has striking similarities to the theme of conflicting expectations. There are several distinctions. First, I believe that there is something for men in needing to know what the rules are. I would argue that part of the male fascination with sports is the satisfaction of seeing activities carried out according to the rules. Second, the word 'rules' was specifically mentioned by several of the co-researchers although no question about rules was asked. Third, the issue of conflicting expectations is more about an experience of thinking and wondering about the many societal expectations. The present theme is more about interpersonal interactions and being unsure how one will be treated by others. This latter element is a result of the collapsing of what were initially two themes, one concerning rules, the other concerning this uncertainty of how one will be treated.

An important point from Bob's feedback concerns the issue of ambiguity under the conflicting societal expectations and uncertainty about rules. He states that he wants "to be clear here as with [the theme of conflicting expectations] that while there is a great deal of ambiguity in male roles, this is preferable to
having some monolithic portrayal." For Bob, he would rather the "constant assessment" that he refers to than a single definition of what the rules of manhood are.

For Cam and Don and Evan, not knowing the rules, and hence whether one is going to be 'penalized' for a particular action or not is difficult. Early in his interview, Cam refers to the male experience as being one in which "you really have to be careful." He goes on to talk about his perception of feminism having created a wedge between the sexes. When I ask him about his experience of being on the male side of this wedge he says:

You have to be cautious and you feel alienated and ah, you feel you have to have this wall around you and keep certain individuals, or people, at arm's length. You can't bring them in so you're, you know, you're missing out.

Don talks of his experience that the rules are constantly changing, and his confusion about the right way to behave. He also talks about other men that he sees who are coping by being sexist when it's only men who are around, but speak in feminist tones when women are present. He says that "until we have some agreement
over what's appropriate, um, it's gonna be tough for somebody." It seems clear from his interview that he is going to be one of the ones for whom it is going to be tough.

Evan also talks about other men who can "play both sides depending on the company they keep." He is frustrated, and indeed bitter, that he seems to keep losing out to these types of men when it comes to dating women. He also experiences an expectation that he is supposed to figure out the rules.

This is not something that, in this form, is supported in the literature, presumably because of the nature of the question being asked here. In asking what the experience is of being a man, rather than how they feel about certain traits or characteristics, we are able to see more deeply into that experience and the meanings and feelings that go along with it.

The many images of men. This theme is the result of the collapsing of two themes, one of which was specifically about images, and one of which was originally called 'my opinion should count'.

As with the previous theme, Bob repeats a concern that the plethora of images, the ambiguity, not be seen solely in a negative light. For him it presents many
potentials. He expresses a concern in his feedback that he not be portrayed "as if what I am looking for is the one true image of maleness by which I can measure myself." What seems clear from his interview is that the presence of these many images leaves him feeling fragmented. It is also a concern that he expresses about his son. At the end of his answer to my question about what he feels that his son needs to know about growing up male in this society, he says:

so yeah, I mean, I think it's [about] trying to keep him whole, not let him be torn apart by trying to balance all these images and be everything at once.

Al notes that there are many images that are available to men. He also says, in response to my asking why he wanted to be involved with the project, that in reading about men and issues of masculinity he thinks "well, nobody ever asked me, or people take a poll and they never ask me." I interpreted this as suggesting that he does not see himself represented in such materials. Evan echoes this experience of feeling that he is never asked about how he feels. Both Bob and Cam talk about how much research is being done on women, and how little on men. Bob says that when he saw
the poster for the present study he said to himself: "now there's a study that needs to be done." Cam says that for him, seeing all the research on women, he ends up feeling misunderstood.

Cam also talks at length about the contemporary portrayals of men on television and radio. He feels that many of the portrayals are of men as buffoons. This leaves him feeling angry and alienated. He also feels worried that young people will see some truth in these portrayals in the same way that he is concerned about the portrayals of women as 'bimboes'. He imagines that his experience would be similar to what women would experience. He finds the portrayals demeaning.

In context of this theme, Al, Bob, Cam, and Don all conclude that the most important response to these many images is to look within oneself and pursue the path that seems right for oneself, regardless of others' perceptions.

As with several of the themes, I believe that this theme offers a keen insight into our culture. I would argue, and here I am drawing partially on comments that Bob made, that it is this plethora of images, each with its concomitant consumer goods, that constitutes the driving force of our capitalist consumerist society.
The variety of images tends to keep us off balance and unsure of ourselves. Should we be the rocker with the motorcycle and the leather jacket, or the yuppie with the condo and the speed boat? Or perhaps we'll settle on the environmentalist with the Birkenstocks and expensive camping gear. Whatever we choose will likely not quite fit, and we will likely start the process again. Disenchantment may not be good for mental health, but it is certainly a boon for the economy.

Of men and friendship. This theme focuses on male-male relationships and, in general, on their emotional character. For Evan, the experience is entirely positive, including the intermittent nature of some of the contact. In his relationships men let bygones be bygones, and do not dwell on the past. As well, he talks positively about the lack of emotional sharing. In responding to my question about friendships he says:

You don't dwell on something unnecessarily.

(I: Hm) You know, 'I share your feelings, I know how, I understand'. You know, we know we understand each other, we don't need to confirm this over and over again.

His comments here also reflect a frustration with women's ways of interacting.
Bob and Don make reference to the fact that they remark when they have an emotionally intimate interaction with another male. They do, however, engage in such interactions with male friends. Cam says that he would not be comfortable talking intimately with another man "because he has never been brought up this way and either have you." At the same time, he is envious of women who "seem to have this huge sistership, this huge group of friends. I have yet to meet a man who has this."

Like Evan, Cam is also satisfied with his intermittent contact with friends. Indeed, he says that he is "almost content to go through life alone." Don, however, is not. He has the following to say:

It's just so many people that I just fall out of contact with so I think 'well then, that must not be a very close relationship' and how come other people do keep contact with more of their friends? So it sort of makes me feel whether it's because it's me or because I'm male I don't know, that I'm not able to connect and relate you know make a, a friendship that survives minor inconveniences and things like that.
An interesting comment that both Al and Don make in their interviews is that each of them has more women than men as friends. Al finds this frustrating, saying he has "platonic relationships with women up to my neck, too many. I'm getting sick and tired of them." Later he follows up on this and says: "I know sometimes if I spend too much time with too much of my female friends, I get tired of them and I really seek out male companionship." He is not definite about what this means, he says he "can't put a finger on it", but tentatively says:

I don't know. Sometimes when we [men] get together I just, it's immediately I, in a way, I change. I think sometimes I don't know if I'm necessarily more arrogant but maybe cockier and, um, I just find it easier to laugh at other people, maybe laugh at their weaknesses or just make jokes about things in general.

Perhaps Al is saying that he feels that things are less serious when he is with men. Evan echoes this in talking about how men relate. He says:

it's like when a guy brings up a problem you know one of the other guys might suggest a
solution and then another guy might turn it into a joke and then you move on to the next problem.

These comments suggest that these two men experience their interactions with other men as more light-hearted than those with women.

These results tend to support Sherrod, Cohen and Clark's (1985) conclusion that men will tend not to share intimate information with other men. The issue of men sharing more with women is taken up below. We also find support for the idea that men do not seek out intimacy with other men, but rather companionship, someone to do things with. Evan refers to this explicitly, saying that "some of the, you know, best talking you have you know in a friendship might go on during an activity." He returns to this twice more, referring to men's penchant for structuring friendship around activities.

This also reflects Messner's (1987) conclusion, albeit tangentially, that what men seek in sporting activities is companionship. Interestingly, Cam, who played semi-professional hockey, refers to this need as typically boyish, and that growing out of this need is a "rite of passage" for men.
Only Bob talks about the issue of homosexuality explicitly in context of friendships, although Don does refer to the fact that men "don't touch that much." Bob grew up in a culture in which he believes that he "just couldn't have that (I: Hm) experience, and have it be okay." Later he says: "So, it is like the assumption of heterosexuality was there and that men have certain kinds of relationships. And they have them with women." In his feedback he speaks of "the gendered character of social relations/expectations which incorporate both homophobic elements and presumptions of heterosexuality." It may be that for the other men, such an assumption of heterosexuality precludes the discussion of homosexuality in context of male friendships.

Men, women and romance. I have included the word romance here, rather than sex, as a result of the feedback from the co-researchers which was quite explicit in suggesting the inclusion of said word. This theme resulted from the collapsing of two themes. On the one hand is the sense of affirmation that they derive from being with women, and the concomitant lack of confidence when not in a relationship. On the other hand is a sense that several have of the power that
women have in their lives as a result of the women being able to provide forms of support that the men cannot find elsewhere. This element strongly echoes Fasteau's (1975) comments about the Male Machine needing the opposite sex to manage those unknown inner circuits.

In talking about male friendships, Cam refers to women as acting as confidants in his life. As noted above he does not feel that he can have an intimate conversation with a man. He then says: "But I certainly can with women. That's very important, a very powerful thing women have, very powerful." Evan says: "any woman can have me wrapped around her finger if she wants." He also talks of needing a woman to reinforce his sense of self-confidence as a man. These comments support the findings of Sherrod's (1987) review that men tend to share more intimately with women than they do with men.

It is the element of power that really bears looking at here. What both Cam and Evan seem to be saying is that they are aware of a type of dependence that they experience with women. They need women. The majority of the research reviewed in the Literature Review suggests that feeling a sense of dependence is antithetical to the social construction of masculinity.
What these men are saying is that this sense of dependence is very real.

For Evan this leaves him bitter. He is angry about the suggestion that he hears in this culture that men are in control. At an interpersonal level, his experience is that women can easily control him and that he needs them. For Al, the power women have is in his feeling like a good lover. He is explicit about his feeling more confident when he feels that he has been a good lover. For Don, his lack of romantic relationships leaves him with a lack of confidence.

This theme, with its focus on the importance of women in these men's lives, connects with the themes of economic responsibility, conflicting expectations, and man as protector. Throughout these interviews, I am struck, although not surprised, by the importance and sometimes power that these men ascribe to women. And although I would not conclude that the critiques of patriarchy and its power are therefore false, I feel that these results point to a need to acknowledge that women do have a form of power in relationship to men. It may not be a power that they asked for, or even want, but it seems clear that it is there, and that these men recognise it.
This suggestion of women's power is also something that I hear from male clients in my therapy practice. In that context it always seems a very delicate issue given that the sort of power that these male clients hold over the women in their lives is usually the power to do violence. At the same time I wonder if acknowledging the men's experience of women's power, and then encouraging them to stop giving that power away, might reduce their use of power against women. If a man feels both that he must be confident and competent at all times, and that there are areas in which he is not competent where women are, it makes sense that he would be resentful, even angry, at these women. Certainly this is not anything like the whole story, but to address these issues in society might go some of the way to making women's lives safer, and keeping more men out of jail.

Positive changes. This theme was supported by Al, Bob and Cam only. It is included because I felt that it was important to acknowledge that there is a specific and contemporary voice of hope that sounds through the experiences discussed here.

Al enjoys the experience of the roles being less rigid, leaving him with more options. This takes us
back to his experience of conflicting expectations as opening up the possibility of him finding a woman with whom he will fit. He is also excited because he thinks "it can provide more flexibility (I: uh-huh) better chances for personal growth."

Bob talks about the opportunities that he has with his child. He says:

You know, one of the things that has been kind of neat about being a Dad is that there is all these things that aren't supposed to be identifying with being a man, that they're really fun. You know, I mean there's. Bathing a child is really great. You know it's just a fun time. Feeding a child and watching all the stuff that happens there.

Cam makes reference to the opening up of opportunities to be cuddly, "touchy feely" with a child. He talks of the removal of restrictions around employment as a positive result of the feminist movement. He also appreciates the opportunity to be more emotionally expressive although, as noted above, he is not as yet entirely comfortable with that sort of behaviour with other men.
Male or human trait? This theme did not fit for Bob or Evan. I have included it because I feel that it points to one of the issues that underlies research into gender and gendered experience. That is, where is the line, if indeed there is one, between male experience and human experience? It also connects to the theme of feeling representative and the issues that arose there.

Al, Cam and Don all talk, at different points, of being unclear how much of their experience is maleness and how much is just about being a person. Don concludes that his experience is more about the family he grew up in than his being a man. Al talks about masculinity in context of the nature/nurture debate. His undergraduate training is in biology and so he wonders "whether with traits, how much, what is...learned or not." His lack of clarity around what might be innate male traits leads him to be confused about his own masculinity and he ends up wishing that gender was not an issue.

This tends to support the notion that men are indeed confused about what it means to be male. The issue is tied up with biology, with family, and with issues of the men as persons. Although he does not
support the theme itself, in summing up our interview. Bob makes an interesting statement. He says:

I mean, we came to talk today about what it is to be a man, what it is to be a male, what it is, masculinity, all that stuff. And it would be hard for me to ever give you complete answers to those questions without telling you every moment and everything I remember, and my entire autobiography plays into that.

Part of what makes the issues of masculinity difficult to tease out is that they are so entwined with who one is as a person.

Being perceived as one of the victimizers. Nothing in Al's interview supported this theme, thus it is one of the minor themes. It is unfortunate that I was unable to reach him for follow up as the support for this theme is extremely strong in the other interviews. This otherwise might have been qualified as a major theme.

This theme is related to some extent to the theme of being unsure of the rules. As well, all four of the men who supported this theme talked about encountering images of white men as the quintessential victimizer.
Bob tells a story of encountering a little girl in the library where he is sitting with his son:

A little girl walked up to me, she started talking to me about her book and I thought 'well, this is cool behaviour, so I'll support this' and I started talking to her back. And her mother quite obviously uncomfortable with this came to retrieve the girl and had a little talking to (I: uh-huh) with her which was just out of earshot. But I heard the word stranger twice (I: uh-huh) and just the notion that, uh, to be a man in that situation, I think...exacerbates the potential threat that you pose to children and um (I: hm) women. And the idea that all men are potential rapists and potential child molesters and all men are potential victimizers in one way or another.

Bob's feelings about this, when I ask him, are of resentment and "awkwardness about the meanings that society has placed on that (I: uh-huh), on being a man."

Cam's reaction to this idea of all men being potential aggressors is to feel alienated,
misunderstood and offended. As noted in the Results, none of his friends are that way. For him this pushes him away from others and leaves him feeling guarded in his interactions with others.

Don acknowledges that men are more aggressive than women, and feels both sad and a little bit guilty about men's greater violence. He then says: "but it's...not like by being male I'm directly contributing to this thing." He also feels that he is seen as more threatening than a woman would be in any given situation. Thus, it is incumbent on him to change his behaviour, modulate his voice, and so on, in order to reduce the likelihood of others perceiving him as an aggressor. He says that he's "so obsessed with, with not sending out wrong signals, um, that I end up getting wound up inside." This echoes Cam's experience of feeling guarded.

Evan feels falsely accused and blamed by the image of man as victimizer. In responding to my question about what he will want to tell his son about growing up male he says:

I'd want him to know that um, that you know, being male isn't some kind of disease like you always hear. That, uh, it's something you
know that being male is something perfectly normal no matter what the uh the mass culture's telling us.

Evan later refers to his heterosexuality as something that he feels he must cover up, because it is somehow disgusting.

Clearly these men experience great pain as a result of this image of man as victimizer. It is instructive to place this theme in context of the theme of men as protectors. In that case the co-researchers spoke of their desire to use power responsibly, to lessen the fears of women, and to protect their loved ones from harm, even at the risk of their own safety. The conflict between the victimizer image and the men's own efforts to be protectors is obvious. Indeed, Evan talks about wanting, at times, to give up trying to do the right thing, given how strong he feels is this image that men have a 'disease'.

It is interesting to note the degree to which the literature as reviewed in the Literature Review reflects the idea of man as aggressor, if not specifically man as victimizer (Brannon, 1976; Eisler & Blalock, 1991; Fasteau, 1975; O'Neil, 1982). Thus, this
image arises from multiple origins, including much of the polemical work in men's studies.

An exception is Ian Harris's (1994) recent article "Men as Standard Bearers". Here he critiques the general focus on the negative in men's studies and presents his own results that indicate support for such conceptions of manhood as bravery, courage, gentleness and support for others. I agree with Harris's critique. I feel that the presence of this strongly negative image of man as victimizer indicates a need for images that present options to young men growing up, and that allow people's imagination to incorporate more positive images of men.

Implications for Counselling

When I began this study, I was talking with one of my female colleagues at the addictions centre where I work as a therapist. While I was telling her about the idea behind this study she interrupted me and said something like: "I have never thought about men's issues. I always assumed that the boys were the boys and they were doing just fine." It should be noted that this woman is a highly skilled and very sensitive therapist.
What this tells me is that we do need to be aware as therapists that, when a man is in our office, he is a gendered individual, with needs and fears and concerns that result from his being male. We must avoid the assumptions of traditional sociological research wherein men were seen as the norm. Otherwise, we will fail to see them as impacted by their gender. And just as I would encourage all therapists, and specifically men, to learn about women's issues and the particular constraints that women encounter in their lives, I would encourage all therapists, and specifically women, to familiarize themselves with the constraints that men face in their lives. It is important for us to be aware that men experience expectations in this culture. It is important for us to be aware that there exist stereotypes of white heterosexual men in this culture, and that these stereotypes are tremendously insidious because they seem like such givens. And they seem that way because for so long such men have been accepted as given, as the norm.

This is especially true when dealing with the issue of alcoholism (Burda, Tushup & Hackman, 1992; Isenhart & Silversmith, 1994; Lemle & Mishkind, 1989; Ritter & Cole, 1992). From my experience in the field
and in the completion of this study, I believe that it is important to acknowledge the difficulty that men may have in admitting that they have not been wholly competent in the face of alcohol. I also believe that we need to look more closely at the role that alcohol has played in their life as men. For many men, alcohol allows them to interact with other men at a level of intimacy that is not available to them when they are sober. For many men alcohol aids them in escaping the reality that they have not achieved, or won big, as they were supposed to.

Being aware of these elements of the male experience allows us as therapists to be sensitive to the possibility of such underlying experience. It encourages us to keep our ears open for elements of the specific gendered experiences of men.

In terms of the practice of therapy itself, there are two specific implications of the results of this research. First, while Cam spoke about not being able to speak to a best buddy about intimate topics, he said that he found me quite easy to talk to. As well, Al and Cam and Don all spoke of the interview experience as feeling therapeutic and helpful. This seems to indicate that if we as therapists use our basic therapeutic
skills well, that men do have the capacity to open up. Perhaps the finding that "men are generally hesitant to seek counselling" (Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992, p.240) has as much to do with men's perception of what therapy is as it does about the reality of the therapeutic experience. Robertson and Fitzgerald (1992) found that framing the therapeutic experience more in terms of tasks, goals, workshops and courses, led to more men showing a willingness to involve themselves in the experience.

Second, this set of themes could provide men's groups with a starting point for discussion. In their article on men seeking counselling, Robertson and Fitzgerald (1992) suggest that alternative forms of therapy need to be developed to appeal to men who are more deeply influenced by O'Neil's (1982) Masculine Mystique. I believe that the themes that resulted from this research could provide a framework for exploring the meaning and experience of manhood as an alternative to traditional forms of therapy.

Implications for Future Research

In terms of recommendations for future research, first and foremost I believe that it is of considerable
importance that more qualitative work be undertaken in the exploration of men and masculinity. Good, Borst and Wallace (1994), in their review of masculinity research, make a similar recommendation.

At this point in time, men's studies is an area that is just beginning to be explored. As such, any area that appeals to a researcher is fair game. Areas that the present project points to as worthy of investigation include: men's experience of women's power in their lives and the effect that this has on their attitudes towards women; men's beliefs about how well they 'fit in' as men and the impact this has on attitudes towards themselves, including such issues as their self-esteem; the relationship between men's experience of conflicting expectations and changing social rules, and their behaviour in the world; men's beliefs about the positive aspects of social constructions of masculinity; the impact of images of men in the popular media on individual men's beliefs about themselves.

Finally, I believe that work needs to be done with more and varied populations of men in this country and in others. A good example of what I am thinking of is the work the anthropologist David Gilmore (Gilmore,
Comparisons between and within cultures can only serve to deepen our appreciation of both similarities and differences.

Conclusion

In the introduction I spoke of the fact that this research held both a personal and a professional interest for me. I would like to conclude by talking briefly about the impact that doing this research has had on me both as a man and as a therapist.

As a man, I realise that I, like my co-researchers, used to wonder about how representative I was. Having found that this is a common experience, I have ceased to wonder. I feel more at peace with myself as a man. I feel like I belong here in my man's skin.

I also feel more strongly than I did in the past that the patriarchal structures that exist in our society hurt both women and men. I feel very strongly that working towards dismantling those structures will genuinely benefit men, as well as women. I am reminded of the castrati of 18th Century European opera. Women were prevented from singing in these operas, thus being kept out of the limelight and denied a chance to perform. But the cost to the castrati was their
testicles and their chance to be fathers and lovers. The system punished both women and men, as it does today.

Finally, I am aware of having a "soft spot" for men, where once I felt a good deal of either contempt or fear, or both. I perceive other men less as competitors now and more as human beings.

It is this final point that is most germane to my work as a therapist. Now when a man enters my office who has been physically abusive towards his partner or who has committed other criminal acts, I wonder about whether he feels like he is faced with conflicting expectations. I take seriously his pain at not working, his desire to be the provider. I am able to see him as someone who has also suffered. Because of this I am able to be trusting with him, and so my work has improved. That is an unexpected outcome of this research that I truly cherish.

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References


Appendix A

ADVERTISEMENT THAT APPEARED AT SFU & UBC CAMPUSES
AND IN THE NEWSPAPER

Are contemporary ideas about men's lives truths or stereotypes?

I am developing a research project designed to explore the experience of being male. If you are straight, white, between 25 and 35, and would be interested in telling your story, please contact Lawrence at 555-1212.
Appendix B

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I hereby give my consent to participate in the research study "The Construction of Masculinity." I understand that the research will be conducted by Lawrence Murphy as part of the fulfillment of requirements for a Master in Arts degree in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia and that Mr. Murphy will be working under the supervision of Dr. Marv Westwood.

I understand that the purpose of the project is to develop an understanding of the experiences of men, with the aim of questioning the societal assumptions that are made about men; as such it will point towards more effective ways of working with men in the area of mental health practices.

In consenting to be involved in this project, I agree to participate in an initial audiotaped interview of a total of approximately two hours' duration, which will be transcribed and become the basis for a case study of my experiences as a man. My story will then be combined with that of the other co-researchers in order to create a general story. I agree to participate in a second audiotaped interview, of approximately one hour's duration, in which I shall respond to the general story, confirming whether it accurately reflects the essential elements of my story.

I understand that my involvement in this project will be confidential and that all identifying references within my story will be deleted from the final document. Special care will be taken to protect and exclusively limit access to researchers of the audiotapes and all transcriptions.

I agree to participate in this project with the understanding that I am able to refuse to participate or withdraw from it at any time with no penalty whatsoever. This includes the right to refuse to answer any questions within the interview and to veto any material within my case study which may be prejudicial to me or contravene my right to confidentiality.
I understand that I have the right to receive answers to any questions which I may have regarding the procedures involved in this project. To that end, Mr. Murphy and Dr. Westwood can be reached at 876-0131 and 822-6457, respectively.

I have read this form in full and agree to participate in the research project. As well, I have received a copy of this consent form which summarizes my involvement in the project.

Co-researcher signature __________________________
Date ____________________
Appendix C

QUESTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

1) Initial statement:

The hope of this research is to understand more fully the experience of growing up male and of being a man in this culture in this time in history. Much of what is written today, in journals, newspapers, and books, suggests that many men feel misunderstood. There are also suggestions that men are confused about what direction to take in their lives. And yet almost no-one is bothering to ask the obvious question: What is it like to be a man in today's world? That is what I would like us to look at today.

2) Interview questions:

The following questions are included here as examples only. They will not necessarily all be asked of all participants.

a) What prompted you to respond to the ad/poster?

b) If you had a son, what would you feel that it was important to tell him about being a man?

c) What does it mean to you to be a man?

d) What experiences do you have, what things do you think, feel, and do that tell you that you are a man, as distinct from a woman?

e) What criteria do you believe society uses to distinguish you as male?

f) What social expectations do you believe exist for men?

g) How do these expectations impact on you? How do they affect your sense of yourself as a man?

h) What do you feel are the pressures on men?
i) What do you feel are the rewards for men?

j) Tell me about experiences that you have had:
   at work;
   in sexual relationships;
   in friendships;
   in recreational activities;
   at home;
that have reinforced or challenged your sense of masculinity.
Appendix D

LETTER THAT ACCOMPANIED THE THEMATIC SUMMARY

April 16, 1994

Dear Al,

I hope that this letter and package finds you well. From the stamps you can see that I am now living in Indonesia. I will be back in Canada this summer, and I will try to contact you again then.

This package contains this letter, the results of the thematic analysis of the interviews that I conducted with yourself and the other four men in this project, and a stamped and addressed envelope. I am asking you to read through the thematic analysis and respond to the best of your ability. It is, I believe, quite simple to complete and shouldn't take much time. I hope that you will be able to find the time to go through it. When you're done, just slip the theme lists in the envelope and drop it in a mailbox. My friend Barry will send it on to me.

Each of the themes that came out of the analysis is listed, along with a brief explanation. If you made comments that fit with a theme, I have listed some of your comments to help to clarify for you what you said. If the theme still fits for you, just check the appropriate box. If it does not, or if you feel that I have misinterpreted your comments, check the other box. If you want, you are welcome to make additional comments in the space provided, (using the back of the sheet if you wish). I would particularly appreciate you making comments if you feel that I misinterpreted your words in the interview. If I did do this at any point, I need to have some sense of what went wrong.

Of course, not all of you made comments relevant to each theme. This could have been because we did not get around to talking about the issue, or because the particular theme did not fit for you. If you did not make comments relevant to a particular theme, but on reading the theme realize that "yeah, that fits for me", then please check the appropriate box. If the theme does not fit for you, just check the other box. Again, I welcome your comments, and again, I would particularly appreciate comments relevant to any theme that you decide does indeed fit for you.
I have tried to put myself in the position of going through this process, and I have found within myself what I might call a need to belong. Be one of the guys, show a united front. That kind of thing. So, recognizing this in myself, I would like to ask each of you in the strongest possible way to be true to yourselves as you respond to the themes. I assure you that you will not be doing me a service by agreeing to themes that don't really fit for you.

Again, I really appreciate your taking the time to complete this. I have found the process of drawing out these themes really fascinating, and although I imagine everyone says things like this, I believe that this is going to be an important piece of academic research. When I have had a chance to go through your responses I will provide each of you with a summary of the final results as well as a copy of the interview that we did, if you're interested.

Cheers!
Appendix E

THEMATIC SUMMARY

1) The experience of economic responsibility and expectations.
   This theme is related to what one of you identified as 'the 4 A's of masculinity': achieve, achieve, achieve and achieve. This is a sense that men are still expected to have a good job and make money.

   Your Comments:
   - a lot of women want someone who is financially stable, especially single Moms
   - feeling a lot of shame in not having a trade - disappointing to my father.

   □ This fits for me. □ This does not fit for me.
   Additional comments: ____________________________

2) The experience of outdoor and/or physical activity reinforcing masculinity.
   This includes sports, camping activities, physical labour and the like.

   Your Comments:
   - two-person Tai Chi is aggressive and appealing to me
   - I enjoy straining myself physically, being rough

   □ This fits for me. □ This does not fit for me.
   Additional comments: ____________________________

3) The experience of not feeling representative of men in general.
   This theme is about feeling unsure whether or not your experiences are common to other men, as well as a desire to know how representative your experiences were.
Your Comments:
- I don't think I feel as threatened as a lot of other males might
- women complain men don't show feelings, but I think I'm better than most; don't know how common it is that men are emotionally available

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: ________________________________

4) The experience of encountering conflicting expectations.
This is just what it sounds like; the feeling that, while on the one hand, men are expected to behave in certain ways, there are also messages that men should be behaving in ways that seem either quite the opposite of, or at least in conflict with, the other expectation.

Your Comments:
- I'm confused about women's expectations
- this is a time of uncertain role expectations

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: ________________________________

5) Feeling unsure if a particular trait is "male" or "human".
Again, this theme is self explanatory. Comments included in this theme are of the character of "but I can't be sure if my hesitation is about being male, or just because I'm a human being."

Your Comments:
- I don't know if there's anything specifically male, it's just sexuality
- how much is maleness, how much is this culture?
  It's very messy

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: ________________________________
6) **Feeling greater safety as a white man in the world than you think others do.**

This theme concerns feelings of greater physical safety in the world and fewer concerns about being attacked.

Your Comments:
- I have a sense of security, of feeling safe
- I don't worry as much about being suppressed

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: ______________________________

7) **Feeling that as a man, you are a protector.**

This theme is about comments made concerning behaviours and attitudes towards women in general, family members, employees and loved ones. The theme suggests that men accept a certain measure of responsibility for the safety of others.

Your Comments:
- I would kill someone who tried to harm my woman or child
- I would sacrifice myself for women, be a martyr; this is an aspect of the warrior

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: ______________________________

8) **The experience that men gain strength from being in a sexual relationship with a woman.**

This theme suggests that men can feel a greater sense of confidence being with a woman. For some of you this also includes an increased feeling of masculinity as a result of being with a woman. It includes the experience that, as one of you said, "the actual sexual practices feel very affirming [of my masculinity]". It also includes the experience of feeling less confident, more lonely, less male, without a woman.
Your Comments:
- In my last relationship I felt like a good lover - improved my sense of masculinity. A big issue of masculinity.

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: 

============================================================================
9) The experience that what is "manliness" is often defined by context.

This theme encompasses several ideas. It suggests that you feel that what is considered male changes depending on the people that you are with and how they react to you. For some of you it contains the idea that what is male is often defined as what is NOT female.

Your Comments:
- being a male as opposed to female is the way society looks at me - a lot from the outside rather than inside
- masculinity is slippery because whenever I do something to put myself in touch with it, I'll see a woman do it and it feels less male.

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: 

============================================================================
10) The experience that others assume that you are confident and competent because you are a man.

This theme concerns the feeling that men are expected to be confident and in control, to be able to handle stress and pressure, and to handle the various different facets of life.

Your Comments:
- as a man you're expected to be aggressive and confident

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: 

============================================================================
11) The experience that you are perceived as one of the group of victimizers.
   This theme addresses experiences of either having personally been perceived of as a threat, or of feeling that, because you are a man, you are lumped in with "those who victimize."

Your Comments: There were no comments that you made that fit into this theme.

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: _______________________________________________________

12) The experience of being unsure of what the "rules of conduct" are today, and so feeling unsure about how you will be treated when you go out in the world.
   This theme is about the lack of clarity you feel of what the right or wrong thing is to do and the experience of not always being able to be sure how others will react to you when you behave.

Your Comments:
- I know some women hate pornography, others think it's okay. I feel confused

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: _______________________________________________________

13) The experience of being on guard.
   This theme addresses the experience of, when out in the world, needing to be guarded in your interactions with other people.

Your Comments: This is another area for which none of your comments fit the theme.

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.
Additional comments: _______________________________________________________

==============================================================================
14) **The feeling that there are many images of men in our culture but few, if any, fit for you, or express your viewpoint.**

This theme contains both the experience that, in our culture, we are flooded with different images of men, and at the same time, you do not really see yourself represented in those images.

Your Comments:
- noone ever asks what I think, for my two bits
- macho man - lots of men are like this. Will my son be promiscuous, monogamous, celibate ?

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.

Additional comments: ________________________________

15) **The experience that, in relationships with other men, the intimate sharing of emotions is not prevalent.**

For some of you, this is about remarking on instances when you or another man shares deeply emotional stuff. For some of you this is about not having the kinds of experiences where you would share deep emotions with another man. For some of you this is about the experience of sometimes going for extended periods without seeing your male friends. For some of you this includes the experience of not experiencing close physical contact with other men.

Your Comments:
- easier to laugh with men, at other's weaknesses; can't put a finger on it, but I just feel more comfortable in some way that I don't with women
- I think more linearly, logically, in contrast to women who are more intuitive, more emphasis on learning their emotions

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.

Additional comments: ________________________________

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16) The experience that positive changes are happening.

This theme is, as it says, about the fact that there are some positive changes coming out of the general changes that are happening to society.

Your Comments:
- now can be more open to, less rigid about, roles
- uncertain role expectations are a good thing, I have a better chance of finding a woman who will fit me

☐ This fits for me. ☐ This does not fit for me.

Additional comments: ______________________
______________________________
______________________________

END