Irish Incarnate:

Masculinities and Intergenerational Relations on Tyneside

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Abstract

This study investigates Irish masculinities on Tyneside with thirty eight men of Irish descent over three living generations. The intergenerational approach to researching men's lives contributes to the geographies of masculinities literature by researching the relationships between place, age, and gender. It considers the intersections of masculinity with roles within the family: such as son, father and grandfather. Furthermore, it looks at masculinities in the context of the workplace, the home, the school, and wider social settings to shed light on the aspirations and economic priorities of 'Irish' men. These discussions reveal gender and generation dynamics: looking at 'growing up' in the post industrial city; at the fusion of Irish and Geordie cultures; as well as the underpinning influence of class and religion. I note the intersections of age, roles within the family, embodied working identities and attitudes towards a religious upbringing as key to understanding the everyday experiences of men of Irish descent, in what I have called 'Irish Incarnate'. To date, there has been much work on the intersectional aspects of identity – gender, race, religion – though much less which combines this with an intergenerational approach. I argue that generational differences have acted as a force of change in the perceptions and performances of Tyneside Irish masculinities. The thesis reveals significant change, often shaped by wider socio-economic factors, such as social mobility and the declining role of institutional religion; but also continuity, through an inheritance of culture and heritage and at times an explicit resistance to change. Through studying the processes of place, age, and masculinity with men of Irish descent I analyse how they negotiate growing up and growing old and all that is in between; how nationality is considered across generations, of what bits of them they claim to be Irish and why; and why ultimately, this all matters.

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The thesis has been the result of research interests stemming from my undergraduate studies which began in 2006. Over the seven years since, I have developed friendships with men of Irish descent living on Tyneside and across the Irish diaspora. To all those I have spoken with, thank you for your interest and enthusiasm. Particular thanks must be expressed to the thirty eight men who participated in the PhD research between 2010 and 2013. Their lives, their stories, their remembrances shape this work; they know who they are and I am indebted to their investment of both time and emotion. I hope this thesis helps to record their contributions to the histories of Tyneside and to the legacies of their ancestors who left Ireland.

This research is dedicated to my Granddad, a great supporter of mine who sadly passed away during the write up of this thesis; he is dearly missed. This research was driven by my own ambiguous connections to Ireland and so in many ways it is also dedicated to the Granddad I did not know. To my family, thanks are due for letting me dive into our past and present, all of which has helped me situate myself within this research and relate to the men of my study. To friends and family who have helped with their advice, patience, energy, insight and wisdom, I am eternally grateful. 2014 is a big year for me beyond this thesis as I got married to the beautiful Charlotte on the 30th of July of this year. I love you all.

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To all, happy reading!

Contents

Abstract 1

Acknowledgements 2

Contents 3

List of Figures 7

Preface 8

Chapter 1 Introduction 9

1.1 Favourable surroundings 9

1.2 Masculinities and social change 22

1.3 Human geography, literally 28

Chapter 2 Researching Men and Masculinities 31

2.1 Researching across generations 31

2.2 Biographical research 37

2.3 The research process 44

2.3.1 Interviewing with images 48

2.4 Ethics and practice 52

2.4.1 To name or not to name 53

2.4.2 Theatre as ‘safe space’ 57

2.5 The politics of representation 64

Chapter 3 Embodied Intergenerationality 69

3.1 Introduction 69

3.2 Talking bollocks 74

3.2.1 Resistance 77

3.2.2 Doubt 79

3.2.3 Confidence 81

3.2.4 Relevance 84

3.3 Cultural narrative structures 87

3.4 Conclusion 90

3.5 Generational chains 91

3.5.1 Inheriting familial culture 91

3.5.2 Inheriting religious culture 92

3.5.3 Inheriting somatic culture 93

3.5.4 Inheriting Irish culture 95

Chapter 4 Fathering and Families 97

4.1 Introduction 97

4.2 Fathering values 100

4.2.1 Prejudice and tolerance 105

4.2.2 Justice and pride 108

4.2.3 Discipline 110

4.2.4 Absent fathers and fathering mothers 114

4.3 Conclusion 121

Chapter 5 School and Spirituality 123

5.1 Introduction 123

5.2 Religious schooling 124

5.3 Synonymous? Irish and Catholic 130

5.4 Being religious in secular society 141

5.5 Conclusion 148

Chapter 6 Working and 'Working Out' 151

6.1 The impacts of de-industrialisation 151

6.2 The body working 156

6.3 Working the body 162

6.4 Conclusion 171

Chapter 7 Tyneside Irish Renaissance 173

7.1 The renaissance men 173

7.2 The gentlemen 178

7.3 Aspiring to better things 183

7.4 Conclusion 191

Chapter 8 Conclusions 194

8.1 Irish masculinities and intergenerational relations 194

8.2 Summary of thesis 197

8.3 Key Contributions 200

8.3.1 Embodied masculinities 201

8.3.2 Familial masculinities 203

8.3.3 Irish masculinities 205

8.4 New research directions 207

Appendices 210

Appendix A Participant profiles 211

Appendix B Family trees 219

Appendix C Migration timeline.....224

Appendix D Interview schedule.....225

Appendix E Script for ‘Under As All’.....229

Appendix F Flyer for ESRC tour of ‘Under Us All’.....254

Appendix G Published works based on thesis.....255

References.....257

List of Figures

Figure 1 Outline of a man

Figure 2 Bill’s rainbow

Figure 3 Tyneside Irish Centre

Figure 4 Daniel

Figure 5 Bill red

Figure 6 Bill purple

Figure 7 The newest member of the Orange Lodge

Figure 8 Anti-Irish (Liverpool)

Figure 9 Anti-Islamic (Newcastle)

Figure 10 Tyneside Irish Centre logo

Figure 11 Joseph

Preface

Bob:

> If we all go back our great, great, great grandparents are all West African or something, you know? I've seen enough of nations to think, you know, they're all the same anyway. And who cares…we're all human beings at the end of the day. But I believe that the Irish experience on Tyneside is important. Because again, we've had this conversation before, if we want to have a world where you can have economic expansion and growth and prosperity for everybody; and you have everybody with the ability to celebrate their own culture…whether they're from Senegal, South Africa, or Strathclyde…as long as they're allowed to do it without oppressing other people. I suppose it's back to the French Revolutionary ideal: of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality. And again, if you have too much liberty, then you have no equality. If you have too much equality then you have no liberty. But you've got to have the fraternity in the middle. It's dead easy to define liberty and equality; you start to define fraternity and it's a difficult thing to do. But I believe if you look at how Tyneside has been able to adapt to a huge infrastructure of people from Ireland; and yet basically not have many experiences of sectarianism or ghettos, or the kind of things that disfigure Glasgow for example today, that is the fraternity. Now whether it's because we drink a lot of beer; or we've got one football team rather than two; or we've got, you know – 'cos it's nothing to do with the innate things of the people, 'cos the people are all immigrants – it's just some means of how the local society and economy was created. Or whether it was created, imagined, you know, designed…I dunno? Certainly nobody's sat down with a blueprint and I think that's the reason why the Tyneside Irish are important
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Favourable surroundings

> 'Of the many asylums to which the Irish fled after the great exodus of the [eighteen] forties, there was none in which, owing to many circumstances, they were able to ultimately find more favourable surroundings than the Tyneside' (Cooter 2005: 21 citing O'Connor 1917).

O'Connor talks of Tyneside's reaction to the first major waves of Irish to settle in the region, between 1840-1880. This introduction explores the nature of these 'favourable surroundings' which the Irish enjoyed upon arrival and questions to what extent they remain today. Historically the Irish were assimilated with a comparative level of ease into the indigenous Tyneside host community, a phenomenon described by Cooter in his book *When Paddy Met Geordie* (2005) which proved an invaluable source in reviewing the literature of the Irish in North East England.

Looking at the Irish on Tyneside today poses interesting and testing social and geographic questions about migration and diaspora. Contemporary discourses of immigration are, in many significant and pejorative ways, no different to those applied to the Irish in the nineteenth century: 'welfare scroungers and burdens on the rates' (Cooter 2005: xix), and these tensions are only heightened when the host community is enduring its own economic uncertainty. By looking backwards, some of the men of this study assert that 'being Irish was like being Pakistani now'. In turn I look forwards within the economic and political environments on contemporary Tyneside. This thesis is concerned with Irish masculinities and intergenerational relations; in particular the intersections of place, age and masculinity, and as extracts from the following three participant narratives reveal, an awareness of former discrimination affects the lives of Tyneside's Irish. Being Pakistani then, according to all three narratives, symbolises being different in contemporary Britain. For these men of Irish descent, their own difference is no longer so visibly marked. Bob, a third generation Irishman was talking of growing up in the era of IRA bombings in the 1970s.

Bob:

> The politics were important and I don't say that in a very dramatic way; but at the time [1970s] being Irish, I suppose, was like being Pakistani now. Every time there was a bomb, you'd shudder, and you'd think "oh god, I hope that never happens here", you know? But at the same time, I knew that the Irish people weren't anti-English, 'cos I was English and I'd been over there
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

He talks in further depth about his Irish surname and how he found the reading of the register in school difficult with his 'difference' highlighted. From research conducted in the late 1980s, we see evidence of this also:

> 'When a bombing or anything like that happens I say thank God for supermarkets, because you do not have to speak, you don't have to ask for a loaf of bread. I do feel intimidated. I wouldn't want to get in a difficult situation, because I wouldn't know how I'd react. When I buy the Irish Post I fold it over when I am in a shop – and I like to buy it in an Indian shop. I notice myself doing these things, very much so' (Lennon et al 1988: 175 cited in Hickman and Walter 1995).

Hickman and Walter (1995) go on to analyse how these experiences were gendered. They claim that because it would be more likely that women were involved in the shopping tasks, they were more publicly visible than their male counterparts. Whilst this may be true I feel the more significant element of this story is the direct association with the woman's accent and the 'men of violence' of the IRA. For those who ask 'what's in name?' we find an answer; for Bob, who considers himself English, his surname supersedes all else at a heightened period of political tension. Even above accent and dialect, markers of national identity are inscribed onto us through our names. We see similar discussion in Dominic's narrative; an Irish born man teasing his English born friend 'Murphy' about his Irish heritage by utilising his self-deprecating humour and playful stereotypes.

Dominic:

> I mean everyone's struggling with identities these days. 'Cos when you watch programmes, especially regarding Indian/ Pakistani children in this country, 'cos they're going through similar things with their parents tied very much back to their homeland. But the kids are really, they're English or they're British and I should think over time you

> know two or three generations, that will water down. And like I'm saying with the Irish, the only thing you'll have is your name or you know, I mean I've got lads, a mate called Murphy, I mean what a great name but he's English to the core. The man is you know, and I go "you're only a bloody Paddy" and he goes "I'm not, I'm English"
>
> (emergency serviceman, 50, Irish born).

With Sean, an Irish born traveller whose family left Ireland for England, we see the discrimination he still faces today. Frustrated by a society that (he feels) values other people of difference (black people or Pakistanis) more than his own travelling community. The stigma he faces is perhaps the last bastion of anti-Irish sentiment that is widespread across Britain.

Sean:

> When there are young boys has been attacked and kicked and punched to death on the road side and the body's left there like a rag doll; or when petrol bombs has been thrown at caravans in the campsite you know; or when there's been vans or cars used to ram you off the road for no reason; or to try and knock young kids over in a playing field; the police doesn't seem to do much about it. If it goes in the press it's just for one edition of the newspaper. If you're lucky enough you get 2 minutes of local news on the telly but there's nothing put in concrete about the way the Irish travellers is treated. You know you could have gold hanging out of you. As my father used to say "you could give your heart's blood to these people and it's still no good". It's just one of them things that you have to live with. And that's how it goes. But you know, even in this country you know even black people, Pakistanis, they seem to have more rights than even what a traveller – Irish traveller – has
>
> (labourer, 40, Irish born).

Critical whiteness studies has dissected the complexities of the regional and diasporic dimensions of the Irish in Britain. The work of Anoop Nayak is particularly relevant in revealing approaches to understanding Irish (and other white ethnic minority groups). Nayak (2007: 738) coins the following phrase, that 'some people are "whiter" than others, some are not white enough and many are inescapably cast beneath the shadow of whiteness'. I employ this statement here as it directly applies to the Irish in Britain. 'Paddy' and 'Biddy' are standard Irish masculine and feminine stereotypes ridiculed by a strand of

mainstream British culture (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2011); it is their very whiteness that they are 'inescapably cast beneath' which helps perpetuate levels of discrimination. If they possessed a more visual difference, their mistreatment would not so easily be excused which is why Sean feels particularly marginalised. Traditionally, the Irish travelled to Britain as economic migrants and faced many of the issues that today challenge groups from European Union Accession Countries. Though they share a 'whiteness' – the Irish are seen to be 'whiter' as for example, their language barriers are significantly fewer than non-English speakers (Datta 2008a; 2008b; 2009a; 2009b; Datta and Brickell 2009). Of note though is that many of the rural Irish who first came to the region were also non-English speakers. This meant that rural (and almost exclusively Catholic) migrants were even 'less white' than their urban (and often Protestant) countrymen.

Some commentators, such as Colls and Lancaster (1992) in their book *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism*, have argued though that it is the unique regional (as opposed to national) identity of the North East that helped ease the migrant integration of the Irish. The 'Englishness' of the North East has long been uncertain, at least in part due to its historic and strategic importance as a border between Scotland and England, and before then, between the Roman Empire and the Northern Celts (see Younger 1992). For many in the North East 'Englishness' was – and some would argue still is – an abstract concept with little relation to their everyday lives. In the English language, with the persistence of strong regional dialects, there are differences not only in distinctive sounds but also in vocabulary. Nayak (2006) points out that working-class Tyneside has already been accused of its own 'not-quite-whiteness' from the 'English' norm. The English national identity still remains invested in the South and Midlands of England. The Tyneside Irish, like Tynesiders more broadly, are culturally and politically distant as well as geographically distinct. Returning to the work of Cooter, and his detailing of *When Paddy Met Geordie*, we see he defines this integration as 'a negative study'.

> 'To a degree, then, this is a negative study explaining why the Irish were *seldom* a subject of public discussion relative to other areas; why, as Catholics, they suffered *less* for their religion; why as labourers, they inspired *little* antagonism; and why, as Irish

> Nationalists, they provoked only *minimal* hostility'(Cooter, 2005, 3 – *original emphasis*).

Notwithstanding the parallels drawn to a Pakistani experience, I too, perceive a more harmonious coming together of the Irish on Tyneside from elsewhere in Britain (as did Boyle [2002; 2011] in his study of the West of Scotland's Irish diaspora). On talking with members of the Irish diaspora in Scotland and elsewhere in England as well as on visits to New York and Hong Kong, I am often faced with the statement 'I didn't know Tyneside had an Irish community'. This lack of recognition both nationally and internationally is explained perhaps by a more subdued presence of Tyneside's Irish. Yes, Tyneside has a quarter of a century old annual Irish Festival. Yes, it has a cultural and community centre in the middle of Newcastle itself with additional social clubs across the region; but my research points to Tyneside as a host calling upon its unique economic, political and religious composition to shed light on the region's relationship with its Irish to reveal that they are to an extent, culturally mutual. For the men of Irish descent in this study, the region is as influential to their identity construction as their national heritage.

Citing Ahmed (2004), Noble (2011: 162) talks of a 'multi-cultural love' and a 'sticky patriotism' to describe the bond that brings groups of people together on a national scale. I put forward an adaptation of this claim on a regional scale – based on the assumption of the migrant's integration with a simultaneous 'gift of difference' (Ibid). Certainly, some of the literature to date is denigrated as parochial, that 'it seems it is hard to ask serious questions about "good feelings" without appearing hopelessly utopian or worse, politically naive!' (Noble 2011: 163). It is seen as confined to the local with a tendency to lack global perspective and to be too narrow in focus. But who and what Tyneside is, depends upon who and what it is imagined to be (Anderson 1991). Anderson continues (2006: 6) 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face to face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined'. Of salience here though is not as Gellner (1983) would posit, their existence under false pretences, but the processes of creation. In the words of Colls and Lancaster (1992: xii) 'regions, no less than nations, are imagined communities'; they equate the North East to a state of mind proclaiming that: 'Geordie identity has been under

pressure for long enough to know that belonging is an act of affiliation and not of birth' (Colls and Lancaster 1992: xii). To belong to Tyneside then is to feel like a Tynesider. The identity becomes embodied and emplaced.

Tomaney (2013: 1), in his defence of parochialism, argues that 'we need more detailed studies of real local identities, which avoid a presumption of disdain'. Indeed, this study of the lives of thirty eight men of Irish descent gives invaluable insight to economic, political and social conditions and the strong and stable nature of Tyneside. Not to be seen as a celebratory record of 'Tyneside Irish experience', the men's narratives should instead reveal strong localised attachment with nevertheless, a great appreciation overall of their Irish heritage. While the region has proportionately the same levels of Irish Travellers as England as a whole (0.1%), this is not the case with persons who are 'White Irish'. According to the 2011 census 'White Irish' account for 1.0% of the population of England (517,001 people); whereas only 0.3% (or 8,035 people) of the population of the North East identified as 'White Irish'. Furthermore, numbers of people identifying as 'White Irish' have fallen from the previous 2001 census where they represented 1.39% of the region's population (or 8,682 people; all data from Office for National Statistics 2013). I argue that some of the above debates on regional identity help explain low levels of identification with Ireland on a statistical level. I regard this as evidence of the assimilation of the Irish in the region, indicative of newer changing intergenerational patterns of identification; these are later highlighted in the thesis.

Somewhat paradoxically, the very nature of Tyneside's stability stems from its flexibility in adapting to social change; something the region has failed to do repeatedly on an economic level, suffering through the concept of 'power geometry'[1] (Massey 1994). It is also argued (Lowe 1989) that we should acknowledge the free will of the Irish in overcoming socio-economic hardship, in not shying away from their own political beliefs and maintaining their religious values; all of which contributed to their overall successful integration on Tyneside. What follows in this thesis is an analysis of experiences of thirty eight men of Irish descent who are living or have recently lived on Tyneside. Twenty seven of these men are from across nine different families and there are a further eleven individuals whose family members I did not get the chance to

meet. In exploring their lives at the intersections of place, age and masculinity, I review experiences of ageing, identity and belonging.

This thesis is structured around what I have called ‘Irishness Incarnate’, that is the embodiment of national identity. When studying the Tyneside Irish, it is fundamental to consider the broader issue of the racialisation of the Irish in Britain (Delaney 2007). Of the little academic work to date, most depict an almost harmonious relationship between host (Tyneside) and migrant (Irish) – a situation in stark contrast to the more volatile receptions experienced elsewhere among the global Irish diaspora. Both the North West of England and West of Scotland provide copious evidence of hostility and sectarianism (Jackson 2001; Boyle 2011), as well as fractious relationships in the Midlands and London (Hickman 1999; Hickman and Walter 1995; Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2003) and across the Atlantic to North America (Ignatiev 1995). As this chapter reveals, while examples can be found on Tyneside, ‘anti-Irishness’ did not arise in this study as a major concern.

Historians have put forward a threefold case for the ease of Irish integration into the region. Firstly, unprecedented industrial expansion had created a healthy economy, which remained unthreatened by large scale Irish immigration. Secondly, the prevalence and levels of support for liberal (and radical) politics generated much sympathy toward the cause of Irish Nationalism. Complementing the above, the variety and strength of dissenting religion (relative to the weakness of Anglicanism on Tyneside) enabled the Roman Catholicism of the Irish majority to comfortably establish itself. These factors combined to make the region’s geographic composition historically unique. The modern history of Tyneside is one built upon the backbone of the industrial revolution, establishing itself at the forefront of heavy industry specialising in coal mining, shipbuilding, chemical and metal works. I point to the nineteenth century as a critical period of British national identity, which throws contemporary light on issues facing the twenty-first century Irish in Britain. Irish Catholics (post 1840s economic migrants) emerged as a significant other (Said 1979) to the British public, carving a path to the very heart of the British workforce. Yet, imbued both by the historical impediment of being regarded as inferior colonial subjects and by their (majority) religious status –

willingly shouldered – as English nationalism's mortal enemy since the sixteenth century, many of these migrants constructed the indigenous British community as a Protestant imaginary. We must note though that the Irish were part of a larger influx of people to the North East at this time, and were therefore not readily singled out as responsible for associated negative economic impacts surrounding the Irish elsewhere in Britain. The lack of occupational competition was key to diminishing anti-Irishness that otherwise might have escalated in the region.

This thesis considers the residents of Tyneside in the post-industrial era. Simplistically (through de-industrialisation) the region saw change in employment through a shift from the manufacturing sector to the services sector, in this case reflecting the shift in the regional market trend from production to consumption. The high wages and job opportunities that the area provided in heavy industry for men changed to lower skilled (and lesser paid) service based jobs. To highlight this shift in the economy, we can look at Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (cited by Byrne and Wharton 2004) where he reveals that the pitmen of the Great Northern Coalfield were the highest paid manual workers in the UK (late eighteenth century) compared with the negative statistics of the OECD Territorial Review where we see that Gross Value Added (GVA)[2] per person in the region sits at merely 80% of the UK average (OECD 2006).

At the time, the growth in the local economy created a demand for labour and corresponding expansion of opportunity for migrants, which forms the basis for argument that Tyneside was a welcoming host to the Irish. The emphasis on industrial and social order (as opposed to hostility and upheaval) can be credited to the nature and condition of the regional economy (MacRaild 1999; 2002; 2005). As has been stated, the region attracted some of the highest wage-earners worldwide, in occupational fields requiring high levels of skill and competence. These vacancies were filled by local men or men drafted in from other speciality areas (such as Cornish Miners). Tyneside's demand for a variety of elite workers was highly significant for the Irish – a workforce coming to Tyneside fully aware that, in the main, they were unskilled. More often from rural areas of Ireland, albeit accustomed to hard manual labour, these country

boys were not in tune with heavy industry. Known as 'green labour'; which according to Hudson (2011: 265) refers to those 'lacking either experience of industrial work in general or of work in a particular industry'. The Irish then were green in both senses of the word – green politically (seen as Republicans) and green geographically (with a rural background). Recognising their 'natural' station – a recognition imposed just as clearly by their hosts – the incomers took up low skilled work upon relocation to Tyneside. Accepting their lowly status, their collective mindset made for reasonably productive working relationships.

This scenario meant that the native Tynesiders, whose prize assets were high wages for highly skilled work (though open to challenge from external specialists) saw little threat from the Irish.

> 'Besides lacking the requisite skills, the Irish were thwarted by the pride and jealousy of the indigenous labour force whose skills were their only property and gift to their sons' (Cooter 2005: 112).

Concurrently, the Irish were welcomed in their low paid subordinate roles as labourers to the region's industries. As a corollary, there were few employment opportunities for Irish women and children in the North East – unlike in the North West, which provided work within the cotton industry. According to Cooter (2005: 118) 'schools for "Catholic – chiefly Irish – children employed in factories" were never proposed for the North-east.' This notion is apparent not just academically but in the minds of my research participants. I cite Bob's narrative (whose experiences are explored in more detail later in the thesis):

Bob:

> Tyneside's important as you know, because it's the first place in the world that had developed an industrial economy that didn't oppress its own children. In the way that the children of Manchester went into the cotton mills and the women of Manchester went down the mines. The children of Tyneside didn't go into the factories and things. 14 year old boys did. But I mean, when you're 14, you're nearly a man; you know in biological terms, not now in the context of the 21st Century. So generally speaking, the men of Tyneside went to work. The women of Tyneside looked after the kids, and generally speaking, the kids went to school. And that was a hell of a lot better than the people stuck in factories, or god knows what else in Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Glasgow, London,

> who were suffering all that Dickensian squalor. And that's why Tyneside's important…because it shows that you can absorb huge numbers of people you know with an alien, and I use the word deliberately, culture. Because a lot of the Irish of course didn't speak English. They spoke Gaelic
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

As an example of the social mobility of Tyneside's Irish, Bob, a well-educated financial advisor (who studied history at university) is from a family who left Ireland for Lancashire, via Liverpool (1830s). Over the generations the family progressed in employment status and economic resources; it was Bob's father who brought the family away from their farm labouring background to the North East and into middle-class professions after attending Durham University. From evidence captured by the 1881 census (via occupational analysis) Smith and MacRaild (2009) tested whether the Irish, more generally, climbed the socio-economic ladder over time. Their research revealed that enhancement of Irish socio-economic status was slow, epitomised by the fact that many highly paid mining occupations were closed to them. When the Irish did start to make inroads into the coal industry, it was only after a global political event and subsequent economic downturn.

> 'With the further expansion of the industry during the Franco-Prussian War [1870-1871] more Irish made their debut in it [the mining industry]. And when wages fell during the depression that followed that war, forcing many local colliers to emigrate, the Irish took up the slack' (Cooter 2005: 113).

So these changes were slow, they were gradual and took hold over generations. Complementing the discussion of the economic scenario into which the Irish were welcomed (soon becoming integral to continuing economic growth), we see a political environment in the North East with a weakness of High Anglicanism and High Toryism (MacRaild 2005) and the predominance of a working-class population; these were contributing factors in facilitating Irish integration. Wherever the Irish travelled, they carried political and religious 'baggage' into the workplace, consequently affecting the social composition of their new host communities. Tyneside was no different. Of primary public concern across the region was Irish Nationalism. The North East was not reactionary in its political affiliations – it accepted the influence of Liberal

Reform, at least in part, its longstanding Whig tradition (MacRaild 2005). This inherent liberalism enabled the region to be relatively undisturbed by the major Victorian radical movements: Chartism, anti-poor law, factory reform and free trade.

> ‘The North-east returned very few Tory MPs in the period 1880-1914 and supported Irish Nationalist claims to Home Rule with a gusto unparalleled elsewhere’ (MacRaild 2005: xiv).

We can look to the North West, and especially to Liverpool, where we see more powerful Toryism, a greater fear of a ‘famine flood’ of Irish and a greater increase of Irish Protestant migration (Belchem 2007). These factors contribute to a more volatile political arena for the Irish resettling in other parts of Britain, than was faced on Tyneside. Cooter (2005: 162) points to the ‘quality of non-religious leadership’ and the ‘attachment of some Irish politicians’ to Tyneside, further explaining the relative success of the Irish Nationalist movement within the region. The strength of the Nationalist cause, together with its never-ending call for Home Rule, meant that few politicians could ignore Irish issues and their direct impact on election campaigns. These electoral realities led increasing numbers of politicians to take the Home Rule pledge. The words of radical, and influential, Newcastle MP Joseph Cowen state that some North Eastern sentiment did not mirror the prevailing attitudes of British politics.

> ‘Repeated funds have been raised in England during the last century for revolutionary efforts to secure the independence of Poland, Italy, and Hungary. Did we not send English legions to fight against Don Carlos, in Spain, and King Bomba in Naples? How can we consistently cry out against help being sent by Irishmen abroad to Irishmen at home to promote objects in which they are equally alike interested?’ (Jones 1885 cited by Cooter 2005: 166).

This extract highlights the hypocrisy of British attitudes towards the Irish: that one rule applied to them and another for other nations. But why would Tyneside be particularly attuned to speaking out against this inequality? According to Younger (1992), contemporary factors align Tyneside with the plight of the Irish Nationalist. In stating that there exists a feeling of dislocation from the dominant political decision-making process, Younger argues that the more the North East vote for the Labour Party, the more the government ignores the region (we must note that this was written after a prolonged period of Conservative Britain with

‘Thatcherite’ politics). This is supported through empirical evidence within my research from Victor who talks of his time in the Irish diaspora in North America, specifically North East Canada:

Victor:

> They had the same industries there [as North East England], and also they had that feeling that “central government don’t give a monkey’s about us”
>
> (retired engineer, 80, 5th generation Irish).

This marginalised political standpoint shares characteristics with the Irish Nationalist cause. Younger (1992) also points to a feeling of isolation from the dominant culture: claiming that for the region to be acceptable to (and accepted by) the British ‘mainstream’, Tynesiders must abandon their language, culture and place of birth – certainly, unpleasant choices, engendering emotions with which the Irish Nationalist would empathise. Gilroy (2004) argues that the sociability of a local society is born out of the everydayness of the habitual practices that produce cosmopolitan spaces. They are cosmopolitan in the sense that they are the production of tolerant welcomes and cultural fusions (Urry 2003). According to Noble (2011: 158) however ‘this conviviality is neither automatic nor guaranteed – spaces of cultural diversity can also be marked by conflict or racism’. The Irish experienced a glass ceiling of always thick and often almost opaque dimensions. They were being welcomed as long as they took jobs that no one else wanted. British discourse seems to openly exclude and persecute them, and the mantra of ‘No Irish – No Blacks – No Dogs’, in certain public establishments (see Nayak 2009a) was rife as late as the 1960s and 1970s.

There is also evidence of internal prejudice in the North East, of the virulence seen in Northern Ireland, on the grounds of religion; perpetuating, for example, an almost exclusively Protestant Police Force. This discrimination was a common factor for Catholic Irish who sought equality through emigration. Jackson (2001: 63) tells us though, that parallels were to be found on Tyneside. Citing an entry from police force committee minutes in Newcastle in 1865, he makes clear that Irishmen in the constabulary were to be avoided: ‘the Committee instructs the Chief-Constables not to give candidate papers to

Irishmen unless other men cannot be had'. The Irish or more specifically, the Catholic Irish, were second class citizens. Whilst maintaining an attitude of strong British superiority, there is much 'mimicry' displayed in the historic portrayal of the Irish: essentially they are the same as us, but not quite (Walter 2001). As Munt (2008: 145) puts it there is: 'the figuration of the Irish and the figuration of the underclass as a dichotomous threatening pet-like Other of British culture'. What is interesting to note though, are the high numbers of Irishmen (Catholics and Protestants) in the British Army, where the levels of prejudice do not seem to be as prevalent (Sheen, 1998). This, however, could simply go back to the earlier argument of favourable surroundings; the Irish were welcomed in occupations that the English could not – or did not wish – to fill themselves. Looking at the region today, we see its economic state encompassing the remains of traditional heavy industries and poorly paid jobs in the service sector – a far cry from the situation which the original Irish migrants found within industrially and commercially proud Tyneside. In essence, the region's Irish progressively accommodated the host culture while at the same time retaining their loyalties to their 'Irishness', itself an identity moulded by their employment status, their political views and their religious affiliations (Hickman 1999). The early Irish immigrant community settling in the North East was characterised by limited social mobility and unskilled employment.

Contemporary men of Irish descent have been labelled 'Plastic Paddies' (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2003); that is to say, individuals with Irish relatives and who would be classed as different generations of 'Irish'. The 'plasticity' of the remark is meant derogatively, to suggest an artificially manufactured nature to the identity – a crudely constructed 'Irishness.' Parallels to the 'Plastic Paddy' (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2003) can be found within post-colonial writing with the rise of the 'native informant' (Spivak 1988). I draw the comparison, as it is the more recent generations of the Irish in Britain who are representative of an Irish post-colonial identity. Like Spivak, though, I am sceptical of the celebration of 'marginality' and as Kapoor, commenting on Spivak, states: 'the problem is that the native informant can too readily don ethnicity as a badge' (Kapoor 2004: 631). The concern is that by bearing the 'badge' of ethnicity, your word is valued and unchallenged purely because you 'belong' to this group and

your word is therefore more 'real.' It is this issue of authenticity that is particularly interesting throughout post-colonial critique; as Bhabha (1994) states, we can never be truly 'real' as our work, at least in part, is a representation. This thesis is not a 'real' story, nor am I a native informant; but through listening to the voices of my participants, I am recording and analysing the lives of men that exist within families of Irish descent on Tyneside. I too, am a man of Irish descent, and while being a key motivation in my pursuit of this research, it is the wider arena of masculinities and social change that is pertinent. In the next section I introduce the literatures on the geographies of masculinities and Irish masculinities as I review relevant research about masculinities and social change.

1.2 Masculinities and social change

> 'Clearly the landscape of geographical enquiry and knowledge has been irrevocably challenged – and changed – by feminist geography' (Nelson and Seager 2005: 7).

The emergence of feminist geography has been attributed to work in North America and the UK in the early 1970s, yet as a discipline, geography was relatively slow in the uptake of feminist thought (compared to sociology, politics or history). The above statement infers that the feminist challenge was however substantial; and with women not permitted membership to the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) until 1913 (van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005), their pathway into the discipline was problematic. In this centenary year, I observe that a major obstacle was the perception of a feminist 'way of writing' geography in a manner displeasing to the patriarchal institution of the RGS. To illustrate the misogynistic attitudes of the prevailing geographic discourse of the time, I cite the example of the geographer and first woman member of the RGS, Isabella Bird (see Bird 1856; 1879; 1880):

> 'Simply for a person to travel about the world in the late 19th Century did not by emerging standards of the time constitute a contribution to the discipline of geography. I am not aware, for example, that Isabella Bird ever made a measurement, a map, or a collection, or indeed ever wrote other than impressionistically about the areas she visited' (van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005: 3 citing Stoddart 1991).

The ‘emerging standards of the time’ may have discounted this knowledge, but in contemporary geography, not making maps or measurements and writing impressionistically does not discredit your geographer status. We have feminist geography to thank for this. Do I make maps? No. Am I a geographer? Yes. I am a feminist; more specifically I am a feminist geographer. Subsequent feminist approaches have provided the space and context for geographers to critically explore the intersections between masculinities and place. I have benefited from the feminist challenge to the discipline; my epistemological approaches to this research draw from feminist methodologies as I seek out connections between place, age and masculinity. I base my geographic investigations on feminist notions of unequal relations of gender and sexuality. The Women and Geography Study Group (since renamed the Gender and Feminist Geography Study Group) state: ‘…to be masculine often means not to be emotional or passionate, not to be explicit about your values, your background, your own felt experiences’ (WGSG 1997: 23). As an academic, I am also warned that writing personally is not something with which I will be naturally comfortable due to a gender politics of research (Anderson and Smith 2001), and so the intellectual bind on my emotions is twofold. A significant lesson learned from my time with the Tyneside Irish community though is that identities, including my own and my participants’, are increasingly multiple (Collinson and Hearn 1994; Connell 1995) and intersect with place, age and masculinity.

But why masculinities and why now? Well to date, there is a body of literatures on the Irish in Britain which has studied Irish femininities (Hickman and Walter 1995; Kanya-Forstner 1997; Lambert 1997; Leach 1979; Lennon et al 1988; Letford 1996), and these focus on experiences of life in the North West of England, the Midlands and London. Studies of Irish men and masculinities have been similar in geographic scope, covering London and the Midlands with the work of Curtis (1997) and Mac an Ghaill and Haywood (2003; 2011) but also in Scotland with the work of Boyle (2002; 2011). These studies of ‘Irish men’ are primarily of Irish born men and in many ways my research adds to this literature with English and Scottish born men who claim to be ‘of Irish descent’. Looking at their belonging and attachment to Ireland and Irishness within the Tyneside

diaspora context is a new contribution with its use of an intergenerational focus. It is a thesis that is as much about Tyneside men as it is about Irish men. Thus, the literatures on North Eastern masculinities, in particular the work of Nayak (2003a; 2003b; 2006; 2009) has proved especially useful. With this in mind, my research goes beyond investigating Irish masculinities of 'these putative male revolutionaries as located in Irish pubs, deploying traditional cultural resources in forging regressive nostalgic identities' (Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2011: 389) and rather positions them within the contexts of the home, the school, the workplace and other social settings, as called for by O'Connor (1992).

More broadly, we have been 'reminded' of the 'crisis in masculinity' (BBC News Online 2013) through the words of the Shadow Health Minister Diane Abbott; albeit a decade after Linda McDowell (2003: 221) stated 'I believe that the notion of a crisis in masculinity among young men is exaggerated'. In analysing the portrayal of men in the film 'Fight Club', which in many ways represents the angst around men and masculinities in contemporary society, Nayak and Kehily (2013: 52) state that the film shows 'men are living lives of wasted potential, in meaningless jobs, surrounded by the allure of consumerism and celebrity culture that appears full of promise but actually generates anger and discontent'. No doubt, economic restructuring has presented, and continues to present, a threat especially to those men whose very self-worth is defined through their working aspirations and economic priorities. Yet I too would render the political discourse and cultural representations as hyperbole. I oppose the use of crisis discourse, as it implies that what was there before was stable, secure and acceptable. Rather than send the 'emergency services' of political rhetoric and moral panic, I believe thorough investigation of men's reactions and responses is more appropriate and certainly more productive. In the face of the challenges of economic change, this thesis highlights men's experiences of, through and with changing social opportunities, rather than seeing them as victims of crises.

In 2009 there was a move towards a third phase of masculinity studies (thanks to a special issue of *Social and Cultural Geography*), building from a first more 'sociological' approach (Connell's 1995 'hegemony' and later 'local hegemony' see Hopkins 2007a; Messerschmidt 2012; Nayak 2006) and a

second ‘cultural approach’ (‘which focuses on questions of subjectivity’ Hopkins and Noble 2009: 813) toward a recognition that masculinities could be seen as ‘strategic’ and ‘understood as performances which are undertaken in particular contexts, drawing on specific resources and capacities’ (Hopkins and Noble 2009: 814). The particular context of Tyneside Irish masculinities and the specific resources/capacities of researcher and male participants are addressed within this thesis. As Connell’s (1995) seminal work states, masculinities are formed relationally with and against femininities but also with and against other masculinities (including my own as a young male researcher – see Horton 2001; Richardson 2013; 2014; Vanderbeck 2005); they change in time and context dependent on history and politics (Burrell and Hearn 1989); and they intersect with ‘variables such as race and ethnicity, class and age’ (Robinson 2008: 59).

In her study probing the ‘in between spaces’ of the Irish diaspora, Ni Laoire (2002: 183) contends that:

> ‘Conventional understandings of the Irish diaspora assume a homogenous white, Catholic, “straight” community with unproblematic ties to a romanticised homeland. The myth of the homogenous Irish diaspora has important implications for all migrants from the island of Ireland, as those migrants who do not conform to the myth may still find themselves interacting with it in various ways’.

All of my research participants are white and heterosexual (though how ‘white’ they are has been debated in critical whiteness studies – see Nayak 2009a; 2009b; Hickman and Walter 1997); however, not all are Catholic (with Protestant, Atheist and Agnostic beliefs represented), nor are their connections to a ‘romanticised homeland’ necessarily ‘unproblematic’. It became apparent during the interactions with some of the men that they saw me as a similar man to themselves with the major difference between us being our ages. A useful caveat is suggested by Nash (1997: 109 citing Finn 1995; see also Nash 1993), on studying the North American Irish diaspora: ‘somehow being heterosexual is so wrapped up with being Irish that they simply can’t imagine something being Irish and not being heterosexual’. Indeed these ‘transcendent moral values’ (Valentine et al 2013: 166) have resonance across geographical locations where Hoad (2007: 59) talks of ‘authentic African-ness’ and how it is

‘constructed through the lens of heterosexuality which gives it a fixity, such that the introduction of LGBT rights is perceived not just as a secular threat to religious beliefs, but as a threat to African identity itself’. Sexuality is discussed and analysed further in Chapter 5 and 6. Building on earlier work on the geographies of family life, which studied the gender performances of fathers as well as mothers and children in the everyday, I note Aitken’s remarks (1998: 195) that: ‘it is important that we try to understand how these performances come together in a critical form of world making that is not constrained by myths’. Crucially in the words of Vincett et al (2012: 278 *original emphasis*) ‘people tend to interpret *performance* to mean acting or illusion, implying that performance is not real or true’; and they propose instead (by citing Shieffelin 2005) that we should think of performance as embodying ‘the expressive dimension of the strategic articulation of practice’ (Ibid). In responding to these calls in social and cultural geography, the empirical work goes beyond the imagined homogeneity of the Irish diaspora, of generational lineage, of family life and masculinities, to examine the performed and lived. As Butler (1993) argues, gender is performatively produced; it is inherently linked to the act of doing.

Like Donkersloot (2012: 579) ‘I understand masculinities and femininities to be a configuration of practices that are dynamic, embodied, socially constructed and socially embedded’. But with a key research question of what it means to be a man of Irish descent, how was I going to speak with men about their masculinities, considering I too, am a man of Irish descent? As discussed further in Chapter 2, our bodies are visual (as well as physical) representations of ourselves. I designed and employed an ‘outline of a man’ as a stimulus to facilitate discussion around the men’s embodied identities and in turn, to reflect on any intergenerational significances. This participant directed visual method of data collection made the ‘familiar strange’ in such a way that ‘lay beyond my repertoire of preconceived understandings of place and space’ (Mannay 2010: 96). The participants were generating material that responds directly to the ‘corporeal turn’ (Hopkins and Noble 2009) in addressing characteristics of their bodies, relative to a blank outline image, more than in relation to me and my masculinity; I was able to reflect upon ‘embodied intergenerationality’ (see

Chapter 3; also Richardson 2013) by looking at variations in reactions to the method.

We see a feminist stance particularly when highlighting the spatial division of labour, the politics of the workplace, and classed gender (Massey 1994; Rose 1997). Historically, a strand of Irish masculinity was often portrayed amid a backdrop of an embodied feminised Celtic idyll, as a soft and artistic identity contrasted with the rational Anglo Saxon (Hickman and Walter 1997). But does this apply to the Irish literary greats or the stereotypical Irish labourer? I glean insight from my research and Bob, who draws influence from his grandfather:

Bob:

> I was always tempted by my gran's example of her husband. My grandfather. You can be a strong man who cries; if it's merited, if you see what's going on in death camps, it's a rational thing to do
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

We see here then the embodiment of intergenerational masculinities. Bob's grandfather's lived experience is personified through his own outlook on life 'you can be a strong man who cries', though elements of a 'renaissance' softer masculinity are encompassed into the hegemonic framework 'it's a rational thing to do' (this is discussed further in Chapter 7). We see a balancing act between the emotional and rational sides of his masculinity. Furthermore, in my research design I felt that being visual – during the interactions themselves, as a form of feedback and dissemination, and for all the academic analysis in between – would best support the development of the biographical oral histories. Not only does this respond to a 'blind spot in the study of masculinities' (Hopkins and Noble 2009: 816) or 'corporeality' (Tamborino 2002; Witz 2000), but as Longhurst et al (2008: 213) state:

> 'In discussing our own bodies as researchers and our participants' bodies, we can begin to establish relationships. We situate ourselves not as autonomous, rational academics, but as people who sometimes experience irrational emotions including during the course of the research. Emotions matter. This enables geographers to begin to talk from an embodied place, rather than from a place on high'.

Social interaction is made up of a constellation of gestures, movements, bodies, sounds, practices and actions, and as a researcher, I am intrinsically linked to the creation of the exchange. My presence is unavoidable, it is inherent. I am integral to the production of the data, and so in establishing and explaining the boundaries of my own embodied masculinity, I am allowed to analyse on a level playing field. In ignoring the Shadow Health Minister's advice 'like the film Fight Club – the first rule of being a man in modern Britain is that you're not allowed to talk about it' (BBC News 2013) my participants and I have talked about what it means to be a modern man in Britain. We have talked about working aspirations and economic priorities; the influence of religion and class; attachment to Irish national identity; as well as regional belonging in this open approach to researching men, masculinities and intergenerational relations.

1.3 Human geography, literally

This thesis literally argues for human geography. That is the geographical person; the identity that is itself, spatial. Situated at the intersections of a particular group of people and the places which they inhabit, my research investigates how people can become emplaced. The ways in which thirty eight men of Irish descent assert their nationality, their inherited identities and sense of belongings which are inscribed and embodied to Ireland, the Irish diaspora and Tyneside through their cultural practices; I call this 'Irish Incarnate'. As Hickman (1999) argued, 'Irishness' is an identity moulded by employment status, religious affiliations and political views; the aims of this thesis are designed to further this understanding by:

Aim 1) Investigating the relationship between place, age and masculinities

Aim 2) Understanding the intersections of masculinity with roles within the family (son, father, grandfather etc.)

Aim 3) Exploring socio-economic change and its effects on masculinities

After this introduction (and following methodology chapter) I divide this thesis into five analytical chapters, although stories of 'Irish Incarnate' slip between these divisions. This introduction highlights the specific geographic and historic

context of Tyneside in both fostering and framing contemporary Irish masculinities and introduces the geographies of masculinities and social change. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology by explaining the research process, my negotiations of ethical considerations and of my novel pursuit of alternative research dissemination.

The first of the five analytical chapters, Chapter 3, articulates the significances of intergenerational relations through the scale of the body. 'Embodied intergenerationality' is a way of understanding the relationship between intergenerational relations, men and masculinities, and it theorises the construction of the men's narratives in this biographical and ethnographic research. Chapter 4 focuses specifically on the family level to analyse how the men look back upon their lives and those of their fathers before them. Chapter 5 looks at wider societal changes and institutional influences through the scale of the school. Chapter 6 switches focus to men at work, and presents an analysis of the influence of their inherited classed legacies of previous generations. Chapter 7 then aligns 'Irishness' with renaissance ideals to open possibilities for working masculinities beyond the traditional and industrial. Finally in Chapter 8 I outline and reflect upon the geographical contributions this thesis has made towards academic literature, everyday understanding and cultural recognition of men of Irish descent on Tyneside, in addition to the geographies of masculinities. The thesis presents biographical oral histories of thirty eight men. It does not tell a universal story of the Irish diaspora, nor does it draw conclusions on what it means to be an Irish man; as Bob insightfully states in the preface 'nobody's sat down with a blueprint'. Rather, through studying the processes of place, age, and masculinities with men of Irish descent, I present how they negotiate growing up and growing old and all that is in between, how nationality is considered across generations, their rationalisations of their claims to be (in part) Irish – and why, ultimately, this all matters.

This thesis has found that across the scales of the body, the family, at school and at work that men draw from and relate to notions of 'Irishness' to lesser or greater extents. Generational differences have acted as a force of change, in particular more liberal attitudes to family planning, a decline in the role of institutional religion as well as the increasingly multicultural school

environment. De-industrialisation has led to a change in employment provision which has changed the very landscape upon which many men constructed their embodied masculinities. In positing Irish Incarnate, I argue that while identification with conceptualisations of generation can shape this process, there is no set pattern for certain generations feeling more Irish than others on contemporary Tyneside. Rather, individual circumstance is more often influential with those who holiday in Ireland, those who practise Irish culture on Tyneside, or those who have relatives in Ireland feel greater attachment regardless of which generation of Irish descent they belong to.

Chapter 2 Researching Men and Masculinities

2.1 Researching across generations

The thesis looks at masculinity 'intergenerationally' – that is, at the relationships between generations (Hopkins et al 2011). As Brannen (2012: 270) puts it 'intergenerational transmission involves the transfer of material resources and services, aspirations, values, practices, social learning, and models of parent-child relations'. This approach enabled me to study the 'within-generation' (Brannen et al 2011: 155) pressures on men as well as the 'vertical pull of inheritance' (Ibid) from older to younger generations. In 'masculinity studies' and 'critical studies of men,' the emphases are anxieties about men and boys, feminist accounts of patriarchy and sociological models of gender (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). In developing 'critical studies of men' Collinson and Hearn (1994) argue that we must think of the concepts of men, masculinity and multiple masculinities; that we should study masculinities in a way that is both critical and engaging to question and challenge the power and control with which they are often associated. Jackson talked of masculine pluralities and the shifting spatial structures of gendered geographies (Jackson 1994; 1991) and two decades on, like the collections of van Hoven and Horschelmann (2005) and Gorman-Murray and Hopkins (2014), my research reveals different ways in which men perform and construct gender roles. Gender is socially and spatially (re)created and (re)organised in different ways by different generations. Like Tarrant (2013) in adopting an intergenerational approach to researching men's lives, this thesis contributes to critical geographies of gender by focusing on the myriad of everyday practices and performances of masculinities over generations of men; in this case, from families of Irish descent on Tyneside.

> 'The examination of intergenerational relationships is contingent on how one defines a generation, and our observation of intergenerational phenomena is conditioned by the methodological issues unique to intergenerational research' (Costanzo and Hoy 2007: 887).

This chapter introduces the complexities of moving beyond theories of men and masculinities into practice and details an intergenerational approach to researching the lives of men of Irish descent. It articulates why thinking relationally is important. In researching across three generations of men of Irish descent living on Tyneside, I acknowledge the intersectional nature of the subject and employ an intergenerational approach to explore it. I go on to detail the specific methodology employed within this research project. I discuss the ethics of 'anonymity' within biographical research (to name or not to name?) and analyse the politics of representation. In establishing the research methodology, I situate 'the plausability of accounts' within appropriate academic literature. I outline the 'rigour' of my research evaluation (Baxter and Eyles 1997: 506).

Generation is used as a determinant of 'chronological age' (i.e. father is born a certain number of years before son, see Pain 2001). Jackson et al (2007) state that this distance in age between generations can vary between 15 and 40 years, which reflects the typical reproductive age range of women. However, generation can also be used as marker of 'social age' (Pain 2001), of which Biggs (2005) offers three different theoretical conceptions: generation as the 'psychodynamic', the 'structuralist' and the 'social gerontological':

> 'It should be noted that the original psychodynamic formulation of generation was a highly 'nuclearised' one predicated on the underlying assumption that intergenerational relationships are symbolised by universal parent-child relations in the early years of a child's development' (Costanzo and Hoy 2007: 887).

They continue, in a critique of the psychodynamic approach as, in their words 'it leaves many gaps in its portrayal of the meaning of "generation"' (Ibid). They base this on the observation that we live in a world where the structure of generations and their relationships is constantly changing – which leads us to the second of Biggs' (2005) conceptualisations:

> 'If psychoanalysis attempts to explain generation in the context of the individual change and inner experience, then the second, sociological tradition, starts by examining generations as structural relations in society, with a principal focus on the mechanisms of social change. It starts by examining generations in the public sphere and draws implications for the private' (Biggs 2005: 701).

Biggs is moving discussion from the ‘conflict-based’ internalised psychodynamic approaches to looking externally, and to extra-familial influences on generations. This stance, then, may be useful in reading and remembering our personal identities, ‘our sense of efficacy, gender, emotional preferences etc.’ with the structural lens shedding light on social identities, ‘our shared peer values, social expectations, relationship guides etc.’ (Costanzo and Hoy 2007: 888). Thirdly then, Biggs (2005) outlines the social gerontological approach to generation as combining both the ‘internal’ and ‘external’:

> ‘Generation goes to the heart of a number of debates about the nature of contemporary society. It has biological roots through the family, where generations generally refer to successive parent-child bonds. There are psychological dimensions in the sense of belonging and identity that can arise, depending upon the stance that an individual takes toward the generation in question. Generation is also used to locate particular birth cohorts in specific historical and cultural circumstances, such as the “baby boomers”. It is a truly crossroads phenomena that links a number of different fields and levels of analysis’ (Biggs 2005: 695).

There is value in the psychoanalytic approach, in particular the work of Jimenez and Walkerdine (2011), and indeed the relational production of narrative accounts (Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012) is picked up on in Chapter 3 by analysing cultural narrative structures; though it is the ‘mechanisms of social change’ of the structuralist approach and the ‘birth cohorts’ of the social gerontological approach that are most relevant to my research. As ‘mechanisms’ generations have acted as a force of change. For example growing up in the post-industrial era open a prescribed set of opportunities: the rise in the service sector on Tyneside (Chapter 6) and the declining influence of institutional religion leading to more multi-faith experience in schools (Chapter 5). The concept of ‘birth cohorts’ also has resonance with relational experience evidenced in the narratives with reference often made to the ‘greatest generation’ (those who fought in the Second World War). I argue that biological phenomena cannot explain all social processes and, like Thomson (2007) and McLeod and Thomson (2009) seek to understand social change through an examination of the relationships between, and within, younger and older generations:

> ‘Periods of slow change may be characterised by a kind of “piety”, where young people look to their elders, possibly adopting their dress and values. During periods of fast social change the old will be more receptive to the young, sometimes even more so that the intermediate generation between them who may experience themselves as being more “stuck”’ (McLeod and Thomson 2009: 110).

There persists an idea with these approaches, that association with a specific ‘generation’ gives individuals access to a specific range of experience; thus conditioning their values through a specific frame of reference. In citing the work of Mannheim (1952), I outline how this was not evident in identification with Irish nationality on Tyneside, yet across the thesis there is evidence of the ‘pious’ (McLeod and Thomson 2009) nature of inheriting the ‘Irish’ values of the elder generation.

> ‘Particularly useful to the exploration of generation is Mannheim’s (1952) distinction between generational location (i.e. individuals born in the same historical and cultural region such as birth cohort), actual generation (i.e. individuals exposed to the same concrete historical experiences) and generational units (i.e. individuals within the same generations who interpret their similar experiences in different ways, or a ‘generational consciousness’ (Mannheim 1952: 311)’ (Grenier 2007: 715).

Mannheim’s work expands the boundaries of generation as he points out that the relationships between them form, then continually adapt and react to one another. Considerations of ‘age’ and ‘generation’ vary, and what follows in this chapter is how this has impacted upon my research methodology. In this study, the men are labelled as being first, second, third etc. generation Irish: to be first generation you must be Irish born; to be second generation you must be the son of a man born in Ireland; to be third generation you must be the grandson of a man born in Ireland and so it continues. While I have always labelled the subjects of this thesis as first, second, third etc. generation Irish, I have not shaped my analysis thus. Literatures on the Irish in Britain *are* drawn as such, as are wider literatures on migration (Brannen 2012; Brannen et al 2013; Brannen et al 2011). This is a deliberate marker of identity on my part, as in my initial review of my participants, I was struck by how few were Irish born (six out of the thirty eight participants; for full biographical details see Appendices), yet also by the extent of identification with Ireland regardless of how long ago a

relative was born there. The men can belong to multiple structured and social ‘generations’. For example, a second generation Irishman could also belong to the post-war ‘baby boomers’ generation just as easily as a second generation Irishman could be part of the post-millennium ‘digital generation’. I repeat, there is no set pattern to how ‘Irish’ a particular generation feels in my study, and due to multiple emigrations from Ireland since the major exodus of 1840-1880 the Irish generations are not age banded (see migration timeline in Appendices).

The implications of this are that I must analyse my participants ‘intergenerationally’. The contribution my thesis makes to literature on the Irish in Britain is that I use the social and familial conception of ‘generation’ rather than their national identity as first, second, third generation Irish; this means that the men are primarily marked as grandfathers, fathers and sons. This poses a challenge for me in generating understanding of the processes of ageing, identity and belonging among these men of Irish descent. To clarify the epistemological status of their oral accounts, I must be clear in my use of participant generated material. It has been argued that the individualistic nature of these structures of experience sit in contrast to traditional approaches to social geography (which principally consider group experience). Certainly my primary use of familial roles rather than cohort conceptions of generation offer a contemporary exploration of this debate. In 1981 Jackson claimed that a ‘focus of the subjectivity of experience seems to be the most attractive feature of the phenomenological perspective for social geography’ (301). Relph (1977) had earlier warned that phenomenology cannot be used as an excuse for subjectivity and as cited by Jackson (1981: 301) ‘nor does it allow straightforward combinations with existing geographical concepts’; though the work of Tuan (1976) had tried to articulate some of these combinations. As Jackson explains (1981: 301), Tuan was ‘making the distinction between place and space, arguing that place cannot be completely understood from the “outside”, as an assemblage of facts, objects and events. Knowledge of a place involved understanding the sentiments and meanings attached by the “insider”.

The insiders of this study are the men of my research. To an extent, and as I discuss in more depth in Chapter 3, I am also an insider. In practical terms this means I treat the participant narratives as lived experience. I am less

concerned about facts, objects and events than I am about the meaning my participants place on their stories. I include ethnographic context in my analysis to help explain their rationale and at times to clarify or contradict sentiment against what has been said. I treat these oral accounts as sources of information; I acknowledge they were not given in a vacuum and that I was influential in their conception. They do not represent truths about a community, but instead offer rich insight to a spatial structure of social relations. The hierarchal systems of families, in particular the intergenerational relationship between these men of Irish descent, help explain generational differences. I summarise below, my understanding and usage of three key terms that feature within this thesis:

Generation

'Generation' is a contested term with multiple meanings; indeed, this thesis employs several interpretations. The term is primarily used as a marker of national identity; the men are labelled as belonging to a particular ‘generation’ of Irish descent. A first generation Irishman was born in Ireland, a second generation Irishman is the son of a man born in Ireland, and so on down the years. Often however, I will use the term to refer to an age defined social category in relation to a family structure (for example: grandfather, father, son). It is in these conceptualisations that I seek to analyse the intergenerational relations and to, in particular, elucidate ‘generational differences’.

Generational differences

This thesis reveals ‘generational differences’ which act as forces of social change between the lives of my participants as grandfathers, fathers and sons. The differences between generations are shaped by socio-economic pressures such as social mobility, de-industrialisation, and the declining influence of institutional religion. These pressures themselves are brought about by societal changes in levels of education and subsequent higher skilled employment alongside economic factors within a global capitalist system.

Inheritance of culture

What I argue to be of great interest to these men of Irish descent are the stories of continuity against the backdrop of ‘generational differences’. I have labelled these transitions as 'the inheritance of culture'; that is, the transmission of values and characteristics of a previous generation. The men claim to acquire these in different ways. They are at times learned, taught and tacit. They are at times claimed to be unavoidable and inevitable. Ultimately, I argue these behaviours are performed and embodied by men of Irish descent.

2.2 Biographical research

The data for my research comes from interviews with thirty eight men across twenty families of Irish descent who are living or have recently lived on Tyneside (nine families with interrelated family connections and a further eleven individuals; for family trees, see Appendices). I aimed to speak with at least three generations of men (within the same family). However for several reasons, this was not always possible. Some of the fathers and grandfathers of the men of my study were dead; some were absent due to family separation and divorce; some were ‘back home’ in Ireland and logistically I could not travel to meet with them; there were also some family members who did not want to participate. Our meetings took place in venues suggested by the research participants, often at home, though not exclusively, with both the Tyneside Irish Centre (Newcastle upon Tyne) and the Iona Club (Hebburn, South Tyneside) occasional locations as well as local coffee shops and pubs. The interactions between the generations were particularly interesting at this stage. An assessment of the power relations and confidence of individuals within the family cohort was noted, as were any differences between perceptions and performances of particular themes raised in the project introductions (these along with other recollections/anecdotes were kept through the research process).

Biographical research is a vast and ever changing method of social science. Academics working in this area are interdisciplinary in their approach and likewise I have drawn from literature across the humanities and social sciences, whilst paying particular attention to the relevance of this for social and

geographical research. This brings obvious advantages, yet I must also reveal the subsequent complexity of defining any one approach:

> ‘A family of terms combines to shape the biographical method…method, life, self, experience, epiphany, case, autobiography, ethnography, auto-ethnography, biography, ethnography story, discourse, narrative, narrator, fiction, history, personal history, oral history, case history, case study, writing presence, difference, life history, life story, self story, and personal experience story’ (Denzin 1989: 27).

In light of the above, I borrow Gluck’s (1996: 217) phrase and frame my fieldwork data as ‘biographical oral histories’. The blurring of much of biographical terminology has clouded the boundaries between disciplines, leaving distinction difficult:

> ‘Simply put, oral history collects spoken memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews’ (Ritchie 1995: 1).

The biographical oral histories are situated within a specific locale and group: the Tyneside Irish diaspora; and this study looks to generational differences as a force of change (as previously introduced) between the lives of men of Irish descent living on Tyneside. Essentially I am concerned with the experience of a particular individual over his life course.

Theory is generated through the research process within biographical research – this ‘grounded theory’ (Glasser and Strauss 1967) – the synthesis of data collection and analysis informing the researcher as data emerges from the research. The process is open to ideas arising from the data, rather than being underpinned by (pre)existing approaches, though it acknowledges the ‘theoretical sensitivities’ and advises the researcher to use ‘his or her previous theoretical knowledge to identify theoretical relevant phenomena in the data’ (Kelle 2005: Online). The biographical oral histories were recorded through interviews (using a digital recorder) then transcribed, themed and coded through NVivo and disseminated directly back to respondents through provision of the transcripts. Ritchie (1995) states that not only does ‘how we are researching’ need clear terminology but ‘how we refer to the researched’ is equally important. With this in mind, I do not use the term ‘interviewee’ as it implies a passivity of the individual – preferring instead, ‘participant’ to

acknowledge the agency of the men themselves. These are their stories that I am recording and analysing.

Social and geographical research has witnessed many ‘turns’ in its thematic priorities, and biographical research is no exception. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) talk about the ‘biographical turn’; and how it originated from the ‘crisis’ of representation. This was marked by the problematic connection between experience and the social context of the researcher. Questions of validity and reliability have continuously challenged biographical research. According to realism there is an objective knowledge of reality to be gained from the empirical, a material basis for individual experience and that life stories reflect a lived reality. Conversely, for social constructionists, the idea of life stories representing a reality is both basic and misconceived (see Denzin 1989, for the ‘biographical illusion’). The constructionist places analytic emphasis on the formation of the story – the performance and collaboration of the researched with the researcher. In other words, rather than representing an objective reality, narrative structures (taped stories, transcripts and field notes) become resources for constructing a text. Indeed this thesis is constructed on these lines, with the use of participant quotations and my own field diary extracts to inform my argument. Biographical oral histories though, unlike some other methods, benefit from direct contact with the participants (Reinharz 1992). A thorough research design ensures that the researcher focuses on concrete interactions through time, over weeks, months, years and even generations – helping the researcher to distance her/himself from abstract speculation.

According to the work of Thomson (2007) longitudinal approaches benefit both the audience of the research as well as the research participants themselves. In a collaborative study of children and mothers she argues that researching in this way exposes the creation/recreation of ‘family narratives or scripts’ (Thomson et al 2012: 196); and furthermore that qualitative longitudinal studies give a lens to what changes as well as what stays the same. In another article she states ‘one of the most compelling attractions of this kind of work is that is enables us to explore apparent discordance between what people *say* and what people *do*’ (2007: 572 *original emphasis*). It is this that forms one of

the key contributions of this thesis (highlighted in Chapter 8); the prevalence of paradox in embodied masculinities.

According to Bertaux (2003: 41), life stories, like autobiographies, are 'subjectively squared': just because these 'facts' are subjective does not mean they cannot also be objective.

> 'Although life stories are undoubtedly subjective productions, they can be used as stepping stones to the construction of sociological descriptions and interpretations that come as close to objective sociological knowledge as is humanly possible' (Bertaux 2003: 41).

This should not automatically deem subjective findings less valuable in academic research. Subjective observations are not necessarily false, valueless or wrong. Furthering this anti-realist critique are claims that life stories only record views, accounts and 'facts' given the current context; that they are entirely dependent on the current state of mind of the participant. These schools of thought can be grouped as 'deconstruction,' 'narrativism' and other forms of 'idealism'[3]. The value of biographical interviewing is that it explores in diverse (methodological and interpretive) ways individual accounts of life experiences within given cultural settings (Humphrey et al 2003). Like the collection of Jeffrey and Dyson (2008), which presents an analysis of how socio-economic change is affecting the lives of young people, undertaking this research is a means of understanding major social shifts by reviewing how new experiences are interpreted by individuals within families (Roberts 2002).

Methodologically, biographical interviewing is a unique and acquired skill, one in which the researcher must have an awareness of relationality, positionality and personality (see Chapter 3). Like Bertaux and Thompson (1993) in their book *Between Generations* my study sheds light on the 'blank spaces' of family relationships through biographical oral histories, looking at the transmission and transmissibility within the family, in what has been conceptualised as 'intergenerationality':

> 'It is the interactions between generations – themselves products of particular times, spaces and cultures – that have significant effects on a whole range of social issues…' (Hopkins et al 2011: 314).

These ‘social issues’ manifest themselves in numerous ways within biographical research. Golofast (2003) broadly categorises them under three headings: ‘the routine’; ‘life as a sequence of events’; and ‘the hidden aspects of daily life.’ The routine reveals itself in the emotional responses to the inertia of everyday life:

> ‘It simply exists. It is self evident. It is always there as the dressing, cooking or eating code, as the unspoken rules regulating any hierarchical structure, any kind of meeting or gathering, or item of folklore’ (Golofast 2003: 58).

The dangers with the routine are in the uncertainty of generalisation. At any point the researcher could think through differing situations with a standardised mindset; in conducting the biographical interview I was always careful to define the social context/contexts. The routine continually reproduces actions, thoughts and feelings, and over generalisation can all too easily be a side effect to accurate fieldwork (if such a thing even exists). The relationship between the personal and the social is an aspect of biographical interviewing; it is highlighted most when looking at life as a sequence of events:

> ‘…personal and public events form the usual subject of biographical research. As a rule, events are also routine, but the routine is that of social life - familial, local, urban or societal’ (Golofast 2003: 58).

These biographies are therefore culturally specific, and provide a platform for comparison between narratives from different cultural contexts. Thus, accounts from men of Irish descent living on Tyneside are different than those from the Irish in Britain as a whole. Golofast’s concept of the ‘hidden life aspect’ is where we see particular pertinence in my study, which according to Golofast (2003: 61 *original emphasis)* is ‘the *mystery* or *destiny* of a biographical narrative: the obscure and sometimes totally incomprehensible and frightening, with its unexpected coincidence and failures’. Topics of a sexual, medical or violent nature may be uncovered through a biographical interview; as well as the mundane, everyday, and inconsequential. By interviewing family members of different gender and generation, I drew conclusions, specific to each individual yet illustrative of many aspects of contemporary life. Taking for example, the role of, and reverence for, religion; ecclesiastic authority through its leadership has traditionally influenced ‘Irish’ families heavily, affecting issues of marriage, divorce and abortion. While the religious teaching remains unaltered, have

individual attitudes changed, and have gender and generation dynamics played their parts (see Chapter 5)?

Active thematising is the recognised technique applied to clarify these hidden aspects of the narrative. A structure of themed topics of conversation increases the dialogical relationship of biographical texts. Unfortunately this comes at the risk of introducing researcher generated ‘facts’, and is being aware of this tension enough? The sensitivity of an interview impacts both the researched and the researcher. The nature of the discussion; the role of ethics; power relations; the write up and dissemination are all affected. Traditionally, biographical oral histories have been critiqued for lacking in the reliability that written accounts can provide. Biographical interviewing however enables the participant to explain and expand upon their decisions made across the life course and as Roberts (2002: 96) states, the critique: ‘…not only fails to recognise the increasing utility that history finds in oral history but that written accounts are also fallible and subject to bias.’ Oral and written accounts should be evaluated differently; they have been formed on different bases and should be open to different appraisal. The performance of an oral history is closely connected to its social context; as long as this is recognised then in a way it is more accurate than the written word. The written word is permanent, and does not necessarily acknowledge a social context. There is no specific temporal element for example.

When the research was in its infancy, a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendices) was developed as part of my research plan. From the very first ‘interview’ however it became clear that what I was actually gathering was a biographical narrative; which resulted in thirty eight biographical oral histories and rendered the interview schedule (though at times a useful checklist) redundant (Gluck 1996). The themes and directions of conversation were participant led, and where there were researcher prompts, they were derived from previous information generated from the participants at our initial meetings. Our meetings were at times long lasting and so I would not schedule two meetings for the same day due to the unpredictable timings.

Through gathering biographical oral histories, I have investigated contemporary Irish masculinities on Tyneside with reference to past, present and future masculinities and how these inform each other. This gives insight to family relationships and the shifting spatial structures of masculine pluralities. With each individual's reflections across his own lifecourse, we see the changing (or otherwise) ideas of family, work, society and so forth. We can then see to what extent 'generational difference' has acted as a force of change.

The intergenerational focus of my research placed emphasis on intra-familial relationships, looking at grandfathers, fathers and sons (as well as uncles, nephews, cousins and brothers). As Antonucci et al (2007: 685) state 'a unique benefit of the intra-family design is to be able to simultaneously assess all three generation members'. The focus on intra-family generation relations can be particularly useful in 'identifying unique and perhaps more universal family characteristics of importance' (Ibid). A seemingly banal comment for example, if independently repeated by three men within the same family, renders it far more significant. It was not possible to hear from a three generational cross section from each of the participant families and thus an extra-familial approach was also employed in the interest of depth of data. Looking between generations by looking across families is also significant:

> 'The extra-familial context is an important one in that it permits the sampling of the diverse attributes possessed by individuals within single generations. The within-family context provides for a limited sampling of the members of any single generation' (Costanzo and Hoy 2007: 898).

Most intergenerational research is not conducted within families but across multiple families. Intra-familial research has often been either in smaller case study samples or in developing world context (Porter 2011) where multi-generational households are commonplace (with the exception of Mannay 2010). In more economically developed countries, it is often the case that family structures produce a wider geographical spread, which can be heightened further with the case of the economic migrant. So my study adopts both approaches.

Biographical research is concerned with the ‘relatively distant past’; has a ‘concern for heritage’; the ‘memories are considered valuable resources’; they are seen as ‘relevant for future generations’ (Ni Laoire 2007: 376). I broaden this to claim that as social and cultural geographers, we should be concerned with the past and its relevance for the future and see memories as valuable heritage materials. Social science traditionally prioritises the interpretation of data, opposing the oral history view that the emphasis should lie with the ‘credibility and authenticity’ of the data (Ibid). An approach that Ni Laoire (2007) took in her research was to offer the participants the option of being named or not named; but as explained later, I do not feel this was right for my project (see section 2.4.1); while ‘narrative authority’ (Mattingly 2001: 447) was desired at times (from the participants), the ‘symbolic economy’ (Ibid), due in most part to relational identity formations (by the participants), proved too strong to override (for the researcher see section 2.4.1).

2.3 The research process

My research participants were recruited through existing relationships within the Tyneside Irish community (developed through my MA and BA dissertations); through participant observation during the annual Tyneside Irish Festival (2 weeks in October each year) and St Patrick’s Day celebrations (March 17th each year); but also through a wider network of local radio (BBC Newcastle and NE1fm) and national press (The Irish World and the Federation of Irish Societies). Having met the initial respondents, I employed ‘snowballing’ processes to speak to other members of their own families and asked for introductions to family friends etc. Generally, participants liked telling their stories once they were assured they could trust me and that I had genuine research interests. Recruitment via ‘snowballing’ and ‘word of mouth’ recommendations was the best way to ensure that trust was established. My portrayal was more often than not as a student needing help with a research project (with each participant the ‘expert’) rather than as a professional academic wanting to research them. During my time in their homes, I regarded myself as a guest and would always take along a box of chocolates. One

participant joked that he would have preferred flowers to chocolates and so in response, on a return visit I brought a box of Cadbury's 'Roses'!

In reading their embodied masculinities I acknowledge three interrelated research factors – relationality (Hopkins and Pain 2007); positionality (England 1994); and personality (Moser 2008); to which I would add 'having a good sense of humour', especially to ease awkward silences and first meetings.

> 'Relationality does not just pose interesting questions about age, but makes a fundamental change in ways which we approach and think about it' (Hopkins and Pain 2007: 288).

Looking 'intergenerationally' can help explain changes in social status between generations and even power relations within the economy, education, health and the body; all areas of interest within this research. Masculinity is relational: towards other masculinities (including my own); to femininities; and to one's own former and future masculinity (Connell 1995). With an intergenerational approach to researching men's lives, I was acutely aware of the significance of the relationship between age and masculinity (Tarrant 2013), as well as the intersections of masculinity within family roles (as son, father and grandfather etc.). Age 'is not only an individual experience but also relational…' and a man's age is relational 'both to women, younger (and sometimes even older) generations, and other men' (Tarrant 2010: 1586). The sociologist Richardson (2010: 739) puts forward a twofold analysis of relational identity formation:

> 'First, in the sense that identities are understood not as inner essences or labels of one's position but as "claims for recognition", which are "contested and fraught" (Devine and Savage 2005: 12). This is to say, identities are formed between rather than within persons as the outcome of recognisable and credible performances (Butler 1990; Lawler 2008). It is through being continuously recognisable as "masculine", being intelligible to others as a particular "masculinity" in terms of the cultural norms of the social group of which we are a part, that such identities are constituted…'
>
> '…Second, identities are relational in the sense that, as Jenkins argues (1996), they are constructed through relations of sameness and difference with others. For Bourdieu (1993) this is based not on recognising oneself as belonging to a certain position, but as differentiating oneself from others within a multiplicity of different fields, invoking a fluid and contextual approach to identity'.

As a man researching men and masculinities, the usual power relations are ever-present (Hopkins 2010; Horton 2001): my position as researcher (and my intellectual motivations/agendas); my experience (social capital, academic attainment, aspirations); but also my physical presence (how I look, how I sound). In addition to my 'positionality', recent work from Punch (2012) and Moser (2008) call for greater consideration of 'personality'; and in response I note Vanderbeck's (2005: 398) insight that 'there is, however, no unitary maleness, and different men fit differently into different situations and places'. Vanderbeck (2005) is rightfully pointing out that what type of man we are, or at least what type of man our participants' perceive us to be, matters greatly. All of these factors contribute to my presentation of self, to the 'performance' of my masculinity (Butler 1990; Nayak and Kehily 2006). This led me to the realisation that the participant interactions of my research needed to be conveyed by more than the written word; they needed to reflect the embodied identities of the men I was working with.

Drawing from my experiences, I found many men do not regularly voluntarily engage in conversations around feelings. Deep seated emotions are rarely put into words, and when they are, the speaker could be accused (often by themselves) of being 'in touch with their feminine side'. By recalling this, albeit, anecdotal evidence, I am confirming that being a man researching men presents challenges. Being a woman researching men (with an obviously different gender equation) of course has its own challenges (for more on this see Allen 2008; McDowell 2001; Meth and McClymont 2009; Tarrant 2013).

Like Rose's (1997: 305) interpretation of researcher positionality, to 'fully understand the researcher, the researched and the research context', this fieldwork was conducted with a self-reflexive awareness. The ways in which I as researcher influenced the research encounters have been analysed with my gender, race, class, sexuality, physical appearance, accent and family background discussed; though often more significant was the influence of my personality (Moser 2008). Socio-cultural understandings of age may also influence the interview performance with the 'experience of growing old' at times equating to 'knowledge' (Bytheway 1995; see also Chapter 3). Access to 'truth' in this sense has also been argued on the grounds of insider/outsider status.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) have suggested though that insiders may miss what is taken for granted as a result of 'over rapport', while outsiders may fail to understand the experiences of the informants. Similar to 'having age', this line of thought suggests that 'having experience' builds greater rapport and thus better access to data; conversely, Mirza (1992) and Baca Zinn (1979) both talk of how their insider status did not guarantee them greater access. The insider status can also be problematic ethically with the concept of being too 'researcher near' (Mannay 2010); in this vein, the researcher is so closely aligned to the participant that they already know the answers to questions they are asking (or at least think they do). Either way, my position as researcher is acknowledged throughout this thesis and where relevant, is explicitly addressed; the autoethnographic element of Chapter 3 reflects this.

The thirty eight men all identified themselves as white, heterosexual and of Irish descent. Their remembrances are not representative of this demographic but the intensive qualitative approach allows for some of the subtleties of their masculinities to be recorded (see later section of this chapter on the politics of representation). Through the analysis of the empirical findings, I found myself questioning whether, in thinking reflexively, were the men's embodied remembrances drawing upon memories or nostalgia? Were these recollections or a performed longing for an idealised past? Bonnett and Alexander tell us that 'nostalgia is a yearning for the past, a sense of loss in the face of change' and that those who make a distinction with memory, label nostalgia as 'irrational, inaccurate and incapable of drawing lessons from the past to apply to the present' (2012: 2). The dating and accuracy of memories can be aided with the use of visual stimuli, but remembering events in such a way, does not come without limitations: 'revitalising memories is not always harmless. It can eliminate injustice, cruelty and evil, but can also give rise to them' (Golofast 2003: 57). When working with visual methodologies I acknowledge the whole cultural context of the image – and of all its transformations and contradictions. 'Memory' itself is a complex term, which has been subjected to many definitions and approaches. It is commonly used alongside terms such as 'recall, recollection, reminiscence, retrospection and review', and is often associated with 'various descriptions of memories including

nostalgia' (Roberts 2002: 134). Moreover the long term remembering of events, according to Hunter (1964) in the distortions and omissions which arise, has an analogy with rumours and folk tales. Hunter concludes that this is no more than an 'imaginative construction' (1964: 183); that whilst usually unaware of the constructive characteristic, in retelling rumours or folk tales, the individual may dramatise the recollection to engage the audience.

> 'There are no "false" oral sources. Once we have checked their factual credibility with all the established criteria of historical philological criticism that apply to every document, the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that "untrue" statements are still psychologically "true", and that these previous "errors" sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts' (Portelli 1981: 100).

Portelli's insightful development on the issue of biographical oral history's true/false dichotomy lies in the fact the researcher should not be merely interested in 'facts' but in the participants' perceptions of what is 'true' and how they have arrived at this conclusion. My research uncovered many instances, of which the following was a great example; following a dispute with his mother (who after overhearing part of his narrative accused him of 'false memory syndrome') Daniel (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish) responded 'well it is true for me, Mam, 'cos that's my memory of it'.

2.3.1 Interviewing with images

This section is structured around my use of a visual outline image (see Figure 1) during the fieldwork of my PhD research. Research findings have been enhanced greatly, and in many cases uniquely generated by, the use of the visual outline image below:

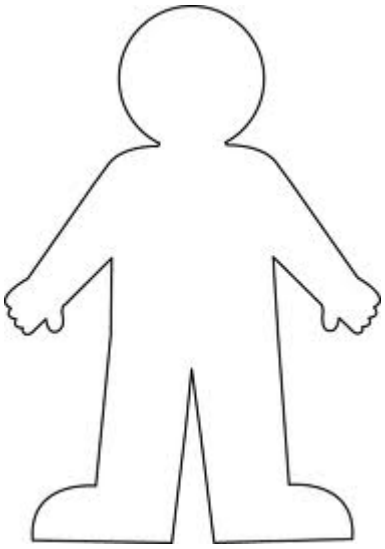


Figure 1 Outline of a man

Upon receiving this image, all the participants were satisfied that this was indeed an outline of a man. On revealing the image, they would usually remark that they recognise him from toilet doors; accompanied by the provision of coloured pens, I encouraged the men to write, draw and annotate as they saw fit in response to the question: ‘How do you see yourself as a man?’ (see Chapter 3). The outline was deliberately chosen as it is a cross culturally recognised symbol (Prosser and Loxley 2008) avoiding privileging any particular masculinities (all men use public toilets no matter their race, ethnicity, sexuality, body size, ability etc. and would therefore have an equal chance of recognising the symbol). Additionally, its cartoon like form was to ease any artistic pressure; yet despite this, over three quarters of the participants (29 of the 38 men) did not touch the pens, nor write or draw anything on the page at all, with less than a quarter (9 of the 38 men) actually visually depicting themselves on the page. While these response rates are worthy of mention, it would not be fair to say that a failure to use the pens equated to a lack of engagement with the task; in fact some of the most revealing participant discussions were led by a participant’s oral description of his embodied identity. The next chapter analyses in depth the ‘embodied intergenerationality’ of the men and their masculinities.

A study of the Irish in Britain is a study of a post-colonial ethnicity. Post-colonialism is an analytic framework which prioritises the concepts of power and

representation; we must consider therefore who does the research, for whom and for what purposes. From a post-structuralist stance – power is dynamic and interchangeable. When considering the power dynamics of the biographical interview I wanted to encourage the participant's agency during the research encounter – this was achieved through the participant led visual outline image. A common thread in a study of biographical data is the connection between the self as both the producer of experience and as the product of experience. Cohen (1989) highlights several issues in this form of recollection which seems to vary depending on distribution over the life course.

Furthermore, Rose's (2001: 22) introduction of 'auteur theory' – which is 'the notion that the most important aspect in understanding a visual image is what its maker intended to show' – is particularly useful. Borrowed from critical French film studies, this theory points to the image maker's intent to be of most salience; I use Figure 2 as an example. Rose also tells us that there are those who oppose this argument, like Hall (1997) who believe that the site of production, the conditions in which the image was produced explain its effect. Conversely, there are those like Barthes (1977) who put forward that since the image will always be seen in relation to other images, the wider context renders the image maker's intent no longer relevant. Developing from this, to the site of the audience, Rose (2001) suggests that how others perceive and interpret the image is highly significant.

Figure 2 Bill's rainbow

So Figure 2, a man in rainbow colours, illustrates this visual analysis debate clearly. This is one of only three outlines generated throughout the research that were drawn by myself. To explain: I interviewed Bill, a man born in the 1960s of Irish descent, and during our meeting he chose not to write, draw or annotate anything on the blank outline image (he was one of the three quarters of men who did so); however, he later telephoned me and asked me to look at the blank outlines images he had chosen not to draw on, then asked me use some pens to make this image 'rainbow coloured' (for more on this see Chapter 3). Following auteur theory, I learned what the image maker intended, with myself as artist and Bill as creative director. In adapting the work of White et al (2010: 150) in their work with drawings and children, 'put simply, we "were there" when the drawings were being created and could note and record children's conversations while they were drawing and after the drawings were finished'.

Bill went on to explain that the rainbow represented the different influences in his life – including education, family, the British army (where he was a soldier) and religion. The conditions of this production were limited by my interpretation of the word 'rainbow', which is reflected in my choice of colours – Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet – developed from my primary school knowledge of the visible light spectrum, recited through the acronym 'Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain'. I was satisfied that I had 'read' this body in the right way when I returned the image to Bill and successfully gained his approval.

The Barthes (1977) school of thought and broader considerations of the site of the audience would generate different analysis (Rose 2001). Upon showing this image at various academic conferences I have had audience members tell me that 'of course' Bill's use of the rainbow is in support of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) movement; yet Bill made no reference to this either during the interview or in our subsequent telephone conversations. These audience members are rightly making links between a well-known symbol of the LGBT movement, the rainbow flag, and assuming that this is what Bill's image represents. It is merely that though, an assumption, and I think to draw further significance through visual analysis without knowing the

image maker's intent, or at least what the image maker claims the intent to be, can be dangerous.

2.4 Ethics and practice

Researchers must realise that in their biographical oral histories (and through visual methods) they might recover memories that are painful or unpleasant. We might also have to question individuals later on accounts they have given, to clarify certain themes. As Yow (1994) states, this is more than just a professional problem but a personal one. After having built a rapport with a participant, it may be difficult to press them on an issue or to challenge a powerful memory. Overcoming this may be achieved by balancing what has been said, against why it has been said (Grele 1991). The researcher needs to ask, 'do I really need to question what has been said?', or given the social context of an interview 'does this actually make sense?' (see Chapter 6 and the point of clarification on the sexist discourse). A significant issue, unique to this form of qualitative research, is that:

> 'Interviews which explore the ways in which a person has remembered his or her past can be rewarding for the interviewer but may be disturbing or even damaging for the interviewee. Unlike the therapist, oral historians 'may not be around to put together the pieces of memories that have deconstructed and are no longer safe' (Thomson et al 1994: 34).

A difficulty in biographical interviewing comes through thematising pressures from the researcher. The norms, senses and meanings of the researcher can be given out subconsciously during an interview (Golofast 2003) as well as more blatantly. The answer to this dilemma lies reflexively. As Yow (1994) states, the researcher's questions require as much monitoring as the participant's responses. Making clear the motivations and social situation (background and experience) of the researcher can help overcome the challenge of the sensitivity of these ethical considerations. There are of course the usual legal and ethical considerations: consent, confidentiality and access to archive research. The value of the biographical narrative only truly becomes clear from a distance, when evidence is supported by social knowledge. It is only after mediating an interaction (Lodge 2005) and scaffolding a response

(Wall et al 2012), that one can establish the norm, and subsequently, anything which deviates from this normative standpoint. Personal intuition, empathy and understanding are all needed in the practical application of biographical interviewing in empirical studies as well as an academic critical vision.

In solving the issue of 'how will you ensure confidentiality?' researchers are asked to anonymise transcripts (as well as photos, images, artefacts); participants' names are to be changed with pseudonyms used throughout; when particular sensitivities arise, we are to age-band people and change place names; where necessary, family relationships should not be revealed; where appropriate, identity characteristics within transcripts should be removed. These are principles to which the ethical researcher must adhere. Building on previous work in social and cultural geography (Mattingly 2001; Ni Laoire 2007), and drawing empirically from the verbatim play I commissioned based on my research (see Appendices), I put forward the case for theatre as a 'safe space' negotiated within the political arena of representation. In the following section, I use my research with thirty eight men of Irish descent to argue that while I agree with the notion of 'not to name', the focus should not remain on participant protection through the removal of 'revealing' information, but instead we should be pursuing options and avenues for 'safe spaces' to voice participant stories.

2.4.1 To name or not to name

For clarity, I do not think participants in social science projects should be identified; they should be given pseudonyms. I believe that even if their consent is readily given, their friends, family, or indeed anyone who knows them may not give theirs; they are not consulted (nor can they be) in the giving of individual consent. I argue that anonymity *can* ensure a form of research protection though it *cannot* be completely protective of the participant in the research encounter. I question how ethical it is to anonymise these stories, and within this section I use the two concepts of 'narrative authority' and 'symbolic economy' (Mattingly 2001) to explore theatre as a 'safe space' (Ni Laoire 2007) for counter narratives of representation.

Narrative authority ‘pertains to whose voices get heard and which stories get told’ (Mattingly 2001: 447) and furthermore can be considered ‘the power to shape the way identities are represented’ (Mattingly 2001: 448). Similarly, McDowell (2001: 95) asked:

> ‘“For whom am I writing?” when the answer may include for, with and about the informants (which are not all the same thing), for the funding body, for academic peers, for the next research assessment exercise, to improve one’s own status, to gain promotion and so forth. It is often difficult for a researcher to disentangle these audiences and motives and to address their implications’.

These questions are timely with researchers, departments, institutions, funding bodies, and academia itself benchmarking its accountability, impact and reputation. Indeed the writing of this chapter has had multiple motivations: firstly, I am reviewing the ethical standards I was asked to conform to in my PhD research; secondly, I am responsibly conducting my work with a thoroughly self-reflexive approach; thirdly, I am honouring my participants by analysing how and why they are represented in my study; but also finally, to help establish myself as an active scholar within my discipline and more broadly across social and cultural geography. My pursuit of additional forms of research dissemination demonstrates the rigour, conduct and ethically sound nature of my research project.

I support the move away from the idea of oral testimony as simply a means of collecting knowledge and instead emphasise ‘the contingent nature of knowledge production of life narratives’ (Ni Laoire 2007: 375). I have written elsewhere in the thesis about the influence of relationality (Hopkins and Pain 2007), positionality (England 1994) and personality (Moser 2008) in the fieldwork stages of conducting biographical research (see Chapter 3). Moreover, in discussing the symbolic economy we are concerned with the relationality of representations, similar to the Barthesian viewpoint. In working with a community theatre project in the USA, Mattingly (2001: 452) claimed:

> ‘In representing the voices of a neighbourhood, one also represents the neighbourhood itself. Therefore the politics of representation in neighbourhood arts projects involve not only narrative authority of individuals, but also the symbolic economy of the neighbourhood. As

> Zukin points out, the symbolic economy is composed of two parallel systems, the production of space and the production of symbols'.

I must further analyse the production of both space and symbols. In the context of my research, the spaces of representation are within the research encounter: the interviews, transcripts and digital recordings; the participant observation and field notes; the family group discussions and personal communications with men of Irish descent living on Tyneside. Interlinked are the symbols of representation: the buildings of the Irish centres, the family homes, the cafes and pubs in which I conducted interviews and participant observation; as well as the digital recorder upon which I relied to detail the encounters; and the consent forms upon which the men were asked to agree. These were all factors as I considered theatre as a 'safe space' for participant narratives.

Ni Laoire asks in her paper 'why is oral history any different?' (2007: 376) and I adapt this to more broadly discuss the role of biographical research.

> 'It has been argued that anonymity denies the participant credit for their story and that it condemns them to remain hidden. Further still, that the very nature of anonymity reduces the credibility of the data' (Ni Laoire 2007: 377).

That said, many participants involved in biographical research expect anonymity – an anonymity which facilitates a much more open narrative, bypasses the digital recorder and recorded evidence as obstacles. Equally, Etter Lewis (1996) refutes claims that pseudonyms make a story less truthful, as does Messerschmidt (2012), with importance placed on letting participants maintain anonymity, protecting privacy and enabling a safe space to tell their stories. I agree.

> 'Interestingly however, a number of women got in touch after publication of [Etter-Lewis'] book to say that they were ready to be named because after all, it was "their story" which highlights this tension between the need for safety and privacy and the need to give fair authorial credit to the participant' (Ni Laoire 2007: 383).

From my field notes I have examples of men stating 'I'm happy to be named in the research' and even 'no need to bother with [pseudonyms]…I've got nothing to hide'. In fact, on several occasions the men revealed that their participation in the research was driven by 'their story' being heard. This led me to question the

emotional impact that this may have on research participants. Was this open display garish bravado or sought recognition? It has been argued that the use of pseudonyms can reduce the participant's control over the testimony while empowering the researcher's analytical licence, resulting adversely in greater exploitation. However, as Ni Laoire (2007: 385) points out, naming participants can also:

> '...conceal the authorial power of the researcher, who still maintains considerable control over the research process and therefore the shape and style of its outputs. While this balance of power does reduce the role of the participant on the research process and therefore can be abused, it also allows the researcher to conduct a more critical interpretation of the stories being told than might not be possible with a named interview'.

But surely this is only applicable if the researcher does not show the participants the analysis? Named or not named, this should be irrelevant if the participant is shown analysis of outputs by the researcher. I argue that this is an ethical consideration which not enough researchers take into account, nor do the ethics committees promote – even demand – enough.

> 'After each interview, the final edited audio version was sent to all participants for their approval and it was made clear to them that they could request changes to be made before it was archived. Unfortunately, one of the implications of this process is that some of the most personal and powerful material in an interview may need to be removed at the request of the participant' (Ni Laoire 2007: 386).

My research methodology offered each participant the opportunity to hear copies of the digital recordings, but all thirty eight declined. Repeated references to the embarrassment of hearing your own voice were made; as researcher – and transcriber – only I had to endure this embarrassment! What the men did receive were the typed, verbatim transcripts of their interviews. They were asked to comment on the accuracy of my transcription. Typos were picked up on as well as my (deliberate) inclusion of the, at times, incorrect grammar and regional dialect. I responded, to those who asked, that my sanitising of this data would have adversely affected the ethnographic moment of the spoken words themselves. A more serious consequence of this process is the risk of withdrawal, as outlined by Ni Laoire. I can state that this did not

happen in my study, though discussions did take place with certain participants about the potential omission of certain stories.

The following section discusses theatre as a safe space for participant narratives. More specifically, it analyses 'Under Us All' a verbatim play (see Appendices) which I commissioned based on interview transcripts from three generations of men within the same family: grandfather Victor, father Peter, son Simon.

2.4.2 Theatre as 'safe space'

> 'Theatre offers possibilities for transcending the representational limits of academic discourse by offering subjects more authority over the representation of their voices and speaking to audiences outside of academia' (Mattingly 2001: 449).

So theatre as 'safe space' is a performative response to Ni Laoire's (2007) call. I argue that, theatre – and professional performance – creates 'safe spaces within which participants can tell their stories and articulate counter-narratives' (Ni Laoire 2007: 373). The performative 'brings to the centre stage...an active, world-making use of language' (Culler 1997: 97-98) and as Butler claims 'identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler 1990: 25). Performance is not only located in the theatre and the work of Butler in particular recognises the theatrical of the everyday, the performances at home, in the street, in the research encounter. It is for this reason why putting the stories on stage through a professional actor communicates these expressions with such clarity and helps bridge the divide between science and art; between researcher and playwright; and ultimately, between fact and fiction.

The concept of performativity enables a recognition of the role of the participants in constructing their own narrative; through selection and ordering, they give meaning to particular memories. Cited by Mattingly (2001: 450) Maines and Bridger (1992) explain three elements of the 'narrative act': that (1) speakers select and describe events from the past; (2) speakers turn these events into story elements; (3) narratives are sequentially ordered to explain casual processes. It was these 'events from the past' that prompted the participants' interest in responding to the research call in the first place. Upon

interview, their spoken words were ‘turned into story elements’ as they performed them to me – consciously or otherwise. Noticeably though, the older the participant was the more ‘rehearsed’ the narrative tended to be. There was a greater sense with the older men (relative to my age) that they were informing me as vast sources of information. The younger men did not seem (or did not want to seem) as well informed about their Irish heritage. It was the third of these components of the narrative, the ‘sequentially ordered’ element, which was exaggerated through the theatre piece, with some artistic vision, moving the stories to create a more flowing argument.

I placed emphasis on not simply ‘collecting’ or ‘gathering together’ with the men of my study and as the research process continued we realised we had formed the basis for new co-produced cultural materials. I was not in or from a practice based discipline, this artistic collaboration was new to me. I saw the performative potential within my research, but I did not conduct the research with this in mind, nor did I know what or how to produce any ‘performed social science’. It was only after my fieldwork was ‘complete’ (is it ever?), having conducted all interviews, that I pursued the creative outputs. I coined this theatre commission as ‘*returning performance’* , very much with the interests of taking the stories back to the men they derive from – beyond the confines of the ‘Ivory Tower’, outside the bounded walls of words in books and texts – and through the spoken word, through performance.

The verbatim play explores the ways in which notions of masculinity, Irishness, religion, family, health, music, life and death have changed and shifted over the years and from individual to individual. Ni Laoire (2007: 379) states the narrative ‘is contingent on the context in which a narrative is being constructed (for whom, why, when and where the narrative is being told)’. This is highly significant (as discussed further in Chapter 3). As previously stated, when this fieldwork was being undertaken, I had neither plans nor ideas for the participant stories to form a play. I was later told by the participants that if this was my earlier intention, the material I generated would have been vastly different. In particular, they mentioned that had they known (through the process of *returning performance*) that their stories would be heard more widely, then they would have been more restrained with the delivery of certain

narratives. Topics of a religious and familial nature were mentioned as more sensitive than others; this notion contrasting the more brazen ‘nothing to hide’ mantra as previously stated. Perhaps then, at the beginning of research projects, participants are more willing to surrender their anonymity; thus seriously questioning the appropriateness of gaining consent at this stage? If in hindsight participants feel more emotionally guarded with their volunteered narratives, should we as researchers be offering the chance to review consent during and potentially after research is ‘complete’? I believe this to be the case, and through feeding back the interview transcripts I am offering the participants the chance to ‘withdraw’ information. At the same time, I stress to them that within my analysis the social context/contexts of the ethnographic moment itself will always be acknowledged; not with the intention of coercing their cooperation but to ensure they can make a fully informed decision. I propose that seeing our spoken word written verbatim is not something many researchers would be comfortable with as it is so far removed from conventional social norms. We are far more composed with what we write than what we speak; why then should we expect anything else from research participants?

The performative is valuable as ‘narrative analysis then focuses on *how* people talk as well as *what* they say, and on interpreting layers of meaning in a text and the connections between them’ (Ni Laoire 2007: 379 citing Wiles et al 2005 *original emphasis*); the utterances are highly significant. Theatre can do different things with narratives than can academic journals, articles and books. This is not to imply that theatre is *better* than more conventional forms of dissemination, more that it is *better suited* given the nature of some research, and certainly more appropriate for my work. Equally this is not to be seen as a patronising approach to conduct less academically rigorous or even less academically written research. Theatre as an alternative form of dissemination is not the ‘dumbing down’ of research, rather the ‘upskilling’ of ethically minded responsible researchers.

In the play, the participants’ lives are set within their wider contexts. The audience are encouraged – through the dramaturgical support of freelance theatre director, Gwilym Lawrence – to consider the individual narratives as representations of social processes. In a blog Gwilym writes:

> ‘Perhaps because I spent many hours listening to my Dad reading stories to me when I was younger, and perhaps because I have always loved audio books, and perhaps because I always mean to listen to the radio more but never do, the simple act of listening to the tapes of Michael’s interviews took on an almost sacred significance. Here – recorded, afforded immortality – were the open, honest, lucid and intimate reflections of three ‘working-class’ Tyneside Irish men, one in his twenties, one in his forties and one in his eighties, reflecting on – without wishing to sound too grand (“too late”, you’re thinking) – what it means to be men; what it means to have a cultural and spiritual heritage; and how they go about generating and constructing meaning in their lives.
>
> These three men describe and belong to a world I will never be able to access directly, and yet their lives and experiences are being played out less than three miles from where I sat in my room, cutting and re-cutting their testimonies into some form of dramatic structure. Indeed, one of the men regularly attends a site for work, I learned through his tape, which is less than two minutes walk from my front door. This, to me, is social geography incarnate, and the tapes provided an unimaginable wealth of theatrical and performative potential through which to explore it (Lawrence 2013).

Theatre then, is catering for the performative needs of the research encounter. It can be considered a safe space as it can treat the spoken word with reference to how it was spoken in addition to where and why. It recognises a version of narrative authority by allowing the participants’ stories to be heard but in a way that has maintained anonymity. The participants were silent partners in the co-creation of the play. Crucially, the actor had never met the men nor listened to their voices through the recordings prior to a dress rehearsal the week of the debut. Myself as researcher and Gwilym as director did not want to influence the actor’s dramatic licence. This play was ‘word for word’ but not ‘sound for sound’; it was an artistic interpretation not an impersonation.

After the performance Victor revealed to me that the play supported and maintained the ‘legacy’ of his family of Irish descent. ‘Legacy’ was in reference to our earlier interview together where Victor expressed feeling towards his Irish family history and ancestry more generally. The first extract below is from the interview transcript, the second extract has been taken from the ‘Under Us All’ script. Whilst ‘verbatim’, Gwilym in his dramaturgical role rearranged aspects of the transcripts in a more artistic version of the original:

<u>From interview transcript</u>

Victor:

Yes, we know that you'll never interest everyone. Some people find the subject [ancestry] very boring, sometimes even within your own family. But yes, there's in Peter's generation there's at least Peter and there's another cousin down in South Shields who's a fireman as it happens. Now up in Canada, my niece married an Iranian. So he is obviously Muslim. And he is actually interested because it means a lot to them in their culture and their ancestry. And the faith, 'cos that's where the faith came from [Ireland]. It's some legacy isn't it? Now what he [Iranian nephew] picked up on, he said it was interesting that a lot of the facts that were quoted actually stated the source. So in effect that is auditable. If anyone had the mind to, they could go online and check the website and the information I've given you would actually tell you exactly where to go at that point in time. So yeah that's coming from a Muslim you know.

Michael:

So touching upon the faith side of things, which is obviously a strong factor, do you see that as, in the context here on Tyneside, is that what has helped carry home some of the Irishness?

Victor:

Yes. Definitely.

Michael:

Could you expand on that a bit?

Victor:

The way I see it is that, just remember there is three elements, three Irish families you know. 2 on me father's paternal family history and 1 on me mothers. In fact he, [a relative] was way back in the 1800s, way before the famine. And he was on Tyneside because he was a seaman [at Tynemouth]. And like I said it's legacy innit, the faith? And I would like to think that our ancestors would approve of us using this new technology [genealogy websites]. They would think it's great. Let me give you one example when we were visiting [Ireland] with me brother. We were in a pub on a lunchtime, and it was all men in, bit of craic was going on. And all the standard Irish swear words and that. And someone said something that was a bit political and I said "oh I can't comment on that" and I said "that's a bit political, I don't belong round here". And he said "what do you mean you don't belong round here?"

> He said “of course you do”. So they see it the same as us you know.

<u>From script for ‘Under Us All’</u>

Victor:

> The way I see it is that, just remember there is three elements, three Irish families you know. In fact one relative was way back in the 1800s, way before the famine. And he was on Tyneside because he was a seaman in Tynemouth. And like I said it’s some legacy isn’t it? And I would like to think that our ancestors would approve of us using this new technology. They would think it’s great. And it’s something to pass onto younger generations and at least some of the younger generations are there to show some interest. And from point one way back in the 1800s in Ireland, there’s something like five generations that have elapsed. And yet there is a feeling of feeling Irish, and Irish ancestry. When we were visiting with me brother in Ireland. We were in a pub on a lunchtime, and it was all men in, bit of craic was going on. And all the standard Irish swear words and that. And someone said something that was a bit political and I said “oh I can’t comment on that” and I said “that’s a bit political, I don’t belong round here”. And he said “what do you mean you don’t belong round here?” He said “of course you do”.

The most striking difference is that the voice of the researcher has been removed. My muted presence allows for the audience to take on the role of researcher, as if they are involved in the research encounter. Further artistic distance is built into the play with the actor’s use of a dictaphone, speaking directly into it, and further blurring the boundaries between researcher, participant, actor and audience. This dramatic device creates a sense of intimacy; that in one sense there is a voyeuristic appeal that the audience is witnessing ‘private’ information. This of course is especially significant given the prior knowledge that the, at times, very private accounts were actually given with me present in the room. According to Portelli (1981) telling stories challenges the threat of time so again we see the performative as protective; as preserving ‘legacy’. Admittedly the very recording of this information immortalises it, but the theatre piece also offers the more openly accessible version of it. In Gwilym’s script-writing role he edited the transcripts, restructuring sections of narrative and omitting my voice to tell the story in the participants’ words with the greatest impact; the juxtaposition of particular

recollections helping to reveal the ‘unexpected coincidences’ of Golofast’s (2003) hidden life aspect.

In the final week of rehearsals and prior to the debut performance of ‘Under Us All’, I invited my research participants along to a ‘behind closed doors’ run through of the play. This was in recognition of the sensitivities involved in this piece of verbatim theatre, with accuracy to the script paramount as well as input from the participants themselves. Throughout the process the men of the study had been encouraged to comment on aspects of the script; and indeed they did with some fault (on my own part) being picked up on through my inaccurate transcription. The occupation of ‘shipwright’ for example – incorrectly recorded as ‘shipwriter’ – a job which does not exist. While a seemingly minor detail, the accuracy of this for the participants’ served as testimony to their knowledge of maritime industries; in one telephone call I had with Peter, he pointed out that he did not want an audience member to question the integrity of the research based on this oversight.

Furthermore, Peter told me there was a ‘cringe factor’ to overcome in witnessing his own words – as well as those of his father and son – performed back to him by a professional actor. The actor told me he too was nervous; performing verbatim directly in front of the man whose very words he was speaking. Gwilym’s dramatic licence was being tested; would his creative interpretation stand up? I was seeing my ideas come full circle, sat opposite my participants looking at their reactions to their words spoken by the man I had approached to perform them. The actor summed up the experience by quoting Victor’s own words from the script: ‘what you’ve been through is what we’ve all been through’. We had all felt apprehensive, nervous and excited; we were all out of our comfort zone. It is for this reason that this interdisciplinary work was so challenging.

But what motivated this pursuit of theatre as a safe space? In paraphrasing the work of Mattingly (2001), I thought our work (verbatim theatre) could be helpful; my presence was motivated by the larger politics of representing men of Irish descent who live on Tyneside; and thirdly my focus was because of the special characteristics of men of Irish descent, specifically

the intersections of place, age and masculinity within the diaspora context. But unlike their project, I was not ‘amplifying the voices of powerless people [to] contribute to justice and equality’ (Mattingly 2001: 446) as the men of my study are not powerless, nor was I promising to address injustice and inequality; though yes, I was amplifying their voices. The literature calls this approach to theatre ‘new genre public art’ (Felshin 1995; Lacy 1995) which is ‘...avowedly political in that it seeks to work collaboratively with the public, to provide a catalyst for social change, and to give voice to those silenced and marginalised by mainstream public culture’ (Mattingly 2001: 450).

This project then can be seen as a safe space for counter narratives of representation (Ni Laoire 2007) of men of Irish descent living on Tyneside. The men volunteered their participation in the research. They were supportive of my ideas of the performative potential of their material and saw the play as a chance to tell their story. This was about taking their stories beyond the annual Tyneside Irish Festival (held every October) into a more open arena – with the debut performance in part of an AHRC Connected Communities sponsored conference and a subsequent tour (part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science; see Appendices) to four public venues across the North East. Further recognition of these efforts was noted in our award of funding from Arts Council England.

2.5 The politics of representation

The biographical oral histories cannot be generalised and cannot be representative as they are inherently individual; but their value ‘lies in revealing the intricate patterning of race and class’ (Nayak 2008: 165). They are individual stories from individual men. They are though, men who think relationally and define and self-identify as such. They are simultaneously grandfathers, fathers, sons as well as fathers and grandfathers to be, their lives are interconnected and intergenerational. I see, ‘Under Us All’ as a play conceived and written from the verbatim transcripts from interviews with three men. But more broadly, it is our nature as ‘world-makers’ that seeks meaning in the stories of others. It is in this sense that I believe the unavoidable notion of representation rears its head within the play and in my research more broadly. The local press, the theatre

company, even the ethical framework of the University, wanted the story to be representative, to be seen as ‘safer’ and more significant. Rather, I would see the play as symbolic. These events, memories and performances, and involvement in the creative processes of script writing, helped recognise the narrative authority of each participant’s individual story. But their stories are universal in the sense that they symbolise stories of masculinity, Irishness, religion, family, health, music, life and death for those who identify as ‘Tyneside Irish’. This is what my participants wanted, *their stories* being heard, regardless of whether their words were actually returned through performance. In addition to the three participants on whose transcripts the play was based, three other participants attended the debut performance revealing the value of dissemination to participants. Equally, two comments from individuals who had no prior involvement with the project are particularly relevant to this discussion:

> ‘[The play] resonates with our Irish background and our reality of the North East’.
>
> ‘Very good performance, I have just finished my dissertation on the History of the Irish in the North East England at Newcastle University so it was very interesting to hear about three generations of the Irish in this region’.

I have already claimed that representation was unavoidable in this project, not because of my approach, but because of the way the participants (and wider public) receive and relate to the work; ‘our reality’ and ‘the Irish in this region’ then speaking to the symbolic economy of the performance. The verbatim theatre piece was not a re-presentation of the lives of three men of Irish descent – but one which catered for their narrative authority and traded within the symbolic economy. Ni Laoire (2007: 385) argues:

> ‘It is apparent that the creation of safe spaces for the telling of life narratives becomes particularly important under certain conditions. These include: when telling stories about the recent past, telling stories that have wider emotional resonance, and when narrators’ experiences conflict with dominant narratives’.

This implies there is a power relation behind what is and what is not emotional. So society treats stories differently depending on their social context. Differences between the ‘recent’ and ‘more distant’ past affect our expectations of narrative authority. Certainly disciplines such as ours in social and cultural

geography are more considered with the naming of participants, which may well have to do with our heightened sense of social responsibility for living participants and lived experience. Are emotions that are more recent, more real; and does the passing of time render something less real? I would argue this to be the case. Labelling something as 'history' seems to open up greater space for emotive conversation. The men themselves were often more comfortable to talk about the experiences of older family members than they were in freely discussing their own contemporary lives.

Could this chapter be seen as 'a predictable confrontation between the idealism of theory and the complexity of reality' (Mattingly 2001: 456)? It could. But I hope it conveys more practically the contribution that this research can make, and has made, to research on men and masculinities, to the political arena of representation, and for those negotiating the minefields of ethics and anonymity while researching men and masculinities more broadly. Adapting Mattingly (Ibid) 'it is impossible for me to know what [the research] has meant, and continues to mean, to those it has touched' with the symbolic economy far reaching. But by speaking with the participants before, during and after the research, I certainly got a sense through both their body language and their spoken words of how pleased they were with the process; their sense of pride and achievement. Equally, those men whose individual stories were not explicitly returned through performance, talked of the value of the research project. I do though note Mattingly's (2001: 456) warning that:

> 'The actions and good intentions of artists and scholars are given meaning within larger structural and institutional processes, which can define and limit the transformative potential of such projects. Putting people's voice on stage does not necessarily give people power over the institutional and symbolic contexts in which their voices are heard'.

The larger structural and institutional processes pertinent to my project are ethical practice within social and cultural geography, and recognised and acceptable practice within social science research at large. I do not claim representativeness through my research. I have conducted thirty eight interviews resulting in thirty eight biographical oral histories, which cannot be generalised and should be considered as individual case studies. However,

through returning performance in the safe space of verbatim theatre, their value has had greater resonance.

The chosen methodological approaches provide a voice, both collectively and individually, for men of Irish descent living on Tyneside. By cross checking the biographical oral histories with those of others in the same generation, and with supplementary ‘evidence’ (participant generated outline images and a piece of verbatim theatre), I am verifying the biographical material gathered. There is no ‘true or false’ with this data, though admittedly biographical data is limited by its subjectivity. As such, my thesis does not claim objectivity; rather, it aims to make a key contribution to the study of the Irish in Britain by revealing partial, yet rich and relevant, biographical narratives. Research using visual stimuli and drawing methods tends to focus on young children and/or within the school environment (O’Connor 2007; Wall et al 2012; White et al 2010); of exception is work within health related fields (such as Darko 2009; Rozin and Fallon 1988; Mishkind et al 1986). This research is contributing to a significant gap within geographical literatures concerning visual research methods in interview settings as well as alternative forms of dissemination.

Criticisms of such visual materials within interviews, are according to Ball and Smith (1992: 12) that they remain under-analysed, ‘serving as little more than illustrative devices’; and that images themselves are inadequate for understanding other people’s worlds (Banks, 2001). I hope the analysis of how I have read the body images and how the men themselves remember (which follows in Chapter 3), goes some way to addressing this issue. In coupling the narrative alongside the image wherever possible, this research has acknowledged the agency of the participant as the expert in their own lives; leading the discussion rather than responding to the researcher’s direction. The outline image is more than illustrative; as a research tactic used to enhance the, at times, sensitive (and hard to reach) topics of masculinity and embodiment.

The researcher/participant conversations have shown the fluidity of masculinities; the interactions are affected by more than just gender, with relationality, positionality and personality all influential. Shared heritage, cultural background, and family role (son/prospective father etc.) were all useful in

gaining greater rapport. I would encourage those wanting to employ biographical research within their own work to do so. I would also encourage them to fully position themselves within the research, to be aware of the influence of relational identity formation and to ensure that their personality comes across as enthusiastic, approachable, interested and respectful to fully reap the benefits of creative practice in geographical research. The following analytical chapters 3,4,5,6 and 7 employ the scales of the body, the family, at school, and at work to further analyse the experiences of growing up ‘Irish’ on Tyneside. These scales emerged from the data itself as I looked to shape the narratives of these thirty eight men; with these four scales most recurrent in their narratives. They help elucidate the embodied and emplaced identities of men of Irish descent into what I call Irish Incarnate.

Chapter 3 Embodied Intergenerationality

3.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to outline my understandings of performances of family position, place and masculinity through the scale of the body; I read these performances through what I call 'embodied intergenerationality' (Richardson 2013). Building on the research with the men of my study I investigate the intersections of place, age and masculinity. Secondary to this contribution is an acknowledgement of the significance of changing positionalities as research insider and participant observer by addressing both intersectional and intergenerational identities involved with this research. The chapter therefore responds to recent work in the discipline which has called for more critical attention toward experiences in the field (Moser 2008; Punch 2012); with its central contribution – embodied intergenerationality – advancing knowledge of masculinities and place for those who analyse masculinities within the research encounter. So what is embodied intergenerationality and what does it mean? It is the incarnation of family position and age produced through interactions between generations. It builds on what Aitken (2009: 4) called:

> 'The spaces that define the relationship between men, women and children; between men and other men; between men and families and men and communities…these spaces are awkward because defining the context of embodied practices is never completely comfortable'.

Addressing the 'never completely comfortable' nature of the research, this work specifically explores the performances and relationalities of masculinities among men of Irish descent on Tyneside as well as between the participants and the researcher. In working with men of different ages both within, and between families, this work draws conclusions on masculinity, intergenerationality and place to argue what it means to be a man of Irish descent on post-industrial Tyneside. In studying men's relationships with the places in which they inhabit, and through the scale of the body this research sheds light on performances of family position, place and masculinity – in the embodied intergenerationality of the research encounter.

The ‘positionality’ of the researcher has long been debated within feminist geography, and is especially relevant to discussions of research interviews as the differentiating processes are taking place in both directions by the researcher and the participant (Soderstrom 2011; Hankins and Yarbrough 2009; Gaskin and Hall 2002; Sidaway 2000; England 1994); as introduced in Chapter 2. According to Grenier (2007: 716) who cites Holstein and Gubrium (1995) the interview should be considered ‘an active site where researchers and participants perform their stories, negotiate their identities’ and where they construct ‘meaning through interaction and interpersonal processes’.

Due to the ‘interpersonal processes’ of this research – or the shifting nature of my researcher positionalities/personalities – the next section of this chapter presents pieces of self-reflexive writing in the form of field diary extracts. While aware of the critique of self-reflexive writing as ‘self-indulgent’ (Mansson McGinty et al 2012; Kobayashi 2003) their purpose is to clearly outline the perceived privilege my position enables as a young heterosexual man of Irish descent. Following this I reflect upon the implications of being this type of man researching men, on interpretations of empirical findings, before concluding on aspects of embodied intergenerationality.

Field Diary: ‘Richardson men hug’ 29/11/12

It was on a dark September evening in 2007, on completion of my fortnightly pilgrimage to St. James’ Park (the home of Newcastle United Football Club), looking up through the ‘Dragon Arch’ of Stowell Street (the entrance to the city’s ‘Chinatown’), I read the words ‘Tyneside Irish Centre.’ It was the contradictory image of the Irish Centre framed (as if deliberately) by the Arch that was to be the stimulus for my PhD research. This should not have come as a particular surprise as I had been visiting the Centre for many years as part of a pre/post match ritual. But until this moment, I had never questioned why I went there and what, if anything, it might signify. I was an undergraduate at the time, studying Geography at Newcastle University.

Figure 3 Tyneside Irish Centre Image source: Cara LockHart-Smith http://caralockhartsmith.wordpress.com/2013/07/16/chinatown-newcastle-upon-tyne/

At the project's outset it would be fair to assume I should have been more reasonably knowledgeable about the involvement of the Irish in North East culture. Born of a family of Irish ancestry who had lived and worked on Tyneside since the nineteenth century, Dad and his twin sister were former world champion Irish dancers, Gran's maiden name being Patricia Mary Monaghan, and I myself having performed as a 9 year old Irish dancer on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean. However, the reasons I stood in relative ignorance were all too evident, due in large part to very little being known about Dad's side of the family (where the Irish connections lie). This genealogical void has not been filled throughout the entire research process. Key to providing answers is Gran (Dad's Mother) who has chosen not to talk about her family aside from the bare facts: which amount to her own grandfather, being an Irishman who married an Irish woman, from Dundee, Scotland. Why did they come to Tyneside? I do not know. Why had they left Ireland? I do not know. And so my curiosity continued.

I returned then to my starting point – the Tyneside Irish Centre. As Justin Hill (friend, Irishman and PhD student from Northumbria University) once (rightfully) pointed out 'there's more to the Tyneside Irish than the Tyneside Irish Centre' (Field Notes, 29/03/2012) but for me at this initial stage of research, it was all I had. It was where I went with Dad. It was where he sang, where he danced. It was where I met his friends, who became my friends. It was where I learned of camaraderie, of male bonding. It was where, for the first (but not the last) time I heard the phrase 'Richardson men hug'. What does this mean? What does this obviously tactile gesture signify? It announces verbally and visually that it is okay for men in my family to warmly embrace each other with a cuddle, sharing a hug with other men who are our friends. This was actively encouraged by Dad to me and to my brother and to all other male relatives for as long as I can remember. We happily impose this mantra onto many of our friends (I am reliably informed that to date, this has been well received). I have always been told that this affection is acceptable, even essential; it is part of being a man. It

goes hand in hand (pun intended) with the football pilgrimage. We walk to the game closely packed together. We cheer together, sing together, get angry together, and (more often than would be liked) get miserable together!

The Tyneside Irish Centre was where I 'learned to drink', or more accurately learned how not to. I recall the father/son evening ('oot on the toon' Nayak 2006: 819) to celebrate my eighteenth birthday where along with various other father/son family friends we each consumed six pints in six different pubs (in a routine of 'circuit drinking' Nayak 2006: 819); I still maintain it was the 'sophisticated' glass of red wine at the end of it all that was the problem! But in all seriousness, the Tyneside Irish Centre gave me an insight to the male dominated worlds of pubs, football stadia, and city centres at night. My transition from boy to man took place at least in part within the Centre's emerald decorated walls. I had accompanied Dad to the smoked filled lounge (of what could only be described as a working man's pub) when I was still small enough to need to hold his hand through the crowds. I had marked personal and family celebrations here, and later had expressed my right to drink alcohol (a little too liberally it must be said). Later still, in my undergraduate days I lessened student debts by working on the Centre's bar serving Dad, his friends and many others of Tyneside's drinking clientele (thankfully after the introduction of the smoking ban in public places). To the present day, I have lived and worked with and for this community, informing and enriching my research.

The extract from my field diary points to aspects of my family position, the places I inhabit, and my masculinities. In mentioning my family background, relationships with my father and other male relatives I am openly referring to the intersections of place, age and ethnicity that shape my own embodied masculinity. An apposite question for this chapter is how do the men of my research position themselves in relation to me? How do I impact upon the research and what is it about being a man researching men (and their masculinities) that should be acknowledged; did my ease at hugging male relatives align my masculinity to that of Bob's aspirational, crying 'strong man'? It was the following comments made during a visit to the home of Victor (retired engineer, aged 80) which highlighted that not only was I influencing the interactions as a man, but with my physical appearance:

Victor's wife:

> You know it's funny, Michael, you look just like my nephew…the spitting image in fact, only he's a little taller.

These social interactions are determining the performances of particular identities. As a man researching men and their masculinities – I must also be aware of how my own masculinity is presented and therefore how it relates to the masculinities of the men of my research. How my masculinity is structured with and against that of my participants' masculinities is under constant negotiation. Connell's (1995) 'hegemonic model' talks of masculinity as either 'dominant', 'subordinate', 'complicit' or 'marginal' and in truth all four of these could have aptly described my relationship with my participants at different stages of the research. Did the participant react to me differently if and when I did not look like their nephew? Did my dark hair, tanned(ish) skin and blue eyes – or in the words of Victor, my 'Spanish Irishness' (Field Notes, 10/05/2012) – affect the interactions in particular ways? Equally, did participants' perceptions of my age (Biggs 2005; Lundgren 2012; Tarrant 2013), class (Skeggs 1997), sexuality (Vanderbeck 2005), and working background (McDowell 2001) make a difference? Yes, they all matter.

Field Diary: Scottish accent 02/05/13

An additional caveat is my Scottish accent – which I gained from growing up in central Scotland from the age of 2-18 as my Dad got a job north of the border. Personally I developed a regional identity as an identity marker which was in response to any (and there was plenty of it) anti-English hostility. I put myself across as a Geordie[4], which tended to generate a friendlier response than the 'Anyone But England' (Kelly 2010) type scenario with the following phrase often cited back to me 'You're a Geordie? Oh that's ok then, you're just like the Scots but with your brains bashed out'[5]. My now confusing North East of England/Central Scotland hybrid renders me neither English nor Scottish (and certainly not Irish). I am therefore flirting with an insider/outsider status in the view of some of my participants; I was familiar to look at but I did not always sound the way they thought I should.

The listening to and presentation of biographical narratives (Roberts 2002) is an embodied experience (Sparkes et al 2011). Like all forms of interviewing these interactions are mediated through language and the visual or as Grenier (2007: 716) puts it, the 'exchange acts of hearing and telling a story'. Though uniquely – because often in biographical narratives the participant is leading the conversation, responding to the researcher's body language rather than the

researcher's questions – the participant selects and presents material in particular ways (Reissman 1987) in accordance with self identity, audience and purpose (Mischler 1999). In reflecting on being a man researching men, I have showed how the fluidity of masculinities, sometimes irrelevant of gender, is evident in the participant interactions. It was more often than not, the embodiment of intergenerational relations as 'nephew' – or as found later in this chapter as 'son' and 'father to be' – that proved particularly successful in developing participant rapport. This brings into question the 'epistemic privilege' (Mannay 2010: 92), questioning whose knowledge should be privileged and in the next section of the chapter I argue the case, like Mannay (2010), that visual methods can help overcome researcher 'nearness' (see also Chapter 2).

3.2 Talking bollocks

In speaking with the men, like any research participants who have responded to participate in a study, they came with ideas, concerns and expectations. As a researcher I am relying on body language and an awareness of social etiquette to analyse their social worlds; and likewise they read mine. Questions are often dispensed with, replaced by reactive conversations. As an ethnographer I am present in the research encounter; I influence the interactions as I listen, talk, watch, react, and contribute. The visual outline of a man was an attempt to stimulate discussion about embodied masculinities by minimising the influence of my own masculinity. The men recognised him from 'toilet doors', 'crime scene television programmes', and often joked they wanted to 'draw on his genitals'! For some, we were literally 'talking bollocks':

Michael:

> I've produced this little chap [see Figure 1] to help depict what it means to be a man

Bob:

> I recognise him from toilet doors…but this is the before picture!

The interview with Bob (financial advisor, aged 45, 3rd generation Irish) revealed the toilet door link. He talked about graffiti in public toilets and how often the outline image would be defaced with graphic annotations.

Michael:

Ok so if I was to put that in front of you and say, “how do you see yourself as a man?” how would you respond to that? Is there anything you’d want to put down on the page…what does being a man mean to you?

Tim (son):

You first dad…

Dan (father):

Sorry, well the first thing I’d do is draw a penis on that little person there!

Michael:

Ok yeah, starting with the facts

Dan (father):

I just want to get the biology right first

Tim (son):

Testicles?

Michael:

Very good, so aside from biology then, what makes a man a man?

Tim (son):

They don’t have boobies?

Dan (father):

That’s biology

Tim (son):

They have shorter hair. That’s something else isn’t it?

Dan (father):

It’s like a trick question this isn’t it Tim?

This interview was with Dan (Bob’s cousin, engineer, aged 40, 3rd generation Irish) and his son, Tim (Bob’s nephew, school pupil, aged 11, 3rd generation Irish also; due to his maternal grandfather in addition to his paternal great grandfather). The interaction is highly revealing of the hegemonic masculinity which in this case in the brazen funny man with a crude sense of humour. Following his father’s lead, Tim then talks about ‘testicles’ and ‘boobies’

(women's breasts), before Dan himself labels the image as a 'trick question'. As a later discussion about men, women and family life (see Chapter 4) shows, Dan fully engages with this question; but in conforming with the hegemonic masculinity his initial reactions are to resort to humour. This is used as a defence mechanism to deflect from sensitive topics of discussion.

James:

> Well in teaching and research and training you usually get these things thrown at you [visual stimuli] in the twilight zone of teaching after you've been teaching all day and you've got to go back and jump through various training hoops. Yeah I'd probably paint a willy on and a big smile!

The interview with James (retired teacher, aged 67) shows the prevalence of the hegemony in that even aged 67, this 'toilet humour' holds currency.

David:

> Ah brilliant, so if I have to draw anything…I'll just circle areas…right we need a manly colour, we need green for Ireland. I'd say that's quite a big area [the genitals]!

In David's interview (college student, aged 16) in addition to seeing that Irish green is a 'manly colour' we see the use of humour here and the 'schoolboy' jokes belie the engagement with notions of national identity and embodied masculinity. According to Kehily and Nayak (1997: 69) in their work on humour and masculinity 'heterosexual masculinities are organised and regulated through humour'. Adapting their work further, 'in keeping with previous aspects of male humour [the 'talking bollocks examples], can be understood as a "verbal performance" structured through the interplay of "audience" and "situation"' (Ibid). So I am the audience for these jokes and I argue that they have been made given the peculiar environment that is the research encounter. This pattern of resorting to humour to distract from the given situation was cross generational from 11 year old Tim to 67 year old James. All of the men went to school at one point in their lives and it seems the tactics used when James was at school are still relevant today. Humour can belie the severity of a statement; my crude use of 'talking bollocks' while facetious, not only mirrors the approach of some of the men of this study, but introduces a more significant occurrence. In acknowledging the work of White et al (2010: 146) 'researchers need to take

seriously the utterances and comments made by [participants] while they are in the process of drawing their pictures'; serious opinion can be masked by jokes, and I have tried to unpick these in the research.

It would be accurate to say that the vast majority of participants did not touch the pens, nor write or draw anything on the page at all. Most respondents claimed a lack of artistic skill as to why they would not draw something, and physically expressed that they were uncomfortable with the idea. In addition to the jokes, this typically manifested itself as either distancing themselves from the outline provided (by moving their chair further away from the table) or through a facial grimace or nervous laughter. Despite this, the visual method did help open up discussions around men and masculinities whether or not the page remained blank. I now highlight four different responses (of resistance, doubt, confidence and relevance) to the introduction of the visual method in the remainder of this chapter with each of these reactions pointing toward the embodied intergenerationality of the research encounter. I reflect upon the significance of family position and masculinity and their intersections with space and place.

3.2.1 Resistance

Following Charlesworth's description of a research encounter (below), as an interviewer we need to 'hear what [the interviewee] implied, suggested, and started to say but didn't. We need to interpret their pauses and, when it happens, their willingness or inability to response' (Anderson and Jack 1991: 17).

> 'The uncertain dread manifest in sighs and pauses, punctured by the speed of his interjections, registering in their rhythms, the raised heartbeat and the *sense* of veins cursing with adrenaline-rich blood, the somatic manifestations of fear; of loss and bewilderment' (Charlesworth 2000: 77 *original emphasis*).

It could be argued that the very nature of the visual prompt, in disrupting the social norm of a conversation, distracted the participants to the extent where they felt as if any verbal description of themselves would be less 'embarrassing' than a visual depiction (Prosser and Loxley 2008); though this did not have an immediate effect.

On introducing the outline to Mark (policeman, aged 48), and in anticipation of a performance of dominant masculine resistance, I warned him that 'this might seem a little strange…' to which he responded, 'I was worried when I seen the figure…' I explained that the reason I use the outline is to bring the discussion to a focal point, to help visualise our masculinities and I asked Mark: 'is there any way you could depict how you see yourself…what it means to be a man to you?' To which there was an awkward silence. I broke this by following up and rephrasing my question: 'or say, who is Mark O'Malley as a man?' But again I was faced with silence. I tried once more with: 'it doesn't have to be pictures but any words maybe…?' Mark eventually announces: 'I don't get what you're getting at?' Here then, we see the resistance I was expecting, the masculine performance portraying the task as illogical and not a manly thing to do. I recognised that my negative suggestion ('this might seem strange') did not encourage engagement and so I switched tact, to discuss an equally intangible aspect of identity/masculinity. I prompt Mark with this next statement: 'well, for example, would you point to any aspect of who you are as having any Irish qualities?' This proves the breakthrough moment as Mark responds:

Mark:

> Well, like your sense of humour. Your sense of morality. Your sense of to me, fair play…I always remember as a kid growing up and me dad would say, obviously it was a slant at Kilkenny, but if you were a bad sportsman you were from Kilkenny, you know what I mean? To me, whatever game you played, whatever you participated in, you would always want to be seen as a fair playing sportsman. That's what I would see myself as. I mean I get on with everybody; I treat everybody the way I would want to be tret [treated]. How I would depict that, I don't know?
>
> (policeman, 48, 2nd generation Irish).

I am very much present in the recital ('you know what I mean') and I am assumed to have prior knowledge of Irish towns ('obviously it was a slant at Kilkenny'); and of the internal regional rivalries within Ireland. Mark tells me that he would much rather 'talk it through…and stumble from what bit to another' than draw anything. What we see in this example is that an engagement with

national identity is more comprehensible and acceptable than conversing on any notion of masculinity. Interestingly in analysing this masculine resistance we see Mark aligning his masculinity with his nationality. Inadvertently, it is revealed that for this policeman being 'Irish' encourages him to be a 'fair playing sportsman'; though admittedly not one from Kilkenny. To analyse this resistance further I point to Gubrium and Holstein's (2009: 32) warning that:

> 'The appearances of people's bodies, the location of rooms and objects such as doors and furniture, and lighting can prompt particular kinds of storytelling'.

In addition to the performed resistance the location is worthy of mention; I interviewed Mark in a public space (albeit a quiet cafe on a weekday afternoon with only the members of staff for company). I argue the space explains some of the participant's hesitancy. In public space the men were more guarded, more self aware, and with the constant possibility that a member of staff would come and ask us for more coffee at any moment (in Mark's case) the blank outline image remained blank. In none of interviews conducted in public places were the outline images drawn on. We see then that place matters and that publicly at least, discussions of masculinity face resistance.

3.2.2 Doubt

Buttimer (2001), who was one of the first to use autoethnography within geography, points out that the visual alone cannot suffice in representing the data. Further evidence of this is found within my own work and with Peter (a mechanic, aged 48), who like Mark, chose not to depict anything visual on the outline, and was similarly interviewed in a public place, a quiet pub on a weekday evening. It would be wrong to interpret that Peter did not engage with the task and that in some way his avoidance of the coloured pens meant that he was avoiding a reflexive analysis of his masculinity; rather it points to a masculinised doubt. He remarks:

Peter:

> So what I define meself as? What I have defined meself as in the past has been like the primary wage earner, you know to support me wife and me family. I mean she, well, doesn't earn as much as much as me. But she makes up for that you know more than the difference by being frugal.

> We're both very frugal people. We don't tend to eat out much or anything of that nature. So how would I define meself as a man? Primarily as a husband you know and a father, I would say. I dunno if that answers your question?
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

So Peter claims to doubt whether his response is what I was looking for from the outline image before going on to tell me about how he is a working man. His oral depiction of masculinity, gender equality and family is exactly the topics of discussion I was hoping to reach. I argue this doubt is performed, and that drawing a picture and talking about it is so far removed from the social norms of conversation for the 48 year old mechanic that he feels uncomfortable in responding. Therefore he is protected under the guise of doubt; he is safer, his 'answer' cannot be wrong because he claims to have not fully known what the question was asking in the first place.

Throughout my time with Peter he adopts a fatherly role with me. He assumed (rightfully) that like him I wanted to have children one day and laid out expectations for my later life (Lundgren 2012) – 'as you'll see when you have kids'; 'you'll find all this out one day'; 'you've got all this to come' – positioning me in relation to himself as a fellow heterosexual man, who, though not yet having children, is expected to become a father at a later (older) stage. I later reflected was this interaction constructed around a performance of my heterosexuality? What was it about the interaction that conveyed my heterosexuality? I realised that the most likely scenario was that Peter's heteronormative assumptions meant that he would not have expected anything else (I am from a similar family background, close in age to his son, whom I happen to resemble) leading him to adopt a fathering role, looking upon me as a younger man similar to himself. The rapport I developed with him coupled with the use of the visual method enabled me to reach a high level of detail during the interaction, which helped counter his doubt. I reassured Peter that I was interested in his thoughts, about his masculinity being defined relative to being a husband and a father. He then continues in a discussion of a work related injury in which he was left with a 'Popeye' muscle (see further discussion Chapter 6). He talks of the value he places on 'physical strength' and how it is a 'taken for granted' aspect of his masculinity.

We see then the despite the lingering doubt, which prevented his drawing on the outline image, the embodied intergenerationality – of me as son and Peter as father – saw my masculinity normalised to Peter, it was familiar and through our commonality and shared experience an 'ordinary male behaviour' developed (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 1996). The interaction between researcher and participant becomes more of a conversation; it forms a biographical oral history rather than a semi-structured interview (Gluck 1996; see also Connell 1995 on life history). The outline image empowers Peter to tell his story. After abandoning his performance of doubt, he becomes the expert (Prosser and Loxley 2008), explaining aspects of his body and his injury to me with me only occasionally seeking his clarification. After rolling up his sleeve to reveal and flex his arm in homage to 'Popeye', he continues in his narrative (more of this is discussed in Chapter 6).

3.2.3 Confidence

Whilst achieving the same end result, of developing an in depth embodied biography, the performances differ greatly between the participants. By contrast the outline image of Daniel – who did opt to use the pens for colour and annotations (see Figure 4) creates a biographical narrative by confidently talking through step by step what he is drawing. Speaking in his home, this retired teacher (aged 65), picks up the coloured pens and seems to have ideas about what he wishes to draw. His living room location, a place of comfort and familiarity, coupled with his educational working background explains his increased ease at embracing the creative opportunity. I again asked 'how do you see yourself as a man?'

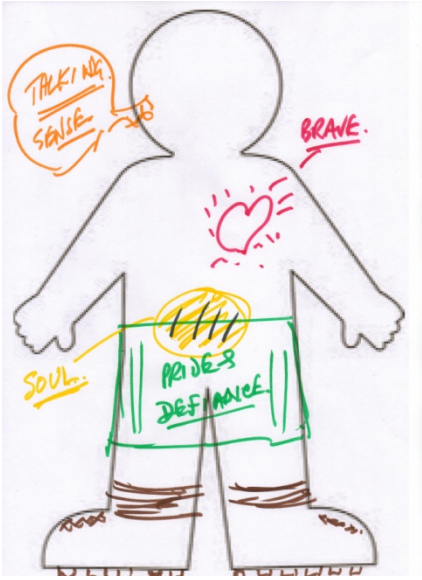


Figure 4 Daniel

Daniel:

> So that was my football boots there. And you know, I played soccer from September to April from the age of 10 – 34. Virtually every day. So it was absolutely massive. We haven't really talked about the soccer side today, but that was massive. And that gave me lots of masculinity I think. Lots of masculine outlets. I mean just today I was jumping around with one of me sons 'cos Newcastle scored a brilliant goal and it was fantastic. He's 40, I'm 65 and we're leaping around like a couple of maniacs. I mean completely spontaneous. You know, we never thought "stop, why are we doing this?" It was just incredible…
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

We talk here about football, about the scores that day. I am able to very naturally converse on these topics as a keen football supporter myself. The latter section of his narrative is framed though within a religious context. Again I point to the value of being visual as a tool to engage with embodiment and masculinity as, in this example, Daniel directs the conversation to wherever he wishes. It is upon seeing a gold coloured pen on the table that he recounts that his grandmother, who died when he was 7 years old, had a favourite hymn called 'Soul of My Saviour'. He began to recite the lyrics to me before stating:

Daniel:

> I knew I had a soul and the soul was sort of in here somewhere. And you couldn't see it, but every time you

> made a mistake, which is the modern way of saying…making mistakes is the modern way of saying you committed sins. And sins made a nasty mark on the soul. A venial sin made a nasty mark on the soul. And dulled the soul. And when you made a mortal sin. And there were plenty in the book for mortal sins. Like not going to church on a Sunday. The whole soul was black. Blackened, mortal sin. It was dead. Black, totally black. And what you had to do was, you had to go to confession and get rid of that blackness. And by confessing your sins the priest was forgiving you on behalf of Jesus and God, then it became golden again. It remained golden until you made a sin, making mistakes, and dirtied the soul again. And imagine, that's still with me. But I know it's…I sort of don't believe it. It's gone. I certainly don't believe in institutional religion
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

So for Daniel the outline image bred confidence and creativity, though his working background in education was influential in his ability to do so. Ahmed (2004: 4) tells us 'emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time'. Perhaps then, the repeated processes of drawing and talking about, on and in the body have helped articulate emotions. Aitken (2009: 19) states: 'if the emotional spaces of fathering are an important aspect of transforming men's lives, then I get at them, at least in part, through memories. To do so, I listen to fathers with an ear to repetitions, rhythms, echoes and cycles. Daniel's repetition of words and phrases are for my benefit (unlike himself, I did not have a strong religious upbringing), whilst physically, it also gave him an extra moment to think about what he is going to draw, write or say next. Certainly I have gained insight to information that a pre-set semi structured interview schedule would not have accessed (for more on the justification of the interviewing with images see Chapter 2). Through the body, these examples have already touched upon the roles of: the breadwinner, family, marriage, physicality, employment, health, ageing, culture, pride, sport and religion in relation to the embodied identities of just a small selection of my research participants; themes that are discussed further throughout this thesis.

3.2.4 Relevance

A final response to the visual outline that I highlight questions the relevance of the outline in discussions of masculinity. Drawing on the concept of lifecourse which 'involves recognition that, rather than following fixed and predictable life stages, we live dynamic and varied lifecourses which have, themselves, different situated meanings' (Hopkins and Pain 2007: 290). This was not particularly an area I had considered until my interactions with Bill (mature student/former solider, aged 45) at his home. I asked him, 'if you were to say how you see yourself…looking in the mirror asking who am I as a man…is there anything that you'd feel would be important for you to put down on that page?' After a long pause he responds:

Bill:

> I don't think there is. I really don't think there is. And why I don't think that way is – the thing about being a man to me is about being tolerant, being understanding, knowing your own power. I would never ever dream of accosting a woman, or children. Discipline is one thing, but smacking a bairn [child]…totally different. It's not the way I was brought up. It's very, very difficult for me to put something on there Michael, because when I consider where I was as a youngster to where I am now, this thing would have changed into so many different colours and I would have to take it back off you again and say "I've got to change that"
>
> (mature student/former soldier, 45, 3rd generation Irish).

He goes onto to explain:

Bill:

> Because I suppose at the moment I'm quite happy within myself. I'm at a stage in my life where I'm as settled as I've ever been. I'm very fortunate to be married to [my wife]. I have a nice house. I live in a lovely area. I don't have any money problems. I don't have any personal problems to be perfectly honest and I'm a very, very happy man at the minute
>
> (mature student/former soldier, 45, 3rd generation Irish).

We see that in response to the outline, Bill reads and remembers his multiple masculinities suggesting a temporal nature of identity. Bill did not write or draw

anything on the outline during our interaction but asked me to leave it with him and he would get back to me on it. A few of the other participants had said similar things but never followed up with anything and I expected this would be the same again. Bill however telephoned me the day after I met with him (and his father) at his house and asked me to take out three blank copies of the outlines. He asked me to colour them: the first in red (see Figure 5), the second as a rainbow (see Figure 2, Chapter 2), and the third in purple (see Figure 6). According to Bill these three images more accurately depicted his masculinity across his lifecourse. He explained over the phone that the red image represented the 'hurt and anger' he experienced as a young man. This was in reference to an incident we had talked about during our meeting the day before, where fourteen local men assaulted him and subsequently put him in hospital after attacking him with a hammer (Bill had showed me the scars on his head, a visible reminder of the attack and subsequent operation). This shaped Bill's outlook on early life as a man as he sought (and successfully exacted) revenge against each one of the fourteen men. He quite plainly told me of how he toughened up after his recovery and took a baseball bat to each of his attackers individually over a three month period. This was not something he boasted or felt proud of, but it was something he felt he needed to share with me. My testing of this masculine performance is limited. Yes I was shown a scar, yes I witnessed the plain delivery of the narrative that did not speak to macho fiction – in fact, Bill's wife actually intervened after overhearing the conversation from a different room in the house to state that Bill was underplaying the severity of the attack – of course, she too, could have been consumed by the masculine performance of a childhood story of her husband. With hindsight, this story of revenge seems fantastical, the narrative of a super-hero, and yet I do not think this story was an example of Bill's machismo. Given the context of his lifecourse and his family's subsequent move away from the region, this story is perfectly plausible; and in talking through the incident with me in my researcher, listener role it became therapeutic (for 'therapy speak' see Munt 2012: 559).

After this incident, he moved to Nigeria with his family as his father got work with the British army out there (his father confirmed this to me in our interview together); Bill too went on to serve as a soldier. After leaving the army

however he pursued further education. He achieved a Bachelors degree and is currently completing a Masters degree. He took on lots of different influences in this period (including religion) and his rainbow colours of Figure 2 (see Chapter 2) are said to reflect this stage in his life. Later then, to the present day and the purple image of Figure 6, we see Bill as a middle aged man who has found a state of 'peace and calm' in his life. In a counter narrative to ageing (which is usually rife with negativity as men enter 'older' age, see Tarrant 2013) he says the purple reflects a higher level of masculinity where amongst other things; he has a greater reflective outlook on life. In a counter story to ageing then, we see age revered, that it can be an aspirational progression to reach this 'higher level'.

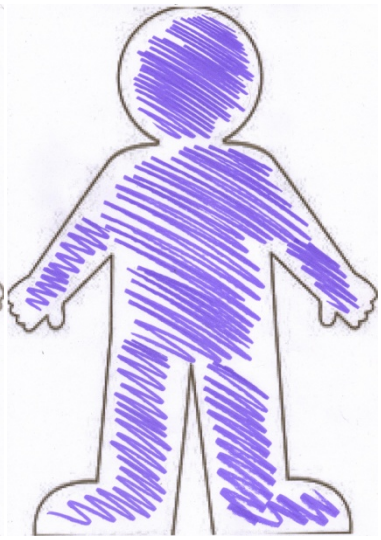


Figure 5 Bill red **Figure 6 Bill purple**

Bill's narrative not only brings into question the relevance of the research tool, showing it both as limited to one moment in time while also accessing a depth of embodied masculine construction; and also the relevance of my ability to read the men's masculinities. Like Aitken in his 'ethnopoetry' work to conceptualise fathering, 'I do not look for accurate accounts but for emotive, embodied responses that are mediated through memory and the telling of stories' (2009: 17). On the whole I do accept the stories of the men but at all times acknowledge the perceived masculine performances. I acknowledge that in reference to embodied intergenerationality the men may be performing particular forms of masculinity in order to present themselves as more

acceptable, more ‘Irish’, more ‘manly’. I further analyse the narratives at a deeper level looking at the cultural narrative structures, in this next section of this chapter.

3.3 Cultural narrative structures

As we have seen already in this chapter issues of resistance, doubt, confidence and relevance have emerged in response to men’s engagement with their masculinities. I now employ an in depth synchronic analysis (e.g. what shapes the resistance, doubt, confidence and relevance of these narratives) looking at the relationships that exist in the construction of the narrative such as age, class, working background, family history etc. Synchronic analysis allows me to consider the narrative at the instant in time in which it was given. I look for incarnation of these relations within the family systems (Berger 2010) in the embodied intergenerationality of the research. They are useful in helping decipher what is being done by the storyteller; what work is being done by the story itself; and how the story is acting to construct aspects of the storyteller’s identity? The work of Frank (1991, 1995, 2006, 2010) suggests that narratives ‘are actors that *do* things that make a difference’ (Sparkes et al 2011: 472 *original emphasis*).

Equally, Robertson and Monaghan (2012: 157) claim ‘bodies are both agents and objects of practice’. As an agent then, we can think of the materiality of the men’s bodies and their place in wider social systems and sets of social relations; as objects of practice, they can be seen in turn to produce these relations and emotions. Embodied intergenerationality then sees bodies as agents and objects of social relations between generations. Finally, Dennett (1991) talks of the self as the centre of narrative gravity, meaning the narrative is: embodied (e.g. he looks like he has seen better days), emplaced (e.g. he looks Irish), and temporal (e.g. he is wise above his years). In further analysis of these narratives I tease out the specific forms of embodied masculinities that emerge. Do they display what Watson (2000) outlines as: normative embodiment (standardised/idealised versions of the body); pragmatic embodiment (the body as functional); experiential embodiment (intersections of

social/physical constraints); or visceral embodiment (the unconscious bodily reactions)?

The body's 'social inputs' (Casey 2000: 184) of 'personality, congeniality and good humour' (Ibid) are positioned against the 'pre-social' (Wolkowitz 2006: 54) nature of the body working as we have seen in some of the extracts in the 'talking bollocks' section, the men position these 'social inputs' against inherited markers of masculinity and Irishness. In addition to national/masculine alignment we can read the narratives along classed lines with the associated cultures of working-class humour and shared experience (Nayak 2006). My starting point was often the pub; or more specifically Irish Centres on Tyneside. As has been discussed earlier in this thesis, such sites are key for the establishment of a diasporic community. Furthermore, drinking and pub culture itself – an oft-cited component of working-class culture – is seen as a key signifier for establishing hegemonic masculine ideals (Nayak and Kehily 2008; Nayak 2003a, 2003b), with alcohol seen as 'asserting male togetherness' (Donkersloot 2012: 584). Alongside strong connections with Irish national identity sits alcohol. Like Hopkins (2004; 2007a) in his study of young Muslim men and Scottish national identity there was a sense across the men of my research that the drinking culture in Ireland, itself a stereotype, exists within the diaspora and plays an important role in the construction of their Irishness.

These drinking establishments were not completely public places, as the Centres are based on membership, but I was nevertheless comfortable to meet the men in a 'public enough' place for our introductions. On meeting one participant family in particular, who happen to form the most linear family model of grandfather (Victor), father (Peter) and son (Simon) we met for a group interview before subsequent individual meetings. I was greeted by Peter and Victor, and we were joined later in the evening by Simon. I was told that Peter and Victor often came here for a drink, whereas Simon had never been before – which is symptomatic of the Centres' membership, with a distinctly older clientele during my time there.

Field Diary: Drinking Practices 01/08/12

Over the course of the evening, pints of beer were consumed (mostly Guinness and Murphy's [Irish stouts], but also [the English bitter] John Smith's). We joked

that these were ‘old men’s’ drinks (compared to lager, vodka mixers, or ‘shots’ which are stereotypically consumed by younger generations). This practice of being ‘selective with what I drink’ is a factor I am aware of more broadly in my own social life, as friends often accuse me of liking ‘girly drinks’. All too aware of this, when meeting people for the first time, I choose not to order my usual Amaretto and Coke!

In her work with the North American Irish diaspora, Marston (2002: 385) talks of the ‘hyper-masculinised and the hyper-feminised, which carry with them an implicit assumption of heterosexuality’, and I make this link to the above field diary extract and ‘gender appropriate drinking practices’. In addition to carefully selecting what I drank, by driving myself to the venue I also controlled how much I drank. This deliberate decision allowed me to be able to join in with the pub culture, while avoiding a situation of drinking excessively. As I read my masculinity it becomes clear that I too, am constructing my own masculinity relative to conventional and heterosexual social norms.

> ‘We, of course, know plenty about men as workers, managers, soldiers, leaders, artists, scientists etc., but our knowledge of men *as men* is still scanty’ (Christian 1994: 164 *original emphasis*).

I sought the men’s engagement with themselves as men with the outline image and the accompanying question ‘how do you see yourself as a man?’ These embodied biographies give me deep insight into often their more visceral responses, the unconscious engagement with the questions of masculinity, ageing, identity and belonging and their intersections with age and place. Interviewing with images took the narratives to another level which disrupted the social conventions of talking, in a deliberate move to make the men more fully express their thoughts and feelings; drawing internally rather than a more scripted and public account of themselves as we are all so used to in everyday conversation. It was suggested to me at a conference that I should provide the templates to the participants in advance of the interview to increase the likelihood of the men drawing on them. This misses precisely the value of them as a tool however as it is the unprepared, instinctive engagement with place, age and masculinity that interests me most. It is too easy to rely on public accounts based on heteronormative assumptions and social expectations, this research rather focuses on the previously unspoken, unwritten narratives of heterosexual men of Irish descent; not simply what the men think I want to hear.

3.4 Conclusion

As Chapter 2 showed, there is value in using a visual research tool within research on men and masculinities (Rose 2001). The visual method employed has not only accessed these topics of conversation quickly but in a participatory manner which encouraged the men to engage with a range of issues, in a way that is relevant to their own lives. The emphasis of this chapter has been to draw on 'embodied intergenerationality', the incarnation of relationships with different generations. The use of intergenerationality has been challenged (Horton and Kraftl 2008 cf. Hopkins and Pain 2008) but the way in which performed masculinities of participant and researcher, sometimes superseding gender, spoke relationally to family position (son/father to be) and place (public/private space) are of particular salience. This contribution sees a departure from gender and methods literatures to date.

I hope that the self-reflexive element to this thesis has, as a means of catharsis, opened the door to my inner research dilemmas and to my methodological approaches as I and the men of my study read and remember our masculinities. I heed Vanderbeck's (2005: 398) warning that writing reflexively can reaffirm 'researcher credibility' in a posturing attempt to assert conformity to 'hegemonic gender ideals'; but this was not the purpose of this chapter. Peter's narrative highlighted the importance of family position with the research, drifting between the roles of son, father and father to be. Mark's narrative was interrupted by the place in which it was given. The voices of both Daniel and Bill spoke more directly to the particularities of masculinities; it was perhaps their working backgrounds as a teacher and student respectively (though admittedly a former solider) that facilitated a greater ease with alternative forms of communication than the aforementioned mechanic and policeman. I have stated my participants' familiarity with my masculinity at times (as son, football fan and fellow 'Irishman'); but this has allowed me to articulate the perceived advantages these positions enable. Interestingly, some stark differences between the lives of my participants and my own proved less problematic than I predicted at the beginning of the research process, with the power of shared experience seeming to trump most differences between us. Though not always through feelings of, as Kehily (1995: 29) claims, 'pain,

uncertainty and failure' my reflections have laid out the 'tensions and contradictions' (Ibid) in positioning myself in the research as advocated by feminist scholars and the anti-sexist men's movement. Questions around men and masculinities, embodiment and research methods have long been debated in the discipline – less so family position and place – and I look forward to reading more empirical data where embodied intergenerationality is similarly explicitly articulated. As this thesis progresses, Chapter 4 looks at the family level towards the inheritance of Irish masculine cultures, as the men remember and engage with the masculinities of their forefathers (and mothers).

3.5 Generational chains

In order to solidify the claims of my work, I want to make clear the contribution my intergenerational analysis makes to the ideas of intersectionality and multiple masculinities. I have selected short case-study examples to help explicate the meaning of the inheritance of culture within specific generational chains. These four examples demonstrate what intergenerational inheritance can look like at the scales of the family, religion, the body and national identity. The first example investigates inheriting familial culture at home:

3.5.1 Inheriting familial culture

> James: 'Right, where do I begin? My family's from a little village in County Sligo called Tobercurry, which in Irish means 'the well of the cauldron'. Now what the cauldron would be doing in the middle of a field…? Very tiny little place. My family were always peasant farmers til my father's generation and fairly poor in that I can - I haven't exactly researched my family background – but I know from the kind of talk…endless blabber round cups of tea by the turf fire, particularly in the early days when there was no television and the radio was a precious thing, requiring batteries and things like that, it was always Radio Athlone as it was called. There was always lots of music. Always has been in my family. And one of the earliest players would be the man who has been described by the Sligo Fiddlers Association as one of the seminal fiddlers of Irish music, he was my great Grandfather and he played the fiddle and he taught music and dancing and he composed tunes. And they never had penny to rub together. But there's always been the music there. Fiddles and concertinas and long, rambling stories…probably

> where I get it from! But always poor, but didn't know we were poor. Looking back on it we were pitifully poor. A diet of spuds and ham if you were lucky. But having just a cabbage patch and not much more, my father used to tell me how he used to hunt for hares on the hills round about to supplement the diet. So he walked in his bare feet one day to Enniskillen to join the British Army. He soon realised that he wasn't cut out for taking orders, he left the army – think he bought himself out after three months or so and he joined the Merchant Navy…..' (retired teacher/former sailor, 65, 2nd generation Irishman).

James jokes about (what I would call) 'inheriting' the family's storytelling ability – a claim I would support. He talks of his Irish family, his Irish roots in both physical locale (the village and the home) and domestic composition (the interlinked family structure, the intergenerational socialisation). More salient however is the relationship he introduces with his father. James himself went on to a career in the Merchant Navy and upon leaving life as a sailor he too, cited his lack of discipline in following orders as a factor in his choice to leave; he went on to become a teacher. As becomes clearer over the course of Chapter 4, highlighted in a section on prejudice and tolerance, we see in James a man who speaks of tolerance and fairness. This is a man who appreciates his family lineage and places his own father's behaviour as influential on both his professional practice and personal values. These traits are 'inherited' by James in the sense that he attributes their origin to his father directly. These qualities become embodied more broadly as 'Irish' by others in the study. It is claimed that being Irish, is in part, to have a sense of fair play. Much of this comes from the relationship the men have with their fathers and their own attitudes towards fathering.

The second example investigates inheriting religious culture:

3.5.2 Inheriting religious culture

> Bill: A friend of mine is very, very anti-religion. He's against anything to do with religion whatsoever and he said, quite rightly so, he said "they've fucked everything up. Priests on both sides have fucked everything up. It's wrong. We should be going into communities and getting people back to work". He says, "Why am I in London? Why did I have to leave Belfast to find work?"

> Michael: How does that make you feel then in terms of your own faith?
>
> Bill: I think as I've got older I've become more accepting of my own faith. I think a lot of people do. Catholicism when you're younger, you feel it's oppressive. And it can be I suppose for people who, if you're in a strictly religious house, it can be quite oppressive. But then again so are people in a Baptist household, it's the same in any religion. But I actually feel more at peace with mine. I take out of religion what I want to. There are some things that I do reject. I don't think the Pope is infallible, I think that's a load of bollocks. He's a man like anybody else. I don't agree with the ostentatious living that some people have, in the Vatican or in Rome, when there's people living in the street. I disagree with that intensely. But apart with that, I'm at peace with mine (mature student/former soldier, 45, 3rd generation Irish).

Through the inheritance of religion we see a change in the intergenerational dynamic. Instead of absorbing particular traits from their fathers, all thirty eight men of the study were born into religious families. The families' religious affiliations varied, though there was a pattern with all having a form of religious experience as *compulsory* in their childhoods. As the men were young, this was mostly through schooling and family routine; it was in their post school leaving ages when some began their journeys towards agnosticism and atheism. Even for those who have since returned to religion (such as Bill), these teenage years were the critical period in their lifecourse. What Bill's narrative shows is not an inherited set of values or beliefs, as his religiosity is reflective of a generational experience. For those men (aged 65 and under) who remain religious, they do so with a liberal and more relaxed attitude to the more indoctrinated beliefs of their fathers' generation. In this conceptualisation, generation is age banded and not structured on national identity grounds, which mirrors the wider changes in society towards secularisation for those living on post-industrial Tyneside. The religiosity of men of Irish descent is further analysed in Chapter 5.

The third example investigates inheriting somatic culture at work:

3.5.3 Inheriting somatic culture

> Jack: I left to go to college at 18. I lived in Corby at that time. I mean, all the time being a student I would always

> go back to Corby to work in the steelworks in the summer. Sometimes for shorter periods if you could get on with the gang, you know. My grandfather had been well known in the company. My father was quite well known as well. He was a champion darts player, had won the Midlands area championship, you know. That's his cup up there... So he was very well known, so it was quite easy for me to get a job in the steelworks because people knew I was so and so's son or grandson, so they put me in. So I was always working in the steelworks. Even when I was 21/22 I was going back to Corby to work, to make money. As I say it was heavily Glaswegian and a really quite violent place (retired sociologist, 65, 2nd generation Irishman).

Jack's narrative is ridden with geographical complexity; he was born to an Irish father and a Scottish born (but second generation Irish) mother. The town of Corby (Northamptonshire) was where his father had settled in looking for work after leaving Ireland in the 1940s. His mother's parents from a previous generation of Irish migrants had also settled in Corby after a major steelworks had relocated from Glasgow. What makes this narrative so rich is its depiction of what constitutes success in heavy industrial work. To succeed, or in Jack's words to be 'well-known' involves a somatic culture of more than hard work. This involves a cultural identity carved through reputation, familial lineage and associated sporting prowess. By association, Jack was able to thrive in this environment with assumed physical working credentials despite pursuing an alternative career altogether as an academic. The tacit nature of working masculinities is further explored in Chapter 6.

Economic pressures have forced significant generational changes which have in turn altered the career trajectories for younger men in my study. De-industrialisation has meant that the type of experience Jack benefited from is not so readily available for the students of contemporary Tyneside. There is a clear longing for what has been lost from this culture and an inherent challenge has been posed to those working class masculinities which are defined through such labouring occupations. While these are individual narratives, this extract does point to a significant generational experience. Men like Jack, sons of industrial workers who went on to university, were able to pursue middle class occupations as teachers and academics without threat to their masculinities. They had still worked as labourers, they understood and could contribute to this

culture in a way that the young men of today cannot. Contemporary men of Irish descent are constructing their masculinities in more nuanced ways and the outcomes of these changes are further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

The fourth example investigates inheriting Irish national identity through cultural practice:

3.5.4 Inheriting Irish culture

> David: Yeah I do feel Irish and I would say I feel Irish. If I had a choice I would say I'm Irish, not English mainly because I think it's passed down, but especially being from granddad really being strong as that figure and then dad as well. Knowing dad's family from being in Ireland and being over there, I just feel their sense of community is a lot better than English. Being in England everyone's taken for granted a lot. I feel, cos I am, I am more Irish than I am English, even though I'm born in England. I've been told different…"no, you're English 'cos you're born here". And I was like "it's not about where you're born from I don't think". My personal view is where your family line comes from. So like a lot of my mum's side is Irish, especially granddad from his Irish roots and then from dad as well just makes the whole thing Irish. It makes me feel, if someone asks me where I'm from I'd say "I'm born in England but I'm mainly Irish" I'd always say that (student, 16, 2nd generation Irishman).

In David we see a young man who points to different aspects of himself and his family as Irish. He talks of this process of identification being 'passed down' through the generations of his family. He talks of his granddad's Irish roots (who I met with and interviewed, his name is Daniel) as well as his dad's (his dad, Dominic, whom I also interviewed). So his identity claims are biological; he points to family ties and cultural belonging rather than places of birth. What is more culturally significant is when David continues:

> David: I've been over there with dad, cos my grandma lives over there. And like all of my dad's family live over there, it's only my dad and his brother who live over here. So we go over quite a lot and they come over quite a lot. And I also feel that all the pubs that my dad goes to, Irish, just gotta be Irish everywhere my dad goes. And all of my dad's mates, like a lot are Welsh, from different places, but it's all Irish bars that they go to. I think being Irish is more widely accepted than being English (student, 16, 2nd generation Irishman).

In believing being ‘Irish is more widely accepted than being English’ we see a vast difference through a generational analysis. This is far removed from the hostility Irish migrants have faced previously. While this may also be specific to David’s close knit community context, there is a more cultural component of the claim. The reference to ‘gotta be Irish everywhere’ begins to depict the diasporic space created by the Irish community. Music, dance and drinking all become embodied as ‘Irish’ and I further analyse these cultural practices in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4 Fathering and Families

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores 'fathering' past and present, and its central role in the construction of Irish masculinities on Tyneside. In this chapter I discuss fathering with both living and ancestral relatives and building from literature on the geographies of family life; 'it is about change and transformation, and it is also about what is learnt and what is carried through' (Aitken 2009: 2). It is about the inheritance of culture, in both norms and attitudes to fathering and family life as well as Irish tradition. This chapter continues as I make sense of family priorities of men who reflect upon how they have been fathered, how they father, and how they intend to father. As an example we see three contrasting levels of engagement with an Irish identity from excerpts from the family narratives of a son, father and grandfather. While perhaps not surprising, it illustrates the complexities of intergenerational relations: while the grandfather believes that the feelings of 'Irishness' still exist across the family, the grandson does not confirm this to be the case.

When looking for generational differences in the perceptions and performances of family masculinities, recorded evidence revealed that, over time, many of the men have become 'less Irish'. By this I am referring to those men whose attachment to, 'belonging' and identification with, the Irish diaspora, and toward Ireland at large, is less strong than their fathers' and grandfathers'. Often the family home was adorned with green painted walls, images of idyllic rural Ireland, as well as displayed musical instruments, all reinforcing traditional notions of the 'homeland'. Of particular note are ideas of the material and imaginative processes of making 'home'[6] within a diaspora context (Walsh 2011; Tolia-Kelly 2010). 'Homes straddle the public and private' (Gorman-Murray 2012: 111). For example, in Victor's home we sat in the living room, a place of comfort and familiarity to the participant but with a sense of public display. There were some family photos on the mantelpiece above the fireplace, but the television, sofas, coffee table and close proximity to the front door and

large window (with an aspect onto the street in front) made the space feel open, designed to receive guests. Whereas, when interviewing within Simon's bedroom, I gained insight to a more private space; sat on the end of his bed in an upstairs room of his father's (Peter's) house, the interaction was enhanced through discussions of items in the room including musical instruments, a games console and dumbbells.

Victor (grandfather):

> From point one way back in the 1800s in Ireland, which is about as far back as we could go in that field, there's something like five or six generations have elapsed and yet there is a feeling of feeling Irish, and Irish ancestry
>
> (retired engineer, aged 80, 5th generation Irish).

Peter (father):

> Occasionally, things from Ireland would rear their head. When we were visiting Ireland (me dad's siblings are all older than him as he said) and their houses were furnished differently to his, which was only natural. But on one occasion, in me uncle's house, there was this thing that hung upon the wall – it looked like a crude tobacco pipe, mounted on a bit of wood, "Oh, it's a shillelagh…" "What the hell's a shillelagh?" I still don't know, do you?
>
> (mechanic, aged 48, 6th generation Irish).

Simon (son):

> I've kind of watched my granddad develop the family tree that he did and I was quite interested in that 'cos he started off with not a lot and he ended up going all the way back to like the 1820s and that was interesting and that's probably as far as it goes really. I don't feel particularly Irish. I've never been or anything, but yeah, it's definitely an Irish sounding name [Gallagher] I suppose and that's about as far as it goes. In my daily kind of, day to day activities, it doesn't really affect me to be honest
>
> (industrial chemist, aged 21, 7th generation Irish).

Significantly, we see that while Peter's own father took him on visits to family in Ireland, enabling him to encounter such symbols of Ireland as the 'shillelagh'[7], Peter has not done the same with his son, thereby facilitating more physical detachment from the 'homeland'. Peter asked me whether I knew what a shillelagh was and I did, because I had become familiar with many symbols of

Ireland when visiting the homes of some of my participants. Unlike this family, many others within the study did have photographs, paintings and other artefacts. These ‘visual and material cultures of the home’ can be seen as ‘cultural artefacts of diasporic heritage’ (Tolia-Kelly 2010: 7). It is these constructions that help establish the ‘romanticised homeland’ (Ni Laoire 2002: 183) of the Irish diaspora. Writing of interviews with older Irish men in London and Birmingham Mac an Ghaill and Haywood (2011: 389) claimed they ‘continued to invest in these mythologies but they were lived out within fragmentary, partial and contradictory ways within complex post-colonial conditions’.

In discussing the cultural fusion of the Irish diaspora and indigenous Tyneside, I use the narratives of the men to chart how the legacies of family masculinities have changed over time. How ‘Irish’ these men feel varies. Across the thirty eight participants there is no set pattern of certain generations feeling more Irish than others, the most salient factor instead being family circumstance. That said, like Simon, with most of the families it was clear that the younger generations had weaker sense of national identity. In fact, all but three of the families (Bill’s, David’s and Tim’s) the younger the man was, the less Irish he felt. The chapter is structured around discussions of behavioural changes and continuities through the micro-level geographies of the family; with links in the home, in and on the body and in the workplace. The intergenerational approach to researching men’s lives contributes to an emerging field within the geographies of masculinities literature – one which investigates the relationship between age and masculinities, as well as the intersections of masculinity within family roles, such as son, father and grandfather (Hopkins 2006; Tarrant 2010, 2013).

As Chapter 3 outlined, embodied intergenerationality does not just exist within and across the men of my study families; it also exists between my participants and me. We have seen how, over time, generational changes have affected the levels of engagement with and understanding of family heritage; with age being prioritised and valued. Fathering within this context is more than the biological act of reproducing children; rather, the set of social expectations ascribed to such a responsibility. Thomson and Kehily (2011: 234), informed by

Simone de Beauvoir's phenomenology (1949/1997), see motherhood 'in terms of "situations" that are the configurations of bodily, biographical and cultural trajectories'. It is this responsibility, the 'situations' of 'providing for one's family' and 'being a man' that renders fatherhood so significant for the men of my study. In the rest of this chapter, I investigate what it means to be an 'Irish father'. The opportunities to father are limited for some of these men due to military service, death and divorce; but we see how fathering values survive in sections on prejudice and tolerance, justice and pride, as well as discipline. In the latter section the importance of men, masculinities and fathering per se is questioned from the viewpoint of fathering mothers – that is, mothers who encompass the masculine traits traditionally associated with fathering.

4.2 Fathering values

Simon:

> I went through a period a while ago of going through like a proper health binge "right, got to get in shape". Doing loads of cycling. Lost loads of weight. Eating total rabbit food for weeks on end, and it got to a point where I thought, and it occurred to us, "right hang on. I'm doing all of this when I could just be hit by a bus tomorrow. Like 21 years of sheer boredom". So yeah I'm just gonna like go out, not worry too much and eat what I want and just you know, exercise some of it off later. You know I'd rather live for 50 years having the time of my life and die of a heart attack 'cos I didn't do enough running, rather than live a little bit longer and just have like a boring life. But that might change as I hurl towards 50. We'll see
>
> (industrial chemist, 21, 6th generation Irish).

It is logical to want to live life free of the constraints of diets, health and fitness but this outlook struck me as extreme: from a regime of cycling, weight loss, and 'rabbit food' to a drastic classification as boring in a more lackadaisical attitude. On first hearing this narrative I was asking what had caused these life decisions. Perhaps it is as Cahill (2006: 81) claims that: 'the young can shock their elders and distance themselves from them only because they share with them taken-for-granted understandings of conventional bodily boundaries. If they did not, their intentionally shocking bodily conduct would not have the intended shocking effect'. Indeed the performance of Simon's masculinity here

is care-free. Cahill is effectively describing what Watson (2000) calls normative embodiment. The strength of Simon's narrative is in that it challenges conventional understandings of life and death. It is not expected for us to wish away our life at 50 in exchange for fun and excitement. Yet Simon's youth is challenging to assumptions and structure, based upon growing old, he is very much in control of his body, suggesting that a 'reckless' outlook can be switched on and off; from healthy to unhealthy but in ordered, rational mantra of 'exercise some of it off later' and 'we'll see'.

Furthermore, through careful analysis of Simon's father's and Simon's grandfather's narratives, we see that his example of dying of a heart attack in middle age (a seemingly random occurrence), actually stems from an inherited family narrative. Simon's grandfather suffered a heart attack aged 59. While he (Victor) survived this heart attack we see a direct causality with the event creating different experiences for the family members. What is evident in these narratives is how Victor's heart attack – to the sufferer, an obvious life-changing event – impacted significantly upon the lives of his son and grandson. For them, also, it was not just an emotional experience but one that has altered their life courses. Peter himself has admitted that, amongst other factors, the health scare discouraged him from taking more responsibility at work (with the consequent loss of extra income).

Victor:

> You're aware that at the age of 59 I had a heart attack and I overcome that and I'm on medication now and I workout and that. But then this job came up for the Far East and I went. The family were appalled you know. I had the words of me daughter ringing in my ear "just come back in one piece dad" and I did. Bit of a challenge maybe? But I did it and I got away with it. No regrets
>
> (retired engineer, 80, 5th generation Irish).

So in this extract we see the evidence of what Frank (1995) called the 'quest' narrative; but this 'challenge' that Victor talks of was not taken lightly. It was not a reckless decision; it was rational. Ultimately the reason he took the job thousands of miles away [as a structural engineer] was due to family pressures; these were financial, revolving around being the primary breadwinner. So

Victor's traditional working-class masculinity has led him to take these risks. The risk is physical (unlike renaissance risk, see Chapter 7), his body moving across countries to take on labour as a structural engineer on offshore platforms (oil rigs). The subsequent values, behaviours and outlook on life are as Wolkowitz (2006) points out an outcome of work not mere bravado; while admittedly bravery is essential to work in such conditions. Victor continues:

Victor:

> …felt that I was one of the lucky ones. I came out of it a lot better than a lot of people would, people the same age. So I was being given a chance. "Use it. Exploit it. Don't just sit in your armchair…" and it worked out right
>
> (retired engineer, 80, 5th generation Irish).

In inadvertently paraphrasing Sparkes et al (2011: 472) in their definition of the quest '…accept illness and seek to *use* it' *(original emphasis)*, we see Victor's proactive response to his ill health. I thanked Victor for sharing this but he lightly dismissed it by saying what he went through was nothing compared to what his ancestors went through; he says, 'like me father, Battle of the Somme, came through that without a scratch'. Clearly then, the tough, resilient masculinity needed to be reasserted with this later statement. The hyperbole of his fighting father's survival is rationalised into his own outlook, into his own masculinity. We see an experiential embodiment, which considers the intersection of the social and physical boundaries of the body of most salience. With this in mind, 'sitting in your armchair' is seen as negative; not socially accepted within the rational masculinity. Victor's decision making is rationalised and justified and that a more careful or considered approach would be seen as profligate. It also links back to his religious beliefs underpinned by scripture (see Chapter 5).

Wolkowitz (2006: 60) cites Sennett (1998) as he concludes 'consistency of character, attachment to one's past, now looks like rigidity and no longer counts for much'; but as we have seen through Victor's embodied rationality and his family's wider acknowledgement of the past, their traditionalist working-class masculinities have continued to survive, even thrive, when others who took alternate routes have faltered (see Chapter 6). For Victor, this rationale has been framed by his religious outlook:

Victor:

> In the oil and gas industry, it is a relatively new industry. So someone in their 40s or their 50s, or 50s as in my case then, haven't been in that industry all the time, you were only just coming into it. So yes we were playing by ear, but let's make no mistake about it: the skills are here – experience isn't exactly the same thing – but you have got the ability to do it. And that's what I'm saying. And they would say …"you know your health and safety" and things like that…"hang on, that's not a very safe practice" and things like that. But there's a bit like what I was saying about bringing fair play into it, bit like a politician, be it a guy like doing what you're doing for schools, fair play; and you know seeing that people are tret and reasonably safe. Health and safety get a lot of stick these days, but I believe if you are a Christian, Irish or otherwise, it's a commitment. You must be committed to that sort of thing, to treat people right without being condescending or anything like that
>
> (retired engineer, 80, 5th generation Irish).

We see 'Irish Incarnate' once more. Like that of Mark's earlier resistant masculinity and his 'fair playing sportsman' (Chapter 3) sits Victor's inherited fairness, rationalised as both masculine, Irish and Christian[8] (see further analysis of religious significance in Chapter 5). His defence of health and safety procedures is rationalised on the grounds of a Christian commitment. This moves our discussion onto the more conservative outlooks of Peter (his son) and his responsible approach.

Peter:

> I've seen the pressure [at work] and I've seen what it's done to people. Get a little bit extra [promotion], and they think "I'm great"; and then the pressure starts and it just has an effect – strokes, heart attacks, people going off with stress. It's not for me. You've just got to look at me father, you know. That is not for me
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

Whilst Victor felt a rational need (no doubt spurred on by his father's efforts in the Battle of the Somme) to challenge himself both physically and mentally, Peter is influenced by *his own father* in a *different* way; a multi-directional embodied intergenerationality. Peter adopts a more careful and considered approach, he is more responsible, which is different again to the more defiant

response from *his own son*. His pragmatic embodiment, sees his body as functional. Instead of Peter incorporating the quest narrative of his father, he chooses to focus on what might be lost: in his masculinity, to his bodily function, to his social standing; and is driven by the recovery of these embodied characteristics. I discuss in Chapter 6 how physical strength is a major component of working-class masculinities.

This is not to say that Peter has lived a sheltered life as a result, he rides motorcycles for example, and talked at length about a solo return trip to North Africa. This risk is mediated by his responsible nature and appreciation of the dangers; it is clear he has inherited his father's rationalised approach to health and safety. On talking about what his wife and son felt about this leisure pursuit:

Peter:

> What had happened was, a friend had a motorcycle, a small one that you could pass your test on and he passed it onto me so I passed me test, and [my wife] says to me "well I may as well do mine"; this is before [my son] come along obviously. She passed her test and we got a motorcycle each and we would go away together, so it wasn't a case of getting away from her or anything like that. And then when she fell pregnant, she wouldn't stop riding the motorcycle until, actually, she didn't ride it a great deal after she found she was pregnant….And of course the only proviso was [with taking my son on the bike when he was older] "so long as you bring him back in one piece", which was stressful. It doesn't have to be your mistake to be a crash, you know that? But when he was born, about the same time actually, I got involved in motorcycle training
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

So with increased responsibility (the birth of his son), he increased his responsibility (becoming a motorcycle instructor). As older men Victor and Peter can more clearly visualise loss in the decline of their masculine bodies, having been greater tested. They are more likely therefore to use their recovery, and indeed seek a recovery in the first place, within their narrative. Their increased responsibility, most often framed by relationship status (husband) and fatherhood brings a change in masculinity (Aitken 2009). The argument goes that Simon's youthful approach can be so, as he has not had to come to terms

with loss or responsibility in the same ways. In a way this can be seen as a counter story of ageing. That while age inherently brings decreasing health in a physical process of decline and a degenerative body, there exists a notion of ageing as masculine enlightenment. In the sections that follow, we see stories that with age comes increased composure and reflexivity. With experience of being fathered comes the inheritance of fathering values: the value of tolerance in the face of prejudice; senses of justice and pride of Irish heritage; and the need for discipline to be effective and respected as a father.

4.2.1 Prejudice and tolerance

Whether fighting for work (military employment), fighting for 'justice' (republicanism/unionism), fighting for pride (see also mixed martial arts in Chapter 6) there is both a desire and apparent need so to do. Pertinent to this section however is the specific effects these decisions have on fathers. Several of the men in this study talked about fathers at war, with the effects of fighting not always necessarily what I expected.

James:

> That was always one thing that always impressed me about my father. He travelled the world as a seaman. He was on a ship running guns to the republicans during the Spanish civil war. He'd been in the worst of the arctic convoys in the [Second World] war. But he was…he treated everyone as he found them. I remember we, I was playing football in the garden, and a black man came, and you didn't see many black men in those days. He was selling stuff to shine shoes and things like that and he was having a hard time going round the streets. And my father brought him in, sat him down, made him a cup of tea and talked about this, that and the other – and probably bought some boot polish he didn't need as well. So he was a, he always wanted to give everybody a chance. And I think that's very important. And I suppose a philosophy I had was treat people the way you'd like to be treated
>
> (retired teacher/former sailor, 65, 2nd generation Irish).

James further details how he carries this mantra of tolerance, fairness and equality through his own life. In particular, he reads into his own masculinity by examining his work as a teacher with the Irish travelling community. Remembering the narrative of his father; James points to his father's

experience of war and travel as being at the root of this tolerance. It would be easy in times of political unrest, with the world literally at war, to become xenophobic. There is empirical evidence supporting this also – under the surface of the harmonious integration of the Irish on Tyneside lay, and in certain respects still lies, prejudice. Whilst violent and obvious forms of sectarianism received public attention in various other parts of Britain, participants offered examples of everyday, though matter-of-factly treated, hostilities on Tyneside. These 'hidden' (Golofast 2003) aspects of day-to-day living were considerable. Keith articulates an experience as a young multi-skilled electrician of Irish descent, in his narrative of a late 1960s episode, when the Queen visited his home town Jarrow, to officially open the Tyne Tunnel (on which major construction project he was working):

Keith:

> You know the IRA were setting things off different places and things like that, and there were scares. And we had a manager and he used to always have a little dig, he was the man who give me, me job remember. But he'd always have a little dig. And he always knew about the Irish dancing and he always knew about the Irish connections, 'cos I never hid nothing. And was so proud of it anyhow. So, there would be little digs, and I remember the police coming. And I'm not talking about policemen in uniform, it was plain clothes people. I was there when the Queen opened the place [the Tyne Tunnel], and the police were everywhere... And I remember him saying, "make sure you know where Keith is, 'cos he's the man you've got to watch!" But during that period, there was always little digs somewhere, one or two somewhere…

Michael:

> Were these always bubbling under the surface?

Keith:

> Aw, there was always something. I remember we had lads came from Jarrow. Some of them somebody had spoke for, someone knew their family or something…But one or two of them…once you get talking to them, you see their bigotry comes out. "ye kna you cannat move in Jarrow 'cos of the Irish bloody Catholics ye kna. You want to get them out of this country ye kna. Send them back where they belong"
>
> (retired engineer, 65, 2nd generation Irish).

This narrative depicts a work environment where a sense of humour and resilience are essential; facing jokes and comments which break down the 'myth of homogeneity' that Hickman and Walter (1995: 7) claim exists within literature on the Irish in Britain. The comments of Keith's employer were meant as a joke, but the remarks of the younger men in the second example were filled with bigotry. This story references a renewed period of deep political turmoil – of fighting – which accentuates underlying racist attitudes. Interestingly, tolerance emerged in the face of fighting elsewhere in my research, with Bill (aged 50) and his father Justin (aged 88), both former soldiers in the British army, claiming that anti-Irish racism 'was less of an issue' upon joining the British army. Bill, now a sports coach and studying part time for a Master's degree, goes on to state 'it's accepted by them that there are divisions and "so what"'. Indeed this potentially fraught employment provided a more harmonious transition to work and to social standing for many of the participant families. The British army provided work for many Catholic men from Northern Ireland, and given the lack of opportunities many Catholics faced, it was for some the only option. Such was the desperation that in the words of James '[my father] walked in his bare feet one day to Enniskillen to join the British army'. The romanticism of this progressive escapism is countered with the words again of Keith whose father fought in the Second World War:

Keith:

> Joining the army at the time, you know, you were a Paddy, you're a Mick…you're thick. You didn't know nothing
>
> (retired engineer, 65, 2nd generation Irish).

Keith stated that their family were encouraged not to be prejudiced in response to the mistreatment of his father; we see this in his own accepting stance toward the aforementioned workplace adversity and he carries these values forward into the fathering of his own children. In recalling the treatment of his father and knowing that it was wrong, he simply states:

Keith:

> It was the time. Things have changed. Not tremendously, it's just that the Irishman, like the Englishman, today is more educated

(retired engineer, 65, 2nd generation Irish).

Keith's tolerance and willingness to forgive are not only core values of his own masculinity but point to a wider 'Irishness' within the men of my study. For some this is religious (see Chapter 5) – a 'turn the other cheek[9]' attitude – but for others it is simply an inherited 'Irish' quality that they find hard to define. Of course the mutually beneficial relationship with the British armed forces is not uniformly accepted, admired or respected. The troubles in Northern Ireland are well documented and affiliated UK based sectarian violence has continued to exist also (Boyle 2011). But such is the nuanced nature of Tyneside Irish masculinities that serving in the British army, being the son of a fighting father, or being British by self-identification does not necessarily produce denouncement of Irish republicanism (which sits politically in fierce opposition). Alongside tolerance is a sense of justice and pride.

4.2.2 Justice and pride

Daniel:

> I've just given myself shivers thinking of "The Wind that Shakes the Barley" which is a beautiful song and it's haunting really...all about a guy who goes to fight the British and gets himself hammered and it's his girlfriend lamenting it. Just horrible. A thousand years of atrocities really. We call them atrocities now. And that's inside me. But on behalf of the Irish nation. I don't feel "I'm fighting for Ireland" but as an interested bystander, an observer, a commentator. I think the Irish have had it really shocking. And I feel that for them

(retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

Not everyone takes on the fighting masculinity. Daniel's fight is not as a soldier but as a custodian of social justice. He has never been a soldier or the son of one. He is a teacher and musician and he fights injustice through education and music. The history, the politics, (dare I say it) the human geography is valued. This sentiment is echoed throughout the sample with only one example of a more militant response to sectarian conflict (see Chapter 5). But a more typical response I found to the geo-political issues at the family level is best captured in the narrative of Bob, talking of the 'Irishness' of previous generations:

Bob:

> I can see why my dad's granny sort of clung on to her Irish tradition, because she'd have been flung out, along with the rest of their family from Ireland and I think that side, that political side, perceived themselves as the great Irish patriots. And therefore they'd be more, they'd express themselves more obviously as that – but not by blowing up the local post office; but by listening to music. And my dad will describe how when he was learning to play the violin, and he was good, he was in the English youth orchestra, he was a very classical violinist, and his granny would say – if you can't play the "South Wind" then you're not much of a fiddler and all this sort of stuff
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

So the Irish pride of Bob's great grandmother sees classical training in the English Youth Orchestra rendered worthless. The measure of talent becomes the ability to play traditional Irish tunes. He continues:

Bob:

> In a way, if you have a regional accent, you know, that's who you are you can't hide it anyway. And I can't hide away from having a name like Cassidy. And I understand what that means and where it comes from. My dad's playing the Irish music and representing Irish causes…some of which were very difficult. Even though they were right; supporting anti internment in 2010/2011…doing it in 1968/69 was difficult. It put you on the list of people whose lists you didn't want to go onto. So, and to a certain extent we lived with that. Not in a bad way, 'cos it didn't affect my childhood at all particularly, but you kind of felt, "ah right". When you're 13/14, right we're not…when the school was asking you to stand up and sing "God Save the Queen", you still do it, but you don't sing it, and things like that, and you really want nothing much to do with it. So I suppose, if anything, the Irish, we'll use the word heritage 'cos I can't think of another one, the Irish tradition within me probably made me more of a rebel. In terms of my behaviour in terms of football, motorbikes, punk rock music, drinking brown ale and disobeying what the school prefects said about anything really; so I suppose it helped that rebelliousness
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

We see then Bob, the rebel, the son of a fighting father (whose call to arms was political protest as opposed to violence or military service). Bob makes direct links between this inherited masculinity, his Irish family heritage, and his own

transition to adulthood. Despite claiming 'it didn't affect my childhood at all particularly', he is proud of his Irish heritage with his experiences at school and his cultural and leisure pursuits shaped by the experiences of his forefathers. Bob's political affiliations are shaped by the fight of his father. Appropriate aggression, through work or politics, sees the fighting father through the lens of justice and pride; intrinsically linked to Ireland, Irish history, and the Irish disapora. As Declan states:

Declan:

> And if I was to link [being a man] to the Irish thing and link it to that, there's something about the Irish thing linked to the rebel idea of fighting off aggressors and fighting off oppression. And I think that comes into it as well. The idea of being ready. Being prepared
>
> (lecturer, 25, 3rd generation Irish).

This notion of preparation seems integral to the role of the father. In this intergenerational study it is clear that the inheritance of culture, values and attitudes is seen to progress the masculinities of sons and grandsons. In this sense, we can see what has come before, the experience of forefathers, as valued. This knowledge is to be recognised and acknowledged. Whether present or otherwise, living or dead, fathers and fathering are strong components of the identities of men of Irish descent on Tyneside.

4.2.3 Discipline

These links between fathering and a son's subsequent outlook on life are further cemented with Daniel's narrative and that of his son, Matthew (salesman, aged 42):

Daniel:

> I tell you what, just as you were asking that question [about fathering style/values], what I wanted to say was that I can distinguish between two types of father. The father that puts his 10 year old son in front of him, in front of a brick wall or goal posts and starts to blast balls at him. To show he's the father and the kid's the kid, and you know "that's the way it should stay". And I have in my mind's eye that eventually that young lad's gonna grow up and be as big as, or even bigger than, the father and get so sick of this idiot older man thinking he's ruling the roost,

> you know “the old cockerel”, that he fists him, that he thumps him and he knocks him into submission. And I just get that feeling. And I wanted to tell that type of father “don’t do that. That’s not the way to play it”. What you have to do is…you’ve got to just stretch them, that they’ve got to stretch out for the ball and praise them like mad when they reach it. That’s what you should be doing
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

He continues:

Daniel:

> And I got sort of “defensive dad” if I thought [my son] should have been on the first team and when he wasn’t I wanted to say so. And I generally did; as subtly as I could. And I thought that was supporting the youth rather than going up there and having a fisticuffs verbally with someone; that was never gonna be productive. And that’s back to the mental, the verbal equivalent of the dad that sticks the ball down and tries to blast his son through the net with the ball. Nah, it’s not the way to play it. But you know, that’s me. You’d better ask me sons if they see it the same way?
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

I did ask Daniel’s son, Matthew, about his fathering style (he has two daughters).

Matthew:

> I think as far as parenting goes, definitely strongly influenced by dad. I have brought my two up very, very similar to how dad brought us up, bearing in mind dad wasn’t really around from 11 onwards [due to family divorce], but still hands on. You know, he wasn’t living with us, but you know brought us up in the right manner. So I think from a parent’s point of view…from dad’s fairness, discipline, but making it fun as well. So as a father, I’ve took a lot of dad, definitely
>
> (salesman, 40, 5th generation Irish).

The fighting masculinity is pitched against ‘defensive dad’ – who is a man constructed around right and wrong and disciplined by strong senses of justice. We see an absent presence of Matthew’s father, that he ‘wasn’t really around’, but he ‘was still hands on’. The physical presence is therefore valued in this narrative. The transmission of styles of fathering, attitudes and values have

passed down the generations; with the apparent quotidian of playing football with your son producing as many ‘life lessons’ as fighting for a living or for a political cause. The role of a particular fighting father is questioned; Daniel demoting this father to an inferior style of parenting. This ‘fighting’ however refers to the social (aggressive masculinity within family life and society) rather than that of the soldier. Here, it is the discipline of the working man (the soldier) and the rebel with a cause (the activist), that is seen more favourably and as the evidence in this chapter has shown can actually generate more liberal, generous and tolerant outlooks on life.

At the family level the mother was often seen to be the disciplinarian over the children, not in violent or aggressive (traditionally masculine) ways, but in a more psychological and controlling way. The women in these families were responsible for the control of children. I do though question whether this is mothers having to play the ‘bad cop’ (of having to make the decisions and restrictions based on family budget constraints) while fathers enjoy the role of ‘good cop’ (coming home and ‘playing’ after work and the weekends)?

Michael:

> Who did you consider as head of the family?

Daniel:

> I mean, who else was there? [He never knew his deceased dad] But the reason why I’m chuckling is I was quite pleased with that. I thought I was incredibly blessed as a kid, because I saw my friends, school friends and play mates in the street, and they would occasionally say “my mother’s fallen out with my dad” or “my dad’s shouting at my mother” or worse. There was very little divorce as a kid. I just can’t remember that. I don’t think they did. They stuck together; but a lot of them I felt, fairly unhappily, for the sake of the kids maybe. And as a result I felt really blessed that I had this one focus of attention. My mother. You were either in with her or you were out with her. And if you were out with her, your job was to get back in with her. If you were out with her it was for very good reason: you were wrong and she was right
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

Faced with the knowledge of 'broken homes' (Baker 2001: 8) and alluding to domestic violence, he continues his narrative by recounting a defining moment of his relationship with his mother.

Daniel:

> So I'm 17 and I'm singing in the parish choir in Greek the whole of the Easter week service "Ageos a Thanitos a Lasionimas…." [sings in Greek] I still remember… "for lamb of god, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us", which is the "Agnus Dei"[10] in Latin. The choir mistress, so she was a bit what we would now call "pretentious", she was gonna do the whole thing in Greek. So there I was and we were a week away from the Easter week itself and I went to me mother and I said "mam, I've got a dilemma" and she said "what's that son?" and I said "well, you know I've been working with the choir and Miss Lyons and me sister" (and I'm one of the few men there, as in male voices) and you know, "I don't wanna let them down, but look what's happened. Newcastle are playing Bolton Wanderers on Good Friday at 3 o'clock" (which is the moment Christ died on the cross, 3pm on Good Friday) and I said "the kick off is 3 o'clock and the winners will get promotion. And the losers might miss out. And I've followed them all season and I'm a huge fan and really I don't wanna miss it and I cannat be in 2 places at once" ('cos it was before digital radios and all the rest of it). And "what do you think mam?" And I was praying that she would give me a way out. And she did, she gave me a way out. She said "son, you're 17. You've got to make your own decisions here. I can see you've worked so hard with the choir, you don't wanna let them down and that's perfectly laudable. And you're a huge fan of Newcastle. Biggest game of the season, winner goes up. Loser stays down. Oh dear. What a decision. I cannot help you son, I cannot help you. You're 17, you're gonna have to make your own mind up on this one." And I said inwardly, "yes, yes, she's given me permission. I can do it, I can do it. She understands, she doesn't mind." And she just walked out the room and she turned and she says "oh by the way Daniel, if you decide to go to the football…never come home!" And that was me mam…and guess what? "Ageos a Thanitos a Lasionimas…."
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

This narrative is so well constructed, drawing on humour and storytelling 'technique' complete with its own 'punchline'. Upon listening to Daniel, I laughed, but this extract is more than just a good story. He claims that his

mother was completely capable of exerting parental control and guidance. We see absent fathering through family divorce and death, and I claim there is an emergence of 'fathering mothers'. Would a father have taken a different approach in advising Daniel? Would a fathering masculinity encourage his son to watch the football instead of the singing in the choir as recommended by the fathering femininity? Does absence make the heart grow fonder? Do men need masculine guidance? Do they desire a father figure? Certainly Daniel does not suggest so. To answer these questions, we must consider the complex composition of what a father is and, as the heading of the next section suggests, do you have to be a man, or masculine, to father? In the absence of men, the next section explores whether women/can women/should women fill the fathering void; and if so, do they embody and replicate masculine traits and qualities or do they father maternally; are they feminine fathers?

4.2.4 Absent fathers and fathering mothers

> 'As Brod (1994) accurately observes, there is a tendency in the men's studies field to presume "separate spheres", to proceed as if women were not a relevant part of the analysis and therefore to analyse masculinities by looking only at men and relations among men' (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 837).

Certainly what follows in this section further questions definitions and clarifications of what it means to be a father, to father and to be fathered. Perhaps being fathered by a mother raises more questions than answers and clouds our capabilities to draw conclusions on gendered parenting. Without doubt is the influence women have in the lives of these men. Against the backdrop of a traditional and patriarchal Tyneside, resides, in many ways, an Irish matriarch of significant control and influence. Inherent within these family systems is a legacy of public men and private women; these spheres rarely overlap with women *at home* and men *at work elsewhere*. This undoubtedly subjugates and demotes women's roles; however the evidence within this study shows that for these families, domestic labour brings respect and value. For those mothers in the study who had a co-habiting husband/father, none worked until the children were of school age and even then, most did not return to work until the children were beyond school age and none did so at all in the oldest

generation (aged 65 and over). The clearest example of this was with Keith's wife Maria:

Keith:

> And one of the reasons I bought my house now…beside the school, Catholic school, which the kids go to. And beside me church. Beside the shopping centre. My family, they had to get to the shops. Maria doesn't drive, she doesn't want to learn to drive. She does far too much. It is my job to do the driving and look after her that way
>
> (retired engineer, 65, second generation).

This narrative is deep and rich with a social and geographical interest. The family home's proximity to both school and church was paramount (see further discussions in Chapter 5), as was a location near to the shops for his wife who does not drive. But let me emphasise the point I am making here. This is not, what Jackson (1991) citing Millet (1977) would characterise as misogyny disguised as chivalry; more, that I saw individuals within a wider family unit each contributing in admittedly, different, but always valued, ways. Maria told me she was not a woman bound to the family home – she had trained and worked as a nurse before choosing a 'career at home'. She raised 8 children, of which the family as a whole were deeply proud of their wife/mother/worker; like the colonial Catholic notions of marianismo, which is as Stevens (1973: 91) defines it 'feminine spiritual superiority, which teaches that women are semi-devine, morally superior to and spiritually stronger than men' (see links also to the religious significance of Irish inheritance in Chapter 5). Where additional respect and value came was in the distribution of money, which I was told was often the mother's responsibility. Control of the budget, though not having to generate the income, is arguably a powerful position to hold; though conversely, it further reinforces women's role as dependent. As we have already seen in the section on discipline, women have a role to play there too.

The influence of the Second World War meant in turn, men growing up often without fathers. This factor meant that even for men whose fathers were alive had limited contact and influence. Simplistically, for Thomas (retired musician, aged 70), his father's fighting in the British army meant they did not

see much of one another when he was a child. As Thomas' son, Bob remembers:

Bob:

> But it meant that my dad's formative years, if you like, you know the kind of times that you learn to talk, and all of that. And he didn't have his father with him. And I heard stories how my dad didn't know who his dad was when he came back in 1946. So he's that generation that, you know, that there was a peripheral kind of suffering as a result of the war
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

What is significant is that Thomas himself does not recount this story to me; it is in the narrative of his own son. Stories skipping the generations are commonplace within the research, suggestive that both a physical and temporal distance equates to an easier expression of emotion. There is a suggestion that the role of the father figure would take prominence however: that for some of the men, while their mothers were respected and valued, it would not be equal to that of the respect and value given to their fathers. I must remind the reader that these narratives were given by men, to a male researcher, in a study of masculinities, and therefore a hegemonic masculine performance was expected; one that promotes dominant masculinities and often subordinates women's roles.

Daniel:

> It was only as an adult when I look back I realised it was probably 80% one and the same thing. What I was viewing as this is how Catholics are, I might have said, if I'd known, this is how Irish are. And I was quite happy to go along with all that was nice about that. And again I haven't said – but I didn't have a father – he was dead before I was born. And if that father had existed and if he'd have been Irish (which I believe he wasn't, from what little I know of it) I think it would be very different. I think I would have associated how I was brought up with Ireland, not with Catholicism. I think that's it. It's only looking back on it now, I thought some of the Irishness, through the Irish dancing. But again that's influences from my mother, who's the only adult in my life as a family member. And we would go to Irish ceilis. These were Irish ceilis they were definitely Irish ceilis. Irish music, Irish people. Lots of young men and not so young men would turn up as the

> pubs were closing to dance with the women and the girls and the families that had been there since 8 o'clock for the parish ceili. And they would play "The Soldier's Song"[11] at the end of the night. And mam would say to us "you should stand up, but we don't need to sing because we're English"
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

So for Daniel's mother (whose grandparents were Irish) she is English and feels her children are also English. This is the opposite reaction to Bob who talked earlier in this chapter of how his family background encouraged his decision to refuse to sing the British national anthem. Daniel's mother's objection is peculiar considering her choice of leisure pursuits in attending Irish ceilis and taking her children to Irish dance classes. Daniel's narrative hints that his father's influence would take precedence given the opportunity; that if his father was Irish he would have grown up with stronger identification with Ireland. That said, if Daniel's mother was Irish and not – English born of Irish descent – then I suggest his identity would be as affected. This extract is also particularly revealing of 'Irish' cultural practices – the very singing of a national anthem to mark the end of the night is fascinating, and certainly not something which would the replicated in the English/British/European/Global pubs and clubs elsewhere on Tyneside. There is also evidence of women and children present at the ceilis with men arriving later in the evening after drinking in the pub to meet the women and the girls. There is an absent presence of men in this recollection; so too, in Declan's narrative.

Declan:

> Upbringing was South Shields, in the North East. Quite a working-class town. Come from quite a working-class family, where all me uncles had worked in factories. Me father worked away at sea. But I didn't really know me father 'cos he left when I was 3. So I don't have a lot of influence from that side. I think it's kinda like to do with that. I mean, god knows, I don't have a specific reference point to friends with present fathers, but I know friends who they would never say their dad's their role model. And even if I'd knew my dad I might still look to other cultures…but because I didn't, I think that's the nearest thing in terms of a male role model. I mean, don't get us wrong I think me mother was great. Like in terms of character, in terms of overall values, approach to life, she

> was everything I'd wish to look up to, but in terms of masculinity and male qualities. Again it would have to be popular culture
>
> (lecturer, 25, 3rd generation Irish).

So Declan talks of a mother who was 'everything [he would] wish to look up to' but that she cannot meet certain gendered requirements; she cannot provide the masculine influences that he seeks. He does though suggest that even sons with close contact with their fathers may seek the same masculine pursuits elsewhere. He continues:

Declan:

> I think, with this [popular culture as sources of role models]…it's not necessarily things I have, but things I aspire to in my identity as a man. So apart from that characteristic of resilience I would say something like, strength. And again this could be physical strength as well as mental strength. I think like it's played a big part in my upbringing. Like ideas of this. Because the idea, that my dad did leave when I was young, all me male role models came from TV, films and stuff like that. I've always looked up to strong men. Tough men. I think it does like permeate to the culture. If you look at like masculinity and gym culture
>
> (lecturer, 25, 3rd generation Irish).

More on gym culture is discussed in Chapter 6 but what we see here is a separation between masculinity and the inheritance of masculine values and fathering. That perhaps if 'masculinity' can be developed elsewhere then the role of the father is in question. In distinguishing between *fathering* and *fatherhood* Brannen et al (2011: 168) claim:

> 'On the one hand, "fatherhood" is construed as an important social status and social institution, a concept which "fits" with the experiences of many of the older British men and both older and current generations of Polish men. Among the older generations, employment as a male sphere, a strong commitment to the work ethic and a hegemonic ideology of masculinity combine to shape men's practices and experiences as "good providers" and role models for their children. On the other hand, "fathering" denotes a set of proactive practices and includes nurturing or relational aspects of parenting'.

Accordingly then, fatherhood can be understood to be patriarchal, to be institutionalised and perhaps an exclusionary practice at the expense of women. In this move towards fathering then, as a more relational concept, I see real traction for some of the men of my study.

Daniel:

> I'm not sure to be honest Michael, what a man is? I think I'm a pretty superior specimen in many ways, I like to think… Intellectually, full of fun, I think understanding – a huge feminine side – I really do believe I think I understand the issues facing women. You know, I've gone through that. I really do think we're a victim of our times and maybe that's because I've got a mam and not a dad that I could see the issues that me mother had to face and me sister, as opposed to me. And of course my wife in turn, and of course my female children. But I dunno. I don't like "Captain Von Trapp" or whatever he is, that fella in "The Sound of Music", sort of dictatorial and censorious and "you will do that" and I think…I hope that's not me; just don't like his style of fatherhood
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

So Daniel's situated knowledge (Haraway 1988) as the son of an absent father and fathering mother, the brother of a sister as well as the 'absent' father of his sons and daughters, has led him to claim he 'understand[s] the issues facing women'. Furthermore the histories and geographies of these experiences are embodied, 'I've gone through that'. Perhaps then what has been discussed within this section transcends gender, presenting a set of lived experiences as fathers and sons, influenced by (and influencing) both men and women. We have seen in these narratives subtle differences in what it means to be a man, to be masculine and to be a father. A discussion with father and son (Dan and Tim) highlight these tensions:

Michael:

> So is being a son different to being a father then?

Tim (son):

> Well when you're a father you'll have more responsibility.

Dan (father):

> Yeah being a man, being a grown up man, being a father to me is sort of responsibility. And when you get older it is

> just seems to bring more and more stress and you're trying to look after the family, provide for the family, look after your children, care for your children. Juggle your job, juggle your wife. But is that being a man or is that being a father? I dunno?

Michael:

> That's an interesting point.

Dan (father):

> I'm sure it's the same for Tim's mam, my wife. Being a woman she'll suffer from the same things: job, family, work, stress, keeping a roof over your heads. So I don't know whether that's any different?
>
> (engineer, 40, 3rd generation Irish and his son, school pupil, 11, 3rd generation Irish also due to maternal grandfather).

I argue the emphasis should move beyond gendered parenting and gendered roles within the family to that of aged roles – to generation – towards a focus on place, age and masculinity. We see again the heteronormative assumptions and the tyranny of the nuclear family (Baker 2001); that being a 'grown up man' equates to 'being a father'. Certainly for men of Irish descent from traditional families this is to be expected, with the legacies of religious instruction and large family composition. The men claim that when you have children your responsibility increases; you have dependents but this is not gender specific. Contemporary society presents challenges to traditional understandings of family. Diverse living arrangements, relaxed attitudes to religious teaching (see Chapter 5) and liberal political economies have contributed to these changes (see Chapter 6). There persists the notion that family implies the presence of children. If a man is asked if he has a family of his own, what he is really being asked is 'does he have any children?' What 'fathering then becomes is a construct, created on a set of social norms and expectations. These are particularly rigid and opaque within traditional communities and even more so when backed by religious doctrine.

4.3 Conclusion

There is a tacit nature to masculinities: that the values, behaviours and attitudes are learned and that outside influences of family (this chapter), school (Chapter 5), work (Chapter 6) and nationality (Chapter 7) can be 'taken on board' (or otherwise) by men in their identity construction and embodied narratives. Perhaps like the traits of earlier in this chapter, some men of Irish descent fight off pending illness as the Irish rebels fought off their own aggressors? Maybe also the masculine construction of 'being ready' prepares the men for any looming threat to their health or change to their identity, whether that be fatherhood or work opportunities.

Admittedly, these narratives make space for individual circumstance affecting alternative lifecourse experiences. In some ways, it would be more logical to be reckless in older age as you are expected to have less time to live; alternatively, with increased responsibility, you have more to live for. Perhaps it is this concurrent experience of less and more that produces the rational and responsible? Nevertheless, what we have seen is that with age comes a more public acceptance of good health through a greater appreciation of its scarcity and fragility. According to some men in this study, being Irish helps you to deal with the prospect of death and subsequently gives you a more resilient masculinity in response to illness. I need to make clear the contribution this empirical evidence is making: that contrary to prevailing notions of masculinity, men can appreciate family life and inherit fathering values even in the face of adversity. So we see in these extracts how the family often becomes the source of the narratives. Residing within the home and intergenerational interaction sits the influential factors behind masculinities and national identity.

In outlining how the men have read and remembered their fathers and grandfathers experiences and their own experiences as fathers, grandfathers, sons and grandsons, this chapter has brought together family narratives to articulate how Tyneside and the Irish diaspora have helped to shape 'fathering' masculinities. Through the micro-level geographies of the family and links to the home, in and on the body and in the workplace, I have outlined how some of these men have become 'less Irish' over time. Paradoxically for some, their

masculine traits and fathering practices have been identified as ‘Irish qualities’. It has been the high levels of assimilation that have led so many of my participants to identify as ‘Tynesiders’ first and anything else second – whether Irish, English, British or European though, notwithstanding, there is still strong sentiment towards Ireland within the diaspora. For both young and old, the influence of fathers affects levels of identification with Ireland. Through these interactions, I have reflected on the heteronormative assumptions that are rife within family studies, and positioned myself as a researcher in relation to the men’s familial masculinities. Their empirical evidence is rich and detailed, yet highly subjective, offering insights to life as men, husbands, fathers and grandfathers of Irish descent living in the North East of England. Their stories are not representative of a community but nor do they claim to be; rather they shed light on aspects of masculinities in family life that is currently under-researched in geographical scholarship.

For fathers (both current and aspirational), appropriate aggression is seen through their work and their politics. It is often channelled through the lens of prejudice and tolerance; justice and pride; and discipline. For these men of Irish descent, a physical and metaphorical fight forms part of their Irish masculinities; part of their ideas of what it means to be a man; and of what it means to be a father. How the men have read and remembered themselves being fathered has been influenced by the extent to which they shared a positive relationship with their fathers and grandfathers (or whether a relationship ever existed); but wherever the masculine familial influences came from, it directly affected how the men have fathered and how they intend to father in the future. After analysing the traditional Irish family, the role of education is explored as a significant component and forms the focus of the next chapter using the scale of the school and its links with religion.

Chapter 5 School and Spirituality

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the narratives of Catholic men and Protestant men as well as Atheist and 'spiritual' men on Tyneside; focussing on their gendered and generational relationships. They share many experiences felt by other working-class groups within the region yet, what has set them apart (historically) and what marks their experience as different, are their distinct religious identities. In responding to the call of Kong (2001) and Hopkins (2007b) I lay out the specific influence religion has played in these localised geographies.

> 'Religion is often forgotten about or is combined and subsumed under a study of race. Kong (2001) claims that religion should be fully acknowledged as a marker or catalyst of social categorisation, identification and processes of in/exclusion, in a manner similar to race, class, gender and age' (Hopkins 2007b: 165).

From within the narratives there was a repeated notion of tolerance, which was inherently Christian, with numerous references to 'turn the other cheek' attitudes (as introduced in Chapter 4). As Hickman and Walter claimed (1995: 16) 'it is hard to think of any other group in Britain against whom such practices could go unchallenged'. I argue the Irish in Britain have been treated with an almost affectionate disavowal. There is a denial of their post-colonial ethnicity that portrays them as culturally aligned to Britain. An indicator of this is the popularity of Irish names for children, or even the success of contemporary Irish artists in popular music. Despite this, it is through religious tensions, often marked by separate schooling (for the Catholic Irish majority) that marks them as different.

My study provides a specific insight to an area of the geographies of religion that Hopkins (2007b) terms 'scaling social life and events.' The focus too often for geographers has been as Bonnett (1996: 870) puts it: 'the residential spread and segregation of "non-white" people' (see Peach's 1996 work on good segregation/ bad segregation). For the men of my study though not all identified as religious, and while some denounced their religious

connections to their ‘Irishness’, others did not, claiming a non-institutional spirituality. Spirituality is commonly understood in human geography, using models of faith and belief based on mainstream religion; though there has been increasing interest in the idea of post-secular society (Beaumont and Baker 2011; Stevenson et al 2010; Wilford 2010), and the re-emergence (or lack thereof) of faith and belief systems as significant in the constitution of social and spatial relationships.

As an alternative to Atheism and Agnosticism, ‘spirituality’ – which was described by men in my study as ‘a belief there’s something there’ and ‘liking to think someone’s looking out for you’ – emerged from within the fathers’ and grandfathers’ generation. No evidence of this was found within the younger men who had claimed to be non-religious. Questions of spirit and spirituality remain absent from most of these debates (cf. MacKian 2012). In particular, I highlight how the lived experiences of forms of spirituality fall outside of the conventional practices of religion; going beyond dualisms between the secular and the religious by using a more fluid and porous sense of 'spirit' and 'spirituality' (Cloke and Beaumont 2013). According to the British Social Attitudes Survey (2011), 44% of adults stated they did not belong to any particular religion. This figure is 17% higher than those interviewees who stated that they had not been brought up in a particular religion. Considering these statistics, linking age and religiosity, I argue they suggest that as people transition into adulthood they further distance themselves from institutional religion. For the men of my research they do so particularly after leaving school. These post school age men often stated religion became less relevant. Any religious connections became more internalised, more private and less public. This is explored further in the rest of the chapter.

5.2 Religious schooling

Through the intergenerational narratives I now look at the intersection of both Catholicism and Protestantism with ‘Irishness’ and masculinties in an increasingly secularised (Dwyer et al 2012; Vincett et al 2012) and post-industrial Tyneside. The youngest generation, participants aged between 11 and 25 years old, contained four men who identified as ‘religious’: Billy (pilot,

aged 24, Irish born); Max and Jimmy (school pupils, aged 12 and 11 respectively, 2nd generation Irish and the two sons of Irish traveller Sean, labourer, aged 45, Irish born); and finally Tim (school pupil, aged 11, 3rd generation Irish); others distanced themselves from institutional religion after leaving school (Dwyer and Parutis 2012). Decisions to reject institutional religion included simply 'not going to church anymore', religion being 'not as relevant anymore' as well as 'scientific education answering the questions'. These men did however talk of their tolerance, fairness and educational achievements as being religious and Irish qualities and while many of the men no longer identify as practising their faith, belief in God still exists.

Within the traditional religious context, the religious 'Father' is the foundation of knowledge. Like that of the fighting father (of Chapter 4), the religious Father passes on values, traditions and an outlook on life. Throughout Christianity 'The Lord's Prayer' is immortalised through generations of school children's recitals 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name'… It is a mantra which is engrained for many from childhood into later life. The religious Father, for those of the Catholic faith or upbringing, becomes embodied through the role of and reverence for the priest. He has a physical presence and a strong influence within many of my participant families. The extract from Daniel's narrative which follows, demonstrates the role of the religious Father in place of a biological father.

Daniel:

> I became a teacher from the age of 12. Because what happened was, I went to the Catholic boys' grammar school and my form teacher was a Father Henderson. And I was his altar boy. And I mean that. That was like a personal relationship. I turned up 5 days a week at 7.15 of a morning to serve mass, because every priest served mass every day; and before work. So there I was, at school from 7.15 and I used to take a little plastic tray with me breakfast and sit in the classroom on me own and eat me breakfast. And then all me pals would come in from all arts and parts. So that was my life and that's what I did. And Father Henderson was a wonderful, wonderful man; sadly died of acute alcoholism, eventually, which was just terrible. What a waste. And once said to me, which was I think incredibly tender, "you're the son I never had", and I feel very proud about that. And I hope I didn't let him down

> too badly, by getting divorced. 'Cos obviously that would have shocked and hurt him because of his beliefs. And I'm sure I did shock and hurt him, but there you go…And the second year was Mr McCleary and Mr McCleary suddenly became Father McCleary; he became a priest. But I knew him as Mr McCleary, a Catholic headteacher of history. And I worshipped him. I thought he was absolutely fantastic. Brilliant teacher. So looking back on it, in answer to your question, why I became a teacher…what else would I become? The two male role models in my life, without a doubt, were Father Henderson and Mr McCleary and there you go
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

So Father Henderson's biological fathering was non-existent due to his vocation but nevertheless he functioned as a father to the son he 'never had'. Daniel's dad had passed away just before he was born and he grew up with his mother and sister (as we learned in Chapter 4). His narrative is suggestive of a need for a masculine role model, a 'father figure' and in his case religion played surrogate. What is interesting is that his mother was a teacher and while he has great admiration for her and the values he inherited, he does not attribute the roots of his teaching career to her, but to his religious Fathers. I argue that a major generational change is that the role of the priest in everyday life is lessened in contemporary society. The younger men (of Catholic upbringing whom I spoke with) did not talk of the respect and admiration for priests in the same way. This is due in large part to a lack of contact with the priests whose role seems significantly reduced within the school environment in particular.

Peter:

> The other thing I notice is that you've got Sikhs going up there [to Catholic school] and all types. So it would…well are the prayers gonna be Christian? Is it gonna be collective worship? Are you gonna be exclusive? By the time you've reeled off the creeds it'll be time to go home!
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

So Peter, whose son attended the same Catholic school as him (in South Tyneside) is talking of the increasingly ethnically and religiously diverse Catholic education system. It is certainly not an environment where pupils are taught by priests any longer. Religious Fathers do not teach in the schools and minister within the confines of churches and community centres. As will become clear in

this section however, the young men of this study no longer attend church (other than on rare occasions) and so these relationships have little chance to form. This differs greatly from Daniel's earlier remarks, but also Peter's own experience. He goes on to say that '[my Irishness] probably was more significant when I was at school if I'm quite honest'. He further reinforces the significance of school, saying that it was through a school play about the life of St Patrick (the patron Saint of Ireland) where he learned of his and his peers' Irish heritage. He stated that as a child 'being of Irish descent' did not mean much to him outside of school. For Peter's son, Simon, there is both a disconnect from Ireland (it is not mentioned) and from religion within the school environment.

Simon:

> The fact I was brought up a Catholic, kind of, well where I was brought up, where we used to live like around North Tyneside the schools weren't particularly great. And like my Dad went to [a Catholic school in South Tyneside] and he knows it was like a really good school so it was "let's ship him, let's move over there and make him a Catholic so we could get him in there". And I'd say that's definitely paid off. It was a good school and I've done alright from it. Got a job and everything. So I think if we stayed where we were, that might not be the case. And so I'm grateful for that as well. But I think it was more of a means to an end, as opposed to "my son will be raised a Catholic" sort of thing
>
> (industrial chemist, 21, 6th generation Irish).

Upon hearing from both Simon's father and grandfather, I doubt whether the decision to 'ship him off to Catholic school' was as practically 'means tested' as Simon suggests. Speaking with the elder generations, I am led to believe that they felt there was real value in schooling their (grand)son in a Catholic school environment; their religiosity certainly was a factor in their decision, and one which the family felt strongly enough to move home for to ensure entrance to the school.

Simon:

> I mean I'm a complete Atheist. I think it's just 'cos I've always been good at science at school and that's what I have always focussed on and been interested in. And

> obviously doing the degree in chemistry, so it was just kinda everything I've ever wondered about has been answered by science. So I felt there was no real need for me. It just seemed like a whole farfetched idea with organised religion. So that's where I am. I haven't had it forced down my neck at home either. So I guess they've kinda just let us make my own mind up. That's my conclusion. I do quite like it though. It does a lot of good things like the church and that. Charity work and stuff. The world's a better place for it, it's just not for me
>
> (industrial chemist, 21, 6th generation Irish).

So ironically, the Catholic education that his father encouraged him to receive proved the source of his Atheism. Simon 'quite likes it' and admits it 'does good things', like other men in the study: John (doctor, aged 24, 4th generation Irish) and Joseph (student, aged 30, Irish born) 'can see its value'. It is interesting that for most of the men who turned against their religious upbringing, they did so on a personal level and not to the extent that they were more prepared to critique religion too heavily. There were some who did, notably Bob and Terry. In Terry's words (photographer, 50, Northern Irish born) 'religion's caused more problems than it's solved'. The following extract from Simon's grandfather, Victor however is illustrative of the levels of indoctrination which most of the men of Irish descent received and goes some way to explaining why even of those who reject institutional religion, most do not denigrate it completely. For these men, many of their morals and values are both 'Irish' and 'religious' qualities:

Victor:

> How often have we been told in scripture that you've been given "talents, ability – use them". Yes you've been given rule books like the catechisms or whatever it was, but at the end of the day you are responsible for your salvation, nobody else. And your priest or whoever says "you've been given hands, you've been given feet, you've been given intellect…just go out and use them, just do it". Don't be afraid of making mistakes. Just use it. Use your mind, your body, your hands, your feet to achieve whatever you want in life. It mightn't be just for personal gain but things that you believe is the right thing to do in those set of circumstances with your experience. And that's what I see there, Irish or otherwise. But yes, my nature, my individuality is about identity and a large part of that identity is Irish, and Scottish by the way, you know there's

> the Scottish element. They've given you a lot of the skills and talents and abilities that you may not even be conscious of. But whatever those abilities are, just go out there in the world and use them. As you know from the parables in the scripture, they tell you that. Let's give you one example. I'll just give you one brief example. Just coming out of mass one night, the then parish priest gave me a note and he says "give that some thought" he says. It was about becoming a Eucharistic minister[12]. "Me?" Honestly I did think "me?" But as I was walking across the car park the words came to me "I know my flock and they know me". And I took that and I thought in other words "just do it"
>
> (retired engineer, 80, 4th generation Irish).

A clear incarnation of religious teaching emerges. The call to arms incorporating values drawn on national and religious lines became embodied and inseparable. We see paradoxically Victor's 'individuality' labelled largely as Celtic (Irish and Scottish). He continues and brings myself into his narrative which explains his reference to Scotland, as upon hearing my Scottish accent he assumes I am from Scottish Irish lineage.

Victor:

> It's about using the talents and the technologies that I've been given. And that's moving all the time. So you for instance have got a BA, you're using your wisdom and that's fine. You're saying "well hang on, that's fine, I've got what I've wanted but I can go on to do a PhD". And that's what you're sitting doing now. And that's part of the thesis. So yeah go for it. You'll get there. It'll take time, it won't be easy but you'll get there. So you're an example of using the skills, talents, experience and advice that you've been given. And that's part of being Irish
>
> (retired engineer, 80, 4th generation Irish).

We have seen the shift from a grandfather producing recitals of scripture as an everyday motto; to a father who sees links between his religion and his Irishness; to a son adamant in his Atheism. Yet Irishness and Catholicism have often been used synonymously in the literature of the Irish in Britain and while inaccurate, it occurs even within my study, with fellow men of Irish descent making assumptions on my religious upbringing and Irish heritage. Victor's narrative is rich and detailed, filled with personal religious belief, indoctrinated discourse and congregational community spirit. Like Chapter 3, through the

embodied intergenerationality of the research encounter I am present within the narrative. The participant refers to me, and through his limited knowledge of my life experience and family background, compares me against his religious and national framework; his outlook on life is turned onto me. I did not know what a Eucharistic Minister was (I had to telephone my Gran [a Catholic woman in her 90s] later and ask her) and I certainly did not consider my pursuit of this PhD as an Irish or Christian commitment; though he looks upon me and talks to me as he does his grandson, with his age and seniority equating to knowledge.

Within this study we see evidence of transnational flows of values; not restricted by national boundaries but intrinsically linked to both national and religious identities. We saw Mark's description of being a 'good' sportsman as an Irish trait symbolising fairness (Chapter 3). In a later section of this chapter Declan equates being a 'good' man and a 'good' father to being Catholic. Others have labelled the Christian 'turn the other cheek attitude' as an Irish trait. These 'transcendent moral values' (Valentine et al 2013: 166) have been under researched in geographical thought and in this next section, I further analyse the relationship between the national and the religious.

5.3 Synonymous? Irish and Catholic

Declan states 'we were brought up as Catholics so obviously there is a little bit of the Irishness there' (like that of Peter's earlier comments 'there was an Irish Priest of course'). This mundane linkage is based on fact: many of the Catholics on Tyneside have Irish roots and many of the priests over the years have been Irish; though there is an increasing trend more recently of priests from across Africa and Eastern Europe coming to the region; as Victor casually states 'we've got a Nigerian Priest at the moment'. The Irish connections should not though be 'obvious' nor implicit. They should be explored. As we see with Billy's more strident (Protestant) outlook; he is one of two self-labelled Protestants within the study although the other, Terry (photographer, aged 50, Northern Irish born), is 'embarrassed and saddened' by the violence of the sectarian divisions. Religion for some is used as a barometer of right and wrong; and I asked Billy, 'does or has religion affected your family's views on sex or relationships?'

Billy:

> Well a “mixed marriage” is when a Catholic marries a Protestant, and in my family we have all married Protestants. When living in Northern Ireland it would be a big issue in considering views on relationships, but living in England the divide between religion doesn’t really come into the picture with friends and other relationships due to the different culture over here
>
> (pilot, 24, Northern Irish born).

His personal religious beliefs are stronger than most of the men in the sample, structuring and framing many aspects of his life relative to his values and outlook. On asking about ‘mixed marriage’ across the men of the study, all in the father and grandfather generations (those aged above 25) described this occurrence as when a Protestant marries a Catholic. For the young men however (those under 25), with the exception of Billy, all pointed to an interracial relationship, or as Andy (trained architect, aged 21, 5th generation Irish) put it ‘when a black and white couple get together’. These generational distinctions are suggestive of a secular contemporary society where difference is drawn on more visible lines of race rather than on religious affiliation. Billy goes on to point to the following aspects of his masculinity as religious:

Billy:

> The way I see and treat different people always links with religion in terms of forgiveness and disabilities. It has given me a softer nature and more to think about
>
> (pilot, 24, Northern Irish born).

Billy is an active member of his local Orange Lodge and on the 12th of July[13] he posted on his Facebook page ‘No Surrender’ and he provided me with this image (see Figure 10); of himself standing in front of the British Flag and the Northern Irish flag. I argue this sits in contrast with the ‘forgiving’ religious outlook; for Billy then, his masculinity is both hardened and softened by his religion.

Figure 7 – ‘The newest member of the Orange Lodge’

Billy being Northern Irish born rather than ‘of Irish descent’ in part explains his stronger and more openly politicised religious masculinity. He grew up in a country where religious geographies were marked and visible; they were tangible. Communities, neighbourhoods and cities drawn on religious lines were prominent throughout his childhood, and a particular inherited Protestant masculinity developed as a result. He claims all the men in his family share these views and they are passed down from father to son. Contemporary Tyneside though is more secular than contemporary Northern Ireland – arguably it always has been – and he recognises this noticeable change after his move to the region (as seen in his ‘mixed marriage’ extract). The members of Keith’s family (Keith, his sister and his brother in law) talked of their experiences of sectarian divisions growing up on 1950s and 1960s Tyneside and spoke of ‘Orangemen’ who would travel down from Scotland and across from Northern Ireland to supplement the local Protestant marchers on Tyneside.

Keith:

> The Orange March used to march to South Shields and end up back in time for mass [at St Aloysius, in Hebburn]…

Keith’s sister:

> They used to beat the drums extra loudly as they passed the Parish Church.

Jim:

> …a coincidence? Surely it's not coincidental every year!
>
> (retired engineer, 65, 2nd generation Irish; his sister, 80, Irish born; and his brother in law, 82, English).

Whilst this story was given light heartedly, they told me of the deep sense of intimidation that they felt as members of the Catholic community on 'marching' days. What was significant though was when I asked about life outside of 'marching season'; whether these tensions were evident in day to day existence on Tyneside? I learned that this was not the case. As adults, in the workplace, on the high street or in the shops, these Protestants and Catholics socialised in a civil and more often than not friendly manner. Furthermore, Keith and his nephew, Aidan both avowed Catholics, were prominent members of a committee that ran a club in a Protestant church hall, and started to take their friends to visit Ireland, where Keith's family had a cottage. Many of these friends were not Catholic nor of Irish descent, but both men had noted, and acted upon, the difference between being a 'non-Catholic' and being 'anti-Catholic;' the former group certainly much easier with which to co-exist.

The sectarian attitudes of these men's memories appear more tokenistic, typified by an extract from Daniel's narrative:

Daniel:

> Every now and then, going home from the Catholic Primary School, we would be confronted by the "Proddy Dogs" [slang name for Protestant youth] on wasteland, where a bout of throwing stones would commence, until the adults scattered both sides. Looking back, it was more a ritual than a fight…we were standing up for "our side" and they were emphatically pointing out that we were "different"
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

So this politico-religious act is remembered as childish and playful, the narrative evocative of the 'sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never harm me' childhood rhyme rather than a confession of hate crime and hostile sectarianism (McMenemy et al 2005). The story itself is constructed in such a way to paint this almost fictionalised picture of the schoolboy fight. But the sectarian conflict has been fuelled at times more aggressively by attitudes inherited from 'Orange' groups elsewhere in Britain and there is evidence of

religious division historically within the literature. MacRaild (2005), in a study of the Orange Order in Northern England between 1850-1920, claims that its emergence can be explained by the arrival of Irish migrants from Ulster. For MacRaild (2005: 4) their Orangeism was more than annual 'displays of drum-thumping' and 'denunciations of "popery"' that the men of my study remember. He goes on to detail that the Orange Order had a history (and accompanying geographic base) dating back to the turn of the nineteenth century[14]. Though according to MacRaild (2005) Tyneside's 'Orangeism' was purely an import from both Scotland and Ireland, (supporting Keith's family's narrative). A regional distinction then is required, compared for example to Liverpool where conflict was an expression of hostility among Ulster Irish alongside anti-Irishness native to the North West of England. Indeed in both contemporary Liverpool and on Tyneside, the recent (re)emergence of the British Political Far Right through the English Defence League speaks to the localised tensions.

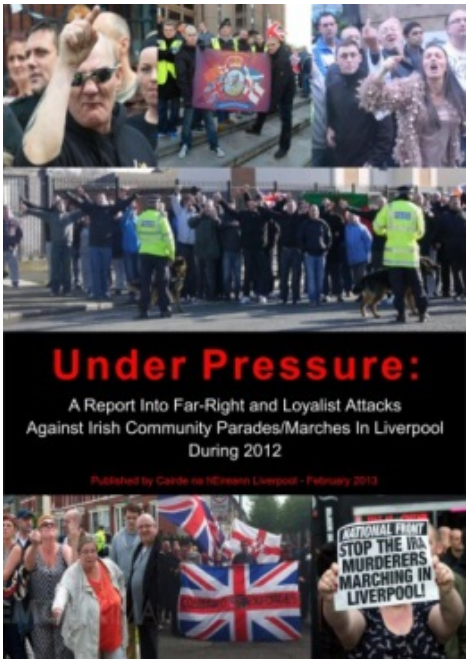


Figure 8 Anti-Irish (Liverpool) **Figure 9** Anti-Islamic (Newcastle)

So in these two contrasting images from the Far Right (of British politics), namely the English Defence League, we see their regional priorities. It is highly significant that anti-Irish sentiment remains publicly quiet in the North East. On Tyneside we see limitations to anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment, with religious hatred targeted more at the Islamic faith and its more visible

community within the region. Historically, Orangeism did not appeal to the host community in the same way that Irish Nationalism was able to generate support and sympathy; it therefore remained marginalised. This is not to say that Roman Catholicism's residence at the heart of the majority of the Tyneside Irish has been without complication. In an expression of Catholic Irish identity and militant religious fidelity, the region's Catholic Irish spoke out against the visit of the secular Italian politician, Garibaldi, in 1866 – and during an anti-Garibaldi riot in Newcastle, cries were heard of "Garibaldi or the Pope!" There persisted however an ignorance on behalf of the authorities as to the cause of the riot; quite content to label the events as 'Fenian'[15] activities without, in the words of Jackson (2001: 49), 'truly understanding what the term meant.'

The literature which equates Irish culture with violence is consistent with the (mis)treatment of the Irish in Britain: 'the traditionally Irish nature of the subsequent violence provides ample evidence of a distinct Irish culture thriving on industrial Tyneside' (Jackson 2001: 75). To say public violence is synonymous with 'thriving culture' is wrong and should be challenged; but it is how the Irish are often framed in historical discourse. Rather, what this incident reveals is the extent to which Catholicism had an omnipotent hold over some of the migrant population on Tyneside.

Other than Billy's 'Orangeism', sectarianism did not feature in the narratives of any of the young men of my study on Tyneside. Its only mention came from John on recounting his family's move to Scotland when he was 13. Initially he talked of trepidation about being a 'Catholic in Scotland' and how 'supporting Celtic' would 'mark him out'; this was in the late 1990s after a renewed focus of anti-Irish sentiment and the pervasiveness of sectarianism in what has been called Scotland's 'secret shame' (Boyle 2011). Instead though it was anti-Englishness which featured more prominently as his English accent marked him as different more prominently than his religion (most likely to have been helped by the fact he enrolled at a Catholic school in Scotland). This national divide seemed to trump the religious one, and similar sentiment was found in the narratives of Declan and Simon with both of these men talking of visiting Scotland for 'nights out with friends' and being seen as markedly 'English', a label neither of them had felt much awareness of before their trips to

Scotland. Indeed my own reflections in Chapter 3 speak to anti-English sentiment in Scotland.

Conversely, there is also a more pragmatic response to the apparent inherent links between Ireland and religion. As shown by Dominic:

Dominic:

> You know, like a lot of people, you know I'm proud of it. I don't know why I am proud of it, do you know what I mean? But you are. You are proud of it. I mean I've got no problem just to turn around and say you know "I'm Irish". Religion's got nothing to do with it. I just know where I'm from
>
> (emergency serviceman, 50, Irish born).

Like Billy, Dominic is Irish born, he feels more assured of his identity. His Irishness is more explicit: through his accent, his more recent emigration, and regular return visits to relatives 'back home' in Ireland. This proud 'non-religious' Irishman has had direct impact on his son's sense of identity, evolving through his choice of passport:

David:

> I was offered if I wanted an English or an Irish one and I was like, "definitely Irish". 'Cos we went to Africa, as you know, and 'cos I had an English passport at the time and dad had his Irish one, we landed and went into one country and for me to go into one country I had to pay £70, 'cos I had an English passport – and Ireland and Africa have like nothing alike – and dad was let in for no price to pay. But because I had an English passport I had to pay £70. So I was like "bonus", if I get accepted into Africa, I definitely want an Irish passport. But I think it's awesome. But equally I think sort of, 'cos of the English empire and stuff I think that's why other countries think like "oh, England are bad". Like with Ireland being a neutral country, but at the same time with like the IRA and religion and stuff like that, they can still be…the English don't really like the Irish and the Irish don't really like the English, but it's not the same with the Welsh and that. The Welsh and the English are so close, but they [the Welsh] support the Irish if there's a game on [against England] or something like that, I just think that England are sort of the odd one out, while the other three are really together as one

(student, 16, 2nd generation Irishman).

The depiction of national identity and geo-political relations through the eyes of 16 year old English born David, son of Irish born Dominic, points to bigger issues surrounding British-Anglo-Irish and politico-religious relations. The frequent misuse of 'English' instead of British is of particular salience. Contrary to David's idea of 'like with Ireland being a neutral country' I actually see Ireland as the odd one out, countering the notion of laïcité[16] (or the absence of religion from political affairs, see Butler 2008). Religion sets Ireland apart from 'the other three' as they do not have the same levels of religious tensions or even political significance; the Republic of Ireland is a Catholic country. Even in Scotland with its underlying sectarianism, I argue that national divisions are more prominent (and will only become more so with the pending referendum on Scottish independence). David's father claims 'religion's got nothing to do with it' though certainly in inhibiting British/Irish relations it has; in David's own retreat from the 'neutral' stance he claims of Anglo-Irish relations that 'they don't really like' one another due to 'like the IRA and religion and stuff like that'. Perhaps then, significantly for those 'of Irish descent' within the diaspora, their religiosity gives them a greater claim to Irishness; a more direct connection with Ireland. The opposite can be found for those Irish born men who are more likely to downplay the religious significance due to the heated politicised context. This is not though unanimous sentiment as we have seen with Billy's proud protestantism, and as Bob explains further 'I mean I'd know people, you know of my age [mid 40s], they were all about "Saint this and Saint that"… oh and "this priest and this priest"'. In contrast he himself claims:

Bob:

> I mean I tell you how unbothered I was…a mate of mine said "come along to this thing, we play games", and it was the Boys' Brigade[17]. Now me dad an ex altar boy. I didn't know…

Michael:

> The exact same thing happened with me. I played football for the Boys' Brigade side and my Dad was an altar boy.

Bob:

> There I was going off to play with the Boys' Brigade, and my dad's an ex altar boy. And he'd be thinking "oh god, what's going on there?" But again, you know, he never went to church. I suspect the church is maybe more important to him as he gets older
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

Bob talks of friends within the diaspora who are framed by a religious outlook, in a vein reminiscent of Victor's narrative where everyday scenarios are read and remembered through religious teaching; but Bob continues by pointing to the hypocrisy of his own father's outlook. His father as a Catholic questions participation at the Boys' Brigade due to its 'Protestant' beliefs, but as Bob remembers 'he never went to church' (clearly as an ex-altar boy his father did used to go to church, with Bob's Atheist beliefs overplaying the contradictions). He then forecasts that his father will return to the church 'as he gets older'. So we see a distancing from religion within the diaspora. This points to a larger trend that pits religiosity against age in a bi-modal distribution as a 'well curve'; this is one which peaks early (school age) then declines (early adulthood and beyond) before rising again (into older age). For some of the men I worked with though, I predict they will not return, as incidentally I do not think my own 'ex altar boy' father will. I believe that in secular society less and less young men will be turning to religion, certainly in the institutional sense. Perhaps what we are witnessing is 'a religiosity that de-emphasises prepositional belief systems in favour of what they call "performance Christianity"' (Vincett et al 2012: 275). This refers to the quotidian of religious action and embodied practice without the necessary ties spatially or to an institution. This decreasing role of religion is age related; though it is the institutional context (or more appositely the lack thereof) that proves more influential. The role of the school and religious teaching is so vital to the widespread rejection of institutional religion which has led to 'large numbers of unchurched young people' and crucially 'even those who identify as Christian' (Vincett et al 2012: 276). As Declan's example further illustrates:

Declan:

> From what I can remember is, we went to church…religiously. 'Til we were about, me and me sister were about teenage. We used to go to midnight mass

> every year, I know that. And again there was…the church was within a 2 minute walk from where we grew up. Literally a 5 minute walk from where I live now. But the kind of church going aspect of it kind of tailed off. As we get older and that. I would still consider that Catholicism part of my identity. I mean I would never, I have never rejected a belief in God. I would never reject the belief as such or the Catholic faith; even though there's elements which I don't agree with and can't get on board with. But we don't, we're not practicing as such. Me mother doesn't seem interested in going to church anymore. So I don't know whether that was an expected element of her bringing us up and times change but that she thought that would just give us a good moral start in life
>
> (lecturer, 25, 3rd generation Irish).

Although admittedly the 2 minute walk to church has increased to a 5 minute walk, the proximity of the church is still present in Declan's everyday geographies. More influential has been the move away from religion in school (and his mother's newer lack of interest) which have affected his 'non-religious' status. 'Non-religious' identity is encouraged through the declining role of both school and family in the lives of young men. Participants mentioned that having children 'of school age' increased the religiosity of those adults concerned, as among other priorities, they try to increase the child's likelihood of attending certain schools, as well as the adult's chance of marrying within church, and christening their children. As Keith's sister claimed, many adults will only go to church twice when they are older 'once to get married' and the other 'to Christen their kids'. This particular point was repeated with sadness by all those in the study who were openly religious.

Such is the legacy though of Declan's religious upbringing that he has never and 'would never' reject a belief in God. His religiosity does vary however and while firm and relentless belief remains, religion's influence as a whole is limited. Like the question I asked Billy earlier, I wanted to know more about religion's role with regard to sex and relationships:

Declan:

> No. I don't think it has in any respect. We are a tolerant family. My sister had an experience a few years ago with an unwanted pregnancy. And I can say that, without going into too much detail, that the religious considerations were

> at the back of our minds at that time. In terms of other stuff, attitudes to other sexualities and things like that, doesn't come into it. Again, 'cos we would consider ourselves tolerant. I mean I've got gay friends, my mam knows gay people. I wouldn't say it has impacted on things any more so than growing up in a working-class North Eastern community has
>
> (lecturer, 25, 3rd generation Irish).

Significantly then, the role of the region is claimed as influential as religion (if not more so); though admittedly he deuces both of these to background considerations. It has recently been argued that we are witnessing 'the declining significance of homophobia' (McCormack 2012: 1); furthermore Valentine et al (2013: 174) claim that 'in England and the US the public sphere is less hegemonically heteronormative'. But with Declan's alignment of the region's influence as significant as that of the Catholic faith, then perhaps this decline is not so evident. I introduce in the next chapter how the emergence of metrosexuality has led to a blurring of what it means to be a heterosexual man and subsequent classed implications of the redefinition of localised hegemonic masculinities (Messerschmidt 2012) which supports Valentine et al's (2013) claims. In Declan's case, fathering through 'unwanted pregnancy' and sexual 'deviance' against religious views both plainly challenges (and succeeds) against the doctrine of the bible (and to an extent against secular, working-class Tyneside) and speaks to his more liberal attitudes. But while heterosexual masculinities are becoming more inclusive and the power within the hegemony is shifting (if only on localised scales), this does not equate to a decrease in homophobia. The 'fear' remains and is often confirmed through the men's performance with narrative asides like, 'not in a gay way' (David, 16, 2nd generation Irish), emerging when describing aspects of their masculinities. There persists a peculiar relationship between gender and sexuality within the study, with an (if reluctant) acceptance of homosexuality (see Chapter 7). Indeed, as Declan comments in an analysis of religion, morality, sexuality and fidelity:

Declan:

> I think the idea that yeah Catholicism gets a lot of things wrong in terms of attitudes to sexuality and moving with the times but I think in terms of moral absolutes, right from

> wrong, I think Catholicism, Christianity, religion overall has a positive effect on people's upbringings. So I think that idea obviously, I've learned right and wrong from that. Stuff like for instance, while I'm quite liberal when it comes to family planning and sexuality and things like that. Funnily enough I'm quite strict on ideas of fidelity and infidelity. One of me friends in recent years for instance, known him for years, me and me cousin were joint best men at his wedding. And 6 months after he did a runner on his wife and is off with a young girl from work. And basically I can look back, and me cousin had a similar experience; we completely lost respect for him at that point. And to be honest, he's not in our lives anymore. It didn't have an impact on me – in terms of leaving his wife and kids – but it goes against my ideas of right and wrong. And my ideas of what a man who can be trusted should do. I think that element of it, probably has… 'cos I know friends who haven't really kept him at arm's length to that extent since who didn't have a Catholic upbringing and I don't know whether that sense, whether that's had an impact on those sort of things
>
> (lecturer, 25, 3rd generation Irish).

For Declan then, the role of a father and the role of a man are set against right and wrong. For him, trust and respect are to some extent shaped by religion. So this is a man who is 'not-religious' though acknowledges and makes reference to his religious upbringing at school to which he attributes accompanying morals; to be a non-Catholic increases the likelihood of accepting a man's infidelity. As he analysed his mother's decision to put him through Catholic school he ascertained it was to give him a 'good moral start in life'. Catholicism then is used as a barometer of social justice; of fundamentally what is right and what is wrong and of what it means to be a good father and what it means to be a good man. The moral framework though is still overwhelmingly built upon heteronormative assumptions.

5.4 Being religious in secular society

Like in Billy's 'Orange' narrative from earlier in the chapter, Declan uses his religious upbringing as his moral compass. Across these narratives we are seeing differing levels of religiosity, from militant Orangeism, to the acknowledgement of religious upbringing, to deep scriptural knowledge and

recital and ‘non-practising’ religious outlooks. It all leads me to question what it means to be religious, living on what is considered to be ‘secular’ Tyneside? The concept of ‘non-practise’ intrigued me as a geographer, and as will become clear by quoting Tim (aged 11), perhaps you do not have to go to church to be religious? Maybe you do not have to practise (physically) what you preach (spiritually)?

Michael:

Are you religious?

Tim (son):

Yes

Dan (father):

I’m not

Tim (son):

Are you not?

Michael:

Tim?

Tim (son):

Yeah I’m Catholic

Dan (father):

Well I’m Catholic, but I’m non-practising

Tim (son):

What do you mean?

Dan (father):

Well I don’t go to church

Tim (son):

Well nah, I don’t go to church

Dan (father):

Do you believe in God?

Tim (son):

Yeah I believe in God, do you?

Dan (father):

[Long pause and silence]

Tim (son):

No, you don't…

Dan (father):

Emm…not really no

(engineer, 40, 3rd generation Irish and his son, school pupil, 11, 3rd generation Irish also due to maternal grandfather).

Clearly my interview with Tim and Dan raised uncomfortable questions; was it right for me to ask this father and son in front of one another? Tim realises his father's non-belief for the first time. After his own statement of yes he is religious, yes he is Catholic, and yes he believes in God; he is left surprised by his father's lack of belief in God. His father clouds the definitions of faith, religion and spirituality in his identification as a non-practising Catholic who does not believe in God. Religion, faith, spirituality are individually negotiated by each of us, though the beliefs of their fathers are highly significant to the men of my study[18]. This serves as another example of age related religious identification and highlights the role of compulsory education. From a young age many of these men of Irish descent are forced to engage with religion through their schooling which forms an integral aspect of their 'Irish' upbringing.

On asking Matthew about his religiosity he responds (remembering his own father Daniel and his narrative about Father Henderson):

Matthew:

No [not religious]. although brought up obviously, brought up altar boy, confirmed, church every Sunday for a while. Me mam was a Cathlolic school headmistress. But yeah, as far as going to church definitely not; but I speak to the fella upstairs most nights if I'm honest. I speak to him, speak to me gran, speak to me granddad most nights if I'm honest. You know, so I believe there's something there and it's a comfort for me before I go to sleep to talk to someone, to say you know "this is how the day's gone" or you know, my daughter, massive at the minute [Matthew's child has a long term illness]. So you know every night I'll say my prayers. But not to the point where I need to go to church on a Sunday.

Michael:

So it's in a sort of spiritual sense?

Matthew:

Yeah. Yeah.

Michael:

Because that's the important bit for you that you cling on to?

Matthew:

Yeah because I just think you wanna believe there's something out there that can maybe listen to you and maybe hear you one night and make everything better. But you know, we'll see

(salesman, 40, 5th generation Irish).

So Matthew 'speaks to the fella upstairs' and for him this takes the precedent over attending church. His spirituality is especially heightened due to the illness of his daughter. He says he has passed this spirituality onto his daughters who also say their prayers at night though they 'have not asked to go to church'. Are we moving to what Butler calls 'secular time' defined as a 'syncretism of religious and secular ideals' (2008: 10)? According to this notion, the men are sat in a seemingly contradictory environment; underpinned by religious upbringings, schooled via religious teaching, yet situated in a secular society based upon modern and liberal principles. This comes to fruition in some of the paradoxical narratives of the men. Like Daniel in Chapter 3 and his 'I knew I had a soul…but I don't believe in institutional religion' analysis of his embodied masculinity. The prevalence of paradox is seen as a key contribution of this thesis (see Chapter 8). An extract from Daniel's son's narrative partly explains why perhaps this contradictory belief system exists.

Matthew:

I think they'd probably be looked on as uncool now as well if I'm honest… Unfortunately it's not a fashionable thing to be doing anymore. It is a bit of a lifestyle change. "You're going to that". "You're going in those circles". I would have almost thought you change as an individual; 'cos you're not hanging around with the people that perhaps you're hanging around with now

(salesman, 40, 5th generation Irish).

So Matthew believes his daughters would have to change as individuals changing their sphere of friends; their social geographies would be altered if they were to be ‘religious’ in the traditional sense. Being of Irish descent today no longer implies a religious childhood; neither does it depend on the church as its social calendar. Epitomised by Tony, we see suggestions of the generational changes:

Tony:

> It wasn’t something that as a child I particularly enjoyed. I went to a Catholic school so got made to do my first holy communion and things like that. That wasn’t something that I particularly believed in but something that I was brought up to believe in. And some of that was kind of enforced by my grandparents, well especially my gran, who wanted wor [me] to go to church and felt it was right for wor [me] to go to church. And then as time went on that was kind of left up to us [me] to choose
>
> (trained architect, 21, 3rd generation Irish).

Of particular note is the fact that when Tony, like other young men in the study, had a choice, he did not choose religion. Religion was something he ‘was brought up to believe in’, not something he believed in himself. Across the study, men talked about parents placing value on a religious upbringing equating it to the source of good morals and we see, in the men’s reading of their own masculinities, its significance at varying levels. It was upon leaving school and moving beyond school age (and often out of the family home) when the young men took their first steps away from institutional religion. Perhaps it was this lack of ‘enjoyment’ as Tony inferred, for men of the younger generation, the sense of feeling pressurised into religion with the lack of agency meaning there was less resonance for those young men. In comparison, Matthew, from an older generation comments:

Matthew:

> Yeah as a kid I enjoyed it. It was a bit of fun. Having a bit of bread, have a play, bit of a tear around afterwards. Altar boy ringing the bells, it was good. I didn’t feel it was a tie doing it. But you know at the time, I think it was just a novelty thing. But you know, the fact I say my prayers every night you know, something’s clicked, something’s

> registered, but not to the point of keeping it up and going to church
>
> (salesman, 40, 5th generation Irish).

The notion is again repeated that going to church is more and more unnecessary. Young men of Irish descent are no longer ‘having a play’ in church. Even when the value is there, with recognition of faith and spirituality, it is still not enough to impact spatially. When it does exist, the belief is personal and individualised. It is non-spatial. This was not so for the three Irish travellers of my study: Sean and two of his sons, Max and Jimmy (as with Tim and his father we agreed to have a group interview). As I go on to argue, I do not feel these men live in the same secular society as others in the study:

Sean (father):

> There’s a lot of people going saying “oh they’re too strict” and you know “travellers ways are about this and about that”; for instance about the kids coming out of secondary school. But secondary school you know, I did a couple of years in secondary school meself when we weren’t travelling, and you know, there’s a lot of bad influence in them schools, you know. I often used to see a lot of young girls coming along expecting and having to get abortions and then taking up bad habits. Smoking. And you know having a few drinks around the bike shed and all that carry on as well. But to everyone else that might be acceptable, but when you’re trying to raise up a family…

Max (son):

> You don’t need to go to school to be good; you’ve got your morals anyway

Michael:

> So where do your morals come from?

Jimmy (son):

> From going to church and family

Sean (father):

> I think eh, the way I’ve brought the boys up, and I have 9 in the family: 5 girls and 4 boys. And sometimes you have to be strict with them but other times you have to set it so they know the morals and the family ways from generations ago as well, you know, coming into it as well. And obviously let them take their own road and see which

> way they're going but you're always there just to guide them back in
>
> (labourer, 45, Irish born; his sons 11 and 12 both school pupils, 2nd generation Irish).

It does not seem that the boys have 'taken their own road' as Sean suggests. Their comments were made in front of their (self-labelled) 'strict' father so I could not accurately assess whether they disagreed with his views on religion or schooling. Though I predict that if their father was not there I would have got similar responses as it is not often young men admit to liking school, whether they do or otherwise. They did joke that their dad 'spied on them' and this was indicative of the disciplined guidance he administers in his fathering style. Sean is clearly over-emphasising ('a lot of young girls') to illustrate his viewpoint and in defence of his more conservative views of family, and family planning, framed by his traditional, conservative religious (Catholic) outlook. In this traveller society, we again see notions of the 'marianismo' (Stevens 1973) mentioned in Chapter 4. In this case we see the strict regulation of gender relations, the protection of a particular femininity from men 'cast as morally decrepit and intrinsically weak' (Olson 2013: 150). In response he does not drink. He states he is 'yet to see a man who has been made better through drink'. He does not believe in sex before marriage. On regulating sexuality, religious teaching in Ireland aligns alcohol as integral to the 'image of the innocent [woman] being seduced' (McCormick 2009: 54).

There were men within mainstream society who talked of being 'pioneers'[19] in a similar way to Sean, most notably Keith and his nephew Aidan. Keith talked of the increased pressures from the secular society in which these religious men reside. Of secular time, Olson (20130: 148) states:

> 'Controlling dress, partnership, love and family is a central concern of modern states, not just in response to internal governance ideology but also as a means of demonstrating commitment to a particular path of acceptable modernity'.

As the wife of one of the participants, who did not want to be identified even via a pseudonym as family planning was still a 'morally difficult subject', claimed (happily) contraception was the 'forgotten sin' of the modern Catholic. We see then this 'control' of the religious body being negotiated to conform to a

‘particular path’ that is ‘acceptable’ to the modern Catholic; moving towards more ‘general Christian ethics’ (Vincett et al 2012: 276; see also Smith and Denton 2005) This woman’s statements were made before the recent topical debates of abortion in Ireland which have only heightened the sensitivities around these politico-religious issues (these followed the death of Savita Halappanavar[20]). For those who are ‘religious’, God is in their everyday and the relevance of faith even for those ‘non-practising’ and ‘non-religious’ seems to lie elsewhere. There does not then seem to be a need to be in church in order to maintain a relationship with faith or spirituality.

Some of the geographical consequences of Irish government policies that regulate family life in their Catholic nation have been mapped and labelled as ‘Ireland’s hidden diaspora’ (Rossiter 2009), with women fleeing to England to have abortions. To use Olson’s words we are seeing ‘new borders’ (2013: 148) being created by embodied religious identities. We see then for these families of Irish descent they are able to negotiate this moral ‘territory’ more easily within the diaspora due to the secular surroundings on Tyneside. There may be transnational value transmission but this does not apply to the political/legal environment, merely at the personal/individual level. So the geographies of religion are intersecting and affecting those who are no longer ‘religious’ as well as for those who practise and regularly attend church. The Irish diaspora context on Tyneside serves as an interesting example of these transcending moral and religious values, across institutional and national contexts.

5.5 Conclusion

Bob:

> I haven’t noticed the Irish nation crumble as a result. I haven’t noticed Irish traditional music ceasing to exist...in fact it’s probably got better and stronger as a result; that it doesn’t have this kind of strange crutch. And luckily I suppose, when I listened to some Irish music, I liked it as music and I liked it as the John B Keane stories I read, I liked aspects of it, and it wasn’t something I was ghettoised into or compelled into “‘cos I was terrified if I didn’t, I’d go to hell”; which is what people rebelled against, quite naturally

(financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

On the declining influence of institutional religion within the diaspora, Bob's comments point to larger questions about the relationship of Irishness and religiosity. The notion of religion as a 'kind of crutch' is crucial. He is a self identifying Atheist but his comments, indicative of reliance, a dependence on the historic legacies and influence of the religious institutions upon Irish culture, raise valid questions of was/is Irish culture institutionalised? For example, despite claiming to be a non-religious space open to all faiths, the Tyneside Irish Centre, in Billy's eyes is, and will remain, 'a Catholic club'. I have met several Protestants there including a member of the committee but this prevailing perception persists. It would be fair to say that the Tyneside Irish Centre is open to all with an interest, connection and affiliation with the island of Ireland both in the North and the Republic, regardless of religious background. Yet the majority of members are of Catholic Irish descent and the Centre is funded by the Emigrant Support Programme of the Irish Government; so for those who are 'anti-Catholic' this will remain a hindrance to participation. Nevertheless when nuns of the Little Sisters of the Poor[21] are drinking half pints of Guinness after a Sunday evening ceili (as I have observed), it is hard to envisage Billy ever accepting the Centre's pan-religious status. Ireland, the Irish diaspora, Catholic and Protestant are clearly not synonymous yet there are linkages and intersections which provide complex identity formations and help shape the identities of men of Irish descent.

Only two of the youngest generation of men are regular church goers, the two Irish travellers Max and Jimmy; this includes Billy, who maintains the most strident religious identity within the study. Arguably though, due to the traditional traveller lifestyle neither Max or Jimmy live in a 'secular society' as the other men do, with their culture enarmouring them against the modernised, contemporary, liberal and secular Tyneside. The others mentioned only attending church on 'special occasions': weddings, christenings and funerals. School provides the greatest link to religion for men of Irish descent on Tyneside, and it was in moving away from school, transitioning into the post school age world of work, where most of the men left religion behind. Indeed school itself, according to the older generation, is becoming 'less religious'.

Some of these men did come back to religion after school, and according to them it is in older age where more men will return to religion as their own fathers and grandfathers did. I do not though feel that the ‘non-religious’ young men of today will find it as easy a return, as the power of institutional religion continues to decrease in secular society.

By looking across generations, I conclude that changes at the societal level have affected the ability to father religiously, with the most notable difference in levels of religiosity at school. Contemporary Tyneside is more secular than it was and even within the most religious corners of the community, demonstrable levels of faith and spirituality are decreasing. But does space matter to faith when religious geographies can transcend the physical in the spiritual? Spirituality in this study can be understood as an internalisation of faith. But of course space still matters because, as I have found, those men who rejected institutional religion did so after reaching school leaver age (16 onwards) of both religious and ‘secular’ schools. This meant a greater distancing from religious interaction – whether encountering scripture directly or having a physical connection to religious spaces. Perhaps then, through the internalisation of faith and with this study’s conceptualisation of spirituality as a ‘belief there’s someone there’ and ‘someone looking out for you’, in contemporary society the geographies of religion have become less public and more private. If so, then the spaces of the family, of the home and of the school should receive more critical attention.

Chapter 6 Working and 'Working Out'

6.1 The impacts of de-industrialisation

Economic change has channelled many young men into working lives different to their fathers' generation, and thus posed a challenge to their working-class masculinities by changing the foundation upon which they construct their identities. This chapter argues, and as will become clearer, the body is used as a tool of working-class masculinities among men of Irish descent. In an examination of the social effects of socio-economic change, I look at 'working out' (going to the gym, building muscle and keeping fit) as a coping strategy to changed working conditions and opportunities. I investigate how grandfathers, fathers and sons have shaped their lives reacting to working practices which have acted as a force for change. By this, I am pointing to the ever decreasing opportunities (with their inherent physical demands) of industrial labour, to shed light on how these men assert their masculinity in other ways in the context of post-industrial Tyneside. These discussions touch upon gender and generational dynamics for young men from traditionally working-class families: looking at 'working' in the post-industrial city (McDowell 1997); at the fusion of Irish and Geordie cultures (Cooter 2005); as well as the underpinning influence of class (McDowell 2000, 2001, 2003). My intergenerational approach researches the lives of these men as they work and 'work out'.

The concept of localised hegemonic masculinities (Messerschmidt 2012) is appropriate in this work with Tyneside Irish working-class men, and I draw on embodied habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; see also Wacquant 2011) as according to Wolkowitz (2006: 61) it 'is better able to explain the evolution of industrial bodies by considering their location within the wider context of class and other social relations'. Specifically though, it is Butler's (1990) notion of 'doing gender' which furthers Bourdieu's habitus by focusing on power relations. In 'doing gender', the men are working within the localised hegemonic framework to maintain the marginalisation and subordination of women (and other men; see Messerschmidt 1994, 2012). My analysis of the data and

research about masculinities, revealed half of the study (19 men) identifying as 'traditionalist', in that they are employed, or were employed (retired or in the case of one man, forced into unemployment on health grounds) within industrial jobs and manual labour careers similar to that of their families' working histories. These men form the first section of this chapter. Secondly, are the 'metrosexuals' – four young men who 'work out' in response to non-existent manual labour opportunities. This label was put forward by Billy, who described himself as metrosexual and as will become clear, related identity markers were also found with Tony, Andy and Declan. The other fifteen men are analysed further in Chapter 7 where, the men as artists, academics and scientists have (re)worked their inherited working legacies differently to that of the metrosexuals.

Each of the thirty eight research participants identified as being from traditionally working-class families; though this is not to say that all the men I spoke with were 'working-class', more that they associated with the identity marker through familial ties. The way in which we understand capital for working-class men is more than in monetary terms, through the embodiment of capital: the capital of the body (Nayak 2006), and of the social and cultural (Bourdieu 1984). We see then, that these men are defined by their capital and construct their identities relative to their capital. As McDowell (2003: 58) states 'waged work defines the sort of men young men become'. But what happens when working-class men do not, cannot, or will not work? Certainly their identity is under challenge, their sense of self is questioned; but there are also external projections to deal with. Accusations of 'cultures of worklessness' – that is generations of families who have never worked (recently exposed as myth, see Shildrick et al 2012) – have dominated political and policy discourse in recent times. Indeed it is the decline of the old industry upon which the region's prosperity depended that has tested, and continues to test, the identities of its residents. Miles (2005: 913) states: 'the world in which we live in is determined as much by what it was as by what it is…' and this has resonance with the men of my study whose own identity constructions are formed relationally with previous generations. The work of their fathers and grandfathers, even entire family working histories, were articulated whenever working opportunities or

aspirations were mentioned. This can be explained partly by looking at McDowell's (2003: 86) understanding of 'childhood socialisation':

> 'Ideas about appropriate work for "people like us" are constructed through childhood socialisation. The cultural and social capital that is built up in these years, which is to a large extent still neighbourhood-based for less affluent members of society, has a crucial impact on access to and retention of employment, especially low skilled and unskilled jobs'.

These legacies are embedded deep into the psyche of contemporary men of Irish descent, with visceral responses to how they predict their future lives and shape their everyday present. As a response to de-industrialisation we see an interesting example through charting the work of men across the family. Victor explains how, from dangerous manual labour in a shipyard to technical expertise in a laboratory, the family has 'progressed'. Hazardous working environments are still in existence, the masculinities which survive have had to adapt to the changing workplace where 'brain has replaced brawn'; in 'places that were once the engine room of the industrial revolution' (Miles 2005: 914). Work on the banks of the Tyne originally brought all of the participant families to the region – at one time Tyneside produced 40% of the global output of shipbuilding which fell to around 7% in 1960 (see Tomaney et al 1999). However many young men grew up in the post-industrial era (1990s), and much to the delight of Victor's family, Simon (his grandson) managed to find work in one of the region's surviving legacies. As Victor proudly remarks:

Victor:

> Let's just take the paint industry which my grandfather worked as a cooper – with lead paint which was hazardous – which burnt the paint off the bows [of ships]. Then there's Simon working in a lab for a paint company. So you can see how things progress?
>
> (retired engineer, 80, 5th generation Irish).

There is symmetry to this family narrative, but its cyclical nature has been encouraged, nurtured, even created. Men across the study had stories of older industrial relatives dying young through work-related illness. For example James (retired teacher/former sailor, 67, 2nd generation Irish), in his recollection of a family friend 'his job was to get car batteries and take out all the lead from

it. And you can imagine the effect that had on his health and he died quite young as well'. Though as industry declined, so too, did the number of men in the sample who were working in hazardous environments; there were wider social pressures forcing change. Over the three generations of Victor's family we have seen this 'progression', the adaptive, rational response to changing working opportunities and the accompanying masculinities, as shown by Simon:

Simon:

> I think it's only just occurred to us now. Like in the family, like my granddad has always worked in industrial, hands on, "get your hands dirty" type of jobs, my dad has as well. And I'm involved in industry as well. Like there's no one in our family has ever been like a graphic designer or a journalist or whatever, or a TV star. It always has been like the proper nitty, gritty "grrr" manly sort of work, which I dunno, maybe is sort of a family link that I've not noticed before. But I couldn't see myself doing another type of job. I've always wanted to do a sort of job in the Chemical industry
>
> (industrial chemist, 21, 6th generation Irish).

History matters; as this, and other empirical evidence shows, previous family employment, itself shaped by the histories of the region and Irish migration (see Chapter 1), affects the identities of young men. This study however looks at working masculinities by conducting a temporal investigation – noting specific changes in identities over time.

Simon:

> I think especially in this day and age it's a lot easier for young people to just choose what they wanna be and who they wanna be and if you wanna do a certain career path then you can, it doesn't really matter, like parents influence doesn't really come into it anymore. There's so much opportunity to just do what you fancy and on top of that, to go where you fancy as well. So if you wanna be a journalist and move to London you can just get on with it. As opposed to, like family trades being passed on. Like these families with long histories of welding and sheet metal work, sooner or later one of the generations will just go "no, I don't fancy that" and now they've got the means to go and do something else. So it's probably just a sign of the times I think
>
> (industrial chemist, 21, 6th generation Irish).

Yet despite Simon's words about having the means to do so, as we will see with the metrosexuals, progression does not necessarily materialise; neither through an increased social respectability or a sounder economic footing. Against Simon's narrative, and of Bob's before him, this is the first generation that may not be more successful than their parents, and economic change is posing a threat to this ideal, to this route of social mobility. Newer changes after the global recession (post 2008), see many working-class men challenged with the re-emergence of 'lives lived in the locality, in which low-level work dominates' (McDowell 2003: 221). Simon continues:

Simon:

> Yeah kinda proud of my North East heritage, 'cos it's quite a powerful image, especially in the past, like the river and the distinctive bridges and the massive cloud of smoke 'cos there was so much industry. I think we used to be the biggest exporter of coal in the county or something like that. And there was a lot to be proud of in the past. It's a bit run down. Like when I was applying to university, obviously I applied to the local ones but part of me just thought "have a look at like Exeter or somewhere" and just get away from it. Half of it was to see a different part of the country but also part of it was definitely to get away from it. Yeah I mean it's a good place. I love it. 'Cos you're like 10 minutes drive from the city. 10 minutes drive to the beach. Half an hour to the countryside. I think it's just the people. Not the nicest bunch sometimes. But eh, I think that's probably just because there's loads of unemployment…
>
> (industrial chemist, 21, 6th generation Irish).

As an industrial chemist Simon is above 'low level' work and is a high earner relative to most young men his age. Indeed his attendance at University, something neither his father nor grandfather did, speaks to his upward social mobility. Nevertheless this is a young man who I believe to be shaped through the legacy of inherited working-class masculinities. Despite the footloose nature of the opportunities available to young people today to which he alludes, I point out that Simon did not go to Exeter or London. Simon stayed within his locale and attended a Tyneside University while living at home; this transition, despite the outwardly mobile narrative, is more suggestive of the working-class experience of McDowell's earlier argument. Much literature of the (post 2008) economic downturn has focussed on its immediate impact, yet the social

consequences are likely to have long-term implications for family life. This is evident with the men of my study, and as the above example demonstrates, inherited working and classed legacies remains firm despite significant generational changes.

6.2 The body working

Peter:

> I must admit, I didn't realise how much I valued strength. Physical strength. You take it for granted. And I've been doing a physical job since I was 16. And eh, two year ago now I was behaving like a 16 year old. Jacking a vehicle up which was low. So the jack was well underneath the vehicle. But I couldn't get underneath the vehicle, so I was jacking it up at arm's length. And what I found out is if you're 48 year old and you try and do that, the bicep parts company with the shoulder. Ruptures. And is no longer a bicep but is now just attached at one point.

Michael:

> Really?

Peter:

> Yes, and what you're left with is a "Popeye" muscle…

Michael:

> Wow.

Peter:

> Not wow.

Michael:

> More ow?

Peter:

> Well I never felt any pain. But it destabilised the joint because of that. And I got all kinds of shoulder problems. And a mechanic with a right arm that doesn't work isn't much cop. And I've had back pain for about 5 year now and it's steadily getting worse. So this all culminated in one of those, aw, what they called, magnetic – MRI? And when I came out the other end I'm sort of arthritis in here and spondolosis in me lumber region and all that and that's when you realise you're just a machine. And for all

> that I'm not old, because of the job I do, I'm not young anymore…
>
> …Fortunately, I managed to get the right physio. You cannat have a one armed mechanic, it's just crazy. So you tread a, it's like a tightrope and you can fall off either way I can tell you. But that was an eye opener for me as a man. For to have to concede that you know, these things aren't a given. It could quite easily happen where you're not in a position to bring the money in, you know. It's come at a time where my son's now self-sufficient, wor [our] mortgage is paid, so it's not the major trauma that it would have been if he was still at college or something like that you know. But certainly it was a wake up call you know as a bloke, you know as a working bloke, I had quite a fright.
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

So in his mind, Peter tries to establish a 'mind/body' dualism that conceptualises the body as a machine, an "it", in need of fixing' (Sparkes et al 2011: 478; see also Seigler 1989: 129 for 'Cartesian dualism'). The narrative fits with Frank's (1995) structure of restitution which is articulated further by Sparkes et al (2011: 472) as 'yesterday I was healthy, today I'm sick, but tomorrow I'll be healthy again'. The man and the body are seen as purposeful, designed and intentional. They are mechanical and robotic; when they are broken they need to be fixed ('get the right physio') and can be rationalised as such. Peter's 'health scare' is of not being able to provide and derives from him seeing his body as aged and increasingly dysfunctional. We see his masculinity conforming to the expected gendered performance of a 'disregard of pain', yet we do not see masculinity in excess, or evidence of reckless behaviour. Instead we see an embodied rationality. Peter does not work as a mechanic; he is a mechanic. His body needs to work (function) for him to work (for him to be paid). These two elements are intrinsically linked. Peter's arms, biceps and shoulders are his capital and essential for his capacity to work; the accident made him acutely aware of this ('you realise you're just a machine').

Charlesworth (2000) questioned what happens to male working-class habitus when its necessity is over and the sort of work associated with working-class masculinity disappears? I adapt Sparkes et al. in their studies of athletes to state that 'people with a strong or exclusive [working] identity are more likely

to interpret a given event in terms of its implications for their [working] functioning' (2011: 470). Peter furthers the traditionalist stance:

Peter:

> I was never gonna work in an office. I wouldn't be too happy to work with women. I've heard people who work with women and you've gotta watch what you're saying; watch what you do and I couldn't see myself doing that. Not that I've got anything against women. When I'm at work, we have had women mechanics and it's been like a publicity stunt and they get pregnant or they just leave you know; women's lib doesn't go there. You don't see them down the pits, up to their eyes, I mean it's so physically demanding a job that those that do persist in it, don't really look like women anyway
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

We see that office work is equated to work for both genders; though not work suited to Peter and his masculinity (nor incidentally his son, Simon, a fellow traditionalist, who claimed earlier he 'couldn't see [himself] doing another type of job' than his industrial work). Clearly the disciplines of speech and movement are not traits which the body needs to accommodate in the working life of an industrial labourer. They are both 'doing gender' appropriately, according to the hegemonic dominance (Messerschmidt 2012). Peter reduces women mechanics to 'publicity stunts' before critiquing their work ethic, but most striking is his view that successful women mechanics cannot possibly 'look like women anyway'; with the demands of physical labour working to conform to the hegemonic patriarch; these are not 'doing gender' appropriately. The expected gendered performances are those women who do not 'persist' in the role and demonstrate what Banta (1993: 162) calls 'wayward womaness' – the claimed emotionality and physical inadequacies of woman at work. The body at work leads Peter to construct women as 'out of place' (McDowell 2003: 58) in certain occupations; feminine bodies should not be in industrial capacities, and when they are, they become less feminine, more 'heavy' and more masculine:

Peter:

> Me mum's never worked when we were children. When her youngest, me sister, when she sort of went away to college Mum went back to work then, at an old people's home just part time. She enjoyed it. 'Til it closed, but

> again, that was quite heavy work for a woman at the time in her 50s. It was before these engine hoists came in for to lift people in and out of baths. She also picked up a bug...which turned into pleurisy – you know what scar tissues on the lungs is? She has difficulty walking up hills; she's ok on the flat, she's just got to watch it, she knows. So you know, you tend to think of industrial illnesses just coming from mines and shipyards but that's not true, there's waste and hazardous material. It's not a pleasant job.
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

Many will argue that Peter's discourse is sexist and serves to maintain dominance over women, yet as the researcher who elicited this narrative, I have a duty of clarification. The sentiment is overstated and meant in part as humour ('laddish banter' see Kehily and Nayak 1997; see also Chapter 3); but he is also drawing on the 'obvious' observable differences in body size and behaviour that to him would make differences to the aptitude of the worker – 'the presumed capabilities of the men's bodies and the exclusion of women's' (Wolkowitz 2006: 56 see also Greed 2000). He is drawing on what I have called 'working dimorphism'; that is, men are bigger and stronger than women and are therefore better suited to cope with the strains of the industrial workplace. If gender is done 'correctly', Peter sees the hard and heavy body of hegemonic masculinity as better suited in dealing with industrial work; though his critique of the working body is not purely drawn on gendered lines, with age both a factor in his own recollection ('what I found out is if you're 48 year old and you try and do that') and of his mother's work ('it was quite heavy work for a woman in her 50s'). Equally, Peter would, and is, critical of lighter and softer masculine bodies at work:

Peter:

> We even had a blast forge [in metalwork at school], we had running machines and laithes; it was geared out for a lifetime down there. And this guy, we were doing something with hand tools, and this guy, his hand slipped and cut his hand and it bled "I'm bleeding" and boof, down like a sack of tatties [potatoes]. And the teacher...he was huge a big ginger man, you didn't mess with him, he had hands like shovels and he didn't know what to do with this kid like! But fortunately, his twin brother was in the same class, he started coming round and he said "ee sir, did I

> faint?" and he said "yes son" and he was creasing himself [laughing]. But he was like Gloria off "It Ain't Half Hot Mum", so camp, and this metalwork teacher having to placate him, he might have been a child but for all the ones for him to have to look after, it was really quite funny.
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

So here we see a 'camp' and effeminate masculinity, again not suitable to the working environment ('didn't know what to do with this kid'). This identity formation is also about definition through difference, as much about what Peter is not, as what Peter is; he is not effeminate, he is not a woman. As Nayak and Kehily (2013: 4) outline in their work into young masculinities and femininities 'in this way "sissy boys" remain tied to some peripheral, if failing, notion of masculinity, just as "tom boys", despite their name, continue to be positioned as the temporary occupants of an aberrant femininity'. The richness of this narrative reveals the value laden qualities of the dominant hegemony: the teacher commands respect not through his educational skills and qualities, but through his physical size, personified by his working body ('hands like shovels'); like Lash and Urry's (1999: 45) 'bodily-technical action' or as Nayak and Kehily (2008: 103) put it 'the body is itself the primary instrument'.

> 'Bourdieu's notion of habitus is especially helpful for teasing out gender as an embodied living relation, not just a social location in a gender hierarchy' (Wolkowitz 2006: 65; see also McNay 2004).

The body habitus: the lifestyles, values and expectations of masculinities that have become embodied, are key to understanding attitudes towards changing working opportunities. Half of the men of the study conformed to hegemonic working-class masculinities, these nineteen men (the traditionalists) gladly inheriting and embracing the working family histories. Their bodies at work in the 'expected' gendered roles as labourers, as engineers, as mechanics and as the emergency services (police, fire and ambulance). The narratives of Peter and his son Simon have outlined the position of the traditionalists, from a 'traditional' occupational standpoint as industrial workers; though this category is both cross-generational and cross-vocational. The 'traditionalist' values then, based upon strict sexual divisions of labour, are actually present among even those men who are not working in the traditional occupations. John (a doctor),

one of the renaissance men of Chapter 7 conforms to the same hegemonic masculinity:

John:

> I dunno how I could draw it down [on one of the outline images]…but being a man for me, it's about responsibility – more so for men than women – I do think I've always wanted to be the breadwinner sort of thing. It's all in the head for me, so if I was to draw something on that – it would all be in the head for me

Michael:

> So what would be in the head then?

John:

> I think being more aggressive. I think we can be more single minded and we're better at getting things done quickly
>
> (doctor, 24, 4th generation Irish).

We see the traditional role of work, income and 'responsibility' made masculine which sustains the subordination of woman within the hegemonic masculinity. Summarising this position is the 'always wanted to' notion; the legacy of the traditionalists' working lifestyles, values and expectations in the everyday working realities of these men of Irish descent. John is not traditionalist in the sense that he opted to pursue educational options, training in the sciences as a medical doctor – a particular job that strikes a curious balance of the emotional and dirty work of the body, which is highly feminised with a strong tradition of Irish women as nurses (Robertson and Monaghan 2012) – while maintaining the masculine power and responsibility ascribed to the doctoring profession with its respect and authority. Indeed, education itself has been 'feminised' according to some hegemonic masculinities (further analysed in Chapter 7; see also Nayak 2003a).

Among the other nineteen men, four of them reappropriated their inherited hegemonic masculinities by (re)working and, at times, rejecting the expected gendered performances, by incorporating more feminine traits. These men's processes of 'working the body' functioned to dissimulate their working-class identities; a notion which points to the shifting nature of body capital

(Nayak 2006). The metrosexuals (Harris and Clayton 2007) are four young men: Tony, Declan, Billy and Andy born on Tyneside in the 1980s and 1990s. They are post-industrial, post-'new man' and post-'new lad' (Gill 2003). They are meticulous about their physical appearance and (re)work their bodies by going to the gym and building muscle. In addition they (re)work their bodies through grooming practices of immaculate hairstyles, 'fake tans' and waxed chests.

6.3 Working the body

> 'The economic and social order increasingly is based on instant gratification, on the consumption of goods and services that are out of reach of the majority of the working class, on aesthetic criteria as the basis of individual worth and on the construction of an individual portfolio of experiences that both facilitates and demands occupational and residential mobility' (McDowell 2003: 220).

McDowell is inadvertently describing the metrosexual: the young, urban, post-industrial man whose body is not defined by its work but on how the young man works it, based on 'aesthetic criteria'. This is achieved through processes of shaping the body. This response to economic change is nothing new as McDowell highlights in her earlier work (1997: 188):

> '[Bourdieu 1984] distinguished younger from older men, arguing that the new bourgeoisie is much more body-conscious than the old guard, and contrasting "the pompous, pot-bellied patron and the slim, sun-tanned cadre".

So we see a shift in hegemony from the dominant 'pot-bellied' masculinity towards a younger, 'slimmer' and 'sun-tanned' model. Parallels can be found in my conversation with Tony (who along with two of the other metrosexuals regularly uses sun beds and 'fake tan'). Worthy of note is tanned skin's classed history (for racial history see Ahmed 1997; 1998; Bonnett 1998). Seen as a marker of lower working status, as the more tanned you were, the more you were assumed to work outdoors (Keller 2010). This cultural legacy still exists today in many parts of Asia, where, unlike in Western pharmacies where you can purchase tanning oils and lotions, you will find skin whitening agents (Li et al 2008; see also Johnston 2005 for New Zealand perspective). Certainly the practice of 'fake tanning' and sun beds could still be seen as an attempt to

ameliorate class status, by portraying an economic mobility based on holidays abroad. For the young metrosexuals, the tanned skin and the toned physique contributes to their embodied masculinities.

Michael:

> Has your Dad ever talked to you about going to the gym or anything like that?

Tony:

> Nah. I mean I don't even really know if he knows I go to the gym...it's not something we've ever talked about. I mean I know he's never really been or anything like that so it's not something that he'd be particularly interested in. He used to have one of those "stand at home" machines, that's all I know in terms of him going to the gym. Had a couple of those baby dumbbell weights and that was that. That was just to get rid of his beer belly a bit. Didn't work!
>
> (trained architect, aged 22, 3rd generation Irish).

But what has prompted this generational change from Tony's Dad the draftsman to Tony, a BA Architecture graduate who now works as a high street retail assistant? What is it about young men born in the post-industrial era that is driving their somatic outlook and in turn creating a new localised hegemonic masculinity for young working-class men? I believe that the social divide between 'high-tech' and 'high-touch' employment (McDowell 2009: 26) can help explain the metrosexual emergence; the 'tech' element referring to technical work in industry with the 'touch' referring to emotional labour and the service sector. But these divisions are too simplistic, and by expanding the metaphor we see there is a 'touchy feely' side to industrial work. It is this 'high-touch' nature of their working-class masculinities (in the occupational sense) which the metrosexuals are lacking. Like Nayak and Kehily (2008; 2013) in linking bodies, affect, emotion, and the anatomy of labour I cite an extract from Peter's traditionalist narrative talking of the generational changes to the school environment.

Peter:

> When me son went into that school and when I went in to see him there was no laithe, no sign of a blast forge, the milling machine was gone and 60-70% of the time in the classroom was spent doing mock ups on the computer

> and then sending them to an Autocad machine for the cutting out and so on. So really you weren't actually touching what you were making. All the hand tools had gone and certainly there was a half and half split of boys and girls in each class. Certainly you'd tailor each class to reflect what was going on in the outside world
>
> (mechanic, 48, 5th generation Irish).

Indeed it is this tactile element that the young metrosexuals (and their fathers and grandfathers) see missing in their working lives which I argue helps explain aspects of their more expressive and sensual social life. We see Peter the traditionalist attributing the disconnection from the body to the introduction of computer technologies in the classroom. The body is no longer working, at least not in the way it was before, with hands and the 'touchy feelyness' of manual labour ever decreasing. We see Peter's son Simon, fulfilling his need to touch as he 'gets his hands dirty' in his industrial employment. McDowell (2009: 223) talks of 'those fleshy characteristics of weight, gender, age and appearance' as distinguishing factors in the sexual divisions of labour and how, in the context of information and communication, technologies have facilitated bypassing these elements at work.

I argue that the conscious shaping of the body, working the body to achieve particular aesthetics, has emerged in the post-industrial era, and information and computer technology has changed the working environment. The empirical findings here then are contributing to fill a gap in workplace literature. The example of the metrosexuals, as will become apparent, addresses the issues of weight (gym culture and protein shakes), gender (shifting nature of hegemonic masculinities), age (generational change in the post-industrial era), and appearance (through male grooming) with the disconnect between the body and work exacerbated by economic change and industrial decline. However, wider societal change, in particular the rise of computer technology, has contributed to masculine performances at work but also in rest and play. We have seen the emergence of the digitised (of the computer/online) replacing the digit (of the fingers/hands). When speaking with Tony and Declan about 'what makes a man' they pointed to strength and knowledge as well as gym culture as important:

Tony:

It's something I'd like [strength and knowledge] but whether it's something I can achieve, I dunno? It's maybe 'cos with my granddad he was brought up with a more physical background, he would go out and make stuff in the garden, now we probably, maybe had a bit kickabout [playing football], but now would just go on the computer or something like that. Kinda that tradition has been lost. Maybe like it's what you were saying before about opportunities I've not been able to have that others have in my family. Maybe 'cos of the way society is now it's something that I've not really had the opportunity to do....

…so what I'm thinking in terms of that is my granddad, if there's anything that needs repairing or anything like that, he would be able to do it, if there's a problem in the house, even ours, he would be able to fix it, as opposed to us having to go and get someone out; and knowledgeable in terms of you need that kind of knowledge to be able to do these things. And he's tried to teach us, makes sure even just little things for the house, which is good 'cos I think that's something that's kind of lost. And I think there's a lot of people's grandfathers or fathers would be able to do the DIY, do the plumbing or something like that whereas I think that's something that's kinda been lost. Although my granddad has tried to teach us bits and bobs it's not something that…if I think when I'm a dad, it's not something that… I'm gonna have to call the plumber!

(trained architect, 21, 3rd generation Irish).

Declan:

I think that [gym culture] seems to be something that is important. It's symbolic. Certainly in working-class communities today. And probably some of that's had an impact on me because of that reason. If you think about the job I do [lecturer]. I don't need to bench-press 200 pound or whatever like that, I'm never gonna need that, I'm never gonna need to do physical labour. But there's something in our culture that motivates you to do that sort of stuff. That says like be as strong as possible and I think you can link that in to the amount of men that do martial arts and things like that. The emphasis on that, it's so popular...

...If you go back to something like 'Fight Club' you can link it into modern developments. You know people who are never gonna get into a fight in their lives are going and doing mixed martial arts classes. I've done plenty meself over the last few years, but I haven't been in a fight in over

> ten years, and I don't expect to be in a fight. But it's something like…as a man you need to be prepared for this, that you can handle yourself in that situation. And I think it fits into the working-class identity 'cos obviously all my family going back years have done physical labour, even though I'm not doing physical labour, I feel like I should kind of, fit into that identity as such'
>
> (lecturer, 25, 4th generation Irish).

So this body capital is based on belonging ('our culture') as much as embodied practice ('never gonna need to do physical labour'). McDowell (2003: 90) asks if young men in the post-industrial era turn to sport or other activities 'to recreate a sense of acceptable masculine success' and I would confirm that the metrosexuals of this study certainly do just that. Working the body in such ways helps their sense of strength and knowledge of the body at work, and inherent is the respect such masculinities command. It is clear that earlier hegemonic models based on men as 'traditionalist' labourers, engineers, mechanics and emergency services are outdated for some young men in contemporary society; the new working environments value different attributes. So for these men whose masculine identities, like those of their fathers and grandfathers have been caused by industrial workloads meeting their physical needs, how can they conform to their working legacies if denied in the occupational sense? The discourse surrounding gym culture itself enables the young men to maintain their inherited traditions in everyday practice through 'working out', 'training', 'body building' and 'building muscle'. This generates a vocational conceptualisation of their leisure pursuits; and more practically inscribes their narratives into and onto the body. Similarly, Nayak (2008: 813) in his work with North Eastern masculinities surmised that:

> 'By exhibiting "spectacular masculinities" of white male excess, young men accrue a body capital that has a currency and a local exchange value within the circuits they inhabit'.

We see the significance of scale as Nayak indicates the body capital these young men possess commands a respect and celebration of their masculinity; within the localised hegemonic framework it becomes dominant. There is evidence of this gaining ground regionally with the popularised MTV show 'Geordie Shore'[22] which has seen the sexualisation of North Eastern working-

class ‘metrosexual’ masculinities. So too, nationally with the work of Harris and Clayton (2007) in Wales and their analysis of the increasing influence of international sports stars like David Beckham and Gavin Henson. While this phenomenon may still be emerging within the regional and national, within the localised level we certainly see excessive performances in the diets and muscular aesthetic of the metrosexuals.

Michael:

> What do your family think about you going to the gym and taking protein supplements and that sort of thing?

Tony:

> For example the other day I stayed at my grandparents ‘cos I had a driving lesson in the morning and before bed, they were like “do you want a quick sandwich? I’ll make you a little sandwich”. And I was like “oh no, it’s ok, I’ve got my protein shake”. And they were like “protein shake…what you doing using that like?” I think my granddad kind of understands why; whereas my gran just doesn’t so much. “Why do you want to get bigger, or anything like that?” So it’s that kind of...she doesn’t really understand it. ‘Cos obviously with her, it wouldn’t be something like “I’m going to the gym”...she sees more gym as, ‘cos she goes a little bit, she’s sees it as staying healthy. Whereas, for example, I don’t go to the gym “to stay healthy”, I’d go to try and gain some muscle, to look better I suppose in terms of….so there’s kind of that difference of why you would go to a gym, which she doesn’t really understand so much.

Michael:

> So do you think that perception, of what you’ve just said there about looking better...obviously you know what you mean by that, but do you think if you were to say to your gran “this is why” would she get that?

Tony:

> I think she’d understand but I don’t think she’d agree. Like she’d understand where I’m coming from but obviously it’s not something that she finds you’d need to look like. For example when - dunno why - but when I’m there she goes “you’re not on them steroids are you?”...
>
> ...“You’re joking aren’t you? Definitely not”. It’s one of those kinda things that as I say my gran doesn’t really understand it. She wouldn’t really get why someone would want to be like that necessarily, but she accepts that I do

> and obviously she understands that now people my age are kinda of going for that, seeing the kind of perfect guy or whatever; whereas back then, there was no one like that at the time was there?
>
> (trained architect, age 21, 3rd generation Irish).

So grandad understands, but grandma does not. We see then the gendering of knowledge; that the elder man, while not practicing the metrosexual identity, can appreciate it and see its rationale. The elder man draws on his own industrial working experience; which the woman (who does not possess an industrial masculinity) cannot do. But what does 'looking better' actually mean? Well according to Robertson and Monaghan (2012: 158; see also Monaghan 2001):

> 'This confidence is not (merely) intra-physic; it comes through admiring glances, positive comments and perhaps repeated successful encounters. "Looking good" and "feeling good" are linked in both public discourse and individuals (shared) embodied experiences. Here, types of lean and muscular physique constitute a form of bodily capital which may serve as a source of distinction and, especially for younger men, provide sexual currency'.

Indeed the metrosexuals of my study talk about the 'hard' body, defined and enhanced through a muscular and disciplined physique. It was this they said, that made them attractive to woman. Their 'looking good' was framed as a display for the opposite sex, though I argue it is also to pay homage to the working-class masculinities of their fathers and grandfathers. As Nayak (2006: 814) states:

> 'Industrial employment also accrued its own type of "body capital", forged through notions of the patriarchal "breadwinner", physical "hardness" and a strict sexual division of labour that split the public "masculine" world of work from the private domestic realm of women's unpaid labour. For many young men the financial independence ascribed to earning a wage enabled them to vacate household duties and instil a pride in "craft" or "graft"'.

So we see here that working out, gym culture and the pursuit of strength and knowledge mirrors that of the patriarchal breadwinner. It too is based on a hard and heavy masculine body, one which denies a feminine existence. Where it differs is in its 'craft and graft'. The pursuit of the 'perfect guy' is a newer phenomenon ('there was no one like that at the time was there?').

Andy claims in quoting from the aforementioned ‘Geordie Shore’:

Andy:

> The hardest graft I’ve ever done is doing me hair!
>
> (trained architect, 21, 5th generation Irish).

Acutely aware of their bodies’ lack of utility in their day to day working lives, the pressure of the localised hegemony is such that the metrosexuals feel they must conform; through their narratives we see clear examples answering Charlesworth’s (2000) question of what happens to male working-class habitus when its necessity is over. They chose to be complicit, with the desire to belong to the ‘lost’ working-class masculine culture achieved for the metrosexuals through aesthetic values. The use of self-deprecating humour as an entertaining performance belies the fact that like Tony, Andy has a BA in Architecture and now works in the service sector. These two young men have ‘worked hard’ have grafted (academically) to climb the ladder of classed society as the first men in their family to attend university, only to reach a point of no return. This is an example of achieving relative mobility. In bettering the social standing of their parents while simultaneously significant economic changes in wider society has prevented them from establishing absolute mobility; there are no jobs available to match their personal progression (Holdsworth 2013). Going against the advice of both their traditionalist fathers (draftsman and builder), who claimed they would be better ‘working their way up’ labouring (or ideally through an apprenticeship), they graduated in 2010 with their degrees but with no career options ahead of them, finding the only work available to them in service level jobs. In effect, they took a step upwards only to finish lower on the ladder than they would have been had they not taken that step. They can no longer labour in the occupational sense of the word, and bored of their unchallenging, non-stimulating employment, instead we see a somatic culture which carves out a newer hegemony based on going to the gym and building muscle. The body is seen as a project upon which to work and develop (Shilling 1993), with the embodied hegemonic masculinity a bi-product. Could you argue that these men are simply young, fit and healthy and there is nothing ‘spectacular’ or ‘excessive’ about working out? You could, but I do not. As Denham (2008: 235) writes:

> ‘After fifteen years of lifting in gyms nationwide, I’ve come to believe that the terms “health and fitness” and “hardcore body building” have little in common’.

I argue that the pride in physical work has gone because of its scarcity. There is a desire for it – as the empirical evidence has revealed – but there is a distinct lack of it. For the young metrosexuals, non-industrial work does not interest them; it does not define them. Their working of the body is ‘hardcore’ in that it is intensely loyal to the working legacies of their fathers’ and grandfathers’ generation. They do not go to the gym to stay fit and healthy or to lose weight; it is the polar opposite. They go to the gym to gain muscle, to gain weight and to control their bodies (or as Monaghan 2001: 334 calls it, to achieve ‘empowerment and self mastery’) to conform to a new hegemonic masculine model of strength and knowledge based on aesthetics rather than practicalities or necessity. So the idealised images of the metrosexuals are shaped to conform to hegemonic working-class masculinities, but ironically, the new generation of body building young men bear little resemblance to the physique of their fathers and grandfathers. Their contrived and muscular shape exaggerated through skin tight clothing, looks nothing like the more natural build of the older, working men. The words of Billy succinctly summarises the young metrosexuals’ working aspirations and economic priorities.

Billy:

> I live by a motto… “Dreamers Do Not Care”... and my passions in life are flying, music, girls, dance and the gym.
>
> (pilot, 24, Irish born)

Unlike Tony, Andy and Declan, Billy does not have a degree. He dropped out of university after two years to train to be a pilot. Seeing a distinct lack of post-university options, he laboured for his father’s haulage company to pay for his flying lessons; his flying epitomising the working-class masculine dream of ‘occupational and residential mobility’ (McDowell 2003: 220; see also Holdsworth 2013).

6.4 Conclusion

> 'Whilst well groomed women are often seen as stylish, well groomed men often face accusations of narcissism...Exploring the "feminine side" of masculinity within modern Western society has traditionally been associated with the derided preserve of the homosexual and perhaps it still is' (Edwards 2003: 143).

This thesis is not dedicated to studying space, place and sexuality (for this see Hopkins 2010; Skelton and Valentine 2005; Valentine et al 2013). Instead, it reveals individual performances of men of Irish descent which in turn shed light on the multiplicity of the geographies of masculinities. In concluding this chapter, I ask where metrosexuality fits into Connell's (1995) gender order and argue it does not align these men to subordinated practice of Connell's hegemony; rather to an establishment of a new form of hegemonic masculinity on a localised scale (Messerschmidt 2012), with evidence of it growing regionally and nationally (see Harris and Clayton 2007). Harris and Clayton believe that metrosexuality could further marginalise and subordinate working-class men; but as this chapter has shown, it has been the embodied metrosexuality of young working-class men that has helped them to maintain, re-establish and shape their working-class masculinities. Admittedly, these four young metrosexuals have all attended university and could be seen as newly emerging middle-class; but what is important is that they all identify as working-class.

As Tony, Declan, Billy and Andy have shown, metrosexuality has emerged as an embodied response to economic change in the post-industrial era. Those bodies which are working for a living do not need to be worked in such a contrived way as the metrosexuals'. They are not men in crisis but are instead responding to what they perceive as a challenge (or threat) to their sense of 'social respect'. This being the salient factor (rather than class status per se) for some young men from working-class families, working out seems the most appropriate response.

> 'It is argued that theories explaining bodybuilding and drug taking, in terms of antecedent inadequacies caused by a "masculinity-in-crisis" are not sufficient and perhaps not necessary' (Monaghan 2001: 335).

I agree that crisis discourse is neither helpful nor necessary, however the ‘antecedent inadequacies’ of the loss of manual labour does help explain the drive and motivation of these young men’s body work and working-out practices. So we have seen how the body has been used as a strategic tool in developing embodied masculine identities. Identified by young metrosexuals as a way to conform to inherited working legacies while reworking and opening up what it means to be a heterosexual man of Irish descent on post-industrial Tyneside. Their creative conceptualisations of ‘hard work’ are becoming increasingly dominant, which in turn will marginalise those redundant masculinities (McDowell 2003) that have been celebrated in other working-class communities. Perhaps, and as will become clearer in the next chapter, this resilience, persistence and creativity may be through ‘Irish’ qualities. Certainly the work ethic and educational pursuits are seen as migrant traits more broadly and it may well be for these reasons that account for the metrosexual emergence of these men of Irish descent.

Chapter 7 Tyneside Irish Renaissance

7.1 The renaissance men

This chapter sits against a backdrop of the historic colonial representation of the 'feminised' Irish; the portrayal of the Irish nation as wholly feminine empowered the British further (Hickman and Walter 1995). During the period of colonisation it was proclaimed that a woman was not fit to govern herself, and the metaphor serves the notion that the Irish nation was not fit to govern itself; justification then, if any was needed, for the colonial domination (Mac an Ghaill 2000). Yet my research reveals that we are witnessing a renaissance of judgement; that there exists a balance and complex nature to Irish masculinities on Tyneside. Interestingly though, as the following empirical evidence shows, the rational hegemonic masculinity resurfaces even amongst the renaissance enlightenment of the men of my research. This chapter coins the phrase 'embodied rationality' to refer to the practice of these men countering the effeminate and irrational of the colonial stereotype. The renaissance men are fifteen individuals who primarily shape their lives relative to ideals based on creatively working the mind as well as the body. They vary in age, with the youngest born in the 1990s and the eldest born in the 1920s. These men can be classed as artists, academics or scientists.

Below, Bob talks of 'thick Geordie' as the stereotypical working man with limited intellect and socialisation – a man similar to that perpetuated through the Paddy stereotype of Chapter 1. This label might equally be thrust upon the 'traditionalist' men of Chapter 6. The thesis has discussed Irish men in traditional terms as the men who built Britain (Cowley 2011); though through the emergence of metrosexuals, we saw some blurring of these categorisations precisely because men of Irish descent were and are increasingly less and less likely to be 'building Britain'. They endure the stereotype twice – as both Irish and Tyneside men – yet within their local spheres, these traditionalists are celebrated and revered. Perhaps though what we see through the renaissance is that by pursuing (as Bob puts it) 'culture, music, entertainment all the rest of

it', men of Irish descent are afforded wider respect and recognition. Contrary to the post-colonial reading of the feminised Irish nation as further marginalising them and rendering them as subordinate to the rational hegemonic Britishness, we see the establishment of status – a status which counters the 'thick' and unintelligent stereotypes as it develops and thrives in the creative and knowledge economies.

Bob:

> You can stand up for what's right and wrong. You don't have to be histrionic about it. And be included. You can be a good fella, and be the life and soul of the party. And still appreciate I dunno, culture, music, entertainment all the rest of it. And contribute to all of that. And I suppose it's a bit strange and highfalutin to talk about a renaissance man being a Tyneside based musician, but absolutely. I think it taught me you can be a renaissance man from Walker or Byker or Heaton [Tyneside locations], or anywhere…
>
> ...There was my dad's mate, you know who's dead now, and he was somebody who taught me you can be a Geordie – and a very proud Geordie – but you can also be artistic. 'Cos he was a tremendous artist. He designed the logo of the Tyneside Irish Centre [see Figure 10]. Completely uncredited. But he just did it in half an hour. And he had a wonderful ability to do handwriting and design and he was interested in all kinds of music. He was interested in art and he knew a lot about it. But if you talked to him, you know if a journalist just met him off the train or something like that, they'd think "oh he's just a thick Geordie" you know. So I learned from more people than my father about how it is and examples of if you like, masculinity. So my belief in masculinity, 'cos there's no avoiding it, if you're a man, you're a man, you can't exactly…I know some people want to be, but you just can't help it; so you've got to make the best of it...
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

Within the spheres of Bob's masculine world, aesthetics are valued. In a different way to the metrosexuals of the previous chapter, we see men who counter their marginalised 'thick' labels. It is implied that those attributing these stereotypes are from outwith the region; the reference to a journalist meeting him off a train sees parallels with Simon's earlier narrative of people wanting to be journalists in London. On the local scale, this working-class man is celebrated, proud of what outsiders would call 'thick Geordies'. What we see in

this example is how there is space within the Geordie identity for embracing the artistic world. Simultaneously, there is a suggestion that this nuance will not be recognised by those from outside the region. Nevertheless, while space may be created for more inclusive masculinities locally, as the next three examples reveal, the hegemonic and traditional legacies remain prevalent.

Figure 10 Tyneside Irish Centre logo

David:

> And I always thought like "wow, the drums" it's like you're in the army or something; you've got like a tank in front of you. So my sister used to teach me but then she stopped and for four years I did absolutely nothing. But I constantly tapped along to songs and even if you're not playing an instrument everyone taps and foot stomps and so I thought I'd try the drums again, like tried the guitar, cannot play a melody instrument to save my life but as soon as I got on the drums I felt a natural feeling, it really is a gift that I have somehow clinged onto. And hopefully I can do that for the rest of my life

> (student, 16, 2nd generation Irish, he is Daniel's grandson).

So David's aspirations as the son of Dominic (who works for the emergency services) are striking. He talks of music coming quite naturally to him. He says he was brought up with music and his interests are wide ranging. His descriptions of playing the drums are fascinating though, with his playing constructed as militarised and made masculine. We see further evidence of masculine dominant performance with Daniel, David's grandfather:

Daniel:

> Ok so here we go… I would go like that, and it's deliberately green because if it was round the back it would have pleats. And I'll just put pleats there. 'Cos that's my kilt. And I was very proud as a teenager to wear my green kilt. 'Cos it was green. It could have been saffron, it could have been black. But I had a green kilt. That was my dancing uniform. I knew that that surprised people. But I

> was proud to wear it. I was defiant. “Hey, look at him in the green … hey big girl”. Not at all. And me and three or four of me mates would chase them kids that were shouting at us and we would frighten them…kilts and all
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

Daniel then is confidently attributing values of pride and defiance (see also Chapter 4) to his dancing, and he counters other people’s perceptions of his ‘girlyness’ with masculine dominance (‘we would frighten them’). In looking at both Daniel’s and David’s narratives we see a pride in Irish culture (see also O’Connor 2014). In another familial interaction we see Dan and his son, Tim, discuss his career plans:

Dan (father):

> Yeah it’s the directing/production side of it you’re into isn’t it [Son]?

Tim (son):

> Yeah I am [Dad], but I’d still like to be an actor. One thing I’d love to be is a James Bond.

Dan (father):

> Me too!

Michael:

> Brilliant, what is it about James Bond then?

Tim (son):

> He looks after himself. And erm, it’s really entertaining, it’s fun. I always enjoy them.

Michael:

> And he goes round killing people...

Tim (son):

> Exactly!

Dan (father):

> That’s manly. And kissing beautiful ladies!

Tim (son):

> That’s definitely manly!
>
> (engineer, 40, 3rd generation Irish and his son, 11, also 3rd generation Irish due to his maternal grandfather).

So even the most artistic, most 'feminised' workings of the body, the 'fleshy characteristics' of playing music ('you've got a tank in front of you'), dancing ('we would frighten them'), and acting ('kissing beautiful ladies') were rationalised, justified and 'masculinised' into an alternative hegemony. So the renaissance opens the door to alternative masculinities and occupational trajectories yet the prevailing hegemony is ever present. The renaissance men themselves are artists, academics and scientists. They have chosen different paths to their inherited traditional working legacies, but these (feminised) pursuits are rationalised and performed as masculine – such is the bind of the localised hegemony. We see the assertion of masculine dominance in different ways in these three examples: with David and his grandfather Daniel, their complicit masculinities emerge from within the social context of childhood play; with Tim and his father Dan however we see a more contrived performance. Tim's father clearly underplays the acting aspirations of his son, who in response portrays his ambitions as 'more manly' in front of his father (and myself as male researcher).

Paradoxically we see a subversion of the hegemony with Peter (a traditionalist of Chapter 6) as demonstrated in the narrative of his son, Simon:

Simon:

> I think definitely with dad he probably wants to break away from that stereotype. I think like when he leaves work he'll want to leave that behind. He's liking his tweed jackets at the minute. Liking to dress up a little bit more than normal. They just had to buy a new wardrobe to put them all in. Most men would buy like a Harley or a Porsche 911, but he's bought tweed jackets
>
> (industrial chemist, 21, 6th generation Irish).

By 'dressing up a little bit more than normal' and not buying into the working-class garish stereotype of the material performance, we see Peter's more subtle approach, his renaissance transition from working-class man to gentleman, embodied by the aforementioned tweed jacket. It is noteworthy that it was not Peter who talked about his fashion sense rather it was his son who brought this up; certainly items of clothing are rarely topics of conversation between men in pubs. Alongside the tweed, Peter has been learning to play the fiddle; and he

told me how he was self-teaching via instructional videos on YouTube. Ironically, it is the very computer technology that he claimed in Chapter 6 has changed the workplace that is enabling him to elude his working-class gendered performance. So we see the renaissance men of David (aspiring musician), Daniel (retired teacher) and Tim (aspiring actor) reasserting aspects of their artistic lives through masculine rationalisation, whereas with the traditionalist Peter (mechanic) we see an artistic escapism. Perhaps the grass *is* always greener on the other side! What we see is the fluid and multiple nature of masculinities, with men's performances moving between categories; the reworking of masculinity is shaped in particular by the narration of cultural pursuits as masculine activities. Progressing from mechanics and engineering to the labour of art, academia and science, these renaissance men (the musicians, lecturers, and doctors) move towards the 'professional middle classes'.

7.2 The gentlemen

Joseph:

> I've always been someone, I think, who people go to talk to. Especially if you're thinking about masculinity and that kinda thing. I get the impression and people have said to me that "you're a good listener". You know if you've got a problem "go and talk to me", and I don't know why that is? [My wife] has this…[laughs]…myself and the lads from Dublin, there's 11 of us in a real kind of core, 11 lads and then girlfriends as well. There's 11 lads and most of us went through school together and there was a nickname, initially when we were about 16, and it was "the gentlemen". Just kind of well-read, poetic, chivalrous guys. It's bullshit. But we were known as "the gentlemen". And then a couple of years later there was two "honourary gentlemen" added to that group after we went travelling for a month. We play up to it now a little bit. I don't think anybody…I think I'm probably the only one who has referred to the gentlemen, right now, for about 5 years. Noone's called anybody "the gentlemen" for a while…and it's really contrived, it certainly feels a little bit contrived now. But there was something in it, you know
>
> (student, 30, Irish born).

Joseph talks of ‘well-read, poetic and chivalrous’ men. Certainly ‘the gentlemen’ he describes aptly contribute to Bob’s earlier introduction of the renaissance men [see Figure 11]. His claims of ‘bullshit’ are almost tokenistic, in an obligatory reaffirmation of his masculinity; which his mention of his wife also achieves. This conforms to the hegemonic and heterosexual masculinity. As will become evident in the second section of his narrative, clearly there is more than ‘something in it’ and that he believes with conviction that ‘the gentlemen’ are different to other men. He continues:

> Whatever but…[my wife] always thinks you know…“you guys are so gay”. And our sort of retort to that, if you like is, we’re “closet heterosexuals”. ‘Cos we’re all lovey-dovey and hugs and pals. And you know, it’s the most comfortable thing in the world. But there’s also, the only other thing that feels as comfortable, and I know people read into this and have their own thoughts about it, but I thoroughly, thoroughly enjoy the company of females; more so than most groups of male friends. You know you get, I mean you can guess, but you get “you know you’re married” whatever, “what are you doing hanging about with a load of girls like?” But I genuinely love that. I don’t know what it is. To be stereotypical, I’m not a gossip. There’s something about…maybe it’s the inherent emotional make-up of me or whatever but I do love the company of females. There’s something you get out of that that you don’t get when you’re with the lads, the only group of lads that I get that with are “the gentlemen”
>
> (student, 30, Irish born).

Joseph talks of being comfortable, even being more comfortable, in the company of women; a feeling that can only be replicated with ‘the gentlemen’. So ‘the gentlemen’ are aligned with women, with females. Hegemonic pressures throw two separate issues at this renaissance man. On the one hand he is challenged by his wife (jokingly) and his own preconceptions as demonstrating homosexual performances. In relation to the stereotype of gay men enjoying the company of women more than other men, Joseph counters this with ‘I’m not a gossip’. Conversely, there is the concurrent opinion that his socialising with groups of women as a married man is inappropriate precisely because of his heterosexuality.

Figure 11 Joseph

Not only do these discussions challenge recent claims of the declining significance of homophobia (McCormack 2012) with evidence of ‘so gay’ being used as a casual joke/insult which serves to normalise homosexual subordination, but more significantly for this research, it speaks to how strongly the renaissance has emerged on Tyneside. David states ‘‘cos you get gay people, and like very camp people, who class themselves as being in the wrong body; but I’d say that definitely what you have down in that area [pointing to the genitals on the outline image, see Chapter 2] classes what you are and I don’t think that can change’. For clarity, David believes that if you are gay, you were born gay, it is a natural occurrence. What is interesting is that he equates this feeling to a transgendered notion of being in the wrong body. It is the transgendered element which he cannot comprehend. Indeed this idea was present in another narrative, that of Bob, who quoted a Robbie Burns poem that his grandmother used to recite ‘a man’s a man for aw that’. He claims despite the desire of some people to change, if you are a man, you are a man. For these men of Irish descent, transgender identities are unacceptable and not natural, unlike homosexuality.

David:

> I’d also say your brain and your personality ‘cos you get gay people, and like very camp people who class themselves as being born in the wrong body, but I’d say that definitely what you have down in that area classes

> what you are and I don't think that can change. Though equally I think what makes a man is your personality and then like all of these sort of real manly bits, like if you're a coward or not. And what type of stuff comes into that? That's really your brain and your personality
>
> (student, 16, 2nd generation Irish).

So we see the 'real manly bits' include the brain and personality. Across the study men state despite their religious backgrounds they recognise homosexuality. Despite these challenges, men spoke openly of these 'feminised' and 'queer' qualities as aspects of their masculinities. I was surprised that in the face of the prevailing hegemony there was this bold embrace of the 'feminine side'. Perhaps though, given the heteronormative assumptions rife across this research, some of the men felt secure enough to flirt with the feminine in the knowledge that no serious challenge would ever surface to their masculinity. Their Irish, Geordie, and at times religious masculinities are sufficiently resilient to endure disparaging jokes about their sexuality; epitomised by the ultimate subversion – the concept of 'closet heterosexuality'.

These qualities are aligned with an Irishness that mirrors the colonial legacy. The artistic, creative and, as a following section of Seamus' narrative shows, 'irrational' is seen as 'Irish'.

Seamus:

> One of my things – I write poetry – you know, I'm a story teller. And that's probably from the Irish. I mean even the other day, I saw a guy that reminded me of my Uncle Tom, and I always think of the story about this guy who had no teeth but he killed a bear and he took the bear's teeth out so he could eat it, 'cos he was starving, and you're a kid and you think "that can't be right" but do you know what I mean? I was brought up in that sort of tradition. And parties were kind of wild and you'd get drunk and there'd be arguments, and they'd make up again. Which was very different from the middle-class background that I had, and frankly I preferred it. I mean my dread when I was growing up would have been to live in suburbia
>
> (retired policeman/writer, 62, 3rd generation Irish).

So the Irish qualities of being both poetic and drunk, of being a story-teller and argumentative are seen more favourably than the 'middle-class' experiences of suburban England. Being Irish then is being defined by what it is not: it is not sober, it is not passive, and it is not middle-class. As this renaissance reveals, there is more to the drunken Irishman and unintelligible Geordie. In the next extract we see further explorations of Seamus' Irishness:

Seamus:

> Apart from this photograph – cardboard backed photographs – that my grandmother carried in her handbag, with all the other junk, I didn't feel Irish. I wasn't really conscious of that. My mother was from Norfolk, sort of farm labourer stock. Worked with the houses and the land. And her Dad had been in the army. So her background was South of England, basically Anglo-Saxon. Very English. But in a very working-class way. And nobody in my family, that I encountered of my relatives on Tyneside, spoke with an Irish accent or had any obvious Irish connection except for old Catholicism. But one of the things that I touch on, and it's part of the intuitive part of my personality which is very strong, is that I'm not a great rationalist about things. I go with my gut feelings and they've usually steered me very well. I went to Ireland first in 1968 with my parents. I felt a natural affinity there with people and with places. This was actually mirrored around the same time, when I'd go round little villages in Northumberland – I'd learned to drive – and I'd go to little pubs in you know, fairly remote places. One of the strange and interesting things for me when I began to do the family history research, you know like 15 years later, one of the things I noticed, including the West coast of Ireland and these villages – I had ancestors from these places. And I found this really spooky. I've got no specific beliefs or doctrine – I've got quite an open mind – but it's rather bizarre to me that without any specific Irish connections growing up – you know, you talk about "feeling at home"…I felt at home there
>
> (retired policeman/writer, 62, 3rd generation Irish).

So except for 'old Catholicism' (see Chapter 5) Seamus didn't realise much of his Irish connections until he was older on a visit to the country. We see feelings 'at home' in both Ireland and the North East of England with further distancing from the Englishness of Southern England. There is this linkage with being Irish and 'not being a great rationalist', echoes of the colonial stereotype. Again we

see a celebration of more embodied rationality ('gut feelings') which leads men to construct their masculinities on 'Irish' qualities. These are not men suffering for their post-colonial ethnicity; rather they are embracing it, embodying the stereotype.

7.3 Aspiring to better things

These men are 'renaissance' in the sense that they are transitioning from the scholastic tradition of learning for a practical purpose or 'learning to labour' (Willis 1977). They move towards a more humanistic approach of learning for learning's sake; though admittedly education is seen across migrant populations as a route to social mobility so there is a rationale behind these academic pursuits. Their Irish migrant background encourages these men to partake in scholarly pursuits without threats to their masculinities unlike other young working-class men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Ingram 2009; Mac an Ghaill 1994; Messerschmidt 2012; Nayak 2003a). This is not though without exception, remembering the experiences of the two trained architects and the tensions with their own fathers (see Chapter 6). On this localised scale, men of Irish descent have reclaimed the hegemony of working-class Tyneside, promoting more inclusive masculinities.

Bob:

> So it was that kind of thing, whereby, because I had a nice and comfortable and indulged childhood, I mean both my parents were teachers. Not like their parents, farmers and pitmen. I was able to talk to these people. These people were in the house, they were available. My parents were very sociable people....
>
> ...I think you know, the great salvation for my father and my mother, that's the parity…they probably found many similarities in each other…was the fact that they were both children that had got an education and were the first members of their families that were able to do that. And therefore could expect to live a life which didn't depend on their hands to earn a living and so they could aspire to things which were better. And, I suppose many people would have said oh well in that case, they could have left their national or class consciousness behind them, but they didn't, they retained that bit of it. That was always very important to them...

(financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

So 'aspiring to things that were better' was to utilise the mind as well as the body. We see the distancing and downgrading of the value of hands, which personified for both the traditionalists and metrosexuals their working-class masculinities ('hands like shovels'; 'get your hands dirty'). We see that through experiencing education beyond the inherited working traditions comes an expectation to 'expect to live a better life'; alongside this is, nevertheless, adulation regarding the working-class legacy. So, while post-industrial Tyneside is a participant in the creative and knowledge economy, the men of my research are not creative practitioners. As Simon stated earlier 'no one in our family has ever been like a graphic designer or a journalist or whatever'. There are however teachers, musicians, scientists (as well as mechanics) who take pride in their 'Irish' cultural leisure pursuits. These men often occupy multiple positions, having been soldiers and now students, or policemen and now writers. There does seem to be a classed performance – reminiscent of the work of Hoggart (1957) is his descriptions of class displacement after winning Grammar School scholarships – a self-deprecating, overly modest outlook whereby the men do not want to seem (publicly) to be bettering themselves, or losing their family traditions (which some of the men attribute to being an Irish quality). There are no graphic designers or journalists in the study, but there are men who symbolise the three strands of the 'Tyneside Irish renaissance', the artists, the academics and the scientists.

Bob:

> I often say to people that we're the luckiest generation because I knew what it was like to get coal out of the coal bunker, so I can appreciate the sacrifice…but I never had to go down the pit. I was never even threatened with it; never even a possibility. We're of the generation that still got a grant for going to university. The suggestion of paying university tuition fees was just a complete no; nobody would even dare mention that sort of stuff. So we had all of that but principally we had access to the memories of our grandparents, whether they were alive or dead on all sides. We were able to infiltrate the values that they'd learned in the real bit of school, in the 1920s and 30s…literally on one side in war and revolution and terror and ethnic cleansing; and on the other side in general strikes and means tests and hunger and all that sort of

> stuff. And the knowledge that you stick by your community.
>
> (financial advisor, 42, 3rd generation Irish).

A striking finding from the study was how highly educated these men of Irish descent are. There is Paul with his PhD in Chemistry, Jerry with his PhD in Sociology and Declan with his PhD in Film Studies. Additionally, there were many others with degrees and of those who did not attend university, most pursued further education and training opportunities through their employment[23]. Perhaps this was a generational experience; certainly it is the men aged 45-65 that have benefited from as Bob puts it, 'never having to go down the pit'. This intergenerational significance is typified by Victor's account:

Victor:

> One son who you've never met, he's an academic. He took his BA as a mature student. You've also got to recognise the progress from way back when those people were really struggling to survive. And that we've always said "well I'm better off than my parents and their parents beforehand". And then there's the academic side – we've got two in the family, the immediate family, that have got a BA, then there's the other side, nephews and whatever with the BA and me brother of course. But that is progress
>
> (retired engineer, 80, 4th generation Irish).

Whether as a renaissance man, and certainly as a traditionalist or metrosexual (of Chapter 6), the working-class legacy has continued through an inheritance of culture and identity. But economic change in more recent times has brought about new factors. Victor talks about the 'progression' in developing the family working legacy, of bettering it. His grandson is now a scientist, experimenting with and furthering knowledge of paint, whereas previous generations of his family, and specifically his own grandfather, cleaned off paint while making wooden barrels. But the economic climate is such that Victor's son (the mature student who I have not met) has since returned to his sheet metal work as (I am told) the pay is better working on offshore projects than the (non-existent) academic work his literature studies made available to him. We see limits then to the progression that Victor talks of. Yes the renaissance has opened doors with greater access to social mobility through education; within his family though, the progression has remained within an industrial context. We have

seen successful renaissance progression from Doctor John, the son of a policeman; mature student Bill, the son of a soldier and a former soldier himself. This shows the value of my intergenerational approach as what these men have in common is that both of their fathers made this transition away from the working histories of the traditional masculinities first. John's father, Seamus left the police to become a writer and Bill's father, Justin became a school headmaster after leaving the army.

While clearly it was challenging for those older men to take the first steps into alternative careers they were supported with funding and government initiatives to do so. So what of those men who would not consider themselves a success story? We have seen the metrosexual architects (Chapter 6) seeking high paid and high skilled employment through the pursuit of knowledge and academic expertise, yet failing to achieve it and having to 'settle' for low skilled, low paid work; thus reigniting the allure of the working family histories. We see also in the aspiring artistic careers of David and Tim a desire to rationalise their choices through dominant hegemonic discourse. I would say that the men of Irish descent in this study (the renaissance men as well as the traditionalists and the metrosexuals) straddle both these classed perspectives to demonstrate an 'embodied rationality'. Overall, the participant families were supportive of academic pursuits as progress. The renaissance men, but also the metrosexuals and traditionalists, see value in school and university, yet pressures from the economy render these options increasingly precarious (McDowell et al 2009). Those who are going to university, to 'better' themselves and their working trajectories are finding their transition more risky and more fragile.

The fathers and grandfathers are also challenged 'faced with the prospect that their sons will no longer have better lives than their own' (McDowell 2003: 222). Contrary to Victor's earlier recollection, they will be tasked to work for longer and postpone retirement plans if they choose to support their sons; stuck in a prolonged period of childhood dependency and 'downward intergenerational mobility' (McDowell 2003: 59). Perhaps then the children of these families, who would appear to have 'progressed' into the professional middle-classes, are suffering most. Too poor to rely on savings and

assets, their capital still tied to their physical working capacities and incomes, yet not poor enough to receive state support. What is significant is that the men who moved from the working-class jobs of their fathers and grandfathers toward middle-class professional careers are feeling a greater sense of financial insecurity on contemporary Tyneside than those who stayed within manual labour occupations.

Times have changed and for the men of my study their workplaces are no longer as hazardous as they once were on industrial Tyneside. Science has developed; the men no longer work in dangerous times. Admittedly, there are some men who do still risk their lives for work (as soldiers, emergency servicemen and the few remaining industrial workers), but as Billy's (metrosexual of Chapter 6) narrative typifies, it is more that, in response to economic change, aspirations have also altered.

Billy:

> I fly, socialise with friends, dance the night away and constantly think of new experiences and challenges to take on before my time is up. I feel I have the potential, well, a greater hope to experience more than other men in my family. I live by a motto…"Dreamers Do Not Care". I feel my experiences are totally different in terms of religion, opinions and actions
>
> (pilot, 24, Northern Irish born).

So it is these renaissance 'dreams' that, for Billy, explain his lofty ambitions of wanting to better himself 'before [his] time is up'. His motto is paradoxical as his proactive approach to life shows just how much he does care with his foresight and planning. The hopes and dreams – guided by his religious beliefs – are far from 'care-free'. It was strange to me, to see young men talk so freely of death; a fact of life which I (aged 25) so rarely entertain in my own mind. The words of an older man, Mark (aged 48), possibly offers a 'renaissance' explanation:

Mark:

> I would like to be seen as the Irish lad…or "that's because he's from Ireland". I'm not saying if I do something bad, "that's 'cos he's from Newcastle", no, but there's lots of things…like I say, me sense of humour that's come from Ireland. You kna, you can joke about death. You know

> some people in England, they just cannot handle it. Whereas from a very early age me and me brother, would be serving at a funeral, we used to get time off from school, to go down and serve at a funeral. And thinking, "hey this is a doddle this like", you know what I mean? And obviously you'd stretch it out as long as possible, and so we would see the coffin. And you see, a lot of people now, in that, my age, 40s and 50s, death/coffins, you know, they cannot handle it, but I would say, being Irish, it's a dunno…I just think the Irish handle death and bodies and whatever
>
> (policeman, 48, 2nd generation Irish).

I did not know what Mark meant, that is until recently, and the passing of my Grandfather as well as the death of a close family friend. It was these experiences however which affected my outlook towards life and death, and not any innate Irishness. We see evidence of the 'Irish' sense of humour as essential to dealing with these issues, though this is also valued as a North Eastern trait:

Seamus:

> I was always proud of my [Irish] background but I would always be classed as a Geordie rather than an Englishman. Although funnily enough I feel more English up here [Scotland]. I have lots of discussions in the pub and get lots of flack when the Euros [football tournament] are on; but I have my own way of dealing with it…which is mainly one of humour. Which you know, is part of the Geordie tradition that I'm thankful for. Banter is part and parcel of my personality
>
> (retired policeman/writer, 62, 3rd generation Irish).

As recounted in earlier discussions, both Irish and Geordie identities sit in opposition to Englishness though the Scottish factor confuses this further (see discussion in Chapter 3). What I argue is that the Tyneside Irish renaissance encompasses more than occupational aspirations but embraces embodied characteristics. For traditional working men 'risk' is physically engrained, risk to the body is a fundamental risk to working capabilities; whereas 'renaissance risk' is more emotional, intellectual, financial; relying on flexibility and adaptability. I see this in Daniel's narrative (see Figure 4):

Daniel:

> Here's a good one…oh right, if I do that for my heart and its beating…it's bump, bump, bump, bump…'cos that's 'cos I think I'm brave. I'm brave in what I say; I'm brave in what I do. I take chances "come on!" What is it, "if you don't do anything, you'll never do anything different". And you know, I think I've got an edge on a lot of people. The vast majority of people. You know, I'm brave – I can do stuff and take a chance. I've had seven careers, I mean that's brave when you're enjoying something and yet you say "there's something else there"
>
> (retired teacher, 65, 4th generation Irish).

His bravery ('I take chances') is career driven; it is work related on an intellectual level. Not physically risky to his body though he does embody the risk, it becomes visceral, with a psychological self-motivation 'come on!' Maybe risk is not simply a young man's game but points to a wider masculine tendency. In overcoming adversity or challenge then we see an internalising of these feelings: whether by Daniel's 'heart' or Seamus' 'gut feelings' decisions are being made. For other men of the study upon seeing the outline images, it was the head that featured prominently, often as the root of their masculinities (see Dominic below; also John in Chapter 6). This is more conventional of the hegemonic masculine body: men use their heads and women use their feelings. Though as we have already seen, these men have multiple masculinities and occupy multiple positions.

Dominic:

> I think when you're young…there used to be a phrase "show me the boy at 14 and I'll show you the man at 18". They're the defining years. And because I grew up in Ireland that's sort of – it is in your head – that's what makes me look back and say that I'm Irish. So that's like the defining time. And once you hit your late teens and you sort of become a man and everything else sort of; you know you're busy working, or you're in a relationship or you're getting on with your life. I think it's the earlier years that define you as to where you are and how you are
>
> (emergency serviceman, 50, Irish born).

So aside from the biological changes that puberty brings, we see a conceptualisation of 'growing up Irish'. The experiences between fourteen and eighteen are the 'defining years' of a man's masculinity. It is worth noting that at the time of interviewing Dominic and his son, David was sixteen. Dominic

wanted to be seen to be actively involved in his son's identity formation; we see that while he grew up in Ireland, David did not. Though David holds an Irish passport (as previously discussed in Chapter 4) this was not a request of Dominic but reflective of David's disconnect with his own Englishness, it was likely also to align himself with his dad in these 'defining years'.

I have argued from a particular feminist stance that sees masculinities as 'performances' prescribed by the working practices of a hegemonic, heterosexual model of industrial labour that is both moulded by the region and of Irish heritage; they are inherently classed. In 'doing gender' (Messerschmidt 2012) we see constructions of identity which conform to localised, hegemonic frameworks (with a concurrent resistance to feminised 'Irish' stereotypes) and which adhere to traditional masculine norms through embodied rationality. Place, age, class and family working histories constitute and construct working masculinities differently, with generational differences a significant factor. The performances of masculinities are dependent on the negotiations of what are 'acceptable' and 'respected' (McDowell 2003: 222) masculinities in the way that men 'do gender', and as has been shown, hegemony shifts over generations, over time and over context. This chapter and the one before it have grappled with these wider social structures of power, along with economic change, the wider racialisation of the Irish in Britain, regional stereotypes, sexuality, and sexist discourse.

The empirical findings of my work show that Connell (1995) is right in pointing to working motivations as central to masculine ideologies. However, the men of my study do not explicitly – more implicitly – point to work as a factor in the gendered identity construction.

Michael:

> Is there anything about being a young man Tim that you think is particularly important?

Tim:

> Keep yourself safe. Like I said keep yourself safe, don't get into any trouble. Like grow up and have a good life. Think of your future 'cos you're young and you still have time. So think of your future and think what you wanna do. That's about it

(school pupil, 11, 3rd generation Irish).

In essence Tim is describing the embodied rationality that was outlined earlier in the thesis. ‘Keep yourself safe’ and ‘don’t get into any trouble’ could be referring to economic security as well as physical and social protection that Tim is describing. Indeed the movement into work is the very means to supporting a family and establishing a home (McDowell 2003). Tim’s words have resonance for traditional working men, for (re)working metrosexuals, and for renaissance men alike. The metrosexuals long for elements of the traditional working life of previous generations; the renaissance men are metrosexual in the sense that they place value onto the aesthetic on post-industrial Tyneside; and the traditionalists have shown they are also, at times, artistic.

7.4 Conclusion

So what we have seen in this chapter are men of Irish descent who have devalued colonial stereotypes of subordination by embracing the feminine side of their post-colonial ethnicity. They are not men who suffer for this, but rather embody the ‘irrational’ and thrive in the feminine. As a result, there is the establishment of an alternative hegemony. It is one based upon more inclusive masculinities, which on the local scale sees ‘renaissance’ pursuits of art, academia and science as accepted, even encouraged, by Irish Geordies. The renaissance is more than a focus upon occupational aspirations though and should be seen as holistically embodying characteristics. These are internalised as a visceral rationale, a sense of humour, and the incorporation of a ‘feminine side’ to the hegemonic masculinity.

Driven by generational change, we see men ‘aspiring to better things’ achieved by opening occupational aspirations beyond the previously inherited working family histories. Education is seen as the route to social mobility for these men, and as Irish Geordies they do not suffer in the way other migrant men have (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2003). This is significant as, like other migrant men, the Irish Geordies have the chance to ‘better’ their parents’ generation; employing the brain, seen as a higher level of

working status than working the hands, is incorporated into what it can mean to be a successful, heterosexual man of Irish descent.

The prevalence of the hegemonic, heterosexual and, at times homophobic, masculinity must though be acknowledged. It appears through the occurrence of the casual equation of ‘feminine’ as ‘homosexual’; the curious example of enjoying the company of women as both ‘gay’ and voraciously heterosexual. More often though its emergence is through what I have called embodied rationality. In overcoming the ‘irrational’ and emotional aspects of their feminine masculinities, we see a discourse which keeps these men as manly, keeps their masculinities, masculine. Occupying these multiple positionalities is a recurring theme throughout this chapter, and indeed through this thesis. Transcending between categories as traditionalist, metrosexual, and renaissance enables these men to negotiate their masculinities in nuanced and individualised ways. Economic change in wider society has halted the success of the renaissance. Perhaps this explains why the four metrosexuals (of Chapter 6) chose to return to the traditional working-class legacies, in a pragmatic realisation of the limited opportunities their academic pursuits have offered.

The thesis has been structured around scales of the body, the family, the school and the workplace – though in this renaissance we see a return to the nation. We see once more the embodiment of national identity, of ‘Irish Incarnate’. The Tyneside Irish renaissance allows the men to embrace ‘national’ qualities within their personalities and masculine performances. For these men of Irish descent there is a balance between what is English, what is Irish and what is Geordie. What becomes clear over the course of this chapter is how alike are the characteristics of their Irish and Geordie identities, not least because of their shared distancing from the concept of Englishness. This process is inherently classed.

In returning to the preface to this thesis we see masculinities defined by the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. We have seen that education helps facilitate the state of feeling free within society, from oppressive restrictions imposed by hegemonic masculinities and working legacies. Greater

access to education gives a licence to those who want it, to gain independence of tradition and the inheritance of culture. Importantly though, this licence did not always grant progression, with wider societal pressures influencing routes to social mobility. This is highly significant from an intergenerational perspective. With economic change affecting the parity of esteem, I am critical also as to how equal the men's narratives are… not all the men had the same chances to 'progress', and even for some who did, they saw their transition halted. However, in its fraternal conceptualisation, defined literally as brotherhood, we see men bonded by common interests. These inclusive masculinities mostly recognise the value of art and culture as well as education. There is solidarity with the (admittedly masculinised) artistic Irishness with everyday cultural practices on Tyneside.

What follows in the final chapter, Chapter 8, are the conclusions of the thesis as a whole: the assessment of the project's aims; situating the key findings in amongst the relevant literature to draw on the significances of 'Irish Incarnate' for issues of masculinities and social change. This thesis has articulated the innovative approaches to researching men and masculinities; in particular it has utilised embodiment to get at the heart of the men's engagement with their own masculinities. In many ways, the approach to this research mirrors the Tyneside Irish renaissance. In investigating at the scales of the body, the family, the school and the workplace it has embraced the emotional, visceral, and at times, irrational identification with national identity.

Chapter 8 Conclusions

8.1 Irish masculinities and intergenerational relations

The biographical oral histories in this thesis have helped relate family trajectories of location, mobility and work to transitions of ageing, identity and belonging. The intergenerational study of men and masculinities has shed light on these transitions; seeking out not simply how things change, but why things change, even why at times, things do not change. It explores the ways in which notions of the body, family, school and work have affected masculinity and Irishness; how they have changed, shifted or remained constant across generations and from individual to individual. Emerging from recent debates on the geographies of masculinities is recognition that a combination of identity markers draws more sophisticated conclusions (Hopkins and Noble 2009) and certainly these relational approaches have aided my conceptualisations of men and masculinities, within the Irish diaspora on Tyneside.

Intergenerationality undermines the (previously) narrow focus in social and cultural geography on younger and older age. Developing studies of men within families in this way creates enriched accounts of family matters. Ideas of childhood and generation have been reworked through critiques of the localised and normalised. Studies of intergenerational relationships help eradicate previous dualisms and biological determinants – such as children are not yet adults (Pain et al 2000). This thesis contributes new understandings of men with its generational analysis – or as Bailey (2008: 410) puts it, 'processes of generationing' – which have added to the literatures of gender and generation. Further analyses of lifecourse geographies have been incorporated with my use of diverse methodological approaches; including interviewing with images and embodied intergenerationality. Memorials and biographies have emerged as valuable resources in supporting my contributions to social and cultural geography; I have used the past to elicit comment on the present and the future; like Thomson (2007) I see the biographical perspective as lives lived forwards and understood backwards. McLeod and Thomson (2009: 27) cite the work of Kuhn (1995: 128), to argue 'memory as a "position or point of view in

the current moment" and that memory-work should be seen as 'working backwards – searching for clues, deciphering signs and traces, making deductions, patching reconstructions from fragments of evidence' (Kuhn 1995: 4). But as Bailey warns the use of memory is not perfect:

> 'As lifecourse resources, processes of remembering and forgetting emerge as productive topics for reflection, not least, of course, because memories "are always mediated" (Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004: 229), with gaps, silences and absences presumably unfolding over lifecourses in relational ways' (Bailey 2008: 413).

In reviewing Irish masculinities and intergenerational relations, I think back to my immediate readings of the biographical narratives and embodied masculinities and what I saw was a love of life and appreciation of the everyday. Throughout the thesis we hear the words of older men, wise men, who have thought long and hard about life itself. We hear from younger men who have taken on board aspects of life experience of the older men in their own daily lives. They in turn pass some of this onto their own children and younger relatives. There are men that are younger still and who even at this early stage of their lives are considered and insightful in their contributions to this research. We see them develop their identities from what they have been told, what they have learned and what they have themselves experienced. I ask, are these threads typical in Irish men? Is there the same love of life, adaptability and drive to make the best of every situation? If so, is this what truly makes a person Irish? Certainly it is their appreciation for education that makes them so articulate. In thinking about their ancestry, we see some of them claim being Irish was part of a bigger identity of being Celtic. Perhaps it is not just adhering to Irish culture, not just feeling or appearing Irish, but *having Irishness* and *having Celticness* that matters most. When the culture has gone, there is a feeling that attachment and belonging will live on through an inheritance of culture. Culture and identity are of course not truly genetic or biological; they are learned, imagined and constructed but it is often via this primal landscape of socialisation that they can seem inherited, inevitable and natural things that people have. Anderson (2006: 5) states:

> 'The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept – in the modern world everyone can, should, will "have" a nationality, as

> he or she "has" a gender – vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations, such that, by definition [Irish] nationality is sui generis'.

So this paradox, above all others present in the thesis, epitomises my research: the *collective* togetherness of the *unique* characteristics of Irish/Celtic national identity. I adapt Anderson's original words to posit that it is this trade-off between having and being Irish that best summarises the 'Irish Incarnate' of the men of my study.

This thesis has highlighted ways in which identities can become embodied and emplaced; ultimately how men can grow up as 'Irish subjects'. The chapters have revealed how men, within the context of the Tyneside Irish diaspora, construct their national identity. The particular challenges of this research lay in presenting my understanding of their identities and subjectivities. According to Wells (2014: 266):

> 'The actual practices through which we come to understand ourselves as people with a gender and an ethnicity are the clearest examples of the double-meaning of subjectivity. These practices subject us to the will of others and at the same time produce the subject - our gendered, racialised selves - who can then act from the position of being socially recognised persons'.

So the men of my research are 'socially recognisable' as belonging to a Tyneside Irish community. As individuals and within family networks, the men of my study are residents of this area. However, it is in their cultural practice that the identities of these (mostly) English born men become embodied and emplaced as 'Irish'. The men draw on intergenerational relationships which structure their experiences. In this ambitious study, I used the existing family dynamics as markers of generation (grandfathers, fathers and sons) and saw these as of crucial importance. It was difficult to hold together these different threads of analysis as I targeted my research to explore to what extent the men were invested in such categorisations.

> 'It is often presumed through the assertion that all people have social identities that these socially ascribed identities, such as ethnicity, gender [generation] and sexuality, are taken up by individuals as meaningful self-descriptions that they are deeply and self-reflexively invested in' (Wells 2014: 263).

As I have argued, I found that the men identified more along intergenerational lines (as fathers and sons) than as descendants of Irish ancestors. A theme cherished by all my participants was the significance of family, and while I have always labelled the subjects of this thesis as first, second, third etc. generation Irish, I have not shaped my analysis thus. Literatures on the Irish in Britain *are* drawn as such, as are wider literatures on migration (Brannen 2012; Brannen et al 2013; Brannen et al 2011). For me to draw conclusions on the experience of, for example, second generation Irishmen, I would be comparing the lives of an octogenarian with a teen; the analysis would be of little social or geographical significance. As Berg and Longhurst (2003: 352) state:

> 'Given the importance of contexts, relationships, and practices in both the (re)construction of masculinity and the way that we come to understand the meanings of the term, it should be very clear that masculinity is both temporally and geographically contingent'.

While I do not want to dismiss existing conceptualisations within disapora studies through my reflections, I find the work of Boyle (2001: 433 *original emphasis*) helpful in reviewing my handling of Irish masculinities and intergenerational relations. He proclaims:

> 'On the face of it, mapping the historical geography of nationalism in diasporic communities ought to be a misnomer; after all, the very essence of the term *diaspora,* as originally conceived at any rate, assumes tautologically the existence of an *entire group* of homesick, nostalgic, and fiercely patriotic international exiles. Everywhere ought to be a hotbed of nationalistic sentiment!'

The italicised emphasis and exclamation suggest to me, that Boyle adopts an incredulous approach towards this sentiment. In my study neither everyone nor everywhere boasts nationalistic; in fact, through these chapters I see a great sense of regional pride prioritised over state sentiment. It is through the complexity of this study that we can see an important contribution to social geography precisely because of its nuance and subjectivity.

8.2 Summary of thesis

Contributions to critical geographies of masculinity have been made by focussing on the myriad of everyday practices and performances of

masculinities over different generations. In many ways this thesis is about being a man in contemporary society – the subtle nuances in identity formation, the (at times) absence of religion, class or national affiliations and the embodiment of 'Irish' characteristics that are of salient importance for drawing conclusions on what I have called 'Irish Incarnate'. I return to these in the next section on my key contributions.

In introducing masculinities, through Chapters 1 and 2, I situate my empirical research with thirty eight men of Irish descent within the wider literatures on the geographies of masculinities and of the Irish in Britain. Chapter 1 in particular introduces myths surrounding Irish experiences of migration and subsequent settlement and integration. The economic, political and social surroundings of Tyneside proved particularly significant to the establishment of an Irish community. The identities of the Tyneside Irish are just that; they are Tyneside's Irish, with the role of the host region and community highly relevant in preventing any ghettoisation. A study of the Irish on Tyneside – as opposed to Tyneside's Irish – would be very different. These are studies of men of Irish descent which present processes of attachment and belonging differently to the prevailing literatures.

Chapter 2 contributes to methodological advancements for those who study men and masculinities, the politics of representation and ethics in social research more broadly. It focuses on the particularities of researching men and masculinities; drawing from newer literatures in response to calls for greater critical attention to fieldwork experiences as well as to established and seminal work on gender and generation. Methodologically, this research seeks to overcome perceived and predicated difficulties in researching men, masculinities and embodiment. Rather than being innovative per se, it creatively draws from research across the humanities and social sciences to develop an open and ethical research process to elicit partial, yet rich and detailed, biographical oral histories. Going beyond the 'ivory academic towers', beyond the bounded walls of conventional dissemination practice, this research was returned through performance, through theatre, through the spoken word. For greatest impact, the research was fed back through the wholly appropriate medium that in fact generated the data in the first place. Verbatim theatre

captures and frames the ‘messiness’ of the everyday; I also see it as an ideal vehicle to translate ethnographic methods to the stage. In particular, considering the specifics of my research approach – including participant observation and in depth biographical interviewing – it was the utterances and narrative asides that proved so interesting. Verbatim theatre frames this so precisely. I studied each embodied narrative with the help of a self-drawn visual outline image. All participants read their own life through their lived experiences in a process affecting both interviewer and interviewee in what I call ‘embodied intergenerationality’ – the incarnation of family position.

Chapter 3 contributes to understandings of masculine performances at the intersections of place, age and masculinity as well as to the changing positionalities as research ‘insider’ and participant observer. Critical engagements with these intimate spaces of men and masculinities are rare within the discipline; and with the exception of Nayak and Aitken, few men have done so from an explicitly heterosexual stance. Developing from the scale of the body, Chapter 4 advances geographical knowledge of fathering within the family context. Drawing from their forefathers, we have seen the construction of Irish masculinity based on the legacies of men and masculinities at war, in politics and more domestically in the familial home. The relational construction of masculinities is also set against the important role women and their femininities play in the lives of men of Irish descent. Chapter 5 tackles religion through the scale of the school, one of the major underpinning influences for these men of Irish descent. In researching at the intersections of school and spirituality we see men’s reading and remembering of their religious upbringing and its relevance to their everyday and increasingly secularised lives on Tyneside. Institutions of the school and the church are challenged and a more hybrid performance of Christianity emerges.

Chapter 6 explores the overriding presence of class, especially working-class masculine cultures which prove hugely influential in the construction of masculine performance at work. Highly contrived at times, class becomes a benchmark of masculinity, of Irishness and of vocation. I consider these men as traditionalist (they are employed in jobs similar to their inherited working histories) and as metrosexual (young post-industrial men who conform to the

traditional patriarch through the establishment of a new hegemonic masculinity). Chapter 7 then develops the particular nationalised significance of class where, in a distinction from working-class experience more generally, a significant number of men of Irish descent are encouraged to shape their masculinity against 'renaissance' ideals. This referred to the more feminised conceptualisation that sees art, culture and education incorporated into the hegemonic framework. This brings us to the present chapter where I review both masculinities and intergenerational relations from across this research.

8.3 Key Contributions

Before focussing my conclusions on three key masculinities to which my research has contributed – embodied, familial and Irish – I return to my three research aims.

> Aim 1) Investigating the relationship between place, age and masculinities

My first aim was to investigate the relationship between place, age and masculinity. In eliciting the embodied and emplaced narratives of these men, I wanted to contribute to the geographies of masculinities. I set out to draw on intersectional identity formations; and my key findings included the significance of class position and inherited familial and gendered expectations in the construction of masculinities.

> Aim 2) Understanding the intersections of masculinity with roles within the family

Secondly, I proposed to enhance understandings of men as grandfathers, fathers and sons at the intersections between masculinity and family roles. Through developing the concept of embodied intergenerationality, I have advanced work on familial masculinities. The thesis has shown the incarnation of family position, relative age and gendered expectations, in identity constructions of Tyneside Irish men.

> Aim 3) Exploring socio-economic change and its effects on masculinities

Finally I set out to explore socio-economic change over time and its effects on Irish masculinities, by studying at the scales of the body, the family, the school, the workplace and the nation. While significant generational differences have acted as a force of change in the lives of these men, individual circumstances remain of paramount importance.

8.3.1 Embodied masculinities

Throughout this thesis (and through my project dissemination) I have deconstructed perceptions of men in crisis. The aims of my research were to establish resonance, understanding and multiple meanings of masculinities. These factors work to negate crises. As Nayak and Kehily (2013: 51) identified, young men are labelled 'in crisis' because they have been 'economically and culturally displaced'. The men in my study have indeed been both economically (downward intergenerational mobility) and culturally (contemporary, and increasingly secular, Tyneside) displaced; but like Nayak and Kehily 'while recognising the widespread impact of global restructuring of gender relations our attention is drawn to the limitations and contradictions of these repertoires' (ibid). Furthermore, McDowell (2003: 98) notes that the power of this 'crisis in masculinity' notion lies in its denial of social and spatial variation. Social and cultural geographers have however been 'rethinking the dominant paradigm' (Nayak and Kehily 2013: 52) for some time. Since Clare's (2001) work *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis,* we have seen numerous critiques and more nuanced accounts of enriched, empirical understandings of young men (Whitehead 2002; McDowell 2003; Noble 2007; Hopkins 2009).

I reflect back to my earlier analysis of the politics of representation – that having a large and varied audience of people engaging emotionally and critically with men's lives, generates greater levels of meaning and brings the (previously) untold stories of everyday men to the fore. As Nayak and Kehily (2008; 2013) illuminate, these symbolic representations of masculinity can also be problematic; as exampled by the film 'Fight Club', with its essentialist portrayal of a single embodied notion of masculinity. As has been demonstrated by the men of my study, masculinities are more nuanced than this; the metrosexual emergence and the renaissance enlightenment being just two

examples. The film's relevance however, and indeed the notion of crises in masculinity more broadly, remains. As a cultural reference it has featured in this thesis, used in the narrative of one of my own participants (Declan), and on a larger scale it has been used in the policy making of the UK's Shadow Health Minister. While scholars in social and cultural geography have helped debunk myths of masculinity, the need for detailed accounts of multiple masculinities remains ever present.

I have conducted my research in a way sympathetic to the psycho-social subtleties present in constructions of masculinity, along classed and nationalistic lines (Jimenez and Walkerdine 2011; Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012). In an attempt to help answer McDowell's (2003: 98) question of 'what the consequences of this crisis might be?' this thesis has elucidated rich and detailed accounts of embodied masculinities. For me, the very notion of crisis discourse is unhelpful. It is used to explain phenomena in a way that ignores men's engagement with issues of embodied masculinities. The affective and emotional are shown through the reworkings of tradition, hegemony and patriarchy. Rather I see these embodied masculinities contributing to critical men's studies in more productive ways. In encouraging men to reflect on their own lives, I am challenging dominant preconceptions of what it means to be a contemporary Tyneside Irish man.

Beyond the epistemological question raised by Nayak and Kehily (2013) of how can masculinity be in crisis if the construct itself has no tangible presence but merely cultural meaning, are the reworkings and negotiations of traditional and inherited masculinities. It is these that contribute to the 'long-awaited challenge to the patriarchal order' (Nayak and Kehily 2013: 66), a challenge long campaigned for by feminist geographers. Hopkins (2009: 300) argues that the crisis of masculinity discourse could then be considered an 'anti-feminist tool'. With reference to the Women and Equality Pay Unit of the UK Government, he explains how the discourse serves to place blame for men's problems at the feet of women's successes despite evidence which emphasises that women in full time employment are still earning less per hour than their male counterparts.

In order to ‘frame’ these embodied masculinities, I cite the method of Aitken’s (2009:20) ethnopoetry. He states that ‘there is no social generalizability from stories of these kind but there are, through the intensity of the emotional recollection, eidetic pointers to larger changes and transformations’. More specifically, in reviewing the masculinities of this thesis we see the prevalence of paradox through the men’s narratives. Clearly, the use of ethnopoetry highlights the potentially exploitative nature of the researcher role, in ‘cherry-picking’ quotations to illustrate arguments that the participants themselves did not want to make. I argue though, that the academic process is not too dissimilar to its creative counterpart: whether articulating one’s argument by choosing the ‘best’ fieldwork data to illustrate a point or as an artist juxtaposing, framing and creating. More significantly, it is this inherently classed performance of paradox – the deliberate narration of contradictory statements to subdue and obscure the engagement with embodiment, emotion and masculinity – that I argue is currently under-researched within academic literature.

I was struck by the prevalence of paradox within the embodied narratives. I understand paradox to be a statement that, while seeming to contradict itself, still rings true; in the performances of Irish masculinity, this phenomenon featured prominently. But my highlighting of this is not for semantic or linguistic reasons; but rather to reveal the frequently contradictory ways in which these men construct their masculinities, speaking directly to their gendered performances. As the thesis has noted, gender is done, it is performed; and by the men in this study, it is usually performed relative to inherited legacies of both Irish and working-class Tyneside ancestry. It is ‘done’ correctly, in accordance with hegemonic discourse and overarching Irish working-class masculine culture. The men’s embodied masculinities are themselves riddled with these apparently contradictory statements.

8.3.2 Familial masculinities

Looking intergenerationally both within and across families has allowed me to focus on the ‘gaps, silences and absences’ (Bailey 2008: 413) of the men’s narratives, verifying/contrasting them with and against alternative accounts.

Identity formations are complex, implicitly personal and intergenerational. My research design and self-reflexive analysis has ensured a focus on these interactions over time which has helped me distance myself from abstract speculation.

The relational performance of masculinity sometimes supersedes gender and speaks to family position and place in a departure from gender and methods literatures to date. Shared experience is formed not just on gendered lines but through the embodiment of family position and assumed Irish heritage. There is a strong sense of value transmission inherited from fathers, and these are attributed as both national and regional qualities by men in this study. There are spatial implications to changes in embodiment, masculinity and intergenerationality with, for example, declining institutional contexts within the family, at school and at work. We see masculinity as performed and socially constructed, that it is 'done' and forms embodied practice for men of Irish descent. The biographical oral histories present counter stories to ageing, evidenced through increasing reflection and foresight by all, along with a high regard for older men within the family context.

Much work has been done on the intersectional nature of identities; much less on combining this with an intergenerational approach (cf. Hopkins et al 2011; Tarrant 2010; 2013; Vanderbeck 2007). It is through the relational approaches to age and identity (Hopkins and Pain 2007) – the intergenerational and the intersectional – that I have shown the men of my study as displaying knowledge and awareness of factors such as economic change and contemporary gender relations. Such a combination enables me to draw on generational differences which I argue act as a force of change in the lives of men of Irish descent. These stories of change have been socio-economic, religious and industrial. They have encompassed relaxing attitudes to family planning, to a decline in the role of institutional religion, as well as to increasingly multi-cultural and multi-faith school experiences. The de-industrialised landscape has contributed to the transformation of Tyneside itself. Intergenerational approaches, through biography and ethnography, have recognised the men as the experts in their own lives and I have employed creative methodologies to further enhance their levels of agency within the

research. I was not looking for ‘facts’, but rather, emotive and embodied responses told through stories and memories.

Ultimately these collective changes have impacted upon men’s experiences of ageing, identity and belonging. Within families we see development alongside continuity, as well as (paradoxically again) resistance to change. There are examples of an inheritance of culture, of masculine values, of attitudes to fathering and of working aspirations transmitted across generations. Workplace and training opportunities have changed, forcing young men into alternative career trajectories. For many who have transcended into the professional middle classes, they have found their new situations increasingly precarious, as arguably they are less economically grounded than those who persisted within their inherited working class occupations (see BBC Radio 4 *Generations Apart*).

8.3.3 Irish masculinities

I further review my contributions to masculinities within the Irish diaspora through Billig’s (1995) notions of banal nationalism.

> ‘Having a national identity also involves being situated physically, legally, socially, as well as emotionally: typically, it means being situated within a homeland, which itself is situated within the world of nations’ (Billig 1995: 8).

Banal nationalism is a term introduced to conceptualise the intersections between the nation, national identity and everyday life. Billig proposed that nationality is ‘flagged’ (1995: 6) in that it can be indicated, asserted and revealed in people’s daily lives. In the context of the Tyneside Irish, I have outlined a physical relationship between the region and a foreign nation; a legal relationship through citizenship status across borders; socially, through the establishment of a diasporic community; and emotionally, through nostalgia and contemporary celebrations of heritage. Billig qualifies that ‘banal’ does not necessarily equal ‘benign’, that ‘banal nationalism can hardly be innocent – it is reproducing institutions which possess vast armaments’ (1995: 7). Through the men of my study and their connections to the armed services, through their passports and through their participation in and support of sporting activities, we have seen this flag-waving (literally in the case of Billy) of national identity. What

is more significant is the way in which it has become incarnated – inscribed onto their bodies through perceptions of 'looking Irish', having an Irish sense of humour, an Irish belief system, an ability to deal with death much more stoically than the English – and a branding as Irish through the naming of children. This develops knowledge on what is a new research area of transcendent moral values (Valentine et al 2013) across national scales. Embodied national identity gives us a way of talking about and through the nation.

Like Billig, I think that national identity appears exaggerated in times of uncertainty, but that it remains under the surface ready to emerge at any moment; indeed the men of my study reveal that for them it features as part of their masculinity and is ever present. In a similar fashion, I think that masculinity itself becomes overstated when challenged; which speaks more broadly to the very nature of identity. Mercer (1990: 43) argues, 'identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis'. As has been discussed, I do not consider these men 'in crisis' but certainly their masculinities are in transition, as they negotiate challenges to aspects of masculinities that were once fixed, stable and coherent. The fact that as people we need to identify with anything at all highlights our insecurities; when we are at our most comfortable, we are more certain, less garish and more settled. The Irish on Tyneside have historically integrated with less resistance than they have faced elsewhere, thus explaining their more subdued presence in the region. The (relatively) harmonious assimilation has led to a fading of ethnicity over time; which is a consequence of stronger and more intersectional regional affiliations. These transitions have been aided by more profound generational shifts. 'Irish' occupations are less evident, and increasing secularisation further erodes the visible presence of 'Irishness' on Tyneside. The Irish masculinities in this thesis are inherently shaped by Tyneside masculinities more broadly.

Billig though denies any primordial connection between identity and the body and warns 'the problems start when one expects to find the "identity" within the body or the mind of the individual' (1995: 7). He states that 'this is to look in the wrong place for the operation of identity' (Ibid) and continues 'as far as nationality is concerned, one needs to look for reasons why people in the contemporary world do not forget their nationality' (Ibid). As before, I state that

we are more likely to assert our identity markers when we are with people perceived to be different or ‘not like us’. These differences between Irish and Geordie are ever fading. Through ‘Irish Incarnate’, the nation does become mapped onto the body; the political is performed through the personal. The men of my research perform human geography, literally. So what we see here is a multi-scalar approach to identity where narratives of embodied masculinities incorporate familial influences, national identities and regional significances. The implications of these more hybrid Tyneside Irish masculinities are in men’s attitudes, performances and behaviours of class, work, education and religion, shaped by both Ireland and Tyneside. These ‘Irish’ men engage with their embodied identities by drawing on gendered expectations alongside ethnic, national, religious and regional norms in order to be recognised within their local spheres. As Hopkins (2009: 310) drawing on Noble (2007) claims, men construct their identities in these intersectional and intergenerational ways ‘to promote their own respectability as valuable members of society’.

8.4 New research directions

Feminist geography challenged the patriarchal foundations of the discipline and the subsequent academic landscape. In pursuing these new research directions, and in building from work in this thesis, we can promote the positive steps that engagement with the intimate spaces of masculinities and intergenerational relations can make towards gender equality. To the men of Irish descent that inspired me in these pursuits, thank you.

A refocusing of contemporary feminism could work with the anti-sexist men’s movement to tackle what I consider to be the last bastions of gender inequality in contemporary society. I see these as online social media, ‘lads banter’ and deeply offensive (and illegal) behaviour. Intimate discussions of men and masculinities with anti-sexist men are a positive step towards gender equality; they encourage men to talk from an embodied perspective. As this thesis has shown, engaging in discussion about what it means to be a man, in turn questions what it means to be a woman and the inherent relationships between genders. As men in my study did, blurring the boundaries between

masculine and feminine helps undermine and devalue the qualities that divide society. Significantly, leading feminist bell hooks writes:

> ‘Men who actively struggle against sexism have a place in feminist movement. They are our comrades…until men share equal responsibility for struggling to end sexism, feminist movement will reflect the very sexist contradictions we wish to eradicate…In particular, men have a tremendous contribution to make…in the area of exposing, confronting, opposing, and transforming the sexism of male peers’ (hooks 1992: 570-571).

Yes, as shown through the thesis, ‘laddish banter’ (Kehily and Nayak 1997) is often established within schoolboy years. At this point, I wish to stress that I do not think the men of my research to be misogynistic; and indeed there was evidence of anti-sexist sentiment and action. Some of the men seemed acutely aware of gender inequality. I propose the emphasis should be explicitly in support of men; men trapped by their masculinity, tarnished by patriarchy and hegemonic domination. This should not be in a way that perpetuates narcissism as a ‘men’s liberation’ but with a focus on actively challenging everyday sexism. The movement should set a new hegemony, one where the sexist, offensive, narrow minded, bigoted and ignorant are left marginalised and deviant. To bring about anti-sexist change, anti-sexist men, women and feminists should work together. As a response to current gaps in knowledge and a hotbed of political action, I call for a series of debates within schools of critical and geographical thinking to further analyse contemporary sexism and anti-sexism through deeper explorations of masculinities and intergenerational relations.

It is desired that, like the work of Thomson and Kehily (2011) and McDowell (2003), I would conduct follow-up interviews in a post-doctoral project to give a longitudinal dimension to this research. Coordination of any intervention would help build a consensus. This work with Irish masculinities and intergenerational relations has not only contributed to under-researched fields of embodied, familial and Irish masculinities, but has made links to pressing issues in the contemporary human geography of the UK. Migration is again being hotly debated in tandem with further expansion of the European Union; issues of identity and belonging will remain ever present.

Significantly, we have seen the tacit nature of masculinities; that values, behaviours and attitudes are ‘learned’. They can be taken on board in men’s identity constructions and are influenced by negotiations of the body (Chapter 3), the family (Chapter 4), school/religion (Chapter 5), work (Chapter 6) and nationality (Chapter 7). This research contributes to the literature on the Irish in Britain in different ways to what has come before. In a new contribution, it studies both English and Scottish born men who claim to be ‘of Irish descent’ in addition to those Irish born men themselves. It is, however, individual circumstances that have proved to be more significant than generational collective identities. Firstly there is the influence that visits to Ireland have on the men. Secondly are levels of cultural participation and practice on Tyneside. Thirdly is having living relatives ‘back home’ in Ireland. These three factors strongly impact upon identification with, and attachment to, Irish national identity by my thirty eight ‘Tyneside Irishmen’.

Appendices

Appendix A	Participant profiles
Appendix B	Family trees
Appendix C	Migration timeline
Appendix D	Interview schedule
Appendix E	Script for ‘Under Us All’
Appendix F	Flyer for ESRC tour of ‘Under Us All’
Appendix G	Published works based on thesis

Appendix A Participant profiles

Aidan

Aidan is an avowed Catholic. He is 65 years old and was born in Ireland. His mother is Keith's sister; he is therefore Keith's nephew, which is how I was introduced to him. Due to large his family's large size, he is actually very similar in age to his uncle; they grew up like cousins. He is actively involved in both Irish and Catholic activities on Tyneside; he runs dance classes and is a member of the Pioneers.

Andy

Andy is a trained architect and is the housemate of Tony. He is 21 years old and having just graduated from a Tyneside University now works in the service sector. He is 5th generation Irish and has little involvement with the Irish community. He was more connected when he was in school (he attended a Catholic school on Tyneside) and his Irish connections have faded as he has left school and religion.

Anthony

Anthony is Keith's son, and therefore Aidan's cousin. He is 30 years old and 3rd generation Irish. He became involved in the study through a family discussion held at his father's house. He still attends church and aids his father in the running of trips up to Northumberland for young Christian men.

Bill

Bill is a former soldier and now a mature student. He is 3rd generation Irish and grew up initially in Scotland before moving to Tyneside. He has a Scottish accent but identifies as Irish because of his surname. He talks of how his Catholicism caused him trouble in Scotland, leaving him stigmatised later in his working life as a sports coach. He since started working for an Irish sports team and found himself welcomed in a more tolerant working environment. His

experiences have led him to explore his Irish connections further through family history research. He is Justin's son.

Billy

Billy is a 24 year old pilot. He is Northern Irish born and moved to the region after attending a Tyneside University. He did not complete his studies however opting instead to train to be a pilot. He initially gained his private pilot's licence in the UK before relocating to the USA on a commercial pilot scholarship. He openly identifies as an 'Orangeman' through his Protestant religion.

Bob

Bob is a 42 year old Tyneside man who is 3rd generation Irish. He is actively involved in Tyneside Irish cultural activities though proclaims his Atheism and has no involvement with religion. He is the son of Thomas, the cousin of Dan and therefore the uncle of Tim. He proved a vast source of information in this study and I am especially grateful for his input.

Dan

Dan is 40 and is Bob's cousin. I met with him and his son following Bob's introduction. He is 3rd generation Irish. He has less strong Irish sentiment than his cousin due to more limited involvement with Irish cultural practise on Tyneside. His Englishness is more pronounced due to spending some part of his childhood away from Tyneside, though is a very happy Geordie.

Daniel

Daniel is 65 and grew up on Tyneside. He is 4th generation Irish. He has never identified as 'Irish' but through his prominent involvement as a young man in the Irish music and dance scene on Tyneside he aligns himself with the Tyneside Irish strongly. He is the father of Matthew, the father in law of Dominic, and the grandfather of David. He also introduced me other men in this study. Great thanks to him for his input in this research.

David

David is a 16 year old student who is the grandson of Daniel. He is however 2nd generation Irish due to his Irish born father, Dominic. He holds an Irish passport and identifies more with Ireland than with England. His links to Ireland are reinforced through visits to his (father's) relatives in Ireland.

Declan

Declan is a 25 year old lecturer from Tyneside. He is 3rd generation and his connections were strengthened after moving out of Tyneside for a while to complete his studies in Manchester. During his time in the North West of England, with its more visible 'Irishness', he was encouraged to re-examine his own family connections.

Dominic

Dominic is Daniel's son in law and David's father. He is a proud Irishman having been born there. He is 50 years old but moved to England for work and has now spent more of his life in England than Ireland; though he regularly returns to Ireland to visit relatives with his son.

Jack

Jack is a retired sociologist, he is 65. He is 2nd generation Irish. His Irish father moved to England looking for work with Jack himself having grown up in the midlands of England before moving to Tyneside during his academic career.

James

James is a 67 year old retired teacher. He is a former sailor however and is 2nd generation Irish. He is actively involved in the music scene on Tyneside and through these connections introduced me to Irish travellers, Sean, Max and Jimmy. I thank him for his input and these introductions.

Jerry

Jerry is a 2nd generation Irishman aged 50. He is a member of the Tyneside Irish Centre and feels connected to Ireland culturally, which he feels is important in passing on to his own children.

Jim

Jim, 88, is English but married to Keith's sister, who is Irish born. With his wife he moved to Ireland where their son, Aidan was born. They since moved back to Tyneside and through his family connections this Englishman feels part of the Tyneside Irish community.

Jimmy

Jimmy is an 11 year old Irish traveller. He is 2nd generation as the son of Irish born Sean. As an Irish traveller his experiences in England are more markedly 'Irish' and does not feel, nor wants to feel, fully integrated into English life.

John

John is a 24 year old doctor, who is 4th generation Irish. He feels connected to Ireland both on his mother's and his father's (Seamus') side. He grew up on Tyneside but moved to Scotland and subsequently remained there into his working life. He feels more 'English' in Scotland further reducing his 'Irishness' which is mainly drawn on through his Catholic upbringing.

Joseph

Joseph is a 30 year Irish born man living on Tyneside. He moved to the region to study before meeting his wife, who also happened to be of Irish descent. This Irishman has recently become a father for the first time and I wish him, his wife and his son all the best.

Junior

Junior is Martin's son and his namesake. He is 35 years old and is 2nd generation Irish and feels connected to the community mainly through his father's involvement.

Justin

Justin is Bill's father and is 2nd generation Irish. He is 88 years old. He feels more Scottish than his son having spent more of his life there. Also a former soldier, he later became a school headmaster and spent time working in Africa. He has always felt Irish connections but not as strongly as his son.

Keith

Keith is a 65 year old, 2nd generation Irishman. He is the father of Anthony, the brother in law of Jim and the uncle of Aidan. He is actively involved in both church life and Irish cultural life on Tyneside. His Irish connections are strongly maintained throughout his family. I thank him for his time and his introduction of his family members.

Liam

Liam is a 75 year old man, who is 2nd generation Irish. He is a Tyneside man whose Irish connections are pronounced through his involvement in Tyneside Irish cultural activities, especially music and dance. He introduced me to his son, Luke.

Luke

Luke is Liam's 45 year old son and is therefore 3rd generation Irish. He is less involved with Irish cultural activities than his father though is a member of the Tyneside Irish Centre.

Mark

Mark is a Tyneside policeman who is 2nd generation Irish. He is 48 years old and is active in both the Irish and Catholic community on Tyneside.

Martin

Martin is the father of Junior and the father in law of Michael. He is 82 years old and an active participant in cultural activities in the Irish centres and Catholic centres on Tyneside. I thank him for his involvement and introductions to his family members.

Matthew

Matthew is Daniel's son, Dominic's brother in law and David's uncle. He does not feel any Irish connections, though has taken on aspects of his Catholic upbringing. He is 42 and has passed this 'spirituality' onto his own children.

Max

Max is a 12 year old Irish traveller. He is the brother of Jimmy and the son of Sean. He is 2nd generation Irish. He became involved in the study in a family group discussion with his brother and father.

Michael

Michael is Martin's son in law and has no Irish connections. He is 49 years old. He became interested in the study following Martin's introduction as the husband of a woman of Irish descent and therefore the father of children of Irish descent. These generational inheritances fascinated him.

Paul

Paul, 56, became involved in the research after conducting his own extensive research into his Irish family history. He is 3rd generation Irish. His involvement was limited due to the tragic death of his son. I am so grateful for him taking the time to help me with my research.

Peter

Peter is the son of Victor and the father of Simon. He is 48 years old and 6th generation but feels more Irish since his father's developments in the family history research. He is learning to play the Irish fiddle and loves the cultural side of Irish life on Tyneside. He is also a member of the Catholic community in the region. He became a huge resource in this research following his initial involvement. I thank him for allowing me to work so closely with him and his family; his family formed the basis of the verbatim play, 'Under Us All'.

Seamus

Seamus is a 62 year old 3rd generation Irishman. He is John's father. He worked as a policeman before becoming a writer. He became interested in his Irish family connections following visits to Ireland with his parents as a young man.

Sean

Sean is Max and Jimmy's dad and is an Irish born, Irish traveller. He is 42 and has spent time living across the UK notably the North West and North East of England. I thank him for his introductions to two of his son's and for their valuable, and very different perspective on Tyneside Irish life.

Simon

Simon is Peter's son, he is therefore a 7th generation Irishman. He is 21. He does not feel particularly Irish but became involved in the research following his father's introduction. He also closely followed his grandfather's (Victor's) development of the family history research.

Terry

Terry is a Northern Irish born, 50 year old man. He moved to Tyneside for work and has subsequently settled in the region. He is an active member of the Tyneside Irish cultural society. He was brought up as Protestant but has since denounced any religious affiliations.

Thomas

Thomas is a prominent member of the Tyneside Irish Centre and is the father of Bob, who proved a great resource in completing this research. He is 70 years old and is 2nd generation Irish.

Tim

Tim is an 11 year old school pupil on Tyneside. He is Dan's son, the nephew of Bob and the great nephew of Thomas. Like his father though he is also 3rd generation Irish due to connections on his mother's side of the family. He

actually feels more Irish than his father due to recent visits to his maternal grandfather's house in Ireland.

Tony

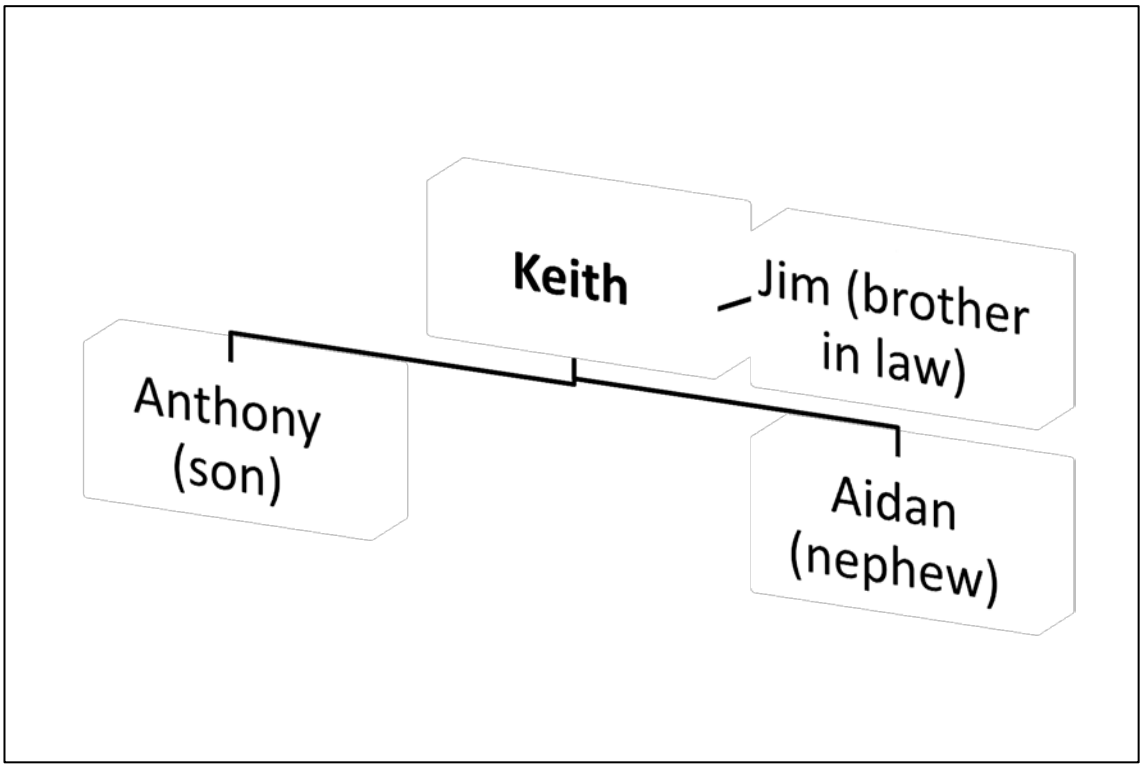
Tony is Andy's housemate and is a fellow trained architect. He is also 21 years old now working in the service sector. He is 3rd generation Irish and his Irish connections lie with his Irish grandmother who was a major influence in his life growing up on Tyneside.

Victor

Victor is an 80 year old, 5th generation Irishman. He pursued his Irish family connections later in his life and working internationally and recognising what he perceived to be 'Irish' qualities in which he recognised from his Tyneside communities. He is Peter's father and Simon's grandfather. He was a vast source of information in this research and I thank him greatly.

Appendix B Family trees

Family 1



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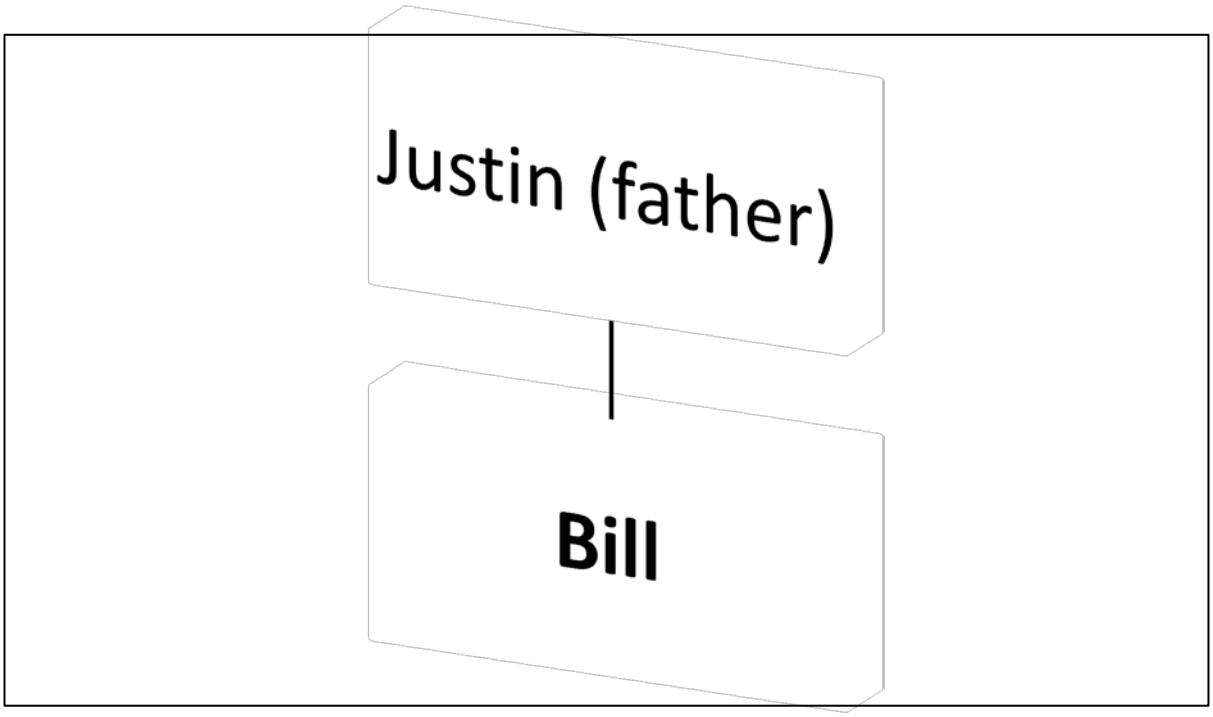
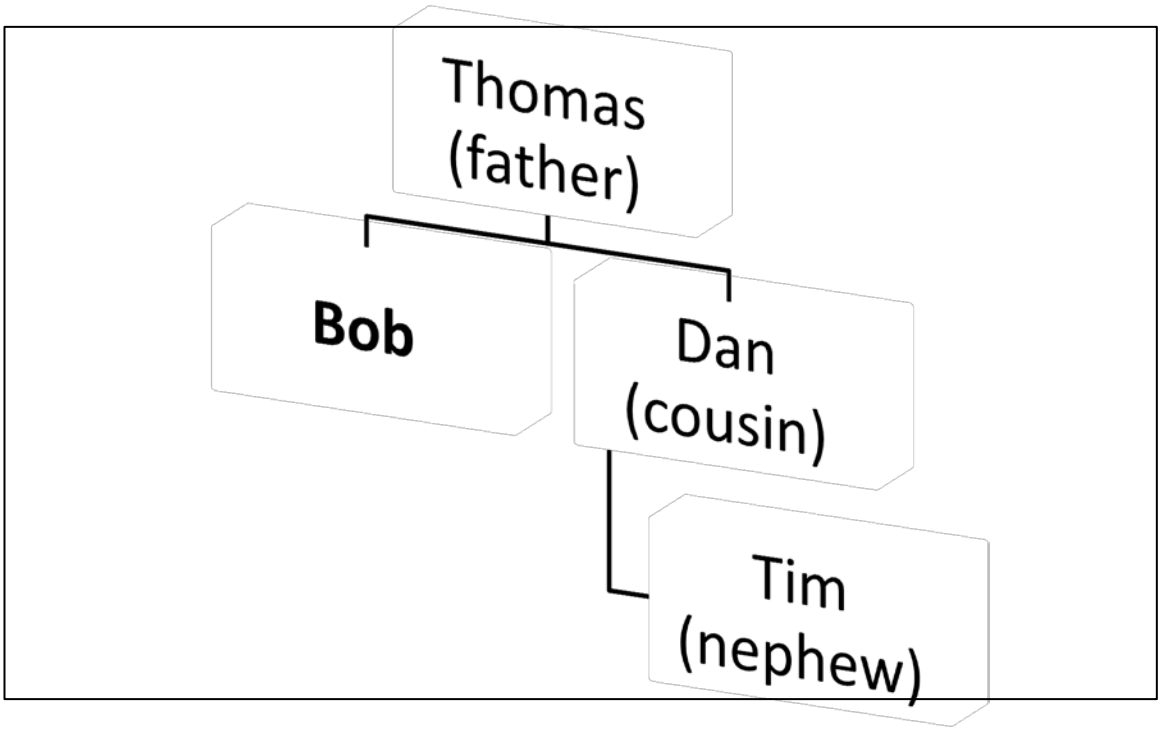


Family 3



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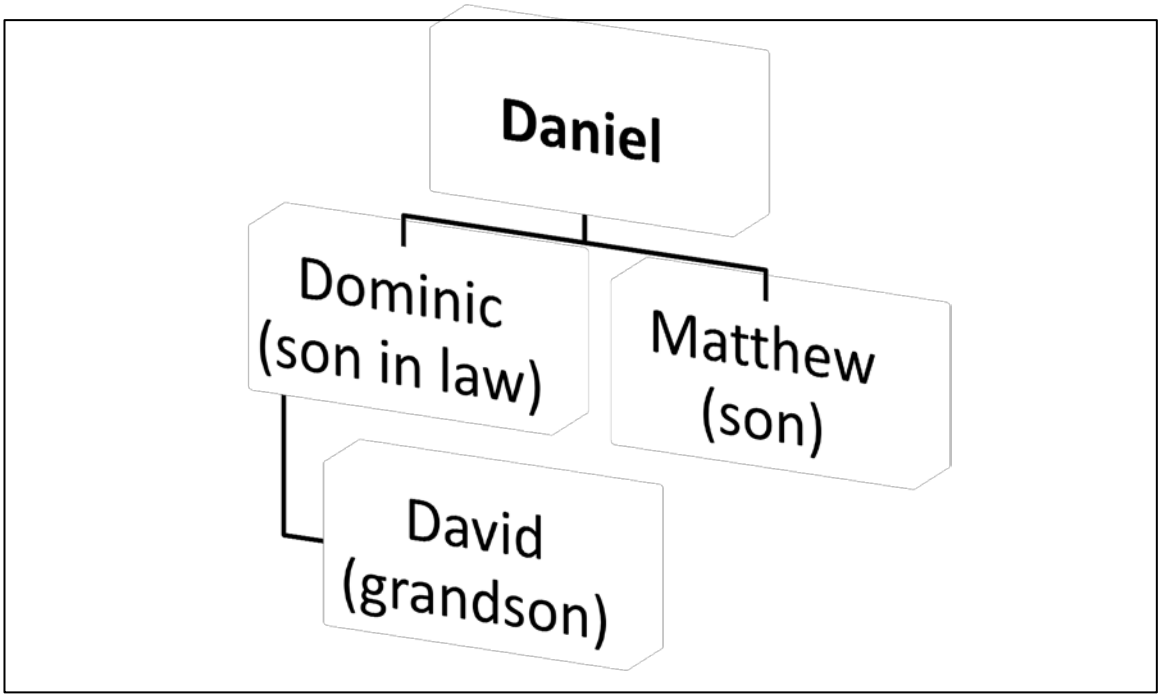

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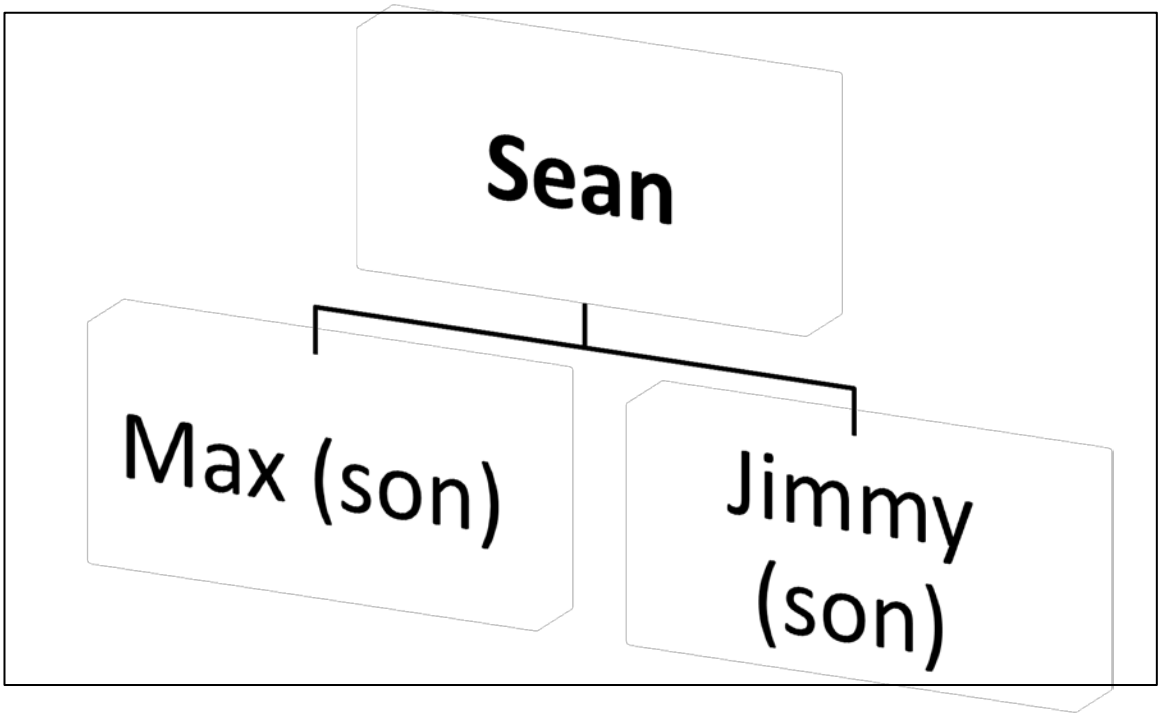

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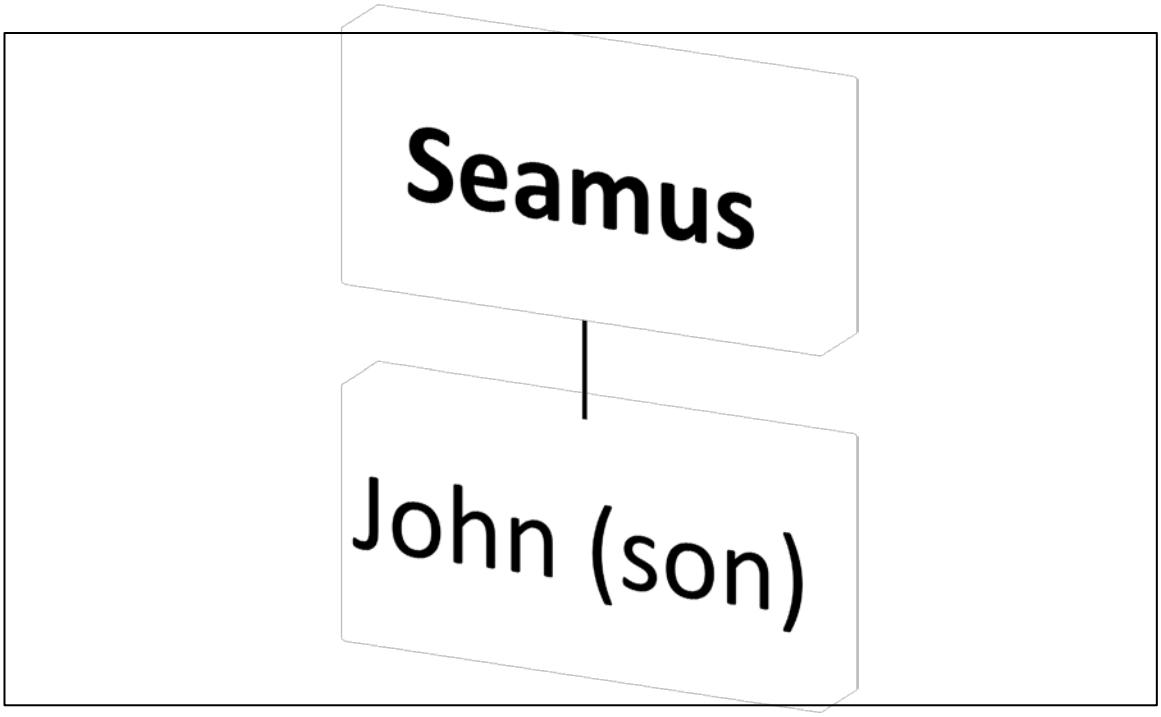

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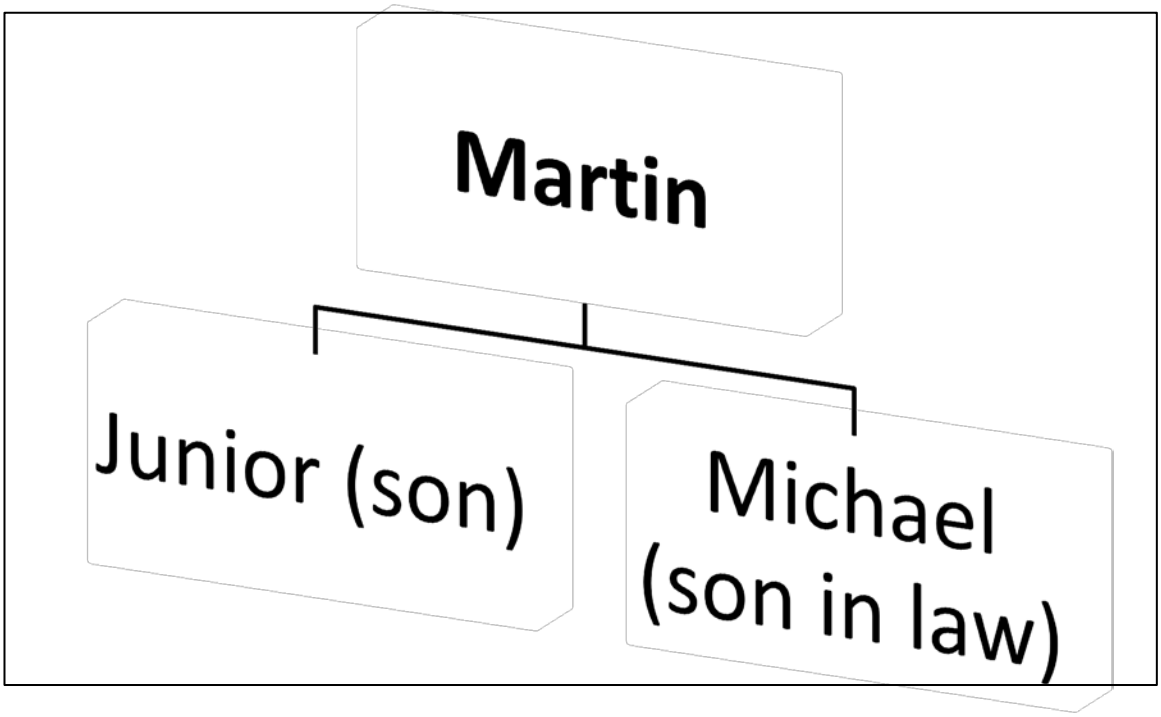

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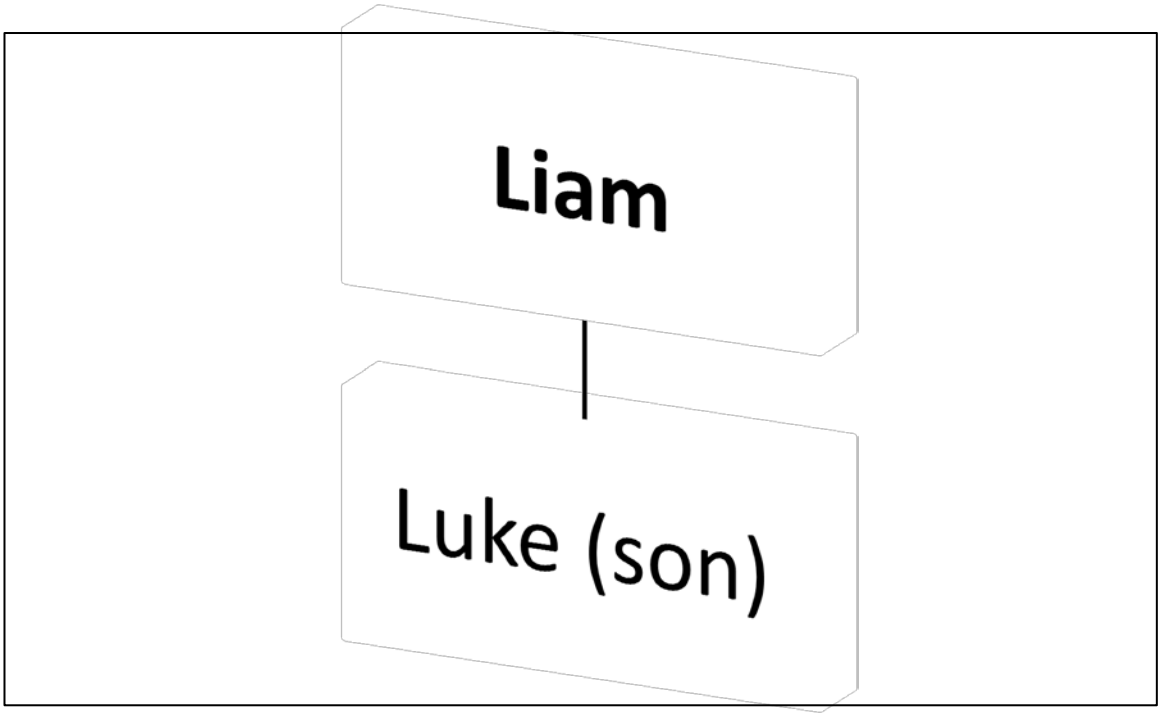

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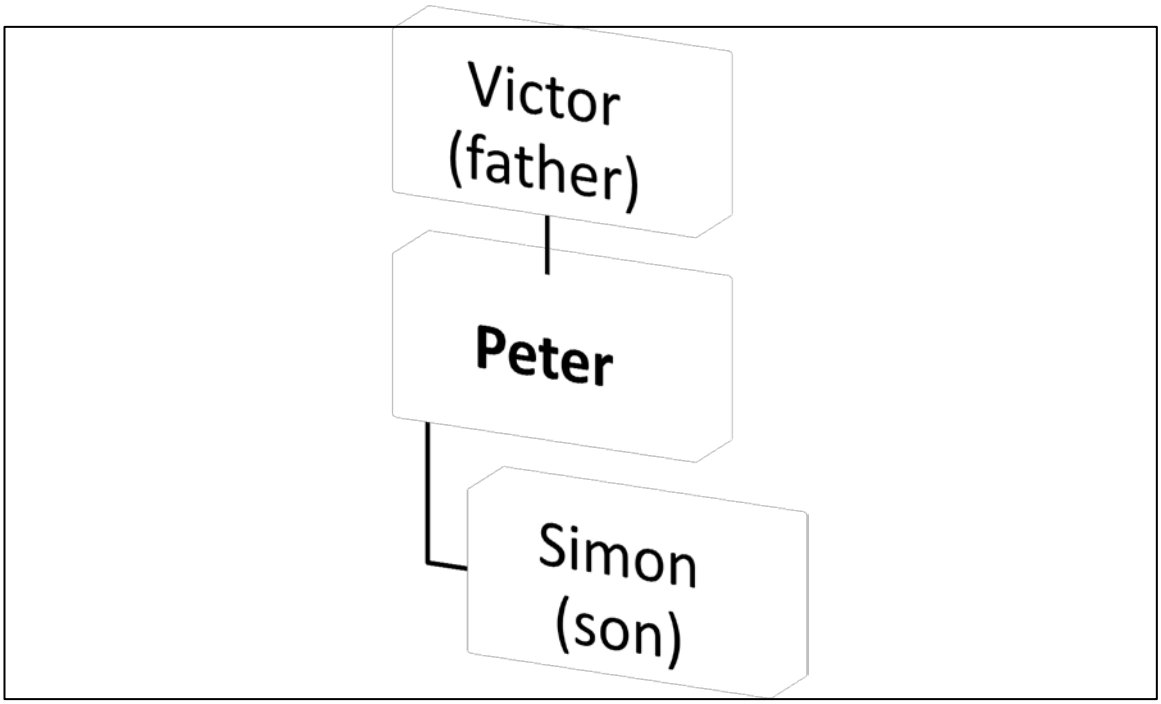

Individuals

1. Andy
2. Billy
3. Declan
4. Jack
5. James
6. Jerry
7. Joseph
8. Mark
9. Paul
10. Terry
11. Tony

Appendix C Migration timeline

	The Great Famine (1845-1852)		Fenian Rebellion (1860s-1880s)	Campaign for Home Rule (1870s-1910s)				WW1 (1914-1918)	Irish Civil War (1919-1922)	Irish Free State (1922-1937)	WW2 (1939-1945)		The Troubles (1960s-1990s)	Thatcherite Britain (1970s-1990s)				
1830s	**1840s**	**1850s**	**1860s**	**1870s**	**1880s**	**1890s**	**1900s**	**1910s**	**1920s**	**1930s**	**1940s**	**1950s**	**1960s**	**1970s**	**1980s**	**1990s**	**2000s**	**2010s**
Family 9 left Ireland for work in NE				Family 4 & 6 left Ireland for work in NE Andy his family left Ireland for work in NE			Family 2 left Ireland for Scotland Paul his family left Ireland for work in NE	The Tyneside Irish Brigade was raised in 1914 The Easter Rising (1916)	Family 3 left Ireland for NW Family 8 left Ireland for work in NE	Family 1 left Ireland for work in NE Declan his family left Ireland for work in NE	Jack, James, Jerry, Mark & Tony their families all left Ireland for work in NE Republic of Ireland Act (1948)	Family 1 second wave to NE Family 7 left Ireland for work in NE	Family 2 moved from Scotland to NE Family 3 moved from NW to NE		Family 5 left Ireland for NW then travelled UK since then Terry his family left Ireland for work in NE		Billy family left Ireland for work in NE Joseph his family left Ireland for work in NE	2004 saw NE reject regional parliament 2011 saw the first British Royal visit to Ireland in 100 years

Appendix D Interview schedule

General introduction, emphasise confidentiality of data collected etc...

A) Background

Thinking about the family history

What is your/your family connection to Ireland?

Who emigrated from Ireland?

Where did they emigrate to?

When did they do this?

Why did they do this?

Process of settlement

Where did you/your family settle?

Were you/they between places for a period of time or did you/they settle straight away?

How did you/your family find work over here?

Did you/your family come across with work lined up?

Was this work similar to what you/they had back home, or did it differ?

Was this skilled or unskilled work?

Were you/they forced to take unskilled work despite previously being skilled or trained?

Process of integration

Do you/your family feel settled, do you feel integrated into the host community on Tyneside?

When was the last time you visited Ireland? Do you visit Ireland on holiday?

Outside of the family what do you do in your free time?

Are you part of a church community?

Are you involved in any community groups?

What are your passions in life – music/sport/dance?

Do you do any of these things with other family members?

How strongly do you feel Irish?

Who do you socialise with...? (Do have any Irish friends?)

Are there particular things about you that make you Irish?

Are there particular times or places where you feel more Irish?

How is it being Irish in Britain?

How do you maintain being Irish? (Touch upon 'plastic paddy' – the creation of 'Irishness')

B) Roles within family

Defining the family

Who do you regard as your family?

Do you differentiate between your close family and extended family?

Does this extended family include 'non blood' relatives?

How has your family married?

What does 'mixed marriage' mean to you?

Does or has religion affected your family's views on family planning?

Who is responsible for what?

Who works in the family?

Has this always been the case?

Is there a head of the household?

How long have women in the family been working for?

Where and what do these family members work as?

What happens when someone is ill?

Does the family work as a source of care?

Who goes where and with whom?

Who does what in the house…the cooking/cleaning/washing/childcare? (Prompt attitudes to gender roles)

Who does the shopping? Where do family members go to run their errands?

Do you have a car/other mode of transport?

Who can drive in the family?

Do you travel much or do you stay quite local?

Method C) Men

Provide a blank outline of a man (and post it notes) for them to draw/sketch/annotate

C) Men in the family

Interactions between generations

Who and what were the big influences in your life?

Do you make decisions based purely on your own judgements?

Does your family or anything else affect your decision making?

Do you see yourself as a role model for other family members?

Have you had the same opportunities as other men in the family?

How has this affected you?

How has this affected other family members?

Do you the experiences/life choices the older generations make affect the younger ones?

How men in the family work, rest and play?

Do you feel your family supports one another?

Do you do things together as a family?

Are their shared family experiences in your family?

Are their common sources of interest…particular events/activities?

Have any skills or traditions been passed down the generations?

Do you enjoy your work?

In your free time – what do you most like doing?

Concluding remarks

Do you feel your experiences compare to other men in your family?

Are they unique or unusual, or quite typical of other men on Tyneside?

Do you feel how you are as a man is because of any 'Irish' qualities?

Do you feel how you are as a man is because of any 'Religious' qualities?

Thank you for your time. As you know I'm interested in the experiences of Irish men on Tyneside...is there anything about being an Irish man in this region that you feel I've missed, or you wish to speak more about?

Appendix E Script for ‘Under As All’

’under us all’

a verbatim play by

gwilym lawrence

based on interviews conducted by michael richardson

Cast of Characters

Victor Gallagher:	83
Peter Gallagher:	48
Simon Gallagher:	21

SCENE ONE

Birdsong.

VICTOR. A table. On it, a jiffy bag.

The birdsong fades.

Victor approaches the table, picks up the jiffy bag, opens it. He takes out a dictaphone and some paper. He reads the paper, considers it.

VICTOR

(Writing on paper)

Name: Victor Gallagher. Age: eighty three years. Born: Hebburn, 1930.

Picks up the dictaphone, presses record.

'You are responsible for your salvation. Nobody else.'

How often have we been told in scripture that 'you've been given talents, ability – use them'? Your priest or whoever says 'you've been given a mind, a body, hands, feet, you've been given intellect - just go out and use them, just do it'.

They've given you a lot of skills and talents and abilities that you may not even be conscious of. But whatever those abilities are, just go out there in the world and use them. As you know from the parables in

the scripture, they tell you that.

Yes you've been given rule books like the catechisms or whatever, but at the end of the day, it's up to you.

I'll give you one brief example.

Just coming out of mass one night, the then parish priest gave me a note and he says 'give that some thought' he says.

It was about becoming a Eucharistic minister.

'Me?'

Honestly I did think 'me?'

But as I was walking across the car park the words came to me: 'I know my flock and my flock know me'. And I took that and I thought in other words 'just do it'.

And I did.

A pause.

VICTOR goes to the dictaphone. Rewinds a small amount, presses play. Listens again to the last few sentences he has spoken. Is satisfied the machine is working. Presses record again.

You're aware that at the age of 59 I had a heart attack.

I overcame it. I'm on medication now and I work out and

that.

Well a little while later, this job came up in the Far East and I went. The family were appalled you know. I had the words of me daughter ringing in my ear ‘just come back in one piece Dad’ and I did.

See, I felt that I was one of the lucky ones. I came out of me illness a lot better than a lot of people would, people the same age. So I was being given a chance.

Use it.

Exploit it.

Don’t just sit in your armchair. And it worked out right.

And you know as well as I do, what I went through there is nothing, not compared to what my ancestors went through. I would think a lot of it was that in my mind, some of my ancestors have been through a lot worse: My father was a stretcher bearer. Battle of the Somme. Came out without a scratch. My mother’s father, he was at sea in the Merchant Navy - this is the first world war, now. He was in the British Navy on an iron ore carrier, and they were a prime target for U boats, even in the first world war, for U boats you know. And he’s of Irish ancestry as well, but of a different family.

But there’s two blokes there who came through it. They went for it and came through it. And that’s...

points to his chest

...that’s there. To be exploited.

You have to take time to recognise the progress from way back when those people were really struggling to survive. I’ve always said ’well, I’m better off than my parents, and their parents beforehand’.

Take the paint industry, for example. My grandfather worked as a cooper with lead paint which was hazardous, which burnt the paint off the bows. Then there’s Simon, Peter’s son - my grandson - working in a chemical lab for a paint company.

And that, you know, it’s... progress.

Pause.

What *I’ve* maximised on meself, although I actually think I could have done more, is not just my experience in engineering and fabrication, but I believe I could have done more with people, with people skills - communication - but that came later.

The situation I had to go into in Canada and Newfoundland, for example, was very delicate. The workers there had been tret unfairly if we’re honest, and we had the rottweilers that could have gone, but it was realised that they were the wrong people to send, it would have created havoc. The supervisors and managers - and I actually became manager when I was out there - they said ‘you know we had you weighed up in about three or four days flat. We knew that you had the

skills, and you weren’t there to put us down’, and what I was saying was ‘what you’ve been through is what we’ve all been through’, and that’s about bringing fair play into it, bit like a politician, fair play and, you know, seeing that people are tret fairly and reasonably safe.

It’s about values.

Did you know, particularly out in the colonies and the States, you find a lot of Irish immigrants end up with something to do with the law. Maybe as a policeman, a lawyer, or maybe just on a local council or something like that. And they see it as a means of administering fair play. Don’t kick a man when he’s down and all that. And you’ve got to give justice to it. ’Give a man a chance’ because they’ve been through it themselves. I found that in Newfoundland there was a very strong Irish identity. It’s in the music, it’s even in the dialect, and they recognised that I’m from an Irish background.

There was also a strange geographical connection.

They’re in the Northeast of Canada, and we’re in the Northeast of England. And they have similar weather quirks as we do, and for similar reasons. They had the same industries there, and they had that feeling that ‘central government don’t give a monkey’s about us’.

You know, the Irish up there, they’ve found themselves in some desperate situations and had to find ways and means of controlling the best of the situation. St

John’s Newfoundland is the most Easterly port in North America, well why did they choose to go that far North? One reason is that it was the cheapest route, but the other one is that they knew they stood a better chance of survival. Cos these ships were rife with things like TB, dysentery, typhoid and they knew that on a short journey it was less risky. The plan was to get a job in Canada and work their way South. But a lot of them found jobs there, even got married there. And they said ‘hey it’s not bad here, what’s the point in going South?’ So that’s the Irish again. They’ve got a way and means of taking an awkward situation and making good of it. Pretty versatile at that. Pretty adapt at that. So there’s quite a bit of admiration there.

Pause. VICTOR goes to the dictaphone, presses stop.

Lights down.

Scene Two

The sounds of industry, rhythmic. Lights up on PETER, sitting at a table. On it, a dictaphone, a jiffy bag and some papers. The sound fades.

PETER considers the dictaphone. Reads the piece of paper.

PETER

(Writing on the paper)

Name: Peter Gallagher. Age: fourty eight years. Born: Hebburn, 1965.

Picks up the dictaphone, rewinds, listens to the last few sentences spoken by VICTOR. Presses record.

PETER

I suppose for me, uh, me Irish connection was probably more significant when I was at school if I'm quite honest.

Sounds daft to say but there was a great play made of it, but I go back to that play and that was possibly the first time when Ireland was mentioned, and we had an Irish priest of course. There was more sort of things of Irish descent shall we say going on there than outside of school. I was thinking today actually, outside of school it more or less stopped.

You only have to read books on Irish politics and so on, they're so sterile; but if you look at it the other way, like a dramatised Ken Loach kinda thing, even when I was growing up as a kid I was horrified with the violence and all that and you were scared of anything to do with Ireland and certainly any ideas of going there, as a child. You just wouldn't, you just wouldn't do it. And our local club, the British Legion Club, is at Mountbatten Avenue and you saw what happened to him, it was all just rather scary. You had H block going on and all of that you know, it was unsavoury; perhaps that's why out of school you never discussed anything. Your parents never really discussed anything about

Ireland and the best thing for it was for it all to stop, without a doubt.

Occasionally, things from Ireland would rear their head. When I was a bit older we were visiting Ireland, me uncle and aunt’s houses were furnished differently to ours, which was only natural. But on one occasion, in me uncle’s house, there was this thing that hung upon the wall – it looked like a crude tobacco pipe, mounted on a bit of wood. ‘oh it’s a shillelagh’ what the hell’s a shillelagh? He didn’t tell us, and I still don’t know, do you? Some sort of stick to beat people up!

They go on about the birch, and this was Irish and this brings us back to school and the beatings. The beatings didn’t start til you got into the Juniors, but that was when you knew that you were Irish Roman Catholic and you had to repent. It started with the slipper and that was dispensed and you got a strap instead. I was never actually given the strap when I was in the Juniors, that was reserved for when I got up to the Seniors – innocuous things – you know like any sane person I tried to stay out of trouble. But as I grew, as my neck outgrew the shirts, and you had to do up your top button, you’d choke, but your parents didn’t have the money to buy a new shirt so you’d leave your top button undone and as best you could you would hide it under a huge knot but that would slip and you’d be going into assembly and I’d be singled out for not having my collar done up. There’d been an issue with the punk thing coming along and people rebelling, and they were after quelling it and I just had the wrong neck at the

wrong time – and I suffered for that like!

It’s changed a bit now though, mind, St. Josephs.

In metal work we had a blast forge in those days. We had running machines and laithes, it was geared out for a lifetime down there. But that more or less finished when I left school, metalwork; that and technical drawing. That went out and all CDT came in - craft, design and technology, so they could incorporate design, like drawing and all that, but you’re not just dealing with metal. You’ve got an Autoclave for bending plastics and so on and it would encompass woodwork as well... And the next stage was to get the lasses in. When me son went into that school and when I went in to see him there was no laithe, no sign of a blast forge, the milling machine was gone and sixty or seventy per cent of the time was spent doing mock ups on the computer and sending them to an Autocad machine for the cutting out and so on. So really you weren’t actually touching what you were making. All the hand tools had gone and certainly there was a half and half split of boys and girls in each class. You’d tailor each class to reflect what was going on in the outside world, and it was a different thing for me son compared to when I was there.

But I remember we had this teacher, the guy who was the metalwork teacher, he was huge, a big ginger man, you didn’t mess with him, he had hands like shovels, he says to me, and it’s funny, he says ‘you seem to be quite good at that’ I just took it as a remark you know, but I’ve always been able to weld you know. It’s

been in me blood. It fell to hand quite easily and I thoroughly enjoyed it. And afterwards, this teacher who was exceptionally dismissive and stern and sarcastic, ‘ah that’s alright’.

But I only came out with three O-levels and I mean you’ve seen me Dad’s qualifications! There was no way I was going to stop at school. There’s an anecdote! Self-deprecating humour – I sound like Terry Wogan! Anyway, I needed an apprenticeship, desperately needed an apprenticeship, and to cut a long story short I got offered one as a shipwright and I took it cos that was the only thing that was offered; and then this British Telecom thing come through. The idea was for to train to be a mechanic because it would give us a wagon driving job when I turned twenty one, but that never happened cos the job was a good one, with a final salary pension. The training was fantastic. It was exceptionally clean, you got your overalls supplied, you got your tools supplied, you got your five weeks holiday. You were in Unions, so the pay went up every year, and it was too comfortable to leave. The wage was never brilliant - we don’t have bonuses or things like that, but it’s a steady wage. And I’ve been getting that wage since I was sixteen, thirty two year.

We have lads who have been there five, ten, fifteen year and they come and they say ‘how do you do it? You never seem to be...’ and I say ‘well, look at Sutcliffe, he’s only done one life sentence, I’ve done four!’ and it’s that mentality, they can’t touch you anymore. It all kinda fit. I was never gonna work in an office. It’s not brilliant, don’t get us wrong, no job

is. But it’s just the way things evolved.

So that’s basically where I am. I could maybe have tried to go up a bit, but I’ve seen it deteriorate for some people and I’ve seen the pressure and I’ve seen what it’s done to people. Get a little bit extra, and they think ‘I’m great’ and then the pressure starts and it just has an effect – strokes, heart attacks, people going off with stress. It’s not for me. You’ve just got to look at me father, you know. That is not for me.

I’m forty eight now, and me first reasonable pension is when I’m sixty. So I’ve only got another twelve years, so it’s pointless going anywhere or doing anything else.

PETER goes to the dictaphone, presses stop.

Lights down.

Scene Three

The sound of an electric guitar tuning up. Light up on SIMON. On his bedside table, papers and a dictaphone. The sound fades. SIMON reads the paper.

(SIMON)

(Writing on the paper)

Name: Simon Gallagher. Age: twenty one years. Born: Hebburn, 1992.

SIMON considers the dictaphone. Picks it up,

rewinds, listens.

SIMON presses record.

SIMON

I think, it’s only just occurred to us now, but like in the family I suppose we’ve always had hands on "get your hands dirty" type of jobs. Me Grandad, Victor, has always worked in industry, and me dad has as well. And I’m involved in industry. There’s no one in our family has ever been like a graphic designer or a journalist or whatever, or a TV star. It always has been like the nitty-gritty, proper ‘grrr’ manly sort of work, which I dunno, maybe is sort of a family link that I’ve not noticed before.

But I couldn’t see myself doing any other type of job.

I know me Granddad worked in industry on the river. Like Amec, oil platforms and that sort of stuff. So I suppose the whole family has been centred around like proper industry like on the river. So I suppose you could say it was quite. It’s quite a nice continuation of that.

I suppose in a sense, I suppose I’m...kinda proud to be from round here, cos it’s quite a powerful image, especially in the past, like the river and the distinctive bridges and the massive clouds of smoke. I think we used to be the biggest exporter of coal in the country or something like that and it was a big industrial hub. And there was a lot to be proud of in the past.

It’s a bit run down now. Like when I was applying to university, obviously I applied to the local ones but part of me just thought ‘have a look at like Exeter or somewhere’ and just get away from it. Half of it was to see a different part of the country but also part of it was definitely to get away from it. I mean it’s a good place. I love it. Cos you’re like ten minutes drive from the city. ten minutes drive to the beach. Half an hour to the countryside. I think it’s just the people. Not the nicest bunch sometimes. But eh, I think that’s probably just because there’s loads of unemployment...

But at the same time, in some ways I think in this day and age it’s a lot easier for young people to just choose what they wanna be and who they wanna be and if you wanna do a certain career path then you can, it doesn’t really matter, like parents influence doesn’t really come into it anymore.

I think in days gone by it was definitely a hundred percent working class. Like you either went down the pit or you nailed ships together...

But there’s so much opportunity now to just do what you fancy and on top of that, to go where you fancy as well. So if you wanna be a journalist and move to London you can just get on with it. As opposed to, like family trades being passed on. Like these families with long histories of welding and sheet metal work, sooner or later one of the generations will just go ‘no, I don’t fancy that’ and now they’ve got the means to go and do something else.

But I mean, I’ve always wanted to do some sort of job in the Chemical industry.

I’d seen posters going up at my school when I was in 6th form doing my A levels and stuff. I thought that seems to be a good idea. Basically a free degree. I’m not gonna pass that up, so that was what really drove us towards it, and it just seemed like the right thing for me. And I went for it. And I’m really enjoying it. I suppose, because it’s quite a serious degree, splashing around with dangerous chemicals you have to be responsible and it’s the same with work, and I think because it’s paint, and everyone’s so obsessed with it - and at the end of the day someone goes and just pours it out of a tin and it’s nothing to them but everything to us. Because of that, I think the other half of me is kind of less serious and more kind of chilled out, and just having a good time. And yeah so I think I maybe overcompensate a bit in my spare time. I do like to chill out and you know and I think it’s driven by the fact that I’ve got a bit of a mundane job.

I went through a period a while ago of going through like a proper health binge, right, got to get in shape. Doing loads of cycling. Lost loads of weight. Eating total rabbit food for weeks on end. And it kind of occurred to us ‘right hang on. I’m doing all of this when I could just be hit by a bus tomorrow. Like twenty one years of sheer boredom’. So yeah I’m just gonna like go out, not worry too much and eat what I want and just you know exercise some of it off later. You know I’d rather live for fifty years having the time of my

life and die of a heart attack cos I didn’t do enough running rather than live a little bit longer and just have a boring life.

But that might change as I hurtle towards fifty! We’ll see.

I kind of one day realised that, hang on, it really is a delicate balance and you’ve got to make the most of it. I mean I’m a complete atheist. Like, I know I was brought up a Catholic kind of, with the school and everything, but well my Dad went to St Joseph’s and he knows it was like a really good school so I think it was more of a means to an end, as opposed to “my son will be raised a Catholic” sort of thing. I think cos I’ve always been good at science and that’s what I have always focused on and been interested in. And obviously doing the degree in Chemistry, it was just kinda everything I’ve ever wondered about has been answered by science. So I felt there was no real need for me. It just seemed like a whole far-fetched idea with organised religion. So that’s where I am.

I don’t feel particularly Irish or anything, either. I’ve never been or anything. I mean, yeh, it’s definitely an Irish sounding name I suppose, but that’s about as far as it goes in my daily, kind of day to day activities it doesn’t really influence us I don’t think. I’ve kind of watched my Grandad develop the family tree that he did and I was quite interested in that cos he started off with not a lot and he ended up going all the way back to like the 1820s and that was interesting and that’s probably as far as it goes

really.

I got pressured into playing the Irish fiddle in like year four or something! But it wasn't really for me. I always wanted to play the guitar. You always want to play the songs that you like to listen to, so for me it was rock music. But for my dad, it actually is fiddle music! I think he probably wants to break away from that stereotype of the working-class mechanic or whatever. But yeah he's always had a passing interest in the music. We went to the ceilidh at the church one new year, which I think he was secretly massively excited about, but I mean it kind of went over my head, I wasn't that interested. So when he started playing the fiddle a bit ago, I guess he's just kind of thought, 'it's a rainy day and we've got one in the house' and he's just had a bash and it took off from there.

SIMON presses stop.

Lights down.

Scene Four

The sound of an Irish fiddle. Light up on PETER, at his table as before. PETER considers the dictaphone. The sound of the fiddle fades. PETER picks the dictaphone up, rewinds, listens to the last few sentences.

PETER presses record.

PETER

I remember the day he came home with that beautiful fiddle, and you couldn’t help but admire it. It’s fantastic, and he used to look at me when I was looking at it and I would say ‘god, look at that’ and I was amazed that he could get this tune out of it. He wasn’t really interested in it cos it wasn’t cool. He got into the guitars and this thing just festered in his room, and I never imagined I could play it. And the number of times I said ‘look, you’re not gonna play it, why don’t I take it into the school and then somebody’s gonna use it?’ ‘yeah, yeah, yeah we’ll do that’ ‘so where is it?’ ‘aw, I don’t know?’ and I thought, he does know, he’s just not telling us. And then I realised it was cos his Granddad had paid for it, and I thought fair enough, it’s not mine to give away and I let it go and forgot about it.

To be honest with you, I only remembered where it was when the Costa Concordia sunk. You heard about the violinist that was killed? The story is, he was on at the lifeboat and he went back for his violin. He, I dunno if he was Hungarian? He was a brilliant violinist and his father was a violinist. And this story came on the radio 2 and at the time I was driving a group 4 vehicle and I thought ‘that’s a hell of a story that’. And I remembered ’that violin’s in Simon’s bedroom’. And that was a Thursday and I had the Friday off. She would be at work and he would be at work and all there would be would be me and this violin, if I could find it. And it was just there on the wardrobe.

I couldn’t get anything out of it, but then I realised you had to tension the bow from looking on YouTube. Then, luckily for me one of the first videos I seen was this Ian Walsh, American guy and he’s brilliant and he sells these instructional downloads is what they are and its just a few dollars a jig. And if you’re as poor as I am, you only need to spend that money once every, initially three weeks and I haven’t spent any for a month or two cos I’ve been trying to get them decent. And the way I thought about it was if it takes a while then it doesn’t matter, cos I’ve got a while. And the funny thing is it costs nothing. It costs nothing, it’s just time. And it’s so satisfying.

I’m getting pretty good, but if anybody comes in other than me family, it’s amazing, I’m like a rabbit in someone’s headlights and it deteriorates to such a level...

But it’s not that difficult. I’m surprised how easy it is. A lot of it is intuitive, you know. I imagine it would be difficult if you were tone deaf. Just learning it off reading it off music, which is the proper way to do it I suppose, but that’s not the way Irish fiddlers did it. The majority can’t read music like that. So you get an inkling of the social life and how that changed in the part of Ireland me family actually came from, too, and I’ve always liked the Irish music. When you hear it, you cannat help yerself, you feel yourself doing that. I even got a Pogues record when they were on the go...

The way you’re brought up and the younger you are the

more you're used to wanting instant gratification. And everything is tuned that way aren't they. Musical instruments aren't like that, you know. You need patience and dogged determination for to plod away with it.

PETER goes to the table. Reads the paper.

I suppose I should talk a bit more about me values. Of course those are instilled going back over... to what happened in school and the influence that your parents had on you. And basically my values lie with like me wife and me son, you know. They're what I value most. So what I have defined meself as in the past has been like the primary wage earner. So I would define meself as primarily as a husband you know and a father, I would say. That's what matters to me most.

I must admit, though, I didn't realise how much I valued strength. Physical strength. You take it for granted. And I've been doing a physical job since I was sixteen. And eh, two year ago now I was behaving like a sixteen year old. Jacking a vehicle up which was low. So the jack was well underneath the vehicle. But I couldn't get underneath it, so I was jacking it up at arm's length. And what I found out is if you're forty eight year old and you try and do that, the bicep parts company with the shoulder. Ruptures. And is no longer a bicep but is now just attached at one point. And what you're left with is a 'Popeye' muscle... I never felt any pain. But it destabilised the joint, and I got all kinds of shoulder problems. And a fitter with a right arm that doesn't work isn't much cop. I've had back

pain for about five year now and it’s steadily getting worse, and this all culminated in a ride in one of those, aw, what they called, magnetic – MRI? And when I came out the other end I’m sort of arthritis in here and spondolosis in me lumber region and all that and that’s when you realise you’re just a machine.

And for all that I’m not old, because of the job I do, I’m not young anymore. My body’s aged more than someone else’s will have. And that’s the thing, once it’s gone it’s gone. And facing up to that, and as you can imagine I was off for a long time off sick. And how do I define myself as a man? You know, I’m not the man I was and I’m not, I don’t consider myself to be old or infirm, but I can’t deny that I’m not longer able to do those things that I could, as little as two or three year ago you know. You think you’re always young until that day occurs. So you tread a, it’s like a tightrope and you can fall off either way I can tell you. That was an eye opener for me as a man. For to have to concede that you know, these things aren’t a given. It could quite easily happen where you’re not in a position to bring the money in, you know. Certainly it was a wake up call you know as a bloke, you know as a working bloke, I had quite a fright.

PETER presses stop.

Lights down.

Scene Five

Irish music plays. Light up on VICTOR, as before. The music fades.

VICTOR picks up the dictaphone, presses record.

VICTOR

Arnold Gallagher, he was a distant relative, way, way back, he said, ‘only in England would one find such lack of interest in, and lack of respect for one’s ancestors’. It’s a situation that appalls my friends in India and the Middle East, and I couldn’t put it better myself.

Me father told me a lot and he was from an era where they didn’t have access to the technology that we have now. Online, the websites and the genealogy websites in particular and like I said, you’ve got these people who have been great sources of information and what that’s done, it’s backed up virtually word for word things that me father told me. He wouldn’t in his wildest dreams have imagined, you know fifty years down the road that we’d have access to this kind of information. A lot of the research that I’ve got and you’ve read has vindicated what me father said. He was spot on, right on the button with these things. He had no notes to refer to, and yet he was right in what he said. I haven’t found anything that ’oh there’s a contradiction there’ you know.

And the way me wife sees certain things we’ve come across on her pursuit of the family history - I’ll say things like ‘oh it’s an amazing coincidence isn’t it’ with what we’ve found, we didn’t exactly know where we

were looking but we've found it. And you know she'll say things like, 'it's not a coincidence at all, it's your father at work'. Now you can take that any way you like.

The way I see it is that, just remember there is three elements, three Irish families you know. In fact one relative was way back in the 1800s, way before the famine. And he was on Tyneside because he was a seaman in Tynemouth. And like I said it's some legacy isn't it? And I would like to think that our ancestors would approve of us using this new technology. They would think it's great. And it's something to pass onto younger generations and at least some of the younger generations are there to show some interest. And from point one way back in the 1800s in Ireland, there's something like five generations that have elapsed. And yet there is a feeling of feeling Irish, and Irish ancestry.

When we were visiting with me brother in Ireland. We were in a pub on a lunchtime, and it was all men in, bit of craic was going on. And all the standard Irish swear words and that. And someone said something that was a bit political and I said 'oh I can't comment on that' and I said 'that's a bit political, I don't belong round here'. And he said 'what do you mean you don't belong round here?' He said 'of course you do'.

We know there's been the troubles in Ireland and yes I'm not strongly political in that sense but I do recognise that a lot of what those people have been through there's injustices that have been engineered.

Some would even say that the famine was engineered. It wouldn’t be hard to do. Something so virulent as that. But what you’ve got to consider is that people were being shipped out to the colonies from Ireland in particular. And the way I see it is that it was a form of slavery. Because just forty years before that they had slavery that was abolished. The landed gentry found their way of getting their cheap slave labour anyway. They were being transported in cases that would be laughed out of court now ‘don’t waste my time, this is trivial’. But it was manipulation.

So it’s good to see how well these people have done in spite of adversity. The particular location where my family come from - a rural location on the shores of Lough Talt - the scenery’s amazing. There’s some amazing photographs. Amazing really that they’ve had to leave this place to go to industrial Tyneside. But what you’re talking about is survival.

And lastly, I would say in my case as well that there is not just an Irish but a strong Celtic element. And the reason I say that is being on holiday in places like Northern Spain, they say ‘you look Spanish, but you’ve got blue eyes’ and one woman in particular who was on the staff in the hotel she says, ‘of course we are all Celtic’. And that was a person just in her 20s. And that goes way back.

In genealogy, you know, there’s the proven and the unproven:

Sometimes you get a break and you’re able to say

’that’s just what I’ve been looking for’.

But if you’re talking about identity, how far back do you go? We’re talking about two thousand years or more of history, of genes. And obviously that’s something you’ll never be able to prove.

Some things you’ll never be able to prove.

But it’s there.

VICTOR presses stop.

Sounds and voices from the play return.

Victor packs up the papers and dictaphone and exits.

The sounds and voices play out.

Lights down.

Appendix F Flyer for ESRC tour of 'Under Us All'

Appendix G Published works based on thesis

Refereed Journal Articles

Richardson, M. J. (2013) Embodied intergenerationality: family position, place and masculinity. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography,* DOI:10.1080/0966369X.2013.855710

Richardson, M.J. (In Press) Theatre as safe space? Performing intergenerational narratives with men of Irish descent. *Social and Cultural Geography*

Book Chapters

Richardson, M. J. (2014) Intergenerational approaches to researching men's lives: reflections from the Tyneside Irish, in the North East of England. In Hopkins, P. & Gorman-Murray (Eds) *Masculinity and Place* Ashgate: Aldershot

Richardson, M. J. and Lawrence, G. (In Press) Under Us All: 'What you've been through...is what we've all been through.' In Rees, C. (Ed) *Masculinity in Crisis: Depictions of modern male trauma in Ireland*. Carysfort Press (in conjunction with the Arts Council of Ireland)

Richardson, M. J. and Sharp, E. (In Press) Giving back in Tyneside and Texas: theatre and dance as more than dissemination. In Herman, D. (Ed) Giving *Back: Research and Reciprocity in Indigenous Contexts*. Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

International Conference Sessions Organised

Richardson, M.J. and Hopkins, P. (2012) Relational Masculinities. Two panel sessions for the Association of American Geographers Annual Conference, New York, March, 2012

International Conference Presentations

Richardson, M.J. (2014) Irish incarnate: differing levels of identity and belonging across generations of men of Irish descent**.** For the Association of American Geographers Annual Conference, Tampa, April, 2014

Richardson, M.J. (2013) Working and ‘Working Out: men of Irish descent on post-industrial Tyneside. For the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference, London, 2013

Richardson, M.J. (2013) Being religious in secular society: men of Irish descent on post-industrial Tyneside. For the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference, London, 2013

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Notes

[1] Power geometry according to the work of Doreen Massey is a term for explaining the differing effects globalisation can have on places. It is useful in explaining how for example, the North East of England suffered more through de-industrialisation than the South East of England. The North East's previous successes in heavy industry meant it was too specialist and slow to adapt to economic change, something the South East excelled at in transitioning toward to the newer service based economy.

[2] GVA is a measure of output used to balance accounts nationally. It accounts for the value of goods and services produced in an area.

[3] Deconstructionism is a critique of idealism. Championed by the work of Jacques Derrida it can be considered a literary theory technique to claim that there is no meaning within text itself, rather it is in the reading of text where we can find meaning. Following this deconstructionist view sits narrativism which places meaning in deriving motives behind author or 'narrator' of the text.

[4] 'Geordie' is the colloquial name for people from the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and its surrounding areas. For more see Colls and Lancaster (2005) *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism.* It tends to generate a friendlier response than the 'Anyone But England' (Kelly 2010) type scenario with the following phrase often cited back to me 'You're a Geordie? Oh that's ok then, you're just like the Scots but with your brains bashed out'[4].

[5] This term of endearment, with its affectionate disavowal is based on both a historical geography with the border between Scotland and England coming as far south as Newcastle and a more contemporary one built up through resentment towards a Southern English based media and sporting rivalries.

[6] I note that the 'home' can be a contentious place: it is argued by some as a positive environment, as a sanctuary or escape (Blunt and Dowling 2006,

Holloway and Hubbard 2001), but also as a negative space, a place of oppression (Skelton and Valentine 2005).

[7] The Shillelagh is a wooden walking stick and is synonymous within the Irish diaspora as a symbol of Ireland. It is often incorporated into the logos of sports teams and also military emblems, for more on this see Sheen (1998).

[8] As became familiar during Victor's biographical oral history, I, as the researcher, am present. In this instance, he links my PhD studies and the ethical approval and consent forms (that we had discussed together) or as he describes them 'what you're doing for schools' to his Irish and religious sense of 'fair play'.

[9] From the general teaching of Matthew Chapter 5 verse 39: 'whoever smight you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also'. This is preceded by discussion of the earlier 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' in verse 38, to which this Christian tolerance and forgiveness is in response.

[10] The 'Agnus Dei', which is Latin for 'Lamb of God' features prominently in Christian prayers and forms part of a standard Catholic Mass

[11] 'The Soldier's Song is the Irish National Anthem (Republic of Ireland).

[12] A Eucharistic Minister in this context is a voluntary, lay (not ordained) member of a congregation who is trained to take 'holy communion' out into the community (usually out to the houses of elderly people or into care and nursing homes).

[13] 'The Twelfth' celebrates the victory of William of Orange over the Catholic King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

[14] With eight lodges in the North East: two in Newcastle and one in Durham, Sunderland, Wallsend, North Shields, Morpeth and Darlington (MacRaild, 2005). Whilst this scale is admittedly larger than my focus on Tyneside, it does indicate a more diverse Irish population than has been previously discussed.

[15] Fenianism was built upon a desire for the establishment of an Irish Republic and the belief that this could only be achieved through a violent uprising. In this historic case however, the Irish political statement on Tyneside was misinterpreted as a riot against the British Empire and was more likely simply challenging Garibaldi's open opposition to the Pope as the Head of the Roman Catholic Church. 'The cause of this violence seems to have been a curious compound of Italian politics and the misunderstood and oft-cited irascibility of Roman Catholic Irish labourers, and it was certainly through this combination of factors that the usually imperceptible difference of Tyneside's Irish became very apparent' (Jackson, 2001, 49). This is an incident that seems on the surface to example what has been earlier outlined; that Tyneside and sections of its Irish population share closely allied views on nationalist sentiment and radical politics.

[16] 'Cultural reanimation does help to explain the persistence of religion in the secular state (laïcité), it also positions religious institutions to historical and cultural categories, thereby reinforcing the idea that contemporary religious institutions are ambiguous geopolitical actors' (Olson 2013: 152).

[17] Officially the Boys' Brigade is an interdenominational Christian youth organisation, but it has Protestant roots in Scotland. For some Catholics it is very 'non-Catholic'.

[18] Before our interview, Tim, Dan and I all agreed it was ethically correct for us to talk together in the same room due to Tim's age. It was suggested by Dan however that I ask questions separately and that Tim should always have the chance to speak ahead of his father so as to minimise his influence in the interaction. This could not be fully achieved but as this example shows, with clear boundaries set, the younger man (the son) was able to talk about such significant topics as religion and even to challenge his father in some of his responses.

[19] The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart (PTAA) is an Irish Roman Catholic organisation for those who have pledged not to drink

alcohol. It builds from the earlier Temperance Movement of the late 18th and 19th Century.

[20] A woman of Hindu (Indian) origin who lived and worked in Galway as a dentist. She died from complications during her pregnancy; the refusal of hospital staff to abort her unborn baby in an attempt to save her own life was highly controversial across the international community (Waterfield 2013). The doctors did not abort the baby due to the legal consequences in Catholic Ireland.

[21] 'The Little Sisters of the Poor' is a Catholic order of religious nuns who dedicate their service to care for the elderly. They have a branch in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne.

[22] *Geordie Shore* has been condemned by the MP for Newcastle Central, Chi Onwurah, who claims it is 'bordering on pornographic' and that it is 'totally unrepresentative of Newcastle' (Moss 2011). Yet its pervasiveness is only likely to continue as it has been recognised as MTV's highest rated programme (Heritage 2011).

[23] Admittedly men who value education are more likely to volunteer to contribute to a student's PhD research and are more likely to come forward; this will naturally have skewed the data. However I was conscious of this and through snowballing existing contacts I reached men who did not actively seek me out; their involvement and any academic background then is more coincidental; see Chapter 2 for further methodological discussion.